

Dream Destination Indian Ocean. European Tourism Discourses in the Context of Decolonisation and the Beginning of Long-Distance Tourism

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Since the 1950s, holiday travel has become an integral part of the annual routine for more and more sections of the population in Western Europe. On an international level, 4 November 1966 is a significant date when the United Nations Annual General Assembly declared 1967 the 'International Year of Tourism' in the belief that tourism could contribute to peace in the world. In this respect, the topic of tourism occupies a central position in a research project on international exchange, transfers and interdependencies in the 1960s, even though by no means all Europeans could afford the holiday trip of their dreams at that time. Rather, many had to be satisfied with the idea of one and thus consumed not the travel destination itself, but its representations: in the form of travel reports, country portrayals, travel magazines, advertising, books or films. Travel magazines such as the Merian-Hefte, which had already been published since 1949, were therefore aimed until the 1960s at a target audience that could not yet raise the financial means for their own travels, but perceived the magazine as an opportunity to travel at least in their heads and to make travel plans 'for later'. The discourse on travel destinations that were difficult or impossible to reach at the time is thus one that targets the imagination of the recipient of such popular media - and it is precisely this that is the focus of the sub-project.