



The Black Holocaust Museum
Cairo



A group of six Herero women stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder. They are dressed in long skirts and blouses, with wool blankets draped on their shoulders. Each wears a shawl tied at the back of her head. They are hunched over as though they are cold, with their hands are folded across their stomachs. Though their heads are cast down, they look straight into the camera. They neither smile nor frown. To their right, we see the back of a white woman sitting at a small desk. The desk is empty. To the left of the group of Herero women are three officers dressed in uniform. With contemplative expressions, they look towards the white woman seated at the desk. It appears to be a slave sale

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At first it seems that there are only two men in the picture. They are naked and facing away from the camera. Ropes are tied around their necks; the opposite end of each rope is tied to a tree. Their broken necks can no longer hold their heads up, so their faces are pointed up towards the sky. The tree from which they are hanging has a thick trunk that splits into two. A third man is hung in front of the tree trunk. The men's feet dangle a foot or two above the ground. Their dead bodies are completely still. Behind the men stretches an open field, which ends in a grove of trees and a big, gray sky

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A group of eight Herero boys wear shackles around their necks. They range in age from about eight years old to sixteen, or eighteen. Attached to each shackle is a chain that falls straight down the boy's chest. Two of the oldest boys also wear short pieces of rope around their necks, to which are attached oval tags that identify them as captives in a German concentration camp. The boys are posed in an arrangement reminiscent of a family portrait. They wear loose cotton rags that barely pass as clothing. One boy appears on the verge of tears; two others look down, away from the camera. One of the boys wearing tags looks directly, murderously, into the camera's eye. His wrath is palpable, emphasized by his proud stance

Behind the group of boys, tightly framed between two of them, is a black African man dressed in a neat uniform. Brass buttons on his coat lead to a thick, warm collar, along which the pressed white edge of his shirt collar is visible. He wears an unusual hat whose wide brim juts out over his left ear. The other brim of the hat is turned upwards in a jocular style. His mustache is neatly trimmed above his top lip. He looks straight into the camera with a serious expression



The photograph depicts two profiles of the same human head. The head is no longer attached to a person; rather, it is mounted on a piece of metal shaped into a loop that supports the severed neck. It is the head of a black African man. On the left, the head is positioned facing towards the camera. The eyes are not quite closed, nor are they open; in fact, it is difficult to tell whether there are eyes or whether the head is punctuated by two empty sockets. It almost appears as though there are tears about to emerge, to roll down the wide nose, to meet the full lips that appear to be frowning. The hair on the head is about an inch long and tightly curled

In the right half of the photograph, the same head is positioned in profile. Above the left ear, there is a strip of hair missing where the bare scalp appears. The exposed skin has the texture of thickened scar tissue. Just in front of the left ear, there is a deep scar or indentation, as though this man's head had been pummeled with a heavy object

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Ten or more Herero men and women are crowded together on the ground. A German officer stands amongst them, looking towards the camera. In his right hand, he holds a stick that is touching the ground. His left hand is placed casually in his jacket pocket. He wears a military uniform, its high collar closed tightly around his neck. His cap is pulled over his eyes. He leans back slightly in a relaxed, yet dominant posture

The people crowded on the ground look tired and unhappy. Some are wearing basic cotton clothing, with small caps or scarves on their heads. A woman in the foreground is topless; her breasts rest on her forearm. She wears a thick beaded necklace around her neck, and her face bears a painful expression. There are two objects amongst the people—something that looks like a small basket, and a fur pelt. Behind the crowd, a hill slopes gently upwards



There are five Herero women in the picture. They are walking in a single file along what appear to be tracks for a train or cart. They are wearing full skirts and blouses and their heads are covered with scarves. What is most remarkable about the photograph is the one rope that ties the five women together. It is wrapped around their necks and stretched taut between them. Each woman grips the rope as though to prevent it from choking her. The fourth woman from the right seems to be struggling; her hands are splayed out in opposite directions, grasping the rope. She looks about to lose her footing

The first woman in line looks directly at the camera. Her eyes are dark and defiant, her mouth tight. She looks both exhausted and unflinching. Behind the women is a large white house enclosed by a fence. Just outside the fence is an outhouse. In the lower right corner of the photograph, there is a stack of full, burlap sacks



There are four Herero men and one German officer in the photograph. There are thick chains slung around the bodies of the Herero men, attached to heavy shackles around their necks. One of the men holds the chain to which he is bound in his hand, as though to relieve some of its weight from his neck. The men are barely dressed; mere rags cover their private parts. In the center, one man puts his hands in front of his crotch as though shielding it from the camera's eye. On his upper left arm are a series of white marks, probably a scar from a very deep wound. The men are emaciated to the point that their ribs are visible; their limbs appear fragile and thin. It is not hard to discern rage in their faces as they look straight into the camera. The officer stands alongside them, also looking into the camera. With his right hand, he grips the upper arm of one of the Herero men. His left hand is poised against his belt and his legs are slightly separated as though to hold his ground. Though it is clear that he has control over the group, he appears to be on edge



The photograph appears artificially staged for a particular purpose. There are three young German girls, dressed in fine clothing, their blond and brown hair carefully combed in a side part. One of them is seated at a table, with her hands on an instrument that may be a telegraph machine. The other two girls are standing to her right, each with one hand placed on a human head. The heads are mounted onto black cube pedestals, placed on the table. One of the heads is that of a white man, and the other is the head of a black man. The girls gaze down towards an undetermined point. Their expressions are empty—void of feeling.