

“Mischlingskinder”; Afro-German Children in Post-War Germany

Presentation by Benny Hochster for Course:
German Social History in the 20th Century

Presentation Overview

Core Subject

The treatment and marginalization of Afro-German “occupation children (Besatzungskinder)” in post war Germany, and what does their experience reveal about race, welfare institutions, and belonging?

Main Points I Discuss

1) Who were the “Mischlingskinder”?

How the issue came to be, as a result of US African-American soldiers stationed in Germany.

2) Mechanisms of Marginalization

The many ways these Mischlingskinder were marginalized in post war Germany

3) Lived Experience

The unique "double stigma" they suffered, as reflected in Memoirs such as Ika Hügel-Marshall's "Invisible Woman"

4) Removal thru Adoption and Separation

In the 1950s, adoption abroad and kinderheime were used as "solutions to the problem". While masked as humanitarian, these were practically focused on removal from society.

5) Representation and Legacy

The film Toxi (1952) expressed sympathy without equality, reflecting conditional belonging. From the 1980s onward, Afro-German movements reframed these children from welfare “cases” into historical subjects.

Selected Sources: Heide Fehrenbach, Race after Hitler (2005); Yara-Colette Lemke Muniz de Faria (2003); Ika Hügel-Marshall, Invisible Woman; Brown Babies: The Mischlingskinder Story.