2. A history of African diaspora in Germany

The first African diaspora that amounted to more than just a few individuals coming to Germany can be traced back to the 1884 Berlin Conference, when the German Reich began to colonise parts of the African continent. In this chapter I give a macro-historical perspective of African diasporas in Germany to contextualise the research on individual lives historically. I analyse when and why people from different African countries organised politically across nationalities, taking the diverse historical circumstances into account. This chapter demonstrates how Black political activism emerged in Germany and what events and people influenced the various activist movements. It is also important for understanding the circumstances under which many of the African parents of my interlocutors came to Germany – as students.

Several historical periods have been important for the formation and development of African diasporas in Germany. In this chapter I will focus on three: The first is European colonialism/imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century, when people from various African countries which had been colonised by Germany (parts of today's Togo, Cameroon, Namibia and Tanzania) started to come to Germany in large numbers. I explore how African diaspora networks started to emerge in Germany and how they were affected by World Wars I and II and go on to explore the new flows of African (student) migration to East and West Germany since the 1950s and the role of the occupation of American troops for Germany's political and cultural landscapes after 1945. The emergence of newer Afrodiasporic organisations since the 1980s will be explored at the end of this chapter, which also includes an overview of the landscape of African diaspora and Black organisations in Germany today.

The beginning and end of the first African diaspora (1880–1945)

From the earliest days of German colonialism there was a very limited influx of migrants from African countries such as today's Cameroon or Namibia, both of which were German colonies until 1918. Detailed studies of African migration and diaspora organisation to Germany are scarce but more have gradually begun to appear since 2000. One of the most noteworthy, because of the long historical timescale it cov-

ers, is Robbie Aitken and Eve Rosenhaft's *Black Germany: The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884–1960* (2013). Aitken, a professor of Imperial History and Rosenhaft, a professor of German Historical Studies, both of whom are based in the United Kingdom, retrace the lives and careers of Cameroonians who arrived in Germany from former German colonies as early as 1884. The authors frame their work in terms of the making of a diaspora community in Germany as 'Black', a community that goes beyond the ties of nationality of Africans in Germany to a more political awareness of being racially marked and suffering from everyday and institutional racism in German and European societies as people of African descent. Aitken and Rosenhaft document a shift of attitudes towards the early arrivals from Africa to Germany between 1880 and 1914. The way they were treated shifted from curiosity and, in most cases, respect to discrimination based on the growing influence of race ideology in Europe.

The African migrants came to Germany at a time when race theories were already flourishing, and the use of racial ideologies based on the categorisation of people according to phenotypical characteristics, supported by pseudo-scientific racism, was already a widespread phenomenon in society at large (Wieviorka 1998). Fatima El-Tayeb (2001) traces the emergence of race theories and racism in Germany from the fifteenth century onwards and notes its effects on German colonialism, finding political and social exclusion of Black people in Germany already long before the era of Nazism. Since the Enlightenment, race theories had been developed in various sciences, leading to new forms of scientifically supported racism in Europe – and Germany in particular. Here particularly powerful currents of racism were associated with social Darwinism and eugenics, as represented by people such as Ludwig Woltmann (1899) or Alfred Ploetz (1895) in the late nineteenth century, who built their ideas around the thought of French, English and American race theorists such as Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The pseudo-science of phrenology – which claimed to be able to determine psychological characteristics based on the form of a person's skull – had already emerged in Germany in the work of Franz Joseph Gall and Johann Gaspar Spurzheim at the start of the nineteenth century. In Germany, racist ideology was also aligned with the growing nationalism that followed the unification of the German Reich in 1871, and Germany espoused a rhetoric of ethnic community as the foundation for the nation (Brubaker 1994, Wieviorka 1998).

Cameroon was one of four territories acknowledged as a German colony by the European colonising powers at the Berlin Conference in 1884. Togo, German South West Africa (now Namibia), and German East Africa (now Tanzania) were also given the status of German colonies in 1884. The first Africans who came to Germany since that date were usually part of a West African cosmopolitan elite. In Cameroon, this meant children of the Duala or other regional elites. They came as students or apprentices, often with the idea of returning to their home countries after receiving an

education. Soon after the first Africans arrived from the colonies to Germany after 1885, a diasporic community building beyond ethnic and national boundaries developed. A shared consciousness arose of experiences as Africans and colonial subjects in Germany:

> [T]he articulation of a sense of connectedness with other black people that reaches out from local relations to envision black interest and identity as something shared across the globe. This is a political vision, but in the lives of our subjects and their contemporaries (Africans and their offspring in Germany between 1880–1960) it was typically something that arose out of everyday experience and was worked out in concrete encounters that called for practices of negotiation and translation. (Aitken & Rosenhaft 2013, p. 194)

Aitken and Rosencraft describe the two-fold nature of the making of Black identity. One side of the process is the political vision of community-building among people of African descent, while the other aspect emerges out of everyday experiences of racism in which people are marked as homogenously black, forcing them to connect for mutual support. The building of an African diaspora community in Germany was a reaction to a shared experience of discrimination and an attempt to build solidarity between people who had come to Germany mostly on their own, without their families. Most Africans were to be found in and around bigger cities such as Hamburg and Berlin, but there were also some in Cologne, Frankfurt, Hanover and Munich. Hamburg was an attractive destination for African men because of its port. Many Africans would arrive in that city, which also offered job opportunities for African and Asian seamen at the docks.

According to the Aitken and Rosenhaft's research, most Africans lived in close proximity and were especially to be found in the working-class neighbourhoods, which indicates a loss of status loss through international migration, as most of them came from wealthier families.

Berlin was the centre of African life in Germany. Some of the people Aitken and Rosenhaft present found employment at the University's Department of African Languages, and many hoped to find work in the film and entertainment industry. In the 1920s, Berlin was already a very cosmopolitan capital with many non-native Berliners living there. Administratively, it was also a strategic place for Africans because of the presence of the German Foreign Office and the Department of Colonial Affairs. They suggest that the African population was around 200–300 (Aitken and Rosenhaft 2013, p. 123) between the wars in Berlin, primarily Cameroonians and their German-born children.

African colonial subjects in Germany after World War I – the emergence of formal organisations

After World War I, the situation for Africans who stayed on in Germany as ex-colonial subjects became increasingly difficult both economically and in terms of their legal status. It was harder to remain in contact with their native countries once the former German colonial territories were handed over to the French and British. This made organisation across ethnic or national boundaries more necessary to prevent those who stayed from being isolated. One such formalised African community organisation, with members of diverse African countries living all over Germany, was the African Welfare Association (*Afrikanischer Hilfsverein – AH*). The AH was officially created in Hamburg in 1918 and was open to anybody of African heritage. The first clause of its statue read: 'Every member of our black race and every person of colour can be a member' (quoted in Aitken & Rosenhaft 2013, p. 129). In 1918, its membership included 32 men, mostly Cameroonian Duala, but also men from Togo, Liberia and the Virgin Islands; later on, people from Sierra Leone and the USA joined. The objective of the organisation was the provision of support and mutual aid – both political and economic: '[I]t looked to offer practical and financial help as well as support for members in their dealings with the German authorities, in the search for employment and in the case of the death of a family member' (ibid.). The AH had ceased to exist by 1922 because most of its powerful members had left the country or died. But before that, AH members had organised several campaigns for the rights of Afrodescendant people in Germany.

Following World War I, many former African colonial subjects who remained in Germany began to experience a process of downward social mobility: Members of the elite in their home countries, the growth of racial discrimination made it all but impossible for them to find jobs that fitted their socioeconomic and cultural status, and they were pushed into 'liminal occupations, including petty trading, hustling and stage performance of various kinds' (Aitken & Rosenhaft 2013, p. 15).

At the same time, Aitken and Rosenhaft also document a growing politisation and the forging of alliances with pan-African, communist and socialist communities in France, the USA and Russia. When describing the emergence of political African diaspora organisations, it is interesting to note the role the international communist movement played in the development of pan-African and Black political activism, which often leaned towards communist and socialist ideals. Aitken and Rosenhaft note that

> the context for African involvement in political organisations was provided by anti-imperialist and anti-colonial projects that developed in the ambit of the Communist International. German communist Willi Münzenberg who was involved in the League Against Imperialism (LAI – Liga gegen koloniale Unter-

> drückung) established contacts with Africans in Berlin and by 1926 there were African members in the League whose objective it was to fight against colonial oppression. (2013, p. 204)

After the emergence of the LAI in 1927,[1] several African diaspora organisations were founded in Germany, for example the German League for the Defence of the Negro Race (LzVN) which was established in 1929 by Duala men who had been trained by the Comintern, which was at that time increasingly fusing race and class struggles in its policies. This formalisation of organisations facilitated transborder contact with political groups from other countries such as the LDRN (League for the Defense of the Rights of the Negro Race – founded in Paris in 1927 by Malian anti-colonialist Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté). The demands of the German-led organisations ranged from improving the living conditions of Afrodescendant people in Germany and recognising them as German citizens and not foreigners, to supporting decolonial movements in Africa (Aitken & Rosenhaft 2013, DHM 2016). One member of that generation of African socialist activists was Joseph Bilé, who came to Germany from Douala, Cameroon to train as an engineer and was cut off from his family when World War I broke out; he failed to return due to lack of funding and remained in Germany and Austria. He became a spokesperson for the LzVN and the LAI and formally joined the KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, Communist Party of Germany*) in 1930. He went to the first International Congress of Negro Workers in Hamburg in 1930, which was attended by prominent Black liberation activists. Soon after that, Bilé visited Moscow to strengthen his links with communist organisations there. In his function as member at LzVN and LAI, he supported newly arriving African students in Berlin (Aitken and Rosenhaft 2013).

Very few Africans in Germany succeeded in their efforts to acquire German citizenship (*Reichsnationalität*) before World War I and the authorities often advised against accepting their demands, stressing that citizenship was usually reserved for white people from Germany (Aitken and Rosenhaft 2013). After World War I, a unified German citizenship was established. Before then, German nationality *Reichsangehörigkeit* (citizenship of the empire) was granted to those who held citizenship of an individual German state (*Landesangehörigkeit*). After 1919 and the loss of colonial subjecthood for Africans in Germany, the objection to granting citizenship because of race was more often voiced openly – as here in the 1930s: 'An official in the Munich Interior Ministry observed: Kohl is a Negro. In my view there must be fundamental reservations against naturalising coloureds' (quoted in Aitken & Rosenhaft 2013, p. 100). Or in this statement from other state officials: '[I]t hardly needs saying that

1 It was founded at the World Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels in 1927, which was attended by 174 delegates representing 134 organisations from all over the world.

the naturalisation of coloureds is undesirable' (ibid.). Mixed Cameroonian-German couples often encountered administrative obstacles when they wanted to get married in the 'mother country'. If a German woman married a foreign national, she and the children would lose German citizenship and automatically be granted the citizenship of her husband. Because of that rule, the Cameroonian men would often ask for German citizenship or naturalisation before marriage, but this could take a long time and was not guaranteed at all – especially after the nationality law reform of 1918, which required the approval of local as well as national government for granting naturalisation.

One debate that made Africans the target of racism concerned the occupation of the Rhineland by French troops after World War I, and especially the presence of French colonial troops and the accompanying 'Black Shame' (*Schwarze Schmach*) campaign, which contributed to the spread of racism against Black people in Germany. Soon after the Armistice in November 1918, demilitarising measures were enforced on Germany, and American, Belgian and French soldiers occupied German territories in the Rhine region. France was the major occupying power and installed troops on three-quarters of the occupied land, administered from the city of Mainz. The Rhineland occupation was an outcome of the treaty of Versailles and lasted from 1918 until 1930 (with remilitarisation and occupation by the Nazi regime in 1936). On 10 January 1920, the Versailles Treaty came into effect. It proclaimed Germany as solely responsible for the war and required Germany to pay compensation. In 1922, Germany fell behind on reparation payments. The French occupation was generally disliked by the German population. Many Germans in the Rhineland felt humiliated by the French troops on an everyday basis, as the French government had taken control over factories and much of public life. And in an age of growing racial ideology the presence of French colonial soldiers from Senegal, Morocco, Algeria and Madagascar, who made up about 20 per cent of the occupying force, was perceived as especially 'aggravating'. (Constant 2019)

The incident that culminated in the 'Black Shame' campaign – a national and then international propaganda campaign against French occupation – took place on 7 April 1920 in Frankfurt. Moroccan soldiers who felt threatened by protesting people in the street began to shoot. Already before that incident, stereotypes of Black soldiers and stories of their killing and raping did exist in the public sphere, but this was the landmark event that triggered the campaign. Initially, the Black Shame campaign was a parliamentary campaign that was launched a few weeks after the deadly incident with the Moroccan troops. The parliamentary protest was soon joined by all kinds of organisations and unions. The only German parties not involved in the protest were the left wing Independent Social Democrats (USPD) and the communist KPD. The protesters used terms such as 'coloured', 'negro race' and 'black plague' to refer to people of African descent (Wigger 2017, p. 4). The historian Iris Wigger analyses the campaign in her book *The 'Black Horror on the Rhine': Intersections of Race,*

Nation, Gender and Class in 1920s Germany (2017). Soon the campaign reached an international public as well, with newspapers calling for the 'solidarity of all civilised people' against the 'desecration of the white race' (Wigger 2017, p. 5). The protests were accompanied by extremely racist and stereotypical images on flyers, newspapers and magazines, portraying African soldiers as brutes and rapists. The extreme right in Germany took advantage of the moment and accused France of committing crimes against the white race, publishing yet more caricatures. The campaign was also used to try to unite all Germans, no matter their political colour, against a common enemy and threat:

> The Black Shame in this way proved a powerful ideology of racialised social inclusion through exclusion […] in this case, a mode of social integration based on the degradation and social exclusion of 'black troops' as racialised 'Others.' (Wigger 2017, p. 6)

Several novels were published at the time using the 'Black Shame' of French occupation as a plot element to demand 'national unity in times of crisis' (Wigger 2017, p. 85). Although the extreme right were the loudest, it was not only they who became vocal. Socialists who were against the occupation regime also used the incident to mark their opposition to the presence of French forces. And they received international support. The pictures painted of the colonial troops from groups on the extreme right and left were very similar. Both presented them as coming from countries that were characterised as equally barbaric and ill-behaved. The results were massive international campaigns – both racist and sexist – against the use of colonial troops, but more especially against African troops, who were defamed as savages who could not help following their sexual instincts and therefore a danger for the docile German woman, who needed to be protected. The presence of colonial troops was represented as a 'double humiliation' – not only was Germany occupied and its sovereignty and territory stolen, but the occupiers were Africans. In the popular racial ideology of the time, this meant an attack on the imagined 'racial purity' of the nation. Soon elements of the British, Italian and US media began to condemn the presence of Black troops in Germany. Although France's government was relatively quick to react, removing most of its colonial troops from Germany after the April incident, the major propaganda campaign continued until 1922 and even after that on a smaller scale.

The same means were reused by the Nazis after 1933 to justify racist policies not only against the Jewish population but also against everyone who was considered non-white. One of the policies included the drastic measure of sterilising the children born from French colonial soldiers and German women, known as the 'Rhineland children'. In 1937, German physicians approved the sterilisation of almost 400 of those children on the basis of their 'foreign racial features' (Wigger

2017, p. 11). Research by the historian Reiner Pommerin (1979) has uncovered 385 such sterilisations. This extreme measure gives a hint of how life for a person of African descent must have been in Germany following the end of World War I, with the rise of eugenics and 'the dogma of racial hygiene' (Wigger 2017, p. 11).

People of African descent under the Nazi regime (1933–1945)

The Nazi regime quickly disrupted pan-African political activities (for example by proscribing the LzVN and banning its activists from Germany). The Hamburg section of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers office was forced out of Germany in 1933 and its director, the famous pan-African and decolonial theorist George Padmore, was deported to France; the LAI and LzVN were shut down permanently, former leaders like Victor Bell (a Cameroonian native) threatened by the Nazi regime (Aitken and Rosenhaft 2013). Many Cameroonian-Germans studied by Aitken and Rosenhaft went into exile in Paris, where they encountered a larger and more organised Black political community of citizens of various African countries to which they could turn to for support. Those who had been active in politics could continue to do so in France.

Some returned to Cameroon from Paris, some stayed on in France. Hitler's project of building an Aryan ethnic community and forcibly excluding or exterminating all those marked as dangerous to the purity of the envisaged ethno-racial *Volksgemeinschaft* (National Community) forced people of African descent into a very marginal position in society. Each group that the Nazi government defined as a threat to racial purity was targeted by different laws and strategies; the most horrific ones being the genocide of the Jews. The Nuremberg laws (also known as Race laws or Aryan laws) of 1935 which comprised the 'Blood Protection Act' (*Blutschutzgesetz*) and the 'Reich Citizenship Act' (*Reichsbürgergesetz*) included not only racist policies targeting Jewish people but also, to a lesser degree, 'coloured races' (people of non-European descent). A marriage ban between those and 'Aryan' Germans was installed. These laws were inspired by race segregation laws in the American South at the time (Brechtken et al. 2017, Essner 2017).

During the war there were several cases of Africans and Germans of African descent being sent to concentration camps – often because they had (or were alleged to have) relationships with white Germans (women or men) (Campt 2004, Aitken and Rosenhaft 2013). As a result of the new citizenship laws, people characterised as 'non-Aryan' were excluded from all forms of state aid, the right to citizenship was revoked based on racial status, and everyday forms of racism increased considerably (Pommerin 1979). At that time, many people of African descent could only find employment performing as part of the colonial film and entertainment industry; many had lost their former jobs due to a law that made it possible to remove 'non-Aryans' to make place for 'Aryans' (Aitken & Rosenhaft 2013, p. 245).

Written life histories of Germans of African descent and how they lived and survived in the Third Reich give accounts of the process of coming of age and subject formation in a time of extreme institutionalised racism. German-born Theodor Wonja Michael (who had a Cameroonian father and a German mother) describes in his autobiography, *Black German: An Afro-German Life in the Twentieth Century* (Michael 2015), how he lost his job because he was considered 'too foreign' – though he had never lived anywhere other than Germany! Theodor grew up during the Third Reich. As a child he acted in so-called *Völkerschauen*, shows that displayed foreign people as exotic and primitive and which often took place in zoological gardens, to strengthen the racist stereotype of non-white people as closer to nature (Bancel et al. 2004). During World War II, he only managed to find employment as an actor in colonial movies, where he had to play a stereotypical 'African'. Although there was a general ban on Black performers, there were also exceptions, because African performers were deemed 'necessary' in colonial films. The movie sets became places of encounter for Africans from various countries and Germans of African descent.

Another life story is told by the German-Liberian writer and editor Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi in his autobiography, *Destined to Witness: Growing up Black in Nazi Germany* (2010). He left Germany in 1948, first for Liberia and then for the USA, where he became editor-in-chief of the African American magazine *Ebony*. (Aminata's father referred to his story once during our interview. He did not know much about Black Germans, but he had read Massaquoi's memoirs.) Fasia Jansen, who was also German-Liberian, a songwriter and peace activist, grew up during World War II. In the biography written about her (she never wrote one herself), *Fasia – geliebte Rebellin*, Marina Achenbach (2004), the author and several other contributors, who were all friends with their subject, describe how Jansen was racially prosecuted in Nazi Germany and forced to work in a concentration camp kitchen.

Both Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi and Theodor Wonja Michael strongly identified as German and wanted to join the Hitler Youth. They were devastated when they were not allowed to do so. They were often erroneously referred to as 'Rhineland children', the name used for children of the French colonial soldiers and German women, which shows the general assumption in Germany at the time that a child of African descent could not have been born in Germany before 1918, even though Germany had then been a colonial power and Africans had lived in Germany.[2]

African diaspora organisations, which had already started to be disrupted soon after World War I because of Germany's loss of its colonies, had been completely dis-

2 This positioning of people of African descent as outsiders happened after the war again when Black children were also referred to as 'occupation children' (*Besatzungskinder*). This time, the reference was to the children of African American soldiers, who were part of the allied armies occupying Germany, and German mothers (more on this in the section on the Afro-German movement in Chapter 9).

mantled by the end of World War II. But soon after 1945, new migration movements from various African countries as well as the occupation of US troops began to build a completely new landscape of African diaspora in Germany.

African diaspora in West and East Germany (1945–1980)

Two aspects of transnational history are important to understand the lives of my interlocutors: German women of African descent born in the 1980s. First of all, I want to explore the history of African student migration to Germany since the 1950s, as this is how some of the fathers of the women I work with came – they received student scholarships. Then, I explore the influences that the USA and its military had on postwar Germany, especially on the cultural landscape and the intellectual exchange that has taken place since the 1968 student revolts.

African migration and diaspora organisation in Germany since the 1950s

The policies towards African countries in Germany after World War II were much influenced by the Cold War and competition for recognition between the two Germanies. Although the loss of the German colonies after World War I had long been perceived as a humiliation, it became an advantage for Germany in the face of the decolonisation of Africa and Asia following World War II, allowing Germany to position itself as somehow a *neutral actor*, who had already lost its colonies a long time ago. Starting in the late 1950s, as the Cold War Germanies entered into a struggle for the attention of the newly independent states, Germany – East and West – became a popular destinations for post-independence African students and workers. And with the presence of international students and workers from the Global South, new African diaspora networks emerged, who worked on several issues within and outside Germany and formed diverse coalitions (DHM 2016). African migration to Germany back then was twofold: There was student migration and labour migration. As some of the African parents of my interlocutors came to Germany as students, the focus of this part will be on student migration.

African students from many different countries began to come both to West and East Germany as early as the 1950s. For many of them it was the wake of independence in their respective countries of origin, and they were often highly politicised. The historian Quinn Slobodian speaks of a 'battle for Afro-Asian students fought between the two republics' (2013, p. 646) which started in the early Cold War period with the separation of the two republics in 1949:

> The question for both Germanies was how to preserve control or at least influence, without colonialism, with success measured in the currency of diplomatic recognition and votes of support at the United Nations. (Slobodian 2013, p. 647)

The FRG (West Germany) started to offer large amounts of scholarships to non-aligned countries. By 1960 there were already over 9,000 spots for students from the South; the first people from African countries came from Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria and Guinea. By establishing these schemes, the government hoped to nurture pro-West German sentiment in these countries, helping West Germany to gain an international image as an open and cosmopolitan country (Slobodian 2013, 2008, Blumenau 2011). For the GDR (East Germany), the total number of African students in 1989 was 2,356, compared to 1,300 some ten years earlier. By 1989, for example, 651 Angolan students had completed a degree in the GDR and 224 were still enrolled. The Africans studying in East Germany had their scholarships taken over by the (originally West German) German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*, DAAD) after 1989 (Schenck 2019). Most had come alone, as it was difficult to legally bring their families. Students were usually supposed to return after the completion of their degrees to transfer their skills and knowledge to their countries of origin, but not all of them did so. In the GDR, some stayed on after 1989 as asylum seekers (though not many were accepted as such) (Schenck 2019). Whereas West Germany liked to frame their scholarship programme in terms of humanitarian aid, East Germany framed it in terms of socialist solidarity and focused on students and workers of countries that were more positive towards communism (socialist and non-aligned).

The influx of international students allowed the formation of new supranational coalitions as well as national diaspora coalitions in both East and West Germany. Slobodian researched transnational activism in African and Asian student groups in West Germany from the 1950s to the 1970s and the influences these had on the emerging New Left in Germany and the 1968 generation (Slobodian 2008). In the wake of the 1955 Bandung Conference and the adoption of non-alignment as a third way beyond the East–West divide of the Cold War, international students (a Jamaican medical student and an Indian physicist) in Germany set up the Afro-Asian Student Union (AASU) in 1956. Other organisations founded at the time included two African student associations with a Pan-African vision: The ASUD – African Student Union of Germany (*Afrikanische Studentenunion Deutschlands*) was founded in 1961 in Munich by a Ghanaian student inspired by pan-Africanist W.E.B. du Bois. It united students from West and East Germany, as international students usually had more freedom to travel than East German citizens at that time. There was also a GDR-specific organisation: the UASA – Union of African students and workers (*Union der afrikanischen Studenten und Arbeiter in der DDR*), which was formed in 1960. The UASA aligned with other African organisations across the Soviet Union and in Western Europe and was very active in anti-racist work (Pugach 2019; Slobodian 2013).

Both Germanies tried to control and even undermine the activities of the international student organisations. For example, before giving scholarships to Algerian

students in 1958 (which was in the middle of the Algerian War of Independence), the West German Association of German students (VDS, *Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften*) advised the students that political activity was forbidden while they were studying in the FRG (Slobodian 2013). But there were still protests, and Arab students united with German students (especially with Socialist German Students Union) to organise protests from 1959 until the end of the war in 1962. The VDS itself became more politicised in the 1960s and criticised colonial wars in Angola (Slobodian 2013, 2008). Besides the UASA, most of the African students were members of National Student Groups (*Nationale Hochschulgruppen, NHG*). There were twenty-three African student groups as well as the pan-African UASA.

Due to the Hallstein doctrine, in effect from 1955 to 1970, which stated that the FRG would not conduct diplomatic relations with countries that officially recognised the GDR, it was complicated for the latter to develop relations with newly independent states in particular. The GDR therefore had an interest in keeping African students, even if many of them did organise in political dissent against their governments of origin soon after independence from European colonialism, including students from Nigeria, Guinea and Kenya (Pugach 2019). It is important to note that political activism was not only directed towards countries of origin. As well as drawing attention to and protesting against politics in their countries of origin, the organisations – especially the umbrella organisation UASA – also called out racism that Africans confronted in the GDR. In 1965, they published a letter which denounced racist violence. These charges were indeed acknowledged and taken seriously by GDR officials, who were afraid that the FRG would use that information for propaganda purposes (Pugach 2019). Although the GDR positioned itself as non-racist and anti-imperialist and saw emergent socialist African states as allies in the fight against Western imperialism, Africans living in East Germany were still confronted by everyday forms of racism and rejection, for instance when it came to questions of marriage, family and relationships.

Although scientific racism had been delegitimised following World War II and the crimes committed by the Nazis in the name of science, racism itself was by no means over. Instead, a pseudo-scientific racism was replaced with a racism that looked for essential differences between humans based on cultural background. Even though these differences were not explained using an evolutionary scheme in which white people were on top and Black people at the bottom of human evolution, the cultural distinctions were still based on phenotypical differences, and racist prejudices against Black people and People of Colour lingered (Wieviorka 1998, Fassin & Fassin 2009). The assumption that people of African descent were essentially culturally different from white people, no matter where they came from, was still widespread.

At the same time, as historian Sarah Pugach notes, the presence of African students became normal, and international student dorms would be popular hang-out

places for meet-ups and potential affairs of the heart (Pugach 2015). The historian Young-Sun Hong (2015) also looks at the flows of students from non-aligned and newly independent African and Asian states. Around 44,000 foreigners studied at East German universities and technical schools between 1949 and 1989. In the 1960s, many of them came from Ghana, Guinea and Mali, joined later by large numbers from Zanzibar and Cuba. Mostly they came to study medical professions, agriculture or engineering. The nursing trainees were largely female.

Although these exchange programmes were framed in terms of international solidarity and medical system development, the trainee nurses and doctors also filled a gap in East Germany, where many physicians had fled to the West (Hong 2015, p. 203). Most of the students or trainees had also come because of a wish to experience new cultures and get to know the world. As in the colonial period, most of the African students and trainees that came in the period form the 1950s to the 1980s, belonged to families from the higher social and economic echelons of their countries of origin; their main motivation was not to earn money to send to their families as remittances but to get a prestigious education and gain some social and cultural capital by getting to know the world. But there are many personal accounts of how they experienced racism in many aspects of life, from their jobs to the private sphere (Pugach 2015)

It is difficult to estimate how many children of African descent have been born in Germany since 1945. What we do have is rough numbers of people of African descent living in Germany today: In 2018, there were 570,115 African nationals living in Germany, about 60 per cent of whom were men, and 40 per cent women (Bundesamt 2019). However, this number does not include people of African descent who possess only German nationality. In its 2017 micro-census, which includes the category 'person with migration background' (*Personen mit Migrationshintergrund*), (which includes the children of migrants who may only have German citizenship) the German Federal Statistics Office recorded 856,000 people with an African 'migration background' living in Germany today; but as the German census does not contain questions about ethnicity, these numbers are only approximate (Bundesamt 2017). Moreover, these figures do not include children born after 1945 to African American soldiers and German women, who would also belong to the same racialised group.

American influences in Germany after World War II

In order to understand later developments within Black and Afro-German movements in Germany from the 1980s in terms of membership and political engagement, it is also important to explain the transnational history that Germany has with the USA – more precisely the US military. For many of my interlocutors, especially those from Frankfurt, the Black American presence in Germany was an important point for the development of their personal Afrodiasporic identities. After

World War II, American influences were very important in shaping political and entertainment cultures in Germany. US cultural and political production, from jazz to the Civil Rights movement, became an important source of inspiration for Germans who wanted to reinvent themselves and break with the historical burden of World War II.

US military occupation after World War II

At the end of October 1945, the US occupation zone comprised Bavaria, Hesse, areas within Baden-Württemberg and parts of the city state of Bremen (because of the importance of the port). After World War II, there were almost three million American troops in Europe, most of them in Germany. The US occupation had a greater impact on Germany than the presence of French or British forces, as the presence of the US military continues until today. By 1947, most American troops had left Germany, but around 137,000 remained. Yet in the 1950s, increasing numbers of American GIs began to arrive in West Germany again, because of US containment policy with regard to the Soviet Union, and new neighbourhoods emerged bringing American life to German cities. At the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, there were again more than 250,000 GIs stationed in West Germany. Although the occupation ended with the coming into effect of the new constitution and the creation of the FRG in 1949, the American presence in West Germany very much remained, due to its being a member of NATO, a military organisation that was founded to resist the Soviet presence in Europe, and the beginning of the Cold War (1947–89).

In geopolitical terms, Germany was of major strategic importance. In 1955 West Germany or the FRG was granted full sovereignty. From 1949 until then, the FRG was a self-governing dominion under Allied supervision (Poiger 2000). It was only after the Cold War and the unification of Germany in 1991 that the number of US soldiers has been steadily reduced from about 200,000 then, to 33,000 today. In particular, the rise in the number of soldiers arriving in the 1950s led to big changes in German cities, as they required not just living space but also entertainment. Rather quickly, and despite the anti-fraternisation rules of the US army, relationships developed between US soldiers and German women. Many American-German couples found their way together and a new generation of so-called occupation babies (the first being the Rhineland children after World War I) were born, many of whom were of African American origin. The historian Sabine Lee (2011, p. 170) estimates that around 4,000 children were born with African American GI fathers and German mothers before 1955 (of 37,000 US 'occupation children' in total). Although the reputation of American soldiers in Germany was better than that of their Soviet colleagues, women who were or had been in relationships with soldiers were heavily stigmatised in Germany in the 1950s. And even more so if the soldier was African American.

The autobiography of the Afro-German writer and activist Ika Hügel-Marshall (1998) tells one such story of a family that was torn apart due to the stigma and discrimination that 'American-Lovers' (*Ami-Liebchen*, a vulgar term for German women in relationships with American soldiers) and their children faced (more about that in the biography of Hügel-Marshall in Chapter 9). From the end of the war until the 1960s, children with a dark skin tone were often referred to as 'occupation children' in public discourse, much like the 'Rhineland children' of the post-World War I occupation, even if they had an African migration history. At the same time though, as anthropologist Damani Partridge (2012) notes, relationships between German women and Black American men also became more popular, especially for younger people who wanted to demarcate themselves from the Nazi past and conservative Germany in general. The German-Liberian writer Hans-Jürgen Massaquoi, for example, notes in his autobiography that right after the war he felt that his skin colour had actually become an asset, '[B]lack was definitely in' (1999, p. 288) he writes. He also recounts his experiences in the then still segregated GI clubs, where Black GIs would hang out with their German dates in the Black clubs.

American culture played an important role in constructing German identities in both East and West Germany in the Cold War years following World War II (Poiger 2000). Large-scale exchange programmes were set up, with over 11,000 Germans (politicians and others) going to the USA, while the USA also founded cultural exchange centres – the 'America houses' (*Amerikahäuser*) – in Germany. The first of the American cultural centres, which opened in many major German cities, was founded in Frankfurt as early as 1946. They functioned as a platform for spreading American culture in Germany with libraries and other cultural events (for more on Frankfurt, in particular, see Chapter 3 'Growing up in Frankfurt'). American popular culture, such as movies, jazz and other genres of music, also found its way to the German public via other channels, especially Radio Luxembourg and the American and British Forces Networks (AFN, BFN).

Cultural consumption and the politics around regulation of access to American cultural production became central to political reconstruction in the FRG and the GDR and was were by both states to confront the tasks of building a nation and national identity after Nazism and in the midst of the Cold War. In the beginning, state attitudes toward American popular culture were generally negative in East and West alike. But that changed considerably during the Cold War, when West Germany was an ally of the USA. What reverberates from the analysis by historian Uta Poiger is that, although Germany tried to address its history of racism and particularly the genocide of the European Jews, this did not necessarily mean that racism against other people, such as those of African descent, was called into question. A lot of the racist stereotypes attached to jazz in the Weimar Republic and in the Nazi doctrine of 'degenerate art' (*entartete Kunst*) reverberated for some time after World War II. Celebrated by the open-minded cosmopolitans in the 1920s, jazz was defamed as

'Negro music' by conservatives. Both positive and negative attitudes towards African American jazz musicians and dancers were charged with racialised stereotypes. The general attitude saw it as exotic, naive or primitive, and in its authenticity closer to nature than white Europeans:

> Many Germans failed to see that associating African Americans with the jungle or even seeing them as authentic representations of Africa was problematic. Charges of blacks' alleged primitivism reaffirmed racial hierarchies, both in the avant-garde, especially among the expressionists who viewed primitivism as liberating, and in the right wing, where celebrations of primitivism fueled a much more pernicious racism that saw primitivism as a cause for racial decline. (Poiger 2000, p. 17)

Germans who had been jazz fans during or before World War II, when they faced persecution, founded 'hot clubs' for listening and playing jazz. These clubs also became a meeting place and forum of exchange between Germans and Americans, especially African American jazz musicians and fans. Hot clubs were founded in Leipzig, Berlin and Frankfurt, among other cities. Thus, this music became a 'symbol of a more general liberation from Nazi oppression' (Poiger 2000, p. 42).

The Civil Rights movement in Germany

Transatlantic influences also mattered a good deal for all kinds of left protest movements in Germany after 1945. Student protests in the 1960s and 70s drew on the Civil Rights and Black Power movements as well as on experiences of decolonial struggles in African and Asian countries (Poiger 2000, Slobodian 2008).

Due to the specific role of the USA as an occupying power and the strategic role of Germany for the USA during the Cold War, transnational exchange between West Germany and the USA was remarkably strong, not only on the institutional level but also culturally and politically. The Civil Rights movement in general, and the Black Power movement in particular, had a huge impact on student protests in Germany and Europe. Martin Klimke has researched the 1968 global protest movement as the first transnational youth subculture that was made possible by rapid changes in telecommunications and transport: the emergence of a global media and information landscape as well as the rise in air traffic: 'With universities as breeding grounds of protest […] the late 1960s saw the emergence of an international language of dissent' (Klimke 2011, p. 6). He analyses the relationship between the group Students for a Democratic Society in the US and the German socialist students union *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (both abbreviated as SDS), showing their mutual influence.

These interactions and alliances between American and West German student groups in the 1960s and 1970s are one example of how transnational activism was

spread, especially through the circulation of people and ideas between the USA and Germany; and it worked in both directions. Ideas generated initially within the Black Power movement, for example, travelled to Germany, where they met a youth keen to rebel against a Nazi past that was still present (with former Nazis still holding political positions). Angela Davis, one of the most prominent figures of the Black Power movement, studied under Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno in Frankfurt from 1965 to 1967; before going back and becoming active in the Black Panther movement, she already was active in the Frankfurt section of the SDS (Klimke 2011); after she was imprisoned in the USA, Angela Davis Solidarity Committees emerged in West Germany.

> The influence of the African American Black Power struggle on the West German protest movement not only consisted in the creation of a transnational protest identity, but also substantially shaped the formation and dynamics of the students activists' ideological position. (Klimke 2011, p. 108)

Many West German students visited the USA and became familiar with the race-based struggles there – the ghettoisation, poverty and racism. And they brought thoughts about that back with them to Germany. There were also many American exchange students in Germany, who introduced news and ideas from the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, such as Rudy Dutschke's American wife Gretchen Klotz, who was herself a student activist. Student leaders from Germany gave lecture tours in the USA, wrote about German student protests in Black Panther media, and Black Panther members came to Germany to hold lectures as well, or to participate in protests.

Black Panther Solidarity Committees were founded, and marches of mourning were organised after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Black Power ideas also influenced African American GIs who were stationed in Germany and who became members of the Black Panthers. There were several protests where GIs marched together with student protesters and other anti-imperialist and decolonial movements (for example the Algerian National Liberation Front) or planned actions together in the 1960s and 1970s (Höhn 2008).

This circulation of people and ideas is what cultural theorist Paul Gilroy (1993) describes as a positive form of African diaspora-making, based on the movement of ideas but especially of people. Gilroy describes how W.E.B. du Bois's travels in Germany in 1892–94 and the political debates he experienced there, especially around the question of nation-building, inspired him and other early pan-Africanist thinkers to develop theories of Black nationalism. By analysing some personal trajectories, including that of the writer Richard Wright, who lived for a long time in France, Gilroy shows how the African diaspora and pan-Africanism were transnationalised by people originating from different places fighting diverse

struggles: against race segregation in the USA, decolonisation in most African and Asian countries, racism and the trauma of the Holocaust in Europe. Wright (1908–1960) spent many years in Paris (he went there to flee the McCarthy era in 1947 as a member of the US Communist Party) where many Black American writers would later follow, including James Baldwin. Among other activities, Wright was an editor of the journal *Présence Africaine*, one example of active cultural production by the African diaspora, a journal that aimed at including writings by Black people in Europe, the Americas and Africa. This important journal, which is now also a publishing house, was founded in 1947 by the Senegalese national Alioune Diop. The idea of the journal came into being after the 1945 Pan-Africanist Congress in Manchester (the first was held in 1900 in London, the second in 1919 in Paris). In the USA, Wright was drawn to Marxism (he became a member of the Communist Party in 1933) and when he moved to France, he discovered French existentialist writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre. For Wright, leaving the USA and traveling widely enabled him to draw connections among the struggles against fascism, imperialism and colonialism.

Afrodiasporic organisations and representation in Germany up to the turn of the millennium

The Afro-German movements of the 1980s onwards were more inspired by African American organisations, ideas and people than African or pan-African ones. The two most important in this regard are the Initiative for Black people in Germany (ISD[3]) and Afro-German Women (ADEFRA[4]) both of which were founded in 1986 and are still active today (these two organisations and their connection with Black American cultural production will be explored in detail in Chapter 9).

These organisations were founded a few years before German unification and one of the tasks of Afro-German activists was soon to be to write about the implications of unification for Black people and People of Colour. The racist upheavals of the 1990s and the rise of neo-Nazi subcultures amplified their anti-racist vocation. Until then their work had consisted more in creating networks for Black people, and Black women in particular, and raising public awareness about the long history of Afrodescendant people in Germany. Yet the racist brutality emerging in the 1990s made members of ISD and ADEFRA more active the overall anti-racist struggle. Attacks on refugees, non-European guest workers/contract workers and People of Colour grew in the 1990s. There was the incident in Hoyerswerda (1991), where neo-Nazis and sympathisers among the local population chased away people living in a home for asylum seekers and former contract workers, throwing stones and bottles at them. And at Rostock-Lichtenhage, where again neo-Nazis and a mob of around

3 The ISD website is at http://isdonline.de/ (accessed 24 November 2020).

4 ADEFRA has its website at http://www.adefra.com/ (accessed 24 November 2020).

3,000 local people set fire to buildings housing former contract workers and asylum seekers (1992); at Mölln, where extreme right-wing activists killed two women and a child (1992); and Solingen (1993), where five Turkish women and girls were murdered in an arson attack (BPB 2018).

In the 1990s, the German government began to use an ethnocultural vocabulary to encourage a sense of national unity among the two German states that had been divided ideologically for forty years through the Cold War. Jürgen Habermas (1997) has also noted the shift in the language used by East German demonstrators right before the fall of the wall (see below). Damani Partridge (2012) analyses how unification and the fall of the wall affected racist attitudes towards people living in Germany, who were considered 'non-German' by the mainstream media and politicians, whether it was guest workers, refugees or Germans of Arabic, African or Asian descent. He explains how a shift in the discourse on nationality in a united and post-socialist Germany since the 1990s may have influenced the emergence of widespread racist violence. In the demonstrations for the rights of free movement and travel for people in East Germany in 1988, the slogans changed rapidly from 'We are the people' (*Wir sind das Volk*) to 'We are one people' (*Wir sind ein Volk*) – and the participation of openly extreme-right activists increased (Habermas 1997). Muriel Rambour also notes how the unification of the two German states in a single entity in 1990 incited a resurrection of ethnocultural understandings of the German nation and growing extreme-right movements using ethnonational myths and racist theories in their political programmes, especially (though not only) in the former socialist East German states.

The ISD focuses mostly on political work related to anti-racism in Germany. It remains the most prominent organisation in Germany that seeks to draw attention to anti-Black racist incidents. It is also inclusive, representing the rights of all Black people in Germany. Nonetheless, today Africans and people of African descent in Germany are represented by a variety of organisations. Many of the most active, especially those with the strongest online presences, which usually have a younger membership, were founded around 2014, a year after the launch of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2013–2024),[5] which boosted funding and visibility for projects concerning people of African descent.

In 2012, the Central Council for the African Community (*Zentralrat der afrikanischen Gemeinde in Deutschland e.V*) was created.[6] It is a network of fifty-three African associations from different countries and with different agendas. Then there are other Afrodiasporic organisations in Germany with different agendas. One I was

5 The official UN website of the decade is at: https://en.unesco.org/internationaldecadeforpeopleofafricandescent (accessed 22 June 2020).

6 The website of the Central Council is at: http://www.zentralrat-afrikagemeinde.de/ (accessed 30 April 2020).

in contact with is ADAN (the Afro German Graduate Network), which was founded in 2014 by a Frankfurt local of Sierra Leonean descent.[7] ADAN is less a political organisation than an economic and cultural network, similar to a student alumni network or a fraternity/sorority that holds networking events. The idea, as one of the founders, Allie B., told me, was to bring together highly educated people of African descent in Germany, whether born in Germany or recently migrated, to create a professional network. Allie B.'s motivation was that he was often one of the few people with a 'migration background' (he puts it in air quotes when he speaks) in his field – today he works for a major bank, having studied law. 'That can often feel a bit lonely', he added. Allie B. is in his thirties. Both of his parents migrated to Germany from Sierra Leone, and he and his siblings grew up close to Frankfurt. It was, as he said, the few encounters he had with Afrodescendant people who also had a similarly promising CV and a higher education – also Germans with an African heritage – that motivated and gave him the idea of founding ADAN. He explained further:

> I already knew one person; he was from Nigeria and was studying in Darmstadt, and then he had a friend who stayed with him for a while who had an internship at the Deutsche Bank. Back then I did an internship at Rohner und Partner (a law firm), so I always had to wear a suit. And I was always the only dark-skinned person around with a corporate look. And suddenly there were two more! Him and my friend. And that was a good feeling; it just made me happy to see 'Hey! There are others like me who work in big companies.' And this is how the idea emerged. We took the train together to Frankfurt every morning. That motivated me to say, 'Hey! Why don't we all get to know each other, it is important that we know each other so that we can carry this positive image to the outside in order to change the picture that many people have of Africans, and in order to be an example for the younger generations.' (Interview 5 December 2017)[8]

Although there has been African student immigration to Germany since the 1950s, with most individuals coming from upper and upper middle-class backgrounds, the majority of non-European migrants since the 1950s have been labour migrants employed in low-wage jobs. Racism in Germany intersects with classism, and for the descendants of guest workers, social mobility has not been easy so far – although it is increasing today with more access to higher education (see, for example, the study of social mobility of Germans of Turkish descent from Lemberger [2019]). This interplay between racialisation and class also entails challenges for people who are racialised but belong to a wealthier class of entrepreneurs or university graduates.

7 ADAN's website is at: https://ada-netzwerk.com/ (accessed 8 August 2019).

8 This and all subsequent citations from German-language sources have ben translated by the author, including interviews with research interlocutors.

As Samina Mezgarzadeh (2019) highlights in the French context, these challenges include having one's bourgeois credentials called into question, encountering barriers when trying to enter the white-collar job market or the fear of facing deskilling.

One of the topics ADAN focuses on is 'Business in Africa': They offer advice and counselling to enterprises that want to invest in or trade with African countries. ADAN today brings together many people in various parts of Germany and is broadening the representation of Afrodiasporic people in Germany by creating networks more focused on the business world. One task is to establish contact with enterprises to create a pool of internship opportunities for younger students, a network, in particular, for those who might not have the economic and social capital per se from their families. To raise visibility and attract new members, they organised a roadshow and now have regional groups in Cologne, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Munich, Berlin and Frankfurt. Their focus is thus very much on mutual support in career questions for highly educated people. Yet, though this is a very different angle from the anti-racist work of ISD or the Black feminist agenda of ADEFRA, they do also consider their work to be political, and engage in anti-racist activities. What is more important to ADAN, however, is to show how Black people are not only victims of discrimination but can achieve success in Germany, and to highlight these successful careers as positive examples.[9] The members of ADAN are quite young, generally in their twenties and thirties. One of the things they have in common with organisations like the ISD is that they are all trying to work against negative stereotypes of people of African descent, and these organisations do sometimes work together on various projects around this subject. But the organisation mostly sees itself as a business and graduate network for people of African descent. On its Facebook page ADAN introduces itself as follows:

> In accordance with the name of our network 'Afro-deutsches-Akademiker Netzwerk', we would like to welcome graduates of African origin into our association. Members of the ADAN e.V. will receive the opportunity to interact with other students and alumni. […] They will not only obtain the chance to participate in a large student network, but also connect with decision makers from the corporate world. We are always looking for motivated and committed students who are eager to help our organisation achieve its goals.

Another Afrodiasporic organisation founded in 2014 is EOTO – Each One Teach One.[10]

9 Mezgarzadeh (2019) also highlighted that aspect for Black managers and leaders associations in France.

10 EOTO has a website at: https://www.eoto-archiv.de/ (accessed 8 August 2019).

According to its website, EOTO is

> a community-oriented education and empowerment project in Berlin. It opened its doors in 2014 as a neighbourhood library and meeting place […] EOTO e.V. is working together with other organisations for the interests of Black, African and Afrodiasporic people in Germany and Europe.

EOTO has a library with over 5,000 books by African and African diaspora authors. In addition, it organises many events and is very active online, which it does to reach the younger generation. Its library is in the historically important Berlin district of Wedding, which has been an important cultural centre for Africans since the late nineteenth century. EOTO follows in the tradition of pan-African organisations and organises events such as 'Afrolution 2019 – Panafricanism revis(it)ed', inviting African and Afro-European authors and activists alike to public lectures and networking events.

As well as these very new Afrodiasporic organisations, there are also long-running pan-African cultural organisations such As the Cameroonian AfricAvenir,[11] which was founded by the father of a friend of Layla Zami (one of my interlocutors), Prince Kum'a Ndumbe III. AfricAvenir, which was founded in Douala in 1985, is an NGO that works in the field of political education and knowledge production from a Pan-African perspective. The Prince went into exile in Berlin in 2000 and the organisation has had an office there ever since. Layla is good friends with his daughter and has worked for the organisation in Cameroon. They got to know each other when Layla lived with her family in Berlin as a child from the age of nine until she was 14. Today AfricAvenir has offices in Namibia, Benin, Austria, Senegal and France.

All of these organisations, ISD, EOTO, ADAN and AfricAvenir, are in contact with each other and sometimes convene events together.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the history and current landscape of African diaspora in Germany. It described how the first African diaspora organisations emerged during German colonialism in the period prior to World War I. It then considered the Weimar Republic and the Nazi era, during which most efforts at organisation were annihilated and many Africans left Germany. Those people of African descent who stayed faced considerable discrimination. Among the Nazi laws was a marriage ban and a strong possibility of people being sacked from their jobs if they were not considered 'Aryan'. Some were deported to concentration camps.

11 AfricAvenir is online at: http://www.africavenir.org/ (accessed 13 August 2019).

The next period, from 1945 to 1980, brought significant numbers of African students and workers from many different countries to both East and West Germany, whose ideological competition also played out in the arena of migration policy. In this era, the US military and the infrastructures of occupation also had an influence on German cultural and political organisations. Since the 1980s, new Afrodiasporic organisations have emerged, and there is quite a diversity of movements today.

In all these historical periods, the various organisations had a common goal: to fight racism, colonialism and racist discrimination in Germany and to build communities of solidarity. What most organisations also had in common was that they were founded by people who came from the upper classes or had access to higher levels of education. The next chapter will turn from the macro to the micro level and focus on the everyday experiences of two women of African descent born in the 1980s in Frankfurt, Germany.