

Working for human rights

Published by the Desk
for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation
of the United Evangelical Mission

Volume 6

100th anniversary of the beginning of the colonial war of liberation in Namibia

**Contributions to a ceremony of commemoration in January 2004
Catalogue of the exhibition „Remember Namibia!“**

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foedus-verlag

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Umschlaggestaltung und Satz: *j.s.*
Gesamtherstellung: Breklumer Druckerei
Manfred Siegel KG
Printed in Germany
ISBN 3-932735-93-5

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

Fotos auf dem Umschlag:
Am Waterberg R. Veller
Friedenskirche Windhoek R. Elbracht
alle anderen archiv- und museums-
stiftung wuppertal

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„100 years since the start of the anti-colonial liberation war in Namibia“

Foreword

BY JOCHEN MOTTE

One hundred years ago the anti-colonial liberation struggle began in Namibia, when the Herero, later also the Nama and Damara rose up with arms to defend themselves against the German colonial power in what was then „German-Southwest Africa“. The German colonial army under General von Trotha reacted with a war of extermination, which ended with the defeat of the Herero at the battle of Waterberg in August 1904 and led to thousands of Herero dying of thirst when the German troops drove them into the Omaheke desert. Later the German colonial army set up so-called concentration camps in the country, where the Herero and other peoples such as the Nama who had joined the resistance were driven together. Here too thousands lost their lives.

To commemorate this first genocide committed in the name of the German people, the United Evangelical Mission and the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland together with the Archive and Museum

Foundation Wuppertal invited people to a commemoration service and a conference to remember the crimes committed and the ensuing guilt and to work together to shape a new future.

An exhibition was opened on the same day under the title „Remember Namibia! Mission, colonialism and the fight for freedom“, which demonstrated the role of mission in pre-colonial Namibia, during the colonial era and the war, and afterwards.

With this documentation of the exhibition and contributions from the conference, the international United Evangelical Mission of today wishes to offer a self-critical contribution to the history of church and mission and at the same time deepen the relations between Germany and Namibia.

In the official statement of the UEM, which is also printed here, we express our expectations of the

German Parliament and the German Government to acknowledge Germany's historic responsibility for the genocide and its visible consequences today in the unjust distribution of land between black and white farmers in Namibia, thereby making a special contribution towards bringing about land reform in Namibia.

Bishop Zephania Kameeta, head of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and moderator of the UEM, summarised our expectations of the German Government in his speech on January 30th 2004, as follows: „... the German Government must confess to, confirm and apologise for the atrocities committed 100 years ago. That is all.“

On her visit to Namibia in August 2004, on the occasion of the commemoration of the Herero uprisings, the Federal Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul asked the Namibians and the descendants of the Herero gathered there for forgiveness using the words of the Lord's Prayer. With this act the Minister clearly went far beyond the position of the Fe-

deral Government and Parliament hitherto. Bishop Kameeta accepted the apology on behalf of the churches and acknowledged the visit as a historic contribution to reconciliation.

With the translation of this volume into English, we wish to make the exhibition and the contributions of our member church, the ELCRN, to the commemoration celebration in January 2004 available to interested people in Namibia.

Our special thanks go to Wolfgang Apelt and Julia Besten, who have edited the documentation as it is now presented. Our thanks also go to Eberhard Löschcke, Hans Lessing, und Wilfried Neusel, who did most of the work and the planning for the commemoration event.

Finally we thank Cynthia C. Lies and Elisabeth Steinweg-Fleckner for their translation.

Jochen Motte

Wuppertal, February 2005

Remembrance, reconciliation, shaping a common future

Statement by the United Evangelical Mission to commemorate the beginning of the Herero rebellion against German colonial rule 100 years ago

This statement was written in close co-operation with the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, the regional synod of which passed a largely identical statement on January 16th 2004.

January 2004 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the colonial war in the former German South West Africa. During this war, which ended in 1908, great sections of the Herero people, as well as the Nama and Damara, were wiped out. Depriving these people of their rights led to land expropriation, expulsions, pass laws, forced labour and the splitting up of large and small families. Today, historical research is almost unanimous in describing this annihilation as an act of colonial genocide to be ranked alongside a whole series of acts of genocide perpetrated during the 20th century.

The Rhenish Mission Society (RMG), one of the forerunner institutions of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), which had worked in Namibia since 1842, was connected with both warring parties and was faced with the dilemma of remaining loy-

al to each. This is also true of the Rhenish missionaries working in Namibia, who, on the one hand, were standing up for the interests of the indigenous population, but, on the other, were working with the colonial authorities. Hence, at their request, the Rhenish Mission Society gathered together the survivors of the war, who were later interned by the colonial government in concentration camps, where a large number of the incarcerated Namibians lost their lives. This two-sided loyalty also shaped the attitude of the Mission during the period of South African colonial administration in Namibia.

One hundred years after the beginning of the anti-colonial war of rebellion in Namibia, there are still many open questions regarding the role of the Church and Mission in this „darkest chapter in the joint history of Germany and Namibia“ (as described by Präses Manfred Kock, chairman of the council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, when he visited Namibia in the year 2000).

To mark Namibia's independence in 1990, the United Evangelical Mission, together with its Ger-

man Protestant member churches, issued a statement admitting its historical share of the guilt for colonialism, racism and apartheid in the region that is now Namibia, and asking for forgiveness from the Christians of Namibia.

In 1996, the German United Evangelical Mission became an international organisation. It has 34 member churches in Africa, Asia and Germany, including the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia. (ELCRN). In the new UEM, in which all churches from southern hemisphere countries are equally involved in all aspects of planning and making decisions on joint programmes and projects, the willingness for reconciliation and to share with one another is demonstrated in an exceptional way.

The year 2004 is therefore a unique opportunity, in dialogue with the descendents of the Herero, Damara and Nama and Namibian society as a whole, to commemorate the victims of the genocide and the anti-colonial rebellion, to rescue them from oblivion, to remember the guilt and the origins and consequences of the crimes committed under colonial rule and thus to make a contribution towards reconciliation and strengthen the relationship between Germans and Namibians.

Together with our brothers and sisters in Namibia, the UEM wishes to remember this dark period

of history, to reflect on the consequences for how it acts today in situations of violent conflict in many parts of the world, to facilitate encounters and discussions between people from Germany and Namibia, so as to shape a common future. This year, alongside acts of worship and other events, the UEM, together with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, will seek to make a contribution to this through exhibitions, films and other media as well as support for programmes of research, meeting and exchange.

The UEM asks the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) to support the churches in Namibia in fulfilling their prophetic ministry and, in particular, to support the Lutheran Churches and help them in their efforts to achieve unity.

Remembering the crimes committed under colonial rule in Namibia is a demand and an obligation placed not only on us as the church but the whole of our society.

On the occasion of this anniversary year 2004, the German government and parliament are called on to affirm Germany's specific responsibility, expressed by parliament and government, in its relations with the Republic of Namibia, and to exhibit this through concrete measures in shaping bilateral relations.

The UEM asks the German government on the occasion of the commemoration of the events of the

years 1904-1907, to explicitly admit Germany's historical responsibility for the crimes of colonialism and racism in the region that is now Namibia, and in particular for the genocide committed against the Herero, Damara and Nama.

Furthermore, against this background, the UEM asks the German government, within and beyond its joint development work, to make a special contribution to the continuation of land reform,

through which the unfair distribution of commercially used farmland in Namibia, brought about by colonial history, will be corrected.

One hundred years after the beginning of the anti-colonial rebellion, Germany can, in this way, make an effective contribution to the peaceful development of Namibia and to relations between the different ethnic groups in Namibia.

What really happened

BY GESINE KRÜGER

No event in Namibian history is so disputed as the German Colonial War from 1904 to 1907. What happened at that time – the reasons for the war, the conduct of the war itself and the time after the war – are all part of an ongoing debate that has in the meantime extended far beyond an academic historical debate. There are various reasons for this. The proceedings against the German Federal Government and German companies brought before American courts by the Herero people for one, and no less so the date 2004 have brought the subject into the columns of the German and international newspapers. A large number of radio and TV programmes on German colonial history have already been presented and more will follow. Films and exhibitions, conferences and new publications such as the volume „Genocide in German South West Africa“ (Völkermord in Deutsch Südwestafrika) edited by Joachim Zeller and Jürgen Zimmerer, or Gerhard Seyfried's novel „Herero“ all

deal with this chapter of German and Namibian history. A history both divided and shared.

This momentary boom however cannot belie the fact that so far the colonial era has played practically no role at all in the German awareness of history¹.

This probably has to do with the fact that after the Hitler regime, the Second World War and the extermination of the European Jews, the first thing on the agenda was to start off the painfully difficult process of analysing and working on the most recent history and that – as is often forgotten today – against the opposition of large groups of the population.

But that the colonial era plays hardly any role at all in the German awareness of history can also have to do with the fact that, in the end, Germany counts as relatively guiltless when colonialism is equated with colonial rule – as Albert Wirz und Andreas Eckert have pointed out.² It is well known that the era of direct colonialism ended for Germany already in

The colonial era plays hardly any role at all in the German awareness of history.

1 Gesine Krüger, Vergessene Kriege: Warum gingen deutsche Kolonialkriege nicht in das Historische Gedächtnis der Deutschen ein? In: Dieter Langewiesche & Nikolaus Buschmann (Ed.), Zur Rolle des Krieges in Gründungsmythen, Campus Verlag Berlin 2004.

2 Andreas Eckert / Albert Wirz, Wir nicht, die Anderen auch. Germany and Colonialism in: Sebastian Conrad / Shalini Randeria (Ed.), Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften, Frankfurt / New York 2002, pp. 372-392.

In Namibia the colonial past plays a much greater role than in Germany.

1915. Thus it was possible for Hasso von Etzdorf, the head of the International Department of the German Foreign Office, for example, to state in 1959: „As a colonially guiltless and economically highly developed country“, the role of a „natural mediator“ between Africa and the former colonial powers falls to Germany. „We have a great plus in Africa – the loss of our colonies forty years ago“ „The chastity of the impotent“, Etzdorf continued somewhat fatuously, was however nothing to crow about.

Even in German school textbooks the colonial era is usually dealt with in one chapter on imperialism and the First World War, concentrating mainly on the short period of German colonialism that is considered to be concluded. This point of view was confirmed by the Federal President at that time, Roman Herzog, on his official state visit to Namibia in 1998. In his speech on the occasion of the visit he said: „we had a short period of common history that was not a very happy period. For Germany this period concluded with the end of the First World War.“³ I do not think that I need to point out here that „not a very happy period“ is a fairly unhappy euphemism for what happened in those days. But for Germany, according to Federal President Herzog, this period is concluded.

In Namibia it was, and still is, different. Here, for all groups of the population, the colonial past plays a much greater role than in Germany. Not to mention the presence of colonial times in the tourist infrastructure and the representation of the country in the advertising brochures. Here quite obviously the colonial setting – the famous Black Forest Gateau and German beer, the Rider from SouthWest and the architecture of Windhoek’s Independence Avenue, to mention but a few! – are used to attract not only German visitors from abroad.

In Namibia, a living culture of remembrance has existed for a long time – and what concerns me – it still exists today. It has a long tradition, very many ways of looking at history and takes many different forms of expression. Part of this is most certainly – the often rather defiantly written and backward-looking – local history in the German language, besides the rich oral tradition of local history and the many so-called Preislieder (prized songs), that still remind people in Namibia and Botswana today of the war and their flight after the war. A well-developed festival culture is also part of this. The largest and perhaps most important celebration up until Namibia’s independence was the Herero Festival,

3 Quoted from Ulf Engel / Hans Georg Schleicher (with help from Inga-Dorothee Rost), *Die beiden deutschen Staaten in Afrika: Zwischen Konkurrenz und Koexistenz 1949-1990*, Hamburg 1998, p. 35.

which has been celebrated every year in August in Okahandja with only short interruptions since 1923. This centred and it still centres on the commemoration of the colonial war and the history of the Herero that was by no means concluded in 1904. In the south of the country, a celebration has taken place every year, presumably since 1930, which centres on the „remembrance of the great old Captain Hendrik Witbooi, who died in battle against the German colonial masters.“ Reinhard Kössler, whom I have just quoted, sees in the renaming of the festival in „Heroes Day“ in 1980, a „symbolic opening towards the national liberation movement.“⁴

SWAPO was also very much aware of the symbolical importance of colonial times and particularly of the anti-colonial resistance. Thus it appears that the first shot in Ongulumbashe was fired on exactly the date of the Herero Day. But is it really the case that this war was simply the beginning of anti-colonial battles that achieved their aim with the national independence of Namibia, as the newly erected memorial Heroes Acre suggests?

In this lecture on what really happened, I wish to explicitly direct our attention away from Germany and to Namibia. For in many newspaper articles

that have appeared recently, the main role is generally given to German soldiers and farmers, German colonial officials and colonial politicians. Herero, Nama, Damara, Ovambo, the whole of the African population seems to be strangely invisible. The African women, men and children are simply victims. And even more. Put rather cynically they are just actors on a historical stage whose curtain fell in 1904 or at the latest in 1907. Here history seems to end. At the beginning, I already stated that there is hardly any event in Namibian history that is so disputed as the German colonial war. And hardly any event that has been so well researched. That may seem surprising at first. For the many newspaper articles give quite a different impression. The SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG speaks for example of a „forgotten people“ (10.01.2004) the DALLAS MORNING NEWS speaks of „Namibia’s dirty little secret“, and DER SPIEGEL claims, quoting DIE ZEIT here, that „in the end it was through ‘post colonial studies’ in the Angloamerican language sphere [...] that in German universities colonial history was ‘rediscovered’“.⁵ In fact German colonialism has been a subject of critical historical research since the 1960s. In German universities it was at first im-

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4 Reinhard Kössler, „A Luta Continua“: Strategische Orientierung und Erneuerungspolitik am Beispiel des „Heroes Day“ der Witbooi in Gibeon, in: Zeller / Zimmerer, p. 184.

5 Der Spiegel No. 3, 12.1.2004, p.103.

When does the history of the war begin?

portant to study colonial history in general, not only from the perspective of German history. Then African history, also of the former German colonies, was established in Hannover, Berlin, Hamburg and other German universities. So in over 50 years a comprehensive German and international research literature on colonialism has come into existence, quite apart from important projects in Namibia that have to do with writing down oral stories. However, all this is hardly known to the general public. What really happened at that time? When does the history of the war begin? Who fired the first shot is still disputed, as it always was. Was it German provocation that started the war?⁶ Or did the revolt begin with a well-prepared attack by Herero warriors on German farms in central Herero country? There are indications and proof for both interpretations. But in my opinion it is more important that even if Lieutenant Zürn is in fact responsible for the firing of the first shots, a large number of the Herero chiefs saw armed revolt as their last option.⁷

Samuel Maharero wrote in a letter to the then governor Leutwein, that not the Herero, but the Germans had already begun the war before 1904, for „how many Herero have you killed, both with guns and by locking them away in prison.“⁸ On the eve of the war there had even been a spate of brutal attacks by settlers and traders upon members of important Herero families.⁹ Acts of violence, humiliation and unjust court judgements led to a bitterness, which the missionaries warned about again and again. The missionary Johann Brockmann for example wrote: „It seemed to me like a faraway roll of thunder before the storm when my faithful congregation elder Elphas said to me one day: Muhongwe, we do not wish to be beaten, otherwise it could be that we also begin to hit back.“ Why then were the German colonial rulers so sure, why did they demonstrate their notorious feeling of being the master race so blatantly?

Long before the German Reich laid claim to a colony of its own, present day south and central

6 Jan Bart Gewalt, *Herero Heroes. A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890-1923*, Oxford 1999.

7 Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewusstsein. Zur Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des Deutschen Kolonialkriegs 1904-1907*, Göttingen 1999.

8 Archives of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN): Documents VII, 11.19: Letters of Maharero and others. Letter Samuel Maharero to Theodor Leutwein, Otjizonjati, 6.3.1904.

9 Drechsler, Horst (1984): *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*. Berlin (Ost), p. 135. Since 1903 alone, twelve murders have been proved to have been carried out by settlers and soldiers. Zirkel, Kirsten (1989): *Militärische Struktur und politische Führung im Deutsch-Südwestafrika-Krieg 1904-07*. Düsseldorf (unpublished Masters dissertation), p.59.

Namibia were already affected by colonial political developments at the Cape and part of a wide trade network. In no way was it a case of the isolated hinterland of colonial novels.

This is demonstrated, for example, by the famous proclamation of Maharero, Samuel Mahareros father, in 1884, in which he laid claim to rule a clearly defined territory, determined the borders of his country and protested against any sale of land or mining rights that had not been authorised by him.¹⁰ The content and even more the form of the proclamation, written in German and Otjiherero with seal, date and signature, show Maharero's knowledge of European forms of legitimization of rule, his foresight and his clear orientation about regional and world political activities. In 1888 Maharero still had sufficient power at his disposal to drive out the first Reichskommissar Goering. However, he knew that behind the first few European delegations that appeared in his kingdom, there were powers that had to be reckoned with – whether the Government at the Cape, Great Britain or the German Reich.

Ten years before the proclamation, chiefs from the „Damaraland“, as it was then called, among

them Maharero himself had appealed together in a letter to the Governor and High Commissioner of the Cape as the representative of the British Government. They requested help against an approaching invasion of Boers, who together with their families had already reached the borders of their lands and, according to the chiefs' information, were prepared to enter into military conflict. They wished to meet all foreigners and visitors with politeness and respect, they stated in their letter, but they protested sharply against the permanent settling of large groups of new settlers. „We have huge herds of cattle and sheep in our possession and during the dry season we have considerable difficulties in finding sufficient water and grazing areas for them. We therefore have no free land available to which we could grant any nation admittance, particularly not those that have made us to believe that they have always considered the black peoples with contempt and displeasure and who both recognize slavery and also practise it.“¹¹ Against a settlement of Boers, who as cattle holders would also lay claim to extensive grazing ground, all the Damara (the word Herero was not yet used everywhere) would if

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10 „The proclamation is written down ‚from Mahareros mouth‘ in the Herero language by his secretary and schoolmaster Wilhelm Kaumunika. It is the size of a poster, has at the bottom a, for those days, brilliant translation into the German language and is dated Okahandja, 19th September 1884. The proclamation also bears Mahareros seal.“ Vedder, Maharero und seine Zeit, p.28.

11 NAN, A.3, 75 Documents from Maharero's estate, No. 8. Translation Andrea Hintze.

necessary defend themselves with weapons. Trusting that the Government at the Cape would also want to prevent a threatening war, the chiefs requested that they should mediate to get an official letter from the British Government sent to the Boers in which the Government stated their objections to an invasion. The letter was signed by Kamaharero, Zerawa (Zeraua) and Kambazembe (Kambazembi), all of them rich and powerful Herero-ovahona.¹²

Letter indicates past conflicts among African groups for grazing land and water

This letter indicates past conflicts among African groups for grazing land and water and foresees the conflicts with future German settlers in the distant future. The particular way of keeping extensive herds of cattle, which not only applied to the Herero, or rather „Damara“, with seasonal migration and the movement of herds from summer to winter pastures, made it difficult to secure land rights on a permanent basis. Every competitor, who could claim troops and weapons on his side at the complicated negotiations for territories and water holes, threatened the fragile balance. That the local chiefs in central and south Namibia also feared colonial invasion, although at the same time they sought for allies at the Cape, is reflected in another letter from

Moses Witbooi and Jakobus Isaak to Maharero in 1878. There he writes:

„Hoachanas, 19th June 1878

Highest noble brother and captain Maharero!

We would very much like to hear what your thoughts are on Palgrave's intention and his request that we should join in an alliance with him.“

W-C. Palgrave was sent from the Cape to Namibia in 1876 as Special Commissioner and tried to make contracts with as many Nama and Herero chiefs as possible.

The letter continues:

„We have heard with satisfaction that you too were against entering into such an alliance with him. For see, it is our firm decision that we wish to retain our land and our people whatever may happen. We will stand as one man for our land. Therefore we request you to let us know your position through a letter. [...] They are trying to keep us apart from each other. [...] Finally we greet you warmly and remain your faithful brothers. Moses Witbooi, Jakobus Isaak.“¹³

This letter shows clearly reservations against contracts with the Cape Government. It is also an

¹² Omuhona (sg.) can be translated as Lord, leader, Chief.

¹³ quoted from Heinrich Vedder, Maharero und seine Zeit im Lichte der Dokumente seines Nachlasses (Maharero and his times in the light of documents from his estate), in: Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für S.W.Afrika, Bd V., 1929-30, Windhoek 1931, p. 18.

example of a policy of alliances, a diplomacy that already went beyond regional and so-called ethnic borders before the official colonial conquest. That in the colonial war 28 years later the two sons, Samuel Maharero und Hendrik Witbooi, were in opposing camps at first, is perhaps a particular tragedy of history, but shows once more that simplified pictures of history explain little. However much colonial politics were always based on a violent relationship¹⁴ and if necessary also enforced their position with superior military strength, it is nevertheless just as important to look at the politics and strategies of the local protagonists. Otherwise history is always explained by its results.

It was not a lack of political foresight on the part of African leaders, nor the conflicts in the 19th century allegedly resulting from „old clan rivalries“, nor was it the at first only nominally existing German colonial rule that led to a deep crisis of African society towards the end of the 19th century. While it is correct that the giving up of land (how far we can speak of the sale of private property is quite unclear) was always extremely problematic on

account of the reasons given above. On the eve of the war, the question of land had without doubt come to a climax.

But even more decisive was the cattle plague that reached Namibia in 1896 and spread like wildfire. The colonial authorities separated infected herds and started a vaccination programme. Jan Bart Gewalt wrote: „The radical breakdown of a world that was based on the ownership of cattle became even worse as young Herero who were not yet old enough to be herd owners were employed for the astronomical wage of one ox per day to help with the slaughtering of cattle. Whole herds were killed in the useless attempt to prevent the epidemic from spreading further.“¹⁵

It is only against this background that the drama of the events generally called the reasons for the war can be understood. The credit orders, the building of a railway line right through the center of Herero land, the policy of reservations that were intended to prevent further sales of land, but also prevented Herero chiefs from using their land as a new form of capital.

*Radical
breakdown*

14 Gesine Krüger, Koloniale Gewalt. Alltagserfahrung und Überlebensstrategien. In: Dag Henrichsen/Jan Bart Gewalt/Larissa Förster (Hg.), Namibia – Deutschland: eine geteilte Geschichte. Kolonialkrieg – Genozid – Erinnerung. Publication to the exhibition of the same name in the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, (in publication).

15 Jan Bart Gewalt, Kolonisierung, Völkermord und Wiedekehr. Die Herero von Namibia 1890–1923, in: Jürgen Zimmerer / Joachim Zeller (Hg.), Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Der Kolonialkrieg (1904–1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen, Berlin 2003, p. 108.

In 1904, in a situation of drastic economic pressure and social degradation, a war began that was finally to reorder huge parts of present day Namibia. Even today traces of it are still visible in the topography. The distribution of the land into central commercial farming areas and the surrounding, often piecemeal reservations.

In a situation of drastic economic pressure and social degradation, a war began.

At first the Herero warriors, supported in part by their wives, were quite successful. They won battles, but the German Reich was in a position to mobilise more and more troops. A defeat against „the natives“ was unthinkable, even if many soldiers and some of the officers, the old Afrikaner, spoke with fear and respect of the capabilities of their opponents. Together with a neverending stream of troops the German Reich finally sent Major General von Trotha, a military man experienced in fighting revolts, who was to guarantee a rapid end to the war. His view of the world was that of racial war and encirclement battles. He saw himself as a Commander, who would quickly clean up the situation with streams of money and blood. Captain Viktor Franke, who liked to think of himself as an old African, spoke scornfully about this theatre general. But von Trotha's policies won through. The plan to destroy the Herero gathered at Waterberg in a encirclement battle failed however. The majority of the Herero, who had withdrawn into the swampy area with

their wives and children and their herds were able to break out of the ring of German troops and escape through the Omaheke into Betschuana. They followed well-known trade routes, but the number of people and cattle, the lack of watering places, the pursuit of the German troops and the misery of the people having suffered for months through the war, meant that only few survived the escape. Very very many people died as they tried to escape and von Trotha was finally able to sell his unsuccessful plan as a properly thought out strategy, describing it as such with rolling pathos in the official report to the general staff.

Von Trotha pursued an even more merciless policy after the military defeat of the Herero. He set up concentration camps and ordered forced labour where thousands of people were worked to death. His phantasy of clearing up once and for all with the „races“ that were pre-destined to disappear from world history and natural life anyway, determined his policies after the war. But for some circles in the colony, parts of the mission and particularly Social Democrats and the Centre parties in the German Reichstag this became a scandal. Arrogant declarations of the kind „the tribes have now ceased to exist“, are characteristic of an absolutly merciless persecution of all forms of resistance and all forms of self assertion, but also of omnipotence phanta-

sies on his part that did not always represent the reality. The survivors found ways and means to withdraw from the rigid forced system of the native decrees. They followed various strategies to defend themselves against them.

The situation after the war was characterized by a high measure of institutionalised and individual violence. This is reflected in the colonial files even in the lists that private people and firms had to hand in to the administration about the Africans they employed. Although the administration quite explicitly demanded a differentiation between forced labourers as prisoners of war and free workers, many employers did not state this – apparently for them they saw no difference. A combination of revenge and fear fed daily violence, that sometimes peaked in such measureless brutality that the authorities intervened. Yet at the same time the colonial economy was sensitively dependent on black workers and this dependence could be used. Under the title „Complaints. Runaway workers“ the district office in Windhoek alone has twelve volumes of files that give information about resistance and „troublemaking“ behaviour of the workers. So many complaints show clearly that workers in spite of

their dependant situation tried – sometimes successfully – to get a better deal on working conditions or withdrew altogether. „Running away“ was then one of the most frequent reasons for complaint named in the files. The information in these files reveals that the reasons for fleeing were violence, insufficient food and refusal to pay wages. However farmers also attracted good workers away from each other and if they offered relatively acceptable living and working conditions they had fewer problems to recruit workers and to keep them. Besides the complaint that people who ran away from their working places changed their names and thus could not be identified any more, there are many other complaints about „laziness“, „cheekiness“ and „non-compliance“. Another very strong complaint by the farmers was that relatives of their workers „flooded their farms without permission to be there.“

All these complaints are not only an expression of the hysterical atmosphere among the white population that had increased considerably after the war, but at the same time also an indicator that the surviving African population did not simply accept their lot.¹⁶

All these complaints are an indicator that the surviving African population did not simply accept their lot.

16 NAN: BWI 40-42, E.2.f. (1-12): At the same time these files reflect the extremely brutal climate, when for example even physical collapse was considered as non-compliance.

*People
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living and
working
conditions.*

Several tendencies become apparent in the continual stream of complaints. People fought against intolerable living and working conditions and tried again to get possession of cattle. The Herero who were separated throughout the whole of the country also began to unite in certain places in order to renew their networks of family relationships as well as relationships with friends, neighbours and clients, and in this way escape from loneliness and proletarianisation. Employers for example who only employed one or two workers had to face the fact that they could not keep their people. In 1907, a letter from the Swakopmund Citizens Association states: „that the natives always seek for such work positions where a large number and if possible a large number of their own tribe are occupied, and therefore run away at the first opportunity without it being possible in most cases to find the people and bring them back to work.“¹⁷ An important motive for fleeing from work situations and the refusal to renew contracts was quite obviously, besides unacceptable conditions, also the Herero striving to find their relatives

again after the war and to return to their homelands. The missionaries also observed when looking for refugees of the war that the Herero returned to their former settlement places.

After the formal revocation of forced labour there was a noticeable migration to the former settlement areas and to the former seats of the chiefs, that besides being the places where the old graves were, now increasingly grew to be seen as the clear localisation of a former „Herero-Land“ and to constitute the mythological country of the ancestors.“¹⁸ Farmers who settled here and who employed members of leading Herero families were surprised to find that they had a constant stream of workers. This process was fittingly described by Helmut Bley as „non-recognition of the dispossession of the land“.¹⁹ Building on this after the end of German colonial rule, a symbolic occupation of the land took place when Herero and Nama claimed old settlement areas for themselves, often marked by old and new graves, and held festivals and memorial celebrations there, even if, or perhaps because they were now in so-called „white“ areas.

17 NAN: BSW 47, XVII, Bd.4: Brief Bardowski, Swakopmunder Bürgerverein an das Kaiserliche Bezirksamt Swakopmund vom 4.9.1907.

18 On the land issue, see Henrichsen, Dag (1994): ‚Ehi rOvaHerero‘. Mündliche Überlieferungen von Herero zu ihrer Geschichte in vor-kolonialen Namibia (oral records by Herero on their history in pre-colonial Namibia)“. In: WerkstattGeschichte 9:15-24; zum sowohl mythischen als auch likalisierbaren ejuru siehe Krüger / Henrichsen, op.cit.: 153f.

19 Bley, op.cit.: 290f.

The dead of the war cannot give us any more information, but the survivors and their descendants in the south and centre of the country have retained their history, for example in the festivals, in the oral literature and in a living analysis and working on history and the past that has a very high standing in all African societies in Namibia.

This can and should perhaps be an example for us. It is not only a case therefore of recognising historical guilt, historical responsibility – and one can have very differing opinions about the current court case brought by the Herero Chiefs Council and by Chief Riruako if one sees them in the context of present day politics in Namibia – but it is a question of taking seriously the fact of a shared history, that is very present in the consciousness of many people in Namibia. And not only as separate history but also as joint history.

Paradoxical as it may appear, it may well be that a well-formulated recognition of guilt, which the German Government refuses at present for legal reasons, could be a starting point for disposing of history. This can frequently be heard, when German politicians point out that, all in all, Namibia is the most important receiver country of development aid, as though with that we had paid off our historical guilt. But the demands for reparation are not only concerned with the material aspects but also

with the recognition of historical responsibility. To show respect, whether by an official visit of a German politician on Herero Day, on Heroes Day, would be a meaningful gesture of apology and reconciliation that has been waited for, in vain, for so long.

However, it also indicates a too rapid disposal of history, when the colonial war is declared alone and unhistorically as the laboratory of the Holocaust, the Shoah, so making all other questions no longer relevant. In this way Africa and Namibia remain as far away as they always were and the Germans discuss as always just among themselves. About their own history.

*The dead
of the war
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any more
information.*

What we owe to people in Germany and in Namibia

Germany and German Christians facing the Namibia question yesterday and today!*

BY BERTOLD KLAPPERT

„The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth.“ (J. B. Metz)

Brother Praeses Schneider, Brother Moderator and Bishop Kameeta, my dear sisters and brothers!

Twenty years ago to the month at an ecumenical conference held between the 9th and the 11th of January 1984 in Bad Neuenahr, I delivered a lecture on the topic: „The Church Facing the Namibia Question“. The Bad Neuenahr conference took place during the Rhenish synod, but also at a certain critical distance from the latter. The brothers and sisters of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), among them its General Secretary Dr A. Maasdorp and his successor N. Nakamhela were present at the conference and divided their time between its proceedings and those of the synod. We also, at this time, learnt a great deal from the brothers and sisters of the Belydende Kring (Beyers Naudé und W. Kistner).

The question then at issue, both from an ecumenical and from a theological perspective, was

one which had already been discussed at other congresses – such as the Oberhausen congress organised by Frauke Heiermann, in the presence of the soon-to-be General Secretary Dr A. Shejavali. It was the question of whether the Namibia Fund being offered by the Rhenish Church to its Namibian sister church constituted merely a part of the Special Fund of the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism *or* whether, instead, it constituted an alternative to the latter. Since both the Rhenish Church Board and the leadership of the United Evangelical Mission at the time, had, despite their committed involvement in Namibia, not approved the WCC's Special Fund – with reference to Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount to renounce all violence – the brothers and sisters from Namibia, for their part, were unable to approve of this alternative Special Fund. That is to say, the Namibian delegation could participate there in Communion only silently abjuring a part of what they had come there to say. That, or not participate in Communion at all.

Both the Rhenish Church Board and the leadership of the United Evangelical Mission at the time, had, despite their committed involvement in Namibia, not approved the WCC's Special Fund

*Christian
campaign
„Freedom for
Namibia and
South Africa“:*

This was also a time, however, when we learnt a great deal from our Namibian and South African brothers and sisters and, through this learning process, eventually succeeded in gaining agreement on the ecumenical Special Fund to Combat Racism. This was also because of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who, starting from his discovery of the principle of non-violence in the Sermon on the Mount, found himself compelled down the road to active resistance – which, in the most extreme cases, conceded the legitimacy of a certain „violence from below“; and because Bonhoeffer and Barth had seen this as the right interpretation and required course of the „responsibility of the ruled“ as defined by the fifth article of the Theological Declaration of Barmen and had practised this interpretation accordingly in opposition to the official church.

It is for this reason that I cannot begin this talk without first expressing to you, brother Kameeta, my deep personal gratitude for all that I have heard and learnt from you over the years – now going on two decades – between 1984 and today, particularly, I might add, from your profound and contextual interpretations of the Bible. You visited my lectures in order to tell the students there about the Black Theology of Liberation which, in the years since 1971 and the publication of the „Open Letter“ of the two black Lutheran churches in Namibia in

June of that year, you developed together with the first native Namibian bishop of your church, Dr Lukas de Vries, and the first General Secretary of the CCN, Dr Albertus Maasdorp. With this Theology of Liberation you set about resisting and opposing the political system and pseudo-Christian apartheid and took a stand against the terror inflicted by the oppressive, racist state authorities and a stand for the self-determination and the independence of your country. The disputes over the alternative Special Fund of the Rhenish Church brought us particularly close together, specifically in the context of the Christian campaign „Freedom for Namibia and South Africa“. The activities of this campaign consisted in the holding of vigils and prayer vigils in front of the South African Embassy in Bonn-Bad Godesberg. Three Rhenish ministers from the Parish Service for World Mission (Dr Jörg Baumgarten, Dr Markus Braun, Klaus Gockel) together with the Frackmanns, a married couple – both ministers of the Johannes Parish in Bad Godesberg – were responsible for these vigils. Many other groups, however, including the Church Seminary Wuppertal, also participated in the vigils.

Your position at that time was that, although you could have badly done with the money to help liberate Namibia and achieve political independence for the country, you preferred to do without

the Rhenish Church's alternative fund if accepting it - coupled as it was with the slogan „No Church Funds For Violence!“ – meant dissociating yourself from the WCC's Special Fund to Combat Racism, a combat which, where necessary and in extreme cases, might involve violence from below.

I still clearly remember sitting with you, Brother Kameeta, in my car on the Bonhoeffer Weg. It was there, I recall, that I passed on to you certain relevant documents by Karl Barth who, having been driven out of Germany, issued, in his lectures on political resistance which he delivered in Scotland in 1938, an analogous appeal, directed in this case to the Allies, to employ armed force to liberate Germany from the Hitler *regime* – and this despite the fact that, in the Germany of 1938, most of the members of the clergy had shown themselves ready to take an oath of allegiance to Hitler which the so-called *Fuehrer* had not, in fact, even required of them. It was not, indeed, with the aim of informing or instructing you that I gave you these documents on that day. You certainly need no instruction from me in these matters. Rather, my intention was to provide you with something that you could hold up to the official representatives of the church and missionary organizations in Germany and declare: this time, we Namibians are standing firmly in the tradition of the Confessing Church not only in

terms of Barmen in 1934 but also of Scotland in 1938, when Barth gave his lecture on the „service of God through politics“ and, in his famous letter to the Czech theologian Hromádka, calling on the Christians and soldiers of Czechoslovakia to take up arms against the Hitler regime.

During the time of the Constituent Assembly in Namibia after liberation in 1990, I sent you, in your capacity as Vice-President of the parliament in Windhoek, those pioneering essays on the politics of law and society by our former German President, G. Heinemann, which are known to only a few people today, to the disadvantage not only of the ecclesiastical, but also the political and academic communities. One rare exception here is the impact of these ideas on the political ethics of our present President, Johannes Rau. This impact was clearly evident, for example, in Rau's recent Lessing Lecture at Wolfenbüttel on the issue of tolerance between Judaism, Christianity and Islam and on the vexed „hijab issue“, which not only documents but also will determine the long-term future of the spiritual, intellectual and theological stance of Germans toward Islam in Germany .

With few exceptions – one, perhaps, is the essay by J. Schroer – all of us, in the meantime, have learnt a great deal more about the issue: „The Church Facing the Namibia Question in an Ecu-

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menical Context“. For this, we are indebted to our Namibian brothers and sisters – even now in the year 2004, the 70th anniversary of the Theological Declaration of Barmen.

Introduction: Commemoration arising from repentance does not make us „Hostages to History“

Instead, our government declared its willingness to increase development aid.

In contrast, the topic: „Germany facing the Namibia Question Today“ is still problematic. Our political class has indeed realized that – as Michael Naumann put it in an editorial in *DIE ZEIT* (7.8.03) – „Germany can no longer (with respect to Africa) look the other way“. For example, the Foreign Minister and even the Chancellor are now making state visits to Africa. However, on this issue, we cannot fail to be disappointed by the Foreign Minister, for whom I otherwise have the highest regard (I am thinking specifically here of his firm approach in dealing with Donald Rumsfeld on the question of the war in Iraq). Although Foreign Minister Fischer acknowledges „Germany’s responsibility for its history as a colonial power“, we learn that he is not prepared to commit himself to „any form of apology that would involve reparations“. I am, of course, aware that after German re-unification, the German

and Namibian governments reached agreement on giving up all claims to reparation. Instead, our government declared its willingness to increase development aid. So far, so good! What remains deeply problematic, however, is Fischer’s justification for the refusal of the idea of Germany apologizing and accepting guilt: „In doing so, we would become ‘hostages to history.’“ As if, in adopting this very attitude, we were not in fact becoming „hostages to history“ in the truest and worst sense – by establishing a comfortable position for ourselves (similar to the stance taken by the present Japanese government toward the 30 million war victims in Korea and Manchuria) safely below the point at which responsibility is expressed in concrete reparations: „Shame? YES! But accepting guilt and responsibility to such a point that one would actually have to make reparations? NO!“

The same could also be said about Chancellor Schroeder’s first visit to Africa. In his speeches on African soil, he not only chose to comment on the German Presidential elections instead of the far more relevant and appropriate question of German-European responsibility for Southern Africa, but also planned his itinerary in such a way that avoided Namibia, of all places – a country to which Berlin, aware of its special responsibility for development in its former colony, quite rightly contributes devel-

opment aid on a scale out of all proportion to the contributions it makes to other regions. Schroeder's decision was deeply regretted in Namibia and, one hundred years after the massacre at Waterberg, was the focus of severe criticism.

One hundred years after 1904, we – all of us: our churches, our United Evangelical Mission and, in particular, our Federal Republic of Germany – are faced yet again with the question of shared responsibility and guilt, and of what Bonhoeffer called „responsible guilt“ – guilt accepted with adult responsibility.

No commemoration of Barmen (1934) without commemoration of Waterberg (1904)

(In saying that we stand here today „70 years after Barmen“ is also to say „100 years after the genocide of 1904“.)

In this year, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Theological Declaration of Barmen, we have a lesson to learn: there can be no commemoration of Barmen today without the commemoration of what happened at Waterberg!

1 No commemoration of Barmen (1934) without commemoration of Berlin (1884)

Here in Wuppertal, in 1984 – the 50th anniversary of the Theological Declaration of Barmen – Eberhard Bethge gave a lecture on „Barmen and the Jews“. In his lecture, Bethge, speaking as a friend of Bonhoeffer and as one carrying on his tradition, said: „Today, critical comments pointing to shortcomings in the Barmen Theological Declaration come from quite other fields of experience (than those of 1934). The chorus of such criticism is louder at this 50th anniversary of Barmen than at any earlier one; and this at a time when this anniversary is acquiring unprecedented ecumenical significance.“

Shortly before this, Eberhard Bethge and I had both delivered lectures at the large American Barmen Conference in Seattle. Another participant at this same conference was Burgess Carr, the then General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). Bethge said of this encounter: „Carr told how he (as an African) was participating in the commemoration of the Barmen Declaration. He added, however, that he found it impossible to celebrate and commemorate the passage of the 50 years since 1934 without at the same time engaging in a commemoration of quite another sort, of an event that had occurred not 50 but 100 years previ-

One hundred years after 1904, we are faced yet again with the question of shared responsibility

„What is it we owe to the people (i.e. us – the people in Germany and the people in Namibia)?“

ously. This was the „Berlin Africa Conference“ of 1884, at which the colonial powers of Northern Europe had, under the leadership of Bismarck, set about dividing up the regions of West and East Africa amongst themselves.“ *Barmen 1934 is, in fact, the 50th anniversary of Berlin 1884.* Bethge also reports how Carr went on: „He too, he said, celebrated Barmen as one of the great (ecumenical) decisions for the freedom given to us by the Gospel. But he could not help but also be aware of how this decision had made its way into his world: still now, as then, with a plus-sign for some (the whites), whose presence there was to be traced back to 1884, and with a minus-sign for their victims“. From this, Bethge drew the following conclusion, which I pass on to you as a thought appropriate also to the 70th anniversary of Barmen, which we commemorate this year: „We have not yet attempted to think through the possible connections between the commemoration of Barmen and Christian colonialism. To which shortcoming will Carr eventually point?“ And Bethge closes by saying: „We make mention of Carr in order to remind ourselves of the fact that after 50 years [and here I might bring Bethge’s statement up to date and add: also after 70 years] we also need to heed and consider other areas of deficiency“.

In August 1974, Burgess Carr visited the UEM in Wuppertal. He expressed a particular wish to visit

the Gemarke church, where the Ecumenical Confession of Barmen was adopted in 1934. He spent a long time there in the company of Siegfried Groth kneeling in silent prayer. The Barmen Declaration was for him not only an ecumenical confession of evangelical freedom. It was also a confession of guilt made by the Confessing Church for had been done in Berlin in 1884.

2 D. Bonhoeffer’s Solitary Confession of Guilt in 1940

The UEM has asked me to explore the theme: „What is it we owe to the people (i.e. us – the people in Germany and the people in Namibia)?“ on the basis of the confessional traditions that are binding for us. I will do this by reference to the examples of two confessional traditions. In this section – II.2 – I will examine Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s „confession of guilt“ made in 1940, and then, in section III.2, I will go on to look at the statement made by the Confessing Church in 1947 in Darmstadt on the wrong political course taken by the German people. These two documents are the best and most credible summary of our church’s confessional traditions.

The Berlin Conference of 1884; the genocide against the Herero people in 1904; the genocidal slaughter of the people of Armenia only ten years

later in 1914; the stripping of the rights of Jews, Communists and Socialists in Germany – Dietrich Bonhoeffer surely had all these events in mind when, in absolute solitude in 1940, shortly before Hitler’s predatory campaign against Russia, he wrote down his „confession of guilt“ and hid it from the approaching Gestapo under the boards in the attic. In this confession he took as his point of reference the Ten Commandments – interpreting their meaning, however, always in the light of Jesus Christ and in relation to the fundamental question: „What do the God of Israel and the Living Christ want from us today in the Ten Commandments?“

I will deal with only a few of the points that Bonhoeffer makes:

Regarding the First Commandment Bonhoeffer writes: „The Church confesses that she has not proclaimed often and clearly enough her message of the one God who has revealed Himself for all times in Jesus Christ and who suffers no other gods beside Himself ... She has often been untrue to her office of guardianship and to her office of comfort. And through this she has often denied to the outcast and the despised the compassion, which she owes them. She was silent when she should have cried out because the blood of the innocent was crying aloud to heaven. She has failed to speak the right word in the right way and at the right time.“

Bonhoeffer’s allusion here to the murder of Abel (Genesis 4,10) and to the Solomonic tradition of „speaking up for people who cannot speak up for themselves“ are intended to point out that the churches have a duty of solidarity not only to their own members but to all victims everywhere, even if they do not belong to the church.

Regarding the Second Commandment Bonhoeffer writes: „The Church confesses that she has taken in vain the name of Jesus Christ ... and she has not striven forcefully enough against the misuse of this name for an evil purpose. She has stood by while violence and wrong were committed under cover of this name“. Here, Bonhoeffer is thinking of colonialism in the mantle of Christianity and of the whole German-national ethnic pathos in the missiology of that time.

Regarding the Fifth Commandment Bonhoeffer writes: „The Church confesses that she has witnessed the lawless application of brutal force, the physical and spiritual suffering of countless innocent people, oppression, hatred and murder and that she has not raised her voice on behalf of the victims and has not found ways to hasten to their aid. She is guilty of the deaths of the weakest and most defenceless brothers of Jesus Christ.“ These words refer not only, as Eberhard Bethge has rightly pointed out, to the Jews. They also refer to those

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affected by the genocides of 1904 and 1915, and the victims both within and beyond Hitler's Germany.

Regarding the Seventh and Eighth Commandments Bonhoeffer writes: „The Church confesses that she has witnessed in silence the spoliation and exploitation of the poor and the enrichment and corruption of the strong. The Church confesses herself guilty towards the countless victims of calumny, denunciation and defamation. She has not convicted the slanderer of his wrongdoing and she has thereby abandoned the slandered to his fate.“

In closing, Bonhoeffer writes: „The Church confesses herself guilty of breaking all Ten Commandments, and in this she confesses her defection from Christ ... She has not proclaimed the justice of God in such a manner that all true justice must see in it the origin of its own essential nature. She has not succeeded in making the providence of God a matter of such certain belief that all human economy must regard it as the source from which it receives its task. By her own silence she has rendered herself guilty of the decline in responsible action ... of the defection of the governing authority from Christ.“ Here, Bonhoeffer is referring to that whole process of theoretical justification and practical execution in the course of which the commandments of the God of Israel and of Jesus Christ were displaced and

replaced by a so-called „law of Nature“ and this „law of Nature“ then in turn was equated and confounded with the so-called „law of the German people“ and with the dictates of „the healthy instincts of those of German blood“, according to the principle: „The measure of what is lawful is what benefits the people and what the people demands.“ In the face of all this, it had been the duty of the Church to remind the state and the government of God's Kingdom, God's Justice and God's Commandment, as had been confessed to in the fifth article of the Barmen Declaration.

Bonhoeffer had found, already in 1940, the only appropriate response to all those attempts at self-excuse and self-justification which really took root in Germany only after 1945. He asks: „Is this saying too much? ... Was not the Church hindered and tied on all sides? Did not the entire secular force stand against her? Had the Church the right to jeopardize her last remaining asset, her public worship and parish life, by taking up the struggle against the anti-Christian powers?“ Bonhoeffer, however, responds to all this (and his response remains today an urgently relevant one) as follows : „This is the voice of unbelief, which sees in the confession of guilt only a dangerous moral derogation ... For indeed the free confession of guilt is not something which can be done or left undone at will. It is the

„Was not
the Church
hindered
and tied
on all sides?“

emergence of the form of Jesus Christ in the Church. Either the Church must willingly undergo this transformation, or else she must cease to be the Church of Christ. If anyone stifles or corrupts the Church's confession of guilt, his guilt towards Christ is beyond hope." It was not until the Darmstadt Confession of Guilt in 1947 that Bonhoeffer's solitary and highly concrete confession of guilt, sparing neither others nor himself, was taken up in a spirit of true responsibility and applied to the present in terms both of political and national history and of the history of the church.

We learn from Bonhoeffer's 1940 confession of guilt and from Bethge's and Carr's reminders of the events of 1884: there can be no commemoration of Barmen (1934) without a commemoration of Berlin (1884) and of Waterberg (1904)!

The acceptance of guilt and responsibility in view of the reconciliation in and through the crucified Christ.

(The confession of guilt of the Confessing Church of 1947 with regard to the false political path taken by our German people.)

1904: The genocide perpetrated by the German

Empire upon the Herero, Damara and Nama peoples (1904–1907)

1915: The genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire upon the Armenians

1941: The genocide perpetrated by the so-called „Third Reich“ upon the Slavic peoples (1941–1945)

1942: The genocide perpetrated by the so-called „Third Reich“ upon the Jews of Europe (1942–1945)

1 The essential structure of a responsible life

In the years 1941/42 – Hitler's war of annihilation against Russia had already been raging since 1941 – Bonhoeffer set about dealing, in his *Ethik* (Ethics), with the question of „the essential structure of a responsible life“. With regard specifically to the theme of the „acceptance of guilt“ he says: the acceptance of guilt and responsibility is not an expression of weakness, not a symptom of resignation and resentment towards ourselves. Even today, we hear again and again that Germans have a traumatic relationship with their own past. But the acceptance of responsibility is, according to Bonhoeffer, rather an expression of a mature and responsible life before God. In the words of J. B. Metz: „The need to lend a voice to suffering [and not to repress it] is a

Here can be no commemoration of Barmen (1934) without a commemoration of Berlin (1884) and of Waterberg (1904)!

*„Inability to
mourn“ and
the denial of
recollection
and commemo-
ration*

condition of all truth.“ Moreover, this is also, in Bonhoeffer’s phrase, an expression of maturity and the practice of a „responsible life“. The „inability to mourn“ (M. Mitscherlich-Nielsen) and the denial of recollection and commemoration – it is rather these things, which render us „hostages to history“ and cause us to repeat our fathers’ and mothers’ acts of genocide.

Distancing oneself from the past is not liberating ourselves from it. On the contrary, it is essentially in attempting to do so that we render ourselves hostages to our own past – a lesson proclaimed by Jesus himself in profound words to the Zealots and the Pharisees who, intent on distancing themselves from the blood-stained history of their people, from Abel to Zechariah, were prepared to set Jerusalem, through acts of terror and violence, on the path to its own destruction: „And you say, ‘if we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’“ Jesus continues: „Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.“ (Matthew, 23:30 ff).

These words of Jesus are also addressed to us, particularly when judging, too quickly and insensitively, the male and female missionaries of the past who, on the one hand, had partly gained the trust of the Herero, Nama and Damara, but whose theology, on

the other hand, was shaped by German nationalism and included absolute obedience to the German Empire and its colonial policy. These men and women lived and worked in the service of their Emperor in Berlin and in ideological dependence upon his colonial policies of exploitation and extermination.

The *Waterberg genocide* of 1904, the *genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire upon the Armenians in 1915* – both these terrible events had already occurred. And Hitler had, as he once remarked, noted with great interest that there had been almost no noticeable public outcry about these crimes. Only the leader of the Social Democrats, August Bebel, had protested against the Kaiser’s policy of extermination of the Herero. And indeed, very early in the 19th century, Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schleiermacher had raised their voices against the exploitative practices of colonialism and against the missionary activity, which accompanied it – in both cases, however, without significant result.

To this was added, in 1941, the genocide perpetrated against the so-called „sub-human Slavs“ by Hitler’s war against Russia. The *genocide perpetrated upon the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe* was remembered and confessed in 1945 by that critical commentary added, under the insistent urging of Martin Niemöller, to the Stuttgart Declaration („we

did not pray faithfully enough, did not love passionately enough...“) which, unfortunately, was merely a half-hearted confession expressed in comparative terms: „Through our actions, infinite suffering was brought down upon the peoples of Eastern Europe“. Then, following the line taken by Martin Niemöller and Hans-Joachim Iwand, the EKD's 1965 Memorandum on Eastern Europe opened the way to Germany's acceptance of its historical guilt, its relinquishment of the East German territories and its signing of the peace treaty with Poland and the Soviet Union under Willy Brandt. Those of us who lived through these events know of the massive resistance from the conservative and right wing nationalist forces, which had to be overcome here.

The genocide perpetrated against the so-called „sub-human Slavs“, which involved the murder of some 20 million people, was followed in 1942, after the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, by *the genocide perpetrated against the Jewish people*, in which some 5 million died – the Jewish people whose consciousness and conscience is defined by an obedience to these Ten Commandments. And indeed Hitler himself had stated, with reference to this people, that this moral consciousness based on the Ten Commandments and not on the „Germanic“ National Socialist sense of justice, was an invention of the Jews, which, therefore, had to be eradicated.

It was not until 1980, when the decision of the Rhenish Synod – i.e. some 35 years after the mass murder inflicted upon the Jews – finally confessed to the „shared responsibility and guilt of German Christians for the Holocaust“, for the annihilation and extinction of European Jewry.

2 „*We have gone astray ...*“

The Confessing Church's Council of Brethren's *Darmstadt Confession of Guilt* regarding the fundamentally false and wrong political path taken by our German nation was a document drafted by the theologians Karl Barth and H.J. Iwand together with Pastor Martin Niemöller, who, at this time, had only recently been released from a concentration camp. Decisive for its wider acceptance was the defence of its ideas within their own churches, and in the face of much resistance by national church authorities, by the two Rhenish church presidents H. Held and J. Beckmann, together with the Berlin bishop K. Scharf. In this confession of 1947, Bonhoeffer's solitary confession of guilt in 1940 – looking back on German history since 1904 and attempting explicitly to reinterpret the Barmen Theological Declaration in the light of subsequent events – is, for the first time, adopted comprehensively. It was in this same spirit that A. Falkenroth – head at

*An invention
of the Jews*

the time of the Church Seminary Wuppertal, son-in-law of Joachim Beckmann and a member of the Rhenish mission board – gave the impetus for a penitential church service and drafted a declaration of penitence on behalf of the UEM, exactly 30 years after the Darmstadt Statement, in 1977 – and this in full awareness of the significance of this date.

The Darmstadt Statement confesses a history of guilt, which we are to accept in a spirit of adult responsibility. In concrete terms, it addresses the following issues:

The nationalistic dream of a world-historical significance of the German people and of its guiding cultural values according to the motto: „The German spirit will heal the world“ („Am deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen“). In his 1948 study *Church and Nation in the History of German Missiology*, the Dutch missiologist, J.C. Hoekendijk, provided a critical analysis of German missiology in the years since the Berlin Conference of 1884. His judgement is: „The legitimacy of a nationalist element in missionary work was discussed“ and advocated „in Germany throughout the whole colonial period (from 1884 to 1914).“ Among the many instances of such advocacy that Hoekendijk cites is the following, from the pen of the German missiologist J. Richter, writing in the year 1915: „In the age of the

Reformation, it was the German people who gave the Gospel back to the world. There is no doubt that our people today also has the universal vocation to bring Christianity to all humanity... In this sense [that is, the sense of a German Christian culture] it would perhaps not be going too far to say that Protestant Germany is the evangelist among the nations... With this truly German gift the national element comes into its own.“ In other words: German Christian culture will heal the world! Hoekendijk is certainly right, then, when he speaks, with reference to the missiology of this period, of its „essentially ethnic emotional appeal“.

The alliance of church and mission with the forces which preserve the old ways and structures

This alliance of „throne and altar“ meant the denial of the duty and right to take, in the most extreme cases, violent revolutionary action as a response to criminal state violence „from above“. And, in turn, the denial of this right to such resistance implied the toleration of and the permission for the development towards absolute dictatorship, as transpired in the Hitler's Germany. Just how topical this tradition of the church's denial of the right to (where necessary, violent) revolution „from below“ against murderous racist violence „from above“ remained can be clearly observed in the various official

*Alliance
of „throne
and altar“*

stances adopted by the EKD in the years between 1980 and 1990 and the criticism during this period of the Namibian churches (CCN) for their participation in the liberation struggle led by SWAPO. Eberhard Bethge has also spoken, in this context, of the „complicity“ of the churches in the criminal violence emanating „from above“.

While the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and the board of the United Evangelical Mission, despite all their committed championing of the cause of a new socio-political system in Namibia, continued to plead for an acceptance of the Alternative Special Fund, the positive and helpful resolutions passed by the UEM on the participation of the Namibian churches – even before the founding of the CCN – in the liberation struggle led by SWAPO, are down, largely, to Siegfried Groth. Palpable in these resolutions was the intention to awaken understanding for this participation in the liberation struggle – an intention fulfilled by highlighting, on the one hand, the political practice and the religious ideology of apartheid that amounted to a kind of state-sponsored terrorism and, on the other hand, the fundamental justice and legitimacy of a theology and a practice of liberation: „Many members of SWAPO are also active church members whose political action is rooted in their religious faith“ (position statement of the UEM, 24.1.1979).

The concrete responsibility for guilt which we need to take upon ourselves

The Darmstadt statement speaks of a concrete responsibility for guilt and acceptance of this responsibility that is clearly distinct from such generalised statements as: „Of course we are guilty, and of course we are in some way responsible; but that’s no reason for us to make ourselves hostages to history“. In sharp contrast to this, the Darmstadt Confession interprets and updates Isaiah 53, 6: „We have gone astray.“ The language of Darmstadt is not the language of Stuttgart, concerned with relativising guilt and detachment from it. It speaks in unequivocal language, stripped of all „ifs and buts“. „We have gone astray, inasmuch as we, as a church, allied ourselves [and I add myself here: also as a missionary organization] with the conservative forces [monarchy, nobility and large-scale landed property].“ Let us remind ourselves, a propos this alliance with conservative forces, of the „Von Trotha street-signs“ which still exist today in Munich. Let us remind ourselves also of the „large-scale landed property“ in the hands of a small number of German farmers in Namibia, who, today, still own 80% of Namibian farming land. We also read in the Darmstadt Confession: „We have gone astray ... inasmuch as we relinquished the Christian freedom to alter [social and political] forms of life when

„We have gone astray.“

the life of human beings demands that they be altered.“ Let us remind ourselves, a propos big industry and big banks, of firms like Woermann-Brock and of the financial policies pursued in Namibia by the Deutsche Bank from the era of colonialism and of apartheid right up to the present day.

3 Reconciliation in the Cross of Christ: its political dimension

But something else identified in the Darmstadt Statement was why the Confessing Church was able to adopt such an open and direct approach to this history of guilt and why it was ready to accept responsibility for it. This ability and this readiness are rooted in the *message of universal reconciliation in Jesus Christ* found in 2 Corinthians 5:19-21: „Entrusted to us is the message of the world’s reconciliation with God in Christ.“

A more concrete expression and formulation

After 1945, Article I of the Theological Declaration of Barmen – „Jesus Christ is the singular and unique Word of God“ – was given a more concrete expression and formulation in the Darmstadt Statement’s reference (after 2 Corinthians 5) to the work as well as to the word of universal reconciliation in Jesus Christ. From this, it is concluded: „This Word is not heard, not accepted, not acted upon and not passed on to others except where we let ourselves

be acquitted of our entire guilt.“ What is referred to here is neither a „collective guilt“ nor a „collective liability“. Rather, it is *the mature acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of the historical „guilt in its entirety“*. We are to be acquitted and absolved „of the guilt of our fathers and mothers as of our own guilt“ (Thesis 1). If this responsibility is not accepted, this can mean, for the generation of those born later, also a second guilt. I am thinking, for example, of the failure to condemn and punish most of those primarily guilty of the crimes committed by National Socialism, who walked free while those lesser functionaries who had merely acted on orders were convicted by the courts. It was in reference to this that R. Giordano wrote, in 1987, of the „second guilt“ of the Germans. And should we continue to fail, after the elapse of 100 years, to assume the responsibility for our guilt in the genocide perpetrated upon the Herero, the Nama and the Damara, then we would need to speak, too, in this respect of a „second guilt“ weighing upon the contemporary Germany of 2004. By contrast, the hearing of universal reconciliation in Christ and the action, which follows upon this hearing, mean that „we let ourselves be called homeward from all those false and wicked paths upon which we Germans, in our political will and our political action, have gone astray“ (Thesis 1).

Let me briefly emphasize four points essential to the statement made at Darmstadt:

„Reconciliation“, as the term is used in the New Testament, is never merely a religious or intra-eclesiastical term. It is always *at the same time* a „political“ concept. Because „reconciliation“ (in Greek *katallage*) is, as distinct from cultic atonement (in Greek *hilasterion*), part of the Greco-Roman legal and political terminology.

Reconciliation in Christ is linked with the *acceptance of guilt* and with *responsibility between generations* not only at the individual and the church level but also at the social-political and the institutional level. H.J. Iwand gave particularly moving expression to this truth in a letter to Eastern Europe written in 1959, i.e. during the period of „Cold War“ between East and West. Addressing the problem of a substitutionary acceptance of historical guilt in its entirety in the life of nations, he wrote : „In the case of guilt in the historical – that is to say in the irreparable – sense, the essential thing is: who is to take it upon themselves? This [i.e. this acceptance] is the narrow gate through which passes the way that leads forward. It is ... something that lies like a stone in our way. No one wants to take it up. No one wants to bear it. Everyone... tries to distance him- or herself from it. In this way, however, we flee before our own history.

We evade the afflictions with which God strikes us – but we [thereby also] evade God’s promises.“

Reconciliation in Christ is a process in which *the victims must grant forgiveness to the perpetrators*, in which, therefore, perpetrators cannot grant forgiveness to themselves or obtain such forgiveness without the co-operation of their victims (Matthew, 5:43ff). Reconciliation is never self-forgiveness in the sense of a religious-sacramental self-pacification. It is rather a painful process in which, instead of looking away, we must look into the very eyes of our victims and, *thereby*, they, in turn, might finally be enabled to look *us* in the face – like Jacob, who, after his reconciliation with Esau, says (Genesis, 33:10): „For truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God, with such favour have you received me.“ This passage is to be considered in the light of H. Kannemann’s meditations on Genesis 33-34, published in the edition of *Materialdienst* on 1904-2004: „The night will end when you recognize your fellow men as brothers and sisters.“

Reconciliation in Christ is linked to truth in the sense of the essay by J. B. Metz and of the quotation from Theodor W. Adorno which forms its title: *The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth*. It was for this reason that, in the South Africa of Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu, we saw the founding by the ANC of a „Truth and

*Reconciliation
in Christ
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the acceptance
of guilt.*

Reconciliation Committee“ (TRC), within the framework of which the victims of the crimes of apartheid could relate, in the very faces of these crimes’ perpetrators, the history of their unspeakable sufferings and these persecutors be obliged, for their part, to confront, face to face, these their victims. There is no reconciliation – something I often stressed during my last visit to Sumatra/Indonesia, after the frightful battle, which occurred in the Batak Church during the Suharto dictatorship there – there is no reconciliation without truth! „We have gone astray“ says the Darmstadt Statement in its specific historical concretion and without any „ifs or buts“.

Reconciliation of the world through Christ is linked to a global commitment to the cause of justice.

Reconciliation of the world through Christ is linked to *a global commitment to the cause of justice*, also in the sense of economic justice, and without such justice „reconciliation“ is an empty, abstract concept. „We neglected to make the cause of those deprived of their rights the cause of [all] Christians, though this alone would have been in accordance with the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God.“ There is no reconciliation without justice.

Reconciliation in the New Testament always implies, according to Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:17, a positive social and national task laid upon the Christian amid the community of the nations. The church as the ecumenical people of God from all

peoples (Acts 15:14) does not abandon or despise its respective peoples. Rather, the church knows itself to be, within the framework of the community of nations, also especially responsible for the specific nation to which it belongs. For this reason, the church enquires, together with its own specific nation, as to the special gift and talent of this nation, which it may use for the benefit of the community of peoples, and nations. It is for this reason that, according to the Darmstadt Statement in 1947, the German nation too finds itself assigned, thanks to its cultural traditions and by reason of its historical gifts and intellectual and spiritual endowments, the following specific task: „Bid farewell to all faithless indifference and become conscious, in this freedom and in the utmost sobriety [that is, in sobriety also of political analysis] of the responsibility which we all bear, singly and together, for the construction of a political system of a better sort: namely, one which will serve the cause of law, public welfare, domestic peace and *reconciliation between the nations*“ (Thesis 7).

Gustav Heinemann, Minister for the Interior at the time in the cabinet of Konrad Adenauer and later President of the Federal Republic of Germany, called this political ideal „constitutional patriotism“. Heinemann – who, seated next to Karl Barth, had attended the Barmen Synod in 1934 and had

participated in the drafting of the Barmen Theological Declaration – set us Germans the task, after 1945, of constantly critically examining and measuring, against the standard of the magnificent constitution represented by our Basic Law and that of the constitutional ideal enshrined within it, the actual constitutional state of affairs within our political system at any given historical point, so that we always have clearly before our eyes and minds the shortfall between the required constitutional *norm* and the actual constitutional *reality*. He also set us the task of constantly contributing to the construction of a free social state based on the rule of law. Heinemann was aiming for a constitutional-social democracy in which the rights of the state are measured by the welfare of the least advantaged – as the future Federal Constitutional Judge Helmut Simon, another friend of Karl Barth's, put it after the preamble to the constitution of Switzerland had been redrafted.

Apart, however, from giving the German nation the idea and ideal of constitutional patriotism, Gustav Heinemann also restored to this nation a pride in the knowledge that, throughout its whole history since 1849 (!), there had been a tenuous but nonetheless continuous democratic-constitutional tradition, so that, after 1945, the political system of democracy did not need to take the form of some-

thing imposed on us from the Allies. It was in this spirit that Heinemann, together with the historian Eberhard Jaeckel, undertook the task of assembling, in the Freedom Museum of Rastatt, the documentary records of the various achievements of this indigenous German will to democracy and the rule of law, to which there have now been added, as the latest and most hopeful episodes, the peaceful freedom movement and the non-violent revolution „from below“ against the violence of state socialism „from above“ which developed in the former GDR in the years leading up to 1989.

If we believe that the reconciliation of the world in the crucified and resurrected Christ is at the very heart of the Gospel, and if we believe that – as stated in the first article of the Barmen Declaration and the first thesis of the Darmstadt Statement – the one work and word of reconciliation in the Cross of Christ is not only for Christians but for the whole world through God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19-21), then it becomes incumbent upon us not only to recognize our own duty, as a church and as individual Christian men and women, to serve the cause of the „reconciliation of the nations“ (Thesis 7), but also to make the German state itself – the free social state of the Federal Republic of Germany, which is governed by the rule of law – serve this cause – which is to say, concretely, also to serve reconcilia-

The task of constantly contributing to the construction of a free social state based on the rule of law.

tion with the Namibian nation. For this reason, we always need to consider the year 1904 from the perspective of 1990, the year of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Namibia, and to learn to understand it in this light.

4 In Search of a „European Conscience“

In the context of an emerging united Europe, it is imperative that we Germans, as constitutional patriots, set about trying to discover what form of conscience and what type of culture of commemoration might prove equally viable and equally valid for all the nations and peoples of Europe.

Bonhoeffer's analysis of the history of western civilization in *Erbe und Verfall* (Heritage and Decline), which amounted to a plea for Christianity to take a great step backward beyond the Greco-Roman cultural tradition of which it had long been a part and to enter into a never-ending direct encounter with Judaism; the Darmstadt Statement in 1947; the 1980 decision of the Rhenish Synod with its appeal to turn back toward the living religion of Judaism as the enduring trunk and toward Abraham as the living root (Romans 11:18) of the great tree of which we form a part – through all these we gradually came to realize: if it is really our wish to turn away from, and to leave behind, the German

nationalism of the 19th Century and the National Socialism of the 20th Century, we need to *return to a specifically Judaeo-Christian culture*. Therein, I can express unconditional agreement with the „Committee on Values“ of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). As the basis for a cultural European identity, we require, then, according to Bonhoeffer, a conscience that finds its orientation in the Gospel of Christ and in Judaism. It was in this sense that the Heidelberg Professor of Systematic Theology, D. Ritschl, spoke in his *Logik der Theologie* (Logic of Theology) of a necessity to step back over the „Athenian Model of Man“ – in the sense of the maximisation of self-realization and the „total development of the self in bodily and spiritual-psychological normality“ – towards the „Jerusalem Model of Man“. With this latter he meant the remembrance of the suffering people through the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53) and the Crucified Christ and the Messianic hope of a new Man, or of a Man newly created.

However, in opposition to the CDU „Commission on Values“ and its fear of Islam, I add: if we are really to orient ourselves by the *Judaeo-Christian* tradition or to refer to the Judaeo-Christian legacy in its reality, then – as Leo Baeck demonstrated in his last essay on „Judaism, Christianity and Islam“ (1956) – it will be not only our obligation but also

We need to return to a specifically Judaeo-Christian culture.

our desire to open ourselves to Islam – not only culturally and intellectually but also religiously and spiritually. This would surely involve not only greater openness toward the 3 million men and women of Islamic faith in Germany who are our immediate neighbours, but also openness toward an intellectual and spiritual encounter with Turkey, and eventually also toward its acceptance into the emerging new Europe. The acceptance of Turkey as a part of the emerging new Europe, together with a commitment by Turkey and its Islamic society to respect and actively defend the new European Constitution and those who publicly champion it, would be a better basic strategy for the reorientation of the Middle East than the entirely false path towards a merely illusory „peace“ and „international order“ being followed by the USA with its military adventure in Iraq, in total disregard for the UN and its nations.

What we wish and hope for, then, is a Euro-Islam bound by the European Constitution – something that has been called for by the Islamic side (Smail Balic, A. Fallaturi and B. Tibi, for example) and the Christian side (K.-J. Kuschel, Johannes Rau and M. Stöhr). One important test, then, of whether the Turkish republic is politically and morally mature enough to be accepted into the European Union would be if and how the Turkish government was able to demonstrate its ability to take a posi-

tion on, and accept political and religious responsibility for, the genocide perpetrated upon the Armenian people in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire.

Hence, following Bonhoeffer, I appeal for a Judaeo-Christian culture of memory and commemoration, which, as *such a* specific culture of remembrance, is also open to Islam on the cultural, intellectual, religious, theological and finally also the political level; and which, in contrast to the culture of America, would have a strong awareness of a responsibility – cultural, economic and also political – for its part for the whole of Africa as the continent immediately geographically contiguous to Europe and an awareness and remembrance likewise of the enormous richness of African culture, which, in a manner comparable to the destruction of the German Jewish culture, was systematically destroyed by Europe over a period of hundreds of years.

If J. B. Metz is correct in contending that it is through the capacity to remember and to commemorate suffering that we are able recognize a culture common to all Europeans, and also recognize the gradual emergence of a European conscience, then Norman Paech – Professor for Public Law at the Hamburg University for Economics and Politics and Visiting Professor, for many years, in Windhoek (Namibia) – was also correct when he wrote, in his

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book *Kolonialschuld und Entschädigung* (Colonial Guilt and Reparation), with respect to the German genocide of the Herero: „If it has proven possible in recent years for the parliaments of many European countries to pass resolutions certifying the genocide in Armenia to be an established historical fact, so as to induce the Turkish government to publicly acknowledge and recognize this dark and long repudiated chapter in the history of the Ottoman Empire and to concede its own historical guilt, why, then, is it not possible for the German Bundestag to formulate, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the genocide perpetrated upon the Herero, a resolution constituting a recognition of and apology for this genocide – a step which would serve to open a new chapter in the political discussions between both governments and the victims concerning a belated form of reparation?“

This would be the beginning of a search for a European conscience which (1) would be determined and directed by the Judaeo-Christian tradition in the sense of Bonhoeffer's demand, (2) would, on this basis, be open on a cultural, intellectual, religious, spiritual and political level to a Euro-Islam and (3) would, therefore, admit to its guilt and responsibility with regard to Africa. For us Germans, this would mean, in concrete terms, admitting our guilt for 1904 and standing by today's Democratic

Republic of Namibia. Here, we should always consider the year 1904 from the retrospective view from 1990, the year of the foundation of the Republic of Namibia, so that, for our part, we do not help foster tribalism in Namibia – something rightly stressed by Dr Kameeta and also by Namibia's political leadership.

In this search for a European conscience, we might also learn a great deal from the great traditions of Africa:

For in Africa, and I am thinking particularly of *East Africa*, a dialogue of tolerance between equal partners and in clear dissociation from every form of Islamic and Christian fundamentalism already exists. This is a dialogue that not only poses practical questions about shared social goals but also engages in joint prayer occasioned by common encounters. Such joint prayer involves not only praying „in parallel“ (a Christian and Islamic representative both praying at the beginning and end of a consultation), but also an Islamic Imam saying a prayer at the beginning and a Christian Bishop a prayer at the end of the consultation, or vice versa. I am grateful for this information from my friend and former Bishop, E. Sendoro, from Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania).

For in Africa, and I am thinking especially of certain theological endeavours in *Southern Africa*, after the cultural destruction wreaked by the white

colonists, the question is once again being asked as to which African traditions – *or in Biblical terms*, which „wisdom traditions“ – were in fact destroyed in the period when it was erroneously held that the cultural traditions of Africa knew nothing of GOD – *or in Biblical terms*: knew nothing of the ELOHIM traditions which the Israelites themselves had come upon as something already existing in the land of Canaan and which they had adopted.

When I speak of ELOHIM traditions being destroyed in Africa and Namibia by the whites, I mean those traditions, which comprised the vision of an integral unity of land, environment, ancestors, generations and God himself, through which the whole of Creation was sustained. The white colonists were unable, for example, to understand that land in Namibia could not be sold since it belonged to the community. Moreover, these colonists positively refused to understand that it was not permitted to „buy“ – it was, in fact, most often a case of stealing – cattle from tribal chiefs, since these animals were sacred. They also failed to understand that one of the many reasons for not driving people from their land was that they could only maintain the link with their ancestors on this land. It was for this reason that, after 1907, some Herero returned to the land and to the graves of their ancestors. Jürgen Moltmann once said: one can tell by the way in which

an individual or a people remembers and commemorates their ancestors and their dead how this individual or this people will treat their children and the generations to come. As Europeans and also as Christians, we surely have a lot to learn from this African commemoration of ancestors and forefathers, which is aware of a bond with the „living dead“ of all generations, while Christendom today still continues to speak in pagan terms of „Totensonntag“, i.e. the last Sunday in the church year remembering the dead – as merely dead.

We could learn, and here I am thinking especially of the theology of *South-Western Africa*, what difficulties are having to be overcome there in the attempt to move from a Theology of Liberation – a liberation specifically from an oppressive racist violence „from above“ – to the reconstruction of a state founded on the rule of law, in such a manner that the legacy of the Theology of Liberation is not simply forgotten but rather brought up to date. Some of these difficulties were explained to me recently here in Wuppertal by the President of the „Evangelical Theological House of Studies“ (ETHOS), Dr Lucas M. Ngoetjana of the Theological Faculty in Cape Town, and Dr Kameeta, in his contribution „We are only now beginning, [after the struggle for liberation] to find our identity“, has also looked in detail at this problem.

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What is it that we Germans, acting out of the Spirit of Remembrance, can now do in concrete terms?

(A plea for a reciprocal critical ecumenism and solidarity)

We Germans should also orient ourselves, both culturally and politically, to the European norms.

I would like to discuss this final point in two sections (IV.1 and IV.2), which are mutually related, although the order in which they occur is not arbitrary.

1 The necessary critical solidarity of the Namibian sister Churches with us Germans

Regarding our relationship with Namibia, I will first specify some concrete steps we Germans must self-critically take in terms of the commemoration of 1904 and 1990, and look at the ecclesiastical and political tasks we must actively undertake. In all this, however, we are dependent – now more than ever – upon the critical solidarity offered by our sister churches in Namibia. And to today's German-Namibian relationship I will apply the past experience we have gained, firstly through our assumption of responsibility towards Judaism which was, albeit only incipiently, accomplished in the dialogue between Jews and Christians and secondly in

the German-Eastern European relationship with respect to Poland and Russia:

a) The European argument

We Germans should also orient ourselves, both culturally and politically, to the European norms which we make binding for other European countries or with respect to future EU member countries. As a precondition for accepting Turkey into the currently emerging Europe united by the principle of the rule of law, we demand – quite rightly, of course – that it demonstrates its respect for this same principle. We demand that Turkey take a responsible and unequivocal stance with regard to the genocide perpetrated upon the Armenian nation and the Christians of Armenia in 1915. But if this is correct – and it is certainly correct – then we are also obliged to apply this European norm to ourselves. If we want to be taken seriously, we can hardly demand that others meet the standard set by this European norm if we are not prepared ourselves to take a position with regard to the „European argument“ and to live and act by it. The „European argument“ from the rule of law, however, says: „There can be no statute of limitations on genocide“. And this argument – the validity of which we gradually came to recognize as regards our relationship to the Jewish and other peoples

and one which we Germans have indeed acted upon, in a more exemplary manner than many other European and non-European nations in actually offering „reparation“ (I am thinking, for example, here of the colonial history of France in North Africa) – also applies to Germany’s relationship with the people of Namibia.

For this reason, I am loath to engage in legal arguments, which are unlikely ever to produce any definitive result, as to whether the Federal Republic of Germany can or cannot be construed as having incurred any legal obligation in terms of the law in force at the time. Instead, in terms of the presently emerging united Europe and following the European legal principle „there can be no statute of limitations on genocide“, we should rather hold ourselves responsible for the genocide perpetrated upon the Herero, Nama and Dama – just as the European states rightly made Turkey responsible for the crimes committed under the Ottoman Empire. In both cases, this assumption of responsibility is the precondition for gaining admission to the newly emerging Europe.

I call this argument, as opposed to all merely legal arguments, the *European* argument, and I believe that – quite regardless of whether the legal action by the descendants of the Herero before US courts of law proves successful or not – this „Euro-

pean argument“ is one which has more hope of success for the following reasons:

It does not draw us into the extremely complex and perhaps insoluble problems of international law between 1884 and 2004.

In as much as it shifts the emphasis of the argument away from individual descendants of the Herero onto the entire Namibian nation, it could give clearer expression within the context of the European Union to the total and integral responsibility of the Federal Republic of Germany for the entire Namibian nation.

The criteria, which it stipulates, are criteria that apply in Europe *today*, and criteria by which countries seeking membership of the European Union today are – and indeed must be – measured and judged.

It takes seriously the lesson we in the Federal Republic have already learnt with respect to the Jews and the Slavic nations: that there can be no statute of limitations on genocide.

b) The necessity for land reform

The long-term effects of that morally irresponsible history of German colonialism in Namibia still evident in the fact that over 80% of Namibia’s land remains in the hands of a small group of white people. For this reason and in line with the „Darmstadt

There can be no statute of limitations on genocide.

Statement“, we demand of the institutions, banks and multi-national companies who have been engaged ever since the Berlin Conference of 1884 – that is, for some 120 years now – in the exploitation of Namibia, that they morally reappraise their own history. In concrete terms, this would mean, for example, they assume responsibility for setting up – as has been done for the Polish forced labourers of the so-called „Third Reich“ – a fund for the reparation and compensation of Namibia and dedicating this fund, in co-operation with the socially and politically relevant organs of the Namibian government, to the necessary land reform and the systematic purchase of land by black farmers. The justification for such a course of action is neatly summed up in a letter written in response to an article on Namibia published in *Der Spiegel* in 2004: „When I was at school, I was taught that, in Germany, there can be no statute of limitations on murder. Apparently, however, this does not apply to the case of 700,000 Herero. The convenient excuse, of course, is that the putting-down of the Herero rebellion was not illegal as the relevant international law was not in force at the time. But are the descendants [of the Herero, the Nama and the Damara] not subject to the law of nations, which is in force today? Or are they, too, only „second-class human beings“ as their forefathers once were in the eyes of

Such companies could also perhaps help finance training and education programmes for black farmers.

their colonial masters and are still, it seems, in our eyes?“

Through such a fund and such a foundation, we could, for example, attempt to bring about a situation, whereby German firms who are currently the objects of legal action in US courts but also such banking houses as the Deutsche Bank and such construction and trading companies as Woermann and Brock – which, since 1884, have profited and continue to profit from the exploitation of Africa in general and Namibia in particular – would, within the scope of the more-than-overdue land reform process, voluntarily make funds available to facilitate a legal buying-back of land by black farmers. This would avoid the emergence of a situation such as the one we now see in the Zimbabwe of Robert Mugabe. Such companies could also perhaps help finance training and education programmes for black farmers as well as for teachers and skilled workers.

c) The necessity for schoolbook reform

Commemoration is essentially linked to culture, knowledge and information. Only on the basis of these can it be sustained and passed on to the present generation in school, university and church. However, the colonial history of the German Empire from 1884 to 1914, along with its continuing con-

sequences, is something the general public either knows very little about or has suppressed. In Germany, the political, historical and theological consciousness is of a nation, which since 1915 has been unencumbered by any colonial guilt. As the research of Gisela Krüger brought to light, even former President Roman Herzog on a state visit to Namibia spoke of a not particularly happy period of common history. Historically, however, this is wrong. Hence, we need to proceed here as we have proceeded – with initial signs of success – in our relations with Israel-Judaism and with Poland and the former Soviet Union. We must establish a joint schoolbook committee comprising both Namibian and German historians to examine German history and geography books with an eye to the forgotten and suppressed history of colonialism and the genocide of 1904-1907, and to readdress and find solutions to how the history of Namibia after 1990 can be dealt with more appropriately in German schoolbooks.

I must also add here that for a number of years some promising German-Namibian co-operation between the University of Bremen and the Law Faculty in Windhoek –under the direction of Professor Manfred O. Hinz and Helgard Patemann among others – has been looking at the schoolbook question. I should also mention the *Lernbuch Namibia*,

Deutsche Kolonie 1884-1915 (Learning Book Namibia, German Colony 1884-1915).

To give a further example: Dr Kameeta has pointed out how in this context the German press often only reports news about Namibia when the news is negative. From this he drew the ironical conclusion: if there is nothing about Namibia in the German papers then everything must be going well there. We should recognize that it is also our task to pay attention to what is being said in our church and secular press and, where necessary, to publicly contradict one-sided or tendentious representations of Namibia through readers' letters or statements. Here, we may take as our model the Mainz Working Group on Southern Africa (MAKSA) under Markus Braun.

d) The renaming of streets

In Germany in the year 2004, there are still street names that are very public reminders of our involvement in a criminal history of colonial oppression.

In Munich-Bogenhausen, for example, we find a Lüderitz Street and a Leutwein Street, and in München-Trudering a von Trotha Street and a Waterberg Street. A recent initiative of the Green Party, which proposed accepting responsibility for the past – yet still so present – history by renaming such streets, elicited the sanctimonious response from a member of the Christian Democratic Party

We must establish a joint schoolbook committee to examine German history and geography books

that „of course (!) we have come out against the re-naming of some 22 streets in Trudering, which are reminders of the colonial period. These street-names are an expression of their time and of our history and that is something which ought not to be glossed over simply because it's unpleasant. This attitude is shared by the great majority of the people who live here, quite regardless of party political affiliation,“ (*Der Spiegel* 5/2004, page 14).

But if these street names form part of the history of our colonial crimes against the peoples of Southern Africa, why – if there is no general desire to actually change these names – are measures not taken to add a some kind of sign or plaque providing information about the historical context and dissociating itself from it? Public opinion chose such an option – non-removal, but dissociation and historical information – in the case of the ancient Judensau (*Jewish swine*) inscription on the City Church of Wittenberg. And, as we also learn from the same reader's letter, will it really do, and is this not actually a perfect example repression of guilt that – to proceed as follows?: „The von Trotha Street has, as a result of these problems(!), long since been rededicated to another member of the von Trotha family.“

What is happening here in Munich in 2004 has already happened in Bremen-Schwachhausen,

where the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAB) has been campaigning since 1979 to change the name of Lüderitz Street to Nelson-Mandela Street. In 1980 the Bremen historian and author of the well-known book *Heinemann und die Deutschlandfrage* (Heinemann and the Germany Question, 1972) supported this initiative in an open letter, which gave a comprehensive account of research into the fraudulent methods of land-robbery the merchant Adolf Lüderitz had been employing since 1883 to illegally appropriate large areas of the Angra Pequena Bay, renamed Lüderitz Bay. The contract agreement with the Nama states that the bay Lüderitz is purchasing is „a distance of 20 geographical miles measured from every point of the coast, including all harbours and rights“. What was not disclosed to the Namas, however, was that a geographical mile is the equivalent of 7.4 kilometres and not the 1.6 kilometres they were familiar with from their previous dealings in English miles. A quite deliberate swindle which vastly multiplied the area of land acquired by Lüderitz, whereby „as indisputably demonstrated by the Bremen government archives, he negotiated with the Nama chief with fraudulent intent.“ (Letter from D. Koch, Lüderitzstraße 21, 22.04.04).

A second attempt to change the name of Lüderitz Street to Nelson-Mandela Street, this time

A quite deliberate swindle

by the Student Christian Movement in Bremen on 25th August 1986, met with no greater success. The pathetically weak response offered by the Bremen-Schwachhausen local authorities was: „By majority decision, the local council has resolved to discuss this matter no further and is also not prepared to enter, on the basis of your application, into any further consultations on this matter.“ (Letter dated 26.9.1989).

By doing so, however, we only succeed in once again suppressing the memory of the colonial land-robbery, which forms part of our history, and in refusing to lend a voice to truth. But through committed campaigning to rename streets truth becomes concrete and – as we see – discussed!

e) The German churches' share of responsibility.

Since the beginning of the 1980's, the German churches' share of responsibility has been recognized above all in the partnerships between church districts, parishes and schools in both countries, which are to be understood as efforts to bring about reconciliation and the assumption of responsibility. The same could be said about the partnership between the EKIR and the ELCRN and the ecumenical Youth Exchange Programme with its arrangement for yearlong stays in the respective sister churches.

Two ways of further concretising this shared responsibility of the EKD, the EKIR and the UEM for Namibia might be, for example, in co-operation with the Church Seminary Wuppertal to set up an ecumenical scholarship fund to support one student from Namibia each year at the Church Seminary and also for the Church Seminary to give special consideration, in future years, to professors from the University of Namibia or from the Paulinum when filling the post of Ecumenical Guest Lecturer. We might encourage German school-leavers to spend a year in Namibia gaining ecclesiastical, theological, cultural and political experience before they take up their theology studies. In this connection, we might also succeed in bringing about a larger-scale exchange of assistant pastors from the Rhenish Church with Namibia, as part of their practical pastoral training. It would also be possible for male and female pastors from Namibia to serve for a time in the Rhenish Church, somewhat along the lines of the already tried and tested practice of exchange with Indonesian sister churches in Sumatra. For it is only through encountering real people from other countries and cultures that their history and traditions are brought home to us in a living and emphatic way. It would also make good sense to include Namibia in the programmes and projects of „*Aktion Sühnezeichen*“ (Sign of Reconciliation Campaign).

We might encourage German school-leavers to spend a year in Namibia.

We could organize a „Children’s Holiday Programme“ based on the model of the programmes established for children in the former Yugoslavia and from the Middle East, whereby it is possible to donate 120 EUR annually to finance a place for a child on such a holiday. Through this, children in Namibia would have the chance to enjoy a holiday within Namibia or elsewhere.

We could organize a „Children’s Holiday Programme“.

In our church services, we could regularly – perhaps annually – especially remember the long suffering of the Herero, Nama and Damara peoples and, in a spirit of hope for the future, tell the story of the successful struggle of the Namibian nation to free itself from the racist yoke of South Africa. We might also – although this would constitute not so much an addition but rather a precondition to all that I have just suggested – pray for the churches and the development of a democratic, constitutional and economically prosperous Namibia.

2 Critical solidarity with Namibia’s ecclesiastical and political path

Only after we Germans, through the acceptance of church and political responsibility, have learned the lesson of this commemoration of 1904 and, with sensitivity, taken this lesson to heart, will we be in a position to credibly perform the ecumenical duty of

standing alongside the churches and the political personalities of Namibia, in a spirit of critical solidarity.

I will mention now, with all the brevity and caution the case demands, three points and refuse to tolerate any misuse of these considerations by other parties:

a) The distinction between the causes of racist violence from above and their consequences

At the first reunion of our „Christian Initiative for Freedom in South Africa and Namibia“ at the Ecumenical Workshop in Wuppertal in 2002, Bishop Kameeta remarked that the reports in the German media on human rights violations by SWAPO before 1990 were often biased, most probably – though this is my own speculation – as a distraction from the need for Germans to accept responsibility for 1904. This was why in my book of 1988, *Bekennende Kirche in ökumenischer Verantwortung* (The Confessing Church and its ecumenical responsibility) I wrote: „In the face of the tendentious use made by a whole series of organizations of the violations of human rights occurring in SWAPO camps – I am thinking here of many circles within the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (DELK) in Namibia and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (VELKD) in Germany, as well as of certain circles in Germany associated with the Turnhalle

Conference and the publications expressing their views – it is important to bear firmly in mind one basic principle: the EKD, in accordance with the ‘Darmstadt Statement’, must distinguish the *causes* of the violations of human rights by the racists in South Africa and Namibia from their *consequences*, because only the implementation of Resolution 435 of the UN Security Council concerning the holding of free elections in Namibia – elections in which SWAPO is entirely ready to participate – can eliminate the sole cause of the use of violence in Namibia, namely, the unspeakable terror being wreaked by the racist army of South Africa. The recognition of this distinction would be a credible fulfilment of the intention behind the ‘Darmstadt Statement’ of 1947 and the Memorandum on Poland of 1965: to distinguish between the causes of violence [the outbreak of the war, for which the Hitler’s Germany was solely responsible] and their consequences [the expulsion of the Germans from Eastern Europe; the criminal bombardment of Dresden by the English as a demonstration to the Soviet Union of their military might], and not to suppress the causes and equate them with their consequences“.

b) The rehabilitation of the so-called „dissidents“
Only when we Germans begin to do this in a credible manner and, liberated through the reconciliation

in the crucified Christ, truly turn back from those fatal and disastrous paths, the milestones of which are 1904 (Waterberg), 1941 (the predatory military campaign against Russia) and 1942 (the decision by the leadership of the Nazi party, at the Wannsee Conference in Berlin, to annihilate European Jewry) – only then do we also have an ecumenical duty to accompany, in critical solidarity, the churches and the politics of the Namibian people.

I was among the participants when our initiative „Freedom for South Africa and Namibia“ blockaded the South African embassy. We succeeded then in completely blockading the embassy for four hours, cutting it off from the rest of the world. For these few hours, a „utopia“ became reality and was given after all a place of liberation and freedom. As someone who on this occasion – together with one of my students at the time, Olaf Schaper – was brutally beaten by the German police and subsequently ordered to pay a large fine by the regional court in Bonn, I have this to say (and distance myself once again, as above, from any possible misuse of these remarks by persons with intentions opposite to my own):

Namibia has a magnificent democratic constitution, to the formulation of which those Christian men and women who took part in SWAPO’s liberation struggle also contributed their share – and, in-

*Namibia has a
magnificent
democratic
constitution.*

*The „second
guilt“ of the
Germans*

deed, by no means the smallest share. It is my prayer and my dream and my wish for us all that in Namibia, too, we will see further progress in the reconciliation of the various tribes with one another instead of a threatening and ever escalating tribalism. This process must not be reversed – not by any commemoration of ours, which is focused, solely on the Herero nor by the showing, in the magnificent Waterberg film of the Killimans, of interviews with Herero alone. It is my prayer and my wish for us all that, also there, we will eventually achieve not only a genuine reconciliation of the various groups within the population – a reconciliation leading towards a unified Namibian nation – but also to a rehabilitation of the Namibian *refugees*, who currently live dispersed throughout the world, and a rehabilitation of the so-called dissidents (for example, of the group of leaders of the „11“). It is not right that dissidents should continue to be defamed as „spies“ to whom forgiveness has been granted; rather, they must be publicly recognized as patriots to whom honour should be restored and reparation paid. The victims must, in their suffering, be recognized and their honour rehabilitated, because every democracy is reliant on critical opposition.

As late as 1952, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was still being publicly defamed and abused as a traitor to his

country – until a Berlin court, in the so-called „Reimer Trial“, finally placed a *legal* ban on this defamation, on the basis of the theological expert opinions of E. Wolf and H. J. Iwand. This, however, was by no means an intellectual ban on the thesis of „the traitor Bonhoeffer“. In Germany, it was only very recently – in other words, some 50 years after 1945 – that deserters who had refused to continue serving in the army of the Nazis were finally rehabilitated. Nazi judges, on the other hand, such as the Minister-President of Württemberg, Filbinger, continued to be, for a very long time after the war, men of position and authority. R. Giordano has, quite rightly, called this the „second guilt“ of the Germans.

Another important point here: during my study of theology, philosophy and the history of religion at the Church Seminary Wuppertal and at other universities, I never once took part in a seminar on Bonhoeffer – for the simple reason that no such seminar was being offered anywhere. Eberhard Bethge’s book on Bonhoeffer appeared only in 1967. And a long time had to elapse even after this before church, university and society had become genuinely familiar with Bonhoeffer’s course of a violent resistance „from below“ and before it was adopted in theological and intellectual respects. In other words, from 1945, it took nearly 25 years before Bonhoeffer had really reached people’s hearts.

Let us grant, then, some time, too, to the Democratic Republic of Namibia. Time to further stabilize itself on all levels – as a democracy, as a state system based on the rule of law, and as a society – until its constitutional stability is sufficient to allow it to address and work through even the dark history of SWAPO's violations of the human rights of its own people. In 1989, after a long period of silence, S. Groth was the first to draw public attention to these violations in Germany – meanwhile joined by many others all over the world – acting on the request of those SWAPO dissidents whose pastor he was, in his capacity as UEM Executive Secretary for human rights in Southern Africa, for many years. We should, of course, not measure or judge Namibia by any standard we are not prepared to apply also to ourselves and to our own government. It may well be that Namibia manages to meet these standards before us and sets us a good example. The „Parents' Committee“ and the „Breaking the Wall of Silence Movement“ (BWS) in Namibia could achieve their goal before we achieve our goal regarding Bonhoeffer and – even more likely – regarding our willingness and ability to work through our Nazi past. This again is my hope and my prayer and my wish for us all!

It is also my dream and my wish for us all that another volume will one day supplement the book of

poems by Z. Kameeta, *God In Black Ghettos*, from which I frequently quoted in my lectures on the theology of the cross and on the concrete commemoration of the Passion of Jesus Christ: *God In The Subterranean Caves Of Lubango* (Angola) or *God In The Dissidents' Prison of Mboroma* (Tanzania). In both prisons, SWAPO liberation fighters were held captive, under cruel conditions, by the SWAPO leadership. Many suffered terrible deaths there. The fate of these people, persecuted by their own SWAPO leadership, is still today the subject of an official silence and taboo. But there can be no reconciliation through amnesia and forgetting. Rather, „the need to lend *a voice* to suffering is a condition of all *truth*.“ This would be in accordance with the biblical wisdom Bonhoeffer taught and practiced in very difficult times: „Open your mouth for the dumb“ (Proverbs, 31:8). This would mean: since we here in Germany have, over and above the „first guilt“ of our crimes against the Slavic and the Jewish peoples, also incurred a „second guilt“ by calling only in rare and exceptional cases the criminal generals and SS-leadership to legal account, a „second liberation“ of the Namibian people, following upon the „first liberation“ from the racist yoke of South Africa, could be an example to us Germans, indeed to many churches and nations across the world. This is my prayer and my dream and my wish for us all.

*Time to further
stabilize itself
on all levels*

c) *The Namibian church's search for an identity of its own*

The close political proximity of the Namibian churches (CCN) to the liberation movement SWAPO, which was demanded and necessitated by the struggle for freedom, will, now that this freedom has been achieved, necessarily have to take the new form of a critical solidarity in the context of „Reconciliation and Reconstruction“ – a lesson the churches in Germany learnt only slowly in the years after 1945. Bishop Kameeta's public admonition (which was reported to me by Oberkirchenrat W. Neusel), pronounced shortly after liberation in 1990, that the political representatives of a free Namibia were, like all creatures, mortal beings and not free of error, needs to be brought to wider public expression. This should be done by the churches in Namibia as a sign of the imitation of Christ, in the spirit of critical solidarity and as a contribution to the maintenance of democracy in the daily conduct of politics. In a brave and pioneering article published earlier this year, Kameeta formulated this idea anew: „We have only just begun to discover our own identity.“ (*Afrika-Süd*, ISA 4/03, 36). I might also refer here, as good examples of the same stance, to the articles written, in a spirit of critical solidarity with SWAPO, by Gwen Lister, editor-in-chief of *The Namibian* and Henning Melber, direc-

„We have only just begun to discover our own identity.“

tor of the Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden – both from 2001.

What needs to be sought and found here is the kind of *critical solidarity* described precisely in Article V of the Barmen Theological Declaration, in terms of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms and Calvin's rule of Jesus Christ over church, society and state: „The church recognizes, in gratitude and in awe before God [„awe“ contains an element of fear as well as of honour; fear is due only to God; honour is due to the representatives of the state by reason of the fact that their conscience is bound to God], the benefit of the political [and social] order that God has instituted. It [the church for its part] is a reminder [the state authorities bound to the political constitution] of God's kingdom, God's justice and God's command, and thereby also of the responsibility [not only] of the rulers [but also and most especially of the co-responsibility] of the ruled indeed“ to stand up for more law, peace and liberty.

It was for this reason that already in 1947, two years after the end of Hitler's dictatorship, the „Darmstadt Statement on the Political Path of our People“ also distanced itself from the policies being pursued by the Allies, most especially by the Americans and that political class in Germany, which was taking its lead from them. These policies involved the instrumentalization of the new legal or-

der then emerging in Germany as a weapon in the struggle against the so-called „Eastern Bloc“ – an instrumentalization which meant an attempt to hinder and prevent any real clarification and establishment of the truth concerning Germany’s recent past. Important members of Hitler’s general staff and secret service, who had taken part in the predatory war conducted in Russia against the so-called „sub-human Slavs“, were taken up into the US secret service as „Russia experts“ for the struggle against the Soviet Union, thus becoming immune to all legal prosecution. This was and is nothing other than a secret amnesty law, enacted „under the cover of night“ behind the backs of the German people! A similar amnesty law was passed in 1990 in Namibia with regard to the human rights violations by SWAPO and by the Boers.

As chairman of the commission for 1904-2004 commemoration events, Z. Kameeta has reported how German journalists have come to Namibia in order to make demands or to outline their own ideas as to how the anniversary year of 2004 ought to be commemorated. By contrast, he pointed out how, during his visit to the Rhenish Synod in 2004, only one German journalist had asked him: „What do you expect from us?“. He answered this question as follows: „For the first time a German journalist has asked this question. Not: ‘This is what we de-

mand of you’ but ‘What is it you expect of us?’; ‘What is it you Namibians expect of us Germans?’“

Since Namibia has a pioneering democratic constitution founded on the rule of law and since, according to Gustav Heinemann, the same applies to the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany – Heinemann spoke of a magnificent *constitutional opportunity* – Namibians and Germans should develop an ever deeper and fuller understanding of themselves as „*constitutional patriots*“: as black and white constitutional patriots.

A constitutional patriotism would mean *for us Germans* that we would renounce all nationalism, take our position consistently upon the foundation of the Basic Law and, within the context of a united Europe, fight for a social democracy which is based on the rule of law and therefore liberal. In this struggle, we need to look, as to the source and origin of all law, to the history of the law giving and liberating God of Israel, who freed Israel from slavery and restored to life the lawlessly crucified Christ. This was why Bonhoeffer, in his solitary confession of guilt of 1940, said that the church had „failed to proclaim God’s justice in such a way that all true law had to see and to recognize in this justice the source of its own being.“

A constitutional patriotism would mean *for blacks and whites in Namibia* that the constitution-

‘What is it you expect of us?’

al norm would also be practically translated into political and social reality; that the gulf between rich and poor, which, up to the present day, has been a gulf between black and white, would be closed; that the injustice that a small percentage of whites own 80% of the farming land of Namibia would be corrected; that the threatening and increasing tribalism would be overcome in favour of a constitutional patriotism on the basis of which blacks, Boers and Germans could all grow together into a single Namibian nation.

It is permissible, indeed it is imperative, that our two nations, in a spirit of critical-solidarity, enquire of each other whether such a „constitutional patriotism“ has or has not yet been realized in Germany and in Namibia.

Epilogue: *Now* we have the Bible *and* the land

In the magazine published by the UEM, *in die Welt – für die Welt* (Into the World – For The World) which addressed the theme „Namibia 1904–2004“ (one would have done better to write: „Namibia 1904–1990–2004“), there is a much-quoted phrase describing the phases of German colonization – and also the entanglement of the missionaries and the

white churches in this colonization – right up to the point of the liberation of Namibia.

That not all of those working with the church in Namibia and Germany were so entangled, that there were some among the missionaries who can be proud of their record in this period – of this we may assure ourselves by a glance at the letters written by the missionary August Kuhlmann in the period around 1904. And that the same can be said of certain female missionaries is demonstrated by the example of (among others of the younger generation) our sister Ursula Pönninghaus, who just recently passed away. Her resistance to all forms of racism dated back to her time, from 1948 to 1951, as a parish worker in Herford – when she lived in the house of the Confessing Church's Herford pastor Eduard Hesse, a man who, during the Nazi dictatorship, had, in the most convincing manner, put into practice the principle of anti-racist resistance. True to her own principles, she stood throughout the course of the liberation struggle loyally alongside the Namibian people. Through conversations with her, I gained much valuable insight into the paths being taken by church and society in Namibia. We last met, and bade each other a final farewell, on the Hardt in Wuppertal – fittingly, on the Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Weg!

The phrase so often cited by Africans runs, according to Paul John Isaak, Professor at the Facul-

*Into the
World –
For The World*

ty of Theology at the University of Namibia, as follows: „The white missionaries gave us the Bible and taught us to pray and, while we were praying, they took our land and our cattle. Now, we still have the Bible – but they have the land and everything else.“ (*in die Welt – für die Welt*, 1/04, 5). What is meant here is: when the missionaries came, they gave us the Bible; when the settlers and soldiers came, they robbed us of the land and the missionaries did nothing to stop them.

Zephania Kameeta not only summed up these facts in more concise terms but he also added a Liberation Theology proposition:

First, we had the land and the whites had the Bible.

Then, we had the Bible and the whites had our land.

But since 1990, we have the Bible and once again possess our land.

In other words: with the Bible we struggled for our land, which belongs to the Lord God (Psalms, 24,1) and which he has given to the community of men and women as a mandate (Psalms, 115,16). Since the independence of Namibia, we have the Bible and also the social and political responsibility for our country. I supplement this pioneering chain of reasoning by Kameeta with a point oriented towards maintaining and promoting the rule of

law, which is as valid for Germany as it is for Namibia.

Now we have both – Germany since 1989 and Namibia since 1990 – the Bible and our country.

Now, more than ever, people in Namibia are enquiring of us in Germany and we in the Federal Republic of Germany are enquiring of the people in the Democratic Republic of Namibia as to the consequences of the Bible for each of our nations respectively: as to how it stands in both countries with respect to a social democracy based on the rule of law and a law-based state respectful of individual freedoms, with respect to the reconciliation and the liberation of the various regions, with respect to land and financial reforms or to the social obligations of all property in terms of the socially conscious nature of the state.

I would like to stress the context of this reciprocal questioning which is done in a spirit of critical solidarity: The Federal Republic of Germany, as it now exists, gained its political unity only a year before the successful establishment of the Democratic Republic of Namibia. For this reason, both countries, as well as the churches responsible for them, find themselves confronted by the task of engaging in criticism of their respective national social realities in such a manner as to assert against these social realities the ideals already enshrined in their re-

*With the Bible
we struggled
for our land.*

spective national constitutions – insofar, that is, as the realities and the constitutions do not yet correspond to one another.

Both countries, and their respective churches, can surely learn from one another here as well. If we saw in the former GDR a *peaceful revolution „from below“* in which the Evangelical Church played a significant role and which obeyed the instruction imparted in the Sermon on the Mount to strive, where possible (following the example already given by Kurt Mazur and Friedrich Magirus in Leipzig) by peaceful and non-violent means for a transformation of the social and legal order, the path taken by Namibia toward a democratic freedom which is based on the rule of law gives rather an example of that other Christian truth recognized and put into practice after 1938 by Barth and Bonhoeffer against the dictatorship of Hitler: that such a revolution may and must, in extreme cases, be *carried through by violent means*. Both states and both churches have much to say to one another regarding their different, but equally legitimate, paths and many experiences of a social as well as of a theological order to exchange with one another.

We wish the churches and the Church Council of Namibia (CCN), as well as the Democratic Republic of Namibia itself, God's blessing and His guidance on their difficult but hopeful way forward!

„The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth.“

It is, however – as Christian men and women in Germany in particular – above all to ourselves that we put the question as to a culture of memory and of commemoration of 1904 and 1990, as to a culture of remembrance of Waterberg 1904 and of Berlin 1884, as to the concrete consequences of a commemoration of the Passion and the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ – in short, it is to ourselves that we put the question as to a culture of the assumption of responsibility for past history. And we ask of our sister churches in Namibia that they accompany us on this our path in a spirit at once of criticism and of solidarity. For „the need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth“ (Theodor W. Adorno).

*revised speech

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What moves us until today

BY ZEPHANIA KAMEETA

Today I share with you some ideas under the title „Was uns bewegt bis heute“ (What moves us until today).

I develop these ideas in the honour of one woman who stood by our side in her prayers, in her commitment to Namibia and its people and this very person, that was mentioned by Prof. Klappert, Ursula Pönnighaus, I will ask the audience to stand for one minute commemorate of her.

The commemoration of this year 1904 is bringing up many thoughts especially among the Namibians. When we started a few months ago to prepare for this year we were not so sure whether people will be interested in looking back and participating in this hole commemoration. But now, the discussion has started and people are involved and committed and new ideas are coming up. A week ago somebody approached me asking the church to commemorate the death of Zacharias Kukuri. Now Zacharias Kukuri was one of the sons of the kings who was trained as the first evangelist in the area which was known as Herero land. Zacharias Kukuri

worked together with missionary Irlé at a place called Otjosazu, i.e. East Okahanja and preached the word of God among his people. His father was king of that particular clan. After the death of his father his elder brother succeeded his father as king of that particular clan but his brother lived only for a few years and so he did. After the death of his brother evangelist Zacharias Kukuri took over the leadership of that particular clan. So he was working as king and evangelist among his people. When the war broke out in 1904 he participated as commander of the resistance movement in that particular area. So he fought against German oppression.

When I read this I realised that some of us who might have thought that we would be the first within the church to participate against the oppression of South Africa, but we were not the first.

Many of us participated by preaching the word of God. This man, Zacharias Kukuri, participated in taking up arms against the German colonialism. In 1904 a false amnesty was declared and so he gave him over. He was captured and taken to what is

*Commemoration
of this year
1904*

known as „Alte Feste“ in Windhoek and tortured. On the 15th April he was hanged in Windhoek in the presence of missionary Meier who testified that Zacharias Kukuri also in these circumstances didn't deny his Christian faith. He died on the gallows on the 15th April 1905.

The request was a week ago that Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia should commemorate the death of Zacharias Kukuri. The church council which met on 23rd and 24th January last week unanimously decided to commemorate the death of this man.

The day falls on a Thursday and so the commemoration will take place on Sunday, 18th April 2004. And on that occasion a little fund will be established to build a tombstone and take care of the grave which is still there and it will be then uncovered on 15th April 1905 precisely then 100 years after his death. We are looking back today at what happened 100 years ago in Namibia. We are looking back not in despair and out of nothing but we are looking back as an independent and free nation. And this free nation consists of Herero speaking people, of Ovambo speaking people, Nama speaking people, of course German speaking Namibians and others and to care that we are looking back at what happened 100 years ago. This in itself is a miracle. But the children of the victims and children of those who victimised us to-

gether can take one another's hand and look back at what happened 100 years ago. And as I have said we look not back in hopelessness from no way but as a free and independent nation. Thank God, the word of Lothar von Trotha was not the last.

He didn't speak the last word, the God of justice and peace and freedom spoke the last word, even if it was only 100 years after that.

Dear friends, we are looking back while holding one another's hands in the spirit of reconciliation. The good and the bad which was done during that time are teaching us to face the present and to prepare the future. The bad will make sure that it is never repeated in a free and independent Namibia. And the good will build on it as we prepare the future.

This commemoration, the 100 year commemoration, helps us not to forget the past. It helps us not to forget the past, but at the same time it is a learning process for the presence and the preparation of the future.

It is by looking back at the past, the ugly past while holding each others hands that we truly can know and understand each other. And this particular with emphasise and reference to the German speaking Namibians. We will not really understand each other, if we are not prepared to hold hands and look back at the ugly past. We cannot shy away we can only be

We are looking back while holding one another's hands in the spirit of reconciliation.

sure and grow if we are prepared to sit together, to hold hands and to look back at what happened in the past and spoke about that. This is what happened on 11th January this month in the „Friedenskirche“ that we together as Namibians including the German speaking Namibians could sit together and looked back at what happened 100 years ago.

Together while holding one another's hands and building a nation we can work on the basis of justice, equality, unity, freedom and peace.

I am so happy that preparing all this we were together as the people of Namibia. We cannot only talk of the Herero, when we think of 100 years ago because the war in Namibia affected each of the Namibians. We don't want also to be divided in this commemoration 100 years ago. We want to look back at this event and happening as one nation and as one people.

Only by going this extremely difficult road we will be able to be mature and grow about politics, rivals and races, divided tendencies coupled with selfishness and if we are prepared to join and stand together and look back we can be about all these things.

A question is asked: What do you expect from us? What do you expect from Germany?

During the press conference I have said this question indicates a change of heart and a change of mind by the present German generation. If this ques-

tion was asked hundred years ago: what do you expect from us? then the Genocide of 1904 – 1907 would not have taken place. But that question was not asked. And therefore we were dominated, we were dehumanised, we were destroyed because we were regarded as non-existent. I am so thankful for this question today. From the former colonizer Germany we expect today, as Namibians, and please keep in mind also as German speaking Namibians, to be listened to carefully. That was the problem, 100 years ago. Today we want to be listened to carefully and understood correctly. This in itself will set a new tone for a more genuine and deeper fellowship and co-operation for the benefit of our two nations.

That's the first requirement. That we take one another serious and that we listen to one another serious and especially that the German people listen carefully to what we have to say. I say this because we had an experience with some German women who came to Namibia last year and who wanted to tell us how this commemoration should be done.

When we are criticising each other we should do it in humanity. And if the spirit of fellowship and co-operation with criticism of one another should be done in the spirit of fellowship and co-operation while acknowledging the past in which we as Namibians were dictated to, divided, dehumanised and destroyed.

*What do you
expect from us?
What do you
expect from
Germany?*

Why the German Government has not yet apologised for their cruelties of 1904?

I am saying this because the criticism I found outside Namibia is mostly here in Germany. E.g. take the whole question of the former detainees in the dungeons. And the question of SWAPO apologies. I always said, well, I agree with that. That we should come to terms, as Namibians, with our past. But I find this a matter of selective morality: while so strongly calling for apologise, why the German Government has not yet apologised for their cruelties of 1904? And that's why I say when we criticise we should do it in fellowship and in humanity. What do we want from the German Government? I call on the German Government and Parliament on the occasion of this commemoration of 1904 to affirm Germany's special historical responsibility towards Namibia and its people.

There are needed concrete measures for the building of the Namibian nation and shaping bilateral relationships that, of course, includes setting aside of visa requirements for Namibians visiting Germany. This is the moment that should happen. I find it still strange while Germans don't need visas to get to Namibia, but we Namibians need visas to enter Germany. I think this 1904 / 1907 commemoration should change this situation.

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia I call on the German Government at this occasion of commemorating this

event of the years 1904 / 1907 to explicitly confess and admit Germany's historical responsibility and apologise for the crimes of colonialism and racism in the region that today is known as Namibia.

I am not unaware of the arguments that have been mentioned also early but on the other hand I cannot neglect quite clearly calling upon this Government to confess, to admit and to apologise the crimes of 100 years ago. As simple as that.

That is the only basis for a true and genuine fellowship and co-operation. If we are really serious as two nations for a serious genuine fellowship there should be the basis.

I thank the United Evangelical Mission, which on the day of independence expressed in writing clearly through its director, at that time Peter Sandner, the confession of guilt. We cannot hide behind legal arguments, while we are demanding from others to apologise. May our God bless our two nations as we struggle and search for justice and peace in our one world. May God bless us in the coming generations together with all the nations of the world, especially those who suffered under colonialism and racism in other parts of the world. And in this case, as Africa is concerned, I have got in mind Cameroon, Togo and Tanzania.

I thank you for your attention.

A reliable ecumenical partnership

Speech at the Namibia Commemoration on 30th January 2004

BY WILFRIED NEUSEL

The Lord's Supper, the visible sign of the culture of commemoration that God has entrusted to the church, allows us to share in the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles and thereby in the reconciliation of the whole of sinful humanity with God. The celebration of the Lord's Supper also offers us a place where we can admit to our guilt, take on responsibility for the future and set our hopes on a world where there will be no more weeping and no more suffering. The Bible tells us that reconciliation is a process involving suffering that has also to do with giving up privileges. It is in the spirit of this commemoration culture of God that we remember the victims of the first genocide in the Twentieth Century, perpetrated in a most brutal way by the troops of the German Empire from 1904 to 1907 on the Namibian population of the Herero, Dama and Nama, in a „war of extermination“ as it was expressly named.

We remember the social, cultural and economic consequences of this war, which influence Namibian society even today. The demographic structure of settlement in Namibia, the distribution of income and the distribution of economically usable land are the most visible signs today.

At the same time we remember the courageous resistance of these Namibian peoples against colonial despotism, exploitation and racist contempt for humanity. Together with the churches of Namibia, we gratefully recognise that a living church has arisen from the ashes of destruction, as Bishop Kameeta expressed it, the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Namibia (the church that developed out of the work of the Rhenish Mission). And we can also add that a living nation has come into being out of the ashes of destruction, which has freed itself from a victim's fate and is shaping its own future.

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and economic
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this war.*

This does not take away our responsibility to admit to our guilt, to ask for forgiveness, to realise where even today there are still open wounds and, wherever possible, to contribute towards healing them. We are grateful to God that we can do this in a reliable ecumenical partnership with Namibian Christians. This partnership is lived and maintained under the umbrella of the United Evangelical Mission, the successor organisation of the Rhenish Mission, not only by the church leadership of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland but also by very many church districts and congregations.

Many years of experience in this partnership enable us to see that the doctrine of national reconciliation proclaimed by the Government of Namibia since independence, while being honoured by the international community at a diplomatic, political and even to some extent at an economic level, has not yet been realised in Namibia itself, nor between the German and Namibian people.

The German colonial strategy of divide and rule, which was continued and reinforced by the South African apartheid regime, has resulted in ethnocentric structures in Namibia even today. Namibia is still today the world champion among the world champions of income differences, whereby the minority of the population of European descent are right at the top of the scale. A small but fine elite

of the indigenous population has joined them, employed in the public service and in service industries, and one can get the impression that the national and international elites have been reconciled to each other at the expense of the broad majority of the population.

The Federal Republic, the legal successor to the government of the German Reich, has so far been afraid to apologise formally for the colonial crimes and the genocide in Namibia, for fear of facing large reparation claims. According to general political and legal estimation however these fears are unfounded. In place of such an apology the Government points to the amount of development aid that has been given instead.

The many German tourists, who contribute considerably nowadays to Namibia's gross national product, also seem on the whole to believe that their money is sufficient contribution to the normalisation of Germany's relations with Namibia. Real encounters with the people of Namibia are few and far between. The dominance relationships have not even been touched on yet.

Today's event is the first of several attempts in 2004 to question the elitist reconciliation strategies and to try and contribute to a real reconciliation between the people of Germany and Namibia. What really happened, what we owe the people of Namibia

Real encounters with the people of Namibia are few and far between.

ia and what still moves and concerns us today will be demonstrated by Dr Gesine Krüger, Professor Berthold Klappert and Bishop Kameeta. All three are convinced that remembrance and commemoration are a credible way of shaping the future of Germany

and Namibia. They will not speak with an air of academic detachment but rather trusting that the spoken word has strength to set the rigidly frozen relations in motion, even to get them dancing.

Commentaries from the Panel Discussion

at the Namibia Commemoration on 30th January 2004

Präses N. Schneider

Question (J. Motte):

What are our expectations from a church point of view? At the Rhenish synod you have just passed a statement on the issue of Namibia 1904. What do we expect from politicians, the Government, and Parliament? Yes, and I would like to combine that with another question: what is the real reason that the politicians find it so difficult to deal with this subject, that they even circumvent it, geographically quite literally as reflected in the Chancellor's travel schedule recently, but also in Fischer's refusal to seize the opportunity offered by the year 2004 to take up the subject. What makes this subject so awkward? What causes such resistance, so that we get so little resonance from a Red-Green Government who came to power with the intention of pursuing different kinds of policies?

And I would like to couple that with an observation of my own: in the past we, at the UEM, have often held events on various topics, especially on Indonesia, together with political foundations, both

with the Heinrich Boell Foundation and the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation. Yet we have not succeeded in winning either of these foundations over for an event on this subject, and from all that we have heard, there are political reasons behind it; the parties have told the foundations to be very careful with this subject and to deal with it very sensitively.

To return to my question, what are your expectations and what are perhaps your apprehensions in judging the situation?

Answer (N. Schneider):

First of all I must say that I am still under the strong impression of what I have heard in the lectures and seen in the film „Waterberg“. And I find it difficult to quickly leave this behind and move on to further business. I therefore ask for your understanding and believe it would be an act of mercy if we were able to work through that now, so that we should now only make short comments.

The first thing I really noticed was how little I knew. I was prepared, I saw what was coming and I have occupied myself throughout the year a little

What are our expectations from a church point of view?

with the subject. My sister-in-law gave me this book, the novel by von Seyfried and I read it with mounting interest. I have always been somewhat interested in history and I was shattered at how little I knew about this topic. I always thought that I had had good history lessons and was therefore interested in the subject. But I can also well remember the message that came over in our history lessons; that we were lucky that thanks to the First World War we lost our colonies very quickly and therefore did not have so much to do with the guilt of colonialism. The English took on that responsibility, so to speak. I know very little. And the first thing that we must do, in my opinion, is to really come to terms with this history.

Can the people there find a perspective for their life at all?

And in order to be able to do this, we have to have some knowledge about it. And that must be on a much broader scale, in our congregations and schools. I believe it is our task to make this known and to win over teachers and schools to take up this subject and to work on it. That is the basis for everything else. That is the first thing.

And the second thing is that I find it surprising that a Red-Green Government approaches this topic so gingerly. If we make it clear to ourselves that the distribution of property has remained the same from that time until today, possibly even with the same family names involved, then that is a real

problem as we can well imagine. But there is no way round it; we must really analyse it and work on it. We must find a fair way of dealing with the people and above all with the victims, so that they do not become victims a second time – that they survive so to speak, but their concerns are not taken into consideration, and that we evade the issue, refusing even to occupy ourselves with what the demands for justice for the victims and the victim's families mean for us today. There must be an offer of a settlement/compensation.

Can the people there find a perspective for their life at all? If we think what it really means, as one person stated very impressively: we are living here in a place where it is not really possible to live, here in the desert. That is the question that we must really look at more closely. That is the second question.

The first is knowledge. Knowledge is the prerequisite to enable us to analyse it more closely. That means of course also dealing with a history of guilt; it means facing up to it. Something that Bishop Kameeta also stated here. And then to find a way for people there to gain a basis for their existence.

Those would be the two things that I would like to change.

Professor Dr Gesine Krüger

Question (J. Motte):

Dr Krüger, would you like to give us your opinion on the question: is it on account of a lack of knowledge on the part of the Government that the subject is rejected? Who is approaching it in such a gingerly fashion as mentioned by President Schneider? What are the reasons that you see for this? And where would you see concrete steps that could be taken, we have mentioned some, to make further progress in bilateral relations with Namibia?

Answer (G. Krüger):

Yes, the hysterical reserve, as you might even call it, really does surprise me. As though they have already worked out that legal action would have a chance. This is of course a legal question. They have to stick to certain language rules so that the legal action that has been transferred from Washington to New York will have no chance. And this is how certain things come about.

This is of course no excuse. I really believe that Africa is simply not important to them. And those of us, who try to bring African subjects onto the agenda of the general public, should strengthen our efforts. We must also not forget: there are still Togo and Cameroon and other German colonial wars.

We are also speaking just about the Herero, but the Nama must also be named. I think it is important that the history we did not share should also be named – it is our joint history.

Mr U Kilimann

Question (J. Motte):

Mr Kilimann, we have just been able to see this film and have heard that it is, in part, due to lack of knowledge that the subject is not brought up; questions of education have been mentioned here several times. We have just attempted in an impressive way to hear about an event that took place 100 years ago in original tone, which is not so easy to get it heard indirectly, meaning not to let historians speak too extensively. But my question to you as a journalist goes in this direction. If you were to go with such a film to the West German Radio (WDR) – the WDR didn't produce it, it has been produced by us so to speak – can you get the subject across? Can such a subject be brought across to the general public? What chances do you see for it?

Answer (U. Kilimann):

Yes, I think it is a very good presentation, that the Rhenish church together with other regional

*Africa is simply
not important
to them.*

churches and the UEM has made this film possible. We are in negotiations with the WDR for a 45-minute version of the film to be shown by the WDR in summer around the actual date of Waterberg. It has certainly found resonance with my colleagues who say that this is a subject that we can bring over to the public.

I have a certain understanding why a Green Foreign Minister, Joschke Fischer, quite deliberately approaches this subject very gingerly. For I have the impression that he is dealing with it strategically and tactically and he is aware that there is no broad awareness of it among the general population. President Schneider has given us a good example when he says, I simply know too little. I can add another example to those indicated in the various statements. Two history teachers, whom we had quite a lot to do with during our research, claimed that they most certainly had a basic knowledge about colonial times, but when we spoke quite directly about genocide and the use of the word „concentration camp“, they admitted: we have never been aware of it in this dimension. This means we have to start with the teachers, where the problem begins with the school textbooks, which deal with the whole German colonial era in a total of 3 to 4 pages. This must be done first through the teachers and then only through the pupils. I just hope that

We have never been aware of it in this dimension.

such film productions, with which the churches have made a start here, are one possibility to begin to bring about a wider awareness of the dimension of this problem.

Bishop Dr Z Kameeta

Question (J. Motte):

Bishop Kameeta, I believe in your presentation you focused your expectations towards us most clearly and brought them to the point, and also the expectations of the Government and the German Parliament. My question to you is, in the meantime the churches in Namibia have taken up this subject in an impressive way. Have you any expectations towards the Namibian Government how they should deal with the subject, not only with this subject but also with the question of German-Namibian relations? And are there demands that you also wish to direct towards your own Government, in order to make progress – you said it yourself, in the land issue there is nothing doing, both governments are passing the buck to each other.

Answer (Z. Kameeta)

You know we have the committee which is organising this whole commemoration 1904-1907, and

we took up discussions with the Namibian Government to be involved in this whole commemoration. Of course, the Government cannot speak together with the committee but in recent weeks and months we had the cooperation of the Government, especially in view of reconciliation when we think of 1904-1907. The Government gave us the Monument Committee, which is working together with us, and we are planning several events that shall take place through the year. On the other hand, we, as church, with our statement and sermons but also we, as the people of Namibia, especially those of our Government, we look carefully back to what happened in 1904 and make sure that this never happens again in Namibia. But together, with church and Government, we influence society and in the process so as to prepare a better picture of our country for the coming generations.

J. Motte:

I myself believe that the question of how Germany deals with this guilt is not only a question that we, as the churches, must articulate more loudly, but basically we must also measure the German Government and the German Parliament by what they have committed themselves to. And I would like to

point to one sentence in the final document of the United Nations conference against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia from 2001, where the countries, who signed it, including the Federal Republic of Germany, stated:

With the aim of closing this dark chapter of colonialism, racism and history, and as a means of reconciliation and healing, we request the international community and its members to remember the victims of these tragedies with honour and respect. Furthermore we acknowledge that some states have taken the initiative and have expressed their regret or remorse or have offered an apology, and we call upon all those countries that have not yet made their contribution, to find ways and means of re-establishing the dignity of the victims, and we thank all those who will undertake such steps.

We thank all those who will undertake such steps.

Sermon

at the Namibia Commemoration on 30th January 2004

BY NIKOLUAS SCHNEIDER

If the train is travelling in the wrong direction, it is of no use to walk in the right direction inside the train. That was how Dietrich Bonhoeffer once commented on the behaviour of the church during the National Socialist era.

And I think that this sentence also applies, dear members of the congregation, to the situation of the Rhenish Mission in Namibia – not only then, but particularly then – at the outbreak of the liberation struggle of the Herero, Dama and Nama, and it applies equally to the war period and to the concentration camps after the war.

If the train is travelling in the wrong direction no matter how much you move in the right direction inside the train – it is useless.

The commemoration of the beginning of a genocide that took place 100 years ago is still able to put aside the question of how it could come about that the mission and the church were so involved in the guilt of war and genocide.

Let us hear what God's word has to say to us, as written by Paul in the letter to the Romans. He writes:

„So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.“
(Romans. 1:15-17)

If the train is travelling in the wrong direction, it is of no use to walk in the right direction inside the train.

Firstly: I am ready to preach the gospel to you in Rome.

Paul did not come to Rome with power and might, he did not come to Rome with guns and cannons, but he came to Rome rather as a victim of violence. It was not planned in this way, but it turned out that way. And when he writes this letter, the most important thing of all for him is to bring the

*The Gospel
is the power
of God unto
salvation.*

gospel to the people in Rome. Even if the journey is difficult and dangerous, even if the road is paved with challenges and enmity and even if he must expect that on the glittering stage of the metropolis he may also be drawn into discussions intended to expose him to ridicule and shame. Even if this road leads to tumult and punishment when it becomes clear that when Paul proclaims the gospel it is not just an academic discussion. There are those who declare him to be mad – either we speak of God becoming man or we speak about someone who was crucified as a criminal – but both together is unthinkable.

People cannot bear the idea that the holy name of God should be brought into connection with a man, and end with his death. But they cannot express this and resort instead to violence. No polite academic discussion this, rather an uprising; the police get afraid and it leads to prosecution and beating on the feet or worse. For Paul it is something of great worth to proclaim the gospel, to help people to understand it. But not with guns and cannons, but in a way that has to be appropriate to the gospel itself; that shows respect for the people whom he meets, respect for their ideas and opinions and for their culture. He writes a letter to them beforehand, he announces his coming; he seeks an open and free discussion. Mission in humility *and*

with courage; with both. And under circumstances so that I can really say - I am not ashamed of the gospel although it is so called into question. I think we must consider it a great miracle that mission activity can bring blessing, even if it came violently, or still does. It began with the first mission with the sword and continued with a mission that followed colonialism and sometimes could not be separated from it. It is a miracle that God was even able to use this form to develop life and faith.

Secondly: the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The power, dear congregation, remains God's power. For everything is ruined when God's power is taken over by man. When people take on God's power, so to speak, make it theirs, and proclaim it as their own power and might. The consequences very quickly turn to torture, burning at the stake, crusades, God wants it to be so, they say. God also wants wars with the famous „God with us“ on their belt buckles. I do not know whether at that time the soldiers in German-Southwest also wore this, but I suspect they did. „God with us“ was also written on their belt buckles. People take note of this power of God unto salvation. They want to make it their own, to possess it. The perversion of God's power leads to disaster. God's power is only good for people in the paradox form of weakness. It is not for nothing that the Bible says, my strength

is made perfect in weakness, and it is not for nothing that it states that God seeks the fragility of man and needs it to work in the world. Only in this way, only in the form of weakness does God's power really lead to salvation. There it takes on a human form that does us good.

Then we can say, blessed are those who suffer, for God's strength will give them strength. Then we can say blessed are those who have gentle courage for they will inherit the earth, not those who make war and cause destruction. Then we can say, blessed are those who show mercy, for they let themselves be opened by this power of God to the needs of their fellow human beings. Then we can say blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for God's power has planted a longing in their hearts that they cannot cease to strive for justice. Our growth depends on justice for the persecuted. Finally, blessed are those who bring peace, who are committed to peace and in this way allow the power of God to become a blessing for all people. The power of God in our weakness. That is the way it takes shape in the world, and that is good.

And thirdly, the righteousness that helps us before God comes from faith in our faith. That is what we must continue to tell everyone. From faith in our faith that is in a way quite a logical circular conclusion. That that which should be the result is, at

the same time, the pre-requisite. That that which is the condition is, at the same time, itself conditional. But this logical circle is not a vicious circle that keeps us imprisoned in injustice and guilt. Rather it creates a circle of life into which the Gospel draws us. For that is basically incomprehensible. We really do not deserve that God turns to us in love and faithfulness and stands by us. And it is an example of God's love and faithfulness that God continues to liberate us from the strings of injustice and guilt and make us into that which we should be: God's beloved children and sisters and brothers to each other.

This is the good Gospel that determines our life today. This is what we live from and this is how we want to bring it home to those around us, not with force or violence. In this way we want to tell people that God's power carries them, liberates them and supports them throughout their lives. And in this way we want to tell them that the righteousness that counts before God is given to them for free, as a gift of God's love and faithfulness, from faith in faith, and that this will lead them throughout their lives.

Dear congregation, when the train is travelling in the wrong direction that is not good. For us, it means that we cannot limit ourselves to travelling in the right direction inside the train, but rather we

*We should be:
God's beloved
children and
sisters and
brothers
to each other.*

must take an interest in which direction the train is going, and we must take on responsibility to see that the train is going in the right direction. This is the courage and the freedom to which we should be attracted. It is part of what it means to bring the Gospel to the people; to take on responsibility, not only for the life of the individual and his or her way to salvation, but also for the just and peaceful co-existence of people here on earth. The Gospel calls us to take this path of responsibility in the same way as it calls us to prayer and repentance

This service is to remind us of a time one hundred years ago, when our brothers and sisters who

had responsibility before us were trapped in their loyalties, in the thinking of their times. I do not think that any of us is in a position to judge our brothers and sisters who lived before us and carried responsibility before us. We will also have to face the question of how God will look upon us when we are called to answer for the times when we have carried responsibility. And so we can only pray to God for our brothers and sisters and for ourselves that God will show mercy on us and give us the strength and the courage to follow our way decisively and clearly through our times. May God so help us.

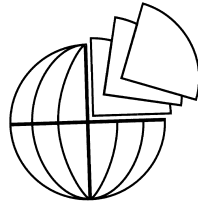
Remember Namibia!

Mission, colonialism and the fight for freedom

The road to colonisation 1842-1902

Tumult of war 1903-1915

The road to independence 1916-2004



A touring exhibition
of the United Evangelical Mission, Wuppertal,
in co-operation with the
Archives and Museum Foundation, Wuppertal

Catalogue for the touring exhibition

Remember Namibia! Mission, colonialism and the fight for freedom

The exhibition is a contribution made by the United Evangelical Mission, the successor to the Rhenish Mission Society, to remind us of crimes that were committed and guilt that ensued. The Rhenish Mission was involved in the war, for it was working in the country long before colonisation.

The exhibition is divided into three sections: The road to colonialism - The chaos of war - The road to independence. Both the pictures and the texts of the exhibition panels are presented here. They are self-explanatory.

Section One covers the years from 1842 to 1902. It offers an introduction to the work of the mission and the colonial powers and gives an inkling of possible conflict situations in South West Africa at that time. Furthermore it shows the changes that came about in the country with the Protection Treaties and the presence of the colonial army. The first part ends with an insight into the work of the Rhenish Mission, which changed considerably with the German colonial occupation of South West Africa. Here it is already quite obvious what a difficult situation the Rhenish Mission found itself in - divided between patriotism and protection of the local population.

The second section covers the years from 1903 to 1915. It begins with the uprising of the Bondelzwart-Nama in the south of the country. It was on January 12th 1904 during this period that the war between the Herero and the Germans began. This war is followed by the representation of the long war waged by the Nama against the Germans. The Nama uprising began on October 3rd 1904 and continued as a guerrilla war against the Germans. In the course of the second section mention is made of the concentration camps and other camps where many of the Herero and the Nama lost their lives, and also of the position of the missionaries with regard to the camps. The second section concludes with impressions of the situation in

the country; the total lack of rights of the local population, the work of the mission and the working of the German colony, right up until the disbanding of the settlers' colony "German South West Africa".

The third section begins in 1916 and leads up to the present day. It explains the various phases of the long Namibian resistance wars that finally led to independence. The description of Namibia's political road to independence concludes with Namibia's independence on March 21st 1990. The tenor of the exhibition then moves towards the mission work that took place during this period of new departure, which was also a new period in the development of the churches and their independence. Individual aspects of the current relations between Namibia and Germany round off the exhibition.

All the pictures and many of the original documents in the exhibition belong to the Archives and Museum Foundation Wuppertal.

Graphic layout of the exhibition: Plum Witte m.m.w. Projektentwicklung Düsseldorf

Ideas and content of the exhibition: Julia Besten

Wuppertal, February 2005

Julia Besten

Part I The road to colonisation 1842 – 1902

Display Panel I-2

Namibia

Up to about 1850, present-day Namibia includes, among others, the territories of

- Ovamboland
- Damaraland (Hereroland)
- Nama or Namaqualand.

The name *Südwestafrika*

English – South West Africa, Afrikaans – Suidwes-Afrika, establishes itself through usage by European travellers and is still used up to the 1960s.

The name **Namibia** is formally approved in 1968 through *UN resolution 2372* and is consistently used by the UN.

In the year of independence, 1990, the official name, **Republic of Namibia**, is formally adopted.

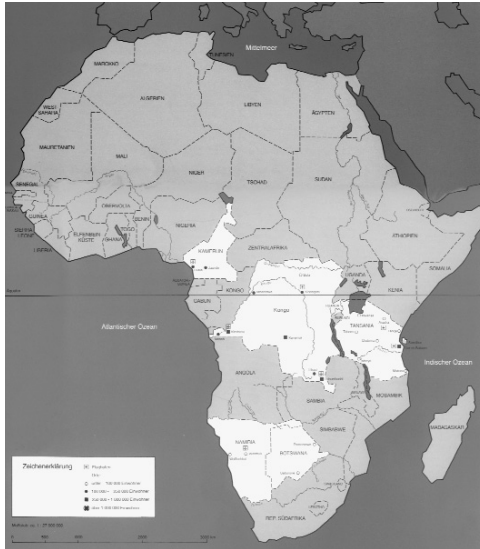


The Name

*National flag of
Namibia*

Photo: R. Veller

The country



Map of Africa

Namib Naukluft Park

Photo: R. Elbracht



The peoples around 1850

Namibia

Size:

824,292 km²

Population:

ca. 1.8 m

Germany

356,950 km²

ca. 80 m

The neighbouring states are Angola in the north, Zambia and Botswana in the northeast and South Africa in the south. In the west, lies the wide expanse of the Atlantic.

Namibia's landscape is dominated by desert and semi-desert regions in the tropical-subtropical arid zone of Africa.

- In the west, there is the Namib Desert, about 1,500 km long and on average 100 km wide.
 - It is bordered on the east by the „Great Escarpment“ mountain range, which includes Namibia's highest peak, the 2,579 metre high Brandberg. The escarpment slopes eastwards down to the edge of the central plateau.
 - In the northeast, are the Kavango and Caprivi regions, which have relatively high rainfall.
- San, also known as the Bushmen
- Nama, mainly found in the south.

- *Damara*, mainly in the northern central region between Waterberg, Erongo and Kalahari
- *Herero*, mainly in northeast and central Namibia
- *Ovambo*, mainly found north of the Etosha Pan

- **Other population groups**
Himba, Kavango, Rehoboth Baster, Europeans



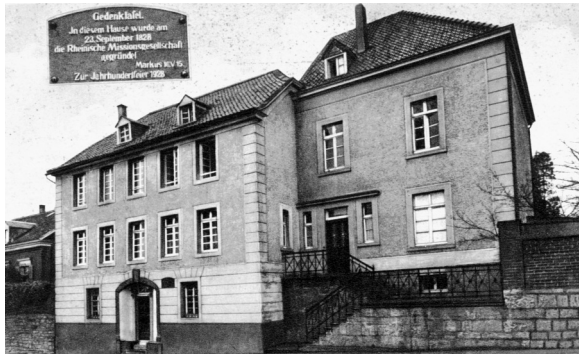
*Independence Road, formally Kaiserstraße,
Photo: H. Heine*

The Rhenish Mission Society – RMS

Display Panel I-3

The founding societies

- 1799 Elberfeld Mission Society
- 1818 Barmen Mission Society
- 1828 Cologne and Wesel Mission Society



The old mission house in Mettmann.

The Rhenish Mission Society is founded here on 23.9.1828

1825 Foundation of the „Seminary“

„Messengers“ are to be trained as teachers, mission helpers and theological co-workers.

On 23 September 1828, these groups join together to become the Rhenish Mission Society.

„The purpose of this society is direct involvement in promoting the Kingdom of God among non-Christian peoples by sending out and sustaining missionaries, by automatically connecting to existing mission stations or by founding new ones ...“

Statutes RMS, 23.9.1828

Sending out to South Africa

There are good reasons for South Africa becoming the first mission field: the London Mission Society is already active there and the climate is similar to Europe's.

The beginnings of Christianity in Namibia

Display Panel I-4

In 1805, the London Mission Society sends the first missionaries to Great Namaland. On their arrival, the missionaries meet several baptised Christians. They had been baptised while working in the Cape Colony.

Johann Heinrich Schmelen founds the Bethany station (Bethanien) in Great Namaland as early as 1814 and in 1839 invites the Rhenish Mission to participate in the work in South West Africa.

The Rhenish missionaries Lückhoff and Zahn take up their work at the London Mission Society's Stellenbosch and Tulbagh mission stations.

Wupperthal in South Africa

On 1.1.1830, the missionaries Leipoldt and von Wurmb found the first Rhenish mission station at Rietmond farm, 300 km north of Cape Town.

Transfer of the work fields

of the London Mission Society to the Rhenish Mis-

The Rhenish Mission Society

*Mission house
Wupperthal,
South Africa*

1840



sion Society. Franz Heinrich Kleinschmidt is sent by the Rhenish Mission to Schmelen's station in Kom-maggas – **Start of the Rhenish Mission in Little Namaland, Capeland.**

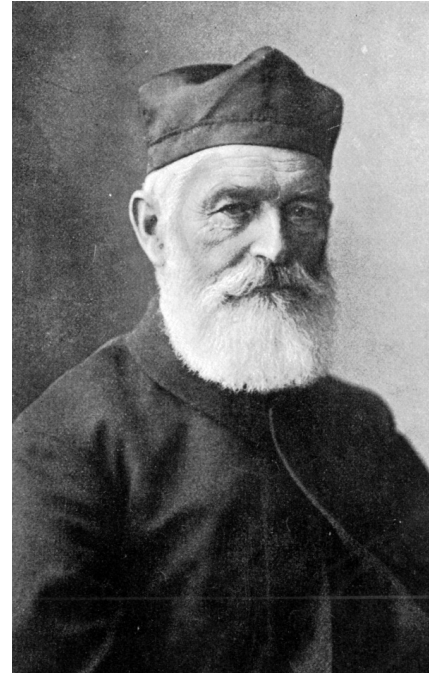
From the Bethany station, the Rhenish Mission begins its work in **Great Namaland** with the missionaries Carl Hugo Hahn and Hans Christian Knudsen. They extend their activities to Windhoek, at that time under the rule of Jonker Afrikaner. The great Nama leader had founded the town in 1840. Two years later, there is a breakdown in relations..

Start of the Herero Mission

Carl H. Hahn moves northwards from Bethany and founds the Otjikango station (New Barmen).

Not until 14 years later, in 1858, is the first Herero baptised. By 1870 increasing numbers of the indigenous population are being baptised. Further mission stations are founded in the years following 1858.

Mission work among the Ovambo does not commence until 1891 in Ondjiva.

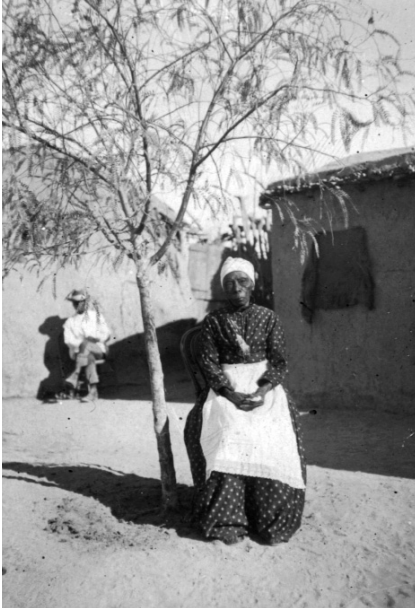


*Missionary
Carl Hugo
Hahn,
founder of
the Herero
Mission in
South West
Africa, 1845*

1842

1844

**Urieta
Kazahendeke**



*Johanna Maria
Gertse on the 70th
anniversary of her
baptism*

Urieta Kazahendeke (1836-1935), is the first Herero to be baptised. With her baptism on 25 July 1858 by missionary Hahn, she receives the Christian name Johanna Maria.

As a child she works in the Hahn household in Otjimbingue. She attends the mission school where she later teaches. She is a great help to missionary Hahn with translation work. She marries the Christian Samuel Gertse and lives till the advanced age of 99.

She is often mentioned in literature as the „Black Johanna“.

Display Panel I-5

When the Rhenish Mission arrives in South West Africa, the indigenous nations are at war.

The groups are fighting - with no long-term success - over grazing lands, which would allow them to extend their cattle exports to the Cape Colony in return for weapons, alcohol and consumer goods.

The Hoachanas Peace Treaty of 9 January 1858 is intended to end the fighting. Through the participation of various Nama groups and one Rhenish missionary, 12 articles are drawn up to establish peace.

Maharero, Chief of the Herero, and *Jonker Afrikaner*, leader of the Nama, sign the treaty. The peace, however, is not stable. Fighting flares up once more.

Jonker Afrikaner had been able to establish his rule in Central and South Namibia by illegally conquering Herero land.

Under his rule, the so-called Orlam hegemony, and essentially through the mediation of the Rhenish

Struggling for peace



Conferences and Treaties

Kamaherero
RMS Reports:
April 1877

The Mission needs order



*Jan Jonker
Afrikaner*

And war again ...

Mission, peace is reached between the Nama and Herero at the peace conference of Okahandja in 1870.

After his death, Jonker Afrikaner is succeeded by his son Jan Jonker. With the treaty of Okahandja, he becomes a subordinate of Maharero.

The Mission needs order in the country to perform its missionary work. But it does not regard the independence of the indigenous population as a guarantee for peace. Instead, they assume that a European force could be more successful in keeping the peace.

Not until the loss of power of the Nama Chief Jonker Afrikaner are the European missionaries and traders able to establish themselves.

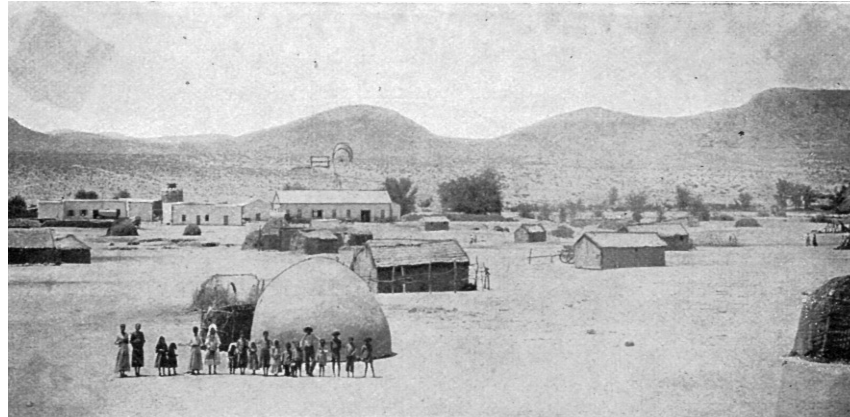
Ten years after the Okahandja peace treaty, war breaks out again between the Nama and the Herero in 1880. Once again the reason is grazing land.

The Nama kill herdsmen and raid 1,500 sacred, valuable oxen belonging to Chief Maherero. In response, the Herero launch an attack until, finally, stalemate is reached.

Otjimbingue, home to many Herero and white people, is repeatedly attacked. The trade of the white merchants is brought to a standstill.

Missionary Hahn requests support from the British in Cape Town. They authorise him to lead a peace mission. On 8 June 1882, peace is reached at Rehoboth and, after protracted negotiations, the Witbooi Nama also sign.

The conflicts also continue during the early stages of the colonisation by the German Reich in 1884.



*Otjimbingue
Western Herero-
land*

**... and again
European
intervention**

Acquisition of land

Display Panel I-6

1 May 1883



Angra Pequena,
Lüderitz bay

Malevolent deception

During this period of intense conflict, the Bremen merchant Adolph Lüderitz decides to found a trading station on the coast of South West Africa.

Joseph Fredericks, Nama Chief from Bethany, sells land to Lüderitz:

- The *Angra Pequena bay* and five surrounding miles for £100 Sterling in gold plus 200 Wesley Richard rifles, including equipment;
- an additional 20 mile stretch of coast some months later, on 25 August.

Joseph Fredericks is unaware of the actual size of the land he has sold. He is familiar with the English mile, 1.6 km, through his contact with the British from South Africa. But Lüderitz is referring to geographical miles, i.e. 7.4 km; in the purchase contract, however, he speaks of miles in general.

The land purchased by Lüderitz is, therefore, four and a half times larger than Fredericks believes.

Whether missionary Johannes Hendrik Bam, who helps to arrange the contract, is aware of this deception, is unknown.

Lüderitz seeks protection for the purchased land from the Prussian Government.

Inspector Friedrich Fabri had already unsuccessfully asked the German Reich for protection of the Mission and the trading company in South West Africa in 1868 and 1880.

Fabri, the inspector (director) of the Rhenish Mission Society from 1857 to 1884, is greatly involved in the colonial movement in Germany.

Lüderitz's land purchase is welcomed in the German Reich. Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the German Reich, changes his earlier rather reluctant attitude towards the colonial policy.

The aim is to find

- new markets for the rapidly expanding industry in the united German Reich
- a new destination for the large number of Germans willing to emigrate



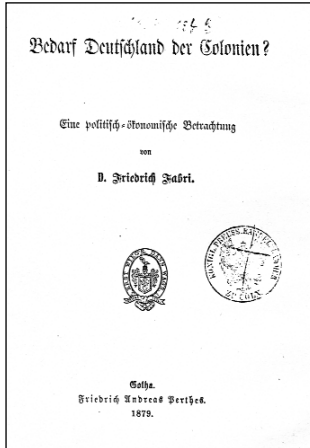
*Missionary
Johannes Hendrik
Bam*

**German
Reich:
a protecting
power?**

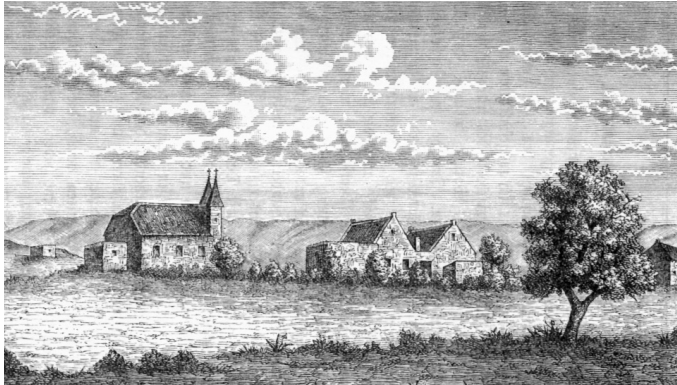


*Inspector
Dr. Friedrich Fabri*

**Colonial poli-
tical interest
roused**



*Does Germany
need the colonies?*



*Mission station
Bethany
RMS Reports:
November 1884*

- a consolidation of patriotic feeling and reputation through possession of colonies.

Moreover, the mission societies have already paved the way for colonisation.

Whereas, previously, Bismarck's overriding concern was to strengthen the recently united German Reich, he now sees advantages in the colonial policy. He agrees to Lüderitz' request for protection, on condition that no foreign territorial rights should be violated.

Bismarck's Declaration of Protection was delivered on 24.4.1884. It is based on the agreements between Adolph Lüderitz and Joseph Fredericks. The agreements of the German traders are to be „protected“ by German law and the German authorities.

Display Panel I-7

Colonial hopes

The German flag is officially hoisted in Angra Pequena on 7 August 1884. From now on, the harbour area is called *Lüderitz Bay*.

The
German flag
is hoisted

Captain Herbig reads a proclamation:

„His Majesty the German Emperor, Wilhelm I., King of Prussia, has commanded me ... to put the territory on the west coast of Africa, belonging to Mr. A. Lüderitz, under the direct protection of His Majesty. ... By thus executing this highest of all missions, I hoist the Imperial German flag as an external sign, hereby placing the above mentioned territory under the protection and sovereignty of His Majesty Emperor Wilhelm I.“ ...

With this ceremony, the German Reich joins the group of colonial powers.

Unfortunate in business, Lüderitz finds himself compelled to sell-off his possessions – land and mining rights. The „Colonial Company for German South West Africa“ (DKGfSWA) is specifically founded for this purpose in 1885.

Lüderitz lacks
business
acumen

In the following years, protection treaties between the German colonial authorities and South West African chiefs are concluded, to provide legal protection for the German infiltration into South West Africa.

Consolidation
of colonial
land
possession

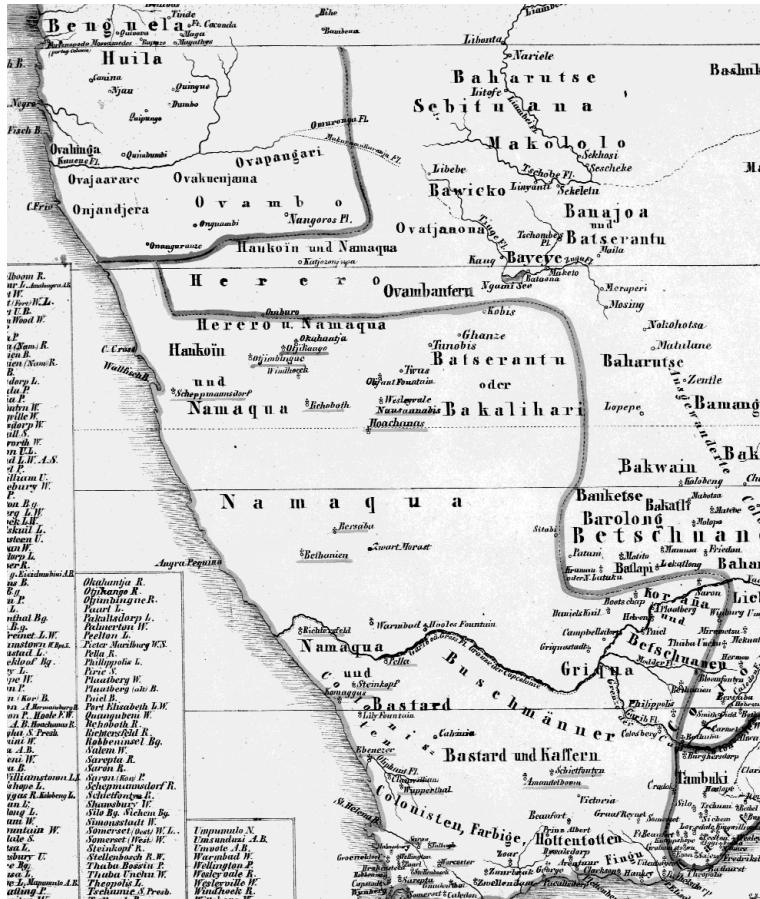
In 1884/85 the country falls into three categories:

- the land acquired by Lüderitz
- other land, which is under the protection of the German Reich

Status quo in South West Africa

False expectations

South West Africa in 1891



the land belonging to those refusing to sign protection treaties, such as the Bondelswart Nama and the Witbooi Nama.

Since its annexation in 1878, Walvis Bay is in the hands of the British. After 1885, only three civil servants of the German Reich are working in South West Africa. The indigenous population barely notices the protectorate.

The Herero, who are still at war with the Nama, enter into a protection treaty with the Germans in 1885. They hope to receive help against the Nama.

But the Germans interpret the protection as legal protection for the agreements made by German traders and settlers and, where necessary, to also keep the British out of South West Africa.

The Herero are disappointed and, in 1888, declare the protection treaty null and void. They return to the old treaties with the British.

Thus, for the time being, the German Protectorate is deprived of any kind of foundation. The Germans withdraw from the Herero area.

These are also unsuccessful years for the Rhenish Mission. Maharero prohibits them from engaging in any further missionary activity. Therefore, the Mission exerts pressure on the German Government to intervene in South West Africa.

Consequences

Tactics, diplomacy, war

Display Panel I-8

The German Reich responds

The German Reich responds to the requests for protection from German merchants and settlers in South West Africa and, in 1889, dispatches a protection force consisting of 20 soldiers disguised as an expedition of explorers, under Captain Curt von Francois. Their task: to keep the British out of South West Africa.

Francois is ordered not to attack the Herero.

Unauthorised action

Francois pursues his own policy: „*the objective can only be achieved by ruthless severity*“. He uses firearms to fight against the Herero. In 1890, the Herero once again acknowledge the German Protectorate.

The Germans in South West Africa, including several missionaries, support his policy. The Foreign Office in Berlin criticises it vehemently. Nevertheless, the colonial force is increased to 50.

Reich Commissioner Heinrich Göring (father of Hermann Göring of the National Socialist German Workers Party) successfully demonstrates the "seriousness" of the German protection in a letter to the Herero. This gesture satisfies Maharero, as the Herero and Nama are still at war.

Hendrik Witbooi

Hendrik Witbooi, Chief of the Witbooi Nama, recognises that the German's offer of protection is an attempt to play the Nama off against the Herero and he refuses to accept the protection treaty.

„This seems impossible and strange to me. ... Each and every chief rules his people and land in a self-governing manner and is an independent head of his land and people. ... I can, in truth, see no possibility that a chief, who has placed himself under another, can be referred to as an independent chief, who can do as he pleases.

This Africa is our land, the land of the Red Chiefs. Should one of us be in danger and feels too weak to face it himself, he can say to his brothers, the chiefs of the Red Tribes: 'Come brother, or brothers, let us stand united for our land Africa and ward off the danger which seeks to penetrate our land with violence'.

For we belong together through our colour and way of life, and this Africa, in its entirety, is the land of the Red Chiefs."

In order to explain the danger, Witbooi contacts Maharero in writing. Maharero's son, Samuel, receives the message. His father had just died on 7 October 1890. There is no peace between the Nama and Herero until 1892.

The German Reich is able to agree a further protection treaty with the Bondelswart Nama.

The war had advantages and disadvantages for the Germans.

- As long as the war lasted, no aggressive action was taken against Germans.
- Due to the fighting, extensive colonisation of the country was impossible.



**Enemies
become allies**

*Hendrik Witbooi,
Chief of the Nama*

Disaster and Success



*Samuel Maharero,
Chief of the Herero*

The peace between the Nama and Herero disturbs Francois. Now the colonial force is faced by united Africans. In 1893, the force is strengthened to 250.

Francois carries out an attack on Witbooi's people in Hornkranz on 12 April 1893. Women and children are wounded and killed. At the time of the attack, most of the men are not in the camp. Hendrik Witbooi strikes back and captures 150 of the force's horses.

Much too early, Francois notifies Windhoek and Berlin of the presumed success. His lack of military success leads to the end of his term of office. Inciting a war, on the other hand, does not count for very much.

Display Panel I-9

In 1893, Major Theodor Leutwein is dispatched to take over as Imperial Governor and commander of the colonial force by the Chancellor of the German Reich. He takes over Francois' position.

His task:

- to bring Hendrik Witbooi under German control
- to manifest German rule
- and to enlarge its territory.

On 27 August 1894, Leutwein attacks the Witbooi Nama. After bitter fighting involving heavy losses on both sides, a truce is reached.

Three weeks later, a so-called „Protection and Friendship Agreement“ is concluded with the Witbooi Nama, now impoverished by war:

- they have to give up their land
- live under surveillance in Gibeon
- and be economically dependent on the cattle lent to them by the colonial power.

Divide and rule



Control over
the Witbooi

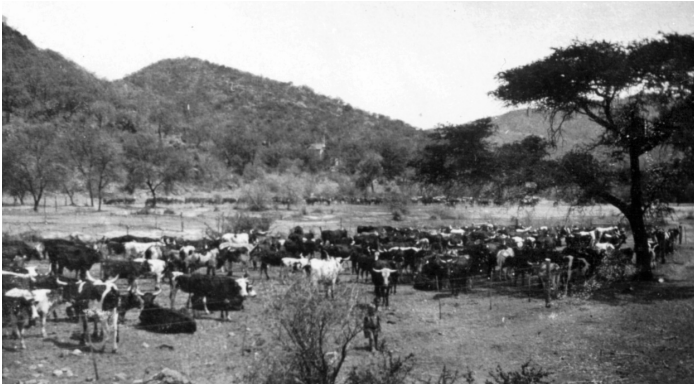
Control over the Herero

Erongo Mountains



The cattle plague of 1897

Herd of cattle



In spite of the strained relations, the Witbooi fight on the German side until 1904.

After this manoeuvre, Leutwein turns his attention to the Herero. He takes advantage of the disagreement about who is to succeed Chief Maharero.

His son, Samuel Maharero, the new Paramount Chief, asks for support against those Herero rebelling against him.

Instead of uniting the tribe, Leutwein succeeds only in dividing it.

He succeeds in annexing the land and expanding the German crown land.

The cattle plague of 1897 inflicts considerable damage on the Herero, who own large cattle herds. Approximately 70 - 90% of the livestock fall victim to the plague. The Herero enter into a state of crisis.

Epidemics and periods of drought force the Herero to work for the whites, to raise money on their land or sell it. In an ostensibly peaceful way, Leutwein succeeds in restructuring the land tenure and in establishing the German position of power. The settlers now have access to new land. The first railway is built between Swakopmund and Windhoek.



Landscape

The economic ruin of the indigenous population is in stark contrast to this. Forced to buy on credit from white traders due to a lack of cash, they eventually lose their cattle. The law, which Leutwein wants to use to end the arbitrariness of the traders and settlers achieves the exact opposite: **violent cattle driving** by the police now appears to be legal.

The economic ruin of the indigenous population

The Rhenish Mission at the beginning of the colonial era

Display Panel I-10

In a country always on the verge of civil war, the Rhenish Mission has continually been seeking protection. At this time, Inspector Fabri is the leading figure within the Rhenish Mission.

The Mission is worried about its own safety and about the growth of its African parishes.

Before the thought of colonisation plays a role in the Rhenish Mission, it seeks protection and support from the British in South Africa, who have agreements with the Herero and Nama.

Request for intervention

The Rhenish Mission requests German intervention from 1880.

The attitude and work of the missionaries changes with Lüderitz' arrival. They work as translators for the settlers and traders and are thus drawn actively into the process of colonisation.

Preparatory work by the missionaries

Owing to their longstanding presence in the country, the missionaries have already laid the foundation for a colony. As further German settlers arrive, they hope this will have positive consequences for their mission work and put an end to the internal African wars.

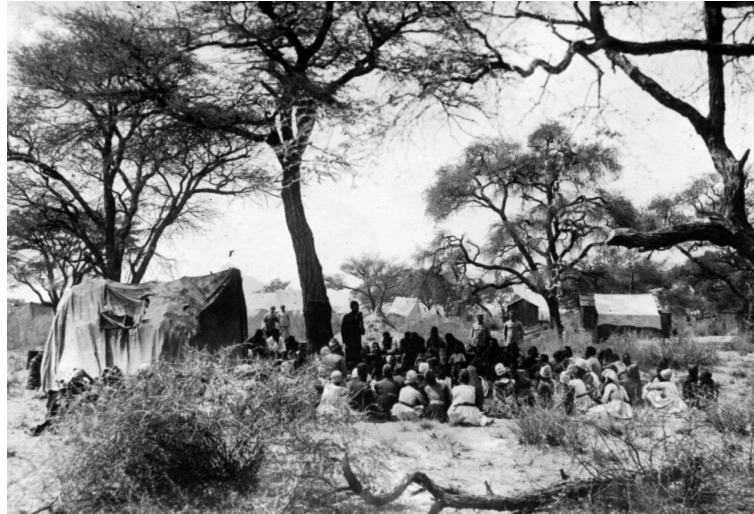
Extracts from **Rhenish Mission reports in 1885:**

„Of course we welcome the German colonisation endeavours in our mission regions with heartfelt pleasure, otherwise we would surely not be good Germans ... It fills us with great pleasure that, in accordance with its outstanding position of power in Europe, the reunited and strengthened Germany has now also begun,

to participate in the great world supremacy of Europe ... However, this is only possible, since we have good reason to expect that this occupation will have beneficial results for our mission work in these parts, and, even more so, to see it, perhaps, as an answer to our prayers.“

But:

„Colonisation serves the expansion of the power and reputation of our dear German fatherland, whereas the mission wishes to serve the expansion of the Kingdom and the Glory of our heavenly King, Jesus Christ.“



*Prayers
at a farm*

Only two years after the annexation, the Rhenish missionaries express their disappointment that the protection treaties, often concluded with their assistance, are not fulfilled by the Germans. They see the trust, they have been able to build up with the chiefs, being jeopardised; as neither the chiefs nor their subordinates are receiving the promised protection.

The tension between Mission and state power is eased only after Leutwein replaces Francois as Governor.

**Disappointment
and
tension**

The Rhenish Mission at the beginning of the colonial era

Display Panel I-11

Allies



Major Leutwein strives to win over the missionaries as leading allies for his policy. He needs this contact in order to gain the support of the chiefs for his plans.

Initially, the Rhenish Mission's judgement of Leutwein's search for peace and political stability is favourable: this being precisely what is beneficial for their mission work and in line with their political role.

The new Mission Inspector, August Wilhelm Schreiber, describes the situation in South West Africa in 1898 *as peace restored by the German Government.*

Estrangement

Dr August Schreiber

The Mission hopes that the colonial power will acknowledge their significance for the colony. However, it also senses the changing climate between the missionaries and the indigenous population.

Missionary Philipp Diehl on the situation in 1899: *„The people's attitude to the missionaries has also*

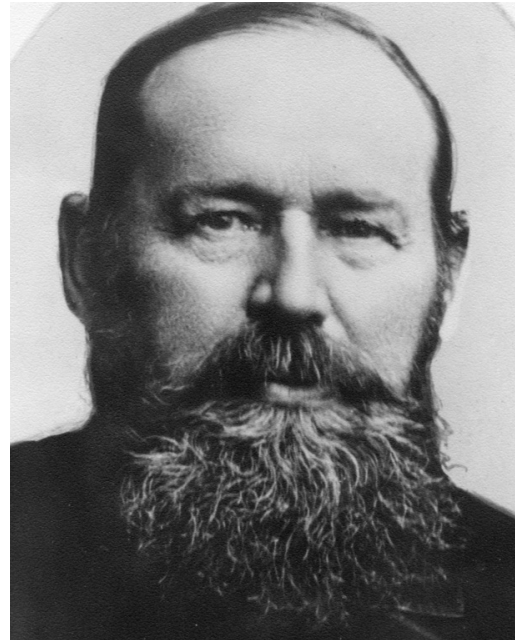
changed. Up to the 1880s, the heathens and the Christians regarded the missionary as a kind of patriarchal figure. He was trusted entirely in all political and church matters. ...

How different everything has become since then! In almost all important social and political matters, the missionary is deliberately avoided. One would have no need to be troubled by this situation, and could, instead, be pleased, if the natives were not allowing themselves to be so cheated to their own disadvantage. ...

When they afterwards feel disappointed, we, the missionaries, are to blame ...“

Since the mid-1890s, the Rhenish Mission has been requesting the establishment of reservations.

- It aims to safeguard, in the long-term, the indigenous population's fundamental means of existence in the face of German „hunger for land“.
- It fears that through land losses it will become more difficult, if not impossible, to perform missionary work among the Herero and Nama.
- It believes reservations offer the indigenous population protection from (European) moral decadence
- and that reservations are a good source of manpower for the colony.



Reservations

*Missionary
Philipp Diehl*

Despite differences of opinion with the Mission, Governor Leutwein does not reject the reservations. His reasoning is not humanitarian; rather, he is striving to uphold the existing system of control.

The reservations are established on infertile land; but abandoned again at the beginning of the wars in 1904.

Display Panel II-1

Part II Tumult of war

1903-1915

War

1904-1908

Genocide

POWER

Liberation

Struggle

Display Panel II-2

Uprising of the Bondelswart Nama

The considerable changes in the country lead to increasing unrest and tension.

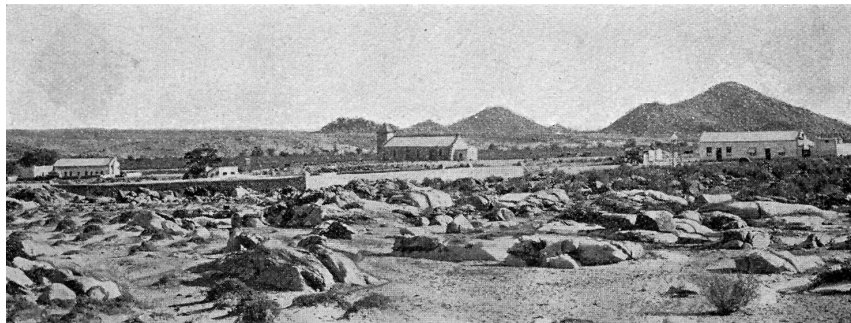
On 25 October 1903, the Bondelswart Nama in the south rise up against the German colonial power. The issues:

- Right of jurisdiction
- Right to possess firearms.

During the conflict, the Chief of the Bondelswart and the German district senior civil servant lose their lives.

Companies from Windhoek and Okahandja advance southwards. Governor Leutwein waits for reinforcements and also advances towards the south.

On 12 January 1904, war breaks out with the Herero in the north.



The events

*Warmbad missionary station,
South Namibia*

The war with the Bondelswart drags on. In order to avoid a war on two fronts, Leutwein needs peace quickly. On 27 January 1904, a peace treaty is concluded.

As compensation for the costs of the attack, the Germans lay claim to the land of the Bondelswart as crown land.

Leutwein leaves the punishment of the Bondelswart to the Nama Chief, Hendrik Witbooi. He has to return to the north as quickly as possible in order to end the war with the Herero.

Criticism of Governor Leutwein



*Great Nama Land,
between Warmbad
and Keetmanshoop*

Criticism of Governor Leutwein becomes audible and reverberates all the way to Berlin. The capitulation conditions appear too lenient for the settlers. They feel unprotected and want all indigenous people to be disarmed. Leutwein forbids the disarmament of Witbooi.

It becomes more and more difficult for him to carry out his policy of „divide and rule“:

- The settlers' protest against him is not silenced by the arrival of new troops from the German Reich.
- The chiefs similarly find divided rule insufficient. They see the loss of power and dependence on the Germans.

In the German Reich, Leutwein's policy is interpreted as defeat and all confidence in him collapses. In May 1904, he is divested of his military supreme command.

He is replaced by General Lothar von Trotha.

War of the Herero against the colony

Display Panel II-3

On 12 January 1904, the first shots are fired in Okahandja. Who fires the first shot is disputed.

Samuel Maharero commands all Herero chiefs to attack the German colonial force.

Maharero's decision to lead all Africans together against the Germans comes at short notice.

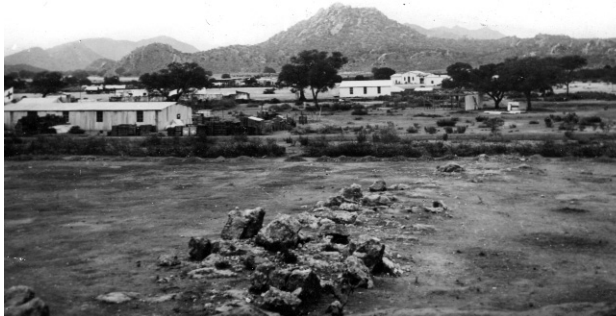
He writes to Hermanus van Wyk, Chief of the Rehoboth Baster, and to Nama Chief Hendrik Witbooi: „... *I wish to inform you that the whites have violated their peace with me ... and, for our part, we should, in our weakness, do what we can ...*“

From a second letter written to Hendrik Witbooi: „... *Let us preferably die together and not die through maltreatment, prison or any other ways ...*“. The letters never reach Witbooi.

The first victims are the trader Adolf Diekmann and his wife from Okahandja. The couple are shot on their way to the military base, where settlers and traders have retreated.

„In my capacity as Supreme Chief of the Herero, I hereby decree and resolve that none of my people lay their hands upon the English, the Ba-

Okahandja



**Instructions
to the
Herero chiefs**

stards, the Berg Damara, the Nama and the Boers. We shall not lay violent hands on any of these. I have made a solemn pledge not to make this known to anyone, including the missionaries. I am the Chief of the Herero,
Samuel Maharero“



Hereroland

The war is directed against settlers, traders and soldiers. Samuel Maharero ensures that the missionaries are not endangered.

As patriots, the missionaries find themselves, nevertheless, in an awkward situation. Some Germans accuse them of being on the side of the Herero and of having known about the plans for attack. Had they not often mediated between settlers and the indigenous population, learned their language and recommended reservations?

The missionaries defend themselves against the accusations, but make it clear that they always treat the indigenous population differently than many Germans do.

Within a few days, the Herero succeed in occupying the entire Central South West Africa, with the exception of the military bases. 123 Germans are killed.

There is no further attack on Okahandja. The Germans are able to bring in reinforcements and, after two weeks, regain the upper hand. A German defeat is averted with concentrated forces.

**The first
 offensive –
 a success**

**No lasting
 victory**

Reasons for war

Display Panel II-4

There are various reasons for the outbreak of war:

- systematic land expropriation
- depriving the chiefs of their power
- credit usury by the Germans causing dependency of the Herero
- contempt for the customs and traditions of the Herero by the settlers.
- the settlers' and traders' fear of being disadvantaged when purchasing land, as a result of the credit decree and the establishment of reservations.



Countryside to the north of the Waterberg

Asked about the reason for war, Governor Leutwein receives the following answer from Samuel Maharero in March 1904:

„To the grand envoy of the Emperor, Governor Leutwein.

I have received your letter and understand well everything that you write to me and my chiefs.

I and my chiefs answer as follows:

The beginning of the war is not just in this year begun by me, but by the whites, for you know how many Hereros have been killed by white people, especially by traders with rifles and in prison. And always when I brought the matter to Windhoek, the blood of my people was always valued at no more than a few head of cattle, namely 50, or (also only) 15...

The traders increased the trouble in the way that they of their own accord gave my people credit ... they robbed them, going so far as to take away by force, to repay themselves, two or three head of cattle for a debt of one pound sterling.

These are the things, which have caused the war in this land.... They went so far as to kill two Hereros of Chief Tjetjo, even Lieutenant Zürn began to kill my people in the gaol. Ten died and it was said that they died of sickness, but they died by the hands of the labour overseer

Now I must kill the white people even if I die. These are my words ...

I am the Chief of the Herero."

The responsibility for the outbreak of war is rejected by Samuel Maharero. Nevertheless, he is willing to wage war.

From the point of view of the Rhenish missionary Johannes Spieker:

.... [It] may be permitted for me to remark that in my carefully considered opinion it is unjust if one wishes to understand the uprising of the Herero and Nama as a totally unjustified revolt against German rule. ..."

**From the
point of view
of the
Rhenish
missionary**

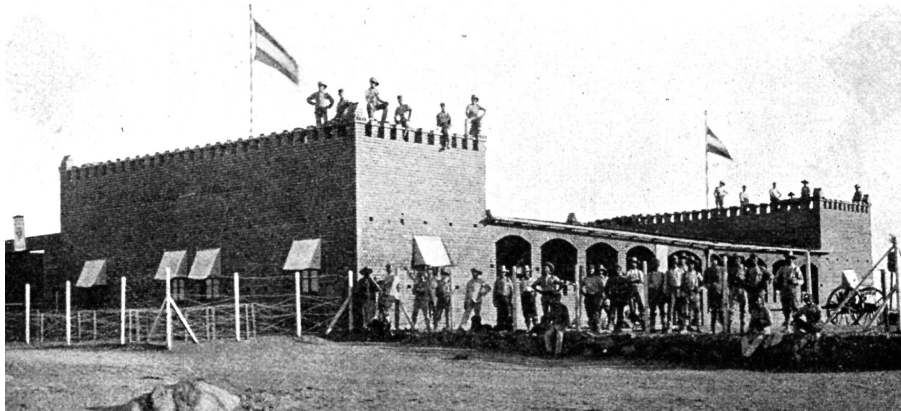
The course of the war

Display Panel II-5

The Herero destroy rail and telegraph connections and plunder settlements and farms. But they would actually prefer to fight out in the open countryside.

The Germans retreat to fortified places and military bases. They wait for reinforcements from Germany.

Governor Leutwein arrives in Swakopmund in February 1904. His main force is ready for action after the reinforcements arrive in March 1904.



German barracks
in Omaruru

Leutwein tries to contact Samuel Maharero in writing. He wants to find out the reason for war and the position of Maharero and his troops.

The German Government severely reprimands him for this course of action. Instead of „negotiat-

ing“, he should have salvaged German honour. The Grand General Staff in Berlin forbids him from carrying out negotiations without the explicit permission of the Emperor.

The Rhenish missionary, August Kuhlmann, succeeds in meeting Samuel Maharero in Otjosenjati. He betrays Maharero’s position.

Further skirmishes take place without any decisive successes for either of the parties. The Herero fight with great fortitude and determination. Soldiers and settlers strike back in retaliation.

At the Battle of Oviumbo in April 1904, Maharero’s troops almost succeed in gaining a great victory. Subsequently some of the Herero forces retreat to the Waterberg.

Leutwein and his men wait for reinforcements.

„The battle of Oviumbo clearly proved that the troops in their present strength are indeed insufficient to put down the revolt. The Herero were evidently joined by great numbers from the Waterberg and almost all of the Otjimbingue people, numbering at least 5,000 rifles.“



Missionary
August Kuhlmann

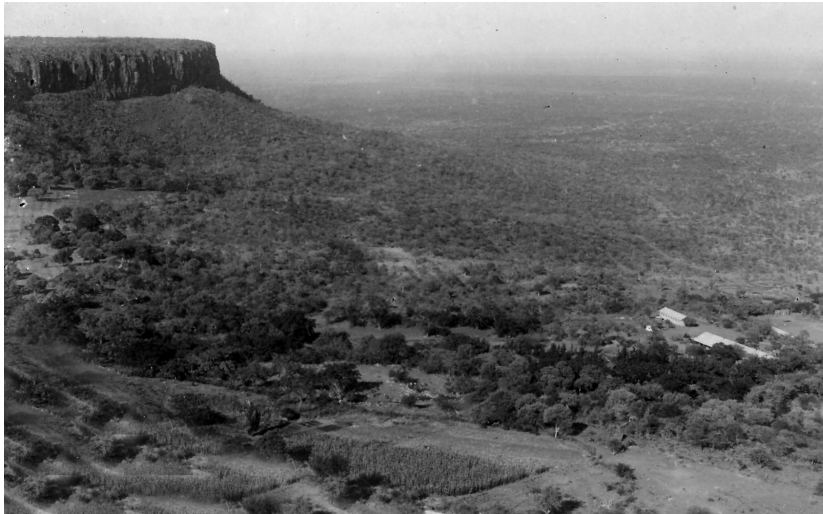
The General Staff assesses the situation:

„In order to break the resistance, the troops have to be so strong so that they are in a position to attack all of the enemy forces simultaneously and not, as at present, first the right wing and then the left.“

Leutwein is severely criticised and replaced in the end by General Lothar von Trotha. Trotha thwarts Leutwein's last offer to negotiate, which was proclaimed as follows:

„You know very well that you have risen against your ruler, the German Emperor, and that nothing less than a fight to the death awaits you.

Until this point I have been unable to end the war ... But you can end the war if you come to me, lay down your arms and receive your righteous punishment. ...“



*The east of the
Waterberg*

Display Panel II-6

Lothar von Trotha

On June 11, General Lothar von Trotha arrives in South West Africa. He assumes supreme military command. Leutwein remains governor but is, in fact, deprived of power.

Governor Leutwein and General von Trotha pursue the same goal:

- immediate termination of the war
- unconditional capitulation
- complete disempowerment of the Herero.

Leutwein has no wish to destroy the Herero. He is thinking of the period after the war, when the Herero, after their capitulation, will be needed as manpower. *In addition*, Leutwein states, *it is not so simple „to exterminate a nation” of 60,000 to 70,000 people.*

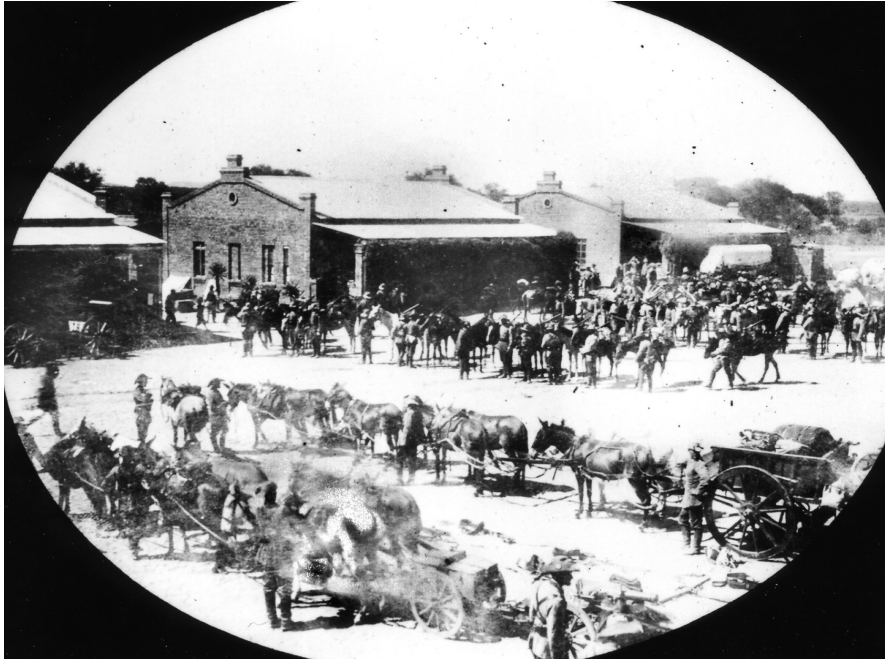


The same
goal

Different
methods

*Soldiers of the
colonial force*

A new phase of the war



The Franke
company
make ready
for marching out
Omaruru

Even before his arrival in South West Africa, Trotha authorises his officers to execute all armed „rebels“ according to martial law.

He declares war, authorised by Emperor Wilhelm II, in accordance with article 68 of the German legal constitution.

Von Trotha is a military officer; known for his brutal acts in China and East Africa; unscrupulous and extremely violent.

He writes to Governor Leutwein:

„I know enough tribes in Africa. They are all similar in so far as they only yield to violence.

To pursue this violence with blatant terror and even with cruelty, was and is my policy. I will exterminate the rebellious tribes with rivers of blood and rivers of money.”

Samuel Maharero, his men and their families take up position south of the Waterberg. They assemble in a semi-circle and make use of the thornbush as natural protection. The families and the cattle are positioned within the semi-circle.

Von Trotha waits for reinforcements – several thousand well-equipped soldiers, dispatched by the Grand General Staff – for a major attack.

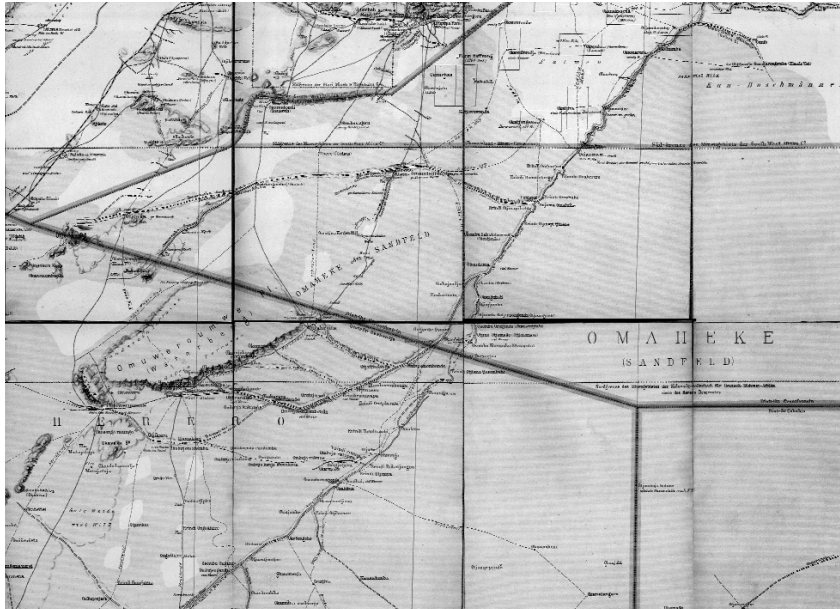
Genocide

Display Panel II-7

General von Trotha plans the decisive battle against the Herero on 10 August 1904.

He positions his units, together with the fresh troops, along the south of the Waterberg, where the Herero have retreated.

The battle at the Waterberg



Map of the Waterberg area

On 11 August 1904, the Germans attack.

After further fighting on 12 August, the colonial forces are victorious. On 13 August, von Trotha orders the pursuit along the border to the Omaheke semi-desert. The Herero flee with families and cattle deeper into the waterless Omaheke Desert. There is no possibility of breaking through the German lines.

The Grand General Staff reports: *„This courageous venture shows the ruthless energy of the German leadership in the pursuit of the enemy in a magnificent light.*

No efforts, no privations were spared in order to deprive the enemy of the last remnants of his resistance: like a wild animal hunted half to death, he was chased from watering place to watering place until finally, lacking any will, he became a victim of the nature of his own country.

The waterless Omaheke was to complete what the German arms had begun: the extermination of the Herero people.“

The Germans drive the Herero in a pincer manoeuvre ahead of them. When the groups meet one another, the Herero are shot at random.

The watering places along the border of the desert are systematically occupied and sealed off.

On 2 October 1904, General von Trotha issues his notorious proclamation:

Extermination order

„I, the great General of the German soldiers, send this letter to the Herero nation.

The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and plundered, have cut off the ears, noses and other parts of the bodies of injured soldiers, and now, out of cowardice, they want to give up the fight.

I say to the people:

anyone who delivers one of their chiefs as a prisoner to one of my bases, will receive one thousand marks, whoever brings Samuel Maharero, will receive five thousand marks.

But the Herero people must leave this land. If they refuse, so I will force them with the Groot Rohr [cannon].

Any Herero found within the German borders armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will no longer give shelter to women and children, I will drive them back to their people or have them shot.

This is my decision for the Herero people.

The great General of the mighty German Emperor.“

Genocide

Display Panel II-8

The text of the Trotha proclamation is translated into Otjherero.

Captured Herero are released, after they, their wives and children have been compelled to witness the execution of their Herero chiefs, so that they can spread the proclamation.

Atrocities



The diaries of many soldiers bear witness to the atrocities, which had already taken place before the extermination order.

„Newly caught Herero prisoners-of-war were hung by the neck. Since that day I would often see Herero swaying from the branch of a tree.“

Emil Mahl Zahn,
attendant to
General Trotha,
September 1904

Hanged Herero

Efforts to negotiate

Efforts to negotiate by the Herero Chiefs are rejected by Trotha. There are vehement debates with Governor Leutwein about the extermination policy.

Several of Trotha's officers, e.g. Ludwig von Estorff, had also been critical, but in the end did not resist his strategy.

Von Estorff believes that many Herero and numerous herds could have been saved:
„I suggested this to General von Trotha, but he wanted their complete annihilation.“



Starving Herero

From Trotha's diary:

„The question for me now is how to end the war with the Herero. Concerning this question, the opinion of the governor and several old Africans on the one hand and my own opinion on the other are entirely contradictory.

The former have long wished to negotiate ... I am of an entirely different opinion. I believe that the nation as such must be completely exterminated. ... I consider it to be [right] that this nation should come to an end. ...“

General Leutwein travels to Germany and does not return to his post.

The end

Approximately 60,000 to 80,000 Herero had faced a colonial force of around 7,000 soldiers.

More than three quarters of the Herero people are dead. Some survivors flee to neighbouring countries; others are collected in concentration camps and employed as workers.

Not until 8 December 1904, does Wilhelm II issue a counter-order to Trotha's merciless proclamation. He grants a general pardon to those Herero who had not participated in any killings or in the war.

General von Trotha is instructed to accept the mediatory service of the Rhenish missionaries.

Display Panel II-9

The Rhenish Mission in South West Africa in 1904

In Europe and Germany at the turn of the 19th century, colonies are generally undisputed.

The mission criticises some of the conditions in the colony. Colonialism, as such, is not questioned. The mission overestimates its influence among the Herero. So, too, missionary Kuhlmann, who accompanies the Herero on their retreat from the mission stations to the hinterland. The German Reich accuses the mission of being in league with the enemy.

It is publicly disgraced:

„In every conceivable way, these brutes are given the utmost protection by the Mission, so that they are in no way whatsoever disturbed in their dealings and activities. ... The Mission even has the impertinence to intercede on behalf of the coloured riff-raff. ...“

Reich Chancellor von Bülow expresses his suspicion about the Mission.

- It replies to the Reich Chancellor and underlines the co-operation with, and the loyalty to, the Germans since the beginning of the colonial era:
„It cannot have escaped your Honourable Excellency’s notice the outstanding service our mission performed at the conclusion of the protection treaties and in making the land accessible for our fatherland. ...“



Director
Johannes Spiecker

**The mission
board
steps in**

- It sends a „pastoral letter“ to the Herero requesting them to surrender.
*„We cannot allow ourselves to conceal from you that you have plunged us into deep sadness and have caused us much pain. Our heart bleeds when we think of you, like the heart of the father whose son has gone astray and turns his back on him.
 You also have embarked on a road, which will inevitably lead you into wretchedness and miserable death, if you do not soon admit your wrongdoings and change your ways.
 You have raised the sword against your authorities, appointed by God, without considering that it is written: All who take up the sword will perish by the sword. ...
 We wish to cordially and urgently warn you against continuing in this direction. In other words, turn back and humble yourselves before God and the people you have sinned against. The sooner you turn back, i.e. lay down your weapons and make peace with the authorities, the better it will be for you. ...“*

The military command prevents the publication of the pastoral letter.

Betrayal

The situation arises whereby the missionaries pass on important military information about the Herero to the Germans.

Despite their ambivalent position, the Rhenish Mission attempts to prevent the destruction of the Herero. In 1904, it writes in the "Reichsbote" („Reich Herald“):

„It cannot be emphasised enough that this is not a question today of a racial war ... but of a national uprising and war of revenge ...“

In hindsight, the then director Johannes Spiecker writes: „... A dispassionate judge of the circumstances could do no more than to admit that the entire development in South West Africa had to lead inevitably to the uprising.“

Display Panel II-10

The war of the Nama against the colony

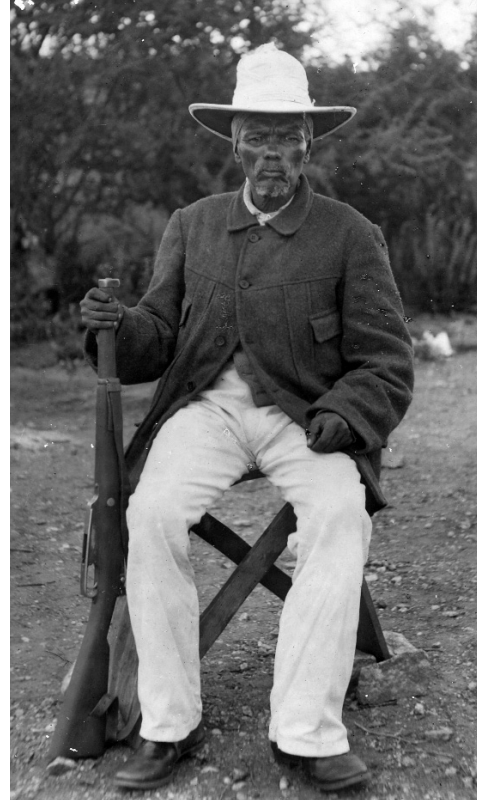
After the Waterberg battle against the Herero, Hendrik Witbooi resolves, in August 1904, that the Nama are to rise up against the Germans. He withdraws the Nama who have fought in the German colonial force against the Herero.

On 1 October 1904, he declares these decisions in a letter to all Nama chiefs.

- the inexorable transfer of land to the white settlers
- the recognition of Trotha's war policy
- the settlers' loud demands to disarm the Nama and to deprive them of their power.

Almost all of the Nama groups follow the call of the highly respected Nama leader Witbooi:

.... as we all know, I have gone my way, governed by the law, in virtue of the law and according to the law. ... I have now ceased to follow the law. And I will also notify the Captain and say to him that I have become tired and the time has passed where I have to follow him.



**Reasons for
the war**

Hendrik Witbooi

*Farm house
in Namaland*



Course of the war

The time has run out and the Saviour wishes to work himself. He will deliver us through his great mercy and compassion. ...“

On 3 October, one day after Trotha's „extermination“ proclamation to the Herero, the war of the Nama begins.

The Nama choose different tactics from those of the Herero. They wage guerrilla warfare:

- attacks on farms and military bases
- white men are killed; the women and children are taken – under supervision – to German fortified positions
- cattle and weapons are confiscated
- no battles on open ground.

*German garrison
in Keetmanshoop*



2,000 able-bodied Nama are up against approximately 15,000 soldiers.

The Nama's attacks catch the Germans by surprise. General von Trotha requests reinforcements and deports the Nama who are still with the colonial troops.

The guerrilla warfare of the Nama, with hundreds of single skirmishes and raids, lasts until 1907.

In retrospect, Ludwig von Estorff, later commander of the colonial force, writes:

„Not every soldier can fulfil the task of guerrilla warfare, only a first-rate thoroughly trained one can. The replacements which the army provided to the colonial troops, were invariably inspired by the best spirit and well-disciplined, but their independence, skill and, often, physical efficiency and endurance were too inadequate.“

The German officers believe the military advantage of the Nama lies in their knowledge of the region.

„Broken up into numerous small bands, it [the enemy] roamed through the land. Marching and resting troops, columns, bases, positions were at no place and at no time safe from the sudden onset of these bands.“

The war of the Nama against the colony

Display Panel II-11

Not wanting to wait for reinforcements, Colonel von Deimling attacks Hendrik Witbooi in Rietmond. Witbooi and his men flee. They suffer great losses. In spite of this, von Deimling does not succeed in defeating Witbooi.

The General Staff finds the military operation unsatisfactory. Colonel von Deimling leaves the country.

Proclamation to the Nama



Colonial troops

General von Trotha now also issues a proclamation to the Nama on 22 April 1905:

„To the rebellious Hottentots. The great, mighty Emperor wishes to show mercy to the nation of the Hottentots and has commanded that those who voluntarily surrender shall be spared their lives. Only those, who murdered whites at the beginning of the uprising, or those, who commanded their murder, have, according to law, forfeited their right to live. This I make known to you and say further that those who do not surrender will suffer the same fate as the nation of the Herero which believed in its blindness that it could wage a successful war against the mighty German nation ...“.

**The
proclamation
produces
no effect**

Disagreement

Nama 1903

The fighting continues until Hendrik Witbooi is wounded and dies on 29 October 1905 during an attack on a unit near Vaalgas.

General von Trotha leaves the country on 19 November 1905. He is succeeded in 1906 by Berthold von Deimling.

Witbooi is succeeded by his son, Isaak Witbooi. He is unable to reach a mutual decision with the Nama groups concerning their tactics.

His second in command, **Samuel Isaak**, surrenders on 26 November 1905, after being disarmed and assured of free passage. In fact, the group is later deported to the concentration camp on Shark Island. Other Nama follow this example. **Isaak Witbooi** surrenders in 1906.

The **Franzmann Nama** under Simon Kopper and Jacob Marengo and the **Bondelswart Nama** under Johann Christian continue fighting.

The situation becomes increasingly difficult for the constantly decreasing Nama groups. Colonel Deimling operates with small, mobile units and has the



Capitulation

Jacob Marengo

The end of the war

*Keetmanshoop
with
Mission Church*



cattle of the Nama driven out of the south. In October 1906, Johann Christian opens peace negotiations.

Jacob Marengo (Morenga) is, alongside Hendrik Witbooi, one of the most capable Nama leaders. He had risen up against the Germans as early as July 1904.

He superbly masters the tactics of guerrilla warfare. In 1905, he wins a major battle against the Germans who incur high losses and are forced to retreat.

In April 1906, after heavy clashes, his only alternative is to flee. In South Africa, where he is regarded as a national hero, he turns himself in to the British Cape police.

They shoot him on 20 September 1907 when he leaves his place of residence without permission.

The end of the war is officially declared on 31 March 1907 by Emperor Wilhelm II; but the final peace treaty, with Simon Kopper, was not concluded until February 1909.



Display
Panel II-12

Women in the war

Display Panel II-13

Indigenous women

Women, both black and white, are drawn to a great extent into the war, even if this infringes the principles of the male code of honour.

Indigenous women support their men during the fighting with calls and chants such as: „*Who owns Hereroland - Hereroland belongs to us*“.

Helene Heyse remembers:

„*During this ... close combat, the Herero women had gathered around (sub-chief) Mutate. Their war cries were like the chirping of crickets and rang out tremulously in the highest tones until well into the night. In between, their call: *Oganda onjani?*(Who owns the Werft?), followed by Mutate's soothing voice: *Vanatje muinee! Oganda ojetu!*(Children, be silent, the Werft belongs to us.)“*

27.1.1904

The German soldiers are astonished to discover that women are an integral part of the enemy army. In German



Herero women

propaganda, these women are depicted as wild beasts who barbarously mutilate the Germans.

The indigenous women are shot at. In concentration camps, they are forced into hard labour and are sexually abused.

The Nama deported to Cameroon in 1910, include large numbers of women and children. They reject the possibility of returning to South West Africa without the men. They do not return with their menfolk until 1913, their numbers heavily decimated and in a weak condition.

Samuel Maharero gave the order not to kill settler women and children, but to take them to the German settlements. With few exceptions, the Herero and Nama respect the order.

But the propaganda speaks of women who have been murdered and abused. However, the lives of German women are - under the circumstances - relatively safe.

In peacetime, their presence reduces the „danger“ of mixed marriages. They are responsible for „civilising“ the African women.



The settler women

Missionary Ludwig Holzapfel with his wife Meta

Display Panel II-14

The settlers demand workers. On the orders of the German Government, under Chancellor von Bülow, camps are established.

Von Bülow accepts the Mission's offer of assistance in establishing the camps. Reluctantly, General von Trotha also accepts.

The camps are established soon after the repeal of Trotha's extermination order at the end of 1904.

Concentration camps are institutions of the military administration in which the Mission also works.

Dispersed fighters and those found in hiding, including women and children are interned here - evidence that it was a war against entire nations.

Assembly and concentration camps

**Dead Herero
are useless**

**Establish-
ment of the
camps**



*Transportation of
prisoners to a camp*

Assembly camps

Imprisoned Herero



Missionary Kuhlmann's request

The Mission regards the concentration of the Herero in camps as an opportunity

- to prevent the complete annihilation of the Herero nation and
- to reintensify the spreading of the Christian faith.

For this reason it establishes assembly camps.

Hence the board of the Rhenish Mission writes to Reich Chancellor von Bülow:

„It is of most importance to us that our valiant soldiers ... from being enforcers of the law become protectors of the peace.

But for obvious reasons, it is of great concern to us that the misguided nation of the Herero should be saved from complete extermination through hunger and war ...“:

25.11.1904

The Herero, also many Nama, are first collected in assembly camps and then taken from there to the concentration camps.

The missionary approaches General von Trotha with the request not to rob the remaining Herero completely of their rights but to allow them to grow vegetables and keep small livestock:

„I find the perception pleasing that the people are regaining confidence in our government. ... It would be of utmost importance for the future well-being of our colony, if the Herero ... were not now to find their returning trust disappointed by extreme severity.“

1905

General von Trotha's reply is characteristic:

„I find it remarkably significant that the Reverend Father is of the opinion that the Herero, under certain circumstances, would regain confidence in the government. ... The Reich Chancellor has [merely] repealed my command that all Herero who surrender are to carry out their labour, daily and annually, in chains ...“

Missionaries of the Rhenish Mission continually criticise the way the Herero and Nama are treated by the German Government.

Occasionally, their efforts to achieve better living conditions in the concentration camps are successful.

Assembly and concentration camps

Display Panel II-15

The Swakopmund Concentration camp



*Swakopmund
Pier and old
landing place*

The conditions in the camps with 15,000 Herero and 2,000 Nama prisoners are catastrophic. Within 2½ years, 7,682 people die, approximately 45% of the inmates. The death certificates are already pre-printed: „Death by exhaustion“. Dysentery, pneumonia and scurvy also claim many lives.

Abuse, rape and forced labour are routine.

The Swakopmund Concentration camp operates from 1904 to the beginning of 1908. The prisoners are lent out as labourers to the Swakopmund harbour and to the settlers and traders.

Here behind barbed wire, 1,500 prisoners, mainly Herero, are crammed together in a confined space under the most abominable conditions.

The harsh Atlantic coast climate, the appalling hygiene and inad-

quate nutrition lead to the deaths of many prisoners.

In 1904, the Rhenish missionary, Heinrich Vedder, is entrusted by the civil government with the care of the prisoners.

In one of his reports he says:

„From early morning until late evening, they had to work, on week days as well as on Sundays and public holidays, under the cudgels of the overseers, until they collapsed.

At the same time, the nutrition was worse than meagre. ... Hundreds were driven to their death like cattle and, like cattle, they were buried ...“

Missionary Vedder tries unsuccessfully to obtain clothing from the government. The Mission in Germany donates clothing and sends money. Vedder merely receives the permission to build a hospital ward.

For spiritual salvation, he has a provisional chapel built, where he can conduct services and catechism classes.

Because of the dreadful treatment of the prisoners, two Rhenish missionaries want to stop working in



*Imprisoned Herero
in Swakopmund*



*Missionary
Heinrich Vedder*

Display Panel II-16

Decrees for the natives

After the war, the structures of the indigenous nations are to be finally dissolved. Governor von Lindequist is authorised,

- to expropriate all land and place it under German possession
- to develop the economy of the country
- to place the Herero and Nama directly under German jurisdiction.

The colonial law for the natives of 18.8.1907 contains the following key elements:

1. Control decree
2. Passport decree
3. Servants decree

All Africans

- shall be entered in a register for natives
- shall be identified by an ID token, without which they shall neither be employed as workers nor be given any accommodation.



The colonial law for the natives

Herero workers

- Without an ID token they can be punished for vagrancy.
- Without permission they shall not be allowed to have a large number of livestock.
- A maximum number of ten families may stay in one place.

After the destruction of their structures and property, the Herero like the Nama are forced to work for the white settlers.

Problems with imple- mentation

In reality, the implementation of the decrees is unsuccessful. Firstly, there are logistical problems, for example, not enough ID tokens are produced in Germany. Only a part of the African nation can be „marked“.

Secondly, the settlers circumvent the decrees, for example, where employers deprive their workers of the passport tokens to prevent them from running away.

Many masters are not prepared to keep working logs as stipulated in the decree governing working contracts.

„The reason is to be seen in the fact that at the handing over of the working log, the native is to be informed by the police not only of his duties but also of his rights.“

[Rights: Length of contract, Manner of payment, among other things]

District Authorities Gobabis, 31.10.1908

The control system fails because of

- the reluctance of the settlers
- a shortage of control personnel – large contingents are withdrawn after the wars
- an inadequate general overview of such a large country

Nevertheless, it has changed the country. The indigenous population has lost all its land and livestock and is forced to live and work on the property and farms of white settlers.

Display Panel II-17

Mission work after the wars

After the end of the fighting, the Rhenish Mission begins to reconstruct its work. The changed conditions in the country also have an effect on their work.

„Of course, the aim of mission work always remains the same: the planting of living evangelical Christianity ... and the redemption of sinners.“

Owing to the circumstances of the post-war era, there are a lot of comings and goings at the mission stations. Some stations are not reoccupied. New stations are established at other places: in Tsumeb, in the north of the country, and in Gobabis.

At the Mission stations, houses, churches and schools are built.

„Thus, the Mission stands, literally, under the sign of reconstruction, or rather, if we so wish, new construction.“

From the reports, 1907



**External
construction**

*Gobabis
Mission station*

Internal organisation

Itinerant evangelists

„The old, tenacious heathenism of the Herero was totally wiped out by the war. ... Unlike Christianity which has outlived the war and, therefore, has proved its superiority, strength and viability to the Herero“, missionary Kuhlmann writes in 1911.

Itinerant evangelists are employed so that the Herero on farms scattered throughout the country can also be reached. This approach proves fruitful. Additional evangelists are employed.

The work at the stations has eased since the end of the war. However, classes often have to be multilingual, as the indigenous people living at the stations speak different languages.

Around 1907, there are, in total, 10,336 indigenous Christians in South West Africa:

Herero 1,556 Bastard 2,491

Nama 3,387 Bergdamara 2,832

„All in all, we have good reason, also in terms of the missionary work among the Nama, to look confidently to the future, when



Resting on the journey, Missionary in Klein Namaland

God, out of this poor crushed nation whose foolhardiness caused our brothers many a difficult hour, can prepare people in whom His glory is revealed.“

Many of the conversions among the indigenous population are a result of the pressure to adapt to colonial life. In the 1920s, the missionaries express disappointment about a „return to heathen ways.“

The indigenous population is trying to recover its culture.

The sympathy of the white population for the Mission grows. Similarly, the rapport between the German Government and the Rhenish Mission improves.



*Service with
Damara families,
1927*

Progress

The Catholic Mission in South West Africa

Display Panel II-18

In 1879, Father Duparquet founds the first Catholic mission station in Omaruru in South West Africa. After disagreements with the Rhenish missionaries, the station is closed again.

The first German Catholic missionaries from the Oblate Order reach Swakopmund in November 1896. Their mission:

- the pastoral care of the Catholic colonists
- and later, missionary work among the indigenous population.

The Rhenish Mission fears the loss of their monopoly. It observes the Catholic clergymen with suspicion.

With reference to their Protestant colleagues, Catholic clergymen express appreciation as well as envy:

„The men who, as early as 1829, set out from here [Germany] were surely zealous and daring. 'Only for Protestants', 'Reserved for the work of the Protestant Rhenish Mission' could have been written on the way to all the 'Werft' throughout the country, when Father Herrmann came to Windhoek with his two companions in 1896. ... Bound hands! - Barriers everywhere! At the same time, every step is under suspicion and jealous surveillance. Suspected and observed with distrust!“

The Catholic mission

Before the outbreak of war, and around 1904, the activities of the 12 fathers and 10 brothers among the 100 baptised indigenous people are rather modest. Mission stations are founded in Windhoek, Swakopmund and Epukiro.

„The biggest hurdle was the legal exclusion from all natives who in some way had contacts with the Rhenish Mission.“

The Catholic fathers criticise the decrees for the indigenous people:

„Through this, the nation has been divested of its economic basis and the social structure has been shaken.

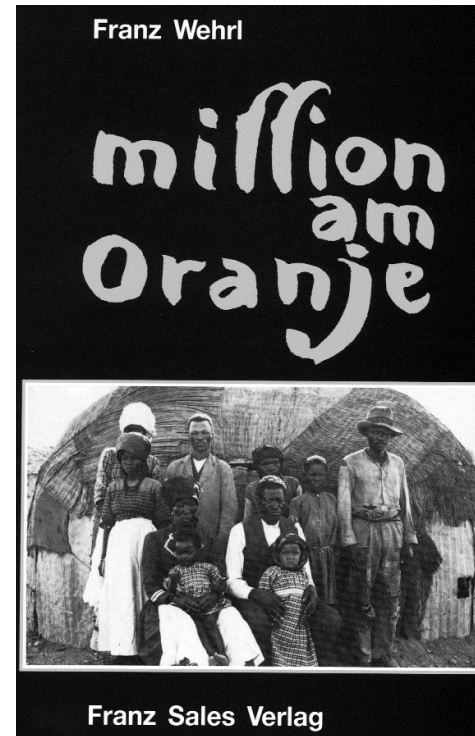
As much as this was perhaps necessary from the standpoint of the white settlers, it was all the more painful for the future of the natives. They were now truly homeless and forced to work as servants for the whites.“

Von Trotha's decree, that

„... the missionary work in the entire Hereroland remains exclusively in the hands of the Rhenish Mission“ is repealed by the Reich Chancellor in September 1905. The Catholic mission is granted the right to complete freedom of missionary work.

As a consequence of the wars, it initiated an itinerant mission approach to reach the scattered Herero and Nama.

„Apart from the difficulties, brought by the colourful mixture of nations, and apart from the influence of the Protestant surroundings, which was doubly perceptible in these places, it was the dependence on white employers that caused so much discontentment ...“



Mission am Oranje

Geschichte der Oblaten-Mission
der Vikariate Keimoes und Keetmanshoop
nach Briefen, Tagebüchern und Visitationsberichten

**Itinerant
mission**

Book: Mission am Oranje (Mission along the Orange River) by Franz Wehr

Over the years, further mission stations and schools are built. Nuns work in the field of medicine, e.g. in the military hospital at the Swakopmund camp.

The Protestant Rhenish Mission Society remains the largest in the country. Protestant Christians greatly outnumber the Catholic Christians.

Display Panel II-19

In spite of expropriation, forced labour and rigid decrees, the Herero and Nama manage to reconstruct their society.

The farmers are dependent on the workers – forced labourers and indigenous freemen.

They have to live in fear of the workers running off and leaving them, throwing away their identity tokens and assuming new names. The farmers often have no other option but to improve the working conditions and pay a wage. Because cash is scarce on the farms, this is often in the form of small livestock. In 1912, the ban on the indigenous population holding livestock is relaxed.

The Herero, like the Nama, who have been scattered as a result of the war, meet again at Mission stations and on farms. Information is exchanged in letters and a network built up. The authorities

The end of the colony



*Kolmanskoop,
formerly
Kolmanskupe
A railway worker
finds the first
diamonds here*

**Reconstruc-
tion of the
indigenous
communities**

No „stealthy“ subjugation

„Diamond“- economy



*Railway station
with
tender locomotive*

„screen“ the mail; the exchange of information, however, is tolerated as there are no signs of any new „uprisings“.

The integration or lasting subjugation of the indigenous population as the proletariat of colonial society remains German wishful thinking.

When South Africa takes over power in South West Africa at the beginning of the First World War, Herero society experiences a powerful upswing.

- the settlement of farms increases steadily
- the German population grows
 - the discovery of diamonds in Kolmanskuppe in April 1908 prompts economic boom.

In September, the government declares the terrain near Lüderitz Bay, which is rich in diamonds, a prohibited area. Here, from 1908 to 1913, diamonds worth 150 million German marks are extracted - 66% of the total gross national product of the colony. Marble is quarried and tin mined.

In the German Protectorate there are
 9,394 Europeans in 1908
 14,830 Europeans in 1913.
 The colonial force comprises 3,988 men.

Railway construction is increased. Post offices and schools are built. In 1909, the foundation stone is laid for a "Turnhalle" (gymnasium) which is to play a significant role in the future history of Namibia.

**Building
 activity**

The First World War begins on 2 August 1914. Berlin telegraphs the colony, „*Colonies out of danger, re-assure farmers.*“

**The First
 World War**

On 8 August, Governor Seitz mobilises the colonial troops. At the end of the month, the first clashes with South African patrols take place.

Mobilisation

The South African troops take Swakopmund, Lüderitz and Windhoek. On 9 July 1915, the colonial troops surrender to the 350,000 South African soldiers.

A section of the German civil population, women and children are deported to South Africa.

South Africa puts the German Protectorate under martial law until 1 January 1921.

German economy and culture

Display Panel II-20

Deutsch-Südwestafrika.
Eisenbahn Swakopmund—Karibib.
Fahrplan vom 1. Juli 1930 ab für die Teilstrecke Swakopmund—Karibib.

I. Swakopmund—Karibib.					II. Karibib—Swakopmund.				
Personenzug I I, II, III, KI an ab	Güterzug 101 an ab	Bedarfszug		Entfernung km	Stationen	Personenzug 2 I, II, III, KI an ab		Güterzug B 102 an ab	
		an	ab			an	ab	an	ab
648	616	700	1000	0	ab Swakopmund	922	445		
650	650	749	1045	10	Wondas . . .	824	400	405	
728	784	835	895	1190	Nieshofen . . .	741	754	315	395
854	994	1015	1025	1200	Rössing . . .	622	622	185	155
1004	1014	1125	1280	305	Khan . . .	502	513	1115	1210
1049	1049	109	110	415	Kabasriet . . .	438	442	1030	1000
1200	1214	295	304	600	Pieterse . . .	391	399	955	905
100	200	400	605	720	Jakawater . . .	115	215	792	800
330	340	350	369	1110	Sphinx . . .	1150	1200	530	590
410	420	1047	1068	1235	Dorretriet . . .	1057	1107	404	420
515	535	1154	1204	141	Kubas . . .	1091	1013	229	309
622	622	146	124	342	Abbas . . .	830	900	106	117
631	721	309	245	450	Halle . . .	755	893	1200	1210
820	845	600	194	179	an Karibib . . . ab	799	1100		

Erklärungen: Personenzug † verkehrt vorläufig in Richtung I nur Donnerstage, in Richtung II nur Montage.
Güterzug * befördert ausnahmsweise auch Personen, aber nur auf den Güterbedarfszug † dient nur zur Beförderung von Betriebs- und Sachbedarfsfrachten. (Die Nachziehen von 6 Uhr abends (622) bis 5 Uhr 59 Minuten morgens (†) durch Unterstreichen der Minutenzahlen gekennzeichnet.)

I. Personenverkehr.
a. Tarif.

Einfache Fahrt I. Klasse II. Klasse pro Kilometer	Hin- und Rückfahrt I. Klasse II. Klasse pro Kilometer	Bemerkung
a) für Weiße	0.10 0.06	0.15 0.09 zehn Tage gültig
b) für Eingeborene	— 0.04	
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44. Jahrgang Nr. 6 Juni 1941

DER TROPENPFLANZER

Zeitschrift für das Gesamtgebiet der Land- und Forstwirtschaft warmer Länder

Organ des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees E.V.
Herausgegeben von Geo A. Schmidt & A. Marcus

Inhaltsverzeichnis

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Verschiedenes. S. 213. Emsierung unter Verwendung von „Starkstiv“ und Silberpapier.
Neue Literatur. S. 214.

Nachdruck und Übersetzung nur mit Quellenangabe gestattet

Im Selbstverlag des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees
Berlin-Halensee 1, Kurfürstendamm 130

Buchhändlerischer Vertrieb durch die Verlagsbuchhandlung
E. S. Mittler & Sohn, Berlin SW 68, Koehnstr. 69—71



Mitarbeiterzeitung
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Begründet 1839 Berlin SW.12. Begründet 1839
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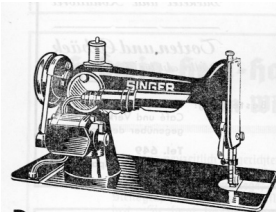
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Das
Wahrzeichen
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Swakopmund

das Seebad Südwestafrikas

Der Aufenthalt an der See wirkt wie
beim Erwachen der Natur!

Die erfrischenden kühlen See-Bäder,
die staubfreie salzhaltige Seeluft,
die heilenden Sonnenbestrahlungen
die heißen Seewasser-Wannen-Bäder
die medizinischen Wannen-Bäder
die erquickenden Seesand-



spenden für
das überanstrengte Herz,
die abgespannten Nerven,
den kranken Organismus
die müde Seele,

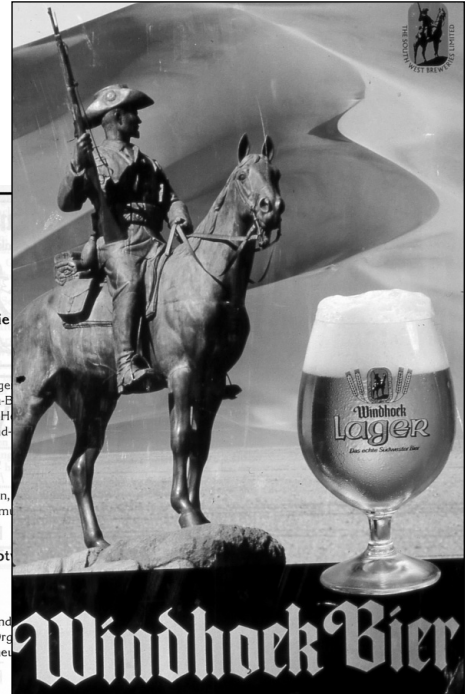
was zur erfolgreichen Gesundung noch
zunehmenden Appetit,
tiefen erquickenden Schlaf,
Erholung von Krankheiten,
durchgreifende Erneuerung und
Erfrischung des kranken Organismus
neue Lebenskraft und neue

Swakopmund

das Seebad Südwestafrikas

besuchen und seine natürlichen Heilquellen auf
den kranken oder erholungsbedürftigen oder
gesunden Körper einwirken lassen, heißt daher:

Krankheiten heilen - Krankheiten verhüten
Erholung finden - Leben verlängern



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FÜR

TROPISCHE LANDWIRTSCHAFT

MIT WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN UND PRAKTISCHEN
BEIHEFTEN.

ORGAN DES
KOLONIAL-WIRTSCHAFTLICHEN KOMITEES.

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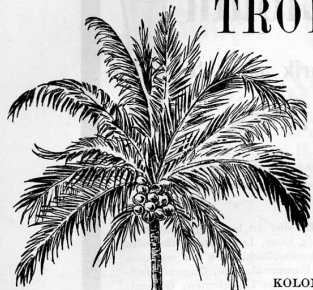
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schule, Berlin.

1902: 6. Jahrgang.

Erscheint monatlich.

Bezugspreis jährlich 10 Mark,
einschließlich der „Wissenschaftlichen und praktischen Beihefte“
(Postzeitungliste No. 7614.)

Geschäftsstelle der Zeitschrift „Der Tropenpflanzer“
Berlin NW., Unter den Linden 40!



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**Ausbildungsblätter
des kolonialpolitischen Amtes der NSDAP
(Reichsleitung)**

Preis des Einzelheftes: 40 Rpf.

3. Jahrgang

Berlin, 15. November 1938

Nummer 11

Part III The road to independence

1916-2004

Display Panel III-1

Apartheid

**Struggle for
Liberation 1990**

Independence

Display Panel III-2

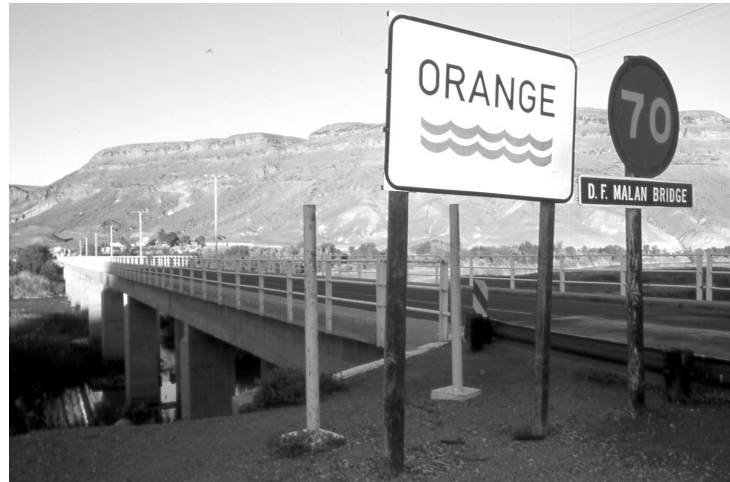
Development in South West Africa

With the end of the First World War, and in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, the German colonies are placed as trusteeship territories under the administration of the victorious powers. Great Britain, as victorious power, delegates administrative sovereignty to the South African Union.

The League of Nations assigns a „C-mandate“ for South West Africa to the South African Union allowing for its administration as an integral part of South Africa.

Article 22 also stipulates that the administration is to be in the interest of the population and not of the home country. That South Africa would not comply with this, was clear from the outset.

South Africa wants to annex South West Africa as a 5th province. It is interested in the country's resources:



**The mandate
of the
League of
Nations**

*Border crossing
to South Africa
at the Orange river*

Foto:
Reinhard Elbracht

**The „5th
province“**

End of the mandate

UN trusteeship

diamonds, uranium and other minerals, as well as in its favourable geo-strategical position.

When the League of Nations dissolves in April 1946, the mandate system ends. The „United Nations“ had already been founded in June 1945. South Africa refuses to recognise the UN as the legal successor to the League of Nations. In its opinion the assigned mandate has expired, since the agreement partner, the "League of Nations", no longer exists.



*South African
military
watchtower*

Foto:
Reinhard Elbracht

The UN, for its part, sets up a trusteeship administration for all mandates dependent on the League of Nations. The regulation is recognised by all UN members - except South Africa.

The Republic of South Africa turns down the trusteeship agreement for South West Africa. It puts forward a motion to the UN General Assembly in November 1946 proposing the "annexation" of the mandated territory. The motion is turned down.

The UN has no possibility of compelling South Africa to place South West Africa under the UN Trusteeship Council.

Hosea Kutako initiates a petition to the United Nations in 1946 without success. He would prefer South West Africa to be placed under British trusteeship.

Because of further petitions the UN has to concern itself repeatedly with the South African administration in South West Africa. It does not succeed in inducing South Africa to relinquish the mandate.

Petitions

Development in South West Africa

Display Panel III-3

South Africa pursues the strategy of integrating South West Africa into its own structures.

The **Odendaal Plan**, 1962/ 64, seeks, through the establishment of „homelands“, to implement South Africa’s legal and apartheid system in South West Africa.

SWAPO

In opposition to this development, the indigenous population founds *SWAPO* – *South West Africa People’s Organization* in 1960. In 1966 they take up arms against the South African troops.

At the same time, other political parties are founded, such as *SWANU* – *South West Africa National Union* in 1959 and *NUDO* – *National Unity Democratic Organization* in 1964.

The South African policy results in the revocation of the mandate in October 1966. South West Africa is placed under the direct responsibility of the UN and, with the resolution of June 1968, is renamed Namibia.

Platform with segregated exits for whites and blacks



Mandate revocation

The UN Security Council

- requests South Africa, in two resolutions in 1969, to withdraw from the mandated territory
- declares South Africa's presence to be unlawful, and
- the struggle of the Namibian people against the illegal presence of the South African authorities to be justified.



*„Tintenpalast“ („Ink Palace“), Windhoek
Location of the
Constituent
Conference*

In 1971, the International Court of Justice in The Hague confirms the legality of the resolutions.

A major strike movement sweeps through the country. The UN General Assembly recognises *SWAPO* in December 1973 as representative of the Namibian people.

On the one hand, the Union advances its policy of apartheid with the establishment of homelands.

On the other, it works on a constitutional amendment for Namibia to improve its international standing.

The „Advisory Council“ is to prepare for the autonomy of Namibia in a constitutional conference. The members of the eleven ethnic groups are neither democratically elected nor allowed to make independent decisions. These rights are the prerogative of South Africa alone.

This attempt to adapt which, in 1977, culminates in an interim government is intended to eliminate *SWAPO*. But due to the lack of legitimacy, the conference receives only a negative response from the black population.

The UN General Assembly demands a binding formula for the independence of Namibia with

- general and free elections for representatives of a constituent assembly and

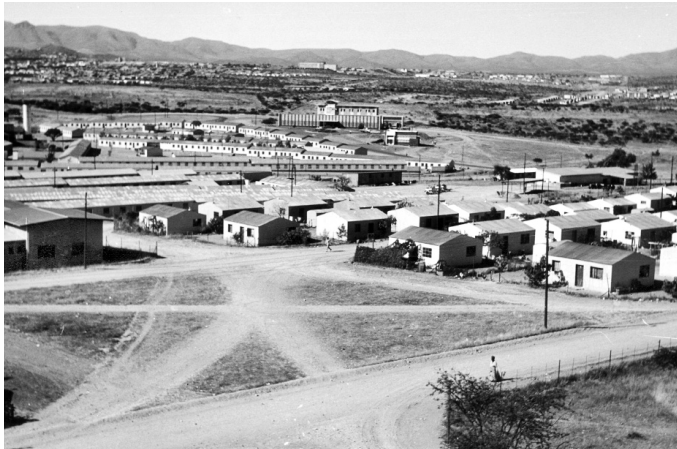
**South
Africa's dou-
ble strategy**

**At the mercy
of South
Africa**

Der Sicherheitsrat,

- unter Hinweis auf seine Resolutionen 385 (1976) sowie 431 (1978) und 432 (1978),
 - nach Behandlung des vom Generalsekretär gemäss Ziffer 2 der Resolution 431 (1978) vorgelegten Berichts (S/12827) sowie seiner am 29. September 1978 im Sicherheitsrat dazu abgegebenen erläuternden Erklärung (S/12869),
 - in Kenntnisnahme der diesbezüglichen Mitteilungen der Regierung Südafrikas an den Generalsekretär,
 - in Kenntnisnahme ferner des Schreibens des Präsidenten der Südwestafrikanischen Volksorganisation (SWAPO) an den Generalsekretär vom 8. September 1978 (S/12841),
 - in Bekräftigung der rechtlichen Verantwortung der Vereinten Nationen für Namibia,
1. billigt den Bericht des Generalsekretärs (S/12827) zur Durchführung des Vorschlags für eine Regelung der Lage in Namibia (S/12656) sowie seine erläuternde Erklärung (S/12869);
 2. wiederholt erneut, dass es sein Ziel ist, den Rückzug der widerrechtlichen südafrikanischen Verwaltung Namibias und die Übertragung der Macht auf das Volk von Namibia mit Unterstützung der Vereinten Nationen und in Übereinstimmung mit Resolution 385 (1976) zu erreichen;
 3. beschliesst, unter seiner Autorität und in Übereinstimmung mit dem obengenannten Bericht des Generalsekretärs eine Unterstützungseinheit der Vereinten Nationen für die Übergangszeit (United Nations Transitional Assistance Group, UNTAG) für einen Zeitraum von bis zu 12 Monaten zu schaffen, die den Sonderbeauftragten des Generalsekretärs bei der Erfüllung des ihm mit Ziffer 1 der Resolution 431 (1978) des Sicherheitsrats erteilten Auftrags unterstützt, d.h. der Gewährleistung der baldigen Unabhängigkeit Namibias durch freie und faire Wahlen unter der Aufsicht und Kontrolle der Vereinten Nationen;

UN-Resolution 435

Resolution
435New Werft
in Katutura

- sanctions against South Africa if it rejects the proposal.

In 1976, the UN General Assembly accepts Resolution 385. In **September 1978**, Resolution 435, decisive for independence, is adopted. By accepting the agreement, South Africa finally recognises the UN as legal successor to the League of Nations and its supervisory authority for the mandate power.

Resolution 435 provides for the creation of a UN force – UNTAG – to monitor free and fair elections over a twelve month period. Any domestic measures taken to lead the country to independence are declared null and void.

South Africa declares its agreement but delays the arrangements until November 1985.

Despite the resolution, the *Turnhalle Conference* organises elections for a constituent assembly. SWAPO boycotts the elections; the Western powers do not recognise the results.

Display Panel III-4

On the whole, the work of the Rhenish Mission continues without disturbance during the **mandate era**.

Missionary Vedder, in the country since 1903, becomes Praeses of the Rhenish Mission in South West Africa in 1937. He takes the first steps to restructure the Mission Church.

During the era of National Socialism, the Rhenish Mission, under the leadership of Johannes Olpp and Heinrich Vedder, attempts to follow a moderate national course. It maintains neutrality towards the mandatory government.

After the beginning of the Second World War, several missionaries and pastors are interned; the missionary work can be continued, albeit in a restricted form.

„That we have survived through all the years of the war is like a miracle from God,“ Vedder writes in 1946.

Development of the missionary work



Augustineum

Augustineum -The National Assistants Institute

*The Nama Dama
Evangelists: Fritz,
Jakobus, Hendrik,
Daniel Fries and
Michael, 1929*



*Evangelist and
teacher Josef
Hanse with his
family, 1938*

In order to educate indigenous Protestant Christians as co-workers, missionary Carl H. Hahn establishes the *Augustineum* in 1860.

The Herero and Nama war shatters confidence in the indigenous co-workers. In 1909, the Praeses of the Rhenish Mission in South West Africa prevents Petrus Jod, a Nama educated by missionary Christian Spellmeyer, from being granted permission to take his examinations. His ordination as pastor is, therefore, impossible.

The Praeses gives the following reason:

„I cannot accept as a school teacher a Nama school master of the tribe which rose up against our German Government.“

Due to the development of the „German South West Africa“ colony and the changes this produces, the institute is closed again 1901; it is reopened in 1922 as a *teacher training college*.

Missionary Friedrich Pönninghaus fights successfully for a training course for pastors. In April 1938, he begins his classes as head instructor. Three years later, the first 13 students sit their examinations. The first ordination does not take place until 1947.

In 1934, missionary Spellmeyer warns the Conference of Missionaries:

„The capacity for independence is germinating within the African people. If we fail to allow this seed to develop, we will be blatantly committing a sin against this nation among which we work, and the end would be that we would one day simply be pushed aside as useless tools.“

In 1946, this is exactly what happens.



Indigenous co-workers, evangelists, elders and teachers during the Omaruru synod, 1947

Independence of the Churches in South West Africa

Display Panel III-5

After the Second World War, a separation movement develops.

The indigenous evangelists want to become pastors and work independently

- in parishes
- in the management of the church and
- in the management of finances.



Separation of the Nama

*Keetmanshoop
View of the old
town centre with
the new AMEC
church*

In 1946, when the Rhenish Mission seeks to replace the missionary in Keetmanshoop with someone younger from their own ranks, a rift develops.

The Nama no longer want to be without any power or rights. Leading Nama evangelists make the decision to break away from the Rhenish Mission on 12 January 1946: „*The community [of Keetmanshoop]*

clearly declares, that under no circumstances does it wish to remain under the leadership of the Rhenish Mission ... [We] clearly declare that as from this date on we irrevocably resign ...“

After the split, the Nama parishes seek to join the *African Methodist Episcopal Church* – AMEC in December 1946.

The reaction

- of the mission board in Germany: it regards the separation positively as an independence movement

and attempts to convey this to South West Africa;

· of the Rhenish Missionaries in South West Africa: disappointment and embitterment. The missionaries see their life's work ruined.

The separation movement gradually subsides after 1959. Several Nama parishes remain within the Rhenish Mission.



Nama women at a conference

Some of the Herero also seek a course towards independence. The idea of founding their own church emerges. Because of different tribal traditions, the Herero have no desire to enter AMEC, in which Nama hold the leading positions.

Herero break away

Not until 1954, in the person of Pastor Reinhard Ruzo, is someone prepared to take on the leadership of, and responsibility for founding, the church. He names the new church, „*Oruвано*-Community“. The Windhoek parish assumes leadership.

On 19 August 1955, the Herero chiefs, including the distinguished Hosea Kutako, take the decision:

„We are breaking away, we are departing in peace; we are not parting from the missionaries in bad faith.“

Hosea Kutako, former evangelist of the Rhenish Mission, has, until his death, a major influence on the development and expansion of the *Oruвано*.



Oruвано

Grave of Herero Chief Hosea Kutako

Independence of the Churches in South West Africa Display Panel III-6



Dr Lucas de Vries

After the Herero also leave the Mission, it becomes increasingly important for the Mission Society to open up new avenues.

The decision is taken to constitute the *Evangelical Lutheran Church* - ELK (Rhenish Mission Church).

The foundation is preceded by a discussion between the leadership of the Rhenish Mission in South West African and the Mission leadership in Germany.

In 1956, Praeses Hans-Karl Diehl says:

„Church independence is all the more possible, as recent missiology repeatedly emphasises that independence no longer depends on the three „selves“, (self-governance, self-support, self-propagation: Henry Venn, 1851), but on the fact 'that a church is ruled by Christ and that it preaches Christ'.“

Three things must be clarified for the reorientation:

1. Denomination
2. Name
3. Form of constitution

The **name** is to be a sign of the essential nature and future direction of the church. This is seen as guaranteed in the title „*Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Rhenish Mission Church)“, which maintains attachment to the Mission.

Regarding the **form of constitution**, the question is: a unified church or a „federation of different tribal churches“, which is to unite the people of all nations. In the end, the decision is made by the indigenous pastors. They decide in favour of the unified church.

In 1957, the *Evangelical Lutheran Church* is founded.

Full independence follows in 1967.

Not only is administrative independence guaranteed, but the church leadership and the Praeses are also elected by the synod.

*Synod Okahandja,
1957*



The parties

Display Panel III-7

Ten political parties and alliances stand in the first election in November 1989, and there are 701,483 registered voters.

DTA

The **Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)**, founded in 1977 at the end of the Turnhalle Talks, is an alliance of 11 independent organisations, representative of the country's 11 major ethnic groups.

The party follows a liberal-conservative line. It works together with the South African Government. The first chairman is a white man, Dirk Mudge.

SWAPO



Former SWAPO office in the „Ovambo compound“ Katutura

In 1958, Ovambo workers found the Ovamboland People's Congress, OPC, in order to achieve improvements in the working and living conditions of the Ovambo itinerant workers. In 1960, **South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)**, a *national movement for the whole of Namibia*, evolves out of this movement.

The exile wing of the SWAPO, led by Sam Nujoma,

wants to liberate Namibia by force. 1966 sees the first armed confrontations with South African security forces.

The use of violence is a decisive step for the party in it being recognised internationally as the most important political power.

As a liberation movement, SWAPO is organised along the lines of a socialist unity party and is strictly hierarchical.



SWAPO rally

The party congress is the highest authority.

Directly elected by congress, the first and, so far, only **President, Sam Nujoma**, is

- party leader
- commander-in-chief of the army, People's Liberation Army of Namibia, PLAN
- chairman of the politburo and the central committee.

With such a monopoly of power, he has cleverly overcome all inner-party conflicts.

Party Programme

No clear statement is issued on the democratic order.

After 1988, the party is no longer striving to achieve a planned socialist economy. There is no more talk of nationalising farming. A change to a more democratic constitution follows with

- a multiparty system, among others
- regular, free elections
- freedom of speech and the press,
- an independent judiciary.

In 1989, half of the cabinet members are not Ovambo. For pragmatic reasons, many high positions are occupied by whites.

In the elections to the constituent assembly held in 1989, SWAPO gains an absolute majority, but fails to reach the two-thirds majority stipulated by the constitution. It achieves this in the elections of 1994.

The **SWAPO Government** comes to power in 1990 with a „policy of national reconciliation“: freedom and harmony for a country devastated by long years of war.

Human rights are enshrined in the country's constitution.

Display Panel III-8

The Churches at the time of liberation

In 1970, at the synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the church publicly declares its opposition to the policy of apartheid:

„From a particular time on, South West is a country for Africans and Europeans. Today, however, the Africans are regarded as immigrants who are permitted to live only in one part of the country. The people are heading quiescently and silently towards their demise in the „homeland“ prison. The establishment of homelands aims at preserving peace within the country – that is what is said ...This separation does not bring peace, but revolution to the country.“

In the 1960s, the black Namibian churches seek talks with South Africa, but their requests are ignored.

In June 1971 the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa* and the *Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-kavango Church* decide to write an **Open Letter** to the South African Prime Minister. The Open Letter focuses the attention of the world on the human rights violations and the policy of apartheid in Namibia. Talks with the Prime Minister follow, but these only increase the divisions.

**The Open
Letter**

At the same time, a **Pastoral Letter** is sent to the congregations.

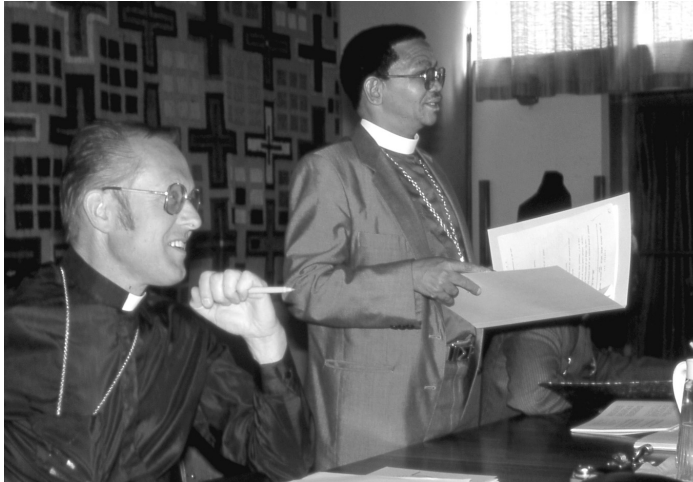
„We can no longer remain silent. We feel that if we, as churches, remain silent, we will be to blame for the life and the future of our country and its people. True peace does not allow people to hate each other. We realize, however, that hatred among the people of this country is increasing, primarily between white and non-white ... in our opinion, this fateful development is caused and upheld by the policy of apartheid ...“

The mission board in Germany declares its solidarity with the church board in Namibia.

**Solidarity
from Germany**

Solidarity in Namibia

JCSWA
Conference
Provost Blank and
Bishop Frederik
Photo:
Reinhard Veller



„At present, we feel particularly close to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa. ... We are in complete agreement with them that the policy of apartheid is threatening the unity of the churches, endangering human rights and steering the development of the South West African peoples in the wrong direction ...“

Since 1959, individual Namibians had fled to neighbouring countries to escape the policy of apartheid and its consequences. In 1974, thousands more follow into exile, most of them to Angola and Zambia.

In the 1970s, the Namibian Church Council (CCN) and SWAPO join forces in pursuit of a common goal: an independent Namibia, free of oppression and racial discrimination.

SWAPO regards the churches as an important ally. The churches are opposed to violence, but do not want to turn their backs on those who, in pursuit of justice, have turned to violence.

The accusation of being a SWAPO church,

since church workers are SWAPO members, is repudiated:

„The work of the Church should never give the impression that it supports a particular political group, but it must always stand up for justice and reconciliation.“

The Namibian churches are an integral part of the liberation struggle in Namibia.

Its increasing independence, is demonstrated by the following: in 1983, the Namibian Church Council declines a large sum from the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR).

- The EKiR wants to make the sum available as the *Namibia Fund*.
- The Namibian Church Council is only prepared to accept the money if it comes through the existing *Special Fund of the World Council of Churches' Programme to combat Racism*, for the use of Namibians in Exile.

According to the Namibian Church Council, there must be no alternative to the Special Fund, which could undermine the ecumenical programme of the Special Fund.



Barriers and fences near Walvis Bay

Photo:

Reinhard Veller

**Independence
of the national church**

In taking this position, the Namibian Church proves that it is an active partner church, which has developed over the course of a long national history.



*Worship in the yard
of a corrugated
iron hut*

Photo:
U. Pönninghaus

Display Panel III-9

In February 1990, a democratic constitution for Namibia is adopted. In the presence of thousands of people, independence is declared in the sports stadium in Windhoek on 21 March 1990

In the preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia it is stated:

„We the people of Namibia will strive to achieve national reconciliation ...“

On 22 March 1990, 3,000 people celebrate an ecumenical thanksgiving service in the sports stadium. Peter Sandner, Director of the United Evangelical Mission, reads a 'Statement of the UEM on the Independence of Namibia':

„... The fellowship with African Christians has often strengthened us in Germany and has enriched us in our Christian identity. We have good reason to give thanks.

But wrong conduct, which had grave consequences, and serious guilt are also part of this shared history. Germans, among them members of our church, appropriated the country as a colony. The „protectorate“ was a forcible subjection of the people to the Ger-

The independence of Namibia



Sam Nujoma, 1st President of Namibia, in office since 16.2.1990, attends the Constituent Assembly at which the constitution is adopted.

*Celebration of
independence
Windhoek, 1990*



*Thanksgiving
service in the
sports stadium:
Above left:
Peter Sandner
On the right:
Reverend
Jesse Jackson,
Civil-Rights
Movement, USA
Windhoek, 1990
Photo:
Reinhard Veller*



man colonial rule. Fundamental human rights were trampled upon. ... We are ashamed that our mission did not protest unequivocally, did not fight courageously against injustice and did not deal with the advocates of the racial ideology determinedly.

We realize that the guilt of our people and our mission weighs heavily upon us. We ask forgiveness from our sisters and brothers in Namibia.“

1993

Namibia introduces its own currency, the Namibian dollar, which, however, remains linked to the South African Rand.

1994

The enclave *Walvis Bay*, which had remained South African territory after independence, is ceded to Namibia.

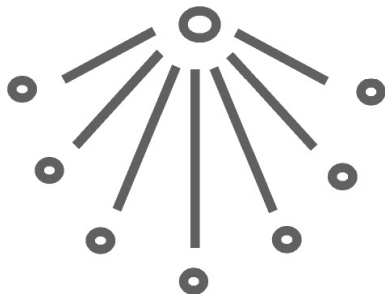


*Thanksgiving
service in the
sports stadium,
Bishop Frederic at
the microphone,
Windhoek, 1990
Photo:
R. Veller*

Mission is developing

Display panel III-10

Transfer from
North to
South



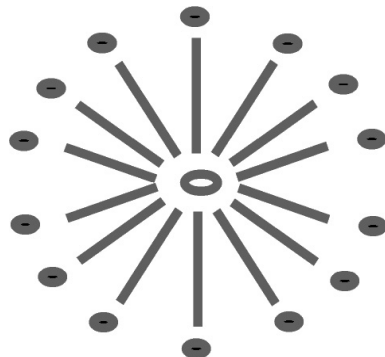
- The Rhenish Mission Society has been working in South Africa, Namibia, Indonesia and China since 1828.
- The Bethel Mission in East Africa since 1886.
- The Zaire Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1965.

In 1971 they merge to form the *Vereinigte Evangelischen Mission – VEM* (today: *Vereinte Evangelische Mission – United Evangelical Mission*).

Two way
traffic

Partnerships with independent missionary churches are developed in Indonesia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Rwanda, DR Congo, Botswana, and Namibia. German churches also assume responsibility in the mission. The one-way traffic from North so South becomes an exchange.

Multilateral
relationships



For the partner churches, the programme is a matter of 2co-operation“:

- exchange of co-workers
- South-South meetings
- joint consultations (Bethel Consultation, 1978).

The *United-in-Mission-Committee* (Mühlheim Consultation, 1988) co-ordinates the collaboration.

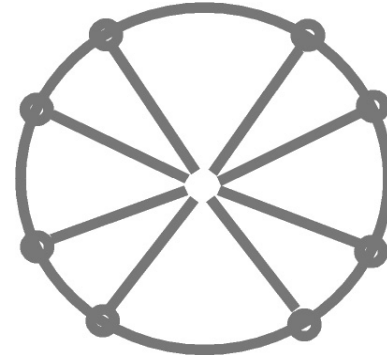
The UEM member churches form a communion, in which all participate in the decisions on joint missionary tasks.

Reorganisation at the General Assembly, Bethel, 1996:

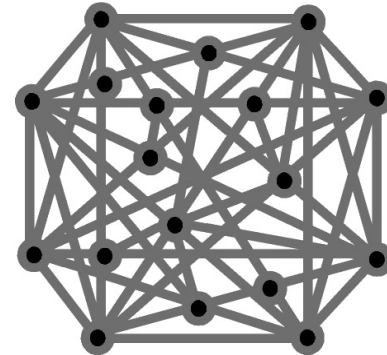
- The UEM subdivides into the regions Africa, Asia and Germany. Each Church appoints delegates to the Regional Assemblies. These elect delegates for the General Assembly, at which each region is represented by one third of the delegates.
- The General Assembly meets every four years. It elects Council, which meets once a year, and the Executive Committee, which meets three times a year.

Mission is the all-embracing task of bearing witness of God's love for all people in word and deed.

Mission aims to empower and strengthen people, so that they can hear the call of God and face the challenges in their lives.



**Ecumenical
communion**



**What is the
task of the
UEM?**

The Church today

Display panel III-11

Today the UEM member churches are meeting enormous challenges:

- the fight against HIV/ Aids - a disease, which dominates everyday life in many countries.
- proclaiming the Gospel
- Christian-Islamic dialogue
- work in cities
- work with women and young people
- partnerships, human rights
 - exchange of staff in all directions - North-South, South-North and South-South
 - volunteer programme for young people
 - ecumenical community programmes for women.



*Head office
of the ELCRN,
Windhoek*
Photo:
R. Elbracht

The work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) is co-ordinated at its head office in Windhoek.

Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta is Leader of the ELCRN and Moderator of the UEM. He

- played an active role in the liberation movement
- was held in custody for some time, and
- fought for the independence of Namibia and for the autonomy of the church.

He emphasizes that from difficult and inauspicious beginnings, a church has emerged, which Christians in Namibia can be proud of.

He points out:

„From the ashes of destruction a living church has arisen. Whatever the mission has done wrong - and there have been crimes - Christianity in Namibia is not a colonial or imperialistic religion. In all the horrors of destruction, God has been at work in history.“

The present is central.

If the church lives now, in the present, then this vitality cannot be devalued or nullified by dark beginnings.

The colonialist past is always present. The shadow of the genocide threatens to stifle all political debate.

When, in this situation, Bishop Kameeta speaks of a living church,



*Bishop
Dr Zephania
Kameeta*

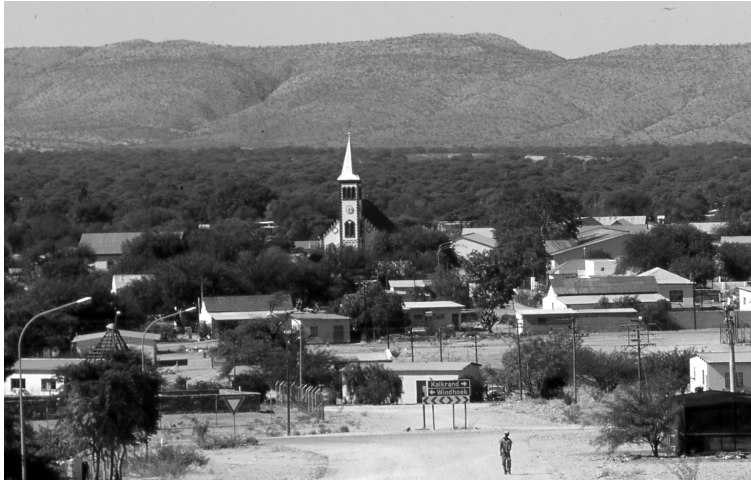
- he is not putting the case for historical revisionism which conveniently covers things up
- he is also not objecting to the need for reparations that are intended to alleviate the repercussions of genocide and colonialism.
- But he does not entertain the illusion that reparations could „make things good“ or even contribute to the elimination of colonial structures.

He expects a **positive contribution** from a community whose place is beyond the legal and political processes of dealing with the genocide. He **finds signs of such a community in his church.**

The churches, united within the Evangelical Mission, are walking together on their way into the future.

In all sorts of projects and fields, they are striving for peaceful and harmonious co-operation, in Namibia, Germany and beyond.

*View of the
Evangelical
Lutheran church,
Rehoboth*
Photo:
R. Elbracht



Display Panel III-12

The colonial era is still omnipresent

Namibia's economic backbone is its wealth of mineral resources: uranium, copper, diamonds. **Mining** accounts for about 20% of gross national product. **Tourism** has a great potential for growth in the service sector. Apart from other foreigners, about 58,000 Germans tourists visit Namibia each year.

Compared with the large number of poorly educated people on the labour market there are relatively few well-educated people. The unemployment rate is high, at 30 - 40%.

A large amount of capital flows into the hands of foreigners.

More than 50% of the population are employed in **agriculture**, which contributes little to gross national product. **Commercial farms**, more efficient be-



*In Namib Naukluft
Park
Photo:
R. Elbracht*

Consequence of the colonial era

Large German minority

*The broken chain of
a military vehicle
from the war
between the South
African troops and
the German
Schutztruppe*

Photo:
H. Heine



cause their land is more fertile, breed livestock mainly for export - predominantly sheep and cattle.

„Subsistence farmers“, who mainly produce for their own needs, live in municipal areas. Around 80% of commercially farmed land belongs to whites.

The land reform legislation (for commercial farmland), adopted in 1995, is designed to enable a larger number of non-white farmers to acquire farmland. Implementing the legislation, however, is turning out to be very difficult.

All Namibian languages, including Afrikaans and German, have equal status. Germans play an important role in craft trades, tourism and other service sectors, as well as in the cultural sphere. German is taught in many schools as a foreign language.

The relationships between

- Namibians and Germans
 - the countries of Namibia and Germany
- are the result of a common history and they are enduring. In the past, this bond has grown in all sorts of ways and taken a wide variety of forms.

The national anthem

The words demonstrate the strength and pride of Namibia and its people in overcoming the long and painful journey to independence.

*„NAMIBIA land of the brave
Freedom fight we have won
Glory to their bravery
Whose blood waters our
freedom*

*We give our love and loyalty
Together in unity
Contrasting beautiful Namibia
Namibia our country*

*Beloved land of savannahs
Hold high the banner of liberty*

*Chorus:
Namibia our country
Namibia motherland
We love thee.“*

Remember Namibia !



*Sandstorm at
Walvis Bay
Photo:
R. Elbracht*

Contributors

Apelt, Wolfgang, librarian, Archives and Museum Foundation Wuppertal

Besten, Julia, MA, responsible for the Historical Picture Archive of the Archives and Museum Foundation Wuppertal and leader of the „Remember Namibia!“ exhibition

Kameeta, Zephania, Dr, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia and Moderator of the United Evangelical Mission

Kilimann, Udo, filmmaker, who made the film „Waterberg“

Klappert, Berthold, Dr, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Church Seminary Wuppertal

Krüger, Gesine, Dr, Professor of History at the University of Zurich

Motte, Jochen, Dr, Executive Secretary of the United Evangelical Mission Desk for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

Neusel, Wilfried, Oberkirchenrat of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and Vice-Moderator of the United Evangelical Mission

Schneider, Nikolaus, Präses of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland