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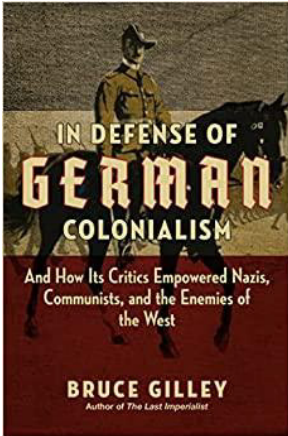
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CONTACT: Elizabeth Hance, 202-495-1916

Elizabeth.Hance@Regnery.com

Contemporary Wokeness, Not Colonialism, Takes Its Cues from Nazism



Washington, D.C.—Modern wokeness and adjacent movements such as critical race theory (CRT) and the 1619 Project decry “colonialism” as inherently evil, writing off anyone who disagrees as a racist. The general public now immediately associates “German colonialism” with the Nazis of World War II. Perhaps surprisingly, modern wokeness shares much more in common with the Nazis than colonialism did. Dr. Bruce Gilley is a professor of political science and public policy at Portland State University, and his book *In Defense of German Colonialism* dethrones the revisionist historians, showing how European colonialism was actually a force for good, how colonialism’s fall allowed Nazism to rise, and how Nazism created the conditions from which modern wokeness would spring.

CRT and contemporary wokeness are dangerous, closed-minded ideologies, and Dr. Gilley is no stranger to their consequences. His 2017 article [“The Case for Colonialism”](#) drew international attention after he received death threats in response.

Dr. Gilley’s discoveries completely contradict modern perceptions of colonialism and shatter revisionist ideologies like CRT:

- CRT claims colonialism was racist and oppressive, but in reality, it was premised on the idea that everyone could achieve freedom, development, and peace no matter his race or culture. Anti-colonialists are the ones who created identity groups and even admired Hitler because his race-purity doctrines were like their own.
- Current public thought equates German colonialism with Nazism. In actuality, the downfall of German colonialism led to the growth of Nazism and empowered advocates of Nazism.
- Modern woke activists similarly characterize Nazism and colonialism, portraying them as closely linked branches of the same tree. The reality, however, is that they represent different trees entirely; and once the tree of colonialism was cut down, the conditions left allowed Nazism to grow. One branch that grew out of the tree of Nazism was modern wokeness.
- CRT insists that colonialism was detrimental and unjust. However, colonialism sparked economic development and good governance, provided the rule of law and human rights for minorities and women, and rescued cultural artifacts and languages from disappearance.

Today’s woke thought circles are missing the truth and suppressing academic freedom and political diversity. Gilley’s *In Defense of German Colonialism* is a tool free-thinking people need to promote these things.

In Defense of German Colonialism by Dr. Bruce Gilley is available August 2, 2022, in hardcover (320 pp, \$29.99, 978-1-68451-237-9) from Regnery Gateway (www.regnerygateway.com).



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In Defense of German Colonialism

By Dr. Bruce Gilley

EXCERPT

PREFACE: Black Berliners and Their White Supporters

I became interested in German colonialism while writing *The Last Imperialist*, a biography of the British colonial governor Sir Alan Burns published in 2021. As a young administrator in West Africa, Burns was sent into combat against neighboring German colonies when the Great War began in 1914. Despite being vastly outnumbered, the African natives fighting for Germany were tenacious and loyal. Native support for the Germans was so vigorous that the young Burns was taken out of the field and sent to British Lagos to recruit more soldiers. All this seemed puzzling to me because, having read what passes for scholarship on German colonialism, I believed that Africans (as well as the Arabs, Chinese, and Samoans) hated the Germans. But if that were so, then why did these peoples rally behind their German governors during the war? In East Africa, the natives did not lay down arms until word came that the fighting had ended in Europe. In West Africa, they followed their colonial masters into exile in neighboring Spanish territory and petitioned world leaders to restore Berlin's authority. Such stubborn facts are incomprehensible to the modern mind, trained as it is to think of European colonial rule as loathsome and unwelcome.

My interest in this footnote to history caught the attention of colleagues in Germany, where calls to “decolonize” the country's understanding of its brief colonial era were running wild. In 2019, I offered an alternative account of this era to legislators and staff of the aptly named Alternative for Germany (AfD), the largest opposition party in the Bundestag. Despite diligent efforts to paint it as a reincarnation of Germany's evil past, the AfD is the only political party in Germany that still believes in the Western tradition. (It is also Israel's most staunch and outspoken defender.) The response to my talk revealed the suppurating sore of anti-colonial activism in Germany. Woke warriors in the city organized a protest outside the Reichstag building for “black Berliners and their white supporters.”

About fifty white Germans and perhaps two black people (who may have been tourists) took part in the ritual. The usual mesh of slogans about unrelated issues appeared. One had to notice the “colonialism kills” signboard to guess the focus of the evening's chanting. “There is no such thing as good colonialism!” a young woman wailed into a bullhorn, demanding that my talk be cancelled. I might have joined the protest to partake of the Christmas spiced cookies but feared that I might be “decolonized” in the resulting melee.

In the media, meanwhile, prominent anti-colonial scholars in Germany denounced the talk and insisted that its contents be censored lest any new ideas percolate into the public mind. “This is a conscious provocation!” declared one prominent scholar. “It shows that the federal government has failed to make



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progress on this important issue of historical guilt and instead allowed it to become a partisan issue up for debate.” The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* ran an article entitled: “The AfD and German colonial era: Thanks for the oppression!” German colonialism in Africa, the newspaper declaimed, “is a story of cruelty, racism and ruthless humiliation.” This conclusion was “beyond dispute,” and any dissenting views were “not to be taken seriously.”

Inside the building, we had a civilized, dare I say “colonial,” discussion. One AfD staffer who is a native of Benin rebuked the Woke white youth outside the building for their arrogance in telling black and brown people what to think about colonial history. “All people in Africa know that what you say is true,” the African man said to me at the gathering. “Germany has done a lot of good in Africa. So I want to thank you for your honest words.” The talk cost me the friendship of a dear Jewish colleague in the United States who, despite his vast learning, fell easily for the charges that I was consorting with neo-Nazis and promoting Prussian militarism. Fortunately, the AfD had invited members of the press to the gathering, and their coverage suggested a growing fatigue with such nonsense.

My talk was well received by the German public and became the basis for a German-language book, *Verteidigung des deutschen Kolonialismus (In Defense of German Colonialism)* published in 2021. In Germany, as elsewhere in the West, the educated public is broadly liberal, tolerant of competing views, and determined to uphold the Western heritage. It is rightly suspicious of the drivel that passes for academic history. As a result, my book is now used widely in independent high schools in Germany by teachers who engage in the daring feat of exposing their charges to more than one point of view.

This revised and expanded English edition takes into account further research as well as critical responses to the German book. It is twice as long as the German version and significantly expands on the thesis that the termination of German colonialism was a major contributing factor to the rise of the Nazi horror in that country and more generally laid the foundations for the series of illiberal movements in Germany that followed, first in the communist-inspired movements of the Cold War and then in the debilitating Woke activism of our days. All this, I argue, is critical to understanding the great hole that now stands at the center of Europe. Rebuilding Western civilization requires many hands. One of the most important of these will seize back an objective understanding of Germany’s brief colonial era.

I am grateful to Regnery and to Harry Crocker III, author of *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the British Empire*, for bringing this politically incorrect guide to German colonialism to English language readers.

To schedule an interview with Dr. Bruce Gilley, please contact Elizabeth Hance at Elizabeth.Hance@Regnery.com or 202-495-1916

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By Dr. Bruce Gilley

QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHOR

General

1. Why does German colonialism matter in light of contemporary “woke” thought leaders?
2. Critical race theory and the 1619 Project are pushing their way into curricula—why is what they teach about colonialism a problem?
3. What were the pros and cons of German colonialism?
4. Why do we now think of Nazis when we hear the phrase “German colonialism”?
5. What has been the response of academics and the culture to your work on the benefits of colonialism?
6. Tell us about your journey writing this book. Why did you get interested in colonialism? Why the focus on German colonialism more specifically?
7. What was the most exciting and important discovery you made?
8. What lessons does German colonialism hold for our world today?
9. Where can people go to buy *In Defense of German Colonialism* and support your work?

Religious

1. How important were missionaries in the success of European colonialism?
2. What was German colonialism’s position towards religion? Did it encourage a specific faith?
3. How did German colonists deal with non-Christian faiths?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DR. BRUCE GILLEY is the author of five previous books, a professor of political science at Portland State University, and a member of the board of the National Association of Scholars, which defends free speech and free inquiry. A former journalist based in Hong Kong and a graduate of the University of Toronto, Princeton University, and the University of Oxford, he lives with his family in Portland, Oregon.

His 2017 article [“The Case for Colonialism”](#) drew international attention after he received death threats in response. To read about the article that sparked death threats, visit:

<https://www.thecollegefix.com/pro-colonialism-article-taken-journal-editor-receives-credible-death-threats/>

<https://www.aei.org/articles/bruce-gilleys-orwellian-campus-nightmare/>

Read “The Case for Colonialism” article here:

https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/31/2/the_case_for_colonialism

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