

Two German States and The New Africa

by B. PELA

I. A THREAT TO AFRICA

THE peoples of Africa are once again being threatened by the dangers of German imperialism.

For many decades Africans suffered from brutal colonial suppression by the imperialists of Germany. Since the Second World War, the financial “kings” of West Germany have put aside the weapons of “classical” colonialism — war, annihilation, robbery and floggings — and have put on the mask of neo-colonialism.

WHAT IS NEO-COLONIALISM ?

In their new plans to plunder Africa they have become active in the newly independent states, declaring themselves as the “benefactors” of the African people, who have always favoured liberation for the colonies, and whose one thought now is to help Africa overcome its economic backwardness.

Neo-colonialism of this type was considered by the Third All-African Peoples’ Conference, held in Cairo in March 1961, to be “the greatest threat to the African countries that have newly won their independence or those approaching this status”. The Conference exposed such countries “as the United States, Federal Germany, Israel, Britain, Belgium, Holland and South Africa and France” as “the main perpetrators of neo-colonialism”. Dr. Nkrumah has aptly described neo-colonialism as “the handing of independence over to the African people with one hand, only to take it away with the other hand”.⁽¹⁾

The imperialist powers have adopted this policy not because they have changed heart and sworn to abandon their sinful past. They have been compelled to find camouflaged methods of exploitation because of the rapid growth of the world socialist system and the strength of the national liberation movement. Today it is the forces of socialism and liberation which turn the wheels of history and not, as in the past, the forces of imperialism. In pursuing this new policy the imperialists have had to pool their resources and, so to say, allocate the roles in this deceptive drama beforehand.

They know that the African peoples fighting for freedom

1. Address to the 15th Session of the U.N. General Assembly, September 23rd, 1960.

have a particular hatred for British, French, Portuguese and South African imperialism. These powers are therefore shoved into the background, to be used only as examples of the "big bad wolf" of "old-type" colonialism to "frighten" the African people and throw them into the arms of the new "hero", U.S. imperialism. But the colonial aims and methods of the United States are becoming more and more discredited in Africa, and it has turned out that this "hero" is another wolf at the door of African freedom.⁽²⁾ So a new actor has had to be found to play the role of imperialist "hero" in Africa. This role has been assigned to West German imperialism. Thus, the London *Financial Times* commenting on the role of the German monopolies in the Middle East, wrote in August 1958 that West Germany should be regarded as "the particularly important ally" though in the field of trade "it is a dangerous rival".

TWO GERMAN STATES

Of course, the actual relations of the imperialist powers with Africa are not as simple as this. They are many-sided, complex and subject to laws of change. They are influenced by many historical, political and economic factors. Among the most decisive of the new influences at work is the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany (with a population of 48.7 million) is not the only state on German soil.

There are today two German states with differing social systems. The one state, the Federal Republic, is a monopoly capitalist state, a state which represents the interests of the industrial and financial empires of Krupps, I. G. Farben, Siemens and others, the very same banking and industrial chiefs who backed Hitler. The other state is the German Democratic Republic (with a population of 17.3 million) a socialist state, in which imperialism has been ended forever and workers' and peasants' power has been established.

The demarcation line running through the heart of Germany is the boundary between the socialist world and the capitalist world. The difference between capitalism and socialism is clearly seen in the two German states.

The Democratic Republic is realising the aims of the working-class movement, ending exploitation and establishing relations of peace, friendship and mutual assistance with the independent African states. The Federal Republic continues to pursue the

2. The present writer analysed U.S. neo-colonialism in an earlier issue of this journal (No. 3, 1960).

expansionist aims of German imperialism.

II. IMPERIALIST GERMANY AND AFRICA

The plunder of Africa by imperialist Germany falls into three historical periods : the first from the 1880's until the Great World War (1914-18); the second from the end of that war until the Second World War (1939-45); and the third from 1945 until the present day.

BLACK PAGES OF HISTORY

In the first of these periods Germany directly ruled a number of colonies in Africa. This period is a black page in the history of Germany which the neo-colonialists now want to forget.

Like the other colonial powers, Germany seized, stole and swindled her way into Africa. In 1883 the German Lüderitz annexed the Bay of Angra Pequena and "purchased" a large chunk of coast of South-West Africa from a local chief. The following year Chancellor Bismarck declared the Lüderitz settlement to be under the "protection" of the German Empire. By another swindle Togoland was declared a German "protectorate" in 1884, and in the same year Kamerun came under the German flag. In East Africa the German East Africa Co. plundered and robbed the local population. When the Sultan of Zanzibar protested Bismarck dispatched a squadron of warships to the scene. In 1886 British imperialism sealed a pact with Germany, by which the Kilimanjaro region and most of what is now Tanganyika was declared a "German sphere of interest". Another colonial "deal" took place in 1911 when Germany received 107,000 square miles of the "French" Congo (Ruanda-Urundi) in return for agreeing to a French "protectorate" over Morocco.

Even today German politicians like to whitewash this rape of Africa by quoting the words of Hohenlohe, who was the German Chancellor, in 1894 : "The German name would be belittled in the world if the German nation were unwilling to take part in the mission of culture by which the past cruelties of slavery will be abolished and the light of Christianity be carried into the Dark Continent".

The "light of Christianity" and "German culture" were carried into Africa with the *kiboko* (a heavy strip of rhinoceros or elephant hide or a plaited rope dipped in tar and then rubbed in sand to give it a rough surface, causing wounds which bring illness and often death) and the rifle. Whole peoples were murdered in a fashion matched only by Hitler's stormtroopers in

Europe. The *Deutsche Koloniale Zeitung* described in 1907 how “unprincipled recruiters of labour have dragged people by force from distant villages to the coast, after setting the villages on fire, like modern slave hunts” for forced labour. In 1880, before the Germans came, there were about 1 million Hereros in South-West Africa. By 1918 there were a mere 200,000 left. Leutwein, German Governor of South-West Africa described the destruction of one of the Hottentot tribes : “The rising of Khauas Hottentots in 1896 ended by bringing the whole tribe to Windhoek, the two leaders were shot by court-martial and the whole tribe was practically annihilated and deprived of 12,000 head of cattle . . . The tribe as such has disappeared. As for the Hereros most of their land, or the best of it, was parcelled out among German colonists and land companies”. “It is only just” said Leutwein “and conforms to the aims of colonisation in this territory that all lands should pass from natives to whites”.⁽³⁾ The Hereros heroically rose against this robbery and were slaughtered. A German Pastor estimated that seventy-five thousand Hereros died in battles, 14,000 were driven to die in the Kalahari desert and thousands more in the concentration camps and in forced labour on the railways. The *Cape Argus* of September 28th, 1905, bears a report of the forced labour of Herero women and children under the Germans : “They are sjambokked when they fall until they get up . . . Their funerals take place daily, averaging from nine to a dozen a day, with many children and babies among them”.

This horrible story can be told of every people whom German imperialism conquered.

In Togoland the population was 2½ millions in 1894; by 1911 German rule had reduced it to less than one million. In Kamerun Akwa chiefs vainly complained to Berlin in 1905 of barbarities by German colonial troops, including the slaughter of whole villages and the mutilation and flogging of tribesmen. Without right and without compensation the Germans appropriated the lands which they fancied of the Dualas and Akwas. In East Africa the German ruling caste looked upon forced labour and brutality as the only method of rule. In fact General von Liebert exclaimed : “It is impossible in Africa to get on without cruelty”.

German imperialism ended this period of its relations with Africa dripping from head to toe with African blood, with its pockets bulging with the stolen wealth of the African people.

3. Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Süd-west-Afrika*, p.270.

COLONIALIST HOPES AFTER 1918

Herr Gerstenmaier, President of the Bundestag (Parliament) of the present Federal Republic of Germany, and also President of the German Africa Society which is a subsidiary of the Bonn (Federal) Government, has declared that Germany abandoned her colonialist policy in 1918.

Now it is true that during the First World War the German colonies in Africa were occupied by other colonial powers and after the war these powers divided up the "swag" amongst themselves in the form of League of Nations' mandates (e.g. South Africa got South-West Africa, Britain got Tanganyika, part of Kamerun and Togo, Belgium got Ruanda-Urundi, and France got part of Kamerun and Togo) and so Germany lost her ill-gotten possessions to another band of robbers.

But Herr Gerstenmaier, who served Hitler as a propagandist in Northern and South-Eastern Europe during the Second World War, should know better than to say that because of this Germany "abandoned" her colonial policy after 1918.

In fact, as far back as 1927 Konrad Adenauer, now Chancellor of the Federal Republic and then Chief Burgomaster of Cologne, in answer to the question "Should Germany pursue a colonial policy?" replied :

"The German Reich must certainly strive to obtain colonies . . . We must obtain more space for our people and thus colonies . . . Colonial activity of the German Reich in the form of colonial mandates is, of course, less desirable than the possession of colonies of our own. In my view we should in the first place strive to obtain colonial mandates in order to make at least one step forward, but we should never lose sight of the aim of freely possessing colonies of our own". ⁽⁴⁾

This statement indicates the readiness of Adenauer to use any form of colonialism as long as it provides an opportunity for German monopoly capital to exert influence and control in Africa and to possess markets and sources of raw materials.

This policy of demanding colonies for Germany was continued by fascist German imperialism. The Nazi Party demanded "land and territory (colonies) for the nourishment of our people and for settling our superfluous population". Hitler demanded "the return of the former German colonies" as the "easy and natural way" of re-shuffling the colonies in favour of German imperialism. It ought to be remembered, filled with warning for the future, that

4. *Europäische Gespräche* — Hamburger Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik — No. 12, December 1927, p.611.

there were powerful reactionary forces in South Africa (such as Malan's Nationalists and Pirow) who fully supported these demands of Hitler. The present rulers of South Africa must still find themselves well-disposed to Germany's imperialist claims. It was, after all, Hitler who declared in 1936 that "the white race is destined to rule"!

Hitler wanted to bring the African peoples into a new colonialist domination. But the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War, the liberation of the peoples from fascism and the victory of the great Chinese peoples' revolution sparked off the tremendous liberation movement which has resulted in the breakdown of imperialist colonialism in Africa and elsewhere.

REVISED COLONIALISM

In the new period of German imperialism since the Second World War, Adenauer has remained true to the principle he pronounced in 1927 of pursuing a colonial policy.

The West German imperialists are adapting this policy to the new situation in the world, marked by the rise of a mighty socialist camp and the collapse of the colonial system.

The chief instrument of modern German neo-colonialism is economic expansion. Of course, as the need arises the imperialists still resort to plotting, intrigues and military gambles to further their colonial policy.

The capitalist propagandists have spread the myth of the West German "economic miracle" — the recovery of Germany from the ravages of war. They have managed to create an impression in some African states that the West German barons have been able, for the first time in history, to overcome the anarchy of capitalist production. In this way they hope to make capitalism sound attractive to the newly independent peoples who stand before the problem: capitalism or socialism? Of course it is becoming a bit difficult to keep up this myth while huge stocks of coal lie unsold in the Ruhr and other economic troubles are recurring. The purpose of this propaganda is to keep these states on the capitalist road and so deprive them of genuine economic independence, tying them down to the major imperialist countries which continue to use the African countries as sources of cheap raw materials, and passing on capitalist crises to these weaker "partners".

ECONOMIC PENETRATION

What are the main ways in which West German economic penetration and expansion is being achieved in Africa ?

Firstly, Federal Germany exploits the underdeveloped countries through unequal trade relations. West Germany concentrates on the export of machinery and industrial plant, and the African countries are suppliers of raw materials which West Germany needs. For her part West Germany wants to buy these materials as cheaply as possible so as to put her in a better position than her capitalist rivals who also export industrial machinery. Figures show that while the prices charged on the world market for West German machinery have been rising, prices paid for important raw materials which West Germany imports from Africa have shown a marked decline. This has resulted in fabulous profits for the West German monopolies. The monopolies admit that in the period January - April 1958 alone this difference in prices brought them about 650 million marks. Over a longer period this will swell to billions.

Secondly, The Federal Republic is second only to the U.S.A. in granting credits and loans. These total about 20,000 million marks.

West Germany is able to do this because she has accumulated vast gold and foreign exchange reserves through buying cheap and selling dear with the underdeveloped countries, and through the exploitation of the working people in West Germany itself. These credits and loans bring in high rates of interest and increase the strings which tie African states to imperialism. An example of this is seen in the case of the United Arab Republic. West Germany has granted this country a credit of nearly 600 million marks, and according to U.S. reports over 500 representatives of West German monopolies and other big firms have made Cairo the centre of their activities in the Middle East. When it made this credit West Germany put forward certain demands to the U.A.R. Government, in particular, the return of the bulk of German property confiscated in Egypt during the war. In this way West Germany is stepping into the shoes of British imperialism in Egypt.

Thirdly, German imperialism is making use of the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) to penetrate the African possessions of France and Belgium, whose overseas territories have been incorporated into the Community.

The Federal Government has allocated 850 million marks

for the so-called E.E.C. Overseas Development Fund. Further expansion is foreseen by the participation of the West German monopolies in exploiting the important iron ore deposits in Tindouf, Fort Gouraud and Mekambo, the bauxites (the Inga and Kouilou projects) and the oil fields (Hassi-Messaoud). This is why West Germany gives financial and political support through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to the French in the colonial war in Algeria and to the nuclear tests in the Sahara. *Die Welt*, commenting on West German financial help to France (some 1,500 million marks) noted that this subsidy would be used "directly or indirectly for the Algerian war".

In supplying "aid" to African countries through the E.E.C. West Germany insists that the countries in question must accept a state of dependence on the Community. At the same time the E.E.C. and West Germany favour the greatest possible dismemberment of African states, such as the separation of Katanga from the Congo. The E.E.C. Commission, headed by Professor Hallstein of West Germany, made it clear (in November 1960) that Katanga is being treated as "an associated overseas area of the E.E.C." and that "investment projects" would be undertaken there.

Fourthly, the West German imperialists have come out against the efforts being made by the liberated African states to industrialise their countries, an essential step towards economic independence.

Particularly Professor Ludwig Erhard, vice-Chancellor and Economics Minister of the Federal Republic, has consistently opposed the construction of high capacity industries which would explore and utilise the resources of the African countries — such valuable sources of profit for Erhard's monopolist colleagues. In August 1960, Erhard sneered at the steelworks in those countries as "national monuments, not fulfilling their economic function" and recommended the young states to concentrate on developing craft industries and agriculture. Such bits of advice were given with the intention of keeping the new national states as suppliers of raw materials to the monopolies, keeping their economies backward and distorted to line the pockets of the West German financiers.

Finally, the giant West German monopolies are penetrating many African countries.

Concerns like Haniel (Gutehoffnungshütte, Ferrostaal), A.F.G., Krupps, Siemens, I. G. Farben and others have rapidly expanded their interests in Africa. Monopolies like the Mannesman

firm have been active in North Africa since the last century. Krupps (one of the major backers of Hitler) is investing capital in Angola and Mozambique at the invitation of the Portuguese colonialists. The West German Deutsche Bank allied itself to the Anglo-American Finance Corporation of South Africa (headed by Oppenheimer) by lending an Anglo-American subsidiary £4½ million to exploit the diamond mines of East Africa.

By the beginning of 1959 the privately-owned (as opposed to State-owned) West German monopolies had invested 148.6 million marks in Africa. This has now grown by several more millions.

The success of these monopolies was stressed by *Time* magazine (February 23rd, 1959) : “The historic Berlin-to-Baghdad ambitions of the Germans got nowhere politically under the whip of the Kaiser or Führer, but before the peaceful push of West Germany’s prosperous economy, they are succeeding surprisingly well. Armed now with sample case and blueprints instead of howitzer and battle plans, West Germany’s businessmen are aggressively pushing ahead with a more realistic version of the old ‘Drive to the East’.”

POLITICAL SIDESHOWS

The result of the economic tentacles of West Germany for the peoples of Africa is the continuation of age-old poverty and misery. It is therefore all the more necessary for the imperialists to put on political and diplomatic sideshows by which they delude the African masses about the true nature of German imperialism, hide its shameful past and paint a beautiful picture of its present designs on the awakened Continent.

One of these political sideshows is the German Africa Society of the Federal Government which held an “African Week” at the end of October 1960, in West Germany.

The President of this Society, Herr Gerstenmaier, spoke to his “dear Africans” and assured them that West Germany’s policy of “partnership” excludes “any discrimination of races”. It is interesting to note, therefore, that this same Gerstenmaier was an arch-racialist in the Hitler period. In 1937 he published a book entitled “Church, People and State” in which he justified Hitler’s racial policies which led to the extermination of millions of Jews, Poles, Czechs, Russians and other peoples. In one passage Gerstenmaier said :

“Any people desiring to preserve their racial peculiarity and and thus biological conditions for their culture must therefore

be anxious to avoid any immigration of racially alien people. The popular state in Germany has begun to fulfil this task . . . by effecting the ethnic and racial separation between people of German origin and racially alien people, in particular the Jews, by virtue of a series of laws. Any racially mixed marriage is prohibited in Germany".⁽⁵⁾

Today Gerstenmaier is still the arrogant representative of the "white master race". In an article published in *Christ und Welt* (Stuttgart, October 20th, 1960) Gerstemaier denied that Africans are capable of developing their culture to a new high level. For this reason he praised the "education aid" to be given to Africa by West Germany, which is in fact a new gesture to enslave the minds of the free peoples of Africa.

During the Second World War Gerstenmaier travelled to Northern and South-Eastern Europe on behalf of Hitler's Foreign Ministry, trying to find out suitable forms of domination for German imperialism in those areas. Today he travels to Africa on behalf of Adenauer's Foreign Ministry to explore the possibilities for West German Big Business.

After a trip to Africa in 1955, Gerstenmaier pointed out that "Africa offers many and wide possibilities for German economy . . .". He loudly praised the colonialist rule of Belgium in the Congo stating that he "was unusually strongly impressed by the planned energy, particularly of the great Congo mining company Union Minière". The German Africa Society has been placed by Gerstenmaier at the service of those who want to dominate Africa.

Besides its own "education aid" programme, the Federal Government is closely co-operating with the Vatican in a plan to recruit and train young Africans. A special Catholic centre, the Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer Dienst, has been opened in Bonn for this purpose. Several dozen African students are being trained in colleges in Munich, Hamburg, Frankfurt and West Berlin. West German Bishops arranged a special three-month training course for 26 students from the Pius XII College of Basutoland. The purpose of these "training" schemes is to make African intellectuals into disciples of reactionary capitalist dogmas.

The occasional protests by Federal Germany against falling dictators, or against racial discrimination, the setting up of "works of relief" out of the fantastic profits of the monopolies, are all part of the armoury of neo-colonialism, the camouflage behind which West Germany is bringing Africa under her economic domination.

5. E. Gerstenmaier, *Kirche, Volk und Staat*, Munich 1937, p.70.

III. SOCIALIST GERMANY AND AFRICA

One of the most blatant examples of interference by the Federal Republic with the independent rights of the new states is to be found in the attitude of the Adenauer Government to any African state which wishes to establish normal relations with the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

The Federal Government pretends that the GDR does not exist. As soon as an African state agrees to exchange trade representatives with the GDR, feathers fly in West Germany. On more than one such occasion, Gerstenmaier has declared, "We do not like this at all", and Adenauer has threatened to break off all relations with states which exercise their sovereign national rights to enter into relations with the GDR. This is the usual petty action of the West German imperialists.

To the African peoples this shows just how worried the imperialists are by the new, socialist Germany. It is a case of "we know our friends by your enemies". In marked contrast to the West German Federal Republic, the GDR always sides with the African peoples in protecting their independence. This is in line with the basic foreign policy of the GDR which aims at peaceful co-existence, the maintenance and safeguarding of peace and the development of international co-operation.

The Chairman of the State Council of the GDR stated on September 26, 1960 :

"The two basically different traditions in the history of Germany became also manifest in the attitude of the two German states towards the anti-colonial liberation movement, towards the national states of Latin America and the new national states of Asia and Africa. Most of these national states have but recently thrown off the yoke of inhuman colonial suppression. They are now waging a hard struggle for the complete liberation from political and economic backwardness, from hunger and want and from all the sad heritage of the rule of imperialism. To support them is a humanistic obligation and the commandment of international solidarity".⁽⁶⁾

This policy is in the tradition of the German working-class and the German humanists who have always despised and opposed colonial suppression and exploitation and always advocated the sacred right of colonial peoples to freedom and human dignity.

In every period of German colonialism there has been another Germany — that of the Communists, Socialists and

6. *Neues Deutschland* (Berlin), September 27th, 1960.

Democrats — who have fought and exposed imperialism.

It was the Germans, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, who founded modern scientific socialism and gave the oppressed peoples of Africa their greatest weapon, the understanding of capitalist exploitation and of the laws of development of society which will enable them to rid themselves of all forms of oppression. It was the Socialist deputies in the Reichstag (Parliament) who exposed the brutality of the German colonial system before 1914. One of these deputies declared in March 1914: "The comparatively tiny white stratum in our colonies sits like a vampire on the neck of the African people, and sucks the blood out of its veins and the marrow from its bones . . . an awful decimation of the Native population runs parallel with the coming to the fore of the so-called capitalist *Kultur*". Between the wars, tens of thousands of German Communists, Socialists and Democrats died for exposing the colonialist aims of Germany. Today it is the GDR, led by the Marxist-Leninist Socialist Unity Party, and the West German Communists, once again forced into difficult underground conditions by the neo-Nazis, who are forging links of iron between the African people and progressive Germany.

The sympathies of the African people for the German people are switching more and more to the GDR.

Proof of this is the growing economic ties between the GDR and the young African states. In the GDR there are no oppressing classes and no imperialists seeking to dominate Africa. The Nazis have been entirely routed in the GDR. The ruling classes are the workers and peasants, whose concern is to raise living standards rapidly and bring about the well-being and happiness of the people through the triumph of socialism. An important aspect of this policy is the unstinting assistance and aid which the GDR is giving to Africa's people. Trade relations are being built on the firm foundation of mutual benefit and assistance.

Another proof of the growing bonds between the GDR and the African people was the warm welcome given by the workers and Governments of Guinea and Ghana to the delegation of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions headed by Comrade Herbert Warnke in 1960. Warnke said: "We brought a great idea to Africa and found the same idea there, the great idea of fraternity, of friendship, of a fighting alliance between the white and black workers for peace, for social progress, and against imperialism". Regular trade union exchanges between the GDR and Africa are taking place.

The GDR and the German Communists are educating the

youth as well as those Germans who lived through the Hitler period regarding the dangers of the neo-colonialist policies of the imperialists.

IV. NEW BONDS FOR OLD

The *Afrika Post*, a journal published in Pretoria on behalf of West German interests, has admitted what it calls "the collapse of the Bonn line". A reason for this, it says, is that many people have already lost their illusions that Federal Germany is not a colonialist power.

But we should not underestimate the potential dangers of German expansion in Africa. This is part of a world-wide imperialist policy, throttling the liberation struggle, not only on this continent, but in Latin America, Asia, and particularly the Middle East. It must never be forgotten that it is the same old monopolies headed by the self-same people pursuing the self-same policy which are today penetrating the African states. They have for the present, dropped the open barbarities which they employed in their old colonial conquests. But in the guise of "aid" they are achieving the same objects—above all, monopoly profits. These profits are obtained by keeping the African people in starvation, illiterate and backward, substituting one colonial master for another.

There is every reason to expose these intrigues at every opportunity.

There is also every reason to build up the closest bonds with the socialist camp, which holds the imperialist camp in check, and which is beginning to surpass it in all fields. The socialist countries, headed by the Soviet Union, are pulling out the teeth of imperialism, and at the same time giving material support to the peoples of the underdeveloped countries. This is placing the African countries on the road to full independence and towards a better life for her peoples.

Lenin said often that one day the forces of the European workers would be joined to the forces of the colonial peoples and this would finally crush imperialism. That day has arrived, and it is nowhere better shown than in the growing ties between the African peoples and the working class movement of Germany.