

Journal of Namibian Studies

History, Politics, Culture

30 / 2021

Otjivanda Presse.Bochum

ISSN 1863-5954 (print)
ISSN 2197-5523 (online)

Journal of Namibian Studies
History Politics Culture

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Colonial wars put on urban display. Hamburg's Baakenhafen and the German colonial wars

Jan Kawlath*

Abstract

During the German colonial war in Namibia from 1904–1907, the port of Hamburg was the central hub for transporting soldiers and military material. One central assumption here is that the transports were not purely formal logistical processes carried out quietly and covertly by the military. These transports were stage-managed to present images of Germany as a colonial power to the domestic audience. The focus is on a harbour basin in the north-east of the port of Hamburg, the Baakenhafen with its southern quay bank, the Petersenkai, where the main shipping companies involved were located, making this the central location for the transports during the colonial war. The aim is to show how, in the context of various colonial wars, a public culture of celebration was established in Baakenhafen.

Introduction

Baakenhafen is the easternmost harbour basin in HafenCity Hamburg and borders directly on the *Elbbrücken* (Elbe Bridges) district. It is currently the centrepiece of the last large-scale construction phase in the prestigious urban development project. The old buildings have been almost completely removed and new buildings are being constructed on both quaysides, some of which are already occupied. At the eastern end of the harbour basin, next to the new *Elbbrücken* underground and suburban railway station, the Amerigo Vespucci Square, the largest public square in HafenCity, was opened on 4 June 2021. On the recommendation of the Department of Culture, HafenCity GmbH and the Hamburg State Archives, the Hamburg Senate decided in 2013 to name the square in honour of Hamburg's "old and new overseas connections as a world port city" and the role of so-called "explorers" in creating global trade relations.¹ In this redesign and reinterpretation of the street and square names in Baakenhafen

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¹ HafenCity GmbH, "Informationen zur Namensbenennung des Amerigo-Vespucci-Platzes", 04 June 2021, https://www.hafencity.com/_Resources/Persistent/5/8/3/4/58343f08ee810226c7edcd2740c0312c2f61f8e9/210604_Namensbenennung_AVP-Platz.pdf

and throughout HafenCity, Tania Mancheno has very aptly analysed the underlying Eurocentric and affirmative historical narrative of European expansion.²

Besides the current practice of colonial-related name-giving, there are two fundamental aspects to the Baakenhafen's colonial history: Its use as a trading hub in the global economic system shaped by colonialism and as a stage for presenting colonial violence. Both levels are interconnected, as the merchant shipping companies operating in the global economic system also transported the colonial soldiers.

The rise of Baakenhafen and other parts of the Port of Hamburg went hand-in-hand with the colonial trade networks of Hamburg's economy. In the middle of the 19th century, a fundamental restructuring of the port economy in Hamburg had become necessary in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the world economy. Until the middle of the 20th century, this economic system was directly influenced by colonialism and Hamburg's economy was part of this system. Raw materials such as rubber, sugar, coffee, palm oil, cocoa etc. were imported from various colonial areas, either directly or via intermediate stations, to Hamburg, where a wide variety of industrial companies processed them. Quite a few Hamburg trading houses also had their own plantations or mining operations from which the raw materials came. At the same time, industrial bulk goods and spirits were exported from Hamburg to the colonial areas of the Global South. This economic system was based on the exploitation of the people in the Global South, who lived under colonial tyranny characterised by racism, enslavement and poverty, while the Hamburg companies amassed huge profits. For the port of Hamburg, the restructuring worked out well: The new harbour basins and the construction of the huge *Speicherstadt* made Hamburg one of the most modern and fastest ports in the world. Industry and commercial enterprises in the port boomed and brought great wealth to Hamburg.³

Hamburg shipping companies operating shipping lines around the African continent were concentrated on the southern shore of Baakenhafen – the Petersenkai. After the *Hamburg-Amerika Linie* (HAL) – today part of Hapag-Lloyd AG – had leased the quayside for the first 10 years, the *Woermann-Linie* (WL) and the *Deutsche Ostafrika-Linie* (DOAL) together with the *Deutsche Levante-Linie* (DLL) took it over in January 1904.

The WL and the DOAL remained in the sheds at Petersenkai until most of them were destroyed during the Second World War. In the following years, the so-called Africa Terminal was built, where ships for non-European maritime trade continued to be loaded and unloaded until the terminal was abandoned as a commercial quay in 1999 for the HafenCity project. As the last piece of this development, the *Kakaospeicher* (cocoa warehouse) at the western end of Petersenkai has been preserved to this day.

² Tania Mancheno: "All change, please! Über die Un-/Möglichkeiten der Dekolonialisierung des öffentlichen Raumes in Hamburg", *ZAG. Antirassistische Zeitschrift*, 70, 2015: 25-27 (27).

³ As further reading on this history of Hamburg's industry and economy, which usually tends to go unmentioned: Sandra Schürmann and Stefan Rahner, "Hamburgs koloniale Industrie", <https://shm.de/postkolonial/grenzenlos>

Fig. 1: The Baakenhafen with the quay sheds and the surrounding harbour basins.



Source: Hamburg State and University Library,
<https://resolver.sub.uni-hamburg.de/kitodo/PPN1024832953> (CC BY-SA 4.0
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In the period before the First World War, however, it was not only global and colonial trade relations that were concentrated in Baakenhafen. German settlers, merchants or colonial officials also travelled as passengers on board the ships. German colonial soldiers and their equipment were also dispatched on the vessels of the local shipping companies to enforce and secure German 'world politics' and claims to power in the German colonies by force. The shipping lines were the supply and connection lines between Germany and the colonial territories and thus played a very important role in the functioning of the colonial empire.

These transports of German colonial soldiers are the focus here. It will be shown that the troop transports were deliberately used to publicly stage and legitimise ideas of Germany as a colonial power and the exercise of colonial violence.⁴ Baakenhafen was not the only place in the port of Hamburg where such stagings took place. However, it is particularly suitable for showing how a specific 'celebratory culture' emerged in Hamburg and how it was maintained across various colonial wars.

Colonial troop transports in Hamburg

From the very beginning there was resistance in the colonies to German policy and hence military force was necessary to support German colonial ambitions. As early as 30 October 1884, with official German colonial policy only in place a few months, the newly founded *West African Squadron* from Wilhelmshaven became the first soldiers to be dispatched for deployment in the colonies.⁵ Colonial troops travelled via Hamburg for the first time on or just before 16 June 1894, when the WL ship *Lulu Bohlen* with approximately 260 soldiers on board, the largest transport of colonial soldiers up to that time, departed from Strandhafen.⁶ By May 1896, there was already a public discussion about how the departure of the colonial troops should be staged and there were calls for the departing soldiers to be given an honourable send-off to emphasize that their deployment was "for the glory and power of the great fatherland".⁷

The presumably first transport of colonial troops from Baakenhafen took place on 15 July 1901, when a relief transport of about 900 soldiers departed from the northern quay, Versmannkai.⁸ Whereas, the first transport arising from colonial policy from the Baakenhafen itself took place a little earlier. At the end of August 1900, the largest and

⁴ For methodological and theoretical considerations on staging and rituals: Jan Kawlath, *Der Hamburger Hafen und der deutsche Kolonialkrieg in Namibia: Die Inszenierung kolonialer Gewalt im Baakenhafen 1904–1907*, Munich, Allitera, 2019: 23–26.

⁵ Heiko Herold, *Reichsgewalt bedeutet Seegewalt. Die Kreuzergeschwader der Kaiserlichen Marine als Instrument der deutschen Kolonial- und Weltpolitik 1885 bis 1901*, Munich, Oldenbourg, 2013: 25–29.

⁶ *Berliner Tageblatt*, 16 June, 1894, p. 6; *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 16 June, 1894, supplement 1, p. 1.

⁷ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 22 May, 1896, p. 12.

⁸ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 July, 1901, cited after Hamburg State Archives (HHStArch), 111-1_46618, p. 80.

most expensive transport of war material during the colonial war in China departed from Hamburg on board HAL's *Brisgavia*.⁹

So far, a total of 86 troop and material transports which arrived at or departed from Baakenhafen between August 1900 and May 1907 have been researched. The majority of these transports related to the colonial war in German Southwest Africa (GSWA) for which there were 73 troop and material transports with a total of 23,145 military personnel and 11,065 horses, all of which arrived at or departed from Petersenkai between January 1904 and May 1907.¹⁰ During the colonial war in China and the following period of occupation, a total of ten transports were handled at Baakenhafen between August 1900 and November 1903. At the beginning of 1906, two return transports of marines from German East Africa (GOA) arrived at Petersenkai and in December 1902, a transport with approximately 125 marines for a naval blockade off the coast of Venezuela departed from Petersenkai.

The troop transports in Baakenhafen can be roughly divided into two phases. In the first phase, from December 1893 to the end of 1903, during which HAL leased Petersenkai,¹¹ the transports went mainly to China and East Asia. In the second phase from 1904 to 1914, the transports went almost exclusively to the German colonial territories on the African continent.

Phase 1: Troop transports to East Asia

German marines had been transported to East Asia since the 1860s to secure the interests of German trading companies in China and Japan.¹² After the founding of the German Empire, these trade interests intensified and, in November 1897, Jiaozhou Bay was occupied by German marines and a German naval base was established in Tsingtau – today's Qingdao.¹³ This intensification of German colonial policy in China necessitated regular troop transports, which were mainly carried out by ships of *Northern German Lloyd* (NL) from Bremen and HAL, as these dominated the liner service for passenger and freight traffic between Germany and China.¹⁴ Troop transports reached their peak during the colonial war in East Asia – the so-called 'Boxer War' from 1900 to 1901 – as well as the subsequent period of occupation: during this colonial war against China waged by eight Allied colonial powers, the largest German combat force until then was sent out, consisting of 19 warships and 21,212 soldiers.¹⁵

⁹ *Hamburgische Börsenhalle*, 26 August, 1900, p. 7; *ibid.*, 30 August, 1900, p. 13.

¹⁰ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 111.

¹¹ Arnold Kludas, *Die Geschichte der Hapag-Schiffe: Volume 1: 1847-1900*, Bremen, Hauschild, 2007: 107.

¹² Herold, *Reichsgewalt*: 100.

¹³ *Ibid.*: 283-93.

¹⁴ Kludas, *Hapag-Schiffe*: 164.

¹⁵ Herold, *Reichsgewalt*: 359f.

The first troop transport to depart from Baakenhafen was a relief transport for the *East Asian Occupation Brigade* in China, which had replaced the previous *Expeditionary Corps*. On 15 July 1901, almost 900 soldiers and military personnel departed from Versmannkai on the *Hamburg-South American Steamship Company's* ship *Bahia*. Beforehand, the Senate funded a reception for them in the passenger halls of HAL at the neighbouring quay Strandhafen¹⁶, with a breakfast, drinks and cigars as so-called *Liebesgaben* (gifts of love). For the common soldiers, there were sandwiches and beer, while the officers received Moselle and Bordeaux wine with a large breakfast.¹⁷ The soldiers were served by volunteers from the Hamburg Red Cross, which had been commissioned by the Hamburg Senate to organise the entire celebration. To accompany the breakfast, a band played patriotic music on the veranda of the passenger halls for entertainment and the soldiers sang farewell songs at breakfast and wrote postcards, which were also given to them as 'gifts of love'. Karl Sauer, the first chairman of the Hamburg Red Cross and vice-chairman of the Hamburg veteran' association, then officially welcomed the soldiers with a speech on behalf of the Hamburg Senate. In this speech he explained the Senate's motives for the reception: the soldiers were to defend the "place [...] in the Chinese sun"¹⁸ and to protect German merchants. Out of gratitude and in recognition of the voluntary service, the Senate had ordered the hospitality and wished the soldiers "a happy and healthy return home to the fatherland".¹⁹

After breakfast, the soldiers marched back to the ship and went on board. As the ship departed, the soldiers on board and the audience ashore gave three cheers for the Emperor and enthusiastically sang the 'National Anthem'.²⁰ This moment was described by Karl Sauer, in a personal report on the troop farewell to the Senate Secretary Dr. Hagedorn, as particularly impressive and having a powerful effect on all the spectators. Likewise, the sight of the soldiers in their smart tropical uniforms standing high up in the rigging of the proud ship would remain in his memory for a long time.²¹ Unfortunately, there are no more precise figures for the audience, but it can be assumed that there was a substantial number, as the Senate had already instructed the Chief of Police to have the quayside cordoned off in advance.²²

In an article about the troops' farewell in the *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, one of the largest and most widely read newspapers in northern Germany at the time, the soldiers' entire deployment is glorified as a "beautiful summer trip" that the soldiers and officers

¹⁶ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 July 1901, cited after HHStArch, 111-1_46618, p. 61.

¹⁷ HHStArch, 111-1_46618, p. 65.

¹⁸ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 July 1901, cited after HHStArch, 111-1_46618, p. 61.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Since there was no official national anthem in the German Empire, either "Das Lied der Deutschen" or "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz" was usually sung. Cf.: Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 52-55.

²¹ HHStArch, 111-1_46618, p. 62.

²² Ibid., pp. 48 & 60.

were already looking forward to.²³ The entire course of the celebration and the interpretations in the speeches and the newspaper article clearly show how the colonial war and colonial violence were legitimised and normalised with these events. The Hamburg Senate used the celebrations as a political stage to make it clear to the soldiers that they were asserting the interests of Hamburg and that both the Senate and the residents of the city supported them.

Phase 2: Troop transports to Africa

The first troop transport from Hamburg to the colonial war in GSWA departed from the Petersenkai²⁴ on 30 January 1904 only a few weeks after the three Hamburg shipping companies (WL, DOAL and DLL) had jointly leased it.²⁵ In total, at least 73 troop transports arrived at or departed from Petersenkai between January 1904 and May 1907. In the process, 18,872 military personnel were shipped to war from Petersenkai on 39 transports, which corresponds to over 90% of the military personnel who were deployed in the war.²⁶

The picture for the return transports is different: of the at least 53 return transports with a total of 10,684 military personnel, 34 transports with 4,273 military personnel arrived at Petersenkai, which corresponded to about 40%. However, the figures for the whole of Hamburg and the entire war are less credible here, as no records of smaller return transports of less than 20 persons were kept in the statistics and there is no information after April 1907,²⁷ when there were still over 9,000 military personnel in GSWA.²⁸ In addition, twelve of the return transports with over 5,000 military personnel arrived in the Hamburg city area but outside Baakenhafen. These transports arrived in Cuxhaven, which at the time belonged to Hamburg and thus were also welcomed on behalf of the Hamburg Senate.²⁹ If these transports are included, a total of 10,605 military personnel arrived in the Hamburg city area and were welcomed on behalf of the Senate, which corresponds to 99% of the returned soldiers researched here. In terms of the numbers of returned soldiers, Cuxhaven surpasses the port of Hamburg, but approximately three times as many transports arrived in Hamburg. In Cuxhaven, it was mainly large transports with many soldiers arriving at once, while transports with as few as 30 soldiers arrived in Hamburg. However, the ships carried not only soldiers, but also

²³ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 July, 1901, cited after HHStArch, 111-1_46618, p. 61.

²⁴ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 31.

²⁵ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 30 January, 1904, pp. 5f.

²⁶ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 110.

²⁷ Kommando der Schutztruppen im Reichs-Kolonialamt, *Sanitäts-Bericht über die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika während des Herero- und Hottentottenaufstandes für die Zeit vom 1. Januar 1904 bis 31. März 1907*, Berlin, Mittler & Son, 1909: 242.

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 2.

²⁹ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 36.

weapons, provisions and equipment. At least 11,065 horses were also transported to the war.

From the data researched up to this point, it is clear what a central role Baakenhafen played in troop transports for the colonial war in GSWA: almost all transports departed from Hamburg – only three transports with about 770 soldiers departed from Cuxhaven or Wilhelmshaven – and two thirds of the return transports arrived back at Baakenhafen. The Baakenhafen and especially the southern shore – the Petersenkai – are thus central places to Hamburg's role in the colonial war against the Ovaherero, Nama and San.

A representative of the Hamburg Senate was present at each transport to officially bid farewell or welcome the transports. At the beginning of the transports, individual senators were present and as late as April 1904, Mayor Mönckeberg attended a farewell ceremony. From 1906, Senate Secretary Anton Hagedorn was regularly present at the celebrations for the troop transports. His main function as Senate Secretary was to organise celebrations hosted by the Senate and to officially represent the Senate at meetings and ceremonial acts.³⁰ In the later course of the war, it was Karl Sauer who usually took over the role of representing the Senate.

In this colonial war, the Senate was again concerned with Hamburg's economic and political interests, which became clear during a speech by Karl Sauer on behalf of the Senate to the departing soldiers in April 1904:

The fact that Hamburg takes a special interest in the suppression of the up-rising in our South-West African colonies, as well as in all overseas undertakings of the German Empire which are aimed at raising and strengthening our trade and shipping interests, is due to the nature of its living conditions.³¹

However, it was not only the Senate that showed great interest in the troop transports to the colonial war. The residents of Hamburg were also enthusiastic participants in the celebrations and joined the families of the soldiers to bid farewell to the departing troops.

In the early phase of the war in particular, the celebrations were carried by a melodramatic and racist national pride, which was also expressed in the reporting.³² Here are two examples of newspaper accounts that employed personal impressions to communicate to the readers the mood of the farewells. The first example reports on the first large troop transport from Hamburg during the colonial war in GSWA on 30 January 1904 at Petersenkai in front of Shed 26 of the WL:

³⁰ Ibid.: 58.

³¹ „Daß Hamburg gerade ein ganz besonderes Interesse an der Niederwerfung des Aufstandes in unseren südwestafrikanischen Kolonien wie überhaupt an allen überseeischen Unternehmungen des Deutschen Reiches nimmt, die darauf gerichtet sind unsere Handels- und Schifffahrtsinteressen zu heben und zu stärken, ist in der Natur seiner Lebensbedingungen begründet.“ (*Hamburger Nachrichten*, 25 February 1904, supplement 1, p. 2).

³² Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 37-61; 110-115.

The music plays 'Germany, Germany above all!' and all at once everyone joins in, the many hundreds standing in the quay shed and officers and soldiers on board. [...] The song roars mightily as the ship slowly glides away from the quay wall. A thunderous hurrah sounds over and over, and now they sing 'The Watch on the Rhine', the old German song of defiance, on board.³³

The next quotation is from the second transport which took place one week later on 6 February 1904, also in front of Shed 26 at Petersenkai. Here, the nationalist pathos not only spreads to the soldiers, but the ship from the WL itself becomes a piece of Germany:

The greater Germany.

[...] The vehicle is a house of the Hansa, a German house. [...] They sit and stand on the attached cargo beams, on the square spar at the bow, the warriors whom the great mother Germania wants to send out to bring murderous, black tribes to peace. [...] [Two tugboats] are connected by iron hawsers to the colossus of the ship, which represents a floating piece of Germany and is to work for German power and kind in the distant dark part of the world. [...] Because our fatherland must be greater, the valiant multitudes must go out into the threatened colony.³⁴

The racism that was elementary to the legitimisation of colonial rule and which provided the ideological background for the troop transports becomes clear here. The struggle of the Ovaherero against the German settlers and colonial policy in the spring of 1904 – the Nama and San only began to fight the Germans at a later date – is portrayed as a 'fanatical struggle' of supposedly 'savages' who now had to be brought to peace by German colonial soldiers. The description of the heterogeneous and complex continent of Africa as a 'dark part of the world' also refers to a central figure of Western colonial thinking and 'the Enlightenment', in which the world and the people are divided into modern, 'enlightened' and civilised societies and wild, barbaric societies that still remain in a dark era.

Troop transport on 7 July 1904

The two quotes above give an impression of the mood and the ideological background at the time of the troop transports. The following example from the summer of 1904 for which there is a relatively good source material provides a more precise picture of the

³³ „Die Musik spielt ‚Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!‘ Und mit einem Mal fallen alle ein, die vielen Hundert, die im Kaischuppen stehen und Offiziere und Soldaten an Bord. [...] Gewaltig braust das Lied empor, während das Schiff langsam von der Kaimauer weggleitet. Ein donnerndes Hurra klingt herüber und hinüber, und nun stimmen sie an Bord ‚Die Wacht am Rhein‘, das alte deutsche Trutzlied, an.“ (*Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 30 January, 1904, supplement 1, p. 1).

³⁴ „Das größere Deutschland. [...] Das Fahrzeug ist ein Haus der Hansa, ein deutsches Haus. [...] Auf den beigelegten Ladebäumen, auf der vierkantigen Spreelatte am Bug sitzen sie und stehen sie, die Krieger, die die große Mutter Germania hinaus senden will, um mordbrennerische, schwarze Volksstämme zum Frieden zu bringen. [...] [Zwei Schlepper] verbinden sich durch eiserne Trossen mit dem Schiffskoloß, der ein schwimmendes Stück Deutschland repräsentiert und im fernen dunklen Weltteil für deutsche Macht und Art wirken soll. [...] Weil unser Vaterland größer sein muß, müssen die wackeren Scharen hinaus in die bedrohte Kolonie.“ (Ibid., 07 February, 1904, p. 2f.).

celebrations. On Tuesday 7 June 1904, the tenth troop transport from the port of Hamburg since the outbreak of the colonial war in January that year left for GSWA. It was the twelfth transport of German troops to the war zone in Africa in 1904 and, as the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung* reported in its morning edition on 8 June 1904, this military troop transport from the port of Hamburg “similar to the first troop expeditions via Hamburg [had] become a pretty rally for the soldiers leaving home.”³⁵ During this troop transport, two ships departed from the port, carrying 908 soldiers and approximately 448 horses, making this one of the larger transports from the port of Hamburg. Both ships – the *Lucie Woermann* of the WL and the *Schleswig* of the NL from Bremen – departed from Petersenkai in Baakenhafen at 9 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. respectively, and were seen off by several hundred people directly on the quayside and, according to newspaper reports, thousands on the banks of the harbour.³⁶

The day itself could be divided roughly into two sections: The arrival of the soldiers at the port in the early morning and the actual farewell later in the evening. The soldiers arrived at Petersenkai at 5 a.m. and at 9 a.m. with military trains from their deployment points Munster – between Hamburg and Hanover – and Döberitz – west of Berlin.³⁷ Immediately after their arrival, they boarded the ships, stowed their luggage and received food and drinks before the trains arrived on the quay with the horses, which were led directly on board to the stables via long footbridges.³⁸ The horses were brought on board the *Schleswig*, which was specially converted to transport the horses.³⁹

After they were accommodated on the ships and had eaten, there was leave for the troop members until the last roll call at 7.30 p.m. at Petersenkai. Very little has been written in the newspapers about this period of several hours that the soldiers spent in the city of Hamburg itself. In one newspaper article it was written that the soldiers made much use of the opportunity “to visit the city of Hamburg”.⁴⁰ It can be assumed that many of the young men also frequented pubs and restaurants, and took the opportunity before leaving to visit brothels or buy services from sex workers. During my research, I came across an article on a colonial soldier who seriously injured a sex worker with his sidearm (bayonet) in a pub in St. Pauli while on leave and drunk.⁴¹

Even before the arrival of the first soldiers, all the WL and DOAL ships, which were moored in Baakenhafen, were flying flags.⁴² The many flags and banners on the ships formed a visual backdrop against which the farewell to the troops took place and which

³⁵ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 08 June, 1904, p. 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3; *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 08 June, 1904, p. 3.

³⁷ *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 08 June, 1904, p. 2.

³⁸ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 07 June, 1904, p. 4.

³⁹ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 06 June 1904, p. 6.

⁴⁰ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 07 June, 1904, p. 6.

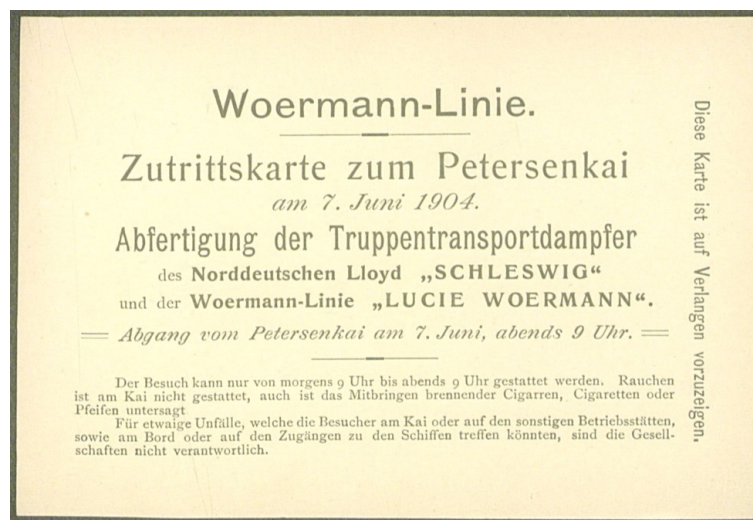
⁴¹ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 08 June, 1904, p. 6.

⁴² *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 08 June, 1904, p. 2.

highlighted the special nature of the day in contrast to the everyday operations on the quay.

Another special feature of the day was that many hundreds of visitors were allowed onto the quay from 9 a.m. until the end of the farewell ceremony. The WL issued 1,200 access cards in advance from their office building, the *Afrikahaus* at Große Reichenstrasse 27, which entitled the bearer to enter the sheds and the ships.⁴³

Fig. 2: Photo of an access card to Petersenkai from the Hamburg State Archives



Source: HHStArch: 132-1 I_180

The scenes that unfolded at Petersenkai in the early evening of 7 June 1904 were described in detail in several articles and the authors must have been very impressed. For example, an article in the *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona* described the scene as follows:

The large transport [...] had, however, once again attracted many thousands who wanted to bid the departing troops a last farewell on home soil. The late hour of departure may well have contributed a great deal to the crowds. At the landing places near St. Pauli, at Kehrwiederspitze, at Krahnhöft and Petersenkai, in the space between the sheds of the Woermann Line and the Levante

⁴³ *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 09 June, 1904, supplement 1, p. 1.

Line, business people and workers had gathered in large numbers. Sheds 26 and 27 on Petersenkai also presented an extremely lively picture.⁴⁴

The *Neue Hamburger Zeitung* also reported on the many people who had gathered at Petersenkai itself and stood on the surrounding banks on both sides of the river Elbe to greet the soldiers.⁴⁵ Outside the cordoned-off sheds on Petersenkai were, according to newspaper reports, mainly workers and business people, while in the cordoned-off area on the quay itself were relatives and acquaintances of the departing soldiers who had received access cards from the WL.⁴⁶

When the soldiers finally gathered on Petersenkai at 7.30 p.m. for the last roll call before departure, there was an elaborate farewell ceremony. First, the troops assembled in Shed 27, in front of which the *Schleswig* lay. There they were first presented with the so-called 'gifts of love' from the Senate by helpers of the Red Cross,⁴⁷ under the direction of Captain of the Reserve Karl Sauer, who's task this has been since the transports began in January. In this colonial war, the 'gifts of love' were again cigars and postcards, which were given to them as official gifts from the Hamburg Senate. However, this time the cigars were stuffed into leather or bast cigar bags, which, according to the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, were "well filled" and had the inscription: "Happy departure, healthy return home".⁴⁸ After the distribution, the commander of the troop units travelling on the *Schleswig* stepped in front of the soldiers and gave a "pithy" speech, "in which he expressed his thanks on behalf of his comrades for the kind presentation of the gifts of love from the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg". At the end of the speech, the commander intoned a 'Hail' to the Senate and Hamburg, with which the soldiers "vigorously" joined in.⁴⁹

The next part of the farewell took place in the neighbouring Shed 26 of Petersenkai in front of the *Lucie Woermann*. The soldiers marched to the shed and took up position for inspection by the commander-in-chief of the 'Schutztruppe' (Protection Force) from Berlin.⁵⁰ With the change of location, the military part of the farewell had begun. Following the inspection of the troops, greetings from the command of the troops in Hamburg and Altona were conveyed. Representing the command, Colonel von Dassel

⁴⁴ „Der große Transport [...] hatte aber doch wieder viele Tausend angelockt, die den scheidenden Truppen das letzte Lebewohl auf heimatlichen Boden zu rufen wollten. Die späte Stunde der Abreise mag wohl viel zu dem massenhaften Andrang des Publikums beigetragen haben. An den Landungsstellen bei St. Pauli, an der Kehrriederspitze, am Krähnhöft und am Petersenquai, auf dem Raum zwischen den Schuppen der Woermann-Linie und der Levante-Linie hatten sich Geschäftstreibende und Arbeiter in großer Zahl angefunken. Auch die Schuppen 26 und 27 am Petersenquai boten ein äußerst belebtes Bild.“ (*General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 09 June, 1904, supplement 1, p. 1).

⁴⁵ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 08 June, 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 08 June, 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 08 February, 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, second morning edition, No. 396, 08.06.1904, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 08 June, 1904, p. 3.

had arrived at the quay by launch from Altona at 8.30 p.m., and gave a speech to the soldiers.

Following the speech, the military band of the 76th Regiment, played the so-called 'Kaiserhymne' (Emperor's Anthem). Next the commander of the soldiers leaving on the *Lucie Woermann* gave a speech and afterwards the troops went on board the two ships. First, the *Schleswig* was towed out of the harbour basin by tugboat at 9 p.m. and the *Lucie Woermann* followed at 9.30 p.m.⁵¹ The casting off manoeuvres were accompanied by loud cheering from the spectators on shore and the soldiers on the ships, who were standing on deck or had climbed onto the superstructures and masts of the ships.⁵²

Fig. 3: Photo of three copies of the Cigar Bags



Source: HHStArch: 111-1_47069; Picture: Kawlath, Jan 2019

⁵¹ *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 09 June, 1904, supplement 1, p. 1.

⁵² *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 08 June, 1904, p. 3.

General troop farewells

From an analytical perspective, different groups can be identified as being involved in the troop farewells: From the military the departing troops and the representatives of the command level who came to the farewells; from the state the representatives of the Hamburg Senate and the Foreign Office inspectors from Berlin; from business the representatives of the shipping companies and from civil society the relatives and spectators in the port. These different groups formed the circle of actors in the staging of the troop farewells in Baakenhafen.

Overall, some changes can be identified over the period examined. These mainly concern the nature of the reporting and the people involved. In the beginning, individual senators or the mayor were present, whereas later, the senate was almost exclusively represented by the head of the Red Cross department Karl Sauer and by senate secretary Anton Hagedorn.

Newspaper coverage was also much more detailed in January 1904. The transports were reported on in long articles, sometimes in great detail and enthusiasm. In the course of the war, this waned and by the end of 1904, the reports were only half as long as at the start. By the end of 1905, the reports on the farewells had become even shorter and the style of writing was strictly limited to the reproduction of facts and the most important information. One of the later troop farewells from Hamburg on 15 May 1906 was reported in only one sentence.⁵³

The length and detail of the reports decreased considerably, but not the number of reports per transport. The transports seem to have remained a news item that editors could not ignore. From their beginnings in January 1904, there was a preliminary report for almost every transport, either directly on the day before or in the course of the previous week, in which at least the date and the number of persons were announced. These preliminary reports were followed by a report on the actual departure of the transport on the same or the following day. In the following days or weeks, there was often a short follow-up report in which the itinerary or the arrival of the transport in GSWA was briefly reported.

One reason for the shorter reports may have been that the troop transports were no longer 'new news' after several weeks or months. There was much repetition in the farewell ceremonies and so it might not have been necessary for the newspaper editors to write a long, detailed report each time anew.

However, the length of the articles was not necessarily an indication of a specific function of the reports. In principle, this coverage extended the meaning and impact of the staging beyond the quays to the city area and even reached people who could not be present at the harbour. The announcements of the next transports always offered readers the opportunity to participate, whether for the first time or repeatedly. In this way, the reports stimulated public interest and the desire to attend the farewell ceremonies.

⁵³ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 16 May, 1906, supplement, p. 2.

The military authorities, the Senate and the WL created a festive setting for the troop transports, turning relatively formal logistical military operations into – in today's terms – events in the Port of Hamburg. The WL made clever use of this public attention and began to use the troop transports as a motif for an advertising poster painted by the well-known navy painter Willy Stöwer at the end of 1904.⁵⁴

Troop arrivals

As already mentioned, mainly smaller troop transports arrived in Hamburg: Of a total of 34 transports, 20 brought fewer than 100 soldiers, while of all twelve transports to Cuxhaven involved at least 100 soldiers. In these smaller transports, the ships were not completely occupied by soldiers, so there was capacity for other passengers. Thus, the composition of the returning transports was more heterogeneous than those departing from Hamburg, which often consisted solely of military personnel. On a return transport of 20 June 1905, in addition to sick and wounded soldiers, there were also troops on board who were on their way home on leave, an undisclosed number of civilian passengers, a nurse and the body of a soldier from GSWA. In general, the troops were transported on the scheduled WL steamers, which departed the colony twice a month.⁵⁵ This explains the variations in the composition of the transports, as all travellers had to rely on the same ships. There were only eight transports which carried mainly soldiers, all of which returned in summer 1906. Among them were also by far the largest transports that arrived in Hamburg which was related to the reduction in the number of troops in GSWA from mid-1906 onwards.⁵⁶

Compared to the enthusiastic atmosphere at some troop farewells, the receptions at Petersenkai were more discreet. As mainly sick and injured soldiers – some of whom were also invalids – arrived in Hamburg, it may well have been out of consideration or reverence that their arrivals were kept quiet. In the newspaper reports, there were no reports of either bands or festive flagging on the other ships in Baakenhafen, which meant that there was no festive framework for the troop receptions.⁵⁷

As long as the transports arrived in Hamburg, the soldiers received the Senate's 'gifts of love' after being examined on board, just as they had on departure. Karl Sauer was again in charge of the distribution and he also gave official welcoming to the soldiers on behalf of the Senate, glorifying their service in the colonial war as a "heroic deed".⁵⁸ Even though the returning soldiers received a lot of medical and emotional support at the troop receptions, the attention and interest was much lower compared to the farewells. There were two exceptions, however, where the mood was much more like the

⁵⁴ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 60.

⁵⁵ Kommando, *Sanitäts-Bericht*: 163.

⁵⁶ Ibid.: 161.

⁵⁷ More generally on the troop receptions at Petersenkai: Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 61-74.

⁵⁸ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 19 December, 1904, supplement 2, p. 1.

first euphoric troop farewells at the beginning of the war. These were the receptions of the former commanders-in-chief of the colonial forces in GSWA: Lothar von Trotha and Berthold von Deimling.⁵⁹

Lothar von Trotha arrived at Petersenkai on 15 December 1905, about one and a half years after the official ceremony there to bid him well on his assignment in GSWA with music and cheers on 20 May 1904.⁶⁰ On arrival, there was a grand reception with the First Mayor of Hamburg Johann Burchard, the Lord Mayor of Altona Karl Tettenborn, the directors of the shipping companies involved, Adolph and Eduard Woermann, Arnold Amsinck and Adolph Hertz, as well as all the senior officers of the Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbek garrisons.⁶¹ The day before the reception, Petersenkai was cordoned off and preparations began.⁶² Shed 28 was cleared out for the celebration and decorated in the national colours of black, white and red with flag cloths and garlands as well as various national flags. At dawn, all the ships in Baakenhafen flew their flags 'over the tops' again and by 8:30 a.m. many police officers were already needed at the quay to keep order among the large crowd.⁶³ At 9 a.m. the official reception began, during which the commander-in-chief of the IX. Army Corps gave a speech glorifying the deeds of Lothar von Trotha and the soldiers in GSWA. At the end of the ceremony von Trotha was awarded the highest order 'Pour le Mérite'. Immediately afterwards, the band began to play 'Germany, Germany above all!' and at the end of the song, General von Trotha gave a speech in which he made it clear what an honour it had been for him to be received by the Commander-in-Chief and Mayor Burchard. In his eyes, he had only done his duty as a soldier and an official, and he felt that "never before had such a cruel war been conducted with such moderation."⁶⁴ At the end of the ceremony, the band played the 'Emperor's Anthem' and most of the reception committee then went on board to have breakfast in the dining saloon, the 'gifts of love' being distributed personally to the soldiers by Karl Sauer. At 11 a.m. General von Trotha and his sons left the ship and went to the hotel *Hamburger Hof*, where his sons had been staying since the previous day. General von Trotha's nephew had been killed in the war in GSWA and not, as had been erroneously reported in various newspapers shortly before, one of his sons. This was corrected in an interview with the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* at the hotel.⁶⁵ General von Trotha had gone to the hotel because he had not received any instructions as to where he should report after his arrival and what his new duties would be. It was not until 6:30 p.m. that a telegram reached him at the hotel ordering him to Berlin.

⁵⁹ Generally on these receptions: Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 74-84.

⁶⁰ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 21 May, 1904, p. 2.

⁶¹ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 75f.

⁶² *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 15 December, 1905, p. 2.

⁶³ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 15 December, 1905, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 76.

⁶⁵ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 December, 1905, supplement 1, p. 1.

Thus, together with his sons Thilo and Hellmuth, he left for the capital by train at 8:14 p.m. from Klostertor station.⁶⁶

The reception for Lothar von Trotha, shows clearly how colonial violence was legitimised and normalised with such staged ceremonies and how these celebrations were used as a political stage. As commander-in-chief in the colonial war in GSWA, he had ordered the genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama and had been responsible for the most serious war crimes. These crimes were not named as such by those involved but glorified as 'honourable heroic deeds' and were met with approval and recognition.

The reception for Berthold von Deimling barely one and a half years later on 2 May 1907 was similar. Newspaper reports give the impression that there was not quite as large an audience on the quay as at the reception for von Trotha. However, there was again a welcoming ceremony with speeches and nationalist songs, at which Senator Otto Westphal and Senate Secretary Anton Hagedorn as well as Adolph Woermann and Arnold Amsinck were present.⁶⁷ In addition to these official representatives, family and friends of the general also came to greet him: Deimling's wife and daughter stood on the quayside together with Johannes Semler, a member of the Reichstag who lived in Hamburg, who had met General von Deimling on his trip through GSWA the previous year and had been associated with him ever since.⁶⁸

During the docking manoeuvre, the general stood on deck and was greeted with cheers from the officers from the quay.⁶⁹ As soon as the gangway was moored, his wife and daughter rushed on board to greet him.⁷⁰ General von Deimling then disembarked and stood before the welcoming committee set up in a circle on the quay. There, General von Bock und Polach gave the first welcoming speech, in which he referred to Deimling as "not only a brave warrior, but a hero" who had "made the impossible and unbelievable possible". Referring to further supposed "heroic deeds" of Deimling in GSWA, General von Bock und Polach made it clear that these deeds had won "the Highest Recognition" from the Emperor, who had therefore appointed Deimling a general and awarded him a medal. At the end of his speech, General von Bock und Polach called for a triple "Hurrah" to welcome Deimling home most warmly, which was done "joyfully" by the officers and gentlemen present and the band then played 'Germany, Germany above all!'.⁷¹

In his short speech, General von Deimling expressed his gratitude for the 'warm welcome', which he saw as the greatest thanks for him and his troops. Senator Westphal

⁶⁶ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 16 December, 1905, supplement 1, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Kawlath, *Hamburger Hafen*: 77-80.

⁶⁸ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 03 May, 1907, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 04 May, 1907, p. 4; *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 02 May, 1907, supplement 1, p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 02 May, 1907, supplement 1, p.1.

⁷¹ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 02 May, 1907, supplement 1, p. 1.; *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 02 May, 1907, supplement 1, p.1.

then welcomed the General on behalf of the Senate of Hamburg and emphasised in his speech the great importance of the colony for Hamburg and thus also of Deimling's deeds for the city of Hamburg, which has close relations with GSWA through trade. At the end of his speech, the senator still referred exclusively to the German sacrifices that were necessary to maintain the colony. After another speech by the representative of the General Staff from Berlin, which was not printed in the newspaper articles, the official welcoming ceremony was over and the officers went on board for a meal at Adolph Woermann's invitation. Meanwhile, the band continued to play on the quay until General von Deimling left the harbour at 3 p.m. accompanied by his family and Reichstag member Johannes Semler.⁷²

Once General von Deimling had left the quay, the reception ceremony at Petersenkai was essentially over, but the festivities for the general in Hamburg did not end there. On the evening of 2 May 1907, there was another reception at the villa of Reichstag representative Semler in Heilwigstraße on the north bank of the Außenalster. Many personalities from the political and economic establishment of Hamburg and, to some extent, Berlin were present at the reception: Hamburg's Mayor Mönckeberg and the President of the Parliament Julius Engel, the Hamburg merchants Richard Krogmann and Edmund Siemens, the Vice-President of the Reichstag in Berlin privy councillor Paasche as well as various representatives of the aristocracy, the military and the consulate system.⁷³

There was extensive coverage of both receptions over several days, with long and detailed reports describing the receptions at Petersenkai. The *Hamburger Correspondent* even conducted an exclusive interview with General von Trotha after his arrival at the hotel.⁷⁴ In addition to these reports on the actual arrivals, there were also preliminary reports that focused primarily on the military career of the respective general. The aim here was to establish a link between the actions of the generals and soldiers in GSWA and the idealised images of German soldiers. With these preliminary reports, the receptions were again announced in advance, thus creating publicity for the actual events and generating interest among the city residents. There were also reports on the receptions after they had taken place. In the case of Lothar von Trotha, in addition to the aforementioned interview, reports continued up to his departure from Hamburg by train, and in the case of Berthold von Deimling, the second reception in the evening was reported on in great detail.

Funeral receptions

Another special type of staging were so-called 'corpse ceremonies', when corpses of soldiers from GSWA were transferred to Hamburg. So far, I have been able to research a

⁷² *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 02 May, 1907, supplement 1, p. 1.; *Altonaer Nachrichten*, 03 May, 1907, p. 2; *General-Anzeiger für Hamburg-Altona*, 04 May, 1907, p. 4.

⁷³ *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 03 May, 1907, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 December, 1905, supplement 1, p. 1.

total of eight such events, marking the transport of eleven bodies. In five of these transports, the coffins were taken directly from the ship to a train on the quayside and transported further. In three cases there was also an official funeral service in the shed on the quayside, one of which I would like to present in more detail as an example.

On 20 March 1905, an official funeral service for the officer Otto Seebeck took place in Shed 26 on Petersenkai. The *Ernst Woermann*, delayed by fog, moored at the quayside in front of the shed at around 7:30 a.m. bearing the body of the deceased in a zinc coffin. As a visible sign of mourning, the flag on the *Ernst Woermann* was set at half-mast.⁷⁵

The zinc coffin was placed in a festive metal coffin, that was carried into Shed 26, which had been emptied the day before so that an altar with a crucifix could be set up in the middle.⁷⁶ The floor of the shed had been covered with black cloth and behind the altar hung the flag of the German Empire.⁷⁷ Palms and laurel trees had been placed in a semicircle around the altar, and the coffin, decorated with green garlands, was placed in the middle of the semicircle.⁷⁸ At the foot of the coffin, facing the audience, a sign was placed on which a short inscription had been engraved that was very similar to an inscription on a gravestone: "Lieutenant of the Kaiserliche Schutztruppe Otto Seebeck, born 3 May 1875 in Berlin, killed on 11 August 1904 at Waterberg, German South-West Africa." The newspaper reported briefly the circumstances of his death: He had been killed by a gunshot at the infamous battle of Ohamakari.⁷⁹ According to the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, this was Otto Seebeck's second tour of duty in a colonial war: In the summer of 1900, he went to China with the 4th East Asian Infantry Regiment, before volunteering for the colonial military in GSWA in the spring of 1904.⁸⁰

The only member of Otto Seebeck's family present at the funeral service was his cousin August Seebeck from Harburg, who had come to the shed with his wife. The dead man's mother had stayed in Berlin, where the body was transferred by train after the military funeral service at Petersenkai and where the burial was to take place.⁸¹ In addition to Senate Secretary Hagedorn, who officially represented the Senate of Hamburg, Adolph and Eduard Woermann from the Woermann Line were present, many representatives of the officer corps of the IX Army Corps⁸² and the 79 colonial soldiers⁸³ who had returned from GSWA.⁸⁴ The band of the Hamburg Regiment was positioned behind the altar and in

⁷⁵ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 20 March, 1905, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ StArch HH, 132-1 I_2998.

⁷⁸ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 20 March, 1905, supplement, p. 2; StArch HH: 132-1 I_2998.

⁷⁹ StArch HH, 132-1 I_2998.

⁸⁰ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 20 March, 1905, supplement, p. 2.

⁸¹ Ibid.; *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 20 March, 1905, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁸² *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 20 March, 1905, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁸³ Kommando, *Sanitäts-Bericht*: 242.

⁸⁴ StArch HH, 132-1 I_2998.

front of the shed, on the tracks on the quay, 40 soldiers of the 31st Hamburg Regiment stood ready to fire a salvo of honour.⁸⁵

At the beginning of the funeral service at 10 a.m., the band played a chorale before the eulogy. The funeral oration was given by the senior priest of the IX Army Corps from Altona, Mr Zierrach, who first pointed out that the deceased had left for GSWA from the same quay not quite a year ago. In the speech, the pastor explained the circumstances of Seebeck's death in GSWA and at the end described Seebeck's death as a "hero's death".

As the final part of the funeral service, the coffin was carried by several officers of the Hamburg Regiment through the shed into the wagon waiting on the quayside, while the band played a chorale. To conclude the ceremony, three salutes were fired by the soldiers on the quayside, accompanied by a drumroll.⁸⁶

Colonial war in East Africa

In the second major colonial war of the German Empire on the African continent – the so-called 'Maji-Maji War' from 1905 to 1908 in what is now Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and parts of Kenya – there were also two troop transports that were received at Petersenkai. From the German military's point of view, this war differed from the one in GSWA in that it was mainly black mercenaries from various African regions who fought while the officer and non-commissioned officer ranks were made up exclusively of white German soldiers. Thus, there were far fewer troop transports to and from Germany than in the other two German colonial wars. In total 227 soldiers were dispatched as reinforcements. They left Kiel by train on 24 August 1905 and travelled from Trieste to Dar es Salaam on an Austrian Lloyd ship. On their return journey, they arrived in Hamburg at Petersenkai in two separate transports on 14 March and 18 April 1906.⁸⁷

Both transports were received with an official welcoming ceremony on behalf of the Hamburg Senate, which proceeded in the same way as the celebrations in the context of the colonial war in China and in GSWA. After the first ship had docked at Petersenkai on 14 March 1906, Karl Sauer greeted the soldiers on the quayside on behalf and in the name of the Hamburg Senate and said in his speech that the "German people" were proud of the soldiers who had laid down their lives for "Germany's honour". The commanding soldier of the transport then also gave a speech in which he underlined Hamburg's role in world trade and made clear how proud the soldiers are of this role. At the end of the speech, there was another cheer for the Senate and the Parliament and

⁸⁵ *Neue Hamburger Zeitung*, 20 March, 1905, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 20 March, 1905, supplement 1, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Medizinal-Abteilung des Reichs-Marine-Amts, *Sanitätsbericht über die Marine-Expeditionskorps in Südwestafrika 1904/05 und in Ostafrika 1905/06*, Berlin, Mittler & Son, 1908: 60-63.

then the 'gifts of love' for the soldiers were distributed before they boarded the waiting trains and departed.⁸⁸

Conclusion

There was an established public culture of celebration around the troop transports of colonial soldiers in Hamburg at the beginning of the 20th century, in which Germany's role as a colonial power and the military violence necessary for it were staged. The celebrations legitimised and normalised this violence and the racism behind it by embedding it in a national discourse framework and celebrating Hamburg's role as a colonial trade and port metropolis through politics and the press. The celebrations served as a political stage for various actors: the Hamburg Senate and various Hamburg shipping companies presented themselves here as central actors in colonial policy and the colonial world economy, while the military demonstrated its own role in implementing these goals. The majority of the transports received a lot of attention from politics, the press and the city's inhabitants. Thus, they are an example of the great public interest in colonial issues within Hamburg at the time of the empire's active colonial policy. Through the staging of the troop transports, Germany's colonial policy and the colonial wars necessary for it were present in Hamburg's public sphere and the city's inhabitants could participate in and consume them.

This connection between the city of Hamburg and colonial policy is symbolically evident in the 'gifts of love'. For the soldiers, they meant recognition of their willingness to go to war and a memento of their deployment.⁸⁹ The 'gifts of love' constituted psychological and emotional support of the soldiers on the part of the Senate of the City of Hamburg, which was maintained over several years and colonial wars.

Another important point in the normalisation and legitimisation of colonial violence was the integration of the colonial war and the soldiers into the national frame of reference of the German Empire. It was repeatedly emphasized during the celebrations that the soldiers were in a line of tradition with the soldiers of 1870/71 and carried on the values of that time. In this way, colonial warfare was integrated into a national narrative and identity. The colonial wars in China and GSWA were the first wars since the founding of the empire and were used by politics and the military as a projection screen for nationalism, aspirations to world power and racism. During the celebrations in Baakenhafen, this discourse with its specific dispositive aspects was once again condensed locally and made tangible both collectively and intersubjectively.

The Baakenhafen as a (post-)colonial place of remembrance thus has three central levels: First, an economic and infrastructural level, as a global travel and logistics centre for people, animals and goods in the port of Hamburg, which was embedded in the global trading system shaped by colonialism. In addition, it was also a place where ideas

⁸⁸ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 15 March, 1906, supplement 2, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, 01 October, 1904, supplement 2, p. 2.

of Germany as a colonial power and the claim to rule over other people were staged and legitimised. These two historical levels are joined by the current practice of naming streets and squares in Baakenhafen and HafenCity after European colonisers.

So far, it is mainly BIPOCs, civil society activists from Hamburg and historians who, together with representatives of the Ovaherero and Nama, are trying to address the colonial history of Baakenhafen. This engagement is to be incorporated into the future (post-)colonial remembrance concept for the city of Hamburg. From a historiographical perspective, Baakenhafen and in particular Petersenkai play a central role in Hamburg's colonial history, which must be properly considered in the remembrance concept. At this location, it would be possible to critically examine the role of the city of Hamburg in the German Empire's colonial wars and to create a place where the victims of this colonial violence could be commemorated.

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