

The hidden South African connection in (West) German - African relations

Recently a public relations journal for the Foreign Office in Bonn could advertise cordial African-German relations reporting on a conference about economic relations between independent African states and the German Federal Republic. The Bonn Minister of Economic Affairs, Herr Friedrichs, gave a friendly speech, the doyen of African Ambassadors in Bonn replied in a hailing address. All present were most grateful to the host of the occasion, the African Association (Afrika-Verein) from Hamburg.

Certainly this institution is very influential in German-African ~~xxx~~ commercial relations as it unites most of the established German firms in African trade and some of the banks and industrial combines with interests in Africa, and therefore contacts are sought by diplomats in Bonn, official delegations and businessmen from African countries. But the same friendly partner for independent Africa and its representatives also has the most cordial relations to South Africa and representatives of the racist regime there: The Chairman, Consul of the Republic of Madagascar in Hamburg, as well as the Secretary, Dr. Martin Kraemer, and other office holders are regular guests <sup>at</sup> of the South African Consulate-General in Hamburg and the South African Embassy in Bonn, and most welcome there, too, as there are not many other occasions for South African legations abroad to have consuls of African states present.

Therefore <sup>besides</sup> many ~~xxx~~ guests from independent Africa ~~there are~~ among visitors to the Afrika-Verein, for whom it has to organize functions, arrange contacts, and give information there were Kaiser Mantanzima of the Trankei, a ten member delegation from the "Turnhalle" conference in Namibia, a nine member delegation



from the chamber of commerce in Cape Town and others. All are listed as distinguished visitors in the latest annual report, and there may be many others, <sup>who</sup> ~~which~~ are not listed, for instance Mr. Sole, the nuclear co-operator, who is mentioned in this document just once, attending the festive luncheon at the end of last years annual conference, <sup>but was in Hamburg more</sup> ~~often.~~ No wonder there also is a special committee on Southern Africa, covering: "Republic of South Africa, South West Africa/Namibia, Rhodesia, Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Angola and Mocambique as well as Guinea-Bissau". Chairman to the committee is Mr. A. Jaekel, a Bremen merchant, who happens to be the South African consul in Bremen. And who still believes this to be sheer coincidence, will certainly stay a firm believer after he finds among the members of the committee Count Christian Dönhoff, ~~past~~ chairman of the German section of the South Africa Foundation. As nobody ever heard of a firm, which the Count might represent in its South African interests, he probably was elected to this committee to contribute from his wide knowledge on South Africa - as he did in the past to the German public, on a South African payroll.

~~At~~ The Secretariate of the Africa Association advised on how to break sanctions on Rhodesia as late as 1973, when officially trade with Rhodesia was illegal also in West-Germany. When this was published in the widely read magazine "Der Spiegel" nothing happened. When the German Africa Society in Bonn started publishing critical reports about conditions in Angola, Mocambique, Namibia, Rhodesia, and South Africa the secretary of ~~the~~ the Hamburg Africa Association, Dr. Kraemer, denounced this in the society's annual meeting, <sup>↓</sup> ~~which~~ turned out to be the last one, as the state subsidies were taken from the <sup>German</sup> Africa Society and



it had to be dissolved soon afterwards.

As active as on Rhodesia and South Africa have office bearers ~~of~~ of the Africa Association been in the past defending Portugal's Africa policy and stressing the economic importance of the Portuguese colonies in Africa. Since the Portuguese partner <sup>was</sup> ~~got~~ lost the economic importance of Angola is only negligible to the Federal Republic according to the official opinion of the Africa Association representatives.

And this certainly proves that the position taken is not just opportunistic, going where power is, but much deeper rooted in convictions, <sup>similar</sup> ~~close~~ to South African views on what communism is and what it does.

Now this body not only is influential in commercial circles, but also it is subsidised heavily from public funds for public functions: conferences, delegations abroad, receptions ~~in~~ for African representatives were paid from public funds and the Africa Association is performing official functions. It has on behalf of the German government sent representatives to Africa, *to give advice on economic matters regularly.* These economic advisors are stationed in Maroc, Nigeria, Kenya, Zaire, and Zambia, each covering also neighbouring countries. Their functions are to advise on opportunities for private investment and to collect informations and give ~~their~~ <sup>on</sup> advice proposed development projects <sup>also</sup> ~~as well as~~ for German public aid institutions. In this capacity they are given access to confidential information in their host countries, which they pass on to headquarters, where South Africans are regarded as close friends. No one can see any guarantee <sup>that</sup> information not ment for this connection is not passed on, confidentially of course.

The personnel selected for such duties certainly would not



be concerned very much about this aspect of their work. For instance there is appointed to East Africa Dr. Britten-Gross, over many years working with ~~him~~ a Geographer, who was one of the major apostles of Salazar's and Caetano's African policies to Germany. One of the past research workers from this academic school was named in Guinea as one of the go-betweens ~~in~~ connection<sup>ed</sup> with the Portuguese invasion. Certainly no state in East Africa needs to be afraid of another Portuguese invasion, but it may be regarded as doubtful whether an expert from this school of thought is a fair judge to economic and social development in Mocambique or Tanzania<sup>Somalia or Ethiopia</sup>, or an objective one even in Kenya.

Using public funds to collect the necessary information and making use of the lobby machinery of private business the Africa Association is a powerful adviser to the German government and carries much weight in influencing German decision~~making~~ ~~in~~ on African affairs. When the Chairman, Consul Klaus Hansen, consul of Madagascar, is attending official functions of the South African representation in Germany himself, how can he influence anybody that decisions of the OAU on diplomatic relations with South Africa are to be taken serious?

If the Africa Association is active to expand German economic activities in South Africa, Namibia, and Rhodesia, and at the same time keeps cordial relations with independent Africa, how can it be expected to present <sup>African</sup> ~~the~~ views <sup>fairly</sup> ~~of Africans~~ that economic cooperation with South Africa is ~~the~~ harming relations to the rest of Africa?

This may be the most obvious example, but that is not just one individual case can be shown by briefly looking at the German Academic Exchange Service, active in <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ field of higher education. This organization, formally an association of West German



but paid from <sup>5</sup> funds of the German Foreign Office universities and student bodies, gives scholarships to Africans in Germany and African universities and research institutions, sends out German lecturers, organises exchange of student groups and finances research for young German scholars in Africa. At the same time - conveniently hidden by handling in general divisions like Commonwealth relations, - it is instrumental to the German-South African cultural Agreement, organizing places and scholarships for South Africans in West Germany, selected by the South African government, and sending out German students and young research workers to South Africa, selected in the presence of a member of the South African Embassy in Bonn.

When looking into details of the nuclear co-operation scheme there are sufficient hints that part of it was channeled through general programmes like this wide exchange network. And certainly this institution does not provide a single hint that anyone was sensitive on this issue or saw any reason not to co-operate <sup>freely in</sup> ~~friendly~~ on all aspects as between good friends. Although there are quite a few German scholars who were refused visas when they wanted to enter South Africa to attend conferences, do research or pursue contacts in their field of work, there was never any threat to continued good relations with South Africa out of such incidents. The organization obviously in the position to press this point was too much involved with South Africa itself to take up this case.

Helping South Africa not just is the matter of the clear cases like the large German-South African Association, the German section of the South Africa <sup>Foundation</sup> ~~Association~~ or the German-South African Chamber of Commerce. Nor of those who took up <sup>their</sup> ~~this~~ pro-South African role <sup>as open</sup> as Mr. Germani, Africa correspondent at the powerful Springer press, once participating in the mercenaries' war in the



Congo, or the press agency Behrens which is doing much of the public relation work of South Africa in the West German mass media. African points of views are much more put in doubt by those institutions who more or less successfully conceal their pro-apartheid attitudes and activities.

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