

FROM MISSION TO LOCAL CHURCH:
ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF MISSION BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NAMIBIA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
ARCHDIOCESE OF WINDHOEK AND THE APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF RUNDU

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SUMMARY

The Prefecture of Pella bought Heirachabis in 1895 and occupied it in 1898. This marked the beginning of the Mission in the South. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate officially started on 8 December 1896. They were allowed to minister among the Europeans and among Africans, not ministered to by a Protestant Mission. The first expansion was at Klein Windhoek, and at Swakopmund being the gateway to the Protectorate.

The Tswana invited the Mission to help them after they had arrived from the Cape. Aminuis and Epukiro were founded. After 1905 the Mission was allowed to open stations among the Herero and Damara. Doepra, Gobabis, Usakos, Omaruru, and Okombahe were the result.

Seven expeditions were undertaken to reach Kavango. After many failures the first mission became a reality at Nyangana in 1910. Just before the war the expansion reached Grootfontein, Tsumeb and Kokasib. In the South missions were opened at Warmbad, Gabis, Keetmanshoop, Luederitz and Gibeon.

World War I scattered the African population of the towns which disturbed the missionary work. The S. A. Administration allowed most missionaries to stay. After the Peace Conference S. W. A. became a Mandate of S. A.

In 1924 permission was granted to enter Owambo. The first station was opened in Ukuambi, later followed by Ombalantu and Okatana. In 1926 the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia was elevated to the Vicariate of Windhoek, while the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand became the Vicariate of Keetmanshoop in 1930.

XIV

World War II left the missionary activities undisturbed. In 1943 Magistrate Trollop in Caprivi invited the Catholic Mission in 1943 to come and open educational and health facilities. The South expanded into Stampriet, Witkrans, Aroab, Mariental.

The election victory in 1948 in South Africa of the Afrikaner Parties with the resulting apartheid legislation negatively affected the missions in S. W. A.

After 1965 the influence of Vatican II became noticeable, while the pressure of the United Nations Organisation moved the territory towards independence. While initially the Catholic Church had been very cautious, in the 70's and 80's she took a very definite stand in favour of human rights. She also became a full member of the CCN.

After independence the relations between the Church and the new State became very cordial. On 22 May 1994 Rome established the national hierarchy and a new Vicariate in Rundu.

KEY TERMS

Apostolic Prefect

Bantu Education

Catechist

Delegate

Hierarchy

Mandate

Native Commissioner

Permanent Deacon

Propaganda Fide

Schutztruppe

Ukuambi

Vatican Council II

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Auswaertiges Amt
AACC	All Africa Council of Churches
ADW	Archives of the Archdiocese of Windhoek
AG	Administrator General
AG 8 etc.	Laws passed by AG
AG-CMM-Tilburg	Archives at the Generalate of CMM
AGEH	Arbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Entwicklungshilfe
AG-OMI-Rome	Archives at the Generalate of OMI
AIGAC	/Ai//Gams Action Committee
A.M.E.C.	African Methodist Episcopal Church
ANC	African National Congress
AZ	Allgemeine Zeitung
BA-Potsdam	Bundesarchiv: Abteilung Potsdam
BBK	Boere Beleggings Korporasie
BCC	British Council of Churches
Belipase	Beleids Lichaam Pastorale Sentrum
BOA-Doebra	Bibliotheca Oblatorum Africana-Doebra
CBHC	Community Based Health Care
CCCP	Central Corpus Christi Procession
CCN	Council of Churches of Namibia
CDU	Christliche Demokratische Union
CELAM	Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano
CEP	Congregatio Evangelizare Populorum
CH	Codex Historicus
CH-CA-AN	Codex Historicus of the Canisianum in Anamulenge

XVII

CI	Caritas Internationalis
CIDSE	Cooperation International pour le Developpment et la Solidarite
CIIR	Catholic Institute of International Relations
CMM	Congregatio Fratres Mater Misericordiae
COV	Centrum Ontmoeting Der Volkeren
CSU	Christlich-Sozialistische Union
CWL	Catholic Women's League
DELK	Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche
DELTA	Development Education Leadership Teams In Action
DP	Deutsche Provinz OMI
DSWA	Deutsch-Suedwestafrika
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
EDICESA	Ecumenical Documentation and Information Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa
ELC	Evangelical Lutheran church
ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church In Namibia
ELOC	Evangelical Owambokavango Church
ELCRN	Evangelican Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
ELP	English Language Programme
E.M.M.	Evangelische Missions Mitteilungen
FM	Finnish Mission
FELM	Finnish Evangelican Lutheran Mission
FMS	Finnish Missionary Society

XVIII

GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschraenkter Haftung
HC	Sisters of the H. Cross
HIGCSE	Higher International Certificate of Secondary Education
HTS	Hoehere Toechter Schule
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICSWA	Joint Committee on South West Africa
IGCSE	International Certificate of Secondary Education
IMBISA	Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa
IMC	International Missionary Council
J & P	Commission for Justice and Peace
KA	Kolonial Abteilung
KA	Kirchliches Amtsblatt fuer das Vikariat Windhoek
KF	Katholisches Familienblatt
KM	Kerklike Mededeling vir die Vikariaat Windhoek
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MBEC	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (from 1995)
M	Mark (German currency: "Reichsmark")
M&B	May and Bake (pharmaceutical firm)
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture (before 1995)
MH&SS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MIVA	Missions Verkehrs Aktion
MM	Maryknoll Missionaries
MMM	Messengers of Mother Mary
MPC	Multi Party Conference
MPLA	Moviemente Populare de Liberatione Angola

XIX

MSC	Missionnaires Sacre Coeur
MVO	Missionsversorgung der Huenfelder Oblaten
NACADEC	Namibian Catholic Development Commission
NACAYUL	Namibian Catholic Youth League
NAN	National Archives of Namibia
NAW	Archives of Nacadec in Windhoek
NRSC	National Road Safety Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OFM Cap	Order of Friars Minor Capuchins
OMEG	Otavi Minen und Eisenbahn Gesellschaft
OMI	Oblates of Mary Immaculate
ORUUANO	"Community" National Herero Church
OSC	Order of St Clare (Poor Clares)
OSB	Order of St Benedict
OSFS	Oblates of St Francis de Sales
PADECO	Pastoral Development Commission
PAGP-OMI-Mainz	Provincial Archives of OMI in Mainz
PHC	Primary Health Care
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
PMAS	Papal Missionary Aid Societies
POS	Primere Onderwys Sertifikaat
PSM	Pallotiner Society for the Missions
PS	Pastorale Sentrum
RCM	Roman Catholic Mission
RRR	Repatriation-Resettlement-Rehabilitation

XX

SACBC	South African Catholic Bishops Conference
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SADF	South African Defence Force
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAW	State Archives in Windhoek
SAW-Z	State Archives in Windhoek: Zentral Bureau with the incorporated Archives of the former German Administration
SSB	Society of St Benedict
SCA	Society of Catholic Apostolate (Pallotiner)
SCPF	Sa Congregatio de Propaganda Fide
SCEG	Sa Congregatio de Evangelizatione Gentium
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
SNJ	Sisters of the Sacred Name of Jesus
SRC	Students Representative Council
SVD	Societas Verbi Divini (missionaries of Steyl)
SWANLA	South West African Native Labour Association
SWANU	South West African National Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
SWATF	South West African Territorial Force
TEEC	Theological Education by Extension College
TG	Transitional Government

UEM	United Evangelical Mission, formerly Rhenish Missionary Society (Rheinische Mission)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIN	United Nations Institute for Namibia, Lusaka
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNTAG	United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
VELKSWA	Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche von Suedwestafrika
VPK	Veel Partye Konferensie
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WA	Windhoek Advertiser
WCC	World Council of Churches
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WNLA	id.

FOREWORD

During the first half of 1992 we often travelled and visited the Catholic schools and hostels throughout the country. While moving through the Centre and North of the country I was accompanied by Father Bernhard Nordkamp, Vicar-General, and in the South by Father Ludger Holling, Apostolic Administrator. In this way we introduced the new Department of Education of Nacadec and its co-ordinator to the Catholic educational institutions. On several occasions we discussed the fast approaching commemoration of the centenary of the Catholic Mission in Namibia. At length Bishop Bonifatius Haushiku and Father Bernhard Nordkamp asked me if I would agree to research the history of the Church in Namibia. Having studied history in the USA I was very interested. I appreciated the trust they placed in me and accepted the challenge.

Because the establishing of local and regional schoolboards necessitated much additional travelling, I took each opportunity that presented itself to study the chronicles and codices at the various mission stations. After each visit I spent the evening hours and the weekends researching the archives of the Vicariate in Windhoek. The work of Professor Joseph Krasenbrink in ordering these archives some years earlier, greatly assisted our work.

Already during these first months we felt the need to study Missiology or at least attending a few lectures on that subject. At the same time we realised that this study would take several years. Combining the two led to the realisation that it would be more advantageous in achieving a balanced study if it was guided by a university. The following months we conducted correspondence with universities in South Africa, the USA, Zimbabwe and also with UNAM in Windhoek.

XXIII

After we had met Professor Willem Saayman at a Conference in Windhoek we realised that a wonderful opportunity was being offered at UNISA and we soon made the decision to apply for registration at UNISA, at the Department of Missiology, which would be effective from July 1993.

Before that date we received an invitation to go and conduct research at the archives of OMI at the order's Generalate in Rome, at the archives of Propagande Fide in Rome, the Bundesarchiv in Potsdam, the provincial archives of OMI in Mainz and the archives of CMM in Tilburg. This led me to Italy, Germany and The Netherlands in April and May 1993.

During the four years of this study many people have been remarkably helpful and accommodating. First and foremost I wish to express my sincere gratitude towards Professor Willem Saayman for his sympathetic and untiring guidance and his positive encouragement while the work was progressing. His constructive guidance was offered as a real friend. He was prepared at any time to answer my frequent phone calls and faxes. And each time when I visited the Department of Missiology in Pretoria I felt that the staff of the department were very friendly towards me and were definitely very supportive. We thank Father Bernhard Nordkamp who gave me free access to the diocesan archives and free time when the examinations were approaching. I appreciated it very much that the managers of the mission station did not hesitate to open the chronicles and other mission documents for me.

We thank Father Metzger OMI who was our first contact person in Rome and Father Beaudoin who entrusted the key of the OMI archives at the Generalate to me giving

me unlimited access to the documents. I also received much help from Father Bullivant who was usually present at the archives. A very special word of thanks to Father Heinz Stens, in those days Provincial in Germany, who gave me a wonderful reception and organised my stay in Germany from Bingen to Berlin and from Mainz to Rott. We thank Father Joseph Krasenbrink OMI, who during my wonderful stay in Bingen, placed his notes at my disposal and Father Werner Roehrich who introduced me to the provincial archives in Mainz. In Berlin we found a real home at the parish house of Father Herbert Glugla in Ahrensfelde, East-Berlin.

We thank Fr Harrie van Geene, Superior-General of the Fratres of Tilburg, who allowed me to study certain sections of the archives in Tilburg and Fr Ambrosi van Oers, the archivist, who accompanied me when I needed certain files. We are grateful to Father Manfred Foerg for providing free access to the Africana Library in Doebra and to Fr Egidius de Laat, archivist of the Archdiocesan Archives in Windhoek. I would like to thank all the helpful archivists at Propaganda Fide, at the Bundesarchiv and at the National Archives of Namibia, who assisted me in my research.

A special word of thanks to my Congregation. Fr Superior-General, Harrie van Geene and the Regional Superior, Emericus Goossens, supported me and provided the necessary resources and permissions to conduct the study and research. The members of my community who put up with the inconveniences of the repeated periods of absence have carried my gratitude, especially Fr Paul for patiently taking care of the post. The same is true for the staff of Nacadec who did not see me for weeks and from September 1995 for months. Often it fell upon them to

represent me or take over my tasks. We hope that these inconveniences have contributed to the proper recording of the church history in Namibia and the worthy celebration of the centenary in 1996. We owe our gratitude to Mrs M.L Hentschel, who assisted me with German documents from the nineteenth century and Dr Maria Fisch, who provided me with much needed geographical and linguistic information about Kavango.

Finally we may express our appreciation to Mrs M. Main, teacher at St Paul's College, who accepted the unenviable task to edit the script and ensure that the translations from German, Afrikaans, Dutch, French and Latin would blend harmoniously into one English composition as well as to Mr and Mrs Dreyer in Pretoria who kindly invited me to their hospitable house to stay overnight when I had to attend seminars or sit for examinations.

Though this study had started with the documents of the Northern Vicariate, the new Bishop of Keetmanshoop, Antonio Chiminello strongly felt, that the dates of initiation of the missions in the North and the South were so close, that it warranted a common celebration. He therefore inquired if we would be prepared to include the Southern Vicariate, nowadays the Diocese of Keetmanshoop. As the study had advanced too far, Professor Willem Saayman felt that a detailed study, similar to the one of the Archdiocese and the Vicariate of Rundu, would not be possible anymore. But he agreed that as often as it was warranted we could refer to the South, in order to make it clear that the centenary concerned the entire Catholic Church in Namibia. This explains the subtitle of this thesis. We sincerely hope that through this study we could preserve for posterity the remembrance of the work of those missionaries who had come to preach the Word

during the first one hundred years of the Catholic Mission in this part of the world. Personally we wish to pay homage to the men and women of the first hour, whose work I came to appreciate while I studied their correspondence and reports. We hope that their idealism may inspire future generations.

PROLOQUE

In this year of 1996 the R.C.Church commemorates that she has been present in Namibia for a period of one hundred years. It was felt that the time was ripe for an evaluation of the pastoral and social situation at the stations and in the parishes and institutions and to present an appraisal of the past and present activities. In order to arrive at a balanced judgment we followed the various paths this Christian community has travelled from the time of its inception up till the present day.

After all African countries have gained their independence in a process which started in 1957 and ended in 1994 and after the African Synod in 1994 stressed the need for a Church in Africa which would express its Christianity through the medium of African culture and religiosity, we have traced this process in the context of the Namibian situation. From a relationship of total dependence of Propaganda Fide the Mission in Namibia gradually has moved to the status of a local Namibian Church. This found expression in the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in 1994 and the approval of the Constitution of the Namibian Catholic Bishops Conference in 1996. We have described the rough and bumpy way to reach that aim, a way which led through political landscapes, which had an adverse effect on this development.

Another line of history we followed, from the arrival of the first missionaries up till the present day, are the relations with other Christian denominations. When the Catholic pioneers entered German South West Africa the country was

already covered by a network of Protestant mission stations, manned and managed by the Rheinische Mission and the Finnish Mission. The Colonial Department in Berlin thought it appropriate to restrict the Catholic Mission to the ministry among the European settlers and soldiers and among those indigenous people, where no other denominations were active. In this way they thought to preserve the peace among the already restless people. But the inevitable result was suspicion and jealousy between the Lutheran and Catholic Missions. Under pressure of unfavourable political circumstances the Christian Churches eventually saw themselves moved into the same corner with common Christian ideals fighting evil social and political situations. A climate of co-operation developed and it did not last long or the Catholic Church gained full membership of the Namibian Council of Churches. We have tried to trace the reasons for the change from an attitude of deep suspicion to the present friendly and ecumenical attitude which took root among the Churches.

Since World War II and especially since the 1960's the Churches throughout the world started to render strong support for development work. Though it may have been a main departure from the former pure evangelistic ideals of certain Churches, we have tried to prove, that the Catholic Church from the very beginning promoted development of the people through the medium of schools and hospitals. Often these preceded the actual preaching and were fully operational long before any of the people had been baptised.

The earlier mentioned awareness of African people of the rich tradition of their culture and religiosity thoroughly influenced the historiography of missiology during the last few decades. In addition a new understanding of Church and

Mission took hold, first among the Protestant Churches and then followed by the Catholic Church. Since the assembly of the IMC at Achimota in Ghana in the year 1958, Christians came to understand that the "home base" of mission is everywhere. Every Christian community is in a missionary situation. Mission should be practised in partnership, whereby the charism and spirit of the early Christian communities and the work of the local catechists and assistants should receive equal treatment in comparison with ex-patriot missionaries.¹ Vatican II affirmed that the Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organised local groups of the faithful. It also proclaimed that the Church should be missionary always and under all circumstances.² The understanding took hold that no history of missions is complete without including the contributions of the fledgling African communities.

Though we were aware of this trend we encountered the serious problem of dearth of sources. Only one of the catechists of the first hour, Franz Khiba, left a manuscript behind. The Fathers Schulte, Buecking, Helfrich, Wiszkirchen, Dohren, Bierfert and Wuest published articles in which the excellent work of these first Christians was preserved for posterity. This information we could supplement to a certain degree with the information we gained via a number of interviews. The result was that we devoted one chapter to these African pioneers, the early catechists, teachers and Christian fathers and mothers. In addition we recorded the development of Schools for Catechists and Training Colleges for Teachers from before the First World War up to the introduction of courses for permanent deacons since Vatican II at various appropriate places in the other chapters.

¹ David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 370.

² Ibid., 371.

Similarly we have related the painful process of awakening vocations for the priesthood among the Namibian people.

The Fathers Wuest and Bierfert described in detail the local culture, traditions and religion as they found it among the peoples they encountered in the course of their missionary travels. Valuable information was preserved about their pastoral methods and the way people responded to the initial missionary attempts. The same applies to the first missionaries who entered Owambo. We are therefore in a position to present an accurate picture of the struggle by the first missionaries in their encounter with the local cultures and customs.

As opposed to an earlier mode, modern historiography has moved to the position in which historians paint the missionaries from Europe as human beings with all the failings and problems surrounding any endeavour of that kind. We have moved away from the romantic and exaggerated biographies of the past and presented the ex-patriots with their charisma and failures alike. We have tried to show that they were part of the European culture and as such were regarded as messengers of the colonial powers among the conquered peoples, even if they themselves did not like the idea.³

We were fortunate, because one of the early missionaries, Father Joseph Wuest, was an historian, from whom we inherited three valuable manuscripts, in which he provided posterity with detailed information of the peoples, the surrounding countries and the mission of Kavango. Though he was mostly confined to the

³ J.A.B. Jongeneel, Missiologie I Zendingswetenschap ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekenhuis B.V., 1991), 170.

station of Andara in East-Kavango, his interests covered the whole of Namibia and beyond. He prepared and collected the material for the history which he planned to write on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Mission in 1946. Unfortunately, he already died on 10 October 1942. His work was completed by a fellow-priest. This book provides a wealth of information about the development of the Mission in the first fifty years. Also Father Watterott, the pioneer in the East among the Tswana, produced a manuscript, in which we found valuable information of the beginnings at the farm Kaukurus and at Aminuis and Epukiro. In general we must be grateful for the diligence with which the first missionaries submitted their reports and articles to the editors of the magazines of *Maria Immaculata* and *Monatsblaetter*.

After this general orientation we travelled to all the mission stations and spent some days at each of them to take notes from their *Codices Historici*. In appraisable foresight the Rule of OMI had prescribed to all members to keep a chronicle and record the events and developments at their stations. In many of these chronicles we learnt about the peoples these pioneers met, and the way they tackled the problem of appreciation its customs and cultures. We clearly feel that these pioneers struggled to blend their own European culture and the teachings of the Bible with the societies they encountered. We read about the day to day life on these primitive stations, the pastoral methods of the first hour and the way the people started to appreciate the Christian life. But it is with special gratitude that we remember Archbishop Gotthardt who meticulously kept all the records, reports, financial statements and private correspondence of the central administration in Windhoek. For that reason the Archives of the Archdiocese of Windhoek have been central among the primary sources which have

been used for this thesis.

From there we moved overseas to conduct research in the Archives of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in Rome, the Generalate of OMI in Rome, the Archives of the German Province of OMI in Mainz, the Bundesarchiv in Potsdam and the Archives of the Fratres CMM in Tilburg, in all of which we conducted research in May and June of 1993. Finally, we were fortunate to find valuable sources in the National Archives of Namibia.

The division in chapters is usually guided by the period that the R.C. Mission received permission by the civil authorities of entering a specific region. The broad periodisation is often guided by political developments which influenced the missions to such an extent that an entirely different approach was warranted. From the beginning until the Herero-German war is to be regarded as the first period, because after peace had been restored the restrictions imposed on the Catholic Mission to minister in the central part of German-South West Africa had been lifted. The next period records a rapid expansion which carried on up till the First World War. After that war, the territory became a Mandate and under South African Administration the Mission was allowed to enter Owambo. An important departure from the German attitude towards education among African people was a new school policy which was introduced by the South African Administration. The next divide was marked by the outbreak of the Second World War. After that war and after the Afrikaner parties in South Africa had won the elections in 1948, the introduction of the Apartheids legislation warranted a new chapter which stretched up to the death of Archbishop Gotthardt who had dominated the ecclesiastical scene from 1921 until 1961, when his successor took over the

reins. In the following chapter we study the widening influence of Vatican II on the Missions and the intensifying struggle against South Africa by the United Nations. We took 1978/79 as the next division when the first Namibian was ordained as Bishop. It was also the year of the general elections as a result of the Turnhalle Conference. From these changes in ecclesiastical and governmental administration we moved up to independence for Namibia. The last chapter deals with the first five years under the new dispensation. It also marks the maturing of the Mission to a local Church, the establishment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the approval of the Namibian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Though the overwhelming amount of sources dealing with ex-patriot missionaries seems to dominate the scene, we have wherever possible made use of the available sources to do justice to the African Christians and wherever appropriate have pointed to their zeal and piety.⁴

⁴ William Jenkinson, Helene O'Sullivan, Trends in Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 39.

PART I: LIMITED EXPANSION DURING THE FIRST TWO DECADES

CHAPTER 1

DIVERSE ACTIVITIES DURING THE INITIAL YEARS

1.1 Activities from the centre

In a previous publication I traced the roots of the R.C. Mission in SWA/Namibia and described the arrival of the first missionaries in the territory.

After these missionaries, the Fathers Bernhard Hermann and Joseph Filliung, had ministered alternatively in Windhoek and in the country at large and Brother Havenith had tried to make ends meet at home, until the long awaited increase of staff arrived in the persons of Father Wolfgang Kieger and the Brothers Pawollek and Leuper. After they had landed at Swakopmund it took them a long time to eventually succeed in obtaining a seat on one of the waggons moving into the interior. They were to describe the trip as being rather boring and irritating.¹

The increase of the community by three people stretched the accommodation of the provisional tent house to the limit. Poverty reigned on Mission Hill in the centre of Windhoek. Everybody had to be very thrifty and careful with clothes and shoes and was personally responsible for mending. The first missionaries acted as their own tailors and cobblers. They soon experienced that the clerical black dress was totally unsuitable for South West African conditions and they quickly changed to the more sturdy corduroy and khaki. The same attitude of thriftiness

¹ Jos Wuest, Manuscript II, 34 (ADW).

was applicable to the cook. It was his special duty to save money. Meat was the cheapest item, followed by rice. They could seldom afford to buy bread as the price of flour was exorbitant. Under those circumstances a garden was of the utmost importance, as a pound of potatoes cost them 75 pennies. It was beyond their means to buy canned food, but fortunately, in those days there was still an abundance of game.²

With the needs of a growing community in mind, the preparations to build a new house started to take form. The tent would not last another rainy season. But they had to realise with the price of a thousand bricks at M 80,- and the daily wages for a mason ranging from 20 to 25 M, that without internal help this would not be affordable. In addition one had to take into consideration that the prices for transport were unbelievably expensive.³

In the spring of 1898 Father Bernhard Hermann left for Europe to attend the General Chapter of the Congregation. The Superior General Father Louis Soullier had died. The Chapter would elect as his successor Father Cassien Augier. Whenever Father Hermann had time he would deliver lectures on the situation in German South West Africa so that he could induce his listeners to make a contribution to the necessary funds.⁴ When eventually he took leave from Huenfeld on 23 September 1898, he was accompanied by the Fathers Augustin Nachtwey and Franz Watterott and the Brothers Jacob Kipper, Peter Meyer and Josef

² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946 (Windhoek: John Meindert Ltd., 1946), 17.

³ Ibid., 18.

⁴ Ibid., 24.

Bast. They arrived in Swakopmund on 22 October 1898, from where they could take the train up to Khan station, 56 km distant from Swakopmund. They were met by Brother Havenith, but he was eight days too late and the weary travellers had to spend that time in a wooden shed wondering where they had been left stranded. Brother Havenith had met a Mr Sanders, a Jew, who had told him that the ship would be late. As there was no grazing for the oxen at Khan station, he could not risk being too early. Therefore he had delayed his departure from Usakos until the last minute.⁵

As Father Hermann was aware of the fact that he would be accompanied by five missionaries, he had sent frantic messages to Father Filling to start making timely arrangements.⁶ Therefore, in anticipation of the arrival of five more members of the community, no time could be lost before starting to build. In August 1898 the Brothers Havenith and Leuper started forming the bricks from loam they found down in the valley (near the present tennis court). They decided to use unbaked bricks. They were lucky that the quarry stones of the hill could be used for the foundation which saved them transport costs. The door and window frames of the tent house were going to be used again and Brother Bast planned to make the floor from slabs of natural stone. The Mission obtained the services of the masons Gebhardt, Kreisler, Wilhelm Walberstadt and Leonard Schurz. All four of them formerly belonged to the Schutztruppe. Having started at such a late date, it was to be expected that they would not be ready when the newcomers arrived. The only solution was to make temporary accommodation from spare trunks and cases. Just before the new missionaries arrived, Brother Pawollek had left

⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁶ Ibid., 88.

the order and had entered government service. Fortunately, they did not need to live very long in these temporary quarters and soon they could move into the new building. The last H. Mass was said in the tent on 8 December 1898, and the new chapel was blessed on the day of Epiphany, 6 January 1899.⁷

In the small Catholic parish, the members Leonard Schurz, his mother and his sister Mrs. Diebler, Lieutenant Keppler and the Red Cross sister Marianne Bohler attended the services regularly. Lieutenant Keppler was the adjutant of Major Theodor Leutwein. Though he was a freemason, he was a regular church-goer and had donated the beautifully carved wooden crucifix on the main altar.⁸ One of the members of the little parish was architect Morcillani. Originally he had designed plans for a big house at the place of the present hospital. But this grand design exceeded the means of this poor community. Thereafter he prepared plans for a more realistic mission house. A little later he left Windhoek. In his words he did not want to submit to parvenu Redecker, because he had made his professional studies in Germany and was a fully qualified architect.

In September 1899, Father Nachtwey informed Father Simon Scharsch that finally the cases of Father Kieger had arrived. Only the transport had cost M 1020, but the worst was that the cases were broken and the contents had been stolen on the way. It would be cheaper for the mission to organise its own transport. Therefore Father Hermann had left for Keetmanshoop to buy a team of oxen for M 4000, so that in future the brothers could become responsible for the transportation

⁷ Interview by Father Wuest with Brother Havenith, 4 April, 1942. Noted by Jos Wuest.

⁸ Wuest, Manuscript II, 26.

service, especially when they would initiate the expeditions to the North East.⁹ Brother Havenith made a good start by passing the associate examination as ox driver.¹⁰

As the pastorate of the beginning years consisted of many trips with the army, Father Hermann took the opportunity to visit the farmers and their employees.¹¹ The statistics of 1897 give a number of 500-600 settlers, which seems to be somewhat exaggerated as in 1900 it was recorded as being 300.¹² The Catholics had been used to living without the Church for a long time and they were rather lukewarm. Around Easter Father Kieger visited all military stations up to Swakopmund, while Father Fillingung went up to Gobabis and Epukiro for the same purpose. These were really difficult journeys, with the danger of fever ever present, while the communication with the taciturn Boer drivers was usually very difficult.

The military and civil authorities on the other hand were very friendly. Especially Father Nachtwey's arrival, in particular, further improved the matter, because his tactful attitude prevented many frictions with the officials and officers who were without exception Protestant.

In Windhoek the Sunday services were held for the civilian population in the tent and in the officers' mess for the military personnel. Normally Father Nachtwey

⁹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰ Wuest, Manuscript II, 1, from: Maria Immaculata 9 (1899).

¹¹ Wuest, Manuscript II, 27.

¹² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 18.

preached the sermon. After Father Aloys Ziegenfusz had arrived he often went to Rehoboth for the services. When the Fathers were at home they had to spend their spare time working in the garden or performing other menial jobs to save money.

Though originally the missionaries were only allowed to minister among the Whites and while the mission in the North East had not materialised yet, the Mission accepted the first Black catechumen, Joseph Leo Nissib. He was baptised on 17 February 1901. In that same year Father Bernhard Hermann resigned and left for the U.S.A. The hectic beginning years had severely overstrained him. In December of that year Rome appointed Father Augustin Nachtwey as his successor.¹³

In September the war in the South had broken out and Father Kieger accompanied the troops to Rehoboth. On 7 October they arrived at Gibeon. When the captain of Bethanie submitted, there was only one Chief left who resisted the attacking Germans, nl. Goliath Christian of Berseba. On 18 October the troops reached Keetmanshoop. The strength of the detachment with the native soldiers included was 400 men.¹⁴

After the house and chapel had been completed, it appeared that throughout the morning the sun was shining on the rooms and the chapel, making life uncomfortable for the occupants. The Brothers proposed to Father Prefect to engage Father Watterott, who had some understanding of building. A veranda should be erected at the Eastern side of house and chapel. Watterott made a very simple veranda of pillars and a corrugated roof. In the middle above the entrance he

¹³ Codex Historicus Great Windhoek, I:6.

¹⁴ Ibid., I:4.

placed a little tower. They regarded it as a temporary measure, which had to make place for a proper structure in the future. ¹⁵ At the end of that year on 12 October 1899, Father Biegner and the Brothers Reinhard and Kleist came to the support of the little band, while in December 1900 the Fathers Aloys Ziegenfusz and Franz Jaeger, and the Brothers Heinrichs and Heckenbach made their entry. In October 1901 it was the turn for the Fathers Hermandung and Weiler and the Brothers Lehner and Raub to join the rapidly growing group. Fortunately, Brother Raub was a qualified mason and he and Brother Reinhard added a new wing to the mission house. ¹⁶

In 1902, after he had returned from the North, Father Nachtwey called the Brothers Raub, Heckenbach and Uken and presented his plans concerning alterations to the mission house. But the brothers added a completely new perspective. They proposed not only to extend the house but to start building a church. Father Nachtwey was surprised, but he agreed that the plan was very sound. With a new church they would have sufficient space for the liturgy for the next twenty years. Moreover they could gain space in the house itself by converting the chapel into rooms. ¹⁷ In an interview in 1945 Brother Uken claimed that the plan only gradually took shape. They started with a proposal to build a church hall. At a later stage a sanctuary could be added and finally the tower. But Father Ziegenfusz apparently seemed to remember a different scenario. According to him when they turned the first sod the entire design was on paper. The first stone was laid on 29 March 1903 attended by many lay people in top hats and tailcoats

¹⁵ Wuest, Manuscript II, 87.

¹⁶ Codex Historicus Great Windhoek, I:6.

¹⁷ Wuest, Manuscript II, 89.

or in uniform.¹⁸

Before the "Christus Kirche", which was commissioned in 1910, had been built, there was no Lutheran church building in Windhoek. The White Lutheran community, which had officially been founded in 1896, assembled in Pastor Siebe's house of which one of the rooms served as a hall of prayer until 1910. Though the first Catholic church was quite simple, it was six years ahead of its Lutheran counterpart. To lay the foundation, the brothers used the foundation stones of the planned sisters' house. The building of that house had been started in 1902, but it was discontinued as the H. Cross Sisters were unable to accept more missions.¹⁹

The master builder of the church was brother Raub and the main carpenter brother Uken. They used unbaked bricks for the walls. The church had nine stained-glass windows. Father Nachtwey donated the one depicting St Augustine, his patron saint. Father Ziegenfusz took care of the window of St Aloysius, the infantry batallion of the Schutztruppe donated St Michael, and Mr Nivedecky, in the name of the artillery, St Barbara. Mr Faber, an Englishman, donated a further two windows. The funds for the two windows in the choir and the main altar were kindly given by Johann von Nathusius. The two windows in the sanctuary cost M 350 each and the others M 300. These windows had been designed and manufactured by the world-famous firm of Meyer at Muenchen. The side altar of Mary was taken care of by the Catholic Women's League, and the statue of Mary by the Catholic Women of Crefeld, stimulated by Father Ziegenfusz. The small bell was taken from the

¹⁸ Ibid., 76.

¹⁹ Ibid., 89.

bellfry between the former tents and two more bells were donated by Major Leutwein. They originated from the bell-foundry at Apolda. Landeshauptmann Leutwein was in attendance in full uniform during the blessing ceremony. The church door had been presented by the hardware dealer Xaver Lehmann of Aachen. Even before the church had been completed and blessed, alterations had to be made. When the first Franciscan Sisters arrived in August 1904 they wanted a private chapel. In order to meet their wishes the brothers took out the Wolfgang window in the sanctuary and created a larger entrance to the little choir of the nuns.

While they were still building, another group of missionaries arrived on 30 September 1903, i.e. the Fathers Lauer and Krein and the Brothers Kortenbach, Oberle, Kalb and Pietsch.²⁰

1.2 Arrival of the first Sisters

The first time it was mentioned that efforts were being undertaken to obtain the services of sisters was in a letter by Father Nachtwey to the Superior-General in 1899. He asked if Father Scharsch had contacted the congregation of nurses, which had been recommended so highly by Dr Richter, the chief medical officer in Swakopmund. He himself, in the name of Father Hermann, had approached the grey sisters of Breslau, but they had declined.²¹ Dr Richter, the medical officer had even contacted the Imperial Government and informed them that sisters would be

²⁰ Codex historicus Great Windhoek, II:1.

²¹ Nachtwey to Augier, Swakopmund, 20 November, 1899 (AG-OMI-Rome: Nachtwey).

necessary for the improvement of the medical situation in the country.²²

The first sisters' congregation which was eager to enter this territory was the one of Holy Cross of Menzingen/Altoetting. These sisters had taken up station in Umtata in 1883. Since that time there was always close co-operation between H. Cross and the Oblates. In gratitude towards their first ecclesiastical leader Father Aloys Schoch, they wanted to work in South West Africa, the territory he had explored. Unfortunately, it appeared that in 1902 they were unable to provide the necessary staff for another mission.²³

Father Hammer, whom we have mentioned earlier, had paid a visit to the Holy Cross Sisters of the German Province in Altoetting. He reasoned that a new prefecture could very well use sisters. As a result of that visit Sr Electa Kaltenbach asked the Prefect for detailed information.²⁴ Some time later Sr Laura Beck from the General Board in Menzingen, Switzerland, wrote to the Prefect that they were still very eager to commit themselves, but unfortunately they had lost in the course of that year eight teachers, who had died, and three sisters were still very ill.²⁵

In the meantime the Prefect had come into contact with the Franciscan Sisters of

²² Dr Richter to Imperial Government, Windhoek, 5 December, 1899 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

²³ Wuest, Manuscript II, 76.

²⁴ Sr Electa Kaltenbach to Prefect, Altoetting, 4 October, 1901 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

²⁵ Sr Laura Beck to Prefect, Menzingen, 23 September, 1903 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

Heythuizen/Nonnenwerth through the good services of Canon Dr Hespers of Cologne. Dr Hespers thought the Franciscan Sisters the best for South West with their excellent record of activities in Missions in other parts of the world. In the early years of the Protectorate the care for the sick was very primitive. The Schutztruppe had their own doctors and nurses and two small military hospitals in Windhoek and Swakopmund. Private people were also allowed to be treated in those hospitals, but the fee of M 20 per day was too much for most people. In addition the facilities were hardly big enough for normal times, not to mention of times of epidemics. Because of that poor situation doctors and citizens charged the Mission with persistent requests for Catholic nursing sisters.

The Provincial of the Franciscans in Germany, Sr Seraphine, informed the Prefect that the Superior-General had left for Brazil with fourteen sisters. Therefore it would only be possible to commit themselves in 1904. She took the opportunity to ask a number of questions. She wanted to know where the centre of activities would be. Would the Prefecture look after house and inventory, and would the journey first lead to Cape Town and from there back to South West again?²⁶ It is interesting to note that the Director of the Colonial Department expressed his satisfaction to Dr Hespers that the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth were going to support the Oblate Mission. He wrote to Dr Hespers that he had informed the Governor of the colony and had recommended these sisters to his urgent attention.²⁷

²⁶ Sr Seraphine to Prefect, Nonnenwerth bei Rolandseck, 8 May, 1903 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

²⁷ Dr Stuebel, Kolonialdirektor to Dr Hespers, Domkapitular, Berlin, 8 Oktober, 1903 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1: Auswaertiges Amt, Kolonialabteilung Nr. K 10938; 18169).

Towards the end of 1903 the negotiations became serious and Sr Seraphine passed on a letter by the Superior-General about conditions dealt with in the contract. Her suggestions dealt with a number of details and requirements for the rooms in the convents as well as for the accommodation for the children.²⁸ On 2 January 1904 the confirmation of acceptance by the sisters arrived in Windhoek.

In order to provide his plans with a sound foundation Prefect Nachtwey sent Father Hermandung to Germany to collect money. In July Father Hermandung could report that the sisters would arrive soon. He added that one of their conditions was to build the planned hospital at their own expense and that from then on they would manage the institute on their own account. If the brothers of the Mission would build the necessary wards and rooms, the congregation would remunerate them accordingly. For this purpose the sisters had collected funds in America and Germany.

The first five sisters left Nonnenwerth in September on the "Woermann" accompanied by Father Hermandung. Because of the Herero-war there were 400 soldiers on board. They landed on 24 October 1904. Unfortunately, the hospital in Windhoek was not ready yet. After the deliberations with the sisters had reached a satisfactory conclusion, the building of the convent had been started forthwith. However, when the Herero-war started, all the brothers had been conscripted and the building activities came to a standstill. When the situation improved somewhat and the brothers returned, gangs of irregular troops constantly interfered with the work. They stole most of the oxen, and without transport

²⁸ Sr Seraphine to Prefect, Moenchen-Gladbach, 14 November, 1903 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

there was no building material. When the foundations had been finished, the building materials ran out and the brothers were called to Swakopmund where there was plenty of work.

This did not mean that the sisters would be without work. They were hardly on their way to the interior when the military authorities entered into negotiations with the sisters to take over the typhus hospital, where a shortage of qualified personnel existed. Quite soon the number of cases had increased to such an extent that it was too much for the five sisters. Therefore the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Schian, supported by General von Trotha, sent a telegram to Nonnenwerth to plead for reinforcements. The Provincial Board recognised the need and already in February three more sisters arrived. Staff and patients unanimously agreed that these sisters had been trained in an exemplary manner and in many ways showed their appreciation. While in the care of these sisters, Brother Schaeffer died of typhus on 18 April 1905. His grave is in the old cemetery in Windhoek.²⁹

After the Herero revolt had been quelled the number of patients decreased soon. Here and there one could hear the remark that actually the Red-Cross sisters had a historical right to staff the military hospitals. The time had therefore arrived for the Franciscan sisters to leave. Chief Medical Officer Schelle wrote to Sr Tharsilla that the contracts of 3 January 1904, and 26 February 1905, would be terminated.³⁰ Also the State Secretary for the Colonial Office wrote to Dr Hespers that the government recognised the competent service of the sisters, but

²⁹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 51.

³⁰ Schelle (Stabsarzt) to Tharsilla (Provincial), Windhoek, 30 June, 1907 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

they could not take away these hospitals from the German Women's Society, because they had guaranteed financially the entire enterprise.³¹ For their faithful service His Majesty the Emperor bestowed on them the Red-Cross medal with brooch. The Maltese knight Baron von Brackel was to inform them of the decree of dismissal. He was spared the ordeal through an accident and a captain officially informed them of the decision. Thereupon the last sisters moved over to the new hospital on Mission Hill on 30 November 1907. Four days before this event the Mission had to perform the sad task of burying Sr Arnulpha Winkelmann, who had died of typhus after she had been hardly five months in the country.

The hospital "Maria Stern" on Mission Hill was quite small and poor and every year it was necessary to change and extend the facilities. The moving force behind all the renovations was Dr Bail. In Swakopmund it was Dr Jakobs who stood on the barricades for the civilian population. He collected money to build a hospital, but when he turned to the government, the officials did not respond. Thereupon he turned to the R.C. Mission and quite soon the negotiations had been concluded to everyone's satisfaction. The Mission would build the hospital and provide staff while the citizens would support the enterprise financially.

In the beginning of 1905 the so-called "building crew" was sent to Swakopmund. The Brothers Bast, Ruz and Heckenbach started the preparations. Soon after the laying of the first stone on 4 March 1907, the first sisters arrived to take up station. One of their patients was the sickly Father Muehlhaus who died 21

³¹ Secretary of State for Colonial Office to Dr Hespers, Berlin, 24 September, 1907 (ADW A 180: Sisters 1).

November 1907.³² On 8 March 1908, St Anthony's Hospital was officially commissioned and blessed. Father Nachtwey wrote to Father Scharsch that it was an impressive building, which would easily fit in a German city. He felt the occasion so important that he invited Father Scharsch as General Assistant to deliver the festive sermon.³³

1.3 Deutsche Kolonialschule

The "Deutsche Kolonialschule in Windhoek GmbH" had been founded as "Gründerwerbgesellschaft der Patres Oblaten von der Unbefleckten Jungfrau Maria in Suedafrika" on 27 November 1902. It was a company formed to obtain land for missionary purposes. The change of name took place on 3 April 1907. The primary aim was to procure ground for gardening, agriculture, stockfarming and building in as far as the education and christianising of the population required this. It started with an initial capital of M 150.000 which had been fully paid.

In "Von der Heydt's Kolonial Handbuch" of 30 June 1911, the current names of the directors were Prefect Eugen Klaeyle and Father Wolfgang Kieger.³⁴ Both of them

³² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 52.

³³ Nachtwey to Scharsch, Windhuk, 25 February, 1908 (ADW A 91: Nachtwey).

³⁴ Franz Mensch and Julius Hellmann, Von der Heydt's Kolonial Handbuch. Jahrbuch der deutschen Kolonial- und Uebersee Unternehmungen issue 5 (Berlin; Leipzig; Hamburg: Verlag fuer Boersen und Finanzliteratur A.G, 1911), 357-358. (NAN; C.J. C Lemmer Versameling L245. ADW A 110: Deutsche Kolonialschule).

Deutsche Kolonialschule in Windhuk GmbH.

Sitz: Windhuk.

Gegründet: 27 November 1902 als Gründerwerbgesellschaft der Paters Oblaten von der unbefleckten Jungfrau Maria in Suedafrika.

Namensaenderung: 3 April 1907.

Zweck und Taetigkeit: Erwerb von Grundeigentum und dem Betrieb von Gartenbau und Farmwirtschaft soweit die Erziehung und Christianisierung der Eingeborenen es

transferred their rights to Father Jos Gotthardt when he succeeded Eugene Klaeyle. Father Jos Gotthardt, at that stage the only representative of the said company wanted to transfer all the assets to the Apostolic Prefect of the R.C. Mission and to his lawful successors.³⁵ Jos Gotthardt explained that the company in question was not a trading company, but an institute to acquire property for missionary purposes. This company had been founded by some members of the R.C. Mission, because the German Administration obliged the Mission to do so in order to obtain legal title for any purchased property. As this was not necessary anymore, Gotthardt wanted all property to be returned to the R.C. Mission. He claimed that it was in fact the Mission farming at Doebra, Epukiro and at Kokasib and practising vine- and horticulture at Klein Windhoek. Moreover all the schools and hospitals in the country were managed and staffed by the R.C. Mission.

1.4 Education

After the administration of the Protectorate was officially installed, no ordinances had been issued concerning education. There were in fact very few European children and the State could not afford to appoint salaried teachers. Automatically the State left education to private initiative. Starting a private school was quite easy and no special conditions would be imposed.

fordert (357).

Kapital: 150,000 M voll bezahlt.

Direction: Apostolischer Prefekt Eugen Klaeyle und Pater Wolfgang Kieger, Windhuk. (358).

³⁵ Jos Gotthardt to Registrar of Deeds, Windhoek, 23 November, 1921 (ADW A 110: Deutsche Kolonialschule).

In 1897 the fathers in Windhoek started with private lessons in elementary subjects and in foreign languages. In 1899 they organised evening classes for soldiers. In 1901 they opened a hostel with school which counted 12 children in 1903.³⁶ After Father Hermann had made the first contacts with the Tswanas in the East, the latter showed themselves eager to send a number of their children to the school in Windhoek.³⁷ The first public examination for White and Black children took place on 29 January 1901. Major Leutwein was present in person and afterwards he praised the students for their performance.³⁸ This school, apart from the elementary component, could be regarded as a kind of industrial or trade school where the students received instruction in useful handwork. On 30 December 1903, the decision was taken to close the elementary school. This meant that also the lay-teachers Julius Johann Favre and Ernst Hausse had to be dismissed. Financial and staff problems led to this decision. In these early years the mission was financially weak and could not afford to pay lay-personnel for a lengthy period of time. In addition there was an acute shortage of fathers and brothers to staff such a school, which would have made the enterprise financially viable. Given these conditions the school was doomed to be closed.³⁹

³⁶ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 53.

³⁷ Deutsch-Suedwestafrikanische Zeitung fruher Windhuker Anzeiger Swakopmund, 29-07-02 Issue IV, nr 31 (NAN; E 4 Catalogue of Periodicals: 205 microfilm).

"Ausbildung von Eingeborenen in Handwerk". The newspaper reported that since one year the R.C. Mission taught nine Tswana boys from the ages 14 to 18 various trades. It added that when in the following year sisters would arrive, girls would be taken up as well.

³⁸ Codex historicus Great Windhoek, I:6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, I: 6.

Also in Swakopmund, Usakos, Omaruru and Tsumeb, the Mission took the lead by initiating education for White children before the State could do so. This is contrary to the policies followed in British colonies where the State provided education for the colonists' children leaving education for Blacks in the hands of the missions. This changed in 1906 when in the Protectorate of South West Africa education became compulsory for Whites. But the education for Blacks remained in the hands of the Missions. In 1915 there were 115 mission schools with 5490 students.⁴⁰ The German Government had voted funds for Black education, under pressure from liberals and socialists, but little had actually been spent. From 1909 until 1915 M 9000,- had been set aside for Black education.⁴¹ But the Black population as such remained untouched, uneducated and illiterate, something the farmers, traders and artisans preferred.⁴²

As early as 1899 Father Nachtwey taught some children in Swakopmund. In 1901 a private school opened, subsidised by the State. Soon thereafter the State opened a State school, but again in 1904 the town was without a primary school. Then the children again found their way to the R.C. Mission to receive some form of instruction. But the rector of the station encouraged the district commissioner

⁴⁰ Martha M. Lategan, Sending- en Staatsonderwys vir die Inheemse Bevolking van die Kavango, 'n Histories-Pedagogiese Besinning (Pretoria: UNISA, MEd Thesis, 1980), 47.

⁴¹ Justin Ellis, Education, Repression and Liberation: Namibia (London: World University Service, 1984), 15.

Henning Melber, Schule und Kolonialismus: das formale Erziehungswesen Namibias (Hamburg: Institut fuer Afrika-Kunde, 1982), 30.

⁴² Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Verslag van die Kommissie van Onderzoek na Aangeleenthede van Suidwes-Afrika 1962-1963 (Pretoria: Staatsdrukkery, 1963), 218 and 220. (NAN: Ref. E 8).

J. //Hoebeb, "Hoer Skoolopleiding as Taak van ons Kerk" in: Van Sending tot Kerk, 1842-1967, ed. Dr. J. Baumann (Karibib: Evangeliese Kerk in S.W.A. <Rynse Sendingkerk>-Boekdepot, 1967), 243-244.

to arrange for an enquete. The result was so astonishing, that in 1905 the State opened a school for 50 children. In Usakos the missionaries opened a school for Whites in May 1906. In 1910 the management of the Otavi-Mine and Railway company (OMEG) took over the school. The principal, Father Florian Borsutzky, remained in office and received a salary. The company had realised that the school should become its responsibility as most of the children were from employees' families. In Omaruru the fathers taught from 1907 until 1909. In Tsumeb Father Joseph Schulte taught the White children until the State founded its own facility. The same happened in Gobabis where a sister directed the school for White children long after the war.⁴³

The school and hostel for children of mixed race at Klein Windhoek was a special type of enterprise which will be dealt with later. Also the school for Herero children at Doebera will be discussed in the following chapter.

In 1906 the R.C. Mission went public with a Boys' and Girls' High School, which was immediately well attended.⁴⁴ In that year there were quite a number of young qualified fathers who had joined the ranks. Among the Franciscan nuns some were highly qualified as secondary school teachers according to the Prussian State system.

The Boys' School did not exist very long. On 20 October, 1906, general compulsory education for Whites was introduced. It counted for children of the ages of 6 to 14. Those who lived within a distance of 4 km from a school had to

⁴³ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 53.

⁴⁴ Codex Historicus Great Windhoek, II:10.

attend.⁴⁵ The ordinance contained stipulations about the foundation and management of private schools and the required qualifications of teachers. A direct result of that ordinance was the foundation of a State Secondary School (Realschule).⁴⁶ The school opened with the "Sexta" and would stress the instruction in the English language over French. The opening date was 18 January 1909 with Herr Zedtlitz as its first director.⁴⁷

Father Nachtwey had the feeling that the Government wanted to suppress the two mission schools. Wilhelm Kuelz called the Catholic private schools praiseworthy, but abnormal in view of the existing state school with four teachers. Private and farm schools were a threat to the German character, which had to be promoted by the German state school.⁴⁸ The "Windhuker Nachrichten" commented that there were not enough Catholic children to warrant an independent school. The author thought it to be a serious threat for the denominational peace and unnecessary opposition against the state school. He added that even the Afrikaners sent their children to the state school so that half of the children at the state school were Afrikaner children.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Wilhelm Kuelz, Deutsch-Suedafrika im 25. Jahre Deutscher Schutzherrschaft Skizzen und Beitrage zur Geschichte Deutsch-Suedafrikas (Berlin: Wilhelm Suesserott, 1909), 234.

Gouverneur von Lindequist, Suedwestafrikanische Erlebnisse in Quellen zur Geschichte von Suedwestafrika ed. H. Vedder (Okahandja: typed manuscript, 1936. NAN; Dr C.J.C. Lemmer Versameling L279), 117.

⁴⁶ Ordinance for the introduction of compulsory education for White pupils: paragraph 3, Windhoek, 20 October 1906 (ADW 111: Schulen 2).

⁴⁷ Kuelz, Deutsch-Suedafrika im 25. Jahre Deutscher Schutzherrschaft, 233.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 235.

⁴⁹ "Das Schulwesen in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika" Windhuker Nachrichten Nr 36, Windhuk, 5 September 1907 (NAN: Arch nr 1093; Cat. Issue 1, January 1994. ADW A 111: Schulen 1).

The government demanded that the R.C. Mission should prove that its schools operated on the same standard as those of the state. The Prefect agreed that he was unable to do so. In order to prevent the schools being closed, which would look like defeat, he proposed to Father Simon Scharsch of the General Board, that a young German father would be sent to university to qualify for the post of director. He even proposed a certain Father Weber. In the meantime he had taken up contact with a befriended deputy of the Reichstag, who had promised to send a qualified teacher to become director of the school. A positive note was that from 16 June 1907 a fully qualified Franciscan Sister would take over as directrix of the Girls' High School. Father Nachtwey claimed that people preferred the Catholic School in spite of the higher fees. But these fees should not have caused a problem, because the specific reason for the foundation of the schools had been to satisfy the needs of the better families in South West Africa.⁵⁰ Meanwhile Nachtwey tried to pacify the authorities by offering the services of Sr Edgara, who passed the Prussian examinations for Handwork in High Schools, and who could take up a post at the State "Realschule".⁵¹ But the District Officer still informed the Prefect that the Catholic Private School would only be accepted by the Imperial Government when from August 1908 onwards the management of the school would be taken over by a teacher who had passed the Prussian State examinations in Germany.⁵² The diocesan priest Father Langenhorst, who had recently arrived, must have taken over as principal, because

⁵⁰ Nachtwey to Zimmermann, Windhoek, 4 August 1907 (ADW A 111: Schulen 2).

⁵¹ Nachtwey to Von Lindequist, Windhoek, 17 March 1906 (ADW A 111: Schulen 2).

⁵² Imperial District Officer to Roman Catholic Mission, Windhoek, 5 May 1908 (ADW A 111: Schulen 2; Reichs Kolonialamt, J Nr 6668).

in October of that year the District Officer inquired about the health conditions at the school and directed his letter to Director Langenhorst.⁵³

The dedication of the teachers was a positive factor. So, for example, Father Georg Kalb was an example of diligence and conscientiousness. Father Nachtwey mentioned, that even at the Court in Berlin the R.C. Mission was a subject of discussion on account of their dedication towards education in the Protectorate.⁵⁴ In spite of his diligence Father Kalb only received permission to carry on teaching until the end of 1909. By then the Mission should have been able to recruit sufficient qualified teachers in Germany or strike a deal with the Imperial Administration.⁵⁵

The administration made a proposal about the amalgamation of the Catholic Boys' School with the planned State High School. The administration would introduce the curricula used for High Schools in Prussia. The ultimate supervision would be in the hands of the Imperial Government. The management of the new school would be directed by a Board of Trustees of which the Apostolic Prefect of the R.C. Mission and the leader of the Catholic hostel, which was connected with the school, would be members. The pastors of the Windhoek parishes of both denominations, Lutheran and Catholic, would have a seat in the name of the parents. One third of the teachers would be appointed on the proposal of the R.C. Mission. A hostel run by the R.C. Mission would be attached to the Boys' High

⁵³ Imperial District Officer to Director Langenhorst, Windhoek, 17 October 1908 (ADW A 111: Schulen 2).

⁵⁴ Nachtwey to Scharsch, Windhuk, 24 May, 1907 (AG-OMI-Rome: Scharsch).

⁵⁵ Imperial Colonial Department to R. C. Mission, Windhoek, 16 January 1909 (ADW A 111: Schulen 2).

School. The State would subsidise one third of the hostel fees and the other two thirds were payable by the parents. No discrimination would be practised with regard to religion. The building would remain the mission's responsibility, as would the property rights. That proposal would ensure legal status for the Boys' school. The R.C. Mission would be prepared, if the Imperial Government would wish so, to transfer the Girls' School under the same conditions.⁵⁶ This, however, never materialised.

The Girls' School started in 1906 with seven pupils. In 1910 there were thirty, and in 1921 there were 125. The staff consisted of six sisters, three fathers, and one lay-teacher for handcraft. Mr Voigt was fully qualified and had passed all the necessary Prussian State examinations. During the first year the school received accommodation under the same roof as the hospital. Naturally, the doctors resisted this arrangement. Some years later a separate wing was built behind the hospital. But soon also this building became too small, while the school remained too close to a hospital. Therefore the Prefect again looked to that part of the Roman Hill which had been taken away from the mission during the first year and was owned by the "Damara-Gesellschaft". This company had built houses for its employees. Eventually, after protracted negotiations, the mission could buy the property in 1916. Immediately the brothers set to work to renovate the existing structures and prepare them to accommodate the Girls' School. Religion would be taught by the various ministers of different denominations. If the girls could not return to their homes during the holidays, the principal had the duty to arrange for accommodation either at Klein Windhoek or at Doebera.

⁵⁶ Imperial Administration to Apostolic Prefect, Windhuk, 6 August, 1908 (ADW A 4: Grosz Windhuk).

Applications for admission would be possible twice a year, on 1 February and 1 August.⁵⁷

Not everybody appreciated the work of the sisters. In the "Windhuker Nachrichten" somebody observed that the Catholic School consisted of an elementary school, a Girls' High School and a Modern Secondary School. The letter to the editor complained that the thirty girls were in one room, taught by one teacher, while in Germany such a school consisted of ten classes. The Modern Secondary School had three classes. Only one sister had the title of "Studienrat" and the father who taught at the school did not possess professional qualifications.⁵⁸ Another complaint was that the English textbook for the ten-year-olds was too difficult for the girls. But in spite of these objections, the school, could successfully carry on with its work throughout the century.⁵⁹ It is very interesting to note that the school operated with a detailed and complete curriculum for religious education with a great variety of divisions.⁶⁰

Proof of the high esteem the sisters enjoyed was the request by English parents before 1914 that the sisters should open a school for their children as well. Similarly, in 1918 the German parents suggested that the sisters should become

⁵⁷ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 53.

⁵⁸ "Aus Windhuk und Umgegend" Windhuker Nachrichten Nr 11 Windhuk, 03-02-1909 (NAN: Arch. nr 1093 Cat. Issue 1, January 1994. ADW A 111: Schulen 1).
Windhuker Nachrichten 1904-1910. Nachrichten des Bezirksvereins Windhuk. Carried on as "Der Suedwestbote" 1910-1915.

⁵⁹ "Die 'hoehere Maedchenschule' der Katholischen Mission" Windhuker Nachrichten, Windhuk, 20 February, 1909 (NAN: Arch. nr 1093. Cat. Issue 1, January 1994. ADW A 111: Schulen 1).

⁶⁰ Curriculum for Religious Education (ADW A 112: Schools 2).

responsible for the entire elementary education of German children. In both cases the sisters had to decline on account of shortage of staff.⁶¹

When the R.C. mission inquired about support from the side of the State, Dr Von Lindequist sent an explanation about the division of the resources in the budget of 1905. He explained that from the beginning the support of German schools was only meant for White children. Only the second section of the budget for the spreading of the German language could benefit mission schools in as far as they would support the expansion of the German language. In such cases it would be the duty of the district commissioner to check the progress of the African pupils and the personal involvement of the missionaries.⁶²

The best reports by a district commissioner had come from Keetmanshoop in 1902 and 1905. From these reports it became clear that the proposals for German education presented in Togo by Graf Zech had been commonly accepted in South West Africa.⁶³ Lindequist did not see the point of the Rheinische Mission that it would endanger the real education of the indigenous population. The Rheinische Mission felt that the elementary principles of pedagogics had been affected. Lindequist argued that one does not learn a foreign language by learning grammar. He mentioned that the auxiliaries of the Schutztruppe spoke better German than the school pupils, on account of their daily practice. In view of the short

⁶¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 54.

⁶² Von Lindequist to Prefect, Windhuk, 14 March, 1906 (ADW A 112 Schools 2: Kaiserlich Deutsches Gouvernement fuer Suedwestafrika Nr. 284. K.A. 15814 No. 1721: Von Lindequist).

⁶³ Graf Zech, Der Gouverneur I.V., Schulordnung fuer die zur Gewaehrung von Behilfen angemeldeten Missionsschulen fuer das Jahr 1905, Lome, 5 January, 1905 (ADW A 112: Schulen 2).

period of schooling no time should be lost by wasting time in teaching through the medium of the local language. He was convinced that if the Rheinische Mission resisted the teaching of German he would receive loyal support from the side of the Oblates.⁶⁴ The resistance by the Rheinische Mission could have had two causes. The first one could provide evidence of a clash of interests between the colonial government and the Rheinische Mission. While the colonial government was firmly committed to the promotion of German language and culture, Protestant Missiology around the turn of the century was very strong on "Volkschristianisierung", which accorded high value to ethnicity and thus to local languages. From the remarks of the Governor we learn, that the Catholic missionaries were prepared to promote German. A second reason could have been the willingness of the Catholic Mission to follow the guidelines of the Administration. With their better resources, especially of staff, they could pose a threat to the position of the Rheinische Mission. This might explain the resistance to the colonial education policy. Von Lindequist's confidence that he would enjoy loyal support from the side of the Oblates supports this point of view. This was also expressed by Heinrich Drieszler in his report when he mentioned that the Catholic Mission with an extravagance of financial resources and staff tried to find entrance through the means of education, among others schools for Whites, even a High School.⁶⁵

In order to qualify for a subsidy the following demands had to be adhered to:

⁶⁴ Report by Dr Von Lindequist (BA-Potsdam: A.A; Kol Abteilung Akten A II Schulsachen June 1901 - February 1907. Band 2/3. Schulen in Suedwestafrika).

⁶⁵ Heinrich Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika. Bd. II der Geschichte der Rheinischen Mission (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932), 228.

1. The teaching of Dutch should be discontinued in mission schools.

The demands of the mission inspector Dr Schroeter of 5 February 1903 should be disregarded.

2. Among the Nama the medium of instruction should be German. Nama should only be used as support language. The example of Heirachabis was given, where the sisters taught German without knowing a word of Nama. The remark was added that there was no need to preserve a dying language. This was typical of the official opinion in the Administration and clearly contrary to Protestant thinking.
3. Along the line Windhoek-Swakopmund, Otjiherero would be allowed as secondary language.
4. Among the Damara Otjiherero would be allowed in elementary education, but the government reserved itself the right to compel mission schools to teach through the medium of German.
5. For Owambo for the time being no regulations. During the time of German colonial rule the German Administration was not immediately responsible for Owambo and the Chiefs were left very much to themselves.
6. German instruction should be given by the missionaries or by another teacher under the responsibility of the missionaries. He expected that eventually the Rheinische Mission would follow suit. Togo was a densely populated plantation colony while South West was a thinly populated settler colony, where the conditions and circumstances differed greatly and could not be compared.⁶⁶

In the end also the Rheinische Mission was prepared to teach German, though they

⁶⁶ Ordinance for the teaching of German (BA-Potsdam: A A - Kol. Abteilung. K.A. 19039).

had noticed that a number of officials totally disregarded pedagogical and didactic principles and Protestant missionary thinking of the time.

In spite of Von Lindequist's appreciation of the R.C. Mission, Father Nachtwey was rather critical of the Governor on account of his preference for State schools. He appreciated that he had a passion for schools, not only for elementary but also secondary education. During his term of office education received a real boost. Because Father Nachtwey had been a dedicated and keen science teacher he had many discussions and confrontations with Von Lindequist. This centred especially around support for the schools and the right of the Catholic High Schools to exist.⁶⁷

1.5 Across South West in the wake of the army

Because one of the original tasks of the Oblates was care of the spiritual well-being of the soldiers, the fathers were regularly on trek throughout the country. On 24 November 1897, Father Filliung accompanied the 4th Company from Outjo to Franzfontein where the brothers Samuel and Joel were leading a revolt against German authority. This campaign lasted five months and Father Filliung made it clear that hunger, thirst and danger were part of everyday life. Being so closely involved with the operations, the Fathers quickly gained the appreciation of the military authorities and the ordinary soldiers with whom they shared the daily strains. They spoke highly of the work of the Fathers Hermann, Filliung, Kieger and Ziegenfusz.⁶⁸ Around Easter 1899 Father Kieger visited all the military

⁶⁷ Nachtwey to Scharsch, Windhuk, 24 May, 1907 (AG-OMI-Rome: Scharsch).

⁶⁸ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 19 - 20.

stations between Windhoek and Swakopmund in the West, while Father Filling did the same up to Gobabis and Epukiro in the East. In 1902 Father Augustin Nachtwey received his legitimation as army chaplain. In the same year he would be in the field with the troops in the East.⁶⁹

On 28 November 1903, Father Ziegenfusz was called up to accompany as chaplain the troops into battle against the Bondelswarts.⁷⁰ And on 25 February, when the revolt of the Herero became threatening, all brothers were conscripted. On that same day Prefect Nachtwey left for Swakopmund as military chaplain and for business. He took part in the battles of Ongangira and Oviumbo.⁷¹ When the situation became threatening the Government issued Alarm Ordinances for Windhoek. Also the Fathers who had not been called up were on stand-by.⁷² All these actions supported the mission coffers, because on 4 October 1904 the government paid M 7500 for services rendered.⁷³

In the beginning of 1904, eleven soldiers were stationed in Aminuis for protection. After some time little ammunition was left and they needed a new supply. Father Georg Weiler volunteered to fetch ammunition at Gochas, 150 km away. Accompanied by a Tswana boy, he rode through the countryside which was infested with warlike Herero. He was lucky and delivered the ammunition safely.

⁶⁹ Kaiserliches Gouvernement von Suedwestafrika to Nachtwey, Windhoek, 17 May 1902 (ADW A 82; Militaerseelesorge).

⁷⁰ Codex Historicus Great Windhoek, II:5.

⁷¹ Ibid., II:16.

⁷² Truppen Kommandantur, "Alarm Vorschrift" J. N. 344, Windhuk, 11 July 1904 (ADW A 82; Militaerseelesorge).

⁷³ Codex Historicus Grosz Windhuk, II:30.

For this feat he should have received a decoration, but Prefect Nachtwey did not apply for it as he seriously disapproved of Weiler's action. He felt that Father Weiler as a priest should not have risked himself unnecessarily, when none of the eleven soldiers volunteered. Nachtwey himself received the Red Eagle decoration 3rd class and Father Ziegenfusz the Crown decoration 4th class.⁷⁴ Also Father Kieger came into action and he moved with the first transport to Gobabis and Aminuis. Epukiro had been destroyed in the meantime.⁷⁵ On 5 March 1904, the news arrived in Windhoek by means of heliogram from Gobabis, that Father Franz Jaeger had been killed by a Nama patrol in Uokukouan in the Aminuis district.⁷⁶

We have mentioned before, that as soon as the Franciscan sisters arrived they were also drawn into military medical service without delay and for three years they served in the military hospitals.

During the German-Herero war Father Aloys Ziegenfusz published his experiences in an article "Aus meinen Kriegserlebnissen". The core of his story was the hunting of Herero in the Omaheke (Sandveld) after the battles of Hamakari and Waterberg on 11 and 12 August, 1904. For us looking back upon these episodes, it is somewhat puzzling that on the one hand the Fathers were eagerly awaiting the permission to start their missionary work among the Herero, while at the same time they used the terminology of the time speaking of the Herero as their enemies. Ziegenfusz felt that the Herero were punished severely and justifiably for their evil deeds. It is clear that the pressure of patriotism and nationalism

⁷⁴ Wuest, Manuscript II, 22.

⁷⁵ Codex Historicus Great Windhoek, II: 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid., II:9.

in the beginning of this century heavily influenced the judgment of everyone, also the priests, and apparently they were unable to look beyond the murders by the Herero to observe the injustices committed by the Germans themselves. From this article and other publications it seems as if these young Fathers thought these trips with the army quite adventurous.⁷⁷ We may detect in the attitude of the missionaries the general opinion of mainline Catholicism concerning their participation in military campaigns. It was regarded as the correct attitude to participate in a just war. Fathers as well as Brothers heeded the call to arms without objection. Unconsciously, St Paul's exhortations in his letter to the Romans in chapter 13 caused them to obey their rightful government. The fact, that initially the German Empire concluded protective treaties and that revolt against the rightful authority is to be condemned, served to justify military service. When the Herero war started with the killing of a number of farmers this was another forceful reason to defend the rightful cause of the German Empire. When we combine this with the nationalistic upbringing at home and at school and the general nationalistic climate in Europe around the turn of the century we find an explanation of this service without query. It must be agreed that the missionaries not only served the White soldiers, but also took time to look after the well-being of the Blacks. They were principally against Von Trotha's policy of annihilation and were careful to administer to the P.O.W.s and orphans. As the Catholic Mission was not involved in large-scale missionary work among Herero and Damara and the Tswana were not involved in the conflict, we have not found indications that the participation in the conflict had a detrimental effect on the standing and progress of the Catholic Mission. In the South the mission

⁷⁷ Aloys Ziegenfusz, "Aus meinen Kriegserlebnissen" Maria Immaculata 13 (1905) 2: 53.

worked among the Nama who were in fact at war with the German Empire. Also there the missionaries were chaplains of the German troops and in their opinion the revolting party should be punished. But at the same time the station of Heirachabis was a safe haven for non-combatants and Father Malinowski was instrumental in forging a peace treaty between the warring parties. It did not seem to affect the missionary work per se. It was only much later, after the actual liberation struggle had started, that the involvement of the missionaries in colonial wars was being criticised.

In 1907 Father Nachtwey addressed the Military Ordinary in Berlin and informed him that he had been asked by Commander von Estorff to take up the chaplaincy at all the military stations to the North of the line Windhoek-Swakopmund. He also mentioned that in the South Pfarrer Weyer took care of the soldiers. The Oblates of St Francis de Sales had only few missionaries and would hardly be in a position to take up a post in the army. He also proposed that in future the rectors at the various mission stations would take care of the army posts in their neighbourhood.⁷⁸ In 1908 Nachtwey could already report that Mr Dernberg had informed him that the army command had approved of the proposal, that missionaries should take care of military posts. He mentioned that the Prefecture had twenty-two fathers and there were more to be expected and praised the good relationship with the army command. It was assumed that Keetmanshoop and Luederitz could be served from Pella.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Nachtwey to Military Ordinary, Swakopmund, 18 December 1907 (ADW A 82: Militaerseelsorge).

⁷⁹ Nachtwey to Military Ordinary, Windhoek, 7 August 1908 (ADW A 82: Militaerseelsorge).

In 1911 Prefect Eugene Klaeyle had become worried, because two military chaplains had left and during the farewell at the Officer's mess, there was no word of a successor.⁸⁰ In June of that year the Prefect could inform the missionaries at Grootfontein, Omaruru, Usakos, Swakopmund and Windhoek that the military chaplaincy had been handed over to the Apostolic Prefecture. He added that the army had agreed that on their tours they were allowed to visit the farmers. On 1 April they had to submit the annual report.⁸¹ In 1912 the Military Ordinary, Henricus Vollmar provided the chaplains with the necessary rules and regulations.⁸²

When the First World War had broken out and many of the troops were concentrated in the South of the country the military commander Von Heydebrecht addressed the Lutheran and Catholic Church and urged them to appoint field chaplains. They had to report as quickly as possible to his Head Quarters at Kalkfontein-Sued.⁸³ After the Union troops had overrun Windhoek the first contact between the Prefecture and the South African authorities was made by Pro-Prefect Damian Arnold to the Provost-Marshal. He requested that the Fathers Jacobs, Krein, Meysing, Stoppelkamp, Ziegenfusz and Arnold would be exempted from reporting on

⁸⁰ Klaeyle to Military Ordinary, Windhoek, 28 March 1911 (ADW A 82: Militaerseelsorge).

⁸¹ Klaeyle to Missionaries, Windhoek, 23 June 1911 (ADW A 82: Militaerseelsorge).

⁸² Henricus Vollmar, Capellanus Major exercitus Borussici, Eppus Tit. Pergamen an Reverendis Dominis Archicapellanis minoribus, Capellanis minoribus et omnibus sacerdotibus ad curam pastoralem terrestrium Borussiae mariti-marumque Imperii Germanici copiarum vocatis. Salute in Domino. Berlin, mense Januarii 1912 (ADW A 82; Militaerseelsorge; I/Mi 205/12).

⁸³ Von Heydebrecht to Prefect, Kalkfontein-Sued, 1 October 1914 (ADW A 82: Militaerseelsorge).

Sundays as they should be free for the various religious services. The letter was written in English.⁸⁴

1.6 The question of mixed marriages

In 1905 the Imperial Government of German South West Africa issued an ordinance to the effect that it was forbidden for District Officials to conclude marriages between Whites and Blacks and Whites and Rehoboth Basters.⁸⁵ Would this mean that the State would ignore marriages blessed by ministers of religion like the State ignored ecclesiastical marriages of Africans among themselves? This was correct, as up till that point in time the State did not interfere in the marriages of Africans. This would be different for Whites, because their marriages had been regulated by the Imperial Law of 4 May 1870. And in accordance with the Law of 6 February 1875, the obligatory civil marriage had been introduced. It had been stipulated that any minister of religion, who would proceed with a wedding ceremony without ascertaining that the civil marriage had been concluded, would be persecuted in court. The same would apply for alliances between Whites and Blacks. As in South West Africa District Officers had been forbidden to legalise such marriages, ministers of religion who would bless such a marriage would commit a double transgression i.e. against the law of 1875 and

⁸⁴ Pro-Prefect to Provost-Marshall, Windhoek, 20 May 1915 (ADW A 82: Militaerseelsorge).

⁸⁵ An saemtliche Standesaemter. Entscheidung vom Kaiserlichen Gouverneur, i.V. Tecklenburg, Windhuk, 23 September 1905 in: Oskar Hintrager, Suedwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit (Muenchen: Kommissionsverlag R. Oldenbourg, 1955), 75-76.

the ordinance of 1905.⁸⁶

The Apostolic Prefect confided to the Provincial in Germany that the Mission was in difficulty as far as mixed marriages was concerned. In South West they were astonished that in the German National Assembly the members without hesitation compared Samoans with Namas and Damaras. In South West people thought this quite inappropriate as the standard of civilisation of the Samoans was thought to be much higher than of the peoples in the Protectorate. Though the Centrum Party recognised that mixed marriages were not desirable, they wanted to safeguard the principle of legality in accordance with canon law. If the R.C. Mission would disapprove mixed marriages they would offend the people in Germany, but if they would approve them the existence of the Church in the Protectorate would become problematic. The problem was that the Whites would cohabit with a Black woman as long as they could not afford a White wife. Even if a White would desire to marry a Black woman permanently, he would not dare to do so, because he would fall prey to general contempt and become ostracised.⁸⁷

In another letter the Prefect answered some questions put by the superior of Huenfeld. The superior wondered if it would be wise for the State to forbid such marriages. The Prefect answered that from the point of view of the State the answer would be in the affirmative. He felt that the State could justify its stance on religious-moral as well as racial principles. Such alliances did not agree with the ideal of real and happy marriages. The Prefect felt that such

⁸⁶ Prefect to German Provincial, Windhuk, 28 August, 1912 (ADW A 95: Klaeyle III).

⁸⁷ Eugene Klaeyle to Max Kassiepe, Doepra, 19 June, 1912 (ADW A 95: Klaeyle III, J. Nr. 6787).

marriages could not be reconciled with healthy opinions of racial differences and racial consciousness, when one would place African women and children on the same level with European women and children.

On the question what should be the attitude of the mission in view of a total ban of such marriages by the State, the Prefect held the view that like in other marital conflicts between the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, the Mission would do well to stick to the principle of choosing the lesser of two evils. In the entire country there was such an aversion against such marriages that the Church would inflict great damage upon herself, if she should bless such marriages against the opinion of the entire White population. Prefect Stanislaus von Krolokowski had blessed such a marriage and a Catholic lawyer had told the Apostolic Prefect of Lower Cimbebasia, that the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand would not recover so quickly from this blow. He stated that, though everyone knew quite well the practical and theoretical points of view held by the priests, the Church had been seriously implicated. The Prefect of the South had defended himself by stating that the two partners had proved the stability of their marriage by staying together for a long period and caring well for their children. Nevertheless, he had acted against two laws and against public opinion.

The Prefect thought there would be a better way out of the impasse. There was an ecclesiastical "impedimentum impediens Ecclesiae vetitum".⁸⁸ Those people who had been living in South West Africa for a long time had no doubt that such marriages caused serious unhappiness for the partners, the children and the

⁸⁸ H. Noldin S.J., Summa Theologiae Moralis 3 vols. III: De Sacramentis (Oeniponte: Fridericum Pustet, 1911), 592-595.

"A hindrance indicated by the Church preventing the granting of permission".

society. The problem was that those living overseas could not understand the situation in the colonies. Even if in one or two percent of the cases these negative points would not apply, the good of the people in general would require a general prohibition.

When Prefect Klaeyle had a meeting with Dr Solf, the Secretary of State he proposed to him the solution of "Ecclesiae vetitum". Dr Solf was very interested and thought that via this clause an agreement with the Centrum Party might be possible. The circumstances were different in various countries and so was the level of education of the natives. If the special situation in an ecclesiastical province would make mixed marriages totally unwanted, then the Ordinary might make use of the power which canon law allowed him to execute and forbid the mixed marriages. The Prefect asked the superior to promote this point at the conference of superiors in Aachen. Dr Solf would also be pleased with that.

Another question was if it would be better not to prohibit such marriages, but only to make it more difficult to obtain permission. But the Prefect replied that this would make the case even more complicated. If the Mission would refuse permission, such candidates would have the right to appeal at a higher level. But should the Mission bless such marriages, then this would increase the resentment of the entire White population.

The Prefect mentioned that at the Prefectural Synod of 1907 it had been decided, in order to avoid greater evil, to refrain from assisting in the conclusion of racially mixed marriages. Moreover the representatives of both denominations had presented a declaration (1908) to the Administration of South West Africa, that

they would not assist in such marriages. Thereupon the government refrained from taking up penalties in its ordinance for ministers of religion in case they would assist. And that was the reason that Prefect von Krolikowski was not persecuted in court, though members of the Landtag demanded this and even proposed to have him banned from South West. It was the general feeling of the priests that, when the different denominations of the partners already were a negative point for "impedimentum impediens", the difference of races would present such a point a hundred times more.⁸⁹

In another letter the Prefect showed that even among professional lawyers the juridical principle was very unclear. The proposal of "Ecclesiae vetitum" should first be tested before implementation. The State wanted to make mixed marriages invalid while "Ecclesiae vetitum" would only stress that they were illicit. This would mean that there was little common ground for discussions.⁹⁰ The case became even more complicated when some members in the Landesrat demanded persecution of Prefect von Krolikowski and it appeared that the penal clause of the law of 1875 was not valid in South West Africa.⁹¹

The position of the missionaries could therefore be formulated as follows. After stating their position that in principle Canon Law did not recognise an impediment based on race, they would follow the custom that the Church always

⁸⁹ Prefect to Superior (Huenfeld), Windhuk, 9 July, 1912 (ADW A 95: Klaeyle III J. Nr. 725).

⁹⁰ Prefect to German Provincial OMI, Windhuk, 23 September, 1912 (ADW A 95: Klaeyle III J. Nr. 1064).

⁹¹ Prefect to Provincial, Windhuk, 28 August, 1912 (ADW A 95: Klaeyle III J.Nr. 927).

submitted to State laws. It should be taken into consideration that the State laws were supported by a general consent among the entire population. Even the Black population saw clearly the temporary nature of such alliances. Therefore, great damage would be done to the Church if she would not submit to the existing laws.

1.7 Apostolic Prefect Augustinus Nachtwey OMI

After Father Bernhard Hermann had resigned and not returned to the Protectorate in 1901, Father Augustin Nachtwey was appointed as his successor. He was born in Seulingen bei Dudenstadt in the "Hannoverschen Eichsfeld" on 28 January 1869. After attending the High School in Dudenstadt he finished his humanities in St. Charles. He entered the noviciate of St. Gerlach on 15 August 1890. After completion of that year, his superiors sent him back to St. Charles to complete his studies and to teach at the juniorate. On 14 July 1895, he was ordained as a priest. Father Nachtwey was a good teacher and when he received his obedience for South West Africa this appointment was a great sacrifice for him as he liked his teaching profession. In South West he soon became the first rector of Swakopmund and taught elementary subjects to White children. He also followed the troops as army chaplain. When he had been in Swakopmund for three weeks he wrote to his Superior-General about the new foundation. He mentioned that the pre-fabricated house had arrived from Hamburg and that it cost M 7061,84. A carpenter put it up, which cost an additional M 1750, though he himself and Brother Bast assisted. He asked for some money for the final touches to the house and some basic furniture. He also expressed the hope that soon Catholic sisters would come

to Swakopmund, a request supported by Dr Richter, the Chief Medical Officer.⁹² During his term of office as Prefect the seven attempts to settle in Kavango misfired. It cost a lot of money and five missionaries lost their lives. The revolts of 1904 -1906 also cost one father his life and much material damage was done.

After the Germans had suppressed the revolt, the restriction on missionary work was dropped and the R.C. Mission was allowed to minister among the Herero. This meant that in a short period of time six new foundations had to materialise. Though the energetic Prefect did not hesitate to realise these expectations, he could not avoid making debts. This would eventually cause his withdrawal from South West.⁹³

In order to raise the necessary funds Father Nachtwey made a proposal to the General Administration. He would like to see that a representative of the Prefecture would reside in Germany, who could make propaganda for his mission. At the same time this representative should be appointed as Mission Procurator. He made it clear that no mission had ever been founded under such unfavourable circumstances. But due to the appreciation of the Mission's work, the Protestant government dropped the clause to restrict missionary activities in the centre of the country in 1905. This unexpected expansion needed extra funds.⁹⁴

⁹² Nachtwey to Augier, Swakopmund, 20 November, 1899 (AG-OMI-Rome: Nachtwey).

⁹³ Necrology of Father Augustin Nachtwey by Father Heinrich Balgo OMI (AG-OMI-Rome: Nachtwey).

⁹⁴ Prefect to General Assistant OMI, Windhuk, 23 July, 1908 (ADW A 91: Nachtwey).

Under pressure of the circumstances Prefect Nachtwey handed in his resignation. But some time later, when he had arrived in Germany already, he protested against the complaints, which had reached Rome along an illegal channel. He wanted to withdraw his resignation and asked for a canonical visitation. He reasoned that Father Schemmer was too sick to succeed and as the war was over, the financial problems would soon be solved.⁹⁵ The Superior-General, however, through his assistant, Father Scharsch, made it clear that the resignation had been handed in to Propaganda Fide and that it would certainly be embarrassing if at that stage it would be withdrawn. Father Nachtwey himself had taken the initiative for the good of the Prefecture and the General Board had accepted his reasoning. He reiterated that the General Board saw nothing in Nachtwey's administration for which he could be blamed. The resignation should not be seen as a "disgrace". He promised to advise the German Province to provide him with an appointment worthy of his qualifications.⁹⁶

1.8 Social life in the parish

Already in the beginning of this century it was customary to organise family evenings. One of these social evenings on August 5, 1905 has been described in "Maria Immaculata" as one of the busiest. Even the separation of civilians and military did not prevent a shortage of space for that event. Father Hermandung opened with a word of welcome and the military band played an overture. The choir performed and sang "Das Deutsche Herz" while somebody presented a solo. The main

⁹⁵ Nachtwey to Dantenwill, Huenfeld, 14 November, 1908 (AG-OMI-Rome: Nachtwey).

⁹⁶ Scharsch to Nachtwey, Rome, 17 November, 1908 (AG-OMI-Rome: Nachtwey/Scharsch).

speaker of the evening was Father Ziegenfusz, who recalled his war experiences. As usual at the end of the evening everybody sang loudly "Deutschland Deutschland ueber alles". The "Windhuker Nachrichten" remarked that though these evenings were initially for military personnel, it was only right that civilians also were allowed to participate. The newspaper stressed the pedagogical value of such evenings in a country where the conditions for degeneration and demoralisation were ever present.⁹⁷

For similar reasons it seemed very important that a Catholic Women's Organisation was founded. The record of minutes starts on 10 December 1909, though the organisation in fact had been founded in 1907. At that meeting Father Ziegenfusz was present, as well as two members of the executive, Mrs Goebel and Mrs Walter. Apart from a recreational society, the minutes indicate that the lectures and activities had a distinct religious and pedagogical aspect. It often stressed the task of women in society as support for their husbands. They should be loving mothers for their children. It is good to note that regularly it was stressed that the housewives should be caring towards the servants and treat them well. The first set of minutes stopped on 13 September 1914 on account of the war. The Women's League resumed the meetings again on 19 August 1924 to be discontinued after 17 April 1928. These last minutes have again been signed by Father Ziegenfusz and a certain Mrs Spiller. No indication has been provided to find a reason for the discontinuation.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ "Bericht ueber den geselligen Abend am 5. August 1905" Maria Immaculata 13 (1905) 2: 62-63.

⁹⁸ Protokolbuch des Katholischen Frauenbundes (ADW: Protokolbuch des Katholischen Frauenbundes).

1.9 Early methods of pastorate

In the initial stages of their ministry the missionaries were compelled to approach individual people. Everybody had a great fear of the Catholic missionaries, especially the pagans. Only very gradually was the ice broken. Once individual people put their trust in the missionaries and the prejudices vanished, they stopped making objections and started sending their children to school. Many of the Fathers succeeded in gaining the trust of the people and this they felt was enough for the beginning. They reasoned that it did not serve any purpose to try to convert the older persons to Christianity as fulfilment of the the difficult obligations at that stage would be impossible. Much more would be achieved if the adults could be convinced not to object to their children attending school and the instructions for baptism. An ideal example of this approach was Father Joseph Krein, who was a Rhinelander with all the good characteristics of this lively people. His happy way of living won the hearts of the natives of Gobabis. As he communicated with them very often, he naturally learnt their language and habits. In order to come very close to the people he learnt their "oxen game" which was played by them very passionately. By participating in such an important aspect of life of the people he became one of them and a trusted father. Many of the other fathers were committed to a similar method.⁹⁹

In conclusion we would like to make the following observations about these pioneering years. Though at the personal level the relationship between the Protestant officials and Catholic missionaries seemed to be quite friendly, these

⁹⁹ Wuest, Manuscript II, 75.

same officials sided with the Government in Berlin when it came to policies in relation to the opening of new missions, to education and the blessing of marriages. The Catholic community was a tiny minority among the predominantly Protestant White and also Black population. Because of that the missionaries often felt discriminated against, though their counterparts, the Rheinische Mission, were often chagrined by the official measures taken in favour of the Catholics.

It is therefore all the more astonishing that in the correspondence and chronicles of the time none of the missionaries expressed any hesitation or objection to serve in the army. We think that nationalism, especially in 19th century Germany, was so ingrained in everyday-life, that it was taken for granted to support the nation in its rightful wars. And it was left to the Government to decide which war was rightful. We may assume that it did not enter the mind of the first missionaries that the creation of a Protectorate did more to serve the business interests at home than that it protected the African population. Moreover, the first group of missionaries was very well aware of the fact that their superiors had accepted the conditions, among which featured quite prominently the position of army-chaplain.

The provision of education was seen as an important part of the pastorate. It would show the willingness of the Catholic Mission to make a valuable contribution to the development of the country. It showed their concern for the children of the early settlers and in that way it would break down the prejudices among the majority of the inhabitants. Most of the first missionaries had been teachers before they arrived in South West Africa, which explains their keen

interest and immediate response. And while they cared for the educational needs of the White children in the usual academic way, they understood that the African child was in need of a different approach. Therefore they opened trade or industrial schools in Windhoek and Klein Windhoek. As there was a dire need of skilled labour in the colony, they created for the African child the opportunity to be taken up in the market economy, get a job and earn a living. We may definitely appreciate this far-sighted approach of the pioneers.

The marriage controversy showed another development. In 1905 the Administration had issued an ordinance forbidding marriages between Whites and Blacks or Whites and Bastards. This decree provoked a strong protest from the side of the Centrum Party in Germany as it was against the Canon Law of the Catholic Church. Though the missionaries recognised the general validity of the Centrum Party's arguments, they felt that at that period in time the cultural levels of the races were incompatible. This would carry in itself the seeds of the dissolution of such a marriage. Therefore the Catholic Mission in South West Africa was in agreement with the Administration of the Protectorate and not with the Centrum Party. The Prefect of Lower Cimbebasia thought he might have found a solution in the "impedimentum" clause of Canon Law which would make such a marriage illicit, but not illegal. This would enable the Mission to prevent such a marriage, but at the same time would adhere to Canon Law and not deny that it could be legal. The Colonial Administration was not purely concerned about the stability of marriages when it issued the decree. It also thought of the burden placed by the many children of mixed race on the meager resources of that Administration. These children fell between the two chairs and were not wanted, either by the White or by the Black families and were especially rejected by the various tribes.

Fortunately, the two denominations provided institutions to educate these poor unwanted children.

The first missionaries entered a territory in which conditions prevailed which were very different from those in their home country. Therefore they had to improvise their early pastorate. It is also important to note that many of the early activities were preparatory. The White Catholics were generally speaking not very active, while proselytising among the Protestant section of the population would have invoked opposition and anger. Up till 1905, the only African population group open for Catholic missionaries were the Tswana. In fact the missionaries were marking time, because for them the real work would start when they would reach Kavango and when the rest of the country would be opened to the Catholic Mission. Therefore they made education an important part of their activities in order to create a favourable climate and break down prejudices. But this approach could not expect a spectacular growth and the Catholic Mission had to be satisfied with a very small increase in numbers in the early years of their missionary work.



at The Commission's Office

Certificate of Substituted Title.

Issued under the Provisions of Proclamation No. 8 of 1920.

Prepared by

[Signature]
Commissioner

I, the Registrar of Deeds for South-West Africa, do hereby certify that, under and by virtue of the entry dated the *17th* day of *March* 19*21*, in the *Grundbuchs* of *SWANENBURG DISTRICT* volume *112* folio *65*.

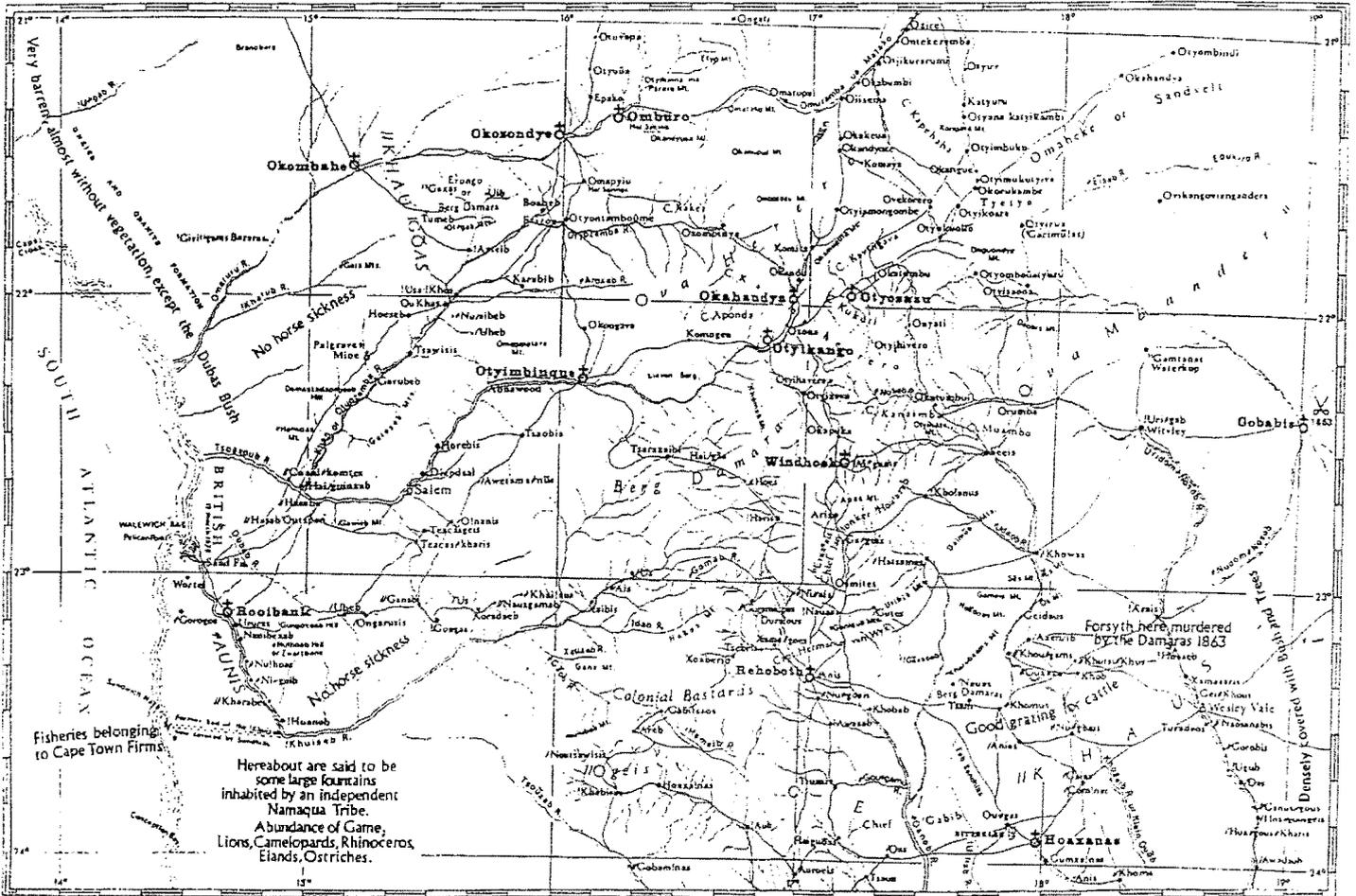
DEUTSCHER KOLONIAL-ANWALT
1011 SWANENBURG

is the registered owner of
Certain farm called *Umsa*,
situate in the District of *SWANENBURG*
measuring four thousand one hundred and *seventy*
two hectares, *seventy* *two* acres, *seventy* *two* square metres.

INSERRED

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The central section of South West Africa, redrawn from the "Original Map of Great Namaqualand and Damaraland" by F. Hahn P.D., 1879.

Map of the central section of South West Africa

CHAPTER 2

FIRST EXPANSION: TWO SPECIAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 Klein Windhoek: Business and Charity

After the ten-year period of peace had been initiated the Rheinische Mission opened a mission for the second time in Windhoek in the year 1871. Missionary Schroeder decided to build his mission house in the fertile valley of Klein Windhoek. But after 1880 when the war between Herero and Nama had flared up again, the missionary left Klein Windhoek for the relative safety of Okahandja. Roaming Herero bands entered /Ai//gams and when they came to the mission house they ransacked it, destroying the interior including the precious harmonium of the missionary.

After Major Curt von Francois had received permission from Paramount Chief Maharero, he moved from the fort Tsaobis into the interior and occupied the future site of Windhoek on 18 October 1890. Four days later, on 22 October 1890, his troops entered Klein Windhoek, where they found the dilapidated mission house.¹ The army wished to make use of it, but it took lengthy deliberations with the Rheinische Mission in Barmen to receive authorisation. Eventually, via the channels of the Foreign Office, they received the required permission after which they converted it into an officer's house with depot. Some time later it was taken over by the Settlers' Company of German South West Africa. Eventually Chief District Magistrate Nitze bought the house and garden from this organisation. At considerable costs he converted it into a livable place for his

¹ Wuest, Manuscript III, 26.

family.²

In the name of the Settlers' Company Dr Vr. Dove communicated to District Magistrate Nitze that all tenants, who rented land from the Syndicate for South West Africa in the Klein Windhoek valley, would receive 6 morgen (= 15.000 m), but house and kraal would be calculated separately.³ A few months later in a second letter Dr Dove informed the magistrate that his latest letter should be regarded as an official title deed. For the further development of his garden Mr Nitze had contacted the Syndicate for South West Africa in order to receive permission to increase the volume of water from well no 7. He received permission dependant on certain conditions.⁴

Magistrate Nitze died in 1898, leaving the new owner, his widow Mrs Nitze, in financial problems, because the property was an encumbered estate. Consequently it was placed onto the property market. One of the neighbours, Mr John Ludwig, drew Father Hermann's attention to this property. The latter was duly impressed by the beautiful valley with flowing water.⁵ The R.C. Mission was successful in its bid and bought the entire property of 1, 59 ha for M 22.500. The contract became legal on 1 July 1899. The agreement with heirs and creditors stipulated that M 2500 should be paid to Mrs Nitze and M 12.000 to the firm Mertens und

² Hugo von Francois, Damara und Nama in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika (Magdeburg: Baensch, 1896), 105.

³ Dr Vr. Dove to Magistrate, Great Windhoek, 17 September 1892 (ADW A 43; Klein Windhoek I: LH 1532).

⁴ General Kartvater des Syndikats fuer Suedwestafrikanische Siedlung an Herrn Oberamtman Nitze, 1 November 1894 (ADW A 43: Klein Windhoek I).

⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 17.

Sichel. On 1 June 1901, M 6348 would be transferred to the Settlers' Company after which the balance would be payable to the heirs.⁶ On 1 July 1899, Brother Josef Bast moved into the house where he would stay alone for two months. When he arrived the house was still decorated, because the family had celebrated a double wedding before they moved out. The daughter, Helena, had married a farmer, Mr von Falkenhausen, and a younger daughter Lieutenant von Scholz. Helena had opened the first private school in Windhoek in September 1894, with eleven children divided over three school years, which school the State had taken over in 1900.⁷

The old mission house looked reasonably neat inside. It had nicely plastered ceilings, but unfortunately, the roof was mainly constructed of loam and when strong rains came down, the roof became soaked, cracks developed and it leaked. On 2 July 1899, Father Kieger celebrated the first H. Mass. Two months later he joined Brother Bast and from then onwards the community expanded. The workers of the first hour were the Fathers Kieger and Filling and the Brothers Heinrichs, Kipper, Poschmann and Meier.⁸

When Magistrate Nitze had taken over the property he found it to be in a neglected state. He had started to plant vines, vegetables and fruit trees and he also grew maize, but he never used more than one quarter of the available six morgen. When the team of brothers arrived, they immediately set to work to change the appearance of the garden. Firstly, it needed careful clearing of weeds, and

⁶ Wuest, Manuscript III, 26b.

⁷ Kuelz, Deutsch-Suedafrika im 25. Jahre Deutscher Schutzherrschaft, 231.

⁸ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 17.

then hoeing and ploughing. They succeeded in tapping a greater volume of water from the boreholes. From twelf miles away they transported valuable soil and deposited it on the steeply sloping terrain. They distributed the water through professionally constructed ducts. Slowly the old garden assumed the appearance of a cultivated little paradise.⁹ The expectations of the Fathers Aloys Schoch and Bernhard Hermann materialised in the production of vegetables, fruit and citrus for the Windhoek market and in 1902 at the Windhoek Agricultural Exhibition the mission received three prizes for their wines. However, it does not seem they produced top-quality products. In 1903 the mission had sent samples of their wines to the Colonial Commercial Committee. This committee acknowledged receipt of these samples and informed the mission that they had passed them on to the wine merchants F.W. Borchardt in Berlin and the pharmaceutical Institute in Steglitz-Dahlem. An expert opinion had been included from the firm F.W. Borchardt. This document stated that the wine resembled Marsala, but had an unpleasant extra taste. This could originate from the kind of plant being used, but most probably originated from the improper cellar treatment.¹⁰ A neurologist from Dresden, on the contrary, sent a letter to Klein Windhoek to praise the wine as of excellent quality.¹¹ Another expert opinion had been compiled by Dr Thoms about the analysis of the wine by the chemical staff of the committee of Dr Fendler. The samples had been tested on 30 January of that year and the results were carefully recorded. The final analysis was that the wine had not received

⁹ Wuest, Manuscript II, 26b.

¹⁰ Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee an Katholische Mission, Berlin, Unter den Linden, 11 Maerz 1904 (ADW A 43: Klein Windhoek I).

¹¹ Dr Ritter to R.C. Mission, Dresden, 31 July 1903 (ADW A 43: Klein Windhoek I).

sufficient cellar treatment and in that state was not fit for marketing. The brothers must have carefully followed the directives, because in the following years the wine and especially the brandy "Katholische" became a well-known and appreciated product on the South West market, sought after by residents and visitors alike. The mission could be expanded by obtaining neighbouring plots. Just like John Ludwig, Mr and Mrs Gunkel were neighbours of the mission. After the First World War and change of government, Mr Gunkel had been exiled from South West Africa and the mission bought his property. The brothers found accommodation in his house. The historian, Father Jos Wuest, mentioned that Mr Gunkel had been banished because of the theft of vines on a big scale in the Klein Windhoek area.¹²

While the business-like production of vegetables and vines was important for the material well-being of the mission, Klein Windhoek would also become well-known in the field of education. In 1902 very important charitable work had begun to be undertaken in the Protectorate, which was the care for the growing number of children of mixed race. A South West newspaper called it a very practical initiative on the part of the Catholic Mission. After explaining the importance of the project the article carried on by reporting that the Mission made use of experiences gathered in other countries as these "Basters"¹³ needed a very special education. The first start had been made in Great Windhoek where the

¹² Wuest. Manuscript II, 31.

¹³ A distinction is made in Namibia between "Basters" and "Coloureds". With the name "Basters" the population group in Rehoboth is meant. They moved from the Northern Cape and bought the area around Rehoboth from the Swartboois. The majority of them carry Dutch names as they originated from Dutch fathers and Nama mothers. "Coloureds" are all the other population groups of mixed race. Most of them carry German names, but a number carry English or other European family names.

rector of the mission had adopted the cause of three coloured children.¹⁴ Among the White population of the "Schutzgebiet" and the educational experts there were serious differences of opinion about the education of children of mixed race. Some claimed that these children should stay with the mother and grow up "wild". Others stressed that the standards of the home country of the father should be maintained. The latter group definitely put their hopes too high, but as usual the truth lay most probably in the middle.¹⁵ If these children were allowed to stay with the father, granted that he did possess a home, the German community could foster some hope that they would be brought up as Europeans. Whether it would be in a Christian spirit was to be questioned. When, on the contrary, the father would leave them with the mother in the tribal area or environment, there would be little hope of a Christian education. When the child grew older, it would feel the move of the Christian father as rejection, which would even be more counterproductive. The attitude of the first settlers and soldiers was not helpful for Christianisation and they definitely had not come for that purpose. Also the missionaries of the Rheinische Mission discovered quite soon that the arrival of the first Whites gave a bad impression of Christian life. They definitely hampered the work of the missionary. The pagans and the newly-converted African Christians got a bad taste of the reality of European Christian life. Fortunately, we are able to cite many examples in Namibia, that the institutions for mixed children, founded by the two missionary societies, prevented a lot of harm and not only produced well-trained craftsmen and women, but also dedicated Christians. In spite of their initial faux pas a number of the German fathers felt duty bound to care for their children. Some of them did not

¹⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 29.

¹⁵ Ibid., 29.

have their own homes and others who had married a White women, felt embarrassed to bring these children up in their White homes, because they would be ostracised by the community. It was because of the attitude of these men that the mission proposed the education of such children.¹⁶

The government in the early years through lack of manpower and financial means was unable to care for these children. In "Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika" we find a remark to the effect that the Rheinische Mission denied these children as if it did not belong to its task.¹⁷ But the inspector of the Rheinische Mission, Herr Spiecker, claimed that like Herero orphans had been taken up in Otjimbingue by Missionary Bernsmann and his daughters Augusta and Bertha, so children of mixed origin had been accepted in the Augustineum in Okahandja by Missionary Wilhelm Eich, the Praeses of the Rheinische Mission. He made the observation that these children would become a danger for the Protectorate if they were not educated in time. But they could become a blessing on the condition that they would not stay with the mother. Nowadays we would think this attitude inhuman and un-Christian. We are convinced that the bond between mother and child is something highly important for a balanced education. We must conclude from Missionary Spiecker's statements that his generation had no respect for African life and as such placed a European, Christian education in an institution above the love between mother and child. Nevertheless, he felt that educating children of mixed race was not really the task of the Herero Mission. The German Home Mission should take care of these children. He expressed the hope that the Home Mission from Germany would soon extend its activities to the colonies, where so

¹⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁷ Ibid., 29.

many Germans had found their home and were in danger of neglecting their religious duties. Though the Rheinische Mission felt that it did not have sufficient means, it would still make a start, because any delay would be detrimental.¹⁸ Also Mission inspector H. Drieszler pointed out that the Rheinische Mission had founded two institutions in Keetmanshoop and in Okahandja with the express purpose of educating Coloured children. He felt that this was a great need which demanded immediate attention, because generally speaking the German fathers of these children did not care for their offspring as they were not compelled to do so by law. In the Lutheran institutions it was stipulated that the older children would attend school and help in house and garden during the afternoon hours. For the smaller ones the mission should set up a kindergarten or a creche. All costs would be met by the Mission except for the M 200, which the German government had allocated for teaching and spreading the German language.¹⁹ Missionary Hasenkamp from Luederitz was of the opinion that it was a shame that the poor people of Germany should bring their "Groschen" together to support the work of converting the non-Christian Africans, while in fact their contributions had been used to take the alimentionation duty away from irresponsible Germans in South West Africa. In his opinion this expensive programme had nothing to do with the actual missionary programme. He felt that it was time that the State take responsibility and reclaim the costs from the fathers of these children. That the Secretary of State, Mr Dernburg, when he was on a visit, had called the school in Okahandja a "monument of German shame" and

¹⁸ Pastor Spiecker, Die Rheinische Mission in Hereroland. Zugleich Visitationsbericht des Missionsinspektors (Barmen: Verlag des Missionshauses, 1907), 124. (NAN: C.J.C. Lemmer Versameling L0352; Archives nr 2369).

¹⁹ Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika. Bd. II der Geschichte der Rheinischen Mission, 218.

had warmly recommended it, was altogether insufficient. These two statements by Mr Dernburg might seem to be contradictory, but in fact they are not. Mr Dernburg condemned the irresponsibility of a number of German citizens and called it German shame. But he recommended the efforts by the Rheinische Mission and by implication the Catholic Mission of offering a solution to the predicament. Of course he did not satisfy the claims of Missionary Hasenkamp, who put the responsibility squarely in the State's court. Mr Dernburg applauded the private initiative without offering state support.²⁰ According to the information given there were about 4300 children of mixed race in 1910. In 1911 the Rheinische Mission closed the school in Keetmanshoop and in 1916 the one in Okahandja.²¹

It seems to us that Missionary Hasenkamp was restricting the meaning of "mission" too much to the conversion of heathens. Missionary Spiecker had expressed himself in similar terms when he stated that they had come to work for the Herero Mission. Referring the Coloured children to the Home Mission or the State was very un-Christian and needed to be addressed. This was definitely part of the missionary's work as the mother was African and possibly Christian or at least a potential candidate. We presume that in Hasenkamp's mind the responsibility of the fathers played a dominant role. He spoke out strongly that it was their financial responsibility to bring up their own off-spring, not the responsibility of Christians in Germany. As these fathers were supposed to be educated Christians, Hasenkamp held them responsible for a Christian education as well. We think that in the beginning of this century there was too much of a dichotomy between pure missionary work and pastoral care for the settled Christian

²⁰ Ibid., 219.

²¹ Ibid., 220.

community. Almost one hundred years of upheavals in Europe have shaken us up. Horrible deeds during the Second World War have taught us, that mission is an on-going process. Mission must not be left to professionals only, but should be the responsibility of all Christians through their example and prayers. Finally, Vatican II spoke out strongly and stated that in principle the Church is missionary.

Also for the Catholic Mission the beginning of this special work of education was a period of experimentation. Rehoboth could not serve as an example, because the Basters lived as a closed group of people. They lived as Christians under a set of written laws, "die voorvaderlike wette". The problem arose in the Centre and the North of the country. The indigenous population did not accept the coloured child, because the mother had moved outside the tribal laws and after birth the ancient tribal rituals had not been fulfilled in order to accept the child into the clan. An additional factor was the injustice which had been committed to the mother. The tribe regarded this as an injustice done to itself. We should understand, that this injustice had been committed by a Christian European. This example and type of behaviour would definitely hamper any efforts by missionaries to bring the Word of God to the Africans. When Christians could treat them with such disrespect, it would be problematic to preach the theory when the practice looked so different. The little child had to bear the punishment and revenge of the community which was expressed in contempt and exclusion. This did not prevent many Nama and Herero women from being proud of their half-white child. Sometimes it furnished them with certain advantages.²² Not all the European fathers neglected their duties and a number showed good intentions to provide their

²² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 29.

children with a suitable education. Unfortunately, they did not want to accept these children in their own homes, neither did they want them to stay with their mothers. Upon these intentions and ideas the missionary authorities founded their policy when in 1902 they opened in Klein Windhoek a house and school for these children. The underlying guideline was to provide a practical education which should make these children efficient in handwork and household chores. The reason the author gave is interesting. He stated that all these children carried with them from the mother's side an inclination to indifference, superficiality and instability. Seemingly, he had not reflected yet on the possibility that the indifference and superficiality of many of the fathers might have played as important a role and no studies had been conducted to investigate this trait in their characters in order to prove these statements.²³

The first rule of the educators of these children of mixed race was to take them away from their environment when they still were very young and keep them up to the age of eighteen. A number of the German fathers agreed with this and seemed prepared to contribute financially. It is mentioned that especially the mothers caused endless problems. They arrived at the door of the school and wanted to see the child or take it with them. This should not come as a surprise, because after all the bond between mother and child is a natural one and similar for Whites and Blacks. On account of these problems the missionary authorities started to demand a contract with both parents. It had to be signed by the father and by the mother and certified by the police. With this document in hand, they hoped to prevent any unnecessary demand from either of the parents.²⁴

²³ Ibid., 30.

²⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 30.

According to the annual statistics published by Prefect Nachtwey in December 1906, there were fifteen children of whom the oldest ones were twelve years of age. In an article by Father Pothmann it was recorded that the number of students in 1909 stood at 48. He expressed as his opinion that the children were very clever, but lazy to learn. Fortunately they did well in the practical subjects and could find good jobs.²⁵ In the following years the number went up to fifty children. Apparently, the institute did have its problems. In a letter by a certain Hermann Huelsmann we hear that he had been asked to look after little Willy Nack. Mr Huelsmann informed the rector that the little boy came to him in a scandalous state. He went so far as to express as his opinion that in any Baster pondok the child would have been looked after much better than in Klein Windhoek. Though little Willy had not complained at all, Mr Huelsmann demanded an immediate answer, otherwise they would have to take him out of the hostel.²⁶ There are no documents left to prove that Mr Huelsmann was right. We know, however, that the new mission house was not ready yet. The little structures spread over the mission grounds did not provide much in the way of suitable accommodation. The government paid very little and the mission did not possess sufficient finances. We therefore assume that Mr Huelsmann was right when he compared it with the European standards in the house of a White family, though he went much further in his condemnation and possibly dramatised the case. If the little child had not complained, it possibly felt cared for and accepted. As happens in so many other cases, comfort and wealth cannot compete with love and care.

²⁵ Father Pothmann, "Klein Windhoek", Maria Immaculata (1908/1909) 16: 350.

²⁶ Hermann Huelsmann to R.K. Mission Klein Windhoek, Windhoek, 23 August 1908 (ADW A 43: Klein Windhoek I).

After some years the accommodation became too small for the community and boarders and in 1906 an application accompanied by a set of architectural drawings for a completely new building had been handed in to the municipal authorities. Mr Lang informed the Catholic Mission that permission had been granted to build a new mission house in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Building Police Ordinance of 12 September 1898.²⁷ The mission house was completed in 1907 and is still preserved as the centre of the pastoral centre "/Ai//gams". In the stained-glass window above the main door one can still observe the date: 1907.

When the students had finished their schooling in Klein Windhoek, some could find a position in the workplaces of the mission in Windhoek. For the others the rector shopped around to find a suitable job. It seems that the school had a good name because it was not difficult to find employment in the postal service, the railways and in private business. The Director of Postal Services expressed his satisfaction with the performance of the former pupils of Klein Windhoek.²⁸

A nice compliment for the mission was the recognition by the State of the workplaces of the mission. The Department of Education raised them to an officially recognised trade school. The Administration would subsidise six students with a grant of M 200 annually. But the Administration stipulated that the school should prepare two masons, two cabinet makers and two saddlers every year. At the end of each year an examination would be conducted and after

²⁷ Mr Lang to R.C. Mission, Windhoek, 15 May 1906 (ADW A 43: Klein Windhoek I).

²⁸ Pothmann, "Klein Windhoek", Maria Immaculata (1908/1909) 16: 350.

successful conclusion of the course the students should be handed over to the government. It had recognised the value of the education of the Catholic Mission which stressed an attitude of commitment and regular work. Also the missionaries were in agreement with the ruling that these children should not learn too much unnecessary academic padding. School was only being held before noon. It was assumed that one could not teach them as long and as much as European students, who stood in a tradition of generations of regular work. The syllabi contained Religion, Writing, Reading, Arithmetic, Geography and Singing. The students proved to be bad in Arithmetic, in Reading and Writing the performance was average and in Music and Singing they beat the Whites by far. The majority, when they became twelve years of age, entered the mission trade school while others wanted to be trained as catechists. An observation was made that the students performed best in the skilled trades of tailors and cobblers. Some of the apprentices also made good progress in joinery while one of them received training as a compositor for the Windhoek Printing House.

Among the responsible citizens of the Protectorate the opinion took hold that they were not only good labourers, but also formed a valuable link between the White and Black populations. It was unfortunate that a number of White settlers did not appreciate this type of competition. As the services proffered by the Coloureds was cheaper, this caused unwanted competition and the settlers gave the mission a hard time. If the missionaries would have taught these children only religion, they would have been accused of neglecting their cultural task and causing their students to be useless citizens in ordinary life. But after the mission had done its best to train Coloureds and Blacks as skilled labourers, she was accused of undercutting the labour market and take the jobs away from White

settlers and artisans.²⁹

The Coloured catechists, who had attended the catechist school in Great Windhoek for three years after the primary school, became important auxiliaries of the missionaries. They relieved them of the daily teaching and left them with the supervisory tasks only. The rector of Klein Windhoek, Father Wilhelm Schleipen, expressed as his opinion that Coloured teachers were better than African ones. The latter ones only taught mechanically while the Coloured teachers showed real imagination. He thought that Coloured teachers could fathom the deeper connections of the content of the subjects while Africans remained superficial.³⁰

After the Franciscan sisters of Nonnenwerth had entered the Protectorate in 1904 the Prefecture invited them to take over the management of this educational institution as well. On 15 October 1907, the Mother General signed the contract. Two sisters would be made available for the home economics classes of the girls and for the education of the boys. The sisters would also be responsible for the kitchen. Remuneration would take the form of free board and lodging and free treatment in case of sickness as well as a salary. In the separate sisters' house, sisters from other communities in need of recuperation would be allowed to stay free of charge. The Prefecture would have to take care of the spiritual needs of the sisters. The sisters would be responsible for the religious education of the younger children while the older children would be the

²⁹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 31.

³⁰ Wilhelm Schleipen, "Erziehung in Suedwestafrika", Maria Immaculata (1918) 10/11: 296.

responsibility of the superior of the house or another priest. The Prefect had serious problems with paragraph 6 about the question of remuneration. He mentioned that the institute depended financially totally on the Prefecture. Therefore he expected the sisters to realise the severe problems and to support this valuable work of charity and refrain from demanding cash.³¹

This important social work has been carried by the Catholic Mission into the 40's and 50's after which separate schools slowly developed for Coloured children in the different towns of the territory. In 1945 the mission opened a hostel for White children in Klein Windhoek, which in turn developed into St Paul's College of which the history will be recorded at a later stage.

2.2 Swakopmund: Gate to the Protectorate

At the end of October, 1899, a priest settled permanently in Swakopmund. On 20 November 1899, Father Augustin Nachtwey had been at his new post for three weeks when he wrote to his Superior-General. A prefabricated house, imported from Hamburg, had been re-assembled and one of the rooms was going to be used as a chapel for the Catholic community. The house is still in use as the presbytery of Swakopmund. This parish consisted of White Catholics as the ministry among the indigenous population had been forbidden. We have mentioned before that Father Nachtwey moved into education from the beginning. This came naturally to him as

³¹ Contract between the Prefecture of Cimbebasia and the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth for the School for Coloured Children in Klein Windhoek, Nonnenwerth bei Rolandseck, 15 October, 1907 (ADW A 44: Klein Windhoek II).

he had always been a dedicated and inspiring teacher at St Charles.³² But the real reason for opening a settlement in Swakopmund was the fact that very often new missionaries arrived at this harbour town or returnees to Germany had to be accommodated. It was vital for the mission that somebody on the spot could guide the trunks, goods and cases through the customs and then organise the transport into the interior. It would be advantageous to have somebody who knew the customs and could deal with the officials. When the bewildered newcomers had moved through the surf, it was comfortable for them to be welcomed by a friend and companion, who could offer them a home. He could arrange a place on the ox waggon and later a seat on the train and introduce them to the peculiarities of country and people. For those who had to return to Germany for reasons of health or administration, it would be comfortable to stay and wait with friends. It should be clear that in the days of the ox waggon the times of arrival and departure could not be coordinated with those of the ships, and even when the railway started operating, the correct connections could not be guaranteed. During the days of waiting the accommodation offered in the mission house would be very convenient for the weary travellers.

Contrary to the regulations, the residing priest must have reached out to people other than just the Whites. Father Nachtwey in a letter to the Propaganda Fide mentioned that the mission in Swakopmund possessed a house and a church. He estimated the number of Catholics between 650 and 700 and he added that they belonged to every tribe, language group and nation. His school also was open to

³² Nachtwey to Superior-General, Swakopmund, 20 November 1899 (ADW A 91: Nachtwey).

White as well as for Black children.³³

As in Windhoek a plan was being developed in Swakopmund under pressure of the immediate need in the field of health care. A former military doctor, Dr Jakobs, claimed that he could not do his job properly unless he received the assistance of Catholic sisters. As long as Swakopmund had been small the military hospital had rendered this service. But during the Herero war the numbers of people had increased rapidly. Large numbers of soldiers disembarked in the harbour town and quite soon the overcrowding and primitive sanitary conditions caused typhus to break out. The military command hired the entire mission grounds to accommodate their sick soldiers in field hospitals. Unfortunately, the suffering civilian population was left to their own misery. Under the leadership of Dr Jakobs a commission was established to prepare the building of a town hospital and collect funds for that purpose. When the government could not respond to their plea for support they turned to the Prefect of the Catholic Mission. Though the financial position of the mission was none too bright the Prefect saw the immediate advantage for the mission's influence at all levels of the society. The deliberations were conducted to everyone's satisfaction. The building would be the responsibility of the mission and the financial and material support would come from the side of the Swakopmund citizens. The "Grunderwerbgesellschaft der Paters Oblaten M.I." had received from the government a site which had to be used for missionary purposes. Therefore the Oblates would build the hospital and ask the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth to provide staff and manage the hospital. When they started the negotiations the Sister Superior in Windhoek was of the

³³ Nachtwey to Prefect of Propaganda Fide, Windhoek, 14 October 1903 (ADW A 91; I CP: Nachtwey).

opinion that the hospital should be built and maintained by the sisters themselves. She even felt that it was an absurdity that the Fathers own a hospital in which the sisters work. It would lead to serious differences of opinion, for example, when the fathers as outsiders would urge thriftiness. But if the sisters would be the owners, it could become a source of income and make the sisters financially independent. The Prefect, however, was of the opinion that this set-up was not unusual, because when sisters work in a state hospital, the employer is also different from the administration of the sisters. He also doubted very much that it would become a source of income and he felt that an order could not run a hospital on its own as examples in Germany could prove at that period in time.³⁴

Fortunately, the Prefect had brought together his so-called building crew, which would render invaluable services. In the beginning of 1905 the brothers started with the preparations of the building site. Brother Bast transported the natural building stones from the quarry to the town. In the meantime the Brothers Rau and Heckenbach had started to form the cement-bricks. The foundation stone was laid on 4 March 1907 and one year later on 3 March 1908 the inauguration of St Anthony's hospital took place. In short succession three more sections were added to the complex, the isolation-ward, a maternity home and a recuperation home.³⁵

After thorough consultation between the Prefecture and the Mother Superior

³⁴ Vertrag der Apostolischen Praefektur mit der Schwester Generaloberin der Franziskanessen in Nonnenwerth. Erziehungshaus Klein Windhuk. Kloster Nonnenwerth bei Rolandseck, 15 October 1907.

Erziehungshaus in Klein Windhuk. Bemerkungen zu Par. 6 des Vertrages. (ADW A 180; Schwestern I: Briefe und Akten).

³⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 52.

General the order had decided to take over the hospital. On 15 October 1907 the Superior-General, Mother M. Ludmilla, had signed the contract at Nonnenwerth bei Rolandseck. Paragraph 1 stated that the Mother Superior-General would see to it that sufficient sisters would be available. The actual number would have to be decided by the doctors, the Prefect and the Sister Superior of the hospital. Paragraph 2 stipulated that the sisters would care for the sick in accordance with the guidelines of the Superintendent of the hospital, but the Rule of the sisters should be taken into consideration. In addition they would be responsible for the kitchen and for the cleaning staff. Remuneration for the sisters would consist of free board and lodging, M 100 per month and 50% of the travelling expenses for entering the country the first time. The sisters had the right to a fortnight's holiday. The financial management of the hospital would be the responsibility of the superior of the mission, but the internal management would be in the hands of the Sister Superior. When the treatment of male patients was not be in accordance with the status of a sister, male nurses should be called to take over.³⁶

After finishing St Anthony's hospital for Whites it was high time to make a start with the preparations for a similar institution for the Black population. Black people could not afford a doctor and had no access to medical aid. In many cases the employer looked after his staff, as they usually lived on his property. But many were left on their own in miserable circumstances. The wet climate of the coast was not suitable for the men and women who had been brought up in the dry and pleasant conditions of the interior. Many sicknesses developed among

³⁶ Contract between Franciscan Sisters and Oblates of M.I. Nonnenwerth bei Rolandseck, 15 October 1907 (ADW A 44: Klein Windhoek II).

them. The fate of the Herero prisoners of war, in particular, was a tragic one. Those who were sent to the coastal towns of Swakopmund and Luederitzbucht died like flies. They were sickly, insufficiently clad and could not stand the climate. The report of the Bezirksamtmann at Swakopmund of 29 May 1905, disclosed that during the financial year, 1903-4, the average number of Africans there was 1025, of whom 185 died. During the financial year 1904-5 there was an average of 1217 Africans of whom 355 died. From 1 April 1905 to 19 May 1905 a further 325 Africans died. These all comprised men, women and children.³⁷

Dr Vedder, who was then Rhenish missionary at Swakopmund, gave the following account of the prevailing conditions:

They suffered greatly from the cold in the coastal towns. Their clothing had long since been torn to tatters. Men and women went about in sackings, their only protection from the cold. Many got inflammation of the lungs and died. During the worst period an average of 30 died daily. It was the way the system worked. General von Trotha gave expression to this system in an article which he published in the Swakopmunder Zeitung.... 'the destruction of all rebellious Native tribes is the aim of our efforts'. Those who did not die in Swakopmund were brought to Shark island in Luederitzbucht. There it was even colder than at the beach in Swakopmund.

On the suggestion of the Military Command at Swakopmund, Vedder appealed to Germany and succeeded in obtaining a great deal of old clothing for the Africans. After the relief clothing arrived, the mortality rate dropped. Nevertheless there were still many sick people. For this the commander had a 60 m long barracks erected. A room was also provided for the treatment of patients. The task of looking after the sick was given to Vedder.³⁸

³⁷ I. Goldblatt, History of South West Africa (Cape Town: Juta and Comp. Ltd., 1971), 145-146.

³⁸ Dr H. Vedder, Kurze Geschichten aus einem langen Leben (Wuppertal-Barmen: Verlag der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft, 1953), 139.

The Bezirksamtman also reported, that the mortality rate of Africans had risen in Swakopmund enormously. He agreed with the Government Medical Officer's view that the cause was to be found in defective accommodation, clothing and feeding of Africans, particularly among prisoners of war, together with the raw unfamiliar climate, and the weak physical condition of the prisoners. Even he thought that they should never have been sent to Swakopmund. He advised they be transported inland to recover under the control of the Government.³⁹

Though the finances of the mission had reached a definite low, it was part of the programme of Catholic missionaries to be socially involved and to look after the physical well-being of the population. Towards the end of 1909 a number of structures had been erected behind St Anthony's. Diagonally behind the maternity home they had built the hospital for Africans, where it remained until 1916.⁴⁰ Though the facility was not big, it was at least a good start and until the war it could serve its purpose properly.

Though the caring for the sick should be done without any preconditions or a hidden agenda, purely because human beings are in distress, it nevertheless imperceptably contributes to the spreading of the Good News. The daily contact between the sisters, the brothers and the patients provide many instances of coming into close contact and answering questions about their beliefs. Also the priests as chaplains made their daily rounds through the two hospitals, and especially the mortally ill persons and the dying could count on the support of

³⁹ Rapport des Swakopmunder Bezirksamtman, Swakopmund, 29 May 1905 (NAN: Zentral Buero (ZBU): vol. 454, D IV, L 2, Bd. 1, p. 8.).

⁴⁰ Wuest, Manuscript III, 24.

staff and priests. Especially for the pagan Africans this was an eye-opener. It was a message that sick and disabled people are as valuable as any other. It was the Good Samaritan from the Gospel come alive and in their midst. The Christians among them were given an example which they would take back to their homesteads on their release from hospital. For the pagans it took away their fears and prejudices. If it did not lead to conversion it opened channels of communication and friendship.

Apart from the frequent contacts with the patients it also provided opportunities of reaching out to a much wider spectrum of people than just the sick. A steady stream of relatives and friends came to look at the patient. They would meet the staff in the rooms, corridors or at the door. It was an involuntary way of meeting the religious sisters and talking to them. This would diminish the misconceptions and possibly lead to appreciation of their work. In conclusion, the medical care taught the people the practice of Christian charity of the Good Samaritan. Care for the sick among the pagans had always been accompanied by searching for a scapegoat and for the evil power behind it. Here they found women and men who cared, because they believed in the intrinsic value of life, created by God in his image. The medical services of the various missions not only improved the basic conditions of life, but also paved the way to Christ and His Gospel.

CHAPTER 3

FIRST ATTEMPTS TO ENTER OWAMBO

As soon as the Oblate-community had properly settled in Windhoek, Father Bernhard Hermann started making preparations to follow up the advice of Prefect Aloys Schoch to start a mission in Owambo. The year 1897 was still unsuitable on account of the cattle plague, but as soon as this had been overcome, real plans could be made.¹ Pro-Prefect Hermann bought three horses for M 400 each, one for himself, one for his assistant and the third one to carry the luggage. Accompanied by the good wishes of those who stayed behind, they started the hazardous undertaking. For days on end they travelled under the glowing rays of the sun. The horses became tired and stopped frequently. With the greatest effort, more on foot than on horseback, they reached the military station of Omaruru. There they met a detachment of Schutztruppe, which had received orders to depart for the North.²

At the invitation of the commanding officer the little group joined his section. Accompanied by two soldiers, Father Hermann and his companion stayed with the supply waggon at some distance from the main body of troops. A more or less recognisable track and a number of mountains on the horizon were the only navigational aids. Thanks to the sharp eye of Hermann's "Bambusen"³ they could

¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 22.

² Bernhard Hermann, "Die Anfaenge der katholischen Mission in Suedwestafrika", lecture delivered in Huenfeld, recorded in Jos. Wuest, Manuscript II, II:21 (A3) taken from Maria Immaculata July (1898).

Bernhard Hermann, "Essais de la fondation d'une mission parmi les Ovambo" manuscript (ADW A 66: Owambo Gruendung).

³ "Servant".

follow the right direction for quite a while. Suddenly the waggon came to a standstill. The donkeys at the back of the team were found suspended, because in the rough terrain the load had shifted to the back of the waggon. After re-loading the journey went on for another couple of hours through high thorny bushes. But then the load became too heavy for the animals and the drivers were compelled to take a number of sacks of rice and containers with bread down and drop them in the veld. The further North the little group advanced, the less recognisable became the road. What made the situation very serious was the lack of water. As they had expected to reach the main body of soldiers by late afternoon, nobody had made provision for extra water. As none of them was familiar with the terrain they did not know where any waterhole could be situated. When darkness fell they prepared camp and tethered the legs of the donkeys to prevent them from fleeing. When morning broke it appeared that the donkeys had escaped in search of water. The only solution open to the little group was for each individual to go and look for water in a different direction. After an entire day of wandering around Father Hermann had not found any water, but in the evening he discovered an old empty hut in which he spent the second night. The next morning he set out to find the campsite of the first day. After a while he saw his companions, but they appeared to be in a terrible state. It looked as if they had to resign themselves to the worst. Suddenly, they heard a muffled sound in the distance. One of the auxiliaries with a couple of oxen had been sent to give them a hand with the transport. They immediately asked for water, but he answered in Cape Dutch that it was "baie ver". Nevertheless they gave him their haversacks and asked him to bring them water. After two hours he returned and they quenched their thirst. The man had to make a second trip and only then did they feel strong enough to follow him to catch up with the main

body of soldiers. These in turn had become worried and had sent out scouts to search for them. To the relief of everybody they caught up with the main body after some hours and their fear was soon forgotten.

On the way to Grootfontein they met travellers who informed them that Mr Axel Erikson, the confidant of Prefect Aloys Schoch, had joined an elephant hunting party in Angola and would not return for a long time. This was very bad news as Father Hermann depended on him. He was helpful to the missionaries, he knew the languages perfectly, and was very friendly with the Chiefs in Owambo. Though it must have been a great disappointment, only one decision could be taken. They should turn and go home.⁴ After a few days of travelling another misfortune befell Father Hermann. He contracted malaria and as he was in the neighbourhood of Waterberg he was taken in by Missionary Eich, who treated him in a most friendly and competent manner for three weeks. After this period Father Hermann took leave again, very grateful for the treatment which was a living sign of Christian charity. Many years later, the helpful Missionary Eich resided in Swakopmund to a very advanced age.

Depressed but not despairing Father Hermann reached Windhoek. For the time being no new expeditions could be planned as the means were simply not available. In 1898 Father Hermann had to attend the General Chapter, which prevented any new initiative.⁵

⁴ Jos Wuest, Manuscript II, II:22 (ADW A 4).

⁵ Franz Watterott, Die Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwest recorded in: Wuest, Manuscript I, I: 38-39.

But in 1899 Father Hermann again prepared another expedition to Owambo. When he returned from Europe he had been accompanied by five new missionaries, for whom he had to find a mission field. After learning it the hard way, he had decided to prepare the journey meticulously and properly this time. He bought a complete yoke of oxen and a big waggon with sunroof. As soon as the oxen arrived in Windhoek he had them inoculated against lung disease, which at that time was raging in the Windhoek area. Sadly, they had to accept that after only eight days half the animals had died. Another temporary postponement was unavoidable. But in September 1900, everything had advanced to the stage that the expedition could become a reality.⁶ Father Hermann had invited Father Nachtwey to come up from Swakopmund and accompany him. As had been the case before, they thought it wise to join a military patrol.⁷

On the evening of 16 October 1900, they arrived at the Waterberg, after traversing the dry stretch between Osire and Waterberg. For man and beast alike it was an encouraging sign to see the high trees and lush grass and the streamlets with clear water flowing down from the plateau. After the animals had been led away for watering and grazing, they pitched their tent under a high fig tree and took their evening meal well-contented. The next morning the commanding officer ordered a respite of four days, which gave the party the opportunity to reconnoitre the beautiful plateau of the Waterberg.⁸ The Prefect intended to

⁶ September/October was not a good time to travel on account of the drought. On the other hand they could not wait for summer, as the rains and malaria would then pose a serious problem.

⁷ Nachtwey to a Friend (in Huenfeld), Swakopmund, 16 April, 1901 recorded in Wuest, Manuscript II, II:1.

⁸ Ibid., 2.

part from the military detachment and take the Northeasterly route to Grootfontein. But returning travellers warned against that decision. That road was impassable because of total lack of water and deep heavy sand. Therefore he reversed his decision and remained with the military column. These would round the Waterberg in a Southwesterly direction and then move northwards via Otjenga and Otavi.

On the second day of the journey the rumour spread that cattle disease had broken out in the column. They heard that one animal had fallen at the Waterberg already, but to avoid unnecessary panic, the drivers had hushed up the case. This had been in vain. It appeared that it was especially the mission's oxen which were mostly affected and eventually decimated. At Otjenga at a distance of 80 km they had to outspan the first affected animal and let it follow without any burden. The stretch of territory between Otjenga and Otavi was very tiring and without open water. It affected the animals most seriously. Once they had arrived at Otavi, the sick animal died immediately. The next morning two more suffered from the dreadful disease and as the experts saw clear indications of the infectious disease they shot the animals. To avoid any danger of the disease spreading, the soldiers built a large bonfire and threw the carcasses on top. When the animals had been burning for a while, the scent invited some shy Bushmen to come and look. But once the meat started to smell quite tasty all the men and women with children appeared from the bush. In spite of the blazing fire they took their chances at pulling big pieces of meat from the fire. Black police executed strict control that no meat would be carried away from the scene, an order the Bushmen did not understand at all.⁹

⁹ Ibid., 2.

Notwithstanding all disappointment, only one decision seemed reasonable: to return to Windhoek. On New Year's eve a knock was heard by Father Franz Watterott and after inquiry he recognised to his utter astonishment the voice of Father Hermann. Upon the question why he was alone, Father Hermann explained that Father Nachtwey had returned to his station at Swakopmund. The Prefect had borrowed a horse in Okahandja and he expected the waggon with the surviving oxen to arrive within a few days.¹⁰

Financially, it was impossible to organise another expedition after so many failures. This would give the Finnish Lutheran Mission ample opportunity to settle among the remaining tribes in the North. As soon as that happened, the government would not have allowed a second denomination into that territory. The Finnish Mission, in particular, was actively trying to obtain the necessary permission, and its efforts were successful in 1902. One should understand that the Finnish Missionary Society regarded Owambo as their special domain. After Hugo Hahn's journeys to Owambo in 1857 and 1866 he was so impressed by the Owambo people, that he had promised some of the Chiefs to send missionaries. But the Board of the Rheinische Mission at Barmen was unable to meet Hahn's requests. The Board could, however, refer Hugo Hahn to the young Finnish Missionary Society, which was looking for a field abroad. On the occasion of the seventh centenary of the introduction of Christianity in Finland, which had been commemorated in 1857, a new missionary zeal had caught the Finnish Church and she had founded the Finnish Missionary Society with the permission of the Russian Emperor. In order to satisfy the Orthodox Church he had stipulated, that they would only receive

¹⁰ Franz Watterott, Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwestafrika, S4, in Wuest, Manuscript II, II:6.

permission for their missionary activities outside the Russian Empire. In 1868 the first group of Finnish missionaries arrived in Cape Town and after one year of practical experience and study of the language in Otjimbingwe, they travelled to Owambo. On 9 July 1870, the group arrived at Omandongo, the seat of Chief Shikongo of Ondonga. The expansion in the early years was unexpected and quick and at one stage in 1872 the mission occupied seven stations in four tribal areas. Towards the end of 1873 the missionaries had withdrawn to their point of departure in Ondonga on account of considerable opposition in the other tribal areas. And even in Ondonga the opposition had gathered momentum. Until the time of Father Nachtwey's expedition the Finnish Missionary Society was still confined to Ondonga and they were anxious to expand once more among the other tribes. This also explains why Father Schoch and after him Hermann and Nachtwey thought they were entitled to enter Owambo, because four major tribes had not been christianised yet, and according to the rules of the Colonial Department, the Catholic Mission was not allowed into a tribal area when a Protestant Mission was present.¹¹ This explained the expression of "remaining tribes".

The Governor of the Protectorate, Major Leutwein, was right, when he confided to Father Hermann that the Protestant Mission had again beaten the Catholics. He expressed his regret, but admitted that he could not help it.¹² This phrase expressed correctly the feelings at the time. Also the Protestants would have felt that way, because they regarded Catholics as adversaries and not as fellow-Christians. The Catholics for their part entertained a similar attitude and when

¹¹ J.J. Kritzinger, Sending en Kerk in Suidwes-Afrika 2 vols. (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1972), I:30-31; II:b180-b194.

¹² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 23.

the Protestant Mission had been chased away from Angola by the Portuguese authorities, the Catholics in turn regarded this as a kind of victory in their race with the Protestant Missions.

We must agree that the Catholic missionaries had been active enough to reach the North and North West of the country, but natural and unexpected causes had prevented them from reaching further than Grootfontein and Otavi. They had to accept temporary defeat and wait for better times. These would only present themselves in 1924, when the first Catholic missionaries were allowed to enter Ukuambi in Owamboland.

10
 Essai de la fondation d'une mission
 parmi les Ovambo.

1^{er} essai: R. P. Hermann, préfet apostolique (1897)

C'était au mois de Novembre de l'année 1896, que les Missionnaires P. H. J., les R. P. P. P. Hermann, Filling et le Fr. Louis Kavenith vinrent mettre le pied sur le territoire de la colonie allemande, du Sud-Ouest d'Afrique. Sur l'ordre de leur Supérieur général, le F. R. P. Louber, ils vinrent d'abord s'installer à Windhoek, capitale de la colonie, pour y missionner les colons allemands et les soldats.

A leur arrivée à Erwatojomondu, le 5. Nov. 1896, ils y rencontrèrent le R. P. Schoch, préfet apostolique du Transvaal, venant de l'intérieur du pays, où il était envoyé sur l'ordre de la Propagande, afin d'explorer le pays en vue de la fondation de missions.

Comme le Gouvernement allemand a cédé aux Missionsnaires les parties Nord-Ouest de la colonie allemande pour la fondation de Missions catholiques, le R. P. Schoch s'en alla tout d'abord visiter le capitaine Ovambo d'En gandra. Il fut entendu que le R. P. Préfet lui en voya des Missionnaires l'année prochaine, qui le capitaine devait recevoir, avec quelques-uns de ses sujets, à la rencontre des Missionnaires.

Les Missionnaires ayant terminé leur maison et chapelle sur l'île à Windhoek, avril 1897, le R. P. Hermann, préfet.

Report by Pro-Prefect Bernhard Hermann of his first attempt to reach Owambo

CHAPTER 4

AN UNEXPECTED INVITATION

In the year 1898 Governor Theodor Leutwein invited Prefect Bernhard Hermann to participate in a military expedition to Gobabis. In the course of this campaign Father Hermann came upon a number of Tswana who had settled in the neighbourhood of the town. Actually they were strangers in this country without tribal property rights.

Some years earlier they had been experiencing difficulties with the English administration in Kuruman and they had taken the decision to move to the North. From Kuruman they slowly moved through the Kalahari during the 1880's and 1890's, following the course of the Nossob valley. Some time after 1890 they arrived at the German border. With permission of the German governor they settled at Aminuis, at Gobabis and along the Black Nossob.¹

But the original inhabitants did not seem to appreciate this incursion. When in 1896 the Nama and Herero revolted against German rule they also attacked the Tswana at Aais, killed a number of their menfolk and carried off women, children and cattle.² Quite soon the Germans were able to suppress this rising, set the prisoners free and return the cattle to their rightful owners. It was unfortunate for the poor immigrants that an epidemic of cattle-disease again rid them of

¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 24.
Theodor Leutwein, Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1906), 285.

² Ibid., 21.

their cattle.³ Being without income they looked for work, which they found in Gobabis where just at that period in time a boom in building activity for the German army and administration provided employment possibilities.⁴

Father Hermann quickly learnt to know the Tswana people. The events which followed seem to prove that the author was right in stating that the Prefect inspired confidence. The Tswana entrusted some of their children to him to take to Windhoek for schooling. But while he was still around they came up with a more comprehensive plan. They proposed that the Catholic Mission should buy a farm in the neighbourhood of Gobabis. There they would like to settle under the protection of the mission. This would give the mission an opportunity to open a school for all their children.⁵ When this proposal became known in Windhoek, it was like a revelation for the missionaries. This was an unexpected expansion of their terrain among the local people neither the Government nor the missionaries had thought of. As the Tswana were not indigenous to South West Africa they did not fall under the regulations of the Colonial Department in Berlin concerning missionary activities.

When the time came to return to Windhoek, Prefect Hermann took three Tswana boys along to attend the proposed trade school. Soon three more followed from families who worked in the neighbourhood of Windhoek. Father Franz Watterott was appointed

³ Franz Khiba, "Wie die Betschuanen von den Deutschen gerettet wurden" (CH Gobabis; Addenda: File Franz Khiba), 3-5.

⁴ Franz Watterott, Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwest, Manuscript (Wuest Manuscript II:7), 5. Original in French. Translation into German by Jos Wuest.

⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 24.

as their teacher. He testified that the mental capabilities of these pupils were quite astonishing. They quickly understood how to read and write. According to the author the German language caused them little problems. It is even stated that after one year they could assist the fathers as interpreters. Unfortunately, we have no means to establish the standard and degree of their performance. But Father Watterott, who would work for forty years among the Tswana, kept on repeating that his Tswana were quite clever, whether they were from Kuruman or from the area around Lake Ngami.⁶ He felt that they had shown their moral authority and capabilities by subduing the people around them and making them pay tribute, among them the Hambukushu at Andara.⁷ One of those firstfruits was the well-known catechist Franz Khiba who rendered such invaluable services as catechist and teacher to the first missionaries in Gobabis and with whose career we will deal in the chapter on Gobabis. Simultaneously Father Watterott made use of this contact with Tswana boys at the school to become initiated in the subtleties of the Tswana language.

After Father Bernhard Hermann had resigned as Prefect and Father Augustin Nachtwey had been appointed as his successor, the latter was eager to take up the connection again. He wrote to his friends at home that this would offer the long-

⁶ F. Rudolf Lehmann, "Das Tswana-Dorf auf der Farm Epukiro der roemisch-katholischen Mission in Suedwestafrika" Sonderdruck: Zeitschrift fuer Ethnologie Braunschweig 77 (1952) 1: 106.

In a session of the Landrat of SWA on 10 June 1911, trader Hugo Abraham, who knew the Tswana well, defended the point of view that they came from Lehututu, a little West of the 22 degree meridian.

Also the Rheinische Mission preferred Lehututu as point of departure. They belonged to the poorest section of Tswana, who lived in the neighbourhood of Lake Ngami. They were called (ba-)Kalahari and lived like Bushmen.

Berichte der Rheinischen Mission 14 (1857): 213ff.

⁷ Watterott, Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwest (Wuest Manuscript II), 6.

awaited opportunity to start for the first time a mission among Africans. Apart from the missionaries themselves, the benefactors in Germany had been waiting with some apprehension, when they would hear of the first conversions among the local populace. One can easily read between the lines the frustrated feelings on that subject.⁸

When Father Nachtwey arrived in Gobabis he received information, that the authorities had caused the Tswana to move to Aminuis. Without hesitation Nachtwey followed them, 180 km to the South East where he found a Tswana village with some 500 inhabitants. He was accompanied by one of the students of Windhoek, who could show his competence as an interpreter. It seems that he fulfilled this job with so much conviction that the entire village wished to be taken up in the Catholic Church. It was only much later that Father Watterott learnt the real reasons behind this wish. Many of the older people had already received instruction in the faith by Anglican missionaries. One of the two who claimed to be teachers related that an old missionary, Rev Robert Moffat, had given them clear instructions.⁹ In case they could not find an Anglican priest, they should not turn to a Protestant minister but to a Catholic priest. He had explained to them that the Catholic Church was the first and therefore the mother of churches.¹⁰

Those Tswana who were acquainted with the situation at Gobabis did not want to stay at Aminuis. They felt that the place was cursed. In the routine epidemics

⁸ Augustin Nachtwey, "The first Mission among Africans", María Immaculata 7 (1900): 110.

⁹ Franz Khiba, "Aufzeichnungen des Schulmeisters Franz Khiba" (CH Gobabis; Addenda: File: Franz Khiba, manuscript), 6.

¹⁰ Wuest, Manuscript II, 6.

among cattle they saw clear proof of that opinion. During the short period they were allowed to live near the Black Nossob, they had grown abundant fields of maize. Now they wished to settle permanently in that area and asked the fathers to buy the farm Kaukurus. At that stage Kaukurus belonged to the German Settlers' Company. Though the management of this company was quite eager to do business with the Catholic Mission, the negotiations conducted at Windhoek had to be approved by Berlin, which dragged on for a long time. The Company proposed that the mission should not wait, but start with the various activities as the management was certain of a satisfactory result.¹¹

Prefect Nachtwey invited Father Watterott to prepare himself and settle at the farm Kaukurus. Accompanied by Brother Kleist and two families he arrived there on 2 February 1902. However, it remained questionable for Father Watterott how much preparatory work could be done considering the lack of a contract.¹² During that period of uncertainty the young chief of Aminuis arrived at Kaukurus. His father had died and though he had been elected as his successor he was not without opposition. A number of the people, at the instigation of the two teachers, did not recognise him as Chief and they did not feel compelled to fulfill the promises the deceased Chief had made to Father Nachtwey. Fortunately, this opposition, though it appeared to be very vocal, was not strong and the majority of the ordinary people eagerly awaited the arrival of the missionary.¹³

¹¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 25.

¹² Wuest, Manuscript II, 6.

¹³ Watterott, Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwest (Wuest Manuscript II), 6.

The situation seemed serious enough for Father Watterott to take his horse and ride to Aminuis forthwith.¹⁴ After his arrival a meeting was arranged to discuss the points of controversy. First of all the question of the legality of the election was discussed. After convincing the dissidents of the justification of the young Chief's election the accord with Nachtwey was considered. Among the local people the idea was widespread, that after the death of one of the parties to an accord, such an agreement had lapsed. Though it is not stated in writing it seemed that Father Watterott could convince them that such an accord was between an organisation, the Church, and the people, and not between individuals. We could speculate today that they in fact objected to Nachtwey's conditions of monogamy and a ban on divorce, and that the death of the Chief created an unexpected opportunity to revert to tribal custom. If we compare this situation with problems in the rest of Africa, we might assume that this explanation could have its merits. We still were far removed from opinions expressed by modern missiologists who point the way to an approach of "open ethics", which on the one hand does full justice to the core ideas of Biblical ethics - law, gospel, justice, peace, freedom, love, forgiveness, reconciliation, sanctity etc. - in its context, but on the other hand in an authentic way carries on the dialogue with the ethics of non-Christian religions and philosophies of life.¹⁵

¹⁴ Wuest, Manuscript II, 9.

¹⁵ J.A.B. Jongeneel, Missiologie. II Missionaire Theologie ('s Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B.V., 1991), 117.

Cf.:

Ludwig Ruetti, Zur Theologie der Mission. Kritische Analysen und Orientierungen. Mission und Ethik (Muenchen-Mainz, 1972), 2252-2561.

Eugene Hillmann C.S.Sp., The Church as Mission (New York, 1973).

Karl Hartenstein, "Versuch einer missionarischen Ethik", E.M.M., LXXIX (1935): 1-100; 33-44; 65-72.

Walbert Buehlmann O.F.M.Cap., Per Una Consuetudo Missionaria (Roma, 1970).

Helmuth Thielicke, Theologische Ethik (Tuebingen, 1968) Monogamie-Polygamie: 579-590. Die Scheidung polygamer Ehen: 708-712.

Apparently, Father Watterott was very relieved, because he reports that to everybody's satisfaction unity among the people had been restored. Now, Father Watterott presented the people with a practical problem. He possessed a waggon at Kaukurus but no oxen. This would prevent him from coming to Aminuis as speedily as they expected. Showing a sign of goodwill the Tswana immediately sent the necessary number of oxen as well as assistants without asking for remuneration.¹⁶

When the Prefect had been informed of these deliberations he took the decision to make use of the favourable conditions and open a station in Aminuis.¹⁷ Again Father Watterott was asked to take this task upon his shoulders. In the month of August he arrived there in the company of Father Georg Weiler. The people gave them an enthusiastic reception and the foreman of the village placed a big hut at their disposal. For the time being the dwelling would be used as their house, chapel and school.¹⁸

In the weeks that followed the fathers made preparations to build a solid house. When the time came to prepare the bricks the entire village set to work, including the girls. Whenever they had time the men transported the clay and the women carried water. Just before Christmas they could occupy the house. One of

Lexicon zur Weltmission, 1975. Polygamie (Ernst Dammann): 440-441.
Eheprobleme bei Neuchristen (Peter Beyerhaus): 122-123.

¹⁶ Wuest, Manuscript II, 9.

¹⁷ NAN: Cat. of Archivalia; 11.1 Government Departments and Offices. 1/1/16 Gobabis DGO 1898-1915. Heimstaettenverkaeufer Gobabis: 16, L.5, e.33 Aminuis. Katholische Mission, spaeter Deutsche Kolonialschule in Windhuk.

¹⁸ Wuest, Manuscript III, 2.

the rooms had been designated as chapel, while a big veranda enabled the priest to celebrate H. Mass on Sundays for a bigger congregation.

When the building had progressed halfway, Father Watterott had to leave and travel to Windhoek to purchase the necessary provisions and items for the presbytery. In Windhoek Father Nachtwey informed him that the negotiations concerning Kaukurus had failed. The conditions and the price had been unacceptable. Moreover it had been established through experience that Kaukurus would be too small and lacked sufficient water for a bigger community.¹⁹

On his way back to Aminuis Father Watterott took the opportunity to search for another farm but it was in vain. Then he turned to Gobabis where district chief Colonel Streitwolff met him in a very friendly fashion. When Father Watterott informed him of his disappointing experiences, the colonel mentioned that soon a farm of 30,000 ha would be placed on the market, when the established military post would be abandoned. He thought this a good opportunity to sell the farm to a trusted organisation and he encouraged Father Watterott to think it over.²⁰

After also Prefect Nachtwey had gathered enough information about Epukiro he dropped the case of Kaukurus completely.²¹ He came into contact with Lieutenant-Colonel Von Winkler in Gobabis. The latter advised him to speak to Major von Estorff about the difficulties he had encountered in obtaining a suitable farm. In fact Father Nachtwey was thinking in terms of an experimental farm, where he

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.

²⁰ Ibid., 1.

²¹ Wuest, Manuscript II, 9.

could teach and practise gardening, agriculture and stock-farming.

When we read in that letter the suggestion to try to obtain a farm at Stampriet for the Tswana people, it proves that the Prefect had no clue that Stampriet as well as Aminuis were situated to the South of the 23rd parallel and thus by right belonged to the Southern Prefecture.²² Colonel Streitwolff informed the Prefect that the farm Epukiro possessed open water and thus would be suitable for limited agriculture. With 30,000 ha it would be big enough for settlement and the reasonable price of 50 pennies per ha made it quite affordable.²³

At the request of Father Nachtwey, Watterott had left Aminuis on 19 March 1903. Also Nachtwey would travel to the East and together they would first visit Kaukurus, collect their property and invite the families to follow. Having completed this task they rode to Epukiro, of which they caught sight on 23 April 1903. Father Nachtwey became quite emotional when he saw the beautiful green valley and he commended Father Watterott to turn the farm into a thriving mission station.²⁴

In the course of the following days also Father Francois Jaeger from Aminuis and the district officer from Gobabis, Colonel Streitwolff, made their appearances and in their presence the mission was officially opened. 4 May was regarded as

²² Prefect to Lieutenant-Colonel Von Winkler, Windhoek, 2 January, 1903 (ADW A 46: Epukiro I).

²³ Wuest, Manuscript III, 1.

NAN: Cat. of Archivalia; 1.1 Government Department and Offices; Gobabis DGO 1898-1915: 1/1/16 Gobabis Abteilung Farmverkaeuft. 3; L.5, d 13, Epukiro. Deutsche Kolonialschule in Windhuk (Katholische Mission).

²⁴ Watterott, Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwest (Wuest Manuscript II), 6.

an important date in the life of the young station when the first Herero youth attended school. In the following months, while they lived in the old military post, they gradually settled down. On 29 June Brother Kipper went to Gobabis and Kaukurus to fetch the remainder of their possessions, while on 10 June the rector of Aminuis appeared with 42 Tswana who had expressed the wish to join their brothers and sisters at Epukiro. Not all Tswana shared their preference. A number of them liked Aminuis where also Chief Khosiman resided. In order to avoid any friction the mission at Epukiro on 12 July divided land for gardens between Herero and Tswana. Another happy occasion for the mission was the 10 August, when the first Tswana children entered the school.²⁵ In view of the tense situation in the South the military station was occupied again and two days later the brother started to build a mission house in Tswana style. On 21 September 1903, Prefect Nachtwey, after his return from Okavango, took the opportunity to make his appearance. We read between the lines of the records that 10 October was regarded as vital. The influential Herero Chief Joseph of Gunichas brought his children all the way from Gobabis to attend school at the Catholic Mission. In missionary as well as civil relations this must have been regarded as important for a peaceful co-existence in the East. Slowly, life at Epukiro reached normality when the fathers and the newly arrived brother Bast moved into their Tswana dwelling. When on 24 November the mission received confirmation of the sale of the farm and on 2 December Father Watterott returned from Aminuis with another 30 Tswana the intended village was taking shape.²⁶

The year 1904 started with bad omens when the news of the Herero rising started

²⁵ Codex Historicus Epukiro, 1.

²⁶ Ibid., 2.

spreading. On 15 January 1904 Witvley had been attacked and sergeant Gross murdered. Five German families from Otjunda and Kondore sought refuge at the station and the next day they prepared the station for defence. A number of military had reached Epukiro and sergeant Wellstein took command. Also Colonel Streitwolff and seven of his men had stayed for one day, but then withdrew to Gobabis. The mission staff offered their services to take turns and stand guard during the night. On 18 January 1904, it was discovered that the Herero of Epukiro had fled out of fear, but the chronicler reported that they did not have any bad intentions.²⁷ Under 18 January we find a remarkable entry. First it is stated that the Tswana defended the farm together with the Germans. This is followed by the note that they were not fully trusted, except by Father Watterott, who gave them his complete confidence. On 19 January the situation became too dangerous and it was decided to leave for the fortress Gobabis. With three carts and one waggon and the cattle of the mission they left the station, followed by the German farmers, who had found refuge at the farm. Some Tswana joined the group, but most of them stayed behind to try and protect their property and herd. The soldiers protected the column and at Okahajure they caught three Herero who were on the verge of ambushing them. On 21 January the patrol was reinforced by sergeant Bay and nine men who joined the group. A few hours later it appeared how necessary this would be as at one stage they were completely surrounded by Herero fighters. Shots were fired everywhere. Father Watterott felt that they were in mortal danger. He took the decision to baptise the catechumens then and there, which happened with fervent prayer and under a flood of tears. After the battle had lasted more than an hour and though many Herero were still hiding in the bush, the column could proceed and soon they had

²⁷ Ibid., 2.

reached Gobabis.²⁸

The fathers were again fully involved as military chaplains. Without any reservations Father Krist accompanied a patrol of 30 men to Oas where on 23 January one farmer and one soldier had been killed. Meanwhile the battle around the fortress Gobabis raged on. Chief Traugott and his group of Herero fled into the mountains and his brother David was killed. Even Herero Joseph vanished into the mountainous area. Three days later news reached Gobabis that the Herero had attacked Epukiro, looted the buildings and afterwards destroyed them. On 6 February a number of people from Aminuis sought refuge in Gobabis with Father Weiler accompanying them. Father Jaeger had stayed behind to guard the property.

Ten days later on 16 February the besieged town of Gobabis breathed a sense of relief when news filtered through that the auxiliaries stood before Kaukurus. The next day 230 troops with nine officers in fifteen waggons arrived, welcomed by the relieved inhabitants. Father Wolfgang Kieger was the military chaplain. On 29 February Father Watterott could not resist the temptation to go and look at Epukiro, accompanied by some Tswana. Near Owinge they found property of the Church. On 16 March Watterott returned via Okonjoze.²⁹ Three days later they made a second attempt but at the farm Ohlsen they received information of the battle at Ovikokorero and they were forced to return.

The road to Aminuis seemed to be safer because on 27 March Father Watterott went to that station to take Father Lauer as the future socius of Father Jaeger and

²⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁹ Ibid., 4.

returned on 10 April, both times without experiencing any incidents. It seemed that they were rather fearless because on 12 April Watterott and Krist took to the riding oxen and were on their way to Epukiro again. To their astonishment they found a number of Tswana peacefully harvesting. After their return to Gobabis they went through to Windhoek together with a group of farmers and some Tswana. Finally, on 8 June the Fathers Watterott and Krist and Brother Kipper left Gobabis for the last time for Epukiro, at least that is what they had in mind. Father Filliung, in the meantime, had preceded them with von Winkler's company. Though it seems to us that they moved quite freely to and fro, not particularly affected by the war situation, the chronicler remarks that they would never forget the wartime again. In plain words this expressed that they had also suffered sufficiently from fear and hunger.³⁰

However, their ordeal was not finished by far. On 7 September with Heidebruch's company, Father Weiler as chaplain came to Epukiro to advise all those who lived there to take their possessions and withdraw to the relative safety of Gobabis again. Two days after their arrival in Gobabis they joined a column leaving for Windhoek. In spite of the war situation and the shaky conditions it seems that Windhoek was not left without news. On 4 October a Bushman from Epukiro brought a letter from Father Ziegenfusz who was military chaplain with the 2nd Field Regiment in the area of Epukiro. One day later another Bushman arrived with a letter from the Tswana Arnat. He informed the mission that Father Weiler with the patrol of captain Meyengruck were encamped at Ombakaka, the farm of the Bulliks.

Finally, the situation seemed to be safe enough and on 12 November Father

³⁰ Ibid., 5.

Watterott and a number of Tswana from Epukiro set out for their farm. On 19 November they entered the mission and to their delight met the Fathers Ziegenfusz and Weiler. For a while they had to make do with a tent, but soon they energetically started building a new Tswana pondok.³¹

The first months of 1905 were still restless with regular stealing of cattle and rumours of battles. But the building programme went ahead and on 1 June the chapel was ready to be blessed.³² In 1906 news filtered through from English Bechuanaland that the Tswanas had risen in revolt. Though the Tswanas in South West Africa did not join their brethren, they had problems in accepting Christian moral standards. At a Council meeting at Aminuis on 2 August 1906, the delegates inquired why Tswana men could not take a second wife. Old customs did not die out easily and witchcraft and witchdoctors were still very powerful.³³ It was the chronicler's feeling, that the young people were favourably inclined towards the mission while the older ones remained hostile. They even cursed the H. Religion. Father Filliung, the rector, discovered that his own housemaster conducted business in girls.³⁴

When the situation had returned to normal, district officer Captain Willeke published a circular with the order to hand in all guns and ammunition belonging to the army. All guns, which belonged to individuals, such as those of the mission and of Tswana people, had to be registered in Gobabis. After the

³¹ Ibid., 6.

³² Ibid., 9.

³³ Ibid., 10.

³⁴ Ibid., 10.

confusion of the war situation it became clear that an orderly period had set in. This would also benefit the work of the mission. In a report to Windhoek the District Commissioner of Gobabis pronounced a very positive judgment of the work of Father Watterott. He had observed that the Mission of Epukiro was far ahead of the Mission of Aminuis. Father Watterott took care to educate his Tswana spiritually and culturally and exerted a very good influence.³⁵

Another improvement, especially important for Epukiro, was the telegraph connection between Gobabis and Epukiro via Onigi, which had been completed. For those who had lived in the isolation of the East this must have been a great relief.³⁶

Contrary to the Codex Historicus of Epukiro, which deals with events in great detail, the information from Aminuis is very scarce. The records mainly deal with instrumenta sponsalitia, while the first entry only starts on 12 September 1909 in Tswana.³⁷ On page 9 the first entries signed by Father Filliung appear under 25 March 1911.³⁸ Another entry by Father Filliung is found on page 17.³⁹ On 29 March 1916, Father Dohren signed and the last entry by Father Filliung was recorded on 20 January 1923. The leaps and bounds of this chronicle went on by

³⁵ Kaiserlicher Districtsamtstmann, Graf von Schwerin an das Gouvernement in Windhuk, Gobabis, 30 December 1911 in:

Lehmann, "Das Tswana-Dorf auf der Farm Epukiro der roemisch-katholischen Mission in Suedwestafrika", 114. (NAN: Dr C.J.C. Lemmer Versameling L599. Arch. nr 2981).

³⁶ Codex Historicus Epukiro, 12.

³⁷ Codex Historicus Aminuis, 1.

³⁸ Ibid. 9.

³⁹ Ibid., 17.

making a new start in 1946 ending soon thereafter, and another start in 1961. Fortunately, some correspondence survived which is shedding some light on the early life in Aminuis.

Though there had not been basic objections to the founding of a Catholic Mission in Aminuis, the German Administration in Windhoek informed the Prefect that permission should be asked from the District Commissioner in Gobabis and from the Tswana Chief in Aminuis.⁴⁰ This seemed to have succeeded, because four months later Prefect Nachtwey received information from the central administration that no objection had been raised to start a mission and that the way was open to obtain a piece of land for building purposes. But as far as land was concerned another hitch appeared. If the land was intended for the order of OMI, permission from the highest authorities would be necessary. If the plot was purchased by the GmbH (Ltd; Pty), the existence of that corporation first had to be proved. This did not present a problem, because Father Hermann had taken the first step in that direction on 1 May 1900.⁴¹

Though the information is not so plentiful the war did not pass Aminuis unnoticed. At the end of the year 1904 several letters were exchanged between the army command and the Catholic Mission concerning the requisition of the Aminuis cart and twelve oxen belonging to the Tswana by the army patrol which

⁴⁰ Imperial German Government to Prefect Nachtwey, Windhoek, 2 May, 1902 (ADW A 40; Aminuis I: Letter by Kaiserliches Deutsches Gouvernement No 3378).

⁴¹ Imperial Government to Nachtwey, Windhoek, 10 September, 1902 (ADW A 40; Aminuis I: Brief der Kaiserlichen Regierung an Nachtwey, 10-09-02 Nr. 6378).

occupied Aminuis.⁴² Together with the requisition order for the cart and twelve oxen, it stipulated the amount for compensation. Though Father Lauer, when he made his appearance in Gobabis, produced the requisition document, which had been signed by Station commander Kubitzza, he did not receive the compensation. Thereupon Father Jaeger approached the Imperial High Command in Windhoek, accused Lieutenant-Colonel Streitwolff of injustice, and demanded M 1440.⁴³ This caused Lieutenant-Colonel Streitwolff to defend himself and accuse Father Jaeger of exaggerated demands. He also suggested that Prefect Nachtwey should visit him in Gobabis.⁴⁴ The last one in this series of letters was dated 14 August, 1905. A certain agreement had been reached with Father Lauer and the case was closed.⁴⁵ It is quite clear that any penny was valuable for the mission and they would go to great lengths to obtain it.

Then suddenly the war became very real for the people of Aminuis when Father Francois Jaeger was killed. The first message received by Prefect Nachtwey was via the heliograph from Gobabis. The heliogramm read that Father Franz Jaeger had been shot by Witbooi Hottentots on 2 March 1905 at 4.30 p.m. Some time later a very sad letter by Father Lauer followed, who had lost a companion. Father Jaeger had also been fully accepted by the people and he had known their language perfectly. Lauer reported that Father Jaeger had gone to take a sick person home

⁴² Stationsaelteste Kubitzza an die R.K. Mission, Aminuis, 24 November, 1904 (ADW A 40; Aminuis I: Requisitionsbefehl)

⁴³ Francois Jaeger to Kaiserliches Oberkommando in Windhoek, Aminuis, 28 December, 1904 (ADW A 40; Aminuis I: Jaeger, 28-12-1904).

⁴⁴ Streitwolff to Kaiserliches Oberkommando der Schutztruppe, Gobabis, 1 March, 1905 (ADW A 40; Aminuis I: Kaiserliches Distriktsamt, Nr. 1097).

⁴⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel Eimdel, Gobabis, 14 August, 1905 (ADW 40: Aminuis I: Letter by Kaiserliches Distriktsamt Gobabis, Nr. 924).

to Ukui, 50 km on the other side of the Bechuanaland border. At the same time he intended to take the opportunity to hunt and for that purpose had taken the .71 and a hunting gun. He had left on 28 February with the mission cart pulled by 11 oxen. Father Lauer had accompanied him to the first pan behind Aminuis, but had not joined the expedition as the station could not be left unguarded. In the letter it is mentioned that a certain Mr Abraham from Lesutitung had sent a warning note that Hottentots were swarming all over the fields between Molokuan and Ukui. It is clear that Father Jaeger had understood the warning, because the report goes on to say that he had decided to make a detour and to enter Bechuanaland via Rietfontein. From the information we cannot read why Father Jaeger took this risk and why it was so important to take this person home without delay. Maybe going for a hunt was necessary for the provisions at the station. In later years it has been suggested that Father Jaeger had been careless by not heeding the warning by Mr Abraham. It is a pity that the real reasons cannot be found anywhere, such as an urgent call for instance, which could have caused him to risk his life. As it stands at the moment we are uncertain how to judge his behaviour. In the excitement of the moment also Father Lauer did not express a negative judgment about his fellow-priest.

When the cart approached Rietfontein the Hottentots fired the first shots and withdrew immediately. At Mokokuan, 60 km behind the last borehole of Gubuams, which in turn is 22 km from Aminuis, they repeated the attack. Half an hour later the Witboois surrounded the cart. Only one Tswana had stayed with the father and was witness to the incident, because the others were on the hunt. The Tswana man called the Hottentots not to shoot. In unison they replied they would refrain from shooting. But one of the leaders screamed that the Whites had been shooting

all of them and so they should kill the White man. The soldiers still hesitated. Then at ten paces distant someone gave the order to shoot. According to the report of the Tswana man, the father called out that it was not right to kill a priest, but nothing has been recorded that he prepared to defend himself. One bullet went through his head, one through his body and one went astray. The soldiers started collecting wood and set fire to the cart. The ox-driver was taken prisoner, bound and interrogated about the situation at Aminuis. After a while they set him free and gave him the order to warn Hottentots as well as Bechuana. No explanation has been given what kind of warning they had in mind. Thereafter he should call Mr Abraham and wait for him. As there is only one surviving letter dealing with this incident it is unclear why he had to wait for this Mr Abraham.⁴⁶

Upon receiving the news, lieutenant Geisling sent a patrol to collect the remains of the victim. He found the tracks at Gubuams, but the patrol was attacked and did not pursue the order. After the return of that patrol a certain sergeant Lutz and five volunteers offered to go and collect the body if the remains could be found. Otherwise they would erect a cross at the place of the attack. They in turn were attacked by the people of Jakob Lamberts, 30 men on horseback with .88 guns, but they pushed through and fulfilled their mission. After taking notice of the fact that every army patrol was being attacked, we finally dare to suggest, that the undertaking by Father Jaeger was hazardous, that he was fully informed and that it would have been safer to postpone the journey or place himself under army protection.

⁴⁶ Lauer to Nachtwey, Aminuis, 4 March, 1905 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I)

Naturally it was regarded as a terrible blow to the mission. Father Lauer even asked himself if Aminuis would ever recover from this blow. Indeed, the foundation of the Tswana mission took place in very troubled times. But it struck root and Epukiro and Aminuis started flourishing. Quite soon all the people had been baptised. It is quite intriguing to notice that even the name of the last pagan, a certain Mukuzan, has been recorded, who was baptised on his deathbed.⁴⁷

Though there are no written records of the reasons why this group of Tswana left the Northern Cape, neither of the exact course they followed, we may assume that the names of "Kuruman", "Moffat" and "Anglicans" they mentioned to the Fathers Hermann, Nachtwey and Watterott were correct. The starting point of Kuruman and the relations with Rev Robert Moffat seemed to be prominent in their story. Father Watterott wrote his own history of the period and passed on his information to Father Wuest, the historian of the Prefecture. Much of the information had been provided by Franz Khiba who had been asked to write down his memoirs.

In the course of the 19th century the situation around the area of Kuruman had constantly been fluctuating. Kuruman was in the process of displacing Griquatown as the hunters' base. The Transvalers had long claimed a Western borderline which included the Missionaries' Road and the Bechuana tribes along it. This again was challenged by traders, hunters and missionaries, and especially by David Livingstone while he served his apprenticeship at Kuruman.⁴⁸ The Transvaal

⁴⁷ Wuest, Manuscript III, 1.

⁴⁸ Eric A. Walker, A History of Southern Africa (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1967), 277-279.

Bondsmen flouted the frontier provisions of the Pretoria Convention by participating in the quarrels of the Tswana Chiefs, as mercenaries, in return for land grants in Tswana territory. But they did not succeed in securing the incorporation of that territory in the Transvaal, because of two prominent adversaries, the London Missionary Society and the traders' lobby.⁴⁹ After Secocoeni had taken up arms in the Transvaal, the Griqua and Pondos rebelled in Griqualand East. They had discovered that Waterboer and Arnot had swindled them. Korannas and Batlapin were in a similar situation and it only required a Xhosa emissary and the attempt to levy a fine on a Batlapin Chief to cause a serious rebellion which spread across the Orange to the Northern border of the Cape Colony. The Diamond Fields Horse had to hurry from the Eastern Frontier to save Griquatown and Kuruman.⁵⁰

In the beginning of the Boer war Cape rebels took Kuruman. They were later joined by Transvalers who annexed Prieska, Kenhardt and Upington to the Republics.⁵¹ The Aminuis group of Tswana must have left on account of the restless situation around Kuruman. Maybe they had joined the rebels against the Cape government or they were dissatisfied with the threatened annexation by the Transvaal. The assumption by Father Wuest that it could be on account of the Boer war cannot be held, as Father Hermann had been invited to take part in a campaign in the East in 1898. During that tour he had his first encounter with the Tswana. Moreover they had been attacked by Herero and Nama in 1896. The dating in Watterott's

⁴⁹ T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1984), 132.

⁵⁰ Walker, A History of Southern Africa, 371.

⁵¹ Ibid., 412.

history seems the better one. He places the trek between 1880 and 1890.⁵²

Franz Khiba assumed that he had been born in 1880 at Taung. As a small child he had moved to Kuruman. He thought that he must have been about eight years of age when they moved to South West Africa. He remembered that the first group had left some years earlier. When they moved away from Kuruman he heard that the Christian religion they practised had been brought to them by the London Missionary Society. The trek lasted two to three years. Especially the first trek had suffered great losses in people and possessions. But Khiba's father was a good guide, because he had been to South West Africa before to barter cattle for horses, guns and pearls.⁵³ He had also travelled around with a land surveyor.⁵⁴ The father of Franz Khiba was the deputy captain and messenger for the Second Paramount Chief of the Kuruman Tswana, the Batharos tribe.⁵⁵ After they had reached the Nossob, it still lasted some months before they had caught up with the first trek. This happened to the West of Aminuis. Franz mentioned that in those days there were no Tswana in Aminuis yet. They were only allowed to settle after they had obtained permission from Andreas Lampert, Captain of the Khausas-Nama.⁵⁶ When in the beginning of the Summer of 1890 Andreas had returned from

⁵² Watterott, Gruendungsjahre der katholischen Mission in Suedwest (Wuest: Manuscript II:7), 5.

⁵³ Father Watterott was of the opinion that long before this trek, Tswana of the tribe of the Bathlaro from Kuruman had travelled to Hereroland with goods to barter for cattle.

Lehmann, "Das Tswana-Dorf auf der Farm Epukiro der roemisch-katholischen Mission in Suedwestafrika", 106.

⁵⁴ Franz Khiba, "Aufzeichnungen des Schulmeisters Franz Khiba" (CH Gobabis; File: Franz Khiba, manuscript), 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 4.

his campaigns he allowed the various groups of Tswana to settle at Huguis.⁵⁷

Robert Moffat's writings suggest that the London missionaries had little success at first among the Tswana, but in due course Setshele of the Kwenana, Lentswe of the Kgatla and Kgama of the Ngwato accepted conversion on behalf of the tribe in a manner which would have done Clovis or Aethelberth of Kent credit, and then made courageous if only partly successful attempts to overhaul the customs of their people. All three abolished male and female initiation ceremonies. Kgama, whose laws were so prolific that, in popular minds, they constituted a distinct corpus apart from that of tradition, presumed to get rid of the "bogadi" (cattle brideprice) and imposed a ban on the brewing of strong drink throughout his chiefdom. Setshele who had been converted by Livingstone, sent all his wives home on his conversion, save one, but contrived to arrange things satisfactorily for them. The Ngwaketse prohibited polygamy altogether. When the Aminuis group arrived in South West Africa we must accept from their reports and from Moffat's writings that the London Missionary Society had had a strong influence on the Tswana people. We must believe their oral tradition that they received certain directives from Moffat to join the Catholic Church if no Anglican clergy were available. It might be that those who claimed to be teachers had been instructed as catechists. But from Moffat's report we also learn that in spite of the conversion of some of the Chiefs, it did not mean that all the ordinary people had accepted the faith and had been baptised. That they were used to Christian missionaries is proved by their easy contact with Father Hermann. They trusted him and pleaded with him to help them to find a farm to settle in peace. His successor Father Nachtwey renewed the contact and the mission made attempts to

⁵⁷ Ibid., 6.

obtain the farm Kaukurus for settlement purposes. Back in Kuruman there had been schools for the young people, which made it natural for them to allow some of their young boys to accompany the fathers to start the trade school in Windhoek.

The Tswana did not have any reason to join the Herero or Nama in their revolt against the German Administration. When they entered German territory fleeing from the Northern Cape, the German Governor was kind enough to allow them to stay and occupy some land at Aminuis. They were placed under the protection of the German Empire. That area was squeezed in between the territories of the Khauas Nama and the East Herero or Mbanderu. Compared to the Herero and even Nama they were a tiny group of refugees without any pretence. In 1896 when the Herero and Nama in the East revolted the Khauas attacked these Tswana. They regarded the Tswana as no more than intruders who had received permission from the Germans to enter but not from the Herero Chief. The Khauas killed a dozen or so of their menfolk and took a number of women and children prisoner. They also robbed them of all their cattle. The German recovered 500 oxen from Captain Eduard Lambert and returned them to the rightful owners.⁵⁸ All these reasons had led to the acceptance of the Catholic Mission as their protectors. For the Catholic Mission it provided a golden opportunity to circumvent all the regulations barring them from missions among Africans and start with the work of converting the heathens. It also presented them with the eagerly awaited results the homefront was waiting for and the sponsors expected of them.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Leutwein, Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika, 56.

⁵⁹ Aug. Nachtwey OMI, "The first Mission among Africans" Maria Immaculata, 7 February (1900): 110.

L. F. Ch
et
M. F.

Amminis, den 4. III. 05.



Hochwürdigem Vater Präfect!

Die Zeit ab mit mir die...
Gefunden... ein solch...
pflichten zu...
Gefunden...
auf vor...
Lauter...
get. G...
mit...
nicht...
Diet...
war...
dies...
Wagen...

Letter by Francois Lauer to inform his Prefect of the murder of Father Jaeger

CHAPTER 5

RESTRICTIONS LIFTED: MISSIONS AMONG THE HERERO AND DAMARA

5.1 Mission at Gobabis

The friendly relations with the Government encouraged Prefect Hermann to make use of that momentary opportunity and ask permission to open a mission with Chief Tjetoo of the Herero in the Gobabis district. He applied to the Imperial Government, because he believed that the circumstances were favourable for being granted entry to the East. Though the Rheinische Mission had already opened a station in 1876 in Gobabis, it had been abandoned again in 1880. In Father Hermann's opinion this meant that only one denomination would work among the Herero of Gobabis, a point which had been stressed over and over again.¹

To his disappointment the answer which he received about a month later was negative. Governor Leutwein answered personally and stated that the government in principle would welcome such a move. But he felt that at this moment it was not yet opportune. He explained that the minor Chief of Gobabis had tried to take up a politically independent position from the Paramount Chief of Okahandja. But he could not prevent subjects having contacts across the tribal boundary and would entertain family relations. Chief Tjetoo himself was an uncle of Paramount Chief Samuel Maharero. The Colonial Department regarded the Herero as a people entrusted to the Rheinische Mission. For political reasons the people should not be divided along denominational lines. He added that mixed marriages would

¹ Prefect Hermann to Imperial Government, Windhoek, 3 January, 1899 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

necessarily cause serious difficulties. An important example was the son of Tjetoo, Traugott, who had been baptised in the Lutheran Church. If the Rheinische Mission would continue to abstain from missionary work in the Gobabis area, however, he would be prepared to reconsider the application.²

It took the destruction and the unnecessary killings of the German-Herero war to change the attitude of the German government in this respect. A number of officials started listening to the words of reconciliation from missionaries of both denominations.³ For a considerable time these words had rebounded against the hate and urge for freedom of the Herero and an attitude of revenge and destruction, which found its expression in the regime of General von Trotha. But his successor, Governor Friedrich von Lindequist, proved more susceptible to these recommendations of leniency, and he allowed the missionaries to exert their influence over the native people and collect them in groups and save them from hunger and disease.⁴ A number of big collective internment camps had been erected in Okahandja, Windhoek and Swakopmund. Eventually 12,000 dispirited Herero found their way to the camps.⁵

The question arose if under these circumstances the monopoly of the Rheinische Mission should be maintained. In the context of the disturbances of the past

² Governor Leutwein to Prefect Hermann, Windhoek, 3 February, 1899 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

³ Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft (1904): 349.
Correspondence Kuhlmann-von Trotha, Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift (1909): 201 ff.

⁴ Cf.: Chapter 2: 76.

⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 33.

years, it was thought necessary to inform General von Trotha that all fathers and brothers of the Catholic Church had been conscripted by the army and all had seen active service, but that the missionaries of the Rheinische Mission had stayed at home. This last statement was not correct. While most of the stations in the war zone had to be evacuated, those stations among the non-combatants need not have and should not have been abandoned. The younger missionaries entered the army as voluntary assistants, medics and army chaplains. Missionary Kuhlmann from Okaseva followed his community after they had joined the revolt. They were astonished but full of joy to welcome him in their midst. The Christians asked him to carry on with the instruction of the catechumens. The elders and ordinary members approached Kuhlmann and asked him what would happen when the children could not be baptised anymore and no marriages could be blessed. They thought God had led the Missionary to them to stay and preach the Word of God. Only when it became unbearable for the family did Samuel Maharero order some of his men to take the family and lead them across the lines to the Germans at Okahandja. Missionary Eich of Waterberg also stayed with his parish, because it was impossible to move through the enemy lines. Waterberg was the centre of the people of Kambasembi and the centre of revolt. During the first days of the insurrection a number of Germans had been killed in his territory. David, the successor to Kambasembi was concerned about the safety of the missionary and he took him along to Samuel Maharero when the former's troops joined those of Samuel Maharero.

The theological opinions in connection with the insurrection became clear during the farewell service by Missionary Eich on 21 February. He first read to them chapter 13 of the letter by St Paul to the Romans: "Everybody must be subjected

to the rightful authority" etc. He proved that the Herero had disobeyed that command and therefore would draw God's wrath upon them. This would be especially the case with the Christians who knew God's Word and still had joined the cause of the pagans. They should do penance in order not to fall victim to God's judgment. Then he read from the epistle of the Sunday: "We urge you as God's helpers, that you should not receive God's grace in vain". Deeply moved he preached to them on that last day. Though the missionaries loved their people and the people honoured them, this did not deter them from condemning the insurrection.⁶

Certain circles such as the "Die Koloniale Zeitschrift", "Berliner Tageblatt" and "Nationalzeitung" used the fact that the Herero had not only spared the lives of the English and Afrikaners but also those of the missionaries to accuse them of conspiracy with the insurgents. They never wished to consider that the decades of hard work had possibly earned them trust and esteem.⁷ Governor Leutwein expressed himself much more sympathetic:

It is unjust to blame the Mission for the participation by Christians in the rebellion. On the contrary it provides proof that the Missionaries did not get involved in political machinations but restricted themselves to their ideal of mission.⁸

It was also recorded that not one of the Catholic natives had murdered a farmer or set fire to a farm-house. Prefect Nachtwey had mentioned this when he addressed a Catholic Congress in Straszburg. Heinrich Drieszler felt that it had

⁶ Heinrich Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, 198-200.

⁷ Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift, (1904): 194ff.
Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift, (1906): 19ff; 62ff.

⁸ Theodor Leutwein, Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Suedwestafrika, 290; 294.

not been proper to make use of that unjustified argument. Father Nachtwey should not have prided himself on that feat, because the few adult native Catholic Christians at the time were Tswana and had not been involved in the Herero war.⁹ Still, the Catholic Church had gained respect and highly-placed officers had intended to entrust the poor orphans into the care of the Catholic Mission. The Rheinische Mission protested and prevented this plan. They lodged a complaint with General von Trotha who in turn issued a sharply-worded proclamation to the effect that any activity among the Herero by Catholic missionaries had been totally forbidden in the past and that he would adhere to that policy. This reaction was all the more puzzling as His Excellency, Governor von Trotha had visited the Catholic Mission in Windhoek on 21 December 1904. On that occasion the Fathers had discussed missionary work among the natives of the Protectorate and he had appeared to be in favour of it. He had promised to send a written official permission. We may suspect that his turn-about had been caused by his fear that in the war situation he would lose the support of the majority of the White population, which had turned against the mission. This he could not afford. Therefore he must have referred back to earlier decisions in Germany by the Colonial Department, to show his goodwill to the Lutheran part of the population and his personal innocence to the Catholic section.¹⁰ However, with the assistance of Catholic organisations and the Centrum Party in Germany, the Catholic Mission succeeded in gaining equality and freedom. By an ordinance of the Chancellor of the German Empire of September, 1905, the proclamation of General von Trotha of September 1905, was cancelled. Instead, founded on the

⁹ Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, 227.
Cf.: Chapter 4: 100; 102.

¹⁰ Codex Historicus Grosz Windhuk, 35: 21-12-1904.

legal power of paragraph 14 of the Law of the Protectorate of 10 September 1900, the mission received full freedom of action.¹¹ This law of 1900 recognised the right to erect religious buildings and the right to open missions by religious organisations officially registered in Germany.¹² This meant that able-bodied men and women could be entrusted to the Catholic Mission as well as orphans. The High Command decided, however, that local separation should remain established for security reasons. Because the Praeses of the Rheinische Mission raised a number of objections, the final decision was left to the incoming Governor von Lindequist. The latter called together a conference for 17 December 1905, to regulate the work of missions among the indigenous population. Among the delegates one finds the names of three representatives of the Rheinische Mission and three from the Catholic Mission. Further participants were Councillor Tecklenburg and Lieutenant-Colonel Muehlenfels for the P.O.W.s, both of them Protestants. After thorough deliberations the Governor of the Protectorate issued the following decree on 17 December 1905:

1. The missions of both denominations receive the right to minister among the indigenous populations of the entire Protectorate under equal conditions.
2. Both denominations are allowed to conduct religious services and to provide instruction for baptism in all the concentration camps along the railway line from Windhoek to Swakopmund and to the North and East.
 - a. Religious services on Sundays must be held in the afternoon unless otherwise decided.

¹¹ Kuelz, Deutsch-Suedafrika im 25. Jahre Deutscher Schutzherrschaft, 226.

¹² Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, 227.

- b. At places where both denominations are active they will have to alternate.
- The Catholics will be the first to start after the promulgation of the decree.
- c. At places, which are only visited by both missions from a central point, the Sunday service will be conducted by that mission, which has no right to a service at the main station.¹³
- d. Baptismal instruction will be allowed once a week during the noon interval.
- e. Services and instruction will not be allowed to exceed one hour.
- f. The hospitals attached to the camps will always be open for both denominations.
3. Children who have lost their parents and who do not have relatives, who in the eyes of the government have a right or duty to care for them or are unable to do so, will on the basis of equality, be placed in the care of the missions.¹⁴

¹³ These restrictions were probably meant to prevent that the Black workers would miss working hours. This was very typical for the contemporary trend among all missions. It was thought to be highly important to introduce the so-called "Western work-ethic". In reality it was also greatly meant to serve the comfort of the employers.

¹⁴ Gouverneur a.D. Friedrich von Lindequist, Suedwestafrikanische Erlebnisse in Quellen zur Geschichte von Suedwestafrika ed. H. Vedder (Okahandja: typed manuscript, 1936. NAN; Dr C.J.C. Lemmer Versameling L279).

It is remarkable that Gouverneur von Lindequist does not mention this important ordinance in his memoirs. He only records that he contacted Praeses Eich to take over the camps and provide food, that Missionary Kuhlmann would take care of the camp at Omburo near Omaruru (99-100), Missionary Diehl of Otjihaenena (101), and Missionary Olpp at Otjozongombe (102). Nothing is said of the opening up of such camps for Catholic missionaries, nor of the rule of parity when dealing with the African population.

See also: Hintrager, Suedwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit, 82.

The Rheinische Mission felt that this unlimited ministry in the Protectorate by the Catholic Mission brought the unfortunate denominational controversies of the home country right into the Protectorate. They regretted that the Catholic Mission had started working in the hospitals and P.O.W. camps, despite there not being a single Catholic Herero. But the Lutheran missionaries decided to submit to the new regulations for the sake of peace.¹⁵

This decree opened the way for the Catholic Mission to settle in Gobabis, where the local administration of the East had established its seat. In time to come it would become a very important station for the provisions for and contacts with Epukiro and Aminuis. In Gobabis itself lived Damara and Tswana and a small group of Herero under the chieftainship of Joseph, who had proved to be sympathetic towards the Catholic Mission. Though the Rheinische Mission did not have a station in Gobabis itself there was a settlement at Okaseva near the White Nossob.

In the month of June in 1907, procurator Hermandung informed Colonel Streitwolff that the mission had bought a piece of land from the Bullik family on 7 June 1907.¹⁶ Bullik was a "Schuhmachermeister", a qualified cobbler. As the 1530 m were not big enough they bought government land which bordered on Bullik's

¹⁵ Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, 228.

Pastor Spiecker, Die Rheinische Mission im Hereroland; Zugleich Visitationsbericht des Missioninspektors (Barmen: Verlag des Missionshauses, 1907), 123.

¹⁶ NAN: Cat. of Archivalia; 1.1 Government Departments and Offices 1/1/16: Gobabis DGO 1898-1915. Heimstaettenverkaeufe Gobabis: 14; L.5. e.2. Blatt 1. Parzelle 2. Deutsche Kolonialschule in Windhuk.

plot.¹⁷ This was the sign to start moving and on 23 July 1907, after a trip of twelve days, the first caravan arrived in Gobabis. Arriving in one small and one big waggon Father Watterott of Epukiro had journeyed via Gobabis to offload the necessary equipment for the new foundation. Though Father Krist was one of the group, he was on his way to Kavango and only intended to fetch Father Lauer. To Father Krein had been assigned the task of preparing the mission. He exclaimed that after so many days of sleeping in the open it would be only one more night and then they could move in under a proper roof. On 24 July 1907, Mr and Mrs Bullik left for their farm Ombakaka. The contract with the mission had been signed. Plot and building cost the mission M 3700.¹⁸ The next day, after the others had left, Father Krein did not lose time and started organising the interior of his house, especially the chapel. But he did not fail to complain that he felt lonely.¹⁹ On 5 August, assisted by Franz Khiba, the catechist, Krein started with the real work when he brought the Herero children together.²⁰ Towards the middle of August they had twenty and on 25 August they reached the figure of forty, which caused the Father to call out "crescate".²¹ This does not mean that he was always in such a cheerful mood. On 17 August he wrote to the procurator, Father Hermandung, that the station was not "ein fertiges Baby" and therefore he had to work very hard.²² But on 10 September he was happy to baptise the first Damara woman. Later in that month, on 24 September, he called

¹⁷ Procurator to Streitwolff, Windhoek, 7 June, 1907 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

¹⁸ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ Cf.: Chapter 15: 646-647.

²¹ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 2-4.

²² Krein to Procurator, Gobabis, 17 August, 1907 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

his superior, Father Watterott, to Gobabis to discuss a difficult problem. Prefect Nachtwey had given him the specific order to start teaching Baster children. In his opinion this would influence the mission in Gobabis negatively. Surely, these children could be sent to Klein Windhoek, where the school specialised in that type of work.²³ On 29 September, the missionary's heart started beating faster. Three Tswana mothers of the Hampel family brought their three babies for baptism. The godfather was Johannes, a former pupil of the trade school in Windhoek.²⁴ Though this provided a boost for his morale, Krein's mood had its ups and downs. After this high he soon complained that he did not receive enough financial support. After all he had to purchase much of his equipment in Gobabis, where the prices were exorbitant. The lively Rhinelander never overcame his feeling of loneliness, but this did not prevent him from feeling satisfied.²⁵

Soon after the Catholic Mission had made its first move, the Rheinische Mission also again settled permanently in Gobabis. The chronicle remarks that soon some skirmishes took place between the two missions and Father Krein felt it important to enter into the chronicle that on 4 October he had the first big fight with Missionary Meyer. He made this entry on the page where the first real baptism service was recorded. In general the controversies between the two denominations centred around recognition of the validity of each other's baptismal service, mixed marriages, enrolment of Lutheran children in a Catholic institute or offending publications. We assume that this clash had something to do with the

²³ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵ Krein to Procurator, Gobabis, 27 November, 1907 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

controversy around baptism.²⁶

When on 29 April Father Prefect arrived via Epukiro, he decided that the brothers Raub and Uken should start building the school, the chapel and an extension to the house. The brothers Heinrichs and Langehenke were allowed to stay for the preparatory work. He also decided that Gobabis would remain a dependency of Epukiro.²⁷ Father Krein had been made a happy person on 28 June when he received company in the persons of Father Gotthardt and the Brothers Havenith, Rau and Raub. The Rheinische Mission also received a permanent missionary for Gobabis, nl. Missionary Irle. Because the O.M.I. community had become quite big, the Prefect had appointed Father Krein as temporary superior for the period of building.²⁸

It is interesting to note that soon after Father Krein had taken up residence an incident was threatening to mar the good relations with the District Officer, the well-known Colonel Streitwolff. Apparently he had forbidden his soldiers to pay visits to the Catholic priest and to attend his religious services especially when natives took part in them. This caused Father Nachtwey to address him in a very carefully worded letter. He started off by mentioning that the Bishop for

²⁶ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 11.

Probst Ollp to Prefect Klaeyle, Karibib, 10 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur: M 491/12).

Klaeyle to Ollp, Windhoek, 18 May 1912 (ADW A 29, J No 491).

Probst to Prefect, Karibib, 24 May 1912 (ADW A 29).

Prefect to Probst, Windhoek 4 June 1912 (ADW A 29, J No 621)

Cf. Chapter 9: 310-311.

²⁷ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 12-13.

²⁸ Prefect to Krein, Windhoek, 16 June, 1908 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

the Armed Forces in Berlin had placed into his care all Catholic soldiers in the Protectorate, of which the region of Gobabis had been delegated to Father Krein. In a friendly but firm way he asked the Colonel to lift the prohibition. To strengthen his plea he referred to an instance in which Streitwolff himself had participated in a religious service for local people conducted by the Protestant minister.²⁹ Quite soon thereafter the problem had been solved and Father Krein could report that in future he would be allowed to conduct a service for military personnel once a month, while the soldiers were allowed to attend H. Mass every Sunday at the mission.³⁰

With the foundation of the mission at Gobabis the framework of stations in the East had been placed in position from where in later years the outer stations could be served. Almost a century later nothing has been changed in this basic pattern.

5.2 Doebra

The farm Doebra, situated in the Eros mountains 25 km from Windhoek, was owned by Moritz Kuersten around the turn of the century. The original Herero name of the area was Otjisondu (sheep's well). The Kuerstens named the farm after their home village Doebra in Saxony. As the Kuersten family feared the Herero very much, for their personal safety as well as for that of their cattle, they had employed two Damara families as farm labourers.

²⁹ Prefect to District Officer of Gobabis, Windhoek, no date, 1908 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

³⁰ Krein to Prefect, Gobabis, 5 August, 1908 (ADW A 48: Gobabis I).

From the days of Father Schoch onwards the Catholic Mission had always intended to buy a farm in order to support the mission and to become financially more independent. When the farm Doebra was offered for sale the Catholic Mission made a bid and was successful. The property was bought in November 1904. On 15 December 1904, the mission formally took possession and moved in. The Kuersten family was welcome to stay on until 21 March 1905, after which date they returned to Germany.³¹ According to rumours, which the chronicler of 1904 had picked up, the poet Konradt had been the first owner of that farm, some ten years earlier.

As the Herero war was raging all over the Central and Eastern part of the country, the farm was protected by six soldiers for a period of two years. In March 1905, Father Jacobs and Brother Kalb permanently settled on the farm. A little later Father Krist joined the community and both fathers started to learn to speak Herero. Around the same time Father Krist started to gather the orphans which roamed the area, looking for food and shelter. Because of the war situation nobody could care for them. But if the mission was going to give them a home, the next step would be to occupy these children and teach them valuable skills. To fulfill these requirements the Mission opened the first native school for Herero children in which they taught Religion, the three R's, Singing, Geography and History. During these first years the medium of instruction was Herero. When the pupils had managed to advance to the stage that they could write an essay in their mother-tongue, the schooling in German started. But speaking German was being practised from the first day at school. Some years later in the Annual Report of 1911, it is mentioned that eight children attended the Primary School and sixteen adults the evening classes. This is indeed a commendable effort by

³¹ Codex Historicus Doebra, I:4.

the mission to start at such an early date with literacy courses and offer these to adults.

Another work of mercy was the care for sick prisoners, which the German Schutztruppe handed over to the mission until they had recovered. Most of them were women and older people, of whom many died at Doebra.³²

The farm started producing milk, meat, butter and eggs for the mission in Windhoek and for sale. Everyday the milk was delivered to Windhoek residents, and the income generated welcome support for the mission.³³ In this way on the initiative of the missionaries and with the support of the army, this station started to care for Herero even before the official decree was issued.

5.3 Usakos - Karibib - Okombahe

The first town in the interior outside Windhoek where a Catholic station would be founded was Usakos. In a short period of time it had become the most important place after Windhoek, because it was an important railway junction where the OMEG railway had opened repair shops. For that reason more than one thousand Black and one hundred White workers had settled in Usakos.³⁴

In order to make a proper start the mission had to build a house and school. Father Nachtwey explained the situation to Mr Toennessen, the manager of OMEG.

³² Ibid., I:5-6.

³³ Codex Historicus Doebra, II:11.

³⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 35.

As Swakopmund was too far away from the interior to serve as a central station, the mission in Usakos should be self-supporting.³⁵ Toennesen replied quite soon and expressed as his opinion that the Company was in favour of a mission. He was aware of the imminent departure of Father Nachtwey for Germany and he offered to write a few lines in support of the application, to his headquarters in Berlin.³⁶

As OMEG seemed to be in favour of the founding of the mission the Prefect did not want to delay any longer. Father Wolfgang Kieger was asked to undertake the journey and according to his reminiscences he left Swakopmund on 20 December. He took the field altar with some goods but no money and boarded a freight train of the Swakopmund-Otavi line. The railway was still under construction and after 112 km he had to swap the freight car for an ox waggon. But the chief engineer offered a horse, as the country side was dangerous and it would be better to travel faster. He was met by a lieutenant on patrol who would protect him from the roaming Herero. Twice they came close to Herero bands, but the danger passed. Early in the morning of 22 December 1904, the group arrived in Usakos.³⁷

The first rector, Father Kieger, moved into the old house which had been used by Father Schoch eight years earlier. The chief engineer had been kind enough to make the necessary provisions to make the place livable.³⁸ The chronicler noted

³⁵ Nachtwey to Toennesen, Windhoek, 24 October, 1904 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

³⁶ Toennesen to Nachtwey, Swakopmund, 19 November, 1904 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

³⁷ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 35.

³⁸ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:A.

that 23 December 1904 should be regarded as the foundation date. Two days later it was Christmas already. The Italians who lived in a railway-camp nearby arrived for the Midnight Mass, which celebration was held outdoors enlivened by their guitar and mandoline music. Early next morning Father Kieger held a service for the Slavs among the railway workers.³⁹ At nine o'clock he celebrated for Christians and non-Christians alike.⁴⁰

Usakos was intended to be a station mainly for Blacks. However, the Owambo among them only worked for six months at the railway and then returned to Owamboland. Therefore ministering among them was not practical. But Damara men were present in great numbers to look for work. The majority of them had never come into contact with a Christian Church before. Father Kieger immediately set to work and started teaching children. Many of them were orphans and left without proper care. On the third day the number had already risen to fifty. When the rector thought of the future he envisaged starting evening classes for adults, but he had to wait for accommodation. Only when a second missionary was assigned to the place, would they be able to give attention to the White section of the population.⁴¹

³⁹ Father Borsutzky wrote in a letter, that in the first year of the mission there were 200 White Catholics, one third of whom originated from Southern Germany and Austria. The dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary included provinces like Slovenia, Moldavia, Bosnia. Though the Hungarians were Magyars, they were for convenience sake often referred to as Slavs. We assume that under the common denominator "Slavs" inhabitants from these provinces are meant. The separate service for them was not caused by a different rite as all the services were in the Roman rite and in Latin, but because Christmas hymns have a special emotional flavour. The Italians wanted to sing theirs and the citizens of the Austrian Empire their own ones.

Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 36.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 35.

⁴¹ Ibid., 36.

In January already, a certain Mr Baurath from the headquarters of OMEG in Berlin had informed Father Nachtwey that he was very interested in the project and that he would bring it to the attention of the General Council at their meeting in Berlin. However, he felt that the founding of mission stations at Otavi and Tsumeb was premature and one should wait for peace to return.⁴² Finally, on 30 May 1905 the OMEG management informed the Prefect that the company had decided to hand over 3 ha of land free of charge just outside Usakos. In the Khan valley, also near the outskirts of the town, the mission would receive 1,5 ha and the rest would adjoin that land or else be in the centre of the town. The mission would be forbidden to sell that land to third parties or to drill for water. Within a year they occupied the land and started building.⁴³

Without delay the mission started with preparations. As Father Kieger had become ill and had left for Germany, Father Krist, who was very practical, had been transferred as per 24 August 1905, from Doeбра. Brother Raub, a qualified mason, had joined the staff. Furthermore the building was facilitated by the firm Arthur Koppel and by OMEG. From the Schutztruppe they had bought a team of donkeys and manager Langohr of the Otavi-railway had kindly placed a trolley with track at their disposal. On 28 October, Father Muehlhaus received his appointment as superior and pastor for the Africans.⁴⁴ Without delay he set to work and brought twelve children from the location to the mission and provided them with accommodation in a hostel. His view was not so enthusiastic as that of his

⁴² Mr Baurath from OMEG to Prefect Nachtwey, Berlin, 9 January 1905 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

⁴³ Mr Gaederitz for OMEG to R.C. Mission, Berlin, 30 May 1905 (ADW A 74: Usakos I, Nr. 5384).

⁴⁴ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:A.

predecessor. Maybe in the excitement at the beginning the hostile attitude of the inhabitants of the location had been overlooked.

When Muehlhaus decided to bring sick women to the mission, he started a tradition and this would eventually lead to two complete hospitals. In the beginning the residents of the location were very negative, but when more and more children were taken up in the school they reversed their attitude and started to tolerate the priest. Towards the end of November the mission was very happy to play host to Captain Cornelius and Gottlieb, both from Okombahe and Captain Elisa of Omaruru. The discussions with these dignitaries encouraged the mission staff and filled them with hope for the future.⁴⁵

From 5 until 12 December, Father Muehlhaus experimented with a school at the location but it failed because of the hostile attitude of the people as well as the lack of an African teacher. He missed a contact person in the community. When Captain Cornelius of Okombahe paid a second visit, this omission was brought to his attention. He promised to place his interpreter Simon at the disposal of the mission to help to introduce them to the people of the location. The chronicler does not give particulars of Simon, but he added that Simon eagerly agreed to this proposal. The Chief as well as the Father must have thought him to be capable of the job.

In the year 1907 Father Joseph Gotthardt was transferred to Usakos. He found the school at the mission grounds in a pondok. The teacher's house had been erected next to it. An additional twenty children were taught in town, also on mission

⁴⁵ Ibid., I:B.

ground. But unfortunately the fruitful contact with the people at the location had failed. To improve this situation Father Gotthardt, accompanied by teacher and children, walked to the location and under a tree they started their lessons. The next step in this process of acclimatisation was that Father Gotthardt asked the teacher to go and live among the people. Soon thereafter the mission erected a wooden building to house the school. But the day after the completion of this structure when Father Gotthardt entered the location, all the people had vanished. The African teacher, encouraged by the Protestant missionary, had ordered the people to move twenty minutes further to prevent all contact with the Catholic Mission. The police had agreed to this action. This challenge, however, the priest was not prepared to accept. He went to the police-station and demanded that the people should be allowed to return. If not, they would immediately depart for Windhoek and inform the Central Administration. This risk the police did not dare to take and they hastily went to bring the people back to their original place.⁴⁶

In the night of 28 to 29 January another incident occurred. Twelve of the children and three women had been kidnapped from mission ground. Though the search had been without success, the investigation brought to light that the culprit appeared to be a certain Uirab from Karibib.⁴⁷ Prefect Nachtwey in a personal meeting with the Governor, followed by a letter, reported to the Government that Uirab had visited a number of Damara who were in the service of the Catholic Mission. On Sunday 28 January, the visits became so frequent that Father Jakobi could not fail to notice it. That same night the children and

⁴⁶ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 36.

⁴⁷ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:C.

people vanished. After ten days one of the children returned on 7 February. The child reported that Uirab had urged them to flee as quickly as possible because the Herero were after them to kill them. Father Jakobi informed the police immediately. Nachtwey had mentioned that the Protestant Missionary Elgers, the pastor of Karibib, had held a religious service on 28 January, but he ended his letter with the remark that Uirab must have acted on his own initiative.⁴⁸

One month later, Prefect Nachtwey in another letter acknowledged that he had received a reply from the Governor as well as a statement by Missionary Elgers. He stated that the presence of Missionary Elgers had been established in a statement by several Damara and they apparently were sticking to their report. However, he was satisfied with the information, that the religious services intended for the Sunday had been anticipated on an ordinary weekday. The incident reveals that subconsciously there was always a suspicion that the opposition stood behind one or other incident. Furthermore he reported to the Government that Uirab had been in Usakos from 24 January onwards in order to prepare the kidnapping. As no progress had been made in tracing the lost persons, Nachtwey mentioned that Uirab's own children resided in Karibib. The police could take them into custody until Uirab returned to his family.⁴⁹ The incident did have a negative influence on the location. The rumours which accompanied the event were detrimental to a good relationship.

Meanwhile the building activities went ahead and on 25 April 1906, the house

⁴⁸ Nachtwey to Governor, Windhoek, 18 May, 1906 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

⁴⁹ Nachtwey to Imperial Government, Windhoek, 8 June, 1906 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

chapel could be blessed. Education also made progress and on 1 May the mission opened a school for Whites. Father Jakobi became its first principal. When on 1 June the Prefect paid a visit the community had grown considerably. He appointed Father Jakobi as rector of Usakos while Father Muehlhaus was considered for that position in Okombahe. Father Kalb and Bachmann took over the work among the Black population. Another attempt was made to establish a school at the location by the people of Paul Kapnar, but they would only send their children to school if Paul ordered them to do so.⁵⁰ Still the situation must have remained problematic, because when on 14 November five small Damara children asked for acceptance in the school it was thought almost miraculous.⁵¹

A new chapter was opened in Usakos when on 24 February the first brother-postulant for the Order of OMI was being accepted. On 5 March, Father Klaeyle became rector, director for material needs, leader of the African mission and novice master. On 14 March the noviciate was canonically founded and Brother Brodmann became the first novice.⁵²

Because of continued troubles between Herero and Damara at the location it was decided to open a separate school for Herero. Father Krein would be the principal and the catechist Ignaz accepted the position as teacher.⁵³ The expansion of

⁵⁰ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:D.

⁵¹ Ibid., I:G.

⁵² Ibid., I:H.

Ex audientia P.P. X: Permission had been granted to open a noviciate at Usakos on the condition that the building should be distinct from the existing house, Rome, 2 March 1907 (ADW A 84: Personalfragen).

⁵³ Ibid., I:I.

schools, the care for the sick and the noviciate made the task of the fathers and brothers very complicated. It was a relief to them when on 14 May the Prefect arrived with Mother Tharsilla and Sr Hiltulpha of the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnnenwerth/Heythuizen. They came to orientate themselves as they had been asked to take over a number of activities in Usakos. Sr Hiltulpha stayed and soon a number of sisters would follow.⁵⁴

Apart from the great variety of activities in Usakos, the Fathers had to care for the military posts Johann Albrechtshoehe and Okawayo. At a distance of 30 km was Karibib, a fortress of Protestantism. But among its citizens there were seventy Catholics who were active in the faith. One of them, a certain Mr Woermerling, had donated pro deo the decoration of the altar and the windows in the chapel of Usakos.⁵⁵ Karibib was a very young village. Fifteen years earlier there was just bush and field. The real birthday of the place was May 1900 when the railway reached Karibib. Development went quickly and soon it was almost as big as Usakos. For the time being the visiting priest conducted the services in one of the rooms of the school. This environment did not lend itself to spiritual reflections. He had to stay overnight in the hotel, which did not encourage his flock to visit him for spiritual guidance. It was therefore the need of the community which started the ball rolling to build a proper church.⁵⁶

After the Prefect had handed in a request for a plot to the authorities, Mrs E. Haelbich, a member of one of the leading Lutheran families of the area, responded

⁵⁴ Ibid., I:M.

⁵⁵ Ibid., I:F.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 36.

with a number of questions. She asked if the Catholic Mission wanted just a chapel or a complete mission station. Did the mission intend to minister to the African population or only to the Whites? Depending upon the needs, how big should the plot be?⁵⁷ Father Nachtwey answered that they would like to build a chapel at the request of the Catholics of Karibib and district. For the time being they would only minister to the Europeans and the Africans who had come into contact with the mission at other places. Needless to say, they would care for the pagans if they came over of their own free will. For that purpose he was looking for a plot of 1800 to 1900 m. He especially liked to have an option on the land across the street behind H.H. Roesemann or Kahl. He wished to mention that those who had requested the building were unable to support the complete project financially.⁵⁸ Though the first contributions were astonishingly generous, the few Catholics were not able to provide the necessary finance on their own. Before the building fund had accumulated sufficiently, the First World War intervened and prevented the project from becoming a reality. After that unfortunate episode it would be quite a while before the Catholics of Karibib had their own House of God.

The only local people who really opened their hearts to the Fathers' attempts were the Damara. In Okombahe they had established themselves as a self-contained and inclusive community. It was regarded as their centre and a safe place after 1870, when Hugo Hahn had persuaded Paramount Chief Maharero and Willem Seraua to

⁵⁷ E. Haelbich to A. Nachtwey, Karibib, 30 July 1907 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

⁵⁸ Nachtwey to Mrs E. Haelbich and Mr E. Haelbich, Windhoek, 2 August 1907 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

provide a free locality.⁵⁹ At the request of Chief Cornelius this had been guaranteed by Landeshauptmann Leutwein for the German Empire in 1895. The first contact between the Catholic Mission and the people of Okombahe had been made when Chief Cornelius and a number of his followers paid their respects to the Father in Usakos. Cornelius had promised that he would send a certain Gottlieb to assist the Father as interpreter at the location. This naturally led to the idea of opening a station in the centre of Damara-activity, where the Captain also resided.⁶⁰

On 26 January 1906, Father Muehlhaus, accompanied by two boys and two donkeys, undertook the long walk to Okombahe, which was situated at a distance of 92 km from Usakos. In spite of Father Muehlhaus's weak health they went on foot, the donkeys carrying the luggage.⁶¹ The reception was very friendly. After discussions with the Chief and the Councillors Father Muehlhaus came to the conclusion that this place had a future. Chief Cornelius and his Councillors expressed the fervent wish that the Catholic Mission should settle permanently in Okombahe.⁶²

From 5 until 11 April Father Muehlhaus undertook his second journey, which convinced him that a station should be founded without delay.⁶³ He reported to

⁵⁹ Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, Band II der Geschichte der Rheinischen Mission, 104.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 37.

⁶¹ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:B.

⁶² Ibid., I:C.

⁶³ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:C.

the Prefect that he had chosen a proper site for the buildings and that he recommended preparations be started. It was his conviction that the Government would not offer any opposition. He thought that such a the founding of this mission might influence relations with the people in the locations of Usakos and Omaruru for the better. In the same letter he defended himself against accusations by the Rheinische Mission that he provided the Africans with liquor. He admitted that he sometimes had given them liquor against a cold. But he had experienced that even the Evangelical Mission gave their workers some on Sundays. Nevertheless, in future he would refrain from presenting it as it had appeared to be a source of controversy.⁶⁴

In May of that year Prefect Nachtwey arrived at Usakos and from there both travelled via Omaruru to Okombahe. Father Nachtwey wanted to make his acquaintance with the Chief and convince himself of the feasibility of a mission. He also wished to investigate whether the proposed site would be suitable.⁶⁵ Upon his return to Windhoek the Prefect informed Governor von Lindequist of his intentions. But also in this case the beginning appeared to be difficult. Though by decree the Catholic Mission had received the freedom to go wherever she deemed it necessary, the Governor immediately expressed his reservations. He promised that during his visit to Okombahe, which had been planned for the near future, he would sound out the feelings of the people. The Evangelical missionary did not like the idea either. Okombahe was regarded as a solid block belonging to the Rheinische Mission, which opinion was justified as this mission had assisted these poor people in their distress when they had constantly been harassed by the

⁶⁴ Muehlhaus to Prefect, Usakos, 11 June 1906 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

⁶⁵ Codex Historicus Usakos, I:E.

Herero. In those early days Missionary Boehm from Ameib had had taken care of this community and the Damara themselves had built their little church. Soon the first church members could be baptised by him.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, certain individuals provided the Government with wrong information about the Catholic missionary, which bordered on libel and which would delay the process of the founding of a mission station.⁶⁷ The Lutheran Missionary informed the Governor that the Catholic Mission tried to attract converts by offering them liquor.⁶⁸ It was claimed that the Catholic Church forbade its members to read the Bible and their services would border on sacrilege. The Rheinische Mission was concerned about the competition and wanted to frighten the people of Okombahe away from the Catholic missionary.⁶⁹

When Governor von Lindequist came to Okombahe he made use of the services of Missionary Baumann to communicate with the people. After lengthy discussions with the Chief and his Councillors he requested Missionary Baumann to allow him an opportunity to speak to them in private. In the subsequent deliberations he made use of a local interpreter. He then proceeded by asking Chief Cornelius if the people really wanted the Catholic Mission to come to their community. Cornelius diplomatically answered that the friends of the Emperor were his friends and the Emperor's enemies his enemies. As the Governor apparently could not invoke a straightforward answer he declared that he had decided to send the Catholic Mission to the people of Okombahe and upon hearing this, Chief Cornelius

⁶⁶ Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, 104.

⁶⁷ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 37.

⁶⁸ Muehlhaus to Prefect, Okombahe, 10 June 1906 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

⁶⁹ Cf.: Chapter 9: 274.

immediately expressed his agreement.

After another round of talks between Government and Mission the time for the founding of the mission was agreed upon. In a letter dated 25 May 1907, Muehlhaus thought that the time was ripe to take a firm decision. He had heard that Missionary Baumann was leaving for Germany as he disagreed with his salary of M3000. His colleague, Missionary Schmidt, was also dissatisfied and did not want to preach. If the decision to go ahead was favourable he asked for brothers to organise the building activities.⁷⁰

Soon thereafter Father Muehlhaus received his official appointment as rector. On 31 July 1907, the Fathers Nachtwey and Muehlhaus and cabinet-maker Kurz of the building crew travelled via Omaruru to Okombahe. The group arrived on 2 August and immediately went to the police station to finalise the question of the building site. Eventually they agreed upon a suitable place with a small plot in the neighbourhood for a future garden. That day was regarded as the foundation date of Okombahe. Chief Cornelius himself transported the building material to the plot for the temporary corrugated-iron shelter.⁷¹ Muehlhaus's idea was to start with a school forthwith and for that purpose had obtained the services of a certain Andreas Goseb, a teacher and interpreter. It would have been better not to start a school as Missionary Baumann had opened a school and hostel already.⁷²

⁷⁰ Muehlhaus to Nachtwey, Usakos, 25 May 1907 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

⁷¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 38.

⁷² Muehlhaus to Prefect, Usakos, 25 May 1907 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

In general it appeared that the missionary had to tread carefully, because one day the Evangelical church bell rang and the community was called together. The Missionary threatened the parents that if they did not withdraw their children from the Catholic school, he would lock them out of the church community. Some parents were scared and took them out, but others claimed that they could send their children wherever they wanted. In general it was not easy for Father Muehlhaus. Missionary Baumann jr. had grown up among the Damara, he spoke their language fluently and was well-acquainted with their customs and way of thinking. Unfortunately, he carried on propagating the well-known historical lies about the Catholic Church.⁷³ A few years later Prefect Klaeyle corresponded with Probst Ollp about these hurting lies, which had even been published in the book "Omahaenge Ookuleza" and threatened to be reprinted.⁷⁴ But the rector courageously carried on and he could report to procurator Hermandung that a certain Mr Fistler would assist in the building of the permanent house.⁷⁵ To the delight of the sickly Father Muehlhaus he could welcome Father Jakobi as his socius in November. The latter was left alone quite soon, as Muehlhaus for health reasons had to leave for Swakopmund. The following May he returned, but hardly half a year later he had to leave Okombahe for good. On 21 November 1908, he died in Swakopmund.

Due to all these upheavals Father Jakobi was left with a handful of faithful, who

⁷³ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 38.

⁷⁴ Klaeyle to Ollp, Windhuk, 18 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).
Cf.: Chapter 9: 310.

⁷⁵ Muehlhaus to Hermandung, Okombahe, 1 September 1907 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

had a very difficult time. When it became clear to the authorities in Windhoek that the mission in Okombahe faced almost insurmountable problems, they planned to abandon the place. For that purpose Father Hermandung, accompanied by Father Bierfert arrived on 1 April 1909. Though Father Jakobi was no coward and wanted to continue, Father Hermandung thought otherwise. He had picked up a rumour that the police needed a new station. Upon investigation and after negotiations he could sell the property for M 15000. When a police officer from Windhoek came to make a survey, Father Jakobi was unaware that the negotiations had gone that far. In the end no deal was concluded and soon Father Leo Bachmann took over. Though the latter still experienced an arduous task, he was able to manage and had soon firmly established the Catholic Mission in Okombahe.

In these pioneering years the missionaries had not been left alone. They experienced firm support from the families of Gottlieb and his son Alfred. But most important was the sympathy shown by Chief Cornelius. When the latter felt he was going to die, he wanted to become a Catholic. Though his relatives could prevent this, he was able to call Pastor Dannert and inform him that he had left the Protestant Church. Needless to say, a few generations later we have problems condoning the ways and deeds of those dignitaries as well as of the people at the turn of the century. But we must realise that Protestants as well as Catholics acted from an entirely different theological point of view. All of them were strong in their faith, but it often led to great sadness among the people. The Rheinische Mission felt that there was no need for the Catholic Mission to intervene and Inspector Heinrich Drieszler found proof of that in an article of Father Nachtwey.⁷⁶ The latter related that about eighty Herero orphans had been

⁷⁶ Drieszler, Die Rheinische Mission in Suedwestafrika, 228.

entrusted to the Catholic Mission, who together with the one hundred adults would form the foundation of the Catholic Herero Mission. He did not not have too high expectations of any conversion by the other Herero. Though the contact with Catholic Mission had made the people less prejudiced, the Herero mission of the Lutheran Church, which had started sixty year earlier, was the cause of the Catholic Mission being very small in the foreseeable future.⁷⁷

5.4 Omaruru, a place of beauty and controversy

Omaruru is beautifully situated on the banks of the Omaruru river in the middle of clusters of huge trees, which gives the impression of an oasis. From 1870 this town possessed a mission station of the Rheinische Mission. In the first part we have dealt extensively with the problems of the first foundation of a Catholic mission station by the Fathers of the Holy Spirit between 1879 and 1881. It is quite understandable and acceptable that the Herero living in that district had become quite attached to the Lutheran Church. Nevertheless, for the Catholic Church it was going to be an important station as it was the centre of a fertile farming area. But the real incentive came from the Catholics of Omaruru themselves. They stressed to the Prefect that they should not be forgotten in the planning. In this respect they were similar in attitude to those of Karibib, but in Omaruru there was a difference. Most of the people had a thriving business and were well-off. They were able to obtain a plot of 15.000 m from Lindhorst and H. Siebers costing M 12.000. Father Ziegenfusz signed and agreed that he could completely support the balance-sheet. The letter had been signed by eight

⁷⁷ Augustin Nachtwey, "Mission unter den Herero", Maria Immaculata, (1906/7): 295.

Catholics, among them Mr Dunaiski, and also six Evangelicals.⁷⁸ One of the leaders of this community, Mr W. Mittelstedt wrote to Father Nachtwey about the progress of the deliberations which would lead to the sale of the ground.⁷⁹ About a year later he could report to Nachtwey that in his presence, district chief lieutenant Hellwich agreed to the transfer of the plot.⁸⁰ On 25 June 1906, the sale became effective and the ground was sold for M 15.000. An extra M 1700 had to be paid for the implements and building on the plot, which Mr Mittelstedt had placed on a list and which Nachtwey had inspected on 4 June of that year. W. Mittelstedt signed as seller and the Catholic Mission was purchaser.⁸¹ The road to the building of a mission station in Omaruru was open. Though it did not start as a mission for the indigenous population, the Father found at least a committed group of Christians, which had been eager to bring a priest into their midst.

It is astonishing that in a period of a few years five stations could be founded. Father Nachtwey had been very eager to make use of the favourable circumstances and when he was overseas he brought together a number of experts and skilled labourers and formed them into a building crew. The members of the group were the brothers Uken and Raub and Messrs F. and A. Raub, two brothers of Brother Raub. Also T. Trapp, Koenig, Schemmer and Kurz belonged to them. In the few years of activity they have achieved excellent results. Unfortunately, the Prefect had to disband his crew too early, because the financial means were lacking. In those

⁷⁸ The Catholics of Omaruru to Prefect Nachtwey, Omaruru, 19 November 1904 (ADW A 61: Omaruru).

⁷⁹ Mittelstedt to Nachtwey, Omaruru, 2 April 1905 (ADW A 61: Omaruru).

⁸⁰ Mittelstedt to Nachtwey, Omaruru, 5 June 1906 (ADW A 61: Omaruru).

⁸¹ Verkaufskontrakt, Omaruru, 25 June 1906 (ADW A 61: Omaruru I).

days the Catholics in Germany were not sufficiently aware of their obligation to support their missionaries. But one of them, August Schemmer, a brother of the future Prefect, decided to remain in the country and he settled in Omaruru where he opened a joinery. He remained in close contact with the mission and fulfilled many jobs for them in the course of the following decades.⁸²

5.5 Reflections on these expansions

The Catholic Mission had been waiting in the wings for permission to meet the Africans of the interior. The home front had become impatient and one could feel the irritation and anxiety of the OMI missionaries to go and move forward. As soon as the green light had been given, it is clear that nothing could restrain the Prefect and his staff from settling in as many towns and villages as possible. Neither staff nor financial problems could stop them any longer. We should also realise the absolute conviction of these missionaries that the Catholic Church was the only true Church and that they were compelled by their vocation to convert and baptise as many people as possible. This resulted in this vigorous campaign which brought the Catholic Mission to the most important places within the police zone. But this did not mean that the membership of the Catholic Church increased dramatically. In fact the numbers rose very slowly and the Catholic Church remained a minority church in the entire country except in Epukiro and Aminuis and later in Kavango.

The unfortunate bad example of strained relations between the two denominations kept on influencing the African population. However, this situation was no

⁸² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 35.

exception. In Spain Protestants were not allowed to have their own churches. In the Scandinavian countries the Catholic hierarchy had not been restored and Jesuits were never allowed to enter. In a similar way Germany had remained a fief of Protestantism. The more tolerant laws of the nineteenth century, the removal of barriers between the different States, greater facilities in transportation and economic conditions had enabled a number of religions, other than the State religion, to gain a foothold. As a consequence several associations possessing a common purpose with German Protestantism were established which made it their business to carry on the work of proselytism. The Gustavus Adolphus Association was very aggressive. It founded a number of small Evangelical communities in the Catholic section of Germany, and assisted many Protestant families in establishing domicile there. The same goal was pursued by the Evangelical League. This league published a whole series of polemical tracts against the Roman Church. When the blow of the Kulturkampf struck, Catholic resistance started to become organised. With the powerful boost of the Catholic "Zentrum Partei" in politics, the Catholics in Germany experienced the feeling of being a powerful lobby, which could overcome this type of persecution.⁸³ Because the governments of Prussia and also of the Empire were Protestant in composition, it was in fact a confrontation between the two denominations. It was inevitable that German citizens carried this controversy across the oceans to the Colonies. Therefore the Protestant officials tried to restrict the activities of the Catholic Mission even when the ordinances became more relaxed. In their turn the Catholics remembered the vigorous action in the home country and tried to penetrate wherever possible. It is also a well-known fact that colonists are more

⁸³ Charles Poulet and Sidney A. Raemers, A History of the Catholic Church 2 vols. (St Louis Mo: B. Herder Book Co, 1935/1957), II: 456-458.

conservative than the citizens in the mother country. They show this in customs, language and therefore also in religion. We should therefore not be astonished that the open controversy and animosity between the two denominations would last longer than in Germany and Europe itself. In reality only after the disaster of the Second World War would eyes be opened and people discover in each other Christians baptised in the same Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Kaufvertrag.

Zwischen dem Farmer ALEX BULLIK in GOBABIS und der deutschen Kolonialschule in WINDHUK, Gesellschaft m. b. H., vertretend durch den Herrn P. HERMANDUNG, ist heute folgender Kaufvertrag abgeschlossen worden.

§ 1.

Der Farmer ALEX BULLIK in GOBABIS verkauft an die deutsche Kolonialschule in WINDHUK, Gesellschaft m. b. H. sein an der GUICUSER PAD gelegenes Grundstück von 1530 qm Grösse nebst Wohngebäude.

§ 2.

Der Kaufpreis beträgt 3700 (Dreitausendsiebenhundert) Mark. 2000 (Zweitausend) Mark sind sogleich beim Abschluss dieses Vertrages von der Kolonialschule bar zu bezahlen. Der Rest von 1700 (Eintausendsiebenhundert) Mark ist in 3 (drei) Monaten fällig, vom Tage des Abschlusses dieses Vertrages an gerechnet.

§ 3.

Urkundlich ist (daher) dieser Vertrag doppelt gleichlautend ausgefertigt und von beiden Teilen unterschrieben.

WINDHUK, den 14. Dezember 1907.

Deutsche Kolonialschule
in WINDHUK G. M. b. H.
L. HERMANDUNG.

ALEXANDER BULLIK
mit meinem Bevollmächtigten
Dr. FRITZSCHE.

Die vorstehenden Unterschriften:

- 1) des Paters LUDWIG HERMANDUNG, Geschäftsführers der deutschen Kolonialschule in WINDHUK,
 - 2) des Rechtsanwaltes Dr. FRITZSCHE, Bevollmächtigter des Farmers ALEX BULLIK in GOBABIS,
beide in WINDHUK
- werden hiermit beglaubigt.

WINDHUK, den 14. Dezember 1907.

Der Kaiserliche Bezirksrichter
FISCHER.

Königsreichs-Südwestafrika
kaiserlicher Gouverneur
von Deutschsüdwestafrika
J. Nr. 33307

Windhuk den 10. Januar 1908.

Vorstehender Vertrag wird hiermit
genehmigt.

Im Auftrage

HEYDEBRECK.

Bill of Sale of the property of farmer Alex Bullik⁸⁴

⁸⁴ NAN: Cat. of Archivalia. 1.1 Government Department and Offices.
Gobabis DGO 1898-1915; 1/1/16 Heimstaettenverkaeufe Gobabis: 14. L.5. e.2.
Blatt 1. Parzelle 2. Deutsche Kolonialschule in Windhuk.

CHAPTER 6

THE EPIC STORY OF KAVANGO

The expeditions by the Catholic Mission to Kavango were not in the literary sense exploratory. In the 17th and 18th centuries missionaries had penetrated into the interior from Luanda. The Africa explorer Wilhelm Mattenklodt related in "Verlorene Heimat" that during his journey from South West Africa to Angola he had come upon the ruins of an extensive mission station with gothic arches and lofty portals. It was situated at the Quellei, a tributary of the Okavango high up in the catchment area of that river. Most probably these missionaries had not come much further than Masacca, 300 km to the North of Nkurenkuru.¹

The first expedition, which reached Lake Ngami on 1 August 1849, stood under the leadership of W.C. Oswell. David Livingstone accompanied them. He was very friendly with the Tawana Chief Sechele and should have heard of the peoples along the Okavango who lived in dependence on the Tawana of Tsau. Another explorer, Ladislaus Magyar carried out extensive tours between 1849 and 1857. He mentioned that during his third journey he visited the Kwangali and "Mukussu" of Andara. The first Whites who in fact reached the Hambukushu after terrible hardships in 1855 were the Swedish scientist Wahlberg and the hunter and trader Frederick Green. They could not meet Chief Diyeve (Libebe) as he was in isolation. He belonged to the dynasty of the famous rainmakers and he was in the process of producing rain for the surrounding kingdoms who gave him tribute for that

¹ Wilhelm Mattenklodt, Verlorene Heimat. Als Schutztruppler und Farmer in Suedwest (Berlin: Paul Parey, 1928), 247; 250.

purpose.² Brockado visited in 1849 the "Diricu" and marked on his map "Deriko". The Portuguese Silva Porto sailed down the river Kwando during the years 1852 and 1853 and visited the Mbukushu.

The first to reach the Okavango from South West Africa was the famous explorer Charles John Andersson in January 1859. After that year a few treks of Boers passed through the valley. The German influence became noticeable when Major Kurt von Francois entered the area in 1891 and travelled as far as Andara. Finally, Dr Gerber during his tour to Owambo, Angola and Kavango met Chief Himarua in 1902.³

6.1 The expedition to Himarwa

In 1902 the consultant for forestry and agriculture, Dr Gerber, undertook an extensive expedition to Owambo, Kavango and beyond into Portuguese territory.⁴ During this trip he received an undertaking from the most powerful Chief in Kavango, Himarua. The Chief had promised to accept a Catholic Mission in his territory. As Dr Gerber was a Catholic himself, it had seemed to him the appropriate thing to do.⁵ As happened, both parties had not understood each other properly, because of the inadequate knowledge of the language. Each party

² Maria Fisch, "Katholische Missionstation Andara", Newsletter of the Namibia Scientific Society 5-6 May/June (1994): 35; 71.

³ Wuest, Manuscript II, 49.

⁴ Leutwein, Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika, 178.

⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 26.

was inclined to explain the treaty in their own favour.⁶

Chief Himarua had a bad reputation with the German administration. Gouverneur Leutwein had warned Prefect Nachtwey of his perfidity. But this could not stop the energetic Prefect from trying to expand the mission into Kavango as soon as he had heard of the agreement with Dr Gerber. He did not waste time starting with the preparations which were taken very seriously. Father Ziegenfusz and Brother Bast had to leave for Otavi and buy twenty strong oxen from Woermann and Brock for M 185 per animal. They prepared supplies for two years, made provisions for clothing and the missionaries were even given a house apothecary. Though the apothecary was stocked with quinine the travellers were careless in administering it in the correct doses. They had not acquainted themselves properly with directives for its use and the worst was that they forgot mosquito nets.⁷

Father Josef Fillingung had been appointed for this expedition, because as army chaplain he had sufficient experience of expeditions throughout the country. Some people had warned Prefect Nachtwey of his fiery character which could cause clashes under the irritating conditions of the tour. Father Hermann Biegner, who possessed an amiable character and was very careful, had been chosen as superior. Father Ludwig Hermandung was still new, while Brother Josef Bast was reliable and a qualified ox-driver in possession of good health. The last one was Brother Josef Reinhardt. For want of local assistants they had taken two Africans from Angola who had been labourers in a railway construction crew. Augusto had been baptised by an Evangelical missionary and Jan was the son of an Owambo chief.

⁶ Leutwein, Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Suedwestafrika, 186.

⁷ Wuest. Manuscript II, 33.

Father Filling described them and mentioned that they did not seem trustworthy.⁸ The third assistant was a certain Petrus, a Nama man, who would take care of hunting, but he would only be hired in Otavifontein. In those days there were no hunting laws yet and no closed season. Thus, wherever it became necessary one could try to hunt for meat on the way.⁹

After a solemn farewell service in the church they left on 12 January 1903 from Windhoek. Their first goal was Grootfontein, 460 km away. When they arrived in Otavi on 15 February, the rainy season suddenly burst loose in all its ferocity. The going became much more difficult. On 22 February they finally reached Grootfontein. One of the first people they met was a Catholic NCO, Mr Gasz, who had accompanied Dr Gerber on his tour to the North. He was the first one to warn against Himarua. Also the District Magistrate, First Lieutenant Volkmann, had experience and he warned the fathers against the perfidity of Himarua.¹⁰ He received them in a very friendly manner and he really felt sympathy for them, because he could not share the optimism of Dr Gerber.¹¹ Though he did agree that a written document sometimes had a magical effect in Africa, in the case of Himarua he could only warn the missionaries. There was no possibility of consulting Windhoek as no railway or telegraph connection existed as yet. Therefore, Father Biegner answered him that they had been sent to fulfil this mission and consequently they would carry on. When Volkmann understood that the

⁸ Josef Gotthardt OMI, Auf zum Kavango (Huenfeld: Verlag der Oblaten, 1933), 15-16.

⁹ Wuest, Manuscript II, 33.

¹⁰ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 17.

¹¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 26.

missionaries did not want to hear of abandoning the mission he at least wanted to give them some good advice. They should take the trusted Tom along. He was a well-known half-cast Bushman, very faithful and with great influence among the people to the North of Grootfontein. Besides he was acquainted with the waterholes and an experienced interpreter. To the detriment of the expedition Father Biegner was of the opinion that he could not accept this advice. In Otavifontein they had hired the services of a third native, a Nama called Petrus. As their means were very limited they would not be able to retain a fourth assistant.¹²

When they left Grootfontein the prospects were pretty good. Though they did not have a guide, the army had provided them with a very good ordnance survey map. Though they had 270 km in front of them, it had rained sufficiently to leave pools and puddles everywhere. There was game in abundance and the route had been traversed by others before them. They trekked in accordance with the usual time table. In the morning after H. Mass, when it was possible, they would move for three to four hours after breakfast. Then followed the midday break during which they would carry out repairs and the cook would prepare a meal. Towards three o'clock the caravan moved on until dusk unless the water places lay too far from each other. If this was the case they would also travel during the night.¹³ On 16 March 1903 (Gotthardt records 18 March) they touched upon the banks of the Okavango, about 5 km downstream of the present Finnish Mission in Nkurenkuru. Hardly had they set up camp or a number of well-armed Blacks surrounded them. To gain their confidence the missionaries presented them with some small items. A

¹² Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 20.

¹³ Ibid., 21.

while later Father Biegner crossed the river to present himself to the Chief. At that time most Kavango tribes lived across the river on the Angolan side. But within a few years most Kavango tribes would cross the river and settle on the South West African side, because in the first decade of this century the Portuguese started administering Okavango more closely imposing taxation under strict supervision.¹⁴ Father Biegner explained the reason for their arrival while he showed the written document in which Himarua had promised Dr Gerber to allow Catholic missionaries into his territory and the children to attend school. The Chief denied any knowledge of this promise and as a consequence refused them permission to stay. After a lot of persistence by Father Biegner Himarua eventually admitted that he had signed the letter, but nevertheless he would not allow them to stay.¹⁵ Himarua's origin had been in the Kunene region. He had invaded this part of Kavango towards the end of the 19th century and had made himself Chief of the people. His reputation was bad from the beginning. When in a period of drought in 1897 a party of Herero had asked to settle in his land he had allowed them entrance and given them land to settle. But after three years he assassinated the entire group and took over all their possessions.¹⁶ After lengthy negotiations he was prepared to hand over a piece of land, but only for an exorbitant price dictated by his greed. When the missionaries ventured to state that he could not be serious he threatened to shoot everybody if they did not leave speedily.

¹⁴ Jos. Wuest, Historische Notizen von Okavango (1850-1910) Manuscript in Codex Historicus Nyangana.

¹⁵ Ludwig Hermandung OMI, Ein Apostelgrab am Okavango (Huenfeld bei Fulda: Redaktion der "Maria Immaculata", 1903), 12.

¹⁶ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 22.

In view of the dangerous situation Biegner made use of an earlier agreement with Volkmann and in the utmost secrecy he sent a Bushman with a plea for help. Two days later Himarua's nephew appeared for further negotiations but these came to nothing. Therefore it was decided to go eastward and look for a more friendly tribe. The travellers dismantled the ox waggon and from the parts constructed a two-wheel cart. It would have been much simpler by boat but Himarua refused to provide them with a boat and crew.¹⁷ The Fathers Biegner and Hermandung departed and found acceptance among the Mbunza tribe. Chief Nampadi received them in a very friendly fashion and granted them permission to settle.¹⁸

Though both of them were very pleased, they were badly affected by malaria. Biegner could hardly stay on his horse and Hermandung described the tour in the cart as running the gauntlet. When against all hopes they arrived at the camp, on Monday, 6 April in the Holy Week, Father Filliung had to take Biegner from the horse. Both travellers lay down on a blanket under a tree in very a weak condition.

On Easter morning, Father Filliung, though still very weak, managed to get up and prepare for H. Mass. He had hardly started before First Lieutenant Volkmann arrived with a troop of fifteen men responding to the urgent call of Father Biegner. Himarua changed overnight, pulled a hypocritical face and promised not to cause any harm. But when Volkmann had left the intimidation went on unabated. Every night his men entered the camp and stole a number of items.¹⁹ All this

¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 27.

¹⁹ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 26.

went on while not only Father Biegner, but also Hermandung and the Brothers Bast and Reinhardt were severely affected by malaria. On Easter Monday, Father Hermandung called Father Filliung to minister the Sacrament of the Sick to Father Biegner as the signs of impending death were very clear. When Filliung went to the waggon Father Hermandung saw that the end was near and gave him the general absolution. Father Biegner died in the evening of 16 April 1903. Father Filliung wrapped his body in blankets and buried him near the camping place.²⁰ On 28 April, Nampadi sent messengers with the Job's news that the missionaries would not be allowed to open a station in his region. Himarua had threatened him with war if he dared to do so. This was the last straw and nothing could now change the decision to return to Grootfontein. As the two Angolese drivers had fled the full burden of the return journey fell on the missionaries themselves. At one stage they met friendly Bushmen who helped them for a while. Then again the oxen were attacked by wild dogs and cheetah. At one stage the caravan had to stop for eight days as Father Hermandung was at the end of his strength. It was again Father Filliung who had to minister to him the Sacrament of the Sick. But soon thereafter the fever subsided and after eight days of rest the journey could be continued. But a new obstacle stared them in the eyes. Since the last rains had fallen the pools and puddles had dried up and they faced the 120 km of the track of thirst. On the third day when they were at a distance of 30 km from Tsintsabis the oxen refused any further work. The only solution was to let them cover the 30 km to the waterhole at Tsintsabis. Petrus would follow them on horseback and hoped to return the following day.²¹ But Petrus did not return and soon the drinking water was finished. Brother Reinhardt experienced another vicious attack

²⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 27.

²¹ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 30.

of fever. Then Brother Bast remembered a pool of water some four hours' walking behind them. With the arrival of the new day Father Filling and Brother Bast set out to fill the water bags with the bitter but saving water. That same evening a Bushman arrived with the news that Petrus and his oxen had not found water at Tsintsabis and had moved on another 35 km. Petrus had failed to be doubly watchful and in the stampede for water three oxen had fallen into the waterhole. Others had been so weak that they could not even reach the hole. It was decided that Brother Bast would carry on fetching water 4 km back and Father Filling would accompany the Bushman. The latter two left at 3 o'clock in the night to cover a distance of 65 km. Also Brother Bast at his waterhole was assisted by Bushmen. After one day and two nights the strong Father Filling reached the waterhole where he found twelve of the twenty oxen alive.

Petrus had left the oxen to their own fate and went to the nearest werf to sit near the fire and enjoy himself. He promised the Bushmen if they would take the three oxen from the hole, he would donate two to them. News travelled fast and from near and far the Bushmen came to participate in this unexpected feast. But the rumour also came round to Tom's kraal at a few hours' distance. When he arrived at the werf Petrus told him that it was too late and the missionaries would be dead. But Tom was undeterred and he organised his people and his oxen to come to the rescue of the expedition. They brought water and milk for the travellers and the sick.²² With the assistance of Tom and his people the unhappy travellers reached Grootfontein without further delay. For Brother Reinhardt it was too late. Although he reached Windhoek, a few days later, and was admitted to the military hospital, he died.

²² Ibid., 32.

After a rest of eight days Brother Bast returned to the Buffalo Omuramba to retrieve the baggage he had left behind. It was untouched. On 28 April, the day he returned to Grootfontein, Prefect Nachtwey had arrived in order to gain first-hand information. Lieutenant Volkmann was full of indignation and he decided on a punitive expedition. He invited Nachtwey, Hermandung and Bast to join him. Father Füllung had accompanied Brother Reinhardt to Windhoek. When they arrived at Himarua's kraal he had been forewarned and prepared and had assembled 150 armed men at the other side of the river. Because the village was at that location, which was Portuguese territory, the only possible strategy was shelling the site. While that was in progress a number of Himarua's men crossed the river upstream and wanted to encircle Volkmann and his men, which could be prevented.²³

Though the punitive expedition had not been a success Volkmann and his companions carried on along the river up to Andara. Here Prefect Nachtwey would strike a deal with Chief Diyevé and the two decided to open a station in 1904. Father Nachtwey left his photograph behind and instructed Libebe to look for this picture. When White teachers came and showed it to him, that would be the sign that the "Great teacher" from Windhoek had sent him these messengers. He should receive them and allocate them a site on which to build their house.²⁴

After the expedition had returned Prefect Nachtwey informed Governor Theodor Leutwein that Deputy-Governor Major von Estorff had agreed in December 1902, that the Catholic Mission could take 3200 kg from the administration stores. He had also kindly supplied the five missionaries with the necessary medicines. This

²³ Ibid., 34.

²⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 28.

expedition should have been undertaken in 1899 or 1900, but lung disease and cattle disease prevented this. He recorded that the transportation costs were very high though the Damara-Namaqua Handelsgesellschaft had agreed to a reduction. Referring to the unfortunate confrontation with Himarua he felt that in future they should be issued with guns for self-defence. He also mentioned that after the failure of the third expedition, rumours circulated in Windhoek that the Catholic Mission had resigned itself to giving up the idea. Nachtwey firmly dismissed these hearsay reports and confirmed that they would renew the efforts as soon as they were ready. He finished his letter by reminding the Governor of the losses suffered in terms of human life and in kind and requested the Governor to leave to the mission the goods in the administration store, free of charge.²⁵

In September Nachtwey thought it necessary to address all the Fathers and Brothers. He explained to them what had actually happened during the first expedition and that he had gone to Grootfontein to investigate. After the invitation of Volkmann he had joined the punitive expedition and in spite of the unsatisfactory result of the same, they had journeyed up to Libebe's kraal. There he had concluded an agreement with the Chief to open a station in 1904. He recognised that there was unrest among the members of the missionary staff about the loss of life and goods. He reiterated that he also was very worried, but felt it imperative to defend the attempts to found a station in the North East. From the beginning the *raison d'etre* of the mission was the conversion of the Africans. These people in Kavango could not be abandoned, because of

²⁵ Prefect to Leutwein, Windhuk, 10 June 1903 (ADW A 62: Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

organisational problems. Before the missionary staff started to criticise they should get the facts straight otherwise Christian charity would be wounded.²⁶

Nachtwey realised that the General Board also worried about the loss of life and he discussed with the Superior-General the reasons why he advised another attempt in Kavango. First of all the tribes were completely non-Christian and many people populated the area. If the Catholic Mission delayed the Protestants would fill the gap. And once the Rheinische or Finnish Mission was settled permanently the Government would prohibit any other denomination from entering that region. One of the advantages he had observed was that the country was fertile. This would make the mission self-supporting. It would, therefore, not be necessary to buy a farm. If they were able to arrive first the principle of "primo occupanti" would be applicable. Permission from the Chief and authorisation from the Government would be sufficient. A second point for consideration was that quite soon the government envisaged occupying the land in the North. If the government forestalled the mission they would declare all land "Crownland" and then the mission would have to depend on the goodwill of a Protestant Government.²⁷

In a reaction to the request of 2 November, Leutwein answered the Apostolic Prefect that his government would be prepared to grant gun licences to the Mission for free, for those areas which were as yet without police protection or insufficiently guarded. However, they should submit an official application to

²⁶ Nachtwey to Fathers and Brothers, Epukiro, 20 September 1903 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

²⁷ Prefect Nachtwey to Superior General, Windhoek, 10 October 1903, Missions de la Congregation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculee 162-163 (1904): 367.

the customs office in Windhoek.²⁸ In another report Father Nachtwey again related what had happened the previous year. The expedition of five missionaries via Grootfontein had been thwarted by Himarua, who was an enemy of the German Protectorate. After the missionaries had turned to Nampadi, he had most generously offered them a place in Bunya. When they were still dealing with Nampadi about a site on the German bank of the river, Himarua started threatening Nampadi with war. The only solution at that moment was to return. As the dry season had set in the pools had dried up and it was very difficult to cross the track of thirst. The entire undertaking had been very costly. The superior had died at Okambombo, the residence situated in Angola opposite Nkurenkuru. Brother Reinhardt had died nine days after arrival in Windhoek. A third one had to be sent back to Europe for recuperation. The expedition had lost material items to theft and, during different incidents, nine oxen. In view of their political task of pacification, which would benefit the German Empire, he asked for partial compensation. He would be very pleased if the supplies they had received from the government stores would be remitted. After Himarua had acted as an enemy of the missionaries, First Lieutenant Volkmann had organised a punitive expedition. But the result had been unsatisfactory, neither had it compensated them. Prefect Nachtwey assured the Governor that in spite of consistent rumours to the contrary and in spite of the bad experiences, they would continue their efforts. When the Herero war had broken out, all that was needed for another expedition was lying in the customs house ready for distribution. In memory of the two missionaries who had given up their lives, and also to spread the German culture, he asked for

²⁸ Leutwein to Nachtwey, Windhuk, 13 November 1903 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango: Leutwein; Kaiserliches Gouvernement fuer Deutsch-Suedwestafrika Nr 12665).

compensation in the form of government supplies.²⁹

The government did not reject the request but informed the mission that the Foreign Office requested detailed specifications about the amount of damage and particulars about how it happened. The mission should explain how much of the damage the Kavango people had caused. They should also prove that it had not been caused by negligence and in the case of the oxen through lack of supervision.³⁰ A month later Father Hermandung acknowledged receipt of that letter³¹ and in the beginning of 1906 he was able to submit the required information as well as the amount of the losses suffered, nl. M 6925, 92.³²

6.2 A new attempt via lake Ngami

In the beginning of 1907 after peace had returned to South West Africa, the idea of another attempt had gained ground. The mission accordingly informed the Colonial Government. Mr Oskar Hintrager in the name of the Imperial Governor informed the Prefect that District Magistrate Narciss had brought the content of their plans to his knowledge. But according to information the government had received from Captain Franke and the explorer Seiner, the attitude of the people in Kavango had remained hostile. It had even been deemed necessary to allot to

²⁹ Prefect to Governor, Windhoek, 17 August 1904 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

³⁰ Kaiserliches Gouvernement in Vertretung an Katholische Mission der Paters Oblaten, Windhuk, 9 February 1905 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

³¹ Hermandung to Government, Windhoek, 25 March 1905 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

³² Hermandung to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Windhoek, 18 January 1906 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

the expedition of Captain Franke, an armed escort of 30 troops. If the mission again tried to enter Kavango it could easily lead to unwanted complications, which for political and fiscal reasons should be avoided. The colonial administration had received strict orders from the Colonial Department in Berlin to avoid all friction. Clearly the fear of another Colonial war played an important role in the Administration's decision making. Therefore Mr Hintrager advised the Apostolic Prefect to refrain from the envisaged expedition. In the event of them going ahead, the Government would refuse to take any responsibility for damage or even loss of life.³³

In spite of this letter, the existing correspondence proves that the Fathers Franz Krist and Franz Lauer received orders from the Prefect to prepare an expedition to Chief Diyeve to show him the picture of Father Nachtwey and investigate if he had still remained faithful to his good intentions of the year 1903. This time it had been decided to start off from Gobabis, travel via Lake Ngami and then find a way to Andara. Though the expedition went ahead as planned it seems that they heeded the warning of Mr Hintrager. It was only an exploratory tour with very limited numbers. On 11 July 1907, the caravan stood ready in the yard of the Catholic Mission in Windhoek. Father Krist and three Africans would travel via Epukiro to Gobabis where they would meet Father Lauer. They left Epukiro on 29 July 1907. The driver they had intended to hire in Epukiro was refused permission to go by his father. Nevertheless they went ahead and after passing Owingi reached Gobabis. In that town Father Krein received them in a very friendly way and they stayed for eighteen days. As the fathers wanted to retain

³³ Herr Hintrager fuer Kaiserliches Gouvernement von Deutsch-Suedwestafrika to Prefect Nachtwey, Windhuk, 5 April 1907 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango. Kaiserliches Gouvernement J.Nr. 8769; 05-04-1907).

the responsibility, they did not want to engage a White person, even if he were well-informed of the road to Kavango. Therefore Father Krist hired a man from the Cape. Though he was not an excellent driver he rendered invaluable services during the journey.³⁴ He was called Christian and baptised under the name Mattheus. In earlier years he had been a cook for an English officer, and this experience came in very handy in the following weeks. While in Gobabis Father Krist informed the Procurator that they had appointed Christian for M 75 per month. It had been agreed that after completion of the tour the latter would receive his wages in Windhoek. It was convenient for the expedition that Mr Hugo Abraham had given them a credit letter of M 2000 to be used in the shops of Tsau. Krist mentioned that they possibly had to buy 12 to 14 oxen in Tsau.³⁵

The route they had decided to follow had two waterless stretches, one between Olifantsfontein and Rietfontein of 89 km and a second one between Kobi and Makakun of 95 km. Along the route on two Boer farms pumps had been installed, which would make it easier on the animals. Once they were beyond Makakun they would encounter more water than they needed.³⁶ At Olifantsfontein they met the first Bushman and as they were about to enter the first waterless track they rested there for three days. The Bushman was quite willing to assist their servant Lukas and he informed the missionaries of the existence of a waterhole called Nau!, 22 km further on. At Olifantsfontein they observed the ruins of both an English and a German military post. It was a revelation to them that in the

³⁴ Wuest, Manuscript II, 56.

³⁵ Krist to Procurator, Gobabis, 11 August 1907 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

³⁶ Wuest, Manuscript II, 56.

middle of the Kalahari, crystal-clear water flowed from the granite near their camp site.³⁷ On 23 August they reached Rietfontein where they called on Lieutenant Bulerich and explained the aim of their journey. From Rietfontein they could only travel another 11 km to the boundary post of Bechuanaland as their oxen were not allowed to enter and they were compelled to hire a team of oxen 47 km inside the territory at the nearest English police station, Quagganei. This could cause a problem in the future when larger expeditions took to the road.³⁸ The lieutenant promised Father Krist his horse, whereupon he invited them for supper. The next morning Krist rode to Quagganei where police sergeant Webb and nine Basuto policemen received him very well. After three and a half days he arrived at the border with the oxen he had hired from Tswana farmers. He outspanned the animals and drove them back to Rietfontein. With nine oxen they continued their journey. When they had advanced 50 km a policeman on horseback presented them with a written notification. The watchful police had noticed that they had a "phylax", a dog with them. According to the legal ordinances no predators were allowed to be imported from Damaraland to Bechuanaland. The police sergeant proposed they leave the dog behind at the next Boer farm "Dikar". They promised to comply and in fact they left the dog at that farm. The next day when they had travelled about 10 km from the farm, the faithful dog followed them, dragging a long chain behind him. The only solution was to take the dog along, which pleased them as he was a wonderful hunter. In Kobi, a police station with a Basuto police to guard the reserve boundary, they waited two days before entering the next waterless stretch. Beyond Kobi the landscape changed and they found many more trees and bushes. Eventually they reached Makakun

³⁷ Ibid., 57.

³⁸ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 36.

(Enttäuschung/disappointment). Here the Okavango was a small little stream, which would seep into the sand and vanish 500 m further. In the neighbourhood a number of Herero were living, survivors of the Herero war. The next day, after covering another 15 km, they entered Tsau on 6 September.³⁹ Though the town was a labyrinth of alleys and winding streets, the houses looked neat with forecourts. There was a small church and three shops. The Magistrate and police lived on the outskirts of the town. Father Wuest relates that he visited Tsau and Maun in December 1928.⁴⁰ There he personally met Chief Mathiba. Though he had been described by various travellers as very slim and neatly-dressed, when Father Wuest met him in the shop of a Greek, he was very fat and shabbily dressed.⁴¹ Wuest had received a lift from Mr Schoenfelder, the manager of the recruitment office of Swanla. Tsau had been abandoned twenty years earlier though there were still some shops for the Tswana living in the neighbourhood. The river Thaoge had retreated more and more and Lake Ngami had run dry. This had caused the inhabitants to move on.⁴²

Father Krist went to call on the Magistrate. Inquisitive Tswana came to ask what the strangers needed. When they understood that these would be interested in a guide they conveyed that message to Captain Mathiba. The next day the travellers suddenly heard the sound of a siren, indicating that an announcement would be made. The towncrier announced that at 9 o'clock a meeting would take place. The missionaries also went to the gathering. About 200 men were present. Solemnly

³⁹ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 59.

⁴¹ Ibid., 61.

⁴² Ibid., 60.

Mathiba, a well-dressed young man of 18 years of age, entered the enclosure. When he noticed the visitors he greeted them in a friendly fashion and offered chairs. But quite soon the missionaries started feeling that their journey did not suit him. After they had left the meeting Mathiba still wanted to discuss with the Magistrate the question of the guides. That afternoon they received an invitation to have dinner with Magistrate Hanney. He had prepared many items which he presented to them for the journey. There was material for mosquito nets, lemon squash, a bottle of medicine against blackwater fever, quinine and tobacco. There was also a bag of rice and flour he was prepared to store until after their return. A Black teacher presented the travellers with milk. Others offered milk which cost 2 shilling per bowl. Goats were also offered for 10 shilling each. On 9 September the missionaries continued their journey. They still needed to cover another 308 km and these would be among the most terrible of the entire undertaking. They had just yoked the oxen when a young boy approached them. Later they learnt to know him and discovered he was a son of Nyangana. This son who had been a prisoner of Mathiba, was called Mbambo.

Outside the town three guides presented themselves and after some time the number rose to seven. The road went through flooded fields for a very long time. Sometimes they could not find the real path. When they were completely stuck, a guide, called Tabacwana was sent by the Chief. He rode in front of the travellers on his riding-ox and they just had to follow. It was only about 100 km from Andara that they left the floodwaters behind them. When they had advanced 120 km from Tsau they met the first White trader. He was an Irishman who lived in Kurube and who entertained them most generously.⁴³ When they reached Andara it appeared

⁴³ Ibid., 62.

that Diyeve was still willing to accept a mission. But soon the fathers had the feeling that Libebe was not fully independent. He was dependent on Chief Mathiba of the Tawana near Ngami, who would not allow either military or missionaries to settle in Okavango. He had made it clear to Diyeve that he would never allow such a step. As the travellers had experienced that the road via Tsau was virtually impassable, they concluded that in future the only other passage would be through the Omuramba Omatako. For that they would need a firm base and the founding of a permanent mission station in Grootfontein was a prerequisite. Since 1900 when Dr Philateles Kuhn, a medical officer, had become District Officer of the town, it had been his ideal to make Grootfontein malaria-free. Together with Lieutenant Eggers he set to work and succeeded, making it a very healthy place. A short while before the South West Africa company had opened a mine and after negotiations with OMEG a branch line had been constructed to Grootfontein making it a rail terminal for Kavango.⁴⁴ All this increased the attraction of Grootfontein as a permanent mission station.

A fortnight after their return Father Lauer produced a report for the Prefect. Though there had been a lack of finances, Lauer felt that the expedition had been a success thanks to the full support of English officials, e.g. Magistrate Hanney in Tsau. During the journey some of the members had been very ill with malaria among them Father Krist. Another disadvantage was that they had not taken a Tswana-speaking person along. They were forced to make use of strangers to communicate with Chief Mathiba. Through the intermediation of Magistrate Hanney this succeeded quite well. Through his commendable efforts Chief Mathiba had given them two official guides on the way to Andara. The way to Andara from Tsau

⁴⁴ Wuest, Manuscript III, 53.

was so difficult that had they been left on their own, they would never have managed to find it. In Tsau a Protestant Mission with two Black senior teachers ministered to the Tswana. When Father Lauer had ventured to ask Mathiba if he would be willing to accept Catholic teachers he vehemently refused permission. Hanney confided to Lauer that Mathiba was still very young and under the influence of older councillors. In fact under English law no exceptions were allowed and all denominations had the same rights. As for the Andara mission, in Father Lauer's opinion, Andara had a healthy climate because the flowing river prevented the formation of marshes.

When they finally had reached Andara Diyeve was on a hippo hunt. After he had received information of the missionaries' arrival, he sent a Bushman to arrange a meeting. The fathers tried as much as possible to act as teachers, not as Whites. Finally they showed him the photograph. He indicated his willingness to receive them, but at the same time he had to acknowledge his dependence upon Mathiba. The two guides from Mathiba made it clear that Nyangana and Libebe were vassals of the Tswana.⁴⁵ Another Tswana who was on a visit stated that each Tswana who was abroad should represent the interests of their Chief. He strongly attacked the mission and warned Diyeve not to allow them into his territory. The dependence of the Hambukushu on the Tswana had been indirectly caused by the Varwa war during the previous century.⁴⁶ Diyeve had personal experience of this dependence when Munuera in the name of his Chief Sekgome had taken him

⁴⁵ Lauer to Prefect, Windhoek, 28 November 1907 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

⁴⁶ Maria Fisch, "Der Kriegszug der Tawana zum Kavango", in Namibiana IV (2) (1983):62.

prisoner.⁴⁷ Though the Fathers wanted to talk to Libebe in private the Tswana were around him all the time. When Diyeve had the chance, he pleaded with them not to come via Ngamiland anymore to avoid trouble with Chief Mathiba.⁴⁸ The evening before they left, Diyeve sent some messengers with bowls of fruit. It was then that Father Krist went to see him once more and he was allowed to cross over to the island. The next morning some people of Diyeve arrived again with fruits and stayed during H. Mass. As Libebe was afraid they would be hungry he presented them with a basket of corn. He gave them guides of his own so that they would get to Tsau safely. The little group left on 29 September and entered Tsau on 15 October. The remainder of the journey was rather uneventful and they reached Windhoek on 11 November after covering 2056 km.⁴⁹

6.3 Grootfontein, base for the Northern Missions

As a result of the experiences Father Krist and Lauer had had on their tour via Ngami, the Prefect decided quite soon to try to open a house at Grootfontein. The great distance between Kavango and Windhoek demanded an intermediary station.⁵⁰ However, this was not the first time that contact was being made with Grootfontein. Already in 1904 Father Ziegenfusz had made an attempt to approach the local Catholics. When he arrived in that year, nobody seemed to have expected

⁴⁷ Wuest, Historische Notizen vom Okavango (1850-1910), 23.

⁴⁸ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 35.

⁴⁹ Father Lauer, Report to Prefect, Windhoek, 28 November 1908 (ADW 62: Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

Father Lauer, Itinerary Gobabis-Rietfontein-Tsau-Andara, Windhoek, 6 January 1908 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

⁵⁰ Wuest, Manuscript III, 12.

him except for a certain Mr Billorsky. While he was there he lived in a small room of 3 by 3 1/2 m for M 25 per month. We presume that he managed to visit all families as he could report that 91 Catholics lived in the town. But the Herero war prevented any serious follow-up to establish a permanent station.

Two weeks after the Prefect had received the report of Father Lauer he addressed the South West African Company Ltd. and submitted a request for a site to build a house, school and church. As reasons for the mission he gave pastoration among the Whites and a trade school for Africans.⁵¹ In March of the following year he received an answer from the General Representative of the company, Mr Toennesen. The latter informed the Prefect that the Directorate in London had decided to grant a plot free of charge. The site was at the top of Kaiser Wilhemsstrasse and measured 50 by 100 m. The mission was just requested to pay the registration fee.⁵²

Thereupon the Prefect appointed Father Franz Krist as rector of the new mission. In February Father Aloys Ziegenfusz became his socius. In the middle of June, Brother Georg Ruzs arrived and pending his departure for Okavango he was assigned the task of preparing bricks on a farm in the neighbourhood of Grootfontein.⁵³ In July we hear of the problems Father Krist encountered. He wrote to Father Jacobs that life was very expensive though they lived very thriftily. The costs of board and lodging was so high that the sooner they moved into their own house,

⁵¹ Prefect Nachtwey to S.W.A. Company Ltd., Swakopmund, 10 December 1907 (ADW A 53: Grootfontein I).

⁵² Toennesen to Nachtwey, Grootfontein, 30 March 1908 (ADW A 53: Grootfontein I).

⁵³ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 40.

the better it would be for their financial situation. In his quarterly statement he proved with many examples and figures the truth of his statement. In this letter we notice that the preparations for a new expedition to Okavango were under way. He advised the Prefecture that the expedition should transport their supplies from Windhoek on their own waggons. In the next sentence he suggested that the provisions for the Grootfontein mission should be brought by rail. Maybe the discrepancy was caused by the fact that the waggon for the expedition had to be brought up anyway and that they could make use of this opportunity to save money.

The priests of Grootfontein were already busy with pastoral work, but Father Krist felt that it was difficult to approach the Black population. A number of them had already been baptised by Missionary Kleinschmidt. He warned that if the Protestants built before the Catholics the town would be lost to them. However, it seems that they were trying hard to prevent this. The mission had dug its own well which was 5.30 m deep with 70 cm of water which was enough for the future garden. In a postscriptum to Krist's letter we notice the presence of Father Ziegenfusz who congratulated Father Jacobs on the occasion of his patron saint.⁵⁴

Towards the end of 1909 Mr Toennesen submitted the contract proposal concerning the promised site. The Directorate had granted it and the mission had to have the contract certified before a lawyer and provide three copies with certified signatures. The contract then needed official authorisation in London. This being a formality, the mission should pay the enclosed amount and become owners of the

⁵⁴ Krist to Jacobs, Grootfontein, 2 July 1908 (ADW A 53: Grootfontein I).

property.⁵⁵

This last formality fulfilled the conditions that Grootfontein could become the sally port for the expeditions to the North as well as the local parish for the Catholics. On 3 September 1908, the corner stone of the mission was laid. The members of the failed expedition assisted the others in their efforts to build the mission house.

6.4 The attempt of August 1908

In June 1908 Father Lauer received his appointment as superior of the foundation in Kavango. Prefect Nachtwey in the meantime had given notice to the government that the mission intended to send five missionaries nl. Franz Lauer, Albert Humpert, Johannes Langehenke, Georg Rusz and Georg Kurz along with two Tswana of Epukiro, Leo and Aloys and a Christian Herero, Wilhelm, to Diyeve. He recalled that he had spoken to Diyeve in 1903 and received an invitation to come back in 1904. When the Fathers Lauer and Krist had visited him in 1907 they returned with a definite invitation to send White teachers. When the traders Geick and Rholoff had passed Andara shortly before, Libebe had expressed his pleasure that very soon he would welcome teachers for his people. Nachtwey asked for permission and also to inform the District Office in Grootfontein.⁵⁶ The following day already he received an answer to the effect that the information had been sent to Grootfontein. The Central Government would send a final reply only after the

⁵⁵ Mr Toennesen for SWA Comp. Ltd. to Prefecture, Grootfontein, 30 November 1909 (ADW A 53: Grootfontein I).

⁵⁶ Katholische Mission an Seine Exzellenz dem Kaiserlichen Gouverneur, Windhuk, 1 July 1908 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

District Officer had expressed his opinion.⁵⁷ This decision followed on 22 July 1908. The government did not have objections to a station at Andara, but one of the conditions was that the members of the expedition should be carefully chosen and be tactful people. In order to obtain land it would be useful to remember that permission from the Central Administration was needed.⁵⁸

A waggon was bought from the firm Heinrich Siebers in Omaruru.⁵⁹ On 21 July 1908, written contracts were concluded with Leo, Alois, Wilhelm and Georg Kurz. Their duties and rights were carefully spelled out as well as their wages and the terms of service. In the case of Georg Kurz the contract specifically stated that he would not undertake anything against the interests of the mission.⁶⁰

Father Lauer drove with Brother Langehenke from Epukiro via Windhoek to Grootfontein where they would be joined by the other participants. The departure from Windhoek was delayed as lung disease had again broken out in the Grootfontein District. The entire district was sealed off to any traffic in oxen. In July permission was given to leave. This time Lauer and Langehenke had a waggon which was covered in a large tent cloth and pulled by twenty oxen. As he had done during his trip to Tsau, Father Lauer had fixed an odometer to the rear wheel of the waggon. When they arrived in Grootfontein on 16 August all fellow

⁵⁷ Hintrager to Prefect, Windhuk, 2 July 1908 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango; Kaiserliches Gouvernement J.Nr. 17467, 02-07-1908).

⁵⁸ Hintrager to Nachtwey, Windhuk, 22 July 1908 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango. Kaiserliches Gouvernement J.Hr. 19141, 22-07-1908).

⁵⁹ Preisauftstellung von Heinrich Siebers, Wagenbauerei, Omaruru (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

⁶⁰ Contracts of Service for Georg Kurz, Aloys, Leo, and Wilhelm, 21 July 1908 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango: Contracts, 21-07-1908).

travellers were present. Apart from the fathers and brothers there was Mr Georg Kurz, who had belonged to the building crew of Father Nachtwey and had served the mission for many years as mason and carpenter. He intended to set up a store in Andara on his own account, something Libebe eagerly awaited. However, he had promised that in the first stages of the building operations at the mission he would assist the brothers.⁶¹

The caravan was well-equipped and prepared. Father Lauer could speak Tswana, a language Diyeve and a number of his subjects understood. A matter of concern was the timid and fearful nature of his character. Most of the other members of the staff had been chosen well, but Father Humpert had only recently arrived from Germany and naturally was without experience.⁶²

After a rest of two days the group departed on 22 August. On 23 August they reached the last police station Neitsas, 75 km North East of Grootfontein and on 24 August the last borehole, Nuragas, 15 km further on. Then they faced the feared waterless stretch from Nuragas to Gasamas. The actual appearance of the "Durststrecke" did not look bad. There was good grass, an abundance of trees and bushes but no permanent water. It was 120 km wide and some 100 km long. With forced marches it could be crossed in three days and three nights. A big problem was the ever-present thorns. The drivers had to be ever watchful as the animals tried to escape.⁶³ Some years earlier a number of Boers had hacked their way through the thick bush. Because they had travelled in the rainy season they had

⁶¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 40.

⁶² Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 36.

⁶³ Ibid., 37-38.

moved from vlei to vlei and as a consequence the road was not straight and considerably longer than 120 km.⁶⁴

When the German government received notice of the pending departure of the missionaries to Okavango they ordered a straight road to be cleared from Nuragas to Gasamas. The government also intended to enter Kavango and make land available for German settlers. It would also help the Africans from Kavango and Caprivi to find their way to the centre in search of work on farms and in mines. A necessary part of the activities was the search for water, which had been successful at Nuragas. 35 km from Nuragas the drilling team had succeeded locating water. The crew had cut a new road to that place as nothing was left of the road the Boers had opened up. Once the missionaries had reached Brandvlei they transported their water containers 25 km ahead. The drilling crew assisted with this operation in order to shorten the waterless stretch. After moving into the thick bush they attempted to penetrate that terrain, but in four hours they covered only 300 m. This discouraged them so much that they gave up. In a report by Father Lauer we learn that the track via Neitsas was the only one available because with good management the waterless track could be shortened to 80 km.

The expedition was accompanied by a police sergeant and two native police all on horseback. The District Officer had been kind enough to place them at the disposal of the travellers. Unfortunately, the road beyond Neitsas was impassable. Originally they had been promised they would find a borehole 40 km on the other side of Neitsas, but in reality this was only 15 km. Father Lauer recorded that at the present drilling side at Mesike-vlei (Brandvlei) no water

⁶⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 40.

had been found yet. Therefore more than 100 km were waterless. From Mesike-vlei no road existed, only one on the map. To deal with the 100 km they had transported 1 cbm of water to the drilling side of Mesike-vlei.⁶⁵ But when the going became irritatingly slow and the animals refused to go further, though they had hacked away most of the bushes in the way, Lauer thought it only right to turn about and go home. He did not want to risk any lives. Also the police sergeant agreed with them.

In the meantime Father Lauer had made inquiries about the road from Otjituo to Karakuwisa. His experience was that healthy oxen could cover 100 km in two days if the road was reasonable. The 160 km waterless stretch between Otjituo and Karakuwisa could be shortened to 120 km if water was transported for the last 40 km of the distance. The mission possessed two tanks containing 2 cbm. But the road between Otjituo and Erikssonpuetz was very sandy. Before the beginning of the rainy season there was no possibility of traversing that stretch. He also found that the baggage they had loaded was too heavy. At least 10 of the 40 tons should have been left behind. But he asked himself what would be left for eight people during a long journey and their stay in Andara. Therefore he suggested taking only three European men along. Father Humpert should be left behind as he had suffered very much on the former expedition, as well as Brother Ruzs. They could join in March when the waggon returned to fetch the remaining 10 tons of provisions. Moreover he reasoned that the Africans of Andara would not be appreciative if so many Whites appeared in their territory at one time.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango. 40.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 40.

This road between Otjituo and Karakuwisa had been used by hunters years before. Herero shepherds also dug their wells along the route. So it seemed that Father Lauer saw certain advantages following this road. But in the meantime the government had carried on making a road from Nurugas to Gasamas. They were hopeful that the drilling operations would be successful. In that case the Neitsas-Gasamas road would receive preference.

After receiving the report the Deputy-Prefect Father Schemmer decided to travel to Grootfontein to assess the situation. During the discussions it appeared that Father Lauer would have preferred a brother instead of Georg Kurz. Father Schemmer argued that a promise had been made to Mr Kurz and this commitment could not be changed. But he agreed to leave Father Humpert and Brother Rusz behind for the time being. Another proposal of Father Lauer to ask Father Bachmann or another experienced missionary to join the new expedition was not thought to be practical. It was clear that the timid Father Lauer was looking for some support during the tour. Therefore he asked if at least Father Krist could accompany him up to Andara. Father Schemmer promised to approach Krist. The latter did not need any prodding. After all the exertions during the trip to Tsau he was determined that this time the undertaking would lead to success. Though Father Lauer was well aware of the customary gruffness of Father Krist which was unpleasant for his companions, this trait in his character could be of help among the natives of Andara. Father Krist was at risk, because in Bechuanaland he had picked up malaria, from which he had never fully recovered.⁶⁷ It was therefore a miscalculation to start the new expedition in the rainy season.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 41.

⁶⁸ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 41.

6.5 Determined to stay

While Father Humpert and Brother Ruzs stayed behind, Father Krist would join the crew and be the leader of the actual caravan.⁶⁹ In the afternoon of 24 November 1908, the heavily-loaded waggon rolled out of the yard in Grootfontein pulled by twenty strong and healthy oxen. The weather did not look promising and there had been several showers already. On 27 November they reached Neitsas and on the 28th Nuragas. It was Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent and they decided to take three days of rest before tackling the dangerous route. Here they met the District Officer of Grootfontein who informed them that he had finished the last part of the promised road. He had lost nine oxen because the animals had become totally exhausted in continually carrying water for the labourers. The officer advised them to transport part of their load ahead and then return to fetch the remainder. Without major problems the caravan reached the Gasamas Omuramba on 14 December. The Fathers Krist and Lauer rode ahead in search of water, which they found quite quickly. Then they unyoked the animals and led them to the waterhole.

To traverse an area without open water required African experience, quiet calculation, firm composure and determination. The 120 km from Nuragas to Gasamas crossed 32 dunes. These are about 50 m high and the valleys 100 m wide. The real danger lurked in the climbing of these dunes. If a waggon became stuck it might lead to the failure of the expedition or grave danger of doing so. In the case of this particular stretch of road the leaders followed the trusted method. First they covered as quickly as possible 40 km, unyoked and drove the oxen back to the water. The caravan would then proceed for another 40 km and after outspanning the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 41.

oxen would again be led to the water but in this case 40 km ahead. After being watered and a day of rest the oxen would return and tackle the last 40 km.⁷⁰

After traversing the feared stretch of land they expected easier days ahead. But then the rain started pouring down without any break and soon the Omuramba was so soaked that they could only ride on the slopes. The wheels constantly got stuck in the mud, which meant unloading, freeing of the waggon and loading again. Father Lauer wrote that it was terrible. They had no house, no protection, and never the possibility of drying their clothes. The constant swarms of mosquitoes also had to be endured. On 27 December 1908, Father Lauer wrote in his diary: "Okavango". Brother Langehenke reported that after clearing the Omuramba they reached the Okavango without further problems. They were delighted, and having reached the river, they rested for a day, tried to catch fish but did not meet people. The next day they moved on downstream. Because of the flood they could not skirt the river. But higher up it was very difficult to find a pathway through the bushes. Sometimes they did not cover more than 4 km in one morning. On 5 January two locals greeted them and in the name of the Chief ordered them to stop and wait until he allowed them to carry on. The next day they received permission to proceed. When they eventually arrived they were dead-tired from the constant rain and the water-logged ground.⁷¹

During the first meeting, Libebe was very cordial. He, however, asked them what they were doing in Andara as he was dependent on Chief Mathiba of Tsau and was

⁷⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 41.

⁷¹ Lauer to Prefect Schemmer, Andara, 20 January 1909 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango: Lauer).

unable to take his own decisions. He and three other people of the Hambukushu had recently heard that Mathiba would not allow the White people to enter. Nevertheless he would see to it that they could stay.⁷² Brother Langehenke remembered that one of the first things Libebe asked for was a present. When Father Krist handed over a jacket, trousers and a hat Libebe wondered where the shirt and shoes were. In the circumstances it seemed the best policy to give in to his wishes and complete the gift with these items.

The entire day was spent negotiating. Towards evening Libebe conceded and allowed the missionaries to select a site for their house, church, school and a grazing place for the oxen. He insisted that Father Krist should see to it that the great Chief of Grootfontein (District Officer) would offer him a gun. From then on every day meetings took place whereby under all types of pretexts new problems were created. However, they had a home and as quickly as possible they started to clear the site, pitched their tent and accommodated themselves as comfortably as possible. It was a 10 minute walk South West of Andara.⁷³

As Windhoek had ordered Father Krist to return as quickly as possible and as they did not have a surplus of provisions it was decided he should return. Father Krist believed that they could look with confidence to the future. But Krist still suffered from his chronic malaria and even Brother Langehenke had had an attack the day before they planned to leave. When they left on 27 January, Krist cheered up his comrades who stayed behind. They did not need to lose courage as

⁷² Diary of Father Lauer (Bibliotheca Oblatorum Africana; Provincialate OMI, Doeбра).

⁷³ Lauer to Schemmer, Andara, 12 January 1909 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Andara: Lauer).

the other confreres would arrive soon. Nevertheless we hear from Brother Langehenke that Father Lauer would have liked to have left, because after the lengthy negotiations he did not trust the Hambukushu anymore.⁷⁴

During the second day both of the travellers had another attack of malaria. On 1 February they entered the Omuramba Omatako. The Omuramba had changed into a lake and often the waggon sank up to its axle into the water. Soon all of them, including Leo, Aloys and Wilhelm were down with fever. The rain never stopped and only those who could move a little drove the oxen. After five days Father Krist's illness entered the stage of blackwater fever. Occasionally he fell unconscious. But in his waking moments he urged the drivers to carry on in order to reach Grootfontein quickly. Brother Langehenke remembered that during the last night from 8 to 9 February the patient slept well. The next day they pushed on throughout the day but at 3 o'clock they were forced to stop. Father Krist fainted and was covered in sweat. At 4 o'clock death-rattle set in and he could not talk anymore. Brother Langehenke prayed with his drivers until he died at 10.30 p.m. It was in the Omuramba Omatako 10 km from Numkaub at Karakuwisa.⁷⁵ The next day they wrapped his body in a blanket and buried him at the edge of a dune. That same afternoon they covered the stretch to Numkaub and went on to Gasamas. This time the so-called "Durststrecke" was flooded with water. It took them one and a half days to look around while riding on a mule to find a passage through the floods. After many circuitous routes they reached Neitsas. Also from there to Grootfontein the entire track was soaked. Everywhere they found

⁷⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 42.

⁷⁵ Brother Langehenke to Father Hermandung, Grootfontein, 22 February 1909 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

abandoned ox waggons, which had become stuck in the mud and awaited later removal. Somewhere in the middle of that waste they met Dr Schulze, the District Officer of Grootfontein returning from an inspection tour. After exchange of news he continued. In this way the notification of Father Krist's death went on ahead of them.⁷⁶ On 19 February they reached Grootfontein where the first person they met was Brother Ruzs.

From our vantage point we notice how these missionaries had made many mistakes, which later generations knew how to avoid. They had not learnt yet how to protect themselves. They were more afraid of traversing a waterless track than of the danger of water and mosquitoes. An additional problem was that Father Krist's body rejected quinine. With his chronic malaria he should not have been allowed to travel. Unfortunately, he succumbed to the illness. Until 1917 he lay in his lonely grave. Then Father Bierfert and the Brothers Rau and Ruzs exhumed him and took him to Nyangana where he was re-buried next to the central cross in the mission cemetery.⁷⁷

In a letter to Prefect Schemmer Father Lauer gave some details of their ordeal. He felt that the journey had been unpleasant and even irritating because of the incessant rain. More serious was his accusation that Father Krist seemed to be suspicious of his fellow-travellers and gave out orders which destroyed interest in and motivation for the undertaking. He hardly ever asked for advice or took suggestions into consideration. This caused them all to look upon their work and exertions as being senseless. It hurt the others that he had himself served by

⁷⁶ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 43.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 43.

Wilhelm in the smallest things as if the latter were a private servant. The friction between Father Krist and Mr Kurz was especially upsetting. Though George Kurz had served the mission very faithfully he was commanded by Father Krist as if he were a mean labourer.⁷⁸ Father Lauer had included a letter by Mathiba to Libebe with Lauer's translation, which provided proof that Libebe was still in a position of dependence and which explained that the Tswana in Andara tried to intimidate the missionaries not to stay.⁷⁹

6.6 Under vigorous leadership

Though the leadership as well as the missionaries in the Prefecture were anxious to come to the rescue of the two who were stranded there was no hope for the time being. Hereroland with 800 mm and the North with a recorded rainfall of 2000 mm had been turned into marshland. The swarms of mosquitoes caused 70% of the indigenous population to be affected by malaria. There was no hope of Europeans surviving.⁸⁰

By the end of April 1909 the preparations had reached an advanced stage. The Council of the Prefecture thought it to be in the best interest of everyone not to send Father Humpert. They appointed Father Gotthardt as leader, who happened to live in Grootfontein and was waiting for the conclusion of the negotiations

⁷⁸ Lauer to Schemmer, Andara, 20 January 1909 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

⁷⁹ Mathiba to Libebe, Tsao, Lake Ngamiland, 24 June 1908 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

⁸⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 43.

with OMEG to open a station in Tsumeb.⁸¹ Before leaving, Gotthardt wrote some last lines to the Prefect. He had calculated that the expedition would cost M1631,12. His calculations for Father Pothmann, the procurator, are very detailed, and gave the first indication of Gotthardt's financial restraint and acumen.⁸² Towards the end of April the party left, made up of Father Gotthardt, the Brothers Langehenke and Ruzs, three Gciriku of Nyangana and a Tswana from Epukiro, Moroe. They had taken proper measures against malaria. This time they slept under mosquito nets and they took quinine. They still had serious problems with the floods. At Nuragas they had to search for a firm track for the waggon through a plain which was completely flooded. Also the Omuramba from Numkaub to the Okavango was a wide stream and again they had to cut their way through the bushes on higher ground. Eventually they came through and when they stood on the banks of the Okavango it seemed to Gotthardt that a keen wish had been fulfilled. When they passed Nyangana, the Chief was on hippo hunt but he sent a basket of maize as a gesture of friendship.⁸³ On the eve of Pentecost they arrived in the neighbourhood of Andara. Father Gotthardt with one of the brothers rode 100 m ahead. Most of the people fled into the bushes, but when the missionaries distributed some tobacco among the older ones the inhabitants ventured nearer. When they asked the three drivers from Andara what people said about Father Lauer and Mr Kurz, they answered that they were still in Andara and well.⁸⁴ When they arrived opposite the island where Libebe's Council was in session a boat crossed

⁸¹ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 44.

⁸² Gotthardt to Prefect, Grootfontein, 20 April 1910 (ADW A 62; Gruendungsversuche: Okavango).

⁸³ Ibid., 46.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 48.

the river with the interpreter of the Chief. In his right hand he held a stick in which a paper was fixed. Gotthardt thought it would be a message from Lauer. But when he saw that it was an old I.D. card of Mr Kurz he got a fright. When they asked how the teacher and the White man were doing, the Hambukushu could not avoid telling the truth any longer. Initially Gotthardt thought that it was a case of misunderstanding. He had asked the question in Herero, a language of which he knew little and in which the Hambukushu were not a master. Then he called his own interpreter, but this man confirmed that they had understood correctly. Since Lauer and Kurz had died the moon had changed twice. The messenger also informed Gotthardt that some of the possessions of Father Lauer were at the Chief's yard, but the rest the Bushmen had stolen. ⁸⁵

When Gotthardt asked if the teachers had not written a letter they became reserved. Some of them replied that they had insisted the missionaries write a letter to prevent people thinking they had killed them. However, the two sick men had refused to comply. The thought of murder forced itself on the travellers when ever more wild-looking fighters with loaded guns surrounded them. Added to this came the suspicious demand by Libebe that the waggon should go ahead, because he had to discuss something with the leader. Thereafter the two of them would catch up. Gotthardt refused and the entire procession moved forward for half an hour. When they arrived at the site of suffering they found the tent upright. On the ground scraps of paper, pieces of broken glass and old rags caught the eye. Everything else had vanished. Then the natives showed them the graves of the deceased under a shady tree near the banks of the river. Deeply moved the missionaries knelt down and prayed De Profundis. In the little garden they found

⁸⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 43.

several kinds of vegetables which had grown excellently, red beet, carrots, salad, radishes and pumpkins. Maize and beans the Africans had already harvested.⁸⁶ It was the vigil of Pentecost.

The next day Father Gotthardt celebrated the Mass of Pentecost in the waggon tent. After the sound of drums had boomed, the Chief and his aldermen entered. Gotthardt offered His Majesty a field chair and himself sat down on a trunk. In a short while more than a hundred men had assembled around them. Diyeve opened the proceedings by declaring that he felt very sad that their benevolent teacher had died but at the same time he was delighted that he could welcome another one. He impressed upon the missionaries that they should be without fear. Unlike Nyangana, who killed the Whites, Diyeve would treat them well.⁸⁷ Diyeve said that he had not forgotten the words his father had spoken to him before his death when he had urged him to keep the peace with all who wished to visit his country whether it be Black or White. Therefore the missionaries were very welcome and should live in peace among his people.

Father Gotthardt wanted convincing proof that the Chief was honest. Therefore he wanted the return of all the possessions of the deceased. It would also be a matter of course for Diyeve to demarcate a site for the house, school, church, garden and a cattle-run for the oxen. Diyeve promised to bring everything which was still on the island and had not been stolen by Bushmen. But he refused to sell any land. This advice he had received from his neighbours the Tswana, who had not sold to the English so that they could remain lord in their own country.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 50.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 43.

Most of the Blacks were convinced that the Whites had only one aim, to rob them of their land. In this conviction they had been enforced by the tales of the refugees of Hereroland.⁸⁸ After hours of deliberations they came to an agreement. The mission would receive the right to use a piece of land for a building site, a garden and pasturage for the animals. Libebe would deliver wood and rocks for building purposes, and he was prepared to present everything at no cost. Libebe declared that he would send all the children to school and that from that moment he would not allow any other teachers into his country.

The following day several cases and trunks were brought as well as a number of separate items. Father Gotthardt expressed his appreciation but the Chief indicated in no uncertain terms that he expected some tangible token of gratitude. He was presented with a jacket and a hat, but asked where the trousers and shoes were. Gotthardt consoled him that these would come at a later stage. But he could not avoid giving a cloth for wrapping the presents as prescribed. After inspection of the trunks it appeared that several liturgical vestments were missing. It was clear that most of the clothes, underwear, tools and household utensils had been taken. After searching for a considerable time they also found the diary of Father Lauer.⁸⁹ While reading the diary they must have been shocked by these utterly devastating expressions of a lonely man. These impressionistic pictures of loneliness and agony of soul during his companion's and his own sickness must have moved the readers. In his hopeless situation he presented on the first page his five reasons why it was impossible to found a mission at that place. Throughout the diary we learn that Diyeve put him under

⁸⁸ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 53.

⁸⁹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 44.

pressure to give him presents or to buy at excessive prices. At one stage we read that Father Lauer felt like a prisoner in his own tent. On 10 March he recorded that Mr Kurz had died after great suffering. Diyeve kept his gun because he claimed that it was the law of the country that the guns of people who died fell to the Chief. He also demanded the carabine of Lauer for his so-called war with his rival cousin Mukoya. On 18 March Lauer exclaimed what a terrible fate it was to be left at the mercy of the Blacks. He felt that his timid and fearful character was not suitable for this kind of task. On 21 March he surprised his workers who actually belonged to the royal family, in the process of stealing his possessions. On that same day he picked up a rumour that a letter from Father Krist would be on its way. He remarked that as long as he lived he would remember that Father Krist had left him behind in that terrible situation without sufficient food and support. On 23 March his illness returned and on the 26 March he wrote that he had become very weak. The last entry was not written up beyond "Sunday, 28".⁹⁰ Though it appeared from the diary that Libebe was a scoundrel and many of his people liars and thieves, one thing became clear, they had not murdered Father Lauer and Mr Kurz.⁹¹ Georg Kurz had died on 10 March between 11 and 12 o'clock but according to the information by the Hambukushu Father Lauer most probably died in the beginning of April. His last entry was 28 March and the moon had changed twice since that date.

Quite soon Father Gotthardt was going to be exposed to the same experiences as Father Lauer. The only difference was that Libebe had found his master in

⁹⁰ Diary of Father Lauer, Sunday, 28 March 1909 (Bibliotheca Oblatorum Africana Library; Provincialate OMI-Doebra)

⁹¹ Josef Gotthardt, "Aus banger Tagen", María Immaculata 17 (1910): 1;2;3;

Gotthardt. Lauer had suffered under the unreliability of the people. Also Gotthardt had to agree that at that moment their only interest was to exploit the mission. The demands for compensation and remuneration for services rendered to Father Lauer and Mr Kurz did not end. Of course, the Hambukushu did not appreciate the real reasons for opening a mission and when Gotthardt tried to explain these to them they replied that they had never called them.

Father Gotthardt demanded to be free in the choice of labour for the building activities of the mission. He would pay his labourers M 10 per month and provide free meals. All of them agreed and thought it reasonable and acceptable. But when Diyeve wanted a reward for this concession Gotthardt first demanded the guns.⁹² Gotthardt reminded him of his assurances that Hambukushus did not steal. But after hours of bickering and fighting he did not want to give up the guns. The Chief declared that arms of a person who had died in his territory were his. Gotthardt replied that he did not agree but would leave the matter resting. Relations then improved and some days later Libebe took an arm ring and put it on Gotthardt as a sign of eternal friendship. This did not prevent all types of frictions from arising at the most unexpected times. When the brothers used dynamite for the preparation of the foundations of the house Libebe protested that the nerves of the sick on the island would be shaken. Another day the oxen of the mission strayed on to the cemetery of the Chiefs. Libebe and his council demanded satisfaction for this desecration of the burial place, but Gotthardt replied that it was the same cowherds who had been instructed by Libebe who had failed in their duties. After Moroe had addressed the Chief and his councillors

⁹² Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 58.

they refrained from further demands.⁹³

The missionaries had underestimated the influence of Mathiba. Libebe had shown the letter of Mathiba, which Lauer had mentioned already, but he added that Mathiba was his friend and when he, Diyeve, had allowed the teachers to stay Mathiba would not cancel this. However, when the news reached Libebe that the Tswana were approaching he became very restless and he entreated the father by the spirits of his ancestors not to tell the Tswana that he had called them. But secretly Gotthardt picked up the information that the Chief had sent a messenger to the approaching Tswana with the request to assist him in expelling the teachers. On 15 June the envoys of Mathiba arrived, three on horseback with a group of thirty servants on foot and an ox waggon. After exchange of greetings they announced that their king had sent them at the request of the English magistrate. They were to investigate if indeed White men had entered Libebe's territory, and if they were on a visit or intended to stay. Gotthardt informed them that they had permission from the White government and Libebe. Hereupon bitter altercations developed between the Hambukushu and Tswana about the power to issue orders and to whom the land belonged. The Tswana impressed upon Libebe that he had to recognise the sovereignty of Mathiba. Gotthardt remarked that he would not intervene in that intertribal controversy.⁹⁴ But afterwards he arranged a secret meeting with the envoys who received him in a very friendly fashion. They explained that they had not received a mandate to take decisions. They had to report to their master who would then decide in the circle of elders which course should be taken. However, they promised to speak in favour of the

⁹³ Ibid., 61-62.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 44.

missionaries. Most probably they did not mean this and forced Libebe to get rid of the missionaries because after their departure the missionaries were subjected to all kinds of harassment.⁹⁵ Alternatively, in case they had been honest, they probably told Libebe unpleasant truths and now he tried to take revenge on the missionaries. When Nyangana's son came to exchange goods Libebe let it be known that no strangers were allowed to visit them without his knowledge, whereupon Gotthardt retorted that they were not slaves.

One day Diyevé offered Gotthardt some horns for an exorbitant price. When Gotthardt refused there followed as lightning the summons to leave his country and go to where they had come from. Father Gotthardt said that he understood and told the brothers to stop with their work. After a while Libebe was back and offered his merchandise for a lower price. Gotthardt rejected his offer and told him to sell his goods somewhere else. He regarded only one thing important which was to go back from where they had come. As long as Libebe refused to revoke his words they had nothing to say to each other. This reaction the people had not expected, used as they were to submit to the basest demands of their Chief and they looked bewildered. Gotthardt was not a man to fall on his knees or be bullied. All of them sat down as stuffed dummies. After half an hour Libebe asked why the brothers had stopped working and the reply was that they would not need a house any longer. After again posing the question if they would work the next day or the day after next and receiving a negative answer, the party left. Near the bank of the river council was held and soon three of the most eminent elders returned and in the name of Diyevé apologised. The Chief regretted his behaviour, withdrew his words and did not wish the missionaries to leave. This settled the

⁹⁵ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 64.

affair and work was resumed.⁹⁶

After six weeks of anxieties and constantly changing situations it was time to send the waggon back to Grootfontein to inform the Prefect and all the missionaries of the death of Father Lauer and Mr Kurz and to collect new provisions. It caused a series of new frictions with Libebe. After a highly dramatic session Libebe called Gotthardt a man without a mind while the deceased father had been a man with a heart for people. Gotthardt thereupon reminded him that he had not forgotten to read and started quoting from Father Lauer's diary. Then Libebe and his people backed down. He agreed to allow some drivers and helpers to accompany the brother and Gotthardt was allowed to decide on the number.⁹⁷

Brother Langehenke would have to drive the waggon to Grootfontein while Father Gotthardt and Brother Rusz stayed behind to carry on with the work. But again they were unlucky. The second night two lions jumped into the camp, tore one ox apart and six oxen fled along the road to Andara. Brother Langehenke could also not keep the others together. He sent Moroe and one of Libebe's people back to fetch the oxen from Andara. Halfway there they found one of the six escapees killed by the lions. He gave his companion the order to return and inform the brother. Late in the afternoon, when Moroe was on his way back he saw movement near the slaughtered ox. He was not certain if there were people or lions. He called out, but received no answer. Then he gave a warning shot and a loud scream was heard. One of the men was slightly wounded by the unlucky shot of Moroe.

⁹⁶ Josef Gotthardt, "Aus banger Tagen", Maria Immaculata 17 (1910): 1;2;3;

⁹⁷ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 67.

Libebe's people had been busy carrying the rest of the ox away. For all these reasons Langehenke had to return. Initially Libebe reassured the missionaries that it was only an accident. But then he changed his mind as the blood of one his children had been spilled. In a dramatic gesture he called out that a child had been killed. Apparently Libebe had been advised by one of the Tswana who happened to be present as a guest. Libebe thought that this was the right time to put Gotthardt under pressure. He demanded M 200 and the gun.⁹⁸ Gotthardt, not to be outdone, replied that Father Lauer had bought two cows for 10 pounds. He could keep the cows. Then they wanted to take Moroe and sell him as a slave. This was going too far and Gotthardt sat down, loaded his gun and revolver and challenged them to take the boy by force. Surprised they mumbled among themselves "Ajadike Siruuru" (that is not an easy man to deal with). Then Libebe ordered his workers to leave the mission ground. Also Brother Langehenke would not get any helpers for the journey. As Brother Langehenke could not drive the big waggon on his own Gotthardt had to take the unpleasant decision of giving up the post. All three thought of Father Lauer's judgment in his diary: "Their only interest is guns and ammunition, exploiting and extortion." And somewhat further: "Here we cannot stay and when the waggon arrives I will order it to return immediately."⁹⁹ When Libebe saw that the missionaries were serious he sent his interpreter to inquire if they would come and take leave. When he received the answer that there was no time he sent a messenger to present a leopardskin. He twice repeated this performance but the missionaries made it clear that they had not come for worldly goods. They did not need them. On 15 July they left Andara. The farewell from the fatherland could not have been more difficult.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 72-73.

After four days of travelling upstream they had a long discussion with Nyangana the Chief of the Gciriku. He had already pleaded for teachers with Father Krist. Now he repeated this request. He told them that evil rumours had been spread about him, but they did not know Nyangana and therefore they should stay and judge for themselves. Then Gotthardt made it clear that Whites could not stay without a house and certain basic provisions. Nyangana replied that he would build a house and provide food as long as would be necessary. However, at that stage it was simply not possible to stay. But Nyangana did not allow the missionaries to proceed on their journey without taking some of his people along as helpers. In Windhoek they would have to submit Nyangana's petition to the Great Teacher. Gotthardt took three young men and one older one. The older one left at some stage and took the guns, but the young ones wanted to stay and fulfil their mission. Indeed they rendered valuable services.¹⁰⁰ On 20 August the party arrived in Grootfontein, grateful that nobody had been affected by malaria.

The fate of the Okavango mission seemed to be sealed. Many judged that it had demanded more than enough sacrifices. The most unbelievable stories were being repeated about poisoned food and a climate where no White could ever survive. Most people strongly believed that these three had survived because they had returned in time.

Father Gotthardt had prepared a report for the Prefect on 1 July in Andara, at a time when he still intended to stay behind. As the situation had changed and he had been forced to join the caravan he could personally submit this overview.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 76-78.

After considering the actual situation and pondering over the suggestions of Father Lauer he finally concluded with the presentation of some desiderata. He stated that personally he did not like the idea of a mission store but he understood that for the time being it would be a necessary evil. He felt that it would be necessary that with the next waggon one father and one brother should be sent over preferably Brother Uken. Which father to appoint he left to the Prefect. He also urged the Prefect to come personally or send a deputy because important decisions would have to be taken especially in view of the relations with Mathiba. He added that as long as he was acting leader he would not accept Father Ziegenfusz as representative. He promised at a later stage that he would present the Prefect with motivated reasons in a private letter.¹⁰¹

Months passed and Father Klaeyle was appointed as the new Prefect. He struggled with a feeling of responsibility for all the people entrusted to his care, which included those in the Kavango who were living in the darkness of paganism and were asking for generous persons to preach the good news.¹⁰² To break the deadlock Father Gotthardt was encouraged to submit a detailed memorandum to the General Board of OMI in Rome. He immediately complied and after recording the entire history of the various expeditions he felt that a new attempt at Nyangana would be justified. He pointed out that the losses mainly resulted from travelling during the rainy season. This had been done for fear of the stretch between Nuragas and Gasamas. If the expeditions left after the rainfall had

¹⁰¹ Jos. Gotthardt OMI, "Bericht ueber den Stand der Okavango-Mission" 1 July 1909 in Leonard Leyendecker OMI, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhoek, Compilation of documents from the Archives of the Generalate OMI, Rome. Manuscript. Also (AG-OMI-Rome: Cimbebasia: Gotthardt).

¹⁰² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 45.

stopped, they could start building a house which was another prerequisite for protecting their health. He pointed out that many Whites from other governmental expeditions and hunting forays had come back unharmed. He also did not take the stories of poisoning seriously. Even the fearful Father Lauer had never suggested this in his diary. As far as Chief Nyangana was concerned, Father Gotthardt was convinced that he could be taken seriously. When during the return journey one of his people had behaved irresponsibly, the others at least remained faithful. He concluded by stating that they should carry on with the Okavango mission. Material expenses did not need to be too high. If again people became victims of another expedition, only God would know. But this was not necessarily inescapable. The Congregation should not wait too long as Chief Nyangana could become suspicious and others would overtake them.¹⁰³ On 17 February 1910, the firm Boediker Cie from Hamburg informed the mission house of the fathers OMI, Colliseo, in Rome, that a telegram from Father Klaeyle had been received. Boediker wrote that after deciphering the message he thought that the meaning of the telegram was that permission should be given for another expedition. Several expeditions of the government and private firms were on the way and the government intended to open a police station in the North. Therefore any delay would be detrimental. A copy of this letter was also sent to the superior of Huenfeld, Father Husz. From the General Board Father Dozois asked the firm Boediker to wire and state that the expedition would be Klaeyle's affair. He was a better judge if the situation warranted the go ahead.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhoek: 1834-1926, 214-218.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Boediker Cie to PP. Oblaten Rom, Colliseo, Hamburg, 17 February 1910: 221.

In a follow-up the General Board declared that they were in agreement. They suggested placing the undertaking under the protection of the Sacred Heart. In all the houses of the Prefecture they started praying every evening the litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for God's blessing in this important attempt.¹⁰⁵

6.7 Nyangana, the first permanent settlement

As soon as the management of the Prefecture was convinced that the Imperial Government of German South West Africa in the course of the dry season of 1910 would build police stations in Okavango, the planning for the next expedition entered a new phase. The consideration was decisive, that in spite of the enormous sacrifices, others could perhaps still beat the Catholic Mission. The immediate preparations were given the green light. After the rainy season they would trek North. Many fathers and brothers had offered to accompany Father Gotthardt who would be the leader again. After using the first months of 1910 to build up the stock of provisions, the farewell ceremony took place in Windhoek on 16 March. The White population also took part and many donations were received. Father Gotthardt and the Brothers Rusz and Rau were present while Father Bierfert and Brother Heckmann intended to join in Grootfontein. From there they continued on 18 April. Before they had reached Nuragas a restless dog had bitten first Father Bierfert and then Father Gotthardt. Between Nuragas and Gasamas the four people of Nyangana who should have herded the cows vanished in the dead of night, taking the cows with them. Without any further problems they reached the Okavango. Some 20 miles from Nyangana's werf the deserters met them and wanted to greet the missionaries. But the missionaries first presented

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 45.

themselves to the Chief and reported the strange behaviour of his messengers. Nyangana immediately called a court session and after the hearing he condemned the three culprits to work for the mission for five months free of charge. Gotthardt, however, made a concession. If the cows would be found he would pay the normal wages after subtracting the costs. Indeed the cows had returned to the police station at Neitsas where the police guarded them. The deserters explained that they had escaped because they thought they would be killed. They had expected the cows to trot behind the waggon. The suspicion that they would be killed came through a misunderstanding of the German word "schlafen" which they had understood as "schlagen". In Doebra they had picked up some German but not enough to follow a conversation properly.¹⁰⁶ As a proof of his goodwill Nyangana returned the guns his people had stolen. That day was Trinity Sunday and Gotthardt held an open-air service, attended by Nyangana and many of his subjects. From that day he never failed to be present. Even more diligent was his son Mbambo.

The following day was important because they received a suitable site without any bickering. The work of building and learning could start. Learning the language was most urgent. It was a difficult task as no teaching aids were available. Especially tricky was the translation of religious terms. With that task Mbambo was an excellent support and a friendly guide.¹⁰⁷ Gotthardt had been able to make the ordinary people understand that they should assist in the building of the house of God. This they did enthusiastically. On Christmas night the first service could be held in the temporary house chapel. As the house was without

¹⁰⁶ Gotthardt, Auf zum Okavango, 85.

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 46.

doors and windows malaria was still rampant among the missionaries. But everybody survived and hope was fixed on the following year when the house would be complete.¹⁰⁸

When Father Gotthardt was satisfied that conditions for co-operation were well established he decided together with one of the brothers to fetch the provisions for the coming year. After reaching Grootfontein Gotthardt travelled through to Windhoek where he reported to the Prefect. On Good Friday he suddenly developed malaria which the following day turned into blackwater fever. Easter Sunday and Monday he hovered between life and death. Then the danger receded and Father Gotthardt recovered quite quickly. The waggon returned in May and Brother Bast took Gotthardt's place. When in August an army detachment left for Kavango Father Gotthardt had recovered sufficiently to join. When he suddenly entered the chapel in Nyangana during night prayer he caused a stir among the members of the community.¹⁰⁹

One of the results of founding this new centre was a move by the Gciriku from the Portuguese side of the river to the German one. The garrison of the fort opposite Nyangana tried to prevent this, but without success. In the "Annual Report of 1912" it was recorded that the number of people moving to the German side steadily increased. Even Diyeve's rival cousin Mukoya and his people, living on the Luyana river in Angola some 600 km away, intended to settle between Nyangana and Libebe. The mission supported this policy of concentration, but was diplomatic enough to work through the Chiefs, especially the trusted Nyangana.

¹⁰⁸ Gotthardt, "Nyangana", María Immaculata 18 (1911) 1, 10ff.

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 47.

It would not be long before the entire tribe would settle on the German side.¹¹⁰

A welcome development was that Diyeve realised his unjust behaviour. First he sent the two cows of Father Lauer with their calves to Nyangana. Though Gotthardt expressed his appreciation he informed the Chief that he first expected the guns of Lauer and Kurz to be returned, before any negotiations could take place. He felt that it was a matter of principle which they should adhere to. Only then would the people of Andara recognise that the mission should also be treated justly.¹¹¹

6.8 Evaluation

When we look back upon this episode in the beginning of this century with the eyes and minds of people at the end of the same century, we can only be astonished at the unbelievable courage of these missionaries. With the prospects of thirst, hunger, malaria and even death before them, they tenaciously kept on fighting.

We noticed in the documents from the period of preparation of the mission in South West Africa, that the order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was filled with the ideal to convert the Africans to the Christian faith. They accepted the restrictions placed upon them in the hope that one day it would change. This

¹¹⁰ Eugene Klaeyle, "Annual Report of 1912", Maria Immaculata 20 (1913) 9:420.

¹¹¹ Gotthardt, "Nyangana", Maria Immaculata 18 (1911) 1:18.

initial acceptance was also a necessary condition to receive permission to open a house in Germany. And lastly the Government had indicated that the Catholic Mission would be allowed to start missionary activities among the peoples along the Okavango river.¹¹²

When the missionaries pushed on to Kavango it was a question of fulfilling these ideals, but also a question of honour. Up till that moment the activities of the OMI missionaries in South West Africa had mainly centered around the pastoral care for White settlers and soldiers. A slight penetration had been permitted among the Tswana in the East, because they were regarded as immigrants and did not really belong to the indigenous peoples as stipulated in the official German decrees. In Kavango the Oblates would find the fulfillment of their original intentions and their vocation. The missionaries in South West Africa knew that the home front of Catholic lay people was not impressed with their everyday tasks and the latter became impatient to hear of conversions. Also the Order of the Oblates and the Propaganda Fide were looking forward to actual missionary work among the pagans of the Northern territories of Owambo and Kavango. If the missionaries' work remained restricted to Europeans, they could have found similar work closer to home. All these reasons provided powerful incentives to keep on trying against all the odds.

Once the first fathers had entered South West Africa it dawned upon them very soon that the rivalry between Protestants and Catholics was as powerful in the Colonies as it was at home. After Father Hermann had not succeeded in reaching

¹¹² A. Beris, Socio-Historical Roots of Roman Catholic Missions in SWA/Namibia (Pretoria: Unisa, Unpublished MTH Thesis, 1995), 105-107.

Owambo, Governor Leutwein mentioned to him that he regretted to say it, but that the Protestants had again beaten the Catholics.¹¹³ The Oblates also understood that Kavango was going to be the next danger spot, because the Finnish Mission and the Rheinische Mission would like to penetrate from Owambo into West-Kavango.

Though Owambo and Kavango belonged to the German Protectorate the peoples living in those territories had been left very much to themselves. An occasional patrol had crossed the country, which had made the influence of the Colonial power noticeable. These Colonial influences were especially confusing to Chief Libebe in Andara. While his territory belonged to Germany, he himself was a vassal of Chief Mathiba who in turn was dependent on the English authorities in the Protectorate of Bechuanaland. This uncertainty on the part of the Chiefs influenced their attitude towards the missions. Though Libebe saw the advantages of allowing these teachers into his territory, his Paramount Chief Mathiba had forbidden it. This was all the more ironic because both the German and English Governments supported the civilising work of the missions.

Though these political and interdenominational frictions hampered the founding of mission stations it appeared that in the end the personal relationships with the Chiefs turned the scales. We can only conclude from the reports that the steadfast and courageous approach by Father Gotthardt and his firm decisions and no-nonsense attitude eventually paid off and assured the first permanent settlement in Nyangana. After it had become clear to Chief Libebe that Chief Nyangana and his people were very pleased with the presence of the fathers, he realised that he had missed a chance. Though at that stage the motives for Chief

¹¹³ Cf. Chapter 3:86.

Libebe and Father Gotthardt to open a mission in Andara were miles apart, Chief Libebe made a new attempt. In spite of the presents and charming words, it was typical of Gotthardt's character that he was sticking to his guns and demanded the fulfillment of the same conditions he had put forward at the time of his departure from Andara. This approach ensured for the coming years a stability which was important for the people and the mission staff. It definitely influenced the appreciation by the officials of the work by the missionaries. When within a few years, during the World War the Governor of Northern Rhodesia wanted to incarcerate all these missionaries of Kavango, the same officials in Kavango prevented this. It gave the mission time to entrench itself in East Kavango and prepare the way for the expansion ten years later to the West and middle of Kavango.

Kaiserliches Gouvernement
für Deutsch-Südwestafrika.

W I N D H U K , den 13. November 1903.

H. P. W.
12665.

Auf die Eingabe vom 2. d. Mts.

Herrn bin ich bereit, die für Sie und die Okawango-Mission eingehenden Gewehre, welche zur Selbstverteidigung auf Stationen und Expeditionen dienen sollen, denen ein polizeilicher Schutz nicht oder nicht hinreichend zur Verfügung steht, im Gnadenwege vom Eingangszoll frei zu lassen.

Ich gebe Ihnen ergebenst anheim, bei der zollamtlichen Schlussabfertigung, welche am besten bei dem Zollamt Windhuk erfolgen würde, unter Bezugnahme auf diese Verfügung einen besonderen Antrag auf zollfreie Ablassung der Gewehre zu stellen.

Der Kaiserliche Gouverneur.

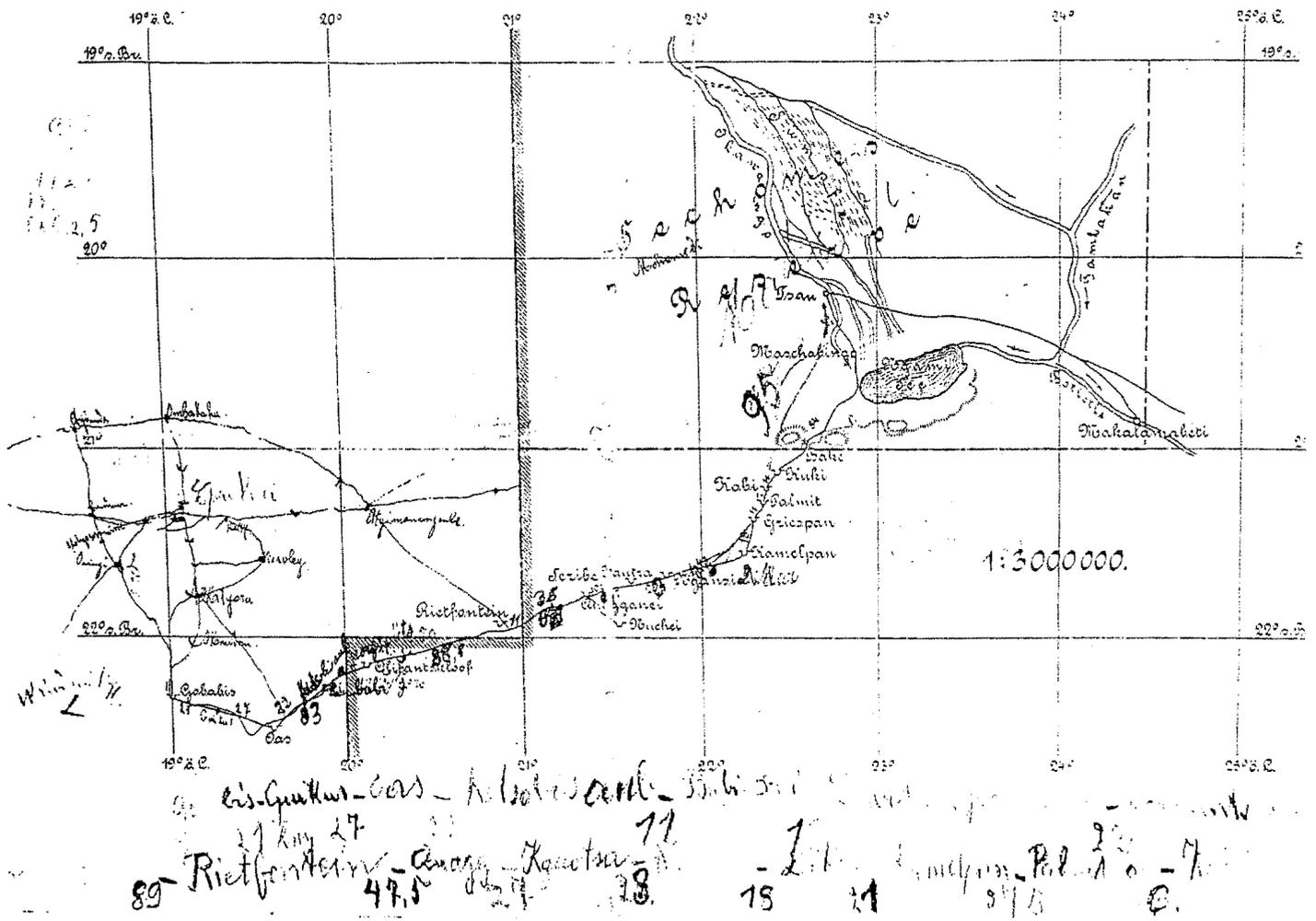


An
den apostolischen Präfekten
Herrn A. N a c h t w e y

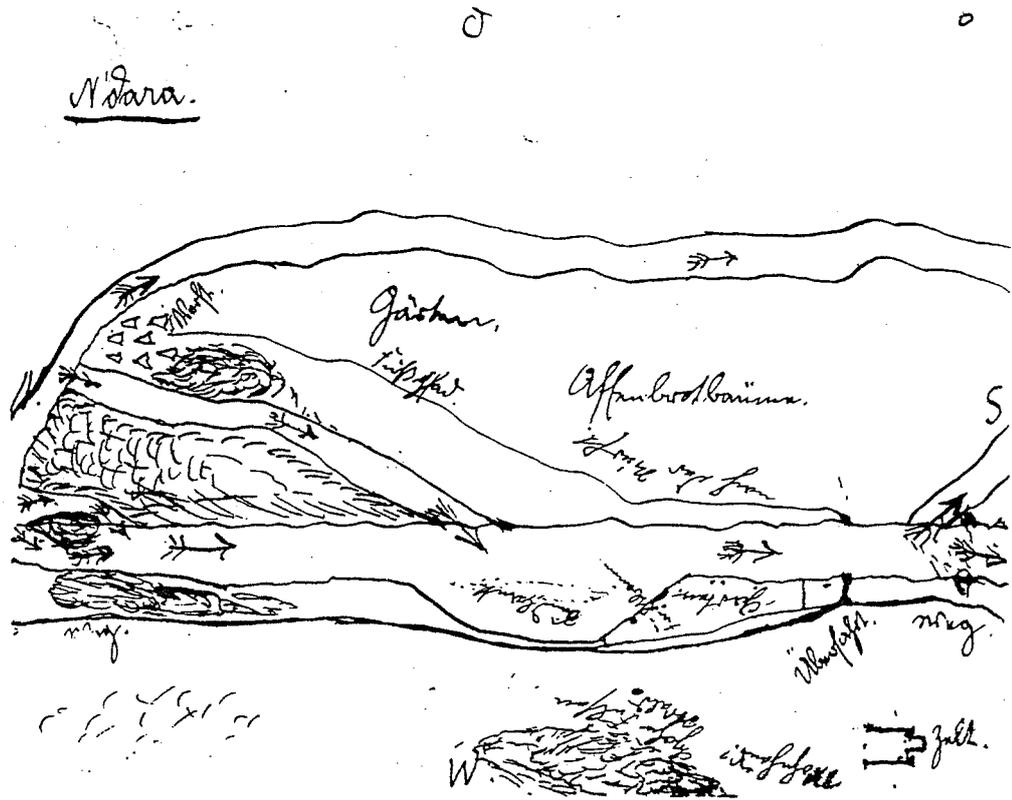
Hochwürden

H I E R

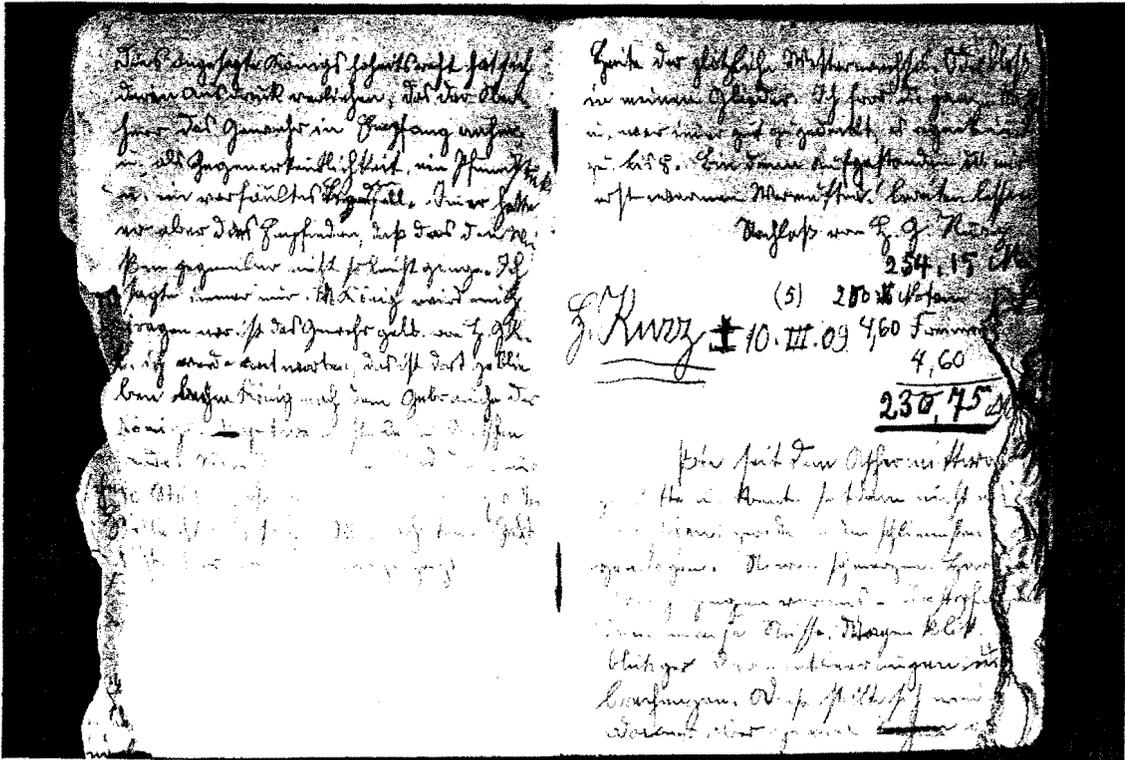
Permit to obtain guns (ADW A 62).



Map used by the expedition of 1907 (ADW A 62).



Drawing by Father Lauer of the situation at Andara
January-March 1909 (ADW A 62).



Final page of Father Lauer's diary (Bibliotheca Oblatorum Africana).

APWES 0

Kaiserlicher Gouverneur
von Deutsch-Südmestafrika.

Windhuk, den 5. April 1907.

J.-Nr. 1169.

Bei Beantwortung wird um Angabe ver-
stehender Nummer gebeten.

Wie mir Herr Bezirksamtmanu Narciss berichtet,
beabsichtigen Euer Hochwürden demnächst eine Reise nach
dem Nordosten des Schutzgebiets zu unternehmen.

Nach den Berichten des Hauptmann Franke und
des Forschungsreisenden Seiner, welche zuletzt in jenen
Gegenden gereist sind, ist die Haltung der dort wohnenden
Eingeborenen keineswegs deutschfreundlich, vielfach deutsch-
feindlich. Bei der Expedition des Hauptmann Franke wurde
es daher für erforderlich erachtet, eine bewaffnete Eskort
von 30 Mann mitzugeben. Mit Rücksicht hierauf scheint es
mir trotz des friedlichen Zwecks Ihrer Reise nicht ausge-
schlossen, daß dieselbe Veranlassung zu Komplikationen mit
den Eingeborenen geben kann, wie dies früher bei einer Ex-

An Herrn

pedition

Präpekt Nachtwey

Hochwürden

H I E R .

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CHAPTER 7

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PREFECTURES OF GREAT NAMAQUALAND AND LOWER CIMBEBASIA

While the various expeditions pressed on to reach Kavango the leadership of both Prefectures slowly became aware of the fact that Aminuis was situated on territory assigned by Papal Decree to the Southern Prefecture. In the time of the Fathers Bernhard Hermann and Augustin Nachtwey the maps did not clearly show the position of Aminuis to the South of 23 degree latitude. As soon as both Prefects became convinced that Aminuis was situated in the Southern Prefecture, they realised the jurisdictional implications and the urgent need of discussions. Other points needed to be considered such as the recognition of the baptism ministered by the Lutheran Church and the position of the Church versus the ban on marriages between the two races by the German Colonial Administration. As a consequence the Prefects organised several meetings either in Windhoek or in Keetmanshoop or Luederitz. But also the missionaries in the two Prefectures had many friendly contacts and were very supportive of each other's pastoral work.

7.1 Prefect Josef Schemmer OMI

After Father Augustine Nachtwey had tendered his resignation, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate proposed Father Schemmer as his successor. He had been born in Luedinghausen on 25 April 1874. Josef Schemmer studied at St Charles and completed his noviciate at St Gerlach. After its completion his superiors sent him to Rome where he carried on with his studies and obtained doctorates in Philosophy and Theology from the Gregorian University. His

ordination followed in Rome on 1 April 1899.¹ Schemmer's health had always been very weak, but after he had obtained his obedience for German South West Africa in 1905 it temporarily improved in the dry climate of that territory and he was able for a number of years to fulfil his duties as a missionary.

Because of the rapid expansion of the Catholic Mission from 1904 the debts had accumulated accordingly. Prefect Nachtwey was held responsible by both the mission staff as well as by the General Board. When he noticed more and more that this tension was detrimental to the missionary work he initially offered his resignation, though later on he felt that it was unwarranted and he started to defend himself. As the Superior-General had informed Propaganda Fide already of his decision, he did not want to accept this change of mind by Father Nachtwey, and Father Josef Schemmer was recommended as his successor. On 24 November 1908 the decree of appointment was promulgated and he started his work as Prefect, a task he had carried out for some time as deputy.² Father Schemmer took over the administration of the Prefecture, which meant that he had to take over a serious financial deficit. It was expected of him to find a solution to the financial problem as well as to carry on with the various activities, among others the attempts to set foot in Kavango.

During that same period Father Simon Scharsch OMI, assistant to the Superior-General, visited South West Africa and carried out the canonical visitation. It

¹ C.V. of Prefect Schemmer in Provincial Archives German Province-OMI-Mainz (PAGP-OMI-Mainz: Na 11: The deceased of OMI: Schemmer).

² Decree of Appointment of Father Josef Schemmer to Apostolic Prefect by Propaganda Fide signed by the Prefect, Cardinal Gotti in: Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhoek: 1834-1926, 190, and in (ADW A 91: Nachtwey/Schemmer).

is mentioned in the correspondence that when he took note of the financial situation he received a small shock. It had deteriorated so far that the South West businesses would not allow any more credit to the Catholic Mission, but insisted strictly on cash only. Though the first two Prefects had been very competent men, they were dealing with an economic situation where almost everything had to be imported and consequently life for the consumer was very expensive. In the beginning the Catholic Mission did not have sources of income. Gardens and farms had first to be purchased and then to be developed. In thirteen years the Catholic Mission had founded fourteen stations, not to mention the costly expeditions to Owambo and Kavango. In the religious climate of that period which placed the different denominations in a position of competition, the administration of the Prefecture nevertheless felt that they should expand at all cost. It was almost a race with the Protestants as to who would be first. This explained the enormous debts which had accumulated in only a few years.³

In 1909 Dr Schemmer published a report in which it was stated that the Catholic Mission was indebted to twelf institutes, banks and individuals to the tune of M 259.400. The annual interest the mission had to raise was M 12.000. The Prefecture had possessions to the value of M 550.000. If the debts were subtracted this would show in theory a surplus of M 300.000. In spite of the harsh judgment by Father Scharsch, Procurator Ludwig Hermandung therefore was right when he claimed that the financial position was not as bad as it looked and that the Mission would not be forced to close down. However, these possessions could not be alienated without seriously disrupting the missionary activities. Therefore Hermandung applied for a loan from the Congregation of OMI of M 50.000

³ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 48.

in order to satisfy the immediate demands by the most demanding debtors. He promised to fulfil all the requirements and pay 5% interest.⁴

Prefect Schemmer started off by proposing the separation of goods between the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide and the Congregation of OMI. All immovables and inventories of the stations should belong to the Propagande Fide and this agency should be responsible. But all the sources of income to support the missionary staff would remain property of the Congregation of OMI. In fact this would entail the farms of Doeбра and Epukiro and the smallholding of Klein Windhoek.⁵

In spite of his delicate health Father Schemmer had travelled to Grootfontein to investigate first hand the situation of the Kavango expedition. He also was quite active in finding the means to solve the financial problems. Nevertheless it could not be denied that his health again deteriorated rapidly. He was compelled to return to Germany to seek expert treatment for his serious lung ailment and Father N.S. Dozoin, assistant of the Superior-General, in the absence of Father Lemius, Procurator-General, submitted the resignation of Josef Schemmer to the Prefect of the Propaganda Fide, on account of very bad health. He informed the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide that just in those days Father Scharsch was on a canonical visitation in South West Africa. The latter had investigated the matter and had come to the conclusion that Father Eugene Klaeyle had the confidence of his fellow-missionaries and should be presented as a candidate for the post of Prefect. As a special favour he asked if the

⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁵ Report of the State of the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia by Prefect Schemmer in: Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhoek: 1834-1926, 191.

appointment could be made soon, because it would present Father Scharsch with the opportunity to confer personally with the new Prefect in South West Africa.⁶ Cardinal Gotti acknowledged the resignation to Mgr Augustine Dntenwill, Superior-General, but expressed the need for more time and information to consider the proposal.⁷ On 17 December Cardinal Gotti addressed Prefect Schemmer personally, expressed his sadness on account of his ill health and accepted his resignation reluctantly. He praised the excellent work he had carried out for the religious and material well-being of the Prefecture.⁸ While Prefect Schemmer resided in Lippspring, Germany and later in Switzerland, he conducted from his bedside, when it was at all possible, a lively correspondence with many people to canvass support for his beloved mission. Eventually he went to Muralto in Switzerland to receive treatment, but unfortunately did not recover. He died on 5 March 1912.⁹

7.2 Prefect Eugene Klaeyle OMI

On 18 December 1909, Eugene Klaeyle received his appointment as fourth Prefect of Lower Cimbebasia.¹⁰ He would serve from 4 January 1910, until 25 January

⁶ N.S. Dozois to Prefect of Propagande Fide, Rome, 21 August, 1909 in: Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhuk: 1834-1926, 193.

⁷ Cardinal Gotti to Mgr Dntenwill, Rome, 1 September, 1909 (SCPF: Protoc. N 1684/909) and in Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhuk: 1834-1926, 194.

⁸ Gotti to Schemmer, Rome, 17 December, 1909: Ibid., 195. Also (SCPF No 2320/909) and (ADW A 91: Nachtwey/ Schemmer).

⁹ PAGP-OMI-Mainz: Na 11, deceased OMI.

¹⁰ Cardinal Gotti to Jos. Lemius, Procurator General, Rome, 18-12-1909 (SCPF: Prot. 2320/09) and in Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhuk 1834-1926, 196

1921. Eugene Klaeyle was born at Mutzig in Alsace. He studied at St Charles and attended the noviciate at St Gerlach. At that time the Province of Germany had become a reality and he could finish his scholasticate in Huenfeld. On 21 May 1903 he was ordained as a priest, assigned to the German Province in 1904 and sent to Cimbebasia in August 1905. He made his debut in Klein Windhoek, but already in 1906 he received a new task on the newly-founded station of Usakos. He worked with great success at that place and soon revealed his great talent for organisation. As secretary to the Prefect he acquired intimate knowledge of the affairs of the Prefecture. He was an ardent writer and during his term of office the first contacts were laid with the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand.¹¹

On the occasion of his appointment a "Fellow Student" in Ceylon recalled that Eugene Klaeyle had been a brilliant student who almost invariably obtained the first place in every subject. He spoke German, French and English fluently. As he was still very young, 31 years of age, the appointment came as a surprise to anybody who knew him.¹²

7.3 Prefect Stanislaus von Krolikowski OSFS

In the same year of 1909 the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand was created and became independent from the Vicariate of the Orange River. For Bishop Simon there were several reasons to promote this separation. As a French Bishop he was not fond of the German shape the mission took under influence of the German colonial policy. Bishop Simon felt that since Germany had obtained Great Namaqualand it

¹¹ PAGP-OMI-Mainz: Klaeyle.

¹² "Fellow student", "The New Prefect Apostolic of Lower Cimbebasia", Ceylon Catholic Messenger, 1 March, 1910.

created a problem for the Vicar Apostolic of Orange River, as he had to lead stations under the sovereignty of two different nations. That part of the mission to the North of the Orange occupied three stations, Heirachabis, Gabis and Warmbad. The staff entertained great hopes, that soon they would be able to expand towards the North-West of the country. ¹³

The German part of the Vicariate of the Orange River was in financial troubles similar to the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia. As a result of the war, which lasted from 1904 to 1907, the founding of new stations, and the rather independent policy of Father Malinowski, the financial situation was desperate. Bishop Simon tremendously disliked the creation of debts and the independent actions of Father Malinowski. After his overseas holiday Father Malinowski was not assigned to Great Namaqualand again, though he defended himself against any accusations as Father Nachtwey had done. With the Oblate sisters as well as with his friends overseas he was still very popular. He was even invited to deliver a lecture at the Court in Berlin for Emperor Wilhelm and the Empress. As a temporary measure Bishop Simon appointed Father Lipp as superior of the three Northern stations, who should report regularly about progress and who was required to prepare regular financial statements. It was Father Lipp's task to eliminate the accumulated debts, which also had been Prefect Schemmer's order. The three stations had a staff of three fathers: Lipp, Gineiger and Auner and a number of Oblate Sisters. They would have wished for more support from the Austrian province, but the young Congregation of the Oblates of St Francis did

¹³ Franz Wehrl, Mission am Oranje (Eichstaett: Franz Sales Verlag, 1994), 275.

not have enough vocations yet from German-speaking scholasticates.¹⁴

On 20 August 1908, Father Stanislas von Krolikowski, accompanied by two missionary Oblate sisters, arrived at Heirachabis. Krolikowski was very sick and suffered from tuberculosis. The doctors had given him only a few more months to live. In spite of that dire prediction he survived the voyage and the healthy dry climate of South West Africa cured him in so far that he could work in the mission for another fifteen years. Though he was a very good financier, the other fathers felt that the tiring missionary journeys would be too much for his weak constitution. He was also looked upon as being a newcomer. Therefore fathers and sisters were astonished that not Father Lipp was appointed as the new Prefect for the newly-created Prefecture in July 1909, but Stanislaus von Krolikowski. He had been born in Lemberg, did not possess German nationality and could not speak German faultlessly.¹⁵ In the years to come he would be the counterpart to Prefect Klaeyle of the North.

Apart from consolidation of the existing missions and correction of the finances he started looking for possible expansion. Quite soon, Luederitzbucht, Keetmanshoop, Duwisib and Maltahoehe were on his programme of action. When it became clear to him that also Aminuis in fact belonged to his Prefecture and was his responsibility, he undertook a journey to the North accompanied by Father Gineiger. He made use of the railway, ox waggon and horse-drawn cart to reach his destination. He also wanted to meet the Prefect of Windhoek to find a solution

¹⁴ Ibid., 273.

¹⁵ Ibid., 277.

for the dispute over the status of Aminuis.¹⁶ This attempt, however failed and he could not reach Aminuis and Windhoek.¹⁷ In a letter to the Austrian Provincial he announced that he had again founded two new stations by which he meant Aminuis and Luederitz. He added that for the time being he did not have fathers to send to Aminuis and therefore the Oblates from Huenfeld of the Prefecture of Windhoek had placed two fathers at his disposal, who were already there. We assume that this untrue version of the situation was used by Prefect Von Krolikowski to force the hand of his Provincial not to delay the sending of more missionaries.¹⁸

7.4 Two Prefectures in the German Colony

When it dawned on both Prefects that in fact Aminuis was situated in the Southern Prefecture, Prefect Klaeyle reported this discovery to Father Jos. Lemius, the Procurator-General of OMI to the H. See. He added that this discovery again meant a moral defeat for the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia. For eight years they had assumed that Aminuis was rightly theirs. Neither the Bishop of Pella, nor the Prefect of Great Namaqualand, nor any other father had doubted that Aminuis was situated in another territory. Klaeyle was afraid that the logical consequence of the discovery was that the dispensations, confirmations and marriages were invalid. His fear seemed to be an indication of the more legalistic attitude of the people 90 years ago. Also Prefect S. von Krolikowski had expressed his

¹⁶ Ibid., 354.

¹⁷ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 15 June, 1911 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II: Am. 382).

¹⁸ Wehrl, Mission am Oranje, 334.

astonishment that none of the former Prefects had occupied themselves with that important matter. He regretted that he had not been informed about it in 1909 at the time of the erection of the new Prefecture, and declared that he would with joy have ceded the territory of Aminuis. But one year after the demarcation of the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand the request for a revision seemed preposterous and would create a bad impression upon the officials of Propaganda Fide. It was also known that the administration of the Oblates of St Francis de Sales was unwilling to agree to secession. However, he himself would not cause any problem if secession took place. In the meantime he had agreed to provide all the necessary dispensations and even pay a specified sum into the account of OMI for the fathers working in his Prefecture. Because of this accommodating spirit Klaeyle called him "un vrai gentilhomme polonaise".¹⁹

The first written contact with the South we were able to trace was a letter by Prefect Klaeyle to Father Gineiger on 25 October 1909. A copy is not available any longer, but Father Gineiger mentioned in his reply that he had passed this letter on to his Prefect. It was a request for information on the practice of compulsory holy-days. Gineiger replied that for the time being the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand observed the same feasts as the Vicariate of the Orange River. Though he did not receive guidelines from Rome, Prefect von Krolikowski had stated that he preferred to have the same "festa de praecepto" as Windhoek. As it was still almost impossible to care for the Northern part of his territory he informed Klaeyle through Gineiger that the OMI fathers were very welcome to minister at places and farms to the North of Rehoboth and he would gladly provide

¹⁹ Klaeyle to Lemius, Swakopmund, 2 September, 1910 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I: J.N. 597/1909).

them with the necessary faculties.²⁰ Father Gineiger had heard of the publication of a Nama catechism and he enquired if it was ready as he wanted to order a number. His mission among the Nama was doing well and the prejudices were diminishing.²¹

On 24 August 1910, Klaeyle arrived in Luederitz and the two Prefects held their first meeting. They took a number of decisions about matters of common concern. Agreement was reached concerning Aminuis and that mission was assigned to the Prefecture of Great Namaqualand as the decree of the Propaganda Fide of July 1909 stipulated. The Fathers Weiler and Filliung, who ministered there, were placed under the jurisdiction of the Prefect of the South. But as religious they would depend on the Mission Vicar, the religious superior of OMI in Windhoek. Von Krolokowski took over the provisioning of the mission station of Aminuis and he promised to pay M 320 per father to the Mission Vicar of OMI in Windhoek. But in future all gifts for Aminuis would belong to the Southern Mission. Also stipends for H. Masses should be handed over to the Southern Prefecture except for H. Masses which were celebrated in accordance with the Constitution of OMI. The Apostolic Prefect of Lower Cimbebasia undertook to leave the fathers OMI in Aminuis until such time as the Propaganda Fide had regulated the boundaries. Von Krolikowski insisted that before 1 January 1912 no steps would be taken to reach a settlement. However, he promised not to cause any difficulties in the case of the boundary being drawn to the South of Aminuis.

In the case of days of fast and abstinence as well as compulsory feast days the

²⁰ Legal ecclesiastical permissions.

²¹ Gineiger to Klaeyle, Warmbad, 16 March, 1910 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I).

Prefect of Lower Cimbebasia would apply to Rome to grant the same days of fast and abstinence as was the custom in Great Namaqualand. As only a short while before the Prefect of Great Namaqualand had applied for a change of holy-days, everything would remain the same for the time being.²²

After Prefect Klaeyle had informed his General Board of these decisions he received a reply through Father Scharsch on 17 October. The General Board had not accepted the decisions concerning Aminuis taken at the Conference in Luederitzbucht and felt that only one solution was possible, which was that Propaganda Fide should be asked for rectification of the boundary without delay. Scharsch as well as the members of the General Board voiced doubts about Aminuis indeed being situated to the South of the 23 degree line of latitude. In an atlas published by the SVD fathers in Steyl it appeared to be situated exactly on the border line. Also Father Nachtwey was still of the opinion that Aminuis belonged to Lower Cimbebasia. Scharsch felt that it was difficult to establish the geographical position of a place. Therefore, in his opinion it was the right of OMI to stay: "ergo praesumptio stat pro primo possidenti". The question should be brought to the attention of Propaganda Fide, and not only the settlement of Aminuis alone, but also the entire surrounding area. He advised an interview with Father Weiler because he had travelled wide and far in that area and could provide good advice. Apart from the geographical situation, the connection by road was such that Aminuis could hardly be reached by the Oblates of St Francis. Secondly these Fathers should not be encouraged to take over responsibility, as it would confuse the people if they belonged to two different jurisdictions. The

²² Minutes of the Conference of the two Prefects of German South West Africa at Luederitzbuch, 24 August, 1910 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I).

Tswana of Aminuis were related to and intermarried with those in Gobabis and Epukiro and should be ministered to by a homogeneous group of missionaries.

Scharsch complimented Klaeyle on his hesitation to sign the pact. He did not understand why Prefect von Krolikowski wanted to pursue this unnecessary postponement. He also felt that it was not particularly a sign of the Prefect's goodwill when he threatened to send his fathers to Aminuis, neither did he grasp why the application for a re-arrangement of the boundary should be submitted only in 1912. According to him the reasons put forward to postpone were the very reasons to settle it immediately. Why call for changes in responsibilities in Aminuis for one and a half years, when it was quite possible that the correction would favour OMI?²³

In his answer Prefect Klaeyle expressed astonishment at the General Assistant's reaction. In both Prefectures the missionaries had been satisfied with the agreement reached at the conference in Luederitzbucht. After all it was a misconception by the missionaries of the Northern Prefecture that had led to the confusion. But in spite of that mistake the agreement still guaranteed possession by OMI of the station of Aminuis. Klaeyle told Scharsch that he had decided only to inform his Council, because wider publication could lead to considerable strife in the Prefectures. When he was appointed as Prefect he had addressed the Procurator in February and had asked him to probe the feelings of Propaganda Fide concerning this matter. The Procurator had replied that it was wrong to approach Rome over the heads of their adversaries. First the two parties should come to an agreement among themselves and only then pursue a common policy in Rome. The

²³ Scharsch to Klaeyle, Rome, 17 October, 1910 (ADW 40: Aminuis I, 599).

Prefect had accepted this advice and had also followed it up in connection with the Northern boundary of the Prefecture which ran 80 km into Portuguese territory.

If the General Board voiced doubts about the situation of Aminuis how much more doubt could be expressed about Windhoek, which in fact was much closer to the boundary? Klaeyle had studied ten maps from the Imperial Ordnance Survey Office and from individuals, which had been published between the years 1894 and 1910. On all maps it was clear that Aminuis was situated to the South of 23 degree latitude. The Prefect was in possession of a valuable Dutch map of 1895 on which Aminuis was to the South of 23rd parallel. Therefore no map justified Scharsch's opinion. Father Kieger and Watterott could testify that Aminuis had been founded without even investigating if the situation was correct. After discovery of the error and in the initial embarrassment they had assumed they would find support for their occupation in the founding decree of the Southern Prefecture of the Orange River in 1892. This decree stipulated that though the 23 degree line of latitude would be the generally acknowledged boundary it was agreed that Rehoboth and all territory that belonged to it should belong to the Prefecture of the Orange River. This could be explained by the fact that the Rehoboth Basters had immigrated from Klein Namaqualand and they should not be added to another ecclesiastical entity or their territory divided into half. But in 1892 Rehoboth had not been proclaimed a district yet and it was not clear where the border line of the Basters' land was situated. Similarly, the fathers felt that the Tswana people should not be divided. Klaeyle stressed that there was no question that Aminuis was lying to the South of the 23rd parallel and justified doubt was not possible. To stress his point he mentioned examples of OMI fathers who in the

past had been less conscientious. They had baptised people and married them in Gibeon and even in Keetmanshoop and entered them into the church books of Windhoek without informing the rightful authority. Some even had proposed to occupy Luederitz. When the rights of the South were neglected in such a manner one could wonder why their counterparts had not acted in a similar manner. Klaeyle and Von Krolikowski had no doubt that Aminuis belonged to the Southern Prefecture. OMI would stay in Aminuis until 1912 and Von Krolikowski would bear the costs. One should appreciate the hesitation of Von Krolikowski in applying for a correction when the division had become a fact only in July 1909. Klaeyle was afraid that pressure from the side of OMI to force the issue would be counterproductive and again put the blame on them. Von Krolikowski should not be suspected. In principle he was prepared to cede Aminuis, but not yet. What more could one ask? And it was natural that the withdrawal of OMI fathers would force him to send his own priests, in spite of the difficulties. Klaeyle did not see any threat in that. The threat emanated much more from the OMI. Therefore he pleaded with Scharsch to accept the arrangement. He enclosed an official draft of the Imperial Ordnance Survey Office to prove the correct situation. The newest map of 1910 he had dispatched to Scharsch via Berlin. Klaeyle's letter ended on a happy note. The finances had improved steadily and the Prefecture's procurator was able to pay for everything in cash.²⁴

On the day of the conference at Luederitzbucht Von Krolikowski had issued an ordinance granting the Fathers Georg Weiler and Josef Filliung all the necessary

²⁴ Klaeyle to Scharsch, Windhuk, 5 December, 1910 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I, 848).

faculties for their ministry in Aminuis.²⁵

When Prefect Von Krolikowski informed Klaeyle about the opening of the station at Luederitz on 1 November, he promised that he would introduce to OSFS the proposed correction at the beginning of 1912.²⁶ In the mean time some misunderstanding had developed between the two Prefects. Von Krolikowski protested that Klaeyle had withdrawn Father Weiler without replacing him. Therefore he did not feel bound by the pact of August 1910 any longer.²⁷ But in a letter of 15 June 1912, Klaeyle had already informed Krolikowski that Father Weiler was very sick and suffering from heart and kidney failure. As soon as the doctor had allowed him to travel they brought him from Aminuis to Doeбра. There he suffered another attack and the doctors advised taking him to Swakopmund. Prefect Klaeyle advised Von Krolikowski that he would take Father Weiler back into the Prefecture and be responsible for any medical costs. As Father Fillingung remained alone and Klaeyle would soon travel to the East he would make serious efforts to give him a companion. Fillingung had informed Klaeyle that he was not prepared to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Prefect should ask for the faculties for himself. As the year was entering the second half and the treaty of August 1910 would soon lapse he invited Von Krolikowski in October to

²⁵ Faculties conferred upon G. Weiler and J. Fillingung by Prefect S. Von Krolikowski OSFS, Luederitzbucht, 24 August, 1910, passed on by Klaeyle on 29 August, 1910 (ADW A 40; Aminuis I: J.N. 563)

²⁶ Von Krolikowski to Klaeyle, Luederitzbucht, 30 October, 1910 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I, 713).

²⁷ Von Krolikowski to Klaeyle, Heirachabis, 5 June, 1911 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

Swakopmund or Windhoek for another conference.²⁸ Interestingly, Father Klaeyle wrote a second letter to the Prefect on that same day. He agreed wholeheartedly that the grant by the government for ministry to the Whites should be shared. He also wanted the ministry among the military to be re-organised. Up till that time Gochas had to be served from Windhoek, but it should be administered by the South. Provision should also be made for Arachoab (Aranos) by the Southern Prefecture.²⁹ Apparently, the letters had crossed and on 20 June Father Klaeyle wrote again that he was astonished about the angry reactions in the letter of 5 June, as he had warned Von Krolikowski in 1910 already, that Father Weiler was ill. He had given this illness as an excuse for failing to submit the number of confirmations and marriage dispensations.³⁰ He had repeated that in his letter of 15 June 1911, and had given many more details of the course of the illness. He had not deliberately transferred Father Weiler, but called him to Windhoek for observation. In the same letter he had agreed that for the time being maintenance of the station should be on the account of Lower Cimbebasia. In the case of Aminuis being assigned to the South it would be refunded.³¹ The transfer of Father Weiler would have taken place anyway, his illness only hastened the decision. Because of a threatening court case, Prefect Klaeyle had promised the District Magistrate of Gobabis to recall Father Weiler, whereupon the former

²⁸ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhoek, 15 June, 1911 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II: Am. 382).

²⁹ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 15 June, 1911 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I: I Pa 383).

³⁰ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 7 November, 1911 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I: JN 775).

³¹ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 7 November, 1910 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I, J.N. 775).

promised not to undertake action.³²

In January 1911, Klaeyle was informed that the General Board of OMI had decided to maintain its point of view. They planned to approach Propaganda Fide directly to keep Aminuis for the Congregation. If no solution could be reached they would withdraw the missionaries from Aminuis as the Board was unable to approve that members of their Congregation should belong to a neighbouring Prefecture, foreign to the Congregation.³³

In April 1912 the Prefect of Great Namaqualand had the opportunity to travel to Windhoek and meet his counterpart. On 16 April they met and again addressed the burning issue of the situation of Aminuis. They also proposed that the boundaries for military ministry should co-incide with the ecclesiastical boundaries. The exception would be Aminuis which should continue to care for Arachoab (Aranos), which post could not be reached from the South. Another point on the agenda was the question of four compulsory holy-days. In view of the Motu Proprio "Supremi Disciplinae" they proposed that in South West Africa Christmas, Ascension, Assumption and All Saints' Day should be observed. The other four days should not be celebrated as the majority of the people were Protestant and the officials would not be granted leave. The Africans mostly worked for Protestant families who would not understand.

If priests travelled from one Prefecture to another, not on mission tours, they

³² Klaeyle to Scharsch, Windhuk, 31 January, 1911 (ADW 40: Aminuis I: Am.55).

³³ Scharsch to Klaeyle, Rome, 8 January, 1911 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I, 90).

would be granted the normal faculties. But presiding over a wedding would only be allowed in urgent cases. In such cases it should be reported forthwith to the appropriate authority. Finally, the combined Prefectures would approach the Government for a special tariff for the land taxes to be paid by the Church.³⁴

One month later Klaeyle sent the minutes of that Conference to Father Scharsch. A copy had also been sent to Father Lemius, the Procurator to the H. See, in order to give him an opportunity to prepare the final redaction before it was to be passed on to the Propaganda Fide.³⁵ A separate request had been included for the Congregatio de Conciliis with the proposal for the four compulsory feast days. Klaeyle advised Scharsch to assist Lemius with the procedures as he had been in South West Africa and was well acquainted with the actual situation. Klaeyle had provided the General Board with an up-to-date map of the colony which would be useful in the discussions. However, he explained that he would prefer a different way of demarcation of territory. As it stood, nobody knew if a farm in the border area was lying North or South of the 23rd parallel, but they all knew in which magisterial district they were situated. He proposed therefore to take the district boundaries of Gobabis, Windhoek, Karibib and Swakopmund and use them as ecclesiastical boundaries. Prefect von Krolikowski was in full agreement with that proposal, but there was a suspicion that the General Board OSFS would not be in favour. Definite rumours had reached Windhoek that OSFS was against the transfer of Aminuis. Contrary to that Von Krolikowski would go one step further

³⁴ Antrag der zwei Praefekten von Grand Namaqualand und Windhuk an die Propaganda, Windhuk, 17 April in Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhuk: 1834-1926, 224.

³⁵ Klaeyle to Lemius, Prokureur aupres du St. Siege, Windhuk, 17 May, 1912 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I CP 504).

and even give up Rehoboth.³⁶ It had become clear to him that Austria could not provide him with sufficient staff and that he could not staff all these stations. Klaeyle on the other hand felt that the costs of taking Rehoboth would not weigh up against the poor results. In this he seemed to have a similar opinion as had guided Von Krolkowski's judgement concerning Aminuis. Franz Wehrl explains that Prefect Von Krolkowski must have known that Aminuis was in a desolate situation. In 1911 the station brought ten adults to baptism and fifteen children to First H. Communion.³⁷ However, these figures do not indicate a desolate situation. About 250 people were living in Aminuis. Most adults were Christians already and fifteen children for H. Communion in one year from a parish of 250 was not bad. But the Prefect of Windhoek told Scharsch that he preferred the entire district of Rehoboth to remain Southern territory.³⁸

At that stage Scharsch could inform Klaeyle that the General Board of OMI was now in agreement with the deal he had struck with Von Krolkowski. They went along with his second proposal that not only the political boundary of the District of Gobabis but also those of Windhoek, Karibib and Swakopmund should be taken to demarcate the ecclesiastical entities. He was happy to rectify the wrong impression that rumours had created. Scharsch had paid a courtesy visit to the General of OSFS, Father Deshairs, who had returned the visit and had expressed

³⁶ Klaeyle to General Board OMI, Windhuk, 17 May, 1912 (ADW A 27: Briefwechsel mit Generalverwaltung; JN 503/CP 504/12).

³⁷ Wehrl, Mission am Oranje, 355.

³⁸ Klaeyle to General Board OMI, Windhoek, 17 May, 1912 (ADW A 27: Briefwechsel mit Generalverwaltung; JN 503/ CP 504/12).

his approval of the suggestions.³⁹

A few months later the Prefect of the South wrote to Klaeyle that he preferred to have certain rectifications inserted in the phrasing of the text. According to him it should not read that there was an exchange of territory but plainly a transfer from South to North. It is interesting to note in all the correspondence of Von Krolikowski, that the impression it creates is that the Prefecture is a personal fiefdom. He talks of "My Northern boundary is 23 degree" or "the Northern part of the Rehoboth Gebiet is mine" and "it belongs to my Prefecture". It possibly referred to an inner attitude and style of governance which was common at the beginning of the century and not confined to Von Krolikowski.⁴⁰

Klaeyle felt that his counterpart was right. He was glad to communicate to Von Krolikowski that the Procurator General had informed him of a meeting between the two General Boards. It revealed that by now also the General Board of OSFS saw the merits of the proposal and had accepted the principle of political boundaries, not only of Gobabis but of all the border districts. Klaeyle had taken both concepts and made them into one. He hoped that Von Krolikowski would agree. The application in German, signed by both Prefects was dated 3 August 1912.⁴¹ The French version was dated 27 August 1912.⁴²

³⁹ Scharsch to Klaeyle, Rome, 19 June, 1912 (ADW A 27: Briefwechsel mit Generalverwaltung; GV 576/12).

⁴⁰ Von Krolikowski to Klaeyle, Heirachabis, 13 August, 1912 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I).

⁴¹ Bittschrift und Gruende, Heirachabis, Windhuk, 3 August, 1912 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: CP 843/12).

⁴² Application et Motifs, Heirachabis et Windhuk, le 27 Aout, 1912 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: CP 947/12).

Changing the topic Klaeyle informed Von Krolikowski that Pastor Heyse in the name of all Lutheran pastors had raised objections to the title of the new Catholic monthly "Christliches Familienblatt". The Pastors felt that this general title could cause confusion among the Christians. Klaeyle had replied that Huenfeld had changed it without the approval of Windhoek. Subsequently he had promised Pastor Heyse that the sub-title "Monthly for the Catholic people" would be brought back and with that correction he hoped that the cause for dissatisfaction would be removed.⁴³

An interesting communication by Von Krolikowski is dated 3 January 1913. We learn from this that the products of the Klein Windhoek vineyard had also reached Heirachabis as the Prefect had bought some bottles of brandy. He also asked for the good services of the Prefect in Windhoek by submitting for him to the Imperial Administration the four compulsory holy-days they had agreed upon. As the Whites of the South did not mind whether it would be Assumption or Annunciation he opted for Assumption to fall in line with the North. An indication of his pecuniary problems was his remark that he would not submit an annual report as he lacked the financial means to have it printed.⁴⁴

The Prefect of Heirachabis was of the opinion that all Catholics should support the good press. Therefore in his poverty he still sent a gift for the administration of "Christliches Familienblatt". He thanked Klaeyle for mailing the monthly to him and for his willingness to publish the news of the Southern

⁴³ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 27 August, 1912 (ADW 93; Klaeyle I. JN 947).

⁴⁴ Von Krolikowski to Klaeyle, Heirachabis, 3 January, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I Pa 90/13).

Prefecture. He included some news items for the next edition. The building of the mission house and provisional chapel in Keetmanshoop would start in the month of May. Before the end of the year a second priest would be stationed in Keetmanshoop from where he would administer Gibeon every second month and Rehoboth, which he would visit three times a year. But before this became a reality he had an urgent request for the Prefect. Could Klaeyle send a priest to Rehoboth before 6 July, the end of the Easter season in Great Namaqualand? Windhoek had a good connection with Rehoboth by rail. From the time of arrival in Rehoboth and the departure of the Windhoek-bound train there would be ample time to minister to the faithful. Naturally he would refund all costs incurred. For the father who would be appointed he included all the necessary faculties. He had even prepared postcards to announce the services. He only asked the priest who would fulfill the task, to post them twenty days in advance. He ended by stating that his General Superior had informed him that Propaganda Fide had accepted the proposed changes in boundaries between the two Prefectures.⁴⁵

Less official but very cordial are the communications between Prefect Klaeyle and the parish priest of Luederitzbucht, Father Hetzenecker. The first letter as an answer to a post card relates his actions to collect money for the building of a church. He was enthusiastic about the good support and praised the peaceful relations with the other denominations.⁴⁶ As Father Hetzenecker could easily obtain big hosts for the celebration of the H. Eucharist, Klaeyle ordered 500 of them, otherwise he had to turn to the sisters in Durban. With enthusiasm the

⁴⁵ Von Krolikowski to Klaeyle, Heirachabis, 6 April, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I Pa 458/13).

⁴⁶ Hetzenecker to Klaeyle, Luederitzbucht, 6 October, 1910 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I Pa 782).

latter related the celebration of the Constantine Feast in Windhoek, the celebration of sixteen centuries of freedom for the faith. He felt that the religious life of the faithful could only gain from such an event. Again it is remarkable for us to notice the difference in thinking after eighty years, for the faithful of the beginning of this century would have been offended by the reservations we nowadays foster about this historical event. Seemingly Klaeyle and Hetzenecker had common friends, because he ended his letter by sending kind greetings to the Seibel family.⁴⁷ There is an interesting case in a letter of 1913. Hetzenecker informed Prefect Klaeyle that Mr Man Thuns, who had been a teacher in Silesia and was at present an official at the Magistrate's Office, had travelled to Windhoek to follow a course in meat inspection. Mr Thuns was the organist in the Catholic church and Hetzenecker asked the Prefect as a special favour to let him play the organ on Sunday. In that case also his wife, who was Lutheran, would attend the church and possibly be converted. Hetzenecker mentioned that he had started already in a subtle way, to try to convert her.⁴⁸

In the same month Klaeyle took up the matter of the "Christliches Familienblatt" again. He invited Von Krolkowski to urge his priests to make propaganda for this paper. Though most parishioners did not have bad intentions, they usually were too lazy to subscribe to such a magazine and needed to be encouraged. As far as the trip to Rehoboth was concerned he promised to take the task upon himself. He had found out that the best time would be after the Agricultural Show when many farmers would be in town. However, when at a later stage Von Krolkowski would

⁴⁷ Klaeyle to Hetzenecker, Windhuk, 8 April, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: J.No. 425).

⁴⁸ Hetzenecker to Klaeyle, Luederitzbucht, 13 July, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I Pa 857/13).

be able to send a resident priest to Rehoboth, Klaeyle invited him cordially to come to Windhoek and visit the mission. In the meantime Windhoek would carry on assisting as much as possible and Father Filling would continue to take care of Arachoab (Aranos).⁴⁹

The first Congregation in Rome to respond to the applications of 1912 was the S. Congregatio de Conciliis. The Prefect agreed to the four proposed holy-days for the entire territory of South West Africa.⁵⁰ This was followed by the S. Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, which had issued the decree in which permission was granted to realise the border correction between the two Prefectures. Propaganda Fide had accepted the principle that political boundaries of the border districts should form the boundary between the two Prefectures.⁵¹

When this point of friction had been settled to everyone's satisfaction Prefect Klaeyle felt that the good relations should be maintained and he proposed that another meeting should be arranged between the two Prefects at Keetmanshoop. He suggested that maybe the Bishop of the Vicariate of the Orange River would like to attend. He was also able to announce that the Imperial Government and the High Command would grant soldiers free time to attend church on 15 August and 1 November.⁵² In an earlier letter he had passed on the message, that Mr Oskar

⁴⁹ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 21 April, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: J. No. 458).

⁵⁰ Decree from S. Congregatio de Conciliis, signed by C. Cardinal Geunari, Prefect Prot. 3692/12 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: ICN 935/12).

⁵¹ Decree by Prefect of Propaganda Fide to General Boards of OMI and OSFS and the two Prefectures in South West Africa, Rome, 2 July, 1913 (SCPF: Protocol 973/1913) and in Leyendecker, Geschichte des Vikariates Windhuk 1834-1926, 225.

⁵² Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 23 July, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I).

Hintrager in the name of the Administration of the Protectorate had answered the letters of 12 and 18 February. All Catholic officials in governmental departments would be allowed to take leave on 15 August and 1 November.⁵³

In the beginning of December 1913 an exchange of letters started between Father Arnold and Father Lipp concerning the date of the planned conference. The problem was that Prefect Von Krolikowski would be in Keetmanshoop at the beginning of January for the blessing of the new chapel,⁵⁴ while Prefect Klaeyle would be in the North and West of the country and only return in the middle of January.⁵⁵ Arnold gave as an extra incentive for the meeting that Klaeyle would travel to Europe on 13 March 1914 to attend the General Chapter of his Congregation. If the meeting did not take place in January, it would be postponed for a long time at least until after his return from Europe. It would be an advantage if Prefect Klaeyle could present a common point of view when he paid visits to the different offices in Rome. Once more he pleaded with Lipp to impress upon the Prefect to stay on in Keetmanshoop for the conference. In the meantime he congratulated the Prefecture on the blessing of yet another House of God.⁵⁶

At the same time a rather lively correspondence developed between the new parish priest of Duwisib, Father Josef Klemann and Father Damian Arnold. Klemann had opened stations at Duwisib and Maltahoehe. On the farm of Duwisib about 100

⁵³ Klaeyle to Von Krolikowski, Windhuk, 21 April, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: J No. 458).

⁵⁴ Lipp to Arnold, Keetmanshoop, 10 December, 1913 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I).

⁵⁵ Arnold to Lipp, Windhuk, 2 December, 1913 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I).

⁵⁶ Arnold to Lipp, Windhuk, 10 December, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I Pa 10/12/13).

Herero found employment. As nobody could speak Herero, Prefect Klaeyle had sent catechist George with his family to assist Klemann. Prefect Von Krolikowski wrote to his Provincial Lebeau in Austria that this was very charming of Klaeyle. Herero George had arrived in Duwisib with his family towards the end of May.⁵⁷ Klemann in turn ordered Herero and Nama catechisms and the Nama hymnbook.⁵⁸ Though it is not in writing he must have asked for a Bible as well, because Father Arnold wrote to him that in the Catholic Church the Protestant Bible was used (*deficiente altera materia*). This was also practiced during the Sunday liturgy. For school books the North intended to order new text books from the firm Hirth in Leipzig, but he expected that this would be a point of discussion at the projected conference. It would be good educational practice to rationalise the German textbooks for the Catholic schools.⁵⁹

Though the relations between the Prefects and the missionaries of the two Prefectures had its ups and downs and the very slow postal services caused misunderstandings, it is justified to make the observation that the relations were lively, businesslike and in general reflected a commendable good spirit.

⁵⁷ Wehrl, Mission am Oranje, 356.

⁵⁸ Klemann to Arnold, Maltahoehe/Duwisib, 26 December, 1913 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I).

⁵⁹ Arnold to Klemann, Windhuk, 27 December, 1913 (ADW A 93; Klaeyle I: I Pa 27/12/13).



HERAUSGEGEBEN VON DER KATHOLISCHEN MISSION, WINDHUK

Windhuk, den 1. Januar 1913 1. Jahrgang.

Abonnementspreis Mk. 2,00. Gebühren für Inserate: eine ganze Seite Mk. 100,—; eine halbe Seite Mk. 50,—; eine viertel Seite Mk. 25,—; eine achtel Seite Mk. 12,50; eine sechszehntel Seite Mk. 6,50; eine zwanzigstel Seite Mk. 3,50. Bei mehrmaliger Aufnahme nach Vereinbarung.

Geleitwort.

Der schönliche Wunsch der kirchlichen Behörde ist durch die Herausgabe des „Christlichen Familienblattes“ erfüllt.

Ende Oktober 1896 war es, als die ersten Missionar-Priester den Boden der 1892 errichteten deutschen Präfektur Nieder-Simbebasien betraten. Und erhoben war der Auftrag, der sie auf das schwierige Arbeitsfeld entsandt hatte. Galt es in diesem fremden, unbekanntem Lande die katholische Mission zu gründen. Gott allein weiss, welcher Anstrengung bedurfte, um das gesteckte Ziel zu erreichen. Dieser, drei Laienbrüder und eine Schwester Grab gesunken, ehe sie die Früchte ihrer Pionierarbeit schauen konnten. Verschiedene sind in anderen tätig. Ihnen und allen, welche die erste schwierigste Arbeit im Weinberg, oder wenn man diesen Steinbruch des Herrn geleistet haben, heute an dieser Stelle ein Wort des aufrichtigen Dankes!

„Gingen und streuten weinend den Samen aus.“ In dem Psalmen dürfen wir auch weiter singen: „Kommen mit Früchten, ihre Garben tragen.“ Wir, die wir noch in der Arbeit stehen, können den Erfolg ihrer mühevollen Bestrebungen nicht and erbauen zugleich. Die Zahl der Stationen des zum 1. Januar 1912 auf 12. Auf ihnen 23 Patres, 25 Bräuter, 22 Schwestern. Im

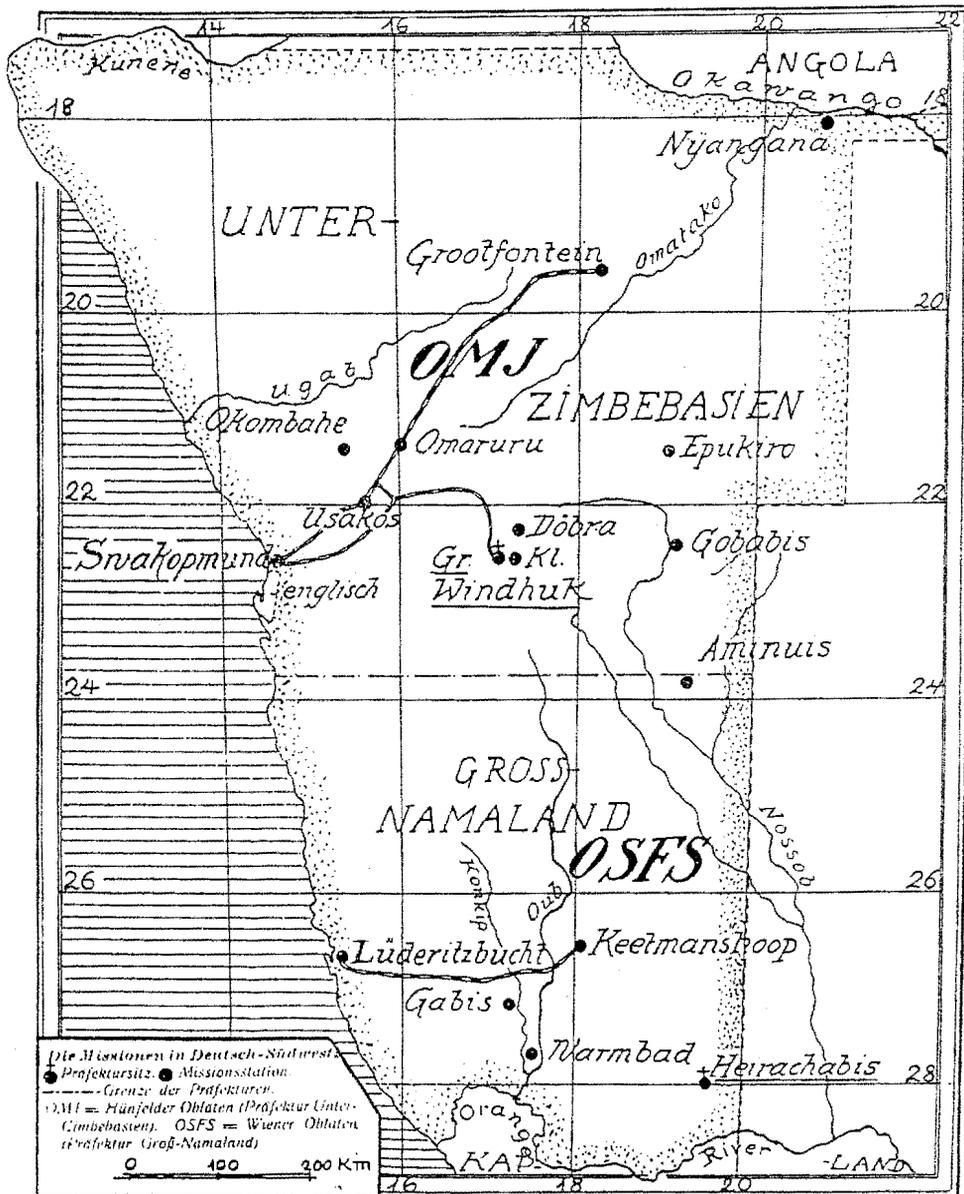
Schatten der Kirchen und Kapellen erheben sich Krankenhäuser, Schulen, Lokale für unsere kirchlichen Vereine, ein Kindergarten.

Die weissen Katholiken sind in 7 Pfarrbezirken Windhuk, Kl-Windhuk, Swakopmund, Usakos, Omaruru, Grootfontein und Gobabis gesammelt. Ihre Zahl belief sich am 1. Januar 1912 auf 1537. Weitere 1165 wohnen in der Südprefektur. Auch für sie sind nach Vereinbarung mit dem Hochwürdigen Herrn Präfekten des Südens diese Blätter bestimmt.

Ein wirksames Band soll alle diese Glaubensbrüder umfassen und fest zusammenschliessen. Das „Christliche Familienblatt“ ist berufen, dieses heilige Band zu weben in der Art, dass der freien Betätigung auf andern Gebieten kein Eintrag geschieht. Beim Lesen dieser Blätter soll sich jeder als Teil der katholischen Kirche Deutsch-Südwestafrikas fühlen, ohne zu vergessen, dass er im bürgerlichen Leben fückenlos eingefügt ist in das grosse Ganze, in unser neues südwestafrikanisches Heimatland.

„Wer einer Tätigkeit ein neues Motiv giebt, schenkt ihr eine neue Seele.“ Unserem Streben und Arbeiten als katholische Christen brauchen wir keine neuen Motive zu verleihen. Die alten Ideale des Christentums haben ihre Jugendkraft bewahrt. Es heisst nur, dieselben stets frisch und lebenspendend unserm Geiste vorzuhalten. Das soll das „Christliche Familienblatt“ tun. Dann wird es uns auch gleichsam eine neue Seele einhauchen.

First issue of the Christian Family Newspaper



FFom: Dr J.Schmidlin, Die katholischen Missionen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten

(Muenster in Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913), 92

CHAPTER 8

THE LAST THREE STATIONS BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

8.1 Tsumeb: Mining centre

While Tsumeb was a mining village, which depended upon the economic life span of its ore deposits, Grootfontein had been founded around a number of strongly flowing wells, which made the cultivation of commercial crops possible. After the death of William Jordan, the founder of the Boer Republic of Upingtonia in 1884, the rights of Upingtonia had been auctioned and were sold to the Cape Town based Upingtonis-Syndicate.¹ Dr Scharlach, an advocate from Hamburg and trader Wichmann from the same city, obtained the rights from this syndicate. With the help of other financial backers they founded in 1890 the "Damaraland Concession", which possessed extensive mine, land, and railway concessions, but which had to take upon itself certain responsibilities for the opening up of the country. Among the rights to explore and exploit were the mineral deposits of the copper mines of Otavi. From the South West Africa Company Ltd the Otavi Company branched off, which in 1900 was recognised as a legitimate imperial colonial company.² It started its activities by dispatching two expeditions. The one under the leadership of Dr Hartmann was to establish the shortest possible route for a railway from Tsumeb to the coast, and the other one under Dr James, was to evaluate the economic feasibility of the deposits. The company started the mining activities in Tsumeb, Guchab and Otavi.

¹ Wuest, "Nordlandia", 1, in Wuest, Manuscript III, 11a.

² Kuelz, D.S.W. Afrika im 25. Jahre Deutscher Schutzherrschaft (Berlin: Verlag Suesserott, 1909), 300.

The plan for a railway line from Tsumeb to Port Alexandre, which had already been approved on 15 March, was dropped in favour of the line between Tsumeb and Swakopmund. When the old treaty with the South West African Company Ltd lapsed it was replaced by a new one in 1903. The construction of the railway line started on 12 September 1903 and it reached Tsumeb on 16 December 1906.³ Transportation of ore started on 18 July 1907. When the company was working at full capacity it employed 200 White and 2000 Black miners. Among the Whites were a big group of married men. They originated from the Sieg county in the neighbourhood of Hereford and consequently they were all Catholics.⁴ At its peak there were 110 White Catholics and it was natural that the Catholic Mission would not neglect them. Before starting the consultations with the mine management Prefect Augustin Nachtwey had wisely gathered information concerning the lifespan of the mine. The mine authorities informed him that it was expected to last at least twenty years. This was reason enough for the mission to take action.⁵

The Catholic Mission regretted very much that she was not allowed to open a mission in Tsumeb. It was regarded as a gap in its missionary activities. Already in November 1906 Father Joseph Krein had passed through Usakos with the intention of starting a station in Otavi.⁶ In the course of that year Prefect Nachtwey applied for permission from Dr Gathemann of OMEG to found a station in Tsumeb or Otavi. But when Father Krein had arrived in Omaruru he sent a telegram that it

³ Sydney M. Moir and H. Temple Crittenden, Namib Narrow-Gauge (Lingfield, Surrey: The Oakwood Press, no date), 34; 52.

⁴ Wuest, "Nordlandia", 2 in Wuest, Manuscript III, 11b.

⁵ Wuest, "Nordlandia", 3, in Wuest, Manuscript III, 12.

⁶ Codex Historicus Usakos, II:7 November 1906.

had come to his knowledge that the Rheinische Mission had been granted permission for both Tsumeb and Otavi. He knew that the Director of the Company was in principle against two denominations in one town. Dr Gathemann told this to Prefect Nachtwey, but he would not take an independent decision and was diplomatic enough to send the request to Berlin and let the directors decide. On 10 April 1907 the reply arrived and Dr Gatheman announced that the directors in Berlin had also decided against it.⁷

In another development the Prefect could pass on the news to Mr Toennesen in Otavi that Mr Gaederitz had approached him for pastoral work among the railway crews. The latter had been full of praise for the mission. However, he had also told Nachtwey that even he could not guarantee a place in Otavi or Tsumeb. He recommended that he should approach Mr Toennesen and write to him for permission.⁸ In due course a second application was submitted in which the mission asked for a station and a piece of land on which to build the necessary mission localities. It was signed by Father Klaeyle, secretary to the Prefect, and he motivated the application by mentioning that there were a good number of Catholics among the White miners and that 200 to 300 Damara had asked for a priest. He also wanted an explanation as to the reasons for the Rheinische Mission receiving a plot free of charge in Usakos when the Catholics had been there since 1904, as well as why the Directors had objected to a Catholic Mission in Tsumeb.⁹ The answer came three days later. The Director again did not decide.

⁷ Gathemann to Nachtwey, Tsumeb, 10 April 1907 (ADW A 71: Tsumeb I).

⁸ Nachtwey to Toennesen in Otavi, Windhoek, 1907 (ADW A 71: Tsumeb I).

⁹ Klaeyle to Director of OMEG, Usakos, 20 December 1908 (ADW A 71: Tsumeb I).

He reasoned that the Directorate in Berlin had been involved before and thus the request had to be sent to them for approval.¹⁰

Whereas at an earlier stage Dr Gathemann had answered that the Directorate in Berlin would not allow a mission in a town where another denomination had already started, they had seemingly given up that principle by 1907 when they gave a plot free of charge to the Rheinische Mission in Usakos.¹¹ We must consider the difference between Usakos and Tsumeb. OMEG was afraid that among the many Black miners who were living together in the hostels, dissension would erupt and disrupt the labour process. The South West African Company Ltd did not hesitate to follow the more liberal principles of the Imperial Government as expressed by Mr Dernberg on the occasion of his visit to the colony. Therefore they offered the Catholic Mission a site in Grootfontein though the Rheinische Mission was already present.

As the Catholic Mission expected a favourable answer to its petition of 1908 Father Jos Gotthardt was recalled from Gobabis in 1908 and transferred to Grootfontein in order to prepare the foundation of a station in Tsumeb. He arrived at the beginning of 1909. By 27 February 1909 he had already dispatched a report to Father Klaeyle, the parish priest in Usakos and secretary of the Prefecture. The mine management had concentrated the Black miners in three locations, one for Owambo, one for Herero and the last one for Damara and Nama people. The San people had left. Catechist Joseph had assembled seventeen Damara/Nama speaking people whom he started instructing. All the Nama were

¹⁰ Director OMEG to Prefect, Tsumeb, 23 December 1908 (ADW A 71: Tsumeb I).

¹¹ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 49.

Lutheran or they went to the Lutheran catechism lessons. Father Gotthardt guessed that about 150 to 200 Blacks did not follow any classes, but most of them were not yet settled and could leave at any moment. Gotthardt thought that the prospects for missionary work were very uncertain. He even doubted if it would be advisable to start a station at all. Catechist Joseph also felt that the mission should not build a house and send a father. For the time being it would be sufficient to appoint a school teacher. Gotthardt did not think it right to take Joseph away from Usakos forever. It would be better to refrain from settling in Tsumeb and instead spend all efforts on opening up Kavango. He would inform Windhoek accordingly and when Prefect Joseph Schemmer decided not to go ahead, Gotthardt offered his services for the mission in Kavango. For the time being it became quiet around Tsumeb and the idea of a foundation was not mentioned again until the energetic Klaeyle took over the reins.

The vacancy in Grootfontein which had been created through the death of Father Franz Krist, had been filled by the end of November 1909 by Father Jos Schulte, a very enterprising person. In 1910 he visited Tsumeb for the first time and when he introduced himself to Dr Heymann, the Director, he was told that by now the Directorate was prepared to make a site available as soon as the Catholic Mission saw fit to found a new mission.¹² After being notified of this successful discussion Prefect Klayle in turn addressed Dr Heymann, the Director, and asked for a special plot, no 34. The Catholic Mission would take the task upon itself and see it as a challenge, and would do everything possible to satisfy the trust put in it.¹³ Some four months later Heymann informed Klaeyle that the Company

¹² Ibid., 49.

¹³ Klaeyle to Heymann, Windhoek, 10 April 1910 (ADW A 71: Tsumeb I).

had agreed to put plot 34 at the disposal of the Church. The Church representative should come and sign the documents in the presence of a notary.¹⁴ A little while later Heymann had to point out that the fees for surveying could not be regarded as the price for the building site. This, however, was an official statement not emanating from himself, because the Heymann family had donated M 100 towards the building fund.¹⁵

With the development of the mine many more miners, professional people and traders had settled in the town. In this part of the country the Protestants had not achieved the influence which made the work of the Catholic Mission in Hereroland very difficult. Life in Tsumeb was not easy. The shifts were long and tiring, malaria was rampant among Blacks and Whites, and lead-poisoning was common. The people were in real need of spiritual comfort. In the absence of a mission centre, spiritual care was provided from Grootfontein at a distance of 60 km. The eighty White Catholics at that time formed one third of the White population. In April Prefect Klaeyle in the company of Father Schulte visited Tsumeb. The religious service took place in the "Minenhotel" attended by many. On the evening of that day the Catholics assembled in the same hotel for a discussion on the future of the mission. The miners promised to support the priest and his work and take responsibility for his material needs. Later Prefect Klaeyle remarked that in the whole of South West Africa he had never found such a demonstration of faith. The Prefecture sent catechist Gottlieb from Okombahe to prepare for the mission among the local population. Soon he had collected

¹⁴ Heymann to Oblates, Tsumeb, 29 August 1910 (ADW A 71; Tsumeb I: OMEG J.No 4570. Akte A. c.12).

¹⁵ Heymann to Prefect, Tsumeb, 8 October 1910 (ADW A 71: Tsumeb I).

seventy poor Damara who had recently arrived from the bush. He gathered them twice a week under a tree and spoke to them in their mother tongue of the Good News of Jesus Christ. He promised that soon a priest would visit them. Foreman Nuwuseb ('the short one'), an energetic weather-beaten Damara, warned Gottlieb, that if the father did not appear soon, he would not be able to prevent the children from going to the Protestant Mission.

Unfortunately, the Prefecture could not forge ahead with the opening of a mission, in the light of large outstanding debts. Even the year 1911 did not see any action. On 25 January 1911 the miners wrote again. They pointed out that at the place where the chapel should have been built, the grass was still growing. They voiced the urgent hope that the building activities would soon start. They promised to place their expertise at the disposal of the mission. The community had been informed that yet again six Catholics from Germany were on their way. In their opinion a village without a church was not the proper place to live. The letter was signed by August Mockenhaupt. A week later Klaeyle answered Mr Mockenhaupt and the Catholics. He expressed his gratitude for their support. He hoped to fulfil their wishes in 1912.¹⁶ Later in the year he also thanked the directorate of the mine and expressed the hope to start building after the rainy season.¹⁷ Not only the Catholics and the Mine but also Father Schulte complained that the interests of the mission were negatively affected by all this delay. However, it appeared that debts were a serious burden which constantly hampered

¹⁶ Klaeyle to Mockenhaupt and Catholics of Tsumeb, Windhoek, 31 January 1911 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

¹⁷ Klaeyle to OMEG, Windhoek, 18 September 1911 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

the development of the mission.¹⁸

In 1913 the Prefect seemed ready to begin the immediate preparations. He informed Father Schulte that as soon as he had settled permanently in Tsumeb it would be proclaimed an independent pastoral district. Tsumeb would also be responsible for Outjo, Namutoni and the area West of the Otavi railway line.¹⁹ Two weeks later the Prefect became anxious to start and he pleaded with Schulte to leave Grootfontein and move to Tsumeb. He felt that a house with two rooms and a hall would be sufficient. A front veranda for the Whites and a veranda at the back for the Blacks could be used for the Sunday services.²⁰ One month later the Prefect met Dr Tometchek of OMEG in Brakwater. When the latter saw the plans for the Tsumeb mission drawn up by architect Mann he was immediately in favour and thought them very practical.²¹ Again a month later Klaeyle complained that there was not enough money to build. He suggested that Schulte apply for exemption from freight dues.²²

When Prefect Klaeyle was able to send the Brothers Uken and Raub and the Black assistant Gabriel to start building, it seemed that the promises would be fulfilled soon. He thanked OMEG in Berlin for the building site as well as for their M 1500 donation towards the building fund for the church. The actual building started on 1 May 1913 and the corner stone was to be laid in June. A

¹⁸ Jos Schulte, "Mission in Tsumeb", Maria Immaculata 19 (1911) 8: 355.

¹⁹ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 2 April 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²⁰ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 21 April 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²¹ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 20 May 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²² Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 19 June 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

temporary house was available for Father Schulte.²³ Klaeyle was either anxious to keep the work on schedule or concerned for the spiritual well-being of the Brothers, but he told Schulte that he was not allowed to let the brothers work for strangers outside the monastery. He wanted the work to progress fast and they should aim at the consecration of the church building to take place on the feast of St Barbara, patron saint of miners, on 7 December 1913. In the meantime he was thinking of entering the Kaakoveld, but Schulte should keep it secret.²⁴

Things started to move at a quicker pace. Klaeyle was of the opinion that the separation of the districts of Grootfontein and Tsumeb should be initiated. This would be for the good of the people and of the administration.²⁵ Tsumeb should become a separate parish and the Prefect appointed Schulte as rector.²⁶

Though the exemption of freight rates did not seem possible, OMEG promised to pay half the amount back as compensation, which helped the building fund tremendously.²⁷ Klaeyle thanked them profusely and informed the headquarters of OMEG that the consecration of the church should take place on 8 December, 1913.²⁸ The company wanted to become involved in the feast and Director Tometchek proposed that the feast take place on a Sunday in order to give all people an opportunity to participate. He promised to organise a miners' feast.

²³ Prefect to Directorate of OMEG in Berlin, Windhoek, 18 June 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²⁴ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 22 July 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²⁵ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 12 August 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²⁶ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 18 September 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²⁷ OMEG to Klaeyle, Berlin, 31 July 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

²⁸ Klaeyle to OMEG, Windhoek, 8 September 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

The mission staff of Grootfontein and Kokasib should also be invited and be part of the festivities.²⁹

On the eve of the celebrations Director Tometchek invited Prefect Klaeyle to the "Minenhotel" for a dinner on the occasion of the St Barbara feast on 7 December. In the local history of Tsumeb it is recorded that in the early morning of that Sunday, 8 December, heavy gun salutes sounded through the village. At 7 o'clock the inhabitants of the mining town collected before the entrance of the trim and smart little church. Prefect Eugene Klaeyle had travelled from Windhoek to officiate at the blessing of this church. The entire village was encouraged to participate in the celebrations. It was a good sign for future co-operation.³⁰

Immediately the father and his catechist set to work among the population of Tsumeb and surrounding area. Though the majority were Owambo, the priests did not minister among them. The Owambos only stayed for a restricted period in Tsumeb and when they returned to their home country there were no Catholic priests to care for them and to follow up the instruction they had received. Most of them would be Lutheran in any case. However, Father Schulte succeeded in forming a strong and active Catholic community among the other population groups.

Tsumeb was more than a station, it was the gate to Owambo, the window to look to the North. Even Father Schoch had passed through it fifteen years earlier on his way to the Northern regions. The function Grootfontein had for Kavango would become that of Tsumeb, a transit station for the pioneers in Owambo.

²⁹ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhoek, 22 November 1913 (ADW A 72: Tsumeb II).

³⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 50.

8.2 Kokasib, Bushmen station and support farm

The first missionary gathering of German Catholics in Fulda in 1911 made a strong impression on those who attended. But the Catholic Conference in Mainz, during which Father Max Kassiepe in a plenary session held an enthusiastic lecture on missionaries and their actions, kindled such enthusiasm that it seemed as if he had lit a fire which would not be extinguished. The missionary societies of German women and girls in the district of Mainz took the decision in 1912 to take upon themselves the sponsorship of a mission in far-away German South West Africa. Initially they thought of a mission along the Okavango river, the "African Rhine" as it was known. This willingness was very welcome to Prefect Klaeyle who was trying to cope with many financial worries. As he was thinking of a support farm and a Bushman mission, he actually preferred that they should sponsor the purchase and management of such a farm in the District of Grootfontein. This, however, was not the intention of the sponsors. But after they had received in-depth information about the actual needs of the mission they agreed to the plan and sent an initial capital sum of M 2000 as a first instalment for the purchase of this farm. The Prefect had explained that the purchase was very urgent. Because of the endemic nature of lung disease and cattle plague it was forbidden for teams of oxen coming from the North to enter Grootfontein. They had to stay at a distance of 30 km away. For the Catholic Mission the ox waggons and its operations were a matter of life and death. Where would the oxen stay when they were not allowed to enter? Therefore it was necessary to buy property at about that distance from Grootfontein.

At that time the South West African Company Ltd possessed a stretch of new

"unoccupied" land, which was highly recommended. According to informed sources it had open watering places for cattle, reasonably well wooded stretches of land and beautiful mountains. In 1912 the Catholic Mission in principle agreed with the South West African Company Ltd to buy the farm for M 20,000. It would be registered under the name "Neu Mainz". But this name did not stick. The name of the river and the open watering place "Kokasib" meaning "Bushmen's well" became the accepted name of this new farm property. It was Mr Bernhard Beyer, owner of the farm "Dornhuegel" who had drawn the attention of the mission to this farm. Mr Beyer had always been a faithful friend of the mission though he was Lutheran. On behalf of Prefect Klaeyle and accompanied by Father Schulte he had travelled to the farm to inspect the new tract of land personally. They found the open wells, established that a large part was suitable for ploughland and admired the well-developed forest and the beautiful mountains. They were satisfied with their findings. Schulte informed Klaeyle accordingly.³¹ The Prefect entered into negotiations and on 10 February 1913 he could send the contracts back for certification.³² In the end it cost the mission M 18.000 including the transfer costs and the registration fee.

The farm had not been totally unknown, because also Father Josef Koch from Grootfontein on his missionary journeys had passed through Kokasib. One day as he had to carry on the same night he had looked for the water points and indeed had traced them. The first provisions for the exploration of the new farm went ahead at Doeбра. The management prepared a transport of 14 oxen, 12 cows, 2

³¹ Wuest, "Kokasib", 1 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 41.

³² Klaeyle to SWA Co Ltd., Windhoek, 10 February 1913 (ADW A 56: Kokasib. Klaeyle J.No 150).

heifers and 1 bull and a number of cattle for Kavango, for transfer to the North. Some time later it was found that it would be better to sell this cattle and buy new cattle more adjusted to the climate and plant growth of the North. They also bought an old waggon for Kokasib for M 600. It may be that the Brothers Uken and Raub, who around the same time came up for the building of the Tsumeb mission house, joined the transport. The waggon with the 14 oxen went on to Tsumeb, most certainly to assist in the transport activities for the building of the new church. The rest of the cattle was left at the farm Strydfontein where they found good grazing.

In June 1913 Father Schoenwasser was transferred from Klein Windhoek to Grootfontein. Father Meysing would take his place until the young Fathers Stoppelkamp and Schleipen arrived. On 1 May Father Schulte moved to Tsumeb permanently.³³ The time had come to take possession of Kokasib. As the waggon, which was intended for Kokasib, was still in Tsumeb, Father Koch had to borrow a waggon and 10 oxen from the owner of Strydfontein. The other oxen were kindly supplied by the butcher of Grootfontein, Mr Jos Zemann. On 2 July 1913, Father Koch and Brother Spiegel departed and after two days' travelling they reached Kokasib. When they started looking for the water points they discovered to their dismay that the wells were dry. They stayed temporarily in the plain of Kokasib and started erecting the corrugated-iron house, which had been pre-fabricated in Grootfontein by Brother Spiegel. Lacking a kitchen they cooked in the open.³⁴ For the time being they were assisted by two helpers from the local population. The lack of water was a serious problem. The well they were digging had reached

³³ Wuest, "Kokasib", 2 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 42.

³⁴ Koch to Klaeyle, Grootfontein, 18 July 1913 (ADW A 56: Kokasib).

a depth of 5 m but was still dry. Therefore Father Koch sent his helpers to the farm Wiesenthal, 15 km away, to fetch a mule cart and the necessary draught animals. With the help of that carriage they could go and fetch water for the household, for the people who had settled around them and the domestic animals. Suddenly they were confronted with the conflict between Whites and San people when a police patrol appeared on Kokasib searching for Bushmen. In the course of time they would often hear of that low-key guerilla warfare.³⁵

When they still had not reached water at the first well they moved to the Bushmen well after which the farm, Kokasib, had been named. After an exhaustingly long period of digging, they finally reached water in September. Only then could the cattle from Strydfontein be fetched. It was high time because the day before they arrived at Strydfontein the Bushmen had killed a cow and taken another one along. It was another incident in the low intensity war being waged between Bushmen and Whites. A number of people had already been murdered on both sides.³⁶

Apart from digging for water they soon started to clear the wood and make the land arable for maize. It was excellent ploughland, black fertile Omuramba soil. In the month of December they were blessed with good rainfalls and they could start to till the soil. The last maize was planted on the birthday of the Emperor, 27 January, but it was only 9 to 11 ha. Brother Spiegel at his own request had been transferred to Windhoek and Brother Gerardus Havenith was going to replace him. He carried on with preparing the fields assisted by the two Black helpers. In November, Father Koch had already bought a hearth plate. His

³⁵ Koch to Klaeyle, Grootfontein, 6 August 1913 (ADW A 56: Kokasib).

³⁶ Wuest, "Kokasib", 2, in Wuest, Manuscript I, 42.

intention had been to build a kitchen before the rains came, but the clearing of the bush and the ploughing took up so much time that this project had to be postponed to the next season. They were already glad to have a roof to protect themselves against nature. The temporary abode in the plain would last one and a quarter years.

After the discovery of water at the Kokasib well many more wells had to be dug as every time the wells ran dry. Eventually the scarcity of water gave Kokasib a bad name. Father Koch and the Brothers Havenith, Brillowski, Spiegel and Brodmann almost worked themselves to death. They lived under very poor conditions, they were extremely thrifty, and still went hungry for days.

On a nearby hill they found a suitable site for the permanent house, about 150 m from the old corrugated iron house. It was important to search for water in the neighbourhood of the building site. The brothers had prepared air-dried bricks for a narrow house consisting of a row of three rooms without corridor or veranda, and a lean-to roof. With parts of the old corrugated iron house they added two extensions, a chapel and a store room. When they had reached the roof they moved the iron sheets in one day. The move took place in October 1914. Father Jos Wuest, the author of "Kokasib", personally visited that house in 1916. On that occasion Father Koch told him the history of Kokasib. He mentioned as something which struck him, that in the chapel they used a carbide lamp as they were short of petroleum.³⁷ Cats were very important in the house as the place was infested with mice. Therefore they told the anecdote of the house cat. After the change of house it took the cat four days to get used to the new place. Every

³⁷ Wuest, "Kokasib", 3 in Wuest, Manuscript I. 43.

day she returned to the old site.

The work to extend the maize field was endless, especially with the lack of workers. After working the available black Omuramba soil they had come upon a light reddish sandy soil. The real fertile Omuramba soil was only found again on the other side of the mountain range, but they only reached the other side in 1916 when they had already cleared and planted 55 ha of light soil. While the brothers worked like navvies in their search for water and their clearing of the bush, Father Koch tried to perform some missionary work. After all, the intention had been to make it a Bushmen mission.³⁸ The mission had applied for permission first to gather Bushmen in Grootfontein on the mission and then to settle Bushmen on the farm. The Imperial Government replied that this could only take place when the mission farm was ready to receive such people. But after the Bushmen had settled, the compensation the State paid out was the same as for the Lutheran mission farm of Gaub. It would consist of an amount of 50 pennies for adult women and men unfit for work and 25 pennies per child.³⁹

In that same period Prefect Klaeyle sent kind regards to Koch and Havenith. He warned them that they could not expect anything from Mainz and they were on their own. The statistics were not complete and as he would leave on 13 March 1914, he advised them to send that information to Huenfeld. In August the First World War started and the Nama people in the South became restless, which caused the government to resettle a number of them in the North. Father Weber OSFS, their

³⁸ Wuest, "Kokasib", 4 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 44.

³⁹ Imperial Government to Prefect, Windhuk, 7 February 1914 (ADW A 56: Kokasib).

spiritual leader in Warmbad, and the Oblate sisters, who worked at the station accompanied them until they arrived in Otjiwarongo. Before the surrender of the German forces on 9 July 1915 at Khorab, Father Weber paid two visits to Grootfontein. During one of these he also visited Kokasib and he was accompanied by the sisters. As recorded, the hearthplace had not been used yet. With the coming of the sisters they hurried to fetch bricks. Brother Havenith quickly built a kitchen-range.⁴⁰ When it was ready the Sisters Amelie, Marie Aimee and Johanna started to show their culinary art. These same sisters worked in Grootfontein with sisters of the Red Cross in the military hospital. The Red Cross sisters were Mrs von Rechenberg, Sister Marie Douglas, later matron of the Kronprinzessin-Ruprecht Heim in Swakopmund and Mrs von Salis, later Mrs Schneider of Okosongemingo. The Red Cross sisters cared for the officers while the Catholic sisters mainly ministered to the ordinary soldiers.

As the hearth was ready nothing stood in the way of building the long-awaited kitchen. Brother Brillowski, who had been a blacksmith before the war, erected a small kitchen from old corrugated sheets. Brother Brillowski had been one of the instructors of the trade school in Windhoek. The brothers taught a range of subjects from taylor, cobbler, joiner and mason to blacksmith. With the outbreak of the war the school had to be disbanded. The brothers were conscripted into the forces and the boys employed at the military workshops. After the surrender the brothers took up their task as farmers and sinking augers again. They sank at least eight wells which cost a lot of money in wages and dynamite. When the wells dried up regularly they called in the help of a diviner. But even these specialists could not guarantee a regular supply of water. When the last two

⁴⁰ Wuest, "Kokasib", 4 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 44.

wells indicated by the diviner's rod appeared to be failures, the fate of Kokasib was sealed.

The poor Brother Brillowski had worked so hard that he was struck by a brain haemorrhage. When they could transport him he went to recuperate in Swakopmund. Unfortunately, the authorities at that place allowed him to go back too quickly. The same Father Wuest who wrote Kokasib's history, stated that he saw him in that deplorable state. He asked himself seriously how they could be so unprofessional in Swakopmund to send him back to such harsh conditions as reigned at Kokasib. Father Koch decided to let him go to Windhoek and Father Damian Arnold, in the absence of the Prefect, transferred Brother Karl Spiegel again to Kokasib.⁴¹

When Father Arnold, the Pro-prefect, sent M 300, he admonished the rector to be very thrifty. It was a pity that no water could be found, because Kokasib was so expensive anyway.⁴² They should only buy items for their personal household. The war had broken out and the sponsors in Mainz had completely different worries than thinking of a farm in far-away South West. Arnold reminded them that they lived from alms. The Church engaged members of missionary orders in her mission fields because they live "secundum pauperitatem".⁴³ It was therefore a relief when after all the trials Father Koch could report that when they moved two and a half km further they came upon water and struck a well.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Wuest, "Kokasib", 5 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 45.

⁴² Arnold to Rector at Kokasib, Windhoek, 24 July 1914 (ADW A 56: Kokasib).

⁴³ Arnold to Koch, Windhuk, 17 August 1914 (ADW A 56: Kokasib).

⁴⁴ Koch to Arnold, Kokasib, 10 December 1914 (ADW A 56: Kokasib).

Brother Spiegel remained at Kokasib for four years. In October 1920 he again asked for a transfer. Brother Jos Brodmann arrived in his place at the beginning of 1921. In 1922 Brother Havenith had also had enough of this wilderness and applied for a change. Then Brother Spiegel returned again. The mission farm of Kokasib was not an easy one. Apart from the continual threat of water shortages, the work force of two brothers was too small for such an extensive farm. Naturally, there was no hope of any relief as after the war there was a general lack of fathers and brothers. In Europe many had been killed on the battlefield and a war is not the proper feeding ground for vocations.⁴⁵

One could rightly call Kokasib the Catholic Bushman station. This was the main reason of its foundation according to Father Wuest. Apparently the Prefect put the stress more on the supporting role of the farm as transit station for the Kavango oxen and provision of maize for the Kavango and other stations. Father Wuest is of the strong opinion that special fathers should have been made available for the work among the Bushmen nomads. They would have lacked a fixed abode, but that was also true of the OMI fathers who were labouring among the Eskimos of the ice mission in Yukon, Mackenzie and Northern Canada. That this did not happen, the South West Oblates would never be forgiven, he felt. Such a mission cannot be compared to a business in the literal sense. No mission superior, after all, would base his decision-making on the profitability of a mission. These harsh words came from a Kavango missionary, who saw the situation in a different light. From the centre in Windhoek, it was clear that they did not doubt the value of the mission, but they were concerned that the small staff could not cope with the task of that farm. Moreover, a mission station may not

⁴⁵ Wuest, "Kokasib", 6 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 46.

be asked for its profitability in the spiritual sense, but a Prefect who is short of money must decide if it was justified to keep a farm or any other institute, which operated at a loss. When one is burdened with debts, then one cannot in conscience allow further losses.⁴⁶

As long as the station existed the fathers were regularly in contact with the Bushmen as well as with the Whites. They could take notice of the reasons given by both parties for the raids and killings. Nowadays we possibly have a better insight into the reasons given by the Bushmen for taking cattle and raiding farms. The Bushmen regarded the land as their rightful property from times immemorial. Even their own clans and families had especially demarcated areas beyond which they were not to hunt or pick fruits. When the Whites appeared and trampled these laws under their feet the Bushmen started to steal cattle from the usurpers. In the same way as the Imperial revenue official collected the taxes from the subjects of Imperial Germany, so the Bushmen collected their dues from the Whites, as they regarded themselves as the rightful owners of the land.⁴⁷

8.3 A second attempt at Andara

When after one year Libebe jealously noticed the peaceful and fruitful work at Nyangana he sent messengers to Father Gotthardt. At the request to come to Andara again Gotthardt answered that there were still a number of "stones" between him and Andara. He assumed that Libebe would understand what that meant. Gotthardt wanted to impress upon Libebe that the arrival of messengers of the faith was a

⁴⁶ Wuest, "Kokasib", 7 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 47.

⁴⁷ Wuest, "Kokasib", 8 in Wuest, Manuscript I, 48 (ADW 56: Kokasib I).

favour done to them, not a right. After a month the messengers returned with the cows of Father Lauer.⁴⁸ Libebe also presented Gotthardt with a leopard skin. He thought that the stones would be removed in this way, but Gotthardt informed him that he was wrong. The biggest stone, the guns of the teacher, had not been removed. This time the messengers stayed away for a considerably longer time. It cost Libebe a lot of self-conquest to part with the guns. But one day his representatives appeared again, this time with the guns. The barrel of one was split, most probably because it had been polished too vigorously. As compensation Libebe had sent along a heifer. This time Gotthardt was satisfied and promised that he would come to discuss the matter, which he did in 1912.⁴⁹ During his first voyage by canoe in November 1912, when they had hardly set out, a leaflet fell into his lap. All the rowers smiled. This was a good omen. The lucky travellers would have a trip without any problems and furthermore Father Gotthardt would return laden with presents. They were right in both respects. The trip gave Gotthardt a good opportunity to familiarise himself with the customs of his companions. When sitting around the camp fire in the evening hours Gotthardt learnt more about their ancestors and beliefs than he had in several months. Once Gotthardt had arrived, Libebe called a public meeting. The conditions of settlement were fixed and it was agreed that the station would be reviewed again in the coming year. Gotthardt returned with Libebe's present of a cheetah skin.⁵⁰

Towards the end of the rainy season in April 1913, Libebe sent three big boats

⁴⁸ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 97.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 47.

with picked rowers.⁵¹ On Easter Monday, 1913 they were ready for departure. While Father Gotthardt and Brother Heckmann prayed in the little church of Nyangana the rowers recommended the voyage to the "vadimu", the ancestral spirits. In the days before the passage they had avoided all actions which could have jeopardised the success of the undertaking. On the day of departure none of them had dried green tobacco on the fire. Nobody had ventured to carry the paddles not in accordance with the regulations on the shoulder or to taper them with a knife. If they had done so this would have meant evil encounters with crocodiles and hippopotamus.⁵²

The voyage lasted three days while they moved eight to ten hours a day. When one evening they arrived at a small clearing, the people offered Gotthardt a goat. He did not dare to accept it because the people were so dreadfully poor. But they explained that if he would not take the goat, they would never kill the goat any more. From the moment of presentation onwards the goat belonged to the teacher and if he did not take her, she would graze peacefully in the fields until she died of old age. After three days the party arrived at Andara. Libebe received them well and explained that people from all sides had pleaded with him to make rain. He could not do it because the teachers would get wet. But now the teachers had happily arrived he would comply with the wishes of the people. And indeed, the next days it rained continually. While it was a blessing for the farmers, for Gotthardt and Heckmann it was a tribulation as they did not have a roof for protection against the whims of nature.⁵³ But both missionaries started their

⁵¹ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 99.

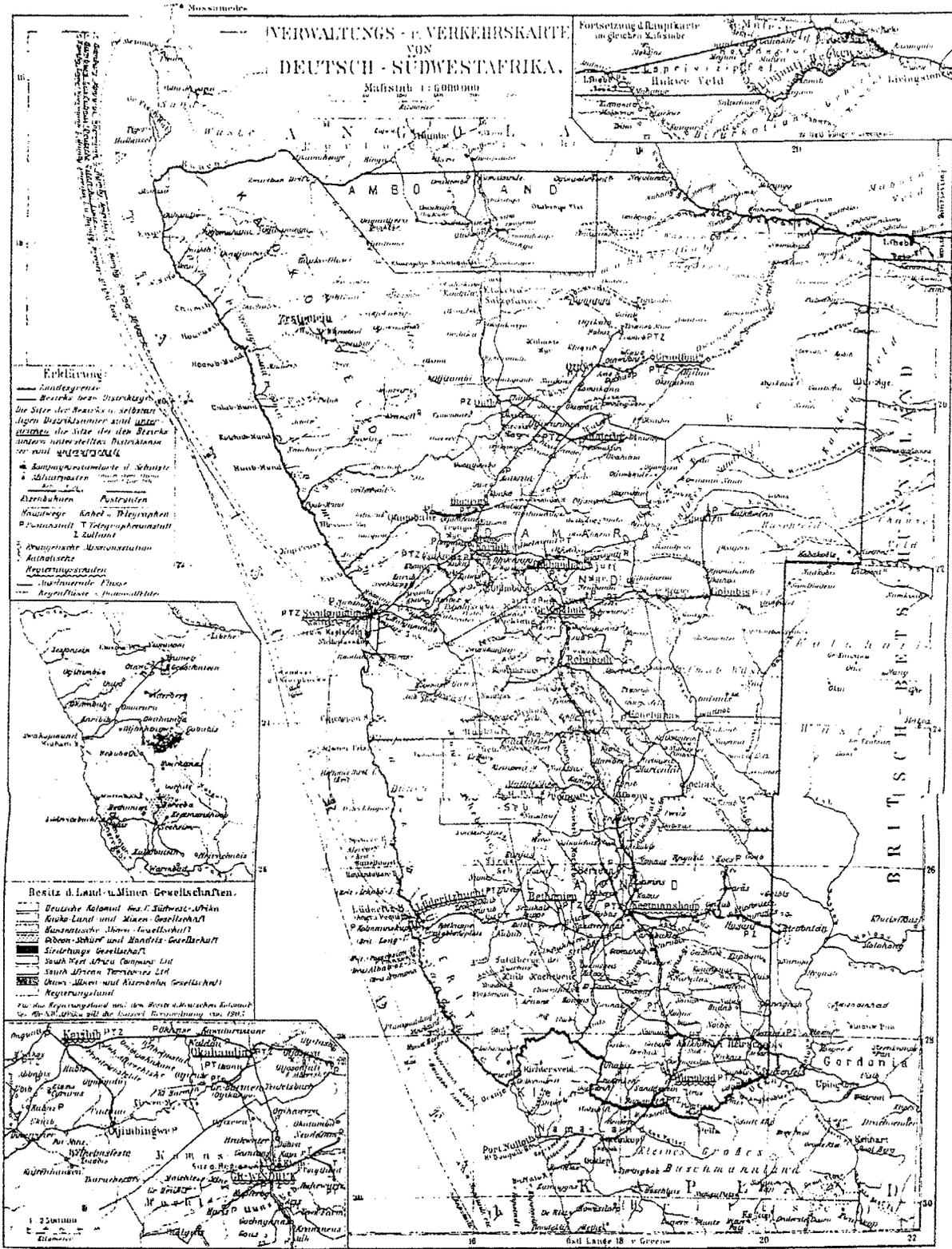
⁵² Anonymous, Katholische Mission in Suedwestafrika: 1896-1946, 47.

⁵³ Josef Gotthardt, "Andara", Maria Immaculata 22 (1914) 4: 171.

new task full of hope. It was a pity that Brother Heckmann was affected by malaria quite soon. As the disease resisted all attempts to cure it he was compelled to look for a better climate. In July 1913 he left Andara. The work was taken over by the Brothers Rau and Ruzs who both originated from Schwaben. At the beginning of the next rainy season the diligent brothers had been able to provide a suitable building to protect themselves against water and malaria. The chapel could be blessed on 2 February 1914. It was dedicated to the H. Family.⁵⁴ In spite of the favourable progress they had to be careful. Even the strong Brother Rau got blackwater fever and for eight days he hovered between life and death. Then it took a turn for the better. Just before the mission became completely cut off from the home base on account of the war, they had succeeded in successfully initiating the activities in Kavango.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Gotthardt, Auf zum Kavango, 99.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.



Government and Traffic Map of German South West Africa

From: Uwe Timm, Deutsche Kolonien (Muenchen: AutorenEdition, 1981), 206-207.

CHAPTER 9

BALANCE ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR I

9.1 The first official evaluation

When Father Simon Scharsch, who had been the first German Provincial and who had been elected General Assistant in the General Board of OMI, conducted the first canonical visitation, he received the first opportunity to evaluate the situation in the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia. He stayed from 19 July until 1 November 1909. This period coincided with the interregnum when Prefect Joseph Schemmer had left on account of sickness and the new Prefect had not been appointed yet. As Prefect Schemmer had invested Father Scharsch with plenary powers in the Prefecture and as it would take some time before a new Prefect would be appointed, he had consulted Father Ludwig Hermandung, the Pro-Prefect. The latter wanted to transfer his authority of deputy on to someone else. Thereupon Father Simon Scharsch, after thorough consultations, appointed Father Eugene Klaeyle as Acting Prefect with the full authority of such a position. He issued this letter of appointment to the Prefecture from Usakos on 19 October 1909.¹

In the report of the visitation one of the first points Father Scharsch mentioned was the wish of the General Board that in future the fathers and brothers should be better protected in order to prevent casualties as had occurred in the past. Though he expressed his highest admiration for the work of the brothers he admonished that their activities should not interfere with their life as a

¹ Gen. Assistant S. Scharsch to Prefecture, Usakos, 19 October 1909, published in Prefectural Circular No. 1, Windhuk, 21 October 1909 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II. J. No. 3).

religious. In general he observed that the poor conditions, the large distances and the lack of staff did infringe on the fulfilment of the H. Rule for all missionaries. Fortunately, he could conclude that the results of the mission among the Black population were encouraging.

In spite of the decision taken by the General Chapter of OMI many fathers had to live alone. "Satagam missionaem Vicarii, ne nimio tempore commilitones sui sint segreges neve stationes plus aequo dissitae constituentur quin convenire possint."² Though the first duty of the missionaries was to convert the non-Christians, the duty of the Congregation according to the General Chapter (Act. Cap. a. 157) was to ensure the religious life of her children and secure their safety. He also encouraged the authorities in the Prefecture to ensure that newly arrived priests would have sufficient time and opportunity to learn the local languages. "Sodalis in missiones advenientes studio idiomatis, qua passim incolae utuntur, sine mora incumbant, ad idque si opus sit illos adstringant vicarii" (Act. Cap. a. 160).³ At the time of publication of the report on the visitation Father Scharsch resided in Usakos. Therefore he took the liturgical feast of the patron saints of the station, the Apostles Simon and Judas Thadaeus, as date of issue.⁴

² "The Mission Vicar must see to it that the priests and brothers are not living separately for an excessively long time, neither must the stations be scattered too far from each other, but rather situated as close as possible".

³ "The members who are going to the missions must study the local languages, wherever they are living, and without delay apply themselves to that study in order to prepare themselves fully for their task."

⁴ Visitationsakt vom General Assistent S. Scharsch OMI, 28 October 1909 (ADW A 91; NS: Visitationsakt, 28-10-09).

9.2 State of the Stations

The station of Great Windhoek had spread its wings into various fields of activities. The centre on Roman Hill was formed by a proper stone church, built in 1904. From the mission house the Fathers conducted their ministry and taught at the school for catechists. The Brothers instructed the apprentices in the trade school. They taught the trades of tailor, mason, printer, joiner and cobbler. In the correspondence with Mr Lehmann in Aachen we learn that woodwork machinery had been ordered several times, among others for Brother Oberle.⁵ The Prefect promised to send products from the trade school to Countess Ledochowski for her exhibitions in Alsace and Switzerland. Also the knitting work by Herero girls would be presented at those events.⁶ The parish showed initiative and the Book of Minutes of the Catholic Women's Society shows the first entry on 10 November 1909. Present were Father Ziegenfusz and the members of the board, Mrs Goebel and Mrs Walter, who also signed.⁷

From the Convent of "Maria Stern" the Franciscan sisters served the hospital and the Hoehere Toechter Schule as well as the Kindergarten. The hospital cared for the many casualties of epidemics and tropical sicknesses in early Windhoek and the school was important to advertise the Catholic Mission and break down the prejudices.

⁵ Prefect to Mr Lehmann in Aachen, Windhuk, 29 March 1913 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II. Ap. Pref. 85/13. J. No. 383).

⁶ Prefect to Superior Pietsch in Huenfeld, Windhuk, 3 May 1913 (ADW A 4: Ap. Pref. I DP 529/13).

⁷ Protokollbuch des katholischen Frauenvereins, 10 November 1909 (ADW: Protokollbuch des katholischen Frauenvereins).

From Windhoek attention shifted to Okahandja where a number of Catholics had asked for a priest. The Mission applied for a plot opposite Hotel Mueller to build a chapel for Whites. The Prefect informed the Mayor that it would be some time before it materialised, but once the building started, the Mission was going to take care that the building fitted in with the pattern of buildings of the town.⁸

From 22 until 25 September 1912, Prefect and Mission Vicar Klaeyle held the prescribed visitation in Doeбра. The Prefect expressed satisfaction with the religious life and the work performed by fathers and brothers.⁹ Apart from being a financial source for the Prefecture and delivering food provisions for the institutes in Windhoek and Klein Windhoek, Doeбра had been a very important farm for the preparation of the stations in Kavango and at Kokasib. During a period of nine years the farm had developed well and could provide the necessary cattle for these future stations. In 1914 the brothers had finished constructing the Johannesdam at Okatjimbumba in the mountains. Father Jacobs had been appointed as rector in those years. In spite of all the material worries of a farm he took care to organise the regular retreats and spiritual gatherings for fathers and brothers of the Prefecture. The standard of his spiritual thinking we can read from an order list to the Herder Verlag. On his list were books on moral theology, meditations, Old and New Testament discussions, Concordance and the up-to-date translations of the Old and New Testament.¹⁰ The fathers and brothers

⁸ Prefekt an Gemeindeverwaltung Okahandja z.H. des Buergermeisters Herrn Dr Fock, Windhuk, 12 June 1911 (ADW A 8: Grosz Windhuk. I Wi. 361)

⁹ Visitation report, 22-25 September 1912 by Prefect Klaeyle (ADW A 45: Doeбра II. Visitationsakt, 22-25 September 1912).

¹⁰ Jacobs to Herder Verlag, Doeбра, 26 April 1913 (ADW A 44: Doeбра I).

had elected Father Jacobs as their representative to the General Chapter, but the war intervened and instead he became army chaplain. In 1914 and 1915 the Brothers Rath and Pohlen left, which put heavy pressure on those who were left behind, because the war prevented any new staff members from entering the country.

A financial problem had developed at Doebra. The lawyers of Mrs Kuersten demanded payment of the entire purchase sum of M 95.000. The Mission had not fulfilled the conditions of paying the interest. In 1904 on 15 December the mission had bought the property from Herr Privatmann Moritz Wilhelm Kuersten. After an initial payment of M 30.000 the rest could be paid over a period of ten years. Maybe the change of name from "Oblaten Grunderwerbgesellschaft GmbH"(1902) to "Deutsche Kolonialschule GmbH" in 1909 could have caused the confusion. Also the surveying of the property had not been concluded and as such it had not been entered into the registry of property. Fortunately, Prefect Klaeyle was able to settle the affair amicably.¹¹

The farm of Epukiro was also important for the Prefecture. Father Watterott was asked to set aside 15.000 ha for the sole use of the Prefecture. Prefect Klaeyle was thinking in terms of 4000 head of cattle. In times of drought it would offer emergency grazing to Doebra and other places. Rector Watterott was a member of the Prefectural Council and as such was regularly asked to travel to Windhoek for discussions.¹² It is unfortunate that the Codex Historicus of Epukiro was not kept up-to-date. It prevents us from recording special daily details of the early

¹¹ Rechtsanwaelte fuer Frau Kuersten an Deutsche Kolonialschule (Hermandung), Koetschenbroda bei Dresden im Koenigreich Sachsen, 10 March 1910 (ADW A8: Grosz Windhuk).

¹² Klaeyle to Watterott, Doebra, 11 June 1912 (ADW A 46: Epukiro II).

life at the station, on the farm and of the developing Tswana community.

On 17 February 1913, Father Johannes Dohren, who would in later years gain fame as the pastor of Gobabis, arrived in the morning of that day at 8.00 a.m. Though he was asked to take responsibility for the farm and Herero mission, it seems that initially work in the garden and the lime pits received preference.¹³ When this had lasted for nine weeks Dohren expressed his disappointment. He had not come to form bricks and grow vegetables for sale.¹⁴ But when we read in a letter to Father Jakobi that it should be regarded as a matter of principle that each station should be self-sufficient, this explains the stress which was being laid on the material welfare of the station. The Prefect gave permission to the rector to write out accounts in order to have written proof of deliveries.¹⁵ Indeed in the beginning there was great poverty in Gobabis. Eventually on 1 June 1913, the farm mission started. The fathers would go on trips of four to six weeks and after finishing that task stay at home for a while. They were not left without support. A certain Catholic farmer, Mr Gauly, who lived 10 km to the North of Kutzikus, informed the mission that he employed a Catholic worker and he invited the priests to visit his farm and conduct religious services. He also asked for Nama readers for the children as he had not been able to obtain them from the Rheinische Mission.¹⁶ The Mission could help the farmer immediately, because the readers had just been printed and were available for sale.¹⁷

¹³ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 26.

¹⁴ Dohren to Klaeyle, Gobabis, 17 April 1913 (ADW A 49: Gobabis II).

¹⁵ Klaeyle to Jakobi, Windhuk, 11 June 1910 (ADW A 49: Gobabis II).

¹⁶ Gauly to R.K. Mission, Gobabis (ADW A 49: Gobabis II)

¹⁷ Klaeyle to Jakobi, Windhuk, 17 September 1912 (ADW A 49: Gobabis II).

Another development pointed towards the impending introduction of medical care by this station. Dr Hollaender, the medical superintendant, discussed in Windhoek the possibility of the R.C. Mission opening a hospital. The Mission would agree if the District Council gave the green light.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that Father Dohren showed another talent of his. He practised church painting. First he tackled the church in Epukiro and later the one in Gobabis.¹⁹

Aminuis had gone through a difficult and uncertain period. Finally, the Prefect could publish the decree of Propaganda Fide that in future Aminuis would fall under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia.²⁰ This meant that from then onwards definite plans could be made for the urgently needed buildings. The Prefect invited Father Filliung to come to Windhoek to discuss these developments. Another encouraging sign for Aminuis was that the pastureland of the Aminuis Tswana had been declared a Tswana reserve as indicated on the map of 1911. It could not be sold any longer. The ordinance had been signed by the Governor. All the waterholes at Toasis, Huguis and Tuguis would in the future belong to the Tswana as communal property. Only Hugams had been reserved for the military and the police. It is important to note that especially Captain Streitwolff of Caprivi fame, had played a major part in the deliberations. But this also meant that the Mission could not buy Uiams as a farm anymore.²¹

¹⁸ Klaeyle to Jakobi, Windhuk, 21 August 1912 (ADW A 49: Gobabis II).

¹⁹ Codex Historicus Gobabis, 27.

²⁰ Prefect to R.C.M. Aminuis, Klein Windhuk, 22 July 1913 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II. Ap. Pref. J.No. 864) and Decretum de Propaganda Fide de 02-06-13 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

²¹ Prefect to Filliung, Windhuk, 3 March 1914 (ADW A 41; Aminuis II: Briefe und Akten).

However, the Government would not object if the mission wanted to buy property outside the reserve. This would be necessary because placing the mission cattle on Tswana land would make her too dependent. But when the Prefect proposed to purchase Nuis, the Government advised him to wait a while as up until that point nobody could buy property in that area. They advised the mission to start by renting that farm.²²

Aminuis remained a lonely and uncertain place. When Father Jakobi failed to send Brother Raub for assistance to Father Filliung, the latter wrote to the Prefect that in conscience he could not stay alone any longer.²³ Klaeyle asked him to have some patience, because Brothers who could live in that solitude with only one Father as a companion, were scarce.²⁴

The rector of Aminuis also made an effort to become self-supporting. Filliung had gone into the salt business and diligently harvested salt from the nearby pan. Klaeyle informed him that Mr Diebler would be interested in buying in bulk. Mr Schurz had also shown interest. Klaeyle admonished Filliung not to sell to Africans on credit, because legally speaking one could not claim from them.²⁵

Klaeyle was happy to compliment Filliung on his statistics. It showed him to be only second to Gobabis. He would continue to minister at Aranos for the Southern

²² Prefect to R.C.M. Aminuis, Windhuk, 3 March 1914 (ADW A 40: Aminuis I).

²³ Filliung to Prefect, Aminuis, 24 May 1911 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

²⁴ Klaeyle to Filliung, Windhuk, 20 March 1912 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II. J. No. 147).

²⁵ Klaeyle to Filliung, Windhuk, 20 March 1912 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

Prefecture, but he would not need to go to Gochas.²⁶ After a long time of waiting Filliung was brought out of his isolation and Father Albert Humpert joined him as socius.²⁷ There also seemed to be a possibility of expansion. Medical Officer Kahle had invited Filliung to his farm to discuss the possibility of opening a station near Etemba (Otjosandu). Klaeyle showed keen interest and advised Filliung to go.²⁸ In this way Aminuis showed some activity and development, in spite of its isolated position in the Kalahari.

In Klein Windhoek both school and smallholding operated smoothly. Father Arnold could report to Brother Uken that at the annual Agricultural Show Klein Windhoek had received a first prize for wine, a second prize for honey and raisins and a third one for the sheep-rearing.²⁹ Clearly, the brothers worked hard and competently. On 7 June 1910, it had orally been announced that the ministry among the White Catholics in Klein Windhoek and Avis had become independent from Windhoek. This decision became official on 23 October 1910. The ordinance had to be posted at the church door. Klaeyle informed the priest in Klein Windhoek that in future he would be responsible for religious education in the state elementary school of Klein Windhoek and perform all tasks which a parish priest or a quasi-parish priest had to fulfil. The chapel in Klein Windhoek would keep her semi-public status (*oratorium semi-publicum*). Therefore people could receive the sacraments during the Easter season. This was important for the mission as well

²⁶ Klaeyle to Filliung, Windhuk, 12 June 1912 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

²⁷ Klaeyle to Filliung, Windhuk, 17 September 1912 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

²⁸ Klaeyle to Filliung, Windhuk, 9 December 1912 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II).

²⁹ Arnold to Uken, Windhuk, 4 June 1914 (ADW A 41: Aminuis II: Briefe und Akten).

as for the parish community, because it proved that they had grown of age and become independent.³⁰

Towards the end of 1909 Father Florian Borsutzki and the Brothers Bleses and Brillowski manned the station of Usakos. Though the mission had been in existence since 1904 there was still no legal contract with the Company. Because Prefect Klaeyle insisted on this and Dr Morgenstern, director of OMEG was very helpful, it could be concluded in 1910. Dr Morgenstern donated 15.000 m of agricultural land and again 15.000 m of gardenland.³¹ From the Codex Historicus we learn that among the Blacks as well as among the Whites there were thriving parishes in Usakos and Karibib. The mission had also moved into the social and charitable field. The rector, Father Borzutzki was chairperson of the "Volksverein von Usakos" and he was asked to be conductor of the town's choir. Sr Archangela, a qualified pharmacist, worked diligently among the poor Black population, but was also often consulted by their White counterparts. For the Franciscan Sisters this station was important, because it was the only one where they worked among the Black people.

The station possessed thriving gardens and orchards, the produce of which could be sold in town and which made the station independent. It is recorded that in 1912 45 extra orange trees were bought and in 1916 another 100.³² Father Borsutzki had proposed to use the church tax for building purposes. The Prefect

³⁰ Prefect to Catholic Mission in Klein Windhoek, Windhuk, 23 November 1910 (ADW A 43; Klein Windhuk: Briefe und Akten, 1892-1920: I K.WI J.No. 819).

³¹ Codex Historicus Usakos, II:1.

³² Ibid., II:2.

was against this as a matter of principle. Church tax was "ex natura sui" for the upkeep of the priest and should remain so. Rome wished expressly that the idea of church tax should be promoted. One should stick to the principle and not make exceptions. Many stations had problems with the introduction anyway. But everything which would annually be donated by each church member above M 10, could be used for building purposes. One was also free in the allocation of collections made in religious services of the first class. But the rector could go further and organise special evenings. The Prefect had ordered a *Laterna Magica* and the Prefecture possessed many *dia positives* which could be borrowed.³³

Okombahe can be compared to Aminuis in its seclusion and poverty. It appeared that in both cases this weighed heavily on the personalities of the missionaries. Both Father Filling and Bachmann were inclined to air their hurt feelings in rather undiplomatic letters to the Prefect. We should see these outburst in the light of isolation and lack of normal communication for months which, psychologically seen, would be harmful for any person. They were also deprived of many simple conveniences which must have irritated them. Father Leo Bachmann had very little money and as such also very little leeway to make progress. At one stage the Prefect asked Bachmann if the Prefecture would rather leave Okombahe or make it a dependancy of another station.³⁴ At another time the Prefect exclaimed that Okombahe was indeed the most difficult station.³⁵

³³ Klaeyle to Rector, Klein Windhuk, 30 June 1913 (ADW A 74: Usakos I).

³⁴ Prefect to Bachmann, Windhuk, 11 March 1912 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

³⁵ Prefect to Bachmann, Windhuk, 12 August 1912 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

In Okombahe we notice more open friction with the Rheinische Mission than elsewhere. Where the differences of opinion at Klein Windhoek and at other places were resolved in diplomatic and polite letters, the animosity exploded more openly in Okombahe. It is certain that the personalities of Missionary Baumann and Father Bachmann were instrumental in causing this. Both missions became involved in a heritage question, which even Praeses Olpp thought was unfortunate. Consultation should have taken place between the District Commissioner on the one hand and Mr Geritz, Pastor Baumann and Father Bachmann on the other, before an open attack was launched.³⁶ Another unfortunate case was the burial of Helena who had become a Catholic but whose relatives were Protestant. In her final hour she had called the Catholic priest and demanded that she should be buried in accordance with the Catholic rites, which had subsequently happened. Some time later the case reached the media in Germany when the "Essener Kirchenblatt" quoted from the "Kirchlicher Anzeiger" that against her wishes Helena had been forced by Father Bachmann to be buried in a Catholic ceremony. The newspaper proved that this was untrue and that the facts had been distorted.³⁷

Father Bachmann was not willing to officiate in Omaruru as he did not want Father Kieger to minister in Okombahe (sub conditione silentio).³⁸ But because there was no other possibility of holding services in the church, the Prefect told him that it was his priestly duty to go to Omaruru. It would also be good for his

³⁶ Prefect to Bachmann, Windhuk, 24 October 1910 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

³⁷ "Verdaechtigung eines katholischen Missionars" in Essener Kirchenblatt (1911) 17: 132. Kirchlicher Anzeiger (1911) 19-03 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

³⁸ Bachmann to Prefect, Okombahe, 24 May 1914 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

health as there was more food in Omaruru.³⁹ However, he did not want to give in as he was already a "Krueppel" (cripple) on account of the refusal to give him Brother Brodmann as helper and he was responsible for all the heavy menial tasks. He would not take a risk.⁴⁰ Just before his departure for Germany the Prefect informed Bachmann that he should appoint a local assistant for gardening and cooking. It would relieve him of the most demanding tasks and he would have more time for the pastorate.⁴¹

Father Bachmann was very well versed in Nama and had some Damara people who helped him with the translations. The Prefect asked Bachmann to send one of them, Cornelius, to Father Jakobi so that the two could finish the manuscript of the Nama catechism. After completion it would be sent to Germany, where Father Schemmer would take care of the printing.⁴²

In October 1912, Prefect Klaeyle finished his report of the visitation of the residence of St Boniface in Omaruru. It recorded that the Codex Historicus, the Codex for the making of vows and the Codex for the recording of canonical visitations were missing. Because of this it is not easy to present a true picture of the early life of the Church in Omaruru, though we possess three reports by Father Schulte, which cover the building activities from 1907 until

³⁹ Prefect to Bachmann, Windhuk, 30 May 1914 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

⁴⁰ Bachmann to Prefect, Okombahe, 8 February 1914 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

⁴¹ Prefect to Bachmann, Windhuk, 23 February 1914 (ADW A 69: Okombahe I).

⁴² Prefect to Bachmann, Windhuk, 2 July 1910 (ADW A 69: Okomabahe I).

1908 as well as the initial ministry among Blacks and Whites.⁴³ The newly appointed rector, Father Kieger, was encouraged to start re-building the parish and especially pay attention to the African mission. The report regretted the fact that during the last two years the mission had suffered badly. His predecessor's opinion of religious and priestly life were often a scandal to the faithful. The confidence of the people was seriously shaken, because their parish priest frequented the tavern and neglected his priestly duties. Compared to other missions Omaruru did not show much activity.⁴⁴

Swakopmund had developed into an important and many-sided centre for the Catholic Mission. This was proved by the installation of a church council by the Prefect of which the members were Advocate Kohler, Mr Boediker, Mr Kriz and Mr Tullius.⁴⁵ Because so many people lived at Guanikontes and it was not within walking distance of the town, Klaeyle felt that it was necessary to start an independent station containing a church in that oasis. The Prefect also urged Father Kalb to purchase a small farm for the upkeep of the station.⁴⁶ Like in Usakos the societies flourished in Swakopmund e.g. the R.C. Men's Society of which Mr Skobel was the chairperson. The Prefect was glad to mention that he was aware of a flourishing African mission, which he felt was very important in a

⁴³ Reports about the station Omaruru by Father Schulte: I. 18 February 1907; II. 1 October 1907; III. 1 April, 1908 (ADW A 1; Ap. Pref.: Gruendung und Entwicklung).

⁴⁴ Report of the visitation of the residence of Omaruru by Prefect E. Klaeyle, 16 October 1912 (ADW A 61: Omaruru).

⁴⁵ Klaeyle to parish priest of Swakopmund, Windhuk, 11 February 1913 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

⁴⁶ Klaeyle to Kalb, Usakos, 10 March 1913 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

place where so many of the activities revolved around the White parish.⁴⁷

The hospital was very well established by that time under the competent direction of the Franciscan sisters. It was natural that the attention fell on the Black population, who were also in need of a hospital and health care. In due time it was established and the buildings were erected at the Northern side of the existing hospital next to the maternity ward. The mission was also a centre for the recuperation of missionaries from the inland stations, as well as a holiday resort.⁴⁸

In the beginning of 1914 the Prefect published an official statement that fathers, brothers and sisters working in the Prefecture could make use of these facilities in the hospital and the holiday centre at the cost of the Prefecture.⁴⁹ From the lively correspondence with Father Kalb we learn that he was the centre of a travel agency for the mission and the contact person with customs. He took care of the import of goods for the different missions and put them on to the train for further transport. Sometimes he complained that he was required to do the work and pay for the goods, but the stations did not compensate him. An example of his type of work was the departure of Father Pothmann and Brother Heckmann who left the Prefecture to travel to Colombo, Ceylon. Kalb received detailed instructions on how to handle the case, how much

⁴⁷ Klaeyle to Ziegenfusz, Windhuk, 11 February 1913 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

⁴⁸ Klaeyle to Rector, Windhuk, 11 February 1913 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

⁴⁹ Prefect to Father Kalb, Windhuk, 3 February 1914 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

money should be given and what kind of tickets should be bought.⁵⁰ It is typical of the period that Father Kalb expressed his joy at having obtained a small, cheap typewriter with four different typescripts.⁵¹

Father Kalb was worried that the "eternal adversaries" (Rheinische Mission) had plans to build their own hospital on account of insufficient accommodation at the Catholic hospital. Kalb felt that the Catholic Mission should fight for its hospital, which in fact possessed a monopoly in Swakopmund. The Rheinische Mission had one in Karibib already and he strongly felt they should leave Swakopmund to the Catholics.⁵²

9.3 Relations between the German Province of OMI and the Prefecture

With the passing years the German Province of OMI and the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia developed their own systems and lifestyle. Sometimes the mutual relations were affected by opposing interests. Therefore many members had expressed the hope that Province and Prefecture could move towards closer co-operation. But Prefect Schemmer would only be in favour of such a step if the Province was responsible for a more substantial sum of money than had been the case in the past. Such a closeness in relations would lead to a livelier interest in the Mission among the Fathers in Germany, it was assumed. Schemmer concluded that the General Board would possibly be against it for administrative reasons,

⁵⁰ Prefect to Kalb, Windhuk, 28 May 1912 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II J. No. 584/12).

⁵¹ Kalb to Prefect, Swakopmund, 3 August 1912 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

⁵² Kalb to Prefect, Swakopmund, 20 November 1913 (ADW A 63: Swakopmund I).

but Father Max Kassiepe was definitely in favour.⁵³

Though a permanent representation in Germany would be advisable, the Mission should not become subservient to the Province as was the case a. o. with the Order of the Pallotiner. The Province should not have any say in the founding of stations or in the allocation of funds. Maybe the situation could become more transparent when the separation of property between Propaganda and Congregation became a reality in the Protectorate. The relations between the Mission Vicariate of OMI and the Province of OMI would improve in quality. In that case it would also be easier for other congregations to take over certain sections of the huge territory.⁵⁴

The change of provincial could possibly support the idea of the appointment of a father whose task would be to represent the Mission with the Province, the Missionary Societies, the Colonial Department and with magazines and newspapers. The Fathers of Steyl (SVD), the Pallotiner, the Fathers of the H. Spirit, and MSC were real missionary congregations and as such they felt that the Province was only in existence for the Mission. The Provinces of OMI had more egocentric interests.

Examples of such relations were the contacts with the Missionary Societies. The administrations of these societies were astonished about the "schwaebische Gemuetlichkeit" with which OMI handled the interests of its Missions. Everywhere

⁵³ Schemmer to Prefect, Marienstift, Lippspringe, 29 January 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur; I/II P).

⁵⁴ Schemmer to Kassiepe, Huenfeld, 22 June 1909 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: Schemmer).

they were last in line. Therefore such a full-time professional would be necessary. If they could not find a father from SWA, then one should be taken from the Province. A Southwester would meet with problems at the top of the Province's administration anyway. Prefect Schemmer proposed Father Kierdorf or Pietsch. The former, however, was afraid that the Provincial Administration would feel left out and consequently refuse to leave such a representative enough freedom of action. This entangled situation irritated Schemmer and made him jealous of the organisation of other congregations.⁵⁵

When the new Prefect, Father Eugene Klaeyle, took over, he started by revealing his worries to the Provincial. He complained that at the start of his term of office a situation without order existed. But when he took appropriate measures he was soon trapped in the middle of various disputes. He lamented that the Oblates in his Mission Vicariate were real South Westers, through and through. He even quoted from Shakespeare that much was wrong in the State of Denmark. According to him the cause of all trouble was the neglect of religious life for a considerable time in the past.⁵⁶

But when it came to the question of relations the new Prefect wrote along the same lines of thinking to the new Provincial as his predecessor had done. He expressed the hope that the latter would support the idea and that reciprocal harmony and recognition of each other's rights would result. It was his ardent wish that the relations would become more business-like and not depend on moods

⁵⁵ Schemmer to Kassiepe, Capellen, Kreis Grevenbroich, 23 July 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur; I/II P 688).

⁵⁶ Prefect to Provincial, Windhuk, 23 May 1912 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur: I/IIP 156/12).

and feelings.⁵⁷

In the meantime actions for support continued and the good news arrived that Germany was collecting money for the new station of Tsumeb. Via an article in "Maria Immaculata" the people received the correct information about the urgent needs in that mining village and were encouraged to contribute generously. Of course, the redaction required prompt receipts as part of the business-like approach.⁵⁸ Johann Wallenborn recommended Schemmer for his ability to rake in money in spite of his bed-ridden situation. But he also did not forget to recommend Prefect Klaeyle for his order in relations and systematic correspondence. He very much appreciated his thorough and well-documented articles.⁵⁹

The Colonial Mission school at Engelport was required to provide reports to the Colonial Department of the work of the brothers in German South West Africa and how they encouraged the local population to nurture working habits. Prefect Schemmer had proposed that Father Hannesperger should do the job but in fact the school never handed in a correct report.⁶⁰ In a letter to Father N. Stehle, the superior of Engelport, the Prefect gave a summary of the situation in the middle of 1912 which could be used to compose a proper report. He summed up the

⁵⁷ Prefect to Provincial M. Kassiepe, Windhuk, 27 December 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur; IIP 897).

⁵⁸ Johann Wallenborn (editor Maria Immaculata) to Klaeyle, Huenfeld, Hessen-Nassau, 10 October 1911 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur; I DP 374).

⁵⁹ Wallenborn to Klaeyle, Huenfeld, 14 April 1911 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I DP z 327).

⁶⁰ Schemmer to Klaeyle, Capellen, 19 August 1910 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P. J. No. 688/10).

following:

1. Great Windhoek: workplaces: great success
2. Klein Windhoek: vineyards: great success
3. Doebra: water projects finalised
4. Usakos: orange and citrus orchards
5. Swakopmund: native hospital: 1 brother with local assistants
6. Okombahe: garden with vegetables and fruit
7. Okahandja: garden
8. Epukiro: farm and gardens ⁶¹

A special project constituted the continued care for catechists in the field. Once the catechists had graduated from the school for catechists in Windhoek, they were sent to the little villages and on to the farms and the mission had to support her workers. A system had been developed whereby individuals in Germany could adopt such a catechist and his entire family. The Mission would provide his name and further interesting particulars accompanied by a photograph, in order to make the contact more personal. It seemed that this was a viable system of support.⁶²

The reality of the relations and the practice of support appeared in some correspondence of the year 1913. The Prefect revealed his worries to the Provincial-Procurator, Johann Wallenborn, that he was in financial trouble again. The rainy season had proved to be very bad. Therefore no harvest could be

⁶¹ Prefect to N. Stehle, Direktor der kolonialen Missionsschule in Deutschland. Windhuk, 17 June 1912 (ADW A 4: Ap. Pref. J.No. 721/12).

⁶² Prefect to Kierdorf at Huenfeld, Windhuk, 18 July 1912 (ADW A 4: Ap.Pref. J.No. 733/12).

expected and the pasture was weak. He had founded three stations, which were all vital for the future. Kokasib, for example, should become the business centre for the North. It also could prove to become the entrance to the Bushmen Mission. Therefore he was pleading for speedy support. As Johann Wallenborn also was editor of Maria Immaculata, Klaeyle apologised for not submitting more articles and information for his magazine. But the missionaries were so busy, that they never found time to do this.⁶³ Almost by return of post Father Wallenborn alleviated his financial troubles.

An important concern of the Prefect was the procurement of brothers for the workshops and the trade school. He mentioned that it could be held against him if in earlier years more brothers had been sent than at present. He was glad to notice the healthy development of the German Province, but also the Prefecture should be given leeway to develop.⁶⁴ He remarked that the future priest-missionaries followed a practical course before they left for the missions. In the same way it would be advisable that Brothers should be given the chance to follow a similar course. And in the preceding years of formation they should acquire the proper qualifications. Such fully-qualified Brothers would come as self-motivated and balanced people to South West and in this way failure would be avoided.⁶⁵

⁶³ Klaeyle to Wallenborn, Windhuk, 25 February 1913 (ADW 4: Ap.Pref. J.No. 220/13).

⁶⁴ Prefect to Provincial M. Kassiepe, Windhuk, 29 January 1913 (ADW A 4: Ap. Praef. J. No. 93/13).

⁶⁵ Prefect to Provincial, Windhuk, 20 February 1912 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/IIP 156/12).

Though there was a steady flow of requests for a diversity of mission workers, like a doctor for Kavango and a maternity nurse for Swakopmund (Sr Meta), the Prefect remained more interested in fathers and brothers for the actual missionary work as in most places the process of stabilisation was still in progress.⁶⁶

At one stage Brother Huckschlag had to be dismissed. This caused dismay and unease in Germany. The brother had made a good impression in Germany where it was thought that the situation in South West had caused his change of heart. There had been more examples of such failures, which almost led to the point that the German Province were not favourably inclined to sending any more brothers to South West. The Prefect explained that in view of the prevailing society and the reigning customs, fathers and brothers should be above average. Fathers should have an interest in studies and brothers in a trade or a profession. One can think back to his remark that brothers should be fully trained and have followed a preparatory course. The Prefect had warned the authorities in time. He pronounced the hope that the exit of Brother Huckschlag would not influence the General Board or the Provincial Board in their policy of sending staff.⁶⁷ When a month later the Brothers Pohlen and Rath arrived the Prefect must have been relieved. Klaeyle had also heard rumours that some fathers in the preparatory course for missionaries were musicians. He quickly took it up and inquired if one of them could be assigned to South West as they needed a bandmaster. Father Georg

⁶⁶ Prefect to Superior Jos Huss at Huenfeld, Windhuk, 8 November 1910 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P 777/10).

⁶⁷ Prefect to Provincial, Windhuk, 14 May 1913 (ADW A 4: Ap. Praef. J.No. 598/13)

Weiler had started an African band, but in the meantime had become disabled and had returned to Germany.⁶⁸ Also the opening of a noviciate in Usakos definitely had something to do with the problems they experienced with brothers coming from overseas. The four brothers who had been in that noviciate were doing very well. The last three years the noviciate had been empty, however, and they were depending on Germany again.⁶⁹

Many fathers and brothers were very happy in South West Africa. Only four brothers were dissatisfied, but already Prefect Schemmer had called them Social Democrats. Just like in Germany they wanted to be in control, on an equal footing and fully independent.⁷⁰ At that stage the Prefect was also disappointed with the Franciscan Sisters who did not dare to accept a mission in Kavango. And even the Sisters of the H. Cross who three years earlier had been quite willing, declined the offer. The sisters' house in Nyangana was ready and stood waiting for workers. And the Prefect was of the opinion that the mission should be based on a truly social foundation. But that ideal could not be realised without sisters. Towards the end of 1913 South West could rejoice again. In the absence of the Prefect, who was on a tour to the North, Father Arnold thanked the German Province for the new Fathers who had arrived. Father Wilhelm Schleipen received his appointment for Klein Windhoek, while Father Heinrich Stoppelkamp came to Great Windhoek to teach at the school for catechists and become the instructor

⁶⁸ Prefect to Provincial, Klein Windhuk, 25 June 1913 (ADW A 4: Ap.Praef. J.No. 770/13).

⁶⁹ Prefect to Provincial, Windhuk, 20 February 1912 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P 156/12).

⁷⁰ Prefect to Provincial, Windhuk, 14 May 1913 (ADW A 4: Ap. Praef. J. No. 598/13).

of the band.⁷¹

9.4 Relations with the Rheinische Mission

One of the main obstacles to good relations was the question of re-baptism. At the first Synod of the Prefecture in 1907 the decision had been taken to accept without restrictions the validity of baptism in the Lutheran Church.⁷² When it seemed that this bone of contention had been removed for good, Prefect Klaeyle suddenly heard from Father Scharsch, to his utter astonishment, that a new decree from Rome had ordered all baptisms by "heretics" to be repeated. The Prefect contacted Father Jansen for enlightenment, but in the meantime the missionaries continued to follow the tradition started in 1907.⁷³ He felt it necessary to inform Praeses Olpp of these developments. In the South Prefect von Krolikowski had re-baptised a Baster child, which had caused new trouble and aggressive Protestant reaction.⁷⁴ One month later Father Jansen had already replied. He had found no evidence of such a decree and it should be regarded as a rumour. He explained in detail that the last decree in connection with the problem of re-baptisms had been issued on 23 November 1898. Therefore they could carry on with

⁷¹ Arnold to Provincial, Windhuk, 10 December 1913 (ADW 4: Ap. Praef. I P 10-12-13).

⁷² Beschlusses des ersten Praefekturkapitels, abgehalten zu Windhuk, 18-21 February 1907: I, B3 (ADW A 1; Ap. Praef.: Gruendung und Entwicklung).

⁷³ Prefect to Father Jos. Jansen in Huenfeld, Windhuk, 22 October 1910 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II. I C.P.J. No. 730)

⁷⁴ Prefect to Superior Pietsch, Windhuk, 27 July 1912 (ADW A 4: Ap. Praef. J. No. 790).

their practice as before.⁷⁵

Praeses H. Olpp approached the Prefect in Windhoek about the case in the South. A Rehobother child of the name Polsterer had received an emergency baptism by a Lutheran missionary. Praeses Olpp had received information that the child was again baptised in the office of one of the Catholic missionaries. He reminded Prefect Klaeyle of the stand he had taken concerning the baptisms administered by Lutheran pastors two years earlier. In those days the Prefect had stated that the Catholic Mission recognised the validity of Lutheran baptisms. Praeses Olpp regretted that the Prefect had recently been sick, which had prevented him paying him a visit when he was in Windhoek. Nevertheless he would prefer to discuss the case personally.⁷⁶

In his answer Klaeyle remarked that he did not know anything of that case as it had happened in another Prefecture, but he was quite prepared to explain the official position of the Catholic Church. If it was morally established that the baptism administered by any minister of any denomination was valid, then Catholic dogmatics did not allow, even forbade, re-baptism. In case of doubt it should be administered "sub conditione". It taught the theological ruling that "in iis, quae ad salutem pertinent pars tutior est sequenda".⁷⁷ A doubtful baptism could be administered by a Catholic priest, a minister of another denomination or a

⁷⁵ Jansen to Klaeyle, Huenfeld, 24 November 1910 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II. I C.P. J.No. 731).

⁷⁶ Praeses to Prefect, Karibib, 10 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur: M 491/12).

⁷⁷ "it is an advantage to apply it to the best of one's ability, but one should watch out for the resulting consequences".

lay-person. But the Prefect repeated that in his Prefecture the opinion was held that all baptisms administered by the officials of the Rheinische Mission were "a priori" valid.⁷⁸ At an earlier stage the Prefect had held long discussions with Praeses H. Olpp who confirmed that all his missionaries administered their baptisms "per infusionem". He was not aware of a practice of signing the forehead with a wet thumb.⁷⁹

A week later Praeses Olpp replied to Klaeyle's letter. In the meantime he had discovered that it had been Prefect von Krolikowski who had re-baptised the child. Now he was compelled through the services of the Praeses of the South to point out to Von Krolikowski the position taken by Catholic dogmatics as explained by the Prefect in his last letter. In his reply Prefect Klaeyle confirmed that he had pointed out the differences in theory and practice. But by now he was afraid that the letter by the Praeses to Von Krolikowski could lead to misunderstandings between the two Prefects. Prefectures were independent of each other. Moreover he did not know anything of the real situation in the case of the Rehobother child.⁸⁰

Another bone of contention was the formulation taken up in par. 7 of the "formula abjuratonis falsae fidei" for converts. Praeses Olpp wanted to know if the formula: "Ebenso verwerfe ich alle anderen Kirchen welche nach Christus von Menschen geschaffen sind und welche von Christus: 'der breite Weg der zur Hoelle

⁷⁸ Prefect to Praeses, Windhuk, 18 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur: J. No. 491/12).

⁷⁹ Prefect to Jakobi, Windhuk, 9 December 1912 (ADW A 49: Gobabis II).

⁸⁰ Klaeyle to Olpp, Windhuk, 18 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur. J. No. 621/12).

fuehrt' genannt werden".⁸¹ The Prefect replied that in his Prefecture the priests left the sentence out or just read the Credo. He hoped that the Praeses knew, that when Christians were divided without personal guilt, they would come to the sanctity promised by Christ. In his opinion par. 7 of the formula was not in line with official Catholic dogmatics. He quoted from Luther (Luthers Werke, Wittenberg, Tom. II fol. 44 and Tom. V fol. 107) in which Luther had stated that those who did not follow his teaching would be damned. Later generations did not take this pronouncement at face value either. He finished his letter by pronouncing the hope that the Praeses would not bring the letter before the public. He also expected that these points would not darken their good relations and he wanted to meet the Praeses quite soon personally.⁸²

Johann Wallenborn OMI, editor of Maria Immaculata inquired a year later if the Fathers of OSFS still used the hated formula. The Prefect was not sure about the South but he assured him that in the North they had stopped using it altogether.⁸³

Another sore point was a paragraph in a Herero reader of 1879, which contained denigrating remarks about Catholics and historical untruths.⁸⁴ When Klaeyle discovered that the book "Omahenge Ookuleza" was again sold for M 1,00, he

⁸¹ Olpp to Prefect, Karibib, 24 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

⁸² Klaeyle to Olpp, Windhuk, 4 June 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur. J. No. 621/12).

⁸³ Wallenborn to Prefect, Huenfeld, 10 February 1913 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

⁸⁴ Klaeyle to Olpp, Windhuk, 18 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

protested in a letter to Baroness Dahl in Munich.⁸⁵ Praeses Olpp defended the book and an article in the "Rheinische Volkszeitung" by saying that it was not possible to turn around history. By the text in the book the Rheinische Mission did not want to hurt the Catholic section of the population in the "Schutzgebiet", but only wanted to tell the truth about the Church to which they belonged. Olpp felt that it was necessary, now that the Catholic Church had entered the scene, to explain to the Africans the difference in teaching between the two Churches and also the reasons for these differences. Nevertheless, he had ordered to take out of the new edition those parts which hurt the Catholics. Still he remained of the opinion that it should be pointed out where Christ's teaching had been harmed by the Catholic Church and one should be allowed to relate the history of that Church. This was even required by the struggle which had been forced upon the Lutherans by the Catholic Church.⁸⁶

Prefect Klaeyle answered that historical research should be "in caritate ex veritate". What had been taken up in the Herero reader had been proven to be wrong for a long time already or, alternatively, the events recorded were part of a general attitude of all Christians in that period. He would never have written the letter of 18 May if the objectionable passage did not contain the offending words: "if the power of that Church had not been broken, she would still burn and kill Christians of another conviction". He felt very strongly

⁸⁵ Klaeyle to Baronin Dahl, Windhuk, 25 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur. Ap. Pref. 544).

⁸⁶ Praeses to Prefect, Karibib, 24 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

about that refutable passage and asked urgently that it should be rectified.⁸⁷

In spite of some friction in the early days of the existence of Klein Windhoek, the school carried on taking Lutheran children. But they would only be accepted with written permission from parents or guardians and they had to promise to follow the house order as the institute was a Catholic one. It was accepted that this should be sufficient to prevent any misunderstandings.⁸⁸

When the Catholic Mission started to publish the monthly newspaper "Christliches Familienblatt" they sent copies to the Lutheran missionaries. Pastor Heyse thanked them for the newspaper and thought that it was a step forward for the Catholics to have their own publication after the Lutherans had started two years earlier. He expressed the hope that also in the field of publications the two denominations would co-operate, "friedlich/schiedlich", peacefully but separate. He also expected that the editors and authors would not seek confrontation. He asked that the Mission should continue to send the monthly newspaper until he was able to take out a subscription. Also Pastor Heyse regretted that he had not met Klaeyle, which is an indication that the relations were quite friendly at the personal level.⁸⁹ Pastor Hasenkamp from Swakopmund responded by writing that he had heard that the Catholic Mission had started to publish a monthly and as the Lutheran Mission was sending their paper he also was eager to receive the

⁸⁷ Klaeyle to Olpp, Windhuk, 4 June 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur. I M. J.No. 621/12).

⁸⁸ Prefect to Rector, Klein Windhuk, 26 July 1913 (ADW A 74: Usakos I. Ap. Praef. J. No. 884/13).

⁸⁹ Pastor Heyse to Prefect Klaeyle, Karibib, 30 January 1913 (ADW A 29; Korrespondenz der Praefektur: I Pa 117/13).

Catholic one.⁹⁰ This was doubly interesting as Pastor Hasenkamp had invited all civil authorities and all societies of the town to a festive service in the Lutheran church, but had shown a cold shoulder to the Catholics.⁹¹ Also the Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut (Zentralstelle) had shown an interest in receiving the "Christliches Familienblatt".

In conclusion we may state that the relations were quite open, especially at the level of both administrations. At the local level the relations remained quite strained in a number of instances.

9.5 Prefecture and the Colonial Administration of the Protectorate

In 1911 the Imperial Government officially handed over the care for the religious welfare of the soldiers to the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia. This was accepted and it was agreed that stations in the neighbourhood of towns would be taken up in the schedule of services. Outlying stations would be visited three or four times annually. It would not be forbidden, when on tour, to visit Catholic farmers, if they lived in the neighbourhood of the military posts.⁹²

In the case of mixed marriages we have seen that the Northern Prefecture was in line with the Government and in that respect they had more problems with the

⁹⁰ Pastor Hasenkamp, Schriftfuehrer des Evangelischen Gemeindeblattes, to Prefect, Swakopmund, 17 April 1913 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur).

⁹¹ Klaeyle to Kalb, Klein Windhoek, 18 June 1913 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II).

⁹² Klaeyle to Kalb, Windhuk, 23 June 1911 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II. Ap. Pref. J. No. 403/11).

Province of OMI in Germany and the "Zentrum Partei" than with the administration of the Protectorate.

The Government had introduced service books for workers in order to make labour relations more organised and surveyable. But the workers themselves refused these books. They were afraid of them even when they only got a copy.⁹³ Also in this case one could speak of good relations, because Prefect Klaeyle asked his missionaries on 30 July of that year to assist the government and explain the advantages of the labour book to the workers. In the same manner the Imperial Government wished that all African marriages should be registered from 1 July 1914 onwards. This would only assume the form of a statement. As the missionaries could act as officials the Government wanted them to enter all these marriages into the book of marriage registers. This the Catholic Mission complied with.

The trade school in Windhoek had not only been recognised by the Government and been subsidised, the Government had also required the school to prepare annually for its service two apprentices in each trade. The Windhoek municipality invited the Catholic Mission to prepare students who attended Catholic schools as interpreters.⁹⁴

In the political field we read regularly that the Prefect attended the official opening of the "Landtag" or had a discussion with the Governor. Carl Schlettwein from Otjitambi wrote the Prefect a letter in which he revealed that he had heard

⁹³ Imperial Government to Prefecture, Windhuk, 27 July 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

⁹⁴ Municipality of Windhoek to Prefecture, Windhuk, 8 February 1912 (ADW A 8: Grosz Windhuk).

from Dr Meyer that Prefect Klaeyle was ill and could not even send a representative to the Landtag Commission on Native Affairs. As some members had complained that the Catholic Mission would not participate for political reasons he pleaded with the Prefect to send a representative which eventually happened.⁹⁵

Governor Theodor Seitz had sent a letter to Praeses Olpp in Karibib to inform him that it had been brought to his attention that Africans, in case of illness, would rather visit the missionary than the doctor. His health officials had complained that this was dangerous in cases of malaria and typhus. The Governor asked him to stop or prevent this practice. In case no doctor was available the Government would provide the necessary medicine to the local community. A similar letter was sent to Prefect Klaeyle.⁹⁶

This proves that whether it be in education or health, social or labour affairs, or in politics and military chaplaincy, the relations were quite friendly, even if the majority of the officials was Protestant.

9.6 The question of the Franciscan sisters of Nonnenwerth/Heythuizen

After residing in South West Africa for four years, it became time for the sisters to sign a proper contract. Superior Jos Huss of Huenfeld conducted the deliberations with Nonnenwerth on the German side. Prefect Nachtwey started to

⁹⁵ Carl Schlettwein to Eugene Klaeyle, Otjitambi, 1 May 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

⁹⁶ Governor Seitz to Praeses Olpp in Karibib, Windhuk, 8 November 1911 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur. Kaiserlicher Gouverneur, J. Nr 25505/11).

get frustrated with the slow progress. He felt that the Superior-General either should sign the contract or the Prefecture should look for another congregation. In Windhoek, Mother Tharsilla acted quite independently and even challenged the the Mission. The demands for payment were dictated by her. The General Board did not want their sisters to take over a maternity ward in Swakopmund, but even the sisters of Klein Windhoek felt that it was impossible to work in the kitchen in accordance with the requirements demanded by the Superior-General.⁹⁷ Mother Tharsilla tried to prove with the contract in hand and with the rules issued by Rome that they were not allowed to be midwives or nurses in a maternity home.⁹⁸ The Provincial of Nonnenwerth, Sr Seraphine, informed the Prefect that the sisters wanted to have private property. She had also heard that the fathers did not behave towards the sisters in a becoming way.⁹⁹ There were complaints from the side of the sisters about the religious spirit of fathers and brothers. It was alleged that they withheld the sisters from the observance of the H. Rule. On the other hand Father Jos Schulte thought that Mother Tharsilla was quite impossible to deal with and not willing to render any co-operation.

When Father Simon Scharsch was preparing himself for his visitation he had promised the sisters in Nonnenwerth to investigate the problems and prepare a report. After all, both congregations should have the same aim and should meet each other in Christian charity. After he had finished his investigations he

⁹⁷ Prefect Nachtwey to Superior Huss, Windhuk, 13 January 1908 (ADW 180: Schwestern I).

⁹⁸ Mother Tharsilla to Prefect, Windhuk, 12 February 1908 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

⁹⁹ Sr Seraphine to Hw Patres, Nonnenwerth, 22 March 1909 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

wrote that it was painful to establish that what he had heard in Nonnenwerth was true, the sisters had a very low opinion of the religious spirit of fathers and brothers. It had come to his knowledge, that even in official correspondence reference was being made of the lacking religious spirit of the missionaries. But he heard from the side of the sisters themselves that their superiors changed their minds as soon as they became convinced of the contrary by observing the reality. Father Scharsch pointed out that the sisters should bear in mind that the fathers and brothers, even to the point of death, had promoted the aims of the mission.

After thorough investigation he had become convinced that Mother Tharsilla could not become reconciled to the primitive conditions in Africa. One sister remarked that Mother Tharsilla often acted as if she were a mad person. He protested vehemently against the accusation that the fathers had demanded the sisters act against their rules. When Mother Tharsilla had refused to prepare the accounts of the sisters with the excuse that she had not been authorised, how could she speak a decisive word in principal questions? How could Nonnenwerth ask him to deal with the sisters in Africa when Mother Tharsilla reported very subjectively? Father Scharsch proposed that under the circumstances it would be better for him to deal with the Superior-General personally. He had found out from Prefect Schemmer, that it was impossible to deal with Mother Tharsilla, and had been supported by a number of fathers, brothers and even a number of sisters who dared to speak out frankly. He believed that the basic cause of problems was to be found in the fact that the sisters were striving after total separation and independence from the fathers. It was his conviction that at that moment in time this was not possible. The new prefect would have to tackle that problem. One

thing he knew was that in several missions of OMI this policy would be regarded as being harmful.

The question of bigger communities was also very tricky. In a country with such large distances and small missions, communities of five or more sisters were hardly feasible. On the one hand so many sisters would not have sufficient tasks and on the other no small mission could afford the upkeep of a big community. He also went into details and mentioned examples where the sisters incorporated into their services so many clauses that in Windhoek the fathers had to take two ladies into service. In such a case the presence of the sisters lost every meaning for the mission.

Finally Father Scharsch regretted that Nonnenwerth had avoided sending a sister-visitor during the same period when he would be in South West Africa. It would have presented many advantages, if both visitors would be able to compare their findings and, if necessary, confront the different persons on the spot. Nevertheless he wished the sister-visitor who would arrive in the course of the following year, success in her efforts to solve the problems. From his side he did not wish to set rules for the future Prefect as this could limit the proper development of the Prefecture.¹⁰⁰

After he had presented his report Father Scharsch felt it necessary to deal with the same problems in a personal letter to the Superior-General. He hoped that

¹⁰⁰ General Assistant Scharsch to Superior-General of the Franciscan Sisters, Windhuk, 5 October 1909 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

with a new Prefect the differences could be ironed out.¹⁰¹ In a reaction to the report Mother Ludmilla wrote to Prefect Schemmer. She started by expressing her regret that he was in such bad shape and had been forced to leave the country. During his term of office the relations had brightened up considerably. But after receiving the report from Father Scharsch her Council remained in favour of withdrawing from South West Africa. She repeated that the spirit of the fathers did not agree with the Rule of the sisters.¹⁰² One week later Provincial Watterott wrote to Acting Prefect Klaeyle that Prefect Schemmer had urgently asked him to contact Windhoek for him. Though his condition was very bad he insisted on passing the news that the question of the sisters had not been settled and they still thought of leaving the country. He warned that from the beginning there had not been enough contact with the Superior-General and that there would still be time to rectify this oversight.¹⁰³

When Father Schemmer had recovered a little he wrote letters to both Mother Ludmilla and the new Prefect on the same day. To Mother Ludmilla he announced the appointment of the new Prefect. He found him a very reasonable and competent man. Unfortunately, when the latter had preached a retreat for sisters, Mother Tharsilla had shown serious dislike, which was not a good sign for a new beginning. He advised Mother Ludmilla that it would be better to replace one sister than call back all of them to the detriment of the Mission. In South

¹⁰¹ Simon Scharsch to Mother Ludmilla, Usakos, 24 October 1909 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

¹⁰² Mother Ludmilla to Prefect Schemmer, Nonnenwerth, 7 December 1909 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

¹⁰³ Provincial Watterott to Klaeyle, Lippspringe, 15 December 1909 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

Africa he knew of a similar situation. The change of superior had immediately cleared the air and a change of relationship had followed.¹⁰⁴ To Prefect Klaeyle he sent copies of his correspondence with Nonnenwerth. The reason behind it was to give Klaeyle the "aditus ad pacem". He would like to see Klaeyle keep the channels of communication open and preferred this to a complete break.¹⁰⁵ And in a follow-up some two weeks later he promised the Prefect to send a book on African clergy. He mentioned when one was reading about the many problems in that field the small frictions with the sisters paled into insignificance.¹⁰⁶

But soon after that the new Prefect had an verbal clash with Mother Tharsilla. After he had protested against her independent actions on the mission ground of Windhoek, she accused him that he was trying to get her out of the country and this again was his revenge for her negative remarks about the retreat. This was too much and he was going to issue her with an official reprimand.¹⁰⁷ Also from Germany unpopular correspondence reached Klaeyle when Sr Seraphine, the provincial, presented to him her wish that the salary of M 100 should be increased to M 200. The sisters could not live on M 100.¹⁰⁸ However, this did not seem to bother the Prefect very much. He replied to Mother Seraphine in a

¹⁰⁴ Schemmer to Mother Ludmilla, Lippspringe, 5 January 1910 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

¹⁰⁵ Schemmer to Prefect, Marienstift, Lippspringe, 5 January 1910 (ADW A 22: Briefwechsel mit Deutscher Provinz. I/II P 83. J. No. 184/10).

¹⁰⁶ Schemmer to Prefect, Marienstift, Lippspringe, 29 January 1910 (ADW A 22: Briefwechsel mit Deutscher Provinz. I/II P 222).

¹⁰⁷ Klaeyle to Mother Tharsilla, Windhuk, 2 March 1910 (ADW A 180; Schwestern I: J. No. 216/10).

¹⁰⁸ Sr Seraphine to Klaeyle, Nonnenwerth, 15 July 1910 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

pleasant way and he praised highly Sr Edgara who had been faithful to the decisions of the visitation. On the contrary Mother Tharsilla was sticking to her former opinions. He also expressed his appreciation of the work of Sr Hilda who was an excellent teacher. But he would like the new superior to be appointed soon.¹⁰⁹

In 1911 Prefect Klaeyle wanted to discuss certain changes in the draft contract of 1910. He was against differentiation in the allocation of salaries for sisters. Also the Mission Vicariate of OMI received the same remuneration for fathers and brothers irrespective of the work they did. He made a special plea for the kindergarten and felt that it would play an important role in the parish life of Windhoek. He hoped that three more sisters could be sent before the end of April 1912. A second sister for Klein Windhoek would be important. Mother Adelheid actually hoped for a sister for the household, because in that case they could dismiss the entire African staff. The Prefect kept on having problems with Mother Tharsilla. In earlier days, she wanted ever more land as property, but once the sisters had to pay tax she was not interested anymore. The Prefecture had advanced the money for the time being, but she refused to refund, not to speak of other troubles, which arose. He was unpleasantly affected by hearing that Mother Tharsilla had discussed in a denigrating way with his subjects a number of agreements which had been made during the visitation. But all the other sisters were very good and they felt at home in the Prefecture.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Klaeyle to Mother Provincial Seraphine, Windhuk, 21 October 1910 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

¹¹⁰ Klaeyle to Mother Provincial Seraphine, Windhuk, 28 January 1911 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

With all these proposals to increase the salaries, it seemed quite natural that someone would express as his or her opinion that the sisters wanted to work at the cost of the Prefecture. Mother Provincial Seraphine found it painful to think that the Prefect believed they heeded such intentions. She proved that the contrary was true. Nonnenwerth had sent big quantities of clothes for sisters and children in South West. They were going to continue to do this and it should be proof of their good intentions.¹¹¹

In June of the same year Mother Seraphine could announce that four new sisters had boarded the "Prinzessin". Mother Lina was going to replace Mother Tharsilla. She was a teacher and had experience as a superior.¹¹²

In 1913 another confrontation loomed when Prefect Klaeyle protested that the sisters wanted to close the Hoehere Tochter Schule without even consulting the Prefecture. He pointed out that in accordance with the Roman Pontifical Constitution no 22 of Pope Leo XIII published 8 May 1881, it was forbidden to religious orders without permission of the H. See and the local ordinary to close or to move institutions. But in Windhoek there were even more reasons. In 1906 the Prefecture had discouraged the sisters from taking on the school management on their own account. Suddenly the lack of financial resources was given as the main reason for closure. Morally it would mean a blow for the mission in South West Africa. The Prefect understood the problems the sisters encountered in Germany to bear the costs of all the new buildings over there, but he suggested

¹¹¹ Mother Seraphine to Prefect, Nonnenwerth, 12 March 1911 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

¹¹² Seraphine to Klaeyle, Nonnenwerth, 1 June 1911 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

to the Superior-General that the weak missions should receive preference in planning. The Prefecture was quite willing to assist, but in the circumstances was not prepared to pay the rent. If that should become the case then the Prefecture should be allowed more influence in the school's administration which the sisters did not want. He was in favour of purchasing the annex to the school. When the Superior-General wanted bigger communities he would support that aim and promote the idea of more than two sisters in a community. Therefore the Mission was investigating the case of Usakos and Klein Windhoek in order to find a meaningful task for a third sister. He objected to the complaint that the sisters in Usakos only worked in the house. On the contrary this was the only station where the sisters performed pure missionary work by means of school and health services among the African population. He finished his letter by proposing that they should keep the contract of 1910 as it was and raise the salaries from M 120 up to M 200.¹¹³

Though the working climate had improved, it seemed that the trust was shaken to a degree that nothing could save the work of the sisters in South West Africa. The same problems recurred over and over again. Finally, Mother Ludmilla informed Prefect Klaeyle that she was at the Bishop's House in Trier to discuss with the Ordinary of that Diocese the position of the sisters in South West Africa and that it would be warranted to call back all the sisters. As replacements she pointed to the sisters of the H. Spirit who had many vocations.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Klaeyle to Ludmilla, Windhuk, 14 February 1913 (ADW A 180; Schwestern I: J. No. 80/13).

¹¹⁴ Ludmilla to Klaeyle, Trier, 10 June 1914 (ADW A 180: Schwestern I).

Though the war would intervene and prevent the sisters from leaving in the middle of 1916, eventually, they would depart from the territory, to the regret of many of their own sisters, who had found in South West Africa a fulfilling occupation. Also many of the fathers and brothers as well as laypersons saw them leave with regret.

9.7 Education provided by the Catholic Mission

By 1914 quite a number of educational institutions had been established in the centre of Windhoek. The first trade school had already been introduced at the beginning of the century when the first Tswana pupils had been sent to Windhoek. As the missionaries should be accompanied or preceded by helpers and translators, the need for a school for catechists was felt and the result was an institute with fifteen candidates.

As no student in the territory could study beyond primary school level the Mission decided in 1906 to open two secondary schools, one for girls, the Hoehere Tochter Schule and one for boys, the Realschule, both with hostel accommodation. The girls' school would be placed under the competent direction of the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth and in the Boys' School the staff would consist of fathers, lay-teachers and a diocesan priest from Germany, Rev Langenhorst, who later moved to Swakopmund. Subsequently, he left the priesthood.¹¹⁵ While the girls' school became quite popular, the boys' school had to amalgamate with the newly erected State Realschule and was closed on 30 November 1910, though the

¹¹⁵ Klaeyle to Langenhorst, Windhoek, 5 February 1910 (ADW A 84: Personalfragen)

hostel remained open.¹¹⁶

At half an hour's distance from the centre was the school for children of mixed race in Klein Windhoek, also cared for by the Franciscan Sisters. At Swakopmund, Usakos and Gobabis the priests had opened primary schools for Whites and for Blacks. They regarded this as a service to the community and as soon as the State was able to provide education they stopped. Usually they continued for a longer time with evening literacy classes. In the early years of the Colony the subsidies by the government were restricted to M 400 annually for the spreading of the German language. At a later stage the Government became interested in the trade school. The officials noticed that the Government's aim to teach the Africans a useful trade and interest for regular work was realised in these schools. From that time onwards they started to subsidise these schools. It was also a certain measure of self-interest, because they required for their own purposes two students per trade per year who would be given employment in the government and military workshops. In 1910, for example, the Government accepted eight handwork apprentices.¹¹⁷ The Imperial Government, however, informed the Catholic Mission that for the division of subsidies for native scholars inspection and examinations would be required for their technical schools in Windhoek and Klein Windhoek.¹¹⁸ A little while later the Mission received notification that the examination of 14 May 1914 had been satisfactory and

¹¹⁶ Klaeyle to Streit at Huenfeld, Windhuk, 30 May 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur)

¹¹⁷ Prefect to Imperial Government, Windhuk, 28 October 1910 (ADW 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur: J.No. 748/10).

¹¹⁸ Imperial Government of German South West Africa to R.C. Mission, Windhuk, 21 April 1914 (ADW A 3: I M. Kaiserliches Gouvernement Nr 9229).

consequently she would receive a subsidy of M 2000 for the year 1913.¹¹⁹

Prefect Klaeyle felt that the Hoehere Toechter Schule represented one of the strongest positions of the Catholic Mission in South West Africa. Because so many Lutheran parents placed their children in the care of the sisters, it provided a good point of contact with these parents and it would break down the prejudices which had been built up throughout the centuries. He found it deeply disturbing that the Franciscan Sisters had decided to give up the school for financial considerations. The Prefect wanted to keep the school going by any means. In spite of the high costs, he had to buy the site annex to the school, which initially had been taken away from the Mission after it had been awarded at the beginning. The plot was the property of the firm Woermann and Brock and it was offered for M 80.000. But the firm informed the Prefect that the offer was very favourable and therefore he had to decide before 1 July. If another favourable offer reached Woermann and Brock they would not be able to wait any further.¹²⁰ It therefore was his task to find at short notice the necessary capital.

He also had to look for another Congregation. Just before the war it seemed that he preferred the "Englische Fraeulein" in Nymphenburg. The General Board of that congregation recognised the importance of spreading and settling in the colonies. The Prefect cherished good hopes that they would participate in the financial running of the school. Klaeyle made use of the influence of His Excellency the Apostolic Nuntius in Muenchen to encourage this Congregation to make a speedy

¹¹⁹ Imperial Government of German South West Africa to Catholic Mission, Windhuk, 19 May 1914 (ADW A 3: Kais. Gouv. DSWA Nr 11794).

¹²⁰ Woermann and Brock & Co. to Prefecture, Hamburg, 27 May 1914 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II).

decision.¹²¹ He reasoned that in a territory with 15,000 Whites of whom seventeen and a half % were Catholic, it would be detrimental to close such a school. He also asked the Nuntius to inform the appropriate instances in Rome of his difficult financial plight.

The Superior-General of the "Englische Fraeulein" replied that her Congregation was unable to become involved financially. But she had undertaken firm action to find other organisations to take over the financial burden. She pointed to the charities by Kronprinz Rupprecht. As the Kronprinzessin Rupprecht Heim in Swakopmund was fully Protestant, he might be inclined to support a Catholic institution. The Mother General had discovered another problem. Her sisters possessed Bavarian teaching certificates, which would not be recognised in Prussian-led Windhoek. Though also Bavaria had recently upgraded the examinations it would still need some time before the "Oberlehrerinnen" would be ready.¹²² In his reply the Prefect made a last attempt and provided the Superior-General with a copy of the budget of the Prefecture. As the Franciscan Sisters had taken the decision to stay two years longer, the Englische Fraeulein would have time until 1 June 1916, though he would prefer them to come 1 January 1916 when the new school year started.¹²³ Also in this case the careful planning would be upset by the outbreak of the war.

¹²¹ Prefect to Apostolic Nuntius Mgr De Fruehwirth, z. Zt. Muenchen, 27 June 1914 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II).

¹²² Mother Isabella Wild to Klaeyle, Nymphenburg, 15 July 1914 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II).

¹²³ Klaeyle to Superior-General in Nymphenburg, z.Zt. Huenfeld, 8 July 1914 (ADW A 94: Klaeyle II).

9.8 Health care

In the field of health care the mission looked for possibilities to be of help in the new colony. From 1904 onwards the hospital "Maria Stern" under the direction of the Franciscan sisters provided good health services. These sisters had, however, hardly arrived in South West when the military command directed them to the military hospitals where they served until 1907. In that year the building of the St Anthony's hospital in Swakopmund started, followed later by one for the Black population. In Usakos, the well-qualified Sr Archangela provided a sort of primary health care for the local population and in this way prepared the way for a hospital in Usakos, which would be founded in later years. In the same period Dr Hollaender, chief medical officer in Gobabis was leading the discussions with the Catholic Mission and the Government in order to encourage the Mission to open health facilities in that town. The total lack of health care in Kavango led the missionaries to point out to the Prefecture that Kavango would be an excellent place for a missionary doctor. It even led the Prefect to ask the General Board of OMI to allow future missionaries to study medicine, but it was refused. However, the action to appoint a doctor in Kavango materialised soon after the war. From the letter of Governor Seitz to the Rheinische Mission and the Catholic Mission we learn that the local population trusted the local missionaries and both denominations provided basic health care at their stations. Though the Government had reservations about this practice in case of epidemics, it promised to provide medicine to the Missions if no doctor was available.

9.9 Printing and publications

Earlier on we have mentioned that the Catholic Mission made use of the Herero translations by the Rheinische Mission for teaching and religious services. But for the catechism and the hymn- and prayerbooks in Nama the Catholic Mission was busy producing her own publications. Prefect Klaeyle asked Rector Jacobs of Gobabis to send Father Jakobi to Windhoek. He also asked Father Bachmann in Okombahe to ensure that Cornelius would travel to Windhoek. Together they had to prepare the manuscript for printing. They followed the advice of Missionary Hegner, who had stated that without a Nama-speaking person in the translation team it would not work. After finishing the manuscript it would have to be sent to Germany where Father Schemmer would supervise proof-reading and printing.¹²⁴ Though the manuscript had not arrived in August, Father Schemmer informed Father Jakobi that it would be printed at H. Rademann in Ludwigshausen. He also would take care that pictures were added. He had been informed of a consignment of 500 extra copies which had to be printed for the Southern Prefecture. In this letter he mentioned for the first time that it would be a good idea to have a printing press in Windhoek. Through the good services of Father Max Kassiepe he would try to ask for the highspeed press of St Karl which was not used anymore.¹²⁵ A friend from Ludwigshausen impressed upon Schemmer, that if you buy a press you could not produce decent work if the printers were not qualified. A course of three months for the composer as well as for the printer would suffice. He also

¹²⁴ Prefect to Jakobi, Windhuk, 1 June 1910 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

¹²⁵ Schemmer to Jakobi, Capellen, Kreis Grevenbroich, 13 August 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur).

received the advice to buy a Johannisberger press and not a platen-press.¹²⁶ One month later the Provincial Council had agreed to hand over the press of St Karl free of charge. As the press was too big Schemmer would see to it to exchange it for a smaller one.¹²⁷ In October Schemmer informed the Prefect that he could not stop the process anymore and he had agreed to accept the press from St Karl free of charge. Neither could he postpone the printing of the Nama catechism any longer. On the account of the Prefecture he had bought letter types (petit, corpus and bold type), as many as were necessary for 2 x 16 pages. This would save them M 200 per 1000 copies. Also the printing of the prayer- and hymnbook in Nama would be taken care of.¹²⁸ When he had arrived in Switzerland he provided the Prefect with some more details. At the Council meeting the Fathers Kassiepe and Watterott had been in favour of presenting Windhoek with the St Karl press, Huss was not against, Metzinger wanted to wait for the successor of the Provincial and Leglise was not present.¹²⁹ The Prefect addressed Father Kassiepe and asked if Father Metzinger had caused problems in connection with payment. He confirmed that the Prefecture could not afford to pay for a press, but if he received it as a donation he would gladly accept.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Schemmer to Prefect, Capellen, 9 August 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P J. No. 613/10).

¹²⁷ Schemmer to Klaeyle, Capellen, 3 September 1910 (ADW A 4: Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P J. No. 687).

¹²⁸ Schemmer to Klaeyle, Locarno-Muralto, Villa Liberta, 27 October 1910 (ADW A 29; Korrespondenz der Praefektur: I P 840).

¹²⁹ Schemmer to Prefect, Locarno-Muralto, 7 December 1910 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P 213).

¹³⁰ Prefect to Provincial Max Kassiepe, Windhuk, 26 January 1911 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P J. No. 34/11).

Also overseas developments of importance took place which would promote missionary publications, also from South West Africa. In 1910 a number of Congregations decided to go ahead with the founding of a Scientific Mission Magazine. Initially the Jesuits did not want to join, but when it appeared that the others would carry on anyway, they decided to participate. For OMI it was important that Father Robert Streit had been appointed as member of the redaction.

Father Johann Wallenborn informed the Prefect that the Province appreciated his interesting articles. He also noted that Father Fülling had published in the OMI magazine "Missions" and Father Hermandung had related his experiences during the expedition to Kavango in his booklet "Ein Apostelgrab am Okavango".¹³¹

The redaction of "Maria Immaculata" had decided to take a new initiative and start with the "Little Mission Library" in order to provide up-to-date information for the many members of the flourishing mission societies. The third publication in that series would already be from South West Africa. The editors had chosen the book "Auf zum Kavango" by Father Jos Gotthardt. The editor of "Maria Immaculata" urged the Prefecture to hand in the manuscript as quickly as possible. Also the Fathers Gotthardt and Bierfert produced articles for "Maria Immaculata" which put Kavango into the limelight.¹³²

In the meantime the press had arrived and it was generally felt that the time was

¹³¹ Johann Wallenborn to Prefect, Huenfeld, 14 April 1911 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I Z 327 D.P.).

¹³² Wallenborn to Prefect, Huenfeld, 10 October 1911 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I D.P. 374).

ripe to start a magazine for the White and another for the Nama population.¹³³ The family newspaper should be called "Christliches Familienblatt" in order to avoid "katholisch", but in the sub-title it would be used. They would avoid specifying that it was intended for Deutsch Suedwestafrika, because the circulation should cover a wider area. The Southern Prefecture objected to that addition. This had been discussed in April when the Prefect of Great Namaqualand had been in Windhoek.¹³⁴ Even Bishop Simon of Pella showed interest in the Nama publications. He told the Prefect that his Nama people liked them, and he ordered a number of copies.¹³⁵

The Prefect was quite proud that he could send a photograph of his printing house to the editor of "Maria Immaculata". Unfortunately it came too late for Father Schemmer who had worked so hard to obtain this press. He had passed away in Switzerland.¹³⁶ In January, 1913, the Prefect could enclose in his post to the Provincial the first copy of "Christliches Familienblatt". The first circulation would consist of 1000 copies. Also the South had shown keen interest in this venture.¹³⁷

¹³³ Prefect to Provincial Kassiepe, Windhuk, 6 September 1911 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I D.P. 504).

¹³⁴ Prefect to Wallenborn, Windhuk, 25 December 1912 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: I/II P).

¹³⁵ Bishop Simon of Pella to Klaeyle, Pella, 20 June 1912 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

¹³⁶ Prefect to Wallenborn, Windhuk, 6 August 1912 (ADW A 4; Apostolische Praefektur: J. No. 849).

¹³⁷ Prefect to Wallenborn, Windhuk, 19 January 1913 (ADW 4: Ap. Pref. J. No. 93).

The new arrival, Brother Huckschlag, received his appointment as a printer. Father Krein would be editor of "Christliches Familienblatt" and the financial administration had been placed in the hands of Father Meysing.¹³⁸ The printing of books was also undertaken. The Prefect proposed to Father Jakobi in Gobabis that the readers for Nama classes should be printed without pictures. Then they could be printed in Windhoek on the press of the Prefecture. This would be cheaper, quicker and more convenient for the proof-readers, as in the Nama publications from overseas many printing mistakes appeared.

With help from overseas the Prefecture had been able to lay the foundation for future printing in South West Africa in order to facilitate the spreading of the Good News.

9.10 Report and "Relatio" to Propaganda Fide

In his report to Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, Prefect Klaeyle informed him that South West Africa was in fact a Protestant country as the Rheinische Mission had ministered in the South and the Centre since 1842 and the Finnish Mission since 1870 in Owambo. The country was very sparsely populated with about 100.000 indigenous people of whom he expected that about 90.000 lived in Owambo. The country as such was twice the size of France. In spite of the recent occurrences the Prefect felt that the Catholic Mission was recognised by authorities and people and even Protestants observed that the Catholic Mission was better in providing education for Blacks.

¹³⁸ Klaeyle to Schulte, Windhuk, 23 March 1913 (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).

Since 1911 they had tried to separate the ministry among Blacks from the one among Whites. Therefore in most towns there were two quasi-parishes side by side. In view of the immense contrasts between the two races it would have been unwise to act otherwise. In principle, however, the Catholic Mission remained opposed to the separation of the parishes which had been formulated at the Prefectural Synod of 1907. ¹³⁹ On 1 January, 1913 there were 1191 indigenous Catholics and since the new delimitations had become legal, when Aminuis would be included, 1409. He listed the progress in 13 years' time:

1900	a few
1905	100
1910	907
1912	1034

In 1903 there were 800 European Catholics and in 1913 1535.

Since the mission could start in Kavango in the extreme North East the mission possessed a territory which would become exclusively Catholic. In Kavango there were no Protestant Missions present nor White colonists. The population had never been in contact with Christianity. Therefore the process of evangelisation would be slow. The first 25 adults had been baptised at the end of 1912, but in view of the social custom of polygamy the mission should not move forward too fast. Though the house for sisters was ready in Nyangana, up till that time no sisters had arrived on account of the distance and the danger. It is interesting to note that the Prefect proposed to the Cardinal to call the station at Nyangana: "Piusdorf". The name definitely did not stick as we later do not hear of it

¹³⁹ Beschlusse des ersten Praefekturkapitels, abgehalten zu Windhuk, 18 - 21 Februar 1907: I: B1. (ADW A 1: Ap. Praef.: Gruendung und Entwicklung).

anymore.

The Prefect was quite proud to call Kokasib the mission for the Bushmen. For two years there had been a Bushman at the school for catechists in Windhoek. The Prefect was of the opinion that the only efficient means of penetrating the nomads was to buy another farm. Kokasib was not developed enough. But he had noticed that also the Protestants were busy gaining ground among the Bushmen. He asked the rhetorical question who would win, and he answered that without doubt this would be the mission with the greatest material resources, something we could not agree with any longer towards the end of this century.

About the state of the finances the Prefect could report that the debts from 1 January 1910 until 1 January 1913, had diminished by M 77.000. The debts to strangers had partly been paid off or changed into debts for the General or Provincial Administrations of OMI. He therefore could express his heartfelt gratitude to the Order of the Oblates. A regular service of amortisation had been introduced which streamlined the process of payment. Thanks to the exceptional generosity of German Catholics on the occasion of the silver jubilee of His Majesty the Emperor, the Prefecture would be able to reduce the debts by another M 20.000 before the end of 1913. And that in spite of the foundation of three new stations. The Prefect saw in these developments evidence of a caring Providence.

The Prefect called for attention for two activities. The first was the "farm mission", which was a time-consuming operation with little satisfaction. The second was the Hoehere Tochter Schule in Windhoek, which was run by the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth. Though this work was of the highest importance

for the Prefecture, it was a pity that the school was in constant financial trouble. He mentioned that the good sisters deserved financial support from the Prefecture. It would be a sad loss if the sisters had to abandon the school and therefore he was trying to prevent the catastrophe from happening.¹⁴⁰

The "Relatio juxta schema 'Questiones'" answered specific questions for the Propaganda Fide.

The first Prefectural Synod had taken place in 1907 and the preparation for the one in 1915 was in progress (10). Regular correspondence had been carried out with the Prefect of Great Namaqualand. Two Interprefectural conferences had taken place, one in 1910 in Luederitz and one in 1912 in Windhoek (12).

All the missionaries belonged to the order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate (20/21).

The Prefecture had been divided :

1. for Europeans in 7 quasi-parishes namely Windhoek, Klein Windhoek, Swakopmund, Usakos, Omaruru, Grootfontein, Gobabis and Tsumeb
2. for the indigenous population in 7 missions namely
Doebra, Okombahe, Nyangana, Epukiro, Aminuis and two in the towns

The quality of the religious life of White Catholics left much to be desired. The reasons were to be found in the new land and its circumstances, many different nations, distances, and life on isolated farms.

The ratio between Protestants and Catholics was 5:1.

That the faith had not become extinct was to be attributed to the thorough religious education they had enjoyed in Germany. (22-26)

The Catholic Mission maintained 19 schools for indigenous pupils with 386

¹⁴⁰ Prefect to Cardinal Gotti Windhuk, 26 June 1913 (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I. I C.P. J. No. 819/13).

students

1 school for catechists with 12 students (seminary minor)

11 primary schools with 280 pupils

7 evening schools with 94 students

For the Europeans there was the Hoehere Toechter Schule with a hostel for 39 students under the direction of the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth/Heythuizen. This school was of the highest importance. It was open to Catholics as well as to Protestants

In Windhoek the Mission kept a kindergarten with 15 infants, founded on 15 September 1911.

For Europeans there were state primary and secondary schools available and the ministers of religion were free to come and teach at these schools. At these schools a Christian spirit reigned.

In the entire territory there were on 1 January 1912, 10 state schools, 8 Elementary and 2 High Schools with 386 students, 309 Protestant, 39 Catholic and 8 Jewish. But in essence the State schools were Protestant schools.(27)

No indigenous priests had been ordained.(30)

Of the 22 OMI priests all were of German nationality.

Until that period no missionary work had started in the Kaokoveld and no missionaries were available. The Prefect had envisaged applying for the allocation of the Kaokoveld to another Congregation. It could be more easily reached from Mossamedes or Tigre Bay. He guessed that about 10.000 people would live in that area, all heathen Ovatjimba. (36).

Priests OMI: 22. Brothers OMI: 23. Sisters: Franciscan: 24.(37).

The Oblates were resident in Windhoek, Klein Windhoek, Doebrä, Swakopmund,

Usakos, Omaruru, Okombahe, Grootfontein, Nyangana, Epukiro, Gobabis, Aminuis. Windhoek was the only house in the canonical sense and according to the Rule of OMI. The other houses were residences.

The sisters were living in two houses: Windhoek (14) and Swakopmund (6) and two residences: Klein Windhoek (2) and Usakos (2).(38).

The Prefect finished his Relatio with the statement that with great zeal the priests preached the Word and administered the sacraments, evangelised the pagans, taught the catechism to the youth and visited the sick and the prisoners. They had founded confraternities and published circulars to direct the faith in the entire colony. Per 1 January 1913, the mission had printed in Windhoek catechisms for indigenous schools in 4 languages (1000 copies).(46).

No moniales lived in the Prefecture.(47).

European Catholics were indifferent (51).

Mixed marriages caused grave problems (53).¹⁴¹

9.11 Eighteen years in South West Africa

After eighteen years of missionary activities the Catholic Mission had established itself quite firmly in the East of the country in Aminuis, Gobabis and Epukiro. In Windhoek the parish was full of action among Blacks as well as Whites. Klein Windhoek had been declared a separate quasi-parish. Also in Usakos and Swakopmund the mission had become quite strong among Europeans and Africans alike. After a hesitant start the work among the Damara of Okomabahe under the

¹⁴¹ Relatio Praefecturae Apostolicae Cimbebasiae Inferioris ad S. Congregationem de Propaganda Fide juxta Schema " Questiones etc" (ADW A 93: Klaeyle I: I CP 819/13).

leadership of Father Bachmann was asserting itself. Grootfontein and Tsumeb were still very young, but especially Tsumeb carried great promise. The Siegerland miners were very dedicated and Father Schulte had formed a strong group of African Christians.

When we study the statistics of 1913 we notice that the number of indigenous Catholics had increased since 1896 from zero to 1409. Though these figures were far behind those of the Rheinische Mission among the Herero and Nama, and the Finnish Mission in Ondonga, these first fruits formed a group which was sufficiently strong to be a foundation for the future. The first missionaries started their pastorate with about 300 Europeans in 1896. In 1903 this figure had risen to 800 and in 1913 there were 1535. This figure was not only an indication of the ever increasing pace of immigration of settlers, soldiers and officials, but also reflected the result of the work of the priests among lapsed and indifferent Catholics whom they brought back to the Church.

The organisation of the Catholic Church was most noticeable in education. The Church had opened a trade school and two High Schools with hostels in Windhoek. In Klein Windhoek the institute for Coloured children under the direction of the Franciscan Sisters took care of that neglected part of the population. In Epukiro and Gobabis the Fathers Watterott and Krein experimented with the first schools for Africans in that part of the country. The parish priest of Swakopmund twice took the initiative to open a school for Whites until a questionnaire convinced the Government that a state school was needed. The Swakopmund mission also provided education for African children. In Usakos Father Borsutzky started a private school for European children, which was taken over by the OMEG mining

company. However, the Board asked Father Borsutzky to stay on as principal. At the mission itself a small school had been opened for Africans. Father Gotthardt sent the school teacher into the location. After some initial problems the school was carried on in that township. Similar schools had been opened by Father Schulte in Tsumeb and by the Fathers Wuest and Gotthardt in Nyangana and Andara. The Hoehere Toechter Schule in Windhoek, the Coloured School in Klein Windhoek and the primary school for Africans in Usakos were taken over by the Franciscan Sisters.

The development of the parishes and of education went hand in hand. Through these schools the mission exerted a great influence on the youngsters and in due time would pick the fruits of this policy. Before long the number of baptisms rose steeply, because the pupils of these schools accepted the faith and joined the Church. In the South at the station of Heirachabis the mission operated a school for Nama children. The number of pupils was about seventy. Father von Krolikowski also founded a school for catechists at Heirachabis in 1910.

At all the mission stations the priests were confronted with the deplorable state of health of adults and children. This concern caused the Prefect to lay contacts with religious orders of sisters. In 1904, barely eight years after the foundation, the Franciscan Sisters of Nonnenwerth/ Heythuizen entered the country. They founded the central hospital in Windhoek, but from the start ministered in the military hospitals during the Herero-Geman war. After the war the St Anthony's hospital in Swakopmund was opened, which was soon followed by a hospital for Africans. In Usakos Sr Archangela took upon herself the task of district-nursing among Africans and Europeans to everyone's satisfaction. In

Kavango no sisters had arrived yet, but the Fathers provided simple medical care for the stricken population. Though the Oblate Sisters of the South had not opened a hospital they provided medical services for the many Nama living around Heirachabis, Warmbad and Gabis. In times of war they were called upon to serve in the military hospitals like their counterparts in the North.¹⁴²

From the correspondence we gain the impression that the leadership of the Rheinische Mission as well as of the Catholic Mission was willing to listen to each other's complaints and smooth ruffled feathers. The main point of friction was the question of re-baptism in cases of conversion. At the first Prefectural Chapter in 1907 one of the resolutions revolved around that point. They were prepared to recognise baptisms ministered by the clergy of the Rheinische Mission without any restrictions. When soon thereafter it seemed that Rome wanted them to repeat all baptisms administered by heretics, the missionaries were very dismayed. The Prefect inquired from Father Scharsch what the truth behind the rumours was, but in the meantime the missionaries carried on with the tradition initiated at the Prefectural Synod of 1907.¹⁴³ The Prefect even contacted Praeses Ollp to inform him of the developments.

Another sore point was the required formula to abjure the heretical faith. Upon inquiry by the Praeses, Prefect Klaeyle informed him that his priests left the formula out of the liturgy and just read the Credo. In its turn the Catholic Church was hurt by a number of publications, which kept on repeating a number of historical untruths. In his answer Praeses Ollp thought to defend the book

¹⁴² Franz Wehrl, Mission am Oranje, 280-281.

¹⁴³ Cf. Chapter 9: 293; footnote 72.

"Omallenge Ookuleza" and an article in the "Rheinische Volkszeitung", because he felt that it was impossible to turn history around. Ollp also found it necessary, once the Catholic Church had entered the scene, to highlight the difference between the teaching of the two denominations. Nevertheless he also offered the hand of reconciliation and ordered to take out all parts which hurt the Catholic citizens. Klaeyle was relieved at the answer and added that historical research should be conducted in love and truth.

The two Churches exchanged each other's publications and they wrote reciprocal letters of appreciation. The general feeling was that they should co-exist "friedlich/schiedlich", peacefully but separate. As far as our modern idea of ecumenism is concerned our predecessors had a long way to go. The progress which had been made since the religious wars was to be found in the peaceful co-existence, compared to the violent episodes of the past. The main concern of the denominations was to keep their distance and stick to their differences. When that was achieved they could treat each other peacefully and carefully. But common services, conferences and publications would have been condemned by both sides. Even in the early 1930's Bishop Gotthardt informed Father Roesze in Tsumeb that he was not against common secular celebrations but definitely against common prayer services. It was unfortunate that certain individuals on both sides sometimes lacked the wisdom and restraint which had been displayed so clearly by the leadership of both Churches.

The Catholic Mission started in 1896 with a number of restrictions which hampered its development. These restrictions reflected the aftermath of the Kulturkampf. Politically it was the result of the fear that the denominational differences

would cause disturbing revolts among the African population. During the German-Herero war the Administration and the Army Command noticed that the Catholic missionaries were loyal and reliable citizens. The new Governor, Friedrich von Lindequist called a meeting in December 1905 to consider lifting these restrictions. As a result he issued new ordinances which allowed the Catholic Mission to administer to the Herero P.O.W.s and in general start their pastorate among Herero and Damara.

The Catholic missionaries supported the Administration in their policy towards mixed marriages even against the opinions of their counterparts in Germany. When the Administration introduced a labour book and the Africans refused to make use of those, the missionaries took it upon themselves to explain the advantages of such booklets. The Government noticed quite clearly the advantages of schools and hospitals in general and a trade school in particular. The Administration recognised the institute and subsidised it, while annually requesting two apprentices per trade for their workshops. In the archives we found an extensive body of correspondence between Prefecture and Administration. We also noticed that the Governor and Prefect met each other on several occasions for private discussions. The Prefect was a regular guest on the occasion of the annual opening of the "Landtag". He was also requested to send a representative to attend meetings of certain commissions such as the Commission for African Affairs. In 1911 the Imperial Government entrusted the spiritual welfare of the military personnel to the Prefecture of Lower Cimbebasia. This meant that the army would not resort under the jurisdiction of the Army Ordinariate in Berlin anymore. The missionaries at the local mission stations would serve the army camps and posts and would be requested to make a general round of the posts in

the country three to four times a year. It is quite clear that throughout that period the German Administration and the Prefecture did their best to keep the lines of communications open. The Administration of the Protectorate supported the mission in as far as they were allowed to do so by the Colonial Department in Berlin. In that sense there existed a cordial atmosphere among their officials.

In 1914 after eighteen years of missionary work the Catholic Church had built up an organisation which made an important contribution to the development of the colony. At the same time she had laid the foundation for further penetration and consolidation in the years to come. In the following decades it would prove to have been beneficial early years, which guaranteed the expansion they were longing for.

Coelner Akademie fuer praktische Medizin. Stundenplan. 145

Stundenplan für den 12 wöchigen Kursus für Missionare vom 14. Oktober 1912 bis 4. Januar 1913.

1. Teil: vorläufiger 6. Pfaff.						
Stk.	Montag	Dienstag	Mittwoch	Donnerstag	Freitag	Sonntag
1-3	Gründungs der Anatomie und Histologie.	Pflege der Zähne und Zahnreinigung der verschiedenen Zahnteile.	Gründungs der Anatomie und Histologie.	Gründungs der Anatomie und Histologie.	Pflege der Zähne und Zahnreinigung der verschiedenen Zahnteile.	
1-12	Praktische Anatomie.	Praktische Anatomie.			Praktische Anatomie.	
1-1		23. Oktober Vorbereitung zum Holographieren.			24. Oktober	
1-5	Hygiene, des Hauses, Hygiene, Reinigung, Desinfektion in der Küche.	Zimmer Medizin.	Hygiene, des Hauses, Hygiene, Reinigung, Desinfektion in der Küche.	Zimmer Medizin.	Hygiene, des Hauses, Hygiene, Reinigung, Desinfektion in der Küche.	
1-6	Höringen.		Höringen.		Höringen.	
2. Teil: vorläufiger 12. Pfaff.						
1-9	Die wichtigsten feindl. und giftigen Krankheiten.		Die wichtigsten feindl. und giftigen Krankheiten.		Die wichtigsten feindl. und giftigen Krankheiten.	
1-1	Praktische Anatomie.					
1-5	Höringen.	Unterweisung im Kochen. Vorbereitung am 1. u. 2. September 1-7 Uhr.	Zimmer Medizin.	Höringen.	Unterweisung im Kochen. Vorbereitung am 1. u. 2. September 1-7 Uhr.	
1-6	Zimmer Medizin.	Zimmer Medizin.	Die Lagerhaltung der Giftstoffe.	Zimmer Medizin.	Zimmer Medizin.	

145 Stundenplan fuer den Kursus fuer Missionare (ADW A 29: Korrespondenz der Praefektur).