

- DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HISTORY -
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**The Map of Africa
Lies in Germany:
The Two Germanys
and their Struggles for
Recognition in Africa**

by
Bernhard
Blumenau

WORKING PAPERS
in
INTERNATIONAL HISTORY

No. 10 / November 2011

© Bernhard Blumenau

No part of this paper may be reproduced without the permission of the author.

Working Papers

in

International History

Editor: Jaci Eisenberg

©Department of International History

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Case postale 136 – 1211 Genève 21

<http://www.graduateinstitute.ch/international-history>

Abstract

This paper assesses the Africa policies of West and East Germany between 1955 and 1966. Special attention will be paid to the central motivation of *Deutschlandpolitik* (Germany Policy) for the two Germanys' relations with Africa. Moreover, this paper analyzes the means that both German states used to buy off African states and to convince them subscribe to the respective German state's stance on the German Question. As West Germany did not recognize East Germany until 1972, Bonn's Africa policy was to ensure the continued non-recognition of the East German state by Third World countries and to support West Germany's sole representation claim. Consequently, East Berlin wanted to achieve international recognition through diplomatic relations with African states. Both Germanys used financial and economic incentives as well as propaganda warfare and knowledge transfer to win over the Africans. Yet that was very costly and the heavy impact of the German Question on both Germanys' Africa policies increasingly became an obstacle to better relations with the emerging Third World.

THE MAP OF AFRICA LIES IN GERMANY: THE TWO GERMANYS AND THEIR STRUGGLES FOR RECOGNITION IN AFRICA, 1955-1966.

“Your map of Africa is really quite nice. But my map of Africa lies in Europe.

Here is Russia, and here... is France, and we're in the middle. That's my map of Africa.”

Otto von Bismarck, 1888

Introduction

The 1950s and 1960s saw a large number of countries gaining independence in Africa and thus reappear on the radar screen of foreign policy strategists in East and West Germany. Both Germanys were looking for recognition as the legitimate representative of the German people. In this struggle for recognition, Africa was to become one of the primary battlegrounds.

This paper seeks to analyze how both German states addressed the German Question in Africa. How did Germany's division influence the Africa policy of both states? What strategies were developed to deal with Africa? What were the main incentives and instruments used to further the respective foreign policy strategies? How were the policies implemented and what impact did they have, particularly in our case studies of Ghana and Tanzania?

While comprehensive academic work has already described West Germany's sole representation claim, known as the Hallstein Doctrine, unfortunately, for an English-language audience, most of the literature is in German. Additionally, these German-language works have described the Hallstein

Doctrine in a general way;¹ in contrast, in this work, the emphasis is placed on the incentives – or bribes – that Bonn and East Berlin used in order to persuade African governments to give them diplomatic recognition.² To tell this story this paper draws on primary sources, memoirs and documents from the West German Auswärtiges Amt (AA) – or Foreign Office – as well as secondary literature.

The analysis focuses on the strategies developed and instruments employed by the two German states without examining the implications of these strategies for the African states, an issue to which not much academic consideration has been given. As this is certainly an important issue, it would be an interesting path for further research. Moreover, the impact and repercussions of the German-German struggle on the respective German state's relations with its allies will not be dealt with in detail. Finally, to allow for a concise treatment of the subject the analysis will be limited to the period between 1955 and 1966, in other terms from the development of the Hallstein Doctrine until the first signs of departure from it, with the West German Grand Coalition under Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger and Foreign Minister Willy Brandt.³

* I would like to thank Gareth Austin, Nathaniel Powell and Jaci Eisenberg for very useful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

¹ The Hallstein Doctrine will be explained in the next section.

² In this sense, this paper complements the book by William Glenn Gray (*Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949 – 1969*, Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2003). Gray, however, focuses on the rather general diplomatic strategy, while this paper explores the actual instruments used for the “diplomatic war” in Africa.

³ Of the several works dealing with the Hallstein Doctrine and its implementation in the Third World, two proved to be particularly useful for this paper because of their detailed assessments of the German-German struggle in the case of individual African states: Werner Kilian's book *Die Hallstein-Doktrin: Der Diplomatische Krieg zwischen der BRD und der DDR 1955 - 1973. Aus den Akten der Beiden Deutschen Außenministerien* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001) offers an insightful story of the “diplomatic war” fought by East and West Germany, and Ulf Engel and Hans-Georg Schleicher's book *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika. Zwischen Konkurrenz und Koexistenz. 1949-1990* (Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1998) also provides excellent information on the implications of Germany's division for both Germanys' Africa Policies. However, to complement these books, this working paper includes new documents from the Politisches Archiv (PA) of the West German Auswärtiges Amt.

Foreign Policy Guidelines

The Federal Republic of Germany

On 23 May 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was founded on the territory of the three Western zones of occupation as a consequence of the emerging Cold War. This new West German state saw itself as the successor of the German Reich and claimed to be the sole legitimate representative of the German people. It was assumed that by being recognized as the only legitimate Germany and thus by preventing the consolidation of the international position of East Germany, reunification could be achieved quickly.⁴ This fundamental policy line of speaking and acting on behalf of all the Germans derived directly from West Germany's constitution, the Basic Law:

Conscious of its responsibility before God and mankind, filled with the resolve to preserve its national and political unity [...] the German people [...] has, by virtue of its constituent power, enacted this Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany [...]. It acted also on behalf of those Germans to whom participation was denied. The entire German people is called upon to accomplish, by free self-determination, the unity and freedom of Germany.⁵

This West German claim to be the only legitimate representative soon developed into an actual policy, the idea of the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* (the claim to sole representation). In this logic, the new East German state could not be recognized as a state as it was not democratically legitimized – as

⁴ Adenauer pointed this out in front of the Bundestag after his trip to Moscow on 22 September 1955. See Deutscher Bundestag, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages. 2. Wahlperiode 1953. Stenographische Berichte*, 1955. Vol. 26. 5646.

⁵ Preamble of the Grundgesetz of the Federal Republic of Germany, version of 1949. Available online at http://www.ena.lu/basic_law_frg_23_1949-2-7108 (last accessed on 2 May 2011).

opposed to the Federal Republic – but merely a Soviet puppet state. Any recognition of the existence of this state, it was assumed, would lead to the inevitable continuation of Germany's division and hence prevent a speedy reunification.⁶

Yet, this policy naturally had to lead to conflicts in an international environment of hostile camps. The first problems for the Federal Government emerged in 1955 when diplomatic relations were opened between West Germany and the Soviet Union. As a consequence, there were now two German embassies – an East German and a West German one – in Moscow, which constituted a major embarrassment to the sole representation claim. In order not to give up the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*, the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) developed the so-called Hallstein Doctrine. It stated that the diplomatic recognition of the East German state by a third country would constitute an *acte peu amicable* and would trigger reactions leading up to, in the worst case, the severing of diplomatic ties with the third country concerned. In an attempt to justify the existence of two German embassies in Moscow, Adenauer stressed the particular and exceptional importance of the Soviet Union as a victor of the Second World War and hence as an Occupying Power whose co-operation was required to reunite Germany.⁷ Moscow was clearly a special case and certainly no example that would be followed in relations with other countries.

It is worth noting that the primary intention of the Hallstein Doctrine was to prevent diplomatic recognition of the GDR by third states. However, this changed during the early 1960s to also include the *Vorfeld* (the area of bilateral

⁶ Gregor Schöllgen, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (München: Beck, 1999), 45.

⁷ Adenauer's address to the Bundestag, see Deutscher Bundestag, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages*, 5644.

relations short of diplomatic recognition), for instance the exchange of trade missions or consulates.⁸ Bonn justified this by the brutal character of the East German regime as it had allegedly been revealed by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961.⁹ And yet, invoking the Wall and instrumentalising it for the Hallstein Doctrine was a mixed blessing. Certainly, on the one hand, it showed the totalitarian character of a state that had to wall in its population. On the other hand, it was also a redundant proof of Germany's division and thus of the *de facto* existence of two German states.

To underline its seriousness, the Federal Government decided that it had to make an example. Therefore, the Hallstein Doctrine was fully applied for the first time in the case of Yugoslavia, which had recognized East Berlin in 1957. Bonn severed its diplomatic relations with Tito. The same decision was taken in 1963 when Cuba opened an embassy in East Berlin.¹⁰

The Cuban case marked the regional reorientation of the Hallstein Doctrine. As most East European states had already recognized the GDR, the more immediate target of this doctrine was soon to be the newly independent states in the Third World, particularly in Africa. In this manner the Hallstein Doctrine influenced and shaped West Germany's Africa policy. When the number of newly independent states increased, Bonn tried to open diplomatic relations with all of them to prevent them from recognizing the GDR, weakening the East German regime on the international stage.¹¹ This, however, was not always so simple. In principle, there were not many

⁸ Hans-Joachim Spanger and Lothar Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt. Die Entwicklungspolitik der DDR, Eine Herausforderung für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987), 286.

⁹ Engel and Schleicher, *Die beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 165.

¹⁰ Gregor Schöllgen, *Jenseits Von Hitler: Die Deutschen in der Weltpolitik Von Bismarck bis Heute* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2005), 242.

¹¹ Heinrich End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik: Internationale Dimensionen des Innerdeutschen Konflikts 1949 - 1972*, vol. 1 (Köln: Verl. Wiss. und Politik, 1973), 116.

obstacles to entering into diplomatic relations with these countries. Bonn was not perceived as having any regional and geopolitical interests (as opposed to France and Britain), and Germany's short colonial escapade ended almost forty years earlier, meaning West German representatives were generally welcomed with open arms.¹² Bonn, however, had to pay attention to its allies with colonial possessions, and particularly to the United Kingdom and France, who were Occupying Powers in Germany. Of utmost importance was the priority that these important allies should not be offended, which sometimes led to conflict. For example, as regards Guinea, in 1958: West Germany could not rush to recognize the country but rather had to handle this issue carefully because of French reservations to Guinea's independence. Bonn could not afford to immediately recognize Guinea as this would have been a major affront to France and problematic in view of the recently-initiated Franco-German reconciliation.¹³

West Germany's association with colonial powers – such as Portugal and Belgium – and its support for the regime in South Africa, was another obstacle for Africa policy. The GDR would try to exploit this only too eagerly.

Though the promotion of economic interests progressively gained importance for West German foreign policy, especially after the start of Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle), clearly the determining factor of Bonn's Africa policy in the 1950s and in the first half of the 1960s was the German Question.¹⁴ Other aspects implied by the term used at the time, "development aid", namely building up the capacity of the countries concerned in order to promote self-reliance, mattered less. The predominant factor for West

¹² Volker Matthies, "Die Staatenwelt Zwischen Sahara und Sambesi," in *Handbuch der Deutschen Außenpolitik*, ed. Hans-Peter Schwarz (München, Zürich: Piper, 1975), 326.

¹³ End, 117. For the example of Guinea see Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 86.

¹⁴ Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski, *Mit Leidenschaft und Augenmaß: In Mogadischu und Anderswo. Politische Memoiren* (München: Goldmann, 1991), 40.

Germany's decisions regarding the amount of development aid granted lay in the respective African country's usefulness for, and support in, the struggle against recognition of East Germany.¹⁵ Adenauer quite freely admitted he had no problem instrumentalising development aid for foreign policy purposes: "I don't feel conscious of any moral guilt toward a colored person [...] I didn't give him the color."¹⁶ He implied that his Africa policy was not designed out of a feeling of moral responsibility to help Africans, and development aid could certainly be used as a political tool.

This exploitation of Africa policy for the diplomatic crusade against East Germany became even blunter in the course of the 1960s; after the Berlin Wall was built, the FRG tried to rally more Third World countries behind its stance on the German Question. It did so by claiming for itself one of the principles that the newly independent states held dear: the principle of self-determination. By Bonn's logic, the GDR should not be recognized or dealt with because, like the Soviet Union, it deprived its population of the right to freely decide on their desired political system. It was assumed that this new link with a principle very much appreciated in the Third World would add a complementary justification to the policy of the Hallstein Doctrine.¹⁷

West Germany's Africa policy was not an altruistic policy, but rather an adjunct of its German Question policy. To understand Bonn's Africa policy, it has to be seen within the Cold War context and the existence of two antagonistic German states. This notion was a recurrent feature of Germany's relations with Africa. To 19th century German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, Africa only mattered as a pawn in his chess game of European power politics.

¹⁵ Matthies, "Die Staatenwelt Zwischen Sahara und Sambesi," 329. Also Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 282-283.

¹⁶ Adenauer cited in Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 120.

¹⁷ Brigitte H. Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960 - 1985*, vol. 3 (Münster: LIT, 1995), 55.

Hence his statement: "Here is Russia and here is France, with Germany in the middle. That is my map of Africa."¹⁸ The same held true 70 years later when Bonn used Africa policy only as a function of its Germany policy. Hence also in the 1950s and 1960s, West Germany's map of Africa certainly lay in Germany.

The German Democratic Republic

On 7 October 1949, as a response to the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, a second German state, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), was created on the territory of the Soviet Zone of Occupation. In stark contrast to West Germany, it was of vital importance for the GDR to stress that two legitimate German states had emerged on the territory of the former German Reich after the Second World War. As a consequence of this stance, the GDR did not deny the existence of West Germany as a state.¹⁹ According to East Berlin's logic, one of the two states was a fascist and capitalist country, the FRG, whereas the GDR was a true democracy that was the result of a revolutionary process. In East Berlin's reading, the German division was the result of a class struggle.²⁰ And yet, curiously enough, East Berlin also had its own version of the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* in so far as it claimed to be the only legitimate voice of the German working class.²¹

For East Germany, the primary foreign policy goal after its creation in October 1949 was to consolidate its status as a sovereign and independent

¹⁸ Bismarck as quoted in A. J. P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 221.

¹⁹ Hans-Adolf Jacobsen et al., *Drei Jahrzehnte Außenpolitik der DDR: Bestimmungsfaktoren, Instrumente, Aktionsfelder*, Schriften des Forschungsinstituts der Deutschen Gesellschaft Für Auswärtige Politik E.V. Bonn Reihe Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft, vol. 44 (München: Oldenbourg, 1979), 97-99.

²⁰ End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 29-30.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

state, especially after the Soviet Union had granted the GDR independence in 1954. Hence, East Berlin pursued a two-state strategy with respect to the German Question.²²

With the Conference of Bandung in 1955 and the creation of the non-aligned movement, the Third World suddenly entered East Berlin's political calculations. Prior to 1955, it had concentrated on the development of relations with its Eastern neighbours and some selected non-European countries, primarily the People's Republic of China, Indochina and Korea. Then, in the course of the late 1950s, a reorientation towards Africa took place as it was assumed that decolonization would weaken the Western world by depriving it of resources and manpower.²³ For that reason, decolonization in Africa demanded political responses and contributed to the evolution of an East German Africa policy in the 1960s. This, despite the fact that there were no genuine East German geostrategic interests in this region.²⁴

Naturally, East Germany strongly supported the notion of decolonization and self-determination. It considered them *per se* as fundamental principles of Marxism. This was for instance stressed in an East German book on the foreign policy of the GDR which found that national liberation movements and workers were "natural allies".²⁵ The primary motivator behind this stance, however, lay in the German Question. By supporting national liberation movements in their struggle for self-determination, their favourable attitude towards the GDR was to be secured and so was the diplomatic recognition of East Germany as a final goal. This would have eventually led,

²² Rüdiger Marco Booz, *"Hallsteinzeit": Deutsche Außenpolitik 1955 - 1972* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1995), 21.

²³ Peter Klein et al., *Geschichte der Außenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Berlin (Ost): Dietz Verlag, 1968), 380; Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 160-162.

²⁴ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 91-94. See also Joachim Naumann, *DDR-Außenpolitik Im Rückspiegel. Diplomaten Im Gespräch* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 83.

²⁵ Klein et al., *Geschichte der Außenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 378.

so the theory ran, to the broad international recognition of the German Democratic Republic as a sovereign state. Similarly to West Germany, the German Question clearly determined East German Africa policy.²⁶

This strategy of achieving international recognition through support of decolonization was implied in the speeches delivered at the Sixth Party Convention of the ruling East German party, the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), in 1963:

The increased international importance of our Republic is best demonstrated by our relations to new nation states and to the peoples struggling for national independence in Africa and Asia. Our anti-imperialist foreign policy, our unconditional stance against colonialism and neo-colonialism has led to friendship with the peoples of new nation states. In many new nation states demands are being raised to enter into normal state relations with the German Democratic Republic.²⁷

By criticizing West German support for colonial powers or colonial regimes as well as Western colonialism at large, the GDR intended to secure the support of Third World countries in order to achieve a breakthrough from its diplomatic isolation in Africa and in other parts of the Third World.²⁸

Not surprisingly, the idea of socialism had some appeal to newly independent states as it provided for an ideology distinct from capitalism – which was conducive towards colonialism – and that could set a basis for the organisation of the new state.²⁹ This could be exploited by the GDR. However,

²⁶ Jacobsen et al., *Drei Jahrzehnte Außenpolitik der DDR*, 175.

²⁷ Protokoll des VI. Parteitages der SED as quoted in Klein et al., *Geschichte der Außenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 397. Translation of the author.

²⁸ Jacobsen et al., *Drei Jahrzehnte Außenpolitik der DDR*, 657.

²⁹ Stefan Mair, "Schwarzafrika Während des Ost-West-Konflikts," in *Afrika I*, ed. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Bonn: 1999).

it is important to bear in mind that the GDR's Africa policy was a response to the Hallstein Doctrine and its intended isolation of East Germany rather than a policy born out of direct interests in the region or the fate of the African peoples.

To counter the Hallstein Doctrine and to be able to establish its own diplomatic relations, the GDR implemented a strategy of staggered escalation. According to this notion, the first step, trade agreements, should lead to the installation of trade missions which could then be gradually morphed into consulates and finally into embassies. It was assumed that this step-by-step approach would provoke less opposition from the Federal Republic and from the African states.³⁰

It should not go unrecorded that there was also a domestic factor affecting East German Africa policy. Striving for international success, or recognition, was considered a means of stabilizing the internal situation in the GDR and of strengthening the rule of the SED, particularly after the uprising in East Germany of 17 June 1953, and the building of the Wall in 1961.³¹ This mirrors the goals of German colonialism in the 19th century, which was supposed to pacify social tensions in the German home country.³²

Incentives and instruments: the Federal Republic of Germany

As the guiding principles for the foreign policies of the two Germanys in Africa have been enumerated, now the instruments used to implement these policies will be analyzed. This paper will differentiate between five different sets of tools: 1) development aid (encompassing technical, financial and

³⁰ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 35-42.

³¹ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 95.

³² Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der Deutschen Kolonien*, 5 ed. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 53-54.

capital aid, as well as loans and financial contributions towards specific projects in the respective country); 2) military aid and cooperation of intelligence agencies; 3) propaganda; 4) travel diplomacy; and 5) cultural cooperation.

Development Aid

For West Germany, the emergence of many new countries in Africa and the need to influence them favourably with a view to the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* coincided with the massive economic boom of its economy (*Wirtschaftswunder*). Consequently, the FRG had massive financial resources at its disposal, and it was economically much better off than the GDR whose economy was considerably smaller.³³ This did not go unnoticed by the Western allies: the United States pressured Bonn to contribute more actively to the fight for the hearts and minds of the people in the Third World. Obviously, a good way to do so certainly would be to give them money in the form of “development aid.”³⁴

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was not very enthusiastic about this, but he realized that West Germany’s new prosperity could no longer be denied and to placate the U.S., he agreed to set up a considerable programme of development aid.³⁵ Nevertheless, it soon transpired that this money would be distributed according to the respective state’s importance in the struggle for sole representation and not as a means of support based on need level.³⁶

³³ For a detailed comparison of the economic power of both Germanys see End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 112. It can be exemplified by the production figures in 1960: The FRG produced goods worth 313 billion deutschmark whereas the GDR only produced goods with a value of 72 billion deutschmark.

³⁴ Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era*, 52.

³⁵ Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 280, 283; Wischnewski, *Mit Leidenschaft und Augenmaß*, 40.

³⁶ End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 125.

Consequently, development aid became a highly politicized instrument in Bonn's foreign policy in Africa and the Federal Government openly admitted this: "The Federal Government, through its development assistance, is attempting to win over the developing countries to an attitude of understanding for the German cause."³⁷ For instance, in the aftermath of the crisis of Guinea's possible recognition of East Germany in 1960, Bonn intensified its financial support for Guinea. This was aimed at preventing a further increase of Eastern influence in the region and was certainly not influenced by considerations pertaining to a development model.³⁸ As a consequence, Guinea received an amount of 50 million deutschmarks which it could use to buy machinery for mining, river ferries, train coaches, and trucks. West Germany also agreed to fund the construction of an aluminium factory and considerably increased its technical assistance.³⁹ The aim of these projects was clear: "The ongoing negotiations will certainly see Guinea's demands for further German financial support for big investment projects. This will be instrumental in strengthening Guinea's relations with the Federal Republic."⁴⁰ The shipment of six trains to Guinea was also supposed to serve this goal: "These trains epitomize German quality. They will increase the political prestige of the Federal Republic."⁴¹

Development aid to the African states was in general increased and distributed like a sprinkler. This meant that Bonn did not focus on certain states, but distributed money to all African countries to demonstrate Bonn's economic importance and power and to increase the negative economic

³⁷ Report "Deutsche Entwicklungshilfe im Jahre 1964" as quoted in Brigitte H. Schulz and William Hansen, "Aid or Imperialism? West Germany in Sub-Saharan Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 2 (1984): 297. Translation of the author.

³⁸ See Memo Referat 410 to Referat 403: Finanzkredit für Guinea, 2 March 1961. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes [hereafter, PA] B34, Bd. 150.

³⁹ Aufzeichnung Referat 410: Guinea, 18 April 1961. PA B34, Bd. 150.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴¹ Letter Botschaft Conakry an das Auswärtiges Amt: Politische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung deutscher Lieferungen an Guinea, 23 Mai 1961. PA B34, 150. Translation of the author.

consequences for states seeking more intensive relations with East Berlin.⁴² But Bonn did not restrict itself to monetary aid. It also sent experts to the Africa, which soon became one of the pillars of Bonn's battle for sole representation. In 1961, for instance, the West German ambassador to Guinea, Herbert Schroeder, recognized the importance of these experts and informed the Auswärtiges Amt that the number of Eastern experts was steadily increasing in the Guinean hinterland. He urged the Auswärtiges Amt to increase West German commitment in that region as well, in order not to fall behind.⁴³

Military Aid

Another incentive to bring the African states on-side with West Germany was the offer of sending military advisers and material to African states. This instrument was employed by the Federal Republic in its dealing with countries such as Sudan, Nigeria, Guinea and Chad. The FRG even went beyond shipping war material and instructors to these states – it also invited African soldiers to come to Germany for training.⁴⁴ As seen below, in the case of Tanzania, this military aid was indeed exploited by Bonn to fight the recognition of the GDR and to support West Germany's *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*.

Propaganda

In the field of propaganda, it was the GDR who set the pace and the FRG who was forced to react. While East Germany quickly started using propaganda as

⁴² Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 115-116; Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 288.

⁴³ Letter Botschaft Conakry an das Auswärtiges Amt: Reise des Referenten für politische Öffentlichkeitsarbeit durch Ost- und Südguinea, 1 March 1961, PA B34, Bd. 150.

⁴⁴ Matthies, *Die Staatenwelt Zwischen Sahara und Sambesi*, 328.

a tool, Bonn only realized its importance in the mid-1960s. It was at that time that press attachés were sent to the West German embassies all around the world to produce and distribute reports on East Berlin's denial of self-determination to its people, its ruthless suppression of the 1953 uprising and – the most exploited point – the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, tearing apart families, friends and a nation.⁴⁵ Quite clearly, this propaganda offensive aimed at discrediting the GDR in the eyes of Africans.

On the other hand, as will be described further down, East Germany highlighted its claims to be a new type of state embracing equality, social progress and peacefulness, giving it the moral high ground over the supposedly capitalist, neo-colonial and imperialist Federal Republic.

Travel Diplomacy

A frequently used tool in Bonn's set of incentives to prevent countries from challenging its *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* was the possibility to either send West German politicians to the respective African states or – the more typical way – to have African politicians, such as Sékou Touré of Guinea, come to visit the Federal Republic.⁴⁶ During the years of the sole representation claim, many thousand politicians from African countries visited West Germany and were given a tour of the FRG and of Berlin. A whole business of diplomatic tourism evolved. As Kilian points out:

It was one of the rules of the game of these years that both German states invited hundreds of so-called 'political multipliers' on expensive information trips. Those normally culminated in a trip to Berlin showing the visitors respectively the 'wall of shame' or 'anti-

⁴⁵ End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 132-133; Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

fascist protection wall'. The minutes of these visits then noted with satisfaction that the visitors showed disgust and outrage.⁴⁷

Moreover, politicians were also invited to undergo extensive health checks in West German hospitals or just visit the country for *de luxe* shopping tours to convince them of the advantages of having a favourable relationship with West Germany.⁴⁸ For instance, in the aftermath of the so-called "Guinea Crisis" – when Guinea was on the brink of recognizing the GDR in 1960 – Bonn invited many Guinean dignitaries to visit the Federal Republic. They paid for medical checks at West German hospitals, and invited them on tours within West Germany as well as on the obligatory visit to West Berlin.⁴⁹

Beyond the contingent of African politicians visiting West Germany, West German politicians such as Federal President Heinrich Lübke embraced the possibility of travelling to African countries such as Liberia, Guinea and Senegal (in 1962), Ethiopia (in 1964), as well as Madagascar and Kenya (in 1966) to demonstrate West Germany's presence and interest.⁵⁰ And, most important, to persuade politicians in Africa not to recognize East Germany. A vivid example of how seriously West Germany took the instrument of travel diplomacy is Special Envoy Hasso von Etdorf's mission to Guinea to visit Sékou Touré in 1960. After some confusion as to whether or not Guinea had opened an embassy in East Berlin, von Etdorf was sent to Sékou Touré of Guinea to clarify his position. However, as the president was in the Guinean hinterland, von Etdorf had to go on an epic trip of 700 km on almost

⁴⁷ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 99. Translation of the author

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 71-72, 191.

⁴⁹ See for instance the visit of Koné, a Guinean politician who stayed for two weeks in the FRG, during which the West Germans covered the travel costs and a daily pocket money of 50 deutschmark. See Drahterlass an die Botschaft Conakry, 29 August 1961, PA B34, Bd. 150.. For the visit of the Guinean minister of employment, and the director of the Guinean social insurance agency, the Auswärtiges Amt also organised a two week stay which included a three-day visit of Berlin. See letter of the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung an das Auswärtige Amt: Einladung des guinesischen Arbeitsministers in die Bundesrepublik, 20 June 1961. PA B34, Bd. 150.

⁵⁰ Matthies, *Die Staatenwelt Zwischen Sahara und Sambesi*, 327.

impassable roads with cars that barely deserved the name.⁵¹ Eventually, this paid off, though, as Sékou Touré then confirmed to him that he had not recognized East Germany.⁵²

Cultural Cooperation

Cultural cooperation was also seen as an effective way to convince African countries of West Germany's superiority over the GDR. The least politicized and exploited instrument in this field was the promotion of German culture through Goethe Institutes in Africa. Their primary function was to inform the host country's population about German culture and language and to promote a favourable view of West Germany.⁵³ Although the idea of influencing the African people on the German Question might have contributed to the decision to install these institutes, evidence they furthered the policy of sole representation is not apparent. What is evident, however, is that by establishing these institutes, the Federal Government wished to show its appreciation of the host state by underlining its willingness for close relations.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the Goethe Institutes indirectly supported the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* by representing West Germany in the host country and by promoting knowledge about the FRG.

A more obvious tool of West Germany's exploitation of cultural cooperation for its sole representation claim was the scholarship programme established for African students who wished to study in the FRG, as well as the dispatch

⁵¹ Drahtbericht Botschaft Conakry an das Auswärtiges Amt, 1 April 1960, PA B34, Bd. 150.

⁵² Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 113.

⁵³ Even today this is one of the basic tasks of the Goethe Institut, see the §1 sub-paragraph 3 of the "Rahmenvertrag zwischen dem Auswärtigen Amt und dem Goethe-Institut: 2004."

<http://www.goethe.de/mmo/priv/1527476-STANDARD.pdf> (last accessed 10 February 2009).

⁵⁴ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 40-41.

of West German teachers to African states, a tool used quite frequently.⁵⁵ Here, the instrumentalising factor is obvious. 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.

In conclusion, the Federal Republic had a variety of instruments that could be used as incentives to promote its *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*. The most important tool, however, was certainly development aid, that is financial loans, gifts and contributions. Here, the competition with East Germany was the least balanced as the GDR simply lacked the resources to have an equally strong financial commitment to the African countries:

The Federal Government intended to support its Germany policy goals by economic aid. Moreover, in several countries that wanted to intensify their relations with the GDR, it used massive financial commitments to achieve the desired restraint of the host government. The GDR was hardly able to compete because of its smaller economy.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ See for instance in Guinea, Ghana and Tanzania as described in *Ibid.*, 158; also Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 108.

⁵⁶ Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 286. Translation of the author.

Incentives and instruments: the German Democratic Republic

Yet, despite the lack of economic power East Germany did not simply stand idly by. The “workers’ and farmers’ state” had other advantages it could exploit.

Development Aid

In terms of its population and territory, the German Democratic Republic was much smaller and economically less powerful than the FRG.⁵⁷ So how did East Germany try to compete with Bonn?

As has been described further above, West Germany distributed its development aid like a sprinkler, trying not to miss out on any African country. The German Democratic Republic, however, used its scarce financial resources more selectively. It focused its development aid on a few countries that seemed to be more prone towards the ideas of Communism and showed some affiliations with the Communist bloc.⁵⁸ One such case was Guinea which became independent in 1958 and had very strained relations with the former colonial power, France. Due to French pressure the FRG could thus not recognize Guinea immediately but had to wait some time for things to calm down. This period was exploited by the Soviet camp and by the GDR to increase their influence on Guinea. Consequently, this newly independent state became one of the focuses of East German development aid.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ According to End, the ratio between the territorial sizes of both states was 100:44 in favour of West Germany, in terms of population 100:28 in favour of West Germany and still in 1969 the East German GDP only accounted for 24 per cent of the West German one. See End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 122.

⁵⁸ Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 186.

⁵⁹ Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 91; Jacobsen et al, *Drei Jahrzehnte Außenpolitik der DDR*, 659-660.

Another instrument used by East Germany was trade. Although not development aid *per se* it was employed also as a means to substitute for financial aid and hence can be subsumed under this category. In order to improve the relations with the respective African country, trade agreements were concluded and the GDR contracted to buy certain African goods, such as bananas and coffee. Trade thus served as a door-opener in accordance with the East German step-by-step approach, escalating relations eventually from purely commercial ones to diplomatic recognition.⁶⁰ It so happened that for instance in Guinea, the GDR bought off the whole banana harvest for purely political reasons; and had no means to ship all of it to East Germany on time.⁶¹

Cooperation of Intelligence Agencies and Military Support

Another instrument the GDR employed to support to friendly African countries was to help build up a secret police. East Germany undoubtedly had experts in this field. For that purpose, officers of East Germany's Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*) were sent to countries such as Ghana to provide logistical support and help the local authorities in building up an efficient intelligence agency. Moreover, East Germany sent military instructors and medical equipment to countries such as Guinea, Ghana and Tanzania.⁶² East Berlin pursued a policy completely in line with that of its allies: a lack of economic resources meant a tendency to offer military support, both material and know-how.⁶³ Military and intelligence know-how became a valuable export good.

⁶⁰ End, *Zweimal Deutsche Außenpolitik*, 122-123.

⁶¹ Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 91.

⁶² Spanger and Brock, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, 186-189.

⁶³ Mair, *Schwarzafrika Während des Ost-West-Konflikts*.

Propaganda

A field in which the German Democratic Republic excelled, and which it was very much committed to was propaganda. Here, it was the GDR that set the trend and the Federal Republic had to follow suit. In Ghana for instance, East Germany published pamphlets depicting the FRG as a neo-colonial exploiter. The West German embassy reacted to these allegations by publishing an embassy newspaper telling the “true story” about Bonn’s foreign policy and attacking the GDR for its denial of free opinion and democratic rights among its citizens.⁶⁴ This propaganda warfare of the two Germanys led to absurd situations. In Guinea, for instance, the West German press attaché paid a local bookseller to give away brochures on West Germany for free. After he had delivered these brochures in the morning, an East German official would come later in the day and pay some money to the bookseller in order to be allowed to take away all the West German brochures.⁶⁵ Obviously, this businessman did not need any lessons in capitalism.

However, West German foreign policy also provided some ammunition for East Berlin’s propaganda cannons: Bonn’s support for the colonial regime of Portugal or the South African apartheid state was eagerly exploited by GDR propaganda.⁶⁶ Naturally, using propaganda had some appeal for East Germany. First, it was a cost-effective way of influencing the local population and authorities. Moreover, as East Germany claimed to support decolonization and independence movements, it had a ready-made target in the ambiguous policy of the West German state. Bonn had to take into account alliance politics and pay attention to the regional interests of its allies,

⁶⁴ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 78-79.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁶⁶ Matthies, *Die Staatenwelt Zwischen Sahara und Sambesi*, 328.

which did not always allow it to be seen in the best light. The GDR certainly managed to exploit this restraint in its favour.

Travel Diplomacy

Another instrument that was frequently used by East Berlin was the possibility of sending GDR delegations to African states in order to persuade them to increase their contacts with East Germany. The goals of these trips were fruitful talks with host governments and garnering as much public attention as possible to demonstrate that the GDR was an equal and normal member of the international community.⁶⁷ The most stunning success in this regard was certainly the visit of East Germany's ruling party's chairman Walter Ulbricht to the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1965. Although Gamal Abdel Nasser reiterated to West Germany that this was not at all a state visit and that the UAR would not recognize East Germany, the trip fulfilled all formal criteria of an official state visit and caused severe tensions in West Germany's relations with Nasser, leading finally to the break in diplomatic relations.⁶⁸

After the construction of the Berlin Wall with its embarrassing implications, East Germany sent many special envoys – and there was a whole army of deputy foreign ministers just for this purpose – to the Third World. They were supposed to explain this special development that had the potential – eagerly exploited by Bonn – to spoil all of East Germany's moral achievements in Africa.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See for instance Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 160, 189, 195, 213.

⁶⁸ Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 174-180. See also Dalia Abu Samra, "Deutschlands Außenpolitik Gegenüber Ägypten. Abbruch und Wiederaufnahme der Diplomatischen Beziehungen 1965 bis 1972" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin, 2002), 100-105.

⁶⁹ Klein et al., *Geschichte der Außenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 396.

In addition to sending East German officials to Africa, the GDR – as well as West Germany – also invited many African politicians for health checks and shopping tours to East Germany.⁷⁰ Again, the aim of this policy was mainly to convince African officials of the advantages East Germany offered, and quite bluntly, to buy them off.

Cultural Cooperation

Finally, East Germany was active in sending teachers and instructors to African countries and in granting scholarships to African students.⁷¹ Much like in the West German case, this was aimed at convincing the beneficiaries of the benevolent intentions of East Germany and to use them as “multipliers” to further the cause of the GDR in the African governments and administrations.

In conclusion, it is true that East Germany had a more restricted budget for development aid than West Germany, and less means at its disposal. Yet, it nevertheless managed to find other ways – such as propaganda and travel diplomacy – of influencing African countries of the righteousness and usefulness of intensifying relations with East Germany.⁷²

Case Studies

After having assessed in a more abstract manner the policy guidelines and instruments developed by the two Germanys in Africa, two cases will now be examined to see how these policies were implemented.

⁷⁰ See for instance Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 71.

⁷¹ See letter Botschaft Conakry an das Auswärtiges Amt: Einrichtung einer Schule durch die FDJ in Guinea, 27 May 1961, PA B34, Bd. 150. Also, Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 158, 196.

⁷² Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 123-124.

Ghana

Ghana became independent from Britain in 1957 but continued to maintain close links with the former colonial power.⁷³ In the same year, a West German embassy was opened in Accra and both countries entered into diplomatic relations.⁷⁴ The GDR, however, also contemplated intensifying its contacts with Ghana because of this country's openly displayed affiliations with the Communist bloc, a fact that led the West German Auswärtiges Amt in 1962 to the conclusion that Ghana was the African state that tended the most towards the Soviet camp.⁷⁵ East Germany hence initiated its own ties with this potential candidate that could bring it a little closer to international recognition. And the efforts paid off: in 1959, the German Democratic Republic managed to open a trade mission in Accra which was unofficially granted almost the same privileges as a diplomatic mission.⁷⁶ Finally, in 1963 – after the construction of the Berlin Wall – Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's president, decided to open a trade mission in East Berlin. As a consequence, West Germany recalled its ambassador to Bonn "for consultations", but refrained from any more serious reactions.⁷⁷

That was indeed the only thing the FRG could do at this point. After the building of the Wall, the Federal Government claimed that it would tolerate relations with East Germany even less than before. However, there was not much that could be said against a trade mission as it was clearly below the

⁷³ For a general overview about Ghana's foreign policy at the time see, for instance, Williard Scott Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), and, more recently, Boni Yao Gebe, "Ghana's Foreign Policy at Independence and Implications for the 1966 *coup d'état*," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 3 (2008): 160-86.

⁷⁴ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 74.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷⁶ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 188.

⁷⁷ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 75.

level of a diplomatic mission.⁷⁸ As a matter of fact, a trade mission had an even less formal character than a consulate and invoking the Hallstein Doctrine would thus have been extremely difficult.

Aside from the prestige of gaining or preventing recognition, Ghana also had some importance for both German states because of the leading role Nkrumah was playing in the Pan-African and non-aligned movements.⁷⁹

Hence, in order not to lose Ghana to the other side, the Federal Republic used its most efficient instrument and started delivering goods worth 22 million deutschmarks as development aid in 1959, and granted a considerable loan of 20 million deutschmarks in 1963. After the opening of the trade mission in East Berlin, Bonn dispatched the head of the Auswärtiges Amt's Africa desk, Hans-Georg Steltzer, to Accra as its new ambassador in order to underline the importance it attached to Ghana.⁸⁰

Yet the GDR did not just stand idly by. At the first glance, it looked to the GDR as if Ghana could be a success for its endeavour to break international isolation. Nkrumah went so far as to even give a favourable speech during the conference of non-aligned states in Belgrade in 1961 in which he stated that "Everybody knows that there are two Germanys as a consequence of the last war. Therefore it's only reasonable for the world to accept this situation."⁸¹ Nevertheless, the East German leadership still saw in Nkrumah a clear representative of the bourgeoisie.⁸² According to their Africa experts, more persuasion work thus needed to be done. Consequently, Ghanaian politicians such as Foreign Minister Kojo Botsio were invited to visit the Industrial Trade

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 201-202.

⁷⁹ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 214.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 213-214; Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 135.

⁸¹ Nkrumah as cited in Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 68. Translation of the author.

⁸² *Ibid.*

Fair in Leipzig and – since they were around anyway - to use the opportunity for a medical check up. As Kilian describes it:

Botsio brought with him his wife and his personal assistant and they all stayed for four weeks as Botiso insisted on a general health check at Leipzig's university hospital. Meanwhile, his wife went on a tour of East German shops – accompanied by officials of the East German foreign ministry – and bought a fur coat for the cold winters in Ghana which was made-to-measure and sent by courier mail to Ghana later on.⁸³

Botsio liked it so much, he came back for two more visits. Yet, to the disappointment of the East Germans, he never engaged in political talks, and his trips hence did not show any significant political results for the GDR.⁸⁴ However, Botsio was also intrigued to see the other German state. In 1965, he came to West Germany, once again for a medical check up of several weeks. The same procedure was repeated by both Germanys for several other Ghanaian politicians. During these trips, the “multipliers” also received valuable gifts to remind them of how fruitful and beneficial the friendship of the respective German state would be.⁸⁵

Propaganda also played an important role in the struggle for Ghana. Once again, to compensate for a lack of financial resources, the GDR actively pointed out the support the FRG rendered to the apartheid regime in South Africa as well as to the Portuguese in Angola and Portuguese Guinea. It also highlighted the alleged Nazi past of several West German ambassadors in Africa.⁸⁶ This was a smart move as Ghana was the forerunner of African

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 71. Translation of the author.

⁸⁴ See Document 122 in *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1964*, and Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 72.

⁸⁵ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika, 195-196*; Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 72-74.

⁸⁶ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 69.

decolonization and heavily resisted colonial regimes. West Germany, however, represented by the new Ambassador Hans-Georg Steltzer, accepted the propaganda challenge and soon it produced articles accusing the GDR of suppressing its own citizens and pointing out the miserable living conditions in East Germany.⁸⁷ Evoking the principle of self-determination was a clever idea as of Bonn's man in Accra as this principle – denied to the East German population by their government – was held in high esteem in Ghana. The propaganda battle was on.

Sports were also seen by East Berlin as a possible means to win over Ghana. The GDR wanted to improve its reputation by organizing a match between both national football teams. However, because of a misjudgement by the referee and some unfairness on the part of the East German team, this campaign to improve the image backfired and it ended in a major public relations disaster.⁸⁸

In 1963, the GDR started a new attempt to woo Ghana. In order to highlight the importance it attached to the country, the East German foreign ministry wanted to hold a regional conference of its representatives in Africa in Accra, emphasizing thus the important role that the host country would play in East Berlin's Africa policy.⁸⁹ Moreover, in 1964, the GDR also offered scholarships to Ghanaian students, and in 1965 it granted a loan of 24 million US dollars, making Ghana only second to the United Arab Republic in receiving East German financial aid.⁹⁰ In spite of all these offers, Nkrumah nevertheless

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 79; Bernhard Rieger, "Hanna Reitsch (1912-1979): The Global Career of a Nazi Celebrity," *German History* 26, no. 3 (2008): 400.

⁸⁸ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 80. For a general assessment of the importance of sport for East German diplomacy see the article by Andrew Strenck, "Diplomats in Track Suits: The Role of Sports in the Foreign Policy of the German Democratic Republic" *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 4, no. 1 (1980), and Martin Geyer, "Der Kampf um Nationale Repräsentation. Deutsch-Deutsche Sportbeziehungen und die "Hallstein-Doktrin"," *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 44, no. 1 (1996).

⁸⁹ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 194-195.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 195, 207.

could not be convinced to recognize East Berlin as he did not want to get overly entangled in the tricky German-German dispute.⁹¹ West Germany still maintained the upper hand with its development aid and major development projects, like the bridge over the Volta River.⁹²

The conditions for the GDR took a turn for the worse when a *coup d'état* took place against Nkrumah in 1966 and a pro-Western government was installed that immediately closed the East German mission in Ghana.⁹³ Consequently, the East German officials working for the Ministry of State Security had to leave the country. They had been dispatched to Ghana to help create an efficient security service sharing the experiences they had already gathered in the GDR.⁹⁴

When examining this case it is clear that both German states dealt with Ghana under the premise of their respective lines on the German Question. While West Germany wanted to prevent diplomatic recognition of the GDR, East Germany at least tried to achieve improved, more intensified, relations with Ghana. To implement their policy both Germanys readily set incentives such as development aid, trips for Ghanaian politicians, and gifts. Clearly, the most obvious instrument used was development aid that both states granted willingly. For the GDR this was only possible by concentrating scarce financial resources on Ghana as a centre of its Africa policy. Yet there were risks involved in this policy. After the *coup d'état*, East Berlin not only lost its influence in Ghana but had also wasted a considerable part of its foreign policy budget on a country that did not turn out to be much support in the struggle for recognition.

⁹¹ Gray, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 149.

⁹² Rieger, *Hanna Reitsch*, 400.

⁹³ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 208-209.

⁹⁴ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 81-83.

An interesting side note: Bonn benefited from a West German pilot with prior affiliations with Hitler, Hanna Reitsch. She owned a flight school – which was funded by Bonn – and was a close friend of Nkrumah’s using her personal friendship to convince him of the benefits of good relations with West Germany.⁹⁵

Tanzania

Tanzania also allows for an intriguing assessment of the German-German rivalry in Africa because of its peculiar situation. Tanzania was formed as a union of the former states Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964. Both states had become sovereign and independent prior to unification and had their own diplomatic relations as well as different governments: the – at least comparatively speaking – pro-Western Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika and the pro-Socialist Abeid Karume in Zanzibar. Because of these different political orientations, both states were important for the two German states. To understand the complexity of the German-German diplomatic war in Tanzania it is necessary to look back at the conditions prior to Tanzania’s unification.

After Karume’s revolution against the Sultan of Zanzibar on 12 January 1964 he immediately received a telegram from East Berlin declaring the recognition of the new government and asking for the opening of diplomatic relations. Karume agreed and unofficially assured East Berlin on 28 January that he would recognize the GDR.⁹⁶ The Federal Republic was less enthusiastic about the change – because of Karume’s strong socialist leanings – and decided to

⁹⁵ Rolf Lahr, *Zeuge von Fall und Aufstieg: Private Briefe 1934-1974* (Hamburg: Knaus, 1981), 400. Rieger, *Hanna Reitsch*, 383, 393, 400.

⁹⁶ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 156.

pursue a policy of wait-and-see until the affairs had settled down a little. Moreover, Britain – the former colonial power – exerted pressure on Bonn not to recognize the new government too soon.⁹⁷ However, when it transpired that there were negotiations taking place between the GDR and Karume, the Auswärtiges Amt immediately dispatched a member of the West German embassy in Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar to find out more about the situation. On 7 February, Karume reassured Bonn’s envoy that Zanzibar would not recognize East Germany. In a spontaneous outburst of gratitude, Bonn’s man in Zanzibar declared an *ad hoc* recognition of the new government by West Germany.⁹⁸

Yet, already prior to this spontaneous recognition, West Germany had decided to increase its efforts in Zanzibar. The Auswärtiges Amt augmented the number of Zanzibaris to be invited to visit the Federal Republic in order to inform them about West Germany and its stance on the German Question.⁹⁹ Consequently, faced with the *fait accompli* of its representative in Zanzibar, on 11 February, the Federal Government issued a press statement simply saying that “The Federal Government has recognized the government of the People’s Republic of Zanzibar. Both governments have decided to enter into diplomatic relations “¹⁰⁰

However, the next day, the Prime Minister of Zanzibar, Abdullah Kassim Hanga, officially welcomed the new East German ambassador and declared publicly that both states would establish diplomatic relations. The ambassador was officially accredited on 20 February.¹⁰¹ Under these circumstances, the FRG could no longer confirm the existence of diplomatic

⁹⁷ Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 155.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 156; Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 177-179.

⁹⁹ Vermerk: Politische Beziehungen zu Sansibar, 24 January 1964. PA B34, Bd. 523.

¹⁰⁰ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 180. Translation of the author.

¹⁰¹ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 157.

relations with Zanzibar and thus declared on 24 February: "The Federal Government will not recognize Zanzibar after the government of Zanzibar had decided not only to recognize the GDR but to already give the *agrément* to its ambassador."¹⁰² At least, after this confusing diplomatic back and forth the situation was now clear: East Germany had its first diplomatic mission in an African state and West Germany would not enter into relations with Zanzibar because of the Hallstein Doctrine.

To secure its influence on Zanzibar, the GDR immediately started a large programme of aid which embraced the whole range of instruments at East Berlin's disposal: East Germany declared it would build 150 flats in a slum cleaning project, give Zanzibar 5 million deutschmarks, agreed to grant a loan of 10 to 15 million deutschmarks, delivered fishing boats, sent teachers and experts, and also invited students from Zanzibar to study in East Germany. Moreover, the East Germans invited several delegations from Zanzibar on trips to East Germany.¹⁰³ East Berlin also ordered ships of its East Africa Line to call at Zanzibar's harbours although there was no economic necessity - it was all to underline the importance it attached to Zanzibar.¹⁰⁴ Beyond this civilian set of measures, the East Berlin government sent members of its secret police to Zanzibar to support the creation of such an agency there.¹⁰⁵

The situation was very different in Tanganyika where Bonn had already opened a diplomatic mission directly after the country's independence, and Julius Nyerere had shown no intention to grant diplomatic recognition to East Germany. Upon independence, Bonn immediately offered a loan of about 9 million deutschmarks and several projects of technical assistance to show

¹⁰² Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 181. Translation of the author.

¹⁰³ See Vermerk Referat I: Arbeitssitzung mit Außenminister Kambona, 5 May 1964. PA B34, Bd. 524. Also, Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 158.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 82.

Tanganyika how much their decision to recognize West Germany as the legitimate German state was appreciated.¹⁰⁶ As a matter of fact, Nyerere was increasingly worried about the formation of a socialist state in Zanzibar, and especially about the growing influence of the Soviets and East Europeans. Nyerere's worry offered a chance for the Western camp to increase its influence in Tanganyika; finally the Federal Government decided to send military instructors and material to the country. Such manoeuvres were also due to U.S. pressure stressing the FRG should exploit its good reputation in Tanganyika to keep Nyerere in the Western camp.¹⁰⁷ Finally, East Germany was already actively involved in sending military aid to Zanzibar which also largely contributed to the West German decision to support building up Tanganyika's army.¹⁰⁸

That was the situation in April 1964. Then, to the surprise of the whole world, Nyerere and Karume agreed to form a union of both states.¹⁰⁹ Now the competition between the two Germanys about who would be diplomatically recognized in this new state, Tanzania, was fully unleashed. Immediately, a busy travel diplomacy of diplomats from both German states started. Among others, the GDR sent Deputy Prime Minister Alfred Scholz to see Karume and from West Germany the Federal Minister for the Interior, Herrmann Höcherl, and the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation, Walter Scheel, visited Nyerere.¹¹⁰ The West German ambassador made it known to Nyerere that the Federal Republic would not tolerate an East German embassy in Tanzania.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁰⁷ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 158.

¹⁰⁸ See Vermerk Referat I: Arbeitssitzung mit Außenminister Kambona, 5 May 1964. PA B34, Bd. 524.

¹⁰⁹ Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 160.

¹¹⁰ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 161, 166; Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 196.

This led Nyerere to inform an East German emissary that the new state would not recognize the GDR.¹¹¹

Bonn was pleased by this attitude and offered financial assistance to build up to 10,000 houses in Tanzania under the aegis of a slum-clearing project. The Auswärtiges Amt was so desperate to show its gratitude for the Tanzanian decision not to recognize East Germany that it was even willing to give the money necessary for the project as a gift and with no strings attached. In the autumn of 1964 the amount cleared for this project was even raised again to now 10 million deutschmarks.¹¹² As an internal document of the Auswärtiges Amt stated, the main purpose of this project was to counter the East German efforts in Zanzibar:

It is the goal of this project to underline the big political and social importance of the slum-clearing project in Dar es Salaam to contrast it with the house-building project that the Soviet Zone of Occupation [that is the term that the West German government used to refer to the GDR at the time] is currently implementing with great propaganda in Zanzibar. Moreover, we have to support President Nyerere with generous German development efforts in demonstrating to the leaders in Zanzibar that they would be well advised to accept our help rather than that of the Soviet Zone of Occupation.¹¹³

The house-building projects in Zanzibar and in Tanganyika became one of the primary battle grounds of the German-German struggle for recognition. In that context, the ability to build more houses more quickly than the other German state was interpreted by both German governments as a demonstration of the supremacy over the other one and hence as a scale for

¹¹¹ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 159.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 160-161.

¹¹³ Vermerk Abteilung III: Technische Hilfe für Tanganjika, 28 October 1964. PA B34, Bd. 524, p. 3. Translation of the author.

measuring the power of the two Germanys.¹¹⁴ However, the GDR had to deal with a particular set of problems as it could not find anyone to sell it the bricks and concrete it needed for its project in Zanzibar. Most local enterprises had boycotted the GDR, so it had to ship them all the way from East Germany.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, West Germany did not restrict itself to impressing Tanganyika – it also wooed the political leaders of Zanzibar. An internal document of the Auswärtiges Amt stated: “We should also take into account the big ego of a person with rather limited intellectual gifts such as Karume who has not been courted enough by us so far. We therefore suggest establishing unofficial direct contacts.”¹¹⁶

Consequently, Under-Secretary of State Karl Carstens instructed the embassy in Dar es Salaam to enter into unofficial negotiations with Karume aiming at concluding an agreement on development aid. Yet, it was believed this agreement should be concluded in secret, behind the back of the Tanganyikans: thus, Nyerere was not to be informed about this.¹¹⁷ Prior to this East German agreement, however, the Federal Republic had extended an olive branch to Zanzibar. It offered to provide seven million deutschmarks for a house-building project in Zanzibar under the condition that the GDR would be excluded from the project and that the project would be openly associated with West Germany.¹¹⁸

East Berlin was not willing to give up without a fight. East German officials approached Karume, who was to become Vice President of the new and united state, reminding him of his earlier promise to maintain the East

¹¹⁴ See letter Hessische Minister für Wirtschaft und Verkehr an das Auswärtiges Amt, 3 December 1964. PA B34, Bd. 524.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Aufzeichnung für Staatssekretär: Beziehungen zur Vereinigten Republik Tanganjika-Sansibar, 25 May 1964. PA B34, Bd. 523. My translation.

¹¹⁷ Drahterlass an die Botschaft Dar es Salaam, 25 May 1964. PA B34, Bd. 523.

¹¹⁸ Drahterlass an die Botschaft Dar es Salaam, 20 May 1964. PA B34, Bd. 523.

German embassy. Karume told the East German comrades not to worry: "If Tanganyika is not willing to recognize the GDR then we would rather blow off the union. The new Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar will recognize the GDR and we declare this openly."¹¹⁹ To offer some more incentives for Karume, East Berlin granted Zanzibar a new loan of 20 to 25 million GDR Marks and even promised a whole hospital including staff. West Germany responded by offering more military aid to Nyerere, including fighter jets.¹²⁰ The official justification for this was the increasing number of East German military advisers and equipment in Zanzibar.¹²¹ The spiral of competition between East and West Germany continued.

Bonn increased its efforts to woo key Tanganyikan politicians by inviting them on trips to the Federal Republic. As in the case of Guinea and Ghana, these trips did not only serve to inform the visitors about life in West Germany in general, but also included extensive medical treatment and shopping tours. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tanganyika, Oscar Kambona, for instance, was invited on a ten-day stay in the FRG including a medical check-up for which the Auswärtiges Amt was willing to pay 3000 deutschmarks.¹²² Then in June, the Deputy Minister of Trade of Tanganyika was invited to visit West Germany for 17 days in August 1964. This also included a thorough medical treatment for which the Auswärtiges Amt paid willingly.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Karume as quoted in Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 195. Translation of the author.

¹²⁰ Informationsbeitrag für die Gesprächsmappe des Herrn Bundeskanzlers zu den deutsch-amerikanischen Gesprächen am 9./1. Juni in Ottawa und am 12. Juni in Washington, PA B34, Bd. 523, p. 4. Also Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 164.

¹²¹ Letter Auswärtiges Amt an die Botschaft Neu Delhi: SBZ-Militärhilfe auf Sansibar, 19 October 1964. PA B34, Bd. 523.

¹²² See Memo Referat B 3an das Referat IV 3: Besuch des Außenministers von Tanganjika, Oscar Kambona, 17 April 1964. PA B34, Bd. 524.

¹²³ Drahterlass an die Botschaft Dar-es-Salaam, 18 July 1964. PA B34, Bd. 524.

Yet because of the intense and consecutively more aggressive German-German competition, the issue of the recognition of the GDR was now threatening to become a serious obstacle in the unification process of both African states and a constant bone of contention between Nyerere and Karume.¹²⁴ East Germany was not at all willing to abandon the diplomatic victory it had achieved in Zanzibar – diplomatic recognition – and launched a massive development project on the island with Soviet backing. The East German desire to keep its embassy, and for that matter its diplomatic foothold in the new state, was apparent from the look of the embassy, as described in detail in a *New York Times* article:

For their part [...] the East Germans have confronted the Zanzibaris with a steel wall built for security reasons, which now stretches across the Shingani Road from their embassy to the sea [...] [with a] new barrier reading, 'Embassy of the German Democratic Republic'. Silent, unfamiliar men carry crates into the building. Iron bars guard the windows. The verandas are caged with wrought iron gratings [...]. The Communist's [sic] presence on Zanzibar, it is immediately apparent, never has been stronger.¹²⁵

The East Germans were digging in and were there to stay.

Eventually, Nyerere decided on a compromise which would allow East Germany to open a consulate general in Dar es Salaam, one step short of diplomatic recognition of the GDR. He certainly expected Bonn to be grateful for this as it meant that the GDR was no longer represented with an embassy in any African state. However, and much to his surprise, the Federal Republic merely replied that this was an unacceptable solution as after the construction of the Berlin Wall, West Germany could no longer tolerate East German consulates. As a consequence, the Federal Government decided to end all

¹²⁴ "Tanganyikan Newspaper is barred from Zanzibar," *New York Times*, 28 June 1964, 11.

¹²⁵ "Stakes High in Zanzibar," *New York Times*, 28 June 1964, E5.

development and military aid in February 1965, which led Nyerere to stop all projects of cooperation between Tanzania and the Federal Republic.¹²⁶ Even though its allies warned West Germany that – within the Cold War context – the influence it had on Tanzania should not easily be sacrificed, Bonn decided it was necessary to make an example of Nyerere, escalating the tensions between both countries. Yet the GDR could not diplomatically exploit this favourable environment. East Berlin had to settle with a consulate general in Tanzania but did not get its embassy back.¹²⁷ How difficult the German fratricidal war in Africa was for Nyerere and his policy of unification is apparent from a statement he made some 30 years later: “Do you remember how you have given me a hard time with your Hallstein Doctrine?”¹²⁸

The case of Tanzania and its two predecessors is thus a primary example of how both Germanys used various instruments to achieve their political goals related to the German Question, with questionable results. This case study shows the shortcomings and dilemmas of both German states’ intentions to buy African recognition through massive development aid and other incentives. Neither Bonn nor East Berlin was able to achieve a satisfactory outcome of their intervention in what was to become Tanzania. West Germany, on the one hand, though it managed to prevent a diplomatic recognition of East Germany, dramatically lost influence because of the inflexible attitude it took on the GDR consulate. East Berlin, on the other hand, could not maintain its diplomatic recognition and was once again degraded to a state of quasi-recognition in the form of a consulate general. For both Germanys their policies did not bring the expected results. It was not just

¹²⁶ Eberhard Kunz, "Die Beziehungen der DDR zu den Philippinen," *Jahrbuch der Universität Hamburg* (2006), <http://www.vip-ev.de/text269.htm>. (last accessed 20 May 2009).

¹²⁷ Engel and Schleicher, *Die Beiden Deutschen Staaten in Afrika*, 169.

¹²⁸ “Gestorben: Julius Nyerere,” *Der Spiegel* 42 (1999): 318. Translation of the author.

a situation of much ado about nothing; it was worse as both Germanys had paid dearly for an unsatisfying situation.

Conclusion

During the period examined, the policies of East and West Germany concerning Africa were interrelated. West Germany's Hallstein Doctrine and its policy of sole representation set the background against which the GDR had to fight for international recognition as a state, its primary goal in foreign policy. As a consequence, there was no genuine Africa policy in either of the two states. All policy with regard to African states was primarily judged by its usefulness in achieving a favourable stance of the African countries concerned on the German Question. As the West German Social Democratic Party's (SPD) expert on Africa, Hans Jürgen Wischnewski, put it in hindsight:

The Africa Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany is not interested in the situation in the African countries but is focused on Bonn's alleged interests. We opened diplomatic relations with every newly-independent country in Africa but not for the sake of having good relations with a new and independent country but to prevent East Germany from gaining a foothold. Naturally, the GDR tried to exploit the changed situation in Africa to achieve political recognition there. ¹²⁹

Although the impact of this battle for Africa on alliance politics was not the subject of this essay it should not be denied that West Germany's Africa policy and its preoccupation with sole recognition caused tensions with its Western allies. That applied in particular to Tanzania where, at the time, the Federal Republic was deemed to be the most important Western country and thus had the greatest influence on Nyerere. When Bonn decided to suspend

¹²⁹ Wischnewski, *Mit Leidenschaft und Augenmaß*, 40. Translation of the author.

all cooperation in 1965, the allies protested heavily in Bonn – but in vain.¹³⁰ However, the same held true for the GDR. It could not count on unconditional Soviet support in its quest for recognition. Moscow considered it far more important to win African countries over to the Eastern camp than to help the GDR achieve international recognition. As a consequence, it denied support to East Germany in cases where it feared that it would endanger its influence in the respective country.¹³¹

The instruments employed by both German states to support their policies in Africa were the same, although both concentrated on different tools according to their economic capacities. For the economically superior Federal Republic, economic aid in form of gifts, loans or financial contributions to projects were the most important tool and were readily used on a broad scale to reach all African countries. East Germany's more restricted financial resources did not allow it to compete with the FRG on this field. Consequently, it concentrated on a few selected countries it considered most receptive to its stance. In addition, East Germany intensively used propaganda tools in this battle for African hearts and minds.

As a consequence of the predominance of German-German considerations in both states Africa policy, development aid did not aim so much at developing the African countries as fostering a favourable political attitude towards the granting state. Africa policy and all the instruments at the disposal for Bonn and East Berlin were a mere function of Germany policy. This sometimes even had direct influence on local African processes as the example of the East German embassy in Tanzania shows: an issue of relatively little concern to Tanganyika and Zanzibar jeopardised the unification process. But for both,

¹³⁰ Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin*, 206-207.

¹³¹ Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, 108.

the Federal Republic and the GDR, their maps of Africa lay, once again in German history, in Germany.

African states were not mere victims of the German-German fratricidal war. On the contrary, they quickly mastered the art of playing both Germanys off each other. This increased competition and led to a spiral of ever more generous development aid.

In sum, the fight for recognition in Africa by the two Germanys severely restricted their foreign politics as all policies related to Africa were judged against the background of the German Question. Their relations in the Third World fell victim to this. Only the mutual recognition in the early 1970s would remove this problem in relations with the Third World.

When looking at the outcomes, one could conclude that West Germany won the battle: it prevented a diplomatic recognition of East Germany by any African country at the expense of a huge amount of money and a genuine foreign policy agenda. But East Germany had its – small and mostly short-lived – successes, too. The diplomatic battle for Africa was a very frustrating and expensive endeavour. It held both Germanys hostage to their respective recognition policies until the early 1970s when the Hallstein Doctrine was finally abandoned. By then, the sole representation claim had caused many people – Germans and Africans, Soviets and Americans – many sleepless nights.

Bernhard Blumenau
PhD Candidate in International History and Politics
Associate Researcher, Fondation Pierre du Bois
The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
bernhard.blumenau@graduateinstitute.ch