

CHAPTER I “RESONANT ECHOES”

The Rhineland Campaign and Converging Specters of Racial Mixture

FRENCH *TIRAILLEURS* AND THE POST-WORLD WAR I OCCUPATION: DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL ORIGINS OF THE RHINELAND CAMPAIGN

I was born in Frankfurt [in August 1920]. Since my mother had a very hard time here when they saw she was pregnant, she went to Frankfurt. My father had been transferred to Frankfurt. Even though they weren't married, she had nobody else, so she followed him there. . . . Sure, there were problems, according to the statements of neighbors who are still alive. . . . Problems—with an occupation soldier, with a *colored* occupation soldier, you have to emphasize that. And then in a good Catholic family—first off, just the stigma of illegitimacy and then, along with that, the worst, with “one of them,” with a colored. Back then that was really bad.¹

France's recruitment of approximately 190,000 African soldiers (*la force noire*) before and during World War I was motivated by strategic military considerations aimed primarily at offsetting deficits in the French army that dated back to the mid-nineteenth century and resulted largely from demographic stagnation and a declining French birthrate.² The government initially began recruiting soldiers from French West Africa in an effort to build a stabilizing force to be deployed in North Africa, particularly in Morocco. The conflict that became the Moroccan Crisis of 1912 played a prominent role in the decision to create a Black military force for use as a colonial army, as

such operations could free up French troops for European operations. Yet even in its recruitment and eventual use of African soldiers, French officials were concerned with striking a delicate balance between arming and training its colonial subjects as instruments of war and maintaining the country's position of dominance over these subjects within the colonial hierarchy. The French government was well aware of the fact that this new military force presented a potential threat to the balance of power within its colonies because these troops could quickly be redirected at the colonizing nation.

The question of why France chose to include its African colonial troops in the post-World War I occupation force is complex. Keith Nelson argues that there were both strong practical reasons for France's use of these troops and more subtle motivations related to the devastation France suffered during the course of the war. Citing the papers of Major Paul Clark, an American liaison officer, and the remarks of the commander of the French occupation forces in the Rhineland, General Charles Mangin ("the father of the Black forces"), Nelson explains,

At least in the beginning, it was likely that the morale of these troops would have suffered if they as a group had been deprived of what was widely considered to be the reward for hard fighting. In addition, because a renewal of hostilities was always possible during the armistice period, the victors clearly ran a certain risk in deviating from the manpower practices which had won the conflict. Furthermore, if only French *national* troops had advanced into the Rhineland in 1918-19, the effect would have been to increase the proportion of colored forces in the reserve areas behind the French frontier.³

As both Nelson and Pascal Grosse contend, another motivation for using Black troops in the occupation was France's belief in the strategic psychological effect of these troops on their military adversaries. Indeed, Nelson maintains that the French government was engaged in a "subtle kind of psychological warfare against the Germans."⁴ France's original motivations for recruiting these troops also explain in part some of the reasons for the decision to deploy them in Germany after the war. The issue of the particular qualities attributed to

Africans played a central role because the racial/anthropological traits associated with Africans were seen as making them especially well suited to contemporary warfare and an invaluable source of military manpower. Mangin introduced the plan to recruit *la force noire* as early as 1910, explicitly emphasizing the qualities that made Africans particularly desirable soldiers:

They have exactly the traits demanded for the long struggles of modern war: robustness, endurance, tenacity and instinct for combat, an absence of nerves, an incomparable power to shock [intimidate] their enemies. Their appearance on the battlefield will produce a considerable moral effect on their adversary. Precisely these valuable assets regarding their quantity and traits are significant factors that will manifest themselves from their first battle. But if the battle should be prolonged, our African troops offer us almost immeasurable reserves whose source is well beyond the reach of the opponent, and which allows us to continue the battle through to our first success, and once this success has been attained to continue through to victory.⁵

Grosse emphasizes that this conception of the African troops relied on a eugenic interpretation of their innate physical capacities and aptitude for war that attributed these qualities to Blacks and Africans on the basis of an essential, biological construction of their race. As Grosse contends,

French military strategists relied here first and foremost on “natural capacities,” which in the European mind compared less civilized peoples to frail and nervous European men in military conflicts. This construction was based on the opposition of nature peoples to cultured peoples, where European cultural development had succeeded in domesticating natural instincts, including aggressive tendencies. A German commentator on French military affairs affirmed this perception, according to which he asserted that “the West African Negro is more suited than the overworked urban adult European to the craft of the soldier through his . . . primal strength and the hereditary warrior’s predisposition he has retained.”⁶

The French military relied on these racial stereotypes in hoping and planning that these troops would have a negative psychological impact on their opponents in battle. In point of fact, these soldiers had already elicited precisely this response in prewar Germany. As Grosse's study shows, long before the occupation of the Rhineland, Germany had responded to the project of *la force noire* through the trope of the *schwarze Gefahr* (Black threat). This xenophobic construction, along with the related tropes of the *slawische Gefahr* (Slavic threat) and the *gelbe Gefahr* (yellow threat), demonized each of these groups on the basis of a racialized threat to German culture and civilization. As Grosse explains,

This demonization of the potential enemy is much more to be understood in the context of a psychological preparation for war. The "Black threat" thus became the symbol of the anticipated brutality of the coming war. . . . The discursive brutality that the characterization of the "Black threat" evoked anticipated projected the violent potential of war into an image of dehumanized French colonial troops as its eventual source. In this way, a war-ready German *Volk* (or, in other words, "the white race") could stylize itself as the sole true protectors of European culture that saved "the dignity of Europe from . . . African barbarians" and prevented a return to the era of the Thirty Years War.⁷

It seems clear that France was aware of and consciously chose to disregard Germany's discomfort with the idea of "colored" troops: German fears about these troops were already apparent and could thus be exploited by the French government. It is quite plausible that French military commanders such as Mangin, Obissier, and Marceau supported the use of these troops in the occupation precisely because of their awareness of the negative response such a deployment would provoke. Indeed, the older arguments justifying the recruitment of African colonial troops were based on this positive strategic assessment of the value of the racial attributes of Africans. As Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink points out, following the war the Rhineland propaganda campaign employed much of the same anthropological discourse used by the French military ten years earlier. However, the biologicistic argumentation that the French had employed in a positive sense was turned on its head by the Germans in the Rhineland campaign.

In the context of the German campaign against the “Black Shame,” the descriptive attributes Mangin had used, such as “l’obéissance aveugle,” “l’agressivité innée,” “penchant matériel pour la guerre,” among others, as well as the “uncivilizedness” of the African soldiers, took on a radically different meaning. Instead of being regarded as positive character traits—as in the colonial anthropology of prewar France—these “grands enfants” and “âmes simples,” who were previously regarded as subjects to be educated, were transformed in the German public into symbols of barbarous savagery.⁸

France’s decision to deploy these troops in the occupation of the Rhineland provoked a concrete response from Germany as early as 1918, when the German Foreign Minister Wilhelm Solf urged his representative at the armistice negotiations to prevent German territory from being occupied by Black French or U.S. soldiers.⁹ In April 1919 the German delegation to Versailles was specifically instructed to insist that “colored troops” not be included in the army of occupation, and in June German negotiators included this statement in their protest against the treaty, seeking to make it more “difficult for our enemies . . . to bombard us and then send in their Black troops.”¹⁰

The Black troops used in the French occupation of the Rhineland represented the first large-scale Black presence in Germany. Until the Rhineland occupation, direct contact between Germans and Blacks had for the most part been restricted to German colonial territories on the African continent and to individual Black immigrants to Germany. As Germany’s first domestic encounter with a substantial Black population, the Rhineland occupation also holds symbolic importance as the first German confrontation with Blacks within its national boundaries. The total number of French occupation troops in the winter of 1919 was estimated at two hundred thousand men. This number was reduced to approximately eighty-five thousand by January 1920, when the Treaty of Versailles came into effect. The number of Black soldiers among these troops varied seasonally. In the summer of 1920, German officials estimated the number at between thirty and forty thousand, while Allied officials cited much lower figures, ranging from fourteen to twenty-five thousand.¹¹ These Black troops were mustered from France’s colonial holdings in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Madagascar, and Senegal.

The post–World War I military occupation of Germany lasted from 1919 to 1930. Exactly how long the Black troops remained is unclear. France renounced the use of colonial troops in 1923, when the occupation of the Ruhr valley began, although France had already withdrawn most of its Senegalese and Madagascan troops in 1920.¹² After the Locarno pact was signed on 1 December 1925, the number of remaining French colonial troops was significantly reduced. Approximately two thousand Black troops remained stationed in Germany in 1927, and one thousand remained as late as 1929.¹³ However, they received little attention. The propaganda campaign against their presence had effectively ended in 1922, when the Ruhr conflict began to dominate international political discussions in Germany.

Black occupation troops became the focus of international attention in April 1920, when French forces occupied the German cities of Darmstadt, Hanau, Homburg, and Frankfurt following an outbreak of civil unrest in the demilitarized Ruhr territory. During the taking of Frankfurt, French Moroccan soldiers fired on civilians, causing a number of casualties. In response to these incidents, the *London Daily Herald* published an article by an English journalist, Edmund Dene Morel, “Black Scourge in Europe: Sexual Horror Let Loose by France on the Rhine,” which marked the beginning of an international outcry against the alleged sexual misconduct of Black troops in Germany.¹⁴ A prominent member of the Independent Labor Party and one of the founders of the Union for Democratic Control, Morel had been involved for many years in the fight against the exploitation of Africans in the colonies (in particular, under the regime of King Leopold in the Congo). He went on to publish other articles on this topic as well as a longer pamphlet entitled *The Horror on the Rhine*.¹⁵

In the chronology of the Rhineland campaign, Morel’s publications effected an important change in the focus of the debates about the Black occupation troops, complicating the emphasis on race with sex and sexuality as the primary issue of contention. This new emphasis on the sexual element set off a chain reaction of outrage and exaggeration among the various international actors involved. On 23 April 1920, in response to Morel’s *Daily Herald* article, six parliamentary delegates petitioned the German government for an inquiry into rapes and assaults allegedly committed by Black soldiers on civilians in the occupied territory.

Our youth in the Pfalz and the Rhineland are being disgraced, our people polluted, the dignity of Germans and the white race trampled. An English journalist calls this “a well-considered political strategy.” Should our people in the Rhineland have to stomach this: the disgrace of the honor and dignity of the German people and the white race; is this fact, which was called by an Englishman the well-considered political strategy of our well-known enemies, known to the imperial government?¹⁶

The language of these charges links alleged rape incidents to the trampling (*zertreten*) of German national honor and dignity as well as to the purity of the white race. In this way, the initially racist objections to a Black military presence in the Rhineland were refounded on the basis of the purported sexual misconduct perpetrated by these soldiers, in addition to the most serious consequence associated with this uncontained sexual menace: miscegenation. The inextricable coupling of Black sexuality with the threat of interracial sex and miscegenation was a primary element around which the discourse of the campaign against the post–World War I Black occupation troops was structured. Nineteenth-century scientific discourses on racial mixture also played a significant role as an important vehicle for the campaign against the Black troops. Scientific conceptions of the negative genetic consequences of racial mixture had by this time won widespread acceptance and were circulating at many levels of society. Consequently, they offer an important key to understanding how anxieties stemming from German defeat came to be displaced onto Blacks and Afro-Germans in this period.

**SCIENTIFIC AND COLONIAL LEGACIES:
RACIALIZED REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRO-GERMANS
IN PREWAR GERMANY**

The images of Blacks and Africans used in this period to represent the threat posed by the Black occupation troops during the post–World War I Rhineland campaign did not originate in the Weimar Republic. In fact, they have a much longer history that considerably predates the contentious debates and inflammatory rhetoric of the postwar period. These representations were products of a scientific discourse on race

that defined race as essence, locating its origins and meaning in nature and biology. As part of a long tradition of scientific thought, the notion of race as a biological human trait has been the focus of scientific research for centuries. Yet this research was never limited to the strictly “scientific” goal of understanding the biological basis of race. More often, and perhaps more importantly, this research also sought to explain the meaning of race for society as a whole and its implications for human interaction in particular.

Both in the racial discourse of the Rhineland newspaper campaign and in scientific studies of the genetic implications of race, individuals of mixed race had a special status, for the issue of racial mixture was particularly significant in this context. As a marker of difference between individuals, racial difference becomes an issue of contention only with regard to the interaction between individuals of different races. In this logic (as scientists such as Eugen Fischer and Charles Davenport attempted to prove), racial mixture was the ultimate test of racial difference, providing the context in which the consequences of racial distinctions would supposedly become apparent. For this reason, racial mixture was often constructed as a threat, as the site of the inherent conflict of difference that underlay racial distinctions. Hence, racial mixture has often functioned as a driving force (either implicit or explicit) in discussions of racial difference. As a vehicle with the potential to catalyze such discussions in volatile ways, the combination of essential conceptions of racial mixture with a discourse of racial endangerment offered a powerful tool of political mobilization, with often unpredictable results.

Racial mixture played an important role in early-twentieth-century scientific efforts to define and interpret the significance of race and racial difference. The innate or inherited differences thought to exist between the races did not in and of themselves necessarily present any problems that could not be remedied through the legislation of interracial social interaction—for example, in the form of segregation, economic disenfranchisement, demographic restrictions, or, in extreme cases, various forms of political domination. Racial mixture, on the other hand, represented the most problematic outcome of the genetic implications of racial difference, posing the questions of what racial “traits” would be passed on to children of mixed race and of what long-term implications mixed-race individuals and their offspring

would have for the “future of the race.” Hence, in the early twentieth century, racial mixture became an important site in scientific inquiries into race and racial difference, as the place where scientific laws of heredity (specifically, the applied and adapted theories of Mendel and Darwin, and concrete proof of the pessimistic prognoses of the racial theories of Gobineau¹⁷) could be put to the test. Paradoxically, people of mixed racial heritage came to be seen as absolute proof both of the untenability of racial theories of heredity and of their absolute truth.

Although racial mixture had for some time popularly been seen as a social problem, scientific studies of individuals of mixed racial heritage began in this period to formulate a somewhat different objective.¹⁸ These investigations of racial mixture explicitly aimed to clarify how physical, psychological, and intellectual traits were transmitted genetically among humans. At the same time, these explorations were also intended as scientific investigations of “social problems,” examining the social dimensions and implications of racial mixture. Almost all of these studies were conducted in the context of the European colonial territories, and each sought to determine the extent to which human social and cultural development would be influenced by the biological or genetic effects of racial mixture that were seen to necessarily accompany modern colonialism, migration, and acculturation. The assumption was that racial intermixture not only had physical effects but, more importantly, had an impact on both the intellectual capacity and psychological constitution of racial groups. In spite of the fact that these studies did not necessarily assume that racial mixture negatively affected the larger population, many of them posited the social and psychological inferiority of mixed-race people to be the result of the genetic inadequacy of racial mixture. The predominant view among early-twentieth-century geneticists was that, in the majority of cases, racial interbreeding resulted in the “pauperization” of the genetic traits of the “superior” white race.

The earliest and, by all accounts, most influential study of racial mixture was conducted in 1908 by a German scientist, Eugen Fischer, in a town called Rehobot in the German colony of Southwest Africa (currently Namibia). Fischer studied a population of mixed-race people then known as the “Rehoboth Bastards,” who were the descendants of white European Boers of Dutch descent and Black women who migrated from the Cape in the late nineteenth century. Fischer

proclaimed his study a groundbreaking scientific investigation, asserting that previous anthropologists had focused primarily on the “purest” strains of racial groups, whereas little was known about racially mixed groups. Fischer believed, however, that science could learn the most from mixed groups, for it was here where he claimed that effects of the genetic transmission of racial differences appeared most dramatically and could best be traced.¹⁹

Fischer’s study of the Rehoboth used the then dominant methodological approach to investigating racial difference, undertaking morphological analysis of a series of anthropological measurements and categorizations of their physical attributes and reconstructing family genealogies. His conclusions were that Mendelian rules of heredity were in fact applicable to humans and that in this population, there was no evidence of the dominance of one race over the other. He rejected assertions of sterility or reduced fertility and of a higher incidence of illness among this population, thus also rejecting the assertion of “biological inferiority” of mixed-race people. Yet in a chapter on “the psychology of the Rehoboth” (which lacked any empirical basis), Fischer also remarked on the mental aptitude of the group. Without relying on any scientific data, Fischer asserted that the intelligence of many of these individuals equaled that of their white counterparts among the Boers. Nevertheless, he made the dubious assertion that the “cultural” psychological and intellectual aptitude of these individuals was inferior to that of “pure whites.” As a result, he declared any evidence of the equality of whites and mixed-race people based on individual cases to be irrelevant. Fisher further argued that these German colonial “bastards,” like all others, were inferior to whites and consequently needed “constant supervision.”²⁰

Using the body as a conceptual model for analyzing the functioning of this discourse of racial mixture reveals a more complex picture of the power of a conception of racial mixture as a danger to the German national and cultural identity, particularly when this identity is articulated through the authority of a scientific discourse of race as essence. Bodily boundaries correspond in many ways to the socially and ideologically constructed boundaries of society and the national body politic. Analogously, that which is perceived and constituted as a threat to these boundaries (re)presents a danger in that it demonstrates their permeability and constructedness as well as the fact that bound-

aries must continually be policed. By the same token, this national body is not neutral but is thoroughly raced and gendered. In this way, bodily fears of pollution and contamination and the desire to defend certain racialized and gendered boundaries of social interaction reflect and articulate more general fears of national and social interpenetration and mixing. In the same way that the crossing, trespassing, and violation of bodily boundaries presents a threat to the survival of an organism through pollution and contamination, the perceived threat of racial difference and mixture to the German nation/German national identity has also historically been articulated through a notion of pollution and contamination that relies on a concept of the nation and German identity as a raced and gendered body. In this formulation, the German body politic is predicated on the assumption and maintenance of certain fundamental social boundaries of racial purity whose vulnerability often becomes apparent through the female body as a vehicle, conduit, or site of entry for potential pollution/contamination.

Thus conceived, racial mixture can be seen to violate social boundaries analogous to those that threaten the core of a living organism. The notion of the body as a bounded organism retains substantial explanatory power as a theoretical tool for historical analysis. This conception of the body has been theorized most influentially by anthropologist Mary Douglas. In her seminal work, *Purity and Danger*, Douglas made her most famous and frequently cited arguments that the structure of living organisms can be read to reflect complex social formations and used as analogies to express and explain more general views of social order.²¹ Her work theorizes how the perceived danger of bodily pollution and aspirations to purity and its maintenance symbolizes the relationship between parts of society and mirrors desires for hierarchy, symmetry, and homogeneity in the larger social system.

As Elizabeth Grosz emphasizes in her reading of Douglas, this idea of the body symbolizes various social and collective fantasies, anxieties, and aspirations: orifices and surfaces represent the sites of cultural marginality, places of social entry and exit, regions of confrontation or compromise. Rituals and practices designed to cleanse or purify the body serve as metaphors for processes of cultural homogeneity.²² The concept of bodily boundaries and the real and imagined conse-

quences of their crossing, trespassing, and violation in social terms is most significant for the study of the history of Germany's Black citizens. Particularly with respect to reading historical discourses of race and racialization and the ways in which these discourses overlap and are constituted through discourses of gender and sexuality, the stakes of these boundaries and their function in constituting concepts of nation, race, and identity demonstrate the explanatory potential of the body for understanding processes of social construction. At the same time, the body also gives us important insights into how such discourses legitimate and serve the exercise of power, enforcing forms of social order through processes of marginalization and exclusion.

Douglas outlines four primary forms of dangerous boundary crossing that reproduce certain fundamental forms of bodily endangerment:

1. danger to external boundaries (pollution or crossing from outside)
2. danger to transgressing internal lines (pollution or crossing from within)
3. danger from the margins of the lines (corruption of the borders)
4. danger from internal contradiction (corruption of the logic that sustains and upholds the borders and or the system)

Similarly, the body can also be used to explain the functioning of boundaries of community as they relate to social responses historically provoked by racial mixture. As Douglas explains, what underlies all responses to border crossings is a fundamental anxiety about bodily margins that expresses a sense of endangerment to the survival of the group. In this way, anxieties of endangerment through pollution and boundary crossing are in no way random or subjective; rather, they serve a policing function, for it is through the policing and enforcing of their boundaries that communities remain intact. The fact is, however, that communities have no real or "natural" basis; on the contrary, they are created through the boundaries they construct to distinguish and distance themselves from others. Indeed, communities are defined by their capacity to maintain these fundamental forms of distinction. By extension, the crossing of these social boundaries destabilizes the legitimacy of such distinctions and at the same time calls into question the

distinctiveness of the group/organism constituted through these borders. As a result, the “boundary crosser” is conceived as both threatening and powerful. Community boundaries, therefore, (1) are not natural but thoroughly constructed, (2) are never solid, and, as a result, (3) paradoxically always constitute the condition of a community’s existence as well as the inherent potential of its ultimate destruction.

Scientific and colonial discourses of racial mixture first converged on the issue of interracial marriage in the colonies. Scientific conceptions of the negative genetic consequences of racial mixture were already an element of nineteenth-century German colonial policies as articulated on the issue of *Rassenmischehe*, or racially mixed marriages between white colonial settlers and indigenous colonial peoples.²³ Only six years before the Rhineland occupation, Reichstag debates on racially mixed marriages prefigured many of the same arguments and fears voiced later in the newspaper protest campaign. Although interracial marriage was not illegal under German imperial law, colonial officials began refusing to register interracial unions in the colonies in 1890. In 1905 Governor Friedrich von Lindequist issued the first such measure in the form of a decree banning interracial marriages in German Southwest Africa. Reflecting the dominant views of the scientific community at the time, he cited what he saw as the dangerous effect of racial mixture on the purity of the white race: “Such unions do not preserve, but rather diminish the race. As a rule the offspring are physically and emotionally weak and unite in themselves the negative traits of both parents.”²⁴ In 1907, the colonial High Court in Windhuk ruled that the marriage bans were retroactively valid, effectively nullifying mixed marriages concluded before the 1905 ban. The court’s ruling stated, “Any person whose ancestry can be traced to natives either paternally or maternally must be viewed and treated as a native.”²⁵ Consequently, many people who had been considered white Germans and who had considered themselves white Germans suddenly were counted as natives. Following Lindequist’s administrative order, similar decrees were passed banning mixed marriages in the German colonies of East Africa in 1906 and Samoa in 1912. In response to this 1912 decree, protests broke out in the Reichstag, prompting delegates to debate the legality of these colonial decrees in light of their conflict with imperial law. But the objections raised in protest against the bans did not focus in any fundamental way on juridical arguments regard-

ing the question of the precedence of imperial over colonial legislation. Rather, delegates raised explicitly moral arguments against the bans, which presented marriages between German colonialists and nonwhite colonial natives as a threat to sexual morality and existing racial hierarchies of difference.

Despite the virulence of this debate, most historians and even those involved in the debates at the time agreed that the bans could never effectively be enforced. Individuals wishing to marry in contravention to these colonial restrictions needed only to travel to any of the neighboring colonial territories or even return to Europe (including Germany): such marriages were legally binding within the German colonies. Lora Wildenthal emphasizes that these bans were unique among the European colonial regimes. More importantly, as she demonstrates, these bans marked the first attempt to introduce explicitly racial definitions into German citizenship law.²⁶ In point of fact, the National Socialists were the first to successfully codify race formally into law. Until that time, neither the 1913 law nor its predecessor, the Reich citizenship law of 1870, contained any explicit formulation of racial categories in their interpretation. As Wildenthal explains,

The relevant categories of citizenship were: Reich citizen (*Reichsangehöriger*), foreigner (*Ausländerin*), and colonial subject (*Eingeborener*, lit. “native”). The colloquial designation “mixed-blood” (*Mischung*) was irrelevant to citizenship law; citizenship could not be “mixed.” “Native” legally indicated that group of persons under the jurisdiction of colonial law (rather than German Reich law), not race per se. The term itself was never qualitatively defined; that task was explicitly put off to a future decree. . . . Nevertheless, colonial governors formulated working definitions of “native” in their administrative decrees that did offer racial definitions. . . . The conflict between Reich law, which refused racial definitions, and local governors’ administrative actions fueled the mixed marriage debate.

Jus sanguinis was not a racial principle in any simple way. That citizenship based on paternal descent was not the same as citizenship based on race was exactly what troubled those who took race seriously enough to consider the “racial” attributes of mothers. . . . The 1913 citizenship law emerged in response to

years of agitation by German nationalists who feared that *jus sanguinis* was failing to protect the integrity of Germanism—variously termed a “race,” “culture,” or “nation”—around the world. . . . Most important [the 1913 citizenship law] did not allow for the insertion of a legal category of race any more than its predecessor had. It did not change a thing as far as colonial mixed marriages were concerned. Therefore, radical nationalists and many colonialists took up their call for legal bans on mixed marriages again immediately after the 1913 law was passed.²⁷

The mixed-marriage bans were not officially codified as laws sanctioned by the Reichstag but were only administrative decrees issued by colonial governors and a colonial secretary. As Wildenthal astutely argues, by restricting the rights of German men to marry and pass on the rights of German citizenship to their wives and children on racial grounds, the bans were an attempt to assert race as a legal category in defining citizenship.²⁸ The central issue behind the decrees banning mixed marriages clearly was that of the citizenship of both indigenous colonial spouses and, perhaps more importantly, the mixed-race children of these unions. What was thought to hang in the balance of the legality of mixed marriages was the status of Blacks as German citizens and a future Black German population with legitimate claim as German political subjects. The prospect of a racially mixed, Black German minority with equal status to a white, “racially pure” German populace was certainly a cause for concern that motivated this change in colonial policy and culminated in the Reichstag debates of 1912.

The native woman, the mixed-blood children produced by both [her and her German husband] and their offspring [become] German citizens and are thereby subject to the laws valid for the Germans here. The male mixed-bloods will be liable for military service, capable of holding public offices, and will partake of the right to vote to be established sometime in the future, as well as other rights tied to citizenship. These consequences are of a high degree of seriousness. . . . Not only is the preservation of the purity of the German race and of German civilization here very substantially impaired because of them, but also the white man’s position of power is altogether endangered.²⁹

This group of mixed-race Germans became a source of alarm in that their presence triggered expressions of racial endangerment that tapped into scientific discourses on the hereditary consequences of racial mixture and thus raised the question of the implications of these individuals for the future of the German (and/or white) race. The legality of racially mixed marriages and the status of their legitimate offspring was seen as a problem on multiple levels, including but not limited to the question of citizenship for these nonwhite Germans and their indigenous parents and the issue of the morality of marriages between civilized white colonials and “uncivilized” or “primitive” natives. As Helmut Walser Smith suggests, the question of mixed marriages confronted Reichstag delegates with a choice between “the ideological imperatives of modern racial theory (which proscribed miscegenation) and the sanctity of the institution of marriage.”³⁰ Through the invocation of an imagined specter of contamination associated with the negative genetic consequences of miscegenation, racial mixture became an even more volatile issue. More than a “problem,” it was seen rather as a threat both to the fragile colonial balance of power and to domestic politics within the Reich. Here, the German national body was a raced body made vulnerable through the female body as the conduit of racial pollution.

The official Reichstag discussion of colonial mixed marriages began in May 1912, when Colonial Secretary Solf was one of the first speakers in favor of parliamentary support of the colonial bans. Using the violent backlash against emancipated Blacks in the United States as a cautionary example of racial parity gone awry (American antimiscegenation laws had served as a model in the conception of the mixed-marriage bans), Solf appealed to representatives’ emotions, urging them to allow themselves to be led by their “instincts.” As a strategic attempt to mobilize and exploit the emotional potential of this issue, Solf repeatedly invoked the figure of a racially mixed child as a specter that threatened the purity and sanctity of the German family: “You send your sons to the colonies: Do you want them to return with woolly haired [Black] grandchildren?”³¹ He continued to raise the stakes on this issue, emphasizing the particular danger racial mixture posed to white German women:

Do you want [girls sent by the Colonial Society (*deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*)] to return with Hereros, Hottentots, and bas-

tards? . . . Consider these facts, consider them according to your instincts as Germans and as white men! The entire German nation will thank you, if you consider nothing else than this: we are Germans, we are white, and we want to stay white. . . . Do you want our race to be bastardized?³²

In his critical response to Solf’s comments, Social Democratic delegate Georg Ledebour countered that although Solf had formally argued in favor of the marriage ban, the thrust of his arguments concerned issues of interracial sexuality and its consequences that would not be addressed by the legislation in question.³³ Representative Matthias Erzberger elaborated on this point:

Where is the logic in this? We forbid mixed marriages because we don’t want to have half-castes in the colonies? . . . If we are to proceed in this way, then we must have proof that the majority of half-castes result from mixed marriages. But this is not the case—rather, exactly the opposite: 99 percent of all half-castes in the colonies result from extramarital intercourse and only 1 percent from mixed marriages.³⁴

Erzberger’s point was well taken. But it is also clear that the primary motivation for the Colonial Office’s bans on mixed marriage was to hinder the claims of legitimate mixed-race German children in the colonies to the rights of German citizenship. If recognized as citizens, only these legitimate mixed-race individuals would gain access to the German fatherland; illegitimate mixed-race children, as Cornelia Essner explains, fell into the category of “natives” and as a result rarely left the colonies.³⁵

The combination of scientific and colonial discourses of racial purity that converged on the issue of mixed marriages was also constructed around a gendered and sexualized discourse that, as Wildenthal contends, “counterposed men’s rights to German racial purity.”³⁶ Foreshadowing what would later recur in the protest campaign against the Black occupation troops, racial mixture was an imagined danger that mobilized racial and sexual fears in the form of racial parity, a specter whose power lie in the threat it posed to white men’s position of power. Here gender played an integral role on both sides of the debate, with women engaged as both primary and secondary victims of this

threat.³⁷ On the one hand, both opponents and supporters of the bans relied on gendered arguments for the protection of native women: Ledebour, for example, argued that the bans protected indigenous women from the exploitation of white male colonial settlers in search of cheap housekeepers, cooks, and concubines; on the other side of the debate, Solf also argued that because of the shortage of native women, they should be protected from white male colonists' attempts to take such women away from their men.

The natives in Samoa will applaud this ban. Among the Samoans the female population is unfortunately significantly less than that of the men, and almost every attempt by white men to marry native women—and they prefer to marry into officers' circles— . . . can easily lead to awkwardness between the native clans and whites.³⁸

On the other hand, opponents of the ban offered a complexly gendered argument that combined a defense of male marital and sexual privilege with a vision of the civilizing mission of a superior, white German colonist as “bearers of culture” (*Kulturträger*) among Black inferiors. For example, Representative von Richthofen, a National Liberal, emphasized that the objective of German colonial politics was to bring a “higher culture” to the natives: [in order] to educate [‘civilize’] them to a higher sensibility “[um] sie zu einer höheren Lebensauffassung erziehen zu können.”³⁹ Toward this end, both appropriate bearers of culture (*geignete Kulturträger*) and the appropriate distance between him and his “civilizing object” (*Erziehungsobjekt*) were necessary. German women thus were constructed as a necessary bulwark ensuring this distance and the maintenance of this crucial cultural (racial) boundary.

Furthermore, German women saw themselves as important protectors of the purity of the German nation/race. Their self-proclaimed mission in the colonies was based in part on a notion of white female bodies as barriers to the potential pollution of the German race via miscegenation.⁴⁰ Indeed, the availability of white female bodies offered what was seen as an important alternative to the dangerous temptations of nonwhite, indigenous female sexuality. Indigenous women's bodies were figured as vessels and conduits for transporting pollution

and contamination into the German national body. The sexual lures they presented to German male colonists produced the mixed-race progeny that destabilized the equation of Germanness with whiteness and violated the imaginary boundary separating the German national body—a body constituted as pure and white—from the Others from which it attempted to distinguish itself.

Contrary to the reservations regarding and opposition to the bans on each side of the debate, the somewhat surprising result of these heated discussions was the passage of a resolution affirming the legality of colonial mixed marriages, along with a second resolution aimed at strengthening the influence of the Reichstag in colonial legislative affairs. Throughout these discussions an essential, biological notion of racial difference, superiority, and hierarchy resonates, a scientific discourse of race that pervades these debates. Though often formulated in the language of “culture” and “civilization,” the discussion nevertheless belies the logic of racial purity that was used as a compelling political tool. References to “culture” and “civilization” were racialized as essential differences and immutable traits attributed according to skin color. This elision is an important tension in discourses of race and racial difference, blurring the boundaries between groups of individuals and the extent to which distinctions among them are learned or innate. Yet regardless of the attribution of such distinctions, they are nonetheless purported to matter and are seen to have extremely serious implications, particularly for those seen as trespassing the boundaries of such differentiation, as in the case of racial mixture.

In spite of the fact that the legality of mixed marriages was upheld, racial mixture continued to be viewed with ambivalence and foreboding. Indeed, when confronted in the flesh with the consequences of mixed marriages, German colonial officials responded with an equally ambivalent reaction to the threat of racial parity that these individuals were seen to embody. As Wildenthal’s study shows, the cases of disputed colonial citizenship during and after this debate demonstrate that this debate was not settled with the 1912 parliamentary resolutions.⁴¹ Rather, such instances emphasize the resilience of the gendered and sexualized threat that racial mixture was seen to pose to the German body politic, a specter that would recur shortly thereafter in an even more virulent form. The fears of racial parity articulated in these discussions did indeed return with a vengeance following the war and

in many ways even came to be realized in the scenario presented by African occupation troops and their Black German children.

**IMAGINED DANGER REALIZED: RACIAL PARITY,
GERMAN VICTIMHOOD, AND THE STAKES OF
POST-WORLD WAR I REVISION**

My father came from so-called colored Africa, as Moroccans or Algerians do. And most are, they're not Black. They . . . belong to the coloreds. Well, they weren't Aryans. . . . There was no difference in the treatment [of coloreds and Blacks]. I fell under the same laws as they did. The "Aryan Paragraph" quite clearly defined who's German or of a related race. Strictly speaking, I wasn't even allowed to join a singing club or a gymnastics club. I didn't join either. 'Cause you had to sign everywhere that you were German or a related race. . . . And the question I'm often asked is "Why didn't you marry?" At the time, I wasn't allowed to marry. I could only have chosen from one of "our girls" [the Black German children of the occupation], one of the three [girls] I knew. We would have been allowed to marry. Both of us were sterilized. That way we couldn't cause any damage to the German *Volk*.⁴²

In this passage, Hans Hauck speaks to the issue of the racialization of skin color as it relates to himself and his Algerian father. He describes himself and his father as "colored [*farbig*]" rather than "Black [*schwarz*]." Hauck distinguishes North Africans and people of North African descent, like his father and himself, from Blacks on the basis of skin color. Later in this passage, Hauck points out the central irony of this issue when he emphasizes that although he makes a distinction between coloreds and Blacks, the Nazis treated him like any other non-Aryan. Here he adopts the dominant definitions of this period, which established a hierarchy between different shades of Black people according to which skin colors were associated with varying degrees of primitiveness. In the end, however, all were reduced to the same "uncivilized" status in relation to whites.

Hauck's distinction between coloreds and Blacks echoes similar tensions regarding the significance of skin color in defining racial differ-

ence and racial mixture evident in both the newspaper campaign and earlier debates of racial mixture. Although skin color significance was a subject of dispute, skin color, racial difference, and mixture were important sites for the displacement of German national anxieties in the Weimar Republic. In his reading of German responses to post–World War I Black occupation troops, Sander Gilman emphasizes that the blackness attributed to these troops was very much a relative assessment. The physical appearance of these African soldiers varied from dark-skinned Madagascans and Senegalese to fairer-skinned Asian troops from French Indochina, with soldiers from such Arab countries as Algeria and Morocco situated somewhere in between. Pointing to the different shades of individuals that comprised the French colonial force, Gilman writes, “In point of fact, there were few Blacks among the French troops.” In his view, “Germans had simply perceived the otherness of the troops stationed in Germany in terms of blackness.”⁴³

The newspaper campaign against the Black occupation troops similarly elides Black, brown, and yellow troops with regard to danger posed to the “German race.” The assertion of a set of distinctions among Madagascan, Algerian, and Moroccan, and Indochinese soldiers effectively set up a system of classification of nonwhites as uncivilized peoples, hierarchically ranked in relation to a nebulous conflation of whiteness, “culture,” and racial purity. In the postwar protests, this type of differentiation is exemplified by an article, “Die Farbigenherrschaft im Rheinlande,” published in the 28 May 1921 edition of the *Deutsche Zeitung*:

Regarding the French denial of a “Black” occupation in the Rhineland, we have established the following: . . . according to absolutely reliable reports these forces are composed of the following: 9–10 regiments native Algerians, 2 regiments native Tunisians, 3 regiments native Moroccans, 1 regiment native Madagascans. Additionally there are small units of Senegalese (Negroes) and a small number of Annamites (Indochinese). . . . Thus “Negroes,” in the strict sense of the word, are no longer present in separate units. But there remain the brown peoples of North Africa; the Algerians, the Tunisians and Moroccans, who are strongly mixed with Negroes, and the Madagascans, the

natives of Madagascar, who are mostly a Negro-like type. But this is no way a question of the shade of skin color. Rather it is a question of the humiliation that France is deliberately inflicting upon Germany through its use of uncivilized colored troops in the occupied zone. This alone is the object of German protest.⁴⁴

In addition to replicating Hauck's comments quoted earlier, the article also echoes the fears expressed during earlier debates regarding the threat posed by Blacks and their mixed-race offspring. Taking up the issue of the racial/cultural hierarchies raised in these debates, this article refers to the *Demütigung*, or the humiliation Germany was seen to face through the imposition of primitives on a *Kulturvolk*. The dichotomy set up implicitly within this discourse opposed Germans as a white, civilized *Kulturvolk* to Blacks as an uncivilized or primitive *Naturvolk* characterized by savagery and unbridled passions, appetites, and instincts. The threat posed by European exposure to these primitives was that sexual interaction between the races would have long-term genetic implications. Germans would not simply "unlearn" civility and culture through this contact; rather, miscegenation would mean the pollution of their genetic stock. What was seen as being at stake in the interracial contact that transpired through the use of Black troops in the postwar occupation was the violation of the boundary that implicitly divided the *Kulturträger* from his *Erziehungsobjekt*, a boundary that formed one of the ideological cornerstones of the colonial relationship. The use of Black troops as an occupation force in Germany in this way both reversed this relation and transgressed this sacred boundary. Again, culture was naturalized as an essential attribute, access to which was mediated by race. This and numerous other articles in the campaign decried further injury inflicted on an already wounded German nation, an injury that stood at the beginning of a larger continuum. As a racial injury inflicted by the victorious powers on a vanquished German state, it was only the first element in a process of postwar victimization. As a Leipzig paper noted in a 26 May 1921 article titled, "Die farbigen Truppen im Rheinland,"

What offends European sensibility in the use of Black troops is not their blackness but rather the fact that savages are being used to oversee a cultured people. Whether these savages are totally

black or dark brown or yellow makes no difference. The prestige of the European culture is in danger. That is what is at stake. And precisely those peoples, those such as England and France that are dependent upon the dominance they exercise over colored peoples, should consider that with the degradation of Germany in the eyes of the colored, they degrade the white race and with this endanger their own prestige.

Upon request, both France and the English Parliament have responded that there are no longer Black troops in Germany. In this reply, which, when one emphasizes blackness as a color designation, is formally correct, lies an evil element of sophism. In the spring of 1920, two Negro regiments remained in Germany. These were transferred to Syria in May of the same year. Today there are no longer any exclusively Negro troops in German territory, this is correct. But there are brown troops—that is, 9–10 Algerian regiments, 2 Tunisian and 3 Moroccan regiments, in addition to 1 regiment of Madagascans; in total, as the “Echo de Paris” reports, 45,000 men.

Thus the fact remains unchanged that a cultured people like the French allow another cultured European people to be overseen by savages. Whether these savages are slightly more black or brown or yellow is of no matter. They must feel themselves to be policing a people of the white race. This is what outrages the German people. At the same time, it is the dangerous thing for the white race in general. 1921.⁴⁵

This article is one example of the accusation frequently leveled against the victorious powers of their participation in the *Schändung der weißen Rasse* (“desecration of the white race”). This charge aimed not only at compromising France and Britain’s position as victorious powers but also at discrediting their status as colonial powers inasmuch as this status was predicated on the racial hierarchy that such *Rassenschande* (“racial desecration”) would destroy. Discrediting these two colonial powers in turn would legitimate Germany’s status through its defense of the racial hierarchy on which colonialism was based. The language of this excerpt reveals another strategic deployment of racial difference and skin color as essentialized “culture.” Again, skin color is rejected as playing a role in the protests against the

Black troops, while race and racial inferiority (Blacks as a “savage” race) are emphasized as the primary danger presented by the use of these troops in the occupation. “Savagery” was constructed as a biological threat to the white race. As before, skin color was equated with culture, thus eliding racial difference with level of “civilization.”

The articles in the newspaper campaign against the Black troops illustrate that Germany’s defeat in World War I was not only experienced with a sense of loss and humiliation but also was articulated as a threat. As was the case less than a decade earlier during the mixed marriage debates, the threat which served as the implicit and explicit subtext of this campaign was the perceived threat of racial parity. Racial parity was the danger perceived to result from Germany’s loss of the war and with which Germans were confronted in several areas, including the military and to a certain extent German society. In the military, the use of Black colonial troops by other European countries effectively set Blacks on the same level as whites. Although Germany did not use colonial troops during World War I, it had in fact considered this option. France’s use of Black as well as white occupation troops presented Germany with a superficial form of racial parity that the country had never before encountered either in the colonies or in the military. As “‘Die Geister, die ich rief . . .’: Die Gefahr der farbigen Besatzungstruppen für Europa,” which appeared in *Die Weser Zeitung* on 23 July 1921, put it,

The main danger in the use of colored troops in the heart of Europe lies far more in the systematic awakening and cultivation of their sense of power over the white race. . . . The French have provided amply for the military training of the Blacks through the use of them in the war and as occupation forces. But, drunk with their victory, the French military still refuse to see the terrible danger. Not long ago Senegalese Negroes were exuberantly celebrated shortly before their transfer to Paris as the “Heroes of Dirmuiden, the Marne, the Dardanelles and other places where one [had to hang on] at all costs.” . . . It is in this way that the feeling of power of the colored race against the whites is only strengthened by the French military.⁴⁶

Perhaps more significantly, racial parity was also perceived as a threat to German society: a threat which again was articulated as a

gendered, sexual threat. On the one hand, the white German woman was presented as the channel of this threat. Several articles portrayed her as both whore and victim and, as such, she functions as both an active and passive conduit of Black male sexuality. The Black man, in turn, was demonized as, among other things, infectious, instinctual, uncivilized, and—most notably—irresistible, insatiable, and uncontrollable. On the other hand, Blacks’ access to white European women through service in the occupying forces represented another form of racial parity—that is, a sexual equality between Black and white men in relation to (or perhaps in the possession of) white women. This, in turn, was articulated in the campaign against the Black troops as a threat to the German man. “Die Schwarze Schmach,” published in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* on 30 July 1921, argued,

The white woman . . . has always had a visibly privileged position among Europeans. For this reason the Negro has also shown her, for the most part, absolute respect and submissive obedience. . . . But the white woman was also something different to him, something beyond the term *Weib*. She was something unreachable to him; something he certainly only seldom consciously desired. . . . Now the Negro, who inhabits Africa and parts of the rest of the world in countless millions and generally stands on a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder, is not only being brought to Europe, not only being used in battle in a white country; he is also systematically being trained to desire that which was formerly unreachable for him—the white woman! He is being urged and driven to besmirch defenseless women and girls with his tuberculous and syphilitic stench, wrench them into his stinking apish arms and abuse them in the most unthinkable ways! He is being taught that . . . he can do anything his animal instincts even remotely demand, without the slightest restraint, he even finds support for this from the “victors.”⁴⁷

In this excerpt, the white female body again forms the conduit of the racial pollution that endangers the German body politic. Unbridled Black male sexuality—essential in its insatiability yet socially malleable in its ability to discern between appropriate and inappropriate objects of desire—perpetrates this act of national pollution. The violation of this most fundamental of boundaries renders this sexualized

form of racial parity perhaps the most intolerable threat to the German nation, one seen as a rallying point for the German people and eventually other whites. Racial parity ultimately posed the most significant danger to white German men in the threat it posed to their masculinity. This was also true of the military, where *Wehrhaftigkeit* (the ability to perform military service and protect one's country and property) has long been regarded as a primary masculine attribute. Here, racial parity threatened to emasculate the white German male. In the logic of national body politics, this masculine potency apparently could be maintained only through inequality. On 24 April 1922, the *Grenzland Korrespondent* stated in "Völker Europas. . .!"

But the "Black Horror is—how long must one scream it into the ears of a deaf world"—not only a disgrace for Germany. It is much more. It represents the desecration of white culture in general. At the same time, it means the beginning of the end of the supremacy of the white man.⁴⁸

The discourse on the Black troops in the 1919–23 newspaper campaign can also be read as an attempt to recover Germany's prewar Great Power status through the displacement and/or projection of the fears aroused by the changes occurring in postwar German society onto another surface. The Black occupation troops were one such surface, and the threat of racial parity served as a catalyst in this process. However, the ultimate result of the displacement of German national anxieties onto the Black troops was the racialization of the postwar situation: German society attempted to regain its prewar dominance or *Herrenstatus* by affirming its racial superiority to Blacks and specifically the Black troops. This was achieved through the extension or generalization of the problem of a Black presence in Germany and the exaggeration of the perceived threat of racial parity into a crisis that threatened all Europeans and the white race in general. This process of racialization was also part of a dynamic that strategically transformed the presence of a Black occupying force in Germany into the fiction of an all-encompassing racial threat to civilization. Here, the merging of fiction and reality was intended to have strategic political consequences—namely, the potential and much-desired revision of the postwar settlement along racial lines. One newspaper asked the British occupiers,

Are you not aware that through the continued increase of the French Black troops, England’s current world standing is far more endangered than the life of the German nation? If we hope for particular understanding of our struggle against the French Black troops from your side, this comes not from pacifistic illusion, but from the conviction that our interests overlap, for we are threatened from the same side. Your people, who have enjoyed the wonderful mixture of Norman gentleman’s pride and Anglo-Saxon justice, must finally understand that the basis of your world reputation would be shaken by the emancipation of the Black race, as France is perpetrating it. Have you no idea of . . . the dangers that the French assertion of equality of the Black race with the white race could bring? Have you no idea of the consequences that could result from the unhindered continuation of this French policy for the English colonial Negro? Consider . . . these thoughts and [you too will come to believe] that this issue is, on the contrary, a matter of the self-consciousness and self-preservation of the white race.⁴⁹

The most dubious effect of this process was the way in which this racialized discourse presented the Black troops as a common enemy of all white nations against whom they should unite and overcome their differences. The extension of the threat posed by the Black troops to this more encompassing formulation created a point of identification between Germany and its former European adversaries via the threat to racial purity—that is, whiteness. This, in turn, led to a defensive closing of ranks among whites against an alleged threat to the white race. According to one newspaper,

Only too late will [the French] realize that they have conjured up a catastrophe for the whole of Europe through the use of colored troops in the Rhineland. All hope rests on the remaining European states and America. Hopefully the feeling of solidarity among the white race will break out in time to effectively meet the rising African threat.⁵⁰

In addition to creating a racially inferior “Black enemy,” the discourse of the propaganda campaign simultaneously constructed a position of racial superiority for the white German counterpart to this

figure, a scenario that might be described as follows: The racially inferior Black enemy poses a threat that must be controlled and contained. The racially superior white German champions this moral campaign. The effect is the reestablishment of the old colonial hierarchy at the ideological level, achieved through the extension or perpetuation of the former colonial relation of domination via the categories of a superior *Herrenrasse* and an inferior *Gegenrasse*, which are made viable through the construction of Blacks as racially primitive. Such a relation forgoes the need for external colonies, as it is tenable with regard to all “primitive” or “inferior” peoples or all those constructed as such. Through a racialized discourse in which the use of Black troops in the postwar occupation is constructed as a dangerous attack on the established racial order, Germany is constituted as the victim of a racial conspiracy. Its defense of the racial hierarchy in the discourse of the campaign effectively makes it the last protector of the white race. In this way, its victimization is recast as a heroic sacrifice (or martyrdom) for the race.

The fear of interracial sex played a central role in this process of racialization. The Afro-German children of the Black occupation troops were the realization of the fears expressed in the propaganda campaign, the embodiment of racial parity and postwar German defeat and humiliation. As in the *Mischehe* debates, these children were used provocatively as a shock tactic aimed at evoking outrage and repulsion, creating a sense of endangerment as a result of the deployment of Black troops in Europe. The message behind this strategy was that the use of Black troops would have long-term repercussions for Germany or, more explicitly, for the “German race.” In this area, the public statements of one of the most prominent speakers involved in the campaign, Ray Beveridge, are particularly significant.⁵¹

One highly publicized example of Beveridge’s rhetoric was a much-publicized speech given at a protest rally in Munich on 22 February 1921. At the rally, Beveridge presented two “little martyrs” of the occupation to the audience: an undernourished and underdeveloped white German child said to be the victim of the Allied “hunger blockade” and a Black German child described as “a living unfortunate witness to the Black disgrace and white shame [*lebendigen und unglücklichen Zeugen Schwarzer Schmach und weißer Schande*].”⁵² Beveridge became a much-sought-after speaker at protest rallies throughout Germany,

well known for her ability to move her audiences. Of the Munich rally, the *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung* wrote on 24 February 1921,

Then Mrs. Beveridge stepped onto the podium. Who doesn't know it, the name of this courageous American, this selfless woman, this woman both inspiring and enthusiastic for all true humanity, this mother of all miserable and hungry German children? She is received by storms of applause, storms of applause follow almost each of her succinctly formulated sentences, which call everything by its right name. But what had an even stronger effect on the gathering was when the speaker presented two children: a 6-year-old, malnourished German child, pitiful to see, and a 9-month-old, almost as large, mixed-caste child from the occupied zone. . . . No person can speak more dramatically or gripingly than such a contrast.⁵³

Beveridge's speech, which was reprinted in newspapers throughout Germany, quite literally cast these “little bastards” as symbols of German defeat and of the impending threat to the purity of the German race. As part of the deployment of the “Rhineland Bastard,” the children of Black soldiers were also depicted as carriers of the infectious diseases of their fathers—in particular, sexually transmitted diseases. Sexuality played a critical role in the campaign against the Black troops, for the representation of Black soldiers as a sexual threat provoked the most vehement popular reaction. Here, racial discourses were permeated by discourses of gender and sexuality. Whenever the issue of race was raised, it was immediately and invariably posed in relation to a sexual threat—for example, essential notions of “biological difference” and stereotyped ideas of the exaggerated “sexual passions” of Blacks combined with the threat of the sexual transmission of infectious diseases. This in turn was exacerbated by the excessive “sexual appetites” of Blacks and their supposed lack of a socially developed ability to control themselves.

The Black German children of these soldiers were seen as a lasting legacy of the occupation, while their mixed racial heritage and illegitimate birth posed a moral and biological threat to the chastity and purity of the German “race.” The danger these children posed surpassed that presented by the Black troops, for as German citizens

whose presence in the country was in no way temporary, the children presented a more far-reaching threat. In the articles written in this period, this danger is formulated as *Mulattisierung*, or the “mulattoization” of the German race—a foreboding warning that, should this situation be allowed to continue, “one need not wonder if, in a few years, there will be more half-breeds than whites walking around; if sacred German motherhood has become a myth and the German woman a Black whore.”⁵⁴

The danger of *Mulattisierung* was best articulated in an article from the 26 April 1922 edition of the *Grenzland Korrespondent*. The author speculated from a scientific perspective on the implications for Germany of the growing progeny of Black occupation soldiers, based on a peculiar application of Mendel’s theory of heredity.

In addition to the horrible poverty in which the white women of the occupied zone live, an extraordinarily great danger threatens the German people: the threat of violent interbreeding with coloreds, the threat of sexual and other types of diseases, and the offspring of the unfortunate victims of these coloreds, at least a dozen different races of which are stationed along the Rhine.

If we calculate according to the so-called Mendel Rule which holds that the human genealogical line takes 300 years to purify itself from a single mixture with alien blood, the result is that the German race will be polluted for centuries by such a multiple and many-sided mixture as the colored occupation represents. But not only the German race, the entire white race. For all the traits of both parents will be passed on. Every trait need not develop into externally recognizable characteristics in every offspring. Whole generations could be completely—[illegible]. A young couple marries from one such family, pure white “since time immemorial.” They look forward to their child. But what arrives is a dreadful, mixed-breed child. Just these kinds of late-occurring bastards are usually even worse than those resulting from the initial conscious act of racial mixture. Woe to the white race should the densely populated Rhineland fall to “mulattoization” in the heart of pure white Europe!

Long after the occupation is over, the traits and skin color of these peculiar creations, loathed by the east as well as the west,

will cry out for revenge against those responsible for this crime committed in the name of victory.⁵⁵

This passage offers a vivid example of how scientific discourses on race permeated the 1919–22 newspaper campaign. The Rhineland protest campaign demonstrated a powerful convergence of scientific and colonial discourses on race and racial mixture with a postwar discourse of German victimhood. Beveridge’s comments in particular synthesize some of the most important resonances between the discourse of the campaign and the earlier debates regarding racial mixture and mixed marriages: among others, the deployment of gender (via Black sexuality’s threat to white women and white women’s supposed role in the campaign against the use of the Black occupation troops), the deployment of race and sexuality (through the construction of Black men as uncivilized savages, infectious, and sexually depraved), and, in the case of the postwar protests, the deployment of the figure of the Rhineland Bastard as a threat to the purity of the “German race.”⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

As an echoing specter of racial mixture, the images of Blacks and Afro-Germans that emerged from the post–World War I campaign against the Black troops resonate and at the same time rearticulate both essential scientific discourses of race and racial mixture and colonial conceptions of the social and political consequences that racial mixture posed to the German nation. The concept of the nation that structured and sustained each of these discourses took the body as its model, with bodily boundaries and their defense against violation and contamination functioning as the bedrock of social order and cohesion. Using the body to read the discourses of race, nation, and identity through which Black Germans were interpellated in the first half of the twentieth century demonstrates some of the ways in which this theoretical model might enhance our understanding of how Germanness has historically been constructed as a community identity based on boundaries of belonging and exclusion that are thoroughly raced and gendered.

With respect to the specific historical contexts that came to interpellate Black Germans in German society, the raced bodies of these individuals were historically seen to have certain dire consequences for the

German nation through the threat these bodies were thought to pose to German identity and through the question of who was entitled to claim membership in the category. This chapter has examined some of the implications of the repeated early-twentieth-century instances in Germany when race was conceived as essence and German national and cultural identity were articulated as having an essential racial substance. In the discourses of race that came together in these historical contexts, both Black people and the German nation were naturalized as bodies whose substance was articulated to have very specific forms of meaning that were seen as one basis for regulating social interaction in German society. On the one hand, Germanness was equated with purity and superiority; on the other hand, racial mixture represented dangerous forms of impurity, pollution, and inferiority. The mixed-marriage debates in the colonies and the discussions of how to deal with the Black German children of the post–World War I occupation were concrete attempts to legislate and negotiate this assumed substance and the implications its meaning was assumed to have for the German nation.

An extension of the fears expressed in the 1912 Reichstag debate, the post–World War I Black occupation troops and the figure of the Rhineland Bastard represented a deeply threatening specter of racial mixture—endangerment through racial parity. Unlike in the prewar debates, in the discourse of the postwar protest campaign this specter was portrayed as a racial injury that the victorious allies had inflicted on Germany. This injury functioned as the source of Germany's victimization and at the same time elevated the country's status as such through a heroic glorification of victimhood as racial martyrdom. Like other equally compelling discursive configurations of enemies and victims in German history, the strategic dimensions of this post–World War I discourse of victimhood and the ways in which it too functioned must be recognized as what Omer Bartov has described as a "national adhesive."⁵⁷ Like the other historical occurrences of the discourse of German victimhood enumerated by Bartov, the responses to the specter of racial mixture Germans articulated through the metaphors of racial victimhood and endangerment served as a form of national adhesive that offered a source of unity and identification in this period of postwar national crisis.