

# New Era

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## German Intransigence

by Kae Matundu-Tjiparuro

IF the Federal Government of the Republic of Germany thinks that by keeping quiet, the issue of the genocide of the Namibian people, and the consequent reparation, will die a natural death, they are completely missing the point.

Unknown to the Government of the Republic of Germany, as quiet and calm as the Namibian people, or a section thereof, may seem about this issue, they are by no means taking the disturbing silence, and inaction by the Federal Government of the Republic of Germany, as docile, calm and inactive as the German authorities would uninformed, ill-informed and unimaginatively assume. This became obvious at a recent gathering in Katutura where the issue came up spontaneously among a group of both young and old who had gathered for a vigil.

To the uninitiated this conversation may have seemed like just talk to while away time. But as history of this people would testify, many an issue started the same way. This is not to talk of the land issue that eventually led to the anti-colonial wars and eventually taken up by stalwarts like Paramount Chief Hosea Kutako and others.

Starting as an informal talk it later developed into somewhat pertinent semi-serious discussion. And there was one single thing anyone present could not mistake. The groundswell opinion out there that the Federal Government of Germany is somehow indebted to the Namibian people for the crimes committed against them during colonial wars starting from 1896 when the Paramount Chief of the Ovambanderu, Kahimemua Nguvauva, was shot together with Nikodemus Kavikunua near Okahandja, to the beginning of the war proper in January 1904, culminating in October the same year in the issuing of the infamous Extermination Order by General Lothar von Trotha, the then commander of Imperial Germany's forces in the then South West Africa, today's Namibia.

Not only this, the air was impregnated with the feeling that sooner or later the reparation movement needs to shift into a different and more powerful gear. This is in view of the undeniable fact that somehow the German government has been taking the affected communities for a ride if not being arrogantly intransigent to their plight and plea.

The thinking was united in which way the campaign must now start moving. In fact, this is not a feeling born lately although hitherto it has been isolated and voiced sporadically by one or the other leader. This sense of a need for a new direction and urgency as far as the genocide issue and reparation is concerned is coupled to the uneasiness as expressed at this very occasion with the position Namibians of German origin seem to be taking, let alone that one of silence.

As far as the people at the said vigil are concerned, the object of their dispossession is not in Germany but here in their own backyards. These are the tracts of land in private hands most presumably owned by Namibians of German descent. Is it not time that the focus shift to these fellow citizens? This seemed the overriding question uppermost in the thinking of most of those who had an opinion on the matter on this particular day.

What can one deduce from this? A section of the Namibian people are aware of the German government's intransigence on the issue of genocide and reparation. Neither would they be any longer pinning their hope on the understanding of the German government.

They have been for long appealing to its understanding but it seems to have none. Hence the question of turning to fellow citizens of German descent so that they could try to bring their influence to bear on the German government. But the bottom line is that while the German government may hope, pray and think that the issue of genocide and reparation is a transient nuisance bound to disappear from the agenda one day, there are those in this country for whom the matter may be more than just a nuisance.

The sooner the German Government awakens to this reality the better.