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## Bodies and Spaces: Citizenship as Claims-Making in Germany, 1942–1949

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### Abstract

In 1935, the Nazi Party promulgated the Reich citizenship law, which, to protect the purity of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, denaturalized numerous people who perceived themselves as German. Despite this perceived threat to the national body, the Third Reich drafted some mixed-race men to serve in the Wehrmacht during World War II. Traditionally, scholars have focused their studies of mixed-race veterans on the so-called Jewish *Mischlinge* who served in the Wehrmacht. This article expands the aperture by examining the oral history testimony of Hans Hauck, a Black German Wehrmacht veteran whose wartime experiences present a complex story of a man who claimed to be German despite legal structures and normative ideals about Germanness that excluded him. Drawing on Hauck's oral history testimonies regarding two periods of his military service, I argue that Hauck used his body, symbols, and physical spaces to seek recognition as a legitimate claimant of Germanness.

**Keywords:** citizenship; Black German; Wehrmacht; masculinity

In 1942, Johann (Hans) Hauck was a man inhabiting two worlds. Like many of his peers, Hauck had been conscripted into the Wehrmacht and was stationed with his unit in France. What made his situation unique was that Hauck was the son of a French Algerian soldier and a German woman. It was Hauck's mixed heritage that placed him among the numerous German men and women of "impure" racial background whom the Nazi regime's 1935 *Reichsbürgergesetz* (Reich citizenship law) denaturalized. Nevertheless, this young man wore the Wehrmacht uniform, an esteemed symbol of the Nazi regime's idealized racially "pure" masculinity and military arm of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Thus, he was at once outside the national community that the Nazi regime sought to create and, by virtue of his conscription into military service, integral to its expansion and defense, at least for a time. Hauck was convinced that he was German despite his denaturalization and the regime's stance that he was a threat to the *Volk*.<sup>1</sup>

Hauck's investment in his German identity is evident in his recollection of a seemingly inconsequential moment while stationed on the western front in 1942. More than fifty years later, in an oral history interview, Hauck recalled an interaction he and his comrades had involving a group of Algerian prisoners of war in France. In a moment of levity, Hauck took off the jacket of his Wehrmacht uniform and tried on an Algerian prisoner's red

<sup>1</sup> Reichsgesetzblatt 1935, Teil 1 (hereafter RGB1.1), September 15, 1935, 1146, in J. Noakes and G. Pridham, ed., *State, Economy, and Society, 1933–1939*, vol. 2, *Nazism 1919–1945: A Documentary Reader* (Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 53–56; Diemut Majer, "Non-Germans" under the Third Reich: *The Nazi Judicial and Administrative System in Germany and Occupied Eastern Europe, with Special Regard to Occupied Poland, 1939–1945*, trans. Peter T. Hill, Edward V. Humphrey, and Brian Levin (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 111.

tarboosh. Seeing this, Hauck's friend exclaimed in the Platt dialect, "Man, Hans. You could run off—you'd be done with the war. Nobody could tell you apart from those guys."<sup>2</sup> Without hesitation, Hauck removed the distinctive headgear and returned it to its owner. When recounting this incident years later, Hauck noted that the statement was a reminder that he "wanted to avoid all of that right then with him."<sup>3</sup>

What was the "all of that" that Hauck sought to avoid by removing the red tarboosh? Hauck did not provide further insight in this interview, but we should not interpret Hauck's silence on the matter as an indication that this moment or this statement was insignificant. Although it would be easy to overlook this anecdote and the comment as playful banter between soldiers and friends, a closer examination of the incident and Hauck's response suggests that it was more complex than it seems. Through the simple act of removing the prisoner's hat, Hauck sought to challenge the presumption that he could not be truly German because he was Black. This was an action through which Hauck attempted to redefine his social status within the Third Reich. On a more personal level, Hauck reaffirmed his identity as a German man in a way he must have hoped his friend would acknowledge, thus ending any further discussion of the matter. That so much complexity was packed into this brief moment highlights the need for further inquiry. Through a close reading of two important moments during Hauck's military service, I argue that he utilized his body and its placement in specific physical spaces to aspire to citizenship and belonging as a German man.

## Hans Hauck: An Ambivalent Life

Hans Hauck's story began shortly after the conclusion of World War I, when a French Algerian soldier stationed in Saarbrücken met and began a romantic relationship with a young German woman. Upon discovering that she was pregnant, the young unwed woman, Mathilde Hauck, left home and joined her partner, who now worked in Frankfurt. By moving, she avoided temporarily the criticisms of her conservative Catholic family and neighbors, who were troubled by her romantic relationship with a "colored occupation soldier" and their illegitimate child.<sup>4</sup> In August 1920, Mathilde Hauck gave birth to Hans, who became a German citizen by birth under the 1913 citizenship law.<sup>5</sup> Later, Mathilde Hauck returned to Saarbrücken-Dudweiler, where she worked as a saleswoman at a local firm and raised Hans with the help of her widowed mother. After his mother's untimely death, Hauck's grandmother became his guardian. He grew up knowing very little about his father or his parents' relationship because "it was a taboo subject in [their] family."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Hans Hauck, interview by Alexander Karschnia, March 18, 1998, interview code 41964, video recording, Visual History Archive Online, USC Shoah Foundation, Los Angeles, CA (<http://vha.usc.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=42720&returnIndex=0>). Antoinette Sutto translated this interview. In his description of this incident, Hauck did not indicate if other soldiers tried on the red tarboosh.

<sup>3</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>4</sup> Hauck was one of approximately 600 children fathered by French colonial troops during the occupation of the Rhineland. See Reiner Pommerin, "Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde." *Das Schicksal einer farbigen deutschen Minderheit, 1918-1937* (Dusseldorf: Droste Verlag GmbH, 1979), 12 and 96-101.

<sup>5</sup> In accordance with Germany's 1913 citizenship law, children gained German citizenship through their fathers unless their mothers were unmarried and their foreign fathers did not claim them. Hans Hauck inherited German citizenship from his unwed mother. Lora Wildenthal argues that this form of citizenship rooted in paternal descent reflected the "racialization of contemporary thinking about Germanness" without including racial definitions in the law. See "German Imperial & State Citizenship Law of 1913, July 22, 1913," *American Society of International Law* 8, no. 3, Supplement: Official Documents (July 1914): 218; Lora Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 265-67.

<sup>6</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Tina Campt, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender and Memory in the Third Reich* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 31 and 96; Tina Campt, "Family Matters: Diaspora, Difference, and the Visual Archive," *Social Text* 27, no. 1 (2009): 84-85; *Black Survivors of the Holocaust*, directed by David Okuefuna, Afro Wisdom Films, 1997. Hauck speculated about his father's name in his 1998 interview; I

Hauck became an active member of the *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) in 1933. A few years later, he entered an apprenticeship program with the railroad, an opportunity that required membership in the Hitler Youth. His participation in the Hitler Youth ended in 1937 after the Nazi regime sterilized him, but he continued to wear the Hitler Youth uniform when required to do so for his apprenticeship.<sup>7</sup>

Despite officials declaring Hauck “unfit” for military service in 1939, the Wehrmacht conscripted him in 1942. Hauck served in units stationed in Luxembourg, France, and eastern Europe until Soviet forces captured him in January 1945. Hauck remained in captivity until his release in April 1949, when he returned to Saarbrücken.<sup>8</sup>

Shortly after returning to Saarbrücken, Hauck resumed working for the railway. He remained with the railway until 1951, when he began working as a machine fitter who traveled to work on projects throughout Europe. In the late 1940s, Hauck joined the Communist Party and remained an active member of its Saar State Association until 1952, when he left the party “for personal reasons.”<sup>9</sup> Despite having at least one three-year romantic relationship, Hauck never married; he did not believe marriage was an option for him because he could not father biological children.<sup>10</sup> He died in 2003.<sup>11</sup>

### Citizenship and Belonging in the Third Reich

When Adolf Hitler seized power in 1933, the Nazi Party viewed its success as an opportunity to combat the “foreign” influence that it believed had infected Germany and weakened the *Volk*, the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and the German state. The party was troubled by state governments that granted citizenship to foreigners who were either Jewish or not ethnic Germans in the 1920s.<sup>12</sup> In the Nazi Party’s assessment, restoring Germany’s greatness required making race a central factor in defining the boundaries of citizenship in the Third Reich.

The racialization of German citizenship during the Third Reich began in February 1934, when the regime consolidated control of citizenship policies at the national level to prevent state governments from executing citizenship laws that were inconsistent with National Socialist ideology.<sup>13</sup> The following year, the regime promulgated the Reich citizenship law, which redefined the state as the “ethnic-political organization of the living organism of the *Volk*.”<sup>14</sup> The law ensured that only members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* could be citizens by defining a *Reichsbürger* (Reich citizen) as an individual of “German or related blood who [proved] by his conduct that he [was] willing and able to serve the German *Volk* and Reich in fidelity.”<sup>15</sup> For those whom the law described as individuals without “German or related blood,” the Reich citizenship law created the category of *Staatsangehörige* (state subject). Beginning in November 1935, the Reich Ministry of the Interior issued a series of supplementary decrees to the Reich citizenship law that excluded “non-Aryans” from the status

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have chosen not to include the name as a result. In Okuefuna’s documentary, Hauck expresses his belief that his mother died from anxiety resulting from her family’s rejection and her concern for him.

<sup>7</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; *Black Survivors of the Holocaust*; Pommerin, “Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde,” 77–84. After the procedure, officials escorted Hauck to an office where they gave him a vasectomy certificate; he signed an agreement that he would neither marry nor have intimate relations with “Aryan” Germans.

<sup>8</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 115, 121–22; Campt, “Family Matters,” 99.

<sup>9</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>10</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 203–04.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Dulle, “Hans Hauck (1920–2003),” *Black Central Europe* (<http://www.blackcentraleurope.com/biographies/hans-hauck-elizabeth-dulle>).

<sup>12</sup> Eli Nathans, *The Politics of Citizenship in Germany: Ethnicity, Utility, and Nationalism* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 201–02 and 217–18. Prior to 1934, each *Land* (state) developed its own citizenship laws.

<sup>13</sup> Nathans, *The Politics of Citizenship in Germany*, 218–19; Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 12.

<sup>14</sup> Majer, “Non-Germans” under the Third Reich, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Majer, “Non-Germans” under the Third Reich, 111.

of state subject.<sup>16</sup> Throughout this period, the regime also emphasized the term *Volksgenosse* (national comrade), a status “only attainable by first fulfilling ‘the duties of a national comrade to the national community’ and submitting oneself to the ‘discipline of shared service.’”<sup>17</sup> By 1943, the regime had denaturalized individuals whose race or conduct it deemed unbecoming of a Reich citizen.

Examining Hans Hauck’s aspiration to citizenship and belonging in this racialized environment requires a reconsideration of citizenship’s definition. In the German context, *Staatsangehörigkeit* and *Staatsbürgerschaft* serve as departure points for inquiries about citizenship. The former indicates the formal status of belonging to the state reflected in identification documents, such as passports. In exchange for this symbol of membership, the state expects loyalty from the individual. The latter term denotes the status of being a citizen but has connotations of middle-class status most relevant to the bourgeois nineteenth century before the principle of descent dominated matters of citizenship as it did during the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Both terms confine citizenship to the legal and political relationship between the individual and the state, which has limited utility in illuminating the significance of removing the red tarboosh for Hans Hauck.

Appreciating the nuances of this event asks us to consider the dimensions of citizenship that exist beyond the realm of politics and law. Margaret Somers asserts that “citizenship, however much an empirical institution of governance, is perceived as a *desideratum* and a good, and these normative qualities have causal powers.”<sup>19</sup> This framing opens the possibility of exploring not only Hauck’s aspirations to citizenship and belonging, but also the normative and social dynamics that shaped this moment.<sup>20</sup> Drawing on Irene Bloemraad’s concept of citizenship as claims-making, this article defines citizenship as “a process of making membership claims on polities, people, and institutions that must be recognized within particular normative understandings of citizenship.”<sup>21</sup> This definition affirms the various relationships associated with citizenship that exist beyond the affiliation between the individual and the state.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, it recognizes that both people and institutions have a role in evaluating whether a claim or claimant meets the criteria for membership given

<sup>16</sup> Majer, “Non-Germans” under the Third Reich, 111–22; RGB.I.I (1935), 1333–34, cited in Noakes and Pridham, *Nazism 1919–1945*, 538–39. The First Supplementary Decree (November 1935) automatically excluded persons of “foreign blood” or those who exhibited its influence from the status of “Reich citizen” and stripped the right to vote from *Geltungsjuden* (individuals counted as Jews). The Eleventh Decree (November 1941) divested “state subjects” of this status upon their voluntary or involuntary departure from the Reich. The Twelfth Decree (April 1943) reserved unrestricted “state subject” status for foreign “Aryans” who served in the Wehrmacht or its auxiliary organizations; it also created the categories of “conditional state subjects” and individuals with “protected status,” which differentiated between non-Jewish “non-Aryans” whom the regime viewed as “capable of Germanization” and those who were not.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Fischer, *Die Deutsche Wehrpflicht, ihre Rechtsgrundlagen und ihre Rechtsnatur*. (PhD diss., Tübingen, 1938), 128 and 138–42, and Johannes Heckel, *Wehrverfassung und Wehrrecht des Großdeutschen Reiches*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1939), 101, quoted in Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Military Conscript, and Civil Society*, trans. Andrew Boreham and Daniel Brückenhaus (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 257.

<sup>18</sup> Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 203; Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 50–51; Kathleen Canning, “The Stakes of Citizenship: Bodies in the Aftermath of War and Revolution,” Plenary Speech at the Eighth Conference in Citizenship Studies: Bodies and Citizenship, Wayne, NE, April 2011 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35vJ9KFDZPQ>); Paul-Ludwig Weinacht, “‘Staatsbürger’ zur Geschichte und Kritik eines Politischen Begriffs,” *Der Staat* 8, no. 1 (1969): 61–63.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 23.

<sup>20</sup> On “aspirational citizenship,” see Anne Epstein and Rachel Fuchs, ed., “Conceptualizing Citizenship,” in *Gender and Citizenship in Historical and Transnational Perspective: Agency, Space, Borders* (London: Palgrave, 2017), 233.

<sup>21</sup> Irene Bloemraad, “Theorising the Power of Citizenship as Claims-Making,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 1 (2018): 6.

<sup>22</sup> For other works on the relational aspects of citizenship, see Saskia Bonjour and Betty de Hart, “Intimate Citizenship: Introduction to the Special Issue on Citizenship, Membership and Belonging in Mixed-Status

the normative ideals of the society. Finally, it acknowledges the creative means individuals can use to seek recognition and alter their status even though their efforts are constrained by legal structures, institutional practices, and prevailing public perceptions.<sup>23</sup>

This article also draws insights from performative and intimate citizenship theories. Performative citizenship considers the extraordinary and quotidian actions that constitute and contest the status of citizen and what citizenship rights mean. This theory contends that the actions used in political and social struggles over citizenship can reference social conventions even as those same actions assert rights to which no previous authorization exists. These aspects of performative citizenship make it possible to view Hauck's actions as a noncitizen's effort to claim membership in the German community and reenvision a form of citizenship for which he was qualified as a result of his combat service despite the repressive conditions of the Third Reich.<sup>24</sup> Intimate citizenship theory highlights the intersection of citizenship, the law, and individual choices about one's body, identity, and relationships. Among other things, it takes seriously the "public identity narratives" people tell others in order to "construct" themselves.<sup>25</sup> In this article, I will use this concept to illustrate how Hauck's actions constructed a narrative that he was German in spite of legal and social conventions that declared otherwise. This article will show how Hauck's actions during key moments, such as the incident with the red tarboosh, were part of an effort to seek acceptance from a subset of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the front-line community. Through his combat service and his acceptance by this group, Hauck must have hoped to demonstrate his worthiness as a German man and aspirant citizen without regard to his racial heritage.

Recent scholarship examining the intersections of military service and citizenship in Germany have focused on German men of Jewish heritage, whom the regime targeted as the paramount threat to the *Volks*. Brian Crim and Michael Geheran have brought to light the ways in which World War I veterans sought to use their military service to combat anti-semitism and persecution and to reclaim their masculinity even as the Third Reich persecuted them.<sup>26</sup> Shifting their focus to the generation of men who fought in World War II, Bryan Mark Rigg and Steven R. Welch demonstrate how an estimated 150,000 German soldiers of Jewish heritage attempted to navigate an ever-changing terrain of military personnel and racial policies during this period.<sup>27</sup> When considered together, these works highlight the importance of military service to a population of men who inhabited a gray zone in the Third Reich. These men were not alone, however. Similar to so-called Jewish *Mischlinge*, there was no place for Hans Hauck in the racially "pure" community that the Nazi regime envisioned. The Nazi regime viewed Hauck and others like him as playing an integral role in the supposed Jewish conspiracy to defile "Aryan" blood and poison the *Volksgemeinschaft*. For these individuals, the "threat" was supposedly evident in their complexions and hair

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Families," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 28, no. 1 (2021); Charles Tilly, "Citizenship, Identity, and Social History," *International Review of Social History* 40 (1995).

<sup>23</sup> Bloemraad, "Theorising the Power of Citizenship as Claims-Making," 5–6.

<sup>24</sup> Engin Isin, "Performative Citizenship," in *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*, ed. Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Bauböck, Irene Bloemraad, and Maarten Vink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 501–07; Bloemraad, "Theorising the Power of Citizenship as Claims-Making," 4–5 and 12. For a detailed discussion of performative citizenship in non-democratic polities, see Isin, "Performative Citizenship," 511–14.

<sup>25</sup> Elzbieta H. Olesky, "Citizenship Revisited," in *Intimate Citizenships: Gender, Sexualities, Politics*, ed. Elzbieta Olesky (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3–5.

<sup>26</sup> See Brian Crim, "Was It All Just a Dream? German-Jewish Veterans and the Confrontation with *völkisch* Nationalism in the Interwar Period," in *Sacrifice and National Belonging in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Greg Eghihian and Matthew Paul Berg (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 90–117; Michael J. Geheran, "Remasculinizing the Shirker: The Jewish *Frontkämpfer* under Hitler," *Central European History* 51, no. 3 (2018): 440–65.

<sup>27</sup> See Bryan Mark Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers: The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 62–65; Steven R. Welch, "Mischling Deserters from the Wehrmacht," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 44, no. 1 (1999): 273–324. Soldiers of Jewish descent comprised less than 1 percent of the estimated 17 million Wehrmacht soldiers.

textures, which led Nazi legal commentators to describe Black Germans as exemplars of individuals with “foreign blood.”<sup>28</sup> Whereas thousands of so-called Jewish *Mischlinge* petitioned the Ministry of the Interior to be reclassified as “Aryan” and thus gain recognition from the regime as legitimate claimants of Germanness, this was not a viable strategy for Black Germans given the assessment of the regime’s legal commentators on the matter.<sup>29</sup> This important difference opens the avenue for considering how Hauck used alternative means, including physical space, to contest his exclusion from the German national community.

According to Doreen Massey, spaces are not “devoid of effect or implications” because they are a “product of social relations,” which are infused with power, meaning, and symbolism.<sup>30</sup> Individuals and social groups experience and interpret spaces differently based on their positionality; this creates the possibility for spaces to be sites where individuals and social groups can seek to contest and reorganize relations.<sup>31</sup> In this article, I draw on the examples of scholars who have incorporated space into their analyses of how marginalized populations navigated their social and political circumstances.<sup>32</sup>

This article also adds to the study of military service and citizenship in Germany by considering Hans Hauck’s experiences as a German soldier of Afro-diasporic heritage in the context of contemporary German imaginations of Blackness and the Black body. During the French occupation of the Rhineland, the “Black Horror on the Rhine” campaign imagined men of Afro-diasporic heritage as hypersexual barbarians without a legitimate role in military formations in western Europe. Moreover, advocates for the campaign argued that the presence of French colonial troops in Germany would inevitably result in the moral and biological “degeneration” of the German race as mixed-race children were expected to inherit the diseases and negative attributes of their parents.<sup>33</sup> Many of these elements recurred in the Nazis’ anti-French propaganda during the western campaign in 1940. In fact, a *Völkischer Beobachter* article dated May 31, 1940 declared that France had “again let loose the cruel black beasts from the jungle ... and given free rein to their animalistic instincts” after the deployment of French colonial troops in the West.<sup>34</sup> Although the majority of colonial troops used in the French occupation of the Rhineland and the western campaign originated from North Africa, the messaging of both propaganda campaigns emphasized the presence of Black African troops and their supposedly hypersexual and animalistic nature. Because Nazi propaganda did not consistently differentiate between northern and sub-Saharan

<sup>28</sup> Majer, “Non-Germans” under the Third Reich, 111; Wilhelm Stuckart and Hans Globke, *Kommentare zur deutschen Rassenengesetzgebung*, vol. 1 (Munich: Beck, 1936), 136, quoted in Camp, *Other Germans*, 146.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of petitions submitted by Germans of Jewish ancestry to the Reich Agency for Kinship Research, see Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 144–52; Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, “Determining ‘People of German Blood,’ ‘Jews,’ and ‘Mischlinge’: The Reich Kinship Office and the Competing Discourses and Powers of Nazism, 1941–1943,” *Central European History* 15, no. 1 (2006): 46 and 52–53.

<sup>30</sup> Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 2–3 and 120–21.

<sup>31</sup> Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 121.

<sup>32</sup> Among these works are George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Donna Gabaccia, *From the Other Side: Women, Gender, and Immigrant Life in the U.S., 1820–1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place, and Irish Women* (New York: Routledge, 2001). For a more recent study, see Sarah Thomsen Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany: Immigration, Space, and Belonging, 1961–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> Ray Beveridge, *Die schwarze Schmach, die weiße Schande* (Hamburg: F. W. Rademacher, 1922), 22, quoted in Julia Roos, “Racist Hysteria to Pragmatic Rapprochement? The German Debate about Rhenish ‘Occupation Children,’ 1920–30,” *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 2 (May 2013): 161; Pommerin, “Sterilisierung der Rheinlandbastarde,” 12–22.

<sup>34</sup> “1918 und 1940. So führt das verkommene Frankreich Krieg!” *Völkischer Beobachter* 53, no. 152 (May 31, 1940): 4, cited in Raffael Scheck, *Hitler’s African Victims: The German Army Massacres of Black French Soldiers in 1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 106.

African troops, it would have been easy for German readers to conclude that the aforementioned negative stereotypes were applicable to all soldiers from the African continent to some extent.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Harvey Young contends that when popular understandings of “blackness are mapped across or internalized within black people” the “abstract and imagined figure” of the *Black body* is created.<sup>36</sup> These popular understandings are so ubiquitous and powerful that they overwhelm and replace individual Black bodies with a “singular body within the imagination.”<sup>37</sup> In this way it was possible for contemporary German understandings and imaginations of Blackness to stretch to include individuals like Hauck, whose bodies might not read as Black in other contexts. This was the case for Willi Barth, the son of a German woman and an unknown French occupation soldier of Asian origin, who was born in 1923 in Euskirchen, Germany. During a 1935 medical examination ordered by the Gestapo, the doctor characterized Barth as a “Bastard [whose] father was a Black occupation soldier.”<sup>38</sup> For Hauck and Barth, these understandings and imaginations of Blackness created a powerful narrative of otherness against which they struggled during this period.

A study of performative claims to citizenship by a Black German man during the Third Reich and its immediate aftermath owes a great debt to the pathbreaking works of scholars focused on illuminating Black German experiences.<sup>39</sup> In particular, Tina Campt’s inquiries into Black German experiences during the Third Reich brought the complexities of Hans Hauck’s life and memories to light. More importantly, Campt’s studies of vernacular photography provide evidence of both Black German “aspirations to privileged status” and acceptance within local German communities through a careful study of the bodies in those images.<sup>40</sup> In particular, I pick up on Campt’s exploration of the “raced body” and the meanings attached to its presence in various spaces to inform this analysis of Hauck’s claims to citizenship and belonging during his military service in World War II through his release from a Soviet prisoner camp in 1949.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, this article complements Julia Roos’s microhistory of “Erika Diekmann” by illustrating the power of relationships and local communities to shape Black Germans’ sense of national belonging.<sup>42</sup>

This project draws on three oral history interviews Hans Hauck gave during the last twenty years of his life to construct two case studies that illuminate his claims to citizenship and belonging between 1942 and 1949. In each of the interviews, Hauck shares stories that provide glimpses into his memories of life as a young Black man and a Wehrmacht soldier that allow us to explore how he confronted the fact of his denaturalization even as he served

<sup>35</sup> Scheck, *Hitler’s African Victims*, 9 and 100–05. In general, Germans viewed North Africans as having a higher status than sub-Saharan Africans because of their lighter skin. Some high-ranking officials, including Joseph Goebbels, shared this view because of North African support for Franco in the Spanish Civil War and viewed this population as potential, although subordinate, allies. Even so, this view of the political usefulness of North Africans did not result in clear and consistent propaganda messages that distinguished between these two populations.

<sup>36</sup> Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 7–8.

<sup>37</sup> Young, *Embodying Black Experience*.

<sup>38</sup> Barth was sterilized in June 1937. See “Die Rheinlandbastarde,” *Euskirchen.de* ([https://www.euskirchen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/service/stadtarchiv/Gegen\\_das\\_vergessen/Rheinlandbastarde.pdf](https://www.euskirchen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/service/stadtarchiv/Gegen_das_vergessen/Rheinlandbastarde.pdf)).

<sup>39</sup> These works include May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, ed., *Farbe bekennen. Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1986), translated as *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out*, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay, ed., *The African-German Experience: Critical Essays* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996). For a more recent study of Afro-German history, see Robbie Aitken and Eve Rosenhaft, *Black Germany: The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Campt, *Other Germans*; Campt, “Family Matters,” 83–114; Tina Campt, “The Motion of Stillness: Diaspora, Stasis, and Black Vernacular Photography,” in *Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture*, ed. Sara Lennox (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 157.

<sup>41</sup> Campt, *Other Germans*, 94, 115, 121–22; Campt, “Family Matters,” 99; Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>42</sup> Julia Roos, “An Afro-German Microhistory: Gender, Religion, and the Challenges of Diasporic Dwelling,” *Central European History* 49 (2016): 255–56.

in the Nazi regime's military. In doing so, the case studies highlight his efforts to alter his experience of this status through his relationships with his comrades.

The oral histories about this period of Hauck's life are complex sources that must be considered carefully. First, the recollections he shares are as much about his past efforts to construct himself as both Black and German as they are about informing his younger interview partners and posterity that he had been Black and German long before "the visible presence of a Black German community."<sup>43</sup> Hauck's awareness of these audiences affected the stories and explanations he shared with his interview partners. In some cases, the differences between the interviews suggest the existence of difficult emotional conflicts that this project cannot address in sufficient detail. Decades after the suicide attempt that preceded his Wehrmacht service, Hauck struggled to explain what drove him to this desperate act. In his 1998 interview, Hauck alluded to several different motivations for his suicide attempt, which he then later denied in the same interview.<sup>44</sup> In other cases, the differences in the interviews could be attributed to his apparent frustration with his 1998 interview partner, which were not evident in the excerpts of his interview with Tina Campt.<sup>45</sup>

Second, Hauck's memories of events that occurred at least fifty years prior to these interviews may include some inaccurate details. As Christopher Browning has noted, scholars using these types of sources must be cognizant that interview subjects may forget, unconsciously distort details, or intentionally provide misleading responses in these circumstances.<sup>46</sup> Although there are elements of Hauck's narrative that his interview partners and others have verified with visual and documentary evidence, that is not the case for some of the details of Hauck's interactions with others that are central to this inquiry. In these instances, I have elected to respect the authenticity of Hauck's narrative over its factual accuracy since the meaning of his identity narrative to himself and his intended audiences is paramount.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to reflecting an effort to demonstrate his worthiness for recognition as a legitimate claimant of Germanness, Hauck's actions also illustrate how the inconsistent implementation of regime policies regarding people of mixed race created opportunities for some to challenge their exclusion. The *Wehrgesetz* (army law) of May 1935 limited military service to "Aryan" men.<sup>48</sup> In January 1940, the Armed Forces High Command began issuing a series of personnel directives ordering the discharge of so-called Jewish *Mischlinge*.<sup>49</sup> Even so, there are images of Mandenga Ngando posing in a Wehrmacht uniform with two other soldiers in 1940 and records reflecting that Willi Barth joined the Wehrmacht in June 1943 and served until he was killed in action in northern Italy in September 1944.<sup>50</sup> Moreover,

<sup>43</sup> Priscilla Layne, *White Rebels in Black: German Appropriation of Black Popular Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 153.

<sup>44</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 115–16. Hauck was wounded in the shoulder and lungs. A Gestapo official helped Hauck conceal the event by reporting it as an accidental discharge of a weapon. Hauck recounts this event in both interviews, but he offers different explanations. In the 1998 interview, Hauck suggested he had been motivated by his exclusion from military service and the limitations placed on him by the Nazi regime's discriminatory policies; he later denied this.

<sup>45</sup> In his 1998 interview, Hauck seemed to grow exasperated when his interview partner interrupted him or asked questions that Hauck did not want to answer. There are moments in the excerpts of his interview with Tina Campt where Hauck attempts to relate to her as a Black American by suggesting that "one doesn't have to tell a Black American in what way this difference ... was expressed." See Campt, *Other Germans*, 200 and 230.

<sup>46</sup> Christopher Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Post-war Testimony* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 42.

<sup>47</sup> Browning, *Collected Memories*, 37–38.

<sup>48</sup> Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat. Zeit der Indoktrination* (Hamburg: R. v. Decker's Verlag, 1969), 75.

<sup>49</sup> Welch, "Mischling Deserters from the Wehrmacht," 279 and 284–86; Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*, 230.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Martin and Christine Alonzo, "Mandenda Ngando (Mitte) als Soldat der Wehrmacht, um 1940," in the section titled "Ein Familienalbum," in *Zwischen Charleston und Stehschritt. Schwarze im Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag GmbH, 2004), 55; "Die Rheinlandbasterde,"



these men's service occurred after some senior Wehrmacht officers had acknowledged the viability of military service-based citizenship claims despite the lack of civil and political rights in the Third Reich. In fact, General Werner von Blomberg, the Minister of Defense and architect of the military's "non-Aryan" purge, argued that "anyone who is permitted to serve the state in the Wehrmacht ... must have a right to citizenship."<sup>51</sup> I offer my analysis of this microhistory as an example of how a Black German Wehrmacht soldier, like Hauck, could use his body and its placement in various spaces to aspire to citizenship and belonging.

### Hans Hauck: Making a Black German Wehrmacht Soldier

Ambivalence was a central characteristic of Hauck's childhood as he sought recognition that he was German. Hauck's schoolmates and the other boys in the neighborhood often called Hauck derogatory names because he was "the son of an enemy" and had a darker complexion than his peers.<sup>52</sup> As a child, Hauck felt frightened by the insults because he did not understand what the terms meant, and no one explained them to him. Later in life, Hauck understood that his peers had repeated the racial and nationalist arguments they heard in their homes. Nevertheless, Hauck expressed that these events "haunted [him] a great deal and [affected him his] whole life."<sup>53</sup>

Even though they teased Hauck, the boys in the neighborhood and at school included Hauck in their games. Hauck recalled that when the boys pretended to be soldiers, "No one wanted to be French, because we Germans always had to win.... And I always had to be the French."<sup>54</sup> As a child, Hauck understood himself to be German despite his father's heritage, and he was unwilling to be relegated to what he and his peers viewed as the undesirable role of the foreign enemy. Inspired by his sense that he was German and his desire to be on the winning side in this role-playing game, Hauck "fought desperately ... to be German."<sup>55</sup>

These small victories on the playground had their limits, as the other children blamed Hauck frequently for any damage that occurred while they played. Hauck "was often the scapegoat. If a window got broken somewhere, who else could it have been? Hans, Hans did it.... My schoolmates figured out fast—I'm not judging them now in retrospect—they figured out fast, they could say 'Hans did it.' I didn't have a father, and they had to be afraid of their fathers at home."<sup>56</sup> Whether knowingly or unknowingly, Hauck's peers played into stereotypes about the Rhineland children when they blamed Hauck for broken windows and other items damaged during their play. If Hauck broke the window, many adults in the community might have interpreted it as evidence of the moral degeneration and savage nature they believed Hauck had inherited from his father. Furthermore, the other children assumed that Hauck's punishment would not be as severe as their own because Hauck's grandmother or aunt would administer his punishment rather than an adult male. Although Hauck may not have been able to stop other children from blaming him for property damage in the neighborhood, he did not allow anyone to hit him as he grew older.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the circumstances surrounding his birth and mixed heritage, Hauck joined the Hitler Youth in 1933 when a neighborhood boy went with him to sign up. During that

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*Euskirchen.de* ([https://www.euskirchen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/service/stadtarchiv/Gegen\\_das\\_vergessen/Rheinlandbastarde.pdf](https://www.euskirchen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/service/stadtarchiv/Gegen_das_vergessen/Rheinlandbastarde.pdf)). I cannot estimate the numbers of Black German men who served in the Wehrmacht, but I expect the population size to be very small.

<sup>51</sup> Jeremy Noakes, "The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish 'Mischlinge' 1933–1945," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 34, no. 1 (1989): 322–23.

<sup>52</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 96.

<sup>53</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>54</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>55</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>56</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>57</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 96. When describing this period in his life, Hauck commented that "by the time I was twelve, I didn't let anyone hit me; I defended myself."

encounter, no one told Hauck that he could not join the Hitler Youth. In fact, Hauck felt more welcomed by the Hitler Youth than the Catholic Youth, where the circumstances of his conception and the fact that his father was Muslim seemed to create insurmountable barriers to his acceptance. Hauck felt pride when he received his brown shirt as a Christmas present. He was an active and enthusiastic participant in Hitler Youth activities, including marches, outdoor games, and amateur theater productions. Prior to the Saar Referendum in 1935, Hauck was among the Hitler Youth members who distributed leaflets in support of the region's return to German rule.<sup>58</sup> For Hauck, his participation in the Hitler Youth altered his relationships with his peer group. The neighborhood boys no longer insulted him or attacked his character because they wore the same uniform and "were standing next to [him] in the ranks of the Hitler Youth."<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Hauck recalled that the group leader protected him because Hauck was an enthusiastic participant in the group's activities. In Hauck's mind, there was no question that he was German. After all, "We were all German, what else could we have been. It was all about Germanness ... —naturally, I was no exception. I didn't think about it for a moment."<sup>60</sup> Although he had demonstrated his commitment to the Hitler Youth and gained acceptance by showing he was a good comrade, Hauck's sterilization at the direction of regime officials must have been devastating.<sup>61</sup> For seventeen-year-old Hauck, there may have been no clearer message that the state still did not view him as German. Despite this significant bodily intrusion, Hauck remained steadfast in his conviction that he was German and could find recognition of this through his relationships with others.<sup>62</sup>

In 1939, Hauck received his draft notice from the Wehrmacht. Although physically healthy, the draft board deemed him "unfit" for military service due to his mixed heritage.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Hauck began receiving notices to report for premilitary training in 1941. This time, however, Hauck's previous designation as "unfit" was revoked and he was conscripted into the Wehrmacht.<sup>64</sup> Hauck was pleased with this administrative change because it offered him the opportunity "to finally ... be like all the others."<sup>65</sup> Hauck believed that the Wehrmacht treated him like his peers once he was in uniform. Hauck was promoted to private first class after five months of service. Moreover, Hauck's unit leadership allowed him to participate in two courses on foreign weapons. He believed that the leadership offered these training opportunities because he was "one of the few men in [his] company who could speak proper German."<sup>66</sup> According to Hauck, his unit's investment in his military training paid dividends as he gained expertise in weapons and marksmanship, which created the opportunity for Hauck to serve as machine gunner number one.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. In the interview, Hauck noted that it was only later in life that he realized that he "was the perfect 'Aryan' choice to pass out leaflets, which were actually directed against [him]. This contradiction, this ambivalence, yes it was there then, but it's been part of my whole life."

<sup>59</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 106.

<sup>60</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>61</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; *Black Survivors of the Holocaust*.

<sup>62</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. When describing the procedure and its aftermath, Hauck noted, "If you look at the big picture, it doesn't play a big role for assessing my beliefs and all that."

<sup>63</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 118. In his 1998 interview, Hauck explains that his physical exam indicated that he was "fit for all branches of service." However, the officer distributing the service record books refused to issue Hauck his book and said, "You know why. You're not fit for service." In his interview with Campt, Hauck noted that he was "allowed to work, but back then [he] wasn't allowed to become a soldier."

<sup>64</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Campt, *Other Germans*, 115–18. In his 1998 interview, Hauck noted that he did not receive a second physical exam, and yet there was "a red mark in [his] timeline" to indicate that his unfit status had been revoked. During his interview with Tina Campt, Hauck credited this change to a friend's father who had led the local Hitler Youth group, of which Hans Hauck had been a member. Hauck did not specify what actions the man took on his behalf, but it may have involved waiving the second exam.

<sup>65</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>66</sup> Campt, *Other Germans*, 121–22; Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>67</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

During the formative months of his military career, Hauck learned an invaluable lesson about the value of the Wehrmacht uniform. The uniform served as a visual symbol of his acceptance by, or at least the toleration of his presence within, the institution the Third Reich charged with shaping the “new German man” and fighting the racial enemies of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.<sup>68</sup> Hauck may have viewed it as a transformative garb because his “non-Aryan” heritage and physical appearance seemed insignificant when he wore that uniform and performed his assigned duties. Hauck noted that it was the “first time that [he] was treated the same as others.”<sup>69</sup> Although the unit’s master sergeant knew the details of his heritage because he had access to Hauck’s personnel records, that information did not deter the master sergeant from sending Hauck for additional training.<sup>70</sup> Hauck may have gleaned from this experience that his unit leadership was more concerned with his ability to perform battle drills and speak the formal language of command than his racialized body.

In his personal and informal interactions within the unit, the Wehrmacht uniform signified that Hauck was part of this community. When asked if he had been the target of “strange comments” from his comrades, Hauck recalled an incident when he was on guard as the unit was preparing to march to its next location. Upon noticing that Hauck was still on guard and the unit had almost left him behind, Hauck’s sergeant said, “We almost forgot our Jüdche.”<sup>71</sup> As he recounted this story, Hauck emphasized that this statement had been made in a joking manner. Hauck tried to emphasize that he had a friendly relationship with this sergeant by noting that the sergeant normally called him Hans and that they used the informal “du” to address each other. While Hauck acknowledged that the sergeant’s use of “Jüdche” was a reference to his complexion and a suggestion that he “looked like ... the people in *Der Stürmer*,” he felt strongly that the sergeant did not hold him in contempt.<sup>72</sup> Rather than focusing on the element of the statement that conflated him with the caricatures in *Der Stürmer*, Hauck embraced his sergeant’s use of the possessive adjective “our.” Hauck’s account suggests he believed that what mattered most to his comrades was that he wore the Wehrmacht uniform, performed his duties well, and maintained friendly relationships within the unit. Maintaining these relationships was not without cost as it required Hauck to be amiable even when he was the target of uncomfortable jokes. The cost must have seemed bearable because Hauck’s recollections of this period focus on his sense that he was accepted by his unit without regard to his complexion.

In a way, the Wehrmacht uniform seemed to intervene in powerful ways in Hauck’s formal and informal interactions within his unit. It was a symbol valued by the state and national community that allowed him to share a common formative experience with his peer group. Moreover, Hauck’s army service connected him to the community of front-line soldiers, the men whom Nazi propaganda films and radio broadcasts celebrated as heroes and exemplars of the strength and determination the regime wanted all German men and women to emulate.<sup>73</sup> This early experience seemed to instill in Hauck an understanding of the powerful combination of his body and the Wehrmacht uniform to create an identity narrative asserting that he was unquestionably German.

<sup>68</sup> Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks*, 253–58.

<sup>69</sup> Campt, *Other Germans*, 119.

<sup>70</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. According to Hauck, his master sergeant was the most knowledgeable about his background. Later, the unit’s leadership changed rapidly due to deaths, injuries, or administrative moves. This rapid leadership turnover meant that fewer leaders had time to become familiar with soldiers in the unit.

<sup>71</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. *Jüdche* is dialect for “little Jew.”

<sup>72</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. After recounting this story, Hauck said, “I should scratch out that he called me ‘Jüdche’ because of how I look, that wasn’t it.... To the two others [soldiers from Upper Silesia], he said, “‘Oh, you Polacks’ because they sometimes didn’t understand; but without meaning it contemptuously, or, or saying any other kind of things. That was not the case, I can rule that out with certainty.”

<sup>73</sup> Rolf Giesen, *Nazi Propaganda Films: A History and Filmography* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, 2003), 51–55; the radio broadcast *Voice of the Front* (February 4, 1940), quoted in *German Radio Propaganda: Report on Home Broadcasts During the War*, ed. Ernst Kris and Hans Speier (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 204.

## The Red Tarboosh: A Challenge to Hauck's Identity Narrative

Hauck's encounter with the Algerian prisoners of war in 1942 provided an unexpected opportunity for him to reassert his identity narrative. This moment was particularly important because it occurred before a unique audience unlikely to gather in a setting other than in German-occupied France: French Algerian prisoners and Wehrmacht soldiers. As Hauck removed his uniform coat and donned a prisoner's red tarboosh, Hauck created the opportunity for both the Algerian prisoners and German soldiers to make a visual assessment of Hauck and determine where they thought he belonged. What began as a lighthearted moment had become something of consequence. Whether intended or not, this was a test of Hauck's public identity narrative.

The comment made by Hauck's friend made clear that the only thing distinguishing Hauck from the Algerian prisoners was the Wehrmacht uniform because "nobody could tell [Hauck] apart from [the prisoners]."<sup>74</sup> The fact that this comment was made in the Platt dialect only heightened the tension of the moment. In choosing this informal regional style of speech, the speaker acknowledged that Hauck had "insider status" as a fellow Saarlander even as his words communicated that Hauck's Black body was out of place among the "Aryan" soldiers in the unit. The speaker attempted to resolve this dissonance by suggesting that Hauck "could run off" and "be done with the war."<sup>75</sup> In addition to recommending that Hauck take this opportunity to escape the dangers of combat, this statement inferred that Hauck had no legitimate role as a Black man in this militarized space. Hauck's Germanness was in question. In that moment, it was no longer enough that Hauck had shared the hardships of combat life with the other Wehrmacht soldiers or that two of his comrades were close friends who shared the same first name.<sup>76</sup> When Hauck was seen standing near the Algerian prisoners wearing a red tarboosh, a symbol of racialized difference and a wartime enemy, Hauck's comrades read his body differently. For Hauck, this statement was, in part, a reminder of the fragility of his position within his unit.

Inherent in the comment was a misunderstanding of identification and Hauck's sense of himself based on the misguided assumption that Hauck would choose to identify with the Algerian prisoners and no longer claim to be German after seeing a group of men who looked like him. This was not the case. Although Hauck recalled being curious about whether one of these men could have been his relative, this encounter did not change how Hauck saw himself or his belief that his upbringing was what made him German.<sup>77</sup> In many ways, this incident was a reminder that Hauck might encounter fewer questions about his status as a German while he wore his Wehrmacht uniform.

In response, Hauck removed the red tarboosh quickly. It was a simple act that disrupted the image that conflicted with Hauck's identity narrative asserting his Germanness. When Hauck returned the hat to its owner, he sought to restore the status quo by creating distance between himself, the object that marked him as Black, and the Black men who wore it. Hauck's action was an unequivocal answer to the question about his identity and his place in the war; Nazi propagandists may have viewed these French colonial troops as illegitimate combatants, but Hauck believed that this assessment did not apply to him. Hauck felt he was German, so he chose to remain with his comrades and connected to this community.

Over the next three years, Hauck's actions demonstrated that he was worthy of acceptance by that group. Hauck saw combat frequently, eventually joining a unit assigned on the eastern front. During this period, Hauck proved his mettle in combat and suffered five combat-related wounds.<sup>78</sup> By remaining with his unit in spaces where violence and death

<sup>74</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>75</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>76</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>77</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>78</sup> Hauck 1998 interview; Camp, *Other Germans*, 121.

were daily realities, Hauck contested the assertion that he did not belong because he was Black. Hauck asserted to his comrades that he had a legitimate role in the unit and a legitimate claim to Germanness in spite of his Blackness.

After Soviet forces captured Hauck and his unit near Warsaw in January 1945, the Wehrmacht uniform became a less effective symbol in Hauck's pursuit of recognition as a legitimate claimant of Germanness due to its diminished status. Whereas the uniform had symbolized "Aryan" strength, superiority, and masculinity previously, its association with these qualities became more tenuous as greater numbers of Wehrmacht soldiers found themselves wearing this uniform in spaces controlled by their "racially inferior" enemies. Under these circumstances, the Wehrmacht uniform began to symbolize failure and weakness. Consequently, Hauck's circumstances called for a new strategy as his identity narrative adapted to a new environment.

### **In the POW Camp: An Identity Narrative Transformed**

Hauck's performances of intimate citizenship did not end with his capture in January 1945. Rather, they continued in a new context: the POW camp. It was in this space that Hauck asserted his Germanness and revised his identity narrative in response to new relations of power and status.

The Soviet POW camps were spaces ideally suited for the type of claims-making that Hauck employed. Soviet POW camps and the journeys to these locations were settings replete with violence that unsettled many soldiers' self-image even as it created connections among the men who shared those experiences. Scholars estimate that approximately one-third of the 2 to 3 million German prisoners held in Soviet camps died. As German prisoners attempted to make sense of their wartime experience in this context, some of these men took refuge in remaining true to themselves under such harsh conditions.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, POW camps were "bureaucratic spaces" that minimized the differences among prisoners.<sup>80</sup> The formal and regimented processes needed to control large groups of prisoners had a homogenizing effect on the controlled population. Finally, the fact that the "racially inferior" enemies of the Third Reich controlled the camps established them as spaces with altered normative dynamics and reorganized power structures. These characteristics made the Soviet POW camps spaces of transformation.

Hauck's description of his time in captivity is dominated by shared experiences of violence with his comrades. Whether enduring long marches while hiding injuries for fear that their captors would shoot them, performing duties in the camp, or working in a labor battalion for six weeks, Hauck describes himself as being part of a larger group who shared these hardships uniformly.<sup>81</sup> Hauck seems to have felt as though his Soviet captors treated him like his comrades "because no one made a big deal about [his] heritage" in the camps.<sup>82</sup> In the process, his Soviet captors established the prison camp as a space that functioned in a manner that paralleled the symbolic work Hauck's Wehrmacht uniform performed prior to his capture. The prison camp diminished the importance of the physical features that identified Hauck as a Black man and enabled him to claim Germanness.

During his detention, Hauck asserted his German identity by claiming space within the prison camp and acting in ways that aligned with his self-perception as a German man. One of these opportunities came when Hauck observed the tactics some of his comrades used in order to secure an early release from a camp. On several occasions, Hauck noticed

<sup>79</sup> Svenja Goltermann, *The War in Their Minds: German Soldiers and Their Violent Pasts in West Germany*, trans. Philip Schmitz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 60 and 80.

<sup>80</sup> Henri Lefebvre, "Space: Social Product and Use Value (1979)," in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, ed. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009): 188–89.

<sup>81</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>82</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

that many of his comrades from the Rhineland claimed to be French. Hauck never claimed to be French even though his father was a French Algerian man. Despite having a more direct claim to French identity through his father, Hauck was adamant that he was “German and was so, contrary to what Hitler thought ... I’m German, even [in Russia].”<sup>83</sup> This was a declaration that came at a cost. For Hauck, choosing to assert his German identity in this way meant prioritizing his Germanness over his physical freedom. It was a choice that displayed his commitment to his self-perception as a German man and resulted in his four-year internment in a space so many of his comrades sought to escape.

Hauck’s actions in the prison camp illuminate the ways in which this claim to Germanness was deeply rooted in Hauck’s past and present circumstances. As a child, Hauck “fought desperately” to play a German soldier when his peers imagined themselves at war.<sup>84</sup> For Hauck, not even his state-directed sterilization shook his belief that he was German. When explaining whether his sterilization altered this aspect of his identity, Hauck explained that in “the big picture, it [did not] play a big role for assessing my beliefs and all that.”<sup>85</sup> Having spent his youth confident that he was German influenced his response to the dilemma he faced in the POW camp. As an adult in that space, Hauck acted in a way that aligned with his sense that being German and Black were not mutually exclusive. He would not say that he was French because to do so would be a betrayal to himself.

Moreover, Hauck’s actions required a daily commitment to enduring the hardships of captivity without complaint. These acts were rooted in a claim to a “hard” manliness that was unaffected by, or perhaps could overcome the “deficits” created by, Hauck’s mixed ancestry.<sup>86</sup> In these moments, Hauck demonstrated that he could be strong and yet restrained. He proved, if only to himself, that he could master his emotions and discipline himself. In doing so, Hauck demonstrated what Nazi propagandists had lauded as “man’s finest virtues” even as his comrades positioned themselves to garner an early release from the prison camp.<sup>87</sup>

Hauck did not judge his comrades for acting in a manner that violated the rules of this form of “hard” manliness. Their actions were “understandable from a human point of view.”<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, Hauck understood that his comrades’ positionality was different from his own.<sup>89</sup> Few, if any, had their German identity called into question based on their physical appearance, and it was unlikely that the Nazi state had sterilized any of them forcibly. From his comrades’ perspectives, there was far less at stake when they sought an early release from the camp by performing Frenchness for their Russian captors.

That Hauck understood his claim to German identity as connected to his ability to demonstrate habits considered to align with an authorized masculinity is not unusual.<sup>90</sup> In his study of Jewish World War I *Frontkämpfer* during the Third Reich, Geheran contends that many of these men cleaved to their masculine and German identities even in the midst of the terrors of concentration camps. Those veterans found dignity and redemption in their subtle acts of protest in these spaces.<sup>91</sup> This comparison is not intended to suggest that

<sup>83</sup> Campt, *Other Germans*, 124. In his interview, Hauck noted that none of these Saarlanders were French or spoke French.

<sup>84</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>85</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>86</sup> On hard manliness, see Thomas Kühne, “Protean Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity: Soldiers in the Third Reich,” *Central European History* 51, no. 3 (2018): 398–401.

<sup>87</sup> From the radio broadcast *Front Reports* (December 15, 1940), quoted in *German Radio Propaganda*, 335–36. The virtues included resolution, circumspection, courage, energy, daring, and patience.

<sup>88</sup> Campt, *Other Germans*, 124.

<sup>89</sup> For a more detailed discussion of positionality and identity construction as it relates to this event in Hauck’s testimony, see Campt, *Other Germans*, 126–35.

<sup>90</sup> On authorized and marginalized masculinities, see R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 80–81.

<sup>91</sup> Geheran, “Remasculinizing the Shirker.” 458–64.

the circumstances leading to Hauck's confinement or the hardships he experienced in captivity are comparable to those of the *Frontkämpfer* in Geheran's study. Rather, this comparison points to the parallels between men whose claims to German and masculine identities were particularly meaningful because they occurred in carceral spaces.

Given Hauck's extensive period of service on the eastern front, it is important to acknowledge that he was not an innocent bystander in atrocities that occurred in the region. In one of his interviews, Hauck acknowledged that he participated in burning the homes of civilians during his service in the East. As he referenced his involvement, Hauck emphasized that he and his comrades "didn't shoot ... we [were] good Germans."<sup>92</sup> Hauck's statement suggests that he must have experienced some degree of mental turmoil and disillusionment as he reflected on his wartime experience.<sup>93</sup> When we consider his involvement in these, and potentially other, atrocities, Hauck's refusal to pursue an earlier release by claiming French identity takes on new significance. Even as he declared his Germanness in the prison camps, Hauck may have sought to assuage his guilt. In 1998, Hauck commented that "whatever sins I committed, I atoned for them in Russia."<sup>94</sup> Although Hauck's guilt and apparent need for penance complicate our understanding of his actions in the prison camps, they also point to Hauck's effort to revise his identity narrative in a manner that acknowledged the reorganized power structure of the camp and demonstrated his rejection of Nazism. Hauck became a communist.

Shortly after his arrival, Hauck joined an antifascist group and immersed himself in the group's activities and in Russian books.<sup>95</sup> Hauck distinguished himself by working with the leader of the antifascist group to assist a Russian political officer in eliminating errors in his speeches to the German prisoners. Through these interactions, Hauck established a relationship with the political officer, who helped Hauck attend an antifa school in Minsk in 1948.<sup>96</sup>

Although Hauck maintained that he participated "out of conviction from the beginning," we must acknowledge how the power relations in this space influenced Hauck's actions and his claim that he was a "good German."<sup>97</sup> In this context, the political officer sought to persuade the German prisoners to reject Nazism and embrace communism. Hauck must have believed that the political officer had some degree of influence in this setting and decided to use his participation in the antifa group and his willingness to assist the political officer to illustrate that he was reformed. Hauck's extensive reading of Russian books, which he credits for shaping his political consciousness during this period, likely provided Hauck with the concepts and language to support his claim.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, Hauck's Blackness may have increased the resonance of his claim if the political officer believed that Hauck had never truly embraced an ideology that did not value him as a Black man. In the end, Hauck appears to have succeeded in convincing the political officer that he was a "good German" since the officer helped Hauck attend the antifa school. When Hauck departed the camp in April 1949, he was a Black German man who believed he had demonstrated strength in the face of adversity and repented for his participation in atrocities on the eastern front.

## Analysis

The preceding case studies of the red tarboosh and the POW camp demonstrate how Hauck used his body and its placement in specific spaces to communicate an identity narrative that

<sup>92</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>93</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Goltermann, *The War in Their Minds*, 60–80.

<sup>94</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>95</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. Hauck explained that he "read everything [he] could get, because [he] was always a bookworm, [his] whole life."

<sup>96</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>97</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>98</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. When asked if his political consciousness was shaped by his studies at the Antifa school, Hauck declared, "Mm-hm [no], it was through reading."

asserted his Germanness and legitimacy as a member of his unit. Popular German understandings of Blackness and Nazi anti-French propaganda from 1940 focused on traits that were supposedly inherent in Black bodies. As Harvey Young notes, abstract ideas about the Black body could be projected upon Black people, thus replacing the individual with “a singular body within the imagination.”<sup>99</sup> In Hauck’s case, contemporary German ideas about the Black body were projected onto Hauck, robbing him of his individuality and transforming him into a faceless Black body in the minds of “Aryan” Germans. In order to resist this abstraction and free himself from the fiction created about him, Hauck wore the Wehrmacht uniform hoping it would diminish the importance of his Blackness as his Hitler Youth uniform seemed to do during his youth. When the red tarboosh presented a visible challenge to his claim to Germanness and legitimacy among his comrades, Hauck removed it. Hauck’s ability to face and endure the violence and hardships of combat and captivity demonstrated his tenacity and commitment. These were not the characteristics attributed to the Black body. Hauck’s identity narrative relied, in part, on his ability to differentiate his body from the imagined Black body others tried to impose upon him.

Hauck’s identity narrative also benefited from the meaning associated with the spaces he inhabited during this period. The combat zones where Hauck was stationed were spaces of persistent violence and death. Hauck’s ability to perform his duties successfully in these spaces challenged the notion that he was unworthy of recognition as a legitimate member of the unit. It also presented a counterpoint to Nazi and nationalist propaganda that asserted that Hauck’s mixed heritage could only result in moral or biological failings. Nevertheless, the incident with the red tarboosh demonstrates that normative ideals and structures placed constraints on this type of claims-making. His comrade’s comment reflected deeply ingrained concepts about Germanness and race that Hauck’s actions and presence in a combat zone could not overcome.

The POW camps also contributed to Hauck’s ability to refine his identity narrative at a pivotal moment when the Wehrmacht uniform lost value. The violence, shared suffering, and bureaucratic nature of the camps allowed Hauck to repair his self-image. In this space, Hauck grounded his identity narrative in normative ideals about “hard” masculinity as he atoned for his role in atrocities during the war and distanced himself from the Nazi regime by becoming a communist. That Hauck’s captors understood that Nazism did not value Hauck as a Black man likely aided his effort to distance himself from that ideology and present himself as a rehabilitated man in their eyes.

To understand whether Hauck’s pursuit of recognition as a legitimate claimant of Germanness had the desired effect, we must consider the relationships he sought to preserve and nurture through his identity narrative. In both case studies, Hauck’s relationships with his comrades were significant considerations for him. Throughout his interviews, Hauck expressed how important it was for him to “be like all the others” and gain acceptance from his comrades.<sup>100</sup> In Hauck’s assessment, his efforts succeeded. His account of his return trip through the POW camps after attending an antifa school in Minsk provides some insight into the matter. On his journey, Hauck traveled through a camp where he had been detained previously. Rather than continuing as directed, Hauck delayed his departure from this facility because “old Hans was so well known there; one day, which would have been normal, turned into eight.”<sup>101</sup> Hauck was in no hurry to depart this camp because he felt accepted by the men he encountered there. In fact, he departed this camp only after someone reported his extended presence to an officer.<sup>102</sup> Hauck’s decision to remain with these men rather than continuing to travel with the group from the antifa school is significant.

<sup>99</sup> Young, *Embodying Black Experience*, 4 and 7–8.

<sup>100</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>101</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

<sup>102</sup> Hauck 1998 interview. It is unclear whether the men in this camp were from Hauck’s unit or if these relationships emerged from their shared hardships at this camp.



His sense that he was accepted as a comrade suggested that Hauck belonged to this community, and thus he must have felt his comrades had recognized him as a legitimate claimant of Germanness.

When we consider Hauck's construction of his identity narrative during the oral history interviews upon which this project is based, we must reckon with the possibility that Hauck may have chosen to emphasize the more positive aspects of his military service in his accounts of this period in his life. For instance, Hauck told the story of his sergeant referring to him as "our Jüdche" when his interview partner inquired whether Hauck had been the target of any "strange comments," but Hauck tried to downplay the significance of the incident in the context of his relationship with the sergeant and others in his unit.<sup>103</sup> Although we do not know anything else about the nature of Hauck's relationship with this particular sergeant, it is clear that this incident did not fit neatly into Hauck's narrative about his acceptance into this unit as a comrade. Hauck may have wanted to minimize the significance of this incident in his oral history because it reflected the ambivalence he felt persisted in his life. Whether he distributed pamphlets that denigrated him as a German of mixed heritage while in the Hitler Youth or his sergeant compared him to the caricatures in *Der Stürmer*, Hauck had long inhabited a world where others felt contradictory feelings toward him. That his inclusion may not have been complete may be an indication that subordinate communities within the *Volksgemeinschaft* could create social spaces that were not permeated completely by the regime's ideology when they made exceptions that allowed for the inclusion of familiar and "exceptional" "non-Aryans." Yet, these ambivalent moments in Hauck's narratives demonstrate that access to these spaces as the "exceptional Other" brought with it varying degrees of emotional pain that are beyond the scope of this article.

## Conclusion

Hans Hauck's experiences in the Wehrmacht are compelling and complex events that invite us to consider an individual's aspirations to recognition and belonging even as we question whether the term *citizenship* has meaning in the context of the Third Reich. First, these experiences are compelling because they demonstrate the power of the body, symbols, and spaces as a means for a Black German man to seek recognition as a legitimate claimant of Germanness. For a time, the Wehrmacht uniform seemed to silence questions about Hauck's heritage, his status as a German, and his relationships with others in the unit. The uniform minimized the significance of his physical appearance by marking him as a member of the community whose presence was approved or at least officially tolerated. The resulting status was fragile as evidenced by Hauck's encounter with the Algerian prisoners and the red tarboosh in 1942. Hauck distanced himself from the foreign garb, an object that drew attention to his Blackness and the similarities between his body and those of the Algerian prisoners. He continued to seek recognition as a German man of equal social standing by continuing to fight alongside his peers in the unit. As the symbolic power of the Wehrmacht uniform was undermined by battlefield losses, capitulation, and the collapse of the Third Reich, Hauck altered his methods. Utilizing the uniformity and shared hardships of the prison camp, Hauck acted in ways that emphasized his ability to persevere in his constructed identity as he attempted to reconcile his involvement in wartime atrocities with his desire to be a "good German." Hauck's continued presence in the POW camps between 1945 and 1949 strengthened the story Hauck had been telling throughout his life. Whether playing soldier with other boys, distributing pamphlets as a member of the Hitler Youth, or training on foreign weapons as a Wehrmacht soldier, Hans Hauck was and had always been German.

Second, Hauck's experiences are complex because they ask us to consider whether Nazi forms of belonging can be understood as citizenship given the regime was a nondemocratic polity premised on racial inequality and annihilationist violence. In many ways, the answer

<sup>103</sup> Hauck 1998 interview.

to this question depends on how one defines *citizenship*. If citizenship is strictly a legal category delimiting rights and freedoms within a state, then one may conclude that citizenship did not exist in the Third Reich. After all, even Germans who qualified as Reich citizens lacked meaningful rights and freedoms. Although this approach to understanding citizenship is in some ways satisfying, it disregards the “perennial gap between the legal constructions of citizenship and its practices.”<sup>104</sup> Inconsistencies and contradictions existed throughout the Third Reich’s racial policies. In fact, a contemporary legal commentator complained that the logic and consistency expected of jurists and lawyers seemed to be absent from the work of the individuals who authored the Nazi racial laws.<sup>105</sup> As Diemut Majer notes in her comprehensive study of Nazi racial laws, these problems were compounded by the use of language such as “Aryan” and “German or related blood” that lacked precise definitions or “exhausted themselves in purely negative definitions (non-Jewish, noncolored).”<sup>106</sup> For Hans Hauck, the inconsistent implementation of Nazi regime policies created the opportunity for him to challenge his exclusion from the *Volksgemeinschaft* through combat service with the Wehrmacht. Hauck’s Wehrmacht service granted him access to the symbols and spaces essential for his claims to Germanness and his aspiration to belong.

When we move beyond the legal constructions of citizenship to consider the social practices and cultural ideals entwined with citizenship, it is possible to understand how people can “maintain a perception of themselves as citizens even as freedom and rights are being taken away.”<sup>107</sup> As S. Jonathan Wiesen argues in his study of consumer citizenship in the Third Reich, corporate advertising appealed to Germans’ ideas about private life, protected domesticity, and personal idiosyncrasy in ways that both promoted their products and permitted Germans to fantasize about a different social order even as the state eviscerated their rights.<sup>108</sup> The regime’s citizenship law excluded Hauck from Reich citizenship and blocked legal paths to this status for Black Germans like him. Yet, the concepts of duty, discipline, and shared service, inherent in the regime’s definition of *Volksgenosse* and its expectations of Germans, created a gap where Hauck could imagine and pursue recognition from his comrades as someone worthy of belonging and equal status, regardless of the regime’s policies.

Hauck’s experiences with the red tarboosh and in captivity demonstrate that individuals can contest their citizenship status without referencing the law or the state.<sup>109</sup> As a Black German man, Hauck’s physical features were not consistent with official or popular notions of Germanness. To improve his everyday life, Hauck needed to influence how other Germans viewed him. He had to provide them with a different story about who he was. During his time in the Hitler Youth, Hauck learned the value of wearing a uniform and being a good comrade. This experience shaped his initial identity narrative through which he proclaimed that he was like his peers. As a young soldier, Hauck wore the Wehrmacht uniform, performed his duties well, and maintained an affable manner even when he was the target of jokes. In doing so, he hoped to persuade his comrades to accept this narrative. After his capture in 1945, Hauck’s identity narrative evolved to address the moral injuries resulting from his participation in atrocities on the eastern front. His identity narrative not only asserted that he was German, but it also maintained that he was a “good” German. In the camps, Hauck endured shared hardships with his peers and performed “hard” masculinity to

<sup>104</sup> Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, “Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany,” in *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 19.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wipperman, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 45.

<sup>106</sup> Majer, “Non-Germans” under the Third Reich, 40.

<sup>107</sup> S. Jonathan Wiesen, “Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Public Relations and Consumer Citizenship in the Third Reich,” in *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 147.

<sup>108</sup> Wiesen, “Creating the Nazi Marketplace,” 162.

<sup>109</sup> Eley and Palmowski, *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany*, 19.

demonstrate his strength and to atone for his actions. Moreover, Hauck distanced himself from Nazism by embracing communism and participating in an antifa group. Hauck's identity narratives and actions did not change the Third Reich's citizenship laws because the legal and institutional structures of the regime would not allow him to do so. Nevertheless, Hauck's identity narratives and actions are significant because they reflect the influence of nonracial cultural ideals about the behaviors of German men during this period. When understood in this way, Hauck's actions between 1942 and 1949 become more than interesting anecdotes about a particular wartime experience. Rather, his claims demonstrate the varied ways some individuals sought to alter their experience of citizenship and belonging during and in the immediate aftermath of the Nazi regime.

Most importantly, Hauck's story reminds us of the importance of considering different perspectives as we interrogate the historical past. Without an awareness of Hauck's experience, it is possible to view the red tarboosh as a simple head covering and the POW camp as a holding space. Our knowledge of Hauck's testimony and life experience opens the possibility of expanding how we think about aspirations to citizenship and belonging in the Third Reich. As Kenneth Plummer suggests, "We need to hear new stories and anticipate how they might change our lives."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Kenneth Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 100.

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