

# **Their own men**

**German associative life in early twentieth century Antwerp  
and Rotterdam**



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*Front page: Slide show at the Deutsches Seemannsheim in Antwerp. Source: Oud-Archief  
Protestantse Kerk Antwerpen, F1, Promotional leaflet for the Seemannsheim.*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introducing the leading question

There is a truism about Germans living abroad that everyone even slightly interested in their lives is bound to stumble upon frequently. The *Deutsche Wochenzeitung für die Niederlande und Belgien* (*DW*), the leading German newspaper in the Netherlands and Belgium in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century expressed this commonplace as follows: 'Dann wird auch wohl im Scherze gesagt, dass wo drei Deutsche sich zusammentreffen, sie einen Verein gründen. So sarkastisch diese Behauptung auch auf den ersten Ruf klingen mag, es liegt doch in ihr eine tiefe Wahrheit.'<sup>1</sup> In her book on the German community of the Dutch city of Utrecht Marlou Schrover refers to a number of examples of this quip that can be found in both modern day historical scholarship and early twentieth century sources.<sup>2</sup> In an article about voluntary associations of immigrants Jose Moya listed even more places where this same truism is repeated.<sup>3</sup> The recurring quip suggests that to better understand the lives of German migrants abroad, we need to study associational activity. The question from which this paper departs is therefore what role migrant organizations have played amongst Germans living abroad.

In recent years some theoretical frameworks have been developed to elucidate the role of migrant organizations. The analysis of Penninx and Schover, for example, tries to throw light on the role of immigrant organizations in integration processes and policy; their starting point is the question whether these organizations are bastions in which migrants retreat or binding agents, connecting them to society as a whole.<sup>4</sup> An organization that can be characterized as a bastion, then, preserves the distinctive qualities of a migrant community and impedes integration, while one that

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<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche Wochenzeitung für die Niederlande und Belgien (DW)*, 1905, No. 14, April 1.

<sup>2</sup> Schrover, M., *Een kolonie van Duitsers: Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw*, aksant, Amsterdam, 2002. p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Moya, J.C., Immigrants and Associations: A Global and Historical Perspective, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31:5, 833-864, 2005. p. 837.

<sup>4</sup> Penninx, R. and Schrover, M., *Bastion of bindmiddel? Organisaties van immigranten in historisch perspectief*, IMES, Amsterdam, 2001.

can be seen as a binding agent contributes to integration. Though every migrant organization can surely be characterized by its integrative function, I do not think that this characterization provides an exhaustive description of its functions. Migrant associational life can be maintained to pursue interests that fall outside the bastion-binding agent dichotomy. To add to the work of Penninx and Schrover, this thesis will focus on the functions of migrant associational life that fall outside of this dichotomy.

A more recent paper by Lucassen and Penninx adds to the existing theoretical toolbox by asserting the existence of three types of migrant associations: those directly exported from the country of origin, those emanating from the opportunity structure in the country of origin and those stemming from the opportunity structure in the country of settlement.<sup>5</sup> The authors aim to look into 'the power of sending states in controlling 'its' migrants abroad' by analyzing 'the relationship between powerful institutions in the sending state and the orientation of migrant associations'.<sup>6</sup> When dealing with Germans in the Netherlands, they conclude that even though some explicitly nationalist organizations were exported from the country of origin, in general '[a]ttempts to influence national feelings by governmental agencies of the country of origin were welcomed as far as they fitted [...] cultural needs, in combination with the practical considerations of possible return'.<sup>7</sup> The apparent ability of migrant organizations to resist state attempts to direct their actions allows for a description of migrant organizations as able to more or less set their own course. At the same time, though, Lucassen's and Penninx' emphasis on the influence of powerful institutions in the sending states distracts from the capability of migrants to model their organizations in such a way as to meet their own specific needs. Migrant organizations do not only react to government pressure, they also actively pursue their own interests and may even be able to take the initiative in dealing with governmental authorities. The position of immigrant organizations can be clarified by

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<sup>5</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis? Changing orientations of migrant organisations in the era of national states, from 1880 onwards*, IMISCOE Working Paper No. 26, 2009. p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 52.

using Schrover's and Vermeulen's definition of 'political opportunities'. 'Political opportunities', they argue, 'can be described as the extent to which powerful groups, including governments, are vulnerable or receptive to new claims made by groups that hold a marginal position in the political system'.<sup>8</sup> I will argue that the German government was receptive to claims made by groups of German migrants in Belgium and the Netherlands. In order to add to the paper of Lucassen and Penninx, then, this thesis will emphasize the agency of migrants and their organizations instead of the agency of powerful institutions in the country of origin.

The assertion of a certain independence of migrants organizations from government authorities does not self-evidently imply that these organizations are not at the same time led by nationalist ideals. Especially from the late nineteenth century onwards, some respected interpreters of German history argue, a movement called 'organized nationalism' emerged in Germany. Otto Dann, for example, states that this new organized nationalism was fundamentally different from older German forms of nationalism.<sup>9</sup> This new nationalism had a systematically organized ideology, group formation and political strategy. Supporters of this nationalism thought of themselves as part of a combative elite fighting for an ethnically defined imperialistic German nation. The social movement of organized nationalism evolved out of older antisemitic movements and had a twofold goal. In the first place minorities within German borders had to be excluded from national life. At the same time ethnic Germans outside the German state were to somehow be ideologically integrated into the German nation.<sup>10</sup> This new organized nationalism mostly developed outside of and in opposition to the existing political parties in newly established well-managed mass organizations, like student societies and work-orientated organizations.<sup>11</sup> One would expect that this increased importance of ethnically defined nationalism did influence the functioning of German organizations abroad and its relations with the surrounding native population.

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<sup>8</sup> Schrover, M. and Vermeulen, F., Immigrant Organisations, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31:5, 823-832, 2005. p. 828.

<sup>9</sup> Dann, O., *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland: 1770-1990*, Verlag C.H. Beck, München, 1993. pp. 195-196.

<sup>10</sup> Oltmer, J., *Migration und Politik in der Weimarer Republik*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2005. p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Dann, O., *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland*, pp. 192-194.

The initial question on the role that migrant organizations have played amongst Germans living abroad can thus be further specified into three sub-questions. The first sub-question is what roles migrant organizations did play outside a theoretical framework focusing on the bastion-binding agent dichotomy. The second sub-question is to what extent migrant organizations have been able to act as independent agents in their relation with state authorities. The final sub-question is to what extent the ideology of organized nationalism has guided this agency.

## 1.2 Limiting the field of research

As a guide for research and the basis of an interesting thesis, though, this set of sub-questions is still both too broad and too narrow. It is too broad because the possible field of research is too large. For many centuries people have migrated from German speaking territories and these people have spread all over the world.<sup>12</sup> Also, when a large number of German migrants live in a city, the number of organizations they establish is too great to deal with in this thesis. Henk Delger, for example, counted more than sixty organizations for Amsterdam only in the period 1894-1924.<sup>13</sup> So it follows that this research has to be limited in time and place. Also, it can only deal with a relatively small number of organizations. To begin with the limitations in time and place, I will focus on the cities of Antwerp and Rotterdam in the period between 1900 and 1920. One reason why these cities are well comparable, is the fact that they both functioned as transit ports for the heavy industry in the Ruhr Basin. The strong German presence in both cities during this period provides another justification of this selection. In 1890 5173 Germans lived in the province of Antwerp. Being 2 percent of the total population, they were the second largest group of people born abroad in the province, after the Dutch. Their impact on the city, though, was such that contemporaries tended to believe that the Germans outnumbered the Dutch.<sup>14</sup> Around the same time,

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<sup>12</sup> For a historical overview of the most important German migratory patterns see: Bade, K.J. (ed.), *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Verlag C.H. Beck, München, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland (1870-1930)* (unpublished manuscript).

<sup>14</sup> Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp in the Nineteenth Century*, *IMIS-Beiträge*, 14, pp. 105-128, 2000. p. 106.



in 1889, the 2609 Germans in Rotterdam amounted to 1.3 percent of the city's population.<sup>15</sup> In both cities the number of Germans would grow until the First World War, reaching 8660, or 2,8 percent, in Antwerp in 1910 and 4285, or 1,0 percent in Rotterdam in 1909.<sup>16</sup> One author even goes so far as to state that the German colony in Antwerp might be five times bigger, if the unregistered and naturalized Germans would be taken into account.<sup>17</sup> The available sources do not allow us to either affirm or deny this assertion, though in both Antwerp and Rotterdam the total number of Germans must have been higher than the number of registered people born in Germany. The resident Germans, after all, were not the only Germans to be found in the cities. At any time, large numbers of German sailors and river skippers that used the ports of the cities could be found, as well as German migrants on their way to overseas destinations. Greta Devos estimates that at its peak shortly before the First World War the total number of Germans in Antwerp might have been as much as 20 000.<sup>18</sup>

The choice for the time span 1890-1920 is justified by the fact that the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century can be considered to be the heydays of European associational life.<sup>19</sup> If we focus on the German colonies in Antwerp and Rotterdam this thesis is corroborated: in both cities German associational life flourished in this period.<sup>20</sup> Delger found more than forty German organizations in Antwerp and around twenty-five organizations in Rotterdam for the period 1870 - 1930.<sup>21</sup> Within the period researched in this thesis the First World War took place. Historians tend to

<sup>15</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, p. 106. ; Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, p. 11. ; Vrints, A., *De Klippen des Nationalismus: De Eerste Wereldoorlog en de ondergang van de Duitse kolonie in Antwerpen*, in: *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* (10), 2002. p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Bitsch, M.-T., *La Belgique entre la France et l'Allemagne 1905-1914*, Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris, 1994. p. 127.

<sup>18</sup> Devos, G., *Inwijking en integratie van Duitse kooplieden te Antwerpen in de 19e eeuw*, in: Soly, H. and Thijs, A.K.L. (eds.), *Minorities in Western European Cities, Sixteenth – Twentieth centuries*, pp. 135-156, Institut Historique Belge de Rome – Belgisch Historisch instituut te Rome, Brussels, 1995. p. 137.

<sup>19</sup> See for example: Nord, P., Introduction, in: Bermeo, N. and Nord, P. (eds.), *Civil Society before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Rowman and Littlefield, New York, 2000. ; Hoffmann, S., *Civil Society 1750-1914*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire/New York, 2006. More on these authors can be found later in this introduction.

<sup>20</sup> Devos, G., *Inwijking en integratie van Duitse kooplieden te Antwerpen in de 19e eeuw*, pp. 142-145. ; Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas. Gevestigd Deutschtum en Duitse nieuwkomers in de jaren 1900-1940*, in: Laar, P. van de, Nijs, T. de, Okkema, J. and Oosthoek, A. (eds.), *Vier eeuwen migratie: bestemming Rotterdam*, pp. 218-239, Monditaal Publishing, Rotterdam, 1998. pp. 220-224.

<sup>21</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, pp. 143 & 147-148

describe this event as a watershed in migration history: migration numbers dwindled, among other things because of the growth of state restrictions on migration.<sup>22</sup> The inclusion of the war period and the first postwar years allows for an evaluation of the watershed thesis as far as German migration and associational life is concerned. A final reason to focus on this timespan is the fact that pre-First World War twentieth century history often seems to be neglected in favor of either studies of the nineteenth century or studies of the post-1914 twentieth century. This study aims to contribute to filling that gap.

Then there is the limitation on the number of organizations to be dealt with. As we have seen, Delger's work provides a useful overview of exactly what kind of German organizations existed in Antwerp and Rotterdam around the beginning of the twentieth century. These organizations cannot all be researched. On the one hand, the number of organizations is too large to fit into my research, on the other hand there is only a very limited amount of information available on most of the organizations he lists. Two criteria have initially guided the choice for organizations to be researched in depth. The first criterion is that the organizations should affect a large part of the German colonies. For two reasons studies of German colonies abroad often seem to overemphasize the higher middle classes and the business elites. The first is the availability of resources.<sup>23</sup> The second reason is the fact that in some cases, like Antwerp and Rotterdam, the wealth and social status of German migrants actually was above average.<sup>24</sup> Still, since no migrant population consists of elites only, more knowledge of the way in which migrant organization affected larger parts of the population would deepen our understanding of the community as a whole. The second criterion is of

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<sup>22</sup> See for example: Bade, K.J., *Migration in European History*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003. p. 165. ; Page Moch, L., *Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650*, second edition, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2003. p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> See for example: Devos, G., Inwijking en integratie van Duitse kooplieden te Antwerpen. ; Bank, J., De Duitse herkomst van een katholieke elite in Amsterdam, in: Lucassen, L. (ed.), *Amsterdammer worden: Migranten, hun organisaties en inburgering, 1600-2000*, Vossiuspers UvA, Amsterdam, 2004. ; Morton, G., Vries, B. de and Morris, R.J. (eds.), *Civil Society, Associations and Urban Places: Class, Nation and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Winter, A., *Migrants and urban change: newcomers to Antwerp, 1760-1860*, Pickering and Chatto, London, 2009. p. 135. ; Lucassen, L., De selectiviteit van blijvers: Een reconstructie van de sociale positie van Duitse migranten in Rotterdam (1870-1885), in: *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis*, 1(2), 2004, pp. 92-115. pp. 113-114.

a more pragmatic nature. The researched organizations will have to be found in both Antwerp and Rotterdam to allow for a fruitful comparative analysis. Following these criteria, still a large number of very different organizations would qualify for further investigation. The German colonies in Antwerp and Rotterdam both had a well-developed associational life, the main constituents of which were churches, cultural societies, sports organizations, schools and charities.<sup>25</sup> The churches were the oldest of these organizations. Since they were involved in the workings of a large number of other organizations, an emphasis on churches would not be helpful in limiting the scope of this research. Existing literature suggests that German sports organizations and cultural societies in the Low Countries were influenced by their surrounding society to such an extent that it can be doubted whether they should still be seen as typical migrant organizations.<sup>26</sup> This leaves us the schools and charities to focus on. This negative argument is not the only reason to focus on this type of institutions, though. This focus is particularly suitable to shed a light on the relationship between migrant organizations and governmental authorities as well. After all, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century European welfare states expanded their influence on society by investing in both education and welfare services.<sup>27</sup> Based on these considerations I have selected the *Deutsche Schule* (German schools) and the *Seemannsheime* (sailors homes), a charity that focused on a group of people that is typically targeted by welfare agencies as well, for comparison. The German schools affected a large part of the German migrant families that decided to reside abroad for a longer time. The *Seemannsheime* affected most of the poorer floating German population of the port cities. Their target groups were the German sailors, Rhine skippers and migrants on their way to overseas, mostly American, territories.

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<sup>25</sup> The next chapter will provide a more exhaustive sketch of German organizational life in Antwerp and Rotterdam.

<sup>26</sup> Penninx, R. and Schrover, M., *Bastion of bindmiddel?*, p. 36. ; Schrover, M., *Een kolonie van Duitsers*, pp. 165-167.

<sup>27</sup> Ritter, G.A., *Der Sozialstaat: Entstehung und Entwicklung im internationalen Vergleich*, Zweite, überarbeitete und erheblich erweiternde Auflage, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, München, 1991. p. 81. ; Swaan, A. de, *Zorg en de Staat: Welzijn, onderwijs en gezondheidszorg in Europa en de Verenigde Staten in de nieuwe tijd*, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 1993. pp. 86 and 222.

### 1.3 Functionalism and nationalism

Earlier in this introduction it was mentioned that the initial question is not only too broad, but also too narrow. This thesis would be more valuable if it would not only uncover the history of a number of German organizations but if it would also do this by the means of a theoretical framework that can be applied to other organizations as well. In looking for this framework my starting point is Moya's observation that in order to explain the workings of migrant organizations it does not suffice to mainly focus on either the typical characteristics of the country of migrant settlement or the typical cultural or national features of the migrant population. The fact that migrants from very diverse backgrounds arriving at different destinations tend to create more or less the same kind of institutions everywhere, leads him to the conclusion that '[t]he principal stimulus for associational activity thus derived not from the cultural backgrounds of the emigrants or the civic habits of their hosts but from a more universal source: the migration process itself'.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, he continues, '[f]unctionalism offers here a more insightful explanation than arguments based on the civic and political culture of the immigrants or their hosts'.<sup>29</sup>

A lot of different functionalist accounts of the working of migrant organizations can be told, though. A lot of the accounts that can be found in existing literature focus on the bastion-binding agency dichotomy, influence from governments of sending states and political nationalism. For example, when discussing the functions and dynamics of migrant organizations, Penninx and Schrover put a strong emphasis on the reception of these organizations by the receiving society and the chances it offers to individual migrants and their offspring.<sup>30</sup> Even more common are descriptions of migrant organizations functioning as extensions of nationalist sentiment in the migrants' country of origin. Their main function would then be the creation or safeguarding of a community of co-nationals strongly identifying with their native country. This approach might seem especially well applicable to the period and the nation under scrutiny in this thesis. In the late

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<sup>28</sup> Moya, J.C., *Immigrants and Associations*, p. 839.

<sup>29</sup> Moya, J.C., *Immigrants and Associations*, p. 840.

<sup>30</sup> Penninx, R. and Schrover, M., *Bastion of bindmiddel?*, p. 57.

nineteenth and early twentieth century both migration numbers and nationalist sentiment were on the rise all over Europe.<sup>31</sup> The statements of the French diplomat Robert de Rautlin de la Roy exemplify this fear of a malicious nationalism. He warned that the aim of Antwerp's Germans was to 'serve Germany, which, when it will have reached a large enough number of reliable settled German nationals, will take over the port of Antwerp, and later that of Rotterdam, without a struggle'.<sup>32</sup> In the same vein Francis Sartorius argued in more recent years that '[t]he heyday of the German presence in Belgium was in the years 1913-14' and that '[t]his presence, that should be seen in both an economic and a human context, was part of a global plan, aiming to establish the worldwide hegemony of the first German Reich'.<sup>33</sup> Happe's description of German associational life in the Netherlands after the First World War provides another example of this perspective, arguing that '[d]ie Bildung, Stärkung und Förderung der deutschen Identität ihrer Mitglieder stand im Mittelpunkt der Vereinsarbeit'.<sup>34</sup> Similar distrust and tensions have been reported in research on German migrants in other areas as well. Writing on the situation in former Yugoslavian territories, for example, one scholar speaks of an almost relentless spiral of mutual escalation in the relations between Germans and Slavs.<sup>35</sup> It is recommendable, though, not to jump to conclusions about the omnipresence of nationalist ideology. At many other places the growth of German associational life seems not to have functioned primarily as a means of promoting nationalist ideologies. For example, before the First World War most Brazilian Germans may have identified with German culture, but not with the expansionist ambitions of the German state.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile in the United States German parades included both the figures of 'Germania' and 'Columbia', while licenses for

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<sup>31</sup> Hobsbawm, E.J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990. p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> Rautlin de la Roy, L. de, *Les Allemands au Port d'Anvers en 1912*, L. Larose et L. Tenin, Paris, 1913. p. 89.

<sup>33</sup> Sartorius, F., *De Duitsers in België*, in: Morelli, A., *Geschiedenis van het eigen volk: De vreemdeling in België van de prehistorie tot nu*, Uitgeverij Kritak, Leuven, 1993.

<sup>34</sup> Happe, K., *Deutsche in den Niederlanden 1918-1945: Eine historische Untersuchung zu nationalen Identifikationsangeboten im Prozess der Konstruktion individueller Identitäten*, Publiziert im Internet durch die Bibliothek der Universität Siegen, 2004. p. 172.

<sup>35</sup> Sundhassen, H., *Die Deutschen in Jugoslawien*, in: Bade, K.J. (ed.), *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Verlag C.H. Beck, München, 1992. pp. 63-64.

<sup>36</sup> Luebke, F.C., *Germans in Brazil: A Comparative History of Cultural Conflict During World War I*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London, 1987. p. 79.

clubs and saloons were amongst the few things that brought Germans together politically.<sup>37</sup> In a similar vein, another scholar argues that German institutions in Britain should be seen as a strand within British society, playing a role in maintaining positive contacts between British and German upper-class society.<sup>38</sup> These examples of a less aggressive German associative life fit Dann's observation that organized nationalism was not the only influential form of national thought in these years: several strains of national thought coexisted.<sup>39</sup> Hence it seems advisable not to take the aggressively nationalist interpretations of Rautlin de la Roy, Sartorius and Happe at face value: the role of migrants organizations might have been more complex.

Examples can be found of other authors sketching a peaceful and cosmopolitan image of the German population in prewar Antwerp and Rotterdam. Devos cites an Antwerp city guide in which the text 'le plus cosmopolite : l'élément allemand y domine' can be found.<sup>40</sup> In the case of Rotterdam, Schmitz argues that, based on the large number of marriages between Germans and Dutch citizens, the conclusion is justified that Germans in Rotterdam did not at all stick together.<sup>41</sup> His findings are corroborated by the numbers Lucassen presents in his article on the marriages of Germans in Rotterdam in the late nineteenth century: more than two-thirds of the Rotterdam Germans married someone from a different background.<sup>42</sup> This marriage pattern suggests that their nationality was not their only or even major source of identity.

Of course the opportunity structure of the country of settlement and the influence of the identification with the native country will provide a necessary background upon which I will sketch the functioning of migrant organizations. It will not be my only focus, though. In line with Moya's call to focus on the migration process itself, one of my main interests will be the functions that

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<sup>37</sup> McCaffery, R.P., *Islands of Deutschtum: German-Americans in Manchester, New Hampshire and Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1870-1942*, Peter Lang, New York, 1996. pp. 78-80.

<sup>38</sup> Panayi, P., *German Immigrants in Britain during the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914*, Berg, Oxford, 1995. pp. 198-199.

<sup>39</sup> Dann, O., *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland*, p. 196.

<sup>40</sup> Devos, G., *Inwijking en integratie*, p. 142

<sup>41</sup> Schmitz, H., *Discriminatie of integratie van Duitsers in het negentiende-eeuwse Rotterdam? Een verkenning*, in: Laar, P. et al., *Vier eeuwen migratie*. p. 134.

<sup>42</sup> Lucassen, L., *Huwelijken van Duitse migranten in Nederland: De rol van herkomst, religie, beroep en sekse*, in: *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis*, 2(2), 2005, pp. 54-80, p. 63.

associations played that are generated by needs of migrants *as migrants*, not by migrants as representatives of a specific nation or as part of a receiving society. The three sub-questions on integration, associational agency and organized nationalism will provide the contours of this research. In order to assess the workings of migrant organization, I will borrow two analytic concepts from the social sciences: the ideas of civil society and transnationalism. The following paragraphs outline my conception of these concepts.

#### 1.4 Theories of civil society

Theories of civil society have played a relatively minor role during the bigger part of the twentieth century. In the late nineteen-eighties and the early nineteen-nineties, though, the fall of the communist regimes of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe caused a veritable boom in writings on civil society by political scientists and philosophers.<sup>43</sup> These publications often combined two arguments. The first argument was that one of the major shortcomings of authoritarian communist regimes was the fact that the state completely submerged what the authors called 'civil society'. The second argument was that the fact that something like a 'civil society' emerged nonetheless significantly contributed to the downfall of these regimes. The concept of civil society was linked to the process of democratization that was taking place in those countries. Therefore it comes as no surprise that a lot of the theories applied to the former communist countries often seem to be inspired by an older tradition of critiques on the functioning of western democracies.<sup>44</sup> This train of thought does still appeal to political scientists in the twenty-first century.<sup>45</sup> How, then, do these authors define this concept of civil society? To Gellner civil society is 'that set of diverse non-

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<sup>43</sup> For example: Keane, J., Introduction, in: Keane, J. (ed.), *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, Verso, London/New York, 1988. ; Taylor, C., Modes of Civil Society, in: *Public Culture*, 3(1), 1990, pp. 95-118. ; Walzer, M., The Idea of Civil Society, in: *Dissent*, Spring 1991, pp. 293-304. ; Seligman, A.B., *The Idea of Civil Society*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1992. ; Gellner, E., *Conditions of Liberty: Civil society and its rivals*, Penguin Books, London/New York, 1994.

<sup>44</sup> For example: Barber, B., *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984. ; Hirst, P., *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1994.

<sup>45</sup> For example: Putnam, R.D., *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2000. ; Edwards, M., *Civil Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004.

governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society'.<sup>46</sup> Keane too tries to understand civil society by analyzing the way in which authors from different traditions have juxtaposed state and civil society.<sup>47</sup> Hirst's analysis is also mostly concerned with the desirable relationship between a 'self-governing civil society' of 'voluntary bodies' and the state as 'vitaly necessary [...] public power that ensures peace between associations and protects the rights of individuals'.<sup>48</sup> Because in the early nineteen-nineties the interest in civil society was strongly related to the political revolutions in Eastern Europe, scholars mostly emphasized the contraposition of state and civil society. Later theorists also described civil society as distinct from economic institutions. Warren, for example, forcefully argues that we should not conceive of 'market interactions and structures' as parts of civil society, because 'markets organize social relations and make "decisions" through price mechanisms, which may depend on social media for their existence (...) but work in fundamentally different ways'.<sup>49</sup> All in all most authors are able to agree on what the associations that make up civil society are not: they are not the family, do not spring from the state and cannot be equaled to economic relations. The only positively defined element of civil society on which general agreement seems to exist is its voluntary character. Hirst and Edwards, for example, both emphasize this voluntary nature.<sup>50</sup> In the same vein, Walzer's characterization of civil society as 'the space of uncoerced human association' is one of the most influential definitions.<sup>51</sup>

When using these concepts of civil society as they have been defined by political scientists and philosophers, the historian should be careful, though. The term carries a lot of normative and ideological connotations.<sup>52</sup> The philosophers and political scientists quoted above all clearly saw the

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<sup>46</sup> Gellner, E., *Conditions of Liberty*, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Keane, J., Introduction, p. 13.

<sup>48</sup> Hirst, P., *Associative Democracy*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>49</sup> Warren, M.E., *Democracy and Association*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2001. p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> Hirst, P., *Associative Democracy*, p. 25. ; Edwards, M., *Civil Society*, p. 20.

<sup>51</sup> Walzer, M., The Concept of Civil Society, in: Walzer, M. (ed.), *Towards a Global Civil Society*, Berghahn, Providence, 2005. p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Janse, M., Towards a History of Civil Society, in: *De Negentiende Eeuw: Themnummer Civil Society*, 32(2), 2008,



development of a civil society as something good. Nonetheless it should be possible to use the concept of civil society without strong these normative connotations. This is, for example, shown in Tilly's writings about 'trust networks', a term with a prima facie positive normative connotation that he uses in a way in which others have used 'civil society'. He immediately acknowledges that these networks might be very coercive and that membership in one does by no means 'guarantee happiness, much less freedom'.<sup>53</sup> This acknowledgment does not prohibit him for further investigating these trust networks, though. Notwithstanding her initial reservation, Janse also concludes that the study of civil society as a 'normal' historical subject is possible.<sup>54</sup>

Distinguishing themselves from philosophers and political scientists, historians who borrowed the concept of civil society have not only tried to stay clear of normative connotations, but have also tried to move away from overemphasizing the contraposition of state, market and civil society. Philip Nord distinguishes a three stage development of civil society.<sup>55</sup> In the years after the Napoleonic wars civil society consisted of voluntary self-governing organizations of higher or middle-class urban men. The second stage was reached in the second half of the nineteenth century. By this time some of the lower classes also got actively involved in associational life. It was only at this time that civil society 'tended to spill over into politics', making the emphasizing of a dialectics of state and civil society relevant.<sup>56</sup> The third and final stage was reached at the end of the nineteenth century. At this stage almost the whole European population was involved in associational life. This associational life often took the shape of emancipatory movements of, for example, rural religious people or the working classes. Nord's overview of the rise of civil society, then, shows a development from an apolitical bourgeois civil society to a strongly politicized mass phenomenon. A similar type of scheme has been developed by Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann. He distinguishes four phases: 'the heyday of enlightened sociability, culminating in the French

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pp.104 – 121. p.107.

<sup>53</sup> Tilly, C., *Trust and Rule*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005. p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Janse, M., *Towards a History of Civil Society*, p. 120.

<sup>55</sup> Nord, P., Introduction, pp. xvi-xviii.

<sup>56</sup> Nord, P., Introduction, p. xvii.

Revolutions of 1789; a second phase, between the 1820s and the Revolutions of 1848/49, considered by historians the 'golden era' of voluntary associations; a third phase, in the 1860s and 1870s, that is characterized by liberalization, nationalization, and, hence, democratization of associational life; and, finally, the period between 1890 and 1910, in which associative sociability dramatically surged'.<sup>57</sup> Again a pattern can be perceived according to which the largely apolitical associational life of the happy few develops into a mass movement that is strongly entangled with state policies.

These different descriptions of civil society allow me to focus on the functions that associations played that are generated by needs of migrants *as migrants* in two ways. The first way is grounded in the distinction between state and civil society, emphasized by modern day political scientists and philosophers and acknowledged as a characteristic of late nineteenth century civil society by Nord and Hoffmann. The perception of migrant organizations as negotiating with the state in order to pursue their own interests differs radically from a perception of these organizations as functioning as some kind of subsidiary bodies of the state authorities of the country of arrival or origin. Within this framework the migrant organizations that this thesis will focus on can be described as working for specific migrant interests. The second way in which the above overview of theories of civil society allows for an emphasis on voluntary associations as directed towards migrants' interests, can be found in Nord's and Hoffmann's description of early civil society. Civil society can flourish without the existence of any clear relationship with the state. This allows the description of migrant organizations as relatively independent agents that of course have to work within the framework provided by the state while they are neither directed by nor opposing this state. Associational agency, then, can exist in two ways. One way is characterized by the ability to negotiate with the state, the other way is characterized by a relative freedom from interaction with state authorities.

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<sup>57</sup> Hoffmann, S., *Civil Society 1750-1914*, 2006. pp. 4-5.

## 1.5 Theories of transnationalism

The idea of transnationalism is the second analytic concept that I borrow from the social sciences. The term 'transnationalism' gained ground amongst anthropologists and sociologists studying migrant populations in the nineteen-eighties. As appeared to be the case with civil society, there is no generally accepted definition of the term. One of the most straight-forward definitions is provided by Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc who define transnationalism as 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement'.<sup>58</sup> Ewa Morawska distinguishes two main types of interpretation. One 'treats transnationalism as a combination of civic-political membership, economic involvements, social networks, and cultural identities that links people and institutions in two or more nation-states in diverse, multilayered patterns'. The other 'understands transnationalism as a shift beyond or, as it were vertically over (rather than horizontally across) the accustomed territorial state-level memberships, state-bound national identities, and civic-political claims'.<sup>59</sup> Morawska's first interpretation seems to be useful for this research because of its focus on civic-political membership and social networks that seems to be easily applicable to migrant associational life. The possible fruitfulness of this emphasizing of community and organizational life is also acknowledged by Peggy Levitt. She argues that this emphasis elucidates migrant lives in three ways. First, it emphasizes the mediating functions of organizations between, what she calls, 'high' and 'low' levels of transnationalism. Second, the establishment of many diverse organizations is likely to support the possibility of membership in more than one community. Third, she argues, this emphasis 'provides a constant reminder that the impact of transnational migration extends far beyond the migrant to the individuals and collectives that remain behind'.<sup>60</sup> Levitt's assertion of the existence of different levels of transnationalism and Morawska's mentioning 'multilayered patterns'

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<sup>58</sup> Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N. and Szanton Blanc, C., *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*, Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, Amsterdam, 1994. p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Morawska, E., *Immigrants, Transnationalism, and Ethnicization: A Comparison of This Great Wave and the Last*, in: Gerstle G. and Mollenkopf, J. (eds.), *E Pluribus Unum: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2001. pp. 175-176.

<sup>60</sup> Levitt, P., *The Transnational Villagers*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001. p. 7.

are clarified by Lucassen's description of three different ways in which transnationalism can be conceptualized. These are 'pan-ethnic or pan-religious identities', 'bi-local ties between specific sending and receiving places' and 'bi-national ties between sending and receiving states, often through migrant organisations at destination'.<sup>61</sup> The German schools and *Seemannsheimen* researched in this thesis at first sight seem to belong to the bi-national category, which is further characterized as 'supported and influenced by institutions at home', where 'home' refers to the country of origin. A focus on associational migrant life, Lucassen also argues, is typical for research departing from this conception of transnationalism.

A first superficial glance at theories of transnationalism might lead one to the conclusion that this modern day concept is not applicable to past migrations. After all, a transnational identity, associational life and political membership is nowadays strongly supported by modern means of communication and travel. Television, radio and the Internet provide non-stop streams of information traveling all over the world and low cost airlines give large numbers of people the possibility to cover great distances in a short time. It might appear as if the means of communication and travel of a century ago, could never have supported the kind of transnational ties that interest modern day social scientists. Against this understanding of the historical role of transnational ties, Morawska argues that the arguments that support the thesis that transnationalism is an inherently modern thing are unfounded. Nineteenth century advancements in transportation 'facilitated considerable return and circular movement between the sending and receiving countries. Advancements in communication technology 'created complex transatlantic networks of communication and assistance'.<sup>62</sup> This conclusion is supported by Nancy Foner. Comparing old and new waves of immigration to New York, she acknowledges that though 'there is much that is new about transnationalism [...] many immigrants in the last great wave maintained extensive, and intensive, transnational ties and operated in what social scientists now call a transnational social

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<sup>61</sup> Lucassen, L., Is Transnationalism Compatible with Assimilation? Examples from Western Europe since 1850, in: *IMIS-Beiträge*, 29, pp. 15-36, 2006. p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Morawska, E., Immigrants, Transnationalism, and Ethnicization, p. 178.

field'.<sup>63</sup>

Like the idea of civil society, the idea of transnationalism allows me to focus on the functions of associations that are generated by needs of migrants *as migrants*. Theories of transnationalism emphasize the different stakeholders in successful migrant organizations. Migrant organizations are unique insofar as they have at least four very different possible stakeholders: the state in the country of origin, the state in the country of settlement, the migrants themselves and the people left behind in the country of origin with whom the migrants maintain relations. A successful migrant organization has to act as a relatively independent actor in order to balance the opportunities and limitations created by this diverse group of stakeholders. This paper will show that all organizations that it deals with can best be understood as trying to find this precarious balance.

The first chapter of this paper will provide the background information needed to situate the Antwerp and Rotterdam organizations of Germans. The focus in this chapter will be on the economic development of the cities and the political situation in Belgium and the Netherlands, with a strong emphasis on the alien policy of both countries. The next two chapters will each recount the history of a type of organization. The first of these will tell the history of the *Seemannsheime*, the other chapter contains my findings on the *Deutsche Schule*. Some short comments on the available literature on these organizations will be provided at the beginning of each of these chapters. The final chapter will focus on the answers to the three sub-questions provided by the histories of the researched institutions, as well as reflect on the theoretical toolkit offered by theories of civil society and transnationalism.

By then I hope to have shown that these concepts of civil society and transnationalism are analytic tools that can fruitfully be applied to these and possibly other migrant organizations as well, because they help us to understand the functions of associations generated by needs of

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<sup>63</sup> Foner, N., *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2000, p. 184.

migrants *as migrants*. Most importantly, though, I hope to have provided an answer to the initial question on the functioning of migrant organizations by answering the three sub-questions on the surpassing of the bastion-binding agency dichotomy, the agency of migrant organizations and the role of nationalist ideology.

## 1.6 Primary sources

For the analysis of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* three sources have been used. Annual reports and some other material could be found at the *Oud-Archief van de Protestantse Kerk Antwerpen* (Old-Archive of the Protestant Church Antwerp). Documents concerning the acquisition of real estate and the dismantling of the organization were found in the *Rijksarchief Beveren-Waas* (State Archive Beveren-Waas). Correspondence about and on behalf of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* with German state authorities was found in the *Bundesarchiv Berlin* (Federal Archive Berlin).

The annual reports of the *Seemannsheim* in Rotterdam were found at the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam* (Municipal Archive Rotterdam). Correspondence about and on behalf of the organization was found at the *Bundesarchiv Berlin* as well.

The analysis of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* uses the annual reports that are kept at the *Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience Antwerpen* (Heritage Library Hendrik Conscience Antwerp). Documents concerning the acquisition of real estate and the dismantling of this organization were found also in the *Rijksarchief Beveren-Waas*. Also, correspondence about and on behalf on the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* with German state authorities was found in the *Bundesarchiv Berlin*.

Only a few documents on the *Deutsche Schule* in Rotterdam could be found in the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam*. Luckily, the *Bundesarchiv Berlin* did not only contain correspondences, but also a few annual reports.

Finally, the *Deutsche Wochenzeitung für die Niederlande und Belgien* of the years 1904-

1920 has been consulted. Volumes of this paper can be found in the collection of the university library of Leiden University. Especially the coverage of Rotterdam is quite limited: most space in the Dutch part of their section *Aus Deutschen Kreisen*, which covers associative life, focuses on Amsterdam. Still, excerpts of annual reports that could not be found elsewhere and announcements of events and festivities organized by the schools proved to be very useful.

## 2 Background conditions

In order to understand the position of the German colonies of Antwerp and Rotterdam it is useful to have some knowledge of legal, economic and social circumstances in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Belgium and the Netherlands. This chapter aims at providing these contexts. First it will provide a concise introduction into the historical development of the legal position of migrants in both countries. Next the focus will shift to the economical development of the two port cities through the nineteenth century with an emphasis on the historical role of migrants in this process. Finally a brief description of the associational life of the German colonies of the cities will be provided.

### 2.1 Legal history

When the new kingdoms of Belgium and the Netherlands were founded in the first half of the nineteenth century, their newly written constitutions did not present the concept of nationality as a major legal category. Both constitutions promised to extend ample legal protection to all people residing in Belgian, respectively Dutch, territories. The Belgian 1831 constitution established the equality before the law of all inhabitants of the kingdom.<sup>64</sup> This was in the same spirit as the Dutch constitution of 1815 that stated that every 'inhabitant or alien' on Dutch territory has the same title to protection of person and property.<sup>65</sup>

These inclusive constitutions notwithstanding, the Low Countries developed new legislation on nationality and the rights of aliens from the eighteen-thirties onwards. According to the Belgian Alien Law of 1835, three types of alien status could be distinguished: aliens without residency status, aliens with residency status and those with denizen status, who were called *domiciliés*.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Caestecker, F., *Alien Policy in Belgium, 1840-1940: The Creation of Guest Workers, Refugees and Illegal Aliens*, Berghahn Books, New York / Oxford, 2000. p.4.

<sup>65</sup> Heijs, E., *Van vreemdeling tot Nederlander: De verlening van het Nederlanderschap aan vreemdelingen 1813-1992*, Het Spinhuis, Amsterdam, 1995. p. 16

<sup>66</sup> Caestecker, F., *Alien Policy in Belgium*, p. 9.



Aliens without residency status did not have the right to reside on Belgian territory. Their stay was only tolerated and the Belgian intelligence service, the *Sûreté* could arbitrarily decide to expel them. Aliens with residency status had the right to live in Belgium. They could only be expelled, if they could be considered dangerous, which they would only if they had disturbed public order or had been convicted for criminal offenses, amongst which vagrancy was counted as well. Though these aliens were not easily expelled, they did not have any rights to *domicile de secours*, the municipal welfare stipulated by the 1845 Poor Law. This, however, changed in 1876 when the new Poor Law stipulated that five years of residency would entitle one to the *domicile de secours*. The 1891 revision of this law, then, reduced the required period of residency to three years.<sup>67</sup> When granted the status of *domicilié*, finally, one was legally equal to Belgian nationals, except where political rights were concerned. It was not possible to expel *domiciliés* and they had full access to the *domicile de secours*. In practice this full access to municipal public welfare was not very important, though, since this status was only granted to a relatively small number of well-to-do aliens.<sup>68</sup> Also, it was possible for aliens to obtain Belgian nationality through naturalization. Before 1881 the procedure for ordinary naturalization, which entitled one to the same rights as other Belgians without the right to partake in national political life, was an expensive and time consuming procedure, involving a judgment by the national parliament. Full political rights were acquired only through the *grande naturalisation*, which could only be granted on the initiative of the Belgian government or parliament. In Caestecker's words: 'Granting of nationality was [...] not a right, but a favor'.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless some members of the German business-elite in Antwerp, like Chamber of Commerce chairman Jacob Fuchs, acquired Belgian nationality in these early years.<sup>70</sup> The 1881 Law on Nationality liberalized the procedure of the *grande nationalisation* and strongly reduced the costs of it. From this time on the number of naturalizations increased strongly.<sup>71</sup> Notwithstanding

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<sup>67</sup> Caestecker, F., *Alien Policy in Belgium*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>68</sup> Caestecker, F., *Alien Policy in Belgium*, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Caestecker, F., *Alien Policy in Belgium*, p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> Pelckmans, G., *De Duitse kolonie te Antwerpen en haar invloed op de Antwerpse samenleving (19e eeuw – 1914)*, (Unpublished Licentiaats-Thesis, Leuven, 1994), p. 15.

<sup>71</sup> Caestecker, F., *Alien Policy in Belgium*, p. 46.

the reduction of the costs, the procedure for naturalization was still expensive enough to ensure that those who applied for it would usually not be amongst the poorer members of the German colony. Therefore, amongst the commercial elite of the German colony in Antwerp a rather large number of Belgian nationals can be found, while amongst the working class Germans this number must have been much lower.

In the Netherlands before 1849 the legislation concerning Dutch nationality and the expulsion of aliens was rather fragmented. In the wake of the new constitution of 1848 new and more comprehensive legislation on nationality followed. The Alien Law of 1849 stipulated that in order to have the right to be admitted to the Netherlands one should be able to support oneself and one should own a valid passport with a visa. If one did not meet these requirements, though, one was often allowed to enter the country anyway. This was not based, however, on a corresponding right to be admitted.<sup>72</sup> The law also reasserted the legal possibility to expel aliens who either did not have the means to support themselves or could be considered to be a danger to the public order. The one thing missing in this law, though, was a clear set of criteria to distinguish aliens from Dutch nationals. During the following decades this distinction could be made based on both the 1838 Civil Code and the 1850 Law on Nationality. The Civil Code, which only described civil rights and no political rights, stipulated that everybody born in the Netherlands or Dutch colonies could acquire Dutch citizenship. Also, the children of Dutch citizens born abroad could acquire Dutch citizenship and aliens could become Dutch citizens by naturalization. Municipal authorities could grant aliens legal equality with Dutch citizens as well if they had lived in the same municipality for six years.<sup>73</sup> The stipulations of the 1849 Alien Law were not applied to those who acquired this formal equality. The 1850 Law on Nationality was made to fill the lack of nationality legislation where political rights were concerned. The criteria for the acquisition of Dutch citizenship in this law were broadly similar to those in the Civil Code, though three significant differences can be found. The first is that

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<sup>72</sup> Eijl, C. van, *Al te goed is buurmans gek: Het Nederlandse vreemdelingenbeleid 1840-1940*, aksant, Amsterdam, 2005. p. 23.

<sup>73</sup> Eijl, C. van, *Al te goed is buurmans gek*, p. 25.

Dutch nationality is no longer automatically granted to those born in the colonies. Secondly, the 1850 law was the first to formulate a series of formal requirements for naturalization. From now on one should have close relations with the country, one should have resided in the Netherlands for at least six years and one should be intent on permanent residence.<sup>74</sup> The third significant difference is that the 1850 law did not provide for the legal equality of aliens. But since a majority in Dutch parliament tended to favor the stipulations of the Civil Code as guiding principles for the execution of the Alien Law, this was not a very weighty disadvantage for legally equal aliens. The Law on Nationality of 1892 succeeded both the 1838 Civil Code and the 1850 Law on Nationality. With this law the distance between Dutch nationals and aliens was increased: the possibility of legal equality was dropped and the children of parents of non-Dutch nationality could no longer easily acquire Dutch citizenship.<sup>75</sup> The procedure for naturalization was not made much easier either. Though the required period of residence on Dutch territories was reduced from six to five years and the requirements for a written statement of the intention to permanently reside in the Netherlands were dropped, the formal requirement to give up any other nationality that an applicant may have was added. Like before the introduction of the new law, the number of naturalizations stayed low.<sup>76</sup> Unsurprisingly, the still uninviting character of Dutch procedures for naturalization led to only a small number of naturalizations. This may have been one of the reasons why most members of German colonies in the Netherlands stuck to their German nationality.

## 2.2 Economic history

Already in medieval times Antwerp was a major trading center. In the fourteenth century the city emerged as one of the nodes in a trading network dominated by Bruges.<sup>77</sup> Armed conflict between the Habsburg authorities and the city of Bruges promoted the rise of Antwerp as the major trading

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<sup>74</sup> Eijl, C. van, *Al te goed is buurmans gek*, p. 27.

<sup>75</sup> Eijl, C. van, *Al te goed is buurmans gek*, p. 28

<sup>76</sup> Heijs, E., *Van vreemdeling tot Nederlander*, p. 74.

<sup>77</sup> Smedt, H. De, Stabel, P. and Van Damme, I., Zilt succes: Functieverschuivingen van een stedelijke economie, in: Bertels, I., De Munck, B. and Van Goethem, H. (eds.), *Antwerpen: Biografie van een stad*, De Bezige Bij Antwerpen, Antwerpen, 2010. pp. 114-115.

center. The sixteenth century was to become Antwerp's 'golden century'. In the mid-sixteenth century Antwerp controlled as much as seventy-five percent of the international trade in the Low Countries.<sup>78</sup> This economic blooming was halted for more than two centuries in the late fifteenth hundreds by the Iconoclastic Fury, the repression by the Alva, the blockade of the river Scheldt and other hostilities that were part of the Eighty Years' War.<sup>79</sup> Under Napoleonic rule an effort was made to revive the port of Antwerp. The import of different goods like coffee, spices and cotton multiplied in the first half of the first decade of the nineteenth century. A Chamber of Commerce was established, as well as new shipyards and new, mostly German, trading houses.<sup>80</sup> This revival did not last long, for the Continental System and the collapse of the American trade brought Antwerp's shipping to a complete standstill.<sup>81</sup> After Napoleon's defeat and the unification of Belgium and the Netherlands, Antwerp's prospects seemed bright again. The Dutch tonnage dues on Belgian ships on the Scheldt were abolished and Belgians got the right to trade with the colonies on the same terms as the Hollanders.<sup>82</sup> The fact that wages, carriage charges and taxes in Antwerp were relatively low and labor regulations were not as strict as in the northern Netherlands also stimulated economic growth.<sup>83</sup> From the eighteen-twenties onwards the annual growth of traffic on the Scheldt would far exceed that of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. This attracted a large number of foreign traders, amongst whom Germans were the most important group.<sup>84</sup> Although the Belgian Revolution severely disrupted the growth of the Antwerp port, from the early eighteen-forties onwards the pattern of growth was continued, helped by the completion of the 'Iron Rhine', a direct railway connection between Antwerp and Cologne.<sup>85</sup> This growth would even further accelerate after the

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<sup>78</sup> Smedt, H. De, Stabel, P. and Van Damme, I., *Zilt succes*, p. 118.

<sup>79</sup> Bertels, I., Bisschops, T. and Blondé, B., *Stadslandschap: Ontwikkelingen en verwickelingen van een stedelijke ruimte*, in: Bertels, I., De Munck, B. and Van Goethem, H. (eds.), *Antwerpen: Biografie van een stad*, De Bezige Bij Antwerpen, Antwerpen, 2010. p. 30.

<sup>80</sup> Lis, C., *Social Change and the labouring poor: Antwerp, 1770-1860*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1986. p. 21.

<sup>81</sup> Lis, C., *Social Change and the labouring poor*, p. 22.

<sup>82</sup> Lis, C., *Social Change and the labouring poor*, p. 27.

<sup>83</sup> Lis, C., *Social Change and the labouring poor*, p. 28. ; Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880: aspecten van een stedelijke samenleving*, Interbook International B.V., Schiedam, 1976. pp. 33 and 82.

<sup>84</sup> Lis, C., *Social Change and the labouring poor*, p. 28.

<sup>85</sup> Lis, C., *Social Change and the labouring poor*, p. 30.

treaty concluded in 1863, which accounted for a full liberalization of the traffic of the Scheldt river. The Franco-German war of 1870 – 1871 strengthened Antwerp's position as a neutral port city even further.<sup>86</sup> The fast pace of growth would continue almost uninterrupted until the First World War.

The German contribution to this development can hardly be overstated. Three out of the fifteen merchants that founded the 1802 Chamber of Commerce were Germans. An analysis of Antwerp entrepreneurs in the early nineteenth century shows that 27 percent of a sample of 250 were from outside of Belgium, 38 percent of whom were from Germany.<sup>87</sup> Similar observations are made by Anne Winter, who argues that the growth of the Antwerp port, which coincided with the downfall of its textile industry, had different effects on the locally born and the migrants.<sup>88</sup> While the locally born population was heavily hit by the collapse of the textile industry, the migrants secured the better jobs in the new and growing maritime economy. She attributes this migrant dominance to the fact that, contrary to other port cities, nineteenth century Antwerp did no longer have its sixteenth century local maritime tradition with local vested interests.<sup>89</sup> This process of occupational specialization, with a relatively large number of up-market jobs going to migrants, continued to take place during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>90</sup> The importance of Germans in the Antwerp business-elite is illustrated by the list of the wealthiest Antwerp bankers in 1914 as compiled by Patrick Pieters. Four out of the ten wealthiest bankers belonged to the German colony. Amongst them are the two wealthiest bankers on the list; Edouard Bunge and H. Albert de Bary. The others were number six, Hugo Michelis and number ten, Albert de Bary Junior.<sup>91</sup> The German predominance is also illustrated by the fact that on the eve of the First World War one out of every three members of the Antwerp Chamber of Commerce was of German origin. At this time German publications sometimes even referred to Antwerp as a *deutsche Hafen*.<sup>92</sup> The number of

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<sup>86</sup> Smedt, H. De, Stabel, P. and Van Damme, I., *Zilt succes*, p. 122.

<sup>87</sup> Devos, G. and H. Greefs, *The German Presence in Antwerp*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>88</sup> Winter, A., *Migrants and urban change*, p. 125.

<sup>89</sup> Winter, A., *Migrants and urban change*, p. 128.

<sup>90</sup> Winter, A., *Migrants and urban change*, p. 135.

<sup>91</sup> Pieters, P., 'Het ontmoetingsnetwerk van de Antwerpse bankierselite aan de vooravond van de Eerste Wereldoorlog', (Unpublished Master's-Thesis, Universiteit Antwerpen, 2008). p. 48.

<sup>92</sup> Vrints, A., 'De Klippen des Nationalismus: De Eerste Wereldoorlog en de ondergang van de Duitse kolonie in

Germans was high as well. Devos and Greefs teach us that in 1910 8660 residents of the Antwerp province were born in Germany.<sup>93</sup> The size of the German colony must have been bigger, though, since during its long existence a large number of children must have been born and grown up in the colony, like Albert de Bary Jr., number ten on Pieters's list of Antwerp bankers and the son of H. Albert de Bary.<sup>94</sup> The *Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums* also states that the exact size of the German colony in Antwerp is hard to establish, because there live so many Germans with Belgian citizenship.<sup>95</sup> Greta Devos estimates that the German colony in Antwerp might have counted around 20000 people in total.<sup>96</sup> The German predominance is also reflected in the already quoted remarks of de Rautlin de La Roy, who feared that the Germans would take over the port of Antwerp once enough of them would have been assembled.<sup>97</sup>

Rautlin de la Roy feared that once the Germans had overtaken Antwerp, Rotterdam would be their next goal.<sup>98</sup> But he thought the overtaking of Rotterdam would be much harder, since he thought the Dutch were much more alert; in his eyes they 'defended themselves intelligently without getting weary'.<sup>99</sup> Rotterdam's history as a port city before the nineteenth century is not as glorious as Antwerp's and its fast-paced nineteenth century growth starts later. At least from the seventeenth century onwards, though, Rotterdam had a regional function as a port of importation for British coal and salt, while it exported agrarian products.<sup>100</sup> Until the early nineteenth century the British commercial presence was so strong that the city was nicknamed 'Little London'.<sup>101</sup> The relatively unimportant economical role of the German trade during the larger part of the nineteenth century is

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Antwerpen', in: *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* (10), 2002. p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, p. 106.

<sup>94</sup> Pieters, P., *Het ontmoetingsnetwerk van de Antwerpse bankierselite*. pp. 48-49.

<sup>95</sup> Petersen, C., Scheel, O., Ruth, P.H. and Schwalm, H. (eds.), *Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums*, Ferdinand Hirt, Breslau, 1933. p. 363. The volumes of the *Handwörterbuch* contain a lot of information on German communities abroad. Unfortunately only three volumes appeared, the last one containing the entries Galizien – Massachusetts. So the entries 'Niederlande' and 'Rotterdam' have never been published.

<sup>96</sup> Devos, G., *Inwijking en integratie van Duitse kooplieden te Antwerpen*, p. 137.

<sup>97</sup> Rautlin de la Roy, L. de, *Les Allemands au Port d'Anvers*, p. 89.

<sup>98</sup> Rautlin de la Roy, L. de, *Les Allemands au Port d'Anvers*, p. 89.

<sup>99</sup> Rautlin de la Roy, L. de, *Les Allemands au Port d'Anvers*, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*. p. 26.

<sup>101</sup> Doortmont, M., 'Britse kooplieden in Rotterdam in de achttiende eeuw', in: Laar, P. et al., *Vier eeuwen migratie*. p. 92.

reflected in the relatively small percentage of German migrants. In 1976, for example, van Dijk, in a random sample of Rotterdam migrants, found that only 3 out of 621 is of German origin.<sup>102</sup> Notwithstanding the British trade, the port had not yet acquired continental, or even national importance in these years. The competition of other ports was strong, because they either had longer traditions as internationally important ports, like Amsterdam, or they were advantaged by trade policies in the neighboring states, like Antwerp, Hamburg and Bremen. Also the access to the port was far from perfect. From 1850 on, though, decreased governmental control on traffic and trade streams improved Rotterdam's competitiveness: taxes and carriage charges were reduced.<sup>103</sup> But it was not until the completion of the Nieuwe Waterweg in 1872 that the port of Rotterdam was competitive enough to allow accelerated growth.<sup>104</sup> After 1875 this growth accelerates even faster when the fairway of the Nieuwe Waterweg is further deepened.<sup>105</sup> Once the access to the Rotterdam port was improved, the old commercial relations with the United Kingdom proved to be contributive to the development of Rotterdam as a transit port between the United Kingdom and Germany. After 1870 Rotterdam even emerged as the most important transit port between the developing heavy industry in the German Ruhr Basin and the British industrial superpower.<sup>106</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, most Rotterdam trade was directed towards Germany. This growing importance of German trade relations is illustrated by the fact that by this time German had become the first language of the Rotterdam commercial elite.<sup>107</sup>

All in all, the German colony in Rotterdam was not as important for the port's economic development as it has shown to be in Antwerp. This is for example suggested by the fact that

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<sup>102</sup> Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, p. 225. Note that most of the 621 people of the sample are internal migrants from other parts of the Netherlands. Still, the conclusion that German migration is relatively small is justified, when we note that there are 26 migrants from Belgium as compared to the 3 migrants from Germany.

<sup>103</sup> Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, p. 103.

<sup>104</sup> Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, p. 33.

<sup>105</sup> Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, p. 59.

<sup>106</sup> Delger, H., Arbeidsmarkt en beroepsmobiliteit: Een onderzoek naar de gelegenheidsstructuur voor Duitse migranten in Rotterdam, 1870-1930, in: Laar, P. van de, Lucassen, L. and Mandemakers, K. (eds.), *Naar Rotterdam: Immigratie en levensloop in Rotterdam vanaf het einde van de negentiende eeuw*, aksant, Amsterdam, 2006. p. 79

<sup>107</sup> Lesger, C., Lucassen, L. and Schrover, M., Is there life outside the migrant network? German immigrants in XIXth century Netherlands and the need for a more balanced migration typology, in: *Annales de Démographie Historique* (2), 2002. p. 33.

Rotterdam counted a smaller number of Germans than Antwerp. Henk Delger finds 4285 Germans in the city in 1909; almost half the number of Germans that Devos and Greefs counted in 1910 Antwerp.<sup>108</sup> The relatively short history of Rotterdam's German colony and the relative strictness of the Dutch naturalization procedures, give us reason to assume that, unlike in Antwerp, the German colony might not be much bigger than these numbers show. Germans did have a relatively strong social-economic position, though. Lucassen even assumes that their *human capital* might have been significantly higher than that of their locally born contemporaries.<sup>109</sup> Some of them were even admitted to the Rotterdam Chamber of Commerce. Schmitz counts a total of four Germans members of the Chamber in the whole nineteenth century; numbers that are clearly lower than those for Antwerp, but still suggest a significant German participation in the Rotterdam commercial elite.<sup>110</sup> Delger's figures on professional differentiation seem to support this conclusion. Germans seem to have been overrepresented in the high income and high status trade sector and underrepresented in the lower income and lower status industrial sector.<sup>111</sup> Van Dijk notes that they were also overrepresented amongst middle-class shop owners, like bakers and butchers.<sup>112</sup> The conclusion that Rotterdam Germans seemed to be generally well-to-do but never were as big an economic influence on the economic life of the city as those in Antwerp seems to be justified.

### 2.3 An associational overview

German associational life in Rotterdam, but especially in Antwerp, was extensive. In his analysis based on the *Deutsche Wochenzeitung für die Niederlande und Belgien* Henk Delger counts forty-two German organizations in Antwerp and twenty-six in Rotterdam.<sup>113</sup> The difference between both cities is presumably bigger than these numbers suggest. Delger has listed all the organizations that

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<sup>108</sup> Delger, H., *Arbeidsmarkt en beroepsmobiliteit*, p. 82.

<sup>109</sup> Lucassen, L., *Toen zij naar Rotterdam vertrokken: Immigranten toen en nu (1870-2005)*, in: Laar, P. van de, Lucassen, L. and Mandemakers, K. (eds.), *Naar Rotterdam: Immigratie en levensloop in Rotterdam vanaf het einde van de negentiende eeuw*, aksant, Amsterdam, 2006. p. 33.

<sup>110</sup> Schmitz, H., *Discriminatie of integratie van Duitsers in het negentiende-eeuwse Rotterdam?* p. 128.

<sup>111</sup> Delger, H., *Arbeidsmarkt en beroepsmobiliteit*, p. 86.

<sup>112</sup> Dijk, H. van, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>113</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, pp. 141 and 147-148.



were mentioned in the *Wochenzeitung* between its first year of circulation, 1894 and 1924. During most of these years the *Wochenzeitung* was produced in the Netherlands and directed at the Germans residing there only. It was only between 1905 and 1917 that the paper had its own editorial office in Belgium as well, from which it reported on Belgian issues.<sup>114</sup>

The largest German organizations in Antwerp in the early twentieth century were the two evangelical churches. The biggest one was the church of the *Reformationsgemeinde* at the *Lange Winkelstraat* which had approximately 3000 members. The smaller one was the *Christuskirche* at the *Bexstraat* whose numbers were 1809 on the eve of the First World War.<sup>115</sup> The total number of people associated with those churches may have been higher, though. In his thesis on German churches in Belgium Jonas Ongenae found that the *Christuskirche* had quite a large number of *Hospitanten*, associate members who were not counted as full members in the official statistics.<sup>116</sup> German Jews attended service in the main synagogue. Catholics could attend masses in German at the Jesuit church.<sup>117</sup> German Catholic sailors were also sent to a place of worship at the *Avenue des Arts*, today's *Frankrijklei*.<sup>118</sup> Other German associations might not have been as big as the churches, but had a membership that was surprisingly high against the background of a German colony that might not have counted much more than 20000 souls. Before the First World War the *Deutsche Turnverein* (German gymnastic club) counted 720 members, the *Deutsche Liedertafel* (German choir society) had 400 members and as many 575 people had joined the *Kaufmännische Verein von 1858* (Business association of 1858).<sup>119</sup> Another category of German associations were those directing themselves towards charity and mutual aid. *Hand in Hand*, for example, focused on providing health services, *Germania* provided cheap housing and the *Seemannsheim* provided

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<sup>114</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>115</sup> Pelckmans, G. and Van Doorslaer, J., *De Duitse kolonie in Antwerpen 1796-1914*, Belgisch-Deutsche Gesellschaft Flandern / Uitgeverij Pelckmans, Kapellen, 2000. p. 34.

<sup>116</sup> Ongenae, J., *In de naam van de Vader, de Zoon en de Duitse Keizer: Duitse protestantse kerkgemeenten in België voor, tijdens en na de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Unpublished Master's-Thesis, Gent, 2011). pp. 43-44.

<sup>117</sup> Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>118</sup> Oud-Archief Protestantse Kerk te Antwerpen (OAPK), F1, Leaflet spread by the *Deutsche Seemannsheim in Antwerpen*. It contains no date, but it is from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>119</sup> Petersen, C. et al., *Handwörterbuch*, 363.

different services to the floating population of German sailors and skippers.<sup>120</sup> Also, both German protestants and catholics established their own organizations to support specific groups of people, like the poor, female servants, the elderly or the sick.<sup>121</sup> One of the earliest organizations, and arguably the most prestigious one, was the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*, which was established in 1840. In 1910 counted it 764 students in its kindergarten, boys' and girls' departments as well as 257 sponsors, contributing sums between 20 and 3000 Belgian Francs.<sup>122</sup> The *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* was one of the biggest in Europe outside the German speaking regions. Only the schools in Constantinople, Petersburg, Bucharest and Galați were larger in 1905.<sup>123</sup> This school, then, was also the breeding ground for a number of new organizations for its students, like the *Freie Orchestervereinigung* (Free Orchestral Association), the *Schüler-Esperantoverein* (Student Esperanto Society) and the *Deutsche Primaner-Lesekränzchen* (German Young Student Reading Circle).<sup>124</sup> There was also a second German school with a relatively large number of students. Established in 1890, the *Deutsche evangelische Volksschule* had 276 students in 1911, mostly from lower social classes than those attending the *Allgemeine Schule*.<sup>125</sup> All in all we can conclude that German associate life in Antwerp was very extensive and stretched out to touch most aspects of the lives of the members of the German colony: religion, sports, culture, social-economic issues and education were all covered.

Though the Rotterdam German colony was smaller and not as wealthy as the one in Antwerp, Rotterdam's German associational life was quite extensive as well. Already in 1862 a *Deutsche Evangelische Gemeinde* was established, where the religious needs of Germans from different protestant denominations were attended to. From 1877 onwards they had their own church

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<sup>120</sup> Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, p. 126.

<sup>121</sup> Kuhn, E., *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule: Beitrag zur Geschichte der Auslandsdeutschen in Antwerpen* (Unpublished Licentiaat's-Thesis, Rijksuniversitair Centrum Antwerpen: Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken, 1973). pp. 15-16. Kuhn's list of associations is taken from the *Deutschen Anzeiger für Antwerpen* of 8-2-1912.

<sup>122</sup> Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience Antwerpen (EHCA) *Bericht über das 70. Schuljahr der Allgemeinen Deutschen Schule zu Antwerpen erstattet von Direktor Dr. B. Gaster*, Juli 2010, Antwerpen. pp. 44 and 60.

<sup>123</sup> Amrhein, H., *Die deutsche Schule im Auslande*, G. J. Göschen'sche Verlagshandlung, Leipzig, 1905. pp. 50-59.

<sup>124</sup> Kuhn, E., *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*, p. 28.

<sup>125</sup> Pelckmans, G. and Van Doorslaer, J., *De Duitse kolonie in Antwerpen*, p. 33.

building.<sup>126</sup> Catholics founded the *St. Joseph Verein* in 1862 and in 1872 they established the *St. Rafaelsverein*, named after the archangel Raphael, the patron saint of travelers, to attend to the religious needs of their co-religionists amongst both German Catholics settled in Rotterdam and the floating Catholic population. In 1910 the *St. Rafaelsverein* appointed a pastor to support Catholic sailors, Rhine skippers and passing migrants on their way to the Americas. With the support of the Holland-America Line a small church that could hold about 450 people called the *St. Rafaelkapel* was erected in 1916.<sup>127</sup> The Jewish German population of Rotterdam did not develop their own religious institutions; they had to join the Dutch-Israelite Congregation.<sup>128</sup> Of course the German colony in Rotterdam also founded associations directed at sports and culture. The first German *Turnverein* (gymnastics association) was established in 1862. In the early 1870s it was replaced by the *deutscher Turn- und Ruderverein* (German gymnastics and rowing association).<sup>129</sup> Like in Antwerp, choir societies were the most visible German cultural associations in Rotterdam. The *Wochenzeitung* mentions a number of Rotterdam choir societies.<sup>130</sup> The most prominent amongst them seem to have been *Deutsche Gesangverein Harmonie*, *Gesangverein Germania* and the *Deutscher Sängerbund*. From the 1880s onwards organizations directed at poor relief were established as well.<sup>131</sup> The *deutsche Evangelische Hafenmission* that was established in 1887 is an example of this type of organization. Also, at the beginning of the First World War organizations, like the *Deutscher Hilfsausschuß* (German Aid Committee) were founded to support the German victims of acts of war.<sup>132</sup> And, like in Antwerp, the German school was one of the crown jewels of the German community. Founded in 1890, the school would have 200 students by the end of the

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<sup>126</sup> Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas*, p. 221.

<sup>127</sup> Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas*, pp. 219-221. ; Sahner, W., *Katholische und Evangelische Seelsorge des Deutschtums in Holland: Kirchliche und Kulturelle Gliederung*, Verlags-Druckerei Lechte, Emsdetten, 1950. p. 138.

<sup>128</sup> Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas*, p.222.

<sup>129</sup> Lesger et al., *Is there life outside the migrant network?*, p. 33. ; Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas*, p. 223. Lesger et al. and Henkes don't agree on the founding year of the *deutscher Turn- und Ruderverein*: Lesger et al. say it is 1870 while Henkes claims the year 1874.

<sup>130</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, p. 143.

<sup>131</sup> Lesger et al., *Is there life outside the migrant network?*, p. 33.

<sup>132</sup> Sahner, W., *Katholische und Evangelische Seelsorge*, p. 86.

century.<sup>133</sup> After a decrease in the number of students in the early twentieth century, which will be dealt with later in this thesis, the number would reach 328 in 1915 and even as many as 424 in 1918.<sup>134</sup> So we can conclude that the relatively small German colony of Rotterdam proved to be able to maintain an associational life that was almost as wide ranging as that in Antwerp, even though the smaller size of the Rotterdam colony must have made this a harder job.

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<sup>133</sup> Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArch): R901: 39223: Letter from Alfred Ruoff to Seiner Durchlaucht den Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten Hohenlohe-Schillingfurst.

<sup>134</sup> *DW*, 7-5-1915, p. 5 and *DW*, 28-7-1919, p. 5.

### 3 Seemannsheime

Students of migration often tend to focus on permanent migration. This might be the reason why not a lot has been written about *Seemannsheime*, which, after all offered accommodation to temporary migrants. The *Seemannsheime* of Antwerp and Rotterdam are sometimes mentioned in lists of charitable institutions in their respective home cities, but hardly anyone expounds on their history.<sup>135</sup> As far as Antwerp is concerned, the only place where a short historical overview of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* can be found is Pelckmans's thesis.<sup>136</sup> He mentions the founding of the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute* (Association for German Sailors) in 1883. Its steady growth necessitated the acquisition of a new home in 1908, which could accommodate as much as 100 sailors. His short history provides only a snap-shot of the *Seemannsheim*'s history, though, since it is only based on the annual report of 1908. Two publications pay attention to the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim*. In a book written for the occasion of the seventy-five year existence of the *Deutsche Evangelische Gemeinde* in Rotterdam Friedrich Henn gave an overview of the development of the *Heim*.<sup>137</sup> The greater part of his writing is dedicated to the nineteenth century religious roots of the institution. Early twentieth century developments are largely neglected. Wilhelm Sahner also dealt with the history of the organization in his book on the history of German pastoral care in the Netherlands.<sup>138</sup> He describes how earlier pastoral work in the harbors of Amsterdam and Rotterdam developed into full-fledged *Seemannsheime*. Between 1875 and 1882 the Lutheran minister Umbeck worked in the Rotterdam harbor to attend to the religious needs of sailors, Rhine skipper and migrants on their way to the Americas. Six members of the German Evangelical parish helped his successor, minister Wolff to establish a reading room in 1887 and a sailors hotel in 1894. Henn and Sahner praise the religious services thus provided, but their analyses hardly touch on the secular functions the

<sup>135</sup> See for example: Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, p. 126. and Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas*, p.221.

<sup>136</sup> Pelckmans, G., *De Duitse kolonie te Antwerpen*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>137</sup> Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, Rotterdam, 1937. pp. 101-118.

<sup>138</sup> Sahner, W., *Katholische und Evangelische Seelsorge*, pp. 153-154.

*Seemannsheim* fulfilled and do not paint a picture of its development through the years.

This chapter will fall apart in two parts, which are themselves divided in three parts. The first part will be concerned with the *Seemannsheim* in Antwerp: the second part will focus on the *Seemannsheim* in Rotterdam. Both parts, then, will start with a general history of the institution. Next I will look deeper into one concrete example of the institution's history, that will exemplify how local circumstances forced the institution in question to negotiate its own specific balance between different actors in the country of origin and the country of arrival. Finally I will shortly recount how the general history and the specific example contribute to the image of the investigated associations as free agents in a transnational civil society.

### **3.1.1 History of the Antwerp Seemannsheim**

In 1863 a committee of consuls and businessmen sent around a letter to the members of the business-elite of Antwerp, to ask for money to establish a sailors home in the city.<sup>139</sup> The authors stated that Antwerp was the only major European port lacking such a facility. Sailors in Antwerp, they argued, were now only served by greedy hotel keepers, who often succeeded in tricking the poor sailors out of their hard-earned money. This, they continued was disadvantageous to both the sailors and the ship owners. Referring to the success of a similar institution in New York, they appealed to both the business-elite's self-interest and their Christian duty to support the poor sailors. German participation in this project was high. Amongst the signatories of the letter were the Prussian and the Hanoverian consuls, as well as the consul of the Free Hanseatic Cities, much of which were culturally predominantly German. Also, the Danish consul, W. Nottebohm and the Austrian consul, Th. Kreglinger, who both signed the letter, were members of the Antwerp German colony. This first sailors home was replaced in 1891 by a new international sailors home.<sup>140</sup> The role of Antwerp's German business-elite in this home remained prominent. The annual report of 1894

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<sup>139</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. Open letter advocating the establishment of an international sailors home, March 1863.

<sup>140</sup> Oud-Archief Protestantse Kerk te Antwerpen (OAPK), F1, *Verein für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen: Jubiläumsbericht aus Anlass des 25 jährigen Bestehens 1882-1907*. p.2.

shows that one of the two honorary presidents of this home was Ernest Grisar, the other one being the mayor of Antwerp.<sup>141</sup> The Grisar family was one of the wealthiest German families in Antwerp. The honorary presidency was granted because Grisar had financed the construction of a building for the international sailors home on a plot of land that was made available by the Antwerp municipal authorities. Though the Grisar family was the most important contributor to the sailors home, other members of the German colony contributed as well. The firm Bunge & C<sup>o</sup> and the individual contributors A. de Bary, J.D. Fuhrmann, O. Günther, J. Rautenstrauch and E. Osterrieth were mentioned in the 1894 annual report. All these people were very prominent members of the German business-elite of Antwerp. Despite this German participation in the establishment and maintenance of an international sailors home, the desire for a German home had grown by the eighteen-eighties. The German *Seemannsheim* would be founded in 1883. This would not completely prevent Germans from visiting the international sailors home. In a request for money on behalf of *das Komitee der Deutschen Seemannsmission in Antwerpen* Georg de Bary, W. Scheibler and Alfred Schuchard reported that 190 German sailors stayed at the international home in 1902.<sup>142</sup>

Though some people in the German colony of Antwerp had already pushed for a German sailors home since the 1860s, it was not before October 1882 that a *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer* (Association for the protection of German sailors and emigrants) was established. In February 1883 the *Verein* opened its reading room. From 1890 onwards it could also offer the sailors a place to sleep.<sup>143</sup> According to the charter of 1884, the aim of the *Seemannsheim* was threefold.<sup>144</sup> In the first place it aimed to offer German sailors a place to read, write, smoke and converse under the auspices of a reliable house-father. The second aim was to offer inexperienced immigrants and emigrants a confidant who could advise and help them. Finally they wanted to ensure that different private charitable initiatives would be properly coordinated. Already in 1889 a

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<sup>141</sup> BArch: R901: 8890. *Zeemanshuis d'Anvers sous le patronage de S.M. le Roi, Quatrième Rapport, 1894-1895.*

<sup>142</sup> OAPK, F1. Letter requesting money for different purposes. November 1902. Signed by Georg de Bary, W. Scheibler and Alfred Schuchard.

<sup>143</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen: Jubiläumsbericht aus Anlass des 25 jährigen Bestehens 1882-1907.* p.2.

<sup>144</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer, V Jahresbericht 1886-87.*

new charter was adopted, from which the services to immigrants and emigrants and the control of private charitable initiatives were removed. At the same time the aim to offer sailors an accommodation for the night was added. The objective of the 1889 charter read as follows:

The German Sailors Home, founded by the *Assoziation für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen* will offer German sailors a home, in which they find decent accommodation and good food for a small sum, in order to guard them from the dangers of the big city. The sailors home [...] will, apart from the necessary dining room, contain a reading and writing room with newspapers and a library etc. and sleeping rooms for sailors of all standings.<sup>145</sup>

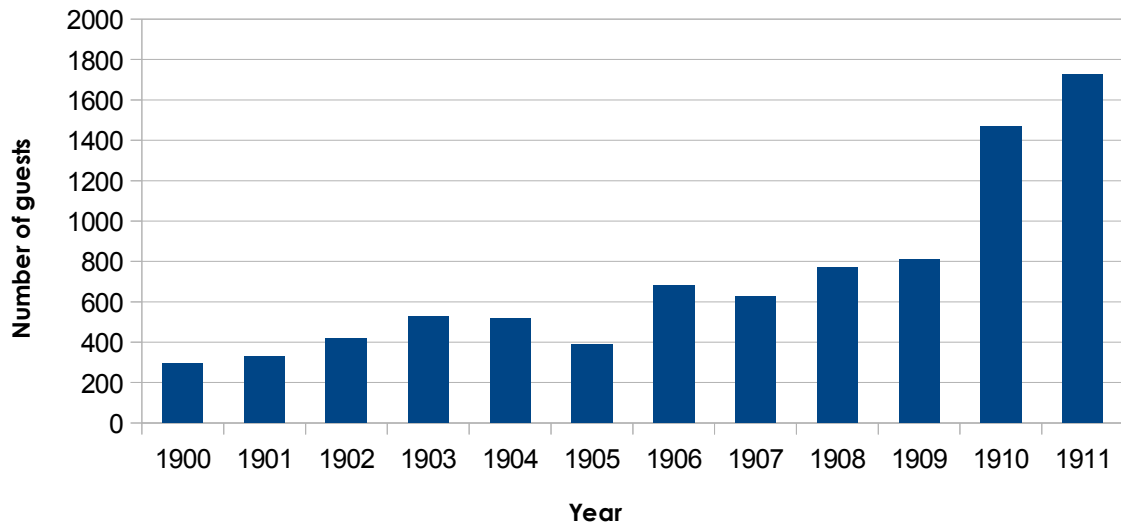
As noted, the earliest associative body responsible for the management of the *Seemannsheim* was the *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer*. From the early twentieth century onwards the responsibilities of this organization would be shared by two new organizations. The *Verein für deutsche Seeleute* would focus on the running of the hotel facilities and related practical activities, like the reading and dining rooms. The *Evangelisches Hilfskomitee für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen* (Evangelical Relief Fund for German Sailors in Antwerp) was to be engaged in pastoral work. Judging by its growth, the *Seemannsheim* definitely fulfilled a need. The general success of the institution is best illustrated by the development of the number of its guests that stayed for the night and the total number of nights spent at the place.

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<sup>145</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen: Neue Satzungen: 14. Nov. 1889.*



**Figure 1: Number of guests spending the night at the Antwerp Seemannsheim**

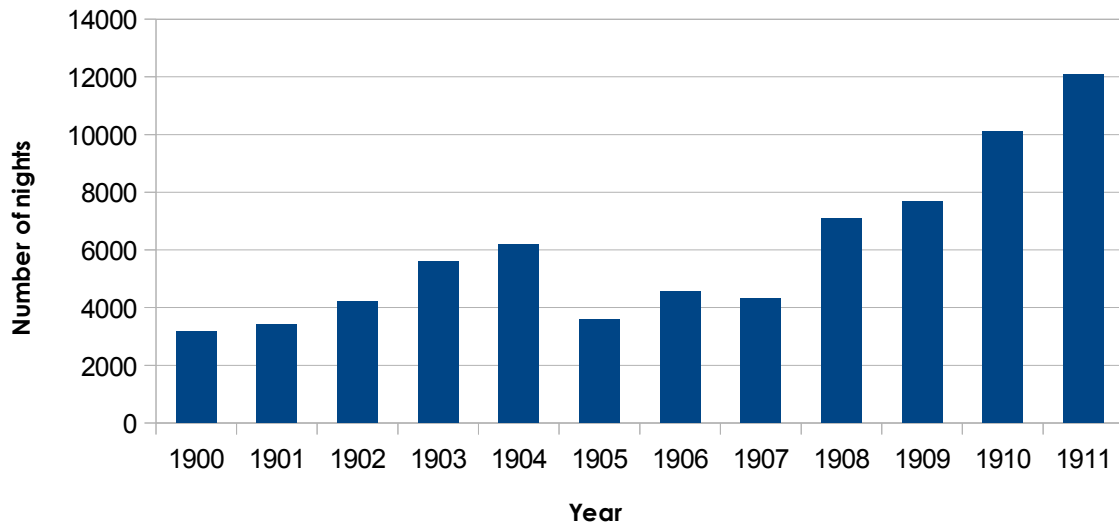


*Source: OAPK, F1, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1911.*

The general pattern of growth is clearly visible, even though in some years a decrease of the number of guests is visible as well. The 1905 annual report does not expound on possible reasons for that year's decline of the number of visitors. Instead it merely claims that during the past year the home and its services have been used extensively. The lower number of guest that year may have had something to do with the fact that the position of house-father was not fulfilled between January and March and from August till October.<sup>146</sup> Also no effort is made to explain the slightly lower number of guests in 1907. The average number of nights guests spent at the *Seemannsheim* shows great variation through the years, with guests spending as little as 6,5 days on average in 1911 and as much as 15 day on average in 1896. Still, the overall development of the total number of nights spent by guests in the *Seemannsheim* shows a development quite similar to the that of the number of guests.

<sup>146</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XIV. Bericht für das Jahr 1905.*

**Figure 2: Number of nights spent at the Antwerp Seemannsheim**



*Source: OAPK, F1, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1911.*

Again we see a considerable downfall in 1905 and a small decline in 1907. Looking at both the number of people staying over and the total number of nights spent in the *Seemannsheim*, the acceleration of the growth after 1907 is remarkable. This could be explained by the new accommodation at the *Canal des Brasseurs* into which the organization had moved, which was within walking distance of the old building at the *Place du Rhin*. This new building could house as much as 100 guests staying over for the night.<sup>147</sup> The *Seemannsheim* would stay at this address until the end of the First World War. April 12 1919, then, it was sequestered, like the property of all Germans and German organizations still left in Antwerp after the war.<sup>148</sup> The Belgian state later sold the accommodation at the *Canal des Brasseurs* to the city of Antwerp for 535000 Francs.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>147</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1908.*

<sup>148</sup> Rijksarchief Beveren – Waas (RBW), Ministerie van Financiën, Bestuur van Registratie en Domeinen, dienst Sekwester (MFS), Dossier 740, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute, Parket van Antwerpen – Dienst der Sekwesters, Ontlasting van beheer, 19-12-1938.

<sup>149</sup> RBW, Parket van de procureur des konings te Antwerpen (PPKA), Dossier 390, Deutsche Schule, Letter on behalf of le college des bourgmestre et echevins to Monsieur Emile Jacquain, Avocat, Sequestre de la Deutsche Bank, Bruxelles, 18-12-1920.

**Illustration 1: The Antwerp Seemannsheim and Heuerstelle at Place du Rhin**



Source: OAPK, F1, Promotional leaflet for the Seemannsheim.

**Illustration 2: The Antwerp Seemannsheim and Heuerstelle at Canal des Brasseurs**



Source, OAPK, F1, Promotional leaflet for the Seemannsheim.

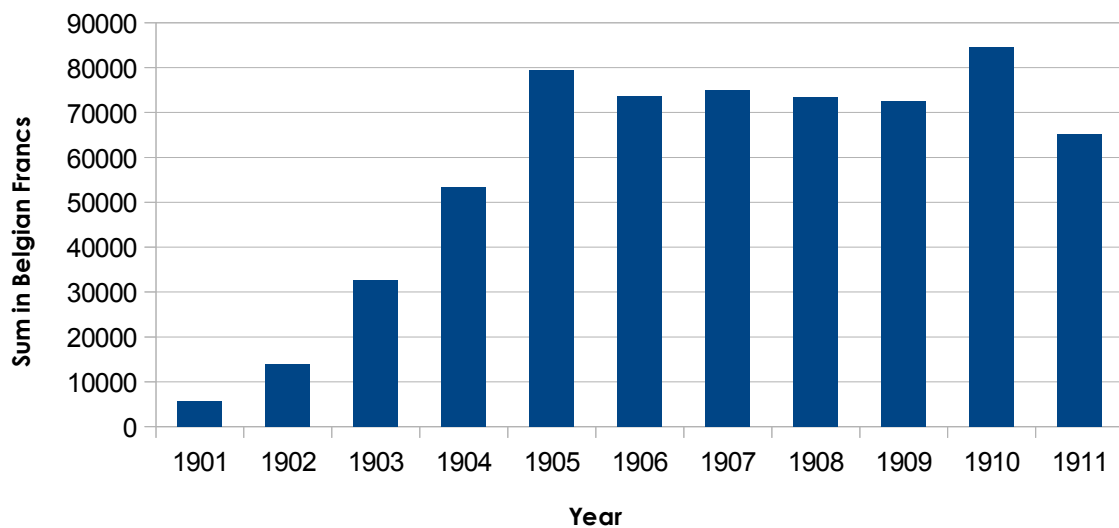
During its existence, the *Seemannsheim* did not only serve as a low-cost hotel. As we have seen, it started off as a reading room. Between 1883 and 1887 the number of visitors of the reading room grew from 2435 to 7769.<sup>150</sup> By 1904 this number had risen to 14600.<sup>151</sup> When the

<sup>150</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer; V Jahresbericht 1886-87.*

<sup>151</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XIII. Bericht für das Jahr 1904.*

*Seemannsheim* extended its field of activity in later years, the number of visitors to the reading room was no longer mentioned in its annual reports, though the reading room itself did not disappear and there is no reason to assume the number of visits had dwindled. Another function of the *Seemannsheim* was one that was also mentioned in the 1863 request for funds to establish a sailors home: the *Seemannsheim* served as a kind of bank, where sailors could remit part of their wages to their families in Germany or deposit it. Already in the eighteen-eighties money was entrusted to the *Seemannsheim*. In 1883 this amounted to 1881 Belgian Francs. In 1887 this sum had more than doubled, reaching the amount of 4467 Francs.<sup>152</sup> In the twentieth century these sums would even increase further. The following graph shows the amount of money savings of German sailors sent to Germany via the Imperial General-Consulate collected by the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute*.

**Figure 3: Sums entrusted to the Antwerp Seemannsheim**



Source: OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1905-1911*.

<sup>152</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer, V Jahresbericht 1886-87*.

The sums of money above are all in Belgian Francs, the value of which was 0,81 German Marks in 1908.<sup>153</sup> It should be noted that not all remittances to Germany were mediated by the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute*. Sailors could also turn directly to the Imperial General-Consulate. The share of the total sum of sailors' remittances administrated at the General-Consulate through the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute* fluctuated. For example, in 1906 almost 75% of the total sum was mediated by the *Verein* while in 1911 it was hardly 50%.<sup>154</sup> The 5758,45 Franc of 1901 was only 32% of the total sum of 18073,95 Franc.<sup>155</sup> Not all of the money collected by the *Seemannsheim* was remitted to Germany though. Some money was saved for the sailors at the *Banque d'Anvers*. After sequestration a sum of 3769,55 Franc belonging to German sailors was found in the save of the treasurer of the *Verein für deutsche Seeleute*.<sup>156</sup> It is clear that the financial importance of the *Verein* grew over the years. Shorty before the outbreak of the war the total sum collected had increased and the percentage of that sum mediated by the *Verein* stayed above the 1901 level. At first sight the development of the sums remitted strongly resembles the growth of the number of sailors staying for the night. A closer look at the number, though, shows that the increase in money sent home is much higher than the increase in visitors. Looking at the period 1901-1911, for example, the number of hotel guests in 1911 is 526% of the number of guests in 1901, while the sum of money entrusted to the *Seemannsheim* in 1911 is a staggering 1131% of the sum of 1901. Apparently the *Seemannsheim* had not only broadened its appeal to German sailors, but it had also succeeded in strengthening its role in financially connecting the sailors to their families in the home country. It is not possible to reliably estimate the average sum entrusted to the *Heim* per sailor. Though the annual reports provide detailed numbers on the number of guests staying over, the number of sailors visiting conversation nights or the reading room was not kept as meticulously. The 1911 annual

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<sup>153</sup> BArch: R901: 17718, Letter from the Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgiën to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 14-11-1908.

<sup>154</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XV. Bericht für das Jahr 1906* and *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1911*.

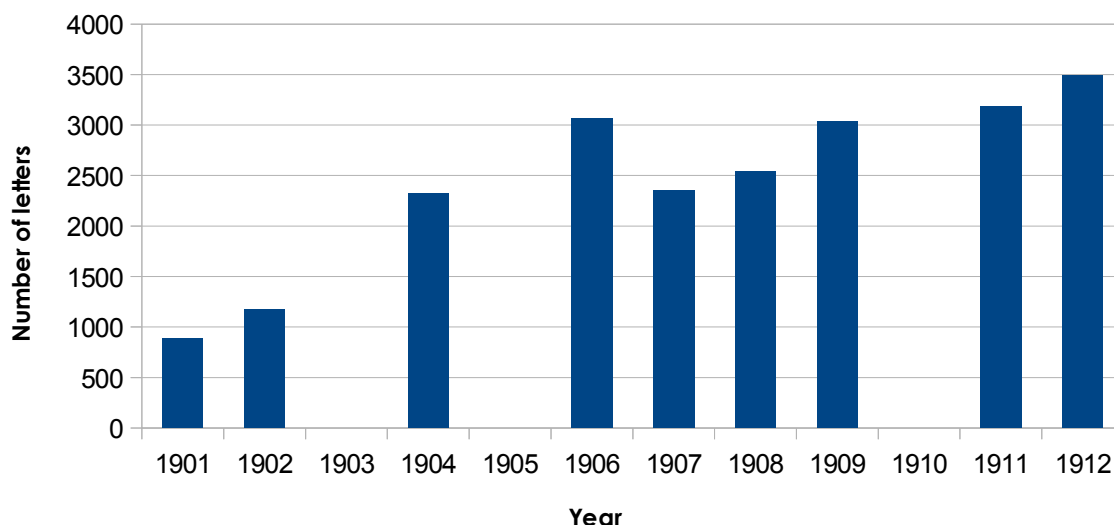
<sup>155</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XIV. Bericht für das Jahr 1905*.

<sup>156</sup> RBW, PPKA, Dossier 1157, Verein für deutsche Seeleute, Parquet du Tribunal de 1<sup>re</sup> instance, relevé C, appartenant à des ressortissant allemandes, 4-10-1927 and Arrondissement d'Anvers, Parquet du Procureur du Roi, Policie Judiciaire, Proces-verbal n° 2493, 27-7-1920.

report, for example, does not mention the number of visitors of the reading room, while it does mention that as much as 10 874 visits were paid to a conversation night that year, while only 1727 people spent the night in the *Heim*.<sup>157</sup>

The *Seemannsheim* also served as a nodal point for mail. Sailors were encouraged to keep in touch with their families in Germany by sending letters that would be processed by the *Heim*. For their relatives the *Seemannsheim* provided a reliable postal address through which they could stay in touch with the often hard-to-reach sailors. In the early years of its existence not a large number of letters from Germany was received yet. Still, between 1883 and 1887 every year between 180 and 329 letters were sent.<sup>158</sup> As the following graphs shows, this number would increase significantly in the twentieth century.

**Figure 4: Number of letters sent from the Antwerp Seemannsheim**



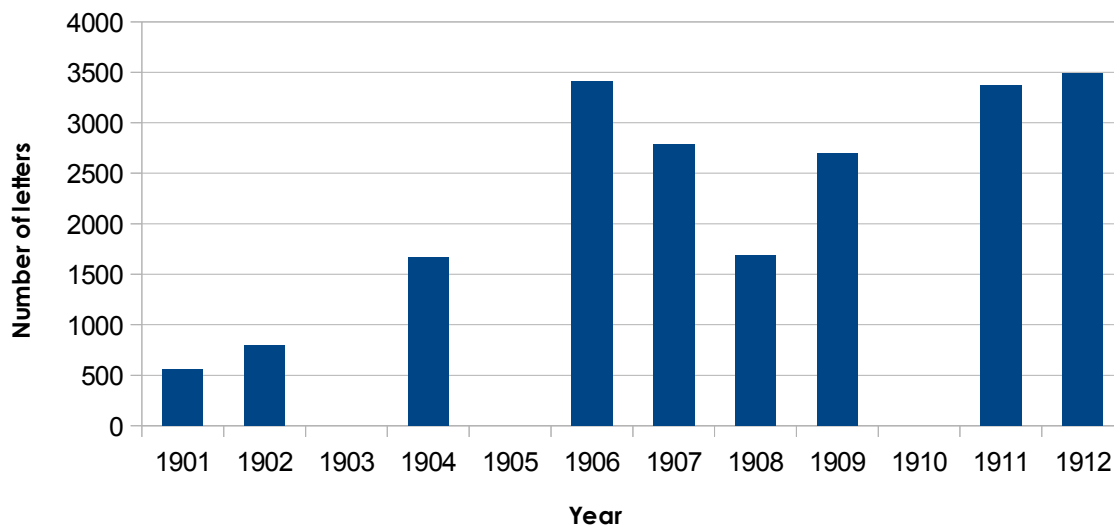
*Source: OAPK, F1, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1902 and 1907, Evangelisches Hilfskomitee für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1904, 1906, 1908, 1909, 1911 and 1912.*

<sup>157</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1911*. Note that the number of 10 874 does not have to refer to 10 874 unique individuals: people may have visited more than one conversation night. Also the people making up this number probably overlap with the 1727 individuals staying over for the night.

<sup>158</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer, V Jahresbericht 1886-87*.

Though in the early years more letters were sent than received, by the early nineteen-hundreds the number of letters received had reached the same level as the number of letters sent, as the following graph illustrates.

**Figure 5: Number of letters arrived at the Antwerp Seemannsheim**



*Source: OAPK, FI, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1902 and 1907, Evangelisches Hilfskomitee für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1904, 1906, 1908, 1909, 1911 and 1912.*

The development of the number of letters sent and received by sailors at the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* strongly resembles the development of the number of people staying there. If we look at the period 1901-1911 again, we see that the pace of growth of the correspondence more strongly resembles the growth of the number of sailors staying at the *Seemannsheim* than the growth of money transfers. As noted above, the 1911 number of visitors was 526% of the 1901 number. The corresponding percentages for sent and received mail are 359% and 606% respectively. Instead of increasing their influence on their visitors life in this respect as well, the *Seemannsheim* seems to have merely stabilized its position.

Another important service offered by the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute* was the so-called

*Heuerstelle* (employment agency). This office was established in 1901.<sup>159</sup> In 1902 the running of the *Heuerstelle* was added to the charter of the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute*. In the charter the explicit aim was to find employment for Germans on German ships to protect them from exploitation. The advantage of not being exploited was clear for the German sailors. The *Verein* claimed that for German ship owners this arrangement would be advantageous as well; the claim was made that a work crew hired at the *Heuerstelle* was less likely to quit on its employers.<sup>160</sup> The *Heuerstelle* was able to conclude agreements with a number of German shipping companies, enabling it to provide quite a large number of German sailors with new jobs. One of the reasons they were able to do so was because they also took over the job of calculating and handing out the wages of employees for whom they had mediated. Another reason for its success may have been that the *Heuerstelle* did not wait for ship owners to ask for new workers. Instead it actively tried to find new positions for jobless German sailors by immediately approaching German ships arriving at the Antwerp harbor to offer its services.<sup>161</sup> The success of the *Heuerstelle* is illustrated by the fact that while in 1903 only 22 shipping companies made use of its services, by 1911 no less than 52 shipping companies were served. The 1906 annual report of the *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute* proudly states that because of the support of shipping companies and the satisfying results of its work the *Heuerstelle* wants 'to take upon itself the task for as long as it succeeds in finding the appropriate people for this heavy and responsible service and as long as it is not possible for the shipping companies to take matters of recruitment into their own hands'.<sup>162</sup> This meant that the *Heuerstelle* was kept open for as long as German shipping companies played a significant role in Antwerp's commercial life, which was until the First World War. Most of the people employed through the *Heuerstelle* were ordinary sailors and stokers, but other maritime jobs like cooks, carpenters and boatswains could also be mediated.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> OAPK, F1. Letter requesting money for different purposes. November 1902. Signed by Georg de Bary, W. Scheibler and Alfred Schuchard.

<sup>160</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, X. Bericht*.

<sup>161</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XII. Bericht für das Jahr 1903*.

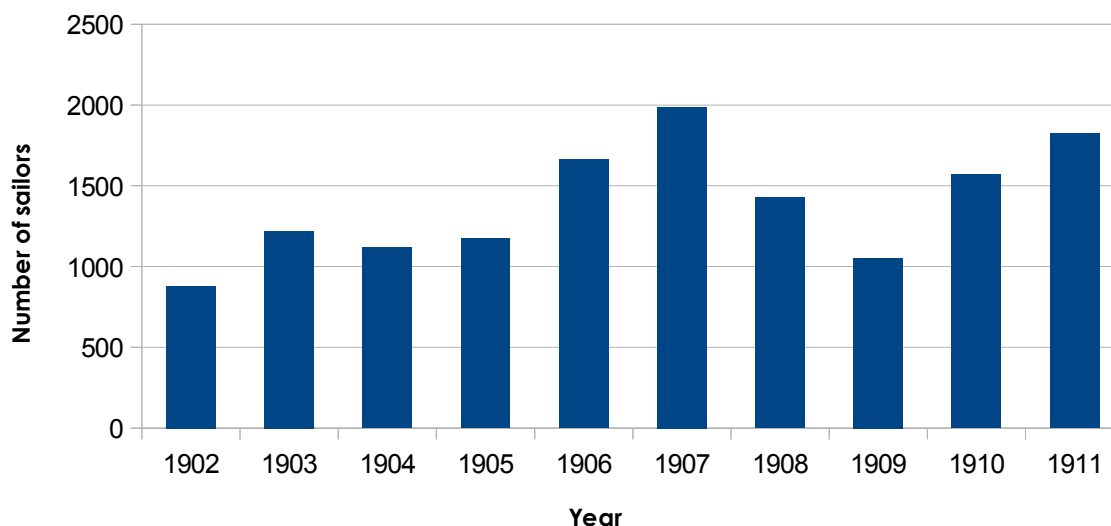
<sup>162</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1906*.

<sup>163</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XII. Bericht für das Jahr 1903, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1911*.



The following graph illustrates the importance of the *Heuerstelle* by showing the total number of people put to work by its mediation.

**Figure 6: Number of sailors hired through the Heuerstelle**



*Source: OAPK, F1, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1905-1911.*

The activities of the *Seemannsheim* were not limited to the examples given above. The reason for their rather extensive treatment is that these activities seem to have contributed the most to the maintenance of a transnational network. It should be mentioned, though, that the *Seemannsheim* also engaged its visitors in a number of activities that are not explicitly transnational. A large number of its visitors may only have passed by to read a newspaper or a book in the reading room or garden. Others may have only visited to celebrate Christmas or to pass the time in a pleasant way at one of the many *Unterhaltungsabende* (conversation nights). Religious services may also have been a reason to visit the *Heim*. The *Evangelisches Hilfskomitee für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen* organized weekly protestant religious services. In a promotional leaflet the *Seemannsheim* referred Catholics to a place of worship at the *Avenue des Arts*.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>164</sup> OAPK, F1, leaflet spread by the *Deutsche Seemannsheim in Antwerpen*. It contains no date, but is from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Illustration 3: Gemütlichkeit in the garden of the Seemannsheim at Canal des Brasseurs



Source: OAPK, F1, Promotional leaflet for the Seemannsheim.

Financially the *Seemannsheim* seems to have been able to act more or less independent from state authorities. The earliest available financial overview is from 1887.<sup>165</sup> The total income for that year was 6480,41 Franc. No mention is being made of any support from either Belgian or German authorities. The contributions of members of the *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer* amounted to 2320 Franc. Donations added another 2074,50 Franc. A total sum of more than 1000 Francs was provided by a New York *Emigrantenhaus* and the Antwerp German Evangelical Church. The larger part of the remaining income was acquired by subleasing their accommodation. It is not easy to get a clear picture of the financial state of the *Seemannsheim* in the early twentieth century. This is due to the fact that the *Verein für deutsche Seeleute*, the *Evangelisches Hilfskomitee für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen* and the *Heuerstelle* all kept their own balances. The *Verein für deutsche Seeleute*, then, kept both a household balance and a general balance during the first decade of the twentieth century. While both these balances were kept, the

<sup>165</sup> BArch: R901: 8889. *Verein zum Schutz deutscher Seeleute und Auswanderer, V. Jahresbericht 1886-87.*

exact relation between the two of them is not clearly explained in the annual reports. In fact, most of the years the household balance is not even included in the annual reports. Without this information it is hard to evaluate the importance of paying guests on the financial situation of the *Seemannsheim*. We do see, though, that when these earnings were included in the general balance in 1910, they amounted to approximately half of the total income.<sup>166</sup> A few conclusions can be made based on the available data, though. The *Heuerstelle* was financially successful: it could easily even its balance with its revenues. The *Verein für deutsche Seeleute*, however, had some trouble to even its general balance. From 1905 onwards the German Empire had to provide assistance: in 1905 more than 3000 Francs, which is more than 25% of the total income listed on the general balance, is provided by the Empire.<sup>167</sup> A 1904 letter from the State Secretary of the Interior to the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs suggests that the *Reichshauptkasse* paid for this.<sup>168</sup> Another letter to the State Secretary of the Interior mentions that the German Empire contributed a sum as high as 5000 Mark to the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* in the year 1907.<sup>169</sup> The general balance for that year only shows an imperial contribution of 2461,73 Franc, though.<sup>170</sup> From 1908 onwards the imperial contribution decreased, never rising above the small sum of 620 Francs a year.<sup>171</sup> Before 1908 the membership contributions did not change a lot. In 1883 a sum of 2728,56 Francs was received. An all time low was reached in 1900 with a sum of 1135,- Francs, while in 1907 the contributions were back to 2555,- Francs.<sup>172</sup> In 1908 the income from contributions rose to 5630 Francs and stayed at this level, showing a total income of 5795 in 1911.<sup>173</sup> This sudden rise of enthusiasm for the *Seemannsheim* in the German colony probably had to do with the acquisition of the new building.

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<sup>166</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1910*.

<sup>167</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, XIV. Bericht für das Jahr 1905*.

<sup>168</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from der Staatssekretär des Innern to der Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amts, 24-5-1904.

<sup>169</sup> BArch: R901: 13420, Letter from Staatssekretär Lehmann to the Staatssekretär des Innern, 19-8-1908.

<sup>170</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen: Jubiläumsbericht aus Anlass des 25 jährigen Bestehens 1882-1907*.

<sup>171</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1908*.

<sup>172</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen: Jubiläumsbericht aus Anlass des 25 jährigen Bestehens 1882-1907*.

<sup>173</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1908, Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1911*.

All in all, the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* seems to have been able to operate rather independent from government authorities. Only between 1905 and 1908 it had to fall back on imperial financial support.

### 3.1.2 The Antwerp Seemannsheim and its new accommodation

As we have seen, the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* opened a new accommodation in 1908. When reading the annual report of 1908 the purchase of this place does not seem to have been very complicated. The report recounts how the establishment of a foundation by Julius Rautenstrauch and his wife Maria Rautenstrauch payed for a plot of land and part of the building costs. The remaining costs for the purchase of the new *Heim* were mostly covered by a group of German Antwerp businessmen, who contributed 76500 Belgian Francs. The remaining sum of 27000 Franc was shared by German corporations, the *Stuttgarter Verein Seemannsheim* and the German state.<sup>174</sup> What the account in the annual report did not tell, though, was how Belgian legislation on legal personality convinced the Antwerp Germans to appeal to the German state and how the state's willingness to help the Antwerp German community and its unwillingness to mingle in Belgian affairs, shaped the legal and financial construction that made the purchase of the new *Seemannsheim* possible at all.

The desire for a new German *Seemannsheim* had already existed for a long time. The effort to actually realize this old wish was started early in 1908 by an initiative of Julius Rautenstrauch. Rautenstrauch was a businessman in wool and skins from Cologne who arrived in Antwerp in 1864. In 1874 he would also be appointed as a trustee of the *Banque Centrale Anversoise*.<sup>175</sup> By the time he got involved in the *Seemannsheim* he had acquired Belgian citizenship.<sup>176</sup> In a confidential conversation Rautenstrauch told the German Consul in Antwerp, R. Pritsch, that he was willing to grant a sum of 50000 Francs in order to purchase a new *Seemannsheim*.<sup>177</sup> He only wanted to

<sup>174</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1908*.

<sup>175</sup> Pelckmans, G., *De Duitse kolonie te Antwerpen*, p. 31.

<sup>176</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 18-4-1908.

<sup>177</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 18-4-1908.

contribute this amount of money, though, on the condition that the German *Reich* would become the owner of the building. He gave two reasons for this condition. First, he wanted to ensure that the *Seemannsheim* would be open to people of every religious confession. The only way he thought this could be ensured was to run it on a national basis. Of course there could not be a better safeguard of this national basis than the German state itself. Second, and most important was the fact that German organizations could not have legal personality according to Belgian law, while the German state did have this desired legal personality. Ownership by individual people was not an option for Rautenstrauch, because the costs of a possibly frequent change of ownership of the real estate could turn out to be high.<sup>178</sup> A memorandum from the German Ministry of the Interior, shows that political prudence caused German state authorities to reject the idea of formal ownership of plots of land on Belgian territory.<sup>179</sup> This type of problem was not new, though. Earlier, the purchase of real estate for the German school in Brussels had led to similar problems. Since in Brussels a way out was found by making the *Deutsche Bank*, who had legal personality in Belgium, the owner of the plot of land, consul Pritsch proposed that a similar solution might be viable in Antwerp as well.<sup>180</sup>

Rautenstrauch agreed with the idea to ask the *Deutsche Bank* to become the official owner of the new *Seemannsheim*. Early May 1908, not long after his first offer of 50000 Francs, he informed the consul that he was even willing to guarantee the full 225000 Francs that the acquisition of the desired plot of land would cost.<sup>181</sup> In the end he was to contribute a sum of 250000 Francs on the purchase of the plot, notarial costs and a first contribution to the building of the new premises.<sup>182</sup> By the end of the month the German chancellor had received a statement from the *Deutsche Bank*, which said that they were willing to contribute to the German interests abroad by becoming the

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<sup>178</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 3-5-1908.

<sup>179</sup> BArch: R901: 17718, Memorandum from Reichsamt des Innern, 16-9-1908.

<sup>180</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 18-4-1908.

<sup>181</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 3-5-1908.

<sup>182</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Julius Rautenstrauch to Kaiserlich Generalkonsulat Antwerpen, 2-7-1908.

formal owners of a plot of land for the *Seemannsheim*.<sup>183</sup> The *Deutsche Bank*, of course, was not at all interested in running a *Seemannsheim* or the financial management of the purchase of a plot of land and the building of a new accommodation. Therefore, Rautenstrauch proposed to establish a foundation that could take care of the financial management of the new property. This foundation should be led by a small group of trustworthy older agents, that would establish itself by a process of co-optation and that would work under supervision of the imperial authorities.<sup>184</sup>

**Illustration 4: Overview of Canal des Brasseurs, where the new Heim was built**



*Source: Goethem, H. van, Antwerpenaren in beeld: De kantelende negentiende eeuw, in: Bertels, E., De Munck, B. and Van Goethem, H. (eds.), Antwerpen: Biografie van een stad.*

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<sup>183</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Deutsche Bank to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 27-5-1908.

<sup>184</sup> BArch: R901: 17718, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 30-6-1908.

The peaceful solving of problems, Rautenstrauch argued, would be guaranteed by the fact that only the most authoritative and disciplined members of the Antwerp German colony would partake in the management of the foundation. Finally, it was decided that the board of the foundation would have the German consul in Antwerp as its chairman, who would be supported by at least two and at most five other members of the board.<sup>185</sup> Next to the chairman, consul Pritsch, the first members of the foundation were Julius Rautenstrauch, Georg von Bary, Theodor Bracht, Georg Samuel and Alfred Schuchard, all of whom are listed as major donors in the 1908 annual report, except for Theodor Bracht.<sup>186</sup> All these people were members of the Antwerp German business-elite.<sup>187</sup> This board got the formal responsibility to secure a trustee or an owner with legal personality in both Germany and Belgium. Also the foundation had the obligation to guarantee all the costs made by the owner or trustee.

All in all the acquisition of the new *Seemannsheim* was a more complicated affair than the 1908 annual report would suggest. Reading this report one would think that a group of rich members of the Antwerp German colony easily bought themselves a new *Seemannsheim*. The truth is more interesting. The process that ended with the establishment of a new *Seemannsheim* was the result of an act of balancing by the members of the wealthy German colony of Antwerp between the limitations of Belgian law on property and the political prudence of sympathetic German state authorities.

### **3.1.3 Some preliminary conclusions on the Antwerp Seemannsheim**

In the introduction I promised to analyze migrant organizations as seeking to promote the interests of migrants *as migrants*. It was argued that this could be accomplished by describing these organizations as part of a transnational civil society. Within the framework of a transnational civil

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<sup>185</sup> BArch: R901: 17718, Memorandum from Reichsamt des Innern, 16-9-1908.

<sup>186</sup> OAPK, F1, *Verein für Deutsche Seeleute in Antwerpen, Bericht für das Jahr 1908*. This annual report lists Julius Rautenstrauch as a member of the board, BArch: R901: 17718, Memorandum from Reichsamt des Innern, 16-9-1908 does not mention him as a member.

<sup>187</sup> For short biographies of these people and other members of the Antwerp German business-elite see: Pelckmans, G., *De Duitse kolonie te Antwerpen*, pp. 7-40.

society, migrant organizations try to balance between the limitations and possibilities posed and offered by different actors. These actors include state authorities in both the country of origin and the country of arrival on the one hand and groups of individuals in both countries on the other hand.

The above analysis of the history of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* shows that relations to all of these actors have been important in the functioning of the organization. The importance of groups of individuals in the country of arrival is twofold. On the one hand the organization was established by businessmen who believed such an organization might economically benefit them. On the other hand the *Seemannsheim* offered an array of services to the floating population of sailors in Antwerp. The importance of groups of individuals in the country of origin can be clearly perceived as well. Families of the people staying at the *Seemannsheim* now had a reliable postal address that allowed them to stay in touch with their far away family. Also some of the money that the sailors had made was kept safe or transferred with the help of the *Seemannsheim*. Though the examples given above do not prove that the Belgian authorities actually benefited from the existence of the *Seemannsheim*, the example of the issues arising at the purchase of a new accommodation shows that they surely were a factor that the *Seemannsheim* had to take into account. Legal personality for the Belgian law was important to the organization and much effort was put into ensuring this. Finally, German state authorities were important as well for the functioning of the organization. They were not directing the organization in any decisive way, though, possibly because the *Seemannsheim* was able to be mostly financially independent. Also, when the German state played an important role in the functioning of the organization, as in relation to the purchase of the new accommodation, this was on the request of the German community of Antwerp and not on the state's initiative. We have seen that the German state consciously tried to not get involved in the management of the renewed organization as well: state-ownership of the acquired plot of land was not accepted, instead ownership was delegated to the *Deutsche Bank*.

Theories of civil society can emphasize two elements of the agency of migrant associational



life. On the one hand, organizations may be described as fulfilling a balancing function between a group of migrants and state governments. On the other hand they may be described as agents that are relatively independent of these authorities. Elements of the second type seem to be the most salient in the case of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim*. Its establishment was on the initiative of members of the Antwerp German colony and these people were to a large extent able to finance their organization themselves. Independence from the German state is also reflected in that most communication and negotiations between the *Seemannsheim* and the state were initiated by the *Seemannsheim* in order to convince the state to help the *Heim* realize some of its interests. The relationship between the *Seemannsheim* and the Belgian state, though, shows elements from the first characterization as well. When its development seemed to be restrained by Belgian state law on legal personality and land ownership, action was taken to set up a legal construction that would both respect Belgian law and support a further development of the *Seemannsheim*. The functioning of the institution, then, can appropriately be described as a part of transnational civil society.

### 3.2.1 History of the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim*

The first edition of the annual report of the *Deutsche Evangelische Hafenmission* (German Evangelical Harbor Mission) published in 1888 paints a dark picture of the situation a German sailor in Rotterdam might get himself into: 'At night one can observe out on the street how seven or eight loose women fight together for one sailor and how they try to violently pull him into the refuges of vice, from which the resounding of dance music is often strongly luring them as well.'<sup>188</sup> Instead of being left at the mercy of these prostitutes they should 'get to know the church as their best female friend and be filled with a desire for often neglected religious services'. In the early years the main purpose of the *Deutsche Evangelische Hafenmission* was to get sailors, Rhine skippers and German emigrants passing through Rotterdam more involved with religion. During

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<sup>188</sup> Gemeentearchief Rotterdam (GAR), Deutsche Evangelische Gemeinde (DEG), 620:279, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam*. 1888.

these first years the work of the *Hafenmission* focused on the visiting of ships and the dispersion of edifying literature. Around 1000 visits were made every year at hospitals and ships and in boarding houses. By 1890 almost 15000 sermons and other edifying writings were handed out on a yearly basis.<sup>189</sup> July 13 1890 the *Hafenmission* opened its own building, which it rented at the *Leuvehaven* 87. This *Seemannsheim* was named *Eckhardthaus Deutscher Seeleute*, after a woman from Braunschweig, who contributed the large sum of 6000 Dutch Guilders to missionary activities in the Rotterdam harbor.<sup>190</sup> The fact that the building of the Amsterdam *Seemannsheim* was also called Eckhardthaus suggests that she donated to the Amsterdam mission as well.<sup>191</sup> The building contained a library, a reading room and facilities for the writing of letters. Also the intention to receive letters from the homeland was stated.<sup>192</sup> The 1891 charter established a new *Verein für deutsche evangelische Hafenmission*. Its main aim was to support sailors, Rhine skippers and emigrants in 'word and deed'. This would be accomplished by appointing a maritime pastor, by the maintenance of a reading room and by providing the possibility to borrow and read good reading matters.<sup>193</sup> In 1895 a new location was found at the *Maasstraat* 16. The new building was much bigger than the old one. The reading room could hold as many as fifty people and the dining room could hold the same amount. In order to find out whether German sailors would be interested to spend the night at the *Seemannsheim* four beds were purchased.<sup>194</sup> This experiment proved to be successful: the next year the total number of beds was raised to nine.<sup>195</sup> One year later the decision was made to provide 15 beds at the *Eckardthaus*.<sup>196</sup> By 1907 the building at the *Maasstraat* proved to be too small and the *Seemannsheim* moved to a new building at *Boompjes* 44.<sup>197</sup> By this time the *Seemannsheim's* interest in passing emigrants had strongly decreased. Thirteen visits of the

<sup>189</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1889-90.*

<sup>190</sup> Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, p. 121.

<sup>191</sup> *DW*, 26-4-1903, p. 11.

<sup>192</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Vierter Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1891.*

<sup>193</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Vierter Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1891.*

<sup>194</sup> BArch: R901: 13420, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1895.*

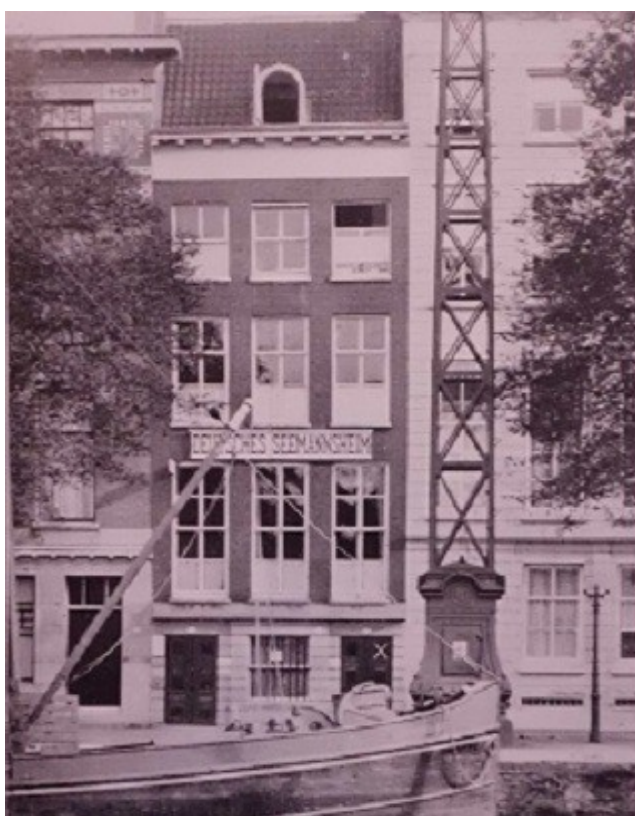
<sup>195</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1896.*

<sup>196</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Mitteilungen aus der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde und Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1897.*

<sup>197</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Siebzehnter Jahresbericht über 1907.*

*Auswandererhotel* (emigrant pension) led to contacts with a disappointing number of eleven migrants. The annual report of 1911 speaks only of contacts with 'a few' visitors of the *Auswandererhotel*.<sup>198</sup> In 1913 the need for a bigger accommodation was felt again and the *Seemannsheim* started to save and collect money to eventually buy its own building.<sup>199</sup> Because of the First World War it would take a rather long time to realize this.

#### Illustration 5: The Rotterdam Seemannsheim at Haringvliet 54



Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresbericht 1929*.

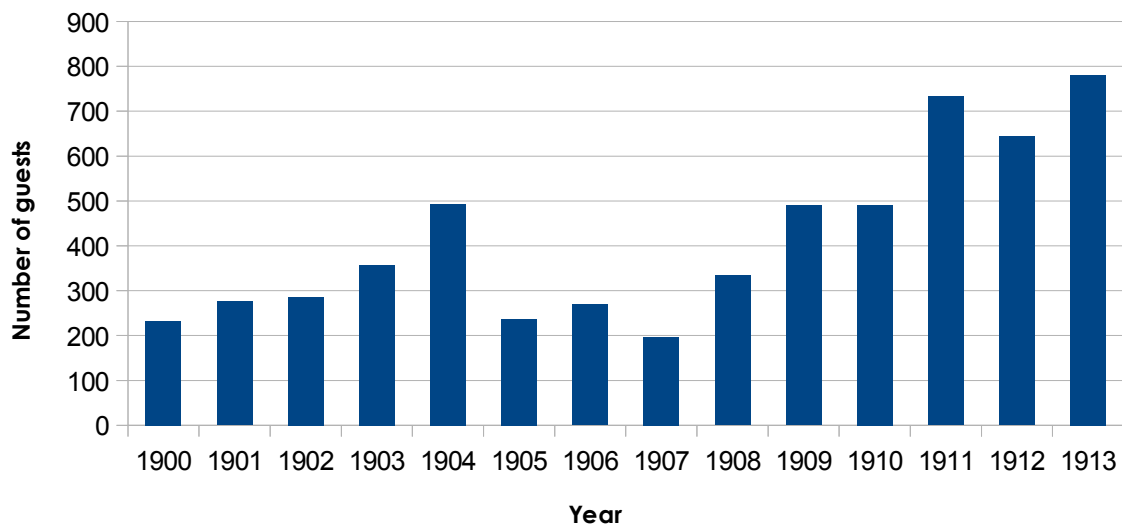
During the war the *Seemannsheim* functioned mostly as a shelter for Germans extradited from the United Kingdom or former German colonies. Also it played an important part as a node in the networks of Rotterdam Germans who tried to support the German armies at the front. Notwithstanding these hard times, the chairman of the board of the *Seemannsheim* proved to be able

<sup>198</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Ein und Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1911*.

<sup>199</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Drei und Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1913*.

to collect enough money from different shipping companies on a trip through Germany in the fall of 1918 to afford the purchase of a new building at the *Haringvliet 54*.<sup>200</sup> In the *Wochenzeitung* the new building is described with glowing enthusiasm: 'the new *Seemannsheim* offers a beautiful garden with a view at the Meuse, a large reading room, a number of sleeping rooms, a bathroom, a good kitchen, cheap lodging and last but not least, electric light on all floors!'.<sup>201</sup> After the end of the war inflation in Germany devaluated the contributions of the German shipping companies, which left the *Seemannsheim* with severe financial problems. Gifts and credit loans of the Rotterdam German community and the leasing of parts of the new building enabled the *Seemannsheim* to have overcome most of its financial trouble by the end of the nineteen-twenties. The future seemed bright: the German merchant fleet, that had almost vanished during the war, had been rebuilt and the board of the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* announced its faith in a bright future in its 1929 annual report.<sup>202</sup> The prewar growth, as shown in the graph below, was expected to be picked up.

**Figure 7: Number of guests spending the night at the Rotterdam Seemannsheim**



Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1900-1911 and 1913*.

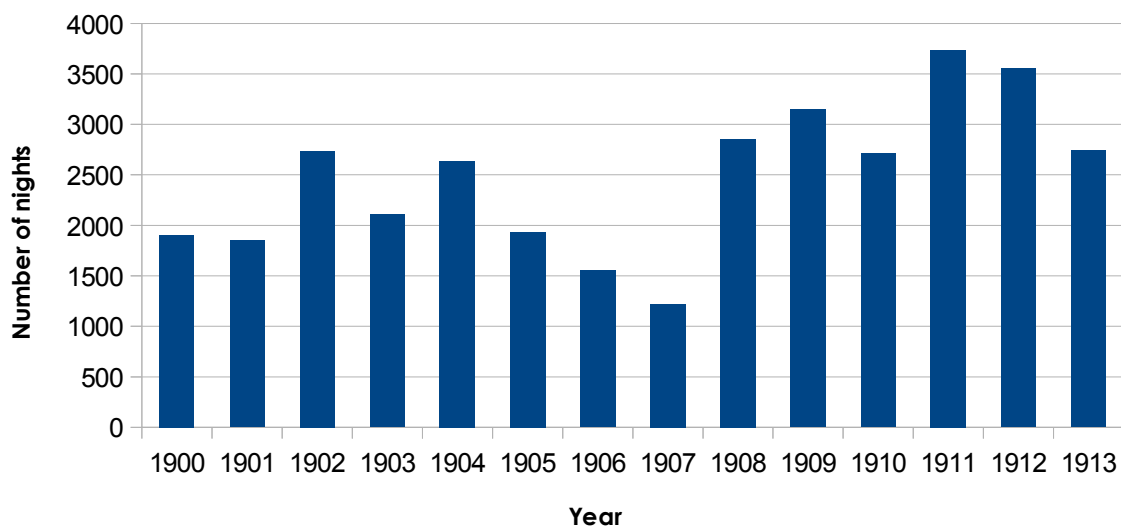
<sup>200</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Bericht des Deutschen Seemannsheims in Rotterdam über das Jahr 1918 und die Kriegszeit*.

<sup>201</sup> *DW*, 27-12-1919, p. 8.

<sup>202</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. Jahresbericht für das Jahr 1929*.

The graph shows that, though the number of guests staying at the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* was not as high as in Antwerp, it was still considerable. Like in Antwerp, we see a slow increase of the numbers in the first half of the first decade of the twentieth century. Also similar to Antwerp is the decline in the middle of the decade and an even stronger expansion starting in the second half of the decade. One thing that stands out is the fact that in the 1906 annual report it is brought up that the *Seemannsheim* may need a larger accommodation. Looking at the number of visitors who spent the night at the *Seemannsheim* in that year, this can not have necessitated the expansion. The reason why a larger building was deemed necessary, then, must have been the anticipated installment of a full-time maritime pastor, which is mentioned in the 1906 annual report.<sup>203</sup> Though the average number of nights spent at the *Seemannsheim* fluctuated strongly like in Antwerp, the development of the number of nights still shows the general development that's also shown by the number of people spending the night.

**Figure 8: Number of nights spent at the Rotterdam Seemannsheim**



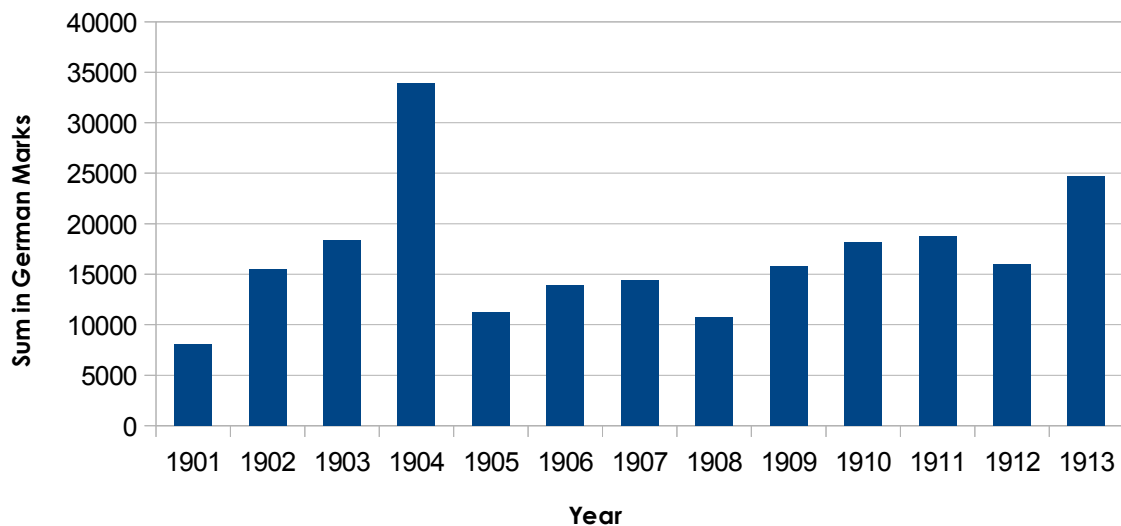
Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1901-1911 and 1913*.

<sup>203</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Evangelische Hafenmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Sechzehnter Jahresbericht über 1906*.

The high and low points in the development of the number of nights spent do not exactly coincide with those in the development of the number of people staying over. An explanation for these differences may be found in economic factors, though these factors do not have straightforward effects on the occupation of the *Seemannsheim*. A bad economic year might result in a smaller number of sailors visiting Rotterdam, which would lead to a smaller number of sailors staying over at the *Seemannsheim*. At the same time, as is suggested in the 1908 annual report, a bad economic year might necessitate a longer stay at the *Seemannsheim*, because sailors need more time to find a new job.<sup>204</sup> So while an economic downturn might decrease both the number of sailors in the *Seemannsheim* and the number of nights spent there in the long run, in the short run a decrease in the number of sailors might coincide with a rise in the number of nights spent in the *Heim*.

Like in Antwerp, the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* also functioned as a sailors bank.

**Figure 9: Sums entrusted to the Rotterdam Seemannsheim in German Marks**



Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1901-1903, 1904-1911 and 1913*.

<sup>204</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Achtzehnter Jahresbericht über 1908*.

Sailors could entrust money to the *Seemannsheim* to have it either kept there, deposited on a savings-bank book, or transferred to Germany. The development of the total value entrusted to the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* is different from the development that was found for Antwerp. At the start of the century the amount of money collected in Rotterdam was higher than in Antwerp. The sum of money collected in 1901 in Antwerp valued 4664 Mark, against 8079,10 Mark in Rotterdam. By 1911 the Rotterdam total value had more than doubled to 18711,10 Mark, but the Antwerp sum of 52757 Mark was almost thrice the sum collected in Rotterdam. While the average amount of money entrusted to the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* by each visitor seemed to have skyrocketed, this same ratio hardly changed in Rotterdam.

Like the *Seemannsheim* in Antwerp the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* also offered its guests the opportunity to write letters and receive replies. Unfortunately, the annual reports from Rotterdam do not keep regular track of the number of letters sent from and received at the *Seemannsheim*. Though the existence of the opportunity to send and receive letters was first mentioned in relation to the 1890 acquisition of the first reading room, the first reference to the actual size of postal traffic was in the annual report of 1904, where it was stated that in the past year 249 letters had been received.<sup>205</sup> The next mention of numbers is in the 1908 report. Between July and December, the report tells, 672 letters have been received and 580 letters were sent.<sup>206</sup> In 1909 a total number of 1345 letters was received while 1126 letters were sent.<sup>207</sup> The corresponding number for 1910 were 1090 and 737.<sup>208</sup> In both 1909 and 1910 it is stated that the number of sent letters does not include the also considerable number of postcards sent. Two things can be concluded from these few numbers. The first is that, like in Antwerp, the flow of post in the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century had strongly increased compared to the first half of the decade. Second,

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<sup>205</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. Eckardthaus. 14<sup>ter</sup> Jahresbericht für die Deutsche Evangelische Seemannsmission in Rotterdam 1904.*

<sup>206</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Achtzehnter Jahresbericht über 1908.*

<sup>207</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Neunzehnter Jahresbericht über 1909.*

<sup>208</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1910.*

staying between 737 and 1354, the number of letters sent and received in Rotterdam was considerably lower than the yearly number of around 3000 incoming and remitted letters in Antwerp.

Another major difference between the Antwerp and the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* is the absence of a *Heuerstelle* in Rotterdam. In a 1906 letter to the German chancellor von Bülow consul Nels paid some attention to the possibility of founding of a Rotterdam *Heuerstelle*.<sup>209</sup> In this letter Nels argued that the need for a *Heuerstelle* under official control was not very urgent, because as the situation was, the consulate was well able to control the few hiring agencies that were allowed to do that job. Complaints about the situation by either sailors or shipping companies, he stated, were rare. He announced, though, that by the end of the year he would inquire amongst sailors and shipping companies whether a *Heuerstelle* would be desirable. He explicitly referred to Antwerp as an example. In later years, no trace of a *Heuerstelle* or even a discussion about its possible establishment can be found. So we can safely assume that the consul was right in stating that within the Rotterdam German colony there was not enough support for such an institution.

One issue on which more straightforward information can be found regarding the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* than in Antwerp, is the financial situation. Until 1907 the whole income and the total costs of all activities taking place in the *Seemannsheim* were accounted for in one balance. It was only in 1908, when a full-time maritime pastor was installed, that the *Seemannsheim* and the *Seemannsmission* split their accounts, though their cooperation was still close enough for them to still publish their annual reports in one volume. This way of organizing seems to have only existed for a relatively short time. The difficulties of World War I forced the organizations to mainly focus on the practical assistance of people instead of on pastoral service. For that reason the annual report of 1918, which deals with the war years as well, does not include a financial balance for the *Seemannsmission*. The introductory remarks in this report also elucidate the reason why the pastoral

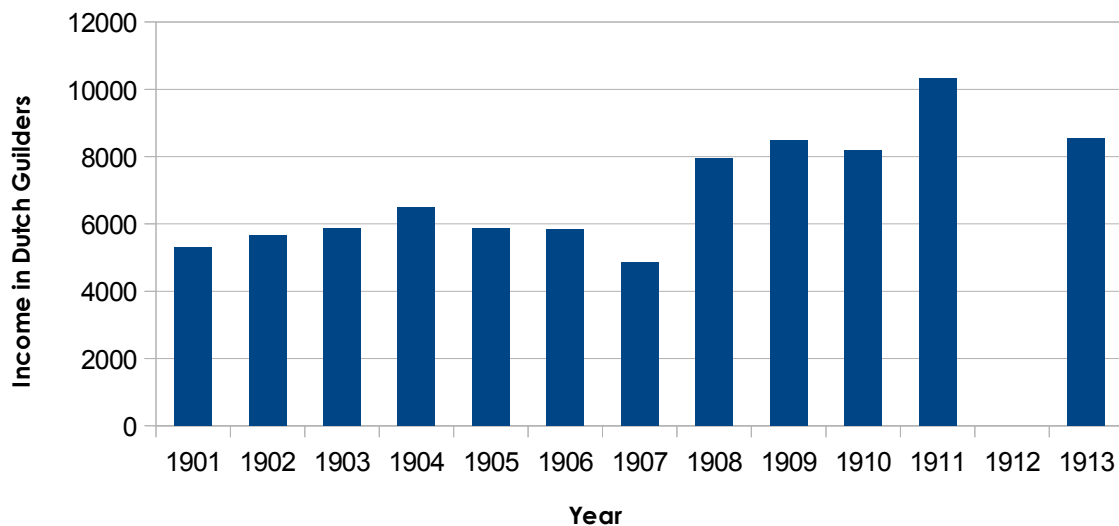
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<sup>209</sup> BArch: R:901: 13420, Letter from the Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat to Seine Durchlaucht den Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 7-8-1906.



tasks were halted: as soon as the war broke out, the pastor left Rotterdam to serve as a soldier and naval pastor in the German army.<sup>210</sup> The following graphs aim to provide some insight in the financial position of the *Seemannsheim*.

**Figure 10: Income of the Rotterdam Seemannsheim in Dutch Guilders**



*Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1901-1904, 1906-1911 and 1913.*

In the early twentieth century the value of one Dutch Guilder was approximately 1,70 German Mark.<sup>211</sup> The decrease in income seems to correlate with a short-lived economic downturn: data collected by van der Laar show a decline in the total tonnage of transport over the Rhine through Rotterdam in 1906 and 1907.<sup>212</sup> The following years growth would be re-assumed. The income seems to be relatively stable between 1901 and 1907. In 1908 there is a considerable increase in income, which most likely has to do with the new accommodation that the *Seemannsheim* moved into in 1908. In the period 1908-1913 the financial position seems to be relatively unchanging

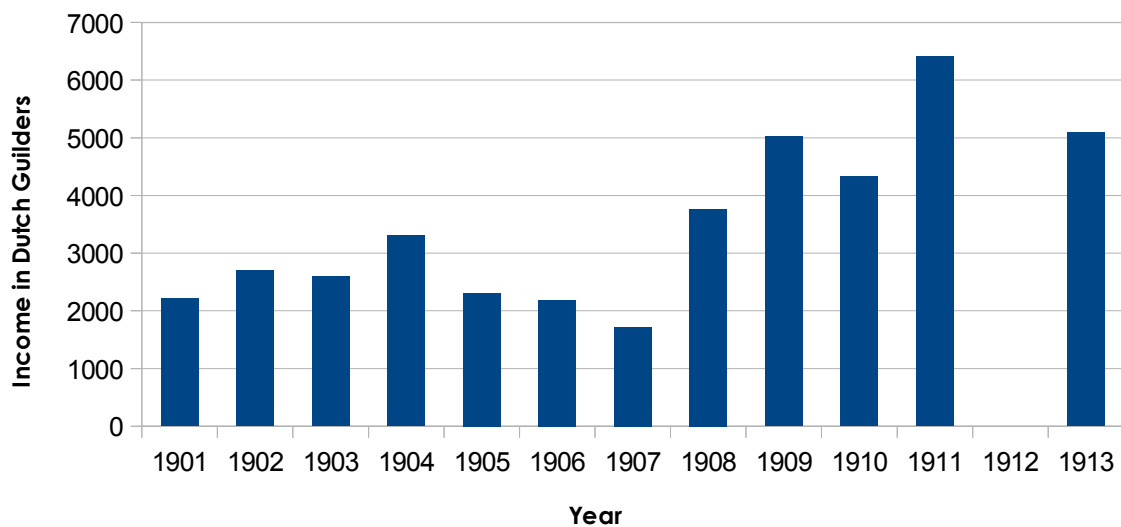
<sup>210</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Bericht des Deutschen Seemannsheim in Rotterdam über das Jahr 1918 und die Kriegszeit.*

<sup>211</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1910.*

<sup>212</sup> Laar, P. van de, *Stad van formaat: Geschiedenis van Rotterdam in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw*, Waanders Uitgeverij, Zwolle, 2000. p. 99.

again. Unfortunately, for reasons discussed above, it is hard to compare these numbers with those of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim*. What is interesting to look into, though, is the sources from which the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* got its income. What immediately stands out is the fact that no direct German Imperial contribution shows in the balance of the *Heim*, although a relatively small sum of 300 German Mark is received every year from the so-called *Centralkomitee* in Berlin, which was funded by the imperial authorities. By far the most important source of income is the money spent by its guests.

**Figure 11: Income from hotel guests of the Rotterdam Heim in Dutch Guilders**



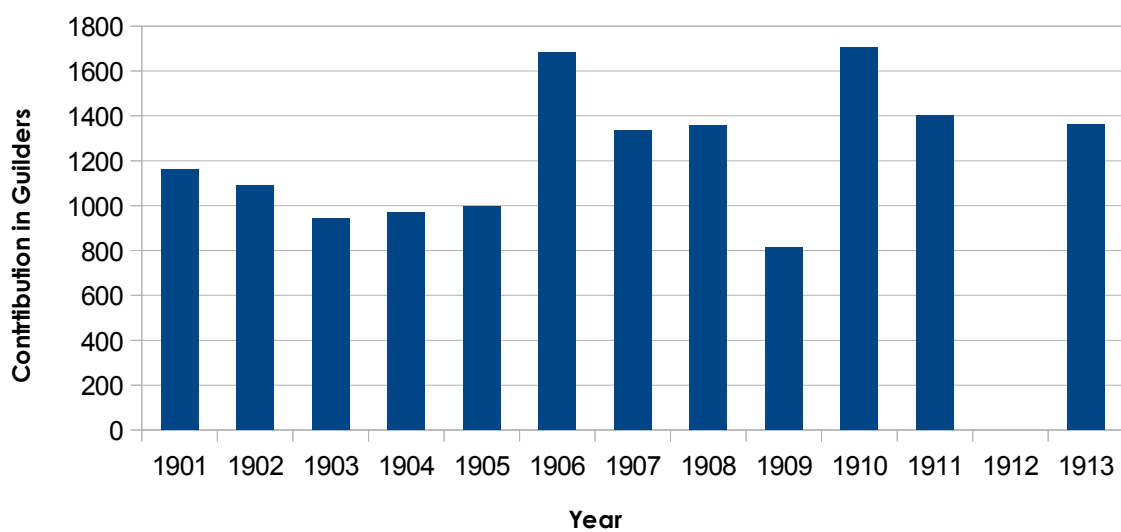
*Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1901-1904, 1906-1911 and 1913.*

Figure 10 and 11 show that in most years the income from staying guests made up more than half of the total income of the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim*.

Another important source of income, not as important as paying guests but much more important than the subsidy of the *Centralkomitee*, was the money contributed by large companies in German cities that traded a lot with Rotterdam. In 1913 the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* received

contributions from Stettin, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, Danzig, Essen, Duisburg and Mülheim.<sup>213</sup> These contributions could make up between ten percent of the total income in otherwise good financial years and twenty-five percent in low-income years. As the graph shows, these contributions were most important in bad years. The bad financial years 1906 and 1907 show an amount of local German contributions higher than the preceding years.

**Figure 12: Local German contributions to the Rotterdam Heim in Dutch Guilders**



*Source: GAR: DEG: 620:279, Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1901-1904, 1906-1911 and 1913.*

It should be mentioned that the local German contributions from 1908 onwards are slightly higher than this graph shows. In the balance there is a budget entry called *Beiträge aus Rotterdam und vom Rhein*, in which the contributions of both the Rotterdam German colony and companies and German cities in the Ruhr Basin were included.

<sup>213</sup> *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Drei und Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1913.*

### 3.2.2 The Rotterdam Seemannsheim and its mission

The establishment of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* was foremost an initiative of the German Antwerp business-elite. This business-elite apparently considered the founding of such a place in their own interest and spent large sums of money in order to keep it running. The initiative for the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* was not taken by a commercial elite but by the *Deutsche Evangelische Gemeinde* of Rotterdam. Already in the first annual report of the *Seemannsheim* we see that more than 9000 edifying writings have been handed out to sailors and over 1000 visits have been made to ships, hospitals and boarding houses to spread the word of God.<sup>214</sup> As late as 1903, the annual report mentions 720 *Sonntagsblätter* (Sunday's papers) and 30 New Testaments handed out at the *Auswandererhotel* and 4080 *Sonntagsblätter* as well as 'many other Christian publications' handed out at ships.<sup>215</sup>

#### Illustration 6: Pfarrer Wolff, one of the co-founders of the Rotterdam Seemannsheim



Source: Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, p.101.

<sup>214</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam*, 1888.

<sup>215</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. Eckardthaus. 13<sup>ter</sup> Jahresbericht für die Deutsche Evangelische Seemannsmission in Rotterdam 1903*.

Judging by the fact that no precise numbers are published anymore after 1903, the dispersion of edifying literature may have lost some of its importance through the years, unlike the visiting of ships. In 1913 still almost 1000 ships were visited and the urgency was as high as it had ever been. According to the 1913 annual report, 'the subversive activities of the social democrats have strongly influenced the sailors, which in some cases even leads to public mockery of the visiting cleric'.<sup>216</sup> The complaints about sailors' lack of interest in the word of god can be found in most of the reports. As early as 1889 'superficial disbelief' and 'mockery of what is most sacred' are mentioned.<sup>217</sup> Providing resistance to social-democrats, though, was an issue that was only emphasized later. The first year in which this challenge was mentioned was 1900. The annual report for that year states that 'the poison of social-democratic points of view has started to work in circles of German sailors'.<sup>218</sup> This perceived social-democrat thread must have added to the demands made on the small work force of the *Heim*. Before 1908 both the job of managing the *Seemannsheim* and the visiting of ships and dispersion of reading matter was done by the *Hausvater* (house-father). When the task of managing the *Seemannsheim* became more demanding over the years, the need arose to appoint a full-time maritime pastor. This pastor could focus on the pastoral tasks while the *Hausvater* could pay his full attention to more secular tasks.<sup>219</sup>

As we have seen, in the twentieth century the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* could balance most of its finances by the payments of its guests and contributions from business contacts in German cities. The spiritual welfare of sailors and the dispersion of edifying literature was apparently not considered to be as useful to the shipping companies as the provision of decent boarding. Financial means for these activities had to be found elsewhere. In order to get the means to appoint a full-time maritime pastor, the board of the *Seemannsheim* contacted the *Komitee für deutsche evangelische*

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<sup>216</sup> GAR: DEG: 620, 279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Drei und Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1913.*

<sup>217</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam. 1889.*

<sup>218</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Evangelischen Hafenmission zu Rotterdam für das Jahr 1900.*

<sup>219</sup> BArch: R:901: 13420, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat to Seine Durchlaucht den Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 7-8-1906.

*Seemannsmission* (Committee for German evangelical sailor's mission). In May 1906 pastor Scheffen visited the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* as a representative of the *Komitee*.<sup>220</sup> Based on his visit, the *Komitee* promised the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* a contribution of 1500 German Mark on a yearly basis on the condition that the German state would add another 1500 Mark. In August 1906 the German consul in Rotterdam, Nels, made a request for these funds to the German chancellery.<sup>221</sup> The imperial authorities were not willing to bring in the full 1500 Mark that the consul asked for. The State Secretary of the Interior was willing to contribute as much as 1000 Mark, though. He also contacted the Prussian Minister of Trade and Businesses, who ended up contributing the remaining 500 Mark.<sup>222</sup> None of the contributing ministries were willing to guarantee the continuation of these flows of money for the future. In the following years, the German consul in Rotterdam had to apply for the money every year all over again.<sup>223</sup> These yearly requests for money were successful, though. Even though the *Komitee für Seemannsmission* did not raise its contribution, both the Imperial and the Prussian governments raised their contributions, contributing 1500 Mark and 1000 Mark respectively in 1913.<sup>224</sup>

As a result, after the division of the old *Verein für Seeleute* in an independent *Seemannsheim* and a *Seemannsmission* in 1908 the financial balances of both organizations looked rather different. The *Seemannsheim* was financially independent from the German imperial or the Prussian royal authorities. At the same time the *Seemannsmission* was almost completely dependent on these state authorities. For example, the total income for 1908 was 2301,705 Dutch Guilders. Of this sum 889,14 Guilders were imperial or Prussian subsidies and another 889,14 Guilders were the contribution of the *Komitee*, which depended on the state contributions. A staggering 77% percent

<sup>220</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Evangelische Hafenmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Sechzehnter Jahresbericht über 1906*

<sup>221</sup> BArch: R:901: 13420, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat to Seine Durchlaucht den Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 7-8-1906.

<sup>222</sup> BArch: R:901: 13420, Letter from Staatssekretär des Innern to Herr Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amts, 7-12-1906.

<sup>223</sup> BArch: R:901: 13420, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat to Seine Durchlaucht den Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 26-6-1907, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat to Seine Durchlaucht den Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 9-6-1908.

<sup>224</sup> GAR: DEG: 620, 279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Drei und Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1913.*

of the total income was directly or indirectly dependent on imperial and Prussian authorities.<sup>225</sup> By 1913 this had not changed much. The total income of the *Seemannsmission* in that year was 3191,43 Guilders. Of this sum 591,90 Guilders were from Prussia, 884,62 Guilders were from the imperial authorities and 886,45 was contributed by the *Komitee*. The percentage of the budget for which the *Mission* depended on governmental authorities was now 74%.<sup>226</sup>

### 3.2.3 Some preliminary conclusions on the Rotterdam Seemannsheim

As was the case in Antwerp, the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* of course balanced state authorities in both the country of origin and the country of arrival and groups of individuals in both countries. As far as groups of German individuals in Rotterdam are concerned, the *Evangelische Gemeinde*, the Rotterdam business-elite and the floating population of sailors and Rhine skippers can be distinguished. The roots of the *Seemannsheim* lie in what the German protestant church in Rotterdam saw as its edifying mission. Like in Antwerp, both the business-elite and the sailors seem to have profited from this church initiative. The involvement of the business-elite, though, is not as high as in Antwerp. In Antwerp a considerable part of the financing was provided by large companies and wealthy businessmen, in Rotterdam only a very small part of the funds came from the Rotterdam German colony even though they may have considered the *Heim's* religious basis as a useful bulwark against social-democrat incitement. Sailors and Rhine skippers also benefited from the organization. The *Seemannsheim* offered them important services that allowed them to keep in touch with their homeland. The fact that half of the income of the organization comes from the money spent to stay over at the *Heim*, shows that this service was highly appreciated as well. Groups of individuals in Germany benefited from the existence of the *Seemannsheim* too. Like in Antwerp, they now had a reliable post address to communicate with their family members at sea

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<sup>225</sup> GAR: DEG: 620:279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Achtzehnter Jahresbericht über 1908.*

<sup>226</sup> GAR: DEG: 620, 279, *Deutsche Seemannsmission. Deutsches Seemannsheim in Rotterdam. (Eckardthaus.) Drei und Zwanzigster Jahresbericht über 1913.*

and were able to receive part of their incomes through the *Seemannsheim*. Of course the possibility to stay in touch with their families in Germany may have been one of the things that attracted some sailors to the *Heim* in the first place. Also, judging by their financial contributions, businessmen in Germany were supportive of the organization: there seems to be some kind of inter-regional financing network linking Rotterdam to German commercial centers. No interaction between the *Seemannsheim* and the Dutch state has been found. There is interaction with the German state authorities, though. Again like in Antwerp, the initiative for these contacts seems to have come from the Rotterdam organization and not from the *Reich*. It is also not clear whether the imperial and Prussian contributions would have been made if the *Komitee für deutsche evangelische Seemannsmission* had not stated its willingness to contribute earlier.



## 4 Deutsche Schule

More has been written about German schools abroad than about *Seemannsheime*. In the early twentieth century, writings on them were already being published. In 1905, for example, Hans Amrhein described the task of German schools abroad as follows.

The German school abroad wants to offer the bigger part of her students, the German children who lack the physical German homeland, at least a spiritual German homeland and by means of her educative work for the non-German children she especially wants to spread the German language, not to provide foreigners with a means to competition, but to teach the foreign countries regard for that which is German, which will add to an appreciation of our merchandise.<sup>227</sup>

Even though the greatest growth of European associative life took place from the late nineteenth century onwards, Europe already counted 24 German schools in areas in which German was not the everyday language before the emergence of the German empire in 1871.<sup>228</sup> One of these schools was the German school in Antwerp, which was amongst the earlier ones with a history that can be dated back to 1840.

Though in the early twentieth century authors like Amrhein may have paid attention to the general development of the rise of German schools abroad, not a lot attention was paid to the historical development of the individual schools. This was done only much later. The most exhaustive work done on the Antwerp German school is still Esther Kuhn's thesis.<sup>229</sup> This work provides a solid introduction into the development of the school through the years, but hardly pays

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<sup>227</sup> Amrhein, H., *Die deutsche Schule im Auslande*, p. 30.

<sup>228</sup> Amrhein, H., *Die deutsche Schule im Auslande*, p. 34.

<sup>229</sup> Kuhn, E., *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*.

any attention to the relations of the school with the German hinterland. Pelckmans's thesis also deals with German education in Antwerp before the Great War.<sup>230</sup> His account is much less exhaustive than Kuhn's, though. His focus is mostly on the role of the rich German merchant elite in founding and maintaining the school and he does not look at the teaching program or the relations with the German state. Bitsch also dedicates some pages to the school. She classifies it as an association for German propaganda which, 'had to preserve the *Deutschtum* amongst the children of German expatriates'.<sup>231</sup> Her treatment of the institution, however, is too concise to provide a convincing picture. Finally, Vanwildemeersch has summarized the history of the Antwerp school, but since his description almost completely relies on Kuhn, Bitsch and two annual reports, it does not add much to the existing knowledge.<sup>232</sup> Apart from this, the German school in Antwerp is regularly mentioned as an important institution, but rarely dealt with in detail.<sup>233</sup>

Even less attention has been paid to the history of the German school in Rotterdam. As with the *Seemannsheime*, Henn's history of Rotterdam's *Evangelische Gemeinde* provides one of the few accounts of this institution, again focusing mainly on its early religious roots.<sup>234</sup> The most exhaustive account of its history can be found in an unpublished work; Henk Delger's paper on German associative life in the Netherlands.<sup>235</sup> In this paper the author tries to both give an account of the development of the school as an educational institution in Rotterdam and an account of the relation the Rotterdam German organization had with the German authorities. The analysis is rather superficial, though, since it is based on an analysis of only a small part of the available sources: mostly articles in the *Wochenzeitung*. In his chapter on German schools in the Netherlands Wilhelm Sahner pays some attention to the Rotterdam school too.<sup>236</sup> His aim is provide a general overview of

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<sup>230</sup> Pelckmans, G., *De Duitse kolonie te Antwerpen*, pp. 54-59.

<sup>231</sup> Bitsch, M.-T., *La Belgique entre la France et l'Allemagne*, p. 285.

<sup>232</sup> Vanwildemeersch, N., Van "Unserm lieben König" tot "Deutschland über Alles". Duitse scholen in België, 1890-1920, (Unpublished Master's -Thesis, Universiteit Gent, 2010). pp. 33-37.

<sup>233</sup> For example: Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, p. 127. and Vrints, A., *De Klippen des Nationalismus*, p. 12.

<sup>234</sup> Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, pp. 118-135.

<sup>235</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, pp. 82-90.

<sup>236</sup> Sahner, W., *Katholische und Evangelische Seelsorge*, pp. 90-116.

German education in the Netherlands, hence no comprehensive history of any single institution can be found in his chapter. Also he focuses mostly on the period between the World Wars, without paying a lot of attention to the earlier years. Apart from these writings, the German school does get mentioned in some papers, but more exhaustive accounts of its history are not provided.<sup>237</sup>

This chapter, like last one, will treat the Antwerp and the Rotterdam institutions separately. The treatment of the organizations will again be divided in three parts. The first part, again, will be a general history of the institution. The second will again focus on a concrete example of the school's history that will show how local circumstances forced the institution in question to find its own specific balance between different actors. Finally the agency of the school will be placed into the theoretical framework of transnational civil society.

#### **4.1.1 History of the Deutsche Schule in Antwerp**

The *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen* (General German School in Antwerp) had two predecessors.<sup>238</sup> The first was a charity school founded in 1836 by the German-Dutch protestant parish. This school had two teachers: the Dutch teacher Sietzes taught German and Dutch while pastor Spoerlein taught religion in both German and French. The second was the private boys school of Vollmann, that had already been established earlier. When Vollmann died in 1839 his school stopped functioning as well. In 1840, then, pastor Spoerlein convinced the German-Dutch parish to abolish the charity school and found a new German school. April 13 1841 the first lessons were given to a group of three boys and four girls by a new teacher, a certain mister Völker who had arrived from the village of Stollberg near Aachen. A small building in the *Rue de l'Empereur* served both as school building and as the residence of teacher Völker.<sup>239</sup> The number of students grew fast. In 1850 74 students could be counted. When the number reached 100 in 1852, the school had to

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<sup>237</sup> For example: Henkes, B., *Gedeeld Duits-zijn aan de Maas*, p.224. and Lesger et al., *Is there life outside the migrant network?*, p. 33.

<sup>238</sup> Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience Antwerpen (EHCA), *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1902*.

<sup>239</sup> Kuhn, E., *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*, p. 41.

move to a new location: a new building was erected next to the church in the *Lange Winkelstraat*.<sup>240</sup> The milestone of 150 students was reached in 1870. After the Franco-German war of 1870-1871, the German community of Antwerp came together to secure the future of their school. The secular association by the name *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule in Antwerpen* took over the management of the school from the church and provided the means for the establishment of yet another new accommodation. A collection amongst the Antwerp Germans yielded a sum of 148 000 Francs.<sup>241</sup> Another sum of 100 000 Francs was obtained by a mortgage offered by the rich Antwerp German businessman M. Frédéric Benjamin Nottebohm.<sup>242</sup> In 1877 the school moved into the new building, registered at the name of Wilhelm von Mallinckrodt at the *Rue Quellin*.<sup>243</sup> This immediately caused another increase in the number of students, which rose to 258.<sup>244</sup>

In 1880 Dr. Müller was appointed as the new director. One of his main aims was to align the German school in Antwerp with institutions of higher education in Germany. In 1894 and 1896 the school was visited by *Kaiserliche Ober-Regierungs- und Schulrat* (imperial higher government and school inspector) Krichel while from 1901 onwards *Provincialschulrat* (provincial school inspector) Nelson from Koblenz would regularly visit the Antwerp school.<sup>245</sup> One of Müllers first important goals was to ensure that a diploma from the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* would be equivalent to the diploma of a German *Realschule*. This would provide the students with the legal certificate of qualification for the voluntary one year military service. At Müller's retirement in 1902, this was not yet accomplished, though. Under its new director, Bernard Gaster, the school acquired this so-called *Militärberechtigung* in 1904. His new aim would be higher: now the goal was to ensure the admittance of Antwerp students to German Universities and *Technische Hochschule* by getting the

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<sup>240</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1902.

<sup>241</sup> Kuhn, E., Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule, p. 46.

<sup>242</sup> RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Declaration of Edmond Jans, Sequestre aux biens et intérêts de l'école generale Allemande, 19-4-1924.

<sup>243</sup> RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Vertrag zwischen der Stiftung "Allgemeine Deutsche Schule" zu Antwerpen und der Deutschen Bank Succursale de Bruxelles zu Brüssel, 3-8-1912.

<sup>244</sup> Kuhn, E., Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule, p. 48.

<sup>245</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1902.

higher grades accepted as the final years of an *Oberrealschule*.<sup>246</sup> At the end of the year 1907-1908 the first *Oberrealschule* students graduated for their *Reifeprüfung*, which, in theory, should guarantee admittance to German institutions of higher learning.<sup>247</sup>

**Illustration 7: The Allgemeine Deutsche Schule at the Rue Quellin**



*Source: Pelckmans, G., De Duitse Kolonie te Antwerpen.*

The imperial and Prussian authorities did not fully accept the diplomas of the Antwerp school, though. Although by this time a number of students from the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* was admitted to institutions of higher learning in Germany, the decision to admit those students had to be made based on case-by-case decisions. An example of the many protests against this state of affairs is a 1910 letter to the German chancellor drafted by the board of the *Allgemeine Schule*.<sup>248</sup> As

<sup>246</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1904.

<sup>247</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1908.

<sup>248</sup> BArch: R901: 38701, Letter from Allgemeine Deutsche Schule Antwerpen to Seine Excellenz den Herrn Reichskanzler zu Berlin, 10-6-1910.

reasons for their complaints the authors stated that the current situation was bad for the school in a number of ways. In the first place, they argued, it was not desirable that the parents of German children should have any doubts about whether their offspring might be admitted to universities and *Technische Hochschule* after finishing the Antwerp curriculum. Second, there was a risk that this uncertainty would persuade parents to send their children to a Belgian school instead. Also people might doubt the quality of the education offered altogether if the diploma was not even accepted by German institutions. The authors of the letter also referred to the fact that other German schools abroad, those in Brussels, Constantinople and Bucharest, had been accepted as the *Vollanstalten* whose diplomas were equivalent to those from Germany, which would of course allow for automatic admittance of their students to German universities. The school would have to wait until 1913 to acquire the same status as its German counterparts.<sup>249</sup> Dr. Nelson, who had attended all the *Reifezeugnissen* since 1908 to document the information needed for the case-by-case judgments on university admission, was appointed by the German authorities as the chairman of the committee of examination.<sup>250</sup> By this time the school had also followed the example of the *Seemannsheim* and made a deal with the *Deutsche Bank* in Brussels about real estate ownership. Before 1912 the first building of the school was still owned by van Mallinckrodt. The neighboring buildings had been donated by the businessman Peter Fuhrmann and by Julius Rautenstrauch, who had been so important for the *Seemannsheim* as well. In March 1912 the *Deutsche Bank* took over the ownership of all the real estate, though the foundation *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* retained the responsibility for the repayment of the Nottebohm mortgage.<sup>251</sup>

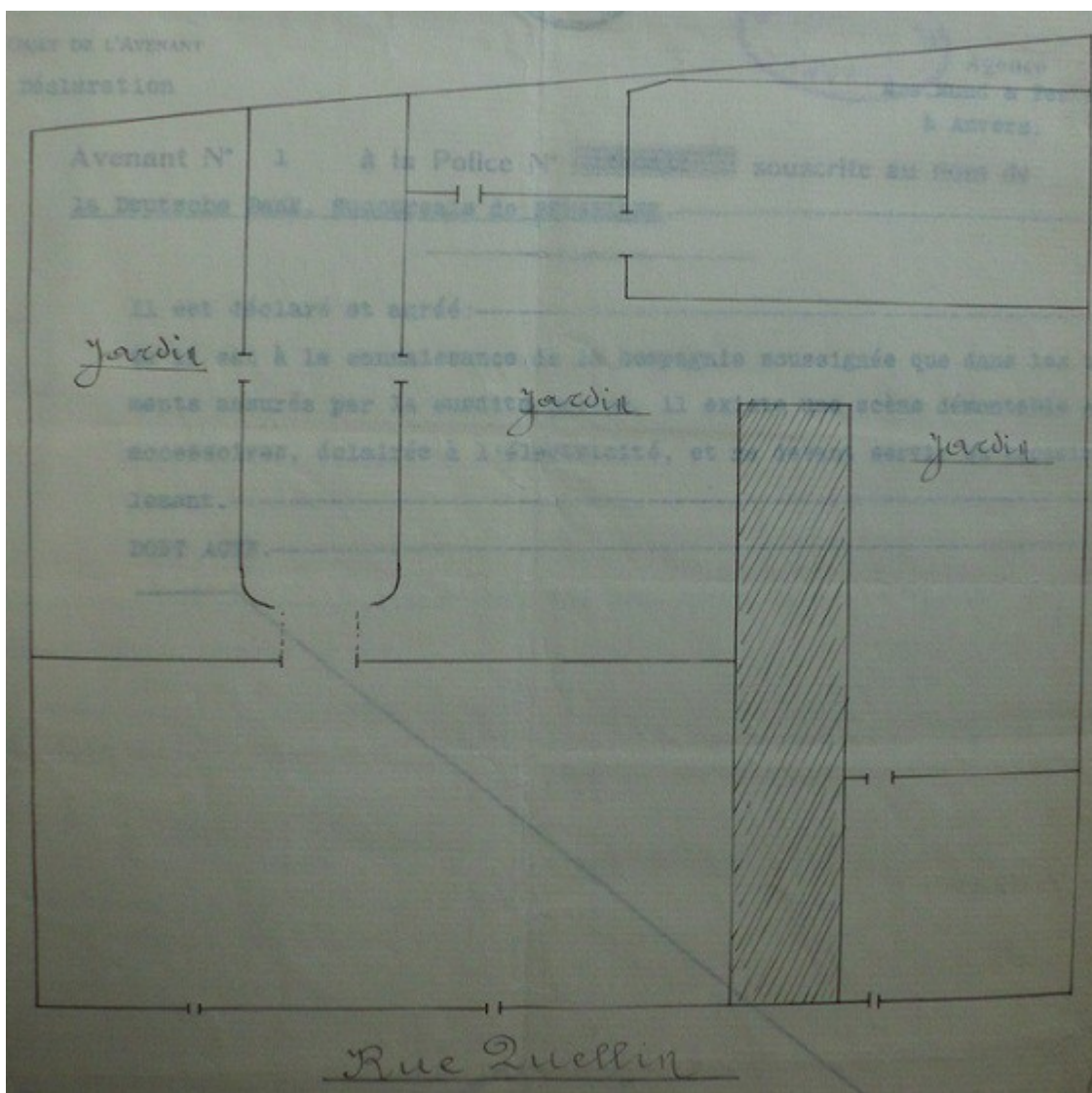
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<sup>249</sup> Devos, G. and Greefs, H., *The German Presence in Antwerp*, p. 127.

<sup>250</sup> BArch: R901: 38703, Letter from Der Reichskanzler. Im Auftrage gez: Kuntzen. to Kaiserliche Generalkonsul Schnitzler, Antwerpen, 26-6-1913.

<sup>251</sup> RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Vertrag zwischen der Stiftung "Allgemeine Deutsche Schule" zu Antwerpen und der Deutschen Bank Succursale de Bruxelles zu Brüssel, 3-8-1912.

### Illustration 8: Map of the Allgemeine Deutsche Schule in 1912



Source: RBW, MFS, Dossier 52, Documentation of the Compagnie d'Assurance d'Anvers.

The *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* could enjoy these successes for a short time only. Within a few years the First World War would start. At the first day after the start of the war the school was plundered: people suspected that the school might hide wireless telegraphs and even bombs.<sup>252</sup> After the Germans seized the city in October 1914, plans were made to reopen the school, which would happen in January 1915. It was not easy to keep the school running as before: both teaching staff and older students were volunteering in the German army. Still the 1917 annual report proudly

<sup>252</sup> Kuhn, E., *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*, p. 56.

states that, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, it had been possible to preserve the full operation of the school.<sup>253</sup> The end of the World War would be the end of *Deutsche Schule* as well. On October 28 1918 Dr. Gaster closed the school. On November 15 Dr. Gaster and the last remaining teachers took a refugee train to Germany. On January 25 1919 the school was sequestered.<sup>254</sup> April 23 of the same year the furniture of the building was sold in an auction.<sup>255</sup> In the early postwar years the building itself was used by the Red Cross, the Belgian Army and the English Army.<sup>256</sup> Later the city of Antwerp used the building to accommodate another school, the *normaal- en oefenschool voor jongens*, for which purpose it bought the building from the federal state in 1927.<sup>257</sup> A new German school in Antwerp would not be established until 1929.

As we have seen, the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* became a rather large organization in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, under the direction of Bernard Gaster, the school grew even faster than before. The number of students that attended the school seems to provide a clear picture of the growth the school experienced. Shortly before the outbreak of the war the school counted as much as 811 students. The event of the war, then, drastically reduced the number of students at first, to a number only slightly higher than 300. During the latter years of the war the school experienced a last revival, reaching the number of 500 students. The following graph shows these developments.

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<sup>253</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1917.

<sup>254</sup> RBW, MFS, Dossier 52, Deutsche Schule, Parket van Antwerpen – Dienst der Sekwesters, Ontlasting van beheer, 10-7-1939.

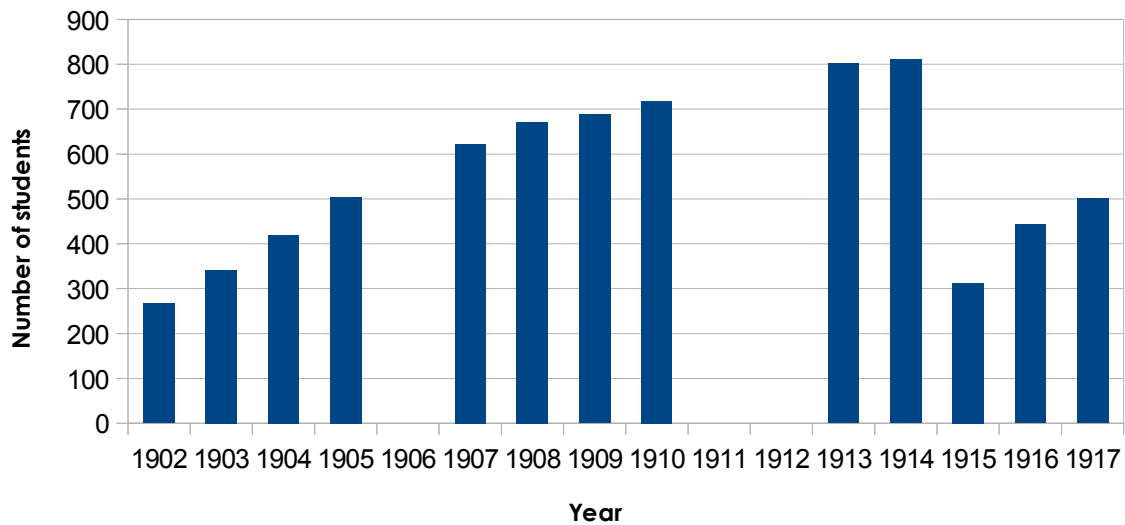
<sup>255</sup> RBW, PPKA Dossier 390, Announcing of Vente Publique de Meubles a l'Ecole Allemande.

<sup>256</sup> RBW, PPKA Dossier 390, Nota voor den heer voorzitter, no date.

<sup>257</sup> RBW, MFS, Dossier 52, Declaration on behalf of the city of Antwerp, 1927. Though the building does no longer exist today, the new building in the *Quellinstraat* still houses a school.



**Figure 13: Number of students of the Deutsche Schule in Antwerp**



*Source: EHCA: Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1902-1905, 1907-1910, 1915 and 1917. ; RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1913-1914 and 1916.*

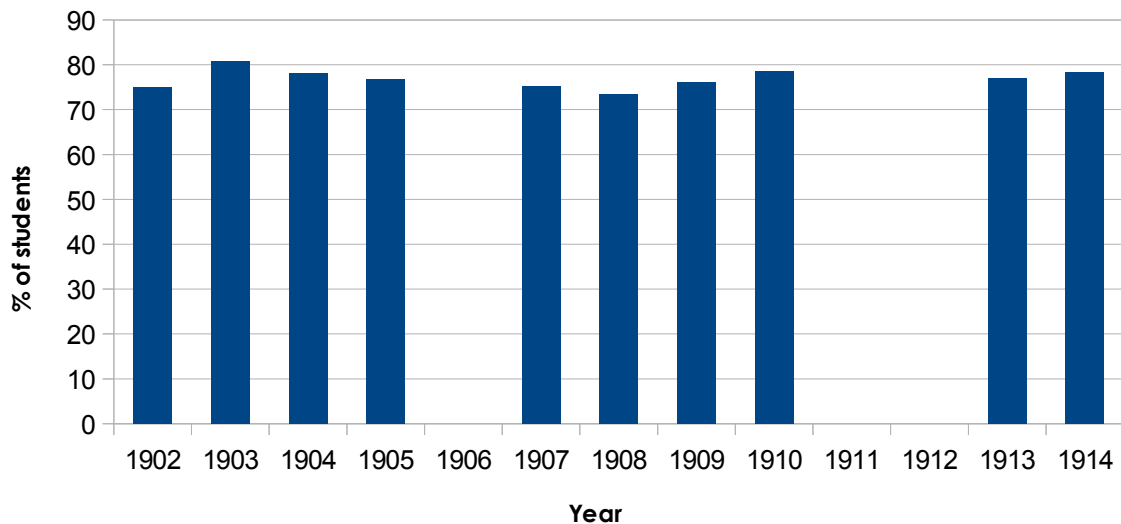
In the twelve years between 1902 and the outbreak of the war, the number of students more than tripled. Two types of growth can be distinguished. On the one hand every class just attracted more students. If we compare the number of young boys in the *Vorschule* classes, the three years between kindergarten and the *Oberrealschule* in 1902 and 1910, we see that this number has risen considerably.<sup>258</sup> In 1902 the number of *Vorschule* students was 77, while in 1910 it had risen to 150.<sup>259</sup> The second reason was the fact that in 1902 the highest grade for boys was the *Obertertia* and for girls the *Selecta*, while in 1910 boys could continue until the *Oberprima* years and girls could attend the *Prima* as well. This added another 65 students to the school. The popularity of the *Deutsche Schule* grew amongst both German and the non-German inhabitants of Antwerp. The percentage of non-Germans remained stable between 20 and 25 percent until the outbreak of the war. During the war the percentage of students with at least one German parent would rise to more

<sup>258</sup> A German boys education consisted of a *Vorschule* consisting of three classes, the *Nona*, *Octava* and *Septima* and an *Oberrealschule* consisting of nine classes, the *Sexta*, *Quinta*, *Quarta*, *Untertertia*, *Obertertia*, *Untersekunda*, *Obersekunda*, *Unterprima* and *Oberprima*. A Girls education consisted of classes 9 to 1 plus the *Selecta* and the *Prima*.

<sup>259</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1902 and 1910.

than 95 percent, reaching as much as 97,6 percent in 1917.<sup>260</sup> This pre-war stability is shown in the following graph, providing an overview of the percentage of students with at least one German parent.

**Figure 14: % of students of the ADS with at least one German parent**



*Source: EHCA: Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1902-1905 and 1907-1910. ; RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1913-1914.*

Not a lot of information is available about the religion of the students, but the school appears to have been quite diverse on this aspect as well. A 1906 report by *Provincialschulrat* Nelson shows that between 1902 and 1906 the number of *Evangelische* students stayed around 50 percent. Catholics were stable at 25 percent and Jews made up about 20 percent of the student population. The remaining few percents were labeled *Dissidenten*.<sup>261</sup>

The courses the students had to follow show that the school kept an eye on what skills would be desirable for both Belgian and German children from a rather upper-class background. There was

<sup>260</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1915 and 1917. ; RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1916.

<sup>261</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Provincialschulrat Nelson, Bericht über den Betrieb und die Ergebnisse des Unterrichts in den der Realschule der Allgemeinen Deutschen Schule in Antwerpen aufgesetzten Klassen.

a strong emphasis on subjects that might be useful in a business career, like foreign languages. The program did not change a lot until the outbreak of the First World War, so an overview of the courses offered in 1908 can be considered to be representative of the whole prewar period. The Latin numbers on top of the table refer to the grades in the boys school as explained in footnote 32.

**Figure 15: Course schedule of the Allgemeine Deutsche Schule in Antwerp in 1907-1908**

	IX	VIII	VII	VI	V	IV	U-III	O-III	U-II	O-II	U-I	O-I	Total
German	8	8	8	7	6	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	66
French	8	8	8	9	9	9	8	7	8	7	6	6	93
English	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Flemish	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	3
Latin	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	4	12
History	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Geography	–	–	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	–	14
Math	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	60
Fysics	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	3	3	12
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	3	3	10
Economy	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	4
Kallygra- phy	–	1	2	1	2	1	–	2	–	–	–	–	9
Drawing	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	23
Handcraft	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4
Singing	–	–	–	1	2	2	2	–	–	1	1	1	10
Gymnastics	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	17

Source: EHCA, *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1908*.

A 1902 report on language teaching in Belgian schools by a British headmaster allows for comparison with Belgian schools in Antwerp.<sup>262</sup> As far as the first six years of education were concerned, the course schedule resembled the standard schedule used at other Antwerp primary schools, by paying considerable attention to two languages. The other Antwerp primary schools would teach Flemish and French, though, while the *Deutsche Schule* taught German and French.

<sup>262</sup> Dawes, T.A., *Bilingual Teaching in Belgian Schools being The Report on A visit to Belgian Schools as Gilchrist Travelling Student presented to the Court of the University of Wales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1902.

The sum of the hours spent per week on Flemish on most Antwerp primary schools during six years of primary education was 44 hours. The sum of hours spent on German at the *Deutsche Schule* was 42 hours. A real difference was to be found in the number of hours dedicated to French education. The sum of hours at the Flemish schools was only 24,5 hours, making it much less important than Flemish.<sup>263</sup> The corresponding number of hours spent at French at the *Deutsche Schule* was 51, making the teaching of French even more important than that of German. During high school years the emphasis of the *Deutsche Schule* on language education was even more pronounced. From the *Untertertia* to the *Oberprima* English was taught. The only subjects to which more hours would be dedicated were French and mathematics. Also in the *Obertertia* some hours were spent on the Flemish language. More hours were not deemed necessary, because Flemish was the everyday language in Flanders and the students were well able to understand it and even speak it to a certain extent.<sup>264</sup> Only during the First World War the number of hours dedicated to Flemish would be strongly increased.<sup>265</sup> This was probably part of the overtures the German occupation force made towards the Flemish, trying to feed on old rivalries between Flemish and French speaking Belgians.<sup>266</sup> Returning to the pre-war years, Belgian schools, were more careful with the teaching of new languages than the German school. Dawes states that '[t]he study of the elements of four languages at the same time is discouraged' and that '[p]upils must have gained a certain percentage of marks for two languages before they are allowed to proceed to the third and fourth'.<sup>267</sup> The emphasis on foreign languages at the *Deutsche Schule* is explained by the fact that a majority of its students planned a career in business.<sup>268</sup> This also provides a second reason why hardly any time was spent teaching Flemish: German, French and English were all more important languages amongst businessmen. The importance of educating a business-elite is also exemplified by the presence of a large number of children from famous Antwerp German business families. Examples

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<sup>263</sup> Dawes, T.A., *Bilingual Teaching in Belgian Schools*, p. 15.

<sup>264</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1905.

<sup>265</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1917.

<sup>266</sup> Vrints, A, *De Klippen des Nationalismus*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>267</sup> Dawes, T.A., *Bilingual Teaching in Belgian Schools*, p. 34.

<sup>268</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1905.

of names that have been mentioned in earlier chapters are Michelis, to which family the number six banker of Antwerp belonged, three Bunge girls, members of the family of the number one banker and a number of Grisars, the merchant family that played such an important role in the founding and maintaining of the international sailors home.<sup>269</sup>

The role of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* was not limited to preparing the promising offspring of a German business-elite for a life as businessmen themselves. The school also organized numerous gatherings and lectures for the Antwerp German community. These lectures could be about many different subjects, as a quick look into the year 1905 shows. On January 25, for example, the painter Wunder from Lübeck talked about the cultures of Siberia, China, Korea and Japan.<sup>270</sup> February 28 of that year, Lucien Blanjean, a teacher of the Brussels *Cercle Polyglotte*, gave a lecture in French on the development and usefulness of Esperanto.<sup>271</sup> The subjects of the lectures varied from highlights of German culture to reports on other European countries and faraway exotic places, as the notification of a series of six lectures for the winter of 1905-1906 also shows. The first lecture would be about Wagner's *Meistersinger*, the second on 'our closest neighbors in space', the third would deal with 'the means of transport in the Congo', the fourth was on 'Morocco and the Emperor's visit of Tanger', the fifth was to be on the history and culture of Japan and the last gathering would figure a German poet reading from his own work.<sup>272</sup> All in all, the topics of the lectures seem to paint a picture of a self-confident German colony but not of narrow-minded inward looking nationalism. Apart from these lectures, the *Wochenzeitung* reports that every year the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* played a part in the celebration of the *Kaisersgeburtstag* (Emperor's birthday). Reports show that the school is one amongst many German organizations that contributed to these annual festivities.<sup>273</sup>

Finally, there is the question of how a prestigious institution like the *Allgemeine Deutsche*

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<sup>269</sup> EHCA, *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresberichte 1903 and 1908*.

<sup>270</sup> *DW*, 28-1-1905, p. 17.

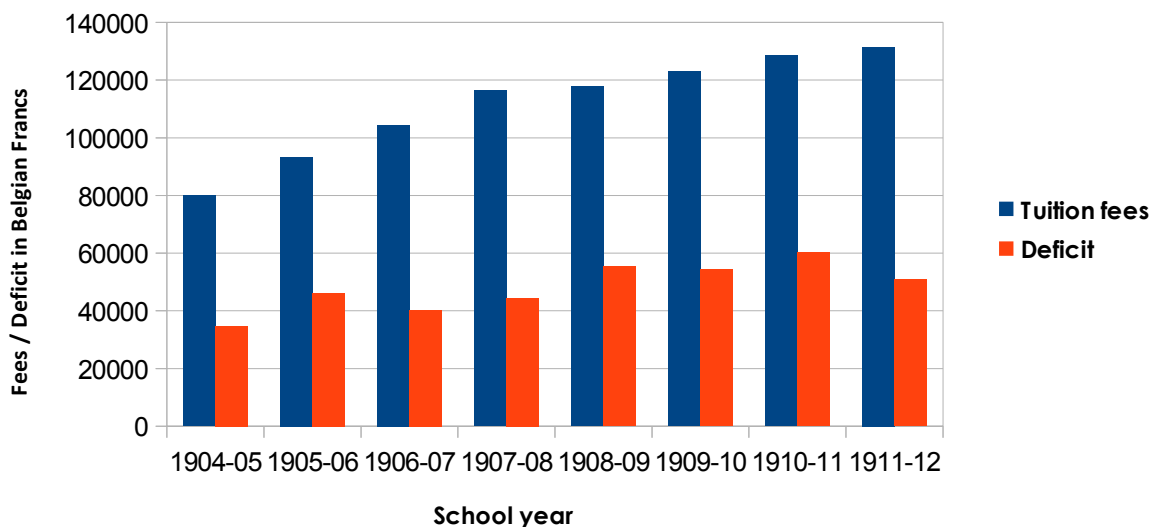
<sup>271</sup> *DW*, 4-3-1905, p. 16.

<sup>272</sup> *DW*, 22-10-1905, p. 16.

<sup>273</sup> For example: *DW*, 22-1-1911, p. 11.

*Schule* could be financed. Unfortunately no financial balance was included in the annual reports. Luckily an overview of the financial balance between the school year 1904-1905 and 1911-1912 can be found at the Berlin *Bundesarchiv*. The numbers in this document show a growing income from tuition fees, while at the same time the yearly deficit stays high as well. Apart from the income from tuition fees, hardly any income seems to be generated. If the financial situation of the school would have to be judged by these figures only, one cannot help but be surprised that the school has been able to exist until the end of the First World War.

**Figure 16: Tuition fees and deficit of the Deutsche Schule in Antwerp**



*Source: BArch: R901: 38703, Zusammenstellung des Betriebs-Haushaltes, 1912.*

These numbers do not tell the full story though. Two things are not included: the German state subsidies and the donations of Antwerp sponsors. Kuhn recounts that from 1895 onwards the school received a yearly state subsidy of 6000 German Marks. In 1900 this was raised to 10000 Mark, to reach the sum of 15000 Mark in 1903.<sup>274</sup> A 1912 letter from the chancellery to the consulate in Antwerp mentions a contribution of 17500 Mark (approximately 21600 Franc) for that year, which

<sup>274</sup> Kuhn, E., *Die Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*, pp. 50 and 53.

would be 11,7 percent of the money spent that year.<sup>275</sup> These government contributions were not enough to make up for the large yearly deficits of about 50000 Mark. This money was collected from the Antwerp sponsors of the school. The 1907 annual report is the first to actually list these, stating a sum of 29915 Francs collected by the sponsors.<sup>276</sup> The sum of 15000 Mark state subsidy and 29915 Francs sponsor contributions nicely covers the 40278,36 Franc deficit for 1907. In later years the sum of these incomes would always cover up most of the reported deficit.

#### 4.1.2 The story of Fritz Bracht

The unclear relationship between the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp and German institutions and authorities is elucidated by the story of Fritz Bracht, a promising young man from one of Antwerp's most prominent families. His plans for a follow-up study in Germany did not materialize as easily as he may have hoped. Fritz Bracht was the son of Theodor Bracht, a well respected member of the Antwerp German elite. The trading firm Théodore Bracht & C<sup>o</sup> had been established in Antwerp in 1867, trading in steel, chemicals and grain, among other things.<sup>277</sup> He also played a very active role in the associational life of the German colony. As we have seen, he was one of the founding members of Rautenstrauch's foundation that was to take care of the purchase and management of the new *Seemannsheim*. He also was deputy chairman of the school committee and member of the board of directors of the school's pension-, widow- and orphan fund.<sup>278</sup> In 1907 Fritz Bracht, at the age of 18 was part of the first cohort of students to get a *Reifeprüfung* for the *Oberrealschule* of the *Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp. Dr. Nelson states that for nine years Bracht had been a student of the *Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp, so we can assume that he had attended all the

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<sup>275</sup> BArch: R901: 38702, Letter from Der Reichskanzler. Im Auftrage gez. Kuntzen. to das Kaiserliche Generalkonsulat in Antwerpen, 17-6-1912. ; BArch: R901: 38703, Zustimmung des Betriebs-Haushaltes, 1912. The total sum spent in school year 1911-12 was 184017,85 Franc. This was covered with 131478 Francs in tuition fees, 1702,25 Franc in 'Mieten und Laden' and a reported deficit of 50837,60 Franc.

<sup>276</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1907.

<sup>277</sup> Pelckmans, G., *De Duitse kolonie te Antwerpen*, p. 32. An interesting detail is that Bracht used the French spelling of his name, Théodere, when he named his Antwerp trading firm. In a memorandum of the Berlin ministry of the interior, though, he is referred to with the German spelling of his name, Theodor, see: BArch: R901: 17718, Memorandum from Reichsamt des Innern, 16-9-1908.

<sup>278</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1908.

classes of the nine-year *Oberrealschule* in Antwerp.<sup>279</sup> The list of members of the *Verein früherer Schüler der Deutschen Schule zu Antwerpen* (Association of former students of the German School in Antwerp) lists him as attending the school in 1895 for the first time, which suggests he went through the full three years of *Vorschule* in Antwerp as well.<sup>280</sup> Dr. Nelson reported to the German authorities that Bracht's oral examinations in English and French were good and his knowledge of physics was excellent, while his written examinations, that had been taken a month before could also be described as excellent.<sup>281</sup> He earned the affix '*mit Auszeichnung bestanden*' (with distinction) on his diploma.<sup>282</sup> The next step that Bracht planned in his career would be studying law at a German *Technische Hochschule*.

As we have seen, though, it was not self-evident, that somebody graduating at the Antwerp *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* would be admitted to a German institution of higher learning. In September, the German consul in Antwerp asked the imperial authorities if Fritz Bracht and two other graduates could be admitted to a German university or *Hochschule*.<sup>283</sup> In order to establish their right of admittance, their nationality had to be identified first. Since all three graduates had indicated that they were planning to visit Prussian schools, the Ministry of Education inquired at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whether these graduates were not just German, but Prussian as well.<sup>284</sup> Foreign Affairs contacted the Antwerp consul Pritsch. Pritsch told them that though the other graduates were Prussian indeed, Fritz Bracht was from a Hessian family. This should not get into Bracht's way, though, he argued, since his father had been the deputy chairman of the school committee for a long time and was one of the most eminent and influential members of the Antwerp

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<sup>279</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Bericht des Provinzial-Schulrats Dr. Nelson über die Prüfung von Schülern und Schülerinnen des neunten Jahrganges an der Allgemeinen Deutschen Schule in Antwerpen, 8-8-1907.

<sup>280</sup> RBW, PPKA Dossier 390, Mitgliederliste der Vereins früherer Schüler der Deutschen Schule zu Antwerpen, October 1912.

<sup>281</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Bericht des Provinzial-Schulrats Dr. Nelson über die Prüfung von Schülern und Schülerinnen des neunten Jahrganges an der Allgemeinen Deutschen Schule in Antwerpen, 8-8-1907.

<sup>282</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1908.

<sup>283</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 19-9-1907.

<sup>284</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Letter from Der Minister der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinal-Angelegenheiten to Der Minister der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, 3-10-1907.



German colony.<sup>285</sup> At the Ministry of Education, however, it was concluded that Bracht could not be allowed to a Prussian *Hochschule* if his diploma was not authorized by the Hessian state government.<sup>286</sup> It was not self-evident that the Hessian governmental authorities would accept Bracht's *Oberrealschule* diploma. Even though the imperial and Prussian authorities had accepted that the *Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp was an *Oberrealschule*, to the Hessian authorities the Antwerp school was only known as an institution allowed to hand out diplomas sufficient for the *Militärberechtigung* but no *Reifeprüfungen* for an *Oberrealschule*. In their administration the Antwerp school was only known as the *Realschule der Allgemeine deutschen Schule unter Leitung des Dr. Bernhard Gaster*, not as *Oberrealschule*.<sup>287</sup> Based on the content and amount of subject material that Fritz Bracht must have learned at the Antwerp school, the Grand-Ducal authorities decided that the boy should have the competence to continue his studies at a Prussian *Technische Hochschule*. At the end of November the Ministry of Education was able to send the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a letter to affirm that Fritz Bracht would indeed be allowed to attend to the educational program he desired.<sup>288</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to inform the consul in Antwerp that he could inform Theodor Bracht of the admittance of his son. All in all, the ties between the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* and a myriad of German educational authorities and institutions seem not to have been so close as to allow for quick settlement of issues concerning follow-up education in Germany. Even the son of one of the most prominent members of the Antwerp German colony who graduated with distinction, had to go through many months of bureaucratic bickering before he was allowed to continue his study at the *Technische Hochschule* of Charlottenburg, which ended up being his final choice.

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<sup>285</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 11-10-1907.

<sup>286</sup> BArch: R901: 38698, Letter from Der Minister der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinal-Angelegenheiten to Der Minister der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, 25-10-1907.

<sup>287</sup> BArch: R901: 38699, Letter from Grossherzoglich Hessisches Staatsministerium to Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin, 4-11-1907.

<sup>288</sup> BArch: R901: 38699, Letter from Der Minister der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinal-Angelegenheiten to Der Minister der auswärtigen Angelegenheit, 22-11-1907.

### 4.1.3 Some preliminary conclusions on the Deutsche Schule in Antwerp

As we have seen, the *Seemannsheime* proved to be able to find a balance between state authorities in both the country of origin and the country of arrival and groups of individuals in both countries. A similar argument can be made for the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp. Starting with German individuals in Antwerp, it is clear that the school served an important purpose. Since the students visiting the school often were the children of members of an Antwerp German business-elite, the school aimed at providing its students with the necessary educational background to one day take up such a position as well. At the same time it offered a number of Belgians or other nationals an entry into these circles too. After all, before the First World War about twenty percent of the students did not even have one German parent. Apart from providing an excellent education aimed at preparing students to find their way into a multilingual cosmopolitan business world, the school also aimed to ensure that its student's chances within the German empire would be as high as possible. The continuing fight for German acceptance of its diplomas bears testimony to this effort. Based on the courses offered and the correspondence with the imperial authorities it is safe to assume that the school did not choose to either be German or cosmopolitan. Both good relations with the German hinterland and the ability to be part of an international cosmopolitan business-elite were highly valued amongst the relatively well-to-do German colony of Antwerp.

As far as the relationship between the *Deutsche Schule* and the Belgian and German authorities is concerned, we can be short. The Belgian government seems to have given the school so much freedom that regular contact seems to have been completely unnecessary. Hans Amrhein confirms this in his 1905 book on German schools abroad, stating that in Belgium schools are independent of the state, for which reason the state does not interfere with German schools on its territory.<sup>289</sup> The main problem for German schools in Belgium, he continues, is the problem we already encountered when dealing with the *Seemannsheime*: the purchase of their own accommodation. Because no arrangements with institutions like the *Deutsche Bank* had yet been

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<sup>289</sup> Amrhein, H., *Die deutsche Schule im Auslande*, pp. 116-117.

made when Amrhein wrote his book, the only solution to him appeared to be private ownership of the real estate. The interference of German authorities seems to have been limited to financial contributions. About 10 to 15 percent of the school's financial means are from German government subsidies. The school seems to have been mostly financially independent of the German state. This relative financial independence allowed for a relative administrative independence as well. Also, when looking at the correspondence between the school and German state authorities, we do not see any attempts of the state to control the administration of the school. Requests by the school for favors, most importantly acknowledgment of its diplomas, seem to define the relation between school and state. The state is not trying to direct the school, the school is trying to bargain with the state instead.

Like in the case of the *Seemannsheime*, the functioning of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* can both be seen as being completely independent of government authorities and as looking to find a balance between state authorities and a migrant colony. The school is almost completely independent from the Belgian government: no Belgian state subsidies are received and no strict legal rules on the subject matter taught have to be taken into account. Only in regard to legal personality and the purchase of land the Belgian state seems to limit the possibilities of the school. The example set by the *Seemannsheim* was easily followed, though. Financially the school does receive some of its funds from the German government, but by far the larger part of its income is from student fees and contributions of rich members of the German colony. The school is not at all independent in regard to the acceptance of its diplomas in Germany, though. The struggle to get the *Militärberechtigung* first and to get its *Reifeprüfung* accepted later shows a long history of negotiation. All in all, though, the school is quite well able to provide its students both with a background needed to be part of an international cosmopolitan business community and a background needed to be part of a German community. Thereby it provides a useful service to a migrant community, whose members might either want to emphasize their *Deutschtum* or their

cosmopolitanism.

#### 4.2.1 History of the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam

The history of the German school of Rotterdam does not reach as far back as that of Antwerp. In 1890 the school was founded by the *Deutsch-evangelischen Gemeinde* of Rotterdam. Its first charter stated that the school was not only open to the German members of the congregation: all German children were welcomed as well as Dutch children of the evangelical faith.<sup>290</sup> The *Wochenzeitung* claims that it had 'about a dozen' students in its first year.<sup>291</sup> A retrospective in a later fund-raising letter for a new accommodation in 1902 mentions the number of 18.<sup>292</sup> The strong bond between the *Deutsch-evangelischen Gemeinde* and the school would soon be undone. An 1897 report of the church council quotes a church official saying that 'since the majority of [the school's] students are recruited from circles that are neither German nor Evangelical families, [...] the desire has developed in both the church council and the rector, to release the school from all associations with the church'.<sup>293</sup> Therefore, on April 10 1897 a secular *Deutsche Schulverein* was established, which would acquire legal personality in the Netherlands at August 14. At the first of October of the same year the administration of the school was taken over by this *Schulverein*.<sup>294</sup> During the first years of its existence the school was only a small institution: the 1902 fund-raising letter speaks of 'a couple of rooms in a rented house serving as classrooms'. These rooms, so it is argued in the letter, were unhealthy and did not even meet legal standards. To purchase a new accommodation a building fund was established: contributions could be handed over to consul M. von Loehr, residing at *Boompjes 58*.<sup>295</sup> To raise more money for the building fund, the *Deutsche Schulverein* cooperated with other German associations in Rotterdam and the German ambassador in The Hague to organize

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<sup>290</sup> Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, p. 105.

<sup>291</sup> *DW*, 30-10-1904, p. 2.

<sup>292</sup> BArch: R901: 39224, Aufruf an alle Vaterlands-Freunde, 1902.

<sup>293</sup> Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, p. 116.

<sup>294</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.

<sup>295</sup> BArch: R901: 39224, Aufruf an alle Vaterlands-Freunde, 1902.

a *Deutsches Fest* (German celebration) on 15 and 16 November 1902. The *Fest* was to include, amongst other things, performances in the theater, a cruise on the Rotterdam waterways, a banquet and a *Deutsches Volksfest* at *Societeit Harmonie*, which could hold as much as 4000 people.<sup>296</sup> The fund raising was successful enough to start building the new accommodation at the *Gedempte Vest* 18 in April 1904. In October, when the building was finished, the school moved into its new building, which was lavishly praised by the *Wochenzeitung*: 'The teaching materials are astonishing. Even a small laboratory is available. The finished and unfinished school- and handiwork, that one got the chance to inspect, show that even the smallest of the small enjoy working under these circumstances.'<sup>297</sup>

**Illustration 9: The Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam at the Gedempte Vest, destructed in WW II**



*Source: GAR: Catalogue number: 1981-1175.*

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<sup>296</sup> BArch: R901: 39224, Announcement of Deutsches Fest, October 1902.

<sup>297</sup> *DW*, 30-10-1904, p. 2.

The school had only six classes. These classes were the three classes of the *Vorschule*, the *Nona*, *Octava* and *Septima* as well as a *Sexta*, a *Quinta* and a *Quarta*. The plan was to expand the number of classes when the new building would allow this growth. Within one year the installation of a seventh class was planned and within two years an eighth was to be added.<sup>298</sup> These ambitions were not to be realized as soon as hoped for, though. Professor Schmidt's 1910 report on the *Deutsche Schule* in Rotterdam still only mentions six classes.<sup>299</sup> One year later, though, an *Untertertia* class was installed. April first 1912, then, an *Obertertia* class was started.<sup>300</sup> In 1914, finally, an *Untersekunda* was established. Now the school had become a full-fledged *Realschule* and got its *Militärberechtigung*, which allowed its graduated students to sign up for the voluntary one year military service.<sup>301</sup> Notwithstanding this favorable development, the early war years were not easy for the Rotterdam school. Extradited and fled Germans from Belgium, Britain and other countries were offered refuge at the school building. Some got traveling advice, some financial support and others even lived for short periods in the school building. Only in 1916 the school was released of this yoke.<sup>302</sup> A more or less normal schedule could be reinstated.

Meanwhile the war years did in no way negatively influence the number of students of the Rotterdam *Deutsche Schule*. While the number of students seemed to stagnate somewhere between 150 and 200 between 1907 and the eve of the First World War, we see these numbers almost double during the early years of the war. By 1918 the number would rise to as much as 424 students. After the war the number would continue to grow for some time.<sup>303</sup> In the nineteen-thirties the number would drop again. Still, the number of 306 students shows that the German school in Rotterdam was still very viable in the nineteen-thirties.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> *DW*, 20-3-1904, p. 11.

<sup>299</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.

<sup>300</sup> *DW*, 31-3-1912, p. 5.

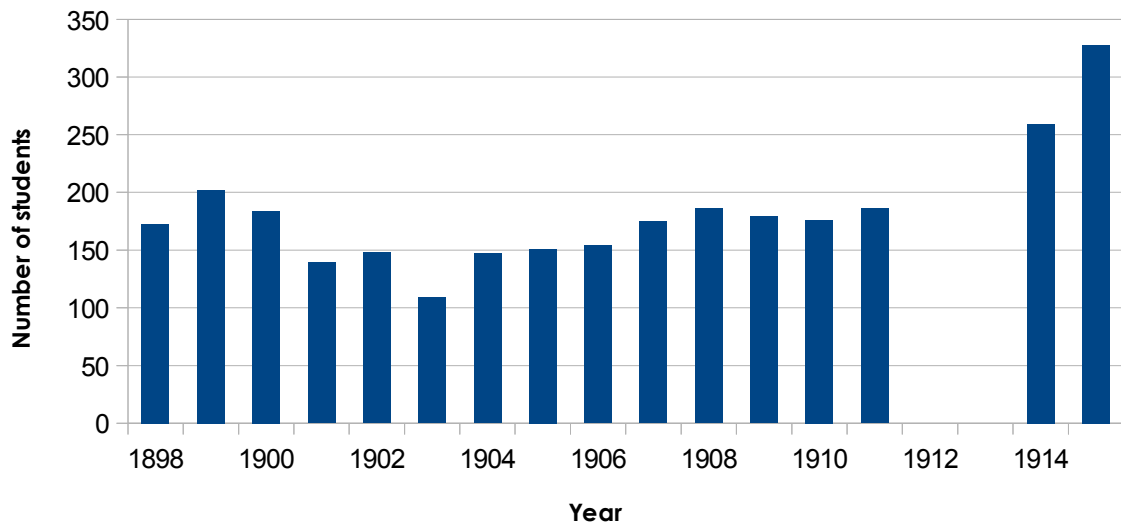
<sup>301</sup> *DW*, 7-5-1915, p. 5.

<sup>302</sup> *DW*, 28-5-1916, p. 6.

<sup>303</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, p. 89.

<sup>304</sup> Henn, F.A., *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Evangelischen Gemeinde in Rotterdam*, p. 117.

**Figure 17: Number of students of the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam**



*Source: BArch: R901: 39223, Deutsche Schule zu Rotterdam: Schülerzahl und Reichsubsidien in den Rechnungsjahren Oct. 1892.93 bis Oct. 1900/1901. BArch: R901: 39224, Deutsche Schule zu Rotterdam, Jahresbericht 1901. BArch: R901: 39230, Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam Jahresberichte 1907-1908, DW, 13-3-1910, p. 6., 31-3-1912, p. 5., 7-5-1915, p. 6.*

The student population of Rotterdam was more diverse than that of Antwerp. In February 1901 exactly one third of the student population had not even one German parent. These were 60 students of which 58 were Dutch and 2 were English.<sup>305</sup> By 1905 the percentage of non-German students had even risen to almost 45 percent.<sup>306</sup> By 1911 this number had dropped to 28 percent. This was still considerably higher than the percentage in Antwerp at this time. The relatively high number of Dutch students was also mentioned in a 1910 report by professor Schmidt.<sup>307</sup> No figures have been found about the war period. Chances are that, like in Antwerp, the percentage of German students increased. Like the Antwerp school, the *Deutsche Schule* in Rotterdam was religiously mixed. Not a lot of data can be retraced, but the 1908 annual report suggests that, even though evangelical students made up majority, there was a considerable number of catholic and Jewish students as well.

<sup>305</sup> BArch: R901: 39223, Overview of origins of students of the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, 18-2-1901.

<sup>306</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Letter from Der Vorstand des Deutschen Schulvereins to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 17-3-1905.

<sup>307</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.

Of 186 students, 121 were evangelical, 43 were catholic and 22 were Jewish.<sup>308</sup>

The teaching staff was a mix of German and Dutch teachers, with the Dutch teachers being a majority. In 1915 only 7 of the 19 teachers were German.<sup>309</sup> In 1918 still only 8 of the 18 full-time teachers had the German nationality, the others being Dutch.<sup>310</sup> This high representation of Dutch teachers cannot only be explained by pointing at a willingness amongst Germans to assimilate to Dutch society. Since the Education Acts of 1878 and 1889 teachers needed to pass an examination to have the right to teach at a primary school in the Netherlands. In this examination teachers were tested on their knowledge of the Dutch language, Dutch history and the geography of the Netherlands and its overseas colonies. This examination was an even more important reason for the relatively low number of German teachers than the fact that the wages of teachers in the Netherlands were lower than in Germany.<sup>311</sup> Dutch authorities made abiding the law attractive by subsidizing teachers who met these legal requirements, providing a financial incentive to ensure a national unity of education. The Dutch provincial authorities, whose task it was to implement the Acts and grant the subsidies, took their work seriously. For example, in reaction to a request for subsidy over the year 1893, the school did not receive the full sum, because the teacher Van der Baan did not meet the legal requirements for part of the year. Because he made up for it later that year by passing his state examination, the school did still receive subsidies for the eight months of work done after Van der Baan had lived up to his legal obligations.<sup>312</sup> As much as 15 years later the Rotterdam school was still not in the position to be lenient towards these legal requirement. Schmidt notes in his report that the school's financial position did not allow it to eschew the Dutch state subsidies.<sup>313</sup> The Dutch subsidy for the school year 1906-1907, for example, was as much as

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<sup>308</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, Jahresbericht 1908.

<sup>309</sup> *DW*, 7-5-1915, p. 6.

<sup>310</sup> *DW*, 28-7-1918, p. 5.

<sup>311</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.

<sup>312</sup> GAR: DEG: 620: 131, Letter from De Gedeputeerde Staten der Provincie Zuid-Holland to Diaconie der Duitsch Evangelische gemeente te Rotterdam, no date, 1894.

<sup>313</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.



2947,42 Guilders or 17 percent of that years total income.<sup>314</sup> Schmidt advises the German government to increase its subsidies to ensure the schools independence of Dutch state control and financing: 'Even if in the end the Reich cannot avoid to take upon its own shoulders the costs of this financial assistance, the sacrifice would not be too great' because it would contribute to 'an uninhibited development to the benefit of *Deutschtum* in the Netherlands'.<sup>315</sup> This financial assistance, however, was never granted or even actively pursued.

Another legal requirement with which the *Deutsche Schule* struggled was the obligation to teach at least 20 hours a week in Dutch. The *Deutsche Schule* explicitly defined itself in its charter as a *deutsche Unterrichtsanstalt* (*Duitse inrichting voor onderwijs* / German educational institute). If Dutch educational institutes are legally obliged to teach 20 hours a week in Dutch, the school board argued, German educational institutes should be allowed to teach an equal amount of hours in German.<sup>316</sup> In concertation with the Rotterdam school inspector and the Ministry of Education in The Hague a compromise on this issue was reached in 1909. The students of the *Deutsche Schule* were not to follow courses in Dutch for 20 hours a week, but the number of hours taught in Dutch would still be considerable. In the *Nona* only 3 hours in a 28 hour week, in the *Octava* 6 out of 30, in the *Septima* 9 out of 32, in the *Sexta* 16 out of 37, in the *Quinta*, 15 out of 39 and in the *Quarta* 11 out of 39.<sup>317</sup> About half of the hours taught in Dutch were language classes. Other subjects, though, like history, geography, chemistry, mathematics, physics and gymnastics were sometimes being taught in Dutch as well.

A look at the classes as they were offered to the students in the school year 1907-1908 shows a picture that is very similar to what we have already seen at the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp.

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<sup>314</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, Jahresbericht 1908.

<sup>315</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.

<sup>316</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, Jahresbericht 1908.

<sup>317</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, Prof. Dr. Schmidt, Bericht über meine Dienstreise zur Besichtigung deutscher Schulen in den Niederlanden und in England im Juni 1910, 5-9-1910.

**Figure 18: Course schedule of the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam in 1907-1908**

	IX	VIII	VII	VI	V	IV	Total
German	11	9	9	9	6	6	50
Dutch	3	5	5	5	5	5	28
French	–	–	–	4	4	4	12
English	–	–	–	–	4	4	8
History	–	–	–	2	3	2	7
Geography	–	–	2	2	3	3	10
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	6	6	36
Physics	–	–	–	–	0,5	1	1,5
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	0,5	1	1,5
Biology	–	–	1	1	1	–	3
Drawing	3	3	2	2	2	2	14
Writing	2	2	2	2	–	–	8
Singing	1	1	1	1	2	–	6
Gymnastics – Boys	2	2	1	1	1	1	8
Gymnastics – Girls	2	2	2	1	2	–	9
Religion – Evangelical	2	2	2	2	1	1	10
Religion – Catholic	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Needlework for girls	2	2	2	2	2	2	12

Source: BArch: R901: 39230, *Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, Jahresbericht 1908*.

Of course the students were not obligated to follow both the courses on evangelical and catholic religion. Depending on their religious background they had to follow only one of the courses.<sup>318</sup> What stands out most in this overview, however, is once again the attention paid to foreign languages, which would have been useful in preparing students for an international business career. The emphasis on language in Rotterdam seems to have been even stronger than in Antwerp. Like in Antwerp, German and a local language, French in Antwerp and Dutch in Rotterdam, were taught from the *Nona* onwards. In Antwerp, though, English was only taught from the *Untertertia* onwards and Flemish only in the *Obertertia*. In Rotterdam, French courses started in the *Sexta* already and English was taught from the *Quinta* onwards. Also the emphasis on mathematics was even stronger

<sup>318</sup> Delger, H., *Duitsers en hun organisaties in Nederland*, p. 88.

in Rotterdam than in Antwerp, spending six hours on this subject every week against an average of almost five hours in the first six school years of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule*. At first sight the Rotterdam school focused less on economic issues than the Antwerp school, since unlike in Antwerp no courses in economy were offered. A closer look shows that in Antwerp these courses were only offered to *Unterprima* and *Oberprima* students, while these classes did not exist at all in Rotterdam. The international orientation that is shown by the set of courses offered at the Rotterdam *Deutsche Schule* is at least as cosmopolitan as in Antwerp, if not more so.

Contrary to the school in Antwerp, the Rotterdam school does not seem to have played a large role in the community apart from its educational function. No announcements of series of lectures like in Antwerp could be found in the *Wochenzeitung*. The school did play a part in the celebrations of the *Kaisersgeburtstag*, though. It is reported, for example, that on January 27 1905 a very dignified celebration at the school was attended by consul Nels.<sup>319</sup> In 1908 on January 27 the *Wochenzeitung* reported that a very nice celebration was held at the school in honor of the *Kaisersgeburtstag* as well.<sup>320</sup> Apart from these birthday celebrations, the only major event that is announced to have taken place at the Rotterdam school was a ceremony in remembrance of the fact that the poet Friedrich Schiller died exactly one century ago at May 9 1905.<sup>321</sup> This was supposed to become an annual event, but it is not mentioned in later years.

More financial reports of the Rotterdam school can be traced than of the Antwerp school. If we take the income of the school as a measure of growth of the institution as a whole, we find that between 1893 and 1899 the yearly budget grew steadily from 2836,66 Guilders to 8960,08 Guilders.<sup>322</sup> The following graph shows the somewhat more unstable developments of the early twentieth century.

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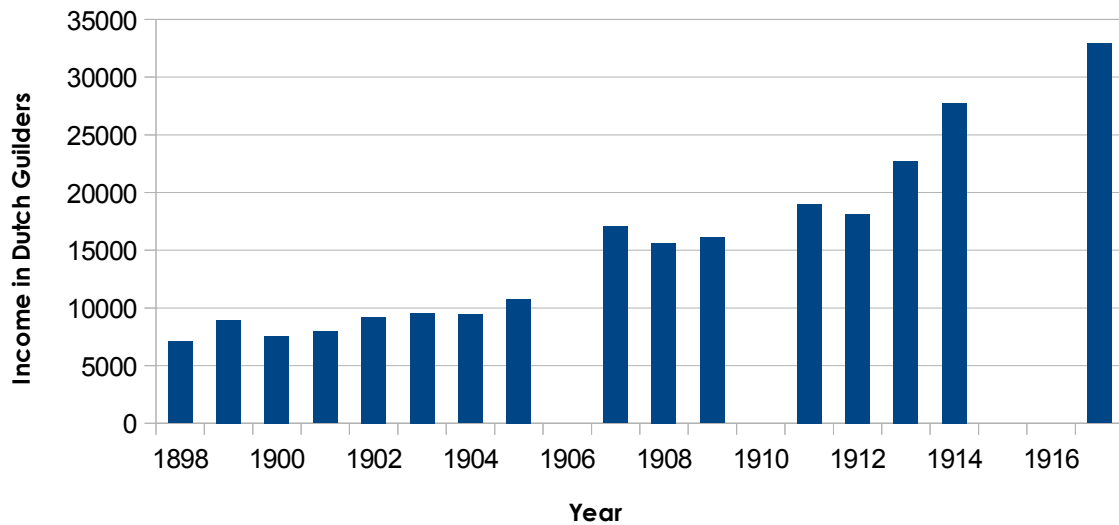
<sup>319</sup> *DW*, 4-2-1905, p.5.

<sup>320</sup> *DW*, 2-2-1908, p.4

<sup>321</sup> *DW*, 8-5-1905, p. 10.

<sup>322</sup> BArch: R901: 39222, Letter from Pfarrer Ernst Wolff to Auswärtigen Amt, 26-5-1893 and Annual financial balances 1894 – 1899. ; BArch, R901: 39223, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1899.

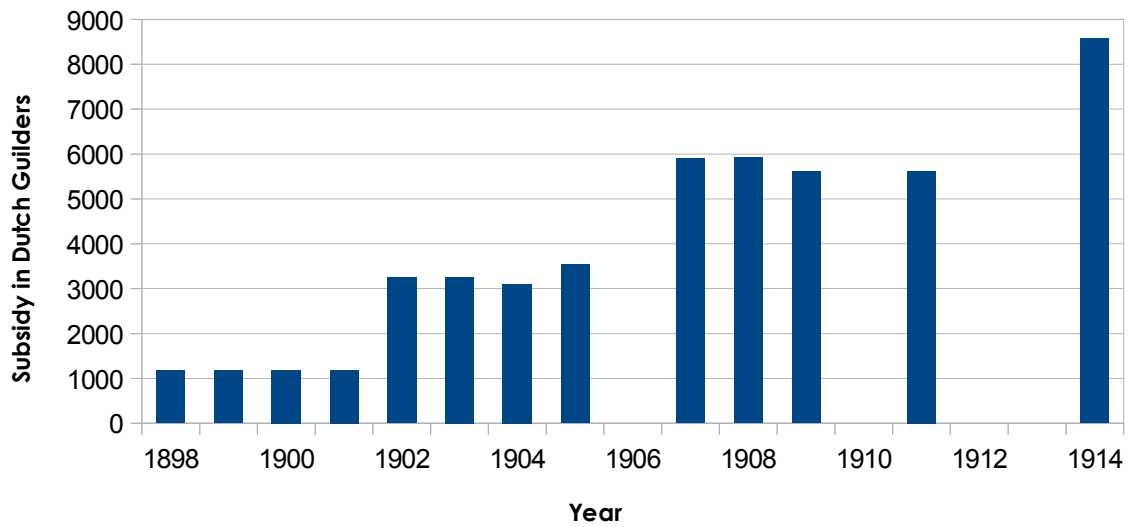
**Figure 19: Income of the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam**



*BArch: R901: 39222, Annual financial balance 1898. ; R901: 39223, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1899-1901. ; R901: 39225, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1902-1904. ; R901: 39230, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1905 and 1907, Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1908-1909. ; DW, 31-3-1912, p. 5, 7-5-1915, p.6, 28-7-1918.*

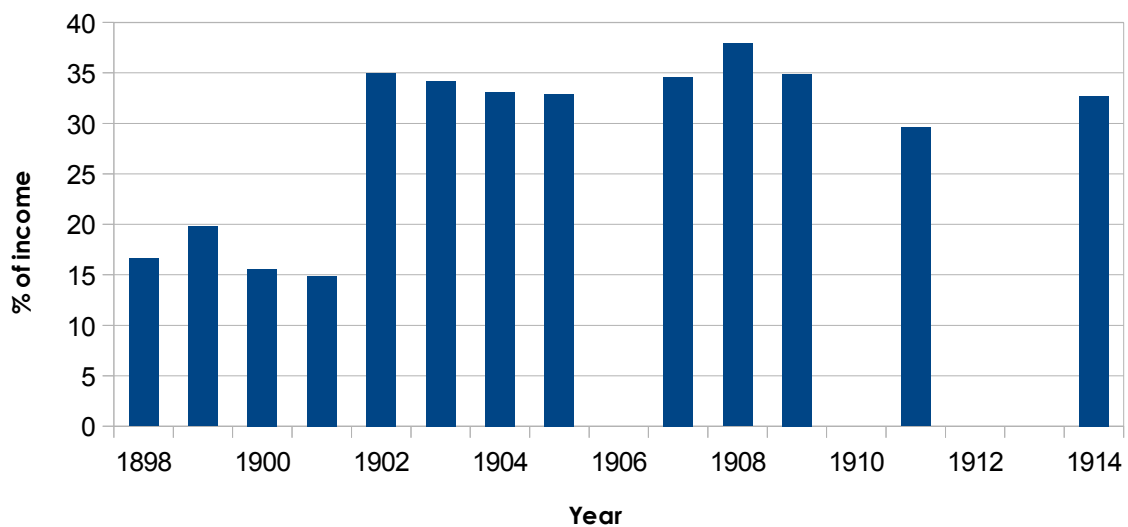
After 1905 the income increased. As we have seen the number of students did not rise very quickly at this time. As the following graph will show, the rise in income in this period can mostly be explained by the growing subsidies from the German empire. During the First World War the income went up as well. This growth in income can be explained by two factors. On the one hand the increasing number of students generated a higher income in tuition fees. On the other hand, the German authorities increased their annual contributions to the *Deutsche Schule* once again. The following graphs show how the subsidies for the *Reich* skyrocketed from a small sum of 1177 Guilders in 1898 to more than 8000 Guilders on the eve of the First World War and what percentage of the total yearly budget of the school consisted of German governmental contributions.

**Figure 20: Subsidies from the German Empire to the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam**



*Source: BArch: R901: 39222, Annual financial balance 1898. ; R901: 39223, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1899-1901. ; R901: 39225, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1902-1904. ; R901: 39230, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1905 and 1907, Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam, Jahresberichte 1908-1909. ; DW, 31-3-1912, p. 5, 7-5-1915, p.6,*

**Figure 21: % income of the Deutsch Schule in Rotterdam from the German Empire**



*Source: This graph is based on the data in Figure 19 and Figure 20.*

Even though the total sum of subsidies from the German state increased steadily through the years, the percentage of the total income of the school that consisted of German state subsidies shows a somewhat different picture. The graphs make clear the German state was a much more important financier for the Rotterdam school than for the Antwerp school. While German government funds never accounted for more than 15 percent of the total income of the Antwerp school, a corresponding low percentage of imperial financing can only be found in 1900 and 1901 in Rotterdam. Only five years earlier, in 1895, this percentage was still a staggering 45 percent, while some years later, in 1908 the percentage would again be close to 40 percent. Where the Antwerp school was able to mostly stay clear of both the Belgian and the German authorities, the Rotterdam school had extensive relations with both the Dutch and the German state. Dutch educational law and state subsidies and German state funding were both important factors in the management of the school.

#### **4.2.2 The reaction to mismanagement at the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam**

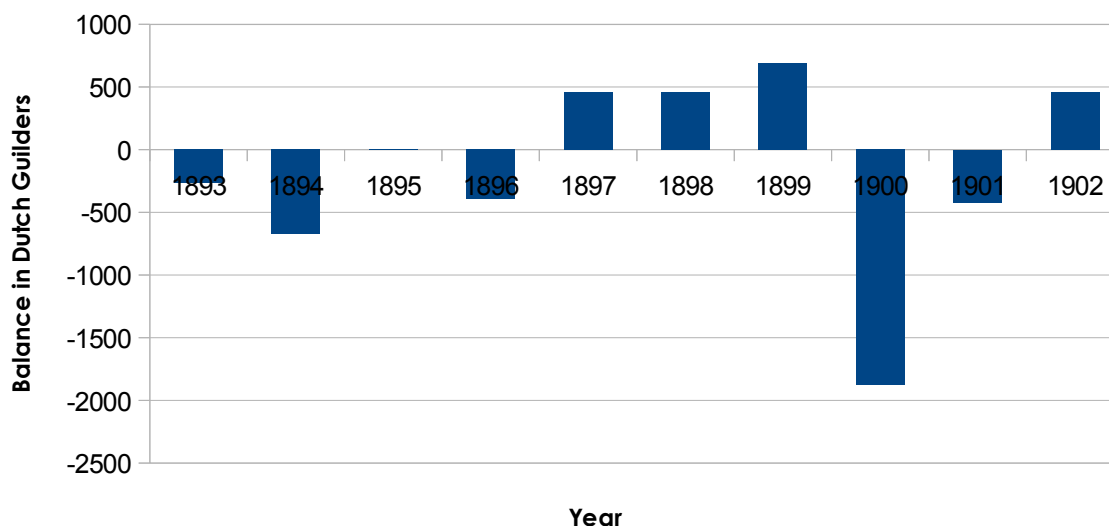
During the first decade of the existence of the *Deutsche Schule* in Rotterdam everything seemed to go rather well. Within ten years the school had grown from a small institution with 18 students to a large school where almost 200 were being educated. The financial balances that were sent to the German ministry of Foreign Affairs looked very bright. In 1897 the school showed a surplus of almost 500 Guilders. The 1899 balance showed a surplus of over 700 Guilders: more than 1000 Mark.<sup>323</sup> Surpluses like that, pointing at an income being 10 percent higher than the total expenses, were almost too good to be true. And indeed, they had probably been made up. The financial balance of 1900 suddenly shows a huge deficit. In order to deal with this sudden financial crisis a request for 2000 Mark was sent to the consulate. The seriousness of the situation was recognized by the German consulate and the sum of 2000 Mark was promised. Future funding, though, would only be

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<sup>323</sup> BArch: R901: 39222, Letter from Wentges and Ruoff to Auswärtigen Amt, 2-1-1897. ; R901: 39223, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam pro 1<sup>st</sup> October 1898 bis ult. September 1899.

possible if rector Heller, who was held responsible for this situation would be removed from his function.<sup>324</sup>

**Figure 22: Balance of payments of the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam**



*Source: BArch: R901: 39222, Letter from Pfarrer Ernst Wolff to Auswärtigen Amt, 26-5-1893, Annual financial balances 1894 – 1899. ; R901: 39223, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1899-1901. ; R901: 39225, Rechnung der deutschen Schule zu Rotterdam 1902.*

On behalf of the school association Alfred Ruoff talked the issue over with the German ambassador in The Hague, count Pourtalès. Meanwhile, the reaction to letters written to the Rotterdam consulate were minimal, so Ruoff asked for a meeting with consul Meier.<sup>325</sup> When this did not appear to be possible, the school association proposed a compromise. In this compromise it was suggested that Heller would leave the school on the condition that the school itself would receive another 4000 Mark to cover its deficit and Heller would receive a compensation of 3000 Mark and an additional 500 Mark to buy off his personal belongings that were used by the school.<sup>326</sup> Since Meier did not react to this proposal and the critical financial situation needed quick resolution, Ruoff contacted

<sup>324</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from Der Kaiserliche Konsul (gez.) Meier to Herrn Alfred Ruoff und Herrn L.G.Rommenhüller, 2-3-1900.

<sup>325</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from Alfred Ruoff and C.G. Rommenhüller to Consul Meier, 30-3-1900.

<sup>326</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from Alfred Ruoff and C.G. Rommenhüller to Consul Meier, 2-4-1900.

the ambassador in The Hague again.<sup>327</sup> Pourtalès replied that he was not into the position to make any decisions on this issue, though he promised to bring it up during his mission to Berlin that month.<sup>328</sup> Coming back from Berlin, the count was able to report that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was willing to spend another 5000 Mark on the Rotterdam school and that the procedures would be speeded up.<sup>329</sup> When asked for another meeting to deal with the issue, the ambassador repeated that he was not in the position to decide on anything that had to do with the administration of the *Deutsche Schule* and referred him to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs instead.<sup>330</sup> After once more contacting consul Meier at his vacation address, Ruoff directly contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to ensure the receiving of the hard-needed money.<sup>331</sup> In the end this seems to have worked, though not as fast as Ruoff might have hoped. He did not only have to negotiate with Foreign Affairs, he also sent money requests to the chancellery.<sup>332</sup> During the school year 1901 – 1902, finally, the German state subsidy was strongly raised.<sup>333</sup>

Meanwhile the hardship was not limited to the relation between the members of the school association and the representatives of the German state. As we have seen the number of students also started to decrease strongly between 1900 and 1904. During the 1903 general assembly of the school association the troubles surrounding the departure of rector Heller were the main reason given for this decrease.<sup>334</sup> The second reason was rather peculiar for a school that had just lost over one third of its students: the accommodation had become too small. The proposed solution to bring back the school at its old level was the purchase of a new building. As described above, the first initiatives for this enterprise had already been taken in 1902, when a fund-raising letter was

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<sup>327</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from Alfred Ruoff and C.G. Rommenhüller to count Pourtalès, 16-5-1900.

<sup>328</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from count Pourtalès to Alfred Ruoff, 18-5-1900.

<sup>329</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from count Pourtalès to Alfred Ruoff, 31-5-1900.

<sup>330</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from count Pourtalès to Alfred Ruoff, 3-6-1900.

<sup>331</sup> R901: 39223, Letter from Alfred Ruoff and C.G. Rommenhüller to Consul Meier, 8-6-1900. ; Letter from Alfred Ruoff and C.G. Rommenhüller to Auswärtiges Amt, 29-06-1900.

<sup>332</sup> R901: 39224, Letter from Alfred Ruoff to Seine Excellenz den Reichskanzler, Herrn Grafen von Bülow, 22-6-1901.

<sup>333</sup> R901: 39225, Dezember 1902: Schuljahr vom 1-10-1901 – 30-9-1902.

<sup>334</sup> R901: 39225, Protokoll über die Generalsammlung des Deutschen Schulvereins zu Rotterdam am 22. October 1903, 22-10-1903.



published and a fund-raising party was announced.<sup>335</sup> The German community of Rotterdam of course asked the German state for a financial contribution.<sup>336</sup> In the end, however, the German colony seems to have paid for the new building itself. The total costs of the enterprise were estimated at 63000 Guilders. In a letter from the board of the school association the chancellery is informed that the German colony had contributed 20000 Guilders, that a 35000 Guilders first mortgage was provided and that a member of the board, Gustav Müller, had provided a second mortgage of 11000 Guilders.<sup>337</sup> This sum of 66000 Guilders must have covered most of the costs. Luckily, the number of students increased again from 1904 onwards. It appears that the damage done by the financial mismanagement and the burdensome winding-up of these issues in cooperation with German authorities had been overcome by the successful opening of a new school building.

#### **4.2.3 Some preliminary conclusions on the Deutsche Schule in Rotterdam**

Of the four institutions described in this thesis the *Deutsche Schule* in Rotterdam might have been most involved in trying to find a balance between state authorities in both the country of origin and the country of arrival and members of the colony where it originated. Of course, like the Antwerp school, it provided its students an education that would both allow them to be part of an international cosmopolitan business community and to be part of a German community in Germany or abroad. Contrary to the Belgian school, the Rotterdam school both received subsidies from the Dutch authorities and had legal regulations to comply to in regard to the teaching language and the obligatory examination for primary school teachers. If the Dutch state subsidies were to be received no indifference towards these examination could be risked. It did appear to be possible to negotiate about the teaching language, however, as the compromise of 1909 shows. The *Deutsche Schule* in

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<sup>335</sup> BArch: R901: 39224, Aufruf an alle Vaterlands-Freunde, 1902. ; Announcement of Deutsches Fest, October 1902..

<sup>336</sup> BArch: R901: 39225, Letter from Vorstand des Deutschen Schulvereins to Seine Excellenz den Reichskanzler Herrn Grafen von Bülow, 2-2-1904.

<sup>337</sup> BArch: R901: 39225, Letter from Vorstand des Deutschen Schulvereins to Seine Excellenz den Reichskanzler Herrn Grafen von Bülow, 29-11-1904.

Rotterdam was not only more dependent on its state of residence than the Antwerp school, it was also more dependent on the German state. Like the Antwerp school the it took years of negotiation with the German authorities to finally get the *Militärberechtigung*. The reason for the enormous financial contribution from German state authorities does not seem to be an extreme meddlesomeness of the German state. Mismanagement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century caused the representatives of the Rotterdam school to rely on the German state, which acted reluctantly but without stipulating any conditions beyond the resignation of rector Heller. Soon after this state intervention a new accommodation was purchased, the costs of which may have assured the continued financial dependence on German authorities, without whose contribution this would not have been affordable.

As part of a transnational civil society the Rotterdam *Deutsche Schule* can hardly be seen as being independent of governmental authorities: the organization is constantly busy looking for a way to find a balance between the different state authorities and the German colony to which it belongs. Though the establishment of the school happened independent of state authorities, the main task of management seems to have been balancing between the limits posed and opportunities offered by both the Dutch and the German governments. The Dutch government was an important factor because it laid down strict legal regulations, that had to be respected in order to receive some badly needed funds. The German government was important both because it provided even more funds than the Dutch government and because it was in the position to decide on the value of Rotterdam diplomas within Germany. The agency of the Rotterdam school was not primarily defined by its ability to function independent of governmental institutions but by its ability to constantly negotiate with them.

## 5 Conclusion

The introduction of this thesis asked for the role of migrant organizations amongst Germans abroad. This question was made more acute by a division into three sub-questions. First I asked how the role of migrant organizations could be described without reducing their function to either integration into the host society or maintenance of the characteristics of the sending society. The second question dealt with the independent agency of these organizations vis-à-vis government authorities, especially those in the country of origin. Finally the role of the ideology of organized nationalism was questioned. The analyses of the *Seemannsheime* and *Deutsche Schule* in the above chapters were all rounded off with preliminary conclusions, framing the histories and functioning of the institutions in the terms of a transnational civil society. Departing from these provisional conclusions, this closing chapter will first deal with the initial leading question by reflecting on its sub-questions. Finally, I will also shortly reflect on the analytical concepts of civil society and transnationalism.

### 5.1 Beyond the bastion-binding agency dichotomy

The perspective of transnational civil society leads to another description of the role of migrant organizations than the starting point of a the bastion-binding agency dichotomy. This is the result of a change in the units of analysis. The bastion-binding agency perspective analyzes migrant organizations in their relations with whole countries or societies: migrants either integrate into a national society or maintain the customs of and loyalty to another society. The perspective of transnational civil society emphasizes the relation between associational life and the authorities in both the country of origin and the country of arrival as well as specific groups of migrants and their relatives and friends left behind in their native country. Within specific groups of migrants a further division is possible: one institution may not fulfill the same role for every member of a group. This

shift of the units of analysis leads to a new description of the function of migrant organizations.

Looking at the *Seemannsheime*, we see that the initiative for their founding originated in the migrant communities of Antwerp and Rotterdam. The German, Belgian and Dutch government did not provide any incentives for these initiatives. The function of the *Seemannsheime*, then, is best outlined by focusing on the interests of those directly involved. In the eyes of the business-elites of both cities, the *Heime* were economically beneficial institutions. The existence of a group of German financiers of the Rotterdam place, suggests that even a business-elite in the country of origin may have conceived of itself as benefiting from the Dutch organization. The relation between the *Heime* and the church was also seen as an asset in the effort to force back social-democratic incitements. At the same time, the organization also functioned to the benefit of sailors. They were provided with a cheap place for the night, affordable meals, a place to relax and easily accessible church services amongst like minded people. The *Seemannsheim* also made it easy for them to save money and to send remittances to their relations in the homeland. Meanwhile the *Heim* both offered them a place from which letters could be sent home and served as their postal address. Keeping in touch with friends and family became much easier. This shows that the *Heime* also held an important function to people in the homeland. Without this organization it would have been much harder for them to stay in touch with their relatives abroad.

Like the *Seemannsheime*, the schools were founded on the initiative of members of the migrant communities of Antwerp and Rotterdam. Both schools had religious roots, but by the beginning of the twentieth century both were managed by a secular *Schulverein*. The leadership of these *Schulvereine* was in the hands of wealthy members of the German population of the cities. The wealthy businessmen generally wanted two things for their children. In the first place they should develop the skills necessary for an international commercial career. Secondly, after their high school they should meet the very strict requirements of German institutes of higher learning. In order to fulfill both these functions foreign languages formed a big part of the curriculum of the

*Deutsche Schule* and a relatively large number of classes was in German. Rather than functioning as a bastion of *Deutschtum* or an agent binding the German youth to an international cosmopolitan commercial elite, the *Deutsche Schule* drew up a curriculum that would leave open both of these options to its students.

None of the above descriptions of the *Seemannsheime* and *Deutsche Schule* suggests in a straightforward way that they primarily functioned to promote either integration or maintenance of *Deutschtum*. At different times and in different ways the organizations also fulfilled economic and moral functions. At other instances a conservation of class differences may have been an important function. Also, the organizations fulfilled important functions in the individual or familial lives of individuals in ways that are not self-evidently related to the bastion-binding agent dichotomy. This does not prove that these institutions did or did not serve as bastions of binding agents. It does show, though, that the functioning of migrants organizations can only be fully understood if we move beyond the bastion-binding agent dichotomy.

## **5.2 Agency and authorities**

Looking into the relations between states and migrant organizations, we have seen that Lucassen and Penninx focused on 'the power of sending states in controlling 'its' migrants abroad' by analyzing 'the relationship between powerful institutions in the sending state and the orientation of migrant associations'.<sup>338</sup> This thesis supports this emphasis in one way: the relationship between the analyzed migrant organizations and the authorities in the country of origin seems to be stronger and more complex than the relationship with the governments of the receiving states. The relation with the receiving authorities should not completely be neglected though. Belgian legislation on legal personality was very relevant to the management concerning real estate. Dutch legislation on education obliged German teachers to pass Dutch examinations, caused a large number of Dutch teachers to teach at the *Deutsche Schule* and forced the school into negotiations about the language

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<sup>338</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 5.

of teaching. In another way, however, this thesis does not fully support the emphasis of Lucassen and Penninx. Though it is undoubtedly true that sending states often try to exert power over the associational life of their co-nationals abroad, this starting point neglects the agenda setting and negotiating functions of organizations.

We have already noticed that the establishment of *Seemannsheime* was not on the initiative of any governmental authority. After the founding of the organization, no governmental attempt to control it could be retraced. This does not mean that no relations between German authorities and the *Heime* exist. On the contrary, the German state seems to be heavily involved in the *Heime*. In Belgium the new accommodation could only be purchased after imperial mediation between Rautenstrauch's foundation and the *Deutsche Bank*. This does not point at state control in any way, though. The fact that the initiative for an arrangement that could be facilitated by the *Reich* came from the Antwerp German community is telling. So is the unwillingness of the German government to become the owner of the real estate itself. In Rotterdam the pastoral functions of the *Seemannsheim* are co-financed from imperial and Prussian governmental funds. Again, this arrangement is realized on the initiative of German migrants in Rotterdam. Also, the fact that the German governments do not want to bind themselves to yearly contributions shows an imperfect enthusiasm for involvement in the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* at best.

German schools, then, are presented by Penninx and Lucassen as an example of a type of organization 'emanating from the opportunity structure in the country of origin'.<sup>339</sup> Their main example is the *Kaiser Wilhelm Schule* in Amsterdam, which they call 'good example of how the German state tried to influence the settlement process of its present and former citizens abroad'.<sup>340</sup> I like the emphasis on the idea of an 'opportunity structure', but I think more attention should be paid to the agency of the schools vis-à-vis the German state to give substance to this idea. At this point Schrover's and Vermeulen's definition of a political opportunity structure as 'the extent to

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<sup>339</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 16.

<sup>340</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 17.

which powerful groups, including governments, are vulnerable or receptive to new claims made by groups that hold a marginal position in the political system', proves useful. The strong emphasis by Lucassen and Penninx on government influence under-appreciates the strong differences between organizations 'emanating from the opportunity structure in the country of origin' and their category of organizations 'directly exported from the country of origin'.<sup>341</sup> This thesis suggests that, instead of focusing on direct export and state influence, an emphasis on the high extent to which the state of origin was receptive to the claims of migrant organizations may be more fruitful. The courses offered at the Antwerp school, for example, do not point at directive German governmental interference. As has been mentioned, the curriculum is directed as much at a cosmopolitan lifestyle as at preserving *Deutschtum*. It should also be noted that the German state never encouraged the school to get its *Militärberechtigung* or acceptance of its *Reifezeugnis*. The school was looking for acceptance in Germany, while the German state did not seem to actively pursue a complete integration of German schools abroad into the domestic system of education. The same can be said about the Rotterdam school: it also offered a cosmopolitan curriculum and experienced more resistance than support in getting its *Militärberechtigung*. Also, during the financial problems in the early twentieth century the representatives of the German state seemed to be reluctant in getting involved with the school. Assistance only came after persistent requests and hard negotiations with the school representatives.

The above description of the *Deutsche Schule* shows that in the frequent contacts with state authorities, the initiative usually came from the schools. In the negotiations that followed their demands were often granted over time. The most important of these demands were acceptance of diplomas and financial support. Looking at the curricula offered, the schools were also well able to keep the state at bay. This story of associational independence gives more substance to the characterization of migrants organizations as 'emanating from the opportunity structure in the country of origin' than Lucassen's and Penninx' description of the *Kaiser Wilhelm Schule*.

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<sup>341</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 15.

### 5.3 Organized nationalism

The ideologues of organized nationalism saw themselves as a combative elite fighting for an ethnically defined imperialistic German nation. The roots of these ideas could be found in nineteenth century antisemitic movements. The movement might be relevant to the study of German migrants in the early twentieth century, because one of its main aims was to integrate ethnic Germans abroad into a German national community. I have rarely referred to nationalism in my description of *Seemannsheim* and *Deutsche Schule*. At times, though, the organizations claimed to be 'national' nonetheless. Julius Rautenstrauch, for example, insists that the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* should be administered by both protestants and catholics, to ensure that the management will be national instead of one-sided.<sup>342</sup> On the same note, a report by the German Ministry of the Interior states that one of the general guidelines of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* is that it has to work along national lines and in a spirit of peace between the denominations.<sup>343</sup> The *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp emphasized the national importance of the German state's acceptance of its *Reifezeugnis* in a letter to the German chancellery.<sup>344</sup> Describing its aims in its annual reports, both before and during the war, though, the school does not mention a desire to contribute to the German national spirit: the focus is primarily, though not exclusively on the education of the children of the Antwerp German colony.<sup>345</sup> The annual report of the Rotterdam school claims that in regard to questions of nationality its aim is to bring future generations of Dutch and German children closer together to advance their common interests.<sup>346</sup> These examples show that German nationality is not emphasized in the organizations' communication towards their members and costumers. References to a national cause seem to have been used mostly when something was asked from German

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<sup>342</sup> BArch: R901: 5147, Letter from Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Belgien to Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bülow, 18-4-1908.

<sup>343</sup> BArch: R901: 17718, Report of Reichsamt des Innern, 16-9-1908.

<sup>344</sup> BArch: R901: 38701, Letter from Schulvorstand der Allgemeinen Deutschen Schule to Seine Excellenz den Herrn Reichskanzler zu Berlin, 10-6-1910.

<sup>345</sup> For example: RBW, PPKA, Dossier 390, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1914. ; EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1917.

<sup>346</sup> BArch: R901: 39230, *Jahresbericht des Deutschen Schulvereins und der Deutschen Schule in Rotterdam 1908 – 1909*.



governmental authorities. Also, the word 'national' seems to be used as a word referring to a willingness to cooperate across different denominations rather than as a term referring to strong ties between people with a supposedly similar ethnic background. A focus on nationalism does not seem to be the most suitable starting point for a better understanding of these organizations.

This idea is reinforced by the presence of Jewish children at both schools. We have seen that at both schools Jewish children made up between 10 and 20 percent of the student population in the first decade of the twentieth century. This does not fit in well with the antisemitic roots of organized nationalism. Also, I have concluded that the function of the organizations can largely be understood from the perspective of a transnational civil society. This perspective does not take the national community as its most relevant unit of analysis. The conclusion that *Seemannsheime* and *Deutsche Schule* were primarily important for very specific groups of German migrants and their relations in the homeland, does not suggest that promoting organized nationalism was amongst the most prominent roles played by these organizations. Finally the independent attitude towards German authorities, for example in drawing up school curricula, does not suggest a desire to be fully integrated into a German national community.

Of course a national consciousness existed amongst the Germans in Antwerp and Rotterdam. The simple fact that a *German* sailors home and a *German* school were founded attests to this. Especially in the case of Antwerp, people like Rautlin de la Roy and Sartorius have sketched a picture that fits Dann's and Oltmer's description of organized nationalism. A closer look, though, suggests that this politicized form of nationalism was not as influential as these authors argued. Lucassen's and Penninx' conclusion that 'Germans immigrants in the Netherlands experienced a 'cultural', rather than a political, nationalism', can be extended to Antwerp as well.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Lucassen, L. and Penninx, R., *Caught between Scylla and Charybdis?*, p. 52.

## 5.4 Civil society revisited

In order to interpret the empirical data about the *Seemannsheime* and schools I have used theories of civil society and transnationalism. While these theories have shaped the perception of the research findings, these same findings can also tell us something about the analytical concepts used.

It was argued in the introduction that there is a certain agreement amongst scholars about a negative definition of civil society: civil society is that type of associational life that takes place outside of the family, the state and the market economy. The development of both the *Seemannsheime* and the schools suggest that a strict distinction between a civil sector of society on the one hand and a private, public and economic sector on the other is problematic. Market forces have both encouraged the establishment and enabled the maintenance of *Seemannsheime* and schools. This is most clear in relation to the *Seemannsheime*. The founding of the Antwerp *Heim* was on the initiative of an Antwerp German business-elite, which referred to the possible economic profitability of the organization as one of the main reasons for its establishment. The subsequent founding of a *Heuerstelle* can be seen as a streamlining of the local labor market. In Rotterdam, the role played by economic interests is reflected in the yearly contributions from an inter-regional financing network consisting of large companies in a number of commercial centers. It is very unlikely that German businessmen would have been willing to spend money on the Rotterdam *Seemannsheim* if they did not expect some kind of economic reward. The influence of the market on the *Deutsche Schule* is not as obvious. It can be argued, though, that the curricula's emphasis on the students' future business career allows us to describe these schools as preparing their students for a very specific segment of the labor market. A strict distinction between civil society and the state is not suggested by these examples either. All four researched organizations have received state financial support at some time. Sometimes, like in the case of the Antwerp *Seemannsheim* this was a relatively small amount of money from one state for a short time. At other times, as the example of the *Deutsche Schule* in Rotterdam shows, state subsidies from both the German state

and the country of settlement made up a large and indispensable part of the organization's financing. All this suggests that an improved definition of civil society should account for the intermingling of the civic, public and economic realm instead of assuming too strict a distinction between these sectors.

The element of a positive definition of civil society that scholars seem to agree on is the voluntary character of the associations that it consists of. The Antwerp and Rotterdam experiences suggest two reservations that one should keep. Firstly, this voluntary character depends on the separation between civil association on the one hand and political and economic association on the other. States and markets may coerce people into a certain kind of associations and behavior: the associations of civil society, by definition, do not function in that way. Now that we have concluded that a strict distinction between civil and other associations cannot be established, it is likely that part of the at times coercive character of other associations tickles down into civil society. The tickle down effect of state coercion seems to be very limited. Notwithstanding the organizations' use of state funding, the states seem to have been unwilling to strongly influence the management the *Seemannsheime* and schools. The coercive influence of the market, though, seems to sometimes have made itself felt through these organizations. Again, this is most clear in the way in which part of the functioning of both the *Seemannsheim* and the school can be explained as an extension of local labor markets. The desire to find a job at a German ship or to one day be a member of a cosmopolitan business-elite, would force people towards the *Seemannsheime* and German schools. A second reservation towards the voluntary character of these associations has to do with the type of relation between the organization and its constituency. The voluntary character of an organization is best exemplified by an organization with a constituency fully consisting of members. Full membership of an organization ideally allows one to take part in the decision making processes of the organization, thereby limiting the coercive power the organization has over its members. The majority of people involved in the *Seemannsheime* and schools, sailors and students, do not have

full membership status. Therefore, the voluntary character of the participation of the majority of the constituents of the *Heime* and schools was incomplete. All this suggests that a better definition of civil society should account for a certain level of coercion in civil society instead of assuming an uncoercive space of voluntarism.

The introduction also paid attention to the schematic representations of the history of Western civil society by Nord and Hoffmann. Both authors sketched early nineteenth century associational life as elitist, local and having hardly any relations to the state. By the early twentieth century, they argued, it had grown into a strongly politicized national mass-phenomenon. The early twentieth century organizations described in this thesis, seem to have more in common with Nord's and Hoffmann's early nineteenth century civil society than with their description of early twentieth century associational life. Though all organizations dealt with in this thesis did have regular relations with at least one state government, these relations were not very politicized. The demands these organization made on state authorities only served to ensure the continued existence or improvement of their own institution. The governments seem to have accepted this to the extent that they hardly tried to influence the activities of the organizations in exchange for their funding. There is also no attempt of any of the researched organizations to expand their activities to a national level. Finally, though the organizations reached a lot of people, we have seen that the full membership of the organizations remained an elite prerogative. This does not prove that the general overviews of Nord and Hoffmann are incorrect. It does suggest, though, that organizations with early nineteenth century traits could still successfully function in an age in which civil society might be better characterized by another type of organization.

## **5.5 Transnationalism revisited**

The analysis of *Seemannsheime* and schools also allows some remarks about the concept of transnationalism. Following Lucassen, I argued that transnationalism can be conceptualized in at

least three different ways: pan-ethnic or pan-religious, bi-local and bi-national. Which conceptualization, then, best fits the Antwerp and Rotterdam *Seemannsheime* and schools? Pan-ethnic and pan-religious are defined as transcending 'both the sending and the receiving state, creating a new social field in which loyalties dominate which go beyond the national'.<sup>348</sup> The organizations researched in this paper do not go beyond the German, Belgian or Dutch national social field, so this conceptualization does not seem to fit the research. The bi-local and the bi-national conceptualizations both touch on the development of the *Seemannsheime* and schools. None of the two, however, exactly fits any one conceptualization. All the organizations seem to be strongly directed towards their own local environment. In order to flourish locally, though, they establish relationships with national governments. Instead of bi-local or bi-national, the transnationalism found here can best be characterized as 'local-national'.

A bi-national conceptualization transnational associative life is, as stated in the introduction, characterized as 'supported and influenced by institutions at home'. The organizations dealt with in this thesis have at times all been supported by government institutions from the country of origin. We have seen that German state authorities provided financial assistance for things like the maintenance of German language education and pastoral work. Also they were willing to fulfill a mediating function in the acquisition of real estate. They too proved to be perceptive to claims to national acceptance of diplomas conferred abroad. What stands out, though, is that the German authorities hardly tried to influence the activities of the organizations they sponsored. The schools, which were financially more dependent on government funding than the *Seemannsheime* were allowed to hold on to curricula that reflected the very specific educational needs of their upper-class businessmen-to-be. This government reluctance to heavily influence the management of the organizations it supported applies to both the Rotterdam school, which was strongly dependent on German governmental funding and to the Antwerp *Seemannsheim*, which only needed a state contribution for a few short years. This independence of the German state is partly grounded in the

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<sup>348</sup> Lucassen, L., *Is Transnationalism Compatible with Assimilation?*, p. 19.

fact that all four organizations got most of their financing from sources other than the German state. Even the part of the income of the Rotterdam school provided by the German state never reached forty percent: over sixty percent of its income consisted largely of tuition fees and Dutch state subsidies.

If we add up the percentage of German and Dutch state contributions to the Rotterdam school, we can conclude that in its most state dependent years about fifty percent of its income must have come from national governments. The other half, though, was from local sources. The other organizations had an even stronger need and ability to guarantee their continued existence locally. Most of the income of the Antwerp school was derived from tuition fees and contributions of a local business-elite. The *Seemannsheime*'s most important source of income were the payments of guests, to which financial contributions of local businessmen and, in the case of Rotterdam, income from an inter-regional business network were added. Both the people served by the organizations and their main sources of income were to be found in a local instead of a national environment. This focus on a local environment also has consequences for the question on whether these organizations were bastions or binding agents. When seen in a national context, the bastion-binding agency question easily leads us to focus on the extent to which the migrants involved in their own associative life come to resemble the native population of the country of settlement. From this point of departure one might conclude that German associational life did not bind its constituents to a Belgian or Dutch national environment. Looked at from a local context, though, these organizations can to a certain extent be seen as binding agencies. In their own different ways both the *Seemannsheime* and the schools bound those to whom they provided services to local economies. Both the terms bi-local and bi-national, then, do not fully cover the functioning of primarily locally organized associations which are able to make claims to which, amongst others, national governments are receptive.

The conclusion of this thesis is best left to Dr. Gaster, director of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Schule* in Antwerp, whose 1903 reaction to the obtaining of the *Militärberechtigung* nicely exemplifies the importance of the local contexts as well as its freedom of agency vis-à-vis governmental authorities.

[O]f course the consideration of the aspired entitlements should not lead to a point where the pressure of German contexts is simply copied to our school. Rather, the guarantee that it will be able to develop into an educational establishment suitable to the Antwerp situation by filling up an existing gap, mainly lies in the freedom, which falls to it in relation to the most appropriate development of its curriculum; for such an educational establishment is not only a need for the Germans in Antwerp, but for broader circles as well.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> EHCA, Allgemeine Deutsche Schule zu Antwerpen, Jahresbericht 1903.

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