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10V0002

**GDR Development Policy  
with special reference to Africa, c. 1960-1990**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the political, economic and theoretical underpinnings of the German Democratic Republic's (GDR's) development policies towards the Third World between c.1960 and 1990. Particular attention is paid to Africa. Case studies of assistance to SWAPO and the ANC further focus the attention of the reader on southern Africa in particular. Aspects of both military and civilian aid are considered, including both development initiatives overseas in Africa, and development training for Africans within the GDR itself. Since German "reunification", the GDR's history has been explored largely from a West German perspective. The present work attempts to provide a more balanced view of successes and shortcomings of the GDR's policies towards, and interaction with, African countries and liberation movements. It also aims to bring to the attention of English-speaking readers German archival sources, other primary sources and published works which they would otherwise have been unlikely to encounter.

From its formation, the GDR made strenuous efforts to develop relations with countries which were either free from colonial dependency or were struggling for freedom. Over the course of thirty years, it followed a number of different approaches, and developed diverse objectives. These were shaped in the wider context of the cold war, the Hallstein doctrine (which established that the FRG – and, in effect, its allies - would not establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognised the GDR), the relationships between the GDR and partner socialist states, and the economic difficulties faced by the GDR. Arising from this complex situation, from time to time, both internally in the GDR and in terms of its foreign affairs, tensions and discrepancies arose between theoretical objectives and political and economic reality.

Despite these severe constraints, during the period under review, the volume and range of the GDR's relationships with developing countries increased dramatically. For example, between 1970 and 1987, the number of developing countries with which the GDR had foreign economic relations on the basis of international agreements grew from 23 to 64. Viewed within its economic context, the state was arguably far more committed to development aid than the Federal Republic of Germany. In addition, there is a great deal of evidence that "solidarity" with developing nations and the oppressed enjoyed a considerable degree of popular support.

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I have to thank the translators, Undine S. Weber and Virginia David-Engelbrecht, who translated my manuscript from German into English. Tim Hacksley performed a final edit of the English version.

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## List of Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany]
AAPSO	Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization
AASK	Afro-Asiatisches Solidaritätskomitee [Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee]
ABF	Arbeiter- und Bauernfakultät [Workers and Farmers' Faculty]
Abt.	Abteilung [division or section]
ADN	Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst der DDR [General GDR Press Agency]
AKFM	Antoky Kongresy Fehaleonvantenani Madagascar
AMK	Ausländische Militärkader [foreign military cadres]
ANC	African National Congress
APC	All People's Congress, Sierra Leone
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Association of the Broadcasting Corporation of the Federal Republic of Germany]
AREMA	Associacion pour la Renaissance de Madagascar
BArch	Bundesarchiv, Berlin [Federal Archives, Berlin, FRG]
BAW	Berufliche Aus- und Weiterbildung [vocational training]
Bil.	Billion
Bl.	Blatt [sheet]
BMF	Bundesministerium für Finanzen [Ministry of Finance, FRG]
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit [Ministry of Economic Co-operation, FRG]
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Federal Republic of Germany, FRG]
BStU	Der (Die) Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR [the Representative in Charge of the State Security Service Documents of the former GDR]
Ca.	circa

CDG	Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft [Carl Duisberg Society]
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union [Christian Democratic Union]
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency, USA
CIM	Centrum für Internationale Migration und Entwicklung [Centre for International Migration and Development]
CNR	Concile National de la Révolution, Burkina Faso
ČSSR	Czechoslovakian Socialist Republic
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union [Christian Social Union]
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik [German Democratic Republic, GDR]
DED	Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst [German Development Service]
DFD	Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands [German Democratic Women's Association]
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft [German Research Association]
Diss.	Dissertation [PhD thesis]
DM	Deutsche Mark
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DSE	Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung [German Foundation for International Development]
DSU	Deutsche Soziale Union [German Social Union]
EXP	Expertenentsendung [dispatching of experts]
EZ	Entwicklungszusammenarbeit [development collaboration]
FDGB	Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund [Free Federation of Labour Unions]
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend [Free German Youth]
FGO	Fonds gesellschaftlicher Organisationen [funds of civil organisations]
FLN	Front de Libéertion Nationale, Algeria
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic

GNP	gross national product
GST	Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik [Society for Sports and Technology]
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit [Co-operation Enterprise for Sustainable Development; lit. Society for Technical Co-operation]
HA	Hauptabteilung [main/central department]
HUF	Ausbildung an Hoch- und Fachschulen [education at tertiary institutions]
HVA	Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung des MfS [MfS Headquarter of Reconnaissance]
IM	Informeller Mitarbeiter des MfS [Informal Collaborator of the MfS]
KGB	Komitet Gossudarstwennoi Besopasnosti [Soviet Secret Service]
Ko Ko	Bereich Kommerzielle Koordinierung des DDR-Außenhandels [section commercial co-ordination of GDR foreign trade]
KPdSU	Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion [Communist Party of the Soviet Union]
KWZ	Kommerzielle Wissenschaftliche Zusammenarbeit [commercial academic co-operation]
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LPG	Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft [Agricultural Co-Operative]
M/L	Marxism/Leninism
MA	Militärarchiv [Military Archive(s)]
MAT	Material supplies and services
MED	Medical care
MfAA	Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR [Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the GDR]
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit [Ministry for State Security of the GDR]
MHF	Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen der DDR [GDR Ministry for Tertiary Education]
Mil.	million
MfÖS	Ministerium für Staats- und öffentliche Sicherheit Äthiopiens [Ministry for State and Public Security of Ethiopia]
MLSTP	Movimento de Liberdade de São Tomé e Príncipe
MPLA	Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola

MWZ	Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit der DDR [GDR Ministry for Economic Co-operation]
NI	National Income
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NMO	Naher und Mittlerer Osten [Near and Middle East]
NVA	Nationale Volksarmee [GDR National People's Army]
o.J.	no year
o.O.	no place
o.S.	no page number
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PAJCV	Partido Africano de la Independencia de Cabo Verde
PdA	Partei der Arbeit [Party for/of Work]
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council, Ghana
PR	People's Republic
PRPB	Parti de la Révolution Populaire du Benin
RGW	Rat für Gegenseitige Wirtschaftshilfe [Council for Mutual Economic Aid]
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAPMO	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin [Foundation Archive of Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR at the Federal Archive, Berlin]
SBZ	Sowjetische Besatzungszone [Soviet Occupational Zone]
SdM	Sekretariat des Ministers für Staatssicherheit [Secretariat of the Minister of State Security]
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands [Socialist Unity Party of Germany]

SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SIVSAJ	Internationaler Freiwilligendienst für die Solidarität und Freundschaft der Jugend [International Volunteer Service for Youth Solidarity and Freindship]
SK	Solidaritätskomitee der DDR [GDR Solidarity Committee]
Soli	colloquial for solidarity or solidarity payments
SPFF	Seychelles People's Progressive Front
SPK	Staatliches Plankomitee der DDR [GDR State Planning Committee]
SR	Socialist Republic
Sthh	Staatshaushalt [national budget]
SU	Soviet Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TTI	Abbreviation for a vocational training facility in Ethiopia
UAR	United Arab Republic
UDPM	Democratic Union of the Malian People, Mali
UN	United Nations
UNEP	UN Environmental Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIP	United National Independence Party, Zambia
UNO	United Nations Organization
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UPRONA	Unity for National Progress, Burundi
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
VdgB	Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe [Association of Mutual Farmers' Assistance]
VDJ	Vereinigung der Demokratischen Journalisten [Association of Democratic Journalists]
VEB	Volkseigener Betrieb [state-owned enterprise]



VKSK	Verband der Kleingärtner, Siedler und Kleintierzüchter [Society of Allotment Holders, Settlers and Pet Breeders]
WBDJ	Weltbund der Demokratischen Jugend [World Federation of the Democratic Youth]
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia
WTZ	Wissenschaftlich-Technische Zusammenarbeit [educational-technical co-operation]
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZK	Zentralkomitee [Central Committee]

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## Introduction

This thesis explores the context and underpinnings of the German Democratic Republic's (GDR's) development policies towards the Third World between c.1960 and 1990. Particular attention is paid to Africa. Case studies of assistance to SWAPO and the ANC further focus attention on southern Africa in particular. Aspects of both military and civilian aid are considered. Development initiatives overseas in Africa, and development training for Africans within the GDR itself both receive attention.

After the German reunification, attempts have been made to record and interpret the GDR's history from an almost exclusively West German perspective.<sup>1</sup> Having grown up, studied, and practiced as an historian in the GDR, I regarded it as a challenge to include a more objective point of view into the discussions about "coming to terms" with GDR history by analysing written and oral sources, especially with respect to the GDR policy regarding African countries and liberation movements. It is this attempt not to simply dismiss the achievements of the GDR, but still to acknowledge its shortcomings, which gave rise to the present work. I have also set out to bring German archival sources, other primary sources and published works which they would otherwise have been unlikely to encounter to the attention of English-speaking readers.

Supported by the *Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft (DFG)*,<sup>2</sup> this thesis forms one of two extensive studies which aim to begin to address the dearth of academic sources relating to this field. The other project, Haile Gabriel Dagne's *Das entwicklungspolitische Engagement der DDR in Äthiopien. Eine Untersuchung auf der Basis äthiopischer Quellen* (published by LIT publishers in 2004), focuses on the GDR's development policy in Ethiopia. This is the first detailed monograph which sheds light on a former aid policy partnership – besides it; there are only a small number of shorter publications which offer some insights into this complicated relationship.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, Dagne fails to discuss the collaboration between the GDR and Ethiopia on a military and/or security policy level, limiting the value of this study.

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1 See especially Möller (2004), Scholtyseck (2003), Siebs (1999), Troche (1996), Wentker (2007).

2 German Research Association

3 See especially Bock/Muth/Schwiesau (eds.) (2004, 2006, 2010), Hänisch/Neubert (1993), Winter (1990). The same publishing house produced a translation entitled *The Commitment of the German Democratic Republic in Ethiopia. A Study based on Ethiopian sources* in 2006. For shorter works, see Panchanan

Even today, a significant number of politicians in third world countries, and others who benefited from the GDR's aid efforts, recognise the significant role which the development policy of the GDR played in assisting their liberation struggles and in the development of their political and economic planning. Hence, an analysis of home and foreign affairs backgrounds, material and staffing conditions, the theoretical as well as the practical approach to the implementation of aid efforts will be undertaken here. Furthermore, this thesis supplies answers to questions on why, and with what staffing and financial effort, aid projects were started in Africa by the GDR, how they were able to be implemented, and why some of these failed. The wealth of research literature, personal accounts, semi-official and official documents, as well as historical sources of various categories, will be used in seeking answers to these questions. I shall try to give an overview for the whole period of the GDR's existence, even though the analysis will be focussed mainly on the last years of the GDR.

In this regard, the improved quality of the theoretical approach to the GDR's development policy adopted by the transitional government of Lothar de Maizière in 1990 will receive particular attention. The fact that these new political initiatives in the field of development- and African policy, a first in the history of the GDR, could not be fully implemented is self-explanatory given the brief period of existence of an independent GDR. As such it can only be treated theoretically. Nevertheless reference is made to the new, innovative aspects of the strategy in this realm of politics beyond the block mentality. What is highlighted at this point is especially the basis, including the gaps and onesidedness, of the GDR's foreign policy on which (or even in competition with which) the new development policy was devised.

An overview of the extent of the GDR's military support towards freedom organisations and Third World countries will also be given. In the GDR context, this was considered to form part of the scope of development cooperation. A number of case studies will be used to assess the forms of development cooperation adopted.

Finally, the aim of this thesis is also to evaluate the great number of "attempts at coming to terms" with the GDR-past with regard to its foreign-policy relations, in particular

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Saha, "India and Germany – against Imperialism and Fascism", in Heidrich (ed.) (1998), 53ff; Katti (1998), 102 ff.



with regard to Africa. It will become clear that despite their sheer number, throughout all existing analyses (in particular after the fall of the Wall) relatively little groundwork has been done in connection with the GDR's developmental policy involvement in Africa (with the exception of Southern Africa). Essentially, these analyses showed that there obviously were structural differences between the GDR and the Federal German Republic's developmental policy. Moreover, in some cases (specifically in connection with the vocational training of people from Third World countries), special innovative achievements were accomplished by the GDR. Regrettably, these were lost with the "phasing out" of GDR-typical institutions during the early 1990s, presumably because the so-called cadre training was understood as political and material aid related to the spreading of socialism.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis demonstrates that since its formation, the GDR made efforts toward a continuous development of its relations to countries which were either free from colonial dependency or were struggling for freedom. The GDR followed a number of different approaches, and in the course of 30 years developed diverse objectives. Within the GDR's home- and foreign affairs, discrepancies showed up between demand and reality. Before the GDR became involved in development, there always had to be an analysis of the potential political gain. Third World partners, particularly in Africa, were chosen according to this factor. It needs to be said that neither the GDR nor other socialist countries acted as the old western colonial countries did towards their colonies – they did not have the ability (or the will) to do so. The official rationale was that socialist countries in their relationship with developing countries were officially led by principles which were to support endeavours of those countries to develop their own resources, develop a national economy, and expand the education, social and health sectors which would contribute to the strengthening of economic independence.

The volume of economic relations increased eighteen-fold between 1960 and 1984 as a result of these trade relations between the socialist countries of Europe and developing countries. Between 1970 and 1987, the number of developing countries with which the GDR alone had foreign economic relations on the basis of international agreements grew from 23 to 64.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Reichard 1985: 949.

5 Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED 1989: 61.

It comes as no surprise that young nationalist states – mainly in Southern Africa – who supported non-capitalistic development processes and freedom organisations, and who closely associated with Marxism, became beneficiaries of the GDR’s development aid. Nevertheless many African people benefited from the policy of solidarity with its economically limited capacity and the GDR’s development policy potential.

Southern Africa is an especially good example of transparency with regard to the importance of military aid offered by the GDR to African freedom movements. This thesis will also show that, besides the cooperation on the military and security political level, a wide range of the GDR population showed ample signs of solidarity with African countries that fought for their independence. This commitment was nevertheless limited as a result of the GDR economy’s material resources, and the omnipresent safety concerns of the GDR top governing level. At times, these forces limited or stopped individual and collective efforts of offering development aid.

Individual commitment, for instance within the church, was gradually possible in the 1980s. The official government view about their populace’s solidarity with countries of the Third World seemed too absolute – on occasion the opinion prevailed that the GDR’s entire populace was in solidarity.<sup>6</sup> However, despite there certainly having been refusals and rejections of the solidarity concept of the regime’s ideology, one cannot claim that the people of the GDR were generally against the officially declared solidarity with African countries struggling for national independence.

In this context, one needs to refer to a statement made by a member of the Lutheran Church Federation of the GDR, Giselher Hickel, shortly after the fall of the Wall in connection with developmental aid policy work. He spoke about the attitude of solidarity which the majority of the people took on, and criticized the GDR’s decisions on developmental policy involvements, which were not transparent most of the time. He spoke for many people, especially for those who were connected to the church and for whom solidarity was an important issue. As with many of their counterparts, they were excluded from decision-making processes. He elaborated: “I basically see the true problem in that correct and good decisions were made in a way, but we were neither included, nor could we understand the pros and cons. The opportunity to engage with these decisions and grow with

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6 Reichard 2006.

them was taken from us.”<sup>7</sup> Obviously critical of the GDR regime, he nevertheless added: “The solidarity of the people of the GDR was certainly no lie. It sometimes surprised me when at major solidarity events people of different sectors of the traffic or administration department turned out to be open-minded and helpful other than if the key word ‘solidarity’ fell. This was neither artificial nor ordered from supreme ranks.”<sup>8</sup>

It became more and more obvious that, due to economic difficulties which the GDR had been facing during the 1980s, state development was becoming increasingly commercialised. But what could be done? One can only give something if it is owned by the one willing to give. The GDR could hardly supply its own people (in particular with consumer goods). This led to limiting the painstakingly-created developmental aid policy from the mid-1980s onwards.

This limitation resulted in the GDR focusing on the education and qualification of African nations (and of people of other parts of the Third World) locally, as well as on other, non labour-intensive forms of developmental cooperation like credit lending. These were forms of development cooperation which the GDR could afford and had been practising before. This limited the expenditure of the much sought-after and needed foreign exchange.

Reliable information about the GDR’s developmental aid involvement only became available with the fall of the Wall. The *Staatliche Plankommission* (SPK)<sup>9</sup> states in a report that in 1986 the GDR government instructed the SPK to draw up a working document which regulated the coordination and settlement of accounts of GDR aid work for developing countries (funds taken from the state budget, the GDR’s Solidarity Committee and social organisations), and allocated responsibilities for undertaking this.

The working document was completed in 1988 and was based on the experience gained in coordinating and accounting for aid work. A particular regulation ordinance on the coordination and settlement of accounts for activities of GDR’s aid work for developing countries was issued by the cabinet on 7 November 1988.

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7 Hickel 1990: 74.

8 Katti 1989: 102ff

9 State planning commission.

The following comments are based on statements by the SPK which were made after the fall of the Wall. These were published in: *Epd-Entwicklungspolitik* (ed.): „Bericht des Solidaritätskomitees für den Runden Entwicklungspolitischen Tisch“ (=Materialien V/90), Frankfurt on the Main 1990: 42 ff.

In addition to that, on 15 November the SPK’s chairman enacted the “instructions to coordinate and to settle accounts for aid work done in developing countries”. The SPK therefore was in charge of the coordination and financing of all aid activities in which over 60 governmental bodies and social organisations were involved.

These activities of GDR aid work were categorised in:

1. Aid work free of charge:
  - Material supplies and services (MAT)
  - Training and extended vocational education (BAW)
  - Training at universities and technical colleges (HUF)
  - Dispatching of experts based on WTZ and KWZ (EXP)
  - Medical Services (MED)
  - State-gifts
  - Voluntary UNO contributions
  
2. Preferential pricing
  
3. Governmental and special credits:

The SPK decided on bodies which were responsible for the coordination of free aid work. These cooperated with the relevant central governmental authorities and developed proposals for development grants with solidarity bodies. The bodies concerned were:

**Table 1: Bodies Coordinating Free Aid Work**

Type of aid work	Coordinating body
MAT	Ministry of Material Economy; Solidarity Committee
BAW	State-secretary for Vocational Training
HUF	MfAA, Ministry of Higher And Technical Education
EXP WTZ	Ministry of Foreign Trade
KWZ	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MED	Ministry of Health

**Table 2: GDR Grants for Developing Countries, 1986 – 1989 (in Mill. GDR-Marks)<sup>10</sup>**

<b>Type of support:</b>	<b>1986-1988</b>	<b>1989</b>
Material supplies and services	333.6	101.5
Training and extended vocational education	234.5	74.9
Training at universities and technical colleges	342.9	102.2
Dispatching of experts	262.6	77.7
Medical Services	37.9	11.6
State-gifts	364.0	23.0
Voluntary UNO contributions	12.5	5.0
Total	1,508.0 <sup>11</sup>	395.9
Share of produced national income	0.21% <sup>12</sup>	0.15% <sup>13</sup>
Discounts	2,156.0	653.8
Share of produced national income	0.29% <sup>14</sup>	0.25% <sup>15</sup>

Thus, according to official GDR sources, between 1986 and 1989, 4,713,700,000 GDR-Marks<sup>16</sup> were spent on aid free of charge and in discounts granted to partner countries. This was given as 0.47% of GDP.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, governmental and special credits amounted to 4,450,700,000 GDR-Marks during the same period of time. From official sources, the total GDR expenditure for aid between 1986 and 1989 thus amounted to about 9,164,400,000 GDR-Marks,<sup>18</sup> which amounts to a yearly average of 0.91% of GDP. Eighty-nine percent of these expenses were financed by the state-budget and 11% from the Solidarity Committee's funds as well as from social organisations. Military aid is not included in the total expenditure. This information was exclusively collected for the ministries of national defence,

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10 epd-Entwicklungspolitik (ed.): „Grundsatzklärung des Entwicklungspolitischen Runden Tisches“ (*Materialien V/90*), Frankfurt on the Main 1990: 42 ff.

11 This is the figure given in the original source. Re-calculating from the figures given, it should be 1,588.0.

12 As given in original source. It is approximately correct but, given the absence of figures for the total produced national income, it is impossible to recalculate it.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 According to the recalculated figures from the table above, this should be 4,793,700,000.

17 It is impossible to check this percentage figure, or those which follow, from the totals available. They nevertheless appear to be approximately accurate.

18 According to the recalculated figures from the table above, this should be 9,244,400,000.

home affairs and state security. Church funds for developing countries were also not included in the abovementioned sum. Between 1986 and 1989, free aid was financed in the following ways:

**Table 3: Financing of Free GDR Aid, 1986 - 1989<sup>19</sup>**

<b>Funds taken</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
From the state budget	50
From the Solidarity Committee's funds	45
From funds of social organisations	5

Foreign exchange was exclusively made available through the state budget to cover transport costs accrued by all institutions offering aid services. The total amounted to 65.5 Million *Valutamark*<sup>20</sup> for the period mentioned above. The GDR's provision of free aid included effective humanitarian aid through supplies of food, medicines, medical-technical tools and instruments, building materials, vehicles, teaching materials and equipment for educational institutions, clothing, blankets, tents and many other forms of aid. This helped to alleviate hunger, to fight epidemics, to supply medical services and to overcome illiteracy in about one hundred countries of the Third World.

Besides supplies of material goods, the GDR's aid in the spirit of solidarity in areas of training and further education at universities and technical colleges, as well as in GDR businesses and institutions, played an important part. 9,400 citizens of developing countries and of national freedom movements studied at universities and technical colleges in the GDR in 1988. 2,900 of those originated from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Approximately 1,900 people finished their training and received their degrees in 1990; 532 of whom were from LDCs. Approximately 6,900 nationals of developing countries – 115 LDCs – learned a trade or undertook further education through long-term and short-term training, such as study exchanges, summer schools, seminars, courses and internships, etc. among others.

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19 epd-Entwicklungspolitik : *Materialien* V/90).

20 Local currency of western strength for internal trade between socialist countries.

Apart from long-term training benefiting especially citizens of the SR Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Mongolian People's Republic, more than 830 Mozambican youths graduated in thirty-seven skilled professions at the *Schule der Freundschaft*<sup>21</sup> in Staßfurt. Furthermore, the GDR granted support by dispatching consultants and experts, who were mainly doctors, medical staff, lecturers, educators, engineers and technicians as well as agricultural experts. An average of 1,500 consultants and experts were operational in short- and long-term missions in developing countries between 1986 and 1989. Nineteen *FDJ* brigades assisted with high personal input in relief aid in eleven Asian, African and Latin American countries, sometimes under difficult conditions. About one hundred developing countries received concerted support by the GDR between 1986 and 1989.

International solidarity was an inseparable component of the GDR's foreign policy. Developing countries with a socialist orientation and national freedom movements were a priority for GDR aid. Only a few countries (such as Cuba, Vietnam, MPR, Laos, Cambodia, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen as well as the PLO, SWAPO and the ANC) received this kind of aid in earlier years. An average of 80% of solidarity funds were spent per year on these countries and liberation movements.

Countries such as Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Mongolian People's Republic and Nicaragua received discounts for particular goods and products as well as special credits on the basis of appropriate agreements. In return, the GDR obtained nickel, copper, sugar, coffee and citrus fruit, among other things, from these countries. Between 1986 and 1989 the GDR granted discounts to the value of 2,809,800,000 GDR-Marks (see Table 2).

The GDR maintained amicable relations with other Asian, African and Latin American countries. The majority of these states received limited assistance which was the main foundation in the relationship, in addition to the political dialogue. These included countries like the Congo, Zambia, Mali, Madagascar, and Benin, as well as countries which faced regular natural disasters, such as floods, cyclones, periods of drought, locust plagues

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21 The Friendship School

Cf. the most comprehensive, up-to-date, far-reaching and unique study of an educational experiment, which is not objective due to political statements, compiled by Reuter, Lutz/Scheunpflug, Annette: *Die Schule der Freundschaft. Eine Fallstudie zur Bildungszusammenarbeit zwischen der DDR und Mosambik* (Munster/New York/Munich/Berlin 2006).

and similar phenomena (like countries from the Sahel region, the Sudan, Bangladesh and other developing countries). The GDR also assisted with the provision of bandages and schooling materials for additional programmes of the UNO children welfare organisation UNICEF in Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia.

This form of developmental aid involvement showed more long-term effects than some of the agricultural and industrial projects which were implemented. Even today, politicians and commercial specialists of many Asian, African and Latin American countries who benefited from education and training in the GDR have social responsibilities in their home countries. It would have been – and would still be – a worthwhile exercise for the reunified Germany to have re-established and intensified these old contacts again. Unfortunately, this seems to have been merely wishful thinking. After the German reunification in October 1990, the Federal German government was too arrogantly judgemental of the then non-existent GDR and its developmental aid, and negated the experience accumulated in decades of useful involvement in these states.

Despite this, not all bonds that existed between the GDR and the countries concerned, as well as African organisations, have disappeared. Many Africans still have fond memories today about their training and education in the other, now defunct, German state. If the political will were available, these contacts could be used today in certain areas of German developmental cooperation, as well as in business. Hence it is important that the West German side does not condemn or reject everything that originates from the GDR. Maybe a review of the developmental involvement of the GDR is one possibility of coming to terms objectively with the GDR past, for the GDR has become an historical object, and thus an object of historical research.



## Literature Review and Sources

In the historiography of attempts to ‘come to terms’ with the history of the GDR, and in particular its foreign policy,<sup>1</sup> there is possibly no other area where serious studies are as lacking as that of the intentions and implementation of the state’s development policy. This is the case both before the end of this state in 1990, as well as in the years thereafter. Much of the small body of work which exists is seriously flawed, either in taking an unthinkingly pro- or anti-GDR stance, without following the usual academic conventions. In this review, I will not deal with works which do not reference sources,<sup>2</sup> or those stemming from political institutions – no matter of which political affiliation. However, at the outset it should be noted that even more serious attempts to deal with the issues in an academic manner suffered from the culture of secrecy during the times of the GDR.

In common with other socialist states, during the period of its existence, the GDR kept secret any statistical data which it feared could be criticised by, or presented negatively in, the West. This exaggerated climate of secrecy extended into many fields of state policy, including data on development policy. Commenting on this as late as 1985, Udo Kollatz, the former state secretary of the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit*,<sup>3</sup> wrote:

In the Soviet Union and all other Eastern Block states development aid is shrouded by mystery, even treated as a state secret. There are no official publications or in-depth reports about the Eastern Bloc’s own aid for the developing countries. Any figures published here every now and then are the result of retrospective calculations regarding projects in developing countries which have become public.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 For a poignant, yet not entirely complete overview of the history of GDR foreign policy, see Bange 2004: 492ff.
  - 2 I refer here especially to numerous articles from FRG newspapers, periodicals and magazines from before and after German Reunification which comment on the development policy of the GDR but have, at best, little but, more often, no academic merit.
  - 3 Ministry of Economic Co-operation, FRG
  - 4 Kollatz 1985: 80f. „In der Sowjetunion und allen anderen Ostblockstaaten wird Entwicklungshilfe [...] mit dem Schleier des Geheimnisses umgeben, nachgerade als Staatsgeheimnis behandelt. Es gibt keine amtlichen Veröffentlichungen oder umfassenden Berichte über die eigenen Leistungen des Ostblocks an die Entwicklungsländer. Bei uns gelegentlich publizierte Zahlenangaben beruhen auf Rückrechnungen anhand bekannt gewordener Projekte in den Entwicklungsländern.“

In different contexts, others have bemoaned the ‘scant information’ available.<sup>5</sup> This meant that works dealing with the GDR Africa policy before the Fall of Socialism fell victim to the fact that the authors did not have access to the relevant archives. Some of the conclusions which they reached were thus, perforce, of a more speculative nature.<sup>6</sup> Scholars both within, and outside of, the GDR suffered equally under this limitation. There were also other forces which impacted on their writing.

Just like their counterparts from other countries, GDR academics and researchers did not have unrestricted access to the appropriate archives where files and other documents detailing development policy involvement were held. Furthermore, ideologically biased views dominated the few relevant publications on the history of the development, and wider foreign, policies of the GDR.<sup>7</sup> Studying works produced during the time, one is left with the strong impression that GDR academics engaged with the development and Africa policies of the Federal Republic of Germany<sup>8</sup> or the USA, rather than with those of their own country.<sup>9</sup> Turning to another possible source of enquiry: during the GDR’s existence, the Protestant church maintained its own relationships with Third World countries. They nevertheless rarely produced any written accounts of this.<sup>10</sup> The West German historian Benno-Eide Siebs’ comments, made in the context of his extensive study of GDR foreign policy in general, are equally applicable to the field of development policy: “The results of academic research are very seldom applied to actual foreign policy; and the GDR is no exception to this.”<sup>11</sup>

Moving to the other side of the Wall, from the 1970s onwards, the GDR’s Africa policy was the subject of increasing interest<sup>12</sup> by some West German academics.<sup>12</sup> A number of these concerned themselves specifically with GDR involvement in development.<sup>13</sup> Beyond

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5 Croan 1981: 23.

6 Schleicher, H.-G. 1990: 350ff.

7 Cf. Anon.: „DDR fest an der Seite der Staaten und Völker Afrikas“, in: *Neues Deutschland*, 15 November 1984, Berlin; Dievenov (n.d.)

8 Cf. Büttner/Rachel 1974; Etinger 1961; Sperker 1960.

9 Cf. Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft (ed.): *Gegen Rassismus, Apartheid und Kolonialismus. Dokumente der DDR 1977 – 1982*, Berlin 1983; Baatz 1985; Babing 1974; Loth 1976.

10 Cf. an exception: Berger 1986: 31ff; Cf. church involvement in development aid: Althausen 1993: 63 ff; Krusche 1998; Wolff 1994: 122ff; Schiewe 1994: 94 ff.

11 Siebs 1999: 104. „Die Ergebnisse wissenschaftlicher Forschungen finden höchst selten Eingang in die praktische Außenpolitik, die DDR bildete darin keine Ausnahme.“

12 Bischof 1977; Hillebrandt 1987; Post/Sandvoss 1982.

13 See especially Kipke 1988; Hendrichs 1981.

any ideological forces which may have been at play, all of these suffered from the same difficulties as their GDR counterparts – the secrecy with regards to sources. This limitation is particularly well illustrated by the work of the US historian Gareth Winrow. In his work *The Foreign Policy of the GDR in Africa* (1990), he attempted to portray and assess GDR support for national liberation movements and young nation states in Africa quite objectively. This is arguably the best assessment of GDR Africa policy before 1989. However, despite this, he was often forced to speculate as he did not have access to the relevant GDR archives.<sup>14</sup> Thus he came to succumb to the theory propounded by West Germany that the GDR would mainly show solidarity support in military and security activities. As he did not have any original sources at his disposition, he often uses journalistic resources, which are not reliable. Against this background, those West German and U.S. publications of that time trying to gather and document information on the GDR's Africa policy more or less accurately are of special significance.<sup>15</sup> In addition, some valuable information may be gained from those works comparing the development policy of both German states before 1989.<sup>16</sup> The first comparative monograph including material to be found in East German archives was only published in the mid-1990s by a German academic teaching in the USA.<sup>17</sup>

Only after the Fall of Socialism, when the archives opened for academic research, could historians and politics researchers concern themselves with the history, the extent and the particularities of GDR development policy. One of the first to present his findings on this topic – in the context of Africa policy – was former diplomat and Africa expert Hans-Georg Schleicher.<sup>18</sup> As he already had close contact with the ANC leadership during GDR times, he could present interesting aspects on the GDR relations with the ANC and SWAPO in his books. These insights of an insider he combined with thorough archive research. He is known as one of the best experts on GDR Africa policy. His wife, too, started to publish after the Fall of Socialism, both independently from and in collaboration with him, on this topic.<sup>19</sup> Other scholars also started investigating foreign policy issues, especially with regards to the GDR

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14 Schleicher, H.-G. 1990: 350ff.

15 Cf. Reime 1972; *Außenpolitik kommunistischer Länder und Dritte Welt* 1980 and 1981.

16 Dornbusch/Vogelsang 1973; Mathies 1978: 169ff; Spanger/Brock 1987.

17 Schulz 1995.

18 Schleicher H.-G. 1993: 10ff; Schleicher, H.-G.1991; Schleicher, H.-G. 1991(a): 32ff; Schleicher, H.-G. 1994 (a): 49ff; Schleicher, H.-G. 1994(b): 16ff; Schleicher, H.-G. 1995: 11ff; Schleicher, H.-G. 1991(b): 367ff.

19 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1990(a): 81; Schleicher, I. 1990(b): 887 ff; Schleicher, I. 1990(c): 283ff.

Africa policy.<sup>20</sup> A number of these case studies have become important standard works on the history of the relationship between the GDR and Southern Africa.<sup>21</sup> These are testimony to a far-reaching intimate knowledge by insiders, who at the time co-designed the GDR's Africa policy.

When the GDR ceased to exist, not all of its former citizens were prepared to remove and forget their former country's positive sides. Thus former academics from the Academy of Sciences of the GDR and ex-diplomats constituted a working group in 1990/1991, as part of a job creation programme, to document and research the GDR's Africa and development policies. No publications emerged from this group, with the exception of a brief study on the history of the GDR-Malagasy relationship.<sup>22</sup> The main reason for this might be that the concerned individuals very soon lacked the financial basis, i.e. the state's financial support. Yet one useful documentation of the GDR's Africa policy was published, which was based on the analysis of files from the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the SED, also as part of a job creation programme.<sup>23</sup>

Of special appeal are the intentions of 'coming to terms' with the past of persons who used to work in those areas which now needed to be dealt with in the wake of reunification. Previously privileged 'insiders', they were now frequently portrayed as agents of an oppressive regime. After the German unification, two development policy researchers from the former *Hochschule für Ökonomie* (University for Economics) in Berlin-Karlshorst, where during GDR times theoretical economics was taught (if there was such a thing in the GDR at all), published on the state of (and especially on the shortcomings within the discussion of) the theory of development in the GDR.<sup>24</sup> In the *Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Academy of Sciences of the GDR), too, mostly younger researchers, mainly based at the *Institut für Allgemeine Geschichte* (Institute of General History) dealt with the history of their disciplines

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20 Muth 2000 (a); Muth 2000 (b); Pfeil 2001; Winter 1990.

21 Cf. Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. 1997; Engel/Schleicher, H.-G. 1998; Schleicher, I. 1999.

22 Cf. Gehrman 1994: 463ff.

23 Husemann, Bettina/Neumann, Annette: *Die Afrikapolitik der DDR. Eine Titeldokumentation von Akten des Politbüros und des Sekretariats des Zentralkomitees der SED 1949 – 1989*, Hamburg 1994.

24 Jegzentis/Wirth 1991: 71ff.

which were related to development policy for as long as their institutes lasted; some continued publishing even after having been made redundant.<sup>25</sup>

Analysing the recent past of one's own discipline is especially interesting if undertaken in a fair and self-critical manner. In the 1980s some cautious changes in the treatment of Western theories of development sociology became discernible. In various academic institutions of the GDR, bourgeois sociological theories on developing countries were met more affably,<sup>26</sup> yet without really embracing any leftist attitudes outside the non-Marxist discourse in the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>27</sup> As there had been, outside the Marxist dominated GDR academe, different attitudes which could not be simplified as being "bourgeois", and from which one could perhaps learn with regard to economics, Hartmut Schilling, was prompted as early as in the mid-1980s to demand that the teaching and researching of the history of theory, and the criticism of theory, be part of Economics at the Africa and Near East Studies at the Karl-Marx-University in Leipzig.<sup>28</sup> The heads of the institution, however, did not find themselves in a position to implement these (given the circumstances in the GDR) revolutionary ideas, which can also be traced in other documents in the Leipzig University Archive.<sup>29</sup>

During the 1980s the number of studies on the "the connection between the worldwide struggle for peace, disarmament and détente and the struggle to overcome poverty"<sup>30</sup> increased, following the general trend of GDR academe in the social sciences. Despite this rather formal sounding stipulation, a number of studies were published at the time with novel approaches and which to this day are part of the academic discourse. Bernhard Streck, now teaching in Leipzig, nevertheless still comes to the conclusion (which he had explicitly applied to ethnography, but which is appropriate for other disciplines from the humanities or social sciences) that in the GDR it was expected in academic publications that authors had to declare themselves to be in conformity with the political system of the GDR. Academe thus had to:

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25 Cf. Robbe 1993: 14; Reetz 1991; van der Heyden 1999; van der Heyden 1993: 181ff; van der Heyden 1992: 207ff.

26 Cf. Schorr 1985: 1096f.

27 Cf. Jegzentis/Wirth 1991.

28 Cf. letter Schilling to G. Kück, 9 March 1986, Archiv der Universität Leipzig, ZM 4812.

29 Archiv der Universität Leipzig, ZM 4812.

30 Cf. Kück 1988: 17ff. „Zusammenhang zwischen dem weltweiten Kampf um Frieden, Abrüstung und Entspannung und dem Ringen um Überwindung der Unterentwicklung“.

argue in an anti-capitalist and anti-colonial way, but had to be otherwise exact, positivist, rationalist and materialist. As the available literature could normally not afford all this, the most important aim of communist ethnography was to criticise it and to interpret it in the spirit of Marx, Engels, Lenin and, for the longest time, Stalin.<sup>31</sup>

However, only in 1986 could an Africa expert from Leipzig, Erich Spiegel, bring himself to ask that this criticism should by no means consist only in a mere ‘unmasking’ of bourgeois literature as being bourgeois.<sup>32</sup>

After the Fall of Socialism and with the beginning of the dismissals of the employed Africa researchers, an “Institute for Development Studies” was supposed to have been founded at the University of Leipzig. Its tasks were to have been, in accordance with the Leipzig tradition, to give an overview of and discuss in a comparative manner, analyse in a multidisciplinary way, and interpret and portray in an interdisciplinary manner, the super-regional “Third World” problem. It was thus intended to combine a regional approach and the methodological approaches of the relevant social sciences. This project would have been unique in Germany, but could not be realised anymore, although it even had the support of experts from the former FRG. During 1992, all personnel were made redundant, after internal disputes with other members of the former Africa/Near East Studies Section.<sup>33</sup>

Topics concerning the area of development policy with regard to Africa increased in number in the academic discourse when the first two volumes on the GDR’s Africa policy which contained not only the first condensed case studies on particular aspects of the rather broad network of GDR development and Africa policies, but also personal reports by persons formerly shaping said relationships, were published.<sup>34</sup> This collaboration of academics and former diplomats eventually resulted in the publication series *The GDR and the Third World*.<sup>35</sup> Especially in the books of this series (others are planned), the voices of former actors

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31 Streck 1997: 64. „antikapitalistisch und antikolonialistisch argumentieren, aber sonst exakt, positivistisch, rationalistisch und materialistisch sein. Da die vorhandene Literatur das in der Regel nicht bieten konnte, war es vornehmste Aufgabe der kommunistischen Ethnographie, sie zu kritisieren und im Lichte der Geister von Marx, Engels, Lenin und lange genug auch Stalin zu interpretieren“.

32 Spiegel 1986: 395. „keinesfalls mit einer bloßen ‘Entlarvung’ der bürgerlichen Literatur als bürgerlich begnügen“

33 Cf. Hopfmann/Krause/Schilling 1992: 143ff.

34 Cf. van der Heyden/Schleicher, H.-G./Schleicher, I. 1993 and 1994.

35 Up to date, the following volumes have been published: Vol. 1: van der Heyden/Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. (eds.) 1993: *Die DDR und Afrika. Zwischen Klassenkampf und neuem Denken*; vol. 2: van der Heyden, Ulrich/Schleicher, Ilona/Schleicher, Hans-Georg (eds.) 1994: *Engagiert für Afrika. Die DDR*

involved in African- and development policy can be heard. Their contributions suffer from excessive subjectivity but can reflect important information about the times of their active participation in politics and development aid. In some of the books in the series *The GDR and the Third World* interviews with these former actors were published, others provided written contributions on their experiences and assessments. These kinds of individual reports and assessments by former actors involved in development- and Africa-policy can also be found in other books used in this thesis and listed in the bibliography. Efforts by the author to arrange interviews with other actors failed on the basis of the argument that everything that needed to be said, had been recorded and published, or – and this concerns the majority of former actors – participants refused to report on the past in any form whatsoever. For these persons the past and their personal involvement in developmental and/or African policies of the GDR remain mere history. Hence it is no easy task to get these persons to the point of reporting on their experiences, something which met with very rare success.<sup>36</sup> In addition, a number of former actors who had played a role in the GDR's foreign policy have passed away.

Since the mid-1990s, especially Hans-Georg and Ilona Schleicher have edited quite a number of monographs on the GDR relationship particularly with Southern Africa and have, in the course of their endeavours, worked through a great deal of archival material and submitted mostly new research results.<sup>37</sup> Thus the necessity to repeat or correct the substantial results available of this intensive archival research seems needless unless appropriate. Where required, reference will be made to the special literature.

Various case studies and a few volumes on the GDR development policy have been published by other authors as well.<sup>38</sup> One volume of conference proceedings has been

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*und Afrika II*; vol. 3: Schulz 1995: *Development Policy in the Cold War Era. The Two Germanies and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960 – 1985*; vol. 4: Heidrich (ed.) 1998: *Partnerschaft DDR – Indien. Erfahrungen und Einsichten*; vol. 5: van der Heyden 1999: *Die Afrikawissenschaften in der DDR. Eine akademische Disziplin zwischen Exotik und Exempel. Eine wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*; vol. 6: Voß (ed.) 2005: *Wir haben Spuren hinterlassen! Die DDR in Mosambik. Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse aus drei Jahrzehnten*; vol. 7: van der Heyden 2005: *Zwischen Solidarität und Wirtschaftsinteressen. Die „geheimen“ Beziehungen der DDR zum südafrikanischen Apartheidregime*; vol. 8: van der Heyden/Benger (eds.) 2009: *Kalter Krieg in Ostafrika. Die Beziehungen der DDR zu Sansibar und Tansania*.

36 Cf. van der Heyden/Stephan 2009.

37 Cf. in particular: Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. 1994: 16ff; Engel/Schleicher, H.-G.1998; Schleicher, I. 1999(a); Schleicher I. 1999(b).

38 Cf. especially Döring 1999; Bücking 1998; of a much lower quality: Möller (a) 2003.

dedicated explicitly to GDR development policy.<sup>39</sup> Analyses with different angles which nevertheless touch on the topic at hand should at least be mentioned here.<sup>40</sup>

A particular category of publications deserves mention here, namely, those publications focusing on the military and security co-operation of the GDR with Third World countries, particularly African countries. In most of these more or less extensive analyses, a multitude of new pieces of information and important details were made public. There was, for example, no essential new information which would have supported the theory of the existence of a GDR 'Africa Corps'. The occasional moral outrage about these relationships (especially by West German authors), which seems entirely hypocritical, is inappropriate,<sup>41</sup> seeing that the Federal Republic's military and economical involvement in the Third World at that time was much greater than that of the GDR had ever been. Particularly in view of the fact that even today in Iraq there are many victims of those chemical weapons which were supplied by the Federal Republic during the Iran-Iraq-war,<sup>42</sup> it seems hypocritical that the supplying of weapons to Iran and Iraq would prove that GDR foreign policy was unsupportive of a peaceful stance.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from the above-mentioned studies of a mainly monographic nature, a further number of mostly small case studies have been published in the past twelve years which need not be mentioned in this review as they will be dealt with in the remainder of this thesis. Special emphasis will be placed on the following areas of development policy: contract workers from Angola and Mozambique, solidarity with the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, so-called SWAPO-children, *Schule der Freundschaft* (School of Friendship), education and training of students and skilled workers from Africa in the GDR.

It is regrettable that, with the exception of the studies mentioned in this thesis, to date no scientific study exists on the African side reflecting the perspective of the partners of the GDR, and the nature of the variety of relations between the respective country or liberation movement and the now defunct German state.

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39 BMZ/DSE/Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken 2000.

40 Cf. for example: Thiel (ed.) 1996; Troche 1996; Belle 1996; Kilian 2001; Möller 2003 (b). Harald Möller was a West Berlin communist who came to be seen as a renegade after the Fall of Socialism as he moved away from his earlier objective stance towards the GDR.

41 Cf. Möller (a) 2003.

42 Heinrich Böll Foundation (ed.): *Iran-Report*, no. 5, Berlin 2004: 13f.

43 Krech 2002.



Publications by historians of other countries, i.e. from third countries which concern themselves explicitly with the GDR's African and development policies are also not known to this author. It is perhaps explicable – at least in respect of the former liberation movements in Southern Africa, SWAPO and the ANC – that there is no relevant archival material on this subject matter available outside Germany, respectively, that there is no material available for scientific analysis. This applies both to the African states with whom the GDR maintained relations, as well as the liberation movements. Especially for the latter filing and archiving written materials was of little importance during their struggle for independence. In those cases where relevant archive materials could be expected, e.g. in the diplomatic offices of the ANC in East Berlin, there is no similar inheritance to be found in the different South African archives as is the case at the Mayibuye Centre.

Scientists involved in research on the relations between the South African liberation movements and other countries of the former East Bloc have had similar experiences. Thus a former highranking Soviet functionary wrote a book about *A View from Moscow to (the) ANC*<sup>44</sup> and not *A View from (the) ANC to Moscow*.<sup>44</sup>

There is a noticeable absence of research on migration in the former GDR, a subject matter which was a regular field of research in the former Federal Republic and other Western countries. Thus there is not only no research basis for this field of study, but also a lack of generally reliable figures and data on migrants from Africa in the GDR.

The history of Angolan and Mozambican contract workers is often discussed with relation to other foreigners in the GDR, often regionally limited, in studies which have been increasing in number in the past few years.<sup>45</sup> For an appropriate discussion of this topic, an analysis of files especially from SAPMO,<sup>46</sup> the Federal Archive,<sup>47</sup> and the *Behörde der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR*

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44 Cf. Shubin 1999.

45 Cf., for example, Maurin 2003: 814ff; Röhr 2002: 211ff; Röhr 1999: 185ff; Gruner-Domic 1996: 204ff; Schüle 2002: 191ff; Krebs 2000; Paul 1999: 59ff; Bröskamp/Jaschok/Noschak 1993; Feige 1999.

46 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin, SAPMO-BArch: see especially, DY 30/IV B 2/12/55; DY 30/J IV 2/2 A-2119; DY 30/J IV 2/2/1709; DY 30/J IV 2/2/1093; DY 30/J IV 2/2A/2155; DY 30/J IV 2/3A/2618; J IV 2/3A/4520; J IV 2/9.04/248; J IV 2/20/25; BArch: J IV 2/20/30 9; SED, IV 2/20/51.

47 Bundesarchiv, Berlin: see especially DC 20/12851; DC 20/12853; DQ 4/5336; DQ 4/5388; DR 3/1322; DR 3. 2. Sch./4038; DZ 8/7060; DZ 8/7302; DZ 8/7301-662; DZ 8/7306-622.

(Representative in Charge of the State Security Service Documents of the former GDR, so-called *Stasi*)<sup>48</sup> is of great use and has been undertaken for this thesis.

The scientific approach to the history of the GDR – even select aspects of it – is to this day quite often not pursued by using scientific method, but is also – and this seems to be the prevailing and widely held impression to date – being used as an ideological extension of the Cold War. Facts and objective descriptions and assessments of the past, which in the end determine the fundamentals for an assessment of GDR society and characterise its behaviour on the interface of the borders between the two big military blocks are often ignored today and not viewed in the historical context of its establishment and the impact of alternating influences. In many cases the simple criterion applied in this so-claimed scientific dispute was that only a few, if any, or absolutely no positive events at all should serve as reminders of the demise of the GDR. No positively motivated reflections should remain in the minds of the GDR population and beyond – both in the public memory as well as in academic and other published forms of historical writing. One cannot fail to ignore these deliberate attempts at prescription when viewing history. Noteworthy is the fact that after German unification, West German politicians pursued the course of action that the GDR was to be delegitimized. Although this was the clear instruction of the then Minister of Justice of the Federal Republic of Germany to German judges and judicial authorities, the apostles or adherents of Clio also seem at least to have taken it up in the same spirit.

When the promotion of such a policy is conceived and widely implemented in the area of jurisprudence – one has to ask oneself the question – to what extent have institutions and their representatives responsible for the application or implementation of this ideology – especially in those disciplines dealing with the past – adhered to prescribed policy? A look at those libraries in which literature published in the last two decades or so have been collected, pays witness to the testimony that the GDR is to be delegitimized with the help of historical science. This dominant viewpoint, not to be found anywhere else in the view on world history, had a strong effect in the public domain, although more predominantly in the western

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48 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin, see especially BStU: MfS-HA II, no. 4574; U: MfS-HA I, no. 13280; MfS-HA I, no. 13618; MfS-HA I, no. 13695; MfS-HA II, no. 27428; MfS-HA II, no. 28715; MfS-HA II, no. 29523; MfS-HA II, no. 29526; MfS-HA IX, no. 20122, vol. 17; MfS-HA X, no. 52; MfS-HA XVIII, no. 12071; MfS-HA XX/AKG; MfS-HA XXII, no. 5541/9; MfS-HVA, no. 23; MfS-HVA, no. 56, part 1; MfS-HVA, no. 63, part 1; MfS-AIM, no. 7735/91; MfS-Arbeitsbereich Mittig, no. 140; MfS-JHS, no. 23106; MfS-SdM, no. 33.

rather than the eastern (German) federal states. This extends to the point where objective, factually based descriptions and assessments of this chapter of German history with due consideration especially of the historical context are denounced as an excuse or even defence of the now defunct GDR, all this despite the fact that these studies are, as a rule, source-based. Even when the latter fact is acknowledged per se in, for example, reviews, their recognition is often being denied in modern day Germany by the representatives of the established historiography.

Hence it is very difficult to obtain public support to make available or for that matter to publish research results which do not conform to the currently held view of the history of the GDR; publishers and editorial boards are very withdrawn when it comes to publishing such materials that do not represent the mainstream view. In addition it has to be mentioned that after German unification everything was done to ensure that, with a few exceptions, historians of the former GDR lost their jobs. This contributed greatly to the establishment of an historical view of the GDR based overwhelmingly on a West German perspective.

Such an assertion does not mean, however, that no work of scientific importance on the history of the GDR and especially on its foreign and development policy has not seen the light of publication in the past years. Especially on African policy a number of collective works, monographs and essays based on the evaluation of historical source materials from different archives have been published. The most important of these are introduced in a separate chapter of this thesis.

However, adequate consideration is also given in this dissertation to other publications and case studies by authors whose objective scientific view has to be questioned against the background of their ideological reservations on the erstwhile existence of the GDR, but who concern themselves directly with or focus on select aspects of the Africa- and development policy of the GDR. Accessible archival resources have in the meantime been evaluated on a number of detailed issues regarding the GDR's foreign policy. This author's criticism is not concerned with such literature which projects a different view or assessment than the one held by him, but is directed against those publications which intentionally pursue a portrayal of GDR history as colourless and doomed from the very start.

Even authors of scientific case studies who pursue a source-oriented approach demonstrate a clear deficit in the assessment of historical events as soon as the question of the legitimacy of the East German state is touched upon.

The most important work on the Africa- and development policy of the GDR has come about on the basis of the evaluation of the documents in the archives of the East German secret service, the Ministry for State Security (Stasi), also known as the Stasi. In fact, the researcher will not only find among the more than 111,000 linear meters of records many important documents of relevance to the central theme of this thesis, but also in other large archives like the Political Archives of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic, of which a separate inventory of archival materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GDR (MfAA) form an integral part. The fact that the Foreign Office maintains its own archives is an exception among the central institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany. All other ministries have to relinquish their file inventories to the central Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv).

The Federal Archives house the files of the central government institutions of the GDR, such as the different ministries (except the MfAA) and its subordinate institutions. The files of the leading party of the GDR, the SED, and the transferred files of other communal institutions such as the central trade union organization FDGB or youth organization FDJ also form part of the Federal Archives. These files of the non-governmental institutions of the GDR, which were established outside the sphere of the state authorities of the GDR in the development of policy choices for the monitoring and steering of the state and society have been consolidated in a foundation, the Foundation for the Archives of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO ). They were subject to strict secrecy until 1990.

For the purposes of this thesis some other archives such as the University Archives in Berlin and Leipzig were also evaluated.

The most important historical sources on the history of the Africa- and development policy of the GDR can, however, be found in the first three of the aforementioned archives, i.e. the archives of the Secret Service, the Foreign Office and the Federal Archives of SAPMO.

Some important aspects and detailed issues have so far been researched and a large part has been published - the bibliography at the end of the study testifies to this. It is not the purpose of this thesis to recapitulate all the existing research results based on available sources again, but it aims at identifying those publications published on the basis of an evaluation of a portion of the files in the above-mentioned archives.

For the pursuit of those current or future research questions that wish to penetrate more deeply into the issues in one way or another, a glimpse at the publications evaluated in this dissertation and contained in the bibliography provides the enabling environment. Only if the file on which the cited publication is based, is particularly relevant or allows further conclusions, reference is made to the relevant archival source in the footnotes. Thus the dissertation does not only make a contribution to historical science through the publication of research results based on the analysis of archival sources, but at the same time shows which specific issues have been investigated and what the results thereof were. A renewed investigation of topics already analyzed by other historians on the basis of source-based research therefore becomes redundant.

As already indicated, the volume of records available for research on the history of the Africa- and development policy of the GDR is vast. Even if, as is usually the case in the archives, the access and usability of the document is restricted, the files concerning the GDR are relatively comprehensive and available for scientific evaluation. While the general embargo on the use of records of at least 30 years as is common in Germany governs the inventory records of the MfAA, SAPMO files - with the exception of personnel records – are fully accessible for scientific evaluation.

Even though there is a widespread preconception that the files of the BstU are freely available for scientific research, the reality is quite different. The relevant legislation, for example, provides for the fact that files containing material affecting the interests of intelligence agencies active in the world today, will not be made available for scientific analysis. Consequently the relevant files from the archives of the former Ministry for State Security documenting, for example, the training of military and intelligence cadres of the ANC or SWAPO, are not available for historical research. This applies, above all, to names, training concepts, assignments and the like. It is, for example, known that ANC cadres were trained in East Germany near the small town in the north, Teterow, but no other information is available. Applicable relevant files of the Stasi on the training of cadres of national liberation

movements from Africa, Asia and Latin America thus remain closed for research. Whatever little relevant information is available, can be found only in the memoirs of former actors and trainees, although, again, its usefulness is rather low because of the confidentiality agreement governing the information to this day.

Reference to the issue of military cooperation between the GDR and the young nation-states in Africa and the liberation movements of southern Africa in particular, is made only selectively in this thesis. Because this is a research topic of which only certain aspects have been studied. Already present on the relevant publications will be dealt with. Especially the military archives of the Federal Republic of Germany in Freiburg and Potsdam contain the files that provide information about the GDR's military involvement in Africa. For various reasons they have been rarely used for scientific analysis. It is gratifying to know that at the behest of the author of this thesis a dissertation on the GDR's cooperation with African states in the military field was written which, at the time of the preparation of this present thesis has not been published yet. Nevertheless, some research results from this dissertation have already been published.

In summary, it should be stressed once again that with the demise of the GDR her archives became available for scientific use for the first time in history. Many details are now accessible. However, it should also be noted that due to the restrictions imposed by the relevant legislation some archives or relevant records are either not or only partially accessible.

In connection with the history of the GDR's military cooperation with countries and liberation movements in Africa it has already been pointed out that subjective sources present in the form of memoirs on certain issues represent the only sources available. Their importance for the central issue under discussion here is not to be underestimated, however. As already indicated, not many memoirs exist which relate to the topic dealt with in this research thesis. Practically no interviews have been conducted; even efforts to explore the experiences that South Africans had in the GDR do not meet scientific standards.

The issue of researching the exile experience, i.e. the temporary or long-term residence of South African citizens in the GDR, so far has played no role. For the analysis of the history of the GDR's political commitment to development this issue plays no explicit role.

Nevertheless, the author of this dissertation has - well aware of the philosophical problems – agreed to render support to a dissertation which is being produced on this very subject.

# CHAPTER 1

## GDR International Development Policy Involvement – History and Fundamental Aspects

### The GDR begins to focus on the Third World

Initially, the Third World did not present itself as a partner for co-operation to the young German Democratic Republic that was founded on 7 October 1949. This was despite the fact that, during the period of rule of the Nazi regime, some of the SED-representatives, who held leading positions in the government of the new Republic had been exiled to countries that would later be referred to as Third World or developing countries, and would later become co-operative partners.<sup>1</sup> Ingrid Muth (2000) provided some examples in her detailed analysis of the social composition of the employees in the GDR foreign office.

Although, during the first decade of her existence, the GDR had not yet fully developed political interest in Asian, African and Latin American countries, or the countries that at that time were colonial or partly colonial territories, the GDR did not differ a great deal from the Federal Republic:

Without any colonial ties, considerably strained by the political, economic and social reconstruction of their own countries and remaining without full sovereignty until the 1950s, the colonies and the few independent states of the Southern hemisphere continued to be negligible for the Federal Republic and even longer for the GDR.<sup>2</sup>

Only after having tried to operate on an international level for some time, did the GDR's leading political party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), discover that after twelve years of Nazism and the end of the war, change had also begun in the world overseas. However, this insight had to mature slowly. Social unrest and national attempts at democracy in the colonial and semi-colonial world are hardly reflected in the SED's party files of the second half of the 1940s and the early 1950s. Neither did colonialism or anti-colonialism play any role in propaganda. This is surprising since a few years later the SED liked to refer to the

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1 Cf., for example, Kießling 1980; Hoffmann et al. 1980.

2 Spanger/Brock 1987: 159. „Ohne koloniale Bindungen, durch den politischen, wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Wiederaufbau des eigenen Landes in hohem Maße beansprucht und bis in die fünfziger Jahre ohne eigene Souveränität, blieben die Kolonien und die wenigen unabhängigen Staaten der südlichen Hemisphäre für die Bundesrepublik und länger noch für die DDR weithin eine quantité négligeable.“



anti-colonialist tradition of the German workers' movement. Most particularly, its anti-colonialist self-conception, sympathy for the oppressed nations' struggle for liberation, was invoked.<sup>3</sup>

In retrospect, the GDR attempted to explain this reluctance, later perceived as a shortcoming, by stating that after the period of national socialist terror, the party members had been lacking a "clear Marxist-Leninist relationship with the colonial question"<sup>4</sup> and that as a consequence 'long-term' clarification had been necessary. According to Professor Hans Piazza, who taught at Karl-Marx-University in Leipzig, the party leadership had to "give priority other tasks of ideological and practical political work because of the objective and subjective circumstances"<sup>5</sup>.

Indeed, the establishment of a new domestic order was given absolute priority in those years. This stance has since been criticised by reference to the proud anti-colonialist traditions of the German workers' movement. However, at the time, there was no criticism of this unconvincing prioritisation of domestic interests over a more internationalist stance. The GDR labour historian, Hans Piazza, for example, argued that, after the war, "mere proclamations" would possibly have "increased the democratic world public's justified mistrust in the 'German situation' rather than reducing" it.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the major task had been "to prove by way of unalterable facts and concrete action that under the leadership of the working class united in the SED something completely new had 'risen from the ruins'".<sup>7</sup>

Only gradually, during the first half of the 1950s, did the Third World move into the consciousness of the leading officials of the GDR. First of all, they showed their solidarity with the "Chinese and Indonesian peoples' struggle for liberation". A message of greeting was sent to the Communist Party of China as one of the first documents of its kind.<sup>8</sup> After

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3 Cf. Weinberger 1967: 402ff; Hyrkkänen 1986; Nishikawa 1976: 87 ff; Oberlack 1993: 49 ff.

4 „klares marxistisch-leninistisches Verhältnis zur kolonialen Frage“

5 „aufgrund der objektiven und subjektiven Gegebenheiten andere Aufgaben in der ideologischen und praktisch-politischen Arbeit den Vorrang einräumen“ "give priority other tasks of ideological and practical political work because of the objective and subjective circumstances"

6 „bloße Verlautbarungen das berechtigte Mißtrauen der demokratischen Weltöffentlichkeit gegenüber den 'deutschen Zuständen' eher verstärken als abbauen [hätten können]“

7 Piazza 1976: 333ff. „durch unumstößliche Tatsachen, durch die konkrete Tat den Beweis anzutreten, daß unter der Führung der in der SED vereinten Arbeiterklasse etwas völlig Neues 'aus den Ruinen auferstanden' war“ The latter refers to the title of the GDR's national anthem „Auferstanden aus Ruinen“/"Risen From The Ruins" – translator's note.

8 Cf. Piazza 1976: 339.

trying to achieve balanced relations with the overseas countries for several years, influenced not least because of the USA's "roll back" policy as well as Stalinist orthodoxy,<sup>9</sup> the GDR began to detach herself from her so far comparatively non-committal perception of the Third World towards the middle of the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, government agreements on the exchange of goods and on payment transactions concluded with Egypt and Lebanon in 1953, with India and Indonesia in 1954 and with Burma and Sudan in 1955, bear testimony to the GDR's starting to commit itself to assisting overseas countries, especially to those later named the so-called Third World or developing countries.

### Stages of the GDR development policy commitment

In the course of the GDR's forty years of existence the general objectives of the GDR development policy commitment were definitely subject to varying priorities. One can speak of different stages of GDR *South Politics*.<sup>11</sup> These were also convincingly described by the West German academics L. Brock and H.-J. Spanger in their book *Die beiden deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt* (Spanger/Brock), published in 1987. Based on the discussion by Brock and Spanger, we can discern four stages of the GDR *Süd-Politik*:

1. The stage of *being caught in a mode of thinking common in the Eastern Bloc*<sup>12</sup> or of the Two-Camps-Doctrine, which persisted approximately until the mid-1950s. According to this, only those countries that ideologically had embarked on a socialist path were to be supported. However, 'ordinary' international trade with all countries, if possible, was not prohibited. In this early stage of the GDR, bourgeois liberation movements were still regarded as weakening the revolutionary potential and were consequently either not supported at all or only supported to a small extent.

2. The stage of the Hallstein Doctrine from 1955 on was characterised, on the one hand, supposedly by the struggle against the Federal Republic's claim to sole representation, on the other hand, by campaigning for co-operation and normal relations with the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The GDR focused particularly on countries that were open to

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9 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 160f..

10 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 161.

11 „Süd-Politik“

12 „Blockdenken“

her own desires for co-operation and recognition, such as Egypt, Algeria, Guinea, Mali, Cuba and, until the mid-1960s, also Ghana. When the first 14 Asian, African and Latin American countries diplomatically recognised the GDR in 1969/70, the Hallstein Doctrine had been condemned to history.

3. With the victory of the national liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique, and following the downfall of the Ethiopian monarchy, the GDR practised a decidedly anti-imperialist *Süd-Politik* in times of a general easing of East-West tensions. It was based essentially on the optimistic approach that success in Africa was an indicator of change in the global balance of power in favour of socialism.

4. Already in the second half of the 1970s, the GDR began to adapt or rather re-design her *Süd-Politik* according to her own economic interests, i.e. securing natural resources and exports. This was intensified in the 1980s and characterised by an aggravation of the East-West conflict, increasing domestic economic problems, the Third World countries emphasised demands for an increase in development aid, also addressed to the socialist countries, and finally by the Afghanistan experience. The stabilisation of foreign trade and foreign economic relations – officially on the basis of mutual advantage – came to the fore. Foreign trade between the GDR and the developing countries decreased proportionally in the 1980s. Thereafter it was at all times characterised by a trade balance surplus which served as compensation for trade balance deficits accrued in trade with the Western industrialised countries.<sup>13</sup> Whether this was official politics or an acceptance of circumstances along with the intention to make the most of politics is another matter. Considering the experiences shared also by other countries in trading with the Third World, it can most likely be assumed that the latter was the case.

Wolf-Dieter Graewe, former secretary of state in the last GDR-cabinet elected after the fall of the Wall, in 1990, reported on the difficulties in obtaining a general idea of the GDR development policy involvement:

A specific peculiarity of the GDR's development cooperation was the lack of a central development policy institution. To my knowledge there was no consistent concept for the implementation of certain goals, no consistent strategy and management of the entire development cooperation. Very complex relationships existed with numerous countries; government loans were linked

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13 Cf. Graewe 1998: 84f.

to commercial relations, these in turn partly to special conditions and also in different kinds of benefits which were free-of-charge.<sup>14</sup>

*Der Spiegel* argued in 1980 that “In economic terms the GDR’s involvement remains a loss-accruing deal notwithstanding”<sup>15</sup> A large number of ministries, institutions and organisations were involved in these complex procedures, i.e. services were rendered by various institutions and funded partly from different sources. Thus, Graewe commented further that:

This complexity of the GDR’s cooperation with many developing countries made it very difficult or impossible to differentiate in retrospect between purely commercial relations and actual development aid services.<sup>16</sup>

At least towards the end of the GDR, i.e. in the second half of the 1980s, the state had become more cautious in granting free services in the name of solidarity, at least to nation states in the Third World which also traded with Western industrialised countries. This raised the question in the GDR as to why these countries should be granted discounts if they had the commercial capacity to do business in world market conditions. Thus, in 1988, a resolution of the Council of Ministers demanded that development aid “be granted in such a way that its efficient implementation complies with the overall economic interests of the GDR, the aims of foreign policy and support of the developing countries in the name of solidarity”.<sup>17</sup>

Presumably, ever increasing demands since the 1980s for more development aid by the developing countries – made to both the socialist and capitalist countries – had contributed

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- 14 Graewe 1998: 85. „Eine spezifische Besonderheit der DDR-Entwicklungszusammenarbeit war das Fehlen einer zentralen entwicklungspolitischen Institution. Es gab nach meiner Kenntnis keine einheitliche Konzeption zur Umsetzung bestimmter Zielstellungen, keine einheitliche Planung und Leitung der gesamten Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Zu zahlreichen Ländern bestanden sehr komplexe Beziehungen, staatliche Kredite waren verknüpft mit kommerziellen Beziehungen, diese zum Teil zu Sonderbedingungen und auch in verschiedenen Formen unentgeltlicher Leistungen.“
- 15 „Wir haben euch Waffen und Brot geschickt“, in: *Der Spiegel*, no. 10, Hamburg 1980: 52. [Also available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-14315215.html>, 12.5.2012] „Wirtschaftlich gesehen bleibt das DDR-Engagement gleichwohl ein Zuschussgeschäft“
- 16 Graewe 1998: 85. „Diese Komplexität der DDR-Zusammenarbeit mit zahlreichen Entwicklungsländer hat es im Nachhinein vielfach sehr erschwert oder auch unmöglich gemacht, rein kommerzielle Beziehungen von eigentlichen Entwicklungshilfeleistungen zu trennen.“
- 17 Schleicher, H.-G. 1996: 241. „so zu gewähren, daß ihr effektiver Einsatz mit dem gesamtwirtschaftlichen Interessen der DDR, den Zielen der Außenpolitik und der solidarischen Unterstützung der Entwicklungsländer übereinstimmt“

to the GDR government's requesting that the *State Planning Commission*<sup>18</sup> carry out a systematic appraisal and documentation of what, according to its own ideas, belonged to the field of development aid. Not until the year 1988 was such an appraisal begun. The details for the years 1986 and 1987 were established retrospectively. Now the GDR was able to make quantitative statements about development aid also within the UN-system. This was important insofar as during the course of the 1980s the GDR had declared her intention to share the responsibility for the solution of global problems. Development aid was quantified by the gross national product and was set to be approximately 0.86%. This is especially remarkable since at present the average share of development aid internationally is 0.33% of the gross national products of the various countries. The Federal Republic's share was around 0.29% at the beginning of the third millennium.

Even today it is difficult to obtain an objective, integral overview of the true extent of GDR development policy involvement in Africa. Simply, the fact that various countries and organisations had been supported for various different reasons renders assessing GDR 'development aid' extremely difficult and ultimately imperfect. One of the most important factors that makes the assessment and characterisation of GDR development involvement difficult, or even impedes it, arises from the fact that the actual performance of development aid was often not labelled as such. For instance, state cooperatives or foreign trade enterprises did not charge the customary interests when trading with Third World countries, offered advantageous loans to overseas partners, and forsook deliveries or the previously agreed upon quantity of goods, products or natural resources. They trained experts within their own enterprises, even if this was not part of any plans. Thus it is difficult to come to a conclusive empirical, data-based evaluation of the extent of GDR development aid in Africa.<sup>19</sup>

### German-German relations and the GDR's struggle for recognition

The Federal Republic of Germany – as opposed to the GDR – had already become a fully recognised state, subject to international law. She followed her own political development, which had been developed on the basis of her having assumed the legal succession of the

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18 „Staatliche Plankommission“

19 Cf. Claus 1990: 4.

German *Reich*. Within a few years, those characteristics, which clearly distinguished her from the GDR, became more pronounced. For the GDR, this was reason to accuse the other German state of hanging on to, and further developing, imperialism, expansionism, economic exploitation of her own population, and repression and exploitation also of foreign populations. GDR spokespersons also made accusations that the leadership and official elite of the Federal Republic contained members who had held positions of prominence in the fascist German *Reich*. These people were now claiming to represent democratic constitutional concepts. The Federal Republic and her Western allies could do little to counter these accusations, as they were indeed not pure invention.<sup>20</sup> Confrontations and accusations of being responsible for the deterioration of the relations between the two German states ensued.

The relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union looked slightly different. The USSR and the FRG had assumed diplomatic relations in September 1955. A few days later, the GDR was declared a fully sovereign state by way of a treaty with the USSR (20 September 1955) – of course without truly owning full sovereignty. The Federal Republic, unlike the GDR, was able to resume diplomatic relations that had already existed during and before the Nazi regime with the Asian and Latin American countries. As is well known, the Federal Republic regarded herself the legal successor of the German *Reich* and demonstrated this not least within the realm of foreign policy where it provoked GDR resentment.<sup>21</sup>

Things were different on the international stage for the GDR. The younger one of the two German states had maintained from the beginning that it would not see itself as the successor state of the German *Reich*. It set out to demonstrate this internationally partly by creating a new cadre of official representatives with no ties to the previous regime. This was particularly discernible among those officials dealing with foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> This new start was not only to be reflected in the biographies of those occupying portfolios under the new dispensation. As in economy and politics, so the formation of diplomatic relations was to be of a different quality to that which had gone before.

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20 Cf. Grossman 1962: 18ff. Also Cf. Nationalrat der Nationalen Front 1967, particularly 75ff; Sperker 1960.

21 Cf. Troche 1996.

22 Cf. Muth 2000 (a).

Despite these lofty aims, until the mid-1950s, circumstances ensured that the main focus of the GDR's foreign policy was to be that of the struggle for recognition under international law, mainly with regard to Europe. Already in the autumn of 1949 and in the following months, the Soviet government had ordered those Eastern European countries that were dependent on it to recognise the young GDR diplomatically. As the Berlin-based historian Michael Lemke has noted:

This action was predominantly to do with appearances and propaganda as the three Western allies did not assume relations under international law with the Federal Republic until 1955 and the statute of Allied occupation did not allow the Western German state its own foreign policy. But this remained the only supposed victory for the SED. No democratic Western state and not any Third World country seemed inclined to exchange ambassadors with the GDR.<sup>23</sup>

This refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the GDR arose predominantly from the economic and ideological pressure that the Federal Republic and her Western allies were able to place on the international community. The Basic Law of the Federal Republic asserted that this social formation was the sole representative of the German people, an interpretation shared by the USA and Great Britain. In addition to the economic leverage which this alliance was able to bring to bear, in the context of the Cold War, they were also able to utilise an 'anti-Red' political rhetoric which focused on the SED leadership lacking democratic legitimacy, the absence of free elections and the repressive, dictatorial execution of power. It was forcibly argued that the GDR in no way complied with the rule of law, and was ruled by a communist party clan that was completely at Moscow's disposal.<sup>24</sup>

In principle, the GDR had little with which to counter these accusations. Hence, from the mid 1950s on, the foreign policy officials focused more intensely on what was going on in the Third World. As a consequence the GDR constantly extended her relations with the developing countries in the second half of the 1950s. As early as 7 March 1953, the first trade and payments agreement was made between the GDR and Egypt. However, it did not produce

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23 Lemke 1993: 1028. „Dies war in erster Linie ein Akt von Optik und Propaganda, nahmen die drei Westmächte doch zur Bundesrepublik vor 1955 keine völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen auf und billigte das Besatzungsstatut dem Weststaat auch keine eigene Außenpolitik zu. Doch blieb es für die SED bei diesem Scheinerfolg. Kein demokratischer Staat des Westens, aber auch kein Land der Dritten Welt schien geneigt, mit der DDR Botschafter auszutauschen.“

24 Cf. Jacobsen 1980: 56ff.

the success which had been hoped for.<sup>25</sup> On the basis of the experiences with Egypt, the GDR then sought other contacts with the states further south.<sup>26</sup> Although GDR foreign policy sporadically succeeded, economic contacts were established and exploratory discussions took place, it was a difficult enterprise altogether.

The GDR's struggle for international and political recognition in the time following 1955 was of a complex nature. The interest in making contacts was not only directed to Southern, Northern and Western Europe anymore, but increasingly also to countries of the – at the time still emerging – Third World. The step thereby taken was quite legitimate since dictatorial domestic conditions, existing after all in many other countries of the world, should not impede the establishing of formal relations between countries with contrary social and governing structures.<sup>27</sup>

Already in 1958, the GDR managed to conclude fifteen long-term trade and payment agreements with African and Asian countries. The first trade missions, soon to be followed by further ones, were established by the GDR in 1954 in Cairo and Bombay as “an expression of interest in mutual co-operation”.<sup>28</sup> In 1959 the GDR agreed with Egypt on the establishment of general consulates, which were also established in Burma and Indonesia the year after. Furthermore, the first official journeys of GDR government delegations took place during this period. In the autumn of 1955 and spring of 1956, the deputy prime minister of the GDR, Heinrich Rau, visited India, Egypt, the Lebanon, Sudan and Syria.<sup>29</sup> His successor, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, went on visits to Egypt, Iraq and India in November 1959.

With these first journeys of government officials the GDR purportedly expressed “the solidarity of the German workers’ and farmers’ state with the lawful anti-imperialist struggle of the Asian, Arab and African peoples”<sup>30</sup>.

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25 Cf. Lemke 1993: 1030f.

26 Cf. Schwanitz 1994: 137ff; Müller 1991: 19ff.

27 Cf. Lemke 1993: 1029.

28 Cf. Freitag 1998: 72ff. „Ausdruck des Interesses an gegenseitiger Zusammenarbeit“

29 Cf. Florin 1958: 935.

30 Hänisch 1979: 42 FN17. „die Solidarität des deutschen Arbeiter- und Bauern-Staates mit dem gerechten antiimperial-istischen Kampf der asiatischen, arabischen und afrikanischen Völker“



**Table 4: GDR trade with African countries 1958-1963 (in Mill. GDR-Marks)<sup>31</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1958</b>	<b>1959</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1961</b>	<b>1962</b>	<b>30.4.1963*</b>
<b>Export</b>	9.6	8.4	7.3	6.5	6.7	6.7
<b>Import</b>	1.4	1.1	1.6	13.3	0.2	n.s.

\* Figures are only available for the first four months of the year 1963, not for the entire year.

In those decades, the economically and politically strengthened Federal Republic hardly had any noticeable difficulties in exercising her Africa policy,<sup>32</sup> being almost completely without moral scruples concerning the re-assignment of diplomats who had already represented the interests of Nazi Germany in Africa, such as for example in South Africa, Congo, Ghana, Ethiopia, Somalia, Cameroon, Senegal, Morocco, Mauritania, Nigeria, Tunisia, Sudan and Egypt.

As of the year 1953 academe acknowledges the existence of Federal German development policy, which did not unselfishly serve the purpose of development aid as had then been claimed, but first and foremost the promotion of the Federal Republic's economic exports by way of favouring private entrepreneurial initiatives in developing countries.<sup>33</sup>

#### The beginning of practical solidarity

Already distinct in the 1950s, the propagandistic manifestations of GDR solidarity with Third World countries by SED-leaders were followed by first steps of practical solidarity. As a consequence of the Suez War of 1956 the GDR sent pilots to Egypt to secure the operation of the canal, and granted Egypt financial support. Guinea, having become independent in 1958, received aid benefits for the education system. Towards the end of the decade the Algerian Liberation Front, FLN, was also supported. Besides providing material aid for the FLN, the GDR facilitated medical care and professional training for injured Algerians. In addition to paying for medical care for the injured, the GDR delivered solidarity supplies amounting to 12 million GDR-Marks to the FLN.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the GDR government had begun at a

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31 Source: Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. 1997: 21.

32 Cf. for example Engel 2000.

33 Cf. Grote 2004: 25.

34 Krüger 1979: 54.

rather early stage to make a number of provisions in order to initiate and develop the smaller German state's relations with the African countries in the cultural, scientific-technological, economic, propagandistic and academic spheres. However, this was originally not regarded as support in terms of development aid.

The so-called solidarity work was initially organised through relevant efforts on the part of the GDR unity labour union, the Free German Federation of Labour Unions (FDGB). Contacts of a partially personal nature with representatives of African labour unions led to agreements on intensive co-operation. The FDGB derived its principally anti-colonialist, anti-racist positions from the international labour movement's solidarity traditions. According to the FDGB-functionaries' general understanding, as well as that of other dominant persons within the labour union, solidarity with national liberation movements was part of the proletarian internationalism. In accordance with the Marxist-Leninist ideology of class struggle and the theory of epochs which presupposed that the transition from capitalism to socialism was progressing worldwide, the national liberation movement was seen as the natural ally of the socialist community of states and was thus to be supported.<sup>35</sup>

In the "African Year", 1960, the FDGB maintained and continually expanded contacts with more than 30 labour union organisations in Africa. Up until the beginning of 1960 the Federation of Labour Unions provided various African unions with 3.5 million GDR-Marks worth of aid supplies donated by members.<sup>36</sup> On 9 January 1960 the FDGB's managing board addressed the public with the solidarity declaration "Our heart and our hands for the African colleagues"<sup>37</sup> A solidarity declaration said:

Our heart, our love is with you and with all our African brothers in class, because we experienced on our own body what slavery and bondage mean and because today we live to see the fortune of freedom in our first German state of workers and farmers.<sup>38</sup>

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35 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1999: 7.

36 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), SAPMO (Federal Board of the FDGB) 1982: 501.

37 *Tribüne*, 9 Januar 1960, Berlin. „Unser Herz und unsere Hände den afrikanischen Kollegen.“

38 *Dokumente der internationalen Arbeit des FDGB*, vol. 2, Berlin/Bernau n.d.: 46. „Unser Herz, unsere Liebe ist bei Euch und allen unseren afrikanischen Klassenbrüdern, weil wir am eigenen Leibe erfahren haben, was Knechtschaft und Unfreiheit bedeuten, und weil wir heute das Glück der Freiheit im ersten deutschen Staat der Arbeiter und Bauern erleben.“

Further campaigns followed, sometimes restricted to certain regions and times, mostly, however, taking place on a national scale.

In February 1960, an FDGB delegation led by its chairperson visited the young West African states of Ghana and Guinea for the first time, following an invitation by the unions. Upon request of several Arab and African countries' labour union functionaries, FDGB-functionaries and specially trained propagandists took up lecturing and training on the African continent. Already since 1959 labour unions from Africa and Asia, later also from Latin America, had sent unionists to study at the FDGB's union academy in Bernau.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the doubts sometimes expressed nowadays, the struggle against colonialism and racism was met with a great deal of respect and empathy by the East German population. When, for instance, one of the most severe accidents in the history of mining occurred in Clydesdale in South Africa at the end of January 1960, caused by the disastrous neglect of safety precautions, unionists in many enterprises in the GDR spontaneously organised collections of donations and protested against exploitation and oppression of the black workers in the country of apartheid without having been ordered to do so by 'superior bodies'.<sup>40</sup> Without any doubt, spontaneous aid campaigns in the name of solidarity, organised in a 'bottom up' way, also took place in other parts. In 1988, a call by the weekly newspaper *Wochenpost* for financial donations to the so-called solidarity ward at the Berlin-Buch hospital, where mainly SWAPO and ANC freedom fighters received medical treatment, still resulted rather rapidly in donations of a total amount of 140,000 GDR-Marks. A few years earlier, in 1983, when the children's magazine *Bummi* had called for donations of toys for Namibian refugee children under the motto "My favourite toy", more than 950,000 toys had been collected.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, these campaigns were possibly exceptions and by no means the rule. In the GDR, one grew more and more accustomed to the fact that it was not just the political life which was ordered, suggested, allocated from 'top down', but also the really very private attitudes towards manifestations of solidarity. Hence the way the FDGB officially presented history has to be appraised critically, even though there is no doubt about the facts:

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39 SAPMO (Federal Board of the FDGB) 1982: 501.

40 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1999.

41 Schleicher, H.-G. 2006: 126.

The FDGB made an effort to further the internationalist attitudes of its members and also their readiness for material solidarity. The FDGB played an active part in the work of the 'Committee for the Solidarity with the African Nations' struggle for liberation'. With great sympathy the workers of the GDR followed the Algerian people's heroic struggle as it freed itself from French colonial rule and achieved national independence in 1962. In the beginning of the 1960s, the labour unions delivered numerous solidarity aid supplies at the value of approximately five million mark. The FDGB assisted in training Algerian skilled workers and students and in treating injured freedom fighters in the GDR.<sup>42</sup>

It is, of course, hard to believe in the wake of the GDR population's rejection of the political system as demonstrated at the end of 1989/beginning of 1990 that nonetheless in previous years there had been a large degree of consent between the state and the population as far as solidarity work was concerned. The GDR population's readiness to make donations 'for solidarity' – which really can be observed until the end of the GDR – clearly attests to this.

Contrary to the opinion expressed by the then secretary general of the Solidarity Committee, Achim Reichardt,<sup>43</sup> donors as a rule did not know where the donated money went. This constituted to some extent an impediment for the readiness of parts of the GDR population to show material or financial solidarity. However, it was actually rather irrelevant for the donors of solidarity aid donations to which regions of the world financial donations were forwarded. A particular relationship in this field had emerged with Southern Africa, though. Solidarity with the liberation movements and the populations of Southern Africa remained a focus of the development policy involvement throughout the existence of the GDR. This was based on the following important grounds:

*Firstly*, the general humanitarian aspects played a considerable role. Very early on, the GDR officially denounced the racist apartheid regime, the repression of the entire 'non-white'

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42 SAPMO (Federal Board of the FDGB) 1982: 501 f. „Der FDGB bemühte sich, das internationalistische Denken seiner Mitglieder weiter zu entwickeln und ihre Bereitschaft zu materieller Solidarität zu erhöhen. Er nahm aktiv an der Tätigkeit des 'Komitees für die Solidarität mit dem Befreiungskampf der afrikanischen Völker' teil. Mit großer Sympathie verfolgten die Werktätigen der DDR den heldenhaften Kampf des algerischen Volkes, das sich von der französischen Kolonialherrschaft befreite und 1962 die nationale Unabhängigkeit errang. Die Gewerkschaften übergaben Anfang der sechziger Jahre zahlreiche Solidaritätssendungen im Werte von etwa fünf Millionen Mark. Der FDGB half, algerische Facharbeiter und Studenten auszubilden und verwundete Freiheitskämpfer in Krankenhäusern der DDR zu heilen.“

43 Cf. Reichardt 2006: 128.

population by a white minority. For this reason the GDR government refused rather early on further contact with the government in Pretoria.<sup>44</sup>

The gap between the socialist GDR and the South African apartheid government seemed insuperable in the context of the Cold War, so that *secondly*, the GDR, for this very reason, was ideologically close to the liberation movements, especially to the African National Congress (ANC). Since apartheid was seen as a glaring type of Western imperialism, the forces that fought against this regime could be regarded as allies and were therefore supported. The claim of “international solidarity with the liberation movements fighting against colonialism and racism” was hence also a constitutional principle of the GDR.<sup>45</sup>

*Thirdly*, the GDR of course had specific foreign policy interests regarding her commitment to support the South African struggle for liberation. It was an opportunity to overcome the non-recognition as an independent German state that had mainly been caused by the Hallstein Doctrine.<sup>46</sup>

#### Ideological support of African organisations, parties and states

Since the beginning of her existence, the GDR and especially the Unity Party SED, claiming state governance, placed great importance on the ideological influencing of politicians, unionists and other persons in leading positions in Africa. It was considered to be of paramount importance to acquaint them with Marxism-Leninism almost as a panacea for the political, economic and, more than anything, ideological problems pressing the Third World. At first these happened without any large-scale organisation – the intention being to make an impact by being a role model – but, from the 1970s on, the cadres in question were increasingly subjected to mainly ideological training or further education in the GDR. The existing connections on party level were particularly used for this purpose. For instance, many Mozambicans and Angolans studied at central and district SED party schools in the GDR. The education could be finished with the conferral of doctoral degrees for particularly able

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44 Cf. van der Heyden 2005.

45 Cf. Jeske: 779 ff.

46 Cf. Kilian 2001.

cadres. The following chart allows some insight into the extent of such support on the level of “party relations”, even if it covers only a limited period of time.

From a draft paper for the Secretariat of the SED’s Central Committee titled „Lehrgänge zur marxistisch-leninistischen Qualifizierung von Kadern entwickelter kapitalistischer Länder, revolutionär-demokratischer Parteien, national-demokratischer Parteien und Bewegungen Afrikas, Asiens und Lateinamerikas an der Parteischule ‘Karl Liebknecht’ beim ZK der SED und an Bezirksparteischulen der SED im Jahre 1987“<sup>47</sup> we can see that in the four years leading up to the end of the GDR a whole line of cadres from Sub-Saharan Africa alone were trained in the GDR:<sup>48</sup> The document is one of the few existing ones of its kind.

**Table 5: Cadres from Sub-Saharan Africa trained in the GDR 1987-1988**

District party school Cottbus:	20 comrades from the PNDC (Ghana) 5 comrades from the APC (Sierra Leone) 2 comrades from the SPFF (Seychelles) 2 comrades from the CP Lesotho
District party school Dresden:	30 comrades ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe)
District party school Erfurt:	10 comrades MPLA-PdA (Angola) 5 comrades Frelimo Party (Mozambique) 5 comrades PAJGV (Guinea-Bissau) 5 comrades PAJCV (Cape Verde) 5 comrades MLSTP (Sao Tomé & Príncipe)
District party school Frankfurt/Oder:	10 comrades AKFM (Madagascar) 10 comrades AREMA (Madagascar) 5 comrades UPRONA (Burundi)
District party school Bad Blankenburg:	34 comrades WPE (Ethiopia)
District party school Ballenstedt:	20 comrades CP Sudan 33 comrades WPE (Ethiopia)
District party school Mittweida:	33 comrades WPE (Ethiopia)

47 SAPMO: “Courses for the Marxist-Leninist Qualification of Cadres of Developed Capitalist Countries, Revolutionary Democratic Parties, National Democratic Parties and Movements of Africa, Asia and Latin America at the Party School ‘Karl Liebknecht’ with the ZK of the SED and at SED District Party Schools in the Year 1987”

48 Courses ran from September 1987 until July 1988, and from July 1987 until the end of July 1988.

District party school Magdeburg:	30 comrades from the ANC (South Africa)
District party school Neubrandenburg:	30 comrades UNIP (Zambia)
District party school Rostock:	30 comrades SWAPO (Namibia)
District party school Schwerin:	10 comrades CNR (Burkina Faso) 10 comrades PVRB (Benin) 10 comrades UDPM (Mali)

The costs for these courses amounted to more than nine million GDR-Marks in total. These were paid for by the central pay office of the Central Committee of the SED. The African participants were joined by about an equal number of participants from Scandinavia, Western Europe, the Arab countries and Latin America. As the SED's district party schools' teaching staff was generally not familiar with the economic, social and political conditions of the participants' countries of origin and did not know "the aims and struggles of the parties, organisations and movements in question"<sup>49</sup>, members of the Central Committee of the SED's department for international relations fanned out to the districts in order to acquaint the designated teachers of the Africans with the specifics on the participants' countries of origin.<sup>50</sup>

It is appropriate to entertain doubts concerning the efficiency and usefulness of such courses for the delegating African parties and also for development aid as such. Even if the variants for solutions of the economic and political problems of the countries of origin were crammed with details about the specific countries, in the end only Marxism/Leninism was applied. As can be seen today, these suggestions have not brought about a sustainable solution of the most pressing problem, i.e. a satisfactory solution of social issues, for any one African country. What else was to be expected from teachers of Marxism/Leninism other than that they represent the concept they were employed to put across? As far as we know, academics at universities of the GDR – such as trained Africa specialists – were not consulted on this matter. However, so-called regional studies academics from the GDR were now and then delegated to political schools of "revolutionary parties" in developing countries with a

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49 „die Ziele und Kämpfe der betreffenden Parteien, Organisationen und Bewegungen“

50 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO): SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/3A/4520: Dokumentenstelle.

socialist orientation.<sup>51</sup> These academics were rightfully named “party experts” by Johannes Kuppe long before the fall of the Wall<sup>52</sup> and were possibly mainly from the SED party apparatus, rather than from colleges and universities.<sup>53</sup> We can thus conclude that “only a few university lecturers from the GDR ventured to developing countries in order to preach socialism there”<sup>54</sup>.

So-called ML cadres were appointed to “trouble spots of international class struggle” fairly often. At times they shaped the image of the GDR abroad. Such GDR experts also had not too small an influence in the shaping of an image of Africa and the GDR development policy co-operation with African countries and liberation organisations. Even the authors of propagandistic writings who were supposed to advocate the idea of solidarity among the GDR populace, did not generally come from academic but party institutions – at least in the GDR later years.<sup>55</sup> In fact, there was rather stiff competition between ‘party cadres’ and those academics that went abroad from state institutions such as colleges and universities. At times the conflict was carried out also in the GDR itself, though not in public, and was hardly reflected in official documents.

The SED’s top secret “party relations” with African parties and organisations should not conceal the fact that rather broad and efficient public relations for solidarity issues existed in the GDR, which were not always state-controlled. Campaigns ranged from participation and organisation of solidarity meetings, the collection of donations and other types of solidarity work to academic treatises.<sup>56</sup> By GDR standards, a considerable number of books

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51 Cf. *Asien-Afrika-Lateinamerika* 1980: 234.

52 Kuppe 1983: 113.

53 These were experts from the field of so-called Regional Studies, which does not exclude representatives from other fields, especially that of Marxism-Leninism at GDR colleges and universities being brought in for these tasks. Colleges and universities were in fact bound by a 1960 Politburo decision to allocate GDR guest lecturers for „Schwerpunktländer entsprechend den politischen Erfordernissen“ [focus countries according to the political requirements]. Cf. SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/9.04/248 (o.P.): „Hausmitteilung des ZK der SED von Abteilung Außenpolitik und Internationale Verbindungen an Abteilung Wissenschaften“, 5.5.1960.

54 Göschel 1991: 183. „nur wenige Hochschullehrer aus der DDR [...] in Entwicklungsländern angetreten [sind], um dort den Sozialismus zu predigen.“

55 Cf. for example Petzold 1982; Schaffmann 1980; Solidaritätskomitee der DDR/Vertretung des ANC in der DDR 1987.

56 Cf. van der Heyden 1998: 371 ff; also Cf. for example the following brochure issued by the GDR’s Solidarity Committee, which though propagandistically designed nonetheless portrays the extent of solidarity work: *40 Jahre Deutsche Demokratische Republik – 40 Jahre antiimperialistische Solidarität* (=Für antiimperialistische Solidarität, vol. 50), Berlin 1989.



were published especially on South African topics<sup>57</sup> – belletrist anthologies,<sup>58</sup> fairy tales,<sup>59</sup> translations or licensed editions of novels,<sup>60</sup> but also editions in the original languages<sup>61</sup> () and political literature,<sup>62</sup> widely read documentaries,<sup>63</sup> also documentations<sup>64</sup> and publications of official documents,<sup>65</sup> studies on women,<sup>66</sup> and even cookery books.<sup>67</sup> In addition, several conferences on Southern Africa of an academic, as well as of a political, nature took place in the GDR and attracted international interest. The GDR had a strong interest in arranging and smoothly carrying out such top-ranking events, such as the meeting of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, which took place from the 24<sup>th</sup> until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 1974 in Berlin.<sup>68</sup>

### The Hallstein Doctrine – effects on GDR development policy involvement

The more the GDR involved herself with the developing countries, most of all with Africa, the more need and the necessity to co-ordinate the related domestic activities grew. Set against this background, numerous “friendship societies”<sup>69</sup> emerged in the GDR towards the 1960s – among others the „Deutsch-Afrikanische Gesellschaft“<sup>70</sup> – which maintained relations with partner countries and were consolidated in 1961 in the „Liga für Völkerfreundschaft“.<sup>71</sup> The „Komitee für die Solidarität mit den Völkern Afrikas“, founded in

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57 Cf. the representative synopsis, not claiming to be exhaustive, by Sebald, Peter: African Studies in the GDR helped by the ANC, in: van der Heyden (ed.) 1988: 107ff.

58 Cf. for example Arnold 1983.

59 Cf. for example Wendt-Riedel 1989.

60 Cf. for example Mzamano 1986; Brink 1986; Brink 1981; Gordimer 1984; Joubert 1983; Mphahlele 1961.

61 Cf. for example Shore/Shore-Bos 1975; La Guma 1978; Cope 1960.

62 With regard to Southern Africa Cf. for example Lerumo 1973; Bernstein 1970; Luthuli 1966.

63 Cf. for example Babing/Bräuer 1982; Babing/Bräuer 1985; Babing/Bräuer 1980 (in English: Dresden 1981); Villain 1961.

64 Solidaritätskomitee der DDR 1974; Mandela/Magubane 1986.

65 Cf. for example *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Südafrikanischen Kommunistischen Partei, 1915 – 1980*, Berlin 1984.

66 Cf. Weinberger/Garmasch/Brade, n.d.

67 Cf. ANC Women Section, n.d.

68 Cf. Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU, ZA: Dokumentenstelle.

69 „Freundschaftsgesellschaften“

70 Cf. Sebald 1993: 79.

71 Cf. Jacobsen 1980: 250f.

1960, was henceforth in charge of the collection and co-ordination of aid in the spirit of solidarity, and became in 1964 the „Afro-Asiatisches Solidaritätskomitee der DDR“ as a consequence of an extension of its sphere of influence.<sup>72</sup>

Before the “African Year” of 1960, when seventeen nations of the “black” continent obtained independence, the regional foci of GDR development policy involvement were unmistakably located in the Middle East and in Asia; to be specific, in the “classic Bandung nations” of Egypt, India, Burma and Indonesia.<sup>73</sup> As initiators of non-alignment, they presented themselves as being more open to the GDR’s bids for contacts and co-operation than most other Third World countries. Much to the GDR’s disapproval, however, they were not prepared to recognise the second German state in a similar manner to that in which they had recognised the Federal Republic, with which they had already been maintaining diplomatic relations for several years. The reasons for this were manifold.<sup>74</sup> Egypt, for example, feared a closer co-operation of the Federal Republic with Israel should Egypt recognise the GDR.<sup>75</sup> For Burma, Europe was at a far distance and it did not want to take sides in disputes there; Indonesia did not want to provoke the United States; India wanted to wait for the right moment – or so the GDR said when stating reasons for those countries’ demeanour.<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, such reactions of sovereign and independent countries, unexpected by the GDR, were the first effects of the Hallstein Doctrine as practised by the West German government, designed to prevent the GDR’s international recognition.<sup>77</sup> The Hallstein Doctrine and the politics pertaining to it cannot be understood without taking into account the context of the Cold War and the *Zeitgeist* that accompanied this confrontation. Above everything else, both ‘super powers’, the Soviet Union and the USA, made use of their allies to meet their geostrategic targets. Africa as well as other Third World regions became a Cold War battlefield.

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72 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 215ff.

73 Cf. Robbe/Weber 1989: 275ff.

74 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 163.

75 Cf. Lemke 1993: 1027ff.

76 Cf. Florin 1958: 937f.

77 Cf. Kilian 2001: 52ff.

Surrounding the East-West conflict, the Soviet Union had quite considerable interests in the global recognition of the GDR as the second German state and as a factor in the European balance of power. After all, East Germany was located at the 'interface' between real socialism and the Western democratic system. Thus the Soviet government, especially after 1955, was forced to attempt an internal stabilisation and to enhance the GDR's status, at first in her own sphere of influence. This implied an increased awareness of the problems in, and special promotion of, the East German Republic, but it meant at the same time tighter control of her government as a consequence of the granting of certain liberties in handling foreign affairs.<sup>78</sup>

The first small successes in this field were to be undone and prevented for the future by the Hallstein Doctrine. As GDR official diction would have it, the rulers in Bonn were indifferent as to whether they disrespected the rights of autonomous states under international law and interfered with their domestic affairs as long as they impeded the recognition of the East German state, and as a GDR satire would have it, their East German brothers' and sisters' access to much sought-after bananas.<sup>79</sup>

On account of the Hallstein Doctrine, the GDR was denied recognition in the Third World despite all efforts until the beginning of the 1970s. Many times, the Federal Republic was only able to enforce her politics of exclusion of the GDR with the help and advocacy of her Western allies. Great Britain, the former colonial power in many of the (in particular African) states recently given independence, and leading power in the Commonwealth, Great Britain played an especially important part in supporting the Federal Republic's claims to sole representation.<sup>80</sup> This situation prevailed despite the fact that the British Foreign Office was cognisant of the absurdity of the Doctrine, and its promoting the Federal Republic's global political self-isolation, as the historian Klaus Larres contends.<sup>81</sup> The enforcement of the Hallstein Doctrine in Zanzibar and Tanzania – much described and commented upon<sup>82</sup> – led to bizarre if not embarrassing manifestations for the Federal Republic.

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78 Cf. Lemke 1993: 1027.

79 Cf. Kilian 2001.

80 Cf. Larres 2002: 129 ff.

81 Cf. Larres 2002: 149.

82 Cf. Kilian, 2001: 171; Schneppen 2006, particularly 513ff; Schneppen 1998, particularly 20ff; Schneppen 1999: 409ff; Engel 2000: 177ff.

As a matter of principle, Soviet views and the goals and ambitions of the SED's foreign policy corresponded during the first decades of the GDR's existence. This, however, did not change the state of dependence, i.e. the unequal alliance of the USSR and the GDR, which also existed in the arena of foreign policy. Later on, most of all in the 1980s, GDR foreign policy emancipated itself from the 'big brother' and, at least selectively, pursued its own goals in Africa policy. She was no longer the Soviet Union's vassal – as was assumed by many Western observers – but became its junior partner at least on the African continent.<sup>83</sup> Even the US State department – informed by the GDR's secret service – considered this to be the case. In a top-secret information statement issued by the Ministry for State Security (MfS) for the party and state leadership it claimed:

Concerning Angola, the State Department regards the GDR's activities as very efficient since she influences the political and economic infrastructure, thereby promoting Soviet interests on a long-term basis and much more efficiently than the USSR herself is able to do.<sup>84</sup>

The correlation between the two approaches to Africa policy, which had definitely been characterised by dependency until the beginning of said junior partnership, did not always proceed without problems, as documents, which are now accessible, prove. After 1955, the Soviet Union at first showed increasing interest in the activation of East German foreign policy which potentially seemed able to support the leading communist power, and to handle issues and geographical areas which it was not political, or possible, for the USSR to engage in. Above all, the GDR could make use of amicable affinities with the German heritage abroad and of relational structures which had evolved from pre-war times. For these reasons, a tendency towards stronger international division of labour in the Eastern Bloc made itself felt from the mid-1950s. To some extent, this confined the SED to certain foci of its foreign and recognition policies, which at the same time were an important element of its German

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83 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1994: 59ff.

84 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: HVA, no. 23: „Information über die Bewertung der Afrika-Politik der sozialistischen Länder durch die USA“: n.p. „Im Zusammenhang mit Angola schätzt das State Department die Aktivitäten der DDR als sehr wirksam ein, da sie auf die politische und wirtschaftliche Infrastruktur Einfluß nehmen und daher langfristig viel wirkungsvoller sie sowjetischen Interessen [...] durchsetzen, als es die UdSSR selbst vermag.“

policy, while also providing it in fact with new possibilities of enhancing its status within the system.<sup>85</sup>

Already since the end of the 1950s there had therefore increasingly been extensive efforts – supported by the ‘Soviet friends’ – on the part of GDR’s state institutions for national contacts with African countries. Especially with the support of Guinea, Egypt and Zanzibar, it seemed that the international isolation would be overcome. This initiative failed because of the Hallstein Doctrine.

Though initially successful, particularly with regard to trade policy, the GDR soon enough had to suffer painful setbacks in her efforts to reach international recognition. The ambassador of the Republic of Guinea was called back from East Berlin to his home country in the spring of 1960. Following massive West German interventions and the threat to stop the payment of development aid, Guinea felt compelled to do so. The ambassador, as the first diplomat of a non-socialist state, had handed over his letter of accreditation to the president of the GDR, Wilhelm Pieck, only a few weeks before. Guinea’s president, Sekou Touré, spoke of a ‘misunderstanding’ and claimed that there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>86</sup>

Since the entire affair had become of significance for the GDR’s national public, a major part of the East German population showed solidarity with their government and its Africa policy. This was reflected in increased support from many thousands of citizens for the government-led solidarity movement and a number of spontaneous campaigns,<sup>87</sup> a state of affairs, which had definitely not been intended by the West German side.

Despite the ‘self-assertion’ – if this term is at all applicable to the relations between the Soviet Union, the Third World and the GDR – the already mentioned junior partnership between the USSR and the GDR came into being rather towards the end of the socialist alliance, when the GDR had ‘already learned to walk’ in Africa and was pursuing her own goals. Beyond any doubt, the Soviet Union was the dominating partner in the development policy relations of the socialist community of states with the developing countries. After all, it provided more than 80% of the development aid funds, followed at great distance by the

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85 Cf. Lemke 1993: 1027.

86 Cf. Döring 1999: 21.

87 Reichardt 1985.

GDR, then the ČSSR, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary. The Soviet Union's repeated urging of her allies to become more involved in development co-operation on account of global strategic considerations was less and less obeyed in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>88</sup> Mainly due to the ever growing economic difficulties in the countries, these demands could not be met. Thus the junior partnership existed ultimately not only on ideological-political grounds, but also to a large extent owing to economic pressures.

In this connection the attitude of the GDR vis-a-vis the Peoples' Republic of China played an important role. Inasmuch as the Soviet side forced its allies, including the GDR, since the beginning of the 1970's to turn their backs on China,<sup>89</sup> these nonetheless knew how to protect their interests in Africa. Nevertheless the Soviet policy guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of the GDR's Africa policy presented a hindrance, and negatively affected diplomatic relations with quite a number of African governments while quite possibly also straining GDR relations with the liberation movements. This aspect has as yet not explicitly become a subject of scientific research.

In this context we have to mention that due to the impediment of the establishing of ordinary diplomatic relations between the GDR and the young nation states in Africa by way of a strict enforcement of the Hallstein Doctrine, the possibilities of efficient development policy involvement on the part of the GDR remained limited. Later accusations, after the fall of the Wall, claiming that the GDR indeed could have become more involved, or more efficiently involved in development policy work, must be seen as mere mockery in the light of the above facts.

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88 Cf. Stier 1992: 19.

89 Melchers 1987.

**Table 6: GDR Support to Developing Countries (in Mil. Mark)<sup>90</sup>**

<b>Kind of support</b>	<b>Annual average 1985/86</b>	<b>Percentage of the national income produced</b>	<b>Delivered in 1989 (up to 15 October)</b>
Non-monetary support	529.3	0.21	395.9
Of which were:			
Material	111.2		101.5
vocational training	78.2		74.9
tertiary education	114.3		102.2
deployment of experts	87.5		77.7
medical aid	12.6		11.6
government gifts	121.3		23.0
voluntary UN- contributions	4.2		5.0
discounted prices	718.9	0.29	653.8

Until the bitter end?

From her founding, the GDR aimed – as her first president of the Council of Ministers put it – at developing relations with African nations:

in accordance with the basic principles of mutual respect, territorial integrity and non-aggression, non-interference with domestic affairs, equality and mutual advantage, for we are convinced that this reflects the peoples' interests and promotes world peace.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Source: compiled according to Schubert 1991: 26

<sup>91</sup> Grotewohl, Otto: „Rede des Ministerpräsidenten Otto Grotewohl vor der Volkskammer der DDR vom 18.1.1956“, in: *Dokumente zur Außenpolitik der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, vol. 3, Berlin 1956. „nach den Grundsätzen der gegenseitigen Achtung, der territorialen Integrität und der Souveränität, des Nichtangriffs, der Nichteinmischung in die inneren Angelegenheiten, der Gleichberechtigung und des gegenseitigen Vorteils zu entwickeln, da wir überzeugt sind, daß dies den Interessen der Völker und der Erhaltung des Weltfriedens entspricht.“ Cf. on the same topic from a contemporary point of view Schulz 1959/60: 47 ff; Kieseewetter 1968: 17ff; Ernst 1963: 1537 f.

The 'anti-imperialist struggle', as well as the 'solidarity support' of the national liberation movements, were ever-lasting valid basic principles of foreign policy throughout the entire period of the GDR's existence.<sup>92</sup> In 1986, at the last SED party convention, Erich Honecker, then leader of the SED claimed: "Also in the future will we loyally support the liberated nations and peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America in their fight for peace and social progress."<sup>93</sup> Even just before the end of the GDR, when the GDR's grave economic problems could no longer be denied by the SED Politburo, the 'leading party' argued for continuing the solidarity support for developing countries and liberation movements.<sup>94</sup>

More than the declarations of leading GDR politicians, it is the existing figures concerning development aid granted despite immense domestic political and economic difficulties and problems especially at the end of the GDR which prove that solidarity was more than just a political slogan. Therefore, the GDR cannot actually be accused of not having taken an interest in the Third World's problems, or of having become involved only in as much as it would have served the country's own good. The question should rather focus on the extent to which the solidarity as declared by party functionaries throughout the forty years of the GDR's existence had taken root within GDR society, and how efficient development aid truly had been, considering all domestic political circumstances. In fact, by the closing period of the GDR's existence, a total of 1602 treaties had been signed with Third World countries. Joint industry and trade committees existed with fifteen countries. Joint commissions concerning long-term stable foreign economic co-operation existed with thirty countries.<sup>95</sup>

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92 Cf. Programm der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, IX. Parteitag der SED Berlin, 18. – 22. Mai 1976, Berlin 1976: 14f. and 59.

93 Honecker, Erich: *Bericht des Zentralkomitees der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands an den XI. Parteitag der SED, XI. Parteitag der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, 17. - 21. April 1986*, Berlin 1986: 18. „Wir werden auch künftig die befreiten Staaten und Völker Afrikas, Asiens und Lateinamerikas im Kampf um Frieden und sozialen Fortschritt solidarisch unterstützen.“

94 Cf. Herrmann, Joachim: *Aus dem Bericht des Politbüros an das Zentralkomitee der SED, 8. Tagung des Zentralkomitees der SED, 22. - 23.6.1989*, Berlin 1989: 25ff.

95 Cf. Winter 1989: 589.



## Euphoria and decrease in the interest in Africa among GDR executive committees

The first of the two great turning points of GDR foreign policy were marked by the events taking place on the African continent around 1960. These are reflected in GDR foreign policy with the creation of an Africa Department in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the GDR (MfAA) and also – where research policy was concerned – in the quick creation and extension of African Studies, especially at the University of Leipzig.<sup>96</sup>

The second turning point was the surge of diplomatic recognitions of the GDR at the onset of the 1970s when the GDR had to meet the new challenges with the provision of specially trained ‘cadres’. A constructive trade policy orientation was established which included the delegation of GDR experts to developing countries,<sup>97</sup> alongside with the intensification of developmental and practical co-operation with Third World countries especially in Africa.

However, the interest in Africa remained moderate among the GDR leadership since the beginning of the 1980s. The main focus was upon the relations with the Federal Republic – once the GDR had been diplomatically recognised worldwide. We may even come to the conclusion that, during the last decade of the GDR’s existence, the party and national leadership’s considerations regarding foreign and economic policy attached hardly any weight to Africa, despite the fact that GDR Africa policy had once been “a success record, hardly diminished by temporary setbacks in certain front sections of the ‘anti-imperialist struggle’”<sup>98</sup> – as Western critical observers also admitted.

Despite the decline in interest on the part of the GDR-leadership in Africa sufficient interest and commitment existed for hundreds and thousands of Africans to benefit from solidarity and other bilateral relations. Therefore it appears to the author to be essential for scientific research to record and to be conducted on these relations of differing intensity.

Files of the topmost executive committees of the leading GDR state party and of government prove that, at these levels, hardly any attention was paid to strategic issues

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96 Cf. van der Heyden 1999: 101ff.

97 Cf. the essay written in contemporary diction, but nonetheless containing some facts and continuative ideas by Willerding, Klaus 1974, particularly p. 692 ff.

98 Löwis of Menar, 1978: 9. „eine Erfolgsbilanz, die von temporären Rückschlägen an einzelnen Frontabschnitten des ‘antiimperialistischen Kampfes’ kaum geschmälert wurde“

concerning Africa or the Third World anymore in the 1980s. Two authors who, after the fall of the Wall, rendered outstanding services to the documentation of files on Africa belonging to the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the SED, concluded: “Whoever intends to venture deeper into the GDR’s Africa policy has to descend from the topmost party level.”<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the GDR’s new policy of peace and dialogue in the 1980s, after the Hallstein Doctrine had been overcome, primarily targeted Europe and no longer countries of the Third World.<sup>100</sup> The official interest in Africa decreased. This did not only become apparent through the GDR political leadership’s decreasing interest in Africa, but also through decreasing encouragement of academic interest in the area by education officials. Individual decisions made by state and party leader Erich Honecker certainly played an important part, alongside other reasons, for neglecting Africa in GDR foreign policy. Reviewing the files of the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the SED,<sup>101</sup> makes obvious what the former GDR diplomat Hans-Georg Schleicher observed soon after the fall of the Wall, namely that the significance of Africa for foreign affairs had already been marginalised in those years.<sup>102</sup> The disappointment about the changes in some developing countries which called themselves socialist, such as Angola and Mozambique<sup>103</sup> certainly played a decisive part in this. So did the shock about the immense costs caused by solidarity work in Africa, which also included human casualties.<sup>104</sup> However, this observation does not imply that the African continent and its problems ever disappeared completely out of sight of the GDR party and state leadership. Besides personnel decisions regarding the foreign policy and foreign trade sectors (posting of personnel at diplomatic missions, ADN offices, dispatching SED, FDGB and other delegations), the SED leadership files from the 1980s more than anything reflect activities in the field of so-called party relations; in the GDR’s view these were subsumed under development aid as well. For years, talks had been taking place with representatives of African states, parties and organisations primarily preparing decisions about the education of Africans in the GDR. In addition to this, the files contain a few documents from the last years of the GDR which to some extent could be labelled

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99 Husemann, Bettina/Neumann, Annette: *Die Afrikapolitik der DDR. Eine Titeldokumentation von Akten des Politbüros und des Sekretariats des Zentralkomitees der SED 1949 – 1989*, Hamburg 1994: III. „Wer tiefer in die DDR-Afrikapolitik eindringen will, muß die oberste Parteiebene verlassen“

100 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1991: 367.

101 Cf. Husemann/Neumann 1994, especially 215, 217, 221 and 212.

102 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1991: 367; Winrow 1989: 303ff.

103 Cf. Voß 2005.

104 Van der Heyden 2005: 278ff.

strategic. Most of these are reports by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MfAA), which were presented to the GDR executive committee. In addition, despite the shift of focus in foreign policy towards Europe, Erich Honecker and the GDR leadership reserved the right to continue to control and decide on relevant activities concerning Africa. It seems unbelievable today that the GDR's most senior authorities insisted on playing a direct role in decision-making on such marginal issues as the reprint of a book for the South African Communist Party, the deployment of GDR teachers to the ANC's education centre in the United Republic of Tanzania, the delegation of a representative of the *Junge Welt* to participate in the conference 'Conflict in South Africa and the press in Johannesburg (South Africa)', the appointment of an editor at the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) labour party school, or even the selection of a student from the section for African and Middle East Studies at the Karl Marx University Leipzig to a Kiswahili language course held in the United Republic of Tanzania from 28 September to 19 December 1986.<sup>105</sup>

GDR Africa policy – just like other fields of East German foreign policy – was directed and supervised by the Central Committee of the SED. The guidelines designed there were mainly implemented by the MfAA, but also by other ministries such as the one in charge of foreign trade. Also the Ministry for Higher and Professional Education, as well as just about all of the country's universities, were involved in shaping these multiple relations. An important part in GDR Africa policy was played by the *Institut für Internationale Beziehungen der Akademie für Staat und Recht* [Institute for International Relations of the Academy for State and Law] in Potsdam-Babelsberg,<sup>106</sup> which was completely 'phased out' after the fall of the Wall.<sup>107</sup> Due to the unsatisfactory situation regarding sources, there is not yet any useable information available on the institute's structural setup, on its considerable influence on academic research topics and on academic committees and institutions not concerned with foreign affairs, and also concerning the training of qualified new staff. Archive material or informative written dissertations from GDR times are also not available.<sup>108</sup> A few findings exist on other institutions which more or less contributed to the

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105 Cf. Husemann/Neumann 1994: 215, 217, 221, 212.

106 Cf. Crome 2009.

107 Cf. Bernhardt 1997.

108 A recent analysis is available only about the umbrella organisation of the „Institut für Internationale Beziehungen“ [Institute for International Relations], the „Deutsche Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaften“, later „Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaften der DDR“: Bernhardt,

strategic planning or shaping of Africa policy as enjoined by the party leadership; namely the *Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften* [Academy for Social Sciences]<sup>109</sup> as well as the *Institut für Politik und Wirtschaft* [Institute for Politics and Economy, IPW]<sup>110</sup> and the *Institut für Internationale Beziehungen der DDR* [Institute for International Affairs].<sup>111</sup> However, these accounts do not specifically concern this particular area of policy.

The more the GDR plunged into stagnation domestically, the more the vanity, amateurism and arrogance of the leadership dominated the foreign policy scene. There were hardly any thorough discussions of the situation and strategies anymore, not even in the Foreign Policy Commission in charge at the Politburo. Academic analyses and proposals for GDR foreign policy, initiated or ordered by members of the MfAA, were rejected or repressed by the political leadership if they were not in accordance with its concepts and ideas.<sup>112</sup>

Though it is often said that in the GDR everything was centrally planned and directed, that there was nothing but the “step of uniformed crews” and a “command economy” in a “command country”,<sup>113</sup> the reality was far from such characteristics. In many cases, the opposite of centralism applied. For example, with regard to student education, graduate students returned from studies in the Soviet Union and were looking for work in the GDR, even though they had a degree in the highly specialised field of Regional Studies. This means that students and doctoral candidates were educated, despite the fact that it was not possible to provide them with middle or long-term career opportunities in their fields of study. One important reason (and criticism towards the end of the GDR) for this was that only rather vague predictions about long-term labour requirements emanated from practical experience.<sup>114</sup>

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Ulrich: *Die Deutsche Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft „Walter Ulbricht“ 1948 – 1971* (Frankfurt am Main 1997).

109 Mertens 2002.

110 Klein 1999.

111 Crome (ed.) 2009.

112 Cf. Hänisch/Neubert 1993: 12.

113 Greiffenhagen 1991: 983f. „Schritt uniformierter Kolonnen“ and a „Kommandowirtschaft“ in einem „Kommandostaat“

114 Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen: Wissenschaftlicher Beirat für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften beim Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen, Ständige Kommission Erziehung, Aus- und Weiterbildung, Berlin 1988.

### Anti-imperialist solidarity or development co-operation

When after the fall of the Wall in 1989/90 the first freely elected government in the GDR, headed by Lothar de Maizière, took over government, a ministry hitherto unknown in this country was created, the Ministry for Economic Co-operation. It was to assume the ordinary duties of a Ministry for Development Co-operation, and was managed by the former clergyman Hans-Wilhelm Ebeling from Leipzig. After the assumption of office, the new minister and his staff would discover that, for all these years, no comprehensive development policy concept for development co-operation had existed in the GDR. Furthermore, there were not even any reliable surveys on the countries, political organisations or parties, or economic or government partners connecting the GDR concerning development policy activities abroad.

The GDR's efforts in foreign trade and development with regard to Third World countries had always been extremely untransparent. The unofficial explanation for this was the exaggerated need for safety and the fear of disclosure of economic data typical of the GDR. It was feared that the publication of statistical data would open up possibilities for the FRG or other Western countries to damage the national economy and to create obstacles for the GDR's foreign relations. This isolating of the GDR's confusing and fragmented aid programmes had been lamented for many years, not only by academics who examined the issue.<sup>115</sup> In 1982, the GDR published figures concerning material aid for the developing countries for the first time.<sup>116</sup> However, not only foreign observers encountered difficulties with the trade statistics, but also GDR academics who were equally subject to GDR foreign policy safety requirements and hardly had any other access to the relevant data. After the fall of the Wall, Claus Burkhard and Hans-Helmut Taake assumed that the considerable fragmentation of responsibilities for development policy in the GDR was deliberately meant to cause confusion.<sup>117</sup> This speculation seems somewhat exaggerated though, for the GDR had other means to camouflage her development involvement, provided that she truly intended to.

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115 Wirth, Anette: „Spranger entrümpelt DDR-Entwicklungshilfe“, in: *Die Welt*, 26 September 1991, Bonn.

116 Cf. Schultz 1986: 11ff.

117 Cf. Claus/Taake 1993: 246.

Any subsequent evaluation of GDR development involvement should take into account that the category of ‘development policy’ did not even officially exist in the smaller German state. A lot of what was nonetheless done in this field was labelled “aid in the name of solidarity” or “soli-contribution” or simply “solidarity”. “Development policy” was rejected as an allegedly non-Marxist term. “Development aid” in the GDR was seen solely as “types of exports of national capital from predominantly imperialist countries to the developing countries as a means of securing the basic conditions for neo-colonial exploitation.”<sup>118</sup> Development aid, as a “Guide to Developing Countries” explains, “primarily has system-supporting functions and in many cases serves as a preparation of private capital export.”<sup>119</sup>

“Solidarity”, so common in the GDR, was after the fall of the Wall often stigmatised as having been prescribed “top down”. Without any doubt, solidarity, or whatever the leaders in the GDR meant by it, was ordered – or at least desired to be – “top down” in so far as all major activities had to be approved of by at least the authorities one level up in state or party hierarchy. Solidarity campaigns “bottom up” were – as already briefly mentioned – rare if one does not include personal contact between GDR-citizens and exiles, contract workers, students and apprentices or other people from Third World countries residing in the GDR for various reasons. Of course, such individual contacts existed and could not have been prevented, even if one had wanted to do so. Especially at the workplaces, in student and apprentice hostels and in other collective meeting places, there would not have been any other way. Many personal friendships made back then last until today.

However, initiatives for showing solidarity originating from the grassroots level were not completely out of the question as is sometimes falsely stated, at least not in the 1980s. We must mention that personal contact with foreigners from the Third World residing in the GDR was disliked and suspiciously observed by some GDR functionaries, as has been demonstrated in one publication, on the example of Vietnamese contract workers.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, it was impossible to prevent this kind of contact, as has been already

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118 „Formen des Exports staatlichen Kapitals aus vornehmlich imperialistischen Ländern in die Entwicklungsländer zur Sicherung der Rahmenbedingung neokolonialer Ausbeutung“

119 Luchterhand 1987: 198. „hat primär systemsichernde Funktionen und dient in vielen Fällen der Vorbereitung privaten Kapitalexports.“

120 Cf. Felge 1999.

emphatically pointed out, and as is proven by friendships lasting to this day, or even marriages.

Solidarity as a frequently postulated element of socialist values was accepted by many GDR citizens for humanist considerations or from an idealistic acceptance of basic socialist values and was shaped by them to a certain – though limited – degree. This should by all means be sufficiently valued and explicitly emphasised here again. One of the first GDR citizens dealing with the solidarity of her extinct country and trying to analyse it was Ilona Schleicher. She correctly observed:

The mechanism of planning and raising of financial solidarity aid of the GDR citizens, the widespread formalisation of solidarity and its political-ideological orientation towards the SED's world view should not hide the fact that, especially in the 1960s, a strong propensity for solidarity with the peoples of Asia and Africa emerged among GDR citizens. The de-colonisation process in Africa at the beginning of that decade had a lasting influence in this regard, after that in particular the war in Vietnam and increasingly since the end of the 1960s also the fight for liberation in Southern Africa as well as events in the Middle East and Latin America.<sup>121</sup>

Almost every former GDR citizen surely remembers how the “soli-contribution” was deducted straight away from the monthly paychecks or was deposited immediately after having received one's wage by buying so-called “soli-stamps”, which were then glued into one's FDGB membership book. This procedure existed in every work collective and for GDR citizens working in agriculture or state administration, as well as for those serving in the army or State Security. Actually, it applied to all enterprises in which labour union groups existed. In certain units of the ‘armed forces’ though, the collection of solidarity contributions was more rigorously collected than in civil institutions. An example of such organised collection of “soli-funds” was the donations for solidarity made by staff members of the MfS. In September 1988, their minister, Erich Mielke, reported to the Solidarity Committee that in the current year three million GDR-Marks had been donated. Furthermore, another half a million Mark was to be added, which had been donated by members of the MfS in the course of the

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121 Schleicher, I. 1994: 194. „Der Mechanismus der Planung und Einbringung finanzieller Solidaritätsleistungen der DDR-Bürger, die weitverbreitete Formalisierung der Solidarität und deren politisch-ideologische Ausrichtung am Weltbild der SED sollten aber nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß sich besonders in den 60er Jahren in der Bevölkerung der DDR eine starke Bereitschaft zur Solidarität mit den Völkern Asiens und Afrikas entwickelte. Der Dekolonisierungsprozeß in Afrika Anfang des Jahrzehnts, danach besonders der Krieg in Vietnam und seit Ende der 60er Jahre verstärkt auch der Befreiungskampf im südlichen Afrika sowie die Entwicklungen im Nahen Osten und in Lateinamerika übten in dieser Richtung nachhaltigen Einfluß aus.“

solidarity campaign “Freedom for Peace”<sup>122</sup>. For the subsequent year, another three million GDR-Marks of solidarity funds were ‘budgeted for’. Nonetheless, these amounts had nothing to do with the 6.5 million GDR-Marks that had been spent in the period between October 1987 and September 1988 for “aid in the name of solidarity and support of friendly security agencies”<sup>123</sup> as Mielke also reported to the president of the Solidarity Committee.

The letter containing this information is interesting in various ways.<sup>124</sup> On the one hand, it depicts in what a formalised way the willingness for making donations and also the amount of money donated was relied upon, especially from the so-called armed forces in the GDR. However, this does not mean that the MfS staff would not have been ready and willing to donate part of their income for solidarity, like other GDR citizens. On the other hand, this internal memo at the same time reveals the extent of support deliveries from the MfS to security agencies of Third World countries, which otherwise are hardly known to their full extent in current research.<sup>125</sup>

To reiterate: there was also an active, voluntary “bottom up” solidarity. In other words, especially in the second half of the 1980s,<sup>126</sup> there were groups (primarily church groups) which were striving towards development co-operation with Third World partners. At times, church representatives succeeded in establishing dynamic direct co-operations, such as that which Reverend Gottfried Wolff maintained with Lesotho.<sup>127</sup> As of the second half of the 1980s, i.e. shortly before the end of the GDR, the churches’ leeway for development co-operation increased.<sup>128</sup> The relatively independent framework within which the GDR superiors allowed the churches to operate with regard to development co-operation – even if there were narrow confines – was a consequence of the GDR Lutheran church’s unambiguously anti-racist attitude regarding the support of the South African liberation organisation the ANC in its struggle against the apartheid regime. In this issue, the state and

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122 „Dem Frieden die Freiheit“

123 „solidarische Hilfe und Unterstützung für befreundete Sicherheitsorgane“

124 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: Abt. X, no. 52: Brief an den Präsidenten des Solidaritätskomitees vom 28.9.1988: 2.

125 Ibid., sheet 8 explains that in the period between October 1986 until September 1987 eleven million GDR mark were spent on „solidarische Hilfe und Unterstützung für Sicherheitsorgane befreundeter Staaten“ (“solidarity aid and support for security agencies of friendly states”).

126 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: HA XX/AKG 188.

127 Cf. Wolff 1994: 122 ff.

128 Cf. Berger 1986: 31ff.



the church in the GDR had largely the same interests,<sup>129</sup> although the two sides aimed for strategically different timeframes.

When the then State Secretary in the Ministry for Economic Co-operation of the GDR, Wolf-Dieter Graewe, addressed the GDR citizens' solidarity awareness at a conference, he was not only talking about those GDR citizens with church connections. In his speech at the tenth anniversary of the German reunification, he spoke about the official state leadership's alleged and true motivations for development co-operation:

“If we see solidarity as being closely connected to one another, as a joint stance, as joint acting with regard to certain goals, then the GDR superiors, the party leadership, certainly had such a feeling of solidarity, for example for Mozambique. One saw a similar historic development. Over here the fight against fascism, over there against colonialism. Both sides found themselves in an exposed position, over there the apartheid regime, over here the borderline of the East-West-conflict. Mutual support, as well as economic support, was only logical.”<sup>130</sup>

Without proof – and therefore incomprehensible in its rigor – is the sweeping claim Graewe makes when saying that there was “No international solidarity of the people of the former GDR”<sup>131</sup> When can we speak of the “solidarity of a people”? When – according to the democratic principle – more than half of the people commit themselves to it, or less? Or when we are dealing with 75 or 90 per cent? If Graewe assumed 50 per cent as a non-representative gauge, then there was definitely an attitude of solidarity of the “GDR-people” towards the people in the developing countries.

### The organisation of development co-operation in the GDR

It is astounding to be constantly forced to acknowledge that in the centralised GDR with more than two dozen ministries, none was responsible for development policy. Fundamental decisions in this field, just like in many others, were made by the Politburo as well as the

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129 Cf. Krusche 1998.

130 „Wenn wir Solidarität verstehen als ein Miteinander-eng-verbunden-sein, als eine gemeinsame Haltung, als ein gemeinsames Handeln im Hinblick auf bestimmte Ziele, dann hat es bei den DDR-Obersten, bei der Parteispitze, ein solches Solidaritätsempfinden sicher gegeben, beispielsweise gegenüber Mosambik. Man sah eine ähnliche historische Entwicklung. Hier der Kampf gegen den Faschismus, dort gegen den Kolonialismus. Beide Seiten befanden sich in einer exponierten Lage, dort das Apartheidregime, hier der Grenzbereich des Ost-West-Konfliktes. Eine wechselseitige, auch ökonomische Unterstützung war folgerichtig.“

131 Graewe 2000: 16. „keine internationale Solidarität des Volkes der früheren DDR“

Secretariat of the SED Central Committee. Contracts which formed the foundation for any involvement in development policy were signed mainly by relevant regional divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs, by the Ministry for Foreign Trade, as well as the specialised ministries. Altogether, the GDR had entered into 350 agreements with African, Asian and Latin American countries in the period between 1981 and 1985 alone.<sup>132</sup> The specialised ministries and the relevant State Secretariats, such as the State Secretariat for professional education, were responsible for the implementation of international agreements. As a consequence, development co-operation did not have a budget of its own. Development aid projects were funded from the individual budgets of the specialised ministries. The development policy involvement in all its facets was co-ordinated by the Solidarity Committee of the GDR.

**Table 7: GDR capital assistance for developing countries 1954 – 1974 by countries in million US dollars and in percent of the total capital assistance for the developing countries<sup>133</sup>**

Country	million US \$	percent	Rank
Egypt	241.0	24.9	1
Algeria	142.8	14.8	3
Bangladesh	23.4	2.4	10
Burma	11.9	1.2	14
Brazil	40.0	4.1	8
Chile	23.4	2.4	11
Ghana	24.0	2.5	9
Guinea	11.1	1.1	16
Indonesia	11.2	1.2	15
Iraq	84.0	8.7	4
Yemen	5.0	0.5	21
Cambodia	42.3	4.4	6
Columbia	5.0	0.5	21
Congo	5.7	0.6	20
Mali	7.0	0.7	19
Somalia	42.8	4.4	5
Sri Lanka	42.2	4.4	7
Sudan	20.8	2.2	12
South Yemen	7.5	0.8	18
Syria	155.0	16.0	2
Tunisia	10.0	1.0	17
Uruguay	12.0	1.2	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>968.1</b>	<b>100</b>	

132 Cf. Honecker, Erich: *Bericht des Zentralkomitees der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands an den XI. Parteitag der SED, XI. Parteitag der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, 17. - 21. April 1986*, Berlin 1986: 16.

133 Source: based on Hendrichs 1981: 80.

The chart shows that, until the mid-1970s, GDR ‘development aid’ for African countries was rather modest in comparison to other regions and continents. This changed only when the former Portuguese colonies obtained national independence, and also with the increasing international support of liberation movements in Southern Africa.

### The GDR Solidarity Committee

The predecessor of the GDR Solidarity Committee was the “Committee for Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa” founded on 22 July 1960. This was renamed the “Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee” in October 1963. The reason for the creation of such an institution was the “African Year” of 1960, when the GDR joined in the euphoria about national independence having been declared in most African countries. The solidarity commitment of a wide proportion of the GDR population in this context later fell victim to officialdom and the insane desire for comprehensive control over GDR citizens’ contacts abroad.<sup>134</sup> Especially in this regard, the GDR committed errors which in the end undoubtedly led to certain parts of the population not – or hardly – taking any interest in solidarity. They would only be reminded of this basic national principle by the monthly payable “soli-stamps”. It is possible that here lies one of the seeds for the xenophobia one could observe after the fall of the Wall.

Due to the fact that the GDR extended her solidarity to Latin America in the 1960s and that a coordinating institution for solidarity benefits, which would also be capable of representing the interests of GDR foreign policy, was needed, the AASK’s name was changed to “Solidarity Committee of the GDR” at the beginning of 1973. It was managed by an executive committee, which comprised representatives of parties and mass organisations, as well as personalities from the academe and the arts. The Solidarity Committee was an associated member of the “Organisation for Solidarity of the Asian and African Peoples” founded in Cairo in 1957.<sup>135</sup>

The Solidarity Committee always had many employees and felt most notably committed to the so-called proletarian socialist internationalism, and oriented its political activity to it. In accordance with like-minded Solidarity Committees in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, countries and liberation movements in the Third World were systematically supported. In some cases, the GDR also co-operated with development aid organisations from Western, mainly Scandinavian, countries.<sup>136</sup> The manifold activities of the

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134 Cf. Sebald 1993: 79ff.

135 Cf. Herbst, Andreas/Ranke, Winfried/Winkler, Jürgen: *So funktionierte die DDR*, vol. 2: *Lexikon der Organisationen und Institutionen M – Z*, Reinbek 1994: 869.

136 Cf. Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. 2000: 311ff.

Solidarity Committee should have been managed by an independent ministry. It seems, however, that there were political reasons not to found such a ministry.<sup>137</sup>

The superior functionary of the Solidarity Committee was its president. For many years this was Kurt Seibt, at the same time Chairperson of the Central Party Control Commission at the SED Central Committee. He exercised his decisional power. His orders, of course, were co-ordinated with the Central Committee, especially with its Department for International Relations. Hence, assertions that the SED did not influence the decisions of the Solidarity Committee are unfounded.<sup>138</sup>

Officially, the task of the Solidarity Committee was the co-ordination of solidarity campaigns of civil organisations, institutions and the citizens of the GDR as well as immediate humanitarian aid, material supplies or the provision of scholarships (rather than financial support).<sup>139</sup> The central administration of donations made by the various GDR groupings and by the population, as well as the allocation of aid support supplies, was carried out by the Solidarity Committee. It goes without saying that only those countries were supported that matched the GDR's political maxim and orientation. But not only countries were granted support, but also liberation and independence movements, and the Solidarity Committee was supposed to lay the foundation for further official political co-operation.<sup>140</sup>

The Solidarity Committee's donations account was filled with private donations, with proceeds of fund-raisers, with the FDGB members' solidarity contributions, but also with financial contributions from civil organisations and ministries and with public funds. In the 1980s, the donations revenue amounted to ca. 200 million GDR-Marks.<sup>141</sup> "Support measures of the MfS for fellow security agencies and national liberation movements", an internal file memo credibly states, "were never part of the official aid measures" of the GDR.<sup>142</sup>

The Solidarity Committee members' work was mainly the initiation and co-ordination of solidarity campaigns such as the campaign in the wake of Nelson Mandela's release from imprisonment by the apartheid regime, the organisation of more or less voluntary work assignments for work collectives and entire enterprises, meetings, petitions and many other tasks. Their duties also included taking care of immigrants, students and apprentices from the Third World. The following chart points out just one aspect of the rather successful solidarity work, presenting a survey of students trained in the GDR:

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137 The topic is discussed rather extensively by Siebs 1999: 100ff.

138 Cf. Reichardt 2006.

139 Döring 1999: 215.

140 Cf. Döring 1999: 207.

141 Döring 1999: 207.

142 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: SdM, no. 33: „Aktenvermerk“, 24.11.1978. „Unterstützungsmaßnahmen des MfS an befreundete Sicherheitsorgane und nationale Befreiungsbewegungen“ ... „fanden nie Eingang in die offiziellen Hilfsmaßnahmen“

**Table 8: Foreign students at tertiary institutions of the GDR (Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 237)**

	1972	%*	1973	%	1974	%	1975	%	1976	%	1977	%	1978	%	1979	%	1980**	1981	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,591</b>		<b>4,524</b>		<b>4,864</b>		<b>5,386</b>		<b>5,351</b>		<b>5,736</b>		<b>6,641</b>		<b>6,607</b>			<b>7,411</b>	
Europe	1,218	27	1,479	33	1,588	33	1,715	32	1,757	33	1,879	33	2,377	36	2,328	35		2,295	31
USSR	n.s.		436	10	425	9	388	7	334	6	344	6	449	7	456	7		466	6
Third World	2,911	63	2,609	58	2,846	59	3,282	61	3,259	61	3,512	61	3,814	57	3,822	58		4,650	62
Africa	808	28	759	29	869	31	922	28	924	28	994	28	1,129	30	1,204	32		1,445	31
North and Central America	84	3	96	4	104	4	132	4	170	5	257	7	319	8	354	9		530	11
South America	135	5	121	5	115	4	276	8	278	9	343	10	383	10	347	9		298	6
Asia	1,884	65	1,633	63	1,758	62	1,952	59	1,887	58	1,917	55	1,983	52	1,917	50		2,677	1

\* Calculated and rounded up and down respectively. Percentages for students from the Third World, Europe and the USSR refer to the total number of foreign students; those for Africa, America and Asia refer to the total number of students from developing countries.

\*\* No data available.

## The financial foundations of GDR “solidarity development co-operation” with African countries

Core conditions of the solidarity movement in the GDR, besides young people’s readiness to go to Third World countries as members of the FDJ brigades, were mainly the funds and material goods provided by the government, which was no easy feat in a society constantly lacking material goods and services, but after all the GDR allocated 0.54 percent of her gross national product for her development commitment.<sup>143</sup> At the beginning of the 1980s, when the GDR presented data on her development policy at the 37<sup>th</sup> UN plenary for the first time, it was established that in 1981 aid funds amounted to, 1529.7 million GDR-Marks. It is impossible to determine exactly how the funds allocated each year were disbursed. Hence it is difficult to find out if and to what extent the “solidarity funds” included military or – in GDR diction – “non-civil” goods. It is an assured fact, however, that within the range of support for development aid, the humanitarian aid for African countries, especially medical supplies, ranked remarkably high considering the GDR’s economic capacity.

The National Front, the umbrella organisation in the GDR which comprised all parties and mass organisations, was partly responsible for the acquisition of funds. In 1988, the National Front commissions had collected 28,263,000 GDR-Marks for supporting the GDR development policy involvement. This was the highest amount donated thus far to so-called “anti-imperialist solidarity”. (In 1985 it had been 25,039,700.00 GDR-Marks).<sup>144</sup>

The National Front had tried to motivate the population in all districts to make donations for solidarity on a local level, even down to the housing communities, which were informal associations of tenants in mostly large apartment houses. Even if dogmatism might have played a part in this campaign, it was nonetheless impossible (especially at this point!) to force GDR citizens to make donations. The top-scoring district in this campaign was Berlin, fulfilling 158.5% of the plan made for the amount of donations; Potsdam least exceeded the goal with 101.8%. The total plan fulfilment was 119.0%.<sup>145</sup> It was not only the staff of big

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143 Fröhlich 1993: 184. Other information exists, according to which the amount of the GDR’s gross national product allocated to development commitment is specified by different figures.

144 Cf. Podewin 1989: 69.

145 Podewin 1989: 69. From a current point of view, the explanation for the high solidarity contributions appears somewhat bizarre: according to the Solidarity Committee brochure, the reasons for this exemplary result „liegen vor allem in der gewachsenen Aktionsfähigkeit der Ausschüsse der Nationalen Front und der damit verbundenen Verstärkung der politischen Massenarbeit in den Wohngebieten der Städte und Gemeinden. Im vergangenen Jahr wurden vielfältige Aktivitäten und Initiativen durch die

enterprises who participated in the fund-raising campaigns, where one could suspect group pressure in the collection of financial solidarity contributions. Even self-employed craftspeople with smaller businesses donated 120 GDR-Marks on average in Berlin in 1988.<sup>146</sup>

The collection of “solidarity funds” was one thing, the spending of these funds for development policy purposes was another since the eagerly donating GDR citizens had no control whatsoever over the use of the funds, and in most cases not even reliable information. Moreover, as has already been pointed out, funds from the national budget were used for development policy. Particularly relevant is the granting of loans whose interest rates were far below the world market’s usual rates, which can also be seen as a special type of development co-operation. The GDR’s financial co-operation with Third World countries focused on approximately 25 young nation states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. There was a particularly close financial co-operation with those countries that were members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) or which were linked closely to it by contracts. These were mainly Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia and Mozambique. Recipients of remarkable government loans were also Egypt, Ethiopia, Yemen and Syria.

According to a 1990 analysis of the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), from the vast number of loan agreements of the GDR with developing countries, about seventy promises of loans to twenty-one countries for the co-funding of projects could be identified, which had a high element of subvention (between 35 – 45%) due to their favourable conditions (interest rate, term, capital repayment holidays). Thus they meet one of the requirements of the Development Committee of the OECD (DAC) to be accepted as development aid (ODA). The integration of these agreements into GDR trade policy,

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Ausschüsse der Nationalen Front ausgelöst. Die Zahl wirksamer Solidaritätsveranstaltungen in den Bezirken ‘ Kreisen, Städten und Gemeinden hat stark zugenommen. Auch in den Programmen der Bürgerinitiative werden die Aufgaben in der antiimperialistischen Solidarität, einschließlich des materiellen Beitrages, zunehmend zum Bestandteil der Leitung und Planung der Tätigkeit der Ausschüsse der Nationalen Front.“ (“lie mainly in the National Front committees’ increased capacity to act and, as a consequence, the intensification of political mass campaigns in cities and municipalities. In the past year the National Front committees carried out manifold activities and initiatives. The number of efficacious solidarity events in districts, counties, cities and municipalities surged. The tasks regarding anti-imperialist solidarity (including material contributions) are increasingly becoming a component of management and planning of the National Front committees, also on the level of the programmes of citizen initiatives.”

146 Cf. Podewin 1989: 70.

however, rather speaks against a development focus of the loans according to the OECD. They may rather be classified as measures for securing natural resources and creating markets for state-owned enterprises and, additionally, as being part of the activities of the GDR determined mainly by ideology and strategic alliances. This rather speaks in favour of seeing them as contracts in their own right with strong elements of trade policy.<sup>147</sup> However, neither can these contracts be said not to have a developmental focus.

The loans for developing countries amounted to a total of 3.7 billion DM towards the end of the GDR. For a total number of sixteen contracts with five countries (Cuba, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Syria, and Mongolia) there had still been payments due in 1990 of a total amount of approximately 130 million DM, of these one-hundred million to Cuba.<sup>148</sup>

#### Attempt at a summary of the GDR development policy involvement

As explained, it is very difficult to present even an incomplete account of several decades of GDR 'development aid', equally due to the various institutions in the GDR participating in the GDR development policy involvement and to the fragmented types of actual development aid. Nevertheless we shall attempt here to present a statistical overview based primarily on the report of the GDR Solidarity Committee to the Round Table in 1990.<sup>149</sup> This captures especially the solidarity benefits of the GDR Solidarity Committee from 1988 to 1989. All benefits of the GDR Solidarity Committee for developing countries or national liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America were exclusively delivered as non-refundable benefits (also called subventions). Since many development aid projects were designed as middle or long-term projects, we shall focus particularly on the period from 1982 to 1989.

As of the beginning of the 1980s, the following benefits were provided yearly:

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147 Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit: „Die Zukunft der ehemaligen DDR-Entwicklungsprojekte“ (=*Informationsvermerk für den Ausschuß für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Bundestages*, Informationsvermerk, no. 34), Bonn 1990: 3.

148 Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit: „Die Zukunft der ehemaligen DDR-Entwicklungsprojekte“ (=*Informationsvermerk für den Ausschuß für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Bundestages*, Informationsvermerk, no. 34), Bonn 1990: 4.

149 Epd-Entwicklungspolitik (ed.): „Bericht des Solidaritätskomitees für den Runden Entwicklungspolitischen Tisch“ (=*Materialien V/90*), Frankfurt on the Main 1990: 50ff.



**Table 9: Expenses of the Solidarity Committee 1981 – 1989<sup>150</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total in million GDR-Marks</b>
1981	191.2
1982	211.6
1983	216.1
1984	173.8
1985	210.9
1986	200.2
1987	199.6
1988	213.9
1989	208.3

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150 Source: Reichardt 2006: 124.

**Table 10: Financial sources by the GDR Solidarity Committee (in 1000 GDR-Marks), 1988 – 1989<sup>151</sup>**

	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>
Unused donations from the previous year	70,011.1	6,5549.4
Current year's deposits:		
FDGB	85,000.0	75,000.0
VdgB	12,971.9	18,578.8
DFD	2,012.9	3,019.2
Kulturbund <sup>152</sup>	345.1	303.2
National Front	24,132.2	23,231.6
FDJ	1,002.0	n.s.
VDJ	11,455.1	7,278.0
Verband der Konsumgenossenschaft <sup>153</sup>	3,546.8	2,867.8
VKSK	1,518.2	1,512.8
Members of NVA, customs, MfS or its successor	25,472.6	20,085.2
GST	600.5	501.9
Churches, religious congregations	510.2	456.9
Deposits from individual citizens, enterprises/schools <sup>154</sup>	85,096.7	35,571.3
Proceeds from estates	535.7	1,120.6
“Solidarity surcharge” on stamps	62.4	52.7
Revenue from administrative work/interest	932.1	1,367.6
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>325,207.5</b>	<b>302,436.2</b>

151 Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 50.

152 Translator's note: Cultural Association.

153 Translator's note: Association of the consumer co-operative.

154 Among them numerous deposits with the reference of “Nicaragua”, “Caucasus”, “UNICEF”, “Romania”, “Ethiopia” (hunger relief) and “Namibia” (orphanage).

**Table 11: Bilateral and multilateral benefits by the GDR Solidarity Committee  
(in 1000 GDR-Marks), 1988 - 1989<sup>155</sup>**

	1988	in%- shares	1989	in%- shares
<u>Bilateral benefits</u>	209,250.5	98.7	204,593.2	99.1
<u>Multilateral benefits, thereof:</u>	2,793.0	1.3	1,953.7	0.9
UNICEF <sup>156**</sup>	1,759.0		1,472.1	
UNRWA	200.0		200.0	
AAPSO	678.0		281.6	
OAU	156.0			
<b>Total</b>	<b>212,043.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>206,546.9</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 12: Expenses of the GDR Solidarity Committee by special fields  
(in 1000 GDR-Marks), 1988 - 1989<sup>157</sup>**

	1988	%	1989	%
Training	112,561.4	52.6	81,057.6	38.9
Material supplies	86,861.0	40.6	114,033.7	54.8
Emergency aid <sup>158</sup>	18,610.5	8.7	50,612.9	24.3
Transportation	6,500.0	3.0	5,982.3	2.9
Information, publicity and administration	1,817.9	0.9	1,777.0	0.9
Medical treatment and child care	3,050.0	1.4	2,818.8	1.4
Other sections	3,071.1	1.4	2,654.5	1.3
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>213,861.4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>208,323.9</b>	<b>100</b>

155 Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 51. Excludes expenses on information, publicity and administration.

156 Material benefits excluding costs for transportation.

157 Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 48.

158 The emergency aid (almost exclusively material supplies) is listed separately here, although its components are already included in 2, 4, 5 and 6.

**Table 13: Allocation of benefits by countries (in 1000 GDR-Marks), 1988 - 1989<sup>159</sup>**

Countries	total	1988 In part, among others <sup>160</sup>		total	1989 In part, among others	
		Training in GDR	Material supplies		Training in GDR	Material supplies
SR Vietnam	41,036.7	18,468.2	21,521.2	33,421.1	14,691.8	17,190.5
Cambodia	16,688.3	7,363.3	9,031.6	12,667.8	5,785.9	6,293.5
Laos	16,975.4	7,678.4	8,865.1	13,431.1	5,030.2	7,684.9
Afghanistan	6,942.4	4,402.2	1,973.8	3,667.0	2,750.0	6,17.7
Other countries South East Asia	12,254.7	11,781.6	473.1	5,853.1	5,653.0	181.4
Mozambique	23,417.4	19,713.0	3,334.2	13,751.9	10,561.8	2,887.4
Angola	7,341.3	3,876.3	3,012.4	5,499.3	3,122.7	1,789.0
Ethiopia	11,687.7	8,273.4	3,271.4	8,536.0	6,060.9	2,234.4
Yemen	4,892.8	4,749.3	123.3	3,241.3	3,072.6	151.2
SWAPO	10,524.8	4,213.5	4,692.0	16,756.7	6,263.9	8,410.8
ANC	5,677.2	982.0	3,377.3	5,613.9	825.8	3,482.1
PLO	1,780.7	1,128.7	102.1	4,272.4	3,429.1	1,49.0
AAPSO	678.0	5.6	0.9	281.6	3.7	
Zambia	813.0	808.0	1.9	10.9	3.7	2.9
Sao Tomé & Principe	392.5	234.8	141.8	326.9	150.0	152.1
OAU	156.0		133.0			
Madagascar	1,268.8	1,072.5	1,42.0	886.6	762.5	107.0
Other African countries/NMO	11,431.2	10,217.0	608.5	8,213.5	7,475.1	395.8
Nicaragua	30,528.1	3,508.2	24,055.4	15,700.9	2,500.0	11,788.6
El Salvador	1,016.8	175.7	519.1	702.8	121.9	492.4
Chile	1,957.5	801.1	51.4	1,593.7	700.0	9.3
Other countries Latin America	4,582.9	3,108.6	1,429.5	2,189.5	2,093.0	48.8
Sub-total	21,2043.5	11,2561.4	86,861.0	156,582.0	81,057.6	64,068.8
Armenia information, publicity and administration	1,817.9			49,964.9 1,777.0		49,964.9
<b>Total</b>	21,3861.9			20,8323.9		

<sup>159</sup> Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 40.

<sup>160</sup> In other words, "among other developing countries".

**Table 14: Allocation of solidarity benefits by focus countries (in% shares), 1988 - 1989<sup>161</sup>**

	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>
Vietnam	19.2	16.0
Cambodia	7.8	6.1
Laos	7.9	6.4
Mozambique	10.9	6.6
Ethiopia	5.5	4.1
SWAPO (Namibia)	4.9	8.0
Nicaragua	14.3	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>54.7</b>
Aid for Armenia		24.0

**Table 15: Funds for major objects (in 1,000 GDR-Marks), 1988 - 1989<sup>162</sup>**

	<b>1988</b>	<b>1989</b>
<u>Africa</u>		
• Friendship School Staßfurt (Children from Mozambique and Namibia)	15,000.0	7,000.0
• Shelter for Namibian children in Bellin (GDR)	1,500.0	1,680.0
• Ethiopian Children's Village Amba	1,918.2	1,080.4
<u>Asia</u>		
• Social services in three coffee, pepper and rubber producing regions in Vietnam	5,810.0	5,550.0
• Friendship Hospital Hanoi	950.0	1,040.0
• Hospital 17. April Phnom Penh	1,060.0	996.1
• Social services in rubber producing region of Cambodia	2,050.0	2,450.0
• Social services in coffee growing region of Laos	6,500.0	7,000.0
<u>Latin America</u>		
• Hospital Managua <sup>163</sup>	2,741.1	3,480.3

<sup>161</sup> Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 39.

<sup>162</sup> Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 55. All figures excluding costs for transportation.

<sup>163</sup> Including costs for transportation.

**Table 16: Support for further long-term objects in the 1980s  
(average annual funds in 1000 GDR-Marks)<sup>164</sup>**

Teaching and learning materials for 12 tertiary education institutions in Angola, Mozambique, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Laos and Afghanistan	400 – 1,000
Maternity ward Sao Tomé	110
2 hospitals in Laos and at the hospital in Cambodia (excluding Hospital “17. April”)	300
Workshop programme Laos	350 – 500
ANC development centre Dakawa (Tanzania)	300
Institution for rehabilitation and orthopaedics Vietnam	300
Workshop programme Vietnam	1,450
9 primary and secondary schools in Cambodia, Laos, Afghanistan, Nicaragua	1,000
Holiday project for Palestinian (and, in 1989, Ethiopian) children	150

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164 Source: epd-Entwicklungspolitik: *Materialien* V/90, 1990: 50.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Peace Corps of the East – The FDJ Friendship Brigades

The GDR's Solidarity Committee, which in actual fact was the 'central manager' of the development policy missions of the GDR, was not normally directly responsible for organising the dispatching of development aid workers to the Third World. Rather, this was the task of the youth organisation, the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ), whose *Friendship Brigades*<sup>1</sup> went into operation on site. The official propaganda called them the *Blue Shirt ambassadors*<sup>2</sup>. With regard to its strategising, the division *Brigaden der Freundschaft* was entirely dependent on the orders of the Department of International Relations at the Central Committee (ZK) of the SED.

Although there were other social organisations in the GDR which dealt locally with practical aspects of development aid, the FDJ youth organisation was the most active institution within the GDR's development policy. The *Brigaden der Freundschaft*, formed in 1964, were rightfully called the counterpart to John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps of 1961. Other organisations were not involved with their staff in the Third World, but instead were involved in development activities at home. These activities ranged from apprenticeships to extended vocational training for people from the Third World, which will be addressed at a later stage. Locally, there were indeed some similarities with the US-American Peace Corps. Both development aid organisations, although with widely differing numbers – the GDR's FDJ Friendship Brigades had about 300 members in comparison to the US Peace Corps which counted 14,000 at their height in the mid-1960s – were led by, "guided by the same principles as officially proclaimed"<sup>3</sup> as West German observers stated.

Both organisations were ostensibly aiming for the same goal and yet they observed each other with great suspicion. Already in 1961 the GDR Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lothar Bolz, attacked the US American Peace Corps as an "Offensive-Corps of the imperialistic ideology,

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1 „Brigaden der Freundschaft“

2 „Botschafter im Blauhemd“ Cf. Stoll 1994: 141ff; Leskien 1994: 278.

3 Spranger 1987: 218. „den gleichen offiziell verkündeten Zielen“

which they use to mislead the people and therefore call it ‘Peace Corps’<sup>4</sup>. The western observer regarded the FDJ brigades with similar words shaped by the Cold War:

The members of the Blue Shirt Brigade are actually military specialists dressed in FDJ uniforms, who solve military problems of the Third World in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. They are part of the People’s Army, the State Security and the ‘Society of Sports and Technology’. They underwent special training for this task.<sup>5</sup>

The only truthful fact is that these prospective development aid workers, who were not allowed to be called by this term, were taught foreign languages, geography and tropical medicine pertaining to the area of their next mission, in the little village of Bärenklau in Brandenburg. The other parts of this comment are entire nonsense.

The FDJ Friendship Brigades were founded in 1963 by the FDJ central council, the decision being taken by the Central Committee (ZK) of the SED. The explanation for its formation lay in the offer to help young African nation states to overcome the colonial heritage. Hence the first brigade was sent to Mali on 17 June 1964. It was tasked with assisting the national production and extension centre in Somo to develop an intensive crop and stock farming system.<sup>6</sup> Already at this point one can observe a complex approach towards development aid projects. A repair workshop base and training facilities were built.

In the summer of 1964 a brigade was sent to Algeria, too. There, the village Les Quadhias was rebuilt within the programme of a WBDJ operation for relatives of soldiers who had died during the liberation struggle against France. Following this, members of the FDJ were sent to the island of Zanzibar in 1966 to build the model village of Bambi and at the same time to train future carpenters, builders and joiners. A technical school was built for the training of locksmiths, electricians and plumbers as well. A workshop for motorbikes was created by an FDJ Friendship Brigade in Guinea’s capital of Conakry. The apprenticeships for skilled professions were started a year later. By the end of the GDR regime, a few thousand

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4 Bolz, Lothar: „DDR-Außenminister Lothar Bolz: Begrüßungsansprache“, in: *Nationaler Befreiungskampf und Neokolonialismus. Referate und ausgewählte Beiträge*, Berlin 1962: 10. „Offensiv-Korps der imperialistischen Ideologie, das sie zur Irreführung der Völker, ‘Friedens-Korps’ nennen“

5 Breyer 1979: 266f. „In Wirklichkeit sind die Mitglieder dieser Blauhemdbrigade jedoch Militärspezialisten, die in Uniformen der FDJ militärische Probleme in der Dritten Welt im Sinne des Marxismus-Leninismus lösen. Sie gehören der Volksarmee, dem Staatssicherheitsdienst, der Volkspolizei und der ‘Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik’ an. Sie wurden in Sonderlehrgängen auf ihre Aufgabe vorbereitet.“

6 Herbst, Andreas/Ranke, Winfried/Winkler, Jürgen: *So funktionierte die DDR*, vol. 1: *Lexikon der Organisationen und Institutionen A – L*, Reinbek 1994: 134.



FDJ brigade members had put development aid into practice in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin-America. Projects undertaken by the Friendship Brigade were based on contracts between the central council of the FDJ and the youth organisations or government departments of the host countries.

The most important goal, according to the way that the FDJ brigade saw itself, was to show active solidarity with the people living in these young nations, to give assistance to overcome the effects of colonial exploitation and national suppression, as well as to support these countries' struggle in the stabilisation of political and economic independence and the advancement of society.<sup>7</sup> Naturally they were also tasked with "breaking down the diplomatic blockade which was forced upon the GDR",<sup>8</sup> as was candidly admitted in a 1988 FDJ brochure.<sup>9</sup>

The FDJ brigades were mainly employed to develop vocational training facilities, to implement apprenticeships and extended vocational training for young skilled workers. At the same time they contributed in more ways than one to the building and development of national economies in countries of the Third World. Up until the end of the 1970s more than 1100 foreign youths were trained in a skilled trade by the FDJ brigade members. In 1978 alone, the most successful year in the activities of the FDJ Friendship Brigades, 1200 trainees from Third World countries received training in skilled trades. The best graduates from training facilities overseen by FDJ brigades were given the opportunity to study at a tertiary institution in the GDR to qualify as master craftsmen or engineering lecturers in order to become involved in their own country's vocational training. This chain of training of skilled workers became a 'self-propelling developmental policy mechanism'. This approach to developmental aid as practised by the GDR in those days remains a widely discussed topic of the "self-help principle" in German development policy to this day.

As the only GDR youth organisation was an active member of the International volunteer service for the solidarity and friendship of the youth (SIVSAJ), a special branch of the Federation of Democratic Youth (WBDJ), there were also (besides activities by FDJ brigades)

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7 Cf. Michel 1979: 159.

8 „die der DDR aufgezwungenen diplomatischen Blockade zu durchbrechen“

9 Zentralrat der FDJ (ed.): Internationalisten im Blauhemd. Brigaden der Freundschaft der Freien Deutschen Jugend, Berlin 1988: 3.

FDJ development workers in international brigades, who were active until the end of the 1970s in Algeria, Cuba, Guinea Bissau and Angola.<sup>10</sup>

It was a privilege for FDJ brigade members to be sent to a developing country considering that the GDR was cut off by the Wall from the outside world.<sup>11</sup> Skilled and politically qualified – and mostly young – workers and engineers with a suitable personality structure were delegated by their company. They received GDR remuneration and a further 100 GDR-Marks as a “tropics bonus” during their stay abroad, which meant that they could retain their accommodation at home. Apart from free accommodation, the FDJ brigade members also received adequate remuneration in the form of pocket money in the currency of the hosting country (usually 40% to 50% of the *Valutagrundbetrag*<sup>12</sup> of the respective country) in order to cover living costs.

**Table 17: GDR support for people from Third World countries in 1988<sup>13</sup>**

	<b>Number of citizens from developing countries</b>	<b>Number of citizens from LDCs</b>
Vocational and extended vocational training in businesses and institutions of the GDR (excluding institutions of tertiary education) 1988 – new in training and qualification	6,889	1.115
<i>Enrolled into course</i>	2,958	569
<i>Graduated</i>	3,883	620
<i>Enrolled into university studies and at technical colleges in the GDR</i>	9,407	2,901
1988 – newly enrolled	1,927	613
Graduated	1,815	532
<b>Experts dispatched to development countries (GDR-Experts)</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>433</b>
Medical care (patients)	1174	348
Number of foreign workers from developing countries	approx. 78,000 <sup>14</sup>	

10 Cf. Michel 1979: 162.

11 Cf. Sebastian 1990: 7.

12 *Valutagrundbetrag*: Base amount of a local currency of western strength for internal trade between socialist countries. As business trip expenses are regulated today by the Federal Travelling Expenses Act, so were they in similar fashion in the GDR.

13 Source: Nitz 1989: 65.

14 Originating from Mozambique, Angola, Cuba, and Vietnam.

Mainly development aid workers from a wide range of skilled professions were employed for missions abroad, yet sometimes young academics and researchers were also given these rare opportunities to be part of a specific African mission. However, there were examples that the combination of development aid operations and academic interests were of advantage with regard to an increase in academic knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Brigade members were often the first GDR citizens to arrive in these countries (particularly in Grenada) or in specific regions of these countries. Even writers, film directors and artists followed the brigades, as it was one method of collecting material for their writing and artistic work. In addition, it gave them the opportunity to leave the GDR and work in a Third World country as the academics did.

Most of the time, in the countries abroad, the quality of workmanship of the FDJ brigade members was considered good, as they were in fact skilled workers. Experts in all skills related to everyday life were dispatched, even chefs and nursery school teachers. On the one hand, this was because some FDJ projects were in comparatively isolated areas. On the other, only a high number of staff could ensure a smooth daily routine in an isolation forced upon them as a result of political and security considerations. Even the provision of basic consumer goods such as toilet paper was organised in minute detail.<sup>16</sup> This led to a certain, desired state of self-sufficiency within the FDJ projects, as it was frowned upon to make contact with the local population, which in any case was often barely possible due to the language barrier.<sup>17</sup> This statement needs to be viewed critically as many brigade members from that time would later contest the impression just rendered. It always depended on the time and the location. Missions with, and in the midst of, the local population simply could never be self-sufficient. The negative image of the working conditions and the secluded GDR citizens as established by West German writers seems to be a result of today's generally accepted image of the GDR, rather than a reflection of the reality at that time. A Friendship Brigade leader states about his experience in Ethiopia: "We had very friendly contacts with the people everywhere in Ethiopia."<sup>18</sup> The perception of the need for security of the GDR personnel grew stronger in the minds of officials back in the GDR in the face of increasing attacks from contra-revolutionaries, for example in Angola and Mozambique, and in the wake of incidents such as attacks by US soldiers on Grenada. This led to a further isolation of the

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15 Cf. Ernst 1973.

16 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 218ff; Hillebrandt 1987: 179ff.

17 Cf. Erl 1992: 64.

18 Zentralrat der FDJ 1988: 10. „Überall hatten wir herzliche Kontakte zu den äthiopischen Menschen.“

development aid community.<sup>19)</sup> But these conditions were no different to any other group of development aid workers who were protected by their national governments.

The most famous development aid project by the FDJ Friendship Brigades was not carried out in Africa but in Latin-America: the “Carlos Marx” hospital in Nicaragua’s capital Managua. At times during the construction of the building, 120 FDJ members were active in various sectors of the hospital. The “African projects” were carried out with much less staffing. Towards the end of the GDR regime, or more precisely, at the beginning of 1989, 19 FDJ brigades were active in countries of the Third World. Most of the 80 people worked in Angola. Furthermore, brigades were sent out to countries such as Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Sao Tomé, Guinea-Bissau, and Tanzania as well as in SWAPO and ANC refugee camps in neighbouring countries of the states still ruled by the apartheid regime.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 18: Countries in which the Friendship Brigades had officially completed missions<sup>21</sup>**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Period</i>
The Republic of Mali (Somo)	1964-1972
United Republic of Tanzania (including Zanzibar)	1966-1971
Republic of Cuba	1970
CSSR (RGW item of property power station Tusimice II)	1971-1975
Republic of Chile	1973
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	1976

In order to summarise, one needs to recapitulate the following: From 1964 more than 60 FDJ Friendship Brigades operated in 26 countries for a long-term period.<sup>22</sup> By the end of the GDR regime, brigades were working in the following African countries: Angola, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and in ANC-Camps in

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19 Cf. Van der Heyden 2005: 278ff.

20 Cf. Nitz 1989: 64.

21 Zentralrat der FDJ 1988: 6.

22 Zentralrat der FDJ 1988: 4.

Tanzania. The majority of people were trained as teachers and instructors for skilled professions, as well as builders, locksmiths, electricians, vehicle mechanics, plumbers and tailors. This was intended mainly to support the national economy. An additional four brigades assisted in the People's Republic of Angola in the maintenance and repair of vehicle and agricultural equipment.<sup>23</sup>

FDJ Friendship Brigades had been active in the People's Republic of Angola since 1977. Most work was done in the sectors previously mentioned, but increasingly changed to the area of vocational training. More than 500 Angolans received training in skilled professions in the vocational training centre of Cabinda. Training was initially provided as a one-year qualification, which was later extended to a comprehensive three-year apprenticeship in professions such as locksmiths, vehicle mechanics and builders. People in Viana, Malange and Lobito received training in vehicle maintenance during courses lasting several weeks.

From 1980 onwards members of the "Werner Lamberz" Harvest Brigade flew to Ethiopia to help farmers with bringing in the harvest for the duration of several months each year. FDJ Friendship Brigades that were operational in Ethiopia were mainly based at Addis Ababa, where, from 1985 onwards, technicians were trained through courses in the maintenance of agricultural equipment. This included the training of mechanics for the GDR export sales success, the combine harvester E512.

From June 1976 the "Amilcar Cabral" Friendship Brigade was active in Guinea-Bissau. Right at the beginning of their operation, they created the country's first vocational training centre in the district of Bra, on the periphery of the capital Bissau. During its long-standing vocational training (which was later on taken up by the National Institute for Vocational Training) up until 1988, over 500 apprentices (with the support by the GDR development aid workers) were successfully trained as professional builders, locksmiths, joiners and electricians. The best apprentices were given the opportunity to study in the GDR to become instructors.

Another FDJ Friendship Brigade assisted from 1978 onwards in Mozambique with the erection of a school for industrial studies in the coal mining district of Moatize. In 1980 the

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23 Cf. Zentralrat der FDJ 1988: 6ff.

training of builders and locksmiths started, as it was recognised how indispensable qualified labour was in order to uplift the Mozambican economy. A year later the “Sigmund Jähn” brigade arrived in Matundo, where brigade members and country youths together built living quarters and miners’ houses. In 1983 the Friendship Brigade “Wilhelm Pieck” assisted in building a school and other buildings as gifts of solidarity from the FDJ members of the Mansfeld collective combine “Wilhelm Pieck” in Muiane and Marropino. In addition, FDJ brigades were active during the rice harvest and in combine harvester maintenance in various areas of Mozambique.

In 1978 an obstetrics clinic was erected in São Tomé and Príncipe as a state gift by the GDR. Young people qualified in skilled professions after training by the FDJ Friendship Brigades from 1986 on. The apprenticeships started with the training of fifty-six apprentices, many of them girls. They received a three-year practical and theoretical course. The apprentices of the building trade, aged between sixteen and eighteen, did the practical part of their training by building village schools.<sup>24</sup>

The Friendship Brigade “Paul Markowski” was operational from 1987 in the Republic of Zimbabwe. The assistance started in an unfinished centre for vocational training in the town of Mashayamombe, 130 km south of the capital of Harare. Mainly builders and plumbers were trained in this location. Their practical apprentice work was the completion of the training centre. There were plans to train up to 400 apprentices annually, once the necessary building of accommodation facilities was completed. The project could not be carried out when the GDR ceased to exist.

In 1987, on the occasion of the ANC’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, an FDJ Friendship Brigade travelled to Tanzania to a camp of the South African liberation movement. The FDJ members were supposed to help to set up and operate a small concrete slab factory which was financed by donations from the GDR population. Furthermore, there was support for the building of accommodation for refugees and social services. Already in October 1988, the apprenticeships started for the young ANC members in exile to become joiners, builders, plumbers and electricians. In 1988 Tanzania requested assistance and a further FDJ brigade was sent out to Zanzibar to construct a training centre for vocational training. Another centre

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24 Cf. Zentralrat der FDJ 1988.

was planned on the mainland. Both facilities would have given the opportunity to learn the building trade.

### CHAPTER 3

#### 'Contract employees', a part of the GDR's development co-operation

##### Contract or foreign worker?<sup>1</sup>

Not long after the Fall of Socialism, in fact as early as 1990, journalists, concerned parties and a few academics started to deal with the GDR's 'Contract Worker Problem'. One cannot say that the GDR's population was not informed of the presence of the 'contract workers' as they were typically called in GDR language usage, for there were too many. GDR citizens had their own relationships with contract workers, spanning from sporadic racist attacks by GDR youths<sup>2</sup> to long-lasting friendships from old work relationships at the collectives. We need to emphasise that the 'Contract Worker' was not necessarily the main focus in the press. Above all, characteristically for the GDR, problems were not covered by the media. These included the difficulties foreigners faced when settling into the GDR, the makeshift accommodation (even though there would have been no other alternative in the *real existierende* GDR), the acceptance of African colleagues by the work collectives, the difficulties of getting used to norms and meeting the planned quotas by foreign work collectives, etc. It was unthinkable for academics to make this topic an object of analyses. Yet immediately after the fall of the Wall, several studies were published in the united Germany addressing the problem of foreigners living in East Germany. These publications consisted mostly of brochures and treatises about the employment of foreigners and the GDR's foreign policy, mainly recounting personal experiences and often with unsuitable generalisations – the rather subjective journalistic narrative of the time often did not render these personal accounts suitable for academic handling. We thus find journalistic comments characterised by a general denigrating of the history of the GDR and her foreign policy. One example of how unsubstantiated claims were perpetuated and spread is that it was frequently claimed that solidarity was decreed from above, without any popular support, as was supposedly internationalism. It was even claimed that the GDR government's activities with regard to co-operation with African, Middle

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- 1 Translators' note: The term *Fremdarbeiter* was part of the Nazi-terminology and denoted forced labour. In West Germany foreign workers were termed 'Gastarbeiter' (guest workers), in East Germany 'Vertragsarbeiter' (contract workers).
  - 2 Cf. for example Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU, Archiv der Zentralstelle, MfS – HA II, no. 27428, Bl. 73; BStU: MfS-Zentralarchiv, vol. 4574, Bl. 130f.



Eastern and Asian countries of socialist orientation contributed to the “inner rejection of the friendship forced [upon the people] from above.”<sup>3</sup>

The following observation is just as incorrect: “The hidden aversion of many GDR citizens toward the communist regime was automatically projected onto the peoples and countries which were supported by said communist regime, especially as they could not even get to know them personally.”<sup>4</sup>

The agreements between the GDR government and countries of the Third World on the planned dispatch of labour for the GDR economy were even called ‘slave-holder contracts’.<sup>5</sup> Particularly in the case of the last two accusations, the fact that these government agreements were bilateral was negated. The GDR did not force treaties upon the states of Angola and Mozambique in a colonial fashion; these agreements were wanted by both sides. However, the fact that the ‘recruiting’ of labour from African countries was never difficult proved that a job in the GDR was highly desired. So too did the fact that many workers tried to return to the GDR after the expiry of their contracts. It is not only stupid to call much wanted work opportunities ‘slave contracts’, but it is also unfair towards many people in the GDR who were involved in integrating these ‘new’ unskilled colleagues. Those GDR citizens took care of their ‘new’ colleagues who very often did not know much about modern technology and were thus unskilled; they also were ignorant of the language and culture of their host country and had often grown up in the country and hence were not used to European city life.<sup>6</sup> In reality, these agreements were both trying to bridge bottlenecks in productivity for the GDR economy and, especially in the first years, serving as an act of solidarity towards Angola and Mozambique, which had freed themselves from the Portuguese colonial power, as well as towards Vietnam, bombed and destroyed by the USA. Therefore, a large labour force was brought into the GDR.

A document by the FRG representative for matters concerning foreigners stated that in 1989 the majority of foreigners (91000) in the former GDR, second only to Soviet citizens

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3 Stach/Hussain 1993: 5. „zur inneren Ablehnung der von oben befohlenen Freundschaft“

4 Stach/Hussain 1993: 5. „Ganz mechanisch übertrug sich die verdeckte Abneigung vieler DDR-Bürger dem kommunistischen Regime gegenüber auf die von ihm unterstützten Völker und Länder, zumal sie diese nicht mal persönlich kennen lernen konnten.“

5 Elsner, E.M./Elsner L. 1992: 13.

6 Further accusations of wide-spread xenophobia, attempting to delegitimise the GDR, have been analysed by Elsner E.-M./Elsner L. 1994.

living there, were contract workers who had been brought into the GDR since the 1960s. These contract workers were initially recruited 'in the context of international solidarity' and later on – from about 1985/86 – due to the chronic labour shortages, the permanent loss of production and the shortfall of planned quotas. Since the 1970s the foreign workforce was recruited to the GDR on the basis of bilateral agreements for the qualification and securing of GDR labour needs.<sup>7</sup>

In the beginning, recruitment of contract workers was important in terms of strengthening the RGW and in terms of the qualification of contracted employees in the name of solidarity from Third World countries with socialist orientation. However, from the mid-1980s on, the negotiators of the dispatching countries had to accept increasingly less favourable conditions for the implementation of government agreements. The implementation of agreements was now more and more orientated toward the economic necessities of the GDR, while the countries of origin achieved partial debt relief, and were especially able to obtain free qualifications for the workforce, which would have not been possible in their home countries in this manner, and which furthermore relieved the local labour market.<sup>8</sup>

From 1985/86 on the qualifications of the African work force became increasingly less important in the negotiations. The new focus was the intensification of person-power replacement, as higher numbers of workers were required within the GDR, especially in the textile, chemical, energy and mining industries. For instance, from 1985 onwards, Vietnam had an explicit contract with the GDR which arranged for employment to be given priority rather than vocational training.<sup>9</sup> One important factor in this was that the employment of foreign labour was to compensate for the migration of said workers to the Federal Republic of Germany. However, the fact that most that production in the GDR was labour-intensive right up to her end certainly played a major role.

Whether economic reasons or reasons of solidarity were the prime motivation for the activities of the so-called contracted workers in the GDR depends thus mainly on the point of time we analyse. The important fact is that principles of solidarity were initially predominant; yet the nearer the GDR came to collapse, the more her economy needed labour; consequently

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7 Müggenburg 1996: 8.

8 For an updated appraisal of the Contract worker situation of the former GDR before and after the Fall of Socialism, see Marburger/Helbig/Kienast/Zorn 1993: 9f.

9 Stach/Hussain 1993: 11.

economic reasons dominated. In the meantime, contract workers from Asia and Africa had become indispensable in maintaining production, and, above all, in supplying the population with agricultural products and consumer goods.

Some of the GDR's reasons for the necessity to employ Africans and Asians, who were called guest workers by the West, shall be mentioned here, yet without further elaboration: Firstly, low labour productivity, which needed a high labour input. This was a striking problem, for the GDR leadership was not able to mobilise the workforce to a higher performance during the entire period of the second German state's existence. (Financial stimuli hardly existed considering the limited offer of goods; it goes without saying that coercive measures were clearly not an option for a proclaimed socialist society.) Second, the 'emigration' to the Federal Republic of Germany caused a continuous labour demand. Third, lack of or efficient modern technology required *per se* a more labour-intensive production process. While the abovementioned reasons form part of politics and economy, the focal point here shall remain the problem of the GDR population meeting 'strangers' from Asia and Africa. The employment of 'contract workers' in the GDR was generally passed off as an act of solidarity by the official propaganda.

Several detailed research reports on the employment of contract workers have been produced since the German unification almost two decades ago. These publications range from smaller documents with a distinctly critical approach, focussing on the operations by the Ministry for State Security (*MfS*) with regard to foreigners living in the GDR,<sup>10</sup> to serious analyses which make an effort to give balanced accounts of the problem, although contradictory at times.<sup>11</sup> A number of other publications deals more or less extensively or even in great detail with the problem of contract workers.

### Foreigners or socialist friends?

The largest portion of foreigners in the GDR consisted of soldiers of the Red Army, who, however, were housed in barracks and hardly had contact with the GDR population. Before the fall of the Wall, 360,000 to 380,000 soldiers of the Soviet military and approximately

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10 Feige 1999.

11 Rüchel 2001; Elsner, E.M./Elsner, L. 1992: 13.

200,000 of their relatives as well as 15,000 Soviet people not connected to the army were living in the state territory of the GDR.<sup>12</sup>

Even though there existed, in the absence of legal provisions, no right to asylum in the GDR, a number of asylumseekers were nonetheless staying in the country, certain groups of which have not yet become part of scientific interest or focus, e.g. the Arab emigrants.<sup>13</sup>

Student exchanges between young people from the Third World and GDR citizens were already taking place from the early 1950s, within a short space of time of the founding of the GDR. These first contacts between Africans and citizens of the GDR took place in a limited number of locations, mainly in university cities. However, where Africans studied, especially in Leipzig, there were opportunities for contact. More than 2,300 foreign students graduated from the University of Leipzig between 1951, when the first eleven Nigerians matriculated at the local *Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Fakultät (ABF)*, and 1984.<sup>14</sup> (Heilmann 1984: 814) Approximately 350 students from sixty-two developing countries studied for degrees over the years at the university's *Institut für tropische Landwirtschaftswissenschaften*,<sup>15</sup> which was phased out after the Fall of Socialism. There were also other shorter courses besides full university degrees. For example, in 1961, the year the Berlin Wall was built, 579 African students and 140 skilled workers from Africa – and only these are at the centre of research – took various courses, or received extended vocational training, at the Institute for Tropical Agriculture Sciences in Leipzig, or received extended vocational training.

In the course of the forty year history of the GDR, the number of Africans who had received their education in the GDR multiplied. There was hardly a faculty at a university or college in the GDR, where African students were not enrolled. Most of them returned back home after their training, and, because of their solid training, usually found a job. Some also used the training in order then to find a job in the West. No reliable data is however available on this.

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12 Trommer 1992: 1; 8.

13 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: SED, IV 2/20/51.

14 Faculty of Worker and Farmers

15 Institute for Tropical Agriculture Sciences

To date, there is, except for the one source cited and the listed statistics no complete overview of the students from the countries and the liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America who studied in the GDR during the course of her existence.<sup>16</sup>

From the mid-1960s on not only were there study places on offer, but also increased employment of foreign labour in industry and agriculture. These were not individually motivated labour migrants, but it was a controlled labour exchange within socialist countries. The reason for this was the attempt of a mutual understanding in economic and social terms of the ‘brother countries’.<sup>17</sup> Exact numbers of temporary foreign citizens during the 40-year-long existence of the GDR are unfortunately unavailable. Various sources mostly supply different figures. The following explanations will try to respond to these different figures.

‘Thanks’ to the *MfS*, a relatively accurate overview exists from the end of the GDR, which shows the number of foreign citizens residing in the GDR. However, this only represents a snap shot. On 17 January 1987, a total of 139,562 foreigners were permanent or long-term residents of the GDR. Reasons for residing there of 124,016 people were recorded as follows:

**Table 19: Reasons for Foreigners Residing in the GDR, 1987<sup>18</sup>**

60,812	Employment
28,450	Reuniting families
23,203	Apprenticeships
10,898	Study
653	Asylum-seeking

In 1977, due to state agreements, 50,000 people worked and resided in the GDR. They mainly originated from RGW countries, particularly from Vietnam.<sup>19</sup> Besides a few thousand refugees from Chile (since 1973), from the liberation organisations SWAPO and the ANC from Southern Africa, as well as from the PLO from Palestine, thousands more citizens from

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16 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Bestand MfAA, Berlin: Foreign Office 1961, MfAA, A 14353:65f.

17 i.e. socialist allied countries (translator’s note). Marburger/Helbig/Kienast/Zorn 1993: 9f.

18 The terminology was adopted from the MfS. Cf. BStU: Archiv der Zentralstelle, MfS – HA II, no. 27428: 6.

19 Stach/Hussain 1993: 5.

developing countries were living there. Since the end of the 1970s an additional 18,000 Algerians had lived in the GDR and in the 1980s a few hundred citizens from North Korea, Libya and Iraq, as well as 1,000 Chinese. The number of foreign citizens working in the GDR and thus contributing to her economy grew continuously. On January 1, 1985, approximately 85,000 foreign citizens worked in the GDR.<sup>20</sup> The majority were employed in terms of the following agreements:

**Table 20: Agreements governing employment of foreign citizens in the GDR, 1985**

Type of Agreement	Approximate number
Government agreements	29,000
Commuting agreements	4,000
Building and construction agreements	21,000
Agreements on vocational training	4,200
Permanent residence permits	16,200

On the basis of *government agreements*, citizens from Poland, Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique and Algeria were then in the GDR. *Commuting agreements* were set up only with Poland. The *MfS* registered Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, the ČSSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Austria, Sweden and Japan as delegated countries for *Building and Construction agreements*. Countries falling under the category of *Agreements on vocational training* were Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen, Syria and Mongolia.

By 1987, the number of foreigners living in the GDR had increased to 95,400.<sup>21</sup> 7,800 Mozambicans and 440 Angolans came from Africa. In total the number of foreign employees who were middle or long-term residents rose by 10,000. The GDR worked on the assumption that sojourns were up to ten years long. The quoted *MfS* document speaks openly about the sojourns of foreigners not being acts of solidarity any more, but employment driven by demands of the national economy. It says literally: “Due to the demographic developments of

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20 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU MfS-HA II, no. 29526: „Informationsmaterial“, Bl. 20ff.

21 BStU MfS-HA II, no. 29526: „Jahreseinschätzung zur politisch-operativen Lage unter den ausländischen Werktätigen in der DDR“, Bl. 65ff.

the GDR population and the economic targets of our country these employees are a firm component of the social working capacity.”<sup>22</sup>

The *State secretariat for employment and wages*<sup>23</sup> was in charge of the ‘central registration’ of foreign workers which presumably included the co-ordination of placements. It kept a *foreign workers’ data storage*.<sup>24</sup> According to information issued by the GDR’s Department of Home Affairs, 192000 foreigners lived in the GDR at the end of 1989, at the time of the fall of the Wall, which was 1.2% of the total population.<sup>25</sup>

Table 21: Percentage of foreigners in the GDR in 1989, categorised by country of origin<sup>26</sup>

Nationality	per 1,000	percentage
Vietnam	60.1	31.4
Poland	51.7	27.1
Mozambique	15.5	8.1
Soviet Union	14.9	7.8
Hungary	13.4	7.0
Cuba	8.0	4.2
Bulgaria	4.9	2.6
Czechoslovakia	3.2	1.7
Yugoslavia	2.1	1.1
Angola	1.4	0.7
Total number of foreigners	191.2	100.0

There is also an official statistic by the GDR’s Department of Home Affairs supplying information on the numbers of foreigners not recorded in this table. These are about 1,000 Romanians as well as several hundred Mongolians, Chinese and North Koreans.<sup>27</sup> Due to

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22 BStU: MfS-HA II, no. 29526: „Jahreseinschätzung zur politisch-operativen Lage unter den ausländischen Werkträgern in der DDR“, Bl. 67. „Auf Grund der demografischen Entwicklung der DDR-Bevölkerung und der ökonomischen Zielstellungen unseres Landes bilden diese Werkträgern schon seit Jahren einen festen Bestandteil des gesellschaftlichen Arbeitsvermögens.“

23 „Staatsekretariat für Arbeit und Löhne“

24 BStU: MfS-HA II, no. 29526: „Informationsmaterial“, Bl. 20. „Datenspeicher Ausländische Arbeitskräfte“

25 Müggenburg 1996: 7.

26 Source: According to Stach/Hussain 1993: 6.

27 Klaus 1995: 223.

marriages with GDR citizens, 40,000 foreigners were living in the GDR, as well as 10,000 to 13,000 foreign students from numerous countries.

Foreigners lived in various cities of the GDR, but higher concentrations occurred in the industrial GDR districts of Berlin (1.6%), Cottbus (1.5%), Karl-Marx-Stadt [Chemnitz] (1.5%) and Leipzig (1.5%). Few foreign employees lived in more rural districts of the GDR like Potsdam (0.8%), Suhl (0.7%), Schwerin (0.5%) and Neubrandenburg (0.4%). The highest concentration in terms of cities was in Karl-Marx-Stadt [Chemnitz], Dresden, Halle, Leipzig, Erfurt and Berlin – here particularly concentrated in the newly-developed residential areas such as Marzahn and Hohenschönhausen.

There were government agreements with those countries with which the GDR cultivated friendly relations which included the employment of workers in the GDR. Hence there were corresponding agreements with Poland (1965/1971),<sup>28</sup> Hungary (1967/1973), Algeria (1974/1976), Cuba (1975/1978), Mozambique (1979), Vietnam (1973/1980), Mongolia (1982), Angola (1985), as well as China (1986). Additionally there were agreements at ministry level with China, Bulgaria and North Korea. Furthermore, foreign trade treaties were concluded with businesses of foreign states which had planned to employ so-called contract workers. Thus the majority of the 52,000 Poles who were staying in the GDR at the beginning of 1990, arrived as cross-border commuters in East Germany.<sup>29</sup> While contract workers were recruited collectively, work commuters – recruited through representatives of GDR companies – came mostly through individual work contracts into the GDR.<sup>30</sup>

With an increasingly perceived stagnation and the growing trend of decline within the GDR's economy, as well as an increase in emigration to the West by many GDR citizens, the SED leadership's interest grew stronger in foreign labour in order to secure the demand for goods. For instance, one (unconfirmed) accusation against GDR policy regarding foreigners runs that in the years 1987 and 1988 alone almost 50,000 new contracted workers were employed at GDR companies without any consideration for their social integration.<sup>31</sup>

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28 Röhr 2002: 211ff.

29 Schmalz-Jacobsen/Hinte/Tsapanos 1993: 81.

30 Stoll 1994: 1.

31 Stach/Hussain 1993: 11.



From 1985/86 on, at the latest, the employment of foreigners in the GDR for the purpose of covering the labour needs clearly had an increasingly negative impact on the contract workers from African countries. The former claim of solidarity was more and more sacrificed for the sake of the economy. Yet the GDR continued offering foreign contracted workers qualifications free of charge despite the parlous economical state, as 15% of them were as a rule apprentices, who according to the international agreements received vocational training. Nevertheless, differences remained between foreign employees, who were entitled to receive a qualification whilst working their company job (mainly the contract workers from Africa), and those who came to the GDR just as ‘guest workers’.<sup>32</sup>

The Africans who were helped by the GDR in one form or another expressed their gratitude after the demise of this country. This usually happened during oral conversations and not in personal writing – in as much as these expressions were recorded and accessible; they have been cited in this thesis. Magazines and some collective anthologies of African exiles, contract workers or trainees contain recollections about their life in the GDR. These statements about the GDR can, however, be found only very rarely in the relevant research literature, because they do not fit into the mainstream view of the history of the GDR. The literature contains almost exclusively negative views about the everyday life of foreigners and especially that of African contract workers in the GDR. Hence the allegation that the GDR had employed foreign workers only to ensure proper supply and upkeep of her own people instead of, as agreed upon, giving the former an education features prominently.<sup>33</sup> This contrasts with the statement made by “interested parties”, one of whom was João Saba: “Our training was excellent. The master craftsmen taught us everything from craftsmanship to working with small and large electronic machines. There we were in direct working contact with German colleagues, who trained us and passed on their knowledge in every aspect, be it in groups or individually.”<sup>34</sup> How unfounded these allegations about alleged breaches of contract by the GDR really are, are demonstrated by the fact, that a total of more than 78,000 persons from Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola and Cuba, who came to the GDR as contract

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32 Behrends/Lindenberger/ Poutrus.

33 Cf. Gruner-Dominic 1999: 215ff.

34 Saba, 2005: 129.

workers on the basis of intergovernmental agreements, received a vocational qualification in her factories and cooperatives until early 1989.<sup>35</sup>

A common criticism placed at the door of the GDR with reference to the contract workers refers to the fact that foreign workers were allegedly not integrated into the political, social or cultural life of German society. Of course this was the case. Such an assertion is, however, almost too sweeping and negates the fact that manifold efforts to develop and maintain friendly relations with the foreign contract workers were made by their German colleagues and supervisors. The contract workers themselves also often went out of their way to develop relationships with their German fellows. A study commissioned by a West German government ministry before the end of 1990 showed that 77 percent of foreigners in the GDR maintained contact with Germans and their families; about a quarter of foreigners spent their time mostly with Germans.<sup>36</sup> This is confirmed in an interview with a Mozambican who has lived with a German woman for years. He recalled: "During the training period we had contact with the people ... The training was provided for about four years." On the question of the relationship with German colleagues he replied: "There were personal contacts and visits. In the early years families agreed to take in Mozambicans."<sup>37</sup>

The assessment of Assa Mondlane, a Mozambican contract worker, is, however, not so clear. On the one hand, she thinks that outside the workplace no "authentic solidarity" could be experienced, on the other hand, she reports that German families "took us in like their own children".<sup>38</sup>

How undifferentiated and inaccurate statements that suggest that there had been no social contacts between African contract workers and the East German population often are, is best shown by the descriptions of affected Mozambicans: "We had a football team ... A German coached us ... At brigade celebrations, we were fully included. 'You work with us, so you can join in everything', was said. And we have been through a lot. We did not feel excluded, have noticed no differences."<sup>39</sup> A Mozambican woman is quoted as saying the

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35 Cf. Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-HA XVIII, no. 12071: 8.

36 Cf. Elsner 1994:37.

37 Hopfman 1992: 39.

38 Reimer, 2004: 21.

39 Hopfman 1992: 40.

following after the collapse of the Wall: “At work, there were good relations with colleagues. They showed us anything. Even after work, there were contacts. Some colleagues invited us home or we went for a walk together.”<sup>40</sup> Of course, circumstances similar to what the writer Landolf Scherzer was told by a Mozambican worker also existed: “But after work we turned to the left to our dormitories and the German workers of our ‘socialist collective’ turned to the right to their homes.”<sup>41</sup> How could it be otherwise? In an essay about former contract workers, the female interviewer says realistically: “Some of them had contacts with German families, others did not.”<sup>42</sup>) Another former contract worker and his German wife experienced solidarity in the GDR as “a sense of solidarity - that really existed among people. It was for real, I think.” And his wife added: “It was spontaneous, it was not prescribed. The people donated clothes, because they knew that Mozambican families were suffering heavily. If someone was travelling home, (s)he received a lot of things from his/her colleagues.”<sup>43</sup>

It is often claimed in current literature that Africans were subjected to racist sentiments in the GDR. Such generally false claims were refuted by Africans themselves: “In the GDR, every fight was for a logical reason: sometimes too much alcohol, sometimes quarrel over a girl. There was always a reason. But nowadays you walk peacefully through the city and suddenly there appear a few characters who you don’t know and that don’t know you either, with whom you neither drank beer nor quarreled over a girl, they come and beat you up for no reason whatsoever.”<sup>44</sup> Another African confirms the experience: “It was certainly the case that I could be out on the streets at night (in the GDR - UvdH) at one o’clock without a trace of fear. Today it is not possible for me to do this.”<sup>45</sup> The predominantly positive memories of the GDR held by people of the Third World are recorded in an anthology published in 2010.<sup>46</sup>

The solidarity that Africans, especially from the south of the continent, enjoyed in the GDR as well as courtesy of the GDR is not forgotten. This is confirmed especially by personal conversations. Thus, the first freely elected president of South Africa, Nelson

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40 Engelhard 1993: 48.

41 Scherzer 2002: 31.

42 Herman 2009: 20.

43 Hopfman 1992: 41.

44 Scherzer/Schmidt 2011: 114f.

45 Seraje 2012: 109.

46 Kunze/Vogel, 2010.

Mandela, said to a GDR official responsible for solidarity work: “The solidarity shown by the people of the GDR for the South African people we will never forget.”<sup>47</sup> During a private visit to South Africa in the 1990s by the former East German spymaster Markus Wolf Mandela also expressed his gratitude.<sup>48</sup>

Even though it was directed by the state the solidarity of the GDR with the liberation movements in southern Africa was viewed as an integral part of international solidarity with those liberation movements fighting for their independence and for the elimination of apartheid.<sup>49</sup>

And the former East German diplomat Hans-Georg Schleicher ascertained during his numerous trips to southern Africa after the fall of the Wall: “African partners still hold East German specialists in high regard. Many of them are remembered as honest persons, as capable and dedicated professionals.”<sup>50</sup>

As recently as March 2010 the Namibian Ambassador to Germany, Ambassador Neville Gertze, is quoted in an interview: “Many personal ties exist because of the past solidarity especially in East Germany with Namibia’s struggle for independence... We can never repay this solidarity ... I would like to express our deep gratitude for the past support for SWAPO and the liberation of Namibia.”<sup>51</sup>

### The legal status of foreigners in the GDR

In order to be able to analyse the situation of the foreigners staying in the GDR, it is necessary to look into the legal status of foreigners living in the GDR. The GDR Foreigners’ Act of 28 June, 1979, differentiated between three types of residence status, though this short legal text gives little information on the associated rights and duties, and we have to take into account that its terminology differs considerably from West German terminology.<sup>52</sup> Firstly, the most

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47 Quoted in Reichardt 2006: 79.

48 Cf. Grossmann 2009: 9.

49 Cf. Schleicher, 2008.

50 Schleicher 2010: 49.

51 Gertze, Neville: „Deutschland ist ein aktiver Partner. Namibias Botschafter Neville Gertze über das Verhältnis zur einstigen Kolonialmacht“, in: *Neues Deutschland*, 20./21. March 2010.

52 Müggenburg 1996: 8.

secure residence status was the residence permit for an unlimited stay and permanent residence in the GDR.<sup>53</sup> However, all other residence permits had to apply for yearly extensions: this applied to long-term temporary residence as well for short-term stays for business, private or tourist reasons.

In the year of the German unification approximately 18,000 men, 17,000 women and 7,000 children lived in the GDR on permanent residence permits, according to the office of the GDR commissioner for foreign affairs. 11,000 of these were Soviet citizens, 11,000 Poles and 9000 Hungarians, most of them being foreigners with East German spouses.<sup>54</sup> A further 111,000 male and 35,000 female foreign employees, apprentices and students as well as foreign scientists, teachers and artists, and 2,000 foreign children were residence permit holders in the GDR.<sup>55</sup>

In order to meet the requirements to obtain a residence permit, the foreign applicant had to be employed, receive a secure income and have a home at his/her disposal. The decision for granting permanent residence in the GDR had to be made within three months by the local public authorities. Residence permits could be limited regarding region and duration, denied, withdrawn or declared invalid, a deportation was possible at any time, and explicitly no reason was necessary for the decision made by the GDR's Department of Home Affairs or from the division Passport and Registration Affairs of the *German People's Police*<sup>56</sup>.

Approximately 90,000 contract employees as well as 50,000 employees of foreign businesses on GDR territory, 29,000 foreign apprentices, 10,000 foreign students, 2,000 refugees, approximately 500 mobilised workers and 300 pupils lived in the GDR shortly before the German unification with permanent or long-term residence permits. Of these, 43,000 persons had their permanent residence in the former GDR. Hungarian contract workers with German spouses were allowed to apply for a permanent residence permit on grounds of 'the interest of a joint residence'.<sup>57</sup>

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53 *Gesetzblatt der DDR*, 1979, Teil 1, no. 17 from 2 July 1979.

54 Schmidt 1992: 19.

55 Trommer 1992: 10.

56 Cf. Trommer 1992: 4f. „Deutsche Volkspolizei“ (VP)

57 Müggenburg 1996: 9.

The training of mostly young people of qualified skilled workers was one of the main foci of the developmental commitment of the GDR. Almost half of the monetary donations given in the name of solidarity by the GDR population was spent on vocational and extended training of citizens of developing countries and national liberation movements, such as the PLO, the Namibian SWAPO and the South African ANC.<sup>58</sup> At least in part, one also has to count the costs of the so-called foreigners' degrees in the GDR. Between 1970 and 1983 a total of 54,000 youths received vocational training at various companies in the GDR, coming from Kenya, Angola, Mozambique, Algeria, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Syria, Laos and Cambodia.<sup>59</sup>

Contract workers from Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique, Angola and Poland received, according to agreements, a temporary residence permit, which they did not have to try to obtain themselves, as the GDR Foreigners Act explicitly allowed the issuing of residence permits on reasons of vocational training. As this Act was not particularly extensive, the agreements between governments represented the factual basis for residence. The residence permit expired when exiting the GDR. The Vietnamese and Mongolians needed permission from their embassies if they travelled to third countries. Mozambicans and Angolans were forbidden from travelling by the international agreements.

The duration of residence for contract employees varied from case to case. Mongolians received one to two years, Hungarians two to three years (with the option of extension), Poles three years (with the option of an extension up to one year), Chinese two to four years. The duration of residence was limited to four years for Cubans, Mozambicans and Angolans and initially also for Vietnamese. Cubans could obtain an extension of their residence permit by two years, to six years. The duration of residency for the Vietnamese was normally extended to five years on March 19, 1987, and through protocols from November 13, 1985, and September 04, 1986, the maximum duration for 'highly qualified workers', without whom the GDR authorities could not do, had already been extended to seven years.<sup>60</sup> Twenty percent of the "Mozambican workers with the best performance and requirements to

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58 Reichardt 1985: 949.

59 Broszinsky-Schwabe 1990: 19.

60 Cf. Broszinsky-Schwabe 1990: 19.

qualify”<sup>61</sup>, though, were allowed to stay for a further one to five years in the GDR. From 1988 the duration of residency was extended to a maximum of ten years.<sup>62</sup>

Contract employees had no automatic right to permanently reside in the GDR, instead they had to leave the country after the termination of their contract and return to their home countries. Yet, the “duration of the employment according to plan [...] for further qualification could be extended”<sup>63</sup>, which mitigated the rigorous temporary limitation; at least Hungarian and Cuban contract employees were able to obtain the approval for a permanent residence permit subject to agreements.<sup>64</sup>

A premature ending of the work contract, and consequently the stay, was possible for the Vietnamese, Hungarians, Cubans, Poles, Mozambicans, Angolans and Chinese, if both states would agree. In case of unlawful behaviour in the host country, or if an employee blatantly violated the socialist work ethic or consistently did not fulfil work norms, they faced deportation back to their home country. For the Chinese, unsuitability due to health reasons would already constitute a reason; the work permit would be cancelled prematurely for Vietnamese, Cubans, Mozambicans and Angolans if their ability to work could not be restored after an illness or an accident, “in the foreseeable future”<sup>65</sup> usually after three months.<sup>66</sup> Yet, the occasional deportation, the ending of contracts and similar other reasons did not prevent young people, especially in Mozambique, from fighting for a job in the GDR. Mozambican authorities asked the GDR regularly if more workers could not go to the GDR. The officials of the *MfS* took notice and explained to their minister in 1988 that:

The People’s Republic of Mozambique is explaining its increasing interest to send Mozambican labour force to the GDR with the complicated local economic situation.<sup>67</sup>

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61 „mocambiquanischen Werktätigen mit den besten Leistungen und Qualifizierungs-Voraussetzungen“

62 For an subjective point of view of Mozambicans concerned, see Scherzer 2002.

63 „Dauer der planmäßigen Beschäftigung [...] konnte] zur weiteren Qualifizierung verlängert werden“

64 Cf. Müggenburg 1996: 9.

65 „in absehbarer Zeit“

66 Cf. Müggenburg 1996: 10.

67 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-HA II, no. 4574: 128. „Die Volksrepublik Mocambique begründet das steigende Interesse am Einsatz von mocambiquischen Werktätigen in der DDR mit der komplizierten ökonomischen Situation im eigenen Land.“

A further reason for cancelling a contract with employees from Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique and Angola could be that the employer did not keep to the contract and that transferring the employee to another business failed. Further reasons to cancel a contract with Hungarians were offences against, “norms of behaviour in the community and public”<sup>68</sup> and for Mongolians offences of discipline or simply for “important reasons”<sup>69</sup>. In the year 1989, for example, 774 contract employees had to return home early for the listed reasons.<sup>70</sup> If foreign employees resisted deportation, the company had to inform the local police station in due time and after having made every attempt to resolve the situation, so that ‘supportive’ measures could be taken to ensure a timely exiting of the GDR.

**Table 22: Areas of employment of foreign workers on the basis of government agreements as of December 31, 1989<sup>71</sup>**

<b>Industry sector</b>	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Angola</b>
Heavy industry	5,255	1,932	451
Mechanical engineering	5,216	2,318	681
Light industry	2,513	1,060	78
Transport	541	34	21
Construction	770	51	
Agricultural, forestry and food goods	816	611	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,111</b>	<b>6,006</b>	<b>1,314</b>

In conclusion, one can see that for most of the ‘contract employees’ there was no social integration.<sup>72</sup> Many of them nevertheless created the basis for extended education or further employment in the united Germany after having trained in a skilled profession or having been employed. Those people who returned to their home country had acquired a higher social status than their contemporaries who had stayed home. To what extent they managed to maintain or expand this higher social status is a different matter. However, no Mozambican worked like forced labour in the GDR, as was claimed again in 2004.<sup>73</sup>

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68 „Verhaltensnormen in der Gemeinschaft und in der Öffentlichkeit“

69 Cf. Muggenburg 1996. „wichtige Gründe“

70 Trommer 1992.

71 Source: Elsner, E.-M./Elsner, L. 1994.

72 Paul 1999: 59ff.

73 Melchers 2004: 9.



Although a number of publications that have concerned themselves in one way or another with the question of foreigners in the GDR society have appeared in the more than two decades since German unification, just about all of them portray attitudes in the GDR as negative despite statements to the contrary by those involved, and contain sweeping and generalized claims as was the case recently in an anthology<sup>74</sup> which, given their absolute form, cannot be regarded as truthful or even serious depictions. By consistently ignoring the relevant sources in the archives these publications increasingly gain the status of being an attempt at indoctrination in the interest of the current commonly held view of history.<sup>75</sup>

### Foreign students and their degrees

The so-called foreigners' degrees started in the GDR at the Workers and Farmers Faculty (*ABF*) at the University of Leipzig in 1951.<sup>76</sup> Apart from 102 students from North Korea, eleven Nigerians qualified at an *ABF* as preparation to study further at a university in the GDR. With the development of the higher education in the GDR, the expansion of international relations as well as the creation of young nation states, foreign student numbers rose. Interviews with contemporary witnesses, in particular with the instructors in charge, as well as then active academics, allow for the conclusion that regarding the states of Asia, Africa and Latin America, solidarity was the deciding factor for training specialists for the state, the economy and the development of higher education. The protagonists of that time thought it very important that this was seen as a basic premise by all participants, besides the acquisition of foreign currency for the sending country on the basis of commercial contracts since the 1980s.

In addition to the students especially young skilled workers were given the opportunity to obtain technical vocational training in the GDR on the basis of intergovernmental agreements, and offers of assistance to liberation movements since the end of the 1950's.<sup>77</sup>

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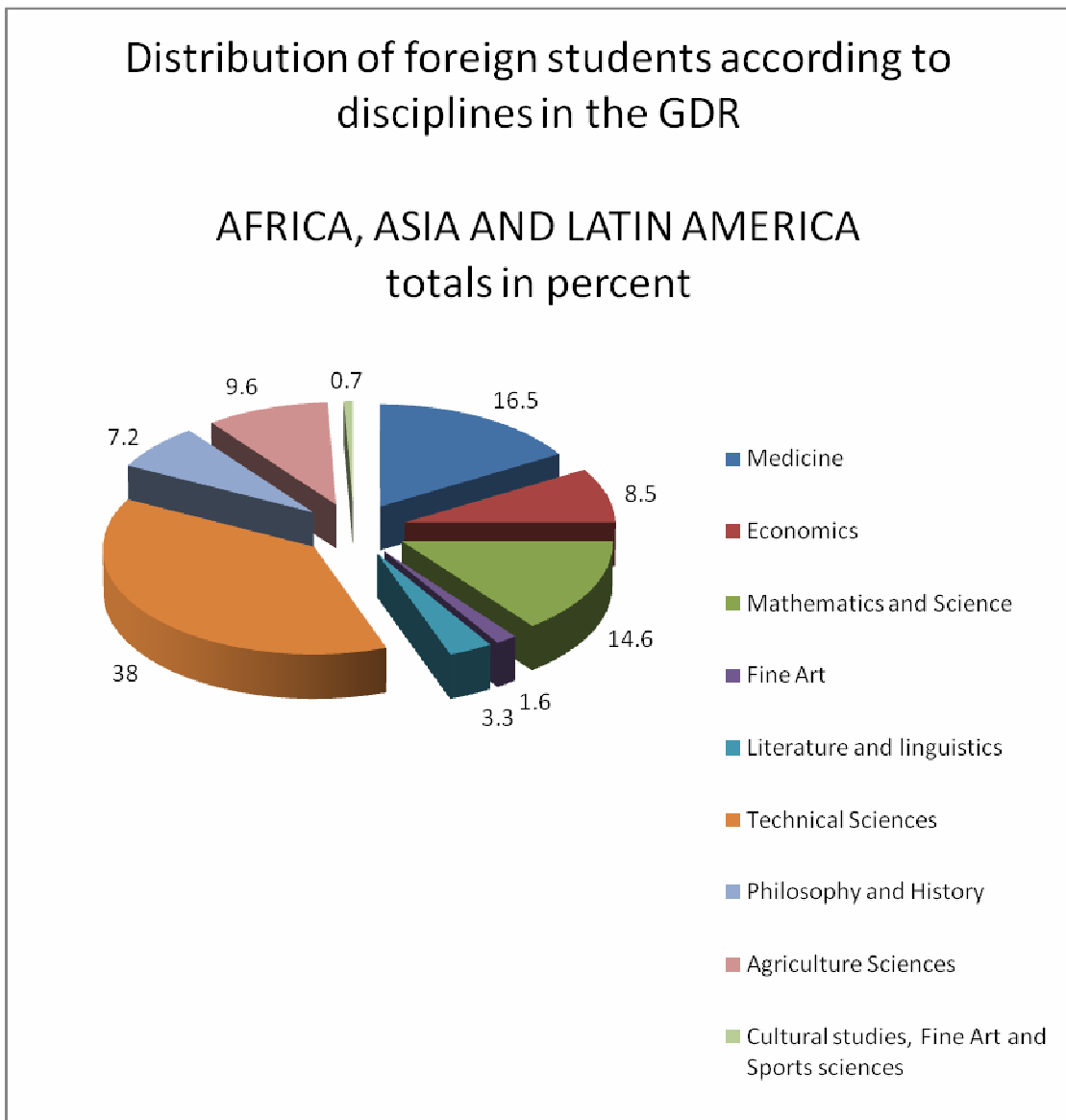
74 Zwengel 2011.

75 Van der Heyden, 2013.

76 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: DR 3, 1322; Köhler/Kraus/Methfessel 1976: 13.

77 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: SED IV, 2/20/57.

**Table 23: Distribution of students from Asia, Africa and Latin-America, according to disciplines, in percent, as of 30 December 1988<sup>78</sup>**

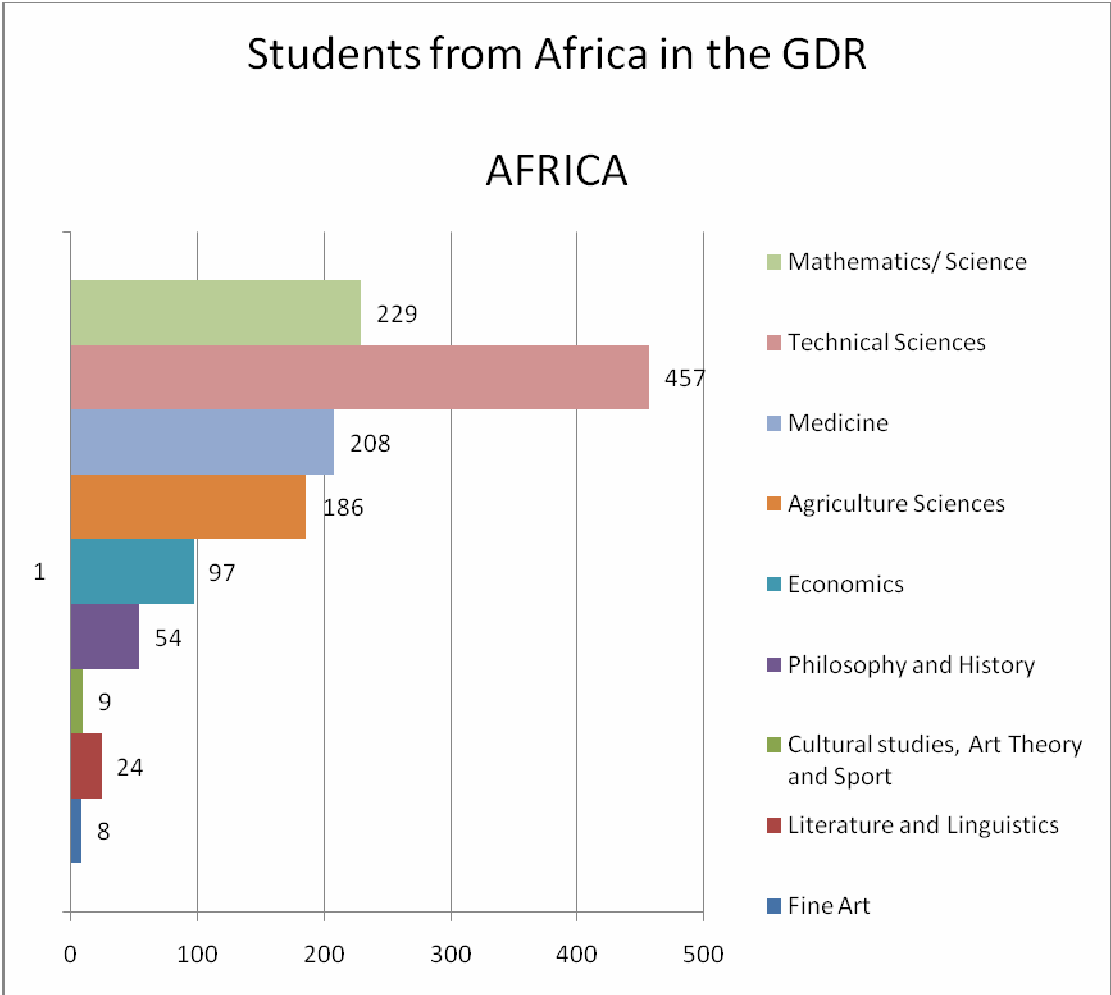


The number of foreign students for all degrees in the GDR increased rapidly in the following years. In 1970 there were just fewer than 5,000 students; by 1987 already 12,400 from 130 countries came every year to the GDR for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Out of these approximately 12,400 foreign citizens, more or less 3,500 students from Asia, Africa

78 Source: Heilmann 1990: 804.

and Latin America were at universities and colleges in the GDR.<sup>79</sup> On 30 December 1988, African students were enrolled in the following academic disciplines:

**Table 24: Students from Africa in the GDR, 1988<sup>80</sup>**



Examining the social background of students from Asian, African and Latin American countries one can see a reflection of the socioeconomic and political circumstances of their countries of origin. However, there are various models of social stratification – bourgeois as well as Marxist. In order to make the social background more transparent, I had to resort to the operational category of “father’s occupation”. But even then the classification does not

79 Heilmann 1984: 798.

80 Source: own calculations according to Heilmann 1990: 800.

become clear, as the job designation “farmer” implies a host of meanings – the spectrum ranges from subsistence farmer to plantation owner and thus reflects great differences in social and ownership relations. A report by the Ministry for Universities and Technical Colleges – which was compiled during the GDR era and published only after the Fall of Socialism – suggests, however, that reliable statements can be made.<sup>81</sup>

Members of the “upper classes” were explicitly excluded in this report. The authors of the statistics were of the opinion that, apart from that, all main social groups appeared to be represented, and that generally a great portion of students seemed to have been from the middle class, and above all from the intelligentsia (teachers, medical doctors, academics, among others) and the higher-ranking employees (officials, government officials, members of the military and police). Farmers were comparatively well represented, while workers and especially self-employed craftsmen and traders were not mentioned as often.

The low degree of urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa is thus reflected in much the same way as evidenced by the strong representation of higher ranking employees and farmers who had sent their sons and daughters to the GDR. Members of the intelligentsia and the working class mainly originated from Latin America, and children from farmers and the intelligentsia came predominantly from Asian states.

For the analysis of the social background of students, one needs to acknowledge the relative importance of studies abroad in general and studies in a socialist state in particular in the various countries. There is no doubt that many young people who received training in the GDR would have preferred to study in a West European country or the United States, yet could not do so due to a lack of opportunities, and therefore set out to study in a socialist state. However, there were young people who consciously chose their study location.

In the 1980s the GDR increasingly offered study places for young people from third world countries, who had to finance their studies themselves. Of course this applied only to those students whose parents were rich and whose governments could pay for their education. Firstly, there were students from Libya and probably from Iran, who had to pay for their studies in the GDR. Much better conditions were created in the hostels for these students than

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81 Heilmann 1984: 800.

were available to the other students. Even prayer rooms were reserved for Muslim students in the hostels that generally were fully booked.

Since 1986, the Government of Cameroon sent several groups of students to study natural sciences and medicine in the GDR. The study costs and scholarships were borne by the Cameroon government. The local political leaders appreciated the training in the GDR in comparison to that in the Federal Republic because it was regarded as well-organized and consisted of shorter periods of study.<sup>82</sup>

What were the reasons for studying in the GDR? High study fees and living costs in the capitalist countries were the main reasons favouring a cost effective education in the GDR. Yet, a degree obtained in East Germany was also considered a status symbol in countries of the Third World. A certain “bond” with the GDR, either due to a political involvement of the young persons or their parents, or due to the political alignment of the country of origin or of the sending organisation was a reason to study in the GDR where studies did not cost anything, where the accommodation was almost free and where scholarships did not need to be repaid.

A special and extended focus on the problems of educating African students in the GDR is beyond the scope of this investigation, especially as no prior work has been done in this area. Future research should focus not only on the Herder Institute in Leipzig, where foreign students were familiarized with the German language, but what has to be done – and this has not happened yet – is for the archives of universities and colleges as well as those research institutes not forming part of universities to be evaluated.

To perform such a task, even if only in respect to students from Africa, is a daunting challenge not to be taken up at this point.

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82 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch DR 3.2 Sch./4038; Schmelz 2005: 85; Naumann 2008

## CHAPTER 4 Military and security co-operation in the name of solidarity?

The spectrum of GDR security interests in Africa – and thus her military and security involvement – was widely discussed after the fall of socialism. This led in part to absurd assumptions and speculations, which have persisted up to the present. These included unproven claims of the MfS's involvement in the “the development of a state security service based on the Soviet model”<sup>1</sup> in several African countries, or claims that the GDR was running an “Africa Corps”,<sup>2</sup> speculations that the GDR had assisted in extensive military aid to African regimes,<sup>3</sup> as well as the statement that the GDR had taken on the role of a Soviet representative in the field of military and security co-operation policies in African states.<sup>4</sup> A proper horror story was published in 1979 in the daily newspaper *Die Welt* where Jürgen Todenhöfer, the spokesperson for development policy of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group within the *Deutsche Bundestag*<sup>5</sup>, claimed that the GDR had stationed approximately 5,000 to 7,000 military experts in eight African states, used within the police, the military as well as prisons, criminal camps and communications.<sup>6</sup>

Above all, the German military historian Klaus Storkman after using extensive research evidence for his thesis and writing an essay pointed out explicitly, that there were no “foreign assignments” of the East German army, neither in Africa, nor in other regions of the world. Only a few consultants and air transport and aviation crews and security personnel working countries particularly closely associated with the GDR such as Ethiopia and Mozambique, ever set foot on African soil.<sup>7</sup>

Since the late 1960s Western journalists have been viewing this differently, and with their facts have further fueled the exaggerated depiction of the Cold War.

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1 „Aufbau eines Staatssicherheitsdienstes sowjetischen Modells“

2 Cf. Post/Sandvoss 1983: 53ff.

3 Cf. Croan 1981: 15ff.

4 Cf. for example, Childs 1983: 296ff; Breyer 1979.

5 Translator's note: Lower House of the German Parliament.

6 Todenhöfer: „5000 Experten aus Ost-Berlin in Afrika“, in: *Die Welt*, 5 November 1979, Bonn. A detailed example of the distortion of GDR history through the portrayal of MfS staff in Ethiopia is provided as an appendix to this thesis.

7 Storkman 2010: 259ff.

In politics, academe and journalism of the West there were claims that the GDR had set up massive military support for the ‘terrorist’ ANC<sup>8</sup> and maintained ‘fighting units’ in Africa’s areas of conflict.<sup>9</sup> After the fall of socialism, the absurd allegation was made that members of the Stasi had been hiding in the African bush and would continue their support of African freedom movements independently of the developments in Germany.<sup>10</sup> Since the beginning of 2006, the claim flitted around German newspapers that the GDR had supported the so-called Red Terror in Ethiopia by sending out torture specialists. This claim in a novel was treated as fact by quite a number of journalists despite the total lack of evidence. It is continues to be spread after 15 years of German Unity.<sup>11</sup> While one tries to make sense of all this nonsense, the interested reader will remember the quote:

That everything turned out the way it did was due to the dubious merit of the media. They had a real go at the MfS. Small wonder: this was a place and concept for which it was easiest to devise headlines which made people of the East and West shudder. No disclosure was too pathetic to offer it up to the outraged public. It ranged from some dead in Leipzig, for whom the MfS was naturally blamed, and who then turned out to be victims of the 1813 Battle of the Nations. Prisoners were apparently shot at with cobalt bombs, after which they fell ill with cancer or died with tumours. It did not end with linking the Stasi team to the disappearance of trustee millions, which were flagrantly put into the pockets of honourable crooks from the West.<sup>12</sup>

Today, the GDR’s military support for freedom organisations in Africa, including the at-the-time never publicly discussed question of arms supplies to African countries, is often viewed in a negative light. Despite the fact that there may be some validity to these criticisms,<sup>13</sup> accusations from West German politicians and journalists often appear to be hypocritical. The boundaries between reality and slander, or rather, exaggeration, were often blurred, such as in

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8 Cf. for example Löwis von Menar 1987.

9 Cf. Krech 2000: 300ff; Coker 1980: 233.

10 Cf. Wysacki, Cordula: „Stasi-Mitarbeiter im afrikanischen Busch versteckt“, in: *Bonner Rundschau*, 19 March 1991, Bonn.

11 Cf. Schmid 2006.

12 Wagner 2001. „Das alles so lief, wie es gelaufen ist, war nicht zuletzt das zweifelhafte Verdienst der Medien. Sie hatten sich auf das MfS eingeschossen. Kein Wunder: Hier waren am leichtesten Schlagzeilen zu (er)finden, die die Menschen in Ost und West schauern machten. Keine Enthüllung war zu albern, um sie nicht dem entsetzten Publikum anzubieten. Das reichte von Toten bei Leipzig, die natürlich dem MfS zugeschrieben wurden, sich dann aber als Opfer der Völkerschlacht von 1813 herausstellten. Häftlinge sollten mit Kobaldbomben beschossen worden sein, worauf sie an Krebs erkrankten oder mit Tumoren verstarben. Und es endete noch lange nicht damit, daß die Stasi-Seilschaften mit dem Verschwinden von Treuhand-Millionen in Verbindung gebracht wurden, die sich doch ganz offenkundig ehrbare Abzocker aus dem Westen in die eigene Taschen geschaufelt hatten.“

13 Cf. the first critical attempt to come to terms with this subject with Schleicher/Engel 1996: 399ff.

the comment made in the *Spiegel* magazine in 1980, that, compared to the generous training programme for armed services and fighters from African countries, the GDR arms supplies for Black Africa were comparatively modest, since the GDR possessed “only [a] poorly developed armaments industry”<sup>14</sup> There was also a mixture of racist arrogance and defamation concerning the description of the relevant processes and people of the other part of Germany. Hence, it was mentioned that the SED liked to keep their protégés, i.e. African soldiers and officers who were in the GDR for training, away from the East German population. It was also stated, in racist terms, that, despite this stance, it really could happen on occasion “an African would take a female GDR citizen back home to the bush.”<sup>15</sup>

The Federal Republic of Germany was, and still is, much more involved in the arms trade with countries of the Third World. The GDR never passed rank number fifteen in the statistics of armament exporters and therefore was far behind the FRG in this respect.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it was a well-known fact in the FRG before the fall of socialism that the GDR was involved in international arms dealing, yet only as a minor player.<sup>17</sup> After the fall of socialism, some journalists tried to impute more significance to the international arms trade of the GDR hoping to prove the GDR’s ‘illegal character’.

In spite of being a minor arms dealer in comparison to other countries, the GDR also had serious military and security co-operation in a few African states.<sup>18</sup> The occasional claim by journalists from West Germany that normal solidarity services included accounted measures of military co-operation is untrue. An internal report from the MfS informs convincingly: “Supportive MfS measures for friendly security agencies and national freedom movements [...] never became part of the official aid measures.”<sup>19</sup>

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14 „nur [eine] kümmerlich entwickelte Rüstungsindustrie“

15 „Wir haben euch Waffen und Brot geschickt“, in: *Der Spiegel*, no. 10, Hamburg 1980: 47. „daß ein Afrikaner eine DDR-Bürgerin heim in den Busch führt.“ Compare the racist terms with a present-day perspective through Arndt/Hornscheidt 2004.

16 Cf. Sandvoss 1983: 18.

17 Cf. Post/Sandvoss 1983: 10.

18 Cf. Greig 1985: 19ff for a not always realistic and indeed critical overview of “the other side”.

19 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-SdM, no. 33: „Aktenvermerk“, 24.11.1978. „Unterstützungsmaßnahmen des MfS an befreundete Sicherheitsorgane und nationale Befreiungsbewegungen [...] fanden nie Eingang in die offiziellen Hilfsmaßnahmen.“



In connection with this thesis, it would be interesting to find out to what extent academics and academic know-how had been sourced to develop the areas of security policy. After all, there were dissertations of minor significance that were written at the MfS college with an Africa and Third World connection.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, at the MfS's Law School, in particular at the Institute for International Relations (not to be mistaken with the institute of the same name in Potsdam-Babelsberg,<sup>21</sup> 'cadres' of security agencies from GDR partner countries received training. These included 'cadres' from Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Congo, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Zambia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania and the Seychelles. As the processing of information for the espionage department (reconnaissance head office) and recruiting of foreign IM was part of the work of the institute,<sup>22</sup> it can be assumed that MfS members trained in African Studies were working there. After all, the "academisation" was a key process in the structural history of the MfS.<sup>23</sup> The extent to which the MfS members influenced academic teaching at non-military universities and research institutes needs further examination.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, up until now, neither former employee of the MfS nor of the NVA<sup>25</sup> have been prepared to contribute towards the coming to terms with these sensitive issues, such as GDR co-operation in areas of the military and security with African countries and freedom organisations.<sup>26</sup> However, it is very important to include insiders; even if it is just to rectify accusations that are occasionally made, mostly by South Africans, that the MfS were

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20 Cf. Masula/Mühle/Wagner 1982; Tschetschorke/Spocht/Schmidt-Kunter 1984.

21 Little is known about the actual tasks of the institute in Potsdam-Babelsberg. Only occasionally does one find a few details in the latest memoirs. One piece of information that could be gleaned is that members of the secret service of the central reconnaissance department at the MfS were trained in diplomacy. (Cf. Bohnsack 1997: 78)

22 Förster, Günter: „Die Dissertationen an der „Juristischen Hochschule“ des MfS. Eine annotierte Bibliographie“ (=Reihe A: *Dokumente*, no. 2), ed. by Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Abteilung Bildung und Forschung, Berlin 1994: 11.

23 Gieseke, Jens: *Doktoren der Tscheistik. Die Promovenden der „Juristischen Hochschule“ des MfS* (=BF informiert, no. 6), ed. by Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Abteilung Bildung und Forschung, Berlin 1994: 3.

24 Intimations to this effect can be found in Barthel 1995: 36f.

25 With the exception of officers of the GDR Volksmarine and officers stationed in the north of the GDR, who participated in the training of foreign members of the military and whose mostly rather subjective publications that only found regional distribution. We will still continue to deal with this topic.

26 An exception to the Ethiopian context is the former assistant of the NVA military attaché (1978 – 1982) Schöne 1993: 31ff Gröbsch's (2003) book is a witness report of the time without an analytical treatment of the subject. A closer look takes Berliner 2001. Apart from that, one depends on short suggestions made by insiders, such as the late former GDR head of espionage. Cf. Wolf 1997: in particular 361ff.

guilty of repressive behaviour in ANC camps.<sup>27</sup> The analysis for this thesis of several years of the relevant files at the so-called Gauck<sup>28</sup> office, which has the GDR's former MfS documentation stored, did not live up to my expectations. Even though the MfS recorded plenty of written material, which certainly is also of interest for this thesis, the results of this research turned out to be rather modest.

Relevant interesting information was above all taken from the MfS Law School, for example, the instruction to the teaching staff within the "year plan by the head of the Institute of International Relations"<sup>29</sup> for the year 1988 to spy on their foreign participants. It reads:

During the courses, teachers must use all opportunities and take the initiative to obtain valuable operational information about the area of mission/region as well as for the files.<sup>30</sup>

There is a remarkable reference in this paper to the co-operation and consultation partners of the MfS in the academic field. The year plan states:

In the interest of an extensive discussion about new academic and political problems, the connections need to be developed further between the Institute and the Academy for Political Science and Law of the GDR (the Department for International Relations) and the Academy of Social Sciences at the ZK of the SED, as well as with the party's college.<sup>31</sup>

A meeting was to be held on 17 August, 1988 in order to give a "Reports about measures and results of the relations the institute has with the Academy for Political Science and Law of the GDR, Division IV, and the Academy for Social Sciences of the SED's ZK, as well as the party's college."<sup>32</sup> State institutions, such as institutions of universities or from the

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27 Cf. for example the criticism that the MfS has helped to suppress "ANC dissidents" in special prison camps. Cf. Trehwela 1992: 62ff.

28 The BStU was commonly known as the Gauck office. Joachim Gauck was its first Federal Commissioner.

29 „Jahresplan des Leiters des Instituts Internationale Beziehungen“

30 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU, ZA: MfS JHS 23106. „Während der Lehrgänge haben die Lehrgangleiter alle Möglichkeiten zu nutzen und entsprechende Initiativen zu entwickeln, um operativ wertvolle Informationen über das Operationsgebiet/Region sowie für die Dossiers zu erarbeiten.“

31 BStU, ZA: MfS JHS 23106. „Im Interesse einer tiefgründigen Diskussion neuer wissenschaftlicher und politischer Problemstellungen sind die Verbindungen des Instituts zur Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft der DDR, Abteilung Internationale Beziehungen, der Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED sowie der Parteihochschule weiterzuentwickeln.“

32 „Berichterstattung über Maßnahmen und Ergebnisse der Verbindungen des Instituts zur Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft der DDR, Abteilung IV, und der Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften des ZK der SED sowie der Parteihochschule“.

AdW, apparently did not take the MfS 'colleagues' seriously enough or had only little faith in its employees.

The practical support for the armed struggle of so-called freedom movements in African countries was mostly limited primarily to the supply of paramilitary equipment – thus clothing, equipment parts, medical supplies, transport, accommodation (barracks and tents) as well as hand-held fire-arms, however, practically no heavy military hardware – and the care of the wounded in the GDR. The direct support of the military combat in this manner was regarded as controversial among the responsible GDR party and state leaders. Some of them rather backed the political support for the liberation struggle.

The relationship between political and armed battle remained controversial in the international debate, but the GDR leadership, too, took different views on this problem when it manifested itself. It triggered various reactions from East Berlin when the joint Wankie operation of the ANC and ZAPU began in August 1967. While the GDR consul general in Dar es Salaam, Gottfried Lessing, who was very influential in the East German Africa policy, supported the armed campaign, the experts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that the objective conditions for this confrontation had little prospect for success.<sup>33</sup> They agreed in unison with warning voices, which also existed within the ANC and the SACP.<sup>34</sup> They were to be proved right. In future, the state was more careful with regard to the political, moral, and also material, support of the armed struggles for liberation in Africa. Basically right up to the GDR's end, it focused more on political than military solutions.

The GDR did not let any doubts emerge about her solidarity with the freedom movements' fighters. When imprisoned guerrillas were sentenced to death and executed by the South Rhodesian courts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the GDR Solidarity Committee joined in international protests supported by the majority opinion of the population. The direct help for wounded fighters carried on.

In analysing the relations that the GDR maintained with African countries in the area of military and security policies, we have to note that there is no data available about GDR representatives working as arms dealers in Africa. Of course the GDR received requests and

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33 Cf. Schleicher I. 1999: 26.

34 Schleicher I./Schleicher H.-G. 1997: 62ff.

appeals for arms. African government representatives or representatives of freedom movements approached GDR institutions with such requests. The GDR was inclined to respond to these requests positively and supplied, if possible, arms and military devices – or as it was called in GDR-speak – non-civil equipment. The GDR after all expected a service in return in political terms,<sup>35</sup> above all, in support for their efforts to be recognised internationally. Furthermore, political strategists of the GDR hoped that the supported states and freedom organisations would reconcile with Marxism/Leninism. However, most of the time, the petitioners operated quite clumsily, and even tried to blackmail: some negotiators let it be known that they would help themselves from other sources if the GDR could not, or did not want to, deliver. East Berlin was quite sensitive towards such remarks, especially when it was suggested that the other Germans west of the river Elbe were certainly going to fulfil the request. Sometimes requests or inquiries were rejected by the GDR for political reasons, such as in the case of Uganda.

It was probably in 1966 that the GDR delivered military support in the form of combat techniques, arms and equipment to Africa and in other countries of the Third World for the first time.<sup>36</sup> So-called progressive national freedom movements were only added to the list as aid receivers a few years later. Addressees of such requests were, as a rule, ministers with access to arms, such as the Ministries for State Security, Home Affairs and National Defence. Officially, the *Ministerrat der DDR* assessed approved or rejected the requests for military support on a case by case basis.<sup>37</sup> However, only the various chairmen of the GDR National Defence Council, Walter Ulbricht and at a later stage Erich Honecker, had real decision-making powers.

Evidence of this procedure lies in the large number of proposals and recommendations which were made in person by the Minister of National Defence to the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the chairman of the National Defence Council. Before decisions were made, a vote had to be taken by the Minister of National Defence and the Chief Commander of the United Armed Forces of the participating member states of the Warsaw Pact. The chairman of the GDR National Defence Council was the ultimate authority to grant consent before the delivery to the recipient state or the freedom

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35 Militärarchiv Potsdam: Ordnung Nr. 049/9/007: GVS-Nr.: A 429 400: 10.

36 Militärarchiv Potsdam: Ordnung Nr. 049/9/007: GVS-Nr.: A 461 304.

37 Cf. Engelhardt 1993: 317.

movement concerned; therefore only after his specific consent was granted, could the NVA begin exporting arms.<sup>38</sup> Up until 1974 no formalised regulations were in place for the so-called support benefits, i.e. the deliveries of military goods to countries of the Third World. These were laid down for the first time in the beginning of 1975 by the minister of National Defence.

The well-documented military deliveries to countries of the Third World, particularly to Africa, became known as from 1966. Until 1971, these consisted specifically of combat technology, weapons, ammunition, spare parts and other military hardware, such as medical equipment, lorries, medicine, bandages, tents, as well as transport services. On the whole, the following products were supplied:

- Aircraft armament (including replacement engines), weapons and ammunition,
- Tanks,
- Anti-aircraft missiles,
- Gns,
- Anti-tank weapons,
- Infantry weapons (mainly assault rifles, and submachine guns with ammunition).

These shipments of military technology were referred to as “solidarity aid” only by the GDR Ministry of National Defence. They did this as no fees were charged. However, they were not referred to in these terms by the Solidarity Committee of the GDR, which saw them as military aid. There were many obscurities and unproven accusations after the fall of socialism with regard to this matter.

As was common in the field of GDR general development aid policy at that time, at the beginning of 1970s there was a shift of commitment in the area of shipments of military and non-civil goods. Up until then, military support was limited to shipments of military goods to Africa and to other parts of the Third World. In about 1973, at the partners’ request, the GDR started to train cadres at appropriate training facilities in the GDR. Instruction on general matters of military know-how was in demand. A document of 1969 was the first to request such a service from the GDR. The Republic of Congo also petitioned the GDR for training of the armed forces. This was a novel endeavour for the NVA. The GDR Minister of

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38 Engelhardt 1993: 317.

Defence, Heinz Hoffmann, inquired from the senior commander of the Warsaw Pact what an appropriate GDR response would be. The Marshal of the Soviet Union answered that:

There is no objection to be made in principle to train military cadres of socialist and developing countries at the GDR's NVA, if the training concerns arms and military technology as part of the accoutrements of these countries and if the studies on the art of warfare remain limited to tactics.<sup>39</sup>

The partners from the Third World were apparently satisfied with the training of their military, and the numbers of requests made on the GDR increased with the following years. Other Warsaw Pact countries experienced a similar increase in petitions. As a result, in 1979, their defence ministers saw themselves forced to issue "Principles about the co-ordination of actions of the Warsaw Pact member states for the implementation of military co-operation with developing countries"<sup>40</sup>. In specialist analyses about the activities of the MfS in the countries of the Third World it is assumed that the GDR Secret Service trained 164 courses and 1,895 persons from 15 countries between 1970 and 1989.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 25: Overview of the training for foreign forces by the MfS in 1981<sup>42</sup>**

ANC South Africa	98
SWAPO Namibia	17
Mozambique	15
People's Republic of Congo	20

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39 Cited in Engelhardt 1993: 320. „im Prinzip keine Einwände bestehen, Militärkader sozialistischer und Entwicklungsländer in der NVA der DDR auszubilden, wenn diese Ausbildung im Umfang der Bewaffnung und der Militärtechnik durchgeführt wird, die zur Ausrüstung in diesen Ländern gehören und wenn das Studium der Kriegskunst auf Fragen der Taktik beschränkt bleibt.“

40 „Grundsätze über die Koordinierung der Handlungen der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages bei der Verwirklichung der militärischen Zusammenarbeit mit den Entwicklungsländern“

41 Borchert 1995: 27.

42 Source: Borchert 1995: 27.

Also in this international agreement, the main focus was on the training of the military from Africa and other regions of the Third World in the countries of the coalition partners. It is assumed that agreements on the co-ordination were made, which, of course, also applied to the NVA, as from then on prospective officers or officers were mainly trained by the NVA. The period of training in the GDR was normally one to one-and-a-half years long. The GDR only dispatched military specialists on a small scale to African countries. Specialists were known to be employed in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. There are few accessible sources on this topic.

### Facts of the co-operation in the military field

Against the background of claims and counter-claims about the collaboration of the GDR and other states in the sensitive areas of military aid and security, it is essential to provide verifiable statistics in order to validate the conclusions drawn. Due to the nature of the state and the sensitivity of the topic, figures are not complete. It is nevertheless possible to draw some conclusions. Firstly, between 1973 and 1989, the NVA trained a total of 2,839 soldiers for 20 countries and freedom organisations. 130,000 GDR-Marks were earmarked for each military trainee trained in the GDR. This totals to a sum of 369.1 million GDR-Marks at the disposal of military training of freedom movement fighters.<sup>43</sup> The tables which follow also provide pertinent supplementary information.

Table 26 reveals that the 1980s saw a significant increase in military training of cadres in the GDR from the 1970s. However, there is some doubt about the completeness of this table. It is likely that figures for the 1970-s may be under-representative. In addition, the support given by the GDR for freedom movements in Southern Africa, the ANC and SWAPO, is missing from this table.<sup>44</sup>

Moving from military training to more material support, Table 27 reveals that, between 1966 and 1989, 26 countries and freedom movements received military supplies to the value of 641.4 million GDR-Marks. According to present-day standards, the quantities of arms, military devices and equipment supplied to Africa and to countries of the rest of the

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43 Engelhardt 1993: 325.

44 Schleicher H.-G./Schleicher I. 1994: 7ff.

Third World may be regarded as rather small. However, given the state's priorities and policies for assistance to other countries; and if the relative position of the GDR economy in world rankings, and the currency value of the GDR-Marks at that time, are taken into account, it may be argued that the state was as committed to this kind of aid as it could reasonably be.<sup>45</sup> Besides the military training, the political training and the qualification of military cadres from the Third World was quite intensive. As to what effects the training in Marxism/Leninism really had in the African home countries on the military field cannot be easily established.

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45 Cf. Schleicher H.-G./Schleicher I. 1994: 328.



**Table 26: Training of military cadres (Officers/Non-Commissioned Officers/Troops)  
for fellow developing countries and national freedom organisations, 1973 - 1989<sup>46</sup>**

Year: States/organisations	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	total
Vietnam	24	24	24	48	48	36	36	39	72	106	12	25	10	82				586
Yemen									97	72					50	68	74	361
Libya									15	110	43			30	25			223
Congo										38			78					116
Laos										20				95				115
Mozambique										7			8					15
Zambia										50								50
PLO										20	20		20	20		50		130
Kampuchea										10					20			30
Benin										6	6	6	6					24
Nicaragua											36		99		155			290
Afghanistan											30							30
Guinea										20								20
Tanzania											40	10				40		90
Ethiopia												49	22				98	169
Zimbabwe												40						40
Syria												70	140		40			250
Cuba														150				150
North Korea																136		144
Lebanon																	6	6
Total	24	24	24	48	48	36	36	39	184	439	207	200	383	377	298	294	178	2839

<sup>46</sup> Source: According to Engelhardt 1993: 329.

Table 27: Support of „bewaffneten Organe befreundeter Entwicklungsländer und progressiver nationaler Befreiungsorganisationen“<sup>47</sup>  
(combat technique, armament and ordnance in Million GDR-Marks), 1966 - 1989 [Source: According to Engelhardt 1993: 328]

Year:	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	total
states/ organisations:																									
Tanzania	1.5	1.5	1.6			3.0	0.6		2.5	4.3															15.0
Yemen	2.0					3.0	0.5		2.5	0.5			14.9						1.0	1.7				0.1	30.0
UAR		22.0	22.0																						44.0
Syria		5.5	5.5		4.4			89.3	5.5											2.0					112.2
Guinea				0.7	0.7	0.7							5.0												7.1
Iraq				1.0	1.0																				2.0
Vietnam								21.0	21.0	21.0	3.5		3.5	42.5		9.3	2.0					0.4	6.4	0.5	131.5
Congo								0.6		2.5			6.3	2.3						1.0					12.7
PAIGC								0.4	0.4																0.8
FRELIMO								1.5	2.0	6.0															9.5
Angola										6.6	9.0		7.2		0.9		3.2			5.0					31.9
Somalia											4.5	4.5													9.0
Cuba											2.1										3.3				5.4
Ethiopia												9.0	15.0	3.8		1.3			15.5	1.0	3.0	0.5	6.8	23.5	79.4
Mozambique												4.8		4.3	3.5	7.8	12.5		1.0	1.5	0.9	2.0			38.3
Laos												5.8	0.3				2.0	1.8					2.2	3.1	15.2
PLO												2.3						2.2		1.5					6.0
Cape Verde													2.5					0.8							3.3
Zambia													1.8								2.0				3.8
SWAPO													1.4					2.3							3.7
Cambodia															2.0	5.0	2.0					4.5	3.3	30.7	47.5
Nicaragua																	2.5	2.9	2.3	2.6	0.1	4.9	4.1		19.4
Afghanistan																		0.8	1.0	1.5					3.3
Libya																		0.8							0.8
Zimbabwe																				10.0					10.0
Total	3.5	29.0	29.1	1.7	6.1	6.7	1.1	112.8	33.9	44.7	19.1	26.4	57.9	52.9	6.4	23.4	26.4	9.4	20.8	27.8	9.3	12.3	22.8	57.9	641.4

47 “armed authorities of friendly developing countries and progressive national freedom organisations”.

The GDR kept arms supplies to countries of Africa and the rest of the Third World strictly secret. Only a small circle of people was involved in the planning and implementation of such activities. This was partly to keep such activities secret from the western ‘class enemy’. It may also be argued that the state wished to hide from the GDR population the financial and material extent of ‘military solidarity’, against the background of the constantly parlous economic state and the shortage of material goods at home. Despite this, both the GDR military command and the MfS saw military co-operation as a crucial aspect of their interaction with partner countries. For example, a high-level military report stated that:

The assistance is based on the aligned foreign policy, security policy and military policy of the Warsaw Pact states, as well as under consideration of the special foreign policy points of view of the GDR’s party and state leadership to concentrate above all on developing countries and their armies which are taking the path of socialist orientation and alternatively when their decision for the socialist orientation needs to be promoted. With the same political prerequisites assistance shall be granted for progressive, national liberation movements and their fight for national independence and social progress.<sup>48</sup>

#### The training of African members of the military by the GDR ‘Nationale Volksarmee’ – a few preliminary research results

There is as yet no summarised or detailed presentation about the training of foreign armed forces – in GDR language usage called the Foreign Military Cadres (AMK) – in the part of Germany calling itself socialist. There are only memoirs of NVA officers available. These shall be evaluated here with the necessary critical view of the sources, in order to offer a short overview about this important part of “military solidarity”. The following deals with the examples of military training of soldiers and officers.

By analysing files from the former MfS a few important pieces of information on the military training of AMK have emerged. A concluding assessment, above all of a qualitative nature, does not exist yet. There are merely a few descriptions about the quantitative military

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48 Militärarchiv Potsdam: Ordnung Nr. 049/9/007: GVS-Nr.: A 429 400, Bl. 17. „Die Unterstützung ist auf der Grundlage der abgestimmten Außen-, Sicherheits- und Militärpolitik der Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages sowie unter Berücksichtigung der speziellen außenpolitischen Gesichtspunkten der Partei- und Staatsführung der DDR vor allem auf jene Entwicklungsländer und ihre Streitkräfte zu konzentrieren, die den Weg der sozialistischen Orientierung beschreiten bzw. deren Entscheidung für den sozialistischen Entwicklungsweg gefördert werden soll. Unter den gleichen politischen Voraussetzungen ist sie progressiven nationalen Befreiungsbewegungen in ihren Kampf für nationale Unabhängigkeit und gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt zu gewähren.“ For MfS attitudes, see Engel/Schleicher, H.-G. in co-operation with Rost 1998: 362ff.

training available from the documents of the *Behörde der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR*.<sup>49</sup> Hence there was the indication that in November of 1981, 653 foreign members of the military were trained or received further training at the military academy “Friedrich Engels” in Dresden, as well as at the officers’ colleges of the NVA. They (including the future officers and officer cadets from 1982) came from the PR of Congo, the PR of Mozambique, Libya, the PDR of Yemen, the Yemenite Arab Republic, the PR of Angola, Zambia, Syria and SWAPO. Research owes this information to the MfS request to “control the AMK operatively”, despite the fact that the “indications for occurrences and consequences of hostile activities”<sup>50</sup> had not been noticed yet at that point in time. However, a note had been made of the assumption that members of the security authorities of the sending states had been among them.<sup>51</sup>

The naval training in Parow shall serve as an example for the NCO training in the GDR.<sup>52</sup> Due to the GDR’s almost all-encompassing involvement on Zanzibar – then still an independent island and later belonging to the Republic of Tanzania – it also took care of the training for a few members of the navy. That is why the training ship division of the GDR navy, called the *Volksmarine*, received the task in the autumn of 1964 to train a few Zanzibari in nautical skills. A patrol boat crew together with officers, NCO’s and sailors was going to be trained. A military ship of the “Schwalbe” type was put at the disposal for this purpose and altered according to special requirements. Training staff with English language skills were concentrated in Parow, as there were not many. Language skills seem to have been more important than educational skills. There was no adequate preparation period for the training of the AMK, therefore it was a complicated situation for the people responsible, located near the coastal town of Stralsund. Yet, in order to guarantee effective training, a people-intensive method was developed. Every officer, NCO and sailor of the training crew trained their equivalent Zanzibari in the theoretical training at the teaching institutions as well as on board the ship during personal contacts. This means that trainees were mentored round-the-clock. This was not only the most effective but also the only possible option to fulfil the mission, as the prerequisites for Africans to undergo naval training were, as the former head of the AMK

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49 Representative in Charge of the State Security Service Documents of the former GDR

50 „Hinweise auf Erscheinungen bzw. Auswirkungen feindlicher Aktivitäten“

51 Cf. Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-HA I, nr. 13618: 143.

52 I am basing this on the following statements from Judersleben 2002: 81ff.

training in Parow, Manfred Judersleben, who became the head at a later stage, carefully formulated, to be “strictly speaking [...] not adequate”.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the training of one patrol boat crew was successfully completed in the spring of 1965. The boat was brought to Zanzibar, accompanied by the African crew, along with their instructors. After a time, the German members of the navy returned to the GDR.

It was the *Volksmarine*'s first ever training task. The Zanzibaris did not need to pay for the training, food and lodging, technology, and equipment which was left behind, nor for the patrol boat. For the fulfilment of the commissioned assignment “no expenses and pains were spared”.<sup>54</sup> On request by the Zanzibari government, a further patrol boat crew was trained from 1966 to 1967 under the same conditions, yet taking the experiences of the first course into consideration. After this, a training course took place for the crew of a torpedo speed boat in 1968.

Due to the international recognition of the GDR by almost all states of the world and the admission of both German states into the UNO in 1973, more members of the military from African countries were trained at the naval school in Parow, such as from Mozambique, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Angola. This happened in particular from the beginning of the 1980s. The course participants, in particular from Libya, caused quite a few problems for the GDR military. One had to show consideration for the Ramadan period of fasting during the training planning, as well as the erecting of prayer rooms in the barracks and adjusting the food to Islamic requirements. Furthermore, the accommodation and training area of the foreign armed forces had to be separated in the barracks. People not part of the course were prohibited from entering these areas.<sup>55</sup> Another problem was the pay. The Libyans received their pay in Dollars; their training was paid for by their government in Tripoli. In comparison to the Mozambicans, who only received a payment of 180.00 GDR-Marks per month, but also to the GDR soldiers, the Libyan officers and NCO's in training could “afford a relatively opulent living standard on site and most of them had private accommodation in Stralsund”<sup>56</sup> There were also great differences in the educational levels. The Mozambican trainees

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53 Judersleben 2002: 82. „streng genommen [...] nicht angemessen“

54 Judersleben 2002: 83. „wurden [...] weder Kosten noch Mühen gescheut“

55 Cf. Judersleben 2002: 85.

56 Judersleben 2002: 86. „[sich] einen relativ üppigen Lebensstandard am Standort leisten und hatten fast alle ein Privatquartier in Stralsund.“

generally had a level of education comparable to a grade 5 at an elementary school. This was very demanding on the patience and skills for the teaching staff, but also for the course participants.

Every AMK trainee at the naval school in Parow learnt the basics of the German language in a one-year intensive course at the officers' college of the *Volksmarine* in Stralsund. The GDR military training is often accused by the West to have attempted ideological indoctrination by spreading the theories of Marxism/Leninism in the countries of Africa. The short paper on the AMK in Parow explicitly indicates that the indoctrination of Libyan members of the armed forces for example would have been "rejected from the beginning and that the adherence to these conditions would have been checked at several visits by the Libyan military attaché".<sup>57</sup> In actual practice, written stipulations in training agreements and visits by prominent representatives of those armies whose members were trained in the GDR, ensured that attempts to influence the foreign military trainees with the ideological ideas and specific characteristics of the GDR were frequently prohibited. It appears that the GDR authorities generally attempted to abide by these agreements. For example, a MfS-"official instruction for the political-operative securing of foreign military cadres in the area of authority, main division I"<sup>58</sup> declared that everything possible was to be done in order to avoid "far-sightedly the straining of relations between the GDR and the sending countries".<sup>59</sup> This does not mean that the GDR security service did not try to secure the services of the AMK to reconnoitre and to work on them, as it is called in the secret service jargon.

Very close to Parow was another military training base of the NVA for foreign armed forces, specifically from Third World countries. This was the "Otto Winzer" officers' college, at which young officers of all branches from the armed forces were normally trained. Also the not particularly well-known officers' college in Prora on Rügen was opened on 1 December 1981. It was said to be exclusively for the training of foreign military cadres. One of the chair holders at the officers' college remembers:

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57 Judersleben 2002: 87. „von vorn herein abgelehnt und die Einhaltung dieser Bedingung bei mehrmaligen Besuchen des libyschen Militärattachés hinterfragt“

58 „Dienstanweisung zur politisch-operativen Sicherung der ausländischen Militärkader im Verantwortungsbereich der Hauptabteilung I“

59 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-HA I, no. 13280: 2. „Belastungen der Beziehungen zwischen der DDR und den Entsendestaaten vorausschauend“

The officers' college 'Otto Winzer' was given the complicated task of introducing non-German speaking military cadres as quickly as possible to the necessary knowledge of the German language and the fundamentals in mathematics, science and engineering as well as the military skills and the required physical fitness.<sup>60</sup>

Three-hundred members of the military and 330 civil employees were part of the training staff. After the prospective officer cadets had completed a one-year German language course in Prora, or at the language institute of the NVA in Naumburg, they usually started a four-year degree at the officers' college from where they graduated with a diploma and with a commission of Lieutenant. The training was done on the same principles as that of the officers of the NVA, but with a particular regard for special requests of the sending states. Until the closure of the officers' training college in 1990, between nine-hundred and 1,000 officers in six companies were trained or received further training. The officers in training came from Cuba, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Laos, Syria, Vietnam, DPRK, the PLO, the Yemenite Arab Republic, the PR of Congo, Ethiopia, the PDR of Yemen, Tanzania and Mozambique.<sup>61</sup> Contrary to present-day claims by uninformed writers from the West, the AMK kept an active contact to the GDR population, within the bounds of training requirements. This is testified to both by the illustrations at the museum of Prora (2007), and by contemporary witnesses.

With German re-unification the officers' college "Otto Winzer" brought its work to an end, and the course participants were released from their obligation to their home countries. When officers from the *Bundeswehr* [the FRG army] came to visit the officers' college for the first time after the Fall of Socialism at the beginning of 1990, they expected to find a terrorist training centre. The answer by a high-ranking NVA officer to the questions concerning this assumption by the *Bundeswehr* officers lives on: "For that, you need to go to Hamburg or

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60 Reinhardt 2003: 10. „Die Offiziershochschule 'Otto Winzer' wurde vor einer komplizierten Aufgabe gestellt, nicht deutschsprachige Militärkader in kürzester Zeit an die erforderlichen Kenntnisse der deutschen Sprache und die mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlichen und ingenieurtechnischen Grundlagen sowie die militärischen Kenntnisse und die dazu erforderliche Körperertüchtigung heranzuführen.“ This is an individual account about the training of foreign armed forces at the officers' college in Prora. Although this book cannot substitute an academic examination, it still conveys important information, which could provide suggestions for, and supplement, a comprehensive representation.

61 Cf. Kultur Kunststätt Prora 1997: 39.

Munich!”<sup>62</sup> By the end of the GDR’s existence, foreign military cadres, meaning officers and officer cadets,<sup>63</sup> were trained in the following teaching facilities of the NVA:

- Institute for Foreign Language Training Naumburg,
- Military Academy “Friedrich Engels”,
- Institute for the Automation of Troop Movement Dresden,
- Military Medical Section, Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University Greifswald,
- Military Medical Academy Bad Saarow.

Another revealing document by the MfS informs us on the total number of armed forces that were to be trained in the GDR at the beginning of 1986: According to this document, 842 AMK studied in the GDR at eight military teaching facilities, coming from 14 states from Asia, Africa, the Middle and Near East as well as from the PLO and Nicaragua.<sup>64</sup> They were trained at the following teaching facilities of the NVA:

The Officers’ College “Otto Winzer”, Prora:	397
Military Technical School LSK/LV Bad Döben:	163
The Officers’ College of the <i>Volksmarine</i> Stralsund:	103
Institute for Foreign Language Training Naumburg:	80
The Officers’ College Naumburg:	47
The Military Medical Section Greifswald:	20
The Military Medical Academy Bad Saarow:	16
The Military Academy “Friedrich Engels”:	15 <sup>65</sup>

### The case of the MPLA and FRELIMO

Up to the 1990s, the Portuguese-speaking countries in southern Africa – Mozambique and Angola – were the scene of anti-colonial struggles and civil wars for almost four decades, and thus the focus of foreign policy interest of the GDR. The local liberation movements were seen as allies in the struggle against colonialism and imperialism. Therefore the GDR, in

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62 Cf. *Ostsee-Zeitung* 2003: 15. „Da müssen Sie schon nach Hamburg oder München gehen!“

63 Cf. BStU: MfS-HA I, no. 13280, Bl. 40.

64 Information about possible training and further education of NCO’s and soldiers from all regions, states and liberation movements could so far not be found.

65 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-HA I, no. 13695: 28.



addition to extensive civilian aid, supported the independence movement in the military field.

Military support for the liberation movement, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) began in 1967. In a letter of the MPLA to the SED, the Angolans requested equipment for 3,000 fighters as well as 90 cannon, 90 mortars, 30 heavy machine guns, 300 rocket-propelled grenades and 1,500 machine guns, ammunition for all weapons to be delivered for use over a period of six months as well as uniforms, but also cooking utensils, typewriters, 6,000 (pairs of) basketball shoes, medicines and school materials like notebooks, pens and chalk.<sup>66</sup>

This wish was not fulfilled, but on 10 January 1967 the SED Politburo decided for the first time on the “delivery of non-civilian goods to national liberation movements in Africa.”<sup>67</sup> With this decision the attitude of the GDR to supply arms to African liberation movements changed. Whereas such deliveries had up to that point been treated with general reluctance, from now on it was not only allowed, but approved as acts of “active solidarity” with the struggle of the African peoples.

Arms were now delivered to the liberation movements in southern Africa. Initially these entailed largely old stocks of the German Wehrmacht during the Second World War, which were stored in the military depots of the GDR. Modern weapons like the Kalashnikov submachine-gun were supplied only in small quantities.

After gaining independence from the Portuguese colonial power in 1975, Angola was swamped by civil wars. Vying for power in the new state were the MPLA, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and Frente Nacional da Libertação de Angola (FNLA). While the MPLA held onto the capital Luanda and thus the formal governmental centre of power held, the opposition groups actively supported by South Africa, Zaire, and to some extent indirectly by the United States and Western European governments, dominated the provinces of the North and the South. The government, the military and the intelligence community in South Africa saw themselves as part of the Cold War, acting, on

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66 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: DZ 8/7301-662: unpaginated.

67 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch DY 30/J IV 2/2/1093, unpaginated.

the side of the West: “In so doing, the [South African] military acted in the Cold War framework, seeing and presenting ‘its role within the international system as the Southern African Communist bulwark against aggression in and on the side of the West, a war of proxy’”.<sup>68</sup> Angola and the other direct and indirect neighbours of South Africa called themselves the “frontline states” and found themselves on the other side of this war – willingly or not on the side of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union. Consequently the Soviet Union, East Germany, Cuba and other states rendered military support and gave other assistance. The requests for military aid from came from Luanda to the GDR never ceased. New weapons were delivered, not old stocks.

In the years 1975 and 1976, the SED Politburo dealt with “non-civilian” support for the MPLA on a monthly basis, sometimes even several times a month,. The value of the consignment decided upon on 5 December 1975, for example, was 6.3 million GDR marks, whilst that of the consignment approved on 3 February 1976 had a delivery value of 6.5 million East German marks.<sup>69</sup> SED Secretary-General Erich Honecker often took care of the delivery of military supplies to the minutest detail. Between October 1975 and April 1977 military equipment worth a total of 17.5 million GDR marks was delivered to the MPLA.<sup>70</sup>

In a report by the former East German Defence Minister, Heinz Hoffman, on his visit to Angola, Guinea and the People’s Republic of Congo in May 1978 references can be found to far-reaching promises and commitments made to African partners by Honecker. The parameters provided to the delegation by the Party- and State leader left the military leadership little room in their local discussions and negotiations for their own decisions, and the East German military delegation was bound by the promises made by Honecker. The total value of military aid deliveries agreed upon during Hoffmann’s trip amounted to 18.45 million GDR marks. It is no surprise that, according to Hoffmann’s report, the African partners on several occasions articulated their “respect” for the policy and solidarity of the German Democratic Republic, and especially for the “exemplary work of Comrade Erich

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68 Pister 2006/2007: 25.

69 Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: DC 20/12853: 47f.

70 SAPMO-BArch: DC 20/12853: 5-7.

Honecker,” and their “high appreciation and esteem” for the solidarity expressed by the GDR.<sup>71</sup>

Political contacts existed even with the Mozambican liberation movement, which later became FRELIMO, since 1962.<sup>72</sup> After the country gained independence in 1975, the GDR increased its commitment to this country in many areas. At times up to 1,000 East Germans found themselves in the country simultaneously, mostly as aid workers in agriculture, as technical consultants in industry and mining, and as teachers and government advisers.<sup>73</sup>

As happened in the case of the MPLA, similar requests for military assistance were initially strictly refused until the above-mentioned decision of the Politburo in January 1967 authorized GDR arms shipments to southern Africa for the first time.

For example, the president of Frelimo, Samora Machel, negotiated for arms on his first visit to East Berlin in April 1972. East German officials referred to the “modest means” of the GDR, which were “exhausted” by its obligations to Vietnam. As a “small country” the GDR possessed only very limited capacities. The GDR, however, was willing to render to FRELIMO continued support if their wishes were communicated in a “concrete and timely” manner. As immediate aid the East German leadership committed 250 machine guns and 2,500 hand grenades requested by Machel. Besides these arms, FRELIMO received tarpaulins, clothing and cooking utensils of all kinds.<sup>74</sup>

The procedure was repeated in subsequent years. In 1974 the GDR, for example, again supplied 2,000 Kalashnikov submachine guns, 30 sniper rifles and 5,000 hand grenades.

In December 1974, Samora Machel and the Frelimo leadership flew to the capital of East Germany to seek renewed assistance. He asked for T-34 tanks and RPG-2 rocket launchers. He was met with interest and understanding. However, tanks were not delivered. A general in the SED party apparatus suggested, however, for another 8,000 machine guns,

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71 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-Barch: SAPMO-Barch: DY 30/J IV 2/2A/2155: 30/05/1978 Politburo meeting, agenda item 2 and Appendix 1; unpaginated.

72 Cf. Schleicher 1993a: 196.

73 Matthe /Voss, 2005: 49.

74 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-Barch: SAPMO-Barch: DC 20/12851: 84f.

5,000 grenades and ten 82mm guns to be delivered “in addition to the supplies provided”.<sup>75</sup> As a result of the visit by Machel and his talks in Berlin with Honecker, the Secretariat of the SED Central Committee decided in January 1975 on a very extensive catalogue of measures in support of FRELIMO in preparation for the planned independence. It was, inter alia, determined herein that 12.000 submachine guns, 10 82mm guns, and 5,000 grenades were to be made available. The costs of firstly six million and in addition another more than one million East German Marks had to be borne by the Solidarity Committee.<sup>76</sup> A new dimension of military aid by the GDR for Mozambique was entered into when Samora Machel requested training assistance by the NVA and other “armed organs” of the GDR for the first time in November 1974. In April and May 1975 an agreed upon number of 250 FRELIMO-members were trained in East German “armed” state organs: 110 by the Stasi, 90 in the Interior Ministry and 50 in the border guard unit forming part of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>77</sup>

The GDR continued its military assistance to FRELIMO after independence was achieved, however with a different goal. The aim was to support government forces against guerrillas.

The Mozambican government repeatedly submitted requests in 1985 and 1986 to the GDR for the deployment of trainers and “instructors” of the NPA. The East German government, however, was not willing to deploy army personnel in Mozambique.<sup>78</sup>

The GDR increased the training of African soldiers, NCOs and officers in military camps of the army. In this manner hundreds of trained soldiers, NCOs and officers were turned out until 1990. This form of support was continued until the demise of the GDR.

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75 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: SAPMO-BArch: DY 30/IV B 2/12/55, pp. 240ff.

76 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: DY 30 / J IV 2/3A/2618: Circulation Central Committee Secretariat 08.01.1975, Item 13 and Appendix 8: n.p.

77 Cf. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV B 2/12/55: 264f. and 271f.

78 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Berlin: SAPMO-BArch: SAPMO-BArch MA: AZN 32277, B1.266: Ministry of National Defense, notes for the chiefs of staff: n.p.

## CHAPTER 5

### The ideological foundations of GDR development policy

#### Theory – Research – Reality

Apart from reference to the anti-colonialist traditions of the German workers' movement, the principles of international solidarity, as well as the constant affirmations by the GDR state and party leaders of an obligation towards a policy of peace, for the entire duration of the GDR, there were no formal guidelines in which the GDR determined her politics vis à vis Africa. As became obvious after the Fall of Socialism, there were a number of deficiencies with regard to the theoretical foundations of GDR development policy, especially if one measured according to Western standards.<sup>1</sup>

The theory of development in the GDR was subject, like all other areas of the social sciences and the humanities, to clear ideological and political limitations. Marxism-Leninism was the dominating theoretical construct in the area of development theory, too, and determined the extent of insights by academics concerning themselves with questions of development policy, which, of course, in turn had practical consequences. The following represents a closer look of the role of academics in conceptualising and designing development policy in the GDR.

Within the limitations of Marxism/Leninism there were comparatively unrestricted freedoms for academics, if they wanted to make use of them. To use those more or less creatively was contingent on the intentions and personal possibilities of the individual researcher, of course depending on the institution where the researcher worked, and on his or her superiors who had to examine, i.e. approve of, major projects according to the 'publication regulations'. One can indeed detect that some GDR publications dealing with development policy did not "suffer from too much Marxism", of which Jürgen Kocka accused the entire field of social sciences and humanities. Their Marxism (and this applies as well to a particular kind of literature dealing with the theory of revolution and the so-called Marxist-Leninist fundamental research in the GDR):

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1 Cf. Jegzentis/Wirth 1991: 77ff.

[Their Marxism] was often limited to the obligatory Marxist-Leninist view of history and society, determined by political interests, which put the existing socialist systems at the pinnacle of history so far, and which legitimised their rulers. The premises of this view were not to be part of academic discourse. This view was a monopoly, was thus dogmatic and, from an academic point of view, seemed primarily dysfunctional. However, often the GDR historians' Marxism-Leninism was present in their introductions and conclusions, their interpretations at large, their moral-political attitudes and their polemic against the 'class enemy' in the West, yet it hardly influenced their research methods in great detail. These frequently remained entirely conventional and 'bourgeois'. On occasion it was possible, though, to make use of the productive potential of Marxist problems and to come to research results which received great acclaim outside the Marxist-Leninist cohesive system and which definitely marked progress.<sup>2</sup>

This assessment arguably applies at least in part to the research on Africa's past, her politics and her problems. Needless to say that Marxism-Leninism was the basis for all academic procedures here, too – it was the theoretical construct which dominated the extent of insights of almost each and every academic in the humanities in the GDR. However, Karl Marx left as a legacy an analytical tool with which to work "is no shame. The same applies to research on Africa."<sup>3</sup> according to the Nestor of West German African Political Studies, Franz Ansprenger, in his essay on the reunification of German African Studies (which unfortunately never did reunify).<sup>4</sup>

During the co-existence of the two German states, a detailed discussion of the practical aspects of GDR development policy towards Third World countries did not take place. This was due, on the one hand, to a restricted access to the relevant information on said practical development policy for academics and researchers. On the other hand, this is

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2 Kocka 1992: 14. „erschöpfte sich häufig in der Anpassung an das durch politische Interessen verbindlich definierte marxistisch-leninistische Geschichts- und Gesellschaftsbild, das die bestehenden sozialistischen Systeme auf dem Höhepunkt der bisherigen Geschichte verortete, und die in ihnen Herrschenden damit legitimierte. Die Prämissen dieses Bildes waren der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion entzogen, es beanspruchte das Monopol, war insofern dogmatisch und wirkte wissenschaftlich primär dysfunktional. Aber oft schlug der Marxismus-Leninismus der DDR-Historiker zwar auf ihre Vor- und Nachworte, auf die große Linie ihrer Interpretation, ihre moralisch-politischen Wertungen und ihre Polemik gegen den 'Klassenfeind' im Westen durch, ihre Methoden im Einzelnen aber beeinflusste er kaum. Diese bleiben häufig ganz konventionell und 'bürgerlich'. Dennoch gelang es mitunter, das Produktivitätspotential marxistischer Fragestellungen zu nutzen und Forschungsergebnisse zu erzielen, die auch außerhalb des marxistisch-leninistischen Systemzusammenhangs große Aufmerksamkeit erregten und eindeutig weiterführten.“

3 „zu arbeiten keine Schande ist. Das gilt auch für die Erforschung Afrikas“

4 Ansprenger 1991: 71.

indicative of a conscious or unconscious avoidance of practice-orientated topics in academe which otherwise would have been automatically subjected to a stronger censorship. What was published in this field of study was limited to the commonplace, propagandistic phrases or some allusions or wordings where one had to read between the lines in order to understand them.<sup>5</sup> This restraint on the side of GDR academics and researchers with regard to engaging with development policy is difficult to understand, as they did work with the outcomes of international research in this field. There were, for example, academics especially in Leipzig who applied themselves mainly to the analysis of bourgeois development theories as they saw them. Typically they would only acknowledge “an increasing divergence of bourgeois-imperialist and socialist ideology in the national liberation struggles in Africa”.<sup>6</sup> Representatives of this kind of attitude, who viewed themselves as ideologists in a particular field, or even as philosophers, were indubitably following the dogmatic tradition of the ideological founding consensus of the SED by adopting such an approach.<sup>7</sup> Innovative ideas with regard to, for example, development-sociological theories could not come about in this manner.

What authors subscribing to this ideology understood to be academic is apparent for instance in the titles and articles which were published in *Einheit*, the SED’s ZK theory journal.<sup>8</sup> Publishing in this journal did mean rather strict checks by the responsible department of the SED’s ZK. It nevertheless also meant enhancing the author’s position in the hierarchy and their political standing, for an article in *Einheit* carried a lot of weight in the end-of-year report. Once the ideological cornerstones were set in such an article (such as the development of socialism in some African countries), it was difficult to publish views deviating from those in *Einheit* elsewhere, for example in the academic journal *asien-afrika-lateinamerika*. Thus the *Einheit* authors could claim to have co-designed GDR politics with regard to individual countries or groups of countries. Especially SED-conformist academics would be typically commissioned with such articles.

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5 Cf. Jegzentis/Wirth 1991: 72.

6 Büttner/Rachel 1970: 241. „zunehmende Divergenz von bürgerlich-imperialistischer und sozialistischer Ideologie in der nationalen Befreiung Afrikas“

7 Leonhard 1994: 3ff.

8 Cf. Liebscher 1970: 1209ff; Liebscher 1973: 368ff; Robbe 1973: 713ff; Babing 1975: 778ff; Dummer/Fuchs 1976: 1284ff; Büttner/Semmler 1978: 405ff; Semmler 1978: 577ff; Dummer 1978: 593ff; Babing 1979: 1302ff; Rathmann 1984: 60ff; Brade 1985(a): 83ff; Brade 1985(b): 938ff; Liebscher 1985: 1129ff.

If one reads these publications nowadays, especially the cited articles, a basic axiom inhibiting insights into the field of study of developing countries becomes apparent, namely the ubiquitous theoretical assumption that *real existierender Sozialismus* would be superior to capitalist society. One would find this kind of article, too, in the most important publication for GDR academics and researchers dealing with Africa as well as with development theories: the above-mentioned *asien-afrika-lateinamerika*, yet they did not have the same status as the articles in *Einheit*. In almost every edition the academic contributions to the three eponymous regions were started off by a few articles of this nature.<sup>9</sup>

If one takes a closer look at a few editions of the year 1989, one can see that in the first contribution of volume 4, there are five footnotes by Erich Honecker, one by Lenin, one by SED Politburo member Hermann Axen and one by the author himself, out of a total of twelve footnotes.<sup>10</sup> In the second article of volume 5/1989 on strategy and politics of the EC with regard to the developing countries, the reader is confronted by the surprising statement: “The 27th convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union noted that a ‘new, complicated and dynamic complex of contradictions’ has arisen between capitalism and the developing countries and their peoples.”<sup>11</sup>

Not all Marxist academics in Africa Studies published such empty phrases, yet there were basic Marxist principles which no GDR academic could possibly attack. These principles based on the doctrine of “the three main streams of our epoch”. They were:

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9 A sample from the year 1983: vol.1: Lehfeld/Roscher. „Kampf um die Sicherung des Friedens und revolutionäre Prozesse in den Ländern Afrikas“ [“The Struggle to Secure Peace and Revolutionary Processes in the African Countries”]; vol. 2: Mährdel. „Revolutionen in Asien, Afrika und Lateinamerika“ [“Revolutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America”]; vol. 3: Ansbach. „Das Recht auf Entwicklung als Menschenrecht“ [“The Right to Development as a Human Right”]; vol. 4: Wünsche/Voigtländer/Lindner. „Die Nichtpaktgebundenen im Kampf um Frieden, Abrüstung und Entwicklung – Zu den Ergebnissen der VII. Gipfelkonferenz nichtpaktgebundener Staaten“ [“Non-Warsaw-Pact Countries and the Struggle for Peace, Disarmament and Development – On the Outcomes of the VII Summit of Non-Warsaw-Pact Countries”]; vol. 5: Saiz Montes de Oca. „Karl Marx“; Küttler. „Ökonomische Gesellschaftsformation – Epoche – Region. Methodologische Probleme der Periodisierung“ [“Economy and Societal Formation – Methodological Problems of classification into Periods”]; vol. 6: Faulwetter/Hoffmann. „Die Mechanismen der Herausbildung kapitalistischer Produktionsverhältnisse in Entwicklungsländern“ [“The Mechanisms of Developing Capitalist Conditions of Production in Developing Countries”]; Grienic. „Zur sozialökonomischen Struktur und ökonomischen Basis von Entwicklungsländern – einige quantitative Aspekte“ [“On the Socio-Economical Structure and the Economical Basis of Developing Countries – Some Quantitative Aspects”].

10 Cf. Winter 1989: 581ff.

11 Eschke 1989: 798. „Der 27. Parteitag der KPdSU stellte fest, daß zwischen Kapitalismus und den Entwicklungsländern und ihren Völkern ‘ein neuer, komplizierter und dynamischer Komplex von Widersprüchen’ entstanden ist.“



- 1) the Socialist states led by the Soviet Union,
- 2) the working class in the capitalist world and
- 3) the national liberation movements in the former or still intact colonies.

This postulated existence of the so-called three main revolutionary trends formed the basis for the Marxist-Leninist definition of epochs, which presupposed that the transition from capitalism to socialism was progressing worldwide.<sup>12</sup> Hence the practical as well as theoretical support by the GDR through the means available was especially generous for those states in Asia, Africa and Latin America which either themselves declared to be on the path to Socialism or which were identified as such by GDR theorists (or politicians). However, more often than not these were mere declarations of intent on the African side, which were gratefully taken up by the GDR as they were in accordance with her theory. That this was frequently a strategic manoeuvre by the Africans to exploit the differences between East and West during the Cold War was often recognised too late or not at all. Thus the field of development studies was limited. However, since the mid-1980s some academics engaged critically with this doctrine.<sup>13</sup>

Analyses which could have caused a deviation from the Marxist-Leninist norm or which could at least have demonstrated different approaches were rarely published in academic journals and books. When dealing with complex topics, one would normally rather focus on political-theoretical or (as there were no development sociology or political studies in the GDR) Marxist-Leninist overviews.<sup>14</sup> Especially in this field a clear lack of empirical research became palpable, which was more evident the more contemporary the subject matter was. If issues of 'the theory of revolution' were being analysed, the shortfall of intellectual and methodological tools was obvious.

The analyses and portrayals dealing with the theory of revolution in a rather abstract manner and at times being utterly removed from reality, and especially the resulting conclusions dominated mainly at the beginning of the 1980s Regional Studies in the GDR. This meant that academics moved further and further away from working empirically. The

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12 Cf., for example, Autorenkollektiv: 1980.

13 Jegzentsis/Wirth 1991: 72.

14 Cf. Adler/Reißig 1991: 5ff; Berg/Möller/Reißig 1991: 5ff.

reason given for this development was that the ‘fundamental questions’ might have played a considerable role in research and publishing in the GDR at the beginning of the 1970s, as laid out in the then standard work *Grundfragen des antiimperialistischen Kampfes der Gegenwart*,<sup>15</sup> but that they had not been developed any further. The most prominent representative of this kind of academic attitude, Christian Mährdel, argues that since the mid-1970s, the more complex and interdisciplinary outlook had not been that prominent any more.<sup>16</sup>

For this reason, a research group called “National and Social Movements in Asia and Africa”<sup>17</sup> was founded at the University of Leipzig in 1980, consisting of subject representatives of “all three integral parts of Marxism-Leninism”, coming from nine humanities disciplines of ten sections of Karl-Marx-University Leipzig, and from twenty-five further academic institutes and central practice committees. This research group investigated “Forms of transitions to socialism in Asia and Africa: revolutions and a comparison of revolutions”<sup>18</sup> A co-operation between researchers with regional focus and the Marxist-Leninist core disciplines, the dialectic and historical materialism, the political economy and the academic communism was to be striven for in the study of the history of revolution.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to these more abstract studies, a number of academics dealt with the questions of how to apply the Marxist-Leninist doctrine more effectively to Africa, and what had to be done to spread this doctrine in Africa. Those African countries which supposedly had embarked onto a socialist path were seen as a good starting point. With the alleged advantages of Marxism-Leninism as a premise, African Studies academics were supposed to analyse the concrete societal conditions for its dissemination and effectiveness, with intensive theoretical and political instruction “This ideological work has to happen under world-historical and concrete societal conditions which are partly favourable, partly unfavourable for the dissemination of Marxism-Leninism.”<sup>20</sup> In a book on the socialist orientation of

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15 Autorenkollektiv 1974.

16 Mährdel 1983: 5.

17 „Nationale und soziale Bewegungen in Asien und Afrika“

18 Mährdel 1983: 5. „Übergangsformen zum Sozialismus in Asien und Afrika: Revolutionen und Revolutionsvergleich“

19 „Nationalkomitee für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik gegründet“, in: *Asien-Afrika-Lateinamerika*, no. 2, Berlin 1980: 231.

20 Büttner/Hoffmann/ Schmidt 1985: 135. „Diese ideologische Arbeit muß unter welthistorischen wie konkret gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen, die für die Verbreitung des Marxismus-Leninismus teils begünstigend, teils erschwerend wirken, erfolgen.“

African countries, the authors set up ten general characteristics for the acknowledgment of Marxism-Leninism in Africa. They assumed that the same historical rules of the worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism applied to all African countries and regions. Hence, one of the main tasks of African and Asian Studies would be “to analyse the rules of development in Asia and Africa, especially of our times, and thus to contribute to the theory of Marxism-Leninism”.<sup>21</sup>

The ideological class struggle, it was assumed, was increasingly dominated by the encroachment of Marxism-Leninism. It has been claimed on various occasions that in this conflict the struggle of Asian and African peoples against neo-colonialism, especially against West German and American neo-colonialism, would be impeded at the same time, for (West-German and American) neo-colonialism would threaten world peace through its politics. Especially at the end of the 1970s/beginning of the 1980s there were arguments, polemics and documentation with regard to this issue.<sup>22</sup>

Not even in diploma dissertations [comparable to South African Master’s level] were the core ideas of Marxism-Leninism compromised. There was a general consensus with regard to the theory of formation, as can be seen in the diploma dissertation of a Ghanaian: The aim of his study with Africa focus was “to record the rules which are the basis of the process of socio-economic and political development in every epoch”.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, even PhD-theses and other degree-earning dissertations by African people had to pay tribute to the goals of the class struggle. This can be seen, for example, in a rather good Political Studies PhD-thesis on the national development of Guinea from the 1960s to the end of the 1970s:

The purpose of this thesis is that its results are supposed to make clear the question of political power in Guinea (during the period of laying the foundations for socialism), as apparent from the analysis of party documents, studies emanating from the socialist countries (especially those by Soviet academics, whose research on the young nation states have yielded many

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21 SAPMO: Federal Board of the FDGB 1982: 3. „die Gesetzmäßigkeiten der Entwicklung in Asien und Afrika, insbesondere in der gegenwärtigen Epoche, zu erforschen und auf diesem Wege zur Bereicherung der Theorie des Marxismus-Leninismus beizutragen“

22 Cf. for example Friedländer/Liebscher 1978; Autorenkollektiv 1981; Institut für Politik und Wirtschaft der DDR 1983.

23 Asamo 1964: 6. „die Gesetzmäßigkeiten, die dem sozialökonomischen und politischen Entwicklungsprozeß in jeder Epoche zu Grunde liege, zu erfassen“

interesting results) and from the critical discourse with the bourgeois ideas, based on the classics of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>24</sup>

The existence of the USSR was the deciding international factor for the dissemination and adoption of academic socialism – this was the tenor of all studies, without exception, in Marxist-Leninist Regional Studies of the GDR which dealt with current problems and problems of the theory of revolution. In this there was a further hurdle for the debate on development theory in the GDR and for its practical implementation in the countries of the Third World. The strong focus on the Soviet colleagues in the subject resulted in a limited audience of the international discussions on theories, as Peter Jegzentis and Volker Wirth demonstrate:

A widespread reception of the increasingly differentiated Soviet theory of development was met by an insufficient critical discussion of Western research results – at least with regard to the central issues. This was even the case with a number of Marxist approaches of Western leftists. There was a partially ideologically motivated distance which could not be reasonably justified.<sup>25</sup>

However, it was postulated in the face of the more and more obvious difficulties in the first half of the 1980s that the spreading of Marxism/Leninism was no formal process or a matter of simply adopting it. “The adoption of academic Marxism is a [...] higher state of rapprochement with the world view of the working class.”<sup>26</sup> Marxism/Leninism as an ideology in Africa encountered “its original social basis in a very immature, underdeveloped form and can hence only [...] be of limited effect”<sup>27</sup> Due to widespread illiteracy in large

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24 Millimono 1982: 9f. „Die Untersuchungsergebnisse der Arbeit haben die Aufgabe, die politische Machtfrage in Guinea (in der Periode des Aufbaus der Grundlagen für den Sozialismus) aus der Analyse der Parteidokumente, der Arbeiten der sozialistischen Länder (insbesondere der sowjetischen Wissenschaftler, deren Forschungen über die jungen Nationalstaaten viele interessante Ergebnisse bringen) und aus der Auseinandersetzung mit den bürgerlichen Überlegungen auf Grundlage der Klassiker des Marxismus-Leninismus deutlich zu machen.“

25 Jegzentis/Wirth 1991: 72. „Einer breiten Aufnahme der zunehmend differenzierten sowjetischen Entwicklungstheorie stand eine unzureichende kritische Aufarbeitung von Forschungsergebnissen westlicher Provenienz – zumindest bezüglich grundsätzlicher Fragestellungen – gegenüber. Dies bezog sich selbst auf eine Reihe marxistischer Ansätze westlicher Linker. Zu ihnen bestand teilweise eine ideologisch motivierte – mit Sachargumenten nicht begründbar – Distanz.“

26 „Die Aneignung des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus ist ein [...] höheres Stadium des Herankommens an die Weltanschauung der Arbeiterklasse.“

27 „seine ureigenste soziale Basis in noch sehr unreifer, unterentwickelter Form und kann darum zunächst nur begrenzt [...] wirksam werden.“

parts of Africa and the low level of education, the possibilities of disseminating Marxism/Leninism, so it was said, were limited. Africa especially came to be seen as typical of the continuation of “historically backward forms of mass consciousness”.<sup>28</sup> As Marxism/Leninism was an academic discipline, it came to be believed that it should mainly be the intelligentsia who would be receptive to it. Büttner, Hoffmann and Schmidt maintained that only socialism could offer the African peoples the prospect of social improvement and overcoming underdevelopment, and argued that this should become accepted doctrine.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, they contended that, through the analysis of additional publications, one would see how Marxist-Leninist influenced Euro-centric categories were transferred onto African cultures and communities. All this shows how academics tried to interpret African societal structures with the aid of a monolithic class definition.

As already mentioned, amongst the GDR academics there were indeed those warning against such an inflexible Marxist-Leninist understanding of academe. Walter Markov had warned “repeatedly and fervently against the increasing tendency towards a scholastic theorising in Asia and Africa Studies without a differentiating view of the actual historical movement and against the questionable sectarian trend with regard to the mother disciplines”.<sup>30</sup> Markov, who had undertaken and inspired research on the ‘revolutionary processes’ in the Third World himself, had to concede later on that the term ‘revolution’ had been over-used and the potential for reform had, in turn, been unduly restricted, even devalued.<sup>31</sup>

Integrating developing countries into the capitalist world economy during colonialism was, for many authors, the central cause for the origin of underdevelopment. Furthermore, neo-colonialism was primarily (and one-sidedly) held responsible for the continuing existence, and intensifying of, underdevelopment in the present. The latter argument was at least partly ideologically motivated.<sup>32</sup>

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28 „historisch rückständiger Formen des Massenbewußtseins“

29 Büttner, Hoffmann and Schmidt 1985: 136ff.

30 Rathmann 1995: 185f. „wiederholt heftig gegen die um sich greifende Tendenz zum scholastischen, die reale geschichtliche Bewegung undifferenziert erfassenden Theoretisieren in den Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften und dem bedenklichen Trend ihrer inhaltlichen Abkopplung von den Mutterwissenschaften“

31 Markov 1989: 267.

32 Jegzentis/Wirth 1991: 72).

Of course Marxism-Leninism was the only recognised ideology in the study regulations for training in Regional Studies. This did not mean, though, that in the various lectures and seminars other topics were not introduced, albeit always under the premise that one had to analyse those critically.

Particularly suspicious were concepts of an ‘African socialism’. A basis and an example of all assessments of such attempts was the *real existierende Sozialismus* model in the GDR, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This was supposed to apply fundamentally for Africa too: “Of crucial importance is the growing influence of Marxism-Leninism on the African countries and the example of *sozial existierenden Sozialismus* in countries of the socialist community of states, spearheaded by the Soviet Union”<sup>33</sup> was a binding directive in the study regulations for the education in the so-called Regional Studies.

In another directive, the *Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen* (Department of Tertiary Education) determined a special training programme for the education of students of Regional Studies on selected problems of Marxism/Leninism. The aim of the training in the area of Marxism-Leninism was seen as being the:

strengthening and reinforcing of the knowledge gained in studies of the Marxist-Leninist foundations with the purpose to enhance the students’ capability to apply their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and to consolidate the inseparable unity of Marxism-Leninism and specialist training.<sup>34</sup>

During their five-year-studies of ‘M/L’ the students to be trained in Regional Studies were supposed to be taught “independently make a connection between the concrete manifestations

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33 Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen: *Studienplan für die Grundstudienrichtung Regionalwissenschaften zur Ausbildung an Universitäten und Hochschulen der DDR* (=Nomenklatur, no. 580), Berlin 1974. „Eine entscheidende Bedeutung kommt dem wachsenden Einfluß des Marxismus-Leninismus und der Vorbildwirkung des real existierenden Sozialismus in den Ländern der sozialistischen Staatengemeinschaft mit der Sowjetunion an der Spitze auf die Länder Afrikas zu“

34 Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachschulwesen: Lehrprogramm für das Lehrgebiet Ausgewählte Probleme des Marxismus-Leninismus, insbesondere zu aktuellen Fragen der Strategie und Taktik der internationalen und kommunistischen Arbeiterbewegung zur Ausbildung in der Grundstudienrichtung Regionalwissenschaften, Berlin 1982: 5. „Festigung und Vertiefung der im marxistisch-leninistischen Grundlagenstudium gewonnenen Kenntnisse mit dem Ziel, die Anwendungsfähigkeit der marxistisch-leninistischen Kenntnisse der Studenten zu erhöhen und die untrennbare Einheit von Marxismus-Leninismus und fachwissenschaftlicher Ausbildung zu festigen“

of the revolutionary process with the theoretical core positions of Marxism/Leninism”.<sup>35</sup> Through their studies of “cohesive works”<sup>36</sup> of the classics of Marxism/Leninism, the students were to obtain the ability to analyse societies. Core questions of international class struggle, on the other side, were to be researched mainly independently by the students in a special seminar.

A planned alternation of so-called information lectures, given by representatives of the *Praxisorgane* (mainly from foreign trade and foreign affairs, the Solidarity Committee, international departments from organisations and parties) and ‘problem-oriented discussions’ under the guidance of specific academics was to deepen the students’ interest in the topics up for discussion and to enable them “to actively form their own opinion on problems”.<sup>37</sup> To achieve this, three methodological goals were formulated for the students of Regional Studies: to continue working with the classic works of Marxism-Leninism in a systematic and goal-orientated manner, to enable students to analyse societal mechanisms through setting appropriate assignments in the seminars, and to practise the derivation of theoretical generalisations from the complexity of the concrete societal development. The main goal of the planned 150 hours of Marxist-Leninist training between the third and fifth year of study for the education of students of Regional Studies was:

to lead the students to the insight that a thorough study of the literature and mastering Marxism-Leninism were the deciding factors for being competent in their respective special fields of study. The seminars and lectures should also make the students aware of the fact that Marxism-Leninism has only ever had the interests of the people at heart, originating from the positions of proletarian internationalism; these seminars and lectures shall contribute to the development of a rationally and emotionally based solidarity with those peoples fighting for their complete liberation.<sup>38</sup>

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35 Ministerrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1982: 14. „eigenständige [...] Verbindung von konkreten Erscheinungsformen des revolutionären Prozesses mit den theoretischen Grundpositionen des Marxismus/ Leninismus“

36 „geschlossener Werke“

37 Ministerrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1982: 15. „selbst aktiv zu Problemen Stellung zu nehmen“

38 Ministerrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1982: 15. „die Studenten zu der Erkenntnis zu führen, daß das gründliche Literaturstudium und die Beherrschung des Marxismus-Leninismus die entscheidenden Voraussetzungen für die Beherrschung des jeweiligen Fachgebietes sind. Die Lehrveranstaltung soll den Studenten zugleich bewußt machen, daß der Marxismus-Leninismus immer von den Interessen der Völker und von den Positionen des proletarischen Internationalismus ausging, sie soll dazu beitragen, eine sowohl rational als auch emotional begründete Solidarität mit den um ihre völlige Befreiung kämpfenden Völkern zu entwickeln.“

It was not easy for members of the teaching staff to teach their subject from a never fully defined Marxist-Leninist point of view. Hence the higher authorities had to admonish repeatedly that a creative appropriation of Marxism/Leninism was necessary. According to them, what was needed was:

continuous learning which is not only necessary for the critical discourse with bourgeois teachings but which also offers the basis for a new way of implementing, in research and teaching, the latest developments in international research. [...] Without intensively studying the classics of Marxism/Leninism and their application, progress in the theory of our subject would not have been possible [...] as quite a number of those classics offer inspiration in the manner of textbooks, even prime examples for ethnographic analyses, even with regard to methodology<sup>39</sup>

The training of students in Regional Studies in the subject of Marxism/Leninism became more and more bizarre. In order to intensify the studies, the number of lecture/seminar periods in this subject had been increased since the beginning of the 1980s, to contribute “further and special strengthening of the Marxist-Leninist class position of the students”.<sup>40</sup> From the academic year of 1990/91 on, a new programme was to be integrated into the degree. In separate courses, the modules of “academic socialism” and “history of the SED” were to be introduced, which had already been compulsory in other sections, as departments were called in GDR universities.<sup>41</sup> Prior to this, special studies had been commissioned to analyse the relationship of Asian Studies, African Studies and Latin American Studies and the subject of “academic communism”.<sup>42</sup>

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39 Jacobeit 1986: 21f. „ein[ ] ständige[r] Lernprozesses, der nicht nur für die Auseinandersetzung mit bürgerlichen Lehrmeinungen notwendig ist, sondern der die Grundlagen dafür bietet, den jeweils erreichten internationalen Erkenntnisstand forschungs- und lehrmäßig neu umzusetzen [...] Ohne das intensive Studium der Werke der Klassiker des Marxismus/Leninismus und der Anwendung ihrer Ergebnisse (wäre) der theoretische Fortschritt unserer Wissenschaft nicht möglich gewesen [...] Bieten doch keine geringe Zahl der Klassikerschriften in geradezu lehrbuchartiger Weise Anregungen, ja Musterbeispiele für ethnographische Untersuchungen, selbst in methodologischer Hinsicht.“

40 Ministerrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1982: 5. „in besonderem Maße zur weiteren Stärkung der marxistisch-leninistischen Klassenposition der Studenten“

41 Cf. Kubitscheck 1996: 40. „in besonderem Maße zur weiteren Stärkung der marxistisch-leninistischen Klassenposition der Studenten“

42 Cf. Preissler 1981: 906.



Former deputy minister of education, Gregor Schirmer, elucidated the inner contradiction in which GDR's African Studies academics, and possibly quite a number of their colleagues in other fields, found themselves. In 1974, he demanded from academics in Regional Studies:

We expect a better academic understanding of the concrete societal development processes in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the uncovering of regularities, the analyses of the concrete effects of general regularities, and especially a better understanding of questions of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution.<sup>43</sup>

This postulation is three-dimensional. Firstly, original contributions to research are to be made (*better academic understanding*), secondly, the application of Marxism is postulated (*the uncovering of regularities*), and lastly, the *Leninist theory of revolution* is to be taken into account. Academics in the GDR dealing with questions of development policy had to achieve this kind of triangulation; they found themselves caught between normal, original research, Marxist doctrine and Leninist theory of revolution.

#### Aims of the development policy involvement

It would be rather unfair against those GDR nationals involved in development policy past and present if one insinuated that the policy they more or less supported and designed merely served the state's own interests – and that this in the end also served theirs. No serious researcher has really tried to claim this. Nonetheless it is not wrong to assume that support for young nation states and freedom movements in countries of the Third World (in this case, of Africa) also had political interests at heart. It was believed that, in places which lacked the prerequisites for a change of the political system in the near future, the implementation of a socialist oriented governmental system should be achieved through development aid from the GDR. The developing countries were to undergo far-reaching political, administrative and economic changes, thus following the *realsozialistisch* example and paving the way for

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43 Schirmer 1974: 709. „Wir erwarten ein tieferes wissenschaftliches Eindringen in die konkreten gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungsprozesse in Asien, Afrika und Lateinamerika, das Aufdecken von Gesetzmäßigkeiten, das Untersuchen der konkreten Wirkungsweise allgemeiner Gesetzmäßigkeiten, vor allem auch ein tieferes Eindringen in Fragen der marxistisch-leninistischen Revolutionstheorie.“

socialism.<sup>44</sup> According to Hillebrandt,<sup>45</sup> the key instrument would be supporting the process of industrialisation and rendering fundamental assistance in changing the agrarian sector of the country concerned in order to lay the foundations for a change within society.

The various countries receiving aid from the GDR did so with varying intensity. Those countries claiming to have embarked on the path to socialism would profit the most, no matter what the reality was. These were so-called focus countries. In the course of history the list of those countries changed, depending on the political system in those particular countries. Amongst others, the following African countries were at some stage or other focus countries for GDR Africa policy: Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania, Zambia, and most recently Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique, besides, of course, the liberation organisations of the 1970s in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. Towards the end of the GDR, the ‘focus countries’ of Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ethiopia and Mozambique were the recipients of 75% of the ‘foreign aid’ of the GDR.<sup>46</sup>

Today, German development aid policy again uses the concept of focus countries. This does not necessarily mean that the Federal Republic has learnt (at least in this respect) from the GDR; it rather means that at least the GDR development policy contained elements which still find their practical use even after the implementing state has ceased to exist.

### Theory and Practice

In the academe, changes were barely perceptible in the assessment of the import of the ‘national liberation movement’ as a part of the ‘three revolutionary main streams of our epoch’. For example, the existential problems of Mozambique and other countries supposedly embracing socialism were ignored and negated. However, in the GDR’s actual political practice, changes occurred which went largely unnoticed by the populace and in the academe. Of interest in this respect is a particular resolution by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED, dated 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1987,<sup>47</sup> which deals with the relations between the GDR and

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44 Cf. Spanger 1987: 200ff.

45 Hillebrandt 1987: 109.

46 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-Abt. X, no. 52: 27.

47 BStU: MfS-Abt. X, no. 52, Bl. 22ff.

the developing countries. The concept of solidarity definitely was relegated to third place in this document: “Aid for developing countries is supposed to be distributed in such a way that its effective implementation will be in agreement with all national economical interests of the GDR, the aims of foreign policy and the support of developing countries in the spirit of solidarity.”<sup>48</sup> (Emphasis U.v.d.H.) At the same time, the demand „to concentrate more on the focus areas of the economic co-operation for a further intensifying of economic relations”<sup>49</sup> arose, which meant a more commercial co-operation instead of developmental co-operation. However, in the year 1988 the GDR offered support (not counting government or special loans, payments in rates and overdue accounts) to the value of 999,100,000 GDR-Marks as well as 30,800,000 *Valutamark*. This translated into a total of 1,134,600,000 GDR-Marks. This made up 0.43% of the national income of the GDR. The amount was used as follows:

**Table 28: GDR Aid to Foreign Countries, 1988<sup>50</sup>**

Type of Aid	GDR Mark in millions	<i>Valutamark</i> in millions
Government gifts:	32.7	18.5
Mat. Supplies and services:	80.0	
Preferential pricing:	707.3	
Professional training:	40.0	1.5
Tertiary education:	90.0	0.5
Dispatching of experts:	33.0	10.0
Medical care:	12.0	
Voluntary UNO contributions:	4.1	0.3

The following passage of the Politburo of the SED resolution is of interest:

The material supplies and services are to be granted on condition that they can be procured by the Department of Materials and the divisions responsible for auditing.<sup>51</sup>

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48 „Hilfeleistungen gegenüber Entwicklungsländern [...] sind so zu gewähren, daß ihr effektiver Einsatz mit den *gesamtwirtschaftlichen Interessen* der DDR, den *Zielen der Außenpolitik* und der *solidarischen Unterstützung* der Entwicklungsländer übereinstimmt.“ (Emphasis U.v.d.H.)

49 „[sich] in größerem Umfang auf die Schwerpunkte der ökonomischen Zusammenarbeit für die weitere Vertiefung der Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zu konzentrieren“

50 Source: Author’s own calculation.

51 „Die materiellen Lieferungen und Leistungen sind in Abhängigkeit von den Möglichkeiten ihrer materiellen Sicherung durch das Ministerium für Materialwirtschaft und die bilanzverantwortlichen Organe zu gewähren.“

Indirectly, an important fact is intimated which tends to be mostly overlooked by critics of the GDR development policy involvement: Every person and every state can only give as much as they themselves have or can spare. And considering the number of inhabitants of this Germany, the widely-spread comparatively low work productivity, as well as the ubiquitous lack of commodities, the GDR's contributions were remarkable.

Due to the GDR's own economic difficulties in the second half of the 1980s, disadvantageous loans were nigh impossible; hence the *oberstes Leitungsgremium* in the GDR decided that already promised government and special loans would only be used for the continuation or completion of projects which had already come about through financial support. „Neue Objekte sind grundsätzlich auf der Grundlage international üblicher kommerzieller Zahlungsbedingungen zu vereinbaren“.<sup>52</sup> Therefore the SED Politburo rejected the application by Angola for a 'special loan' amounting to 65 million *Valutamark*.<sup>53</sup>

Despite granting some Third World countries loans on reasonable terms, the said countries were not in a position to pay off their accumulated debt. The Politburo thus gave out the directive that all possibilities should be explored in the interest of repayment of GDR claims and the avoidance of further outstanding claims.<sup>54</sup> In this context, requests to change the terms of debt by the African countries of Zambia, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique were denied.

Thus the GDR, at the latest in her last years of existence, changed her involvement formerly determined by development policy to an increasing commercialisation. The Politburo resolution dated 1 December 1987, bears testimony to this, by issuing the instruction that the existing contacts were to be handled “with special attention to the economic interests of the GDR”.<sup>55</sup>

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52 “New objects are to be negotiated without exception on the basis of the usual international commercial conditions of payment.”

53 BStU: MfS-Abt. X, no. 52: 25.

54 Cf. BStU: MfS-Abt. X, no. 52: 22ff.

55 Cf. BStU: MfS-Abt. X, no. 52: 25. „unter besonderer Beachtung der ökonomischen Interessen der DDR“

## CHAPTER 6

### Development Aid and/or Solidarity with the Liberation Movements in Southern Africa

#### 6.1. The Case Study of SWAPO

In almost all regions of the Third World, the GDR supported the struggle of the local peoples for national independence from the former colonial powers. The kind of support provided varied: the manifestations of solidarity ranged from verbal political comments to diplomatic and military operations as well as material non-military and personal help to overcome the colonial legacy. Usually the GDR institutions partnered up with so-called revolutionary parties and liberation organisations in the developing countries or the colonially suppressed areas. Trade unions were also favoured partners.

After the ‘African Year’ of 1960, when the majority of African countries had obtained their national independence, the remaining liberation movements having to fight for their countries’ national independence and/or the removal of racist minority governments were to be found almost exclusively in Southern Africa. It is thus obvious that the GDR development co-operation and solidarity was concentrated mainly on Southern Africa.

Hence one of the main foci of the GDR’s Africa policy was to support the liberation movements in what are today Namibia (SWAPO) and the Republic of South Africa (ANC). On occasion, Angola and Mozambique were counted as belonging to the region of Southern Africa. Both countries had a particular affinity to socialist Germany as they claimed to be intent on building up socialism. This topic has been academically researched to some degree; the focus being more on Mozambique than on Angola.<sup>1</sup> However, those two countries which rid themselves of the yoke of Portuguese colonialism will not be at the centre of this study.

According to the understanding of the history and the future in socialist countries, the so-called understanding of epochs, the national liberation movements were one part of the three ‘revolutionary world trends’. They were thus seen as a part of the character of the present-day epoch, i.e. roughly of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a definition provided by V.I. Lenin. As a

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1 Döring 1999; Döring/Rüchel (eds.) 2005; Voß 2005.

logical consequence, supporting the liberation movements the “revolutionary world process” could be activated in favour of the socialist camps. These were not geostrategic but indeed global political ideas.

We must not forget that, borne out of the history of the workers’ movement, the GDR had made support and solidarity with the peoples fighting for their independence an integral part of her foreign policy. For this reason, she was on the side of those peoples fighting colonialism and imperialism – in the first years of the GDR’s existence her leaders had mainly been officials of the German workers’ movement. The history of these relations had been researched far less exhaustively during GDR times than one should think. This fact was not even widely used for propaganda purposes.

The national and party relations of the GDR to the SWAPO and ANC liberation movements have been researched mainly by former GDR diplomat and specialist in the history of GDR – African relations Hans-Georg Schleicher, after the Fall of Socialism; yet the same cannot be claimed as emphatically about government endeavours which could be called development aid, although more recent research has been published in this field.

In the GDR, development aid policy was an integral part of her Africa policy, which is noticeable not least in the staffing involvement of its protagonists. This may be one reason that this topic has been of a limited interest so far. The contacts of GDR representatives with those of the liberation movements in Southern Africa go back to the end of the 1950s. First talks with SWAPO were conducted in 1960 by the ‘Komitee der DDR zur Unterstützung der Völker Afrikas’,<sup>2</sup> later on the GDR Solidarity Committee. More concrete contacts were made when SWAPO president Sam Nujoma visited the GDR in 1962. The printing of the programme of the former German colony’s liberation movement was agreed upon and a typewriter was offered as a gift.<sup>3</sup>

From these first tentative contacts a continuous co-operation emerged, which can be labelled development involvement in the spirit of solidarity as well as support for the political efforts to overcome the racist regime in Namibia. Ilona Schleicher describes the reasons for making contact as follows:

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2 Committee of the GDR for the Support of the Peoples of Africa

3 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin: DZ8/7306-622.

It was important for SWAPO to be recognised internationally as representative of the interests of its people and to convince the international community of the rightfulness of its struggle for self-determination. For the GDR, on the other hand, supporting SWAPO and other liberation movements was not only the implementation of the promulgated anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist and anti-racist foreign policy principles. By offering support, the GDR was at the same time serving its own particular interests, especially with regard to her foreign policy aims and her struggle for international diplomatic recognition.<sup>4</sup>

In 1966 for the first time the GDR published a statement concerning the problem of Namibia. Similar documents, which focus on the GDR's stance on the South West-Africa (later on: Namibia) question, had since then been passed on to the relevant UNO-organs<sup>5</sup> Often the GDR approach differed from that of the FRG.<sup>6</sup>

After the GDR managed to overcome the Hallstein doctrine (Cf. Kilian 2001), as practised by the Federal Republic especially in Third World countries, and to achieve the long-desired international recognition at the beginning of the 1970s, the GDR state party, the SED, initiated in 1977 direct party contacts with SWAPO. In the following year, SWAPO, the ANC and the Zimbabwean liberation movement ZAPU opened an office each in the East German capital of Berlin, with quasi-diplomatic status.

The co-operation with SWAPO had already reached its first pinnacle due to the worsening of the conflict between the Namibian liberation movement and the troops of the Apartheid regime who were unlawfully occupying Namibia. SWAPO then started to receive more support from the GDR. The material support increased up to 74,100 GDR-Marks in 1973. In the following year it was already 487,000 GDR-Marks.<sup>7</sup> The following table shows the extent of GDR aid for liberation organisations in Southern Africa:

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- 4 Schleicher, I. 1999: 2f. „Für die SWAPO war wichtig, international als Interessenvertreterin ihres Volkes anerkannt zu werden und die internationale Gemeinschaft von der Rechtmäßigkeit ihres Kampfes um Selbstbestimmung zu überzeugen. Für die DDR andererseits war die Unterstützung der SWAPO und anderer Befreiungsbewegungen nicht nur die Realisierung der verkündeten antiimperialistischen, antikolonialistischen und antirassistischen Prinzipien der Außenpolitik. Sie verfolgte damit in starkem Maße zugleich spezifische eigene Interessen, insbesondere hinsichtlich ihrer außenpolitischen Ziele und im Ringen um internationale diplomatische Anerkennung.“
- 5 Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft/DDR-Komitee für die Kampfdekade gegen Rassismus und Rassendiskriminierung (eds.): *Gegen Rassismus, Apartheid und Kolonialismus. Dokumente der DDR 1949 – 1977*, Berlin 1978: 123ff.
- 6 Cf. Neugebauer 1990: 28.
- 7 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1999: 3.

**Table 29: GDR aid for liberation organisations in Southern Africa  
(per thousand GDR-Marks), 1963 - 1974<sup>8</sup>**

year	ANC	SWAPO
1963	123.4	2.2
1964	173.0	35.0
1965	250.0	25.0
1966	150.0	* <sup>9</sup>
1967	* <sup>10</sup>	50.0
1968	207.6	12.8
1969	115.9	70.4
1970	168.7	31.6
1971	163.6	4.2
1972	210.0	* <sup>11</sup>
1973	337.4	74.1
1974	988.8	487.3

The monies above mainly financed material support, delegates' travel expenses and medical aid. Supplies for the so-called 'non-civilian sector' were part of it, which comprised mainly military equipment.

The Solidarity Committee organised, co-ordinated and financed the material aid for SWAPO. This particular, effective form of generating solidarity was, as Ilona Schleicher puts it in a somewhat old-fashioned way, an element of GDR Africa policy vis à vie the peoples of Namibia.<sup>12</sup> The Solidarity Committee of the GDR was headed and controlled by members of the Central Committee and of the MfAA.<sup>13</sup> Achim Reichardt, spearheading the Solidarity Committee in the 1980s, denied that anybody had "in any way influenced the area of responsibilities of the Central Committee,"<sup>14</sup> but it would be only realistic to assume that "at least at Central Committee-level"<sup>15</sup> decisions were influenced as to "for what the donations to

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8 Source: Schleicher, I. 1994: 151.

9 No Information available.

10 No Information available.

11 No Information available.

12 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 267ff.

13 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1999: 5.

14 Reichardt 2000: 131. „in irgend einer Form in die Kompetenzen des Solidaritätskomitees hineingeredet“

15 Reichardt 2000: 131. „mindestens auf ZK-Ebene“



the Solidarity Committee were used”.<sup>16</sup> The services of the Solidarity Committee were, like in other cases too, mainly financed by donations of the GDR populace.

Of course the GDR did have a foreign policy agenda with her national ‘development aid’ policy with regard to Africa. There is hardly any country in the world with development aid and foreign policy being managed completely separate from one another. Yet to accuse the GDR of having geostrategic interests in Southern Africa would mean to misinterpret her economic and military powers. With regard to the Soviet Union’s Africa policy, on the other hand, geostrategic motives may have played a role in Southern Africa. It would also not be realistic to attribute to the GDR the role of a „Bittsteller“ (supplicant)<sup>17</sup> or „Helfer“ (helper).<sup>18</sup> One could rather characterise the position of GDR policy/politics with regard to the Soviet Union in Africa generally as a ‘junior partnership’.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding Namibia, the GDR intended to end the unlawful occupation by the South African apartheid regime, to support a UNO-administered transition, and to hand over power to SWAPO as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people. Hans-Georg Schleicher, an ex-diplomat with great accomplishments in the field of documenting GDR relations with SWAPO, contends that this was reflective of a fundamental change in GDR Africa policy towards supporting negotiated compromises. This went beyond the original strategic orientation towards conflict resolution through support for suitably-selected liberation struggles.<sup>20</sup> In interviews with Dr. Schleicher, leading SWAPO politicians later on emphasised the particularly close relationship with the GDR as playing the most important role for the support of SWAPO, second only to the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup>

The GDR relations with SWAPO have been documented extensively by Hans-Georg Schleicher and will not be analysed any further in this work.<sup>22</sup> Our starting point of evaluation of the GDR development policy involvement regarding SWAPO shall be the two-pronged

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16 Meier 2000: 131; see also chapter on the Solidarity Committee. „was mit den Spenden an das Solidaritätskomitee gemacht wurde“

17 Sodaro 182: 106.

18 Bigler 1979: 193.

19 Schleicher, H.-G. 1994: 59ff.

20 Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 268.

21 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 268.

22 Cf. *ibid.* This work is highly recommendable for a general understanding of the close co-operation between the two partners.

form of support (as also noted by Schleicher): On the one hand, we have the political/diplomatic level, on the other the level of solidarity or development policy, with noticeable trends and variations in intensity of the relations.

From 1960 to 1977 the relations between the GDR and the Namibian liberation organisation SWAPO became increasingly effective. The support grew in the 1960s and at the onset of the 1970s, when it mainly took the shape of offering vocational training in the GDR, support with propaganda (e.g. printing of SWAPO publications) and even limited paramilitary and military services for PLAN, the military branch of SWAPO.

From 1977/78 to roughly 1981/82, the contacts intensified, especially at a higher level. Official party relations between the SED and SWAPO were initiated, material support was increased and new forms of humanitarian co-operation explored. Thus GDR doctors and teachers were active in SWAPO camps in neighbouring African countries. The military and security co-operation was intensified.

From 1982 to 1989/90 the continuing support was expanded and supplemented by co-operation and advice for strategic and conceptual issues through GDR advisors and through goal-orientated preparation of SWAPO for democratic elections, taking over power and government after independence would have taken place.<sup>23</sup>

The co-ordination of the manifold relations between the GDR and SWAPO with regard to development policy was maintained by the Solidarity Committee throughout all those years. Besides supplying material goods and staff to the SWAPO refugee camps in Africa, delegates of the Namibian liberation movement were invited for discussions; youth and trade union delegates as well as journalists were trained, young people studied at the universities and technical colleges of the GDR or underwent vocational training.

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23 Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 275.

**Table 30: Education/training expenses of the Solidarity Committee of the GDR for liberation movements in Southern Africa (Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe) per 1000 GDR-Marks, 1981 - 1989<sup>24</sup>**

Year	SWAPO	ANC	Mozambique	Angola	Zimbabwe
1981	1,105.3	240.2	43.2	No information available	No information available
1982	1,887.0	623.3	83.1	No information available	No information available
1983	4,438.0	867.2	10,763.4	2,197.2	317.5
1984	4,436.9	853.6	11,386.1	2,254.4	229.6
1985	5,295.7	813.5	13,778.6	3,529.6	225.5
1986	5,267.1	970.7	16,456.4	3,696.6	345.6
1987	4,581.2	1,071.2	21,279.8	4,016.2	1,091.6
1988	4,213.5	982.0	19,713.0	3,876.3	896.2
1989	6,236.9	825.8	10,561.8	3,122.7	847.8
Total	37,488.6	7,247.5	104,065.4	22,693.0	3,953.8

Until 1973 material aid for SWAPO was significantly lower than that for other liberation movements in the region. However, SWAPO received more training opportunities for skilled workers than other liberation movements from Southern Africa – the reason for this seems to be unknown. Hence SWAPO received 25,000 GDR-Marks in aid in 1965; the ANC, though, received ten times this in financial support. In 1973 SWAPO received financial aid to the value of 74,100 GDR-Marks, whilst the ANC was given 337,400 GDR-Marks.<sup>25</sup>

In 1974 SWAPO was under great pressure since thousands of young Namibians were leaving their country which was occupied by South African troops; the organisation did not know how and where to house them, and especially how these young people would receive any training and education. The GDR responded to an inquiry about this issue positively by increasing her development policy involvement considerably: The intended solidarity monies for Namibia were increased from 100,000 GDR-Marks to 500,000 GDR-Marks. The same amount was budgeted for 1975 for support. This amount was then doubled.<sup>26</sup>

The solidarity fund for Namibia was increased one more time in 1977, when in December of that year SWAPO president Sam Nujoma visited the GDR and initiated a new

24 Source: Schleicher, Ilona 1998: 69.

25 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1994: 151.

26 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin: DZ 8/SK 7306-662: Solidaritätskomitee, 26 May 1975.

phase of the GDR-SWAPO co-operation and thus of the development policy involvement. As a result of this visit, the GDR increased the solidarity monies for SWAPO in accordance with a Politburo resolution. Medication and medical equipment were sent, the SWAPO office in Berlin was opened, 200 vocational training places were made available, five teachers and two doctors were dispatched to SWAPO camps in Angola, an offer of equipping two hospitals was made, treatment of wounded SWAPO fighters in GDR hospitals was organised and the supplies of foodstuff and clothing were increased. Furthermore, Erich Honecker committed the GDR to supply weapons, ammunition, as well as documentaries and other propaganda material. Building up military relations was left to the NVA.<sup>27</sup> The pledge to print SWAPO publications (up to then, it had been the paper *Namibia Today* since 1975) was expanded.<sup>28</sup>

On 13 October 1978, a SWAPO office was opened in the presence of Sam Nujoma. The GDR financed the office as well as the flight tickets for the employees. The leader of this office was accredited with semi-diplomatic status by the president of the Solidarity Committee.<sup>29</sup>

When GDR president and party leader Erich Honecker met with Sam Nujoma in Luanda during his Africa visit in 1979, he granted the SWAPO president his request of an increased military support and relevant transport vehicles. He also symbolically handed over a cheque of 5,000,000 GDR-Marks.<sup>30</sup>

However, the support for the SWAPO refugee camps in Angola and Zimbabwe remained paramount. Here the GDR co-operated with relief organisations from Scandinavian countries, which also committed themselves to the Namibian refugees.<sup>31</sup> Tents, foodstuff, clothing, uniforms for the PLAN fighters, W50 trucks, furniture for kindergartens, teaching and learning aids for schools, and equipment for health centres were supplied. Teachers,

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27 Cf. Engelhardt 1993: 317ff.

28 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO): SAPMO-Bundesarchiv: DY 30/J IV 2/2 A-2119: Conversation Nujoma-Honecker; DY 30/J IV 2/2/1709: Report on Nujoma's Visit.

29 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 276.

30 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO): SAPMO-Bundesarchiv: DY 30/J IV 2/2 A-2219; DY 30/J IV 2/2/1709.

31 Cf. Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. 2000: 311ff.

doctors and medical staff from the GDR worked in the camps. The GDR supplied machinery and materials for the training centres and production facilities.<sup>32</sup>

The GDR development policy involvement for SWAPO was deemed by the advisors' observers to have been substantial. Hans-Georg Schleicher proposed the interesting, even spectacular theory:

The GDR supported SWAPO with humanitarian aid considerably and – contrary to the even greater Scandinavian aid – unconditionally<sup>33</sup>

On the whole, the solidarity support for the Namibian liberation organisation was very material and cost intensive, yet did not have many staffing implications. The media in the GDR reported very little concrete news on this work which carried a lot of responsibility and was often perilous.

### Schooling, Media and Vocational Training

Until the fall of the Wall in Berlin in November 1989, 1,400 skilled workers were trained from Namibia alone.<sup>34</sup> The former representative-in-chief of SWAPO in Berlin, Obed Emoula, said in an interview with Hans-Georg Schleicher that between 1979 and 1986 alone more than 2,000 Namibians had received their training in the GDR.<sup>35</sup> Between 1981 and 1989 the expenses for the training of Namibian youths increased from 1.1 million GDR-Marks to 6,2 million GDR-Marks.<sup>36</sup> Enrolling and schooling of the so-called SWAPO children in the GDR was part of the category of training. We will focus more intensively on this particular aspect of the co-operation of the GDR with the Namibian liberation organisation later on in this thesis.

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32 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 277.

33 Schleicher H.-G. 1999: 277. „Die Hilfsleistungen der DDR für die SWAPO im humanitären Bereich waren beträchtlich und erfolgten – im Unterschied zu den noch umfangreicheren skandinavischen Leistungen – ohne Auflagen.“

34 Cf. Bundesarchiv, Berlin: DQ 4/5388; DQ 4/5336: Übersicht zur Zusammenarbeit mit der SWAPO (1986–1990).

35 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 278.

36 Cf. Schleicher, I./Schleicher H.-G. 1997: 175.

## Treatment of the Sick and Wounded in the GDR

As for any guerrilla army, the medical care for the soldiers wounded in fighting or for fighters or their relatives taken ill presented a great problem. For this reason the SWAPO leadership had early on seen to medical care for their people, which the GDR had readily agreed to support when called upon. This particular kind of development policy involvement of the GDR with SWAPO started in 1976/77.<sup>37</sup> A number of GDR doctors were despatched to the SWAPO refugee camps, later on also nurses.<sup>38</sup> Up to 1989 a total of fourteen medical doctors from the GDR were active in the SWAPO refugee camps.

Back in Germany, the exact number of SWAPO fighters treated in GDR hospitals is unknown. We can assume that several hundreds of people injured in war were treated, whilst the number of roughly 300 Namibian patients as published after the fall of Socialism in the GDR press is too low.<sup>39</sup> On the basis of a number of interviews with SWAPO leaders, former diplomat Hans-Georg Schleicher contends:

The medical care of the wounded was of great significance especially due to the psychological effect this kind of help had on the refugees who thus learned that there was reason to hope for healing and rehabilitation for serious casualties, too.<sup>40</sup>

The wounded SWAPO fighters were nursed to health with other wounded from over 30 countries in a hospital of the Berlin-Buch clinic. After having recuperated in GDR hospitals, there often was the possibility of rehabilitation through professional training. When Sam Nujoma, as president of an independent Namibia, visited the re-united Germany, he insisted on expressing openly and publicly his gratitude for the solidarity and support from which he had benefitted in earlier times in both parts of Germany. During his first state visit to the FRG after Namibia's liberation, he arranged for a memorable meeting in Berlin, as he visited the new German capital at the end of his state visit. It was here that he and a large number of his

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37 Cf. Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft 1983: 71.

38 Cf. Kabus/Stradmann 1985.

39 Cf. *Wochenpost* 13/1990: 12.

40 Schleicher, H.-G. 1999: 279. „Der medizinischen Betreuung Verwundeter wurde durch die SWAPO große Bedeutung zugemessen, auch wegen der psychologischen Wirkung dieser Hilfe auf die Flüchtlinge, die erfuhren, daß es auch für Schwerverletzte Hoffnung auf Genesung und Rehabilitierung gab.“

delegates met up with SWAPO supporters and former comrades. The meeting had been organised by Christian Zippel (CDU), then chairing the social committee of the Berlin Senate and during GDR-times deputy director of that particular ward of the Berlin-Buch clinic in which hundreds of wounded SWAPO fighters and Namibian refugees had been medically attended from 1977 onwards, as well as Hans-Georg Schleicher, the first – and only – GDR ambassador to Namibia. On this evening, Sam Nujoma named two reasons for the special relationship between Namibia and Germany, which have been acknowledged and defined as such by others too: “Initially, when Germany was the colonial power and then through the close relations between SWAPO, then a liberation organization but now a majority party, and the GDR.”<sup>41</sup>

The SWAPO delegates expressed their gratitude especially for the support in professional training of young Namibians; the GDR’s taking in Namibian children, the teachers and trainers in SWAPO camps as well as the various other forms of humanitarian aid and the manifold military support of the liberation struggle.<sup>42</sup> The GDR citizens’ solidarity, their support for SWAPO’s aims would not be forgotten, said the Namibian Head of State during this meeting in Berlin-Buch.

During his visit to Germany, Nujoma also acknowledged and expressed his thanks for the support from West German groups. Within the University of Bremen’s “Namibia Project”<sup>43</sup> there were a great number of eager academic activists who were mainly known for compiling schoolbooks for the Namibian schools, especially for History (Mbumba/Noisser 1988). President Nujoma stated at the end of his sojourn that the state visit to Germany had been very successful, and that the meeting in Berlin was the icing on the cake.<sup>44</sup>

Ilona Schleicher seems to assess the GDR support for SWAPO correctly:

The heritage of East German solidarity with the liberation struggle is, on an official level, being treated rather differently in Namibia and the unified Germany. For SWAPO, the former liberation movement in power since 1990,

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41 Schmickler 1996: 94.

42 Cf. Schulz 1995; esp. 67ff.

43 Hinz/Melber/Modise/Patemann 1987: 25ff.

44 Reinert, Jochen: „Das i-Tüpfelchen von Berlin. Im Anschluß an die offizielle Staatsvisite traf sich Sam Nujoma mit alten Freunden“, in: *Neues Deutschland*, 25 July 1996, Berlin.

GDR solidarity during the liberation struggle forms part of the basis for the special relations of a free Namibia with the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>45</sup>

## 6.2. The Case of the ANC

The countries in the region of Southern Africa (including the Great Lakes region), i.e. the countries today called Namibia, the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland,<sup>46</sup> Angola, Madagascar, Tanzania, Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda,<sup>47</sup> Zimbabwe and Zambia did play a special, if not extraordinary, role in GDR foreign policy. The particular importance of the region of Southern Africa for GDR foreign policy was not due to potentially economically beneficial opportunities for GDR national economy or geostrategic aspects.<sup>48</sup> The deciding factor was rather that two of the countries in Southern Africa, Angola and Mozambique, after the liberation from Portuguese colonial subjugation, decided to declare themselves as being 'on the path to socialism'. In Namibia and South Africa, there were national liberation organisations which were known to be allies of the GDR in the fight against imperialism, war-mongering and apartheid. Within GDR foreign policy, Zimbabwe, or for many years the Zimbabwean liberation movements, occupied a separate and sometimes very ambivalent position.<sup>49</sup> Tanzania and Zambia were part of the states with which the GDR was friendly, although the GDR's hopes for developments towards socialism proved to be vain.

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45 Schleicher, I. 2008: 56.

46 Botswana and Swaziland were rather insignificant with regard to GDR foreign policy; the first trade contacts were established only in 1961. Cf. Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO): SAPMO-BArch, J IV 2/20/25. The disinterest of foreign policy and foreign trade were noticeable in academia as well.

47 The following comment by former FRG ambassador in Kigali, Reinhard Bindseil, in the book mostly dealing with colonial history, Ruanda und Deutschland seit den Tagen Richard Kandts (1988: 247), is interesting and revealing: „Angemerkt sei hier, daß sich in Ruanda kaum Interessenkollisionen mit dem anderen Teil Deutschlands, der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, ergeben haben. Diplomatische Beziehungen DDR – Ruanda wurden am 14. Februar 1973 hergestellt. Zuständig war jahrelang der DDR-Botschafter in Kampala/Uganda, ab Februar 1986 ist es der DDR-Botschafter in Kinshasa/Zaire. Er hat Ruanda einzelne Stipendien im landwirtschaftlichen und medizinischen Bereich zur Verfügung gestellt.“ [“We would like to add that there has not been much of a collision of interests between Ruanda and the other part of Germany, the German Democratic Republic. The diplomatic relations between the GDR and Ruanda were taken up on February 14, 1973. For many years the GDR ambassador to Kampala/Uganda was in charge; from February 1986 onwards, it has been the GDR ambassador to Kinshasa/Zaire. He made available a few bursaries in agriculture and medicine.”]

48 Cf. Matthies 1978: 176f.

49 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1994: 49ff; Schleicher, H.-G. 1995: 11ff.



An in-depth and at the same time extensive study of the economic relations between the GDR and countries of Southern Africa has yet to be compiled.<sup>50</sup> It is necessary to fill this gap in order to make public for academic as well generally interested parties the economic relations (which were top secret during GDR times) and the role that the office for the acquisition of foreign currency (*Ko Ko*) played.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the secret economic GDR relations with the Apartheid regime could be made public, which most likely were managed by *Ko Ko* and which, according to first reports,<sup>52</sup> had not been broken off as rigorously as GDR propaganda would then have had it.<sup>53</sup> Future research will need to yield reliable information, too, with regard to the military and secret service support the GDR rendered for countries or liberation organisations in Southern Africa.<sup>54</sup>

Contrary to other opinions, we can assume that most of those GDR citizens – be they diplomats, development workers or academics – dealing with the African continent in one way or another did so in the spirit of solidarity with the African people. This included, above all, those experts who were concerning themselves with the practical aspects of development policy in the southern parts of the continent. One particularity concerning the involvement of

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50 First findings have been published in Schleicher, I./Schleicher, H.-G. 1997; esp. 20ff.

51 The files of informal collaborators for the Ministry of State Security are particularly informative on the relations between the GDR and Mozambique and Angola, not only with regard to economics. For example, the file of informal collaborator 'Henry', who was a high-ranking officer of *Ko Ko* and head of the department of African Countries as well as special envoy, contains not only much information on the economy of the countries part of 'Henry's' brief, but also descriptions of the inner situation which in this clarity are not found in any other historical source. Cf. Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU, ZA: MfS-AIM 7735/91.

52 Cf. Heese 1994: 73ff; van der Heyden 2004; van der Heyden 2005.

53 Cf. for example Spröte/Wünsche 1975: 57. Research undertaken in the MfS archive brought to light that at least in the mid-1980s there were no such contacts. The Head of the NVA Reconnaissance, general-major Krause, informed the MfS in June of 1983 that NATO was preparing a document accusing socialist states of maintaining relations with the Republic of South Africa. NATO was supposedly in possession of information proving the import of raw materials from South Africa to the GDR and the People's Republic of Poland, especially asbestos and various kinds of ore, which were shipped to their destination via Swedish ports. According to this information, all NATO representatives in the socialist, non-Warsaw Pact and neutral states had been asked to gather information and "evidence" on all direct and indirect contacts of socialist states with South Africa. The request to the Reconnaissance central department was forwarded to the MfS leadership. On August 1, 1983, the deputy MfS minister, Lieutenant-General Mittag, after having obtained information from the responsible sections of foreign trade, said: "It has been confirmed that the GDR does not maintain direct economic contacts through third parties, nor does the GDR maintain indirect relations with the Republic of South Africa." It is unlikely that one GDR secret service would have been untruthful with another. (Cf. Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU, ZA, MfS-Arbeitsbereich Mittag, no. 140)

54 The first serious analyses have compiled: Schleicher, H.-G./Schleicher, I. 1994: 7ff; Schleicher, H.-G./Schleicher, I. 1997: 202ff; Engel/Schleicher, H.-G. 1998: 362ff.

representatives of the GDR public and policy with Southern Africa came about as a result of the German past. Ever since the South African War of 1899 to 1902, South Africa had played a major role in determining the image of Africa in Germany and furthermore the whole of Europe (Cf. Kröll 1973; van der Heyden 2002), which was also the case for the GDR. The southern part of the continent had also been discovered by the German bourgeoisie through the German missionaries. If one considers the personal connections and relations between the former colonies South West Africa and East Africa with Germans east of the River Elbe, and if one considers the host of emigrants from Germany to South Africa, it becomes clear that the GDR population had had comparatively strong cognitive as well as familial ties to Southern Africa which could have been used for the economy.

Since the 1960s the GDR was actively involved in the South African freedom movements. This involvement consisted mainly of four aspects, namely those of economic sanctions, solidarity campaigns, propaganda campaigns, diplomatic support of the freedom movements, as well as material support of the armed struggle.<sup>55</sup> Not only parts of the government but also many ‘simple’ inhabitants of the GDR were part of this involvement. The activities were co-ordinated by the GDR Solidarity Committee, which also financed students at tertiary educational institutions from countries and liberation movements in Southern Africa.

**Table 31: Number of students financed by the Solidarity Committee for tertiary education in the GDR<sup>56</sup>**

Academic Year	SWAPO	ANC	Angola	Mozambique	Zimbabwe
1983/84	52	45	232	218	18
1984/85	31	47	267	258	20
1985/86	52	47	290	318	24
1986/87	57	52	281	396	27
1987/88	67	43	308	337	24
1988/89	68	29	246	318	59

Solidarity of the people in the GDR with those in Southern Africa is a comparatively long-standing tradition. In a letter of July 1963, the SED assured the South African Communist Party of its support for the arrested ANC leaders during Rivonia<sup>57</sup> and of its decision to

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55 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1993: 45ff.

56 Source: Arbeitsmaterial von SODI International e.V., as published in: Schleicher, I. 1994: 157.

57 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1994: 104ff.

impose sanctions on South Africa. The GDR Minister of Foreign Trade then proceeded to instruct his subordinate authorities to discontinue trade with South Africa and let the export contracts expire, yet to stop the export of hunting weapons and matching ammunition at once.<sup>58</sup> This boycott marked the beginning of the long-lasting intense GDR support of the ANC and the South African communists in its many guises against the apartheid regime. From then on, the GDR was particularly active in solidarity campaigns for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. Although demonstrations of solidarity were often imposed by the GDR leadership, even the strictest orders from above would have fallen on deaf ears without personal involvement.

The former GDR diplomat Hans-Georg Schleicher<sup>59</sup> has discussed further instances of GDR support for the ANC in his contribution to the book, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*. As soon as the SED and the ANC established party-to-party relations, material assistance became an item in their mutual agreements. Procurement, transport and, of course, funding of “solidarity supplies” continued to lie with the Solidarity Committee. Working together with governmental agencies, the committee made the necessary arrangements for training and education for liberation movement members, and medical treatment for the sick and wounded. Supplies financed by the Solidarity Committee included paramilitary equipment. In addition to the supply of medicines and medical apparatus, medical treatment for wounded soldiers and civilians played an increasingly important part in the GDR’s solidarity effort from the mid 1970s. Wounded personnel of the ANC were treated in the 2nd Geriatrics Clinic in Berlin-Buch. Admission of patients was organised by the Solidarity Committee, and sometimes by the SED Central Committee, the FDGB and the Ministry of Health. Thus, Berlin-Buch acquired an international reputation as a place of humanitarian help and solidarity.

The GDR’s assistance in this field was very important in terms of emotional support. It had a great moral and psychological effect among fighters and refugees who had been exposed to the horrors of South African raids. It was encouraging for them to know that there was hope for recovery and rehabilitation, even in critical cases. Artificial limbs were in short supply in the GDR. Those responsible for procuring them had to develop initiative in contacting suppliers and finding ways to negotiate the obstacles of an economy ridden with

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58 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1993.

59 Schleicher, H-G. 2008.

shortages. Medical assistance for hundreds of wounded freedom fighters was a substantial part of the GDR's overall humanitarian help. This is well remembered among South Africans.<sup>60</sup>

The campaigns reflected the GDR's will to distinguish herself vis à vis the peoples of the Third World and in her own citizens' consciousness as a progressive German alternative to the FRG, which was supporting the apartheid regime.<sup>61</sup> The support of a democratic right to self-determination was diametrically opposed to the societal situation in the GDR, where individual and political rights were disregarded.

In the second half of the 1960s the GDR launched her support for international propaganda campaigns and the armed struggle of the South African liberation movement, the ANC. In 1967 the first edition of *Sechaba*, the ANC magazine whose printing and distribution, as well as two editors were financed by the Solidarity Committee of the GDR, was published. Later on the magazine was also printed in the GDR.<sup>62</sup> One-and-a-half years later the South African Communist Party (SAPC) appealed to the GDR to have its publication *The African Communist*, founded in 1959, printed in the GDR. The SED agreed, as this manifestation of solidarity suited the comparatively limited economical means of the GDR best and it gained her many sympathies for her international image.

These connections were established and maintained mostly outside the public gaze through the 1960s; yet from the 1970s on, after GDR Head of State and Party Leader Erich Honecker had visited Africa, particular manifestations of solidarity and co-operation by the GDR with the liberation movements were not as off-limits for the press and the interested public as in previous years.<sup>63</sup> In the GDR there was a certain, even measurable interest in South Africa's problems, even outside the field of politics. This intensified among the interested and compassionate GDR populace later on when the press reported extensively

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60 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 2008: 1125.

61 Cf., for example, Wenzel 1994.

62 Cf. Singh 1994: 129ff.

63 Cf. Kühne/Plate July-August 1980: 14.

about the occurrences in South Africa<sup>64</sup> in the wake of the ostracism of the apartheid regime, especially about events like the Sharpeville massacre or the Rivonia trial.<sup>65</sup>

However, there were very few personal contacts between GDR citizens and South African emigrants, amongst whom were not only black, but some white inhabitants of that country. For security reasons, the GDR leadership was not kindly disposed towards personal contacts with exiles living in the GDR. The MfS were thus extremely wary of uncontrolled contacts between GDR citizens and non-nationals. For example, its own employees, public servants, teachers, judges, and members of the army and police had to report contacts with foreign nationals and “foreign political parties and organizations” to their superiors. Correspondence between GDR citizens and people living in South Africa, too, was almost impossible due to the distrust of the secret services on either side. This led to the fact that even political allies or family relations found it very difficult to remain in close contact. As a result of apartheid security legislation, this was particularly the case for South Africans wishing to remain in contact with relatives and organisations in the GDR. In those cases, church authorities would often arrange with GDR border authorities that South Africans visiting the GDR would not receive a visa stamp in their passports. Other citizens of the Republic of South Africa who would not get into trouble at home for visiting a ‘communist country’ were able to move about in the GDR like any other tourists. Visits to South Africa were impossible for GDR citizens for many years. The first citizen to visit South Africa for three days was East Berlin lawyer and Erich Honecker’s representative for humanitarian issues, Wolfgang Vogel – he was supposed to organise the exchange of Nelson Mandela for the Soviet regime critic Andrej Sacharov, ultimately a fruitless endeavour.<sup>66</sup> In 1987 the GDR authorities permitted Reverend Helmut Schiewe to travel to South Africa.<sup>67</sup> Around the same time the deputy editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper *Junge Welt* visited the Republic of South Africa with SED Politburo permission to take part in the conference “The Conflict in South Africa and the Press” in Johannesburg.<sup>68</sup> These must have been the only GDR citizens

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64 Cf. Bäbler 1984.

65 Even a book translated from English was published on this topic: Bernstein, Hilda 1970: *Die Männer von Rivonia. Südafrika im Spiegel eines Prozesses.*, Berlin. Cf. as well Schleicher, I. 1990: 887 ff.

66 Cf. Hagemann 1995: 108.

67 Cf. Schiewe 1994: 94ff.

68 Cf. Husemann, Bettina/Neumann, Annette: *Die Afrikapolitik der DDR. Eine Titeldokumentation von Akten des Politbüros und des Sekretariats des Zentralkomitees der SED 1949 – 1989*, Hamburg 1994: 221.

who officially visited that country in Southern Africa between the beginning of the 1960s (when East Germany joined the sanctions against the apartheid regime)<sup>69</sup> and the Fall of Socialism.

Leaders of the ANC and SACP were highly respected in the GDR and granted treatment equal to that of other official guests. That was of special significance in the early years, when the ANC leaders could not expect a similar protocol treatment in too many places. Oliver Tambo met the GDR leader Erich Honecker after 1978 on a number of occasions. He and Nelson Mandela, as well as Yusuf Dadoo, were awarded some of the highest official state decorations in the GDR. A school in Ilmenau and other institutions were named after Nelson Mandela. As part of their extracurricular activities, these institutions collected “soli-funds” to show their identification with the ANC’s struggle for liberation. Activities to raise these funds included so-called “Bazaars” (where children sold home-baked foodstuffs and craft works), “Solidarity Concerts”, and participation in gathering in the agricultural harvest. The institutions also periodically hosted lectures and talks by ANC exiles and officials on the history and activities of organisation, and the nature of the liberation struggle. These were attended by the students, their parents and members of the local communities.<sup>70</sup>

The GDR proclaimed proudly that all forms of racist ideology, exploitation and oppression in the country had been destroyed root and branch. They argued that in what was now the GDR, the social forces that had exercised political and economic power up to the end of World War II were no longer practising and spreading racism, chauvinism and international hatred. There was no objective basis for racist ideology and exploitative practices in the socialist society of the GDR. Many foreign visitors gained the impression that feelings of racial and national hatred seemed quite alien to the people of the GDR, although developments in the East of Germany during and after the collapse of the GDR in 1989, with serious incidents of xenophobia and racism, question the efficiency of the eradication of racism. On the other hand, ANC and other national liberation movements found that anti-imperialist solidarity had become a feature of everyday life. Above all, they experienced the practice of this solidarity not only through the support they received from the GDR

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69 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1990: 283ff.

70 Cf. Schmidt 1988: 93 ff..

government or the solidarity committee, but also from a number of organisations and institutions.<sup>71</sup>

A rather important component of the interaction between the GDR and the South African liberation movement, the ANC, as well as the whole of the 'liberal' population of South Africa, were the academics and journalists who brought the news about the situation and especially of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa to their German readers. On the basis of the premise: "The GDR as part of the socialist world system regards it as her major duty to support this justified struggle [against imperialism and colonialism in Southern Africa], and contributes to this struggle especially through her politics against West German imperialism and neo-colonialism".<sup>72</sup> The parameters of research on South Africa in the GDR had been clear from early on. The relationship between the FRG and the South African apartheid regime were initially the focus of attention.<sup>73</sup>

In GDR Africa research, particularly in political publishing, the relationship between national and social revolution was an important aspect. The elimination of apartheid by means of implementing a social or even socialist revolution was considered necessary.<sup>74</sup> Even after the GDR party leadership had been informed about planned talks of the ANC with the regime in Pretoria about the elimination of apartheid through negotiations, this idea was still propagated in official declarations.<sup>75</sup>

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71 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 2008: 1086.

72 Editorial Premise in *ZfG* 1961: 5. „Die DDR als fester Bestandteil des sozialistischen Weltsystems betrachtet es als eine Hauptaufgabe, diesen gerechten Kampf [gegen Imperialismus und Kolonialismus im Süden Afrikas] zu unterstützen, und trägt insbesondere durch ihre gegen den westdeutschen Imperialismus und Neokolonialismus gerichtete Politik dazu bei.“

73 Cf., for example, Afro-Asiatischen Solidaritätskomitee der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (ed.): *Denkschrift über die militärische und atomare Zusammenarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Republik Südafrika*, Berlin 1964; Afro-Asiatischen Solidaritätskomitees der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (ed.): *Das Bündnis Bonn – Pretoria. Die Expansionspolitik der Bundesrepublik (West-)Deutschland im Süden Afrikas und ihre Basis in der Republik Südafrika. Denkschrift*, Berlin 1967; *Against Racism and Neocolonialism. For the Liberation of Southern Africa, Summary of Proceedings of the Scientific Conference*, Berlin 1968; Kramer 1971: 29ff; Czaya 1964; Babing 1974; Mader 1978; Frankenberg 1964: 108ff.

74 Autorenkollektiv 1980: 276: „Angesichts der entwickelten kapitalistischen Strukturen und der Existenz einer kampferprobten kommunistischen Partei in der RSA kann in der Perspektive ein relativ schneller Übergang von der nationaldemokratischen zur sozialistischen Revolution möglich werden.“ [“A comparatively quick transition in perspective from the national democratic to the socialist revolution is possible due to the developed capitalist structures and the existence of a struggle-trained communist party in the RSA.”]

75 Cf. Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO): SAPMO, BArch, J IV 2/20/30 9 [n.p.]: 29 Oct., 1986.

Only toward the end of the GDR, when it had become obvious that apartheid would be eliminated through the process of non-revolutionary course, did academics in the GDR feel that it was the right time to come up with new research insights. In a letter by the Section for African and Near Eastern Studies of the KMU in 1988, the most recent insights into the current political developments in South Africa were presented in the following phrases: “Connection between racism/apartheid and influence of speed and degree of societal progress”, “relationship between reform and revolution in South Africa”, “the particularities of the social development (advanced processes of class differentiation), of the ethnic-national development in the bantustans as well as the dimensions of the ANC assuming a leadership role”<sup>76</sup>

The GDR involvement in the liberation movements in Southern Africa was brought to the attention of the public through a number of publications in which, more often than not, the recipients of the acts of solidarity spoke up. In the 1980s, large print runs selected propaganda pamphlets on the then-current problems in Southern Africa were published.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the SED publishing house Dietz-Verlag edited a booklet containing speeches by Joe Slovo and Alfred Nzo which attained a large circulation.<sup>78</sup>

At the beginning of the 1980s, the various aspects of peace-keeping measures and conflict research in Southern Africa received increased attention.<sup>79</sup> Further foci arose in connection with the UNO struggle-decade against racism and racial discrimination in the first half of the 1980s, information about which in the academic journal *asien-afrika-lateinamerika* read as follows:

Due to the importance attributed to the problems of Southern Africa by the international public, GDR academics, as part of the Central Plan for research in the humanities, have analysed a series of core processes which play an

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76 Archiv der Universität Leipzig: ZM 4812 (n.p.) 1988, B1.2. „Zusammenhang von Rassismus/Apartheid und Einfluß auf Tempo und Grad des gesellschaftlichen Fortschritts“, „Verhältnis von Reform und Revolution in Südafrika“, „die Spezifik der sozialen Entwicklung (fortgeschrittene Prozesse der Klassendifferenzierung), der ethnisch-nationalen Entwicklung in den Bantustans sowie die Dimensionen der Realisierung einer Führungsrolle durch den ANC“.

77 Cf., for example, Schaffmann 1980; Brade 1982; Brade 1987; Arnold 1990; Baatz 1985.

78 Südafrikanische Kommunistische Partei und Afrikanischer Nationalkongreß – ein im Kampf geschmiedetes Bündnis. Ansprachen von Joe Slovo, Vorsitzender der Südafrikanischen Kommunistischen Partei, und Alfred Nzo, Generalsekretär des Afrikanischen Nationalkongresses, auf dem Meeting anlässlich des 65. Geburtstages der Südafrikanischen Kommunistischen Partei, London, 30. Juli 1986, Berlin 1987.

79 Cf., for example, Jatzlauk 1982: 185ff; Arnold 1985: 144ff; Babing 1975: 138ff.



important role in connection with the struggle against racism and apartheid, yet which have, so far, not been at the centre of research.<sup>80</sup>

These publications dealt in part with the black, or predominantly black, political organisations in South Africa,<sup>81</sup> as well as economic research.<sup>82</sup>

A closer look at GDR politics regarding the apartheid regime, especially when it came to diplomacy and academe, reveals at least nuances in continuity. A few years before the end of the GDR, those in charge of research were contemplating how to deal with the fact that the apartheid regime was clearly heading towards its end. An internal strategy document elaborated:

Preliminary considerations are to be initiated for a research co-operation with researchers from Israel and South Africa, most likely to take place towards the end of the 1990s, regarding various topics. We should direct our attention towards a future co-operation with academics from Namibia.<sup>83</sup>

Was it possible that the GDR was thinking about making contact with the hitherto avoided colleagues from the apartheid state? After all, it was the Soviet Union which had breached the international boycott by starting up economic relations and which had dispatched the first academics to South Africa at the beginning of 1989.<sup>84</sup> From the mid-1980s, there had been intense discussions anyway about whether international sanctions against the apartheid regime, in which the GDR had participated since the beginning of the 1960s, made sense and

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80 Anon.: „DDR fest an der Seite der Staaten und Völker Afrikas“, in: *Neues Deutschland*, 15 November 1984, Berlin: 95. „Angesichts des hohen Stellenwertes, den die Probleme des südlichen Afrika in der internationalen Öffentlichkeit einnehmen, haben Wissenschaftler der DDR im Rahmen des Zentralen Planes für gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Forschung eine Reihe von Grundprozessen analysiert, die im Zusammenhang mit dem Kampf gegen Rassismus und Apartheid von Bedeutung sind, aber bisher weniger im Mittelpunkt von Forschungsarbeiten standen.“

81 Deutschland 1984: 95ff.

82 Weinberger 1984: 110ff; Jatzlauk 1984: 121ff.

83 Regionalwissenschaften 2000: Grundsätze für die weitere Entwicklung der marxistisch-leninistischen Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften und Nordeuropa-Wissenschaften (Regionalwissenschaften) beim Übergang ins 21. Jahrhundert (manuscript): 6. „Vorbereitende Überlegungen sind für eine Ende der 90er Jahre abzusehende wissenschaftliche Kooperation zu Sachfragen mit Wissenschaftlern aus Israel und Südafrika anzustellen. Aufmerksamkeit sollte einer künftigen Kooperation mit Wissenschaftlern aus Namibia geschenkt werden.“

84 Cf. the hidden information in a review in Darch 1990: 329.

were fruitful.<sup>85</sup> () After all, the sanctions (even if never fully implemented and attracting reservations from the anti-apartheid movement in Western countries) were formally following those of the USA, the European Community and the Commonwealth States in 1986.<sup>86</sup> ()

In the end, the aim for GDR academics was merely to justify the official statements by the ANC and the South African Communist Party, both of which demanded sanctions. Academics had little difficulty in representing this attitude in their publications as it was also the attitude of the international states.<sup>87</sup> Early reform attempts of apartheid were rejected in this context.<sup>88</sup> In any case, the solidarity which the African people – especially from the southern part of the continent – enjoyed in and from the GDR has not been forgotten; any former GDR citizen identifying himself as such will experience this during a visit to South Africa. The two journalists Michael Behrens and Robert von Rimscha offered the advice that this could be capitalised on for the sake of the united Germany:

Intriguingly, the relations between Bonn and Pretoria could benefit from the legacy of the GDR. Nowadays, the former liberation movements associate the ex-GDR not so much with the weaknesses of its dictatorial system but rather with its earlier solidarity and support.<sup>89</sup>

However, with regard to South Africa the GDR experiences have also been negated after the German unification of 1990, although there has been testimony in the relevant academic publications to the fact that the GDR reputation to this day has had effects on the “African leadership”<sup>90</sup> – and this does not only apply to South Africa.<sup>91</sup>

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85 Cf. Schleicher, I. 1993: 45ff.

86 Cf., for example, Starnberger Institut zur Erforschung globaler Strukturen, Entwicklungen und Krisen e.V. (ed.) 1988; Sanktionen in der Diskussion (anon.) 1988 [check]; *Erklärung des Rates der EKD 1988; South Africa: The Sanctions Report, Prepared for the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa*, London 1989.

87 Cf. Weinberger 1988(a): 120ff; Weinberger 1988(b): 97ff.

88 Cf. Weinberger 1980: 1047ff.

89 Behrens/Rimscha 1994: 142. „Die Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Pretoria könnten künftig ausgerechnet vom Erbe der DDR profitieren. Die vergangene DDR wird heute bei den ehemaligen Befreiungsbewegungen nicht so sehr an den Schwächen ihres diktatorischen Systems gemessen, sondern an ihrer früheren Solidarität und Unterstützung.“

90 „afrikanischen Führungsschichten“

91 Jungbauer 1998: 25.

Table 32: Support by the GDR Solidarity Committee for SWAPO and ANC per 1,000 GDR-Marks, 1974 - 1989<sup>92</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>SWAPO</b>	<b>ANC</b>
1974	487.3	988.8
1975	1,001.9	929.1
1976	1,522.7	1,972.3
1977	2,262.4	2,421.3
1978	3,552.1	2,729.7
1979	6,133.4	3,289.1
1980	5,123.6	2,309.4
1981	5,954.5	2,968.8
1982	10,570.2	1,936.8
1983	6,009.6	2,207.9
1984	6,376.2	2,180.1
1985	4,160.6	2,003.9
1986	3,107.5	1,886.4
1987	3,409.7	2,630.9
1988	5,162.3	3,868.1
1989	9,323.2	3,972.6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>74,157.2</b>	<b>38,295.2</b>

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92 Source: Schleicher, I. 1998: 71.

## CHAPTER 7

### Selected examples of GDR development policy involvement

#### The Economy – Finances, a look at the results

In a first analysis after the demise of the SED leadership in the then still existent GDR, State Secretary Wolf-Dieter Graewe (appointed to cabinet by Lothar de Maizière) named the financial extent of GDR development services to have been 2.3 billion GDR-Marks on average for the years 1986 to 1988. This, he further stated, was based on figures by the former State Planning Commission, and represented the equivalent of 0.91% of the national gross product. As development experts from what was then the FRG noted with astonishment, according to these figures, the GDR thus exceeded, by a considerable margin, the percentage of 0.7% as suggested by the UN for that decade (official development assistance in relation to the gross national product). This also implied that the GDR was ranked among the elite of Western donor countries (in comparison for 1988: the Netherlands 0.98%, FRG 0.39%, Japan 0.32%, and USA 0.21%).<sup>1</sup> The total amount of 2.3 thousand million (British English)/2.3 billion (American English) consists of three items:

- 530 million GDR-Marks: services rendered free-of-charge, i.e. financial subsidies in usually non-exchangeable currency, but mostly as free-of-charge deliveries of goods.
- 720 million GDR-Marks: granting of preferential prices. The preferential prices were usually politically fixed for five years, as surcharge on the relevant world market price of, for instance, coffee, bananas, sugar, nickel, etc. The preferential price system with its proceeds obtained from exports thus made it easier for the benefitting country to import GDR industrial products and to repay its potentially amassed debt; furthermore, the GDR could secure the purchase of important raw materials in this manner.
- 1.1. billion GDR-Marks: government and special loans. The larger part of this was paid in transfer roubles or GDR-Marks, the smaller in exchangeable currency. The financial conditions were not standardised. They were negotiated from case to case and were ultimately based on relevant decrees by the Politburo. They ranged between

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1 Cf. Claus/Taake 1993: 247.

2.5% to 3% interest, with a period of eight to twelve years of validity. They thus roughly corresponded to the western ODA (Official Development Assistance) conditions of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. The surcharge, i.e. the mathematical difference between these preferential conditions and the usual market conditions, is said to have been between 35% and 45%. It was strictly cash on delivery – an almost automatic consequence of development aid consisting of goods. The same applied to financial services in GDR-Marks as there was no possibility to exchange GDR-Marks for hard currency. These three areas, rather distinct from one another regarding their application, as a whole formed what the GDR called financial development co-operation.<sup>2</sup>

For reasons pertaining to statistics and methodology, unambiguous values for the individual national products could not be calculated, and hence the DAC consciously abstained from determining the relation between ODA and the GNP of the FRG in percentage after 1988. As Claus and Taake make explicit in their article, the main obstacle was that price fixing was subject to completely different processes in planned economies and market economies; furthermore the ‘national product’ as determined in the RGW differed from the western definition of a GNP in that there were no deductions of the capital input and no consideration concerning the nett product regarding the service sector. In a study compiled even before the fall of the Wall, Sigfried Schultz presupposed that “East Germany had not reached the target set by the UN”,<sup>3</sup> i.e. that East Germany had not reached the 0.7% target.

The *Technical Co-operation*<sup>4</sup> of the GDR (which the GDR herself did not call by this name for many years) can be traced back to so-called solidarity benefits which were made especially towards the national liberation movements.<sup>5</sup> Mainly state institutions supported those; however, important activities initiated by the parties, the FDGB, the Women’s Association, the FDJ and the churches existed as well. The Lutheran Church, for instance, actively took part in the discussions surrounding South Africa policy<sup>6</sup> and denounced the negative impact of apartheid uncompromisingly. In 1989 the GDR had still sent – as part of

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2 Claus/Taake 1993: 248.

3 Schultz 1990: 319.

4 „Technische Zusammenarbeit“

5 Cf. summarising development policy activities: Schleicher, H.-G. 1996: 240ff

6 Cf. Adler, Elisabeth (ed.): *Wie lange noch? Apartheid als Herausforderung für Südafrikas Christen und Kirchen. Dokumente 1970 bis 1980*, Berlin 1982; Adler 1975; Adler 1985; Adler (ed.) 1975.

trade, scientific-technical or cultural co-operation agreements – about 1200 trained staff to approximately forty developing countries. These delegates normally worked in the host countries for free. On occasion, though, this procedure did not exclude charging for the training of persons from developing countries with a strong currency (e.g. Libya), or for personnel working in projects financed by loans.<sup>7</sup>

The regional focus towards the end of the GDR was on the developing countries of Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Cuba, Yemen, Laos, Algeria, Mongolia, Tanzania and Vietnam. Target areas included the sectors of agriculture and industry, the development of a centrally planned economy, the expansion of co-operatives, academic co-operation as well as education and continuing training, and – equally important – improving the mass media and adult education. A number of these projects, predominantly in the area of vocational training, were carried out by the FDJ Friendship Brigades, often called ‘blue-shirt ambassadors’. At the end of 1989 they were active in nineteen projects in eleven countries and with the ANC.<sup>8</sup>

Education and continuing training as part of the technical co-operation were of absolute priority. In the middle of 1990, about 7,400 bursary recipients from Laos, Vietnam, Mongolia, Cambodia, Yemen, Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Afghanistan were residing in the GDR. Of those, some three-thousand students were studying at universities, about one thousand in postgraduate training courses. Approximately five-hundred were studying at technical colleges; roughly three-hundred doctors were being trained; about eight hundred language students were enrolled at universities and technical colleges. The rest were receiving vocational and continuing training in almost all professions. Most of these bursary holders, especially those undertaking university studies, received a long-term education, taking several years. The vocational training for a skilled worker took three years. In this context, the highlight of socialist education policy was arguably the *School of Solidarity*<sup>9</sup> in Staßfurt. Founded as a result of agreements between Margot Honecker and Samora Machel, this afforded nine-hundred children from Mozambique their entire school education and vocational training with the aim of their becoming elite cadres in their home country after completion.

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7 Claus 1990: 5.

8 Cf. Winter 1989: 589.

9 „Schule der Solidarität“

As mentioned above, during the existence of the GDR, there was barely any reliable data about the quantity of the development policy involvement of the GDR. This limitation also applied to information about the number of citizens from developing countries trained in the GDR. The few available figures dating back to GDR times are thus of great import. The former Secretary General of the GDR Solidarity Committee, for instance, wrote in an article for the academic journal *asien-afrika-lateinamerika* about the motives for training people from the developing countries in the GDR:

Almost half of the solidarity monies from donations by the population is spent on financing the education and continuing training of citizens from the developing countries and national liberation movements like the PLO, Namibia's SWAPO and South Africa's ANC. In doing so, we believe that training cadres is political and material help at once, as teaching and training of cadres in the various areas will manifest itself later on in their home countries. [...] Training cadres should – and must be – of use to the developing countries for their speedy political, economic and cultural progress.<sup>10</sup>

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10 Reichardt 1985: 949. „Nahezu die Hälfte des Solidaritätsaufkommens aus Spenden der Bevölkerung wird für die Finanzierung der Aus- und Weiterbildung von Bürgern aus Entwicklungsländern und von nationalen Befreiungsbewegungen wie der PLO, der SWAPO Namibias und des ANC von Südafrika. ausgegeben. Dabei wird davon ausgegangen, daß Kaderausbildung politische und materielle Hilfe zugleich ist. Denn die Vermittlung von Wissen auf den verschiedensten Gebieten materialisiert sich bei dem späteren Einsatz der Kader in ihren Heimatländern. [...] Die Kaderausbildung soll und muß den Entwicklungsländern dienlich sein, damit sie die eigene politische, ökonomische und kulturelle Entwicklung rasch vorantreiben können.“

**Table 33: Foreign Trade Turnover with Developing Countries in Africa, 1955 - 1984<sup>11</sup>**

	1955	%	1960	%	1965	%	1970	%	1975	%	1976	%	1977	%
AFRICA	46.7	4.4	334.1	15.8	358.9	15.4	497.4	15.0	843.5	12.8	882.4	11.6	1,441.9	16.1
Egypt	43.6	4.1	261.7	12.4	234.9	10.1	389.7	11.8	639.6	9.7	559.2	7.4	546.3	6.1
Algeria	n.s.	-	0.4	-	1.7	0.1	23.1	0.7	72.9	1.1	120.3	1.6	101.3	1.1
Angola	n.s.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	236.0	2.6
Ethiopia	0.2	-	0.3	-	0.4	-	0.6	-	0.2	-	0.2	-	278.2	3.1
Ghana	-	-	7.0	0.3	53.0	2.3	2.2	0.1	13.7	0.2	9.1	0.1	17.7	0.2
Guinea	-	-	38.4	1.8	18.9	0.8	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-
PR Congo	n.s.	-	2.8	0.1	0.2	-	0.3	-	0.1	-	8.0	0.1	3.8	-
Libya	n.s.	-	0.5	-	3.2	0.1	6.4	0.2	12.1	0.2	63.3	0.8	84.8	0.9
Morocco	-	-	10.7	0.5	9.6	0.4	20.3	0.6	48.6	0.7	37.6	0.5	47.1	0.5
Mozambique	n.s.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24.9	0.3
Nigeria	n.s.	-	0.9	-	13.4	0.6	12.9	0.4	3.3	0.1	19.4	0.3	19.3	0.2
Sudan	2.9	0.3	11.1	0.5	9.9	0.4	24.0	0.8	33.3	0.5	47.7	0.6	51.3	0.6
Tanzania	n.s.	-	-	-	2.0	0.1	6.6	0.2	6.3	0.1	2.2	-	2.0	-
Tunisia	n.s.	-	0.3	-	11.7	0.5	10.3	0.3	13.4	0.2	15.4	0.2	29.2	0.3

Data in million *Valutamark* of the GDR (1955: million rouble); method: buying and selling country and current prices. The percentage figures have been calculated; they refer to trade between the GDR with all developing countries. All developing countries have been captured which had been registered in the *Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1983*, (p.237), plus Burma, Chile, Guinea dating back to earlier data. Source: *Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR*, various years.

11 Source: Spanger/Brock 1987: 248f.



Table 33: Foreign Trade Turnover with Developing Countries in Africa, 1955 - 1984 (continued)

	<b>1978</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1984</b>	<b>%</b>
AFRICA	1,635.7	16.7	1,607.4	15.2	2,328.0	17.9	1,941.5	15.8	2,179.5	15.6	1,726.7	11.8	2,338.7	15.6
Egypt	442.2	4.5	520.7	4.9	306.8	2.4	295.0	2.4	342.7	2.5	334.2	2.3	650.4	4.3
Algeria	324.0	3.3	247.4	2.3	538.9	4.1	249.7	2.0	463.7	3.3	308.9	2.1	296.9	2.0
Angola	233.7	2.4	311.6	2.9	275.0	2.1	193.5	1.6	264.3	1.9	255.2	1.7	797.8	5.3
Ethiopia	316.5	3.2	63.3	0.6	132.3	1.0	62.4	0.5	129.1	0.9	193.9	1.3	93.7	0.6
Ghana	15.5	0.2	4.4	-	49.5	0.4	46.4	0.4	74.7	0.5	115.7	0.8	112.5	0.8
Guinea	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-	n.s.	-
PR Congo	1.0	-	0.4	-	3.6	-	14.2	0.1	28.6	0.2	11.9	0.1	6.8	0.1
Libya	13.3	0.1	54.7	0.5	502.0	3.9	494.7	4.0	260.4	1.9	126.8	0.9	93.0	0.6
Morocco	71.2	0.7	52.0	0.5	61.4	0.5	39.5	0.3	38.6	0.3	48.5	0.3	38.3	0.3
Mozambique	130.5	1.3	227.3	2.1	274.5	2.1	368.0	3.0	411.8	3.0	222.7	1.5	109.0	0.7
Nigeria	14.4	0.2	31.3	0.3	74.5	0.4	148.3	1.2	137.9	1.0	14.6	0.1	9.5	0.1
Sudan	46.1	0.5	42.5	0.4	26.7	0.2	6.2	-	16.0	0.1	79.3	0.5	96.8	0.7
Tanzania	2.0	-	7.4	0.1	49.1	0.4	3.5	-	2.6	-	2.4	-	2.9	-
Tunisia	25.3	0.3	44.1	0.4	60.7	0.5	15.1	0.1	9.1	0.1	12.6	0.1	31.1	.02

### Cultural implementation (the media, journalism, sports)

From the early 1960s, the GDR was actively involved in development policy regarding culture. *The Schule der Solidarität*, affiliated with the International Institute for Journalism in Berlin, offered training and continuing training for foreign journalists, especially from Africa. The GDR also sent journalism experts to developing countries to aid them in setting up a press based on socialist principles. By focusing on various journalistic aspects like editing and methods of journalism, the journalists were taught the foundations of journalism for their home countries. Extensive aid was also given to sports, which enjoyed a high social status. The GDR sent sports equipment, offered courses at the *German University for Physical Education*<sup>12</sup> in Leipzig for selected foreign bursary holders, or sent skilled trainers and supervisors abroad.

### Political-administrative aid

Certain political and administrative conditions had to be created in order to transform a Third World country according to socialist principles. The GDR followed the same patterns here as in almost all areas of educational-technical co-operation. On the one hand, foreign students were offered education and continuing education at GDR institutions. On the other hand, cadres were dispatched to individual countries to supervise the political developments there and possibly influence them. Besides the various SED party academies and SED-affiliated organisations like the FDGB or the FDJ, the *Institute for Local Government Politics*<sup>13</sup> in Weimar was of great significance.

Administratively, the GDR Convention of Municipal Authorities had been responsible for the training of cadres from developing countries since 1955. At first, the training of foreign cadres had to take place in facilities not owned by the organisation. This changed with the founding of the *Institut für Kommunalpolitik* in 1968, which created an institution in its own right.<sup>14</sup>

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12 „Deutsche Hochschule für Körperkultur“

13 „Institut für Kommunalpolitik“.

14 Schmidt-Streckenbach 1984: 12.

The Institute's mission was not only to educate and train specialists and leaders, but also to be an intermediary between the various countries and consequently to focus on an exchange of experiences of the training. This meant that the GDR model was either not, or was barely, forced upon the course participants. Hence, seminars were the chosen form of teaching method, enabling discussion and the exchange of experiences. This assessment does not mean that there were no attempts made at conveying the "experiences the GDR made building a socialist society"<sup>15</sup> to the course participants. Civics, history, economy and finances were all part of the curriculum, and the classes of course were influenced by the socialist world view.<sup>16</sup>

One of the few usable sets of statistical data on the GDR development policy involvement dating from a time when the state still existed comes from a 1985 article by the former Secretary General of the GDR Solidarity Committee, Achim Reichardt. He contended that between 1970 and 1985 more than 16,000 young citizens from developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America successfully completed their studies at the GDR tertiary education institutions. According to Reichardt, more than 60,000 young people from these regions obtained vocational training or a job qualification during this period. Reichardt also mentions the fact that thousands of cadres of national and social organisations in the developing countries came to the GDR for training courses during this period due to bilateral agreements, UN agreements, or agreements of other international organisations. This enabled them to acquire a solid knowledge of their respective fields and exchange experiences.<sup>17</sup>

### Industrial aid

Aiding the industries of developing countries was an important part of the GDR development policy involvement as, according to the socialist way of thinking, it was essential to the establishing of socialism as a form of government. It was therefore of paramount importance to quickly launch a competitive heavy industry, as well as modern mechanical large-scale production, in the developing countries. This, it was envisaged, would enable them to reach the level of the industrialised countries, and to establish to some extent a globally competitive

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15 „Erfahrungen der DDR beim Aufbau der sozialistischen Gesellschaft“

16 Cf. Schmidt-Streckenbach 1984: 17ff.

17 Reichardt 1985: 949.

economy. Initially, the GDR followed this premise regarding her industrial aid, and in the 1970s alone, 650 projects were completed in developing countries, including cement factories, textile companies, petrochemical plants and printers.<sup>18</sup>

In this context, we should also mention the coal-mining in Moatize, Mozambique. As the GDR lacked natural resources, it was understandable enough that they sought to exploit deposits of raw materials in friendly countries. After Mozambique had obtained independence, and after diplomatic relations had been established, up to five-hundred specialists were sent to Mozambique to explore hard coal deposits and to mine them industrially.<sup>19</sup> After some initial difficulties due to accidents, problems developing the necessary infrastructure, and similar obstacles, a co-operation was set up in 1977. This took the form of an *immediate measure*,<sup>20</sup> which was mainly concerned with the dispatching of mining experts and mining equipment.<sup>21</sup> This co-operation was formalised by the signing of the *coal agreement*<sup>22</sup> on 24 April, 1978. After this, the material and personal aid was expanded further by deploying an FDJ brigade and by increasing payments made by the Solidarity Committee. The economic co-operation in the coal-mining area of Moatize became more and more a matter of prestige due to hard coal supply losses and supply difficulties with brown coal. In addition, the purchase of Mozambican coal held out the possibility of minimising, if not fully removing, the need to purchase the expensive western variant in order to cover domestic requirements for coal.

Despite all initial euphoria and the massive employment in Mozambique in connection with it, the GDR leadership had to realise at the beginning of the 1980s that the Moatize project was not worth it. There were various reasons for this: the GDR could not process the coal, and there were considerable transport problems. Furthermore, the Mozambican workers were unskilled. The lasting rebellion in the adjacent region exacerbated the problems in Moatize. Nevertheless, the GDR continued to invest in the mine.<sup>23</sup> As the difficulties persisted and as there was no question of profitability of the coal-mining venture (not even the most urgent requirements could be met), the GDR started to withdraw from Moatize from 1982 onwards. In the end, the GDR suggested to Mozambique in 1989 that the mine in Moatize be

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18 Spanger/Brock 1987.

19 Cf. Döring 1999: 186.

20 „Sofortprogramm“.

21 Künanz 1993: 174ff.

22 „Kohlevertrag“.

23 Döring 1999: 193ff.

closed down. In summary, we can state that this “most extensive and most intensively pursued project”<sup>24</sup> of the GDR in the developing countries failed due to its ambitiousness, a lack of planning, short-sightedness, and a misjudgement of the Mozambican project partner; not to mention the financial losses.<sup>25</sup>

### Agricultural and infrastructural aid

It was clear to the agricultural theorists and experts in the GDR that the overwhelming majority of the population in Africa was living in rural areas and from agriculture. There were attempts in the 1960s and 1970s to collectivise agriculture in African countries along GDR lines. However, a more realistic view emerged by the 1980s. According to a GDR expert, this was because “the solution of the agricultural and food question has become a key problem in the countries with a socialist orientation”<sup>26</sup>

As it turned out, it did not matter in the end whether the leaders of a particular country had proclaimed that country to be socialist, non-capitalist or capitalist. Securing survival by securing the necessary foodstuffs for the population took precedence. This was of great importance and significance as Mozambique and Ethiopia were two of the countries ‘on the socialist path’ in those years affected by the famine in Africa. Despite the climatic problems, this made apparent the failures of the agricultural policy as practised thus far.<sup>27</sup> *Die beiden deutschen Staaten in der Dritten Welt*, a popular book (even in the GDR) on the “GDR colleagues”, commented that:

Even if, from their point of view, socio-economic changes are imperative, it still seems as if the GDR was intent on slowing down the agricultural reforms in the future, limiting the agricultural mass production to a few products, not ignoring family enterprises anymore and opening up to technically less intricate ways of production.<sup>28</sup>

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24 „umfangreichste [...] und am intensivsten betriebene [...] Vorhaben“

25 Döring 1999: 198ff.

26 Scharschmidt/Stelter 1984: 803. „die Lösung der Agrar- und Ernährungsfrage [ist] zu einem Schlüsselproblem in den Ländern der sozialistischen Orientierung geworden.“

27 Cf. Semin-Panzer 1983: 223ff.

28 Spanger/ Brock 1987: 231. „Auch wenn aus ihrer Sicht sozialökonomische Umgestaltungen unerlässlich sind, so hat es doch den Anschein, als wolle die DDR künftig das Tempo der Agrarreformen bremsen, die landwirtschaftliche Großproduktion auf nur einige Güter beschränken, Familienbetriebe nicht länger ignorieren und sich zudem technisch weniger aufwendigen Produktionsmethoden öffnen.“

The sector of agriculture in Africa remained a focus study area for development strategists over the years. They argued that, in addition to industrialisation, agriculture in particular would bring about political changes in the young African nation states. Aiding the sector of agriculture supposedly would help to restructure the entire society.<sup>29</sup> However, despite this, and despite its importance for other Eastern Bloc states, in the actual implementation of GDR development policy, aid for agriculture in African countries was not of central importance. Up to the end of 1975, there had only been thirty-seven registered agrarian projects.<sup>30</sup>

Often agricultural projects could not be limited to one sector alone. Hence a speciality of the GDR 'development aid' was building and maintaining repair and service points for trucks, tractors and combine harvesters, the last-mentioned of which were exported to Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Madagascar and also to Nicaragua.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the GDR supplied industrial facilities for the processing of agricultural products as well as for grain, oil and rice mills, which were delivered and set up by the GDR. Overall there must have been about one-hundred of those; other sources claim twice the number of deliveries.<sup>32</sup>

Besides agricultural experts and technicians of a number unverifiable today, the *FDJ Friendship Brigades*<sup>33</sup> played the biggest role in agriculture. In the repair and service points, they were to manage the mechanical equipment and had the responsibility for training young interested Africans. During the harvests, GDR experts were also responsible for the technology and training of local workers, for example to steer combine harvesters. A special consulting company was created in the GDR for consulting and planning tasks, the Agro-Consult in Dresden. It offered solutions for land development, farm development, the processing of grains and milk as well as for the production of baby food and drinks.<sup>34</sup>

Besides personnel and technical aid, training and education in matters agrarian occupied an important space in the GDR development aid involvement. These were mainly administered by the export enterprise VEB Interagrarkooperation Leipzig-Markkleeberg. Students from the Third World could obtain the academic degree of certified agrarian

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29 Cf. Hillebrand 1987: 109.

30 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 232.

31 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 232; FN 359.

32 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 232; FN 360.

33 „FDJ Brigaden der Freundschaft“

34 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 232.

engineer at the *Institute for Agriculture of the Tropics*<sup>35</sup> at Leipzig University from 1960 onwards. By 1980, a total of 212 students completed five-year undergraduate studies, ninety-nine obtained a doctoral degree, seven the degree of “Doctor of Academic Disciplines”,<sup>36</sup> which, conforming to the Soviet example, had replaced the earlier *Habilitation*,<sup>37</sup> and 245 participants completed postgraduate studies. The tasks the Institute had set for itself also comprised research independent from other institutions (including the two Cuban and Ethiopian branches), the preparation of GDR experts for their work in the Third World, and regular international summer schools addressing the problems of tropical and subtropical agriculture.<sup>38</sup>

There was an even greater number of non-academic participants from the Third-World who completed job-related training, either at the *Agrar-Ingenieur-Schule* in Altenburg, or at the Centre for continuing training Zschortau, part of the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food Economics. At the School, more than five-hundred students and interns from forty-seven countries were trained until 1982. By this date, the Centre had trained a total of eight hundred specialists, from twenty-five developing countries, in the thirty-one three-month-long courses it had organised in planning and leading agricultural enterprises. Other agricultural schools too, like the *Association of mutual agricultural aid*<sup>39</sup> (VdgB) in Teutschenthal, where more than 1600 agriculture specialists obtained training between 1961 and 1985, had participated in the past in the training of agriculture specialists from the Third World.<sup>40</sup> More recent data is unfortunately not available.

Apart from these possibilities for vocational training, there were also ten-month-long courses organised by the Technical University of Dresden for UNESCO and UNEP (UN Environmental Program) The seventh of such courses took place as early as 1984, hosting environmental specialists from fifteen countries discussing questions of soil management, irrigation and ecology in general.

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35 „Institut für Tropische Landwirtschaft“

36 „Doktor der Wissenschaften“

37 A second, higher-level PhD (or equivalent). In German-speaking countries, it is essential to obtain this before one can become a professor. (Under certain conditions, a second book can count instead of this.)

38 Cf. Fröhlich 1977: 97ff.

39 “Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe” (VDgB)

40 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 233

Compared to the projects and personnel assistance in the Third World, the GDR agricultural training aid was rather extensive. However, this aid, too, could not do justice to the demands, given the immense importance of this particular economical sector in developing countries. Due to famines, for example, in Ethiopia or Mozambique, the GDR leadership came to the conclusion that in developing countries the agricultural and food question had become “a key problem of the socialism”.<sup>41</sup> This was a new-found quality in the supplementary process and had consequences for the GDR development policy involvement. Yet, the question remained as to how African agriculture, characterised by subsistence economy, could become a modern, productive agriculture?

The GDR aimed at a socialist remodelling of agriculture, which basically meant establishing *Collective farms*.<sup>42</sup> Equipped with modern technology and aided by artificial fertilisers and pesticides, the LPGs were to secure at least the national supply of agrarian products, or even to sell the surplus on the global market.<sup>43</sup> These aiding measures<sup>44</sup> could consist of local political and specialist training of staff by GDR experts or at various specialist institutions in the GDR, but there was also the possibility of setting up rural workshops and repair workshops for engines or of model farms and irrigation systems.

A functioning infrastructure was necessary, though, to distribute the goods produced in the countryside amongst the population. This was a problem recognised in the infrastructurally less well resourced developing countries, whose transport networks often dated from colonial times. Therefore, the GDR was also involved in the development of the infrastructure and the transport network by exporting many trucks of the *W-50* and *L-60* types to Africa<sup>45</sup> and supplying heavy machinery like dockside cranes to the developing countries. To a certain extent and in accordance with her economic potential, the GDR aided the improvement of the road and rail networks, as in Moatize or Ghana, and was involved in the development of their communication networks.<sup>46</sup>

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41 Spanger/Brock 1987: 203. „Schlüsselproblem des sozialistischen Weges“

42 Hillebrandt 1987: 116. „Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften“ (LPG)

43 Spanger/Brock 1987: 230.

44 Hillebrandt 1987: 118.

45 Cf. Hundt 1994: 31ff.

46 Cf. Spanger/Brock 1987: 234.



## Educational aid

The educational aid rendered actually deserves a separate academic dissertation dedicated entirely to it, as it was a very extensive, if not the central part of, GDR development aid. We are thus going to try to give a mere overview of GDR educational aid, for it can be traced in almost all areas of the educational-technical co-operation.

Due to bilateral treaties and agreements with developing countries, foreign guest students and workers were sent to the GDR to be trained in their respective areas of professional expertise. Already in 1951, students from North Korea and Nigeria were enrolled in the GDR. Subsequently, the influx of foreign students and guest workers increased steadily. Especially in the 1980s, more and more African students and skilled workers came to the GDR, a situation which was indicative of the intensive relations with the countries of origin of those students and workers in those days.

During the last decade of the GDR's existence, an average of about 6,500 places were offered for vocational training and 250 for studies; all cost-free due to bursaries, as long as the bursary holders came from countries with similar ideologies. Although other countries would also be offered places to study, from 1982 onwards these countries would have to pay for the training and education due to a more commercial approach by the GDR.<sup>47</sup>

In summary, we can conclude that on an educational level, there was a lively exchange between the GDR and a number of developing countries. GDR teachers taught abroad, foreign children were sent to specially created schools in East Germany for their schooling. The *Schule der Freundschaft* in Staßfurt is one example, where at times up to nine-hundred Mozambican children received schooling which up to this day is recognised as having been of a high pedagogical quality.<sup>48</sup> The education and training of the so-called "SWAPO children" or – depending on the point of view – "GDR children" from Namibian refugee camps is another example.<sup>49</sup>

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47 Spanger/Brock 1987: 236.

48 Cf. Rüchel 2001; Rüchel 2002: 258ff.

49 There are a number of academic publications, articles, TV and radio programmes. Cf. for example Kenna 1999; Timm 2005: 77ff.

## GDR educational and vocational aid for Africa

The educational and vocational aid offered to Third World countries was usually of a bilateral nature, resting on international long-term agreements. The most common forms these agreements on educational and vocational aid took were agreements on educational co-operation, treaties on cultural and academic co-operation, agreements on the training of specialists, agreements on the co-operation regarding healthcare, and agreements on the co-operation of civil organisations (trade unions, friendship societies, associations, etc.)<sup>50</sup> These general long-term agreements were specified through detailed treaties between the various institutions and enterprises of the partner countries. We can discern three forms of GDR educational and vocational aid:

- a) Training and staff aid by the GDR in the context of other activities pertaining to the educational co-operation (as discussed above),
- b) Training of citizens of Third World countries in the GDR and
- c) The GDR contribution to improving the education and training in the developing countries themselves.<sup>51</sup>

On a); the GDR aided the developing countries with staff and training as part of agreements regarding educational co-operation, in connection with machinery and especially exports of entire factory plants. Thus, on the one hand, GDR experts were dispatched to the relevant developing countries to work on projecting, planning, advising and installing, and to instruct and train the local workers to use the new machinery and plants. Furthermore, as part of this kind of aid, on occasion, training concerning the technical side of production would be conducted for local workers in the GDR, usually taking place with a relevant supplier. The developing country would be billed for the costs for personnel and vocational training aid, and then credited as part of the financing of the educational co-operation.

On b); Training for citizens of the developing countries in the GDR. Here, too, we can discern two different types of GDR aid. Firstly, citizens from Third World countries

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50 Cf. Lamm/Kupper 1976: 141.

51 Cf. Hendrichs 1981: 48.

completed or continued their vocational training in enterprises, universities, colleges or technical colleges of the GDR. Secondly, interested parties like party officials, labour union or youth functionaries, journalists and members of co-operatives from Third World countries came to the GDR to receive functionary training and/or socio-political training. The GDR almost exclusively financed this aid.

Students from developing countries usually were admitted to technical colleges or tertiary institutions as part of the agreements on cultural and educational co-operation, or through international mass organisations like the World Federation of Trade Unions. Before they started their studies at one of the roughly seventy possible tertiary institutions in the GDR, the candidates would complete a preparation course at the *Herder-Institut* in Leipzig. Those future students were trained especially in the German language. If the students from developing countries were not individual applicants (which was not the norm), the GDR government typically covered the study fees, a bursary, social services (e.g. medical aid) and partially the transport costs from and back to the country of origin. For internships in GDR enterprises and technical colleges for citizens from developing countries, the GDR also paid for training, bursaries, social services and partially for the transport costs. Lastly, the GDR paid all costs for the so-called functionary training courses and the socio-political training of citizens from developing countries. The training institutions themselves frequently raised the necessary funds, as the course participants were, as a rule, impecunious labour union, youth or party functionaries.<sup>52</sup>

On c); the GDR educational and vocational aid in the actual developing countries was a special form of GDR development policy involvement which varied in intensity over the years. Since the 1980s, the GDR had given aid to education and training in the developing countries. On the one hand, GDR staff (experts, consultants, teachers and university lecturers) were dispatched to Third World countries to train local specialists. On the other hand, the GDR was of assistance in the construction of training facilities and paid in part the costs of the technical equipment. From 1970 to 1985, roughly 25,000 GDR specialists, especially engineers, technicians, teachers, vocational trainers, doctors and other medical personnel had worked in developing countries (not only in Africa).<sup>53</sup> A typical example of this kind of development policy aid was the work of a small team of educationalists and doctors training

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52 Cf. Lamm/Kupper 1976: 142.

53 Cf. Reichardt 1985: 949.

medical students at Gondar University in Ethiopia. In 1984 alone, and with very few personnel, fifty-seven young Ethiopian doctors successfully completed their degrees.<sup>54</sup>

The GDR educational and vocational aid for developing countries began at the end of the 1950s and increased continuously. The extent of this aid can be gleaned from the number of GDR specialists dispatched and the number of citizens from developing countries who obtained some kind of training in the GDR. However, there are no exact and consistent final details to be found in research literature. We have the following figures: up until 1963 there had been apparently 150 dispatched GDR experts, in 1965 over eight-hundred and in 1971 more than 1,800.<sup>55</sup> Other sources claim that from 1964 to 1966 there had been about 1,000 GDR experts in the Third World, and up to 1973 more than 1,300.

There are the following figures on the number of citizens from developing countries in the GDR for educational and vocational training: In 1970, there had possibly been 4,700 of them; between 1965 and 1973 more than 3,000 students from developing countries obtained a degree from a tertiary institution, and between 1966 and 1970 about 2,000 citizens from Third World countries obtained vocational training without studying.<sup>56</sup>

GDR activities regarding educational and vocational aid for developing countries (excluding liberation movements) were focused on particular countries and regions. Special regional focal points were the Arabic as well as the African states of Guinea, Tanzania, Sudan, Mali and Somalia. Regarding the centre of attention concerning sectors, the GDR educational and vocational aid concentrated on technical-industrial and agricultural disciplines.<sup>57</sup> Due to the lack of labour and foreign currency in the GDR, the educational and vocational aid, especially regarding personnel, was limited.<sup>58</sup>

We may safely assume that the GDR educational and vocational aid, and that of the entire Eastern Bloc, was central to her development policy activities. The exchange of experiences and the knowledge transfer was indeed of great importance to the developing countries.<sup>59</sup> While Marxist indoctrination may have been one motive for the GDR – and this

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54 Reichardt 1985: 949.

55 Cf. Lamm/Kupper 1976: 140.

56 Lamm/Kupper 1976: 140.

57 Cf. Hendrichs 1981: 52.

58 Cf. Hendrichs 1981: 52.

59 Hendrichs 1981: 53.

motive for this particular kind of development aid should not go unnoticed – yet it was not the main reason for this special form of development policy involvement.

Educational and vocational aid in connection with other activities of the educational co-operation was particularly suited to guarantee a quick and uncomplicated handover of projects the GDR had implemented in developing countries, which was much appreciated by her partners in Africa. The particular developing country provided funding in support of the aid in those countries; if not, all the costs for the dispatching of experts were covered by the GDR. However, the GDR did pay when dispatching specialists and teachers: it usually amounted to the difference between the income in the developing country and the income he or she would have had in the GDR.

The financial and organisational conditions of GDR educational and vocational aid were mostly to the advantage of the developing countries, particularly in training citizens from developing countries in the GDR. This meant that the so-called “brain drain” could be prevented, for almost all graduates returned to their home countries and the foreign students were guaranteed sufficient social security because their studies were fully funded.

A considerable part of the educational and vocational aid mainly financed by the SED concentrated on multipliers from developing countries and included political-ideological instruction, as we have already demonstrated. The SED also wanted to gain long-term possibilities to influence the socio-political development of the developing countries through those courses, although we must be realistic in our assessment of these activities. In order to be able to influence participants ideologically in courses of limited duration, there always had to be a topical component, not to mention one of quality in agreement with the GDR leadership. Even educating students and academics from developing countries seemingly free of ideology served the purpose of gaining their sympathies for the GDR and tying them to the GDR from a technological-industrial and a psychological point of view (about which the author of this thesis has some understanding).

## CHAPTER 8

### New principles of development policy towards the end of the GDR

After the people of the GDR had elected a new government, led by CDU premier Lothar de Maizière, on 18 March 1990, a new department was created for development policy co-operation, the *Ministry for Economic Co-operation*<sup>1</sup> (MWZ). This was led by Wilhelm Ebeling, a Dresden parish priest who, at the time, was still a member of the *Deutsche Soziale Union* (DSU). Thus, for the first time, there was a ministry in the GDR fully responsible for development aid for Third World countries. The transfer of competencies regarding development co-operation, which up to then had been decentrally managed, onto the MWZ necessitated not only the capturing of all former GDR institutions, but also the devising of new theoretical principles which were to be implemented into practical work. The ministry, for which employees first had to be recruited from other institutions, set up three main starting points:

- to assess matters pertaining to the past critically and as objectively as possible,
- to go on with projects which especially helped people in the Third World and
- to attempt to achieve a development policy publicity together with NGOs, orientated mainly towards the fundamental values of justice, peace and conservation of nature, as well as the granting of human rights and human solidarity.<sup>2</sup>

These tasks were echoing the new premier de Maizière's inaugural speech. On 19 April 1990, he had declared:

The real problems in our world, as we all know, are not German-German problems or East-West problems. The real problems arise out of the structural injustice between North and South<sup>3</sup>

Hence the government programme, a coalition agreement dating from 12 April 1990, read:

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1 „Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit“

2 Ebeling 1990.

3 Ebeling 1990: 1. „Die eigentlichen Probleme in unserer Welt – wir wissen es alle – sind nicht die deutsch-deutschen oder die Ost-West-Probleme. Die eigentlichen Probleme bestehen in der strukturellen Ungerechtigkeit zwischen Norden und Süden.“

The reduction of tension in the East-West relations offers Third World countries new chances for development. Together with all developed countries in Europe, the GDR and the future united Germany stand by their obligation to work towards a reduction of the North-South difference, the creation of a fairer world economy, decrease armament exports and contribute to the understanding and tolerance between cultures.<sup>4</sup>

These statements determined the foundations for the new start of GDR development policy, and constituted a declaration of a share in the responsibility to solve global problems. Intensive consultations with the FRG concerning development co-operation had been planned to further the efficacy of the joint efforts and came to pass due to the future German unification.

The *Development Policy Round Table*,<sup>5</sup> created as a consequence of the fall of the Wall and which had developed its own development policy foundations,<sup>6</sup> supported the MWZ regarding contents and theory. However, there were some senior staff in this ministry who came from the Federal Republic or who had West German advisors.

Neither the Round Table nor the MWZ came to a completely negative verdict about the GDR development policy involvement, unlike the BMZ later on, after unification. Yet we have to point out that many assessments and evaluations by the new employees and senior staff of the MWZ were based on faulty or fallacious foundations, due to a lack of specific knowledge. The experts in development co-operation, as it was now officially called, were barely consulted. Still, the new ministry staff would not dismiss entirely or overwhelmingly the development policy involvement as some specialists and politicians from the FRG did for obvious political reasons. Many were facing the new challenges with optimism and great enthusiasm.

At the beginning of 1991, the relevant West German ministry came to the following conclusion, which is, as we demonstrated earlier on, mostly absurd:

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4 Ebeling 1990: 1. „Die Entspannung im Ost-West-Verhältnis bietet den Ländern der Dritten Welt neue Entwicklungschancen. Gemeinsam mit allen entwickelten Ländern Europas steht die DDR und das künftig geeinte Deutschland zu der Verpflichtung, auf den Abbau des Nord-Süd-Gegensatzes hinzuwirken, eine gerechtere Weltwirtschaftsordnung zu errichten, Rüstungsexporte abzubauen und zu Verständnis und Toleranz zwischen den Kulturen beizutragen.“

5 Cf. Belle 1996. „Entwicklungspolitischer Runder Tisch“

6 epd-Entwicklungspolitik (ed.): „Grundsatzserklärung des Entwicklungspolitischen Runden Tisches“ (*Materialien* V/90), Frankfurt on the Main 1990.

We have to be critical in our assessment of GDR development aid. The aid was mainly orientated towards criteria of the international class struggle, not towards the interests and needs of the developing countries. Furthermore, aid was in later years used increasingly to obtain basic and raw materials for the GDR which was short of foreign currency. The efficacy and sustainability of GDR development aid suffered due to these aspects. However, there were good attempts, too, which will be continued by the government of the Federal Republic and which enrich the development policy spectrum.<sup>7</sup>

Immediately after the MWZ had been created, work on a publication began which was to set up the principles of the GDR development policy involvement, as there were not any comparable written directives. Opposition members and their work were of assistance in this matter.<sup>8</sup> The departure point in the small brochure, which could only be published towards the end of the GDR and which today is only of historical value, was a brief description of the social and economic situation in the Third World, concluding that the state of affairs was characterised by poverty and hunger. It was stated that the GDR populace was very concerned about this threat to the existence of the majority of the people in the Third World. According to the brochure, the many different situations of the various continents, countries and local structures made the assessment of the problems exceedingly complicated, characterised by especially the following points:

- roughly three quarters of the world population were affected by the effects of underdevelopment,
- the number of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) had risen to forty-one,
- about 840 million<sup>9</sup> people lived below the subsistence level. Their income was insufficient to cover basic needs like food, housing, health and education.

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7 Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit, Pressereferat (ed.): „Abschlußbericht über die Fortführung von Entwicklungshilfeprojekten der ehemaligen DDR“ (=BMZ Informationen, no. 1), Bonn 1991: 3. „Eine wertende Bilanz der DDR-Entwicklungshilfe muß kritisch ausfallen. Die Hilfe war in erster Linie an Kriterien des internationalen Klassenkampfes und nicht an den Interessen, Nöten und Bedürfnissen der Entwicklungsländer orientiert. Im übrigen wurde die Hilfe später zunehmend dazu benutzt, der devisenschwachen DDR Grund- und Rohstoffe zu verschaffen. Unter diesen Aspekten litt die Wirksamkeit und Nachhaltigkeit der DDR – Entwicklungshilfe. Dennoch gab es auch gute Ansätze, die von der Bundesregierung fortgesetzt werden und die das entwicklungspolitische Spektrum bereichern.“

8 Cf. for example Bindemann 1990: 11ff.

9 In other documents by the “Ministerrat der DDR” there is mention of 950 million people.



Furthermore, according to the brochure, the overwhelming majority of developing countries would be subject to the following characteristics:

- a high population growth-rate that did not keep up with the food production of many countries,
- increasing unemployment and underemployment worsened the social situation of the population,
- a lack of, or poor, healthcare,
- a high rate of illiteracy,
- continuous draining of net resources and capital from the developing countries,
- high debt (ca. 1.3 billion US\$) and extreme conditions of debt discharge with concurrent necessary measures of structural adjustment
- continuous export difficulties through the industrial countries' trade protectionism with concurrent deterioration of the terms of trade,
- shortage of traditional energy sources (at that moment, 2 billion people were dependant on firewood as well as animal and plant waste/scraps),
- increasing destruction of, and threat to, the environment; and
- increasing expenditure on armaments in most developing countries.<sup>10</sup>

For the first time in GDR history, the principles of development policy were defined comparatively free of ideology. The ministry assumed that GDR development policy would be oriented towards the fundamental values of justice, preservation of peace and the natural environment, respecting human rights, and human solidarity. In order to achieve these aims, the highest possible participation of the population in the Third World in these developmental processes would be necessary.

Nobody knew for how much longer the GDR would continue to exist when these principles of development policy were proposed. It was nevertheless stated that the development policy of the GDR was to form a part of overall state policy, especially with regard to foreign affairs. It was also emphasised that awareness of the global problems of humankind and of the urgency of their solution required the forming of a sense of shared

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10 Ministerrat der DDR, Ministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit: *Grundlinien der Entwicklungspolitik der DDR*, Berlin 1990: 2.

responsibility between East and West as well as North and South, in which the GDR was to participate actively. The starting point was the insight that in future, peace and international security would be increasingly dependent on non-military, but economic, social and ecological factors. In achieving this, the following principles were to be heeded:

- Economic and foreign affairs policy as well as development co-operation were to be implemented according to co-ordinated criteria as harmoniously as possible to achieve an integral development policy.
- Development co-operation would henceforth take place on the basis of partnership and independent of ideologies and worldviews, respecting the right to self-determination of the developing countries.
- Development policy would henceforth take into account the different conditions, socio-cultural peculiarities, interests, needs and expectations in the developing countries.
- The main focus was to be on developing the abilities and achievements of the people in developing countries.<sup>11</sup>

The aims attached to the development policy involvement were quite novel for the GDR. It was recorded expressly that the aim of GDR development policy was the improvement of the economic and social situation of the people in developing countries and the developing of their creative abilities, that aid should enable those countries to help themselves. Aid was to be aimed at securing basic living conditions, especially for the poorest, linking up with the efforts by the developing countries to build strong economies which were adapted to the specific conditions and independent. This kind of development policy, according to the Ministerrat der DDR, advanced the regional co-operation of developing countries and their integration into the global economy.

After these rather general aims, the following intentions were marked as paramount in this document which would have been of strategic quality, had the GDR existed for longer as an independent, internationally recognised state:

- The GDR was to recognise and pursue the aim of making available 0.7% of the GNP for development co-operation and aid.
- These funds were to be used mainly to satisfy basic needs, supporting the economic activities of the developing countries.

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11 Cf. Ministerrat der DDR 1990: 3.

- Fighting poverty was to have priority in all development co-operation measures.
- The GDR wanted to promote further progress in the relations of the developing countries amongst each other.
- All efforts on international, national and regional level for fairer world economy structures, preserving human rights and participation were to be supported.
- The GDR was to participate more actively in multilateral UN programmes and other international organisations.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, it was assumed (somewhat unrealistically from today's point of view) that the economic and social reforms in the GDR, as well as in the developing countries, would take place using resources in an effective and ecologically safe manner. Hence the establishing of regional and municipal structures for development co-operation was to be started, with central support and guidance. With the exception of the *Bundesland* of Brandenburg,<sup>13</sup> the success was rather limited.

In conjunction with NGOs, the GDR population was to be educated about the critical condition in the developing countries and the collective responsibility for the solving of those problems.<sup>14</sup> In this respect, too, the German unification happened too quickly. An independent development policy education in the GDR did not come about.

When the 'principles' were formulated, it was absolutely clear that GDR development policy did not start from scratch with her first freely elected government. Hence the evaluation of already existing development aid projects would have had to start with the examination and assessment of their actual development policy efficacy. Central criteria would have been the prioritisation of the development of the least developed countries (LDCs), the needs especially of the poor parts of the population and the elimination of military and purely politically orientated aid, the MWZ publication contends.<sup>15</sup> Thus the traditional co-operation with Angola, Ethiopia, Yemen, Cambodia, Cuba, Laos, Mozambique, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Vietnam was to be continued.<sup>16</sup> A further aspect, according to the MWZ publication, was planning and implementing projects which would

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12 Cf. Ministerrat der DDR 1990: 4.

13 Cf. Hundt, Walter (ed.): *Handbuch. Brandenburger Eine-Welt-Gruppen, Aktionsläden, Initiativen, Organisationen und Institutionen* (=Brandenburgische Entwicklungspolitische Hefte, no. 2), Potsdam 1992.

14 Cf. Ministerrat der DDR 1990: 4.

15 Cf. Ministerrat der DDR 1990: 5.

16 Cf. Ministerrat der DDR 1990: 5.

especially improve the situation of women and their status through the process of development. Jointly with the developing countries, the new GDR government, in accordance with its profile, wanted to focus on the following specific areas:

## 1. Education

Basic education, literacy and complex and integrated vocational training were seen as being elements of social development and mobility. They were further seen to be directly linked to profession, work and the role of women and family. Education and training oriented on needs and structures were to be seen as a basis for the economic development according to the various conditions. The following programmes and projects were to be pursued:

- the then current treaties concerning the education or training of usually young people from Third World countries in the GDR were to be examined for their usefulness for the sending countries, and – where applicable – were to be brought to an end,
- the MWZ was to strive for suitable education and training. This was never to be orientated towards single, defined professions, but was also to make possible combined job profiles available,
- it was seen as being preferable to run and support education and training programmes in the developing countries themselves, by dispatching educators and trainers,
- specialists as well as trainers and educators were to receive continuing vocational training in the GDR,
- in future, postgraduate studies at institutions for tertiary education were to be increasingly supported.

## 2. Healthcare

One of the most important duties regarding this sector was, according to the MWZ, the elimination of grave shortages in health care staff and funding. Especially the poor conditions in rural areas were to be improved, taking population growth into account. Special focus was to be placed on:

- Continuing training of non-doctoral medical staff, and training of specialist doctors from developing countries at GDR institutions,

- setting up or supporting the setting up of medical facilities in Third World countries, ensuring gradually that these facilities would be well-run by staff from the developing countries,
- consolidation of research co-operation.

### 3. Food Security, rural development, protection of the environment and resources

In these areas, the focus was supposed to be on the sustainable effective improvement of the living conditions, especially of people in rural areas. This was designed to secure the adequate supply of food to the population mostly independent from imports in general. Ecological damage was to be repaired and new damage to be avoided. The MWZ envisaged the following measures for the solution of these problems:

- promoting purposeful agricultural training, appropriate for the conditions of the respective country, and research on the basis of integrated development concepts,
- consulting and co-operation regarding the development and application of appropriate agricultural technologies and production processes which were socially, economically and ecologically sound and took into account the country's specific conditions,
- co-operation on projects for the securing of agricultural resources, especially reforestation, soil protection and fighting desertification,
- contributing to the establishing of predominantly self-sufficient rural areas (production structure & marketing).

### 4. Trade and industry

It was explicitly recorded that the purpose of development co-operation regarding industry was to develop local capacities for the production and processing of local raw materials, as well as the production of goods for domestic use. The support of trade was the foundation for covering the basic needs of a broad spectrum of the population and would slow down the migration to urban conglomerations with a comparatively better infrastructure. Focal points of development policy involvement in this case were:

- projects serving the purpose of satisfying the basic needs of the population, developing and utilisation of natural resources and application of environmentally friendly technologies. Processing industry projects were to be given priority to cover the demands of the domestic market as well as of the energy and water supply. Conditions

for the participation of GDR enterprises in such projects were to be created and the bureaucratic requirements were to be alleviated.

- Promotion of co-operation between middle-class enterprises and enterprises in developing countries, with a particular focus on projects in the informal sector. The goal here was to improve the situation of women in developing countries.
- All projects in trade and industry were to be checked for their environmental friendliness.

##### 5. Implementation of development policy measures

According to the minister responsible, the Ministry for Economic Co-operation (MWZ) was in charge of the overall co-ordination of the development co-operation with African, Asian and Latin American countries. Existing structures had to be checked and used accordingly, potentials furthered and projects developed through their implementation in practice. According to the MWZ, the most important instruments of furthering development co-operation were:

- bilateral technical and financial co-operation,
- multilateral development co-operation,
- support of the development policy activities of the NGOs,
- development of co-operation in the private sector.

The technical co-operation was to encompass the following aspects:

- joint planning, preparation, execution, assessment and regulation of programmes and projects,
- training of specialists in the receiving country,
- continued training of specialists from developing countries in the GDR as well as sending out specialists from the GDR.<sup>17</sup>

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17 Ministerrat der DDR 1990: 5ff.

With regard to financial co-operation, debt obligations which the Third World had towards the GDR were an acute problem. It was to be examined how far debts could be repaid by the relevant countries, converted or waived. The latter option applied particularly for the least developed countries (LDCs). The debt repayment was to be used mainly for measures furthering development.

In order to emphasise the international dimensions of her planned development policy involvement, the MWZ declared that the GDR would utilise her United Nations development co-operation and other international organisations to implement the development policy as described above, and be involved in international projects. Voluntary financial contributions towards this were to be raised. Furthermore, churches, foundations and other NGOs were to receive subsidies from the MWZ budget earmarked for the implementation of measures of development co-operation on applying and assessment. Projects by economic enterprises in developing countries were also supposed to receive funding for training, project studies and the covering of financial costs (especially regarding investments).

With reference to disaster relief, the GDR wanted to grant humanitarian aid to developing countries in particular. This aid (in co-ordination with existing or future development projects) was to be used for rebuilding measures in countries which had been afflicted by disasters. This disaster relief was to be granted soon after the disaster occurred, which would make necessary stockpiling a certain amount of urgently needed aid supplies. The Ministry of Economic Co-operation, in co-operation with the *Ministry for Disarmament and Defence*,<sup>18</sup> the *Ministry for Transport*<sup>19</sup> and other ministries, were to utilise military equipment and facilities for disaster relief and to set up a disaster relief brigade.

Finally, the development policy training and education was addressed once more. The development policy training and education within the GDR, it was recorded, was to occur in partnership with the NGOs and in co-operation with the *Ministry for Education and Research*.<sup>20</sup> Central points of training and education supported by the MWZ were the designing of educational material pertaining to development policy, particularly for schools, as well as an extensive raising of consciousness mainly through NGOs, especially on the causes and effects of poverty and hunger.

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18 „Ministerium für Abrüstung und Verteidigung“

19 „Ministerium für Verkehr“

20 „Ministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft“

In order to administer all of these projects and activities, and to put the development co-operation into practice, the MWZ was tasked with setting up two structures. The first was a *German Agency for Development Co-operation*<sup>21</sup> (ltd. non-profit organisation). This would restructure existing facilities and establish a new profile for development co-operation. The second structure was to be a development aid worker service, which would continue the project work. These structures were supposed to facilitate a smooth integration of GDR activities in a future joint German development policy.

In the early summer of 1990, negotiations on co-operation between the West German BMZ and the East German MWZ started in numerous work groups and consultations. These aimed at addressing the continuation, modification, or termination of the GDR development co-operation activities. All discussants agreed that the developing countries were not to come to any harm as a consequence of the German unification. The former Secretary of State, Wolf-Dieter Graewe, would later contend that, with the benefit of hindsight, it is doubtful that these aims were fulfilled. This was because, despite some areas where representatives from the two states were in agreement, from the beginning, there were problem areas.<sup>22</sup>

The most pressing problem the employees of the new East German Ministry For Development Aid (which in the end only existed for barely six months) was obtaining an overview over the actual projects in Third World countries. The BMZ assumed that possibly only the SED Politburo had an exact overview of the number and progress of the individual projects, yet even these remains doubtful. According to the West German partners, the missing information made it extraordinarily difficult for the MWZ, founded after the elections in March 1990, to obtain a comprehensive picture of the GDR development co-operation with Third World countries.<sup>23</sup> In practice, however, the MWZ could at least lay the foundations for the BMZ to take over the East German development projects in a more or less orderly fashion after the unification of October 1990. One of the citizens very much involved in NGO development policy in the GDR and during the transition phase was Willi Erl. His disappointed conclusion was: "There was no time for the proper implementation of those

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21 „Deutsche Agentur für Entwicklungszusammenarbeit“

22 Graewe 1998: 91.

23 „Abschlußbericht über die Fortführung von Entwicklungshilfeprojekten der ehemaligen DDR“, in: Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (ed.): *BMZ-Informationen*, Pressereferat, no. 1, Bonn 1991: 1.



‘principles’”<sup>24</sup>.

As positive and as innovative as those new guidelines for future development policy developed towards the end of the GDR may read and as much as those who have designed it are to be recognized, they are not able to stand up in practice. The GDR disappeared and with her demise her development intentions were lost too. However, it is a document that not only has historical significance, but shows the way forward in how the Germans might be able shape the cooperation with people from the developing world in future.

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24 Erl 1992: 129. „Die Zeit, diese ‘Grundlinien’ konsequent durchzusetzen, war nicht mehr gegeben.“

## CHAPTER 9

### What happened to GDR development projects in Africa?

After the German Re-unification of 1990, the question arose as to how to deal with the objects of GDR development policy involvement. The first step was to analyse the actual nature of the development aid policy and projects of the now extinct smaller German state. Many observers and interested parties found the result surprising. Aided by the „Entwicklungspolitischer Runder Tisch“,<sup>1</sup> an overview had already been compiled, confirming the actual extensiveness of GDR development aid.

On 3 October 1990, the day of German unification, there were still 106 active GDR projects in fifteen countries. It had been decided that 72% of projects in these countries were to be carried on. About 7,400 bursaries were to be paid to young people from developing countries for studying at tertiary institutions, and the vocational training of 2,280 specialists was to be financed as well.<sup>2</sup> The overview compiled by the „Runder Tisch“ served as a first orientation, but it turned out that the GDR development policy involvement had been much more diversified than assumed, which made comprehensive and reliable listing very difficult.

However, it could be established that there were three kinds of GDR development policy involvement in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Firstly, free aid made up the biggest part of this. Secondly, there were the government loans (whose concessions were far below the usual conditions of the financial markets) for African and other Third World countries. Thirdly, there was the preferential pricing policy, which the economically and financially weak developing countries gladly accepted.<sup>4</sup> The State Planning Commission calculated that the GDR had put up 710 million GDR-Marks for those loans.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Belle 1996.

2 Erl 1992: 127.

3 For comparative purposes and because some statistical information refers to all countries and liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America, facts and figures from outside the African continent are also referred to..

4 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 1998: 102ff.

5 Graewe 1998: 89.

Free aid consisted of material supplies, vocational training, bursaries for tertiary institutions, as well as further material or non-material services.<sup>6</sup> Only in a few instances did the GDR hand out government loans which could be used as the receiving countries saw fit. Usually the loans approved of as part of government agreements had to be exhausted within predetermined periods of time through exports for the GDR. The period of validity was normally ten to fifteen years; the interest rate was between 1.5 to 4.5% – far below world market conditions.

On the basis of government agreements, special loans were agreed upon between banks or state enterprises for the export of goods, with a period of validity of two to eight years, with a 4–8% interest rate. No loans were granted for certain goods like medication, textiles, and household appliances. Loans granted were usually repaid through local products and their administration through settlement and clearing accounts. Fewer and fewer loans had been granted since the beginning of the 1980s. In 1986, loans were granted to the value of 1.5 billion GDR-Marks, in 1987 1.3 billion and in 1989 800 million GDR-Marks.<sup>7</sup> The reasons for this decrease were the accumulation of overdue claims from earlier years; the waning ability or willingness on the part of the developing countries to take on investment projects with a GDR profile; and the increasing economic difficulties their countries were facing.

Purely from a geographical point of view, Cuba was a problem region. The Federal Republic of Germany refused to continue the development co-operation with that country due to political reasons – its failure to renounce socialism and its continuing criticism of US-Imperialism – a decision which still stands today. Church and NGO activities were not excluded, though. At times the development co-operation of the FRG with Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola and Afghanistan was suspended due to non-existent diplomatic relations or internal conflicts. This still applies to Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup>

At least from the GDR's point of view, debt as a result of defaulting in repayments of GDR loans remained problematic. During the LDC conference in Paris in the early summer of 1990, the East German MWZ had tried to obtain debt waivers to the value of 400 million dollars for LDC countries, to which the West German BMZ seemed quite amenable.

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6 Cf. for example Aichinger 1993; Schmelz 2005: 84ff.

7 Graewe 1998: 90.

8 Graewe 1998: 91.

However, the *Federal Ministry for Finance*<sup>9</sup> did not agree, arguing that there were still open questions regarding whether or not GDR loans would qualify as development aid, and arguing the necessity of individual checks in accordance with the OECD DAC criteria.

As of 1 July 1990, the GDR was still owed ca. 6.2 billion DM by developing countries (excluding RGW countries). These debts consisted of government loans, debt conversions as well as payments agreements. By 31 December 1995, this amount had been reduced to 4.2 billion DM, according to BMF information. This was achieved through regular payments (300 million), commercialisation of claims (600 million) and partial payment waivers in conjunction of bilateral debt conversion agreements by the FRG (ca. 1 billion DM). Despite this, more interest debt (ca. 200 million) arose. Iraq and Syria owed roughly half of all unpaid claims (1.325 billion and 910 million respectively). One of the Secretaries of State responsible for the transition of development aid from the GDR to the unified Federal Republic of Germany, Wolf-Dieter Graewe, remembers:

One of the comparatively problem-free areas was the entire complex of education and vocational training, as there was a general concord that all foreign students and trainees were to continue and complete their studies or training not pertaining to political instruction, which did not exist anymore anyway. In agreement with distribution of responsibilities, over 4,000 students were assigned to the AA in the FRG, the BMZ still had 2,145 trainees who were taken on by the CDG/DSE. The CDG had set up regional offices in all new Bundesländer, the DSE had integrated some of the training institutions of the former GDR. The practical implementation of those decisions proved difficult, for numerous training enterprises and also university departments were closed or phased out. Thus, new training and education facilities had to be found.<sup>10</sup>

It was agreed that individual projects and the utilising of experts should be evaluated as to whether they should continue and if so, in which manner. According to the conclusion of

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9 „Bundesministerium der Finanzen“ (BMF)

10 Graewe 1998: 92. „Zu den relativ problemlosen Bereichen gehörte der gesamte Komplex der Bildung, Aus- und Fortbildung, da generell Übereinkunft bestand, daß alle ausländischen Studenten und Auszubildenden ihre Ausbildung weiterführen und abschließen sollen, sofern es sich nicht um politische Ausbildungsgänge handelt, die es ohnehin nicht mehr gab. Über 4.000 Studenten wurden entsprechend der Ressortverteilung in der Bundesrepublik dem AA zugeordnet, dem BMZ verblieben 2.145 Auszubildende, die von der CDG bzw. der DSE übernommen wurden. Die CDG hatte in allen neuen Bundesländern Landesstellen eingerichtet, die DSE einige Ausbildungsstätten der früheren DDR integriert. Zu Problemen im Ausbildungsbereich kam es bei der praktischen Realisierung der Beschlüsse, da zahlreiche Ausbildungsbetriebe und auch universitäre Bereiche nach der Wende geschlossen bzw. abgewickelt wurden. Es galt also entsprechend neue Ausbildungseinrichtungen zu finden.“

October 3, 1990, the evaluation of 106 projects in fifteen countries was to be carried out by the BMZ (64)<sup>11</sup> and the AA (four); four projects were to be continued by NGOs (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam). Thirty-four projects were discontinued because the partners were not interested anymore (e.g. Angola – harbour pilot, Yemen – polytechnical instruction, India – nautical technology); the projects were mainly of a commercial nature (grain silo in Algeria, mill consultancy in Syria); or there was no development policy relevance (e.g. consultant for the *School for State and Law*<sup>12</sup> in Mozambique, or training for the Civil Service in Angola).

Graewe comes to the conclusion that, on the whole, “one can say that the FRG development co-operation was broadened by the integration of development co-operation projects from the former GDR internationally (Mongolia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Vietnam) as well as with regard to the sectors concerned (education and training, health).”<sup>13</sup> His further assessment is interesting:

If this suffices in order to come to a positive conclusion remains, at least for me, an open question, which one can barely separate from the general question of the status of development policy in politics and in the eyes of the general public in our country and the FRG development policy regarding the focus countries of the former GDR as it has developed over the past few years.<sup>14</sup>

We can safely assume that the positive aspects of development co-operation as created by the GDR have not been utilised by the unified FRG as they could have. This goes both for the human resources capacities, as well as the good relations which existed, for example, between GDR citizens and politicians and economic experts in Angola and Mozambique. In some Third World countries the former close partners of the GDR and most significant aid recipients often form part of the government. Many members of the present elite in those countries obtained their education in the GDR or were educated by GDR specialists.<sup>15</sup> A number of government ministers of the Republic of South Africa studied in the GDR, which

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11 Eight were administered by the DED, 26 CIM treaties were signed and 20 TZ and 10 FZ.

12 „Schule für Staat und Recht“

13 „kann man sagen, daß die EZ der Bundesrepublik durch die Integration von EZ-Vorhaben aus der früheren DDR sowohl länderweit (Mongolei, Mosambik, Äthiopien, Vietnam) als auch sektoral (Bildung, Gesundheit) erweitert wurde.“

14 Graewe 1989: 93. „Ob dies ausreicht für eine insgesamt positive Bilanz [ist], bleibt – zumindest für mich – eine offene Frage, die allerdings kaum zu trennen ist von der allgemeinen Frage nach dem Stellenwert von Entwicklungspolitik in Politik und Öffentlichkeit in unserem Lande und der sich im Verlauf der letzten Jahre entwickelten EZ der Bundesrepublik zu den Schwerpunktländer der früheren DDR.“

15 In the instance of Namibia Cf. Schleicher, I. 1999: 1ff.

also applies to more than a dozen provincial politicians in South Africa. In other Asian, African and Latin American countries, too, GDR-educated politicians and economic experts on all levels are now leaders of their societies. It would be a worthy task to revive those ties, now and in future times. Many Africans still fondly remember their education and training in the other German state.

Regarding the evaluation of the quality of GDR development aid projects – whether one agrees with the assessment criteria or not – special mention must be made of the concluding report on the continuation of GDR development aid projects.<sup>16</sup> The *Abschlußbericht* elaborates that the question of continuation of development aid projects of the former GDR has to be seen in connection with ideologically orientated GDR development policy and that it was thus, in many cases, rather difficult to recommend a continuation. It was emphasised again that the GDR development policy, as was characteristic for those times, had to orientate itself towards the directives and principles according to which the SED designed its international policy. The GDR had perceived the problems of the developing countries as mainly grounded in the categories of the global rivalry between systems and the East-West-conflict, the report states in a somewhat vague manner.

On the whole, the report states, the GDR had had development policy relations with roughly one hundred developing countries. The co-operation was of significant proportions with thirty states, with seven of those particularly intensive (Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua and the RGW partners of Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam). The GDR co-operation with her partners can be seen as a broad, integrated programme of measures of development policy, research and technology, commerce, humanitarianism and culture. It was especially stressed that the education at technical colleges and universities in the GDR, as well as the training of specialists in GDR enterprises and training colleges, occupied a large part of its development policy. The fact that GDR development policy was extraordinarily unclear and fragmented into many institutions was also reiterated.

Up until the unification of both German states in October 1990, 106 projects in fifteen developing countries remained of the GDR development policy co-operation. In the case of some countries, this was limited to the despatching of a few experts or sending bursary

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16 „Abschlußbericht über die Fortführung von Entwicklungshilfeprojekten der ehemaligen DDR“, in: Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit (ed.): *BMZ-Informationen*, Pressereferat, no. 1, Bonn 1991: 1ff.

recipients to the GDR. One of the main reasons for this state of affairs was the fact that the co-operation of the former GDR with developing countries formed a part of the five-year plans, the last of which came to an end in 1990. After the fall of the Wall in the autumn of 1989, the preparations for a further plan period were terminated. As a result, the majority of development programmes could be completed as planned, as long as they had not been terminated by the first freely elected GDR government due to their ideological aspirations or for security reasons. A further factor was that, as the ex-GDR structures were crumbling, many experts returned prematurely in order to secure their professional future at home.

Already in the summer of 1990, talks between BMZ and MWZ took place in some of the focus countries like Mozambique, Mongolia or Nicaragua, so that the fate of the remaining projects could be decided upon as speedily as possible. After German unification, these evaluation missions continued unabated. According to the BMZ press service, the starting point of these considerations was whether projects which were furthering the economic and social development of the developing countries and were not ideologically tainted should be continued and brought to completion. Central to the assessment was the intention of avoiding at all costs development wreckage as a consequence of the German unification.

The predominance of all projects whose continuation was to be decided could be grouped in the areas of education, health and agriculture. Their main characteristic was the service of dispatched personnel who were taken on by the relevant executive organisations GTZ, CIM or DED. Furthermore, in some unspecified cases investments were concluded so as not to cause any development wreckage. Thus, in a comparatively short period of time, clear decisions had been made about the future of the former GDR development aid projects. Those projects which were continued were of particular import to the partner countries. However, some of them were modified regarding questions of a stronger market economy orientation of the relevant structures and a greater responsibility on the part of those partners. About 120 million DM were allocated to those projects in the BMZ budget of 1991; roughly 110 million DM in the BMZ budget of 1992.

The extensive bursary programme was of special significance when GDR development aid projects were integrated into the unified Germany. About 4,700 people from developing countries continued to receive their education and training in the so-called 'new Bundesländer'; 4,500 of these at universities. Since 1 January 1991, university studies have been financed by the AA through the DAAD. For all other educational and training measures

(concerning 2,280 bursary holders from 1 January 1991, onward) the BMZ put up ca. 50 million DM in 1991.

A particular problem presented itself in the BMZ so-called specialist programme for Vietnamese and Mozambicans. When the new national budget came into effect, the German parliament had allocated to this programme a total of 3.3 million DM for 1991 and 13.5 million DM for the following years, meant for the re-integration of the Vietnamese and Mozambicans working in the GDR into their home countries.

**Table 34: Attempt at a comprehensive overview of GDR development projects<sup>17</sup>**

Country	Number of Recorded projects	Intended continuation by the BMZ	Responsibility of the AA	Taken on by NRO	No continuation
Algeria	5	3	1	-	1
Angola	18	11	2	-	5
Ethiopia	10	8	-	-	2
India	1	-	-	-	1
Yemen	5	3	1	-	1
Cambodia	3	-	-	1	2
Congo	3	-	-	-	3
Laos	8	5	-	1	2
Mongolia	6	5	-	-	1
Mozambique	17	8	-	-	9
Nicaragua	9	6	-	-	3
Zimbabwe	2	2	-	-	-
Syria	4	1	-	-	3
Tanzania	5	5	-	-	-
Vietnam	10	7	-	2	1
Total	106	64	4	4	34

17 Source: „Abschlußbericht über die Fortführung von Entwicklungshilfeprojekten der ehemaligen DDR“ 1991: Anlage 1.



These decisions meant, for the African continent, that the following projects were continued:<sup>18</sup>

### Algeria

- Physical Education consultation at the University of Algiers
- Vocational training centre Annaba
- Vocational training centre Ines Bejaia

### Ethiopia

- Technical agricultural service
- Vocational training centre TTI
- Ministry for Education and Institute for Curriculum Research
- Lecturers at the University of Addis Ababa
- Medical faculty of Gondar College
- Completion of the concrete factory Mughher II
- Completion of the alkyl resin plant Addis Ababa
- Ensuring the East German agricultural equipment is fit for use

### Angola

- Automotive repair shop Viana
- Vocational training centre Cabinda
- Teacher training college Luanda
- Vocational training centre Cazenga
- Hospital I. Machel Luanda
- Rehabilitation centre Luanda
- Automotive repair shop Lubango
- College of education
- Faculty of engineering at the University of Luanda
- Teacher training college Lubango
- Ministry of Agriculture

### Mozambique

- Consulting in the banking sector
- Hospital Tete
- Faculty of engineering and faculty of forestry of the University of Maputo
- Consulting the national planning executive and the provincial planning commissions
- Supporting the educational sector
- Fishery school Matola and consulting in marine biology
- Consulting in the mining sector
- Completion of the water supply in the textile factory Mocuba

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18 Source: Erl 1992: 127.

## Zimbabwe

- Vocational training centre Mashayamambe
- Parienyatwa Hospital

## Tanzania

- Vocational training centre Ithemba
- Labour union clinic Daressalam
- Teacher training college Changombe
- Lecturers at the University of Daressalam
- ANC vocational training centre in Dakawa

On the whole one can agree with the then minister of development co-operation who said, with regard to the development policy of the GDR, that the unified Germany had been bequeathed a welcome heritage and not only the burdens of yore.

## Conclusion

Even after twenty years, for a great deal of the GDR populace, the facts that were presented to the public about their perished state by historians and persons formerly involved in Africa policy were unusual. Even citizens who used to be or still are actively involved in the creation of solidarity between people from the northern and southern hemispheres were astonished that, at least in the second half of the 1980s, the hitherto common practice, held up by propaganda, of a strict support of international sanctions against the Apartheid regime in South Africa<sup>1</sup> were to be relaxed around the end of the 1980s, and that there had been cautious first contacts between representatives of GDR institutions and the Republic of South Africa. Especially after the South African President de Klerk had released Nelson Mandela after long years of imprisonment and had signalled the abolition of the Apartheid regime through a process of reform, the Foreign Office in East Berlin showed an inclination to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Africa as part of such a process. The deputy Foreign Minister, Hans-Dieter Winter, made a statement in accordance with this during a trip to Zimbabwe at an ambassadors' conference. President de Klerk then explicitly welcomed this announcement in a letter from 2 March 1990 to the then Head of the GDR State Council, Manfred Gerlach.<sup>2</sup> These official endeavours at establishing contact between the GDR and the Republic of South Africa coincided with corresponding efforts by the superpower USA and Soviet Union to end the conflict in Southern Africa.<sup>3</sup>

The East German public barely knew of such activities like the establishing of contact of “socialist diplomats” with representatives of the Apartheid regime which during the times of the “old GDR”, i.e. before the fall of the wall, would have been unthinkable. Only after the replacement of Erich Honecker and the establishing of an interim government under Hans Modrow had a “new way of thinking” in accordance with the Soviet example become possible. During the few months between the end of 1989 and the first free elections in the GDR on 18 March 1990, the GDR Foreign Office tried to conceptualise as to how GDR policy regarding the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America could do justice to the rapidly developing domestic changes as well as to the new international conditions and

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1 van der Heyden 2004; van der Heyden 2005.

2 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 2010: 94; Winter 2010: 79.

3 Cf. Saunders 2008: 523 ff; Windrich 2006: 237ff.

prerequisites. However, such deliberations, as necessary as they seemed for the international challenges, were marked by a certain unrealistic assessment of the domestic political situation, as those politicians in Foreign Affairs dealing with the altered conceptions assumed the continuing existence of the GDR and concentrated on the following areas:

1. The MfAA supported consistently peaceful political conflict resolutions and the elimination of confrontations. It denounced any armament delivery to conflict areas and wanted to foster a legal regulation providing parliamentary checks for weapons exports; a corresponding decision had already been made in the MfAA on 4 December 1989, during a meeting with the minister.

2. Help and Solidarity for developing countries should be dominated more by humanitarian motives and not by the ideological criteria of anti-imperialism anymore. Traditionally friendly relations like the ones with the liberation movements in Southern Africa as well as with Mozambique and Angola should be continued.

3. Efforts to influence the domestic developments in developing countries with the interests of a “socialist orientation” at heart should cease.

4. The relations with the developing countries should increasingly take into account the economic necessities and contribute to the stabilisation of the GDR. The network of embassies and consulates was considered as inflated. To relieve the national budget it was decided to close some consulates and embassies. In total, eighteen embassies, general consulates and consulates in developing countries were considered.<sup>4</sup>

Besides the “conception of a future GDR policy toward developing countries as part of the unification process of the two German states”,<sup>5</sup> a complete inventory of the bilateral relations with the African countries was drawn up, if only in the department North and West Africa of the MfAA. It seems that there was no such declaration for the other African regions any more.<sup>6</sup> As a result it is extremely difficult today to offer a reliable complete picture of the development policy activities of the GDR regarding Third World countries or even other regions of the African continent.

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4 Winter 2010: 79.

5 „Konzeption zur künftigen Politik der DDR gegenüber Entwicklungsländern im Prozess der Vereinigung beider deutscher Staaten“

6 Röder 2010: 83.

Although many detailed questions about the relations between the GDR and Africa over the last twenty years have been processed - and herein lies the emphasis of dealing with the history of relations between the GDR to SWAPO and the ANC - this chapter of GDR history is still far from being complete. The published results presently available were referenced in this thesis and the historiographical achievements of the various authors duly acknowledged. Other aspects of the history of the relations between the GDR and Africa - to which reference has been made here in some cases - must for reasons of insufficient sources or lack of academic resources remain in abeyance. This forms part of the archival situation, and partly, too, its lack of scientific capacity, i.e. what is mostly missing is the interest on the part of historians. It seems however that the situation just criticized is improving slowly. On the one hand, more and more archives become accessible and on the other hand, more and more persons, especially young people, become involved in the "reclamation" of this chapter of GDR history. An even greater interest from the African side in such historical research would be welcomed. Above all, the cooperation partners of the GDR, namely the African people, should be given the opportunity through this research work to discover the historical sources and research services and technical literature available in the German archives and libraries on the subject.

One of the diplomats involved in the GDR Africa policy describes the process of transition of the GDR into the united Germany concerning "his portfolio" as follows:

Those who still believed at the beginning of 1990 that it was possible to integrate the material and positive experiences of the relations of the GDR with that region's states into the later relations of a unified Germany, through topic-related co-ordination and co-operation with the respective departments of the Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-Operation and Development, had to recognise fairly quickly that this was an illusion. There was no interest or willingness on part of the West Germans in this respect. In February we agreed to the request from the 'Ständige Vertretung' [embassy] of the FRG to consultations regarding Africa policy. Two meetings with officials from the Foreign Office and the Ministry for Economic Co-Operation and Development took place in the guest house of the MfAA in Treptow. The West Germans' sole interest consisted in being informed as comprehensively as possible about GDR relations with those African countries which, according to

our criteria, pursued a 'non-capitalist' development. Though agreed upon, no further meetings took place.<sup>7</sup>

Thus GDR Africa policy came to an end. The remark made by the then designated president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma, at the beginning of 1990, to the first and last GDR ambassador to this southwest African country, Hans-Georg Schleicher, during talks in Windhoek, regarding the developments in the GDR and the intention of both German states to unify, seems to be accurate: "If this had happened earlier, we [SWAPO] would not be here today."<sup>8</sup> There are few serious publications on this matter as well as on the history of GDR foreign and especially Africa policy, despite a few remarkable studies which have been acknowledged and assessed.

In an article calling for more intensive work on the history of GDR foreign policy which received widespread attention, Oliver Bange described research in this field with a metaphor: "GDR foreign policy is mostly historical *terra incognita*, the state of current research resembles, and not by accident, either, the nautical charts of the early modern age, sketching out legendary new continents, including their resident monsters."<sup>9</sup> If we assess the situation of the humanities in Germany realistically, it is highly unlikely that this state of affairs is going to change soon. There will continue to be extremely subjective descriptions of persons formerly involved in GDR foreign policy (although this particular way of historicism will come to an end soon for biological reasons), or there will be historical works which follow the goal set by politicians from the old Federal Republic to discredit the GDR's actions, and thus its actions regarding foreign policy.

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7 Röder 2010: 83. „Wer Anfang 1990 noch glaubte, dass es möglich sei, in sachbezogener Abstimmung und Kooperation mit den jeweiligen Abteilungen des Auswärtigen Amtes und des Bundesministeriums für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung die Substanz und die positiven Erfahrungen in den Beziehungen der DDR zu den Staaten der Region in spätere gesamtdeutsche Beziehungen einbringen zu können, musste schnell erkennen, dass dies ein Trugschluss war. Es gab dazu auf westdeutscher Seite keinerlei Interesse oder Bereitschaft. Im Februar stimmten wir einem Wunsch der Ständigen Vertretung der BRD nach Konsultationen zur Afrikapolitik zu. Es fanden zwei Treffen mit Beamten des Auswärtigen Amtes und des Ministeriums für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung im Gästehaus des MfAA in Treptow statt. Das alleinige Anliegen der westdeutschen Gesprächspartner bestand darin, möglichst umfassend über die Beziehungen der DDR zu den afrikanischen Ländern informiert zu werden, die nach unserer damaligen Bewertung einen ‚nichtkapitalistischen‘ Entwicklungsweg beschritten. Obwohl vereinbart, fanden weitere Treffen nicht statt.“

8 Quoted in Schleicher, H.-G. 2010: 94. „Wenn das früher passiert wäre, würden wir (also die SWAPO – U.v.d.H) heute nicht hier sein.“

9 Bange 2004: 492. „Die Außenpolitik der DDR ist noch weitgehend eine historische *terra incognita*, der Forschungsstand erinnert nicht zufällig an die Seekarten der frühen Neuzeit, die sagemunwobene neue Erdteile skizzieren, inklusive der darin hausenden Ungeheuer.“

There are few historians who grew up in the GDR who are still active in their jobs and are thus capable of pursuing academic research in this field. With the fall of the wall, hundreds if not thousands of academics – especially in the humanities – lost their jobs. They have not been able to regain them, even twenty years after the unification.<sup>10</sup> Thus it will be difficult in future to present a distinct, realistic image of the GDR's involvement in Africa. Supposed GDR military deployment in Africa during the Cold War will probably continue to be cited to slander the involvement in Africa policy, which was mostly supported by the GDR citizenry, as well as the support efforts of any kind, much appreciated by the African partners as they may have been. And yet it has been demonstrated without a doubt that the GDR was not involved in any actual combat situation in Africa – or any other part of the Third World. The GDR even consistently refused the deployment of military trainers outside short-term technical instructions despite requests by some African governments.<sup>11</sup>

Up to this day it is rather difficult to sum up the GDR's development policy. According to one of the first internal reports by the West German ministry in charge after the political unification of the two German states, the GDR had entertained relations concerning development policy with about one hundred developing countries. A part of these relations concerned measures which could have been grouped with other areas, like foreign cultural policy or trade policy, but they were subsidised for the developing country and regarded as development aid by the GDR, even after the Fall of the Wall. The co-operation with about thirty countries could be classed as meaningful, with twelve of those very intensive, with a high volume of measures. Countries on which the GDR focused with regard to development policy were Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria, Algeria. The focus sectors were agriculture, industry, especially agricultural industry, education and training, the health sector, usage of raw materials and the ideologically tainted areas of national education, economy planning and training of socialist orientated leaders of developing countries.<sup>12</sup>

The GDR's focus for the young nation states in Africa, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique, as well as for the national liberation movements in today's Zimbabwe, and

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10 Cf. Bollinger/van der Heyden (eds.) 2002; Bollinger/van der Heyden/Kessler (eds.) 2004.

11 Cf. Storkmann 2009: 440.

12 Bundesminister für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit: „Die Zukunft der ehemaligen DDR-Entwicklungsprojekte“ (=Informationsvermerk für den Ausschuß für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Bundestages, Informationsvermerk, no. 34), Bonn 1990: 1.

particularly for the South African ANC and the Namibian SWAPO, was on the delivery of material goods, including military goods like armament, ammunition, radio and telecommunication technology, uniforms, equipment and other articles necessary for the liberation struggle. Military goods deliveries also contained machinery and equipment which could be used in a non-military way, like tents, field hospitals, water purification plants, film technology, generators and the like.

The training of the military in their own country was classed as purely military support of the GDR for their African partners and is still held in high esteem by many of the still active and former African military. The significance of the GDR's solidarity support, and that of its citizens, for the national liberation movements and young nation states in Asia and Latin America, but particularly for Africa, can only be measured, appreciated and critically appraised if one includes the historical development of the willingness on the side of the general population to participate in solidarity as well as the GDR's Africa policy. As early as 1960, when seventeen states on the African continent obtained independence from their colonial masters, the declarations and actions initiated, at first, by the GDR trade union, FDGB, were received with appreciation and recognition by a great part of the population.<sup>13</sup>

Following the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa on 21 March 1960, the GDR focus of the solidarity movement shifted more and more towards Africa's south. In this study I have demonstrated that the ANC and SWAPO were the biggest recipients of solidarity services. In discussing the beginnings of GDR relations with the liberation movements in Southern Africa, the rather voluminous standard work on the history of the struggle for liberation in South Africa entitled *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* states that:

the GDR established relations with liberation movements in southern Africa in the early 1960s. After the apartheid regime had crushed the structures of the ANC and other political organisations in South Africa by the mid 1960s, international solidarity became indispensable, a lifeline which gave the movement a chance to rethink and to rebuild their strength. The GDR was among the first states to offer solidarity assistance to the South African liberation movement. This principled position was acknowledged internationally.

In the 1970s, with the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire, the GDR shifted the focus of its Africa policy towards southern Africa, which seemed to offer a chance to inflict a strategic defeat on Western imperialism and to

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13 Schleicher, I. 1990(c): 6.



advance the 'revolutionary world process' rapidly. Solidarity with the liberation struggle became the trademark of its Africa policy.

The GDR was considered by the African liberation movements to be mostly involved with Africa. Three of the four priorities of its Africa policy in the 1970s were concentrated in southern Africa, namely Angola, Mozambique and the liberation movements of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The political players in the GDR in theory agreed on the principle of solidarity, but had to manage conflicts of political and economic interests in the practical pursuit of policy. The economic situation of the GDR had always been a difficult one. In the early years, economic hardships were aggravated by Western embargo policies. It was always a problem to find ways of practising solidarity and material support without overstressing its economy. In addition, aspects such as the repercussions of Soviet-Chinese conflict and rivalry for the GDR's policies on the volatile issue of peaceful coexistence versus support for armed liberation struggle have to be considered, as they affected economic relations and trade.<sup>14</sup>

The relations of the GDR with other countries, including those of Africa, were influenced by the political conflict between the two German states. Former GDR diplomat Hans-Georg Schleicher summarises the situation as follows:

In 1955 the West German government proclaimed the Hallstein doctrine to deter the Third World states from diplomatically recognising the GDR, inter alia by threatening to withdraw economic aid and to break off diplomatic relations. For almost two decades this doctrine formed an inflexible frame of reference for West and East Germany's Africa policy. At the height of the Cold War, the German-German conflict also affected solidarity. The frontline situation seemed obvious: West Germany was siding with the South African regime and Portuguese colonialism, and the GDR supported the liberation struggle. The GDR considered the exposure of West German economic interests in southern Africa and connections with minority regimes a contribution to its support for the liberation movements as well as serving its own international and inter-German policy interests.

The overall importance of the *Deutschlandpolitik* in both Germanys made Africa a battleground of inter-German rivalry. African decolonisation seemed to offer the GDR a chance to break up the international blockade imposed by West Germany. The GDR attacked West Germany because of its support for Portuguese and French colonial wars and launched

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14 Cf. Schleicher, H.-G. 2008: 1071 ff.

campaigns to reveal Bonn's 'military and nuclear collaboration' with Pretoria. This helped the GDR to develop and strengthen ties with liberation movements. In connection with the GDR sanctions against South Africa, in 1963 a letter from the GDR Solidarity Committee to the OAU Liberation Committee described the diametrically opposed policies of the two German states concerning South Africa. Placing the GDR's support of the liberation movement in the context of the inter-German confrontation, it stated that 'struggle against West German imperialism was a decisive merit of this support.'<sup>15</sup>

Apart from the liberation movement ANC it was the SACP which received strong support and help from the GDR. One of the former partners of the GDR sums it up in 1997:

There was of course an especially close relationship between the SED and the SACP. Regular colloquiums took place between the leadership of the two organisations in which views were exchanged on the situation in their respective countries with a view to convey information, neither side interfering with the policy or decisions of the other but both sharing the common ideology of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>16</sup>

The GDR's diplomatic activities in the struggle against Apartheid should not remain unmentioned. The GDR was involved in activities and conferences of the international solidarity movement and of the UN regarding southern Africa. A number of events were convened in the GDR in co-operation with international organisations or in the context of international solidarity campaigns. Apart from the political, material and diplomatic support by the GDR for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa I would like to emphasise especially the contribution of the smaller German state to the economic sanctions against the Apartheid regime as the GDR, constantly struggling itself with economic problems was dependent on any trade relations.

The participation in the trade boycott as depicted in this dissertation augmented the problems the GDR economy had with the import of raw materials and the export of GDR-produced industrial products. The GDR was hit hard by Western embargoes regardless and suffered considerable financial losses by discontinuing direct trade relations with South Africa. Ilona Schleicher appraises the situation correctly: the participation in the boycott by the government in Berlin "was even more crucial as every payment in foreign currency

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15 Schleicher, H.-G. 2008: 1077.

16 Bunting 1997.

counted. In any case the discontinuation of direct trade with South Africa is to be seen as an act of solidarity with the South African liberation movement.”<sup>17</sup>

GDR assistance was received gratefully in other regions of Southern Africa as well, where the GDR population practised solidarity like, for example, in Mozambique. When GDR journalist Peter Spacek travelled to this south east African country, he was able to report: “I could see with my own eyes how noticeable and effective the GDR’s solidarity assistance is. [...] It might not be earth shattering, but one cannot help but being deeply moved when one sees how children use GDR stationery in the primitive bush schools.”<sup>18</sup>

The liberation struggle of the MPLA in Angola was also supported effectively by the GDR despite its own economic problems to supply the GDR citizenry: in 1975, upon an urgent request for help, the GDR’s Ministry for Economic Co-operation alone delivered great quantities of food stuffs, medication and medico-technical machines, clothing and equipment of the most varied kind to the total value of 5.2 million GDR mark. During that same year the MPLA also received fifteen ambulances, and 12,500 pairs of gym shoes, pullovers, sport equipment, 4,000 tracksuits, 10,000 pairs of men’s socks and children’s clothing were shipped to Angola. As indicated, these were goods which were also badly needed in the GDR. Instant soups were particularly popular in Southern Africa of which the GDR donated in 1975 alone more than forty-five tons to the value of 350,000 GDR Mark, as well as peas and beans. The value of the medication provided in that year came to 1,508,834 GDR Mark and that of the 10,000 Khaki shirts to 300,000 GDR Mark.

One could recall the following semi-military equipment: fifty collapsible boats of various brands, rear engines, camping furniture, ninety tents of varying size, camping equipment, tea kettles, plates, 15,000 mugs, 6,000 canteens, tin and plastic canisters and 1,000 billy cans. This listing of solidarity deliveries concerning only the year 1975 is not even complete, simply highlighting some of the goods sent to Angola.<sup>19</sup>

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17 Schleicher, I 2008: 30. „[fiel] umso schwerer ins Gewicht, als für die DDR jede erwirtschaftete Valutamark zählte. Als eine solidarische Leistung für die südafrikanische Befreiungsbewegung ist die Einstellung des direkten Handels mit Südafrika... in jedem Fall anzusehen.“

18 Bundesarchiv, Berlin: DZ 8/7302: Peter Spacek: Informationsbericht über meine Reise in das befreite Gebiet von Mozambique, Dar es Salaam, 27.3.70. „Ich habe mich selbst davon überzeugen können, wie spürbar und wie wirksam die solidarische Hilfe der DDR ist... Es ist sicher nicht weltbewegend, aber man ist zutiefst berührt, wenn man in den primitiven Schulen im Busch sieht, daß es Hefte aus der DDR sind, in die Kinder schreiben.“

19 Bundesarchiv, Berlin: DZ 8/7060: Lieferaufträge MPLA 1975.

Contrary to many assertions designed to discredit the solidarity of the GDR people, the military aid the GDR sent to young nation states of the Third World was designed to enable them to defend their independence from former colonial powers who were by no means prepared to relinquish their former positions, or to assist the liberation movements which were still trying to throw off the yoke of colonialism. According to an internal note of the MfS, they were “just an entry regarding the official measures of support by the GDR government”<sup>20</sup>

The multi-faceted and capacious GDR solidarity, as depicted in this PhD thesis, especially with the liberation organisations in Southern Africa, in particular with the ANC and SWAPO, did not come about as a result of centralised structures and “orders from the top”, or, as the West often asserts, “state-instituted solidarity”. Rather, it was the result of the solidarity involvement of very many East German citizens. Up to this day quite a few personal contacts still exist between former GDR citizens and Southern Africans. The East German citizens who were involved in various functions with the liberation movements in an effort to demonstrate solidarity have also determined the image of the Germans in Southern Africa. The legacy of the East German solidarity involvement with the liberation struggle especially in Southern Africa is being honoured officially now, over twenty years after the German reunification – even if this is rather one-sided. West German (now just German) diplomats only partially call to mind this particular chapter of German-African co-operation. They seem unable to continue these relations in the interest of today’s co-operation between African states and a united Germany by working with the GDR’s old partners. For most government representatives and diplomats from the GDR partnering countries, however, the solidarity the East German populace performed with those people struggling for freedom on the African continent is the basis for special relations between South Africa, now freed from Apartheid, and Namibia with the united Germany. The partners of that time have not forgotten the substantial material aid in economic, diplomatic, military, cultural, academic and educational form as part of an all encompassing solidarity. To this day the former partners emphasise the reliability and efficiency of the aid the Solidarity Committee of the GDR organised. Ilona Schleicher, for example, has argued that: “All this was only possible ... as many East Germans were willing to involve themselves in the fight against racism, colonialism and Apartheid, and to support this fight with material deliveries, with donations,

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20 Archiv der Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Berlin: BStU: MfS-SdM, no. 33: „Aktenvermerk“, 24.11.1978. „nur Eingang in die offiziellen Hilfsmaßnahmen der DDR-Regierung.“

through their work as teachers and doctors in the camps of the liberation movements, training Africans and tending to injured fighters in the GDR.”<sup>21</sup>

In conclusion I would like to quote the South African diplomat Jeremiah Mamabolo in his assessment in an interview: “At the level of government, there was no doubt that GDR was in the forefront of support for the liberation movements in terms of material support, political, moral support, material and so forth... The GDR government was in the frontline.”<sup>22</sup> Hans-Georg Schleicher, too, who has been working intensively on the GDR Africa policy in the past few years, states:

Altogether the range of support and assistance for the ANC was impressive. The brand of GDR solidarity recognised by many liberation movements, including the ANC, was that of partnership on equal terms and speedy and efficient solidarity support. It can be concluded that this support was a valuable contribution to the struggle of the liberation movements in general and during emergency situations in particular. The collapse of the GDR and (nearly) all its structures in 1989/90 came as a shock for many partners in the liberation movements and interrupted solidarity relations.<sup>23</sup>

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21 Schleicher, I. 1990(c): 67. „Möglich wurde all das nur “ ... „weil viele Ostdeutsche sich vom Kampf gegen Rassismus, Kolonialismus und Apartheid angesprochen gefühlt haben und ihn solidarisch unterstützten, mit Sachleistungen, mit Spenden, mit ihrer Arbeit als Lehrer und Ärzte in den Camps der Befreiungsbewegungen, bei der Ausbildung von Afrikanern und bei der medizinischen Betreuung von verwundeten Kämpfern in der DDR.“

22 Cited in Schleicher, H.-G. 2008: 1143.

23 Schleicher, H.-G. 2008: 1153.

## Appendix How GDR-history is distorted – An example

At the beginning of 2006 there were a whole number of unproven speculations and horror stories about the activities of MfS staff in Ethiopia. This biased discussion was triggered by the book *Aschemenschen* by Ulrich Schmid.<sup>1</sup> For several months in 2006, the book was reviewed in the features sections of various German newspapers. These reviews all contain one peculiarity – they barely analyse the bizarre plot of the book. Instead, the events in the second part receive the most attention. Here, a creepy German named Gerd turns up. How could it be any different, he apparently used to work for the Stasi. And that was not all; he was also an adviser for Ethiopian security forces for interrogation and torture, and participated in the so-called Red Terror in Ethiopia under Mengistu Haile Mariam. It is quite revealing that the reviewers of various papers rushed at a fictitious story as if it was reality. Ulrich Schmid, the foreign correspondent of the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, who missed out on an attractive story for his newspaper, if ever it would have been a truthful story, and then made it fit into his novel, claims in the epilogue of his book:

The Red Terror did happen: Tens of thousands fell victim to it. It is also a fact that not a single East German adviser to Mengistu Haile Mariam was ever taken to court in Germany. And therefore I hesitate to say that Gerd is a fictitious figure. People like him were here in Addis Ababa. They are remembered, one knows what they look like. That applies to the foreign gentlemen as well as to the local torturers.<sup>2</sup>

Presentations on the book were also made by various German TV corporations. A film crew even made a film in Ethiopia to interview victims of the Red Terror and to find proof about GDR involvement in tortures. The former endeavour was successful, the latter was not. Despite this, almost incomprehensibly to neutral observers of the German unification process, almost all reviewers saw the fictitious figure of Gerd as real, concentrating on the role of “torture specialists(s) off [official] duty”<sup>3</sup>. Features mention “one of these Germans, who was

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1 Schmid 2006.

2 Schmid 2006: 396. „Der Rote Terror fand statt; Zehntausende sind ihm zum Opfer gefallen. Auch daß kein einziger der ostdeutschen Berater Mengistu Haile Mariams in Deutschland je vor Gericht gekommen ist, ist leider Tatsache. Und deshalb zögere ich auch zu sagen, daß Gerd eine fiktive Figur ist. Menschen wie er waren hier, in Addis Abeba. Man kann sich an sie erinnern, man weiß, wie sie aussehen. Das gilt für die fremden Herren ebenso wie für die einheimischen Folterknechte.“

3 Deutschland Radio 11 June 2006. „Folterspezialist(en) außer Diensten“

contracted as a secret service agent at that time by the GDR to support the Mengistu regime and tortured with great enthusiasm”<sup>4</sup>. Further, it is claimed that “guest workers from the GDR [participated] as ‘consultants’ in the tortures and murders of that time. Instructed by the Ministry of State Security, they were part of torturing and murdering.”<sup>5</sup> Gerd, the torturing MfS agent,<sup>6</sup> was described as a “Rotter” and as a “Perverse creep”.<sup>7</sup>

The cultural programme „Titel-Thesen-Temperamente“ also fell for the fictional story. The particular broadcast was titled: “The arm of the Stasi reached as far as Addis Ababa. Ulrich Schmid is telling a true story in form of a political thriller.”<sup>8</sup> Contrary to better knowledge (I had made available the facts of the case to the producers), it was said in the broadcast that:

This is still an unwritten and unpunished chapter of contemporary history. It is about the consulting and torturing activities of GDR secret service agents during the 1970s in Ethiopia, which have been presented by the Swiss writer and journalist Ulrich Schmid through his recently published novel „Aschemenschen“. The content of his gripping political thriller is not just a product of his fantasy, but a good portion of the brutal reality.<sup>9</sup>

The film producers claimed as fact about the Stasi’s role in Ethiopia:

The dictator, who today lives unhindered in the rich suburbs of Harare, was advised and backed up by the GDR state security.<sup>10</sup> [which is untrue, as Mengistu or his staff had no MfS consultants]. The files of the Birthler office and those of the archives of Addis

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4 Zingg, Martin: „Ein Mann für alle Jahreszeiten“, in: *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 17 May 2006, Zurich. „eine[n] der Deutschen, die seinerzeit im Auftrag der DDR das Mengistu-Regime als Geheimdienstagenten unterstützen und mit einer Begeisterung folterten“

5 arte 15 May 2006 [television broadcast]. „an den Folterungen und Morden jener Zeit [...] als ‘Berater’ Gasterbeiter aus der DDR beteiligt [waren] Im Auftrag des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit folterten und mordeten sie mit.“

6 Die *Berliner Literaturkritik*, 17 May 2006, [http://www.berlinerliteraturkritik.de/index.php?id=26&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=12001&cHash=db480c4d92](http://www.berlinerliteraturkritik.de/index.php?id=26&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=12001&cHash=db480c4d92), 11. July 2011.

7 Vogel, Sabine: „Holt mich hier raus! Zwei Urlaubsromane über Kidnapping“, in: *Berliner Zeitung*, 27 July 2006, Berlin. „Ekelpaket“, and as a „perverser Widerling“

8 von Eisenhart-Rothe/Gaertner 2006. „Der Arm der Stasi reichte bis nach Addis Abeba. Ulrich Schmid erzählt eine wahre Geschichte als Politthriller.“

9 (ARD-Kulturmagazin „Titel – Thesen – Temaramente“ 18 June, 2006 [television broadcast]). „Es ist ein bislang ungeschriebenes und ungesühntes Kapitel Zeitgeschichte. Die Berater- und Foltertätigkeit von Agenten der DDR-Staatssicherheit in den 70er Jahren in Äthiopien, die der Schweizer Journalist und Schriftsteller Ulrich Schmid in seinem soeben erschienen Roman ‘Aschemenschen’ verarbeitet hat. Der Stoff seines packenden Politthrillers entspringt nicht nur seiner Phantasie, sondern ist zu einem gut Teil der brutalen Realität verpflichtet.“

10 „Beraten und unterstützt wurde der Diktator, der heute unbehelligt in einem Nobelvorort von Harare lebt, von der Staatssicherheit der DDR“

Ababa document the close co-operation between both countries.<sup>11</sup> [*the cooperation on a security policy level was limited, see the documentation at a later stage*]. In 1977 Erich Honecker offered a helping hand through an agreement. Especially with regard to the treatment of alleged regime opposers...<sup>12</sup> [*according to the files, the 'co-operation' was all about espionage and the observation of Western messages*] ...the Stasi offered their services<sup>13</sup> [*to my knowledge the Stasi never offered their services, but rather responded to requests*]. It supplied weapons and torture devices...<sup>14</sup> [*see documentation with regard to the absurdity of this claim*], ...assisted in the development of a Ministry for State Security according to the GDR model<sup>15</sup> [*during careful research one would have become conspicuous about it as this was not the case, much to the MfS's surprise possibly also annoyance*] ...and organised interrogation courses in East Berlin for the Ethiopian military<sup>16</sup> [*there is no evidence that this happened, not even that there were courses for secret service staff, let alone for the military*].

On the 19 June 2006 the, *press agency*<sup>17</sup> dpa, distributed the following passage from a book review by Annett Klimpel, which was reprinted in various places as well as in respectable publications:

Injustice was also done in Ethiopia several decades ago – under German participation: In East Berlin at the end of the 1970s, the military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam signed treaties with Erich Honecker. The GDR sent state security 'specialists' to the North African country, who 'trained' the local militia on how to handle the captives and in the tactics of arrest and interrogation. Furthermore, 'material for special tasks' was supplied – handcuffs, gags, batons. Tens of thousands fell victim to the 'Red Terror' from 1977 until 1987. Several Germans from the former GDR took part in the cruel tortures – no one was ever brought to trial.<sup>18</sup>

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- 11 „Die Akten der BIRTHLER-Behörde und der Archive von Addis Abeba dokumentieren die enge Zusammenarbeit beider Länder“
- 12 „1977 reichte Erich Honecker in einem Abkommen dem sozialistischen Bruderstaat die Hand. Vor allem im Hinblick auf den Umgang mit angeblichen Regimegegnern“
- 13 „bot die Stasi ihre Dienste an“
- 14 „Sie lieferte Waffen und Foltergeräte“
- 15 „half beim Aufbau eines Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit nach DDR-Vorbild“
- 16 „und organisierte in Ostberlin Vernehmungslerngänge für äthiopische Militärs“
- 17 „Deutsche Presseagentur“
- 18 Klimpel, Annett: „Das Ignorieren von Gräueln lässt Böses triumphieren“, in: dpa (*Deutsche Presseagentur* - German Press Agency), 19 June 2006. „Unrecht wurde vor einigen Jahrzehnten auch in Äthiopien begangen – mit deutscher Beteiligung: In Ostberlin schloss Ende der 70er Jahre der äthiopische Militärdiktator Mengistu Haile Mariam Verträge mit Erich Honecker. Die DDR entsandte 'Spezialisten' der Staatssicherheit in das nordafrikanische Land, die die dortigen Milizen im Umgang mit Verhafteten 'schulden' und ihnen Festnahme- und Vernehmungstaktiken beibrachten. Zudem wurde 'Material für Sonderaufgaben' geliefert – Handfesseln, Knebel, Schlagstöcke. Dem 'Roten Terror' von 1977 bis 1987 fielen Zehntausende zum Opfer. An den grausamen Folterungen wirkten etliche Deutsche aus der früheren DDR mit – keiner von ihnen wurde je vor Gericht gestellt.“



Without knowing the facts, without looking into the records, without interviewing Ethiopian contemporary witnesses, without consulting the specialised literature, claims were taken up from a journalist and writer who lives off sensational reports. In addition, while there was talk of “‘development aid workers’ from the state security in Ethiopia”,<sup>19</sup> at the same time, hundreds and thousands of GDR development aid workers, who worked under difficult circumstances in Ethiopia and elsewhere, were being brought into disrepute. Even Amnesty International supposedly now knows that East “German military cadres” were reportedly taking part in the tortures under the Mengistu-regime,<sup>20</sup> although the human rights organisation apparently did not know anything about it at that time. A “poetry festival” remarks with woe on the internet that: “Stasi agents that tortured abroad during the GDR times have not been brought to justice until today”<sup>21</sup>

Such claims are not surprising. *Die Welt* titled their book review on the work “German torturers in Addis Ababa”<sup>22</sup>. As if this was not about a character in a novel, the “Stasi-torturer” was introduced as somebody who stayed “In the 1970s [...] in Ethiopia to train the torturers of the communist Mengistu regime by official order of the GDR”<sup>23</sup> Even the newspaper calling itself “East-West weekly”, *Freitag* reviewed the book without considering the truthfulness of the story. At least the reviewer thought of “Schmid stages [...] by means of his amazing eloquence a brilliant game of reality levels.”<sup>24</sup> Without taking any further note of the fictitious character of this book, it says:

And then suddenly, in the last third of the book, we are catapulted by a rough cut through time and space into the Ethiopia of 1977 when the communist Mengistu regime came into power by means of terror, actively supported among others by torture instructors from the GDR.<sup>25</sup>

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19 *perlentaucher.de – Das Kulturmagazin*, n.d. (2006). „‘Entwicklungshelfer’ der Staatssicherheit in Äthiopien“

20 Amnesty International, Schweizer Sektion (ed.): *Amnesty-Magazin der Menschenrechte*, no. 47, September 2006.

21 Erlanger Poetenfest 2006, „Ulrich Schmidt“ at [http://www.poetenfest-erlangen.de/2006/c\\_autordetail.asp?AutorID=134&VonSeite=c\\_autor.asp](http://www.poetenfest-erlangen.de/2006/c_autordetail.asp?AutorID=134&VonSeite=c_autor.asp) „Stasi-Agenten, die zu DDR-Zeiten im Ausland folterten, wurden bis heute nicht zur Rechenschaft gezogen.“

22 „Deutsche foltern in Addis Abeba“

23 Marko, Marko: „Deutsche foltern in Addis Abeba“, in: *Die Welt*, 29 April 2006, Berlin. „in den siebziger Jahren [...] in Äthiopien, um in offiziellen DDR-Auftrag die Folterer des kommunistischen Mengistu-Regimes auszubilden“

24 „Schmid inszeniert [...] mittels seiner verblüffenden Sprachmacht ein brillantes Spiel der Realitätsebenen.“

25 Wörtche, Thomas: „Crime Watch No. 1009“, in: *Freitag. Die Ost-West-Wochenzeitung*, 26 May 2006, Berlin. „Und plötzlich, im letzten Drittel des Buches werden wir mit einem harten Schnitt durch Zeit und

The weekly paper *Die Zeit* reviewed the book in a way that is appropriate for what it is: a novel. But then the reviewer could not help it, and felt he had to join the trend of public opinion:

What the novel cannot tell, is the story of the scandal: Since the Federal Constitutional Court granted a ‘partial amnesty’ to state security agents from the former GDR in 1995, the dust is left to settle on these acts. Even though crimes against humanity do not come under the statute of limitations, it becomes extremely difficult to prosecute and accuse after such a long time. It is the aim of this remarkable and bulky novel written in a breathtakingly beautiful language to not forget these acts. Schmid’s story fluctuates between imagination, political thriller and travel account.<sup>26</sup>

If reviewers from the *Die Zeit* magazine fell into this trap, it is not surprising that more naive reviewers did the same. This was made clear with the review of *Aschemenschen* by Regina Károlyi. She recognised correctly that “Supernatural things [...] are important in this novel, yet only in a figurative sense” as she apparently knew exactly that “the whole plot is practically real.”<sup>27</sup> It is no wonder when major papers and TV corporations led the way that smaller press or internet organisations argued in the same way, such as: “It was not known to the wider public that the GDR exported torture specialists all over the world in order to support communist dictatorships. Germany never really came to terms with this.”<sup>28</sup> After all, the reviewer admitted:

Of course such things also happened and still happen under different political conditions: CIA, Mossad and other agents are, as everybody knows, just as

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Raum katapultiert. Ins Äthiopien des Jahres 1977, als das kommunistische Mengistu-Regime sich an die Macht terrorisierte, tatkräftig unterstützt unter anderem von Folterausbildern aus der DDR.“

- 26 Gohlis, Tobias: „Was damals in Äthiopien geschah“, in: *Die Zeit*, 24 May 2006, Hamburg. „Was der Roman nicht erzählen kann, ist der Skandal: Seit 1995 das Bundesverfassungsgericht den aus der DDR stammenden Agenten der Staatssicherheit eine ‘Teilamnestie’ gewährte, wächst Gras des Vergessens über diese Taten. Auch wenn Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit nicht verjähren, sind sie nach so langer Zeit extrem schwer zu verfolgen und anzuklagen. Das sie nicht vergessen werden, ist das Ziel dieses bemerkenswerten, in einer berauschend schönen Sprache geschriebenen sperrigen Romans. Schmid’s Geschichte schweift zwischen Fantasik, Politthriller und Reisebericht weit aus.“
- 27 Károlyi, Regina: „Ulrich Schmid: ‘Aschemenschen’ - Ein Roman über Liebe, Gewalt und unbewältigte Vergangenheit“, in: *Sandammer. Die virtuelle Literaturzeitschrift*, no. 4, 2006. Google’s cache of <http://www.sandammer.at/cgi-bin/linkplex/gewalt>, 11. July 2011. „Übersinnliches [...] in diesem Roman zwar einige Bedeutung habe aber nur im übertragenen Sinne“, for she seemed to know exactly, „praktisch die gesamte Handlung ist real“
- 28 „Dass die DDR Folterspezialisten in alle Welt exportiert hat, um kommunistischen Diktaturen tatkräftig zu unterstützen, ist einer breiten Öffentlichkeit kaum bewusst und wurde in Deutschland nie wirklich aufgearbeitet.“

keen to make people pay respect internationally to the politics of their regimes.<sup>29</sup>

This comparison falls short, though, as the tortures by the CIA and also by other secret services are proven. However, the tortures central to the reviews of the novel *Aschemenschen* were based on the doubtful writings of a novelist. The *Berliner Zeitung* judged the novel remarkably reservedly:

Schmid, who by profession is a foreign correspondent working for the „Neue Züricher Zeitung“ astonishingly performs best when he writes subjectively and when he enters the realm of romantic fairytale when the ash people sadly trot through the black desert. At the end, a group of uigur-islamic guerrillas turn up. Their political goals remain unclear. It is clear though, that the rebellious anti-communists are the goodies. Smartly disguised as a political thriller with tastefully failed sex scenes and various exotic hijacking stories as well as a whole arsenal of zombies, culprits and victims assists the Swiss writer to examine the lust of fear, pain and cruelty from various angles. At the end one almost grows fond of Gerd [the alleged Stasi torturer ]. Tricky.<sup>30</sup>

A reporting highlight about the novel *Aschemenschen* was the book review during the broadcast „Kulturzeit“ on the 3Sat television station. There had been a correspondence between the author of this thesis and the film maker. So as not to repeat the arguments, this rather different assessment of Ulrich Schmid’s novel<sup>31</sup> shall be documented here.

3Sat presented the book in 2006 in its broadcast „Kulturzeit“, too. This programme was also seen by the writer of this thesis, who had studied the files from the „Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR“<sup>32</sup>

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29 Bollinger 2006. „Natürlich geschah und geschieht solches auch unter anderen politischen Vorzeichen: CIA-, Mossad- und andere Agenten sind bekanntermassen genauso einsatzfreudig, wenn es darum geht, der Politik ihrer Regierungen international Achtung zu verschaffen.“

30 *Berliner Zeitung* 2006. „Erstaunlicherweise ist Schmid, der im Hauptberuf außenpolitischer Korrespondent der Neuen Züricher Zeitung ist, gerade da am besten, wo er unsachlich wird und mit den traurig durch die schwarze Wüste trabenden Aschemenschen abhebt ins romantisch Märchenhafte. Am Ende tritt eine Gruppe uigurisch-islamischer Freischärler auf. Ihre politischen Ziele bleiben unausgegoren, klar ist nur, dass die rebellischen Kommunistenbekämpfer die Guten sind. Flott verpackt als Politthriller mit dezent misslingenden Sexeinlagen und mehreren exotischen Entführungsgeschichten dient das ganze Arsenal aus Zombies, Tätern und Opfern dem Schweizer Autor auch noch dazu, die Lust an Angst, Schmerz und Grausamkeit durchzudeklinieren. Am Ende hat man den perversen Gerd [also den angeblichen Stasi-Folterer] fast lieb gewonnen. Tückisch.“

31 Cf. for a first critical look at Spoo 2006: 899.

32 The Office of the Federal Commissioner (BStU) preserves the records of the Ministry for State Security of the GDR in its archives and makes these available for various purposes to private individuals, institutions and the public in accordance with strict legal regulations. ([www.bstu.bund.de](http://www.bstu.bund.de))

authority on that very same day, analysing those which were taken to prove accusations of torture by the film maker Julia Fensterer. I took a contrary view on this subject, as I had studied the files as well as the topic for many years. As a result, I contacted the editorial department of *3Sat*. I received an email by the film maker Julia Fensterer shortly after that, to which I responded. The correspondence is documented as follows:

*The film maker Julia Fensterer's email to Ulrich van der Heyden, 7 June 2006*

Dear Mr van der Heyden,

I heard that you have severe objections with regard to the film produced by us about the role of the Stasi in Ethiopia. Could you express your criticism once more? It would be important for me to know where you have your doubts.

With regard to my research: I am not an academic, but a journalist who has evaluated the documents in close coordination with the Birthler<sup>33</sup> office. On purpose did I not claim – as other media did, see various newspaper articles – that the Stasi tortured or even murdered in Ethiopia. Indeed, this cannot be proven and I do not regard this as absolutely likely.

It was all about the statement that the Stasi as a regime did also not desist from torturing and was facilitating it heavily – not just financially, but also ideologically. I think these files present evidence to this effect and the Birthler Behörde has confirmed that, too. As a journalist I need to rely on the experts' statements and in this case they surely are the staff from that authority – from which I received very positive reactions, by the way.

I would appreciate your reply, if time permits.

Yours sincerely

Julia Fensterer

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33 Translator's note: Birthler office is a synonym for the BStU. Ms Marianne Birthler is the Federal Commissioner.

Dear Ms Fensterer,

Thank you for your email.

As I had stated to your editor, Ms von Medingen, that I am available to speak to you about your documentary on the book „Aschemenschen“ (although you actually do not go into the content of the book!), I will do this now, even though I will also voice my opinion in the press.

Why did I get worked up about your film? I normally agree, as the majority of the former GDR citizens do, with the writer Daniela Dahn's opinion, who argues that in light of such transparent political background of these freely invented stories about the dissolved German state:

The dominant historiography about the GDR of today [...] is full of distortions, cuts and slander [...]. At first one gets worked up about it, then one only shakes the head, and at the end one is bored by it and says: Let them be, they talk about a country that I did not live in.<sup>34</sup>

Reaching for the telephone after the screening of your unspeakably unprofessional (if one takes objectivity as a standard) TV contribution and why I am answering to your email in detail has the following reasons:

I am not used to such nonsense by *3Sat*, which is after all financed by my tax money as well. I do not regard blatantly manipulated public statements like these, with such monstrous claims, as good for West and East Germany growing together, as some find confirmation in their reservations towards the „Ossis“ and others will refuse to watch when something like that is to be seen on a publicly funded TV station. They will possibly turn to some charlatan who appears to be more honest. Also the enthusiasm for *ostalgie* is due to this fact. And last but not least, the recent debate about the so-called Sabrow document (of which you will have heard) has its causes in the so far unobjective and politically motivated attempt at coming to terms with the GDR past.

Above all, I had the same documents in my hands which you used at the Gauck office, just a couple of days later, and came to a totally different conclusion than you did. I have been working on the general topic of the GDR and the Third World for the last twelve years and have, just as other researchers having worked on this subject for years, not found anything of what you have claimed in your broadcast. If I or others would have ever come across such material, no one would have kept this quiet. This should have aroused your suspicion, apart from the fact that research has considered, in comparison to the statements you have spread,

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34 „Die heute dominierende Geschichtsschreibung über die DDR [...] ist voll von Verzerrungen, Verkürzungen und Verleumdungen [...] Zuerst regt man sich noch auf, dann schüttelt man nur noch den Kopf, schließlich langweilt es einen, und man sagt: Laß sie, sie reden über ein Land, in dem ich nicht gelebt habe.“

that all speculations made at the time before archives were opened were untruthful.

I mentioned to Ms von Medingen on the phone that I received inquiries from other film makers to say something about this topic after the publication of the above mentioned book. I refused to, firstly because I found no evidence during my research in spite of a few unproven claims, and secondly because with no other topic in this world would somebody in broadcasting studios or offices of TV producers even dream of undertaking some research in archives only because some writer had thought of something spectacular and put it onto paper.

I will disregard the Ethiopian's motivation on which the claims must be based and whom you did not show on screen. And by the way: Every "Stasi torturer" if he existed, could find somebody in the neighbouring country, if he wanted to. But why? Why make such a big secret out of this? With all the seriousness of this story, this appears to be ridiculous.

Mind you, there were tortures and arbitrary arrests in Ethiopia under Mengistu; not that you think I would want to deny this or gloss over the matter. Good specialised literature has been published about it in the past few years. The claim you made and spread remains without evidence yet again.

There are sufficient other topics, if one wanted to develop something on this problem, such as the relations the GDR had with Ethiopia, as they are so abundant in interesting questions. For example, with regard to all the money that was pumped into Ethiopia and which originated from GDR citizens' pockets – comparatively very little of it was used for the army and security. Or with regard to the origins of this fiction of building up socialism in this African country: Why was the GDR involved? But also: The "exchange of interests" of Somalia, initially supported by the Soviet Union/GDR, with Ethiopia, which previously received assistance from the USA and countries from the West. Or such exciting questions would be interesting relating to: What arms or military equipment were supplied? Can a country, and this includes the liberation movements of the ANC and SWAPO in Southern Africa, resist old colonial powers and their puppets by throwing little cotton balls at the opponents who were very well equipped by the Western World? Should the GDR have abstained from arms supplies to the Third World when, according to the SIPRI report, the Federal Republic of Germany supplied them in abundance? How did Honecker manage to supply tanks still in 1989 (this was, by the way, the first and only time that heavy arms were sent to Ethiopia, or to my knowledge into the Third World) when his Minister of Defence and others opposed?

Allow me to refer first to your email. You wrote: *I am not an academic, but a journalist who has evaluated the documents in close coordination with the Birthler office. On purpose did I not claim – as other media did, see various newspaper articles – that the Stasi tortured or even murdered in Ethiopia. Indeed, this cannot be proven and I do not regard this as absolutely likely.*

You should also as a journalist undertake to keep to the truth, especially with such a sensitive subject. What do you mean by close co-ordination? The files were shown to you at the Gauck [Birthler] office. They are known to Mr Auerbach, whom you interviewed, just as well as you and I know them. You should also take into consideration what a staff member of that authority says, in the current situation where the authority's future is publicly under discussion.

I simply expect that a TV station under public law does not broadcast unproven claims which you have referred to, as it was done in various newspaper articles (of which I know no serious articles).

The claims of your contribution with which I will deal now in further detail, are diametrically opposed what you have said at present, that *in fact it cannot be proven* that MfS members of staff in Ethiopia have *tortured or even murdered* and that you *do not regard this as absolutely likely*. But why, would I ask my students, if they would hand in work to me aimed for publication, have you made such a biased report? Was it simply quick ‘moneymaking’ or because one does not need to do much research with this topic, as everything that was GDR was synonymous with the Stasi at the same time, and this was and ‘*is evil?* ‘

You wrote to me: *It was all about the statement that the Stasi as a regime did also not desist from torturing, yet assisted it heavily – not just financially, but also ideologically. I think these files show this kind of evidence [...]*

Don't you think that the Stasi system in the GDR, the way the GDR citizens got to know it, was not bad enough? Is it necessary to play this down by presenting unproven claims at which people who thought things through would smile at? Was that possibly the reason for your motivation to make such a contribution?

Yes, the GDR did assist the Mengistu regime financially and ideologically. But you claim something different! And that is a great difference!

You will notice that I am talking as a university lecturer. I would like to voice my opinion specifically on what flickered across the TV screen and what I have copied from the internet on the same evening. I hope this is identical. I will try and keep it short and simple for lack of time. Also, I cannot go into detail with all the mistakes made in this contribution. I apologise for this.

*[...] possibly hundreds of thousands of alleged members of the opposition were arrested, tortured and executed.[...] The GDR's state security was there as a role model and instructor [...]*<sup>35</sup>

This is a classic insinuation, because it implies that GDR citizens were present at arrests, tortures and executions.

*We may assume that interrogation methods and such matters [what are by the way such matters?] to the regime of prisons [...] was mediated by the MfS to Ethiopian investigation bodies...*<sup>36</sup>

This claim is apparently based on Mr Auerbach's statement. You have read the same files as he and I did. You should have noticed that there is no evidence for such a claim. I maintain that this is freely invented.

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35 [...] womöglich Hunderttausende vermeintlich Oppositionelle verhaftet, gefoltert und hingerichtet.[...] Die Staatssicherheit aus der DDR war als Vorbild und Lehrmeister dabei. [...]

36 Es sei davon auszunehmen, dass Inhalte wie Vernehmungsmethoden und dergleichen [was ist übrigens dergleichen?] bis hin zum Regime in Haftanstalten vom [...] MfS an die äthiopischen Untersuchungsorgane vermittelt worden seien. [...]

It is also wrong to use the term „Bruderstaat“<sup>37</sup>, because to my knowledge Ethiopia was never labelled like all the other socialist countries were at the time: *The GDR and the socialist ‘Bruderstaat’ are two of a kind. [...]*<sup>38</sup> If you had dealt with the specialised literature from the GDR, you would have realised that in those days at the end 1970s, one never spoke about a *sozialistische[r] Bruderstaat*. Historical knowledge is part of a journalistic piece, if it deals with history.

The GDR [...] *supported the terror with much more than symbolic signatures.*<sup>39</sup> Well, you must have read different files to the ones I read – yet, I do not believe that. *Evidence is found in the files at the authority for Stasi documents.*<sup>40</sup> NO! They do not exist and none of the other at least users of the files (as one learns from the entries) found proof, as this would have been made public long ago!

*It is documented without any doubt that Stasi instructors advised the Ethiopian militia*<sup>41</sup> [according to the files the Ethiopians did not know the difference between the police/militia and the authority for security/secret service – if there were contacts and assistance by the MfS, then it would have been by the „Ministry for State and Public Security of Ethiopia“ (MfSÖS)] *when dealing with the opposition*<sup>42</sup> [the majority of Ethiopia’s ‘public enemy’ were not from ‘the opposition’ in the conventional sense, but were ‘separatists’ (just as today) and members of other ethnic communities] [...] *This is a unit for political prisoners and a matter of arresting and interrogation methods.*<sup>43</sup> I would like to know where you obtained this claim. I have looked in vain for this particular information in the files but have not found anything. Your following statement is total nonsense, as well as the line of your argumentation: *The Ethiopians were interested – according to the file – [...] in particular in the interrogation of the accused. This substantiates the suspicion: The Stasi took part in torturing in Ethiopia.*<sup>44</sup> This claim is contrary to what you having said in your email, that is to say that the participation in or the instruction of torture by MfS members of staff can *in fact not be proven*. But you simply claim that! According to the records, Ethiopians requested to arrange a programme for one of their MfSÖS head cadres to visit the GDR, in which a visit to a prison was going to be included. Unless you have accessed files that I have not seen, the conclusion you have drawn, as just quoted, is unprofessional, or you purposely intend to hide the truth.

Mr Auerbach caps it all: [...] *when members of staff of the Ethiopian interrogation body went to see [sic] prisons in the GDR, the MfS was there [in Ethiopia] and at the camps too. This is obvious.*<sup>45</sup> If such unproven claims and non-sensical conclusions are made, then we do not need historians, we do not even need to deal with and describe history anymore. Everybody thinks of something and interprets it according to one’s own fabricated knowledge and ideas.

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37 i.e. socialist allied state (translator’s note)

38 Die DDR reicht dem Unrechtregime aus dem sozialistischen Bruderstaat die Hand.

39 unterstützt den Terror mit weit mehr als symbolischen Unterschriften

40 Beweise dafür finden sich in den Akten der Behörde für die Stasiunterlagen.

41 Zweifelsfrei dokumentiert ist, dass Stasi-Ausbilder die äthiopische Miliz

42 im Umgang mit Oppositionellen

43 Es handelt sich um eine Einheit für politische Häftlinge, und es geht um Festnahme- und Vernehmungspraktiken.

44 „Die Äthiopier interessierten sich – laut Akte – dort [this refers to a remand prison in East Berlin] vor allem für die Vernehmung Beschuldiger. Damit erhärtet sich der Verdacht: Die Stasi war an der Folter in Äthiopien beteiligt.“

45 wenn die Mitarbeiter des äthiopischen Untersuchungsorgans sich in der DDR Gefängnisse angesehen [sic!] haben, dann war das MfS dort [also in Äthiopien] auch in den Lagern präsent, das ist klar.



The Stasi supported the Red Terror *also with handcuffs, gags, or batons*.<sup>46</sup> To my knowledge the word *gag* is not found in the files. Only gag chains which were a standard part of police equipment in many countries of those days and apparently still are.

Mr Auerbach, who apparently knows more than what the files state, even though he has not yet to my knowledge published anything about the Stasi in the Third World, claims that: *Wir haben Unterlagen* [up until now they must have been withheld from research], *wo man sich wundert* [if one counts the various copies and completions made by subordinate service units instead of consulting the latest version, this may indeed have the appearance, although the numbers – as mentioned – appear rather low in comparison to other “arms dealers” of the Western world], *we have documents [...] which make one wonder [...] how many weapons, but also means of enforcement were sent to Ethiopia such as batons, gags or handcuffs*.<sup>47</sup> They converted *chain gags* into *gags* and *chains*, I assume just for a shudder, to send shivers down the spine of the TV audience. According to my knowledge they were 200 + 40 pieces of equipment – but I would like to discuss this with you in relation to the files.

As you have read the files, you should have come across the following passage in the file HA IX, No 20122, Vol. 17 from a 1985 document: *The MfS in Addis Ababa is represented through an action group. [...] The division of anti-espionage and the interrogation body of the MfSÖS are both assisted by a specialist from the MfS, while the latter is not effectively used*.<sup>48</sup>

I refrain from further comments.

I just ask myself, what will happen with what you have cobbled together? In any case I would like to make use of your documentary in my classes. Could you send me a copy on DVD or Video? But what will *3Sat* do now? In my opinion one should discuss the various points of view – perhaps in the same fashion I did above. But for that one needs more than just unproven claims and some crazy idea.

What do you think?

Yours sincerely

Ulrich van der Heyden

A relevant account of the *Tagesspiegel*<sup>49</sup> is most interesting in this context. It stands out against all the other accusations and blind adoptions of fictitious stories taken for fact, only because a chapter on the GDR history had been pushed into the negative news again. The author of a longer article about the Stasi files, and about a case of interest at this time on an

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46 auch mit Handfesseln, Knebeln oder Schlagstöcken

47 in welchen Mengen nicht nur Waffen, sondern auch Zwangsmittel nach Äthiopien geschickt wurden wie Schlagstöcke, Knebel, Ketten oder Handfesseln.

48 Das MfS ist in Addis Abeba mit einer Operativgruppe vertreten. [...] Je ein Spezialist des MfS unterstützt die Abteilung Spionageabwehr und das Untersuchungsorgan des MfSÖS, wobei letzterer wenig effektiv genutzt wird.

49 Ensikat, David: „Die Akte und die Wahrheiten. Rosenholz, Gröllmann, Äthiopien. Wie man die Stasi-Unterlagen immer neu missverstehen kann“, in: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 12 August 2006, Berlin.

alleged co-operation of artists with the GDR secret service, was the only reviewer of the *Aschemenschen*-book who made the effort to inquire at the Stasi-files authority. He established contradictions between Schmid's accusations in the epilogue of his book and to what he found in the files:

Consultants from the GDR were in Ethiopia at that time [...]. There were rumours about what they did. The real Ethiopian did not know and does not know more than these rumours [...]. Also the novel writer Ulrich Schmid does not know anything concrete. [...] He thought this up [...], artistic freedom.<sup>50</sup>

And, in the light of the records, Ensikat draws the conclusion:

Torture cellars and the dead are not mentioned there. It does not even mention interrogations or instructions for Ethiopian interrogators. [...] At the end of 1977 the first two Stasi delegations arrived [...] in the country.<sup>51</sup>

The *Tagespiegel* journalist opted for the right judgement: "This had been known for a long time. One can read about the GDR's military involvement in Ethiopia in specialised literature. [...] Therefore, nothing new, nothing that gives evidence."<sup>52</sup> He concludes with severe condemnation: "Just a novel and rumours. No subject matter for a newspaper story."<sup>53</sup> By the way, a story as such has not been published since the many sensationalist reviews, and could not have been made due to a lack of events that one could be charged with. But why this claim in the first place? Are there still some journalists that believe they can attract attention with alleged 'Stasi tortures'? Are these representatives of this guild doing anything and everything to earn some money? One needs to ask if some of the representatives of this guild concerned do not perform the necessary research and have ethical considerations!

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50 „Zu jener Zeit waren in Äthiopien [1977, when a witness of the accused Ethiopians of the Ethiopian regime of the time was arrested] Berater aus der DDR zugegen. Es gab Gerüchte darüber, was sie taten. *Mehr als die Gerüchte kannte und kennt der echte Äthiopier nicht* [emphasised by U.v.d.H.]. Auch der Romanautor Ulrich Schmid weiß nichts Konkretes [...] Er hat sich das [tortures in the presence of MfS members of staff] ausgedacht, künstlerische Freiheit.“

51 „Darin ist nicht von Folterkellern die Rede, nicht von Toten. Nicht mal von Verhören oder Anweisungen für äthiopische Vernehmer [...] Ende 1977 kamen zwei erste Stasi-Delegationen [therefore after the time, in which the Ethiopian, presented as a witness, should have been arrested and tortured] ins Land [...].“

52 „Das alles war lange bekannt. In der Fachliteratur kann man über das militärische Engagement der DDR in Äthiopien lesen. [...] Nichts Neues also, nichts Belegbares.“

53 „Nur ein Roman und Gerüchte. Kein Stoff für eine Zeitungsgeschichte“

Fortunately, there are exceptions such as David Ensikat, who also voiced his opinion in an article about the claims made in the *3Sat* programme criticised by the author:

Our fellow colleague has either smuggled the evidence out of the Birtler office or they do not exist, in any case not in these files. Journalists must exaggerate. When they have made the 20th story on the IM espionage, they go over to the stronger stuff [...] If the files are not much good; one needs to additionally invent something else. [...] <sup>54</sup>

The last Head of Intelligence in the Ministry of State Security, Werner Großmann, wrote in the preface of Bernd Fischer's book on this scandal which was dominated by the West German mass media more than fifteen years after unification:

As usual, everything petered out. The hype did not last long. But has one ever seen a clarification? Has there been any statement that the accusations were entirely fictional and had no basis and that nobody could have been caught in such an action because they did not exist? <sup>55</sup>

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54 „Entweder die Kollegin hat die Hinweise aus der Birtler-Behörde rausgeschmuggelt, oder es gibt sie nicht, jedenfalls nicht in diesen Akten. Journalisten müssen zuspitzen. Wenn die zwanzigste Geschichte über IM-Spitzeleien durch ist, darf's auch gerne der stärkere Tobak sein. [...] Was die Akten nicht hergeben, muss man sich also dazufantasieren. [...]"

55 Großmann in: Fischer 2009: 8. „Die Sache verlief, wie stets im Sande. Die künstliche Aufregung hielt nicht lange an. Doch las man je eine Klarstellung? Irgendwo ein Wort, dass die in der Dichtung erhobenen Anschuldigungen Fiktion waren und keine Basis hatten, dass niemand ein solchen Handlung überführt werden konnte, weil es nicht gegeben hat?"

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