

l'identité sexuelle : la raison masculine contre l'intuition féminine. Aux lecteurs de s'en satisfaire ou non.

Parmi les mérites de cet ouvrage, celui de nous faire mieux comprendre comment ont été produits les « chrétiens sociologiques » de l'après-guerre, ceux qui ont délaissé sans trop de peine au moment de la révolution tranquille la religion cléricale qu'on leur avait enseigné à l'école. Celui, aussi, de nous faire découvrir les racines québécoises de la catéchèse et de l'approche contemporaine de l'enseignement religieux.

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Clarence Lusane — *Hitler's Black Victims: The Historical Experiences of Afro-Germans, European Blacks, Africans, and African Americans in the Nazi Era*. New York and London: Routledge. 2002. Pp. viii, 312.

The most important function of this book is to have posed the question about the relationship between what the author calls Blacks and the citizens of Germany, even before the rise of Hitler. Clarence Lusane points to a long tradition of anti-Black sentiment in Germany, dating at least from the German Enlightenment with Kant and Hegel and characterizing German society to the founding of German colonies in Africa in the 1880s and beyond. He correctly dwells on the 1904–1907 war against the Herero in South West Africa as a racial conflict — some historians have called this the first instance of (German) genocide. The volume becomes multi-dimensional as its author turns to incidences of anti-Black prejudice in the United States and points up parallels between the eugenics programmes of both Germans and Americans, mutually fertilizing one another.

What could have been a valuable contribution to the history of racial prejudice in Germany, however, as the key questions are broached, ultimately reveals itself as the product of shoddy research and careless argumentation. At best, it is a volume of lexical rendering rather than systematic analysis. The two main reasons for this are a misconception of German history and society on one hand and the failure by the author to define his victim group more closely on the other. A third, and minor, reason is an extraordinary lack of fact-checking and misspelling of German as well as English names and terms. Hence the Kristallnacht is placed in 1937 rather than 1938, Joseph Goebbels is introduced as minister of culture rather than propaganda, and the Dutch concentration camp of Westerbork is relocated to Denmark. *Mischling* becomes *mischeling*, and President Friedrich Ebert is President Eben. In equal measure, these last-mentioned errors are a fault of the publisher.

Lusane's misinterpretation of Germany's more recent history and society culminates in his miscomprehension of the country's interest groups and attendant interest-driven currents. In a generalizing sweep and against all differentiating caution, Lusane identifies all the Germans since 1900 as *a priori* racist; Jews are immediate

victims even in the Weimar Republic because their communities were well positioned. In truth, racist Germans, even after the humiliating defeat of 1918, were always in a critical minority, and Germany's Jews in their socio-economic setting were an absolute image of German society as a whole. In the manner of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's distortions, Lusane then reasons that Hitler's largely anti-Semitic NSDAP (the author writes NSDDP) corresponded logically with the majority anti-Semites among the German people. The fact is that anti-Semitism played a significant, recognizable part in Hitler's rise to power in 1933, but not the decisive one, nor was it a major factor in the Third Reich's continued maintenance.

Even though Lusane has Hitler's view on the Jews right, if not the view of all of his subjects, the author still totally misrepresents the Führer's attitude to Blacks and to the former German colonies. Contrary to Lusane's account, Hitler cared little about Blacks because numerically they posed no threat to the German people (neither did the Jews, even though there were more of them, but they were propagandistically useful), and he had no hankering for a return of overseas colonies lost during World War I. One reason for the latter was strategic, the other racist. First, Hitler did not wish to tie up Germany (again) in a geographical situation that would badly serve its interests; he knew that, economically and demographically, especially the four African colonies of Togo, Cameroon, South West Africa, and East Africa had been a drain on the Reich's resources. He also feared an entanglement outside Europe with powerful European states that still held colonies or administered mandates, especially Britain, which he admired as a modern model of colony-building. The whole formula just before World War II — a formula the British were loath to accept — had been that Germany colonize the European East (Russia), whereas for balance Britain ought to be content with its holdings in Africa and Asia. Secondly, Hitler repudiated a recolonization of Africa because he feared what he called miscegenation — sexual congress, with its consequences, between Blacks and Whites of the kind that was going on in South Africa (and had been in German South West Africa). He despised the French for allowing Black colonials easy access into mainland France and for allegedly sanctioning relations between White Frenchmen and Black women in French African colonies.

The definition of who was a "Black" in twentieth-century Germany, and whence racist problems arose, remains fuzzy throughout Lusane's volume. The heavy-handed French occupation of the Rhineland in the early 1920s is a case in point. Lusane is repeating National Socialist propaganda when he claims, implicitly or explicitly, that it was Black French troops who occupied the Rhineland and that their offspring were later sterilized under the Nazis. As Sally Marks, whose research is not consulted, has shown years ago, there were three "racial" elements to those colonial French troops. French troops from Senegal, for instance, were part of the colonial forces. They were of course "Black". Then there were Arabs from French-held North Africa, who were not "Black" but "Brown", and lastly Indo-Chinese who tended to be "Yellow". Who, then, exactly, were the French-German illegitimate children from the 1920s occupation who had to lead a miserable existence in the Reich as German "Black Victims" of Hitler? How many were there, especially in relation to the "Browns" and "Yellows", and where did they live? We receive no accounting.

Instead, the pool of Blacks in Germany is artificially enriched by Lusane with other people of colour, some of whom may have been visiting Blacks from the United States like William E. B. Du Bois or, even more transiently, the French citizen Josephine Baker. Others were probably of Arab background, and others again, whom, curiously, Lusane never mentions, could have been transmigrants or their offspring from the German African colonies of yore. Because the author fails, time and again, to identify self-contained groups of Blacks or Mulattoes, either as citizens of Germany or as sizeable groups having been transplanted there from overseas, he has to concentrate on itinerant individuals who, in their singularity and uniqueness, are not representative of any collective that could have been marked for blanket Nazi stigmatization. Lusane spots Black individuals in the German Army no less than in German concentration camps. But in the end the reader wonders how Blacks, as a self-contained, more or less homogenous group, figured ideologically and in daily life vis-à-vis the Jews, and why their treatment at the hands of Nazi politicians and administrators was as incoherent, arbitrary, and inconsistent as it obviously turned out to be, as is shown by this and other sources.

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David Henry Slavin – *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Pp. xv, 300.

European colonialism in North Africa and elsewhere was accompanied and facilitated by theories of European racial supremacy. European governments of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries claimed to be entitled to rule non-Europeans. In this impressive and carefully researched book, David Henry Slavin shows how French popular culture helped create and sustain the racial hierarchies that colonial rule and the *mission civilisatrice* required.

Slavin argues that films and novels did more than simply romanticize the European hero-adventurer. By inventing a myth of a French “master-race,” fit and destined to rule, popular cinema and novels erased class distinctions that divided metropolitan French society. Slavin painstakingly dissects a number of films and books to show how a variety of colonial themes, such as “whiteness,” anti-Semitism, anti-Arabism, the myth of timeless and empty land, female sexuality, and racial pollution, found their way into popular consciousness, and helped to de-emphasize the achievements, history, and basic human rights of the colonized. These are what Slavin means by the “white blind spots, male fantasies, and settler myths” of the subtitle. Slavin follows the making and remaking of films to show the changing dynamics of the colonial undertaking. As colonized people resisted European domination, the symbolic content of film changed from paternal “sensitivity,” to racialized suspicion and hostility. Multiple remakes of the same screenplay over the decades illustrate the shift.