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# Aiding Africans: West German Perceptions of Race and Modernity in the 1960s

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AIDING AFRICANS: WEST GERMAN PERCEPTIONS OF RACE AND MODERNITY IN  
THE 1960s

by

LAUREN NASS

Under the Direction of Joe Perry

ABSTRACT

During the 1960s, decolonization and the Cold War pushed many West Germans to concern themselves with aiding Africans. This aid came in the form of federally funded development aid or *Entwicklungshilfe*, student activism, and the continuation of missionary work. Utilizing print media, scholarly sources, as well as reports from missionaries and other aid workers, my thesis explores the discourses that surrounded aid work. These discourses reveal a number of ways West Germans conceived of race, modernity, and their role in the world. While acknowledging the multiplicity of views and contest over attitudes, I argue that in general aid to Africa supported West German conceptions of themselves as racially superior, modern, agents of goodwill, and benefactors to the world.

INDEX WORDS: West Germany, Africa, Development Aid, Race, Modernity, Students, Missionaries

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by

LAUREN NASS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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2013

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*To my husband*

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1962, the newly formed *Deutsche Afrika-Gesellschaft* (German Africa Society) hosted a meeting in Bonn, West Germany, comprised of international scholars to discuss current problems in Africa.<sup>1</sup> The following year, a group of West Germans traveled over 14,000 kilometers from home in order to set up display stands instructing local African visitors on topics ranging from hygiene to the “problem in Berlin” (meaning the East/West division by the Berlin Wall). This travelling exhibition, funded by the Federal Republic of Germany, was just one development aid (*Entwicklungshilfe*) project among many that the government undertook in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> Also in 1963, a number of West German university students participated in work-study programs in “developing” countries.<sup>3</sup> Then in 1964, hundreds of students gathered in West Berlin to protest the visit of new Prime Minister of Congo, Moïse Tshombe. Trying to aid the people of Congo, the students sought to draw negative attention to the perceived “murderous” leader.<sup>4</sup> In addition, West German Christian missionaries in the 1960s wrote often about the newly independent African states and their need for education and help with civil service.<sup>5</sup>

These examples illustrate West Germany’s serious interest in aiding sub-Saharan African countries in the 1960s, which is the focus of this thesis. By aid, I mean to include a number of different forms of assistance including government funded development aid (*Entwicklungshilfe*), student protests and solidarity campaigns, and Christian missionary efforts. Some of these ways

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<sup>1</sup> W. Fröhlich, “Vorwort,” in *Afrika im Wandel Seiner Gesellschaftsformen: Vorträge einer Tagung der Deutschen Afrika-Gesellschaft (Bonn) im November 1962 in Köln*, ed. W. Fröhlich (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), viii.

<sup>2</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” *Der Spiegel*, September 9, 1964, 52.

<sup>3</sup> Bernd Huffschmid, “Werkstudium: Entwicklungshilfe: Praktische Arbeit in Übersee ergänzt die Vorlesungen,” *Die Zeit*, August 16, 1963.

<sup>4</sup> “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, December 19, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Meyer, *So sah ich Afrika* (Bad Salzungen: MBK-Verlag, 1961), 7.

of engaging with Africa were new in the 1960s, while others, like Christian missions, existed long before the 1960s. All of the forms of West German aid to Africa, though, experienced a surge of energy in the 1960s.

This desire to invest and care about Africa in a way not witnessed before in German history must be understood in light of decolonization and the Cold War. In 1960, seventeen different African states won their independence. By the end of the decade, nearly the entire continent was free from formal colonial oversight. This rapid political shift in the beginning of the decade focused the world's attention, including West Germany's, onto Africa. Politicians, journalists, students, and missionaries alike all sensed a change occurring in the world. And this change offered incredible opportunity. In Africa, the Federal Republic sought allegiances with newly independent states to boost their global legitimacy as the sole representative of the German people. West German government leaders, like other foreign leaders, utilized aid to African states as one of its most powerful foreign policy tools. African aid, then, was a significant way both West and East Germans acted out the "German question" in the 1960s. The Federal Republic also supported African aid endeavors, in part, to satisfy the foreign policy demands of its ally and Cold War superpower, the United States of America.<sup>6</sup>

Student and missionary interest in Africa also have to be placed in the global context. For example, students aiding Africa through solidarity campaigns can in large part be seen as a backlash against the polarized world and a struggle against neo-colonialism. In the late 1960s, student movements from around the world protested what they saw as the continuation of colonialism in disguise: Western powers on-going economic and political interference in Africa. Likewise, West German missionaries' heightened concern for Africa in the 1960s came as a

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<sup>6</sup> Heide-Irene Schmidt, "Pushed to the Front: The Foreign Assistance Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1958-1971," *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 4 (2003): 474.

result of decolonization. West German missionaries, though used to not having German protection in Africa since World War I, now faced a reality of no European protection at all. At the mercy of new African political authorities, West German missionaries needed to make their case all the more evident of why they should still be in Africa. Clearly other factors besides sheer benevolence motivated West German aid to Africa in the 1960s.

However, West German aid was more than calculated political maneuvering and a reaction to political changes. In advocating for assistance to Africa, West Germans made cultural statements as well. The people of the Federal Republic embedded their actions in Africa in powerful narratives, even if unknowingly, about what it meant to be a West German and how West Germans compared to the rest of the world. The changes in Africa evoked a sense of opportunity for West Germans. Aid work allowed West Germans to present themselves in new, more egalitarian ways to the global community. Because of this, the discourses over aid are especially telling about the ways West Germans perceived of themselves. Since Africa captured the minds of so many West Germans from various backgrounds and parts of society (the public, government, students, and religious leaders), discourses over aid offer a wide window into the multifarious ways West Germans formulated and contested questions of identity.

This thesis, then, is ultimately concerned about West German perceptions and attitudes in the 1960s. More specifically, I utilize the discourses about aid in Africa to analyze West German conceptions of race and modernity. These are two hierarchical concepts, which are undoubtedly intertwined, but also maintain unique qualities. Throughout my thesis, I will look for the ways these concepts overlap, diverge, and reinforce one another.

Several questions guide this inquiry: How did various West Germans characterize racial difference and modernity in the 1960s? Do these perceptions mark a change or show evidence of

continuity from the Nazi and colonial past? What dominant narrative emerges from development aid discourse and how do other discourses challenge this narrative? What paradoxes exist in aid discourses? In what ways did aid work destabilize or legitimize West German (and more broadly European) positions and perceptions of superiority in relation to Africa?

In answering those questions, this project will make several broad arguments. First, I will argue that West German interactions with Africa in the 1960s shaped West German cultural perceptions and attitudes. In part, I showcase the effects of West German encounters with non-Western peoples in the 1960s, because so far this type of transnational relationship has rarely been featured in German historiography. More often, transnational studies of West Germany in the 1960s have analyzed the relationship between West Germany and the United States.<sup>7</sup> While those studies are incredibly important to our understanding of the time, my thesis reminds readers that West Germany actively engaged in other parts of the world as well. Thus, West Germans formulated the meanings of what it meant to be West German in a context wider than the Western world.

I will also argue that often hidden within cross-cultural aid work are relationships of power. The aid-givers often presume a position of superiority and authority, even in their attempts to be more globally fair and egalitarian. Development aid, or *Entwicklungshilfe*, is especially prone to becoming a form of neo-colonialism, preventing former colonies from achieving true independence. The Federal Republic demonstrated this as it utilized aid to manipulate African countries to align with its political and economic aims. Thus, African

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<sup>7</sup> Some examples of studies on West Germany and the United States during the Cold War include: Heide Fehrbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

countries could not truly act freely or independently because they depended on foreign aid. In addition, many West Germans clung to modernization and developmental theories that required a hierarchical and binary worldview. By encouraging Africans to develop along a Eurocentric path, many West Germans positioned themselves as the supreme ideal in which Africans should strive. Even those who rejected this type of thinking, like the leftist students, still held positions of power in regard to Africans as they often spoke *for* Africans, like parents speaking for children.

Finally, my thesis ultimately argues that despite attempting to be more egalitarian and color-blind in the 1960s, many West Germans still held onto to hierarchical concepts of race and modernity. In other words, racialized thinking as well as a sense of civilizational superiority continued to exist in West Germany. While many West Germans hoped to separate themselves from their Nazi and colonial past, I will show that a number of continuities existed in the minds of West Germans in regard to perceptions of race and civilization. These hierarchical concepts, though, were neither uniform nor ubiquitous, but instead contested and reinterpreted by different groups in society.

As a study of race and modernity, this thesis is a work of cultural history. In it, I take discourse very seriously. I look for the discourses of aid primarily found in West German mainstream newspapers and magazines, scholarly reports, leftist literature, and Christian missionary publications. In doing so, I draw on some of the great thinkers and historians who emerged out of the so-called linguistic turn. Through discourse, I understand that cultural meanings are historically constructed. Thus, I do not understand race as a biological or transhistorical fact, but as a concept that is fashioned and refashioned by historical actors in the societies in which they live. Here, my work builds on pioneering historians of race like Barbara

Fields as well as more current scholars such as Gail Bederman and Evelyn Higginbotham, who all utilized Michel Foucault's theories of discursive power to analyze racialized language and concepts.<sup>8</sup>

However, my understanding of race in history is more closely tied to the work of German historians like Rita Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Atina Grossmann, and Geoff Eley. In their recently edited volume, *After the Nazi Racial State*, the authors admit that if one *only* looked for the presence of obvious racialized language, one would miss the way racialized thinking persisted in postwar Germany. These authors demonstrate that the term *Rasse* (race) "virtually disappeared from the German lexicon and public discourse since 1945" and yet racialized thinking persisted in often more subliminal ways.<sup>9</sup> My thesis augments this argument slightly because although I affirm that *Rasse* virtually disappeared from the mainstream press, Chapter Three demonstrates that missionaries continued to use the word. However, even West German missionaries did not apply the word *Rasse* to describe Africans, but rather to address racial discrimination issues within Africa. So even when West Germans did use the word, the historian needs to look beyond the language to find more subliminal ways of racialized targeting.

In light of all of this, my work addresses both what was said and was not said in regard to race. I look for ways that West Germans targeted Africans, often uniting a very diverse population into an imagined homogenized group, and then positioning themselves and the targeted group in a type of social gradation or hierarchy. Also, while *Rasse* disappeared at least

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<sup>8</sup> Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Gail Bederman, "Remaking Manhood through Race and 'Civilization,'" in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no.21 (Winter 1992); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1977; repr., New York: Random House, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "Introduction: What's Race Got to Do with It? Postwar German History in Context," in *After the Nazi Racial State*, eds. Rita Chin et al. (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 2009), 3.

from the mainstream press and public discourse, color-modified language still existed in the 1960s. For example, reporters used the terms “Dark Continent,” “black children,” and “black residents” throughout newspaper articles.<sup>10</sup> This color modified language helped specify Africans as a racial group, which then the press and others confirmed was inferior through characterizing Africans as developmentally inferior.

Similar to race, I approach the concept of modernity as a socially constructed term. My thesis does not attempt to answer questions on whether or not the West Germans were modern. Nor do I attempt to assess the African people’s level of modernity in the 1960s. Instead, I work in line with African historian Frederick Cooper’s assessments that modernity is not useful to the historian as an analytical tool but only as an “indigenous category.” Cooper argued that historians should look for the ways historical actors understood the concept of modernity in their own time.<sup>11</sup> In the same way, this thesis considers what modernity meant to West Germans in the 1960s. To do this, I look for the various ways within aid discourse that West Germans established binaries between the undeveloped Africans and the developed West Germans. Often in reading how West German authors characterized Africans, the reader gets a sense of how West Germans perceived of themselves as opposite of those characterizations. For example, when West Germans described African “laziness” as a part of an undeveloped society, then they also made an assumption that West Germans’ hard work resulted from their modernity. I also look for the discursive evidence of West Germans perceiving themselves as breaking from the past or doing something new. It is in these discussions that West Germans molded and shaped their concepts of modernity.

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<sup>10</sup> “Schriftsteller: Janker: Scheck für Safari,” *Der Spiegel*, July 25, 1966, 81. “Preußens Gloria,” 57.

<sup>11</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 7.



While I emphasize discourse, I do not neglect the ways cultural meanings are shaped through experience and practice. I understand that conceptions of superiority and inferiority are not only formed through discourse but also through the daily practice of human actors. Thus merely by participating as benefactors, speaking as experts, protesting with authority, acting as teachers and mentors in relationship to Africans, West Germans embodied the social hierarchies emanating from dominant discourses of aid. As renowned sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu argued, social hierarchies become embodied, or inscribed in people's minds, thus taking on the appearance of having a "natural order."<sup>12</sup> Because of this, even when West Germans spoke of equality, their experienced relationship with Africans made latent notions of superiority unquestioned assumptions of "natural order."

With that said, my thesis also keeps in minds the words of William Sewell, who depicted culture as "worlds of meaning as normally being contradictory, loosely integrated, contested, mutable, and highly permeable."<sup>13</sup> While cultural assumptions of superiority may have pervaded large portions of West German society, they were never without contest or contradiction. This is exactly why studying West German aid to Africa in the 1960s is so informative and intriguing. Government officials, scholars, students, and missionaries all understood helping Africa in different ways. And in these different ways, they also constructed different meanings of what it meant to be West German.

In addition to the ways other historians inform my research approach, my work is also informed by and will contribute to a number of sub-fields within German historiography. Currently, the history of German aid to Africa during the Cold War is a small but growing field.

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<sup>12</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 468.

<sup>13</sup> William H. Sewell, Jr., "The Concept(s) of Culture," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, eds. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 50.

In general, works on the history of aid work pay little attention to the role of West Germany or Germans.<sup>14</sup> Focusing on the Cold War, some German historians do discuss German-African relations, although primarily through the lens of political diplomacy.<sup>15</sup> While these works provide a political framework for my studies, they do not address my particular interest in perceptions and hierarchies. One book that does address some of these concepts is Nina Berman's book, *Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa*. Berman's work, like my own, identifies hierarchies at play in German interaction with Africans, including discourses of modernity and race. Although she acknowledges racism, Berman argues that conceptions of modernity and superior civilization predominantly drove German efforts in Africa. My own work, drawing on research by Rita Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Atina Grossmann, and Geoff Eley, emphasizes race to a greater extent than Berman does. My thesis also fills in a large chronological gap in Berman's study: the Cold War. All of Berman's case studies examine periods either before or after the Cold War.<sup>16</sup>

Two books that do focus on the Cold War are Quinn Slobodian's *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* and Martin Klimke's *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties*. Klimke acknowledges that student protests addressed "Third World" issues, but his primary focus is on the close ties between the United States and West German student movements. My thesis shifts attention away

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011). Carol Lancaster, *Aid to Africa: So Much to Do, So Little Done* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Quinn Slobodian, "West German Labour Internationalism and the Cold War," in *Divided, But not Disconnected: German Experiences of the Cold War*, eds. Tobias Hochscherf, et. al (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2003), Heide-Irene Schmidt, "Pushed to the Front: The Foreign Assistance Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1958-1971," *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 4 (2003): 473-507.

<sup>16</sup> Nina Berman, *Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Rita Chin et al., eds., *After the Nazi Racial State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2009).

from the United States-West German relationship, and focuses more closely on the West German-African relationship. In doing so, I approach the West German student movements more in line with Slobodian's work. In *Foreign Front*, Slobodian is solely concerned about the West German student connections with the "Third World" in their publicity campaigns against racism and imperialism. The author contends that activism was not just a "projection screen" for West Germans to address their own identity issues, but instead was a space for foreigners in West Germany to join forces with West Germans to bring attention to "Third World" issues.<sup>17</sup> While I agree that activism was not only a "projection screen" or stage for West Germans to deal with their past, it remains an important aspect of West German endeavors and thus I will delve into the subject more than Slobodian does in his work. Even though my thesis will not give much attention to foreigners in the Federal Republic, due to my interest in West German perceptions and identity, I do acknowledge the agency and influence of foreign exchange students and visitors. Slobodian's book also helps frame my understanding of the New Left student movements and the way they both challenged hierarchies and allowed some to endure.

Other authors informing my view on student movements and Third World activism during the Cold War include Jason Verber, Young-Sun Hong, and Thomas Lekan. Verber and Hong, like Slobodian, discuss the transnational student interactions of the 1960s. While Hong's work supports my discussion of the growing trend of exchange programs, her focus on East Germany does not influence my thesis directly.<sup>18</sup> Verber, along with Slobodian, highlights

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<sup>17</sup> Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> Young-Sun Hong, "'The Benefits of Health Must Spread Among All': International Solidarity, Health and Race in the East German Encounter with the Third World," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. by Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

hierarchies that exist between West Germans and their African peers.<sup>19</sup> Verber also draws attention to the ways West Germans used activism as a place to deal with their past.<sup>20</sup> I utilize these insights as I look at West German students' activism. In addition to these works, my thesis also builds on Thomas Lekan's essay on Bernhard Grzimek and postwar West German conservation movements in Africa. Lekan's essay, like my own study, uncovers hidden hierarchies within a seemingly "charitable" effort. He also analyzes the ways Germans addressed (or denied) their past through acting as the protectors of the African safari.<sup>21</sup> In similar fashion, I will look at the ways West German development aid projects in Africa were often fraught with discourses of power and authority. These goodwill projects, like Lekan's research on conservation programs, illustrate ways West Germans refashioned their identity in the global sphere.

In discussing the global sphere, my work steps into conversation with scholars of West German foreign policy, like Heide-Irene Schmidt, Brigitte Schulz, and William Hansen. Schmidt observes that the United States greatly pressured West Germany to contribute more and more money to developing countries during the 1960s. Despite the outside pressure, Schmidt argues the West Germans had their own unique motivations and policies for aid. My thesis will agree with that sentiment, albeit with several qualifications. While Schmidt argues that West German aid "reflected a genuine commitment to the development of the Third World" with "no ambitions to establish spheres of influence," my thesis will show that ulterior motives did factor into

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<sup>19</sup> Quinn Slobodian, "Dissident Guests: Afro-Asian Students and Transnational Activism in the West German Protest Movement," in *Migration and Activism in Europe Since 1945*, ed. Wendy Pojmann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 36.

<sup>20</sup> Jason Verber, "Building Up and Tearing Down the Myth of German Colonialism: Colonial *Denkmale* and *Mahnmale* after 1945," in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*, ed. Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 355.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Lekan, "Serengeti Shall Not Die: Bernhard Grzimek, Wildlife Film, and the Making of a Tourist Landscape in East Africa," *German History* 29, no. 2 (June 2011): 246.

developmental programs.<sup>22</sup> This assumption is more in line with Brigitte Schulz and William Hansen's work, which contends that the *Hallstein* doctrine (West Germany's claim to be the sole representative of the German people) and economic benefits ultimately drove the Federal Republic's motivations for aid.<sup>23</sup> Also, Schmidt contends that West Germans were not "tainted by colonialism."<sup>24</sup> If by that statement Schmidt means that the state was unhindered by immediate colonial ties, this is true. However, my work will demonstrate that West Germany's colonial past did affect its 1960s activity in Africa. While the state's attention was not only focused on former German colonies, the press gave special attention to former German colonies.

Because I see a continuation of the influence of German colonialism within West German society, I align myself with other historians of German colonialism like Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, Susanne Zantop, and Jared Poley who argue that colonialism profoundly affected German identity and left a long, enduring legacy.<sup>25</sup> I also draw from Lora Wildenthal's book, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* and Sebastian Conrad's *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* to demonstrate continuities in perceptions of Africans from the colonial period to the 1960s.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to Germany's colonial past, my work will also touch on how aid work and activism allowed West Germans to both address and neglect the Nazi past. To do this, I will draw from Philipp Gassert and Alan Steinweis' edited volume, *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* along with Dagmar Herzog's

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<sup>22</sup> Schmidt, "Pushed to the Front," 475, 487.

<sup>23</sup> Brigitte Schulz and William Hansen, "Aid or Imperialism? West Germany in Sub-Saharan Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 2 (June 1984): 296, 306.

<sup>24</sup> Schmidt, "Pushed to the Front," 487.

<sup>25</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 8; Jared Poley, *Decolonization in Germany: Weimar Narratives of Colonial Loss and Foreign Occupation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884 – 1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, trans. Sorcha O'Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

*Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany*. These two books help tease out the ambiguities concerning the transformations occurring during the “tumultuous decade” of the long 1960s. Gassert and Steinweis’ book admits that marked transformation did occur in the 1960s, and yet there was also a “remarkable degree of continuity in many areas of *Vergangenheitspolitik* (politics of the past).”<sup>27</sup> In discussing the 1960s, Herzog also demonstrates that 68ers did break from the Nazi past, and even more from the immediate generation before them. However, their ambiguous relationship to the Holocaust and their “profoundly distorted understanding of the national past” meant that a complete rupture from Germany’s past did not occur.<sup>28</sup> My own work will demonstrate that many West Germans, especially the students, hoped to move past Nazi conceptions of race and national superiority. However, I demonstrate that in many ways all West Germans continued to support these hierarchical conceptions.

Lastly, my work hopes to pave the way for new research into the work and attitudes of West German Christian missionaries in the 1960s. Little so far has been written on this group of West German society. This thesis will contribute in a small way to the need for more studies on twentieth century Christian missions, which Brian Stanley acknowledges far extended in scope the work of 19<sup>th</sup> century Christian missions.<sup>29</sup>

This thesis then is not an attempt to overturn a major historiographical argument. Instead, I hope it will add to multiple avenues of research and open up new paths of inquiry. Instead of taking a traditional chronological approach, each chapter of my thesis covers a different perspective on aid to Africa. Therefore, each chapter could be a launching point into future

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<sup>27</sup> Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis, eds., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 183.

<sup>29</sup> Brian Stanley, “Introduction: Christianity and the End of Empire,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 2.

research into the specific factions of West German society (authoritative figures and mainstream press, students, and missionaries). The reader will hear new voices in each chapter and thus see a wide diversity of perspectives and attitudes. However, taken together, I intend to show the commonalities of hierarchy that run throughout the various aid discourses.

My first chapter will lay out what I see as the dominant discourse on aid to Africa. These are the narratives established primarily by the mainstream press and concerning government funded development aid. In this chapter I will introduce the reader to several different development projects and discuss the ways the press utilized the hierarchies of race and modernity in their coverage of the projects. The discourse will show that despite the word *Rasse* largely disappearing, color-modified language and racist depictions continued. Journalists and other authors supported these racist depictions with developmental narratives, which posited the West Germans as modern and the Africans as traditional. In this case, modernity usually referred to a more economically, politically, and culturally advanced society. In this chapter we first see how development theories are coded racially. Supporting these hierarchical narratives, a colonial myth about the German past continued. This chapter will discuss how the West German press continued to describe Germans as the “good colonizers” who had only benefited their African subjects. By evoking this myth, the press further solidified the hierarchies of race and modernity.

My second chapter focuses on West German universities and how aiding Africa captured the minds of professors and students alike. I begin with discussing how students encountered Africa on their West German campuses through African studies courses and meeting exchange students from Africa. For some, these encounters with Africa motivated students to action. Some students participated in development aid projects, which required some adherence to a hierarchical worldview. However, there is evidence to show that not all student participants

bought into the narratives the press was releasing about these projects. Other students mobilized politically on behalf of African causes. These students made obvious attacks on racism and perceptions of West German superiority. However, even they could not overcome positions of authority in regard to Africans completely.

My final chapter considers West German Christian discourse on aiding Africa. Although German missionaries had been active in Africa since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, West German missionaries in the 1960s felt that they needed to establish a new way or modern way to do mission work. In line with the dominant discourses advocating for development aid, Christian missionaries encouraged the material assistance of Africans, along with spiritual guidance. In their discourse, the Christians established hierarchical narratives similar to those found in the dominant narratives of chapter one, but not entirely the same. For example, the Christians stayed away from the racialized language and racist cartoons found in the mainstream press and many Christian leaders even advocated for the resistance of racial oppression in Africa. The Christian authors also advocated for a religious, instead of secular modernity. However, in many ways the Christian discourse was not so different from the dominant discourse of aid. In their support of development aid, along a Western path, West German Christians still understood themselves as civilizationally superior to Africans.

Throughout these chapters I demonstrate that hierarchical concepts such as race and modernity are extremely difficult to overcome. In the 1960s, West Germans saw great opportunities in Africa to do aid work. Through aid work, West Germans hoped to project notions of goodwill, generosity, and egalitarianism. West Germans saw themselves as part of a new modern state, one distant from its oppressive Nazi and colonial past. And in many ways, this *was* a new state with a new social makeup. West Germans went to Africa not with tanks and



rifles, but with checkbooks, pens, and construction tools. West German students freely expressed their opposition to government actions and societal attitudes toward Africa. Even Christian missionaries saw racial oppression as antithetical to their mission work. All the while, though, this thesis claims that continuities of hierarchical thinking existed.

In the 1960s, West Germans fashioned the meaning of being a West German on a number of different stages. Individuals and communities within West Germany struggled over issues of race and modernity. What set West Germans apart, and how should they relate to others in the international community? One stage on which West Germans made sense of these questions has since been given little attention by historians: the stage of aid work. Simply by stepping onto it, West Germans could not help but wrestle with how to relate to the ones “below.”

## CHAPTER ONE: REVISITING THE “DARK CONTINENT” WITH AID

“Steep hills and fearful gorges, primeval forest’s night,  
the air is damp and muggy, blocked from the sun’s sweet light.  
Through swells of grass expanses,  
our valiant troop advances  
with porters and Askari,  
heia, heia, safari!”<sup>1</sup>

In 1963, 24 West German trucks rumbled through cities like Nairobi, Kigali, and Dar es Salaam as part of the federally funded development aid (*Entwicklungshilfe*) project called the German Travelling Exhibition to Central and East Africa. After introducing themselves with fireworks and military music at each locale, the West Germans would begin their show of displays and demonstrations concerning topics such as agriculture, hygiene, woodworking and the so-called “German question.” In between teaching important lessons such as, “Plants need plenty of water,” to the “primitive people” the West Germans showed films and passed out “Made in Germany” consumer goods.<sup>2</sup> More than passing out goods and teaching a few lessons, advertising the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) primarily motivated the exhibition organizers. Along with hoping to garner trading partners and allies in the Cold War, journalist Christiane Fritsche explains that through this development aid project, West Germans understood themselves as a “messenger of modern civilization.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lyrics from a popular German song of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century commemorating the East African troops of World War I. The entire song in German and English can be found in Helmut Glenk, *Shattered Dreams at Kilimanjaro: An Historical Account of German Settlers from Palestine who Started a New Life in German East Africa During the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford Publishing, 2007), 236.

<sup>2</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” *Der Spiegel*, September 9, 1964, 52.

<sup>3</sup> Christiane Fritsche, “Skurrile Werbetour: Hump-ta-ta in Afrika,” *Der Spiegel Online*, November 18, 2009, [http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground-xxl/4334/hump\\_ta\\_ta\\_in\\_afrika.html](http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground-xxl/4334/hump_ta_ta_in_afrika.html) (accessed April 4, 2012).

West Germany sought through development aid projects like this to “present the new Germany” to Africa and the world.<sup>4</sup> Ironically though, in the case of the German Travelling Exhibition, the Federal Government chose a former Nazi commander to lead the charge. Werner Lott, a former Nazi U-boat commander, turned Christian youth group leader, now in 1963 held the leading role in a major aid project to Africa. Instead of commanding soldiers in war, Lott now commanded a 50-member crew in demonstrating the ways of a “modern” state. In Africa, the Federal Republic of Germany likely felt that Lott’s past, like its own, would be left far behind. However, this chapter will demonstrate the ways many elements of the past continued to linger.

The German Travelling Exhibition is just one example of West Germany’s development aid projects during the 1960s. Beginning in the year 1960, the so-called “Year of Africa,” seventeen African states gained their independence from colonial powers. West Germany, like other “First World” states, sensed a changing historical tide that they believed necessitated intervention. U.S. President John F. Kennedy declared that the 1960s would be the “Decade of Development.”<sup>5</sup> In line with this development dogma, West Germany began offering large scale loans, entertaining African diplomats, initiating technical projects, proposing education opportunities, and the like for newly independent African states. According to German historian William Glenn Gray, in the 1960s, “development aid was ‘in’” and the Federal Republic wanted to be a part of it. The surge of energy concerning development aid spilled outside government walls. For example, applications “poured in by the thousands” for admittance to the newly created German Development Service (*Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst*), an organization similar

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<sup>4</sup> Albion Ross, “West Germany Wooing Africans; Seeks Negro Students, More Trade,” *New York Times*, December 5, 1954, 1.

<sup>5</sup> John F. Kennedy, “Address in New York City Before the General Assembly of the United Nations,” September 25, 1961, *The American Presidency Project* available from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=835> (accessed August 26, 2012).

to the U.S. Peace Corp, in 1963.<sup>6</sup> In addition, West German academics busied themselves publishing works and holding conferences in the 1960s concerning African development.

Far from altruistic, the West German government utilized *Entwicklungshilfe* as a powerful foreign policy tool in the midst of the Cold War. Although still not a central topic of German historiography, several historians have conducted studies on the political and economic implications of West German development aid to Africa. Authors Brigitte Schulz, William Hansen and Bernhard Blumenau argue that upholding the Hallstein Doctrine (FRG's claim to be the sole representative of the German people) and establishing new regions to export goods and invest private capital primarily motivated West German aid to Africa in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Heide-Irene Schmidt stands in opposition, arguing that West Germany's foreign aid policy must be understood in light of its international co-ordination and co-operation, as opposed to merely its own self-interest. While Schmidt is right in observing the outside influences (like the United States) urging West Germany to give aid, her argument is overstated. Schmidt argues that the Federal Republic's development policy "was hardly affected by the Hallstein doctrine" and that "Germany had no ambitions to establish spheres of influence."<sup>8</sup> However, the evidence suggests otherwise. In the above example of the German Travelling Exhibition, West Germans displayed a miniature Berlin wall to the Africans with photographs of East Germans escaping from windows on the infamous Bernauer Straße. This display can only be read as a form of West German propaganda in a fight against East Germany. Therefore, I agree with Schulz, Hansen and

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<sup>6</sup> "Peace Corps Everywhere," *Time*, November 27, 1964, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Brigitte Schulz and William Hansen, "Aid or Imperialism? West Germany in Sub-Saharan Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 2 (June 1984): 296, 306; Bernhard Blumenau, "The Map of Africa Lies in Germany: The Two Germanys and their Struggle for Recognition in Africa," *Working Papers in International History* 10 (November 2011): 7-10.

<sup>8</sup> Heide-Irene Schmidt, "Pushed to the Front: The Foreign Assistance Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1958-1971," *Contemporary European History* 12, no.4 (2003): 487-488.

Blumenau, that the Federal Republic intentionally used development aid to support its own economy and win its own Cold War battles.

With that said, aid work in the Cold War involved more than appropriating funding and sending out workers to Africa. These battles had to be won through thoughtful national image making. Thus, West German development aid to Africa in the 1960s informs us of more than West Germany's political and economic interests or international relations. Aid work also illuminates how West Germans understood what it meant to be a West German, and the societal hierarchies embedded within that. By analyzing discourse concerning development aid in Africa, I argue that racial and developmental superiority characterized a dominant narrative of West German identity in the 1960s.

While West Germans also discussed Africa in the context of student solidarity movements and ecclesial missions, as we will see in future chapters, government funded development aid primarily captured the nation's attention through the mainstream press. The media's depiction of Africans demonstrated a general societal consensus about the differences between West Germans and Africans; a narrative that positioned West Germans as superior. Although I recognize that the term "Africans" oversimplifies a vast number of people who are far from a homogenous entity, I utilize the term in this paper to mirror the ways contemporary West German discourse referred to the various peoples of Africa.

In order to examine West German social hierarchies in the 1960s through the lens of development aid, I will first analyze articles in the mainstream press to show how race continued to operate as a discursive marker of difference. The press' racialized language presented a consensus that being a West German meant being white, which contrasted with black Africans. I will then show how journalists and scholars combined racialized language with notions of a

developmental hierarchy. Articles about development aid often characterized Africans as inferior because they lacked the characteristics of modernity, which West Germans supposedly possessed. Lastly, I will demonstrate that a colonial myth continued to pervade society due to writers' praise of German colonialism and an overall lack of any critical assessments of colonialism within the press and academia. This myth gave legitimacy to West German perceptions of racial and developmental superiority found in development discourse. Since the media played a critical role in both preserving and reshaping postwar culture, its discourses are central to understanding dominant narratives within West German society. That is why this chapter focuses primarily on the discourses within the mainstream press.

Through my analysis of these discourses, I have organized the chapter by various forms of hierarchy. In dividing the chapter this way, I am aware that I risk presenting these forms of hierarchy as isolated, compartmentalized, and mutual exclusive. This could not be farther from the truth, as each type of societal branding is embedded in discourses that often work together, reinforcing and justifying one another. With that said, by examining the unique nature of each one, we see how the processes in which people identify difference and belonging are engineered through a number of different mechanisms.

### ***The Disappearance of Race?***

In 1967, the West German author, Salcia Landmann, argued for removing *Rasse* (race) from the “taboo concepts.” The popular West German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, judged her newest book entitled, *The Jews as a Race*, a “risky” endeavor.<sup>9</sup> But why would any writing be considered “risky” if the Basic Law of 1949 had provided for the individual right of free

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<sup>9</sup> “Anthropologie: Rassen: Fälliges Theme,” *Der Spiegel*, September 18, 1967, 158.

expression? It was risky, because after 1945 the term *Rasse* had practically disappeared from public discourse. Throughout the pages of development aid coverage, the word *Rasse* hardly ever makes an appearance. By discarding a single word, the Federal Republic attempted to promote a color-blind society. In doing so, West Germans gave pretense to a complete rupture or a “*Stunde Null*” (zero hour) that separated them from the Nazi racial past.<sup>10</sup>

While the myth of “*Stunde Null*” is problematic, unaltered continuity would be an equally false assumption. Prior to 1945, Jewishness existed as the primary marker of racial difference. After World War II, though, color and blackness also became a significant referent of race.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, though, in the rare cases when West Germans used the word *Rasse* in the 1960s, they rarely related it to blackness. For example, in a book of published West German public opinion polls from 1947-1966, only one series of three questions explicitly regarding race appears. In it, pollsters asked 2,000 people ages 16 or over in the Federal Republic and West Berlin if the Japanese/British/Jews “belong to a different race than ourselves.” The results indicate that West Germans felt most similar to the British, and least similar to the Japanese. Only 10% of West Germans identified themselves as a separate race from the British, whereas 94% felt the Japanese belonged to a different race and 73% thought that Jews belonged to different race.<sup>12</sup>

These results indicate that conceptions of race still strongly shaped West Germans’ sense of national belonging, despite the rare usage of the term *Rasse*. The published polls also reported on several questions about anti-Semitism and the Nazi extermination of the Jews, which

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<sup>10</sup> Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, “Introduction: What’s Race Got to Do with It? Postwar German History in Context,” in *After the Nazi Racial State*, ed. Rita China, Heide Fehrenbach, Geoff Eley, and Atina Grossman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2009), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds. *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947 – 1966*, trans. Gerard Finan (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1967), 127.

demonstrated a public awareness of the immoral nature of racism targeted toward Jews, even though West Germans widely accepted Jews as a different race. The decision to include the Japanese as a category in which to compare the German race is intriguing and deserves more attention in future studies of West German racial conceptions. For the purposes of this study, however, it is important to note that the poll did not reference Africans or blackness in relation to race. With rare mention of the word *Rasse* and no explicit acknowledgement of blackness and race, it is easy to see how racism toward individuals with colored skin could survive. It is always the unacknowledged sins that linger the longest.

While West Germans did not explicitly identify themselves as a race set apart and superior from black races, development discourse reveals how this type of distinction actually pervaded society. The Chancellor of the Federal Republic from 1949 – 1963, Konrad Adenauer, gave evidence of this when he argued that the only “sensible reason” for aiding the “Third World” was to keep communism at bay, because he said he did not “feel conscious of any moral guilt toward a colored person...I didn’t give him the color.”<sup>13</sup> Here Adenauer identified people in the “Third World” as “colored” and therefore different from himself. Then, instead of denying past wrongs (like damage from colonialism), he negated any form of moral guilt by claiming he did not give “Third World” peoples their color. In other words, if Adenauer *had* given these people their color, he might be persuaded to offer them aid out of a sense of moral guilt. Adenauer implied that colored skin is inferior to white skin, since he would feel guilty if he had given someone colored skin. Colored skin, therefore, not only separated a West German from an African, but also causally related Africans as inferior to West Germans.

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<sup>13</sup> Adenauer is quoted in William Glenn Gray, *Germany’s Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949 – 1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 120.



In the 1960s West German media, journalists ubiquitously used skin color as a descriptive tool to label peoples in Africa. Whether referring to the un-educated masses or elite diplomats, West Germans continually associated Africans with the color of their skin. Writers called diplomats “dark-skinned presidents” and “colored delegates.”<sup>14</sup> Authors described local attendees of the German travelling exhibition to central and East Africa as “black locals” and “dark guests.”<sup>15</sup> *Der Spiegel* titled a story about a number of African presidents visiting the capital of West Germany as “Black Week,” as opposed to “African Week” or even “Third-World Week.”<sup>16</sup> Another article referred to African patients at a West German clinic in Togo as “black patients” and named the “Negro people” of Zanzibar as the ones involved in bloody tribal feuds.<sup>17</sup> Not only did the media racialize African people, but it also blanketed the continent of Africa with racial language.

Again and again, journalists referred to Africa as the “Black Continent,” “Black Africa” or the “Dark Continent”. The racial aspect of the “Dark Continent” is evident when one understands the origins of the phrase. As Patrick Brantlinger explains, the Victorians invented the “myth of the Dark Continent.” The myth developed during the transition from the British slave trade to the imperialist portioning of Africa. With its imperialist origins, the term “Dark Continent” carries with it a racist theme. Brantlinger explains, “As a rationalization for the domination of ‘inferior’ peoples, imperialist discourse is inevitably racist; it treats class and race terminology as covertly interchangeable or at least analogous.”<sup>18</sup> By employing the term “Dark

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<sup>14</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Schwarze Woche,” *Der Spiegel*, May 17, 1961, 21.

<sup>15</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” 52, 57.

<sup>16</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Schwarze Woche,” 21.

<sup>17</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Mit der Gießkanne,” *Der Spiegel*, December 2, 1964, 48, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, “Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent,” *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 166, 181-182, 198.

Continent,” along with other color-modified phrases, West German writers employed heavily weighted and racialized terms.

In addition to racialized language, racist cartoons sometimes accompanied articles about



„Wo wohnen hier der reiche Massa Erhard?“

Simplissimus

**Figure 1: Africans Arriving in Bonn**

Cartoon from *Der Spiegel*, May 17, 1961.

development aid. These cartoons portrayed stereotypical, racist images of Africans. The cartoon shown below accompanied an article in *Der Spiegel* that described a week where 16 African delegates arrived in Bonn to discuss development aid. The cartoonist portrayed the African faces with protruding lips and

bulging eyes. In addition, the visitors

appear to have arrived in Bonn in chaotic fashion, on various “traditional” forms of transportation, even swimming. Interestingly, the cartoonist also utilized stereotypical images of the Middle East and northern Africa by drawing a snake charmer and men on camelback, even though all of the delegates actually came from sub-Saharan Africa. Clearly, the cartoonist’s depiction of these Africans reminds readers of Africans’ racial and civilizational inferiority. It is hardly a picture of respect or equality, especially with one man asleep in a trunk. The caption below the cartoon supports the racist interpretation, as it is reminiscent of racist American blackface minstrel shows. According to the caption, which refers to the Finance Minister Ludwig

Erhard, the African says to the West German, “Where here does the rich Massa Erhard live?”<sup>19</sup> “Massa,” not being a German word, obviously references the stereotypical American black slave pronunciation of the word “master.” With this word choice, the West Germans made a connection between Africans, blackness, and slavery.

Popular culture reinforced these types of racist portrayals through advertisement cartoons like that of the Sarotti company. Beginning in 1918, and continuing throughout the 1960s, the company used the Sarotti Moor image

seen below to advertise its chocolates. The bulging eyes and large lips of this African servant resemble some of the figures in the development aid cartoon discussed above.<sup>20</sup> Also, the Sarotti Moor plays on Middle Eastern stereotypes with the turban and dress. Blackness thus referred to a host of “outsider” characteristics. Finally, this portrayal of blackness in association



**Figure 2: The Sarotti Moor**

Image found in George Steinmetz and Julia Hell’s article, “The Visual Archive of Colonialism: Germany and Namibia.”

with servitude reinforces a hierarchy of race. With these cartoons, one begins to see how difficult it is to analyze race apart from other forms of hierarchy as the West Germans not only contrasted white West Germans with black Africans, but also the civilized nature of West Germans with the very primitive nature of Africans.

<sup>19</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Schwarze Woche,” 21.

<sup>20</sup> George Steinmetz and Julia Hell, “The Visual Archive of Colonialism: Germany and Namibia,” *Public Culture* 18, no.1 (2006): 155, Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, trans. Sorcha O’Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 195.

### *Modern West Germans and Traditional Africans*

According to the West German press, “Archaic social forms of extended family and tribe still characterize the African societies” and most of Africa remains in the “Stone Age.”<sup>21</sup> Statements like this contributed to a clear civilizational hierarchy, which pervaded West German development aid discourse. Journalists and scholars utilized a binary narrative, which portrayed Africans as traditional and West Germans as modern. This binary assumed modernity’s superiority to traditionalism; modernity equated to the preferred human condition. For West Germans, this concept of modernity encompassed industry, hard work, capitalism, consumerism, national wealth, education, and European cultural norms. According to the press, the Africans lacked all of these indicators of modernity, and thus needed West German aid to progress.

This civilizational hierarchy worked together with racial hierarchies in establishing difference in the minds of West German readers. In Nina Berman’s book, *Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa*, she argues, “No single factor, whether civilizationism, biological racism, or attitudes based in a Christian religious worldview, determines the ways in which Germans relate to and act in Africa.”<sup>22</sup> I agree with Berman’s assessment. In looking at development aid discourse, we see that writers did not employ racism alone, but instead combined it with a developmental hierarchy. These hierarchies reinforced one another and allowed West German readers to conceive of themselves as belonging to a white, modern community. In using the term modern, I hope to avoid the “constricting abstraction” of the concept, as esteemed African historian, Frederick Cooper, warns against. Instead, I use the

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<sup>21</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Mit der Gießkanne,” 49.

<sup>22</sup> Nina Berman, *Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military, and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 16.

term as an “indigenous category,” to understand how West Germans understood their own relationship to the past, present, and the future.<sup>23</sup>

To construct this developmental binary, the West German press often described Africans as natives coming from the bush or jungle. This evoked a sense of the wild, untamed nature of the “Black continent” and its peoples, which contrasted with the industrial state of West Germany. Many times reporters described West Germans travelling “to the bush” or meeting Africans “in the bush” to describe any location in Africa.<sup>24</sup> Even in a photograph showing a well-dressed African elite shaking hands with a West German official inside a structured building, a journalist included a caption stating that these two men met “*in den Busch*” (in the bush).<sup>25</sup> Another article described the people of Africa as “drumbeating natives” from the “black continent of jungle.”<sup>26</sup>

West German authors often used the word *Urwald*, which I have translated to mean “jungle,” in their discussions of Africa.<sup>27</sup> The word may also be translated as a “primeval forest,” denoting not only a wild landscape, but also one that is prehistoric, untouched by human development. The use of *Urwald* evoked a popular myth stemming back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. African historians John Parker and Richard Rathbone explain: “Primeval, impenetrable, monotonous, and above all, dark, ‘the jungle’ was seen to have bred the most extreme primitiveness. It was – and in many ways remains – the most persistent popular myth about the

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<sup>23</sup> Frederick Cooper, “Modernity,” in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 115, 113, 149.

<sup>24</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Mit der Gießkanne,” 58; “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” 52; “Afrika: Entwicklungshilfe: Sachsen im Busch,” *Der Spiegel*, November 18, 1964, 134.

<sup>25</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Mit der Gießkanne,” 58.

<sup>26</sup> Bernd Huffschild, “Werkstudium: Entwicklungshilfe: Praktische Arbeit in Übersee ergänzt die Vorlesungen,” *Die Zeit*, August 16, 1963.

<sup>27</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Schwarze Woche,” 21-22.

African landscape.”<sup>28</sup> In this trope, West Germans also grouped African people together with wild safari animals. For example, as *Bundestag* president Eugen Gerstenmaier greeted a number of African diplomats, a West German writer described Gerstenmaier as a “friend of man and animal in Africa.”<sup>29</sup> This *Urwald*-rhetoric would have resonated with West Germans in the 1960s, who eagerly tuned into Bernhard Grzimek’s TV shows and movies that portrayed the African landscape as a pristine wilderness needing to be preserved from the onslaught of human civilization.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to the African *Urwald*, development discourse emphasized West Germany’s modernity through its manufactured goods and services. The Federal Republic made offering West German goods to African states integral to its development aid policy.<sup>31</sup> For example, as part of the German Travelling Exhibition to Central and East Africa, West German aid workers passed out lighters, table lamps, knives, binoculars and SLR cameras all marked with “Made in Germany” tags.<sup>32</sup> On one hand, advertising West German goods highlighted the successes of a capitalist, consumer society and worked as a weapon against East German propaganda. On the other hand, West Germany used these goods to entice African states into becoming economic trading partners with the Federal Republic. Christiane Fritsche makes this point in her article about the exhibition. She states, “The clear message was: Products made in Germany should pave the way for industrialization, and Bonn would grab the developing countries under its

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<sup>28</sup> John Parker and Richard Rathbone, *African History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), under “The lie of the land: environment and history,” Kindle Edition.

<sup>29</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Schwarze Woche,” 22.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Lekan, “*Serengeti Shall Not Die*: Bernhard Grzimek, Wildlife Film, and the Making of a Tourist Landscape in East Africa,” *German History* 29, 2 (June 2011): 232-234.

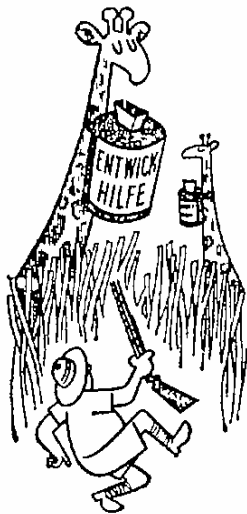
<sup>31</sup> Corinna R. Unger, “Modernization À La Mode: West German and American Development Plans for the Third World,” *GHI Bulletin* 40 (Spring 2007): 148.

<sup>32</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” 57.

arms.”<sup>33</sup> In other words, West Germany would gain economic partners as it promised African states aid along a path to industrialization.

Another example of development aid discourse highlights the superiority of West German products. In 1964, the West German government funded a 200 million Mark project to build “German style private homes” in Tanzania. The West German media boasted of offering Africans a change from their poor “negro mud huts.” The plan consisted of one-story homes each including: three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen with a refrigerator, bath, and toilet. According to the article, the “non-German standing toilets,” which the “natives” had demanded, caused the only problem in the building construction.<sup>34</sup> A reader could assume that a West German product would not have caused the same problems.

Cartoons also supported a developmental hierarchy with stereotypical tribal portrayals of



**Heia Safari!**

Africans. For example, several cartoons portraying Africans as black, tribal, and uncivilized accompanied a published interview about development aid with president of the *Bundestag*, Eugen Gerstenmaier. In addition to the “traditional” imagery of Africa and Africans, these cartoons give us a more nuanced understanding of development aid discourse. Published in *Der Spiegel*, a left-leaning magazine, the cartoons demonstrate that the media did not always fully support government spending in Africa.

The first image (Figure 3), although not portraying any African

**Figure 3: Heia Safari!**

Cartoon from *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 1960.

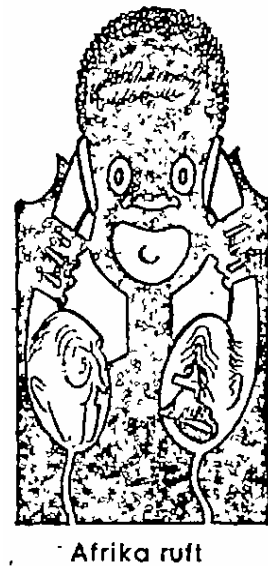
person, still demonstrates a developmental hierarchy.

The cartoon shows a safari scene with two giraffes

<sup>33</sup> Fritsche, “Skurrile Werbetour.”

<sup>34</sup> “Afrika: Entwicklungshilfe: Sachsen im Busch,” 134.

holding collection cans with the German word for development aid written on it. The cartoonist utilized the jungle myth as the scene is one of a jungle safari. Also, the caption reading “Heia Safari!” is significant. West Germans likely associated this phrase with the glorified lore of German colonialism. Incidentally, one West German would use the phrase “Heia Safari” later in the decade to title a film criticizing German colonialism. But in 1960, most West Germans thought only of the faithful German colonial troops or *Schutztruppe* in East Africa, also known as Askari, who used “Heia Safari!” as a rallying cry as they fought in World War I.<sup>35</sup> Under the leadership of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, these troops were undefeated at the end of the war and became central to the German colonial myth, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In the interview, which accompanied these cartoons, *Der Spiegel* suggested criticism of the amount of government spending on development aid through its questions. This cartoon, then, could be understood as mocking the Federal Republic for approaching aid with the same amount of eagerness and glory of the *Schutztruppe*. Yet in their boldness, the West Germans confronted rather smug animals (symbolizing Africans) asking for handouts. With this, we see that the media did not

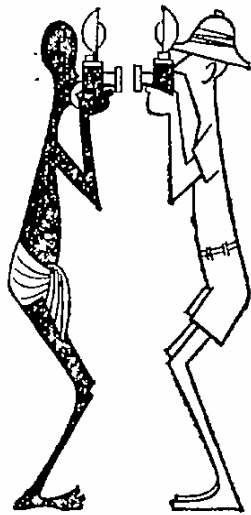


**Figure 4: Africa Calls**  
Cartoon from *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 1960.

always praise or endorse wholeheartedly the work of development aid. *Der Spiegel* worried about the great cost of development aid. The conversation of aid, therefore, allowed for critiques of the West German aid enterprise. However, no one critiqued the stereotypical images of Africans.

<sup>35</sup> Glenk, *Shattered Dreams at Kilimanjaro*, 236.





· Kulturelle  
· Annäherung

The next three images (Figures 4 – 6) depict the African people as black and “traditional.” The second image (Figure 4) shows an African with two telephone receivers. On each receiver, the cartoonist drew the faces of two West German officials, one presumably being the current Chancellor of West Germany, Konrad Adenauer. With the caption “Africa calls,” the cartoonist sent a message about Africa asking for aid from West Germany. While the artist drew the West German officials with more realistic features, the cartoonist portrayed the African as a caricature with dark skin, dramatically large eyes, a wide nose, and a capacious

mouth. The contrasting artistic styles reminded

### Figure 5: Cultural Approach

Cartoon from *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 1960.

readers of the vast differences between Africans and West Germans.

The cartoon in Figure 5 also draws readers’ attention to the differences between Africans and West Germans, both racial and developmental.

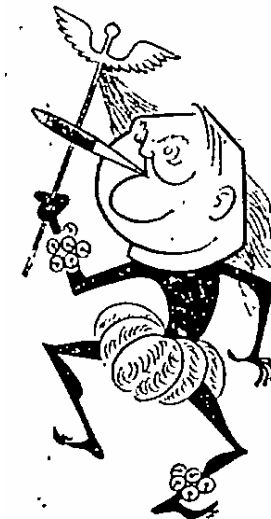
The drawing depicts the African’s blackness and little clothing in dramatic opposition to the West German’s whiteness and Western dress. Once again, the cartoonist exaggerated the African’s facial features, showing here enlarged lips. As the two face toward one

another in similar stances, the artist gave the

impression of Africans and West Germans equally

fascinated with one another’s foreignness. While this may offer some sense of equality between the two people, the caricature of the African reminded readers of the hierarchies that still existed.

Finally, the last image (Figure 6), titled “The Medicine Man” shows an African body with the



Der Mediziner

### Figure 5: The Medicine Man

Cartoon from *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 1960.

head of Ludwig Erhard, Minister of Economics under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. This cartoon reflects a statement that Gerstenmaier made about Erhard in the interview. Gerstenmaier said that in the *Urwald* (jungle), Erhard has a magical appeal because Africans think that West Germans have a special knack for becoming rich quickly.<sup>36</sup> So the cartoonist drew Gerstenmaier as an African medicine man, or magician. By emphasizing African beliefs in magic and spiritualism, the artist confirmed the narrative of a traditional African society. Also, the humorous combination of a West German official with an African body may have spurred readers to question the linkages between West Germany and Africa. Thus, once again, we see the possibility for criticizing West German aid. Yet, criticisms of hierarchical perceptions did not exist.

Aside from the discourse and cartoons, civilizational superiority embedded itself in West German identity as West Germans related to Africans as benefactors and scholarly experts. Organizations like the *Deutsche Afrika-Gesellschaft* (German Africa Society) and the *Afrika-Verein* (Africa Association) emerged in the late 1950s to research and solve the “complex problems” in Africa.<sup>37</sup> Scholars began publishing monographs about the geography and economy of various African states.<sup>38</sup> Acting as experts, West Germans could internalize narratives of superiority. Cultural historian Gail Bederman explains the phenomenon: “Daily practices which enforce a society’s power relations –its institutions, customs, political movements—determine what sort of knowledges will appear to be true.”<sup>39</sup> Out of West Germans’ scholarly expertise, it made sense to accept what one development aid worker

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<sup>36</sup> “Karitas für Afrika,” *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 1960, 36.

<sup>37</sup> Willy Fröhlich, “Vorwort,” in *Afrika im Wandel seiner Gesellschaftsformen: Vorträge einer Tagung der Deutschen Afrika-Gesellschaft (Bonn) im November 1962 in Köln*, ed. W. Fröhlich (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), vii.

<sup>38</sup> J.A. Hellen, “Deutsche Afrika Gesellschaft: Regional Monographs,” *The Geographical Journal* 133, no.1 (March 1967): 85-86.

<sup>39</sup> Gail Bederman, “Remaking Manhood through Race and ‘Civilization,’” in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), 24.

reported: “To consider, reason, logically think, try out – all of that is very difficult for an African.”<sup>40</sup>

In addition to lacking higher reasoning, West German development aid discourse also portrayed Africans as lacking the esteemed German work ethic. In an example of the new West German development aid scholarship, W. Schulz-Weidner wrote an article titled, “Work and Work Ethic in the original Black Africa,” with a section called, “The Verdict on the Lazy Negro.” In this segment, the author argued that laziness did not explain the African passive nature, but rather interfering foreign influences caused African passivity as a defense mechanism.<sup>41</sup> While the author combatted commonly held racist beliefs, his admittance to African passivity, and even the analysis of the African work ethic suggests a sense of West German superiority. His paper also offers evidence that the idea of the “lazy negro” permeated society. A letter from a West German development aid worker supports this notion by saying, “One can not simply say, that they [Africans] are lazy – as it is so often argued.”<sup>42</sup> Both Schulz-Weidner and the anonymous aid worker’s denial of African laziness demonstrate a movement beyond Nazi and colonial racism. However, their statements show that many others in West Germany continued to believe in narratives of the “lazy negro.”

West Germans did not invent the use of work attitudes as a tool for marking difference, but instead drew on rhetoric from Imperial Germany and the Third Reich. Colonial historian, Sebastian Conrad, discusses the prevalence of the “lazy negro” concept amongst colonial administrators and missionaries in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These Germans

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<sup>40</sup> Quotation comes from a letter that arrived at the “Institute for Development Aid” in Köln-Deutz that was then published in Heinz Stuckmann, “Sie glauben, alle Deutschen seien Millionäre: Entwicklungshelfer berichten von ihrer Arbeit in Asien und Afrika,” *Die Zeit*, December 8, 1961.

<sup>41</sup> W. Schulz-Weidner, “Arbeit und Arbeitsethos im ursprünglichen Schwarz-Afrika,” *Studium Generale* 15 (1962): 546.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Stuckmann, “Sie glauben, alle Deutschen seien Millionäre.”

understood teaching the African natives to work as integral to the empire's civilizing mission. In addition, Imperial Germans and Nazis utilized work-related rhetoric to justify ambitions in occupied Eastern Europe during World War I and World War II. According to Conrad, Germans of the 19<sup>th</sup> century believed "that the 'cultural condition of a people' could be measured in terms of its attitude to work." In other words, a people's work ethic signified its position in a civilizational hierarchy. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Germans justified their superior race and nation through rhetoric of "German work."<sup>43</sup>

Despite some seventy years separating Cold War West Germans from their imperial ancestors, a rhetorical legacy of "German work" remained. In 1961, Heinz-Dietrich Ortlieb, a West German economist, wrote a paper on development aid in Africa. In his summary, Ortlieb explained that Africans remained psychologically impaired and inclined to idle talk instead of having a "reasonable attitude towards physical labor."<sup>44</sup> In order for Africans to progress, in other words, Africans needed to learn to do real work. West German aid workers on the ground in Africa echoed some of these same thoughts. One worker wrote, "If an African can beat a nail in wood, then he already feels like a master and needs a boy who hands him a nail and hammer...many natives want to play the master and just boast, but not work anymore." Another worker argued that for development to begin, "The African must first adapt to regular work." These quotations, indicating African laziness, stood in opposition to the West German development aid workers who journalists described as having a "hard career" that "demands sacrifice."<sup>45</sup> Just like the imperial rhetoric that historian Sebastian Conrad analyzes, West

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<sup>43</sup> Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, trans. Sorcha O'Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 83-85, 346, 359.

<sup>44</sup> Heinz-Dietrich Ortlieb, "Entwicklungshilfe für Afrika: Bemerkungen zu den politischen und wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungsproblemen westafrikanischer Länder," *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik* 6 (1961), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Stuckmann, "Sie glauben, alle Deutschen seien Millionäre."

Germans in the 1960s used attitudes of work as a way of signifying difference between West Germans and inferior Africans. This rhetoric suggests that a legacy of imperialism lingered in the West German imagination.

### *The Good Colonizers*

The New York Times reported in 1960 that Bonn “decided to forego any special favors for former German colonies.”<sup>46</sup> While this may be true as an official policy, the West German press most certainly favored features on former colonies. While German marks may have been flowing to Ghana and the Congo, it was aid work in Togo and Tanzania that captured the media’s and therefore the public’s attention.

To understand the legacy of colonialism in West German society, it is important to remember the basic structure of German colonialism. From 1885 – 1919 Germany possessed four African colonies: German East Africa (today’s Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania), German Southwest Africa (today’s Namibia), Togo, and Cameroon. In addition to their African colonies, Germany also claimed rights to smaller colonies in East Asia and the Pacific including New Guinea, Samoa, a number of Pacific islands, and Kiaochow on the Shandong province in China. Although in many ways similar to other European colonizers, historians note Imperial Germany’s uniquely rigid racial segregation practices and relatively high level of violence in their colonies, even committing what some label the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> Germany’s contemporaries and rivals, Britain and France, emphasized Germany’s destructive

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<sup>46</sup> “Close Africa Ties a Key Bonn Policy: Diplomats and Business Men Work to Win Goodwill of New Independent States,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1960.

<sup>47</sup> Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, trans. Sorcha O’Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3-4.

colonial rule as they participated in the portioning out of Germany's African holdings at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.<sup>48</sup>

To counter these anti-German sentiments, a revisionist history emerged in Germany in the 1920s, which lauded Germany's colonial endeavors. Reading heroic tales and watching colonial-themed films solidified the myth of the "good colonizers" in the hearts of many Germans. According to this myth, the faithful obedience and admiration of Germany's African subjects proved the benevolence and kindness of Imperial Germany.<sup>49</sup> Even into the 1960s in West Germany, this colonial glorification largely remained in the press, despite West German officials claiming to be anti-imperialistic.<sup>50</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Suzanne Zantop argue in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* that from 1945 to 1980, the public's view of the colonial past remained much the same as before 1945: "as the legend of the hard-working Germans who built roads and railroads in Africa and taught the blacks their ABCS."<sup>51</sup> Groups like the *Deutsch-Südafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DSAG), formed in 1965 to "form close cultural and trade relations between West Germany and South Africa," helped sustain this myth throughout the 1960s. According to historian Susanna Schrafstetter, German colonialist ambitions still shaped the politically influential group's ideas. In addition, the group's newspaper, *Afrika-Post*, "painted what could best be described as a self-serving picture of Germany's colonial and national socialist past."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The United Kingdom's Historical Section of the Foreign Office, "German Treatment of Natives," in *German African Possessions (Late)*, vol. XVIII of *Peace Handbooks* (1920; repr., Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1973), 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, 188.

<sup>50</sup> William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 122.

<sup>51</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 24.

<sup>52</sup> Susanna Schrafstetter, "A Nazi Diplomat Turned Apologist for Apartheid: Gustav Sonnenhol, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and West German Foreign Policy towards South Africa," *German History* 28, no.1 (2010): 54.

In view of this, it is not surprising that development aid discourse often glorified Germany's colonial past. For example, in documenting the president of Togo's stately visit to Bonn in 1961 to discuss aid, a journalist wrote that Sylvanus Olympio will be very familiar with the "German character and German helpfulness" of his childhood. It goes on to say,

In Olympio's youth, Togo was a German colony. Pioneering farmers of the German Empire transformed the jungle-kraals of the generation before Olympio into clean villages. Now engineers and scientists should establish industry and comfort in Togo for the generation after Olympio. After a forty-five year disruption, Togo hopes once again for German start-up aid.<sup>53</sup>

Not only does this passage directly connect development aid with German colonialism, but also the rhetoric of cleanliness itself is reminiscent of the colonial era. German colonial historian, Sebastian Conrad, notes how the triumph of germ theory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century became linked to racism and colonization in discursively setting the boundaries between Germans and others.<sup>54</sup> In other words, 19<sup>th</sup> century Germans understood cleanliness as a way to control the contamination from the supposedly diseased, colonized races. Utilizing colonial-type rhetoric reminded West German readers of all the supposed good Germans previously enacted in Africa.

In particular, West German journalists often drew readers' attention to the former German colonial regions of Togo and East Africa. Germans regarded Togo as the "model colony" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, due to little military intervention. Germany also built the greatest number of its mission schools in Togo and maintained a balanced budget in the colony.<sup>55</sup> It is not surprising, then, that journalists often featured Togo in the press even in the

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<sup>53</sup> "Entwicklungshilfe: Schwarze Woche," 21.

<sup>54</sup> Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation*, 184 – 189.

<sup>55</sup> Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, 49.

1960s.<sup>56</sup> Dennis Laumann, a historian of West Africa, agrees that the “model colony thesis” of Togoland continued to be widely accepted in West Germany.<sup>57</sup>

The press also frequently featured former German East Africa, which gives further evidence to the persistence of a colonial myth in West German society. After World War I, Germans commemorated the undefeated East African troops (Askari) who fought under the command of legendary General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. These troops came to mind when Germans listened to the song or read Lettow-Vorbeck’s book, both with the title “Heia Safari!” For decades, the “loyal Askari” proved to Germans that Africans “had been so devoted to their stern yet beloved German masters that they were willing to die for them.”<sup>58</sup> Even after World War II, this myth held strong in West German society. Reactions to a 1966 TV documentary confirm this point. Ralph Giordano, a German Holocaust survivor, produced a documentary film entitled “Heia Safari!” aimed at “uncovering the ugly truth” behind German colonialism. While this demonstrates that some West Germans did critique the colonial myth, the reaction to the series is illuminating. Complaint letters quickly poured into the office of West German broadcasting, and the president of the *Bundestag*, Eugen Gerstenmaier, even tried to prevent the second half of the documentary from airing.<sup>59</sup> In 1966, criticizing German colonialism did not gain public favor.

In another example of the “good colonizer” myth, the West German government decided to continue pension payments to living Askari, which began in the Weimar era but had since been interrupted. *Der Spiegel’s* article about the German Travelling Exhibition throughout East

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<sup>56</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *Imperialist Imagination*, 11; Dennis Laumann, “A Historiography of German Togoland, or the Rise and Fall of a ‘Model Colony’,” *History in Africa* 30 (2003): 196.

<sup>57</sup> Laumann, “A Historiography of German Togoland,” 204.

<sup>58</sup> David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 320.

<sup>59</sup> Jason Verber, “The Conundrum of Colonialism in Postwar Germany” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2010), 147, 163-164.



Africa mentioned the payments to Askari. Through this we see that the press often linked development aid discourse with colonial narratives. In the article, the journalist records a former Askari's response to a question about how he would spend the pension: "With it I can buy myself a few women."<sup>60</sup> Here, while announcing West Germany's benevolence toward former colonial subjects, the author also justifies a civilizational hierarchy by choosing a quotation that calls attention to the exotic nature of African sexuality.

While the enduring colonial legend survived through praise of German skill and kindness, the myth also persisted due to a dearth of information and critical discussion of the destructive characteristics of German colonization. Even within West German scholarship, few academics pursued the topic of German colonialism. This was due in part to the fact that in the 1960s East Germany held exclusive control of the colonial archives. According to Horst Drechsler, an East German historian who originally published a book on the colonial atrocity in German Southwest Africa (the Herero-Namaqua genocide) in 1966, "West German historians ignore German colonial policy completely."<sup>61</sup> Drechsler's remarks demonstrate an argument put forth by historian Dennis Laumann: "The 'Cold War' between the capitalist and socialist nations was not only fought in the economic and military realms, but also in academia."<sup>62</sup> East German scholars utilized their colonial studies to launch attacks on West Germany and condemn the western state for being the sole heir to German imperialism. Even with this bias aside, though, East Germans like Drechsler measured fairly accurately the lack of critical accounts of colonialism emerging from West Germany. Because few challenged the powerful colonial myth, it continued to operate and justify hierarchies of race and modernity in West German society.

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<sup>60</sup> "Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria," 57.

<sup>61</sup> Horst Drechsler, "'Let Us Die Fighting': The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism, 1884 – 1915, trans. Bernd Zöllner (1966; repr., London: Zed Press, 1980), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Laumann, "A Historiography of German Togoland," 204.

In 1970 the journal *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* published a short compilation of new words in the German language. Under the subheading “Politics” the author listed the terms “*Dritte Welt*” (Third World) and “*Entwicklungshilfe*” (Development Aid).<sup>63</sup> In line with poststructuralist thought, I believe that language must be taken seriously in order to understand how people construct meaning and represent themselves in the world. Therefore, the words’ presence in the journal underlines their importance not only to the German language, but also to West German identity.

Through development aid, West Germany presented itself to the world as a “new” Germany.<sup>64</sup> Its sense of modernity in comparison to Africans helped West Germany align itself with the family of Western nation-states and prove it had moved far beyond its own need for aid. However, this “new” Germany was not all that new. Instead of a *Stunde Null* or zero hour, much continuity existed in West German perceptions of race and civilization. Even though *Rasse* practically disappeared from public discourse after 1945, racialized perceptions continued decades after the Nazi State. This sense of racial superiority transformed as West Germans established markers of difference not only in relation to Jewishness, but also now to blackness.

West Germans supported and affirmed this racialized hierarchy with a developmental hierarchy. A discursive binary presented Africans as traditional and tribal and West Germans as modern and civilized. To emphasize this distinction, authors conjured up images of a primordial Africa and recalled colonial tropes of the “lazy negro” in contrast to the hard-working Germans. The superior West German civilization shined through the pages of magazines and newspapers that recounted quality West German goods and products being distributed to Africans. Even

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<sup>63</sup> Heinz Vater, “Some New Words in the German Language,” *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* 3, no.2 (Autumn 1970): 10.

<sup>64</sup> Schmidt, “Pushed to the Front,” 487.

more, West German individuals embodied these social hierarchies as they acted as experts on the growth and success of Africa and its peoples.

West Germans also encouraged these binary perceptions through an enduring belief in a colonial myth, which continued to laud the colonial past. Authors mentioned previous accomplishments of education, cleanliness, and order in Africa, while evading discussion of forced subjugation and genocide. As West Germans continued to identify with the “good colonizers” of the past, they also latently supported the hierarchies of race and civilization that older Germans had expressed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It is clear then, that development aid discourse largely reinforced West Germans’ sense of belonging to a white and developmentally superior community. And yet, by expressing these forms of social superiority in a theater of aid, the harsh realities of hierarchy faded to the background behind charming notions of goodwill. Not only did West Germany want to present itself as a benevolent patron to the world, but this development rhetoric also could have served as an antidote for a society questioning its own humanity.<sup>65</sup> Although this dominant narrative of racial and civilizational superiority filled the media, not everyone in the Federal Republic was content to rest in a discourse and type of aid work that resembled an imperial past. The younger generation, coming to age in the 1960s, illustrates the way narratives of dominance are never fixed, but are difficult to move past completely. The next chapter will explore how the students of the Federal Republic complicated the discourse of aid to Africa.

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<sup>65</sup> See Michael Barnett’s theory on the human motivation for humanitarian work. He argues that the international community rallies around humanitarianism whenever its own humanity is most suspect. Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 15.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE RESTLESS CAMPUS

“Youth is always critical, youth is always revolutionary...The main difference is that these young people have more courage and also more impudence than we did. They have the courage to tell us what they think to our faces.”  
 –Eugen Horselberg, a Heidelberg teacher in the 1960s<sup>1</sup>

A palpable restlessness existed on West German university campuses in the 1960s. Students desired to move beyond books and into action, and many concerned themselves with issues beyond the Federal Republic.<sup>2</sup> While the West German government attempted to aid Africa through development aid projects, the students of the New Left sought to aid Africans through their ventures of solidarity and protests against imperialism, racism, and a bi-polar world. In addition, while the government’s aid work in Africa acted as a tool to support the state’s political goals, the students’ aid work often acted as a weapon against the state. These students not only openly contested state policy, but also tacitly challenged the hierarchical perceptions of race and modernity that dominated the press’ coverage of development aid.

In addition to the political activity of the radical students, the restlessness also characterized others’ global activity. Some faculty participated in the formation of the Federal Republic’s development aid policy, and some students travelled to Africa to participate in development aid projects. In these ways, West German universities buttressed government aims. And through their support, they encouraged the narratives of civilizational and racial superiority to continue in the mainstream press. But even the students participating in government funded aid programs challenged societal hierarchy, if to a lesser degree than their more radical peers.

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Neven-du Mont, *After Hitler: A Report on Today’s West Germans*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 299.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Görlich, *Die 68er in Berlin: Schauplätze und Ereignisse* (Berlin: Kai Homilius Verlag, 2002), 38.

People often remember the university campus of the 1960s as a site of protest and upheaval. For the Federal Republic, like so many other countries, this was most certainly true. By the mid-1960s the United States' press began reporting that, "West Germany's university students, traditionally uninterested in politics, are beginning to show signs of political activism."<sup>3</sup> This generation, coming to age in the 1960s, demonstrated a marked difference from their parents. Upon arriving at college or university, these students engaged in more political activity than previous generations. Students of the New Left movement, or the so-called 68ers, challenged many shared societal assumptions.<sup>4</sup> Their politics addressed university and societal reform, along with global political issues.

With protests posters and leaflets in mind, though, many forget that other types of students as well as faculty also felt a sense of *Weltoffenheit*, or openness to the world.<sup>5</sup> German historian Quinn Slobodian, in his book *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany*, argues that "Through concrete collaboration, activism, and engagement with political theories, the New Left brought the Third World close."<sup>6</sup> This chapter will take a step beyond Slobodian to argue that many people engaged with the "Third World" (in this case Africa) on West German university campuses, even those not connected with the New Left movement.

With diverse aims and ways of engaging with Africa, the universities and students of the 1960s offer a complex and rich case study of West German perceptions of race and modernity. This chapter, like the previous one, will demonstrate that aiding Africa in the 1960s gave West Germans an opportunity to promote, shape, and contest their own social hierarchies. To

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Shabecoff, "German Students Turning to Politics," *New York Times*, August 7, 1966, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Belinda Davis, "A Whole World Opening Up: Transcultural Contact, Difference, and the Politicization of 'New left' Activists," in *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s*, eds. Belinda Davis et. al (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 255.

<sup>5</sup> Davis, "A Whole World Opening Up," 255.

<sup>6</sup> Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 5.

understand how this worked on the university campus, I will first explore the ways West Germans encountered Africa in their universities, which will help to explain some of the impetus for student action. Then I will discuss students' participation in development aid projects and how this shaped their perceptions of what it meant to be a West German. The second half of the chapter will look at the students of the New Left, who were most vocal in countering mainstream views about Africa and their own country. Through these actions, students challenged, to varying degrees, traditional binaries and narratives of West German superiority.

### *Encountering Africa in West Germany*

In the 1960s, West German students and faculty did not have to travel to Africa in order to encounter the continent. Many students likely first encountered Africa through their academic studies. Of course, African studies did not begin in the 1960s. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Germans began studying Africa at the university level to assist colonial endeavors. Like other European powers, engaging in commerce and warfare in “new” regions of the world suddenly made it “important to study the rest of the world as well.”<sup>7</sup> Universities offered classes in African languages, anthropology, tropical agriculture, and administrative training for senior colonial staff.<sup>8</sup> The curriculum did not include classes in African history, political science, sociology and literature. Germans at this time thought of these as “modern” subjects that did not belong to such “primitive” peoples.

Even after Germany lost its colonies, academics continued to research and teach about Africa along similar lines throughout the Weimar era and even during the World Wars. In a 1967

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<sup>7</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Franz Ansprenger, “African Studies in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no.3 (Nov. 1967): 401-403.

report on African studies, West German political scientist Franz Ansprenger wrote during a one-year assignment at the University College, Dar es Salaam:

In general it must be acknowledged that African studies in Germany, until about 1950, remained somehow fixed to the year 1914. Programmes were continued, and lines of research followed, which had once been relevant to an enlightened colonial policy in German Africa.<sup>9</sup>

As Ansprenger explained, African studies in West Germany remained relatively the same for some four decades. In calling Germany's colonial policy "enlightened," Ansprenger evoked the colonial myth discussed in Chapter One and seems to be an apologist for colonialism.

Ansprenger felt that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Germany excelled at training colonial officials in African languages and agriculture. He praised colonial officials like Hermann von Wissmann for being both a scholar and empire-builder. Incidentally, students of the New Left tried to dismantle a statue of Wissmann in the same year of Ansprenger's reports. With all of this praise, though, Ansprenger bemoaned the fact that African studies had remained fixed in time for decades.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1950s, though, African studies began to change and took on different forms in the two Germanies. Holding claim to the files of the Imperial Colonial office, East Germany conducted several critical studies of German colonialism. These included works like Horst Drechsler's, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft. Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus, 1884-1915* in which the author condemned Imperial Germany for genocide against the Herero and Nama people of what is now Namibia.<sup>11</sup> East Germany used works like Drechsler's as Cold War weapons to connect Imperial Germany with

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<sup>9</sup> Ansprenger, "African Studies," 402.

<sup>10</sup> Ansprenger, "African Studies," 401-402.

<sup>11</sup> Horst Drechsler, "'Let Us Die Fighting': The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism, 1884 – 1915, trans. Bernd Zöllner (1966; repr., London: Zed Press, 1980), 7.

the capitalist Federal Republic. East Germany viewed West Germany as the inheritor of German imperialism, and found its African studies lacking “all criticism of German colonialism.”<sup>12</sup>

In West Germany, intellectuals interested in Africa preferred to focus on contemporary development issues rather than colonialism. If doing colonial studies, West German historians primarily researched the imperial state write large, concentrating on Germany’s domestic policies rather than colonialism’s effects in Africa. For those concerned foremost with Africa, though, new types of studies began to emerge in the 1950s and 1960s. These new African studies’ subjects included African history, political science, and economics. The interdisciplinary journal *Afrika Spectrum*, which the German Institute for Africa Research in Hamburg established in 1966, is an example of this new type of work. The first issue, intended to show the “many problems” of the two newly independent countries of Botswana and Lesotho, published articles on the two states’ histories, economics, geographies and politics.<sup>13</sup> These subjects undoubtedly acknowledged more African agency than the traditional, colonial studies. By admitting to the existence of an African history at all, scholars certainly softened the binary between the “civilized” and “uncivilized” or “modern” and “traditional” worlds. However, researchers predominantly pursued these subjects in order to advise state development policy, which rested on a developmental binary.<sup>14</sup> In addition, these new subjects resulted in few actual classes available to students. Despite “quite a few students asking for more and better university courses on Africa” according to Professor Ansprenger, West German universities in the 1960s offered limited courses focusing specifically on Africa and its history, politics, and economics.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Drechsler, “Let Us Die Fighting,” 8.

<sup>13</sup> “Neue Staaten Afrikas: Botswana und Lesotho,” *Afrika Spectrum* 1 (1966): 7-60.

<sup>14</sup> Ansprenger, “African Studies,” 402.

<sup>15</sup> Ansprenger, “African Studies,” 404, Taylor Cole, “African Studies and Training in West Germany,” *African Studies Bulletin* 6, no.1 (Mar. 1963), 17.



Despite newer African-specific courses being limited, West German students nonetheless encountered Africa through lectures and discussions about contemporary problems in the “Third World.” In an article about West German students travelling overseas to participate in aid work, Bernd Huffschnid from *Die Zeit* described the students wanting to learn first-hand about the problems, which they had heard so much about in the lecture halls of universities.<sup>16</sup> Journals circulating through West Germany, including the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* (International Review of Education), advocated education that addressed contemporary global and humanitarian problems.<sup>17</sup> Some university students likely encountered this kind of teaching even before college as historian Belinda Davis acknowledges: “As early as the first half of the 1960s, many teachers introduced pupils to contemporary world politics, from circumstances in Algeria to Vietnam to Chile.” She continues, “But well into the 1960s schoolchildren were equally likely to sit in the classroom of an ‘old Nazi,’ or even just an older, conservative, authoritarian instructor who taught quite different lessons.”<sup>18</sup> Even if it was not until university level, though, it seems likely that most college students encountered the so-called “problems” in Africa at least to some degree. Thus, it makes sense that many felt the urge to participate in some sort of aid work, whether through development aid or protests.

In addition to their studies, some West German students engaged with Africa through personal interactions with visiting African students. Beginning in the 1950s and continuing throughout the 1960s, the government offered scholarships to students from various African countries to study in the Federal Republic as a form of development aid. International historian Bernhard Blumenau explains the government’s motivations:

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<sup>16</sup> Bernd Huffschnid, “Werkstudium: Entwicklungshilfe: Praktische Arbeit in Übersee ergänzt die Vorlesungen,” *Die Zeit*, August 16, 1963, 1.

<sup>17</sup> William E. Stevenson, “Heranbildung einer neuen Generation zum Internationalen Dienst,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* 6, no.1 (1960): 49.

<sup>18</sup> Davis, “A Whole World Opening Up,” 260.

By granting scholarships to African students and allowing them to study in West Germany, the Federal Republic wanted to improve its reputation in these countries. Moreover, it was assumed that the students would feel a great deal of gratitude towards the West Germans for this generous offer. They would hence have a pro-West-German impact on the African societies later on – assuming that these students would occupy important positions in the countries' administrations due to their levels of West German-sponsored education.<sup>19</sup>

Education journals also promoted international student exchange programs as a “means of obtaining deeper insight into world problems.”<sup>20</sup> Of course, it seems that far more African students arrived in the Federal Republic, than West German students travelled to African universities. According to Karl Fritz Heise, an author who sought for the integration of foreign students in West German schools, there seemed to be an “invasion of students from African and Asia” in West German colleges in the mid 1950s.<sup>21</sup> One report showed that the number of foreign students in West German institutions had grown to over 24,000 students by 1962, though a fairly small number of students actually came from Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa. In 1962, the largest number of students in the Federal Republic from any one sub-Saharan African country was only 133 students from Nigeria.<sup>22</sup>

While the government invited African students to study in the Federal Republic, and many West German students created bonds with the visiting students, not everyone in West Germany welcomed the foreign guests. Gertrud Ferhnhäuser, a student at the University of Heidelberg, met several African students while studying in Heidelberg. In discussion of the African students, Ferhnhäuser observed that there was still “a great deal of prejudice among the Germans, not so much the students as the townspeople.” She went on to describe how Africans

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<sup>19</sup> Bernhard Blumenau, “The Map of Africa Lies in Germany: The Two Germanys and their Struggle for Recognition in Africa,” *Working Papers in International History* 10 (November 2011): 21.

<sup>20</sup> Stevenson, “Heranbildung,” 49.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Fritz Heise, “Politische Aktivitäten ausländischer Studenten innerhalb und außerhalb der Hochschule (originally published in 1962),” in *30 Jahre Reintegrationsdiskussion an den deutschen Hochschulen*, ed. Afrikanisch-Asiatische Studentenförderung (Göttingen: IKO, 1998), 146.

<sup>22</sup> Cole, “African Studies and Training,” 17.

struggled to find housing, and would often have to pay more for a room than a West German would.

This type of discrimination did not apply to all peoples with colored skin. Ferhnhäuser acknowledged that West Germans treated “American Negroes” differently than Africans. She illustrated this particular attitude toward Africans with an example of a chemistry student from Nigeria:

A Negro chemistry student from Nigeria told me recently, for example, that the professors and students all smiled pityingly at first when they saw him working in the lab. They asked him if he was able to keep up and whether they could help him. Actually he had studied chemistry in Nigeria and when the German students saw that he knew just as much as they did –well, then they got really sore. What made them angry was that a foreigner should be able to do just as well if not better than they. Since then they’ve avoided him and have tried to make things hard for him in one way or another.<sup>23</sup>

This example highlights themes noted in Chapter One. In relation to Africans, West Germans connected a sense of racial difference with a feeling of civilizational superiority. This explains why West Germans treated African students differently than African Americans, who they perceived as more modern than Africans. In addition, the example of the Nigerian student brings up the myth of the “lazy African” discussed in Chapter One. Another report on African students in West Germany from 1963 noted, “There has been a growing determination in some German quarters to reduce the number of university students from Africa because “many African students in Germany are unprepared for German university work.”<sup>24</sup> These two examples demonstrate that many West Germans felt that their academic rigor and student work ethic surpassed the level of African ability. Many West Germans viewed African students as civilizationally inferior.

In addition to concerns about African students’ work ethic, the political activity of many African students while in West Germany bothered the Federal Republic. Several articles about

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Neven-du Mont, *After Hitler*, 83.

<sup>24</sup> Cole, “African Studies and Training,” 20.

student protests mention the presence of Africans, and historian Quinn Slobodian even argues in his book *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* that “Third World” that students actually initiated many of the 68ers’ campaigns.<sup>25</sup> Belinda Davis explains that many students came to West Germany introducing political concerns and prompting protests about their home countries, which were often West German allies.<sup>26</sup> This of course put the politically active African students at odds with the West German government. In response to politically active foreign students, the government passed a new Foreigner Law in 1965, which limited the political activity of any foreigner in the Federal Republic.<sup>27</sup> For the students of the New Left, interactions with these students motivated them all the more to activism in Africa. Witnessing the societal prejudice and government opposition toward African students compelled some West German students to stand in solidarity with their African peers.

Whether through classroom discussions or interaction with peers, many students encountered Africa (or at least the idea of Africa) without leaving their West German campuses. And for some, these encounters motivated students to aid Africa. Despite not hearing many critical perspectives of German colonialism or current development work in the classroom, interactions with African students inspired some students to take a stand against imperialism and neo-colonialism through protests and solidarity campaigns. This would be their aid work and way of solving the many problems in the “Third World.” But for other students, perhaps influenced by their professors involved with development policy, participating in development projects was the best way they knew how to aid Africa.

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<sup>25</sup> “Africa Addio: Starker Spürsinn,” *Der Spiegel*, August 15, 1966; “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, December 19, 1964; Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Davis, “A Whole World Opening Up,” 265.

<sup>27</sup> Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 41.

### *Going to Africa*

Politically active students of the 1960s usually receive the most historical attention for engaging in international issues, but another group of students also engaged with global issues. Instead of taking to the streets of West Berlin or Hamburg, these students traveled to the likes of Dar es Salaam and Khartoum to participate in aid projects funded both federally and privately. By participating in federally funded development projects, these students aided government foreign policy aims. The students funded by West German companies also helped to advance West German capitalism. Through participation, the students also gave content to more development aid discourse, in which the press articulated a form of West German superiority. These students did not decry the signs of what the Ghanaian president, Kwame Nkrumah called “neo-colonialism.” By that he meant the continued Western domination of Africa through aid work and corporations that benefitted the West more than Africa and thus hindered Africa’s true development.<sup>28</sup> While the students did not conduct out-right protests like some of their peers, though, their actions indicate that they would not have approved of some of the forms of hierarchy hidden within the development discourse. To see this, we’ll look at two small case studies from the student volunteers of the German Travelling Exhibition and a work-study program.

Students from the Free University of Berlin primarily made up the workers of the six-month German Travelling Exhibition to Central and East Africa that was discussed in Chapter One. After just a week of training, the federally funded endeavor sent students overseas to be truck drivers and exhibition presenters. While we do not know much about these students, the press reported that they became unhappy with Werner Lott, the leader of the enterprise.

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<sup>28</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965; repr., London: Panaf, 2004), ix.

Lott, a former Nazi U-boat commander turned Christian youth leader, embodied what students perceived as the hierarchical order of the “old” Germany. First, he mandated that the volunteer crew attend morning roll calls at the flagpole as well as participate in shared prayer time before meals. In addition to the militaristic style of handling the crew, Lott’s physical operation of the exhibition resembled pre-1945 German military operations. At each locale, Lott circled the convoy around a military-like command post and raised a flag, enacting a play of power and possession. Then Lott introduced the group by playing Prussian military marches over loud speakers. Lott’s musical choice was not only anachronistic, but also strangely bold in a postwar German state. German historian Gavriel Rosenfeld explains the context:

During the first three decades of the postwar era, Prussia was largely banished from public discourse. The Allies’ formal dissolution of the state in 1947 as a bastion of militarism made explicitly clear what many inside and outside of Germany had long believed – Prussia had contributed directly to the rise of Nazism.<sup>29</sup>

At the moment when one would expect an ex-Nazi to hide militaristic symbols, Lott chose to play a song entitled “Prussia’s Glory.” Lott likely attached national pride to this music, and hoped to impress the Africans with this highly “civilized” musical form. With its steady rhythm, the march connoted a sense of order in opposition to the loose rhythms of “traditional” African music. With all of these mechanisms, Lott presented a picture of West Germany highly rooted in a pre-1945, even pre-1918 past.<sup>30</sup>

The students, however, opposed this image of West Germany. *Der Spiegel* reported that the students of the Free University resented the demands for morning roll call at the flagpole and shared prayers before mealtimes. This led to a fight between Lott and his crew.<sup>31</sup> These students

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<sup>29</sup> Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, “A Mastered Past? Prussia in Postwar German Memory,” *German History* 22, no.4 (Nov. 2004): 507.

<sup>30</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” *Der Spiegel*, September 9, 1964, 52, 57.

<sup>31</sup> “Entwicklungshilfe: Afrika: Preußens Gloria,” *Der Spiegel*, September 9, 1964, 57.

may not have seen a problem with the government's aid work, nor felt qualms over narratives of West German racial and developmental superiority, but there is a sense that these students longed to identify with a *new* state, one free from its militaristic and hierarchical past. However, just by participating in this government aid project, the students took part in a project based on a hierarchical view of the world.

The next example of student development aid work is a three-month work and residence study program in developing countries that began in 1960. A West German construction firm initially suggested the idea, and the West German section of the International Student Federation helped organize the whole project. Although partially self-funded, West Germans companies operating in the local countries did pay students for their work and the federal government offered students grants to cover the rest of the cost. In 1960, twelve students took part in the program and traveled to Sudan. The program must have been popular, as it increased to 83 participants in 1961. The students came from various universities and colleges across the Federal Republic with diverse majors, although engineering students made up most of the participants. After working for six weeks, the students attended local universities for two to three weeks and interacted on a peer level with African students. At the local universities, African students led discussions with West German participants on their own perspectives of the problems within their countries. While studying together, the West German and African students reportedly developed "genuine friendships." In addition to their peers, the West German students made connections with African locals through residing with local families throughout the program.<sup>32</sup>

With these personal peer-level connections, the students most likely did not voice the same type of hubris that the press often did when discussing aid work. However, the students'

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<sup>32</sup> Huffs Schmid, "Werkstudium: Entwicklungshilfe," 1- 2.

participation in a development aid project gave the press more content in which to boast of West Germany's modernity in contrast to primitive Africa. Covering this particular work-study program, the author wrote, "A generation ago Africa was the black continent of jungle, deserts, and the drumbeating natives."<sup>33</sup> Even though the students experienced a sense of equality with other educated Africans, the West German press continued to employ rhetoric that utilized a civilizational binary. And while the students may have shared their experiences with their friends and family back in the Federal Republic, the press carried its discourse of superiority throughout the general public through the channels of print media.

It is difficult to know exactly how the students who participated in development aid work felt about Africa and their own identity because they did not publish papers and essays about their work. While these students were likely not the most politically radical at their universities, a few things should be noted. The students involved in the travelling exhibition mostly came from the Free University in Berlin, which scholars often refer to as the "heart" of the student movement. And the press labeled the students involved in the work-study program as "avant-garde."<sup>34</sup> Because of these characteristics, we could infer that these students might have leaned to the left politically. If nothing else, these students desired adventure and wanted to play a part in West Germany doing what they no doubt saw as good in the world.

But did these students just act in a perpetual narrative of West German and Western superiority? Through their work, they did provide more content to the mainstream press, which eagerly utilized hierarchical rhetoric when discussing West German aid to Africa. The aid work itself also symbolized a hierarchical view of the world, and by participating in it, the students helped propagate Eurocentric theories of modernization. Even with all of that said, though, these

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<sup>33</sup> Huffs Schmid, "Werkstudium: Entwicklungshilfe," 1.

<sup>34</sup> Huffs Schmid, "Werkstudium: Entwicklungshilfe," 1.



students made efforts to contest hierarchy. Whether through challenging regimented, military-style leadership or through building “genuine friendships” with African students, West German students made an effort (even if at a small level) to overcome social hierarchies within West Germany.

***“Mut zur Politik” (Courage for Politics)***

Some students, though, did not make their contests a quiet affair. Like so many other countries in the 1960s, West Germany experienced a number of youthful protests throughout the decade that sometimes erupted into violence. These are the students who have captivated many peoples’ and scholars’ memories of the 1960s. Martin Klimke, historian of the 1960s student movements in West Germany and the U.S., describes the way these students are often remembered: “Long hair, beards, colorful and exotic clothes, casual behavior, and a hedonistic search for pleasure and ostentatious informality became distinctive marks of a rebelling youth across the world.”<sup>35</sup> But these students had higher ambitions than simple hair and wardrobe style changes.

The highly politicized students opposed a myriad of global injustices along with their own state’s present social realities. Through their protests concerning Africa, we are able to see how students challenged hierarchies at work within West Germany. First, the students attacked racial superiority. This included denouncing foreign issues of race like South Africa’s apartheid regime and racial violence in the Congo even in the early 1960s.<sup>36</sup> But it also meant disapproving of racist attitudes *within* West Germany that the students perceived in films and press coverage

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<sup>35</sup> Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>36</sup> Roland Rall, “Keine Hallsteindoktrin für Studenten: Der Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften tagte in München,” *Konkret*, May 1962, 9, Michael Luft, “Kongo-Gruel,” *Konkret*, December 1964, 20-21.

of Africa. In addition to protesting racism, students combatted a host of connected issues tied to West German (and European) perceptions of civilizational superiority. Students wanted to advertise that “old Europe is not at the center of the world” anymore.<sup>37</sup> To challenge civilizational superiority, West German students protested imperialism, neo-colonialism and the West German idea of modernity.

Combatting imperialism meant not only advocating for initial African independence, but also fighting against any remnants of imperialism. Students supported African nationalist movements and criticized the ongoing wars of decolonization in places like Angola and Algeria.<sup>38</sup> In regard to independent African states, West German students argued for their continued freedom from foreign influence and control. This included calling out the Federal Republic’s own hand in Africa, even its aid work. For example, the leftist student magazine *Konkret* satirically described African aid recipients as children of the West German finance minister, Ludwig Erhard. The *Konkret* reporter, Jürgen Holtkamp, described the Africans as waiting at the Bonn manger with “sweet chubby cheeks” to fill their “little hands” with “a loan, a dam, a hospital, again a loan.”<sup>39</sup> This paternalistic language poked fun at aid and its discourse in the press, which presented African states as eager children awaiting the gifts of their Western fathers.

In addition to contemporary events, students called attention to West Germany’s own imperial past and condemned its glorified memory with acts like tearing down the statue of a German colonial hero, Hermann von Wissmann in 1967.<sup>40</sup> Wissmann, an explorer and colonial

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<sup>37</sup> Jürgen Holtkamp, “Neger-Märchen,” *Konkret*, January 1962, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Rall, “Keine Hallsteindoktrin,” 9.

<sup>39</sup> Holtkamp, “Neger-Märchen,” 3.

<sup>40</sup> Jason Verber, “Building Up and Tearing Down the Myth of German Colonialism: Colonial *Denkmale* and *Mahnmale* after 1945,” in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*, ed. Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 354-355.

officer in Africa, suppressed early revolts in East Africa, which allowed for the establishment of the German East Africa colony. After his death in 1905, legends about Wissmann's great intellect and friendliness toward Africans emerged in Germany and became part of the colonial myth discussed in Chapter One.<sup>41</sup> The Wissmann statue stood in the front of Hamburg University, which was originally an institution dedicated to training colonial officers. As students dismantled the statue in 1967, they made an obvious statement of anti-imperialism. Even though the Federal Republic condemned outright imperialism, the students uncovered the more subtle ways the colonial relationship lingered among West Germany, its allies, and Africa.

The New Left also confronted civilizational superiority through an attack on the West German conception of modernity, particularly its attachment to the capitalist system. Herbert Marcuse, an influential philosopher of the New Left and part of the Frankfurt School, wrote in 1966 about the "disgust of the lifestyle of the 'affluent society'" at work in West Germany.<sup>42</sup> This affluence, a product of capitalism, troubled the students due to its global injustice. Wolff-Dietrich Webler, a German sociologist and historian, explains that the Frankfurt School of sociologists influenced these students to the extent that they became conversant with Marxism and "concepts such as exploitation, repression, manipulation and liberation were understood and accepted."<sup>43</sup> Thus, while the West German government boasted of its modernity and advocated African development along capitalist lines, the students criticized this "one track" perspective and found the promised end result of an affluent, capitalist society wanting. The dominant

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<sup>41</sup> Jokinen, "Colonial Monuments and Participative Art - Cultures of Remembrance, Myths, Anti-theses, Inversions," *afrika-hamburg.de*, <http://www.afrika-hamburg.de/english.html> (accessed May 14, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Herbert Marcuse, "Vietnam – Analyse eines Exempels," *Neue Kritik* 7, no.36-37 (July-August 1966): 30-40, repr. in *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung. Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995*, ed. Wolfgang Kraushaar (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 1998), 205-209, trans. Allison Brown in *German History in Documents and Images*, [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=890](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=890) (accessed February 26, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Wolff-Dietrich Webler, "The Sixties and the Seventies: Aspects of Student Activism in West Germany," *Higher Education* 9, no.2 (March 1980): 158.

narrative of modernity in West Germany assumed a binary view of the world. It required a belief in the superiority of the developed world in comparison to the undeveloped world, and the West superior to the East. The West German students wanted to blur these hard lines of separation by standing in solidarity with those in the undeveloped world and hoping to work closer with those in the East.<sup>44</sup>

We should be reminded, though, that foreign students also participated in the West German student movement. As we have already seen, a number of African students resided on West German campuses during the 1960s and became involved in leftist political movements. While African students may have been supremely concerned with issues in their home countries, their participation in protests within West Germany contributed to the shaping of West German attitudes toward race and modernity. Thus, not only did West Germans construct and deconstruct hierarchies within their society, but Africans also affected West German conceptions of race and modernity. To take a closer look at how the students of the New Left addressed racial and civilizational attitudes, I will present two separate cases of protests involving Africa: the events of the Congo Crisis and the film *Africa Addio*. Both cases will demonstrate how students attempted to deconstruct racism and developmental superiority through protests and writing.

To understand the West German student protests concerning the Congo, it is important to first understand the basic course of events of the crisis. The Democratic Republic of Congo won its independence from Belgium on June 30, 1960 and the country elected the young, brash Patrice Lumumba as the first Prime Minister. In the first few weeks of independence, the Congolese army mutinied in an initial desire for improved pay and also in protest of the

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<sup>44</sup> Rall, "Keine Hallsteindoktrin," 9.

remaining Belgium soldiers who continued to hold all officer positions.<sup>45</sup> In response, without the request of Congo, Belgium intervened militarily. Also within a month of the state's independence, the province of Katanga seceded under the leadership of Moïse Tshombé, who the Belgium government supported. Prime Minister Lumumba requested UN assistance to protect the sovereignty and unity of the state. Despite UN resolutions, though, the Congo continued to struggle to achieve real sovereignty, unity, and peace. Then in January of 1961, Katanga forces killed Lumumba. News of the killing quickly gained global attention, as many around the world perceived it as a scandalous and treacherous event. Many people suspected that the Federal Republic's close ally, the United States, secretly assisted the Katanga forces in killing Lumumba. The next tumultuous four years were filled with political struggles for power, increased violence, and increased foreign influence. Scholars often mark the end of the 1960s Congo Crisis when Mobutu came to power in 1965 through a coup backed by Western powers.

With so much drama unfolding, it is not surprising that issues in the Congo captured the attention of West German students. After Patrice Lumumba's shocking death, protests erupted around the world. In the student magazine *Konkret*, the front page of the February 1961 issue displayed a large headshot of Patrice Lumumba with the word *Mord*, meaning murder, written in large bold print.<sup>46</sup> The use of the word *Mord* is significant. According to historian Thomas P. Kaplan, *Mord* reappeared in leftist literature "more than any other concept."<sup>47</sup> Students applied this term liberally, often to condemn collective "murderous" practices of states and utilized it to

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<sup>45</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *Challenge of the Congo: A Case Study of Foreign Pressures in an Independent State* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 19.

*Challenge of the Congo*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Cover page of *Konkret*, February 1961.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, "Leaflet-Posters as Discursive Spaces of Trans-European and Transatlantic Student Protests During the 1960s," *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2012): 5, <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2012/Article=565> (accessed February 13, 2013).

make direct connections with Nazi war crimes.<sup>48</sup> By evoking the word in regard to Lumumba, the students claimed that more than just one man had been killed unjustly. The students used Lumumba's killing as a symbol of the collective neo-colonial atrocities enacted by Western states. Many Western states had seen Lumumba as a communist threat, including the Federal Republic. The President of the *Bundestag*, Eugen Gerstenmaier, said in an interview from 1960, "A Lumumba in power can ruin everything and open the door to Bolshevism," and that "the worst that could happen in Africa, would be the replacement of the old colonial system with the dictatorship of communism."<sup>49</sup> For the students, Lumumba was not a threat, but the rightfully elected leader of a sovereign country. His killing offered evidence of Western powers once again interfering with the sovereignty of African states. The students recognized the Western influence as colonialism, albeit in different form. Through their protests of Lumumba's death, the students attempted to stand up against Western superiority.

As the crisis continued, leftist students criticized not only "the West" in general, but the Federal Republic specifically for benefitting and prolonging the crisis. The struggle over the province of Katanga remained one of the major issues throughout the Congo Crisis. This is the province that seceded, under the leadership of Tshombe, just weeks after independence. Katanga was important because it was the richest province in the Congo and home to a wealthy Belgian mining company called the Union Minière. In 1964, *Konkret* reported that the Union Minière had American *and* West German shareholders and that shares had increased since the crisis began.<sup>50</sup> Thus, West Germans benefitted from continued foreign control in the Congo. In addition, Tshombe utilized mercenaries, some from West Germany, in the struggle. The students found the

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<sup>48</sup> Kaplan, "Leaflet-Posters," 5-6.

<sup>49</sup> "Karitas für Afrika," *Der Spiegel*, October 26, 1960, 33.

<sup>50</sup> Luft, "Kongo-Gruel," 20.

mercenaries to be troubling for a number of reasons, but especially focused on the fact that they were *white* mercenaries, killing *black* Africans.

Along with Western superiority or neo-colonialism, the Congo Crisis evoked racial issues that the West German students sought to contest. When discussing the foreign mercenaries used in the Congo, the students often labeled them with a color adjective to emphasize their white race. Unlike the mainstream press that used color adjectives to emphasize white superiority, the students utilized the color adjectives to condemn white superiority. By 1964, Moise Tshombe had become the Prime Minister of the Congo and visited Berlin in December of 1964 to discuss potential aid. Some 300 students protested his visit, holding placards with phrases such as, “No money for white mercenaries!”<sup>51</sup> These white mercenaries assisted Tshombe, whom the students labeled a “mass murderer.”<sup>52</sup> Not only did the mercenaries participate in racial violence, but also according to the leftist perspective, they personally adopted racist attitudes. *Konkret* quoted one mercenary from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) saying, “It is not difficult for me to shoot them. I am from Rhodesia and hate blacks automatically.”<sup>53</sup> With words like these, it is easy to understand the leftist students’ outrage.

In addition to issue of the mercenaries, the racial attitudes of the public greatly concerned the students. Despite the students’ protests of Tshombe, reports said that during his visit to Berlin “the vast majority of listeners sympathized with Tshombe.”<sup>54</sup> According to the article in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Tshombe’s argument that “his country would fall to communism if the West waited with its economic aid” primarily motivated the public’s sympathy.<sup>55</sup> This type of Cold War fear mongering likely did drive West German sympathy, but the students noticed that

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<sup>51</sup> “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, December 19, 1964.

<sup>52</sup> “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren.”

<sup>53</sup> Luft, “Kongo-Gruel,” 21.

<sup>54</sup> “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren.”

<sup>55</sup> “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren.”

racial allegiances did as well. In the fall of 1964 the rebels (in a struggle against Tshombe's forces) captured several hostages. Michael Luft, reporter for *Konkret*, argued that the mainstream press utilized racialized language to garner public sympathy for Tshombe:

But there is something wrong. Somehow the emphasis is always on the adjective *white* hostages, *white* women...Murdered and tortured were always in Congo, but now whites were threatened...Of the countless people tortured and murdered, those who Tshombe's mercenaries and police have on their conscience, little has been reported. So our public opinion has come to terms with the white mercenaries and Tshombe. And with the intervention of the Belgians.<sup>56</sup>

The leftists felt that West Germans had formed an alliance with Tshombe and the Belgians based on race. The *Konkret* article even quoted a correspondent from the mainstream West German magazine, *Stern*, saying, "Without whites it does not work."<sup>57</sup> Words like these gave evidence to the students that a strain of white identity and superiority ran throughout West German society. And only by acknowledging the racism, did students see a way to overcome this form of hierarchy. It should be noted that the student movement especially found fault with the mainstream press, which perpetuated these racist themes. The *Konkret* article cited above names *Spiegel*, *Stern*, *Zeit*, and *Bild-Zeitung* as guilty of persuading the public's opinion to side with the Belgians.<sup>58</sup>

Race continued to be an issue for students in subsequent protests concerning Africa, like the one against the movie *Africa Addio* (Goodbye Africa). In July of 1966, newspapers advertised the coming premiere of the movie by proclaiming that the "sensational" and "unique" film would show viewers "never before seen images of unimaginable reality."<sup>59</sup> An image of an African woman wearing large jewelry, a fur shawl and striking an evocative pose that exposed her long dark legs accompanied the marketing phrases. The advertisement dripped with exotic

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<sup>56</sup> Luft, "Kongo-Gruel," 20-21.

<sup>57</sup> Luft, "Kongo-Gruel," 21.

<sup>58</sup> Luft, "Kongo-Gruel," 21.

<sup>59</sup> Africa Addio advertisement in *Tagesspiegel*, July 31, 1966.



allure. Those familiar with one of *Africa Addio*'s Italian directors, Gualtiero Jacopetti, who previously produced the shocking "Mondo Cane," knew he was not shy of producing jarring imagery. The movie promised to stun audiences, but also give them an education in "reality."

The filmmakers argued that they intended to make a film showing the "new Africa that really exists today" as opposed to "the country of the dreams of our childhood, the Dark Continent of freedom and fantastic adventure." They claimed they had captured Africa just as it was "beginning to leave the cocoon of silence that had enclosed it for so long."<sup>60</sup> Between the advertisements and the filmmakers' own words, one can see the imperialist and racist tropes. Jacopetti and Prosperi described pre-independent Africa as a romanticized "dark" place that was stuck in a timeless "cocoon of silence." But now, a new Africa existed, a place no longer glorious, but only brutal, violent, and tragic.

Mainly filmed in the Congo in the early 1960s (during the crisis), the movie displayed one violent death scene after another. And despite its claim to being a documentary, and capturing "unimaginable reality," some West Germans suspected otherwise. One article claimed that filmmakers directed mercenaries when to shoot their guns so they could capture particularly horrifying moments (the killing of children) on camera. The directors also apparently moved dead bodies in order to capture the best lighting and encouraged soldiers to kick the faces of captured Africans in order to capture unforgettable images.<sup>61</sup> Because of the intense violence, England actually banned the film. However, the state-sponsored West German Film Rating Board praised the film for the way it "encounters the entity of the African human" and how it gave viewers insight into the "horrifying and ongoing problems of the African continent."<sup>62</sup> To

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<sup>60</sup> John Cohen, *Africa Addio: A Film by Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prospero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 15-16.

<sup>61</sup> "Film: Gesicht unterm Stiefel," *Der Spiegel*, April 14, 1965, 124.

<sup>62</sup> West German Film Rating Board is quoted in Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 137.

see the horror and promised “reality” for themselves, viewers arrived at the Astor Theater on *Kurfürstendamm* street in Berlin on August 2, 1966.

Not all who entered the Astor Theater that night, though, sought entertainment and education. While the West German Film Rating Board gave its approval, West Berlin students rose up in objection of the film’s racism, and exploitation of Africans. Fifty students from West-Berlin college, both West German and African students, piled into the Astor Theater on August 2<sup>nd</sup> to protest the film’s showing. One student actually tried to close the curtain in front of the screen in the middle of the movie as other students angrily yelled out “murder!” In a short time the students carried their protest onto the street, where the number of demonstrators surged to 800. The night of protest ended with 43 arrests and “a few bruises.”<sup>63</sup> In addition to making protest posters, several college groups wrote letters to the government officially stating their disapproval. The Socialist German Students’ League (SDS), for example, called the film a “disparagement of all people of black skin color.”<sup>64</sup>

Through their protests, the students confronted the issue of race in West Germany. First, they explicitly condemned what they saw as “racial hatred,” which they argued should be punishable under the German Basic Law.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the students utilized the word *Mord* (murder) just as students had done in protest of Lumumba’s death and various other campaigns. As was already discussed, the students used this word to refer not only to an individual killing, but also to collective practices of oppression.<sup>66</sup> The film’s depiction of Africans as murderous and unable to govern themselves moved students. But perhaps even more, the students demonstrated immediate concern about the West German showing, approval, and viewing of the

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<sup>63</sup> “Africa Addio: Starker Spürsinn,” *Der Spiegel*, August 15, 1966, 86.

<sup>64</sup> “Africa Addio: Starker Spürsinn,” 89.

<sup>65</sup> “Africa Addio: Starker Spürsinn,” 89.

<sup>66</sup> Kaplan, “Leaflet-Posters,” 5.

movie. The students saw legacies of racism still at work in West German society, and sought to eradicate it.

For those studying on West German campuses during the 1960s, Africa was not just a distant land. Whether through taking an African studies course, listening to a lecture on contemporary “Third World” problems, or befriending an African classmate, many students encountered some idea of Africa on West German soil. And for some of these students, the encounters led to action. Through these actions, and student discourse, we see that West German students engaged with more than just Africa. They also engaged with what it meant to be West German.

For some students, their concern for Africa led them to participate in development aid programs in Africa. Partially funded by the government, these students (whether knowingly or not) acted as arms of the Federal Republic’s Cold War endeavors. The mainstream press covered these stories with narrations of how the hard working West German students assisted the poor Africans along the road to modern development. Although not the most politically radical of their peers, due to their participation in government funded projects, the students’ experiences may have caused them to question dominant West German perceptions of social hierarchies. Whether through developing friendships with African peers on African soil, or through challenging authoritative West German leadership while on the road, these students separated themselves from the general West German public. It is not too much to assume that they returned from their travels hoping to identify with a more equitable West German character.

The students of the New Left movement communicated their opposition to general public attitudes of race and modernity in more obvious ways. In 1962, *Konkret* reported that the Association of German Student bodies “took a big step forward: it finally found the courage to

declare a political commitment.”<sup>67</sup> This group of 100 students joined together as representatives of West German universities and colleges to take political stances on a number of domestic and international issues, including issues in Africa. In a number of cases, like opposing the apartheid regime in South Africa, the students stood in opposition to the federal government. These students represented peers who went on to protest neo-imperialism in the Congo and racism in films like *Africa Addio*. In their efforts to bring awareness to the racism and imperialism that plagued the African continent, the 68ers also raised awareness about West German issues. Students challenged the aid discourse, which presented West Germans as racially and developmentally superior. But were they successful?

It would be difficult to argue that the 68ers had zero effect on West German society. Even so, it would be equally difficult to argue that they overturned all societal prejudices. The longer-term consequences of the student movement reach beyond the scope of this project. However, we can evaluate some of the effects of the student movement in the short-term. The student protests did gain national and even global attention, which surely can be evaluated as some form of success in and of itself. West Germans reading a regular newspaper or news magazine became aware, for instance, that students considered the film *Africa Addio* racist and Moise Tshombe a murderer. However, these articles made sure to also record how the police arrested the rabble youth, the Berlin mayor would not show any respect for some communist students, and that in regard to the student enemy, Moise Tshombe, most West Germans sided with Tshombe.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the mainstream media did not sell stories of leftist student triumph to the general public. Of course, the same papers published stories of development aid in Africa in which the dark-skinned, tribal Africans needed the aid of modern, white West

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<sup>67</sup> Roland Rall, “Mut Zur Politik,” *Konkret*, May 1962, 9.

<sup>68</sup> “Africa Addio: Starker Spürsinn,” 89, “Berliner Studenten demonstrieren.”

Germans. Even though leftist magazines like *Konkret* called direct attention to lingering forms of imperialism and racism within West Germany, the general public did not read *Konkret*. Without changing the mainstream press, it is difficult to see a way dominant attitudes of race and modernity could be transformed.

In addition, students themselves sometimes struggled to overcome forms of hierarchy they so adamantly rejected. For example, although the students protested *Africa Addio* and its imagery, they employed some of its same shocking graphic techniques for their own endeavors. Leftist protest posters and magazines often contained images of exotic black bodies, dead and mutilated. Historian Quinn Slobodian argues that while students “hoped to shock and enlighten public opinion by using images of suffering non-white bodies,” they also took away the voice of the Third World victims.<sup>69</sup> Thus, even with great effort to overcome hierarchies and fight for equality, West German students fell into hierarchical traps by portraying all Africans as victims, in need of West Germans to speak for them.

Despite what may seem like failures, though, a look at West German university campuses in the 1960s reveals that some West Germans undoubtedly questioned racism and developmental superiority. The students and professors engaged with Africa on a number of different levels. In some ways the binary discourse, which positioned a superior modern West Germany in opposition to a primitive Africa, endured. But in many other ways, students sought to break and blur common ways of understanding the relationship between West Germany and Africa. In doing so, they poked holes in the cultural hierarchies that captivated so many West German minds. While the short-term holes may have been small, they opened up avenues for future West Germans to continue questioning long-held assumptions.

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<sup>69</sup> Slobodian, *Foreign Front*, 135, 154.



### CHAPTER THREE: CHRISTIAN MODERNITY

“The church in the entire world has in this case a great opportunity to help a continent on the right path. The church has this opportunity, because it knows about the true freedom.”  
-Heinrich Meyer, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lübeck, 1961<sup>1</sup>

“The notion of a culture’s being superior or inferior, higher or lower, progressive or backward, is still predominant in the thinking and behavior of Westerners in their relations to other peoples in the world whose cultures are different from the European.”  
-Ako Adjei, Ghanaian nationalist, 1962<sup>2</sup>

In Tanzania (then Tanganyika) workers on the streets and politicians in formal receptions greeted the West German visitors with the word “*Uhuru*,” meaning freedom in Swahili. In Madagascar these same West German visitors noticed that the main city street had been renamed “*Avenue of la Liberation*.” The visitors concluded from their visit to Africa in 1960 that they had seen: “Africa on the road to liberation! An Africa that is proud of its freedom, hungers after freedom, and is intoxicated with its freedom.”<sup>3</sup> These visitors did not come to Africa as politicians, government funded aid workers or student activists. Instead, they were West German missionaries and church leaders. Led by Heinrich Meyer, a former missionary to India and bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lübeck since 1956, the group traveled to Tanzania and Madagascar in order to participate in multiple church conferences. Africa, in the 1960s, took center stage not only for West German governments and students, but also for West German Christian churches and missionaries as well.

German missionaries had long been involved in activities on the African continent. But in the early 1960s, West German Christians perceived themselves as embarking on a new period in their relationship with Africa. Heinrich Meyer’s report on his travel to Africa is informative.

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Meyer, *So sah ich Afrika* (Bad Salzuflen: MBK-Verlag, 1961), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ako Adjei, “Imperialism and Spiritual Freedom: An African View,” in *Christianity in Africa as Seen by Africans*, ed. Ram Desai (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1962), 68.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer, *So sah ich Afrika*, 4.

Instead of opening his account with the spiritual state of the African people, Meyer wrote in excited prose about the intoxication of freedom in Africa. Although a spiritual leader, Meyer began his account of the mission conferences with the changing *political* state of Africa. The political changes in Africa both excited and alarmed West German missionaries.

While Christians wrote about a unique opportunity to serve in Africa, they also shared many fears. Meyer wrote, “The end of colonialism comes with the danger of a storm and landslide over Africa.” Another missionary report from 1961 covered such topics as: “The World in Rapid Social Upheaval” and “Christian Life in a Changed World.”<sup>4</sup> One author said that a person would have to be blind to not see that the world was changing.<sup>5</sup> Another missionary characterized Africa as going through a “profound spiritual crisis.”<sup>6</sup> There is no doubt that West German missionaries sensed a change and a critical turning point in Africa.<sup>7</sup> Certainly some Africans themselves wrote at this time about a crisis facing Christianity in Africa.<sup>8</sup> An early African studies scholar, Roland Oliver, observed that by the late 1950s European religion “was becoming the object of African ‘suspicion and contempt.’”<sup>9</sup> In the midst of these perceived tumultuous times the West German missionaries called for greater attention and effort in Africa. Yet they did not want to continue on in the form of “old Christianity.” Instead, these missionaries sought to be modern missionaries, portraying the “new Christianity.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Brennecke, ed., *Weltmission in ökumenischer Zeit* (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag GMBH, 1961).

<sup>5</sup> Karl Heinz Pfeffer, “Die Welt im raschen sozialen Umbruch,” in *Weltmission in ökumenischer Zeit*, ed. Gerhard Brennecke (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag GMBH, 1961), 248.

<sup>6</sup> Ursula Brennecke, *Christliche Frauen in Afrika Übernehmen Verantwortung* (Bad Salzflun: MBK-Verlag, 1966), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Lohmann, ed. *Weltmission in der Krise? Ein Arbeitsheft für alle, die von dieser Frage beunruhigt sind* (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag GMBH, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Ram Desai, ed. *Christianity in Africa as Seen by Africans* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1962).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in John Stuart, “‘Speaking for the Unvoiced’? British Missionaries and Aspects of African Nationalism, 1949-1959,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 193.

<sup>10</sup> Ernst Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika* (München: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1968), 93.



In presenting their own form of modernity, the missionaries both aligned and distanced themselves from other West German visions of modernity. In the missionaries' advocacy for social and economic development, they aligned themselves with the West German government, mainstream press, and general public encountering the dominant discourse of African development. Then by challenging the discrimination of races in Africa, particularly apartheid, the missionaries positioned themselves alongside the student activists who decried racism. At the same time, the missionaries seemed less concerned with the continuation of racism on West Germany's own soil than the students. Still, the missionaries separated themselves from others through continuing to see faith, theology, and spiritual development as important to their endeavors (albeit less so than missionaries of old).

This chapter suggests that West German missionaries constructed a unique vision of what it meant to be a modern West German. Missionary discourses of the 1960s largely did not use race as a dominant framework for understanding their relationship with (or difference from) Africans. However, many of their concerns mirror dominant discourses of development. As outlined in Chapter One, the hierarchies of race and development are integrally connected. Therefore, while the missionaries did not use the type of racialized language of the mainstream press, and some even spoke out against racism, their adoption of Western development theories demonstrates at least a latent form of racialized thinking. This paradoxical embracement of civilizational superiority while criticizing racism makes West German missionary discourse distinct. In addition, the missionaries' continued allegiance to Christianity as a part of development sets them apart from the mainstream press. Thus, these West Germans created an idea of Christian modernity, distinct from dominant discourses yet still imbued with notions of developmental and racial superiority.

To explore the perceptions of West German Christian missionaries and church leaders, I examine books and newsletters produced primarily by Protestant Christians. I largely omit the perspective of a number of West German Catholic missionaries who also actively engaged in Africa during the 1960s. The Catholic perspective no doubt deserves more attention and I hope my study will instigate further inquiry in that direction. However, this chapter will mainly focus on the mainstream Protestant perspective due to resources available at this time. In addition, there is more to say about postwar West German missionaries, their perspectives, activities, and position within West German society than I have attempted to address here. My research in many ways treads in uncharted territory. I agree with Brian Stanley, editor of *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, in his assessment of missionary historiography:

Christian missions in the twentieth century, despite their more extended geographical scope and much greater numerical weight than in the nineteenth century, have to date received only a fraction of the scholarly attention that has been lavished on the Victorian mission enterprise.<sup>11</sup>

This lack of scholarly attention seems to be especially true in the case of postwar German historiography.

While many German Christian missionaries did leave the “field” after Germany lost its colonies in World War I, historians have overlooked the many that remained and returned throughout the twentieth century to work under other colonial powers and then in independent African states. In addition, much still remains to be examined concerning the social influence of religious organizations in postwar Germany. Thus, despite my limited scope of study, this chapter will hopefully contribute to new lines of inquiry concerning the postwar Christian churches in West Germany and the discourses of its missionaries in Africa.

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<sup>11</sup> Brian Stanley, “Introduction: Christianity and the End of Empire,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 2.

In order to understand why West German missionary discourse is important to questions of West German perceptions and hierarchies, I will first briefly explore the significant role that the Christian churches played in society in the 1960s. Next, this chapter will analyze the missionary discourse: what is said and what is not said. I will begin by discussing the theme of thinking globally. This new sense of orientation toward the world affected West German missionaries' understanding of their relationship with Africans. I will go on to show that West German Christians entertained a relatively liberal attitude toward race, in comparison with the mainstream press. The missionary and church leaders understood racial equality in Africa as significant to their mission in Africa, and a characterization of what it meant to be modern. With that said, these "new Christians" wholeheartedly embraced Western development theories, which were racially coded in dominant discourses. The missionaries ignored the paradoxical embrace of civilizational superiority and anti-racism. Their understanding of development also remained distinct from other discourses because of their commitment to spiritual development. Finally, I will discuss the concepts and language of superiority found in the missionaries' texts. Despite trying to overcome images of dominance, the Christian commitment to Western development kept the West German missionaries in narratives of West German civilizational superiority.

### ***Church Bells Still Ringing***

According to the West German contemporary mainstream press, Christian churches continued to play a very important role in West German society throughout the 1960s. Histories of West Germany, though, have been slow to acknowledge this. In Mark Edward Ruff's essay, "Integrating Religion into the Historical Mainstream: Recent Literature on Religion in the Federal Republic of Germany," he explains that dominant narratives of West Germany until

recently remained ones of secularization. In other words, narratives usually followed themes of modernization theory: as West Germany modernized, it also became more secular. However, Ruff contends that after 1945, “Religious belief did not completely evaporate.” He goes on to say,

To be sure, the overwhelming majority of West German citizens claimed membership in one of the two major denominations...the fact that most Germans were at least nominal members of Christian churches meant that German politics, culture, society, and everyday life were, at the very least, tinged if not strongly colored by these organizations.<sup>12</sup>

In line with this, a recently published dissertation by Benjamin Carl Pearson claims that after 1945, churches in West Germany “became an important force for political and cultural change.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, after 1945 religious organizations in the Federal Republic were still relevant and influential. While this chapter does not center on exactly how the churches’ impacted society in West Germany, I maintain that they did hold significant power. It is because of their influence that the discourses of church leaders and missionaries in Africa are relevant to this thesis.

Although critical of the churches’ capacity for control, the mainstream West German press believed that the churches had the power to shape society. After six years of research, Frankfurt journalist Klaus Martens reported that the two churches in the Federal Republic (referring to the Protestant and Catholic churches) were among the “largest corporations...builders and land holders.” The *Der Spiegel* article, which published Martens’ findings in 1969, described the vast power of the churches with a highly critical tone. The article began by provocatively claiming that the “guardians of the Holy Scriptures, the churches” have

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Edward Ruff, “Integrating Religion into the Historical Mainstream: Recent Literature on Religion in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *Central European History* 42 (2009): 311-312, 336.

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Carl Pearson, “Faith and Democracy: Political Transformations at the German Protestant *Kirchentag*, 1949-1969” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 2007), 4.

not listened to their own teaching: “More precious than great riches...is a good reputation.” The article reported on the Protestant and Catholic churches’ six billion Deutsche Mark assets within the Federal Republic, and some 1,000 different publications issued by the Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches. Martens believed, “The church press plays a greater role in Germany than ever achieved by Springer’s publishing house,”<sup>14</sup> which owned a number of prominent mainstream publications including but not limited to *Die Welt*, *Welt am Sonntag*, and *Bild*. The article makes it clear that the mainstream press perceived the churches as having a significant hold on the collective imaginations of West Germans. Because of this, it is worth looking closely at the words of the missionaries.

### ***Modern Christians Think Globally***

A prominent theme quickly emerges when looking at West German missionary discourse of the 1960s: Christians should be globally minded. It seems obvious on the one hand that overseas missionaries would talk in this way. They had long been looking and living outside of the nation-state. But there is something different about the language of the 1960s. West German missionaries felt a responsibility to the world, which one could imply meant the “Third World.” In the foreword to the book, *Medical Mission Service: A Necessity*, the head of the Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg, Martin Pörksen wrote, “Christ’s goal is the world.” He implied: If Christ’s goal is the world, our goal should be the same.<sup>15</sup> Invoking the term “world” meant Asia and Africa, as the book that follows focuses solely on those areas of the world (giving preference to Africa). Heinz Nickel, a Heidelberg Catholic priest, stated this theme even

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<sup>14</sup> “Kirchen: Vermögen: Nörgeln und zahlen,” *Der Spiegel*, October 27, 1969, 96, 98.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Scheel, *Missionsärztlicher Dienst – Eine Notwendigkeit* (Bad Salzflun: MBK-Verlag, 1961), preface.

more clearly, “The modern Christian has a world mission. ‘World mission’, ‘responsibility for the world’, etc., have become topics of present-day theology.”<sup>16</sup>

This globally minded vision meant new attitudes toward those in the “Third World.” First, being globally minded meant moving beyond purely nationalist endeavors. This marked a break from the former German missionaries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who saw the propagation of the gospel and of Germanness as two in the same mission.<sup>17</sup> Just by evoking a sense of responsibility to Africans, West German missionaries attempted to downplay national sentiments of superiority. In addition, this new thinking led missionaries to become more invested in the materiality of the world. Finally, a global mindset had racial implications for West German missionaries.

### ***Talking about Race***

When discussing Africans and the current situation in Africa, West German missionaries largely avoided race-based language when describing Africans. However, the authors did not dismiss the issue of race entirely. We know from Chapter One that *Rasse* became a taboo word in the mainstream press after 1945. Yet this did not stop writers from using color-modified language to emphasize racial differences between West Germans and Africans. For missionaries, however, the story is somewhat different. Although not employed prolifically, some Christian authors utilized the word *Rasse* to discuss the issue of race in Africa. Thus Rita Chin and Heide

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Jürgen Neven-du Mont, *After Hitler: A Report on Today's West Germans*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 216.

<sup>17</sup> Hartmut Lehmann, “Missionaries without Empire: German Protestant Missionary Efforts in the Interwar Period (1919-1939),” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 37, 52.

Fehrenbach's argument in *After the Nazi Racial State* needs to be augmented.<sup>18</sup> While *Rasse* did virtually disappear from the mainstream press and political discourse, the word did not vanish entirely from the German lexicon. Christian authors still employed the term in the 1960s. One can only speculate why missionaries did not classify the word as taboo like the mainstream press did. I suspect that missionaries rooted their discourse in more traditional language because of the conservatism of the church and the fact that Christian authors wrote primarily for a Christian audience. Because they wrote to a closed audience, they worried less about offending readers with potentially taboo language. Still, their usage of *Rasse* is intriguing and deserves closer attention.

Even though missionaries occasionally utilized the word *Rasse* (or derivatives of the word), they rarely characterized Africans as black. They did, however, sometimes refer to West German missionaries as white. Instead of utilizing this colored language as a way to differentiate West Germans from Africans, though, authors often employed the term white to describe the type of mission work they hoped to move past. In other words, "white missionaries" characterized the "old Christianity," and some people still thought of Christianity as "the white man's religion," but these West German missionaries wanted to defy these types of classifications.<sup>19</sup> Perceiving themselves as a new type of missionary, the West Germans promoted the Africanization of churches and the plurality of races within churches. By Africanization, the authors referred to Africans taking over the leadership of churches in Africa. Ursula Brennecke, wife of the Mission Director of the Berlin Mission-Society, wrote in 1966 about how Europeans had bound the church in Africa to white people under colonialism. Now, she argued, in order for the African church to grow it must free itself from colonialism, and show

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<sup>18</sup> Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "Introduction: What's Race Got to Do with It? Postwar German History in Context," in *After the Nazi Racial State*, eds. Rita Chin et al. (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 2009), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 92. Brennecke, *Christliche Frauen in Afrika*, 8.

itself to be *more* than a religion for the white man.<sup>20</sup> Brennecke clearly advocated for the Africanization of the church and desired to overcome white superiority.

One missionary voice, though, wrote more reservedly about Africanization, and other issues of race in Africa. Ernst Dammann, former missionary to Tanzania and professor of history of religion at Philipps-University of Marburg, wrote in 1968, “From the beginning, African Christianity has existed of different nations and races.” From this truth, Dammann went on to say that Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists, among others, reject “racial separation” (as was currently practiced in apartheid South Africa).<sup>21</sup> At this point, Dammann seems to withhold his own judgment on the matter of racial separation. The author did include himself, though, when speaking about Africanization. In regard to “white leadership,” Dammann wrote that “we abandoned” it.<sup>22</sup> Here, Dammann aligned himself with other missionaries like Brennecke who encouraged the Africanization of the churches. The former missionary to Tanzania, though, hesitated to fully endorse the slogan “Africa for Africans,” which he maintained communists used in exploiting the issue of “racial tension.” In response to the slogan “Africa for Africans,” Dammann spoke directly to the issue of apartheid. He argued that people give little thought to whether it is even *possible* for African leadership to be realized in South Africa, and questioned whether this realization would benefit the “black population” or leave them as “victims in economic terms.”<sup>23</sup>

Dammann’s hesitancy toward apartheid’s defeat may be partly explained by his personal history, and was also a reflection of the government’s views. Besides being a former missionary, Dammann also previously belonged to the Nazi party. Dammann’s lack of radical racist language

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<sup>20</sup> Brennecke, *Christliche Frauen in Afrika*, 8.

<sup>21</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 98-99.

<sup>22</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 94.

<sup>23</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 155.



and endorsement of Africanization marks a drastic change from Nazi rhetoric. However, his hesitation about “Africa for Africans” indicates lingering Nazi racist ideology. In addition, this attitude reflects the Federal Republic’s overall apologetic stance toward apartheid throughout the 1960s.<sup>24</sup>

While Dammann seemed to fall in line with the state’s position toward South Africa, other missionaries and churches took a more radical and direct stance against apartheid and racial discrimination. Even as early as 1961 the West German Lutheran church condemned racial segregation in South Africa. Heinrich Meyer recorded the denomination’s unanimous stance:

For the first time in the name of the Lutheran church we clearly said that as a church we cannot condone discrimination of the races, but that we in the church belong together, the blacks and the whites, equal rights before God, and that we therefore as a church also have to unequivocally fight in the political arena against any policy that discriminates against people because of their race.<sup>25</sup>

This statement not only publically condemned the apartheid policies of racial segregation, but also called for the church to politically oppose such practices. With this radical statement, the Lutheran church aligned itself with the politically active students of the early 1960s who also denounced apartheid.<sup>26</sup> West German pastor Karl Schmidt, who lived and worked in various South African townships, offers another example of anti-apartheid sentiments. German historian Susanna Schrafstetter explains how he “wrote many letters to the CDU politicians in which he described the plight of the population in moving terms. His pleas to take a stronger stand against apartheid were met with indifference at best and open hostility at worst.”<sup>27</sup> Another West German Christian leader, Günter Linnenbrink, argued at the end of the decade that the church

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<sup>24</sup> Susanna Schrafstetter, “A Nazi Diplomat Turned Apologist for Apartheid: Gustav Sonnenhol, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and West German Foreign Policy towards South Africa,” *German History* 28, no. 1 (March 2010): 54-56.

<sup>25</sup> Meyer, *So sah ich Afrika*, 14.

<sup>26</sup> Roland Rall, “Keine Hallsteindoktrin für Studenten: Der Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften tagte in München,” *Konkret*, May 1962, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Schrafstetter, “A Nazi Diplomat,” 56.

must stand in solidarity with the “politically, *racially*, and socially discriminated” (emphasis added).<sup>28</sup> These examples demonstrate that many West German Protestant leaders and missionaries saw addressing racial inequality as integral to their role in Africa. And in order to fight racial discrimination in Africa these authors used the word *Rasse*.

For West German missionaries and church leaders, the term *Rasse* was not as taboo as it seemed to be in the mainstream press. However, Christian writers did not employ the term to mark their differences with the African people. Instead, they only used the term to refer to racial segregation and discrimination in Africa. In fact, the only case of a Christian author frequently using the word *Rasse* to describe the African people that I found in the course of my research was an article written by a Catholic bishop from Cameroon, whose translated work appeared in a West German book in 1968.<sup>29</sup> Instead of referring to an African race, the West German missionaries utilized *Rasse* to discuss issues like Africanization and apartheid. And predominantly, the authors painted a fairly liberal stance toward these issues: in favor of Africanization and against apartheid. The example of Dammann, though, reminds us that some missionaries and church leaders held less radical views than others. Nonetheless, even Dammann encouraged Africanization and largely avoided racialized language in describing Africans.

By utilizing the term *Rasse*, West German church leaders took a stand against racial discrimination. However, they did so in a way that always addressed issues in Africa, not in West Germany itself. Also, the missionary discourse rarely utilized color modifiers to denote differences between West Germans and Africans. Unlike the mainstream press, there seems to be a conscious effort by West German Protestants to stay away from language of racial hierarchy.

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<sup>28</sup> Günter Linnenbrink, “Mission und Entwicklungsdienst,” in *Weltmission in der Krise? Ein Arbeitsheft für alle, die von dieser Frage beunruhigt sind*, ed. Heinrich Lohmann (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag GMBH, 1970), 60.

<sup>29</sup> Jean B. Zoa, “Der Christliche Beitrag zum Gestaltwandel Afrikas,” in *Theologie und Kirche in Afrika*, ed. Horst Bürkle (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1968), 285.

These West Germans saw the fight for racial equality, at least in Africa, as central to the modern Christian mission. And yet, we will see that this did not mean that the missionaries avoided forms of racial hierarchy altogether. While missionaries avoided blatant language of racial hierarchy, they tacitly accepted conceptions of it through claims of civilizational superiority.

### *More than Converting Souls*

In addition to striving for racial equality in Africa, part of being a modern Christian missionary meant caring about the material realities in Africa. Peter Herold, a missionary under the West German Protestant organization *Brot für die Welt* (Bread for the World), believed the Bible to be a social handbook and a practical aid to everyday life, not just a lofty theological book. This belief led Herold to aid the poor by building a community center in the slums of Douala, Cameroon. He worried over the societal impacts of industrialization, which pushed so many to the cities of Cameroon to find jobs, only to end up in poverty. Another *Brot für die Welt* missionary, Dr. Schwarz, worked tirelessly in the West Cameroon mission hospital called Acha Tugi. *Die Zeit* described Schwarz as “a type of modern pioneer. He does not evangelize, he helps and heals.”<sup>30</sup> According to the mainstream press, modernity meant practical, not spiritual help.

While spiritual work would not be left completely by the wayside, West German missionaries largely did sense that modern mission work included aiding Africans in practical ways. In addition to individual missionary and denominational work, a few larger West German religious organizations gained attention in the 1960s for their development work in Africa. These included: *Misereor* (Latin for “compassion”), a Catholic relief organization, *Brot für die Welt*, the Protestant organization that funded missionaries like Herold and Dr. Schwarz, and *Dienste in*

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<sup>30</sup> Dietrich Strothmann, “‘Wer ist mein Nächster?’: Kirchliche Entwicklungshilfe in Kamerun: im Busch und im Slum,” *Die Zeit*, April 11, 1969.

*Übersee* (Service Overseas), a non-denominational Protestant organization. In 1969, reports stated that *Misereor* collected around 54 million Deutsche Marks and *Brot für die Welt* collected around 25 million Deutsche Marks for their endeavors. Although the secular press argued that West Germans complained about the great deal of church solicitation for money, *Der Spiegel* wrote that the churches' spending on relief organizations "unlike other expenditures, are hardly controversial."<sup>31</sup> In other words, church members eagerly donated money on behalf of international aid organizations.

Given the public support for these large-scale, religious development aid organizations, it should not be surprising that most missionaries also endorsed practical development in Africa. Heinrich Meyer, for example, reported after his travels to Africa that the "great opportunity of the church" was to "develop these countries." This included building schools, colleges, and allowing African students to travel to the West, the same type of development promoted by the Federal Republic and praised in the mass media. Development for Meyer, though, also meant training pastors in Africa. He believed modern development must include spiritual and theological training.<sup>32</sup> For Martin Scheel, author of *Missionsärztlicher Dienst – Eine Notwendigkeit*, Africa needed medical aid and thus physical care should be central to West German Christian work. Scheel also argued more broadly that West Germans must aid in overcoming the current situation of "unfair distribution of goods on the earth."<sup>33</sup> While Scheel did not explain how this could be achieved, his comment demonstrates the "new Christian's" emphasis on the material world. Ursula Brennecke also acknowledged the need for material development in her short book on women in Africa, in which she argued for the church's support of education and training of women in Africa. She stated that some missionaries felt that their

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<sup>31</sup> "Kirchen: Vermögen," 96.

<sup>32</sup> Meyer, *So sah ich Afrika*, 11.

<sup>33</sup> Scheel, *Missionsärztlicher Dienst*, 5.

true mission involved proclaiming the gospel, not engaging in social work. However, she argued that this type of thinking should not be endorsed.<sup>34</sup> Most of the missionaries and church leaders I surveyed agreed with Brennecke, that social aid or development aid must be part of the Christian mission.

Missionaries believed that Christian aid, like the secular aid given by the Federal Republic, should be directed along European guidelines. In other words, the West Germans would help the Africans to become more like West Germany or their other Western counterparts. Strongly influenced by Cold War politics, West German missionaries understood proper development along Western (as opposed to Eastern) lines. The West German churches seemed to believe wholeheartedly in the dichotomous narratives that positioned those in Africa as undeveloped, and those in Western Europe and the United States as developed. In this way, the missionaries, like the mainstream press, perceived themselves to be civilizationally superior to Africans. The words of Georg F. Vicedom, a Lutheran theologian and mission professor, are indicative. He stated, “Christian faith and development have a lot to do with one another, otherwise the Western peoples would not have reached the present state of scientific and technical development.”<sup>35</sup> Not only does this statement clearly show a belief in a Westernized modernization theory, but it also includes the Christian faith as central to this process. Unlike the mainstream press and government who emphasized democracy and capitalism as causes of Western progress and success, Vicedom posited a Weberian-type argument that Christianity primarily contributed to the rise of the West.

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<sup>34</sup> Brennecke, *Christliche Frauen in Afrika*, 13-14.

<sup>35</sup> Georg F. Vicedom, “Acht Thesen zu Mission und Entwicklungshilfe,” in *Weltmission in der Krise? Ein Arbeitsheft für alle, die von dieser Frage beunruhigt sind*, ed. Heinrich Lohmann (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag, GMBH, 1970), 62.

While mainstream and Christian narratives of development differed on the role of religion, they agreed on a common enemy: communism. For the Federal Republic, development aid acted as a critical foreign policy tool in the midst of the Cold War. The government offered aid to woo African states into not only the West German, but also the broader “Western” camp in the struggle against communism. West German Christians also entered the fight against communism. Ernst Dammann warned that Christians in Africa needed to consider communism seriously. He wrote that within communist thinking, “The Christian church is held up as the bastion of the forces which stand in opposition...to the supposed good of the African people.” West German Christian missionaries needed to oppose this message and realize that “on the whole, communism in Africa represents a challenge to Christianity.”<sup>36</sup> By emphasizing the dangers of communism, the West German missionaries aligned themselves with the government’s activities and mission in Africa. And through their rhetoric of development, the West German Christians also mimicked hierarchical concepts found in the mainstream press.

### *Language of Superiority*

While the missionaries saw their participation in development aid and social work as modern, their narratives of developmental superiority and paternal attitudes toward Africans demonstrate that little was “new” about their work. To be sure, many church leaders desired to be more egalitarian in their relationship with Africans. Karl Heinz Pfeffer, a sociologist whose work appeared in the volume *Weltmission in Ökumenischer Zeit* in 1961, wrote “We are no longer masters, but servants.”<sup>37</sup> And yet the discourse of development required a hierarchical view of the West German-African relationship. Ernst Dammann, the previously mentioned ex-

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<sup>36</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 156-157.

<sup>37</sup> Pfeffer, “Die Welt,” 248.

Nazi, missionary, and religion professor proved the continued existence of paternalism toward Africans. He acknowledged in his book *Das Christentum in Afrika* that Christian mission work in Africa since 1945 included economic and social aid. He also argued that more could be done “to develop industrial or agricultural enterprises, and to offer qualified teachers for the necessary schools.”<sup>38</sup> In this statement, Dammann called for bringing West German teachers to Africa, not for training African teachers for African schools. Once again we see evidence of Dammann’s hesitation concerning Africanization. He wrote that these teachers “should teach the Africans so that they do the seemingly secular things with the right moral and religious responsibility.”<sup>39</sup> This quotation demonstrates a paternal attitude toward Africans: West Germans must teach the Africans the way they should go. And this could be a slow journey because as Heinrich Meyer stated, “It is still a long way for Africa...to be equivalent to the European nations.”<sup>40</sup>

In addition to placing themselves as guides and teachers for Africans, some missionaries utilized hierarchical language to describe the people of Africa. Martin Scheel described Africans as “primitive people.” Bertha Johanssen, a missionary in Tanzania, and Elfrieda Lutz, a missionary in West Africa, used the terms “natives” and “heathens” to describe the Africans they encountered.<sup>41</sup> Instead of racialized language, missionaries tended to employ language that emphasized the developmental or civilizational differences between West Germans and Africans. Of course, we know that civilizational discourse was also racially coded.

To emphasize civilizational differences, several works characterized Africans as naturally more spiritual than Europeans. While this may seem complimentary in the context of Christian discourse, it reflects older notions of the less civilized Africans. It may also reflect the

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<sup>38</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 92.

<sup>39</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 92.

<sup>40</sup> Meyer, *So sah ich Afrika*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Scheel, *Missionsärztlicher Dienst*, 4. Quoted in Paul Gerhard Johanssen, *Glaubensheilungen in den Jungen Kirchen* (Bad Salzungen: MBK-Verlag, 1964), 5, 7.

missionaries' own fears about postwar secularization in West Germany. West German missionaries respected African spirituality, but insisted on its manifestation in the civilized religion of Christianity. In the preface to a work about faith healing in the "Third World," Paul Gerhard Johanssen wrote, "Africans are convinced that God's relation to man is a healing behavior. They live on an understanding of the reality of a spiritual world."<sup>42</sup> This description of being a spiritual, rather than a rational people, is consistent with modernization theories. However, instead of advocating a move toward secularism, missionaries wanted Africans to move toward Christianity, a modern religion. Dammann described the Africans as believing in a "natural religion" and that to be modern meant to "join a high religion" such as Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

While a sense of civilizational superiority is evident in the discourse, West German missionaries espoused their conceptions differently than the mainstream press. There are few signs, for example, that West German Christians consciously understood race as a primary marker of difference between themselves and Africans. However, a belief in a developmental hierarchy seems almost certain. West German Christians saw themselves as guides in the process of development. As teachers, they could guide Africans in social, economic, and spiritual improvement. In adopting developmental theories and using civilizational binaries, missionaries also (even if unknowingly) employed deeply embedded racialized concepts. However, in reading the accounts of missionaries and Christian leaders, one does not come away with a sense that West Germans gloated over their superiority. If anything, they hoped to overcome older notions of the superior white missionary. However, their investment and strong belief in a Eurocentric modernization project, along with civilizational discourse, continued to posit West Germans as racially and developmentally more advanced.

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<sup>42</sup> Johanssen, *Glaubensheilungen*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 94.



In conclusion, when seventeen different African states became independent in the year 1960, West German church leaders and missionaries took notice. The political changes in Africa suggested worldwide upheaval, especially for Christian missionaries. The sense of change spurred emotions of excitement, possibility, and also danger. West Germans likely heard sentiments such as those from Ghanaian nationalist, Ako Adjei, who said, “The Christian church has stifled and violated the freedom of Africans to worship God in the manner they think best in their circumstances.”<sup>44</sup> The encroachment of communism also felt threatening to church leaders. In order to preserve their ongoing mission in Africa, West German missionaries hoped to present themselves in a new fashion.

As modern Christian missionaries, West Germans took stands against racial oppression and endorsed practical aid in Africa. Differing from the mass media, missionaries rarely used color modifiers when describing Africans. However, they did use the word *Rasse* to address racial discrimination in Africa. While some writers, like Ernst Dammann, spoke hesitantly about overturning apartheid, others avidly opposed South Africa’s legal racial discrimination. In general, the missionaries and church leaders did not portray their whiteness, or African blackness as primary markers of difference. Racial superiority does not come through the pages of church literature as it does in the mainstream press. Instead, racialized thinking was more deeply coded within conceptions of modernity.

Perceiving themselves as modern missionaries, most West Germans wrote enthusiastically about participating in development aid. They believed that the new Christian mission must be more than a gospel-sharing mission, it must also offer practical aid. But in their advocacy of concrete service, West German missionaries conceived of development only along

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<sup>44</sup> Adjei, “Imperialism and Spiritual Freedom,” 69.

Western lines. This also meant the adoption of a binary ideology, which classified West Germans (and their fellow Western Europeans) as modern, and Africans as traditional. Their participation in and rhetoric of development was hierarchical. Some missionaries and church leaders also described Africans with words and phrases denoting a lesser-civilized people. “Primitive,” “natural,” “native,” and “heathen,” all connoted a group of people opposite of the civilized and developed West Germans. German missionaries of the 19<sup>th</sup> century employed similar language. Thus, the newness that the missionaries hoped to enact was perhaps not all that new.

What does this all mean for West German identity in the 1960s? As examined in the case of the mainstream press and the students, the missionaries and church leaders demonstrate that West Germans formulated many of their perceptions of race and modernity in the context of a relationship with Africa. However, reviews of all of these different voices demonstrate that conceptions of belonging and difference are always multifaceted, and continually being reshaped. West German missionaries hoped to refashion themselves in Africa in the 1960s. They presented a unique version of West German modernity, a Christian modernity. Most believed in opposing racial oppression and participating in hands on aid. They retreated from claims of outright superiority. Even Dammann wrote that Christians were now “co-workers” with Africans.<sup>45</sup> However, in all of these efforts, the Christian missionaries did not escape hierarchical concepts. These West Germans continued to write and thus perceive of themselves as developmentally more advanced than Africans. As consistent with other West Germans, these writers also wrote little of previous German encounters in Africa. Not one missionary recalled previous harm to Africans. In the 1960s, missionaries viewed Africa as a fresh place to

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<sup>45</sup> Dammann, *Das Christentum in Afrika*, 92.

reestablish and reconceive of themselves. Unfortunately, while attempting to be more egalitarian, the missionaries continued to rely on conceptions of civilizational superiority.

## CONCLUSION

Outside a German nightclub in 2009, a Neo-Nazi told a black-skinned man, “Europe for whites, Africa for apes.” This racist slur was recorded in the controversial documentary film, “Schwarz auf Weiß” (Black on White).<sup>1</sup> In the film, journalist Günter Wallraff disguises himself with elaborate black face paint and a wig and takes on the identity of Kwame Ogonno from Somalia to discover what it is like to be black (and of African descent) in Germany. In the film he encounters numerous racist sentiments from right-wing extremists like the example above, but also from “everyday people.” Wallraff claims that, “Germany is a developing country as far as racism is concerned...There is something close-minded and ill-at-ease about it. Germany is harboring more prejudices than it is ready to accept.”<sup>2</sup>

Wallraff’s film demonstrates that racism in Germany continues to be a problem, despite many Germans’ belief that racism is only a problem in other countries, like the United States.<sup>3</sup> And this racism is not only directed at Turkish “guest workers” as Rita Chin has thoroughly explored, but also at those of African descent.<sup>4</sup> Hierarchical perceptions, in regard to Africans, *still exist* in German society. This is in part why a study on West German perceptions of race and modernity in relation to Africa in the 1960s is so important. Renowned historian Greg Dening once wrote, “History is not the past: it is a consciousness of the past used for present purposes.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “New film uncovers racism in Germany,” *BBC News*, November 6, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8347040.stm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Henning Hoff, “Blackface Filmmaker Sparks a Race Debate in Germany,” *Time*, November 18, 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1940290,00.html> (accessed April 29, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Hoff, “Blackface Filmmaker.”

<sup>4</sup> For more on racism toward Turkish “guest workers”, see Rita Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” in *After the Nazi Racial State*, eds. Rita Chin et al. (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 2009); Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Greg Dening, *Mr. Bligh’s Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 170.

In line with this, by bringing Africa into the scope of a postwar German study, my hope is that contemporary German perceptions of blackness and Africanness can better be historicized and more fully understood. Even more, my argument about the continuation of hierarchical conceptions of race and modernity in 1960s West Germany will hopefully spur further inquiry into how these notions may still be at work in German society today. My thesis demonstrates just how deeply embedded social hierarchies can be, and how easily they can go on unnoticed. In order to make arguments about West German social hierarchies, my thesis focused on the activity of aid. Using aid as an insightful tool allowed me to illuminate a number of different voices on issues of race and modernity. However, aid was more than a useful window into the topic of West German social perceptions.

My work has attempted to problematize the nature of aid itself. In 2009, many Germans responded critically to Wallraff's film, "Schwarz auf Weiß", because they recognized something that West Germans did not in the 1960s: hierarchies are often hidden even in the best attempts at aid. Previously writing on the plights of Turkish guest workers in Germany, Wallraff has a tradition of trying to combat racism and other social injustices in Germany. In many ways, Wallraff's attempts to address racism in Germany by focusing on a black African call to mind the West German student protests of the 1960s. Wallraff and the leftist 68ers saw their work as aiding an oppressed people, as well as a fight for a more equitable Germany. Yet Wallraff and the 68ers both overlooked the ways their efforts allowed hierarchies to continue. For example, some Germans paralleled Wallraff's use of blackface makeup with racist American minstrel shows of the 1920s.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, many black Germans responded critically to "Schwarz auf Weiß" because in it, Wallraff speaks for black people, instead of allowing black Germans to

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<sup>6</sup> Hoff, "Blackface Filmmaker."

speak for themselves.<sup>7</sup> In similar fashion, the 68ers spoke on behalf of Africans. By neglecting the voice of Africans, Wallraff and the 68ers allowed racial hierarchies to continue.

My thesis has shown that aid work is a complex endeavor. In offering aid, the benefactor often obtains the upper hand when entering into a relationship with the beneficiary. In his book, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, Michael Barnett claims, “Any act of intervention, no matter how well intended, is also an act of control.”<sup>8</sup> The Federal Republic’s development aid of the 1960s most certainly demonstrates Barnett’s claims, as the state utilized development aid as a foreign policy tool. The Federal Republic would give and also take away aid based on African countries’ compliance with the *Hallstein* doctrine. In addition, modernization theories demanded that African states develop in line with democratic and capitalist ideals. The West German state certainly held the upper hand in relationship to newly independent African states.

This project, though, is more about how people embody perceptions of authority and hold to their beliefs without question. Throughout the thesis, I have shown that as West Germans acted as benefactors, their ideas of superiority became almost self-evident. The notion that West German missionaries should teach Africans how to develop went undisputed. The belief that West German students could speak on behalf of Africans went unchallenged. The benefit Africans could receive from West German government funded development aid seemed obvious to the press. These assumptions often allowed hierarchies of race and modernity to go unnoticed. Giving aid, especially transnational aid, has a way of supporting the benefactor’s (perhaps long

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<sup>7</sup> Hannah Pilarczyk, “Kritik an neuem Wallraff-Film: ‘Einfach nur der Fremde’,” *Spiegel Online*, October 21, 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/kino/kritik-an-neuem-wallraff-film-einfach-nur-der-fremde-a-655929.html> (accessed April 29, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 12.

held) notions of superiority while at the same time disguising the belief behind claims of generosity.

Through aid to Africa, many West Germans solidified pre-war identifications with a white race and sense of national superiority. Racialized thinking persisted in the mainstream media and the general public, despite *Rasse* disappearing from West German rhetoric. Instead of obvious racist language, the mainstream press used color-modified language to draw connections between blackness and the developmentally inferior Africans in stories about development aid. Thus, hierarchies of race and modernity continually worked together in the dominant discourse of aid. Because of this, when others such as African studies scholars and missionaries espoused developmental hierarchies without using color-modified language, racialized thinking could still be evoked amongst the readership.

Yet while demonstrating strands of continuity from pre-war to post-war (West) German society, I have also attempted to show historical change and disruption. For example, within the mainstream press, racism existed but was not brazenly apparent. Even more, leftist students in the 1960s protested against racism and developmental hierarchies and some missionaries felt it was their duty to stand in solidarity with the racially oppressed. Surely, West Germans' hierarchical perceptions had changed since 1945 and many people challenged dominant narratives of superiority. Thus, West Germans did not have a homogenous nor stagnant view of race and modernity in the 1960s. Instead these ideas, like all cultural meanings, were contested and at times loosely held. Yet since different groups of West German society espoused the same hierarchies, albeit in different forms and to greater and lesser extents, the historian must pay heed.

My hope is that in the future, studies like this will be expanded to East Germany and balanced with more African perspectives. Due to the historian's familiar restraints of time and sources available, my own study focused solely on West Germany. However, future studies focusing also on East Germany would better be able to historicize contemporary issues of identity in Germany. In addition, a comparison between East and West Germany in the 1960s would allow one to see more clearly how the Cold War affected social perceptions differently and perhaps similarly in the two German states. In further considering African perspectives, readers would be reminded that Africa was not a void place available for West Germans to consider their own perceptions, but a space filled with historical agents who also constructed and contested hierarchies. The transnational interactions of aid work affected both West Germans and Africans. Yet even without these added perspectives, an analysis of West German aid to Africa in the 1960s is rich indeed.

Since Germany lost its African colonies in World War I, few historians have studied the links between the two geographic areas after 1918. Even fewer have considered interactions after 1945. My thesis has shown that in the 1960s, West Germany and Africa overlapped in unique ways. African citizens and leaders embarked on new paths of political independence, charting out what it meant to be either Ghanaian or Kenyan, for example. Entering into the fray, West Germans offered aid to these "undeveloped" lands. But in a way, West Germany was also a relatively new country, struggling over what it meant to be West German. Engaging in international aid offered an opportunity for West Germany to present itself as a new country and a new people. Aid work would justify to the international community, and to themselves, that Germany's past was far behind them. However, pasts are hard to completely overcome. Although laws and even language may change, social concepts so easily endure.



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