Sarah Lentz

11 “No German Ship Conducts Slave Trade!” The Public Controversy about German Participation in the Slave Trade during the 1840s

When the Bremian ship *Julius & Eduard* entered the Weser on May 10, 1841 escorted by the British warship *Persian*, her arrival quickly gave rise to commotion and rumors spreading well beyond the limits of the Hanseatic city. The *Dorfzeitung*, for example, wrote the following: “A Bremian ship has been taken away by the English because it wanted to bring slave chains to Africa. A ship of the free honorable city of Bremen and slave chains! I would make its owner try on every single chain for 24 hours.”¹ The *Bremer Zeitung* controverted the *Julius & Eduard*’s alleged participation in the slave trade at once “since detestation of that reproachable trade is too universal here that, directly or indirectly, ships under the Bremian flag would stoop to it.”² According to the *Bremer Zeitung*, there was no proof for such activity by the ship, and neither captain nor shipowner had knowingly attempted to profit from the slave trade. The latter of the two men – “a very respected local burgher” – had therefore immediately appealed to the appropriate authorities to protect his rights as well as “to cleanse the Bremian flag of any and all suspicion that it could lend itself to the pursuit of ignominious trade.”³

The *Julius & Eduard* was in fact not the only ship to be seized by British patrols along the common slave trading routes in the spring of 1841. It was only a short while later that the bark *Louise* from Hamburg was escorted to Cuxhaven.⁴ A third ship, the *Echo* – likewise from Hamburg – was accused of engaging in slave trade

1 “Welthandel,” *Dorfzeitung*, May 22, 1841: “Ein Bremer Schiff ist von den Engländern weggenommen worden, weil es Sklavenketten nach Africa bringen wollte. Ein Schiff der freien ehrenwerthen Stadt Bremen und Sklavenketten! Der Eigenthümer müßte mir jede Kette 24 Stunden lang anprobiren.”

2 “Bremen, 26. Mai,” *Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 8, 1841: “da die Verabscheuung jenes schändlichen Handels hier zu allgemein ist, als daß, direct oder indirect, Schiffe unter bremischer Flagge sich dazu sollten hergeben können.”

3 Cited according to: “Bremen, 10. Mai,” *Frankfurter Ober-Postamts-Zeitung*, May 16, 1841: “ein sehr geachteter hiesiger Bürger [. . .] um die bremische Flagge von allem und jedem Verdachte, als könne sie zur Betreibung eines schmähhlichen Handels sich hergeben, zu reinigen.”

4 For summaries of the trials against the two ships, cf. Johann Carl Friedrich Gildemeister, *Verfahren und Erkenntniß des Obergerichts in Untersuchungssachen wider den Capitain des Bremischen Schiffs Julius & Eduard u. Conf. wegen Sklavenhandels: Nach den Acten dargestellt* (Bremen: Johann

Note: Translated by Stephan Stockinger

by British officials in Sierra Leone at around the same time. While the trials against the *Louise* and the *Julius & Eduard* were held in local German courts, proceedings against the *Echo* were initiated in Sierra Leone.⁵

Considering the increasing number of economic history studies focusing on German contributions to the Atlantic slavery system, these three cases of alleged German involvement in human trafficking will hardly come as a surprise.⁶ By now we have at least individual scientific inquiries on the participation of the cities of Hamburg and Bremen and their inhabitants in the slave trade.⁷ Historian Magnus Ressel, for example, has argued that there was “a verifiable participation by Hamburg politicians, merchants, shipowners and ship crews in the slave trade in various forms” over a period of around 200 years from 1650 to 1850. According to Ressel, there are multiple signs for the first half of the nineteenth century in particular that appear to justify a “substantial suspicion of slave smuggling by Hanseatic agents.”⁸

While we thus have evidence of participation by Bremen and Hamburg – as well as some other German territories – in the Atlantic slavery system, investigations on the degree to which knowledge of such activities reached a wider German public are hitherto lacking. It is largely unknown, for instance, what types of reactions such presumptive “own” involvement triggered, or whether critical reflection of such activities perhaps even gave rise to slavery-critical protest activities. An analysis of the public discourse related to the impoundment of the three abovementioned ships therefore

Georg Heyse, 1842) and *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren und Erkenntniß über die Hamburger Bark Louise wegen Verdachts der Beteiligung im Sklavenhandel* (Hamburg: Johann Philipp Erie, 1842).

5 On the case of the *Echo*, cf. especially: “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers: Parties of Conventions under which Vessels are to be Tried by the Tribunals of the Nation to which they Belong: From January 1, to December 31, 1841, inclusive,” in *Parliamentary Papers: Accounts and Papers: Slavery*, vol. 19, Session February 3–August 12, 1842, (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 1–162.

6 Cf. e.g. Klaus Weber, “Deutschland, der atlantische Sklavenhandel und die Plantagenwirtschaft der Neuen Welt (15. bis 19. Jahrhundert),” *Journal of Modern European History (Special Issue “Europe, Slave Trade, and Colonial Forced Labour”)* 7, no. 1 (2009): 37–67; Klaus Weber, “Mitteleuropa und der transatlantische Sklavenhandel: Eine lange Geschichte,” *Werkstatt Geschichte*, no. 66–67 (2015): 7–30; Magnus Ressel, “Hamburg und die Niederelbe im atlantischen Sklavenhandel der Frühen Neuzeit,” *Werkstatt Geschichte*, no. 66–67 (2015): 75–96; Andrea Weindl, “The Slave Trade of Northern Germany from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, ed. David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 250–272.

7 Historian Horst Rössler in particular has studied Bremen’s involvement in the Atlantic slavery system, notably also discussing the case of the *Julius & Eduard*. Cf. Horst Rössler, “Bremer Kaufleute und die transatlantische Sklavenökonomie, 1790–1865,” *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 95 (2016): 75–106 and Horst Rössler, “Vom Zuckerrohr zum Zuckerhut: Die Familie Böse und die Bremer Zuckerindustrie,” *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 90 (2011): 63–94.

8 Cf. Ressel, “Hamburg,” 94: “eine nachweisbare Beteiligung von Hamburger Politikern, Kaufleuten, Reedern und Mannschaften am Sklavenhandel in unterschiedlicher Form”; “substantieller Verdacht auf Sklavenschmuggel durch hanseatische Akteure.”

seems an appropriate step towards investigating the contemporary public response to traces of the slave trade in the German Confederation. For it was these three cases that provoked widespread discussion within the Confederation as well as beyond – especially in Great Britain – about a possible involvement of Germans in the slave trade more than any other preceding or subsequent event. And while the captured ships convinced the British public of German complicity in the persistence of slaving, the debate tellingly also saw the permeation in the German context – despite evidence to the contrary – of the conviction that “no inhabitant of Hamburg, no German ship” had ever engaged in human trafficking.⁹

The aim of this contribution is to investigate this “blind spot” concerning the German embroilment in trade in enslaved persons, with the core question being why this involvement was so vehemently denied domestically. To answer this question, the first section will deal with the trials against the three mentioned ships, using the body of evidence and the argumentation of both parties as well as the opinion of the court in the case of the *Louise* as examples. This will be followed by an analysis of the reactions to the trials, which ended with acquittals for the *Louise* and the *Julius & Eduard*, in Great Britain as well as in the German Confederation. Based on this analysis of the dominant discourse in the German context, the final section will deal with the question how the events were received by German abolitionists and whether forms of protest against German involvement in the Atlantic slave trade system developed as a consequence.

“Surely This Is Suspicious Enough!”: The Case of the Ship *Louise* from Hamburg

The pursuit and eventual stoppage of the *Louise* by the British sloop *Grecian* on February 25, 1841 shortly after her departure from Rio de Janeiro caused a considerable stir among the passengers aboard the ship as well as among its crew.¹⁰ The Portuguese passengers, for example, hastily threw a sack of letters and other documents weighed down by a piece of iron overboard. The *Louise*’s captain, Hamburg native Carl Heinrich Boye, likewise aroused suspicion by having his helmsman burn several letters.¹¹ During the subsequent search of the ship, the British officials discovered a host of typical goods in demand with African slave traders, like glass beads and muskets, as well as a number of planks they identified as being intended for a slave deck.

9 “Freie Städte,” *Münchener politische Zeitung*, May 18, 1841, 634: “kein Hamburger, kein deutsches Schiff.”

10 For the quotation in the heading, cf. *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 22: “Dieses ist doch wohl verdächtig genug!”

11 *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 22–24.

The *Louise* was also found to carry a suspiciously large supply of water, a large number of drinking vessels, and an additional metal cauldron that could have been used to feed numerous slaves.¹²

The discovered items violated the terms of a treaty concluded between France and Great Britain in the years 1831 and 1833, which the Hanseatic cities of Lübeck, Bremen, and Hamburg had joined in 1837 “for the purpose of a more effective suppression of the slave trade.”¹³ The treaty allowed certain British warships to stop and search suspicious Hanseatic ships, especially along the West African coast but also in the waters near Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Not only the discovery of slaves constituted grounds for the detainment of a ship, however: Various items on board that suggested a “suspicion [. . .] of equipment for this heinous traffic” could likewise lead to seizure.¹⁴

In the case of the *Louise*, the articles found could be considered suspicious under the treaty, and the commander of the *Grecian*, Captain William Smyth, deemed this circumstance in combination with the less than trust-inspiring behavior of the crew and passengers sufficient to redirect the ship to Cuxhaven under his supervision. Once there, closer inspection of the *Louise*’s cargo revealed a dozen whips – “woven of leather, very long, and hideous to look at” – that had been sewn into a bundle of sailcloth.¹⁵ Furthermore, the translation of the cargo manifest showed that the entire cargo of the *Louise* had been taken on from two Brazilian ships “for the reason conceded by the helmsman that Brazilian ships could have easily aroused suspicion with it.”¹⁶ According to Captain Smyth’s testimony, the named ships were indeed “notoriously engaged in the illicit Slave Trade from this port [Rio de Janeiro].”¹⁷ In the same vein, the questioning of the crew revealed that a further water barrel had been removed

¹² “Nichtpolitische Nachrichten: Hamburg, 25. August,” *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, September 3, 1841.

¹³ “Accessions-Vertrag der freien und Hansestädte Lübeck, Bremen und Hamburg, zu dem am 30. November 1831 und 22. März 1833 zwischen I. I. M. M., den Königen der Franzosen und des Vereinigten Königreichs von Großbritannien und Irland, zum Zweck einer wirksameren Unterdrückung des Sklavenhandels abgeschlossenen Tractaten, unterzeichnet zu Hamburg den 9. Juni 1837,” in *Sammlung der Verordnungen der freyen Hanse-Stadt Hamburg, seit 1814. Funfzehnter Band. Verordnungen von 1837 bis 1839*, ed. Johann Martin Lappenberg (Hamburg: Johann August Meißner, 1840), 41–70: “zum Zweck einer wirksameren Unterdrückung des Sklavenhandels.”

¹⁴ “Accessions-Vertrag,” 49: “Verdacht [. . .] der Ausrüstung für diesen niederträchtigen Verkehr.” The exact phrasing in Article V of the *Accessions-Vertrag* reads: “[. . .] daß die besagten Schiffe zum Sklavenhandel benutzt, oder in der Absicht, diesen Handel zu treiben, ausgerüstet worden [. . .]” (that those ships were used for slave trading, or were equipped with the intent to conduct this trade), cf. “Accessions-Vertrag,” 54. On the suspicious items found, cf. “Accessions-Vertrag,” 55–56.

¹⁵ *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 19: “von Leder geflochten, sehr lang, und scheußlich anzusehen.”

¹⁶ “Hamburg, 25. August,” *Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 1, 1841: “aus dem von dem Steuermann eingestandenen Grunde, weil brasilische Schiffe dadurch leicht sich hätten verdächtig machen können.”

¹⁷ *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 16.

from the ship by the charterer shortly before its departure with the justification that transporting it would be too dangerous. Upon further inquiry, the charterer's representative Domingo José Gonzalez Penna, who had been arrested in Hamburg, confirmed that this second barrel had likely held shackles or manacles, as the implied charterer "conducted local business in slaves and could certainly use fetters for that purpose!"¹⁸

The proceedings against the *Louise's* captain Boye, his two helmsmen Christian Andresen and John William Bernhard Alfred Harris, shipowner Ferdinand Blaß, and several of the vessel's charterers initiated at the Hamburg Commercial Court in August 1841 aroused considerable interest among the city's population. In fact, the courtroom was allegedly so "chock-full" on every day of the trial that the police had to be called out on one evening to control the crowds.¹⁹ Based on the circumstantial evidence, the prosecution concluded that Boye had presumably not planned to take slaves aboard himself, but had in fact intended to equip slave ships anchored on the African coast with materials needed for the crossing. With reference to Captain Smyth's statement, prosecutor August Heise emphasized that this was the usual practice of Brazilian slave traders as observed by the British, and that human trafficking could continue to exist only due to such sub-suppliers.²⁰ Captain Boye had known full well "that the cargo was not without reproach, but wanted to use our flag to get away with it."²¹ Based on this accusation, the prosecution requested the permanent confiscation of the ship and its cargo as per the provisions of the treaty.²²

Defense counsel Dr. G. M. Heckscher naturally saw the situation quite differently, presenting not only himself but also his clients as staunch opponents of slavery: "I hate and detest the slave trade. I know that my friends, Captain Boye and Ferdinand Blaß, think and feel the same."²³ His clients, he stated, had never intended to participate in the slaving business, nor had they *de facto* done so. Instead, Heckscher attempted to discredit the motives and actions of the British commander Smyth as unfair and guided by an "excessive arbitrariness contrary to the treaty."²⁴ He sought to prove that the actions of the British Navy had been illegal since – according

18 *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 22: "ein Platzgeschäft mit Sklaven treibe und dazu Fesseln gebrauchen könne."

19 "Hamburg, 27. August," *Bayreuther Zeitung*, September 5, 1841: "gepfropft voll."

20 For Smyth's testimony in this context, cf. *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 44. Concerning the *Julius & Eduard*, Rössler is able to show that her charterer employed this tactic repeatedly. Cf. Rössler, "Bremer Kaufleute," 90–92.

21 *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 21–22: "daß die Ladung nicht vorwurfsfrei war, wollte aber unsere Flagge dazu benutzen, um damit durchzukommen."

22 *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 31.

23 *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 34: "Ich hasse und verabscheue den Sklavenhandel. Ich weiß, daß meine Freunde, Capitain Boye und Ferdinand Blaß, ebenso denken und fühlen."

24 *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 32: "maaflosen tractatenwidrigen Willkühr." In the event of a ship being convicted, the treaty stipulated that part of the revenue from its sale was to go to the crew of the warship that had seized it. Cf. "Accessions-Vertrag," 55.

to Heckscher – the treaty stipulated that only ships actually engaged or intending to engage in slave trading could be prosecuted.²⁵ Trade in goods that could perhaps find a use in the slave trade, on the other hand, could not be punished.²⁶

Ultimately, the attorney of the defense argued that Boye, who had allegedly been unaware of the existence of the treaty and furthermore could not be held responsible for what his passengers brought aboard with them, was completely innocent. This also because, in the opinion of the defense, the entire cargo had ultimately not been intended for the slave trade – neither the cauldron nor the planks, water barrels, or whips.²⁷ The impoundment of the ship and its cargo had thus in no way been legal, since there was no relevant law in Hamburg. The defense thus urged the court not only to acquit, but also to award its clients damages to be paid by the Brits.²⁸

Upon hearing the evidence, the Commercial Court found the *Louise* and her crew, owner and charterer not guilty despite the incriminating evidence submitted by the prosecution. The court considered it proven that the ship “had neither conducted slave trade nor been equipped for the conduction of this trade.”²⁹ Since the *Louise* had made herself suspicious as a result of the mentioned items on board and documents had been destroyed prior to its seizure, however, the involved persons were awarded no indemnities and had to pay the costs of the proceedings.

While this verdict in the case of the *Louise* attributed at least partial blame for the seizure of the ship to the defendants, a Bremian court ultimately acquitted the ship *Julius & Eduard*, which was accused of engaging in slave trading at around the same time, on all counts. In addition, the commander of the British sloop that had stopped and seized the ship was sentenced to pay the costs of litigation as well as

²⁵ *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 53. On Captain Smyth’s putatively incorrect behavior, cf. *ibid.*, 70–71 and 79. Heckscher complained, for example, that Smyth had transferred part of the cargo onto his ship “[w]ährend welcher Zeit alle möglichen tractatenwidrigen Gegenstände unter die Ladung gebracht werden konnten” (during which time all manner of treaty-violating items could be mixed in among the cargo). Cf. *ibid.*, 79. In addition, Smyth had allegedly attempted to entice several crew members to provide false testimony by way of bribes, *ibid.*, 80.

²⁶ *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 60.

²⁷ On Boye’s innocence, cf. *Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren*, 105. On the various items found on board, cf. *ibid.*, 83–97. E.g. on the whips “[. . .] daß diese Peitschen so wenig bestimmt gewesen, Sklaven zu peinigen, als der, gleichfalls in einem Koffer gefundene Sattel, darauf zu reiten” (that these whips were as little intended for tormenting slaves as a saddle likewise found in a trunk was for riding). Cf. *ibid.*, 97. Concerning the large number of water barrels as compared to British ships, the argument was repeatedly made that they were needed due to “Germans being accustomed to the cooking of a larger quantity of vegetables.” Cf. “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers,” 90.

²⁸ “Hamburg, 26. Aug.,” *Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 4, 1841.

²⁹ “Deutsche Bundesstaaten: Hamburg, 6. September,” *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, September 11, 1841: “weder Sklavenhandel betrieben hat, noch zur Betreibung dieses Handels ausgerüstet gewesen ist.”

compensation for damages.³⁰ And although this resulted in the *Julius & Eduard* being retrospectively portrayed in public as having offered no reasonable grounds for suspicion, there are several aspects that cast doubt on this assessment. Historian Horst Rössler, for example, has proven that the outfitter of the ship, Charles Tyng, was a "well-known shipper of slave cargos."³¹ Even some of the contemporary Breman experts were confident of the ship's guilt, not least because the search of the cargo at Bremerhaven revealed a box of padlocks as well as a large number of plates and cups, "with the latter being in part covered and also furnished with all manner of names of the kind given to female slaves, Dido etc."³² The bailiff present during the search, Dr. Johann Daniel Thulesius, hence arrived at the appraisal prior to the trial that not only had the seizure of the ship been rightful and the ship and its cargo should be confiscated, but also that the captain should be convicted of abetment of the slave trade.³³

"[. . .] No Doubt of her Guilt": The Reception of the Cases in Great Britain

The three cases of presumptive German participation in the slave trade attracted attention not only among the German public: The trials were followed with interest especially in Great Britain, and the acquittals of the *Louise* and the *Julius & Eduard* evoked "a strong sensation."³⁴ The *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* in particular expressed great disappointment with the verdicts, with its journal – the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* – commenting on the *Louise*: "In our minds there is no doubt of her guilt."³⁵ The British abolitionists therefore demanded that the treaty concluded with Hamburg be revised as quickly as possible, since the case of the Hanseatic ships "is likely to be followed by many more."³⁶ As this quote indicates, the seizure of the

30 Gildemeister, *Verfahren und Erkenntniß*, 51: "wohlbekannten Ablader von Sklavenladungen." On the trial against the *Julius & Eduard*, cf. Horst Rössler's excellent elaboration: Rössler, "Bremer Kaufleute," 82–94.

31 Rössler, "Bremer Kaufleute," 90–93.

32 Staatsarchiv Bremen, Bestand 2 – D.17.g.2.b.1–4, Gutachten des Bremerhavener Amtmanns Johann Daniel Thulesius, May 14, 1841: "wovon letztere zum Theil bedeckt waren und dann mit allerlei Namen wie sie den Sklavinnen gegeben zu werden pflegen, Dido etc. versehen waren."

33 Instead of viewing especially the metal drinking vessels featuring typical slave names as clear circumstantial evidence, their evidentiary value was notably denied during the trial with reference to the fact that the treaty spoke of wooden receptacles. Cf. Gildemeister, *Verfahren und Erkenntniß*, 48–49.

34 "No Title," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 201.

35 The *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* was convinced that the ship would have been convicted in one of the mixed courts. Cf. "No Title," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 201.

36 "No Title," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 201.

German vessels triggered a changing of views in the British context concerning the role and position of Germans in the slave trade. Until this time, American and British activists had increasingly come to believe – not least as a result of the beginning mass emigration of Germans into the USA – that Germans were particularly suitable cooperation partners for the anti-slavery project due to their social and cultural imprinting or a “natural” predisposition: “There appears, however, to be a natural kindness and true humanity in the German mind, which spurns from it the odious idea of trading in human flesh and blood [. . .].”³⁷ The notion of a “general passion of the Germans for liberty” was therefore already common among Anglo-American activists during the early 1840s and did not permeate only as a result of the presence of exiled German revolutionaries after 1848.³⁸

While this point of view endured throughout the 1840s and 1850s, there was simultaneously a growing awareness triggered by the events of 1841 that Germans were by no means merely uninvolved spectators of the Atlantic slavery system but rather that, despite their own lack of colonies, they profited from colonialism in various ways. In early 1842, for instance, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* published the following grim assessment: “The Germans have no slave-colonies, and yet they are, in numerous cases, proprietors and hirers of slaves. [. . .] Some of these honest and good people, if we may judge from recent events in Hamburg, are equally anxious to engage in the slave-trade.”³⁹

This apparent shift in public opinion was likewise fueled by articles in British newspapers reporting that several merchants from Hamburg had openly raised the allegation in the course of the trials “that England has a sinister motive in endeavouring to abolish the traffic in slaves.”⁴⁰ Among other things, this referred to British claims to dominance in trade with Africa, which will be discussed in more detail below. As a result of these accusations, the British public saw a dramatic increase

37 Cf. “Anti-Slavery Meeting at Frankfort on the Maine,” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 5, no. 58 (01.10.1850): 160. Cf. e.g. “No Title,” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 3, no. 28 (April 1, 1848): 61.

38 Joshua Leavitt, “Seventh Annual Report,” in *Seventh Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society* (New York: William S. Dorr, 1840), 41: “One of our most interesting objects of expenditure has been the diffusion of anti-slavery principles and intelligence, among that portion of our countrymen who use the German language. [. . .] The numbers of people now in the country, who use only that language, with the immense accessions constantly making to their number, and their exclusion from the ordinary means of obtaining information on the subject, render these efforts highly promising; while the general passion of the Germans for liberty, gives the highest assurance that nothing is wanting but light to range them against oppression in this country, as they have fled from it in their fatherland.” It stands to reason that the notion of German immigrants as particularly suitable allies had already arisen due to German expatriates like Carl Follen who had been forced to leave the German Confederation in the wake of the Carlsbad Decrees and the July Revolution.

39 E. S. A., “Anti-Slavery Sentiment in Germany,” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 3, no. 5 (March 9, 1842): 37–38.

40 “The Bremen Slaver (From the Morning Herald),” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 194.

in reports about cases of German embroilment in the slave trade. In summer 1841, for instance, further ships were said to have been equipped for slave transports, "with all the apparatus, instruments, and accommodation necessary to a slaving expedition."⁴¹

The *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* in particular jumped on reports of Germans as participants in the transatlantic slave trade. According to one such account, an involvement of German ships in slaving missions was corroborated by the report of a British Navy officer on a Bremian ship that had allegedly transported several loads of slaves to Brazil in 1838. This had been accomplished in part by flying the Portuguese or German flag as needed: "She once passed an English corvette outside the harbour of Rio, when she had 630 Africans on board. She hoisted Bremen colours; and the deception was so complete that our cruiser had not the slightest suspicion, though she passed almost within hail."⁴²

Participation of Germans in the Atlantic slave trade was revealed at other levels as well. For example, there was reporting about a German mine overseer in Brazil who was said to have beaten a male slave to death. The correspondent for the *Reporter* was convinced that this had been "a deliberate murder, of an unoffending, amiable, sober, useful, and industrious slave."⁴³ The inculpated overseer, who had been hired directly in the German Confederation by "Rundell and Bridges' Slave-Working Company" and therefore must have been aware of his job description, was not prosecuted for his actions according to the newspaper.⁴⁴

The increase in seizures of German ships thus effected a shift in public discourse within Great Britain, or at least a change in opinion among activist circles. As a result, the German territories and their inhabitants assumed a more central position in the view of British abolitionists, who in turn increased their engagement in Germany – especially in Hamburg. Missions of the *Society of Friends* and the *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* visited the Hanseatic city as well as other places in the German Confederation repeatedly during the 1840s to solicit support for their abolitionist project among the local populations.⁴⁵ As will become clear in the following, however, this thrust by the Brits tended to effect contrarious public reactions. That their commitment nevertheless bore at least some fruit in the long term will be demonstrated in the final section of this article on the activities of German opponents of slavery.

⁴¹ "The Bremen Slaver," 195.

⁴² "No Title," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 16 (August 11, 1841): 172.

⁴³ "British Slave-Holders: The Imperial Brazilian Mining Association," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 3 (February 10, 1841): 37.

⁴⁴ "British Slave-Holders," 38.

⁴⁵ Cf. Sarah Lentz, "Wer helfen kann, der helfe!" *Deutsche SklavereieegnerInnen und die atlantische Abolitionsbewegung, 1780–1860* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 242–263 and 353–367.

“Our Flag Has Thrice Been Insulted” – Reframing Suspicions of Slave Trading in the German Public Sphere

Despite the described seizures of three ships and the circumstantial evidence presented by the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* and other British newspapers, the acquittals of the *Louise* and the *Julius & Eduard* ultimately contributed to the view of fundamental innocence regarding German involvement in slave trading and slavery – and thus the notion of German exceptionalism – prevailing within the German Confederation.⁴⁶ The patterns visible during the trials themselves, however, were somewhat more differentiated. Especially the trial against the *Louise*, which was the first to be heard, enduringly captivated the German audience. Newspapers in many parts of the Confederation reported on the proceedings and the subsequent verdict, with many of them refraining from passing their own judgement.⁴⁷ There were even a few more critical voices to be heard in this early phase, for example from the *Allgemeine Zeitung von und für Bayern*, which commented on the initial information on the seizure of the *Louise*: “One is outraged at such dishonoring of a German flag and hopes for exemplary punishment of these sellers of souls.”⁴⁸ While uncertainty and more ambivalent positions had been visible prior to and during the trials, the cases of the three ships were later elevated to indubitable proof of non-involvement in the slave trade in retrospective interpretation by various publicists.⁴⁹

Magnus Ressel has advanced the theory that the acquittal of the ships offered a convenient opportunity for contemporaries to publicly underline their own innocence and non-involvement concerning the slave trade: “Thus the legend of a centuries-spanning abstention from slave trading as a matter of principle was produced by

46 “Das Durchsuchungsrecht der Engländer,” *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, October 28, 1842: “Unsere Flagge ist [. . .] drei Mal beschimpft [. . .] worden.” This article was reprinted with minor changes in the *Aschaffener Zeitung*: “Von der Elbe, 24. Oct.,” *Aschaffener Zeitung*, October 27, 1842.

47 To name reports from but a few cities: “Hamburg, 27. August,” *Nürnberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 2, 1841; “Freie Städte: Hamburg, 25. Aug.,” *Münchener politische Zeitung*, September 3, 1841; “Hamburg, 6. Sept.,” *Frankfurter Ober-Postamts-Zeitung*, September 10, 1841; “Hamburg, v. 6. Juli,” *Kemptner Zeitung*, July 13, 1841. Many newspapers copied and republished reports from higher-circulation papers like the *Allgemeine Zeitung*.

48 “Freie Städte,” *Allgemeine Zeitung von und für Bayern*, May 7, 1841: “Man ist entrüstet über solche Entehrungen einer deutschen Flagge und hoffe exemplarische Bestrafung dieser Seelenverkäufer.” For further examples of more ambivalent reporting, cf. “Hamburg, 22. April,” *Der Friedens- und Kriegs-Kurier*, April 30, 1841 and “Hamburg, 27. August,” *Nürnberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 2, 1841.

49 Such one-sided interpretation was also facilitated by the fact that newspapers regularly reproduced only the arguments of the defense, thereby suggesting an unambiguous balance of evidence. Cf. e.g. “Bremen, 23. März,” *Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 1, 1842.

Hanseatic agents."⁵⁰ And indeed, the notion that there had never been any German embroilment in slavery and the slave trade can be found in various sources from the period. The economist Adolf Soetbeer, for example, wrote in his 1842 publication *Statistik des hamburgischen Handels* (Statistics of Hamburg Trading): "While almost all seafaring nations participated to a greater or lesser extent in the slave trade, the Hanseatic flag has always refrained from any contact with the same."⁵¹

It has hitherto been underappreciated that the proponents of a German special status benefited from the fact that some of the accusations raised by the British press and especially by the *Anti-Slavery Society* turned out to be false. These wrong accusations were subsequently used by the German side to question the British anti-slavery efforts at a fundamental level.⁵² It was, however, the British course of action in the case of the third mentioned vessel, the *Echo*, that contributed more than these partly unfounded rumors to significantly discrediting the British government's project of bringing an end to the slave trade by confiscating ships. After transporting goods from Havana to the West African coast in 1841, the *Echo* took on passengers to Brazil – allegedly including "former slave traders from Havana and Portorico."⁵³ In order to collect further passengers, she subsequently sailed on to Sierra Leone, where her captain Gottlieb August Sohst introduced himself to the governor upon referral and was "directly accused of being implicated in slave dealing."⁵⁴ As there was no proof of any wrongdoing, however, the *Echo* was initially

50 Ressel, "Hamburg," 94: "So wurde die Legende einer prinzipiellen und Jahrhunderte übergreifenden Abstinenz vom Sklavenhandel durch hanseatische Akteure gelegt."

51 Adolf Soetbeer, *Statistik des hamburgischen Handels: 1839–1841* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1842), 402: "Während fast sämtliche schiffahrttreibende Nationen mehr oder minder sich beim Sklavenhandel betheiligten, hat die hanseatische Flagge sich stets frei von jeder Berührung mit demselben gehalten."

52 In August 1841, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* had written about one Don José Santos – "the most extensive and notorious slaver in existence" – who used five ships sailing from Hamburg under the Danish flag to supply Brazil with slaves. Cf. "Jos. Santos and the Danish Slavers," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 16 (August 11, 1841): 175. It later turned out that the British abolitionists had been misinformed and the mentioned ships had not been slavers after all. Rather, Santos – who had served as the Portuguese consul in Hamburg – had been gifted a stretch of land on the West African coast by his monarch and planned to establish a colony there. Cf. "Freie Städte, Hamburg, 13. Mai," *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, May 22, 1841. Upon hearing the rumors, he sued for slander. Despite the attempts by the British abolitionists to prove the legitimacy of their allegations, sentiments among the German press quickly tipped in Santos' favor, and ever more details about his planned undertaking that rebutted an intended participation in the slave trade came to light. Cf. "No Title," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 201 and "Hamburg, 30. Oct.," *Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 6, 1841. The British were subsequently once again accused of dishonest motives. Cf.: "Hamburg, im August," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, August 27, 1841.

53 "Freie Städte," *Münchener politische Zeitung*, May 18, 1841, 634: "frühere Sklavenhändler aus Havanna und Portorico." Several captains and helmsmen captured and dismissed for slave trading were purportedly also among the passengers.

54 "Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers," 104.

allowed to leave port with her passengers. She was quickly ordered back “on suspicion of having intended slave trading,” however:⁵⁵ “[. . .] the papers and private letters of every one taken away, plundered of all their baggage and money by officers in civil dresses, who would not give an answer, [. . .]; then rudely thrust by soldiers, in the night, into a boat, without the slightest preparation, or assigning any reason why they were so maltreated, or what was to become of them [. . .].”⁵⁶

Due to allegedly incorrect papers designed to disguise the *Echo*’s involvement in slave trading, the ship as well as its cargo and even some of the crew’s personal belongings were sold on location almost immediately. The sailors were forced to wait a long time for their trial, however. As Captain Sohst reported to the *Echo*’s owner Justus Frederick Ballauf: “I was, without further ado, thrown into prison among thieves and murderers. Bail was refused. The prison is the place where the healthiest European must lose his health; and in my opinion it is the wish of the Governor that I should die here.”⁵⁷ Ernst Cesar Hartung, who was serving as the Bremian consul in Sierra Leone at the time, came to the aid of the stranded and penniless captain and crew. They engaged a lawyer to lodge an appeal in London, “knowing that there only right would be granted, otherwise the names of the owner and captain would be blamed and the honour of our flag be tarnished for ever!”⁵⁸ A report by Hartung submitted to the British Parliament in 1842 described the actions of the authorities in Sierra Leone “[s]o flagrant an act of injustice” and pointed out that they had caused not only material damage, since three members of the *Echo*’s crew had died in Sierra Leone: “THREE LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST!”⁵⁹ It would take until 1844 for the verdict against Sohst and his vessel to be retroactively repealed. The wrongly accused were awarded compensation amounting to the value of the seized ship and cargo – but no further redress for accrued costs or injuries suffered was offered.⁶⁰

While the initial seizure of the three mentioned ships had already aggravated emotions among the German public, the misconduct in the case of the *Echo* caused them to boil over in many people.⁶¹ The following passage was included in Hartung’s report, for instance: “I have never heard of the Hamburg flag having covered slave-trading, even at the time when it was carried on by England and other nations; that it is, and was, ever held in abhorrence throughout Germany; but the manner in which German vessels have been treated *this year*, while carrying on their legal and honourable

55 “Freie Städte,” 634: “wegen Verdachts, Sklavenhandel beabsichtigt zu haben.”

56 “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers,” 104.

57 “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers,” 88.

58 “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers,” 104.

59 “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers,” 105.

60 Cf. “Hamburg,” *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, May 30, 1844.

61 As mentioned before, there were also allegations in the case of the *Louise* of attempted bribery to persuade the crew to testify against the captain.

commerce [. . .] has excited a feeling of indignation [. . .]."⁶² And indeed, voices could increasingly be heard in the public discourse that questioned the true nature of the British interests. As the reporter covering the trial against the Bremen ship *Julius & Eduard* emphasized: "One may well consider the suspicion frequently heard on the occasion of the Hamburg trial against the *Louise* and of the condemnation of the *Echo* in Sierra Leone, namely that the British government has given its cruisers the secret instruction to inhibit the trade of less powerful nations in those regions as much as possible, to be not unfounded."⁶³

The German public interpreted the actions of the British not only in the context of their pursuit of a trade monopoly, however, but also in terms of their alleged striving for colonial dominance.⁶⁴ The *Allgemeine Zeitung*, for instance, wrote that "that violent nation wishes to spoil the tropical zones of Africa for every other flag, namely also the Hanseatic one, under the pretense of slave trade." Such treatment would only serve to intensify "the wish for German colonies," however.⁶⁵ Statements like this one are early forebodings of the so-called "Scramble for Africa" that would culminate during the final third of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ The mentioned articles frequently called for the German territories – in particular the Hanseatic cities – to stand up to such behavior by the British: "We must rise up against the insolence of the British, against their predaciousness and their clandestine plans to prevent the trade of

62 "Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers," 104.

63 Gildemeister, *Verfahren und Erkenntniß*, 37: "Wohl möge man den bei Gelegenheit des Hamburger Verfahrens über die 'Louise' so wie der Condemnation der 'Echo' in Sierra Leone vielfach laut gewordenen Argwohn, daß die britische Regierung ihren Kreuzern die geheime Instruction gegeben habe, dem Handel minder mächtiger Nationen in jenen Gegenden nach Kräften zu wehren, nicht ungegründet finden."

64 On the accusation of suppressing all trade with Africa, cf. e.g. "Bremen, 23. März" and "Nord-amerikas Stellung zum Quintupel-Traktat vom 29. December 1841: Nach amtlichen Daten von Olof Berg, schwedisch-norwegischem Consul: Königsberg, Gräfe und Unzer, 1842," *Literaturblatt* no. 29 (March 17, 1843): 113: "Es [Großbritannien] maßt sich an unter dem Vorwand, versteckte Sklaven zu suchen, alle Schiffe zu visitiren und mißbraucht dieß Recht gegen die Schwächern, wie kürzlich das Schicksal des Hamburger Schiffs 'Louise' bewiesen hat, auf eine wahrhaft schamlose Weise." (It [Great Britain] presumes under the pretense of seeking concealed slaves to search all ships and abuses this power against weaker entities, as the fate of the Hamburg ship "Louise" has recently proven, in a truly shameless manner.)

65 "Hamburg, im August," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, August 27, 1841: "daß jenes gewalthätige Volk unter dem Vorwand des Sklavenhandels jeder andern Flagge, namentlich auch der hanseatischen, die tropischen Zonen Afrika's durchaus verleiden möchte"; "den Wunsch nach deutschen Colonien."

66 On the connection between the anti-slavery project and the Scramble for Africa, cf. e.g. William Mulligan, "The Anti-Slave Trade Campaign in Europe, 1888–1890," in *A Global History of Anti-Slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. William Mulligan and Maurice Bric (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 149–170.

our ships with the African coast under the cloak of philanthropy so that they might dine at this table alone.”⁶⁷

As these examples show, the British abolitionist agenda was repeatedly de-based as a pure power-political pretense and understood as an explicit attack on the German “national honor” in the public discourse.⁶⁸ Significantly, this interpretation also lastingly discredited the accusation of possible German participation in the Atlantic slavery system, which further promoted already existing notions of German exceptionalism. As a consequence, these contemporary statements often featured certain overtones of moral superiority compared to other European nations, especially the British: “Our flag has thrice been insulted and treated with disdain, and by whom? – by the British, the greatest slave traders.”⁶⁹

The statements likewise strove to underline how unanimously slavery and the slave trade were allegedly loathed in the Hanseatic cities and beyond. The Hamburg syndic Karl Sieveking, who had negotiated the anti-slavery treaty with Great Britain on behalf of the City of Hamburg, spoke of “horror in which the Slave Trade is held in the Hanse Towns.”⁷⁰ The case of the Hamburg merchant Heinrich Flindt, who was contacted by a North American slaver in 1843 about participating in a slave expedition, provides an indication that parts of the population may indeed have held such slavery-critical sentiments: Flindt not only declined the offer, but proceeded to make it public in order to unveil this “brazenness.”⁷¹

While Flindt’s case illustrates that some Hamburg traders may indeed have resisted the temptation to profit from the slave trade, it also shows how easily such participation could be arranged. There is also evidence that there must have been some awareness, at least among merchants, of an embroilment of the Hanseatic cities in the slave business. The mentioned abolitionist Sieveking’s father, for example, had attempted as late as the 1780s to organize a slave trading expedition from Hamburg.⁷²

67 “Das Durchsuchungsrecht der Engländer”: “Wir haben uns zu erheben gegen die Anmaßung der Britten, gegen ihre Raublust und ihre verborgenen Pläne, unter dem Deckmantel der Menschenliebe unsern Schiffen den Handel nach den africanischen Küsten zu entleiden, damit sie allein zur Tafel sitzen können.”

68 “Das Durchsuchungsrecht der Engländer.” In fact the case of the *Echo* also gave rise to criticism within Great Britain regarding the actions of the British officials. Cf. “Freie Städte,” *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, October 2, 1841. The newspaper referred to an article in the *Times*.

69 “Das Durchsuchungsrecht der Engländer”: “Unsere Flagge ist [. . .] drei Mal beschimpft und verächtlich behandelt worden, und von wem? – von den Briten, den größten Sklavenhändlern.”

70 “Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers,” 99.

71 “Antrag eines Sklavenhändlers an einen Hamburger Kaufmann,” *Gutenberg: Zeitschrift für Gebildete* 4, no. 6 (1843): 47: “Schamlosigkeit”

72 Cf. Johann Christian Sinapius, *Lesebuch für Kaufleute* (Leipzig: Mathießen, 1782), 414–417. For more information on Sinapius and his own embroilment in the slave trade, see Susanne Woelk, *Der Fremde unter den Freunden: Biographische Studien zu Caspar von Voght* (Hamburg: Weidmann, 2000), 113–114. What is more, various families from Hamburg and Bremen still owned plantations during the nineteenth century, for example in Suriname. Cf. e.g. Hermann Kellenbenz, “Deutsche

Educational textbooks for traders that the leading generation of Hanseatic merchants around 1840 would have had to have come into contact with during their training contained obvious evidence of an involvement of German businessmen in slaving. One such textbook, published in 1805 by mercantile author Wilhelm Benecke, included the following passage on the possibility of taking out insurance on enslaved persons: "In Hamburg, insurance on negroes is not very common, nor does a law on this matter exist. Anyone wishing to contract such insurance in said place must arrange the conditions precisely and include them in the policy. – I have knowledge of cases in which insurers from Hamburg refused to recompense the price of slaves killed in revolts, and where the insured acquiesced to this without seeking a judge's verdict in the matter."⁷³

While these textbooks had been published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and addressed merchants explicitly, there were also works written for a broader public during the second quarter of the nineteenth century that revealed the participation of Germans in the Atlantic slavery system. Relevant examples are the repeatedly reprinted memoirs of the slave trader Joachim Nettelbeck that were first published in 1821 as well as the travelogue of physician and abolitionist Nikolaus Heinrich Julius, who informed his compatriots about German slaveholders in North America.⁷⁴ While both mentioned works were furnished as proof of German involvement in the slave business by British abolitionists, they did not provoke reflection among the German public concerning its own moral complicity.⁷⁵ Instead, the conviction persisted that Germans had no direct share whatsoever in the

Plantagenbesitzer und Kaufleute in Surinam vom Ende des 18. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 3 (1966): 141–163.

⁷³ Wilhelm Benecke, *System des Assekuranz- und Bodmereiwesens, aus den Gesetzen und Gebräuchen Hamburgs und der vorzüglichsten handelnden Nationen Europens [sic], so wie aus der Natur des Gegenstandes entwickelt: Für Versicherer, Kaufleute und Rechtsgelehrte*, vol. 1, (Hamburg: Conrad Müller, 1805), 52: "In Hamburg sind Versicherungen auf Neger nicht sehr gewöhnlich, auch ist kein Gesetz über diesen Gegenstand vorhanden. Wer also daselbst solche Versicherungen schliessen will, muß die Bedingungen genau verabreden und sie der Police einverleiben. – Mir sind Vorfälle bekannt, wo Hamburgische Versicherer sich weigerten, den Preis der im Aufruhr getödteten Sklaven zu vergüten, und wo die Versicherten sich dies gefallen liessen, ohne die Sache auf einen richterlichen Ausspruch ankommen zu lassen." Further evidence of this can be found in Sinapius, *Lesebuch für Kaufleute*, 414–417.

⁷⁴ Joachim Nettelbeck, *Des Seefahrers Nettelbeck höchst erstaunliche Lebensgeschichte von ihm selbst erzählt*, vol. 1 (Halle: Rengersche Buchhandlung, 1821) and Nikolaus Heinrich Julius, *Nordamerikas sittliche Zustände. Nach eigenen Anschauungen in den Jahren 1834, 1835 und 1836*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1839), e.g. 350–356, 362.

⁷⁵ E. S. A., "Anti-Slavery Sentiment in Germany," 37–38. The *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitschrift* elides Nettelbeck's participation in slave trading, which he describes in detail in the book, with the following words: "[Nettelbeck] machte eine Menge bedeutender Reisen, namentlich an die Westküste Afrikas und nach Surinam [. . .]." ([Nettelbeck] made many important journeys, namely to the west coast of Africa and to Suriname.) Cf. "Vermischte Schriften," *Jenaische allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, no. 49 (March 1822): 392. An extensive review in the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* likewise neglects to

persistence of slavery. One key reason for this phenomenon lies in the fact that the notion of exceptionalism regarding the Atlantic slave trade represented an important source of moral capital in the German discourse: It was precisely this idea that served to generate part of the “national” honor against the background of the lack of colonies, which was increasingly being perceived as a massive shortcoming.⁷⁶ In 1840, for instance, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* countered criticism that the “German nation” acted too little, wrote too much, and all too often retreated “into a form of banal cosmopolitanism” on the international stage as follows: “In exchange, we find in our ‘banal cosmopolitanism’ some compensation in the fact that as a consequence of this isolation, the German name alone has not been tarnished by participation in the slave trade.”⁷⁷

The conviction that the Germans, in contrast to other nations, were not guilty of any moral wrongdoing related to the business of slavery was therefore of significant importance for the construction of a positively connoted “German” identity – especially during the *Vormärz* period. The characterization of “the German” as a natural opposer of slavery, which became dominant in this period, created a model for identification through which an imagined community of all “Germans” could be construed.⁷⁸ This may also explain why so many contemporaries reacted touchily to

mention Nettelbeck’s involvement in the slave trade, cf. Amalie von Helwig, “Ueber Joachim Nettelbeck’s Leben, von ihm selbst aufgezeichnet und herausgegeben vom Verfasser der grauen Mappe,” *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, no. 59 (March 9, 1822): 233–234; no. 60 (March 11, 1822): 237–238 and no. 61 (March 12, 1822): 242. It is noteworthy that a fifty-page summary of the autobiography in the *Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen* touches upon Nettelbeck’s slave-trading activity, but in contrast to the book itself portrays the Pommeranian seafarer as having persistently disapproved of dealing in humans: “Wohl war es dem menschenfreundlichen Nettelbeck auch damals schon, wo dieses Handwerk noch nicht in einem solchen Verrufe stand, zuwider sich hier mit Negerhandel befassen zu müssen, [. . .] doch war eine unmenschliche Behandlung derselben ja nicht nöthig und er duldete sie wenigstens niemals, so weit er hierbei einwirken durfte.” (While the philanthropist Nettelbeck already detested having to occupy himself with negro trading here at a time when this business was not in such disrepute, [. . .] inhumane treatment of them was not required and he at least never tolerated it insofar as he was permitted to exert influence.) Cf. “Joachim Nettelbeck,” *Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen* 2, no. 1 (1826): 277.

⁷⁶ Susanne M. Zantop was the first to call attention to this phenomenon with her concept of the *colonial fantasies*: Susanne M. Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

⁷⁷ “Marmier und die deutsche Literatur: II. Oeffentliche Thätigkeit und öffentlicher Geist in Deutschland,” *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, April 6, 1840, 769: “deutsche Nation . . . in eine Art banalen Weltbürgerthums”; “Wir finden in unserm ‘banalen Weltbürgerthum’ dafür einigen Ersatz darin, daß der deutsche Name allein in Folge jener Isolirung nicht von der Theilnahme an dem Sklavenhandel befleckt worden ist.”

⁷⁸ On this argument, cf. also Sarah Lentz, “Deutsche Profiteure des atlantischen Sklavereisystems und der deutschsprachige Sklavereidiskurs der Spätaufklärung,” in *Das Meer: Maritime Welten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Peter Burschel and Sünne Jüterczenska (Cologne: Böhlau, forthcoming) and Sarah Lentz, “‘Oh, wonderful sugar beet! You are the death of the bloody sugar cane’: The German

information that challenged this narrative of a German special status, and why the mentioned accusations by the British were interpreted as explicit attacks on the German "national honor."⁷⁹

While many publicists of the time correspondingly balked at the thought that their compatriots could be making profits off the slave trade, we must also ask in closing how active abolitionists in the German Confederation, who increasingly entered into cooperations with British activists beginning in the 1840s, reacted to the cases of suspicion against the *Louise*, the *Julius & Eduard*, and the *Echo*. Was it equally unthinkable to them that Germans were embroiled in the business of slavery, or did they believe the reports by their British allies and attempt to take action against such involvement?

"Blushing We Write It Down" – German Abolitionists and the German Involvement in the Slave Economy

Between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century, the Atlantic anti-slavery movement found expression in the German territories as well.⁸⁰ The 1840s and early 1850s in particular can be considered the zenith of this German slavery-critical engagement, for it is during this time that the largest number of abolitionist initiatives can be found – ranging from the writing of anti-slavery treatises through the eschewal of sugar produced with slave labor and the collection of charitable donations all the way to the redemption of slaves and the establishment of abolitionist societies.⁸¹ Despite intensifying contacts and exchange with the British movement during this period, the following paragraphs will show that the theory of a "blind spot" regarding the Germans' own involvement can notably also be applied to German citizens who actively participated in the fight against slavery. While the narrative of the "good German" who would oppose slavery due to his socialization or even due to "natural" characteristics inherent to the "German nation" was met with approval among the general public as well as within abolitionist circles, it can also be shown for various activists that they were fundamentally skeptical in regard to allegations of German complicity. This is especially apparent in the case

Debate on the Morality of the Consumption of Sugar Produced by Slave Labour Around 1800," in *Moralizing Commerce in a Globalizing World*, ed. Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming) and Lentz, "Wer helfen kann, der helfe!"

⁷⁹ "Das Durchsuchungsrecht der Engländer."

⁸⁰ For the quotation in the heading, cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Carové, "Sklaverei und deren Ausrottung: V. (Beschluß)," *Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 18, 1849, 277: "[. . .] erröthend schreiben wir es nieder."

⁸¹ Cf. Lentz, "Wer helfen kann, der helfe," 233–402.

of the Hamburg abolitionist Christian Friedrich Wurm, who was also a member of the *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*. Wurm had compiled an extensive report on the trial against the *Louise* for the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* on behalf of the organization. Although the article reproduces the positions of the prosecution and defense in detail, it simultaneously illustrates that there appears to have been no doubt of the ship's innocence in the eyes of Wurm and most of the participants in the trial already before the beginning of the proceedings.⁸² Wurm writes, for example, that the mood in the courtroom evidenced a "proper detestation of the slave-trade" as well as a "confident expectation that the Hamburg flag would not have so far degraded its hitherto unspotted character as to engage in so heinous a crime."⁸³

In light of the reproval of the actions of the British that was increasingly being voiced, Wurm emphasized that no one could deny the great sacrifices the British had made in terms of the abolishment of slavery. But he simultaneously warned that "the sacrifice would lose part of its value, the example its entire moral effect should a factual trade monopoly be linked in any way to the regulations."⁸⁴ He also criticized the British intrusiveness and underlined that "no further external impetus is needed to convince the Germans that foreign infringements, may they come from wherever they will, can only be counteracted with unity and conciliation."⁸⁵ To Wurm, an unwarranted restriction of German trade could thus quickly become an assault on the "national" sovereignty of the German states – respectively, in his perception, of "Germany."

Despite repeated impulses from British abolitionists, there is evidence of only a scant few efforts on the part of German activists to broach the topic of German embroilment, let alone putting an end to it. Instead, the persistence of the notion of German exceptionalism even among abolitionists in the late 1840s is apparent – among other sources – in the 1848 founding declaration of the *Nationalverein für Abschaffung der Sklaverei* (*National Society for the Abolition of Slavery*). It featured a clear denial of any participation by Germans in the Atlantic slavery system: "Does our nation, which was so fortunate to abstain from direct participation in colonial slavery, therefore have a less sacred duty to support the other nations in the battle against this monster?"⁸⁶

⁸² Christian Friedrich Wurm, "Trial of the Louisa: Hamburg Tribunal of Commerce, August 25th and 26th," *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 202.

⁸³ Cf. Wurm, "The Trial of the Louisa," 202–204.

⁸⁴ Christian Friedrich Wurm, "Deutschland: Der Hamburger Sklavenhandelsproceß," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, October 11, 1841: "Das Opfer würde einen Theil seines Werthes, das Beispiel seine ganze sittliche Wirkung verlieren, wenn an die Maaßregeln ein factisches Handelsmonopol irgendwie sich knüpfen sollte."

⁸⁵ Wurm, "Deutschland: Der Hamburger Sklavenhandelsproceß": "daß es keines äußeren Anstoßes mehr bedarf, um die Deutschen zu überzeugen, daß fremden Uebergriffen, sie mögen kommen woher sie wollen, nur durch Einheit und Einigung begegnet werden kann."

⁸⁶ Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Grimm Nachlass 447, Friedrich Wilhelm Carové, *An die deutsche Nation* (Darmstadt, 1848): "Hat unser Volk, welches so glücklich war,

Only one German abolitionist seems to have seriously attempted to take action in this regard: the author and philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Carové from Heidelberg, who was presumably the most committed German anti-slavery activist between 1844 and his death in 1852. He was not only a founding member of the *Nationalverein für Abschaffung der Sklaverei*, he was also the primary contact person for Anglo-American abolitionists in the German territories.⁸⁷ During the second half of the 1840s in particular, Carové tried to raise awareness of German involvement in the slavery business. Among other efforts, he did so by way of his slavery-critical series *Sklaverei und deren Ausrottung (Slavery and its Extirpation)* published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* between 1847 and 1850. Although he did not explicitly allude to the three ships discussed in this article, whose trials had ended some years earlier, Carové repeatedly voiced the indignant opinion that German ships continued to participate in the slave trade. Referring to the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, he bemoaned that several "slave ships under Hamburgian and one under Prussian flag set sail to Africa" from Brazil in 1845.⁸⁸ For the following years, Carové saw himself compelled to inform his readers – "blushing we write it down" – that at least two ships in 1846 and three in 1847 had transported slaves to Brazil flying the flag of Hamburg.⁸⁹

But Carové did not restrict himself to public criticism of German involvement in the Atlantic slavery system. He also worked toward having the corresponding laws tightened, his hopes resting on the new constitution that was to be hammered out in the course of the March Revolution of 1848. With the help of his friend, the famous linguist, literary scholar and jurist Jacob Grimm, Carové was eventually able to introduce a motion at the Frankfurt National Assembly held at St. Paul's Church to prepend the following article to the charter of basic rights: "All Germans are free, and German soil tolerates no thralldom. It makes free any foreign unfree persons who stay upon it."⁹⁰ As noted in the minutes of the session, representative Grimm's proposition was met with "bravos from many sides." While most scholars have

unmittelbarer Betheiligung an der Colonialsklaverei fern zu bleiben, darum eine minder heilige Pflicht die anderen Völker im Kampfe gegen jenes Ungethüm zu unterstützen?"

⁸⁷ Lentz, "Wer helfen kann, der helfe," 265–277.

⁸⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm Carové, "Sklaverei und deren Ausrottung: IV," *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, December 28, 1847: "Sklavenschiffe unter hamburgischer und eines unter preußischer Flagge nach Afrika abgesegelt [. . .]!" He was referring to the British consular report from Rio de Janeiro that had been published in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*.

⁸⁹ Carové also publicly assailed the *Mainzer Adelsverein* for tolerating slavery on its estates in Texas and owned a plantation with slaves itself. Lentz, "Wer helfen kann, der helfe," 355–358 and James C. Kearney, *Nassau Plantation: The Evolution of a Texas-German Slave Plantation* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2010), 39–53, 165–183.

⁹⁰ Franz Wigard, ed., *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Sauerländer, 1848), 737: "Alle Deutschen sind frei, und deutscher Boden duldet keine Knechtschaft. Fremde Unfreie, die auf ihm verweilen macht er frei." The subsequent quote, "Bravo von vielen Seiten," is from the same source.

interpreted the motion as a single-handed effort by Grimm, historians Steffen Seybold and Hartmut Schmidt have advanced the thesis that it was in fact a cooperation with Carové.⁹¹ This is corroborated by the existence of a letter written by Carové in which he asked his friend to extend the proposed text given the proven involvement of German ships in the slave trade and to formulate it as an explicit precept against German participation in the Atlantic slavery system: “No German may keep a slave, nor participate directly or knowingly indirectly in any undertaking that intends the enslavement of a person or trade in slaves, or that can only be executed by means of slaves.”⁹² This demand by Carové illustrates his wish to effect a clearer legal regulation to conclusively eliminate the judicial gray area that had become apparent in the cases of the *Louise* and the *Julius & Eduard*. Based on the criteria laid down in his proposal, both ships would have had to be found unequivocally guilty of trading in slaves or abetment of the same. It is noteworthy that in order to lend emphasis to the intended regulation, Carové suggested that persons found guilty of slaveholding or slave trading should “have their German imperial citizenship revoked.”⁹³ This addition proves that he considered German participation in the Atlantic slavery system problematic for the German “national” honor.

Carové’s ambitious project would not come to fruition despite his efforts, however: Neither were his additions to the constitutional amendment considered for the vote in St. Paul’s, nor did the amendment’s original version manage to obtain a majority.⁹⁴ The brief argumentation against the proposition tabled by Grimm prior to the vote asserted that it was unnecessary to note that the Germans were a nation of free individuals. After all, it continued, unfree foreigners were already “regarded as free here.”⁹⁵ German soil could not make them free on principle, however, since such status would not be accepted upon their return to their native countries. This phrasing suggested that Germans generally did not bring unfree persons to the German

91 Steffen Seybold, “Freiheit statt Knechtschaft: Jacob Grimms Antrag zur Paulskirchenverfassung,” *Der Staat* 51, no. 2 (2012): 215–231 and Hartmut Schmidt, “‘Kein Deutscher darf einen Sklaven halten’: Jacob Grimm und Friedrich Wilhelm Carové,” in *Bedeutungen und Ideen in Sprachen und Texten*, ed. Werner Neumann and Bärbel Techtmeier (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987), 190.

92 Schmidt, “Kein Deutscher,” 190: “Kein Deutscher darf einen Sklaven halten, noch sich unmittelbar oder wesentlich mittelbar bei einer Unternehmung betheiligen, welche Versklavung eines Menschen oder Sklavenhandel bezweckt, oder nur mittels Sklaven in Ausführung gebracht werden kann.” Cf. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Grimm Nachlass 447, fol. 36–38, Friedrich Wilhelm Carové to Jakob Grimm, Heidelberg, July 11, 1848.

93 Carové to Grimm, Heidelberg, July 11, 1848: “des deutschen Reichsbürgerrechts verlustig erklärt.”

94 Cf. Schmidt, “Kein Deutscher,” 191. Seybold provides a good overview of the possible reasons for the rejection of the proposition, see Seybold, “Freiheit,” 228–230.

95 Franz Wigard, ed., *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: Sauerländer, 1848), 971: “bei uns als Freie gelten.”

lands.⁹⁶ The mentioned "isolated cases" were portrayed as exceptions, and the article proposed by Grimm was thus denied all warrant.

The episode relating to the constitutional amendment proposed by Grimm and Carové indicates that even in 1848, the majority opinion was still that there was no need for action concerning German involvement in slavery and the slave trade. At the same time, however, it seems clear that the seizure of the *Louise*, the *Echo*, and the *Julius & Eduard* – along with the subsequent campaign by British abolitionists – motivated at least individual Germans like Carové and Grimm to critically reflect their nation's own embroilment in the Atlantic slavery system and to attempt to end this German participation.

Conclusion

Although evidence of German embroilment in slavery and the slave trade during the early 1840s reached a high point with the seizure of the three ships *Louise*, *Julius & Eduard*, and *Echo*, many Germans were still unable to imagine their compatriots being involved in the Atlantic slavery system.⁹⁷ This article proves that German publicists – and in part even active German abolitionists – instead suspected British propaganda behind the cases of suspicion against German ships that increasingly began to occur starting in 1841. This alleged propaganda was thought to pursue the goal of keeping "Germany" away from trade with Africa and South America and preventing potential German colonial projects. The widespread disbelief was one of the main reasons for the overall lack of resistance against the involvement of German contemporaries in the slave trade – for how should something be opposed whose very existence was denied a priori? Consequently, most German abolitionists likewise adhered to the notion of a German special status or exceptionalism in regard to the Atlantic slavery system, and only sporadic activities targeting German contributions to the slave trade can be determined. Only the most committed of all German

96 Cf. Wigard, *Stenographischer Bericht*, vol. 2, 971: "Aber hier kann man schon nicht sagen, daß der deutsche Boden die Unfreien frei mache, sondern nur, daß sie bei uns als Freie gelten; denn wenn z. B. der leibeigene Russe, der sich bei uns aufhält, wieder zurückkehrt, so zweifle ich sehr, daß man ihn, weil er in Deutschland gewesen, dort als frei betrachten wird. In Deutschland wird es allerdings geschehen, wenn auch vereinzelt Fälle entgegengesetzter Art vorgekommen sein sollen." (But here one can already not say that German soil makes unfree persons free, only that they are regarded as free while here; for when e.g. the bondservant Russian staying with us returns home, I very much doubt that he will be considered free there due to having been in Germany. In Germany this will be the case, although isolated cases of the opposite kind are said to have occurred.)

97 Knowledge about German involvement in the Atlantic slavery system had circulated within the German public already before, for example regarding German slaveholders and slave drivers in Suriname, but critical discourse did not develop in this context either. Cf. Lentz, "Deutsche Profit-eure des atlantischen Sklavereisystems."

abolitionists, Friedrich Wilhelm Carové, campaigned for change – but his attempt to get the Frankfurt Parliament to add an anti-slavery article to the constitution failed. This confirms the theory of a “blind spot” concerning a certain complicity in the persistence of slavery among the German public as well as by the German politicians and revolutionaries in Frankfurt.

Although the three seizures of German ships caused a considerable stir, the combination of prevailing views and the eventual acquittals of the ships and their crews allowed these events to be reframed such that existing perceptions were ultimately confirmed. The notions of German moral superiority and British self-interest apparent in the German public narratives are harbingers of the Scramble for Africa and the connected “civilizing mission” – for which German contemporaries saw themselves particularly qualified and eligible as a result.

References

Archival Sources

- Staatsarchiv Bremen, Bestand 2 – D.17.g.2.b.1–4, Gutachten des Bremerhavener Amtmanns Johann Daniel Thulesius, May 14, 1841.
- Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Grimm Nachlass 447, Carové, Friedrich Wilhelm to Grimm, Jakob, Heidelberg, July 11, 1848.
- Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Grimm Nachlass 447, Carové, Wilhelm Friedrich. *An die deutsche Nation*. Darmstadt, 1848.

Printed Sources

- “Accessions-Vertrag der freien und Hansestädte Lübeck, Bremen und Hamburg, zu dem am 30. November 1831 und 22. März 1833 zwischen I. I. M. M., den Königen der Franzosen und des Vereinigten Königreichs von Großbritannien und Irland, zum Zweck einer wirksameren Unterdrückung des Sklavenhandels abgeschlossenen Tractaten, unterzeichnet zu Hamburg den 9. Juni 1837.” In *Sammlung der Verordnungen der freyen Hanse-Stadt Hamburg, seit 1814. Funfzehnter Band. Verordnungen von 1837 bis 1839*, edited by Johann Martin Lappenberg, 41–70. Hamburg: Johann August Meißner, 1840.
- “Antrag eines Sklavenhändlers an einen Hamburger Kaufmann.” *Gutenberg: Zeitschrift für Gebildete* 4, no. 6 (1843): 47.
- Benecke, Wilhelm. *System des Assekuranz- und Bodmereiwesens, aus den Gesetzen und Gebräuchen Hamburgs und der vorzüglichsten handelnden Nationen Europens [sic], so wie aus der Natur des Gegenstandes entwickelt: Für Versicherer, Kaufleute und Rechtsgelehrte*. Vol. 1. Hamburg: Conrad Müller, 1805.
- “Bremen, 10. Mai.” *Frankfurter Ober-Postamts-Zeitung*, May 16, 1841.
- “Bremen, 23. März.” *Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 1, 1842.
- “Bremen, 26. Mai.” *Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 8, 1841.

- "The Bremen Slaver (From the Morning Herald)." *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 194–195.
- "British Slave-Holders: The Imperial Brazilian Mining Association." *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 3 (February 10, 1841): 37–38.
- Carové, Friedrich Wilhelm. "Sklaverei und deren Ausrottung: IV." *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, December 28, 1847.
- Carové, Friedrich Wilhelm. "Sklaverei und deren Ausrottung: V. (Beschluß)." *Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 18, 1849.
- "Class C: Correspondence on Slave Trade, with Foreign Powers: Parties of Conventions under which Vessels are to be Tried by the Tribunals of the Nation to which they Belong: From January 1, to December 31, 1841, inclusive." In *Parliamentary Papers: Accounts and Papers: Slavery*. Vol. 19, Session February 3–August 12, 1842, 1–162, London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842.
- "Deutsche Bundesstaaten: Hamburg, 6. September." *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, September 11, 1841.
- "Das Durchsuchungsrecht der Engländer." *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, October 28, 1842.
- E. S. A. "Anti-Slavery Sentiment in Germany." *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 3, no. 5 (March 9, 1842): 37–38.
- "Freie Städte." *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, October 2, 1841.
- "Freie Städte." *Münchener politische Zeitung*, May 18, 1841.
- "Freie Städte, Hamburg, 13. Mai." *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, May 22, 1841.
- "Freie Städte, Hamburg, 25. Aug." *Münchener politische Zeitung*, September 3, 1841.
- Gildemeister, Johann Carl Friedrich. *Verfahren und Erkenntniß des Obergerichts in Untersuchungssachen wider den Capitain des Bremischen Schiffs Julius & Eduard u. Conf. wegen Sklavenhandels: Nach den Acten dargestellt*. Bremen: Johann Georg Heyse, 1842.
- "Hamburg, 22. April." *Der Friedens- und Kriegs-Kurier*, April 30, 1841.
- "Hamburg, 26. Aug." *Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 4, 1841.
- "Hamburg, 27. August." *Bayreuther Zeitung*, September 5, 1841.
- "Hamburg, 27. August." *Nürnberger Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 2, 1841.
- "Hamburg, 6. Sept." *Frankfurter Ober-Postamts-Zeitung*, September 10, 1841.
- "Hamburg, 30. Oct." *Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 6, 1841.
- "Hamburg, im August." *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, August 27, 1841.
- "Hamburg." *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, May 30, 1844.
- "Hamburg, v. 6. Juli." *Kemptner Zeitung*, July 13, 1841.
- Handelsgerichtliches Verfahren und Erkenntniß über die Hamburger Bark Louise wegen Verdachts der Bethheiligung im Sklavenhandel*. Hamburg: Johann Philipp Erie, 1842.
- Helwig, Amalie von. "Ueber Joachim Nettelbeck's Leben, von ihm selbst aufgezeichnet und herausgegeben vom Verfasser der grauen Mappe." *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, no. 59 (March 9, 1822): 233–234; no. 60 (March 11, 1822): 237–238 and no. 61 (March 12, 1822): 242.
- "Joachim Nettelbeck." *Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen* 2, no. 1 (1826): 252–335.
- "Jos. Santos and the Danish Slavers." *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 16 (August 11, 1841): 175.
- Julius, Nicolaus Heinrich. *Nordamerikas sittliche Zustände. Nach eigenen Anschauungen in den Jahren 1834, 1835 und 1836*. Vol. 1. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1839.
- Leavitt, Joshua. "Seventh Annual Report." In *Seventh Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society*, 35–53. New York: William S. Dorr, 1840.
- "Marmier und die deutsche Literatur: II. Oeffentliche Thätigkeit und öffentlicher Geist in Deutschland." *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, April 6, 1840.
- Nettelbeck, Joachim. *Des Seefahrers Nettelbeck höchst erstaunliche Lebensgeschichte von ihm selbst erzählt*. Vol. 1. Halle: Rengersche Buchhandlung, 1821.
- "Nichtpolitische Nachrichten: Hamburg, 25. August." *Neue Würzburger Zeitung*, September 3, 1841.

- “Nordamerikas Stellung zum Quntupel-Traktat vom 29. December 1841: Nach amtlichen Daten von Olof Berg, schwedisch-norwegischem Consul: Königsberg, Gräfe und Unzer, 1842.” *Literaturblatt* no. 29 (March 17, 1843): 113–115.
- “No Title.” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 16 (August 11, 1841): 172.
- “No Title.” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 201.
- “No Title.” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 3, no. 28 (April 1, 1848): 61.
- Sinapius, Johann Christian. *Lesebuch für Kaufleute*. Leipzig: Mathießen, 1782.
- Soetbeer, Adolf. *Statistik des hamburgischen Handels: 1839–1841*. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1842.
- “Von der Elbe, 24. Oct.” *Aschaffener Zeitung*, October 27, 1842.
- Wigard, Franz, ed. *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main*. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Sauerländer, 1848.
- “Welthandel.” *Dorfzeitung*, May 22, 1841.
- Wurm, Christian Friedrich. “Deutschland: Der Hamburger Sklavenhandelsproceß.” *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, October 11, 1841.
- Wurm, Christian Friedrich. “Trial of the Louisa: Hamburg Tribunal of Commerce, August 25th and 26th.” *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 2, no. 19 (September 22, 1841): 202–204.
- “Vermischte Schriften.” *Jenaische allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, no. 49 (March 1822): 392.

Literature

- Kearney, James C. *Nassau Plantation: The Evolution of a Texas-German Slave Plantation*. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2010.
- Kellenbenz, Hermann. “Deutsche Plantagenbesitzer und Kaufleute in Surinam vom Ende des 18. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts.” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 3 (1966): 141–163.
- Lentz, Sarah. “Deutsche Profiteure des atlantischen Sklavereisystems und der deutschsprachige Sklavereidiskurs der Spätaufklärung.” In *Das Meer: Maritime Welten in der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Peter Burschel and Sünne Juterczenka. Cologne: Böhlau, forthcoming.
- Lentz, Sarah. “‘Oh, wonderful sugar beet! You are the death of the bloody sugar cane’: The German Debate on the Morality of the Consumption of Sugar Produced by Slave Labour Around 1800.” In *Moralizing Commerce in a Globalizing World*, edited by Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
- Lentz, Sarah. “*Wer helfen kann, der helfe!*” *Deutsche SklavereieegnerInnen und die atlantische Abolitionsbewegung, 1780–1860*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020.
- Mulligan, William. “The Anti-Slave Trade Campaign in Europe, 1888–1890.” In *A Global History of Anti-Slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by William Mulligan and Maurice Bric, 149–170. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Ressel, Magnus. “Hamburg und die Niederelbe im atlantischen Sklavenhandel der Frühen Neuzeit.” *Werkstatt Geschichte*, no. 66–67 (2015): 75–96.
- Rössler, Horst. “Bremer Kaufleute und die transatlantische Sklavenökonomie, 1790–1865.” *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 95 (2016): 75–106.
- Rössler, Horst. “Vom Zuckerrohr zum Zuckerhut: Die Familie Böse und die Bremer Zuckerindustrie.” *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 90 (2011): 63–94.
- Schmidt, Hartmut. “‘Kein Deutscher darf einen Sklaven halten’: Jacob Grimm und Friedrich Wilhelm Carové.” In *Bedeutungen und Ideen in Sprachen und Texten*, edited by Werner Neumann and Bärbel Techtmeier, 183–192. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987.

- Seybold, Steffen. "Freiheit statt Knechtschaft: Jacob Grimms Antrag zur Paulskirchenverfassung." *Der Staat* 51, no. 2 (2012): 215–231.
- Weber, Klaus. "Deutschland, der atlantische Sklavenhandel und die Plantagenwirtschaft der Neuen Welt (15. bis 19. Jahrhundert)." *Journal of Modern European History (Special Issue "Europe, Slave Trade, and Colonial Forced Labour")* 7, no. 1 (2009): 37–67.
- Weber, Klaus. "Mitteleuropa und der transatlantische Sklavenhandel: Eine lange Geschichte." *Werkstatt Geschichte*, no. 66–67 (2015): 7–30.
- Weindl, Andrea. "The Slave Trade of Northern Germany from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries." In *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, edited by David Eltis and David Richardson, 250–272. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Woelk, Susanne. *Der Fremde unter den Freunden: Biographische Studien zu Caspar von Voght*. Hamburg: Weidmann, 2000.
- Zantop, Susanne M. *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.