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## Notes on Twentieth-Century German Public Opinion, Colonialism, and the Portuguese Colonies (a Tentative Approach)

German attitudes towards colonialism have been the object of several recent studies that are primarily interested in the internal dynamics of German colonial history. Only a few of these studies, however, direct some attention to international colonial settings and, not surprisingly, the number of those addressing the Portuguese colonies is quite small. This paper explores the political and, above all, the cultural framework under which the discussions on Portuguese colonialism take place in twentieth-century Germany. It highlights the continuities underlying the complex German-Portuguese colonial networks before and after World War II and focuses mainly on their genealogical paths, historical motivations, and intellectual as well as political backgrounds. On the whole, these notes are meant to contribute to a more contextualised and differentiated understanding of German public opinion's sensitivity to colonialism, and especially to the Portuguese colonial regime during the period.

**Keywords:** anti-colonialism; German colonialism; Portuguese colonialism; public opinion.

In 1971, Yale Professor of Comparative Literature and Germanic Languages and Literatures Peter Demetz published a review of two German books on Portugal that had appeared that same year in the West German newspaper *Die Zeit* (Demetz, 1971). An American scholar of German-Czech-Jewish descent, Demetz had visited the country in 1959 and 1961, as he notes at the beginning of his text, and published professionally on Portuguese literature (Demetz, 1967). The books reviewed for *Die Zeit* were Fritz René Allemann's *8mal Portugal* [*Eight Times Portugal*, that is, eight chapters on Portugal] (Allemann, 1971),<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the life and career of the Swiss-born Fritz René Allemann, see Gerber (2001) and Harpprecht (1995). As a collaborator or foreign correspondent for several German and Swiss newspapers in different European and Latin American capitals, Allemann published widely on contemporary politics and culture. Among his publications, there are also other articles on Portugal (e.g. Allemann, 1968a, 1968b, 1969, and 1975). After 1971, Allemann's work *8mal Portugal* underwent an additional three very revised and augmented editions, the last of which was published in 1983.

and Rudi Maslowski's *Der Skandal Portugal. Land ohne Menschenrechte* [*Scandal Portugal. Country with no Human Rights*] (Maslowski, 1971a).<sup>2</sup>

Germany's increased interest in the country, which these two works and the review in a reputed German newspaper make apparent, is obviously related to the political changes that Portugal had been undergoing: Salazar's death in July 1970, the new Caetano government, in office since late 1968, and the seeming political and economical opening-up of the regime and of its colonies. What makes Demetz's review interesting in this context is that it provides a good starting point to grasp the different – and apparently opposing – views that contemporary German public opinion had on Portugal and specifically on the Portuguese colonies by that time.

The covers of the reviewed books alone offer a clear and eloquent testimony on this issue. The first edition of Allemann's work, published in the series "Panoramas of the Modern World", presents a touristic aerial color photo of one of the towers of the Pena Palace in Sintra, while Maslowski's front cover reproduces a rather odd black and white photo of church dignitaries standing atop a panzer during what seems to be the celebration of a mass (reproduced in Lopes, 2009: 89). More disconcerting, however, is Maslowski's shocking black and white photo on the back cover, which certainly cannot go unnoticed in this context as well. Entitled "Portugal Defends 'the West' and 'Western Freedom' – Oppresses Portuguese in Portugal and Africans in Africa", the picture shows a group of white (presumably Portuguese) soldiers gathered around an impaled head of an African (reproduced in Lopes, 2009: 90).

The back and front cover images of Maslowski's work are obvious and explicit political statements. The message they convey is clear: they provide some sort of inverted *déjà vu* of colonial history that works as a counterpoint to historical mythological perceptions of the "civilising mission" of colonialism. They reverse the roles played by Europeans and natives in so many "true histories" of the "Age of Discovery" – Hans Staden's engravings representing cannibalism come to mind here (Staden, 2005: 144-152) – thus projecting an image of twentieth-century European colonialism as a violent form of barbarism. Furthermore, the particularities of Portuguese colonialism are no less clearly depicted; in fact, the front cover image of an alliance between the Catholic church and the military,

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<sup>2</sup> On Maslowski's book, see Lopes (2009), Lopes (2014: 83), and Kühnl (1975: 99-100), who sees Maslowski's work as an important contribution to a "theory of international fascism". It is worth noting that in 1971 Maslowski also brought out an essay on "Portugal after Salazar" (1971b) and up until 1978 he published or edited two other books dealing with the Ibero-American world (Maslowski, 1973, 1978).

unusual and appalling as it is, should be understandable to an educated German reader with a minimal knowledge of world history, for the alliance between the soldiers and priests that the image conveys is patently anchored in a historically powerful northern European stereotype of a decadent and religiously perverted Catholic South, and it therefore works as a reminder of one of the dark periods of the history of the Iberian countries, that of the “Black Legend”.

It goes without saying that when comparing the touristically appealing bird’s-eye view of the Pena Palace and the image of an impaled head of an African surrounded by Portuguese soldiers, the contrast is more than conspicuous. But does this mean that the different views of these two books can be reduced to the differences between a touristic viewpoint and a highly politicised, engaged approach? A quick unreflective answer would probably be yes. However, Demetz’s review has a significant subtitle that cannot simply be ignored: “Two Books on Portugal, *Two Political Conceptions*” (author’s emphasis).

To be sure, it is impossible to overlook the explicit political dimension of Maslowski’s book and his engagement in what Geertz (2005) called the “Third World Revolution”. And in fact, Demetz points out that the “radical political scientist” with connections to African resistance groups in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) sees “Portugal entangled in its African war and gathers information about the course of the conflict and the structure of the opposition groups in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique” (Demetz, 1971: 2).<sup>3</sup> The political dimension of Allemann’s book, on the other hand, is much more elusive. Even though Demetz considers his work an “intelligent and analytical travel guide” (*ibidem*: 1) he also notes quite rightly that the Swiss-born author is a “liberal observer” who tends to emphasise “the undoubted merits of the *Estado Novo*” (*ibidem*: 2; quoting Allemann himself). “Touristic” is therefore far from meaning “apolitical” in Allemann’s case and this is something that one should bear in mind.

Allemann’s first edition, for example, does not address the colonial question. This is a point that cannot be ignored for Allemann’s intriguing omission somehow brings to mind the reports that Nazi diplomats in Lisbon were sending to Berlin in the late 1930s, alerting the German authorities to the fact that “the only cloud that hangs over the German-Portuguese sky is the colonial question” (*apud* Matos, 1996: 35) and advising due restraint

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<sup>3</sup> All the translations were made by the author.

on these matters.<sup>4</sup> Of course, Alleman's silence occurs in a different, albeit equally tense, international political setting marked by the Cold War and by strong public pressure exerted on colonialism, but what is important to underscore here is that both Maslowski's and Allemann's works on Portugal are political books, as the subtitle of Demetz's review already suggests. They are political in both what they wish to say and not say, or deliberately seek to silence. The differences that matter between them are therefore political differences, and these can, in my opinion, be taken as paradigmatic of the two basic approaches that the German-speaking world took with regard to Portugal and the Portuguese colonies in the second half of the twentieth century: on the one hand, there is an apparently apolitical, and yet essentially conservative, "liberal observer", and on the other there is the "radical political scientist" engaged in *Third World Politics* (Slobodian, 2012) and in international anti-colonial networks.

Two years after these two books and Demetz's review were published, the picture of a divided German public opinion about the last European colonial empire assumes much more accurate contours in a critical review of literature on the subject of Portugal in Africa (Löwis, 1973), which unveils the shortcomings of the few existing German publications. As Henning von Löwis notes straightforwardly at the beginning of his brief but telling review: "whoever wants to find out more about Portuguese Africa in Germany today does not have it easy. On the spectrum between Portugal-P[ublic]R[elations]<sup>5</sup> and anti-Portuguese agitation, the serious literature has only a relatively narrow bandwidth" (*ibidem*: 108). Given these circumstances, the conclusion reached comes as no surprise:

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<sup>4</sup> In the late 1930s the alert had been motivated by a rumour spread by the French news agency Havas in December 1936 (Treue, 1963: 47) that circulated widely in international circles. The leader of the German Colonial Society (*Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*), General von Epp, reacted swiftly to the news (Epp, 1937: 4-5): "Certain foreign periodicals have attributed the most incredible intentions to Germany as a 'have-not' country, which was determined to obtain possession of colonies by hook or by crook, and these insinuations have led to widespread unrest. Political suspicion increased considerably, not only in France but in smaller countries such as Belgium and Portugal. [...] It cannot be stated too emphatically that Germany would never defy world-wide public opinion by annexing foreign territories". Despite the German denials the rumour proved nevertheless to be well-founded. Britain's appeasement strategy toward Germany during the 1930s did indeed consider the redistribution of Belgian and Portuguese colonies in tropical Africa (cf. Louis, 1971). Furthermore, it is also worth noting that this was not the first time that the survival of the Portuguese colonial empire was placed in jeopardy during bilateral British and German talks. Seen as "one of the anomalies of modern history" (Woolbert, 1937: 374), the Portuguese colonies had already been the object of Anglo-German negotiations before the outbreak of the Great War (Langhorne, 1973 and Vincent-Smith, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> That is to say, Portuguese propaganda; see e.g. the German version of Adriano Moreira's book on the Portuguese colonial empire (Moreira, 1963) and Marcelo Caetano's speech on the same subject published in German by the National Secretariat of Information and Tourism (Caetano, 1971).

“The percentage of qualitatively satisfactory German-language literature about Portuguese Africa is considerably low” (Löwis, 1973: 112). And if one moves from “serious literature” to the German media landscape, the panorama does not change significantly either (see e.g. Paeffgen, 1976 and Mükke, 2004).

It is the absence of interest combined with politically biased information – or more simply, poor quality research – that are, in part, at the root of the lack of a global account of the German (and of course international) networks involved in Portuguese colonialism. Contributing to this research gap, which was still garnering attention well into the 1990s (cf. Sängler, 1996) and afterwards, was the aforementioned ambiguous and seemingly apolitical silence, which was motivated, among other things, by the close institutional and military collaboration of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) with the Portuguese colonial regime (see e.g. Skupnik, 1974; Schroers, 1998; Fonseca, 2007; Fonseca and Marcos, 2013; and Hallbauer, 2015).

The Portuguese State and the FRG had resumed diplomatic relations in 1951 and this led to a gradual revival of the old personal and professional networks that had laid the basis of the friendly atmosphere which characterised the relationship between the Hitler and Salazar regimes. In 1964, for instance, the German-Portuguese Society (*Deutsch-Portugiesische Gesellschaft*) was founded by “distinguished personalities such as Otto Wolff von Amerongen (the first president of the society), Dr. Phil Manfred Zapp, Dr. Girardet, and the Portuguese Ambassador in Bonn, Dr. Manuel Homem de Mello” (*Deutsch-Portugiesische Gesellschaft*, 2018). The networks associated with these men’s names leave no doubt as to the continuities that shaped German-Portuguese relations after the war. Amerongen “had spent much time in Portugal on business during the Second World War and had a self-professed admiration for Salazar” (Lopes, 2014: 82; on Amerongen see also Nunes, 2010: 414 and Schmelzer, 2003: 93ff.). Zapp had been a Nazi propagandist in Portugal from around 1936 to 1940, and after the war he was one of the founders of a German public relations (PR) club, one that later became the official German Public Relations Association. From the mid-1950s, his PR firm (Zapp-PR) was offering information services to Salazar’s regime in West Germany (cf. Clara, 2016). Finally, Girardet was the owner of a local media consortium in North Rhine-Westphalia, responsible for publishing the German edition of Salazar’s speeches back in 1938 (Salazar, 1938).

It is true that the disruptions occurring in Portugal in 1974 and in Germany in 1989 provided the conditions for a major change in both this promiscuous political landscape and, consequently, in the research scenario depicted by Löwis in 1973. Changes in this research scenario, however,

would only begin to be noticeable in academic publications a few decades later (cf. Fonseca, 2007; Lopes, 2014; Hallbauer, 2015). Moreover, I defend that it is important to stress that such a scholarly shift of focus was also fundamentally made possible by a cultural realignment in the humanities, one that ended up affecting and transforming these fields of research as well.

On the one hand, the establishment of cultural studies in the 1990s, with its notorious focus on postcolonial studies, brought new attention to European colonialism. The German academic landscape was certainly not immune to this trend. Colonialism was obviously a topic that German historiography did not – and could not possibly – ignore (cf. Wehler, 1969 and Hildebrand, 1969 among many others), but still, the postcolonial turn in German Studies (Lubrich and Clark, 2002) cast a new and different light on German “imperialist imagination” and on German “colonial phantasies” (cf. Zantop, 1997, Friedrichsmeyer *et al.*, 1998 and Berman, 1998). Above all, Zantop’s book is of merit for showing that colonialism has a strong cultural component and cannot simply be reduced to political, economic or even religious issues, although all these aspects did indeed play an important role in colonial settings. On the other hand, a transnational turn in history and the emergence of the idea of a global history brought new actors (NGOs, international organisations and networks etc.) into the foreground of historiographical discourse and thus also a new dynamic to the internationalisation of international history (see e.g. Mazlish and Buultjens, 1993, and Iriye, 2002, 2013).

In view of this changing research landscape, it makes sense to revisit the context in which Allemann’s and Maslowski’s books appeared. A broader cultural perspective is needed in order to achieve a more contextualised panorama of both the conservative and the anti-colonial networks at work in the German public space of the period. How were these different views able to reach the German public opinion and how did they influence it? How were they internationally linked? Or how were they rooted in the local mind-set? To which of the German intellectual traditions or cultural assumptions and beliefs regarding colonialism did Allemann and Maslowski give continuity?

This last question raises a point that undoubtedly deserves further examination and discussion. Continuities are, to a certain extent, more or less obvious as far as Allemann’s “liberal”-conservative perspectives are concerned, but on the other hand they are also not really absent from Maslowski’s radical and apparently more disruptive anti-colonial views. The question of continuities therefore plays an important role in the understanding of these texts, above all, because it provides long-term insight into their cultural environment without excluding their more immediate political motivations or intentions.

### Conservative Continuities

Allemann is admittedly not the only publicist in the West to praise “the undoubted merits of the *Estado Novo*”. After all, his ambiguous silence regarding Portuguese colonialism does not seem to differ much from the complicit silence and the frequently implicit support that certain institutions such as NATO or post-war Western diplomacy devoted to the same subject (see e.g. Lopes, 2016; Rodrigues, 2015; and Guilhot, 2014).<sup>6</sup> His conservative attitude toward the Portuguese regime was recognisedly shared by many in the FRG during the post-war period (cf. Zimmerer, 2003).

Ernst Gerhard Jacob and Hans Seligo are two cases in point. Their names and works have so far been neglected by research in these areas, mainly due to the fact that they are secondary actors in terms of the political history of the period. But I believe that their activities and writings occurring before, during and after World War II, their focus on Portuguese colonialism, and the fact that they were able to maintain their connections to the Portuguese regime after the defeat of Nazism offer fruitful insights into the FRG’s conservative political environment and thus into the continuities underlying Allemann’s book. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the activities and writings of both Jacob and Seligo show that West German support for the Portuguese regime or for its colonial policy cannot and should not be reduced to government officials nor to institutional contacts.

Ernst Gerhard Jacob was a very prolific publicist during his lifetime, leaving innumerable essays, articles and books on colonialism and especially on the Portuguese colonial empire. In 1929 he received his PhD from the University of Leipzig with a thesis on Daniel Defoe (Jacob, 1929a) and in that same year he published two essays in the German *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (*Journal for Geopolitics*). Both essays dealt specifically with the Ibero-American world and addressed topics that were to become recurrent in Jacob’s later writings, the “pan-Iberian movement” and the “world-political significance of the Day of the Race on 12 October” (Jacob, 1929b, 1929c).<sup>7</sup>

But from 1933 onward, his political and research interests changed, seeming to focus mainly on German colonialism. He published or edited

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<sup>6</sup> Moreover, in this context it is important to recall that the Western European colonial project was in no way abandoned after the end of World War II. Quite to the contrary, foundational documents of the “European Union”, such as the *Political Report of the Congress of Europe* (or The Hague Congress, 1948), stress the need to “include in its orbit the extensions, dependencies and associated territories of the European Powers in Africa and elsewhere” and to “preserve the existing constitutional ties which unite them” (*apud* Heywood, 1981: 200; on these post-war European colonial ambitions, see Hansen and Jonsson, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> On the celebrations of this “Day of the Race” or “Día de la Raza” (also known as “Columbus Day”) see Sebastiani and Marcilhacy (2016).

several books on German colonial rule, German colonial doctrine, administration and policy, and he also wrote about colonial Germandom or against the German “colonial guilt lie” (Jacob, 1933, 1937a, 1938a, 1938b, 1938c, 1939). During this phase, the Ibero-American world was still present in his writings (e.g. Jacob, 1934, 1937b), but it had clearly lost some of its previous relevance. After the war began, Jacob succeeded in merging these topics in a book and an essay significantly dedicated to the Portuguese colonial empire (Jacob, 1940, 1941).

In February 1946, the department of public education of the city council of Berlin (Soviet zone) published an index of books to be removed from public libraries. Ernst Gerhard Jacob was listed as a “colonial politician” [*Kolonialpolitiker*] (Abteilung für Volksbildung, 1946: 41) and his books were thus banned from public libraries.

From 1950 on, he resumed his activity as a publicist with a brief but telling note on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the German Institute at the University of Coimbra (Jacob, 1950). In the following years he recapitulated some of his favourite topics, such as the celebrations of the “Day of the Race” (Jacob, 1951, 1954), and he also took up his more or less regular news section on Ibero-American culture at the German *Archive for Cultural History*, a collaboration that had begun in 1930 and which extended over a period of 25 years (see e.g. Jacob, 1930, 1955a).

During this post-war period, his publishing activity was mainly focused on German-Portuguese relations (Jacob, 1955b, 1961) and on the Portuguese colonial empire (Jacob, 1960, 1969, 1974). As for the perspective adopted in these books, the words of Löwis (1973: 108) should be clear enough: “The author depicts an idyllic Lusitanian world. [...] An official historiography could hardly be more uncritical than Jacob’s *History of Portugal and Its Overseas Provinces* [1969]”.

Hans Seligo shared Jacob’s global interest in Africa, colonialism and the Portuguese colonies. However, his first book – *Africa under Reconstruction* (Seligo, 1931) – was at the antipodes of Jacob’s views on the “civilising mission of colonialism”. The work was written in a clear anti-colonial vein and, what is more, it was brought out by a publisher linked to German freethinkers’ organisations (Urania-Freidenker-Verlag). After 1933, the book was banned and Seligo must have quickly changed his mind about this and other matters, for in the following years he worked as a foreign correspondent for several German newspapers in London and, later, also in Lisbon (*Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Hamburger Nachrichten* among others). Furthermore, in London he was head of the press corps of the Foreign Organisation of the Nazi Party (AO, *Auslandsorganisation*) for Great Britain



(Auswärtiges Amt, 1991: 144). Operating under this institutional framework, it should be obvious that many of his texts and reports from this period never saw the light of day.

But that was not the case of his wife, Irene Seligo, whose writings cannot go unnoticed here. Throughout the period, while her husband was sending confidential reports to Nazi Germany (cf. Weinberg, 1994: 1029, 1072), she was writing for several German newspapers (the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, but also the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the Nazi daily newspaper; cf. Hausmann, 2000: 151). In 1942, she published a volume of short stories, *Delfina or the Good Old Days. Portuguese Illustrations* (Seligo, 1942), which would prove to be providential for the couple. According to Wheeler (1986: 126), the book “was apparently read and appreciated by Dr. Salazar, and his interest played a role in Portugal’s allowing Mrs. Seligo to remain in Lisbon when some other Germans were deported”.

After the war, Hans Seligo also wrote a novel whose setting is in Portugal – *Black Yacht off Lisbon* (1956) – and some years later his name was back in the German press, this time interceding for Portugal in the FRG, and vehemently calling for closer economic, political and cultural relations between the two countries (Hallbauer, 2015: 53). In 1959, he published a long essay on the *Portuguese Second Development Plan* (Seligo, 1959) and it should come as no surprise that he and his editors at the Research Institute for Technical Cooperation of North Rhine-Westphalia candidly justify their interest in this plan with the following straightforward opening sentence: “Portugal, the country in the southwest of the Pyrenees peninsula, offers the German entrepreneur interesting perspectives with its overseas possessions” (*ibidem*: 3). Moreover, during this post-war period, Irene Seligo’s articles on Portugal appearing in German newspapers (e.g. *Die Zeit*; Seligo, 1949, 1950) cannot be overlooked, but it is above all her brief monograph on Cabora Bassa that deserves undisputable special mention in this context (Seligo, 1969). The above mentioned PR firm run by Manfred Zapp (as well as the German-Portuguese Society) must not have been indifferent to this and many other post-war publications on Portuguese topics penned by Irene and Hans Seligo. In 1968, Zapp had already published a guide for German investors in Portugal (Zapp, 1968), and in 1971 the Portuguese National Secretariat of Information (S.N.I., *Secretariado Nacional de Informação*) and Zapp-PR also issued a pamphlet on the Cabora Bassa dam. The pamphlet was clearly a response to the controversy that the building of the dam stirred in West Germany (see Lopes, 2014: 108ff.). It was printed in Germany and probably composed (or compiled) by the former Nazi propagandist himself (Zapp, 1971).

Thus, from Allemann to Jacob, not forgetting Hans and Irene Seligo, the West German conservative political environment offers a wide range of approaches to “the undoubted merits of the *Estado Novo*” or to the “interesting” Portuguese “overseas possessions”. What is important to point out, however, is that ranging from sympathetic (and not so innocent) bystanders to active collaborators, these actors and their attitudes are patently marked by continuities deeply rooted in the Nazi period, ones which were themselves encouraged and enhanced in post-war years by the continuity of the Portuguese fascist regime.

### **The Anti-Colonial Front**

The continuities present in Maslowski’s book are far more complex and varying in type, thus requiring closer attention. The book is clearly in line with the anti-authoritarian discourse and revolutionary climate of the period (cf. Slobodian, 2012 and Brown, 2013), and its images and contents are almost pamphletary, its anti-colonialism radical. However, one cannot help but recall that anti-colonialism is not exactly something new in Germany (or in Europe). It did not just emerge in the aftermath of World War II because of the African independence and liberation movements. In fact, as Young (2016: 74) notes,

Contrary to what is sometimes assumed, there was a strong tradition of anti-colonialism in the Europe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a radical tradition that some of the more blimpish representations within postcolonial writings today of the ideology of imperialism neglect.

In the meantime, the panorama described by Young has somewhat changed. The history of European anti-colonialism has been receiving some attention from research (cf. Muthu, 2003 or Carey and Festa, 2009), and the works of eighteenth-century German authors such as Kant or Herder are now being reassessed in this light (see e.g. Flikschuh and Ypi, 2014 and Noyes, 2015). This is, of course, not the place to review the history of anti-colonialism in Europe, but it would make sense to test the strength of this tradition and of this idea in twentieth-century Germany in order to enhance our understanding of Maslowski’s book and the strand of thought that it represents. With that goal in mind, I will briefly examine two works, from quite different periods of German twentieth-century history, in which the idea of anti-colonialism is unexpectedly present.

The first is Alfred Zimmermann’s *Colonial Policy* (1905). Zimmermann was a legation councillor and a very prolific historian of European and

German colonialism (Zimmermann, 1896-1903, 1914). It should be needless to point out that his book was published during the short German colonial period and is the result, as the author says in the preface, “of twenty years of studies and observations in several countries” (Zimmermann, 1905: vi). What is impressive about this work is its detached perspective of European colonialism. It reviews the colonial history of Europe, engages in the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of colonialism and does not hesitate to provide a comprehensive list of its main disadvantages – economical drawbacks, less population, expensive wars, ethics of slavery – but above all the book strives to contextualise the anti-colonial idea. It provides an extensive philosophical-historical background, encompassing the works and words of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, Diderot, Mirabeau, Locke and J. S. Mill, against which the contemporary (anti-)colonial debate takes on new dimensions (cf. *ibidem*: 8, 153 and *passim*).

Significantly, Zimmermann’s *Colonial Policy* ends with a chapter on “the native question” (Zimmermann, 1905: 371-412) where he critically reviews the interactions between the colonisers and the colonised since the time of Columbus, denounces the practice of “forced labour” as “disguised slavery” and finally notes that “European colonisation can only be successful if it is able to better the natives’ conditions, extend their freedom and improve their moral and economic position” (*ibidem*: 410). Noteworthy, as far as my argument goes, is then the fact that at the peak of the German colonial period, the anti-colonial idea and the disadvantages of colonialism remain vividly present in the country’s political and cultural mindset.

Far more surprising in this respect is a book published anonymously in 1931, *The Struggle for German Foreign Policy*. It is an all-embracing handbook on German foreign policy that not only discusses the adverse international political environment that the Weimar Republic was facing at the time but also provides clear directions for future German diplomacy. And even though the author explicitly asserts that a fascist regime is not suitable or desirable for the country, it must nevertheless be added that many of the political and diplomatic guidelines suggested in the book were indeed implemented by Nazi Germany (at least until the beginning of the World War II).

The book has a chapter on colonial policy that debates some of the topics that were already present in Zimmermann’s work. But with the loss of its colonial territories after Versailles, the situation had drastically changed for Germany. Thus, instead of adopting Zimmermann’s analytical historical viewpoint, the anonymous author is now much more concerned with a prospective view of German colonial policy. That is to say, he is much more

attracted to the issue of how Germany might reclaim its former colonies (or at least some of them) within the contemporary legal international framework.

What is interesting about this prospective view is that it is somehow still anchored in anti-colonialism. Two of the initial paragraphs of the chapter on colonial policy are worth quoting (Anonymous, 1931: 66; emphasis in the original):

The *objections* to any colonial activity, also in Africa, are in many ways definitely justified; but they are outweighed by the advantages.

To the criticism that colonial possessions are equivalent to the *oppression of other races* [fremder Rassen] and are therefore condemnable, one must object that in any case the African Negroes will never be in a state of political freedom, and that they are most probably hardly capable [fähig] of achieving it. If Germany does not colonise other countries will.

Significantly, both paragraphs begin with “objections to any colonial activity” and “criticism” to “colonial possessions” as if colonialism had to be justified first and foremost against a background anti-colonial idea that seems to be prevalent in the German cultural mindset.

When considered in this context, Maslowski’s book takes on new dimensions. Its “radical” anti-colonial discourse becomes a multilayered discourse. On the one hand, the book is definitely the product of an internationalist Marxist ideology. It accepts the challenge of exposing “the monstrous exploitation of the colonial peoples”, as Marx and Engels put it in an anthology of texts on colonialism opportunely published in Moscow in 1950 (Marx and Engels, 1950: 7), thus assuming its legitimate place in a vast international solidarity network with African liberation movements (on Marxism and these liberation movements, see Young, 2016: 167-181 and Anderson, 2010). On the other hand, it manages to persuasively combine anti-authoritarian and anti-racist arguments, which were particularly important for a post-war public opinion that was still trying to cope with the catastrophic dimensions of World War II and that had just adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations Assembly in 1948. And finally, Maslowski’s discourse also shows traces of a critical anti-colonial tradition that has its roots in European Enlightenment thought, predominantly French and German. This last aspect is not completely irrelevant, above all when one takes into account that anti-colonial discourse was deeply inscribed, though not always in a persistent and consistent manner, in German public opinion from the late

eighteenth century onwards. In a cultural environment such as this, the only note remaining to be added is that the efficacy of Maslowski's arguments can hardly be underestimated.

### Final Remarks

The cultural and political framework in which many of the discussions related to Portuguese (de)colonisation take place in Germany is a complex puzzle that cannot be fully captured by a linear understanding of the history of this period. From 1945 to 1989, there seem to be two basic strands of opinion in the German public space regarding colonialism in general (cf. Verber, 2010) and Portuguese colonialism in particular. One might be tempted to say that these two strands of opinion correspond roughly to the two German states. There is a clearly conservative view that supports in words and deeds the Portuguese regime and Portuguese colonialism; this kind of view is apparently more frequent in the FRG and its roots can be traced back to the European fascist period, as the foundation of the German-Portuguese Society in 1964, or the paths taken by Jacob and Seligo after 1945 clearly show. And there is also an anti-colonial front inspired by Marxist ideology that produces an internationalist discourse which is primarily, though not exclusively, voiced in the GDR.

Yet things are not that black and white. Interestingly, Demetz had already made a similar observation in his review. It is true that he had the specifics of the Portuguese situation in mind ("Black and white are not enough in this land of complications in which the theoretically impossible is part of everyday life"), but the idea could well apply to German public opinion and to its ambiguities towards the Portuguese colonial regime. After all, Demetz himself also notes that, in the end, "The liberal observer and the radical political scientist find themselves separated by nuances in the crucial question of the possible opening of the political system" (Demetz, 1971: [3]). Anti-authoritarian, anti-colonial, and anti-racist discourses are not exactly absent from the FRG either. In this respect, it is worth recalling that Maslowski's book was published in Munich by a reputed West German publisher (Carl Hanser), and that two other important texts denouncing Portuguese colonial rule – Eduardo Mondlane's *The Struggle for Mozambique* and Américo Boavida's *Angola* – were also both published in Frankfurt in 1970, the latter by another highly regarded German publishing house, Suhrkamp (Mondlane, 1970; Boavida, 1970).

The post-war German public opinion was therefore not so black and white when it came to issues related to the Portuguese regime or to colonialism. Anti-colonial discourse was not only multilayered but also

“hybrid” (cf. Young, 2016: 167-181). It combined traces of Marxist ideology and eighteenth-century ideas regarding human rights or anti-racism, with its national/nationalist emancipatory appeals. It was very flexible, and easily adaptable to political change and to international or more local interests, thus, though motivated by different political goals and rooted in distinct cultural traditions, anti-colonial discourse pervaded the public spaces of both the FRG and the GDR.

But so did colonial and racist discourse. Perhaps unexpectedly, and yet not completely surprisingly, if one takes into account the history of racial prejudice in twentieth-century Germany, when East Germany engaged in the development of cooperation programmes with Angola and above all Mozambique, after the independence of the Portuguese colonies, many of the typical characteristics of a coloniser-colonised relationship became suddenly apparent (cf. Croan, 1980, 1981). Paradoxically, “traditional [racist] knowledge was perpetuated despite anti-racist ideology” (Schuch, 2013: 227).

That, however, is another story. It is a story that has only begun to be told (see e.g. Müller, 2010; Schuch, 2013: 222-229; Schenck, 2019; Pugach, 2019: S101-S105) but whose consequences still echo in the overt racial tones of today’s East German public space and political landscape.

Edited by Scott M. Culp

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Received on 06.11.2018

Accepted for publication on 05.02.2019

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### ***Notas sobre a opinião pública alemã do século xx, colonialismo e colónias portuguesas (ensaio de aproximação)***

As tomadas de posição alemãs em relação ao colonialismo têm sido objeto de diversos estudos recentes que se focam principalmente nas dinâmicas internas da história colonial alemã. Assim, apenas alguns destes estudos dão alguma atenção aos cenários coloniais internacionais e, sem surpresa, menor ainda é o número dos que se debruçam sobre as colónias portuguesas. Este ensaio tenta explorar o contexto político e, sobretudo, cultural sob o qual ocorreram as discussões sobre o colonialismo português na Alemanha do século xx. Destacam-se as continuidades subjacentes às complexas redes coloniais luso-alemãs antes e depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial, focando-se principalmente nas suas ligações genealógicas, motivações históricas e contextos intelectuais

### ***Notes sur l'opinion publique allemande du xxe siècle, le colonialisme et les colonies portugaises (approche provisoire)***

Les attitudes allemandes à l'égard du colonialisme ont fait l'objet de plusieurs études récentes qui s'intéressent principalement à la dynamique interne de l'histoire coloniale allemande. Cependant, seules quelques-unes de ces études attirent l'attention sur les contextes coloniaux internationaux et, sans surprise, le nombre de celles qui s'adressent aux colonies portugaises est encore plus faible. Cet article se penche sur le cadre politique et surtout culturel dans lequel se déroulent les discussions sur le colonialisme portugais dans l'Allemagne du xxe siècle. Il met en exergue les continuités sous-jacentes aux réseaux coloniaux germano-portugais complexes avant et après la Seconde Guerre mondiale et se concentre principalement sur leurs

e políticos. No geral, estas notas procuram contribuir para uma compreensão mais contextualizada e diferenciada da sensibilidade da opinião pública alemã relativamente ao colonialismo e, em particular, ao regime colonial português durante esse período.

**Palavras-chave:** anticolonialismo; colonialismo alemão; colonialismo português; opinião pública.

parcours généalogiques, leurs motivations historiques et les contextes à la fois intellectuels et politiques. Dans l'ensemble, ces notes sont censées contribuer à une compréhension plus contextualisée et différenciée de la sensibilité de l'opinion publique allemande envers le colonialisme, et en particulier envers le régime colonial portugais de cette période.

**Mots-clés:** anticolonialisme; colonialisme allemand; colonialisme portugais; opinion publique.