

The Evangelische Oberkirchenrat (Evangelical Supreme Church Council) of Prussia and the Protestant work overseas in southern Africa until 1922

Principal Features of Development

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It would take an extensive monograph to present the subject to be studied here as part of the Study Process with the precision and wealth of detail that the surviving source material permits. The framework given here only allows for a broad sketch of the main thrust of the work abroad that was carried out by the Prussian Evangelische Oberkirchenrat (Evangelical Supreme Church Council – EOK) in Berlin until 1922, in collaboration with the German-speaking Protestant congregations in what is today Namibia and South Africa. All the same, however, one can provide a glimpse of the basic conditions, the goals, and particularly also the problems surrounding this work.

About the sources

Ample handwritten and typewritten unpublished sources are available, but there are also published sources to be found. They allow an insight into the overseas work of the EOK¹ but also make it possible to recognise how this work was received by the congregations that were located overseas.

The key source material documenting the work of the EOK in the field of the “overseas diaspora” is located in the Evangelisches Zentralarchiv (Evangelical Central Archive – EZA) in Berlin. The extensive records in the meticulously opened up Record Group 5, “Kirchliches Außenamt und Vorgängereinrichtungen” (Church Office for Foreign Relations and predecessor institutions), were not lost in wartime or damaged in any other way.² These mainly comprise correspondence and other documents dating from 1852 onward, when the EOK began looking after the German Protestant congregations overseas. Sources also include written correspondence originated from the work of the “Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenkonferenz für die Angelegenheiten der deutschen evangelischen Kirchen im Ausland” (Commission of the German Evangelical Church Conference for the Affairs of

1 The work of the Prussian EOK in the first half of the 20th century is characterised in a brief overview by Georg Burghart, “Der Evangelische Oberkirchenrat in den Jahren 1900–1950”, in Oskar Söhngen (ed.), *Hundert Jahre Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat der altpreußischen Union 1850–1950*, Berlin-Spandau 1950, 11–64; on the overseas work see *ibid.*, 22f.

2 On this see Christa Stache, *Das Evangelische Zentralarchiv in Berlin und seine Bestände*, Berlin 1992, 49f.

the German Protestant Churches Overseas; the so-called Diaspora Commission) founded in 1884, as well as the correspondence of the Deutscher Evangelische Kirchenausschuss (Committee of German Evangelical Churches, or DEKA) beginning in 1903 – and lastly of the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchenbund (Federation of German Evangelical Churches, or DEKB) founded in 1922 (and thereby outside of the time period targeted for research). Support for the overseas congregations was restructured later on, leading the records to be merged and rearranged. But because the Church Office for Foreign Relations was ultimately set up as an entity of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), all of the documents from the EOK and the DEKA that begin in 1903 and are relevant for the research period up until 1922 are available in Record Group 5 of the EZA in Berlin. This is extraordinarily helpful for research, because since the records were merged for the period beginning in 1903, a dual collection of records has survived that to all appearances is mostly complete.

There are thus not only so-called “Generalia” available – documents which relate more generally to the congregations created by the Protestant Germans abroad – but also “Specialia” that cover the ecclesiastical institutions found there and the activities in each of the congregations and areas of operation abroad. To this we can add the more than 600 fascicles of personnel files that indicate the personal employment status for the Protestant pastors who were being despatched from Germany until the end of the Second World War.

Five volumes of generalia records cover the period until 1922 for the region that is now Namibia; in addition there are further volumes on the synodal federation of the German Protestant congregations in Namibia (beginning in 1910), the pastoral conference held there (beginning in 1910) and the facility for travelling preachers that existed there between 1909 and 1916. Special records document the relationships to the church congregations in Windhoek beginning in 1896, in Gibeon and Swakopmund beginning in 1903, in Karibib beginning in 1907 and in Gobabis, Grootfontein, Keetmanshoop, Lüderitzbucht, Okahadja, Omaruru, Tsumeb, Usakos and Warmbad beginning in 1908. The written records are especially extensive for the congregation in Windhoek – special records are available that give information about the local church construction (from 1908 to 1915) and the building of the organ (between 1909 and 1913).

Moreover, there are general records for the period from 1859 onward that relate to church congregations located in the region of what is now South Africa, and contact with the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa is documented beginning in 1907. Special documents give information³ on the EOK field visit to the German Protestant congregations in June 1913 carried out by none other than Senior Councillor Hermann Kapler,⁴ who later became president of the Evangelical Supreme Church Council. These documents represent a snapshot of a moment that was of particularly special importance because it provides an insight into ecclesiastical relationships and structures at a certain point in time when, to the outside observer, they had been relatively consolidated – it had been six years since the end of the hostilities with the Herero and Nama, but at the same time these institutions were still unhampered by fundamental changes that would come with the outbreak of the First World War one year later. In addition, Kapler immediately made

3 See Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin [EZA] 5/3034.

4 On Kapler's career and works see Carsten Nicolaisen, Kapler, Hermann, in RGG⁴ 4, 802.

public the impressions gleaned from his trip⁵ – and thus put a political as well as ecclesiastical accent on these.⁶

The development of the EOK's relationships to individual congregations in South Africa is documented for Berlin (1868 to 1914), Bloemfontein (1885 to 1914), Bodiam (1909 to 1911), Braunschweig (1909 to 1914), Durban (from 1913), East London (1891 to 1921), Frankfurt (from 1909), Johannesburg (from 1896), Cape Town/St Martini (from 1886), Keiskamahoeck (with Emngesha) (from 1909), King William's Town (1875 to 1914), Kwelegha (1909 to 1912), Neu Eisleben (1909 to 1914), Paarl (from 1909), Pietersburg (1913 to 1920), Port Elizabeth (1906 to 1909), Pretoria (from 1882), Queenstown (1909 to 1914), Stutterheim (1907 to 1914), Worcester (from 1909) and Wynberg (1906 to 1914).

The material maintained in the Evangelical Central Archive in Berlin demonstrates that, in principle, the EOK did not document its work for the diaspora congregations abroad any differently than its other duties as the highest ecclesiastical authority for its subordinate church provinces, church districts and church congregations in Old Prussia – yet we also ought not to overlook the important difference that there were no levels of middle management between the EOK in Berlin and the church congregations in southern Africa.

As for accounts in print of the subject examined here, the works by Britta Wellnitz are most worthy of reference – primarily her monograph *Deutsche evangelische Gemeinden im Ausland*,⁷ but also her essay that is included in this volume.⁸ Wellnitz outlines the development of legal relationships to the congregations of the overseas diaspora in particular; the main interest of her book, however, is not dedicated to the period before 1922.⁹ In addition, she almost universally covers only printed sources, so that her claim of at the same time offering “an ecclesiastical historical account of a field of work that acted as an important integrating factor on the path to the realisation of a universal ecclesiastical merging of the German Protestant regional churches” that deals “to a great extent” with the eras and subjects in question cannot be fulfilled.¹⁰

Besides Wellnitz, only Gerhard Besier has briefly outlined the connections relevant here, in his three-volume *Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche der Union*.¹¹ Besier examines in particular the interplay between the old Prussian EOK on the one hand and the German DEKA on the other; the process, however, yields no detailed picture of the work performed locally in the congregations in southern Africa. Newer reference books com-

5 For more on the process of these see Hasenkamp, Zum Besuch des Herrn Geheimrates Dr. Kapler, in *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 3, 1913, 51f; see also Die Reise des Herrn Geheimrats Dr. Kapler, in *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 3, 1913, 72f.

6 See Hermann Kapler, Die deutschen Schutzgebiete als Arbeitsfeld für den Gustav-Adolf-Verein. Vortrag, gehalten auf der 65. Hauptversammlung des Gustav Adolf-Vereins in Kiel 1913. Hg. vom Centralvorstand des Evangelischen Vereins der Gustav Adolf-Stiftung. Mit einer Kartenskizze der evangelischen kirchlichen Organisation in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Leipzig 1913.

7 Britta Wellnitz, *Deutsche evangelische Gemeinden im Ausland. Ihre Entstehungsgeschichte und die Entwicklung ihrer Rechtsbeziehungen zur Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, Tübingen 2003.

8 See article #1.

9 See Wellnitz, *Gemeinden*, 57–154.

10 *Ibid.*, 516.

11 See Gerhard Besier, Die Auslandsarbeit des Evangelischen Oberkirchenrats, in: Joachim Rogge, Gerhard Ruhbach (eds.), *Die Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche der Union*. vol. 2. *Die Verselbständigung der Kirche unter dem königlichen Summepiskopat (1850–1918)*, Leipzig 1994, 457–480.

pletely fail to indicate the significant role of the EOK for the Protestant congregations abroad.¹²

These more recent accounts are in addition to those that arose decades ago and even contemporaneously, and which we today can also sometimes consider to be sources – these include the works from August Krieg,¹³ Carl Mirbt¹⁴ and Amand Suin de Boutemard¹⁵ in particular.¹⁶ Other publications, published in considerable number within subject-specific contemporary periodicals in southern Africa and in Germany, also offer multiple insights into the reality of life in the congregations and the formation of their contacts with the EOK;¹⁷ however, their availability in German libraries is incomplete and only sporadic.

Finally, there are also local counterparts to these records in Namibia and South Africa, but their total size has not yet been determined.¹⁸

The evolution of the EOK collaboration with the German Protestant church congregations

Contact before 1900

“Nothing in the world made the Evangelical Supreme Church Council in Berlin as well-known as its work overseas, the provisions for the German Protestant congregations outside of the German fatherland.”¹⁹ The obligation to take up this duty had already been officially imposed by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV upon the EOK from the date of its establishment,

12 See e.g. the EKL³, 1, which likely offers the lemma “Ausländerarbeit” but not “Auslandsarbeit” (ibid., 336f) and which overlooks the subject in relationship to the commentary on the “Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland” (ibid., 1208–1215) and the “Evangelischen Kirche der Union” (ibid., 1205–1208); likewise: Hermann Göckeljan, *Auslandsgemeinden deutscher Sprache. I. Evangelische Auslandsgemeinden*, in RGG⁴, 1, 990–994.

13 August Krieg, *Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union und Auslandsdiaspora*, in Oskar Söhngen, *Hundert Jahre Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat der altpreußischen Union 1850–1950*, Berlin-Spandau 1950, 114–155, describes in particular the duties generally ascribed to the EOK.

14 See Carl Mirbt, *Mission und Kolonialpolitik in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, Tübingen 1910; ibid., *Die deutsch evangelische Diaspora im Auslande. Vortrag [...] in Chemnitz [...] 1910 gehalten*. Halle (Saale) 1910; ibid., *Die Frau in der deutschen evangelischen Auslandsdiaspora und der deutschen Kolonialmission*, Marburg 1912.

15 Amand Suin de Boutemard, *Die Auslands-Diaspora. Ein neues Arbeitsfeld der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche*. Mit Geleitwort von Carl Mirbt, Potsdam o.J. [1909], it offers the most detailed representation written before the First World War of the Protestant work with the overseas diaspora.

16 Also worthy of mention is the information from E. Wilhelm Bussmann, *Evangelische Diasporakunde. Handbuch für Pfarrer und Freunde deutscher Auslandsgemeinden*. Marburg (Hessen) 1908, as well as the short treatises by Carl Paul, *Was tut das evangelische Deutschland für seine Diaspora in überseeischen Ländern*, Leipzig 1903, and *Mission und Auslandsdeutschtum*, Gütersloh 1918.

17 Others worthy of mention include the “Deutsch-Evangelisch” journals, as well as “Deutsch-Evangelisch im Auslande”, “Daheim und Draußen”, “Diasporabote”, “Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland E.V.”, “Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Deutsch-Südwestafrika” and “Südafrikanisches Gemeindeblatt”; from after the First World War, “Die evangelische Diaspora” and “Der Deutsch-Afrikaner”.

18 For example, there are relevant archival materials available in the ELKIN (DELK) archive that give detailed information on the history of the congregation in Windhoek and the relationships with the EOK in Berlin; on this see the article #17 by Rudolf Hinz.

19 Krieg, *Kirche* 114.

after the Royal Consistory of Berlin had already been in contact with the German-language congregations in South America since 1827.²⁰ The work then grew steadily, and in 1872 the German Evangelical Church Conference, at the instigation of the EOK, concerned itself with the matter of providing ecclesiastical services to the Protestant Germans who had emigrated: Senior Councillor Ottomar Hermes²¹ put forth a series of propositions in which he primarily characterised it as a “loving duty of the church” to “maintain and cultivate the ecclesiastical fellowship in any way possible with our living German Christian brothers and sisters,” and that regional churches should also take up the task.²² In his words, if the German emigrants overseas succeeded in creating an independent church, above and beyond a congregation, the community ought to foster it as they would with any other regional church, but “the organic link of one German regional church to individual congregations of an existing overseas church” was “improper”.²³ From the start, then, fostering contact with the Protestant Germans overseas was not about preventing or subverting the construction of an independent church that might be developing abroad. On the contrary, as far as the matter of the support of individual church congregations was concerned, those in Germany ought to be involved in only a subsidiary fashion. As early as 1859, they were reaffirming decisions already taken to allow individual Protestant congregations overseas to affiliate with a German Protestant regional church upon application; others who had not linked up in such a way were to be able to receive support if there was a prospect that pastors who had agreed to a post overseas in the German colonies would be readmitted into their respective regional church at home; after five to ten years of irreproachable work abroad, an appropriate pastoral position at home was assured.²⁴ Moreover, they envisioned that the regional churches in Germany would provide material support to the congregations overseas.²⁵ They hoped for state funding to do so,²⁶ but also intended to organise collections toward this end.²⁷ In order to ensure a targeted and appropriate use of the funds, the EOK was designated as the “Centralvermittelungsstelle” (central agency) for this work by the Church Conference in order to draw up a plan (with feedback from the regional churches) for the use of the money.²⁸ Each individual regional church remained free to intercede further to improve the ecclesiastical services provided to the Germans living overseas.²⁹

20 Ibid., 115f.

21 For more on his personal and professional development see Otto Lerche, Verzeichnis der Mitglieder und wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiter des Evangelischen Oberkirchenrats 1850–1950, in Oskar Söhngen (ed.): Hundert Jahre Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat der altpreußischen Union 1850–1950, Berlin-Spandau 1950, 171–194, q.v. 180, no. 60.

22 Julius August Ottomar Hermes, Thesen des Referenten. Printed, n.p. or date [31 May 1872]. With handwritten corrections by Senior Councillor of the Evangelical Supreme Church Council Albrecht Schmidt, Berlin, between 4 and 23 December 1880, no. 1. EZA Berlin, 1/91.

23 Ibid., no. 2.

24 Ibid., no. 3.

25 Ibid., no. 4.

26 Ibid., no. 8.

27 Ibid., no. 5.

28 Ibid., no. 7.

29 Ibid., no. 9.

The implementation of these resolutions, however, did not happen for an entire decade.³⁰ “The common collections that were urgently requested on behalf of the diaspora were not well received.”³¹ Nevertheless it was in the “Generalsynodalordnung” passed at the extraordinary meeting of the Prussian General Synod in 1875 that the previously established connections to the overseas congregations with Protestant Germans ought to continue. As a result, then, the ordinary general synod for the year 1879 dealt with this subject in great detail.³² At this time there were not yet links between the EOK and Africa³³ – and the situation remained this way until 1891.³⁴

Not until this point would a congregation in southern Africa (Pretoria) be named for the first time in a statement crafted by the EOK concerning the foreign church congregations that had newly made contact with the organisation. The remarks on it were brief: “Pretoria in Transvaal with 200 souls. Pastor Grünberger (missionary for 786 coloureds) since 1891. Salary 4,000 M[arks].”³⁵ This unmistakably concerned a pastor who was employed as a missionary in order to subsidise his additional pastoral duties among the local settlers.

In 1891, the conference of German Protestant church governments once again urgently called attention to the decision that had been taken a decade before with the intent of supporting the overseas congregations through collections gathered in Germany; the Commission of the German Evangelical Church Conference for the Affairs of the German Protestant Church Overseas” (Diaspora Commission) was to examine where these collection funds would be most urgently needed.³⁶ Gradually a specific and tangible connection developed among the German Protestant regional churches through their collaboration in allocating the collected funds. The EOK also apportioned the funds as part of its everyday work, receiving information in the process about the South African congregations that until then had been looked after by the regional consistory in Hanover, as well as hearing about the “Synodal Order of the German Evangelical Lutheran congregations of South Africa”,³⁷ in which it was however expressly established that “The synod is under the supervision of

30 See Oberkonsistorialrat Schmidt to the EOK. Berlin, 23.12.1880. EZA Berlin 1/91.

31 As formulated by Theodor Heckel, *Kirche jenseits der Grenzen. Aus der deutschen evangelischen Auslandsdiaspora*, Göttingen 1949, 40.

32 See *Denkschrift betreffend die mit der Preußischen Landeskirche in Verbindung stehenden deutschen evangelischen Gemeinden des Auslandes (General-Synodal-Ordnung § 19)*. Gedruckt. O. O. [Berlin] 1879, 1149–1179; available in EZA Berlin 1/163.

33 *Ibid.*, 1149f.

34 See *Nachweisung der seit dem Jahre 1880 eingetretenen Veränderungen in den mit der Preußischen Landeskirche in Verbindung stehenden deutschen evangelischen Gemeinden des Auslandes. Zweite ordentliche Generalsynode 1885. No. 8, Berlin, im September 1885, Berlin o. J. [1885], 1–3; see also Mittheilung des Evangelischen Ober-Kirchenraths, betr. die mit der Preußischen Landeskirche in Verbindung stehenden deutschen evangelischen Gemeinden des Auslandes. Dritte ordentliche Generalsynode 1891. No. 5, Berlin, 28.9.1891, Berlin o. J. [1891], 3f.*

35 *Nachweisung der seit 1891 neu hinzugetretenen Diaspora-Gemeinden. O. O. o. D. [1894], EZA Berlin 1/163.*

36 See *Zusammenstellung der von der Konferenz deutscher evangelischer Kirchenregierungen in ihrer 21. ordentlichen Versammlung vom 24. bis 30. Mai gefaßten Beschlüsse, O. O. o. J. [1894], 3 Nr. II, EZA Berlin 1/163.*

37 See *Hanover Regional Consistory to General Superintendent Trautvetter (Rudolstadt), Hanover, 10.4.1896, EZA Berlin 1/163.*

the High Regional Consistory in Hanover, which also has the last word in all matters of vocation.”³⁸ There thus remained clear barriers to any common work for the time being.³⁹

These would last until 1896, when for the first time greater attention would be paid to the overseas congregations in South Africa in a presentation on the evolution of the support that was being provided to them:

“In South Africa the events of this year have highlighted what was predicted here two years ago about the significance of the German element. Placed among their congenerous Dutch and English relatives, our German brothers have been substantially protected by their Lutheran faith from being absorbed into one of these nations, and they will be able to fulfil their historical duty anew by safeguarding their religious and national uniqueness. For many years, a series of congregations in the Cape has been subordinate to the Evangelical Lutheran regional consistory of Hanover, which has also given material support to the pastors there with the assistance of the regional consistory. These congregations have been joined by a new one[,] and we are hoping to also construct a German Lutheran church and parish office in Johannesburg in the Transvaal.”⁴⁰

Negotiations by the Prussian General Synod that began in 1897 gave the relationships a substantially more detailed foundation, as well as one that was fixed in church law: on 7 May 1900, a law was adopted that was a guarantee to provide for the church congregations associated with the Prussian regional church and promote their interests. It also extended legal protections to the pastors despatched overseas.⁴¹

Increased involvement after the turn of the century

With this new legal basis, the EOK in Berlin stabilised and increased its involvement from the early years of the 20th century on, and soon turned special attention to advancing the German Protestant church congregations in the area of what is today Namibia. Now the

38 Synodal-Ordnung der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinden Süd-Afrikas, n.p., n.d. [1894], no page number [4].

39 Since from 1714 to 1837 the local Hanoverian sovereign was also King of England, he also exercised summepiscopal rights over the German Lutheran church congregations that had emerged in the colony of British South Africa (the Cape Colony); these were thus incorporated into the Hanover regional church and were not merely contractually “affiliated” like those church congregations in Southern Africa that were associated with the Prussian EOK in Berlin. Since the Hanover regional church also remained independent after the 1866 annexation of Hanover by Prussia, no change occurred in regards to the legal status of the relationships that the German church congregations in South Africa had to the regional consistory in Hanover (Wellnitz, *Gemeinden*, 86f). Wellnitz also rightly indicates *ibid.*, 87, Note 115, that this difference in the legal shape of the relationship to the church congregations located overseas has not always been clearly worked out in the literature on ecclesiastical law (see also article #1 by Britta Wellnitz). The self-styled transformation by Wilhelm II into a Kaiser who wielded a messianic, universal claim to power, impressively described by Hanns Lessing in this volume (article #4), made it impossible to alter the legal reality of the regional church system toward a new, national structure of Protestantism until the end of the monarchy in 1918.

40 Referat über die auswärtige Diaspora aus den Jahren 1894. u. 1895. erstattet deutsch-ev. Kirchenkonferenz im Jahre 1896, B[erlin], 29.1.[1896], EZA Berlin 1/163.

41 See Krieg, *Kirche* 130. For further detail on the content of the law see Bussmann, *Diasporakunde*, 216f, and Wellnitz, *Gemeinden*, 67–74.

appeals from the EOK for collections to support church work for the Germans living overseas (among them the congregation in Windhoek) were not only urgent ones (as was still the case in 1899):

“In joyful preservation of the faith of our forefathers, we must help them to foster the German nature and morals abroad and to keep the badge of honour of the German Protestant name pure and unsullied through exemplary transformation, so that through them the Kingdom of God may also spread and increase among the coarse native peoples.”⁴²

But at the 5th ordinary General Synod in 1903, the EOK also presented a detailed “announcement [...] about the ecclesiastical provisions for the German-speaking Protestants in the German protectorates” that reported the successful efforts in German South West Africa to create a German Protestant congregation at the site of the seat of government in Windhoek, and on the formal affiliation of this congregation (by its own request) to the Old Prussian regional church.⁴³ Also reported was the plan to build a church there, open a nursery school, offer religious education classes and erect preaching stations in other locations.⁴⁴

Six years later, a comparable report for the 6th ordinary general synod would rather pathetically recall the duty already set out at the 4th ordinary general synod:

“it falls to the Protestant regional church of the older Prussian provinces, as the largest German church fellowship, to take over the honourable charge of fulfilling the great new duties that result from the need for orderly ecclesiastical institutions for the German Christian brothers and sisters in the colonies.”⁴⁵

But now this task could be referred to the institution of the DEKA, which had since been created and overlapped the level of the regional churches. The DEKA was appointed “to protect the common Protestant-ecclesiastical interests in regard to the ecclesiastical provisions for the Protestants in the German protectorates.”⁴⁶ But the EOK’s continuing commitment to “extensive collaboration” in this task area, despite this change in jurisdiction, was defined precisely

“because of the fact that the German Protestant congregations in our colonies, to the extent that until now they have generally been linked to the home [churches], are affiliated [...] to our regional church in accordance with the church law of 7 May 1900 or have requested this affiliation, as well as because the clergy of these con-

42 Aufruf des evangelischen Oberkirchenrates in Berlin, in: Diasporabote 1899, no. 6, 139f, cit. 139.

43 Announcement of the Protestant Supreme Church Council [sgd. Barkhausen] concerning ecclesiastical provisions for German-speaking Protestants in the German protectorates, Berlin, 14 August 1903, in Fifth Ordinary General Synod, 1903. no. 48, n.p., 1903, 3.

44 Ibid., 4.

45 Mitteilung des Evangelischen Ober-Kirchenrats [gez. Barkhausen] über die kirchliche Versorgung der deutschredenden Evangelischen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten, Berlin, 14. August 1903, in: Fünfte ordentliche Generalsynode 1903, Nr. 48, O. O. 1903, 3.

46 Ibid. – The DEKA had characterised its appointed duties in a comprehensive memorandum; see Denkschrift des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschusses über die kirchliche Versorgung der Diaspora im Auslande. Berlin, in November 1904, Berlin n.d. [1904].

gregations were despatched by us at their request to the protectorates, and have achieved membership in the pension fund and the pastor's widow and orphan funds of the Prussian regional church through our intervention, in order to ensure their retirement and survivors' benefits.⁴⁷

In fact they were now working – at least publicly – hand in hand with the DEKA in a trusting and successful collaboration,⁴⁸ which the DEKA announced in a programmatic statement of 10 November 1903:

“The citizens who have ventured out into the wide world should of course get lost neither to the German language and morals nor to their church: we shall keep our loving eyes upon them. And since collaboration also promises greater success than individual aid that is just as loyally intended, we shall deal collaboratively with the emerging ecclesiastical crises in the German colonies and the diaspora abroad respecting the different confessional status balance as much as possible.”⁴⁹

The special attention to German South West Africa

Among the reasons⁵⁰ for the EOK's increased special interest in German South West Africa⁵¹ was the strong growth (compared to other German “protectorates” overseas) in the German Protestant population living there⁵² – not least as a result of the chaos engendered by the war with the Herero and Nama between 1904 and 1907⁵³ – as well as the good economic development and the discovery of diamond fields and copper deposits.⁵⁴ At any rate, those who had immigrated there from Germany had great expectations and hopes for the future and took an expanded German presence in this economically promising region as a starting point for granted.⁵⁵

47 Mitteilung des Evangelischen Ober-Kirchenrats [gez. Voigts], 2.

48 Ibid.

49 Quoted in Bussmann, *Diasporakunde*, 110.

50 For further detail see article #17 by Hinz, as well as articles # 10 and #16 by Lothar Engel.

51 This evolution since 1903 is expressly emphasised in: Mitteilung Oberkirchenrat 1909, 3. – Rudolf Fitzner offers a characterisation of the country and its population in 1900 in *Deutsches Kolonial-Handbuch. Nach amtlichen Quellen bearbeitet*, Bd. 1, 2. erweiterte Aufl., Berlin 1901, Nachdruck Wolfenbüttel o. J. [2006], 121–204; on the evolution of the number of Germans resident in the country and foreigners see *ibid.*, 140–142.

52 Kapler, *Schutzgebiete*, 4, lists the following figures for 1912: 14,816 whites (including 2,171 members of the armed forces) in South West Africa (835,000 km²) of whom 11,812 were Protestant, whereas there were only 222 German Protestants in Togo, 1,218 in Cameroon and 3,187 in East Africa.

53 The course of these conflicts that escalated into genocide is briefly characterised in Bernd G[...] Längin, *Die deutschen Kolonien. Schauplätze und Schicksale 1884–1918*. Documentary illustrations by Michael Schindler, Hamburg, Berlin, Bonn 2005, 125–143. For a detailed description see Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewußtsein. Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkriegs in Namibia 1904 bis 1907*. Göttingen 1999, as well as Lothar Engel, *Kolonialismus und Nationalismus im deutschen Protestantismus in Namibia 1907 bis 1945. Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Mission und Kirche im ehemaligen Kolonial und Mandatsgebiet Südwestafrika*, Bern 1976, along with the localised historical study in article #17 by Hinz.

54 Kapler, *Schutzgebiete*, 3.

55 On this see e.g. the characterisation by Längin, *Kolonien*, 148f.

Senior Councillor Hermann Kapler did future generations of researchers a favour by also formulating these expectations in public presentations from 1913; what's more, he established a direct connection between the future German political and economic expectations for German South West Africa on the one hand and the expansion of the German diaspora congregations on the other. This expansion, in his view, was urgently desired in order to preclude German involvement in church life in the native congregations, which had been another result of the missionary work.

“German South West Africa occupies a sharply pronounced special position among our colonies and also ascribes particularly large tasks to the Protestant church. [...] German South West Africa is a settler colony.”⁵⁶

“The white race is the ruling one, the black and yellow races the servile, and this difference that is based on natural conditions has become even sharper than before, perhaps also more sharply pronounced than in other protectorates, because the great uprising of 1904–1907 was crushed. With this state of affairs, it is also objectively contradictory, especially to the white population, in whom is concentrated all the power, property, and higher culture, that they should profess to be unable to satisfy their liturgical needs under their own power and with the aid of the German motherland and that they should forever be visitors to the mission churches, toward whose building and maintenance the native-born congregations have been enlisted to provide construction and funding.”⁵⁷

For this reason, Kapler argued, the Protestant regional churches in Germany needed to invest in South West Africa so that the plan for an independent German Protestant church there could be achieved,⁵⁸ a church “where the white man does not come and go, but, God willing, an immeasurable chain of families will grow to become a great German people!”⁵⁹

The belief in whites' military, economic, and cultural superiority over the indigenous population is hardly surprising for this era;⁶⁰ much more revealing in this line of argument is how this conviction is combined with the reasoning that the natives have built and financed the church and that the whites would present a burden were they to make use of it as well. This fiscal-budget-oriented-ethnic examination chafes against the observation that at the same time, there were no theological considerations in church lawyer Kapler's argument: for example, the question of the unity of God's people beyond all ethnic and cultural

56 Kapler, *Schutzgebiete*, 14. Sixty-one per cent of the white population was comprised of adult men, while 19% were adult women and 20% were children (*ibid.*, 17).

57 *Ibid.*, 26.

58 *Ibid.*, 33.

59 *Ibid.*, 34.

60 In 1914 Consistorial Councillor Carl Mirbt described the attractiveness of the region thusly: “In truth the southwest has great appeal. The lengthy sunshine is a pleasant experience; the clear air is healthful, and the size of the region offers great freedom of movement; the existence of a native population of lower social standing gives the Whites, as such, a higher position.” (Carl Mirbt, *Leistungen und Aufgaben der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands in Deutsch-Südwest- und Deutsch-Ostafrika*. Vortrag gehalten an unserem Jahresfest in Magdeburg am 15. Februar 1914, in: *Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland* e. V. 1914, no. 19, 341–356, cit. 345.)

boundaries, witnessed at Pentecost and through the *one* baptism, a unity that is evident to any Christian.

And what's more, the conceptual work that the EOK in Berlin was doing for the German congregations in the colonial areas continued to look as if it were being shaped by legal perspectives.⁶¹ Thus the extraordinarily weak legal situation of the Protestant congregations in the colonies (in comparison to the usual structures in Germany) was vehemently deplored,⁶² since these were not public corporations; not until 1913 were they able to obtain legal recognition as private organisations under the law.⁶³ This reflects the fact that even in the era of the Second Imperial German Empire in Germany, the local rulers still exerted over the summepiscopate, but there was no comparable *imperial* summepiscopal legal institution with an effect on the German protectorates overseas: neither the churches that had arisen from missionary work nor the German Protestant congregations abroad (with the exception of those on the Cape belonging to the Hanover regional church) recognised a "summus episcopus".⁶⁴ In the discussion of state church law, it becomes very clear that the summepiscopal right of local rulers, which had been anchored in imperial law in Germany since the Reformation, did not belong to the core area of monarchic law; instead, thanks to regulations set forth in the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555, it possessed the character of a mere "annex right" that applied to the Protestant local rulers alone.⁶⁵ The protectorates

61 The problems described are evident in H. Edler von Hoffmann, Fragen des protestantischen Kolonialkirchenrechtes, in Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht und Kolonialwirtschaft 6, 1904, 492–497; see also Schreiber, Koloniales Kirchenrecht, in Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht und Kolonialwirtschaft 6, 1904, 871–884.

62 See e.g. Rudolf Böhmer, Deutsch-evangelisches Leben in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Vortrag auf dem II. Deutschen Kolonial-Missionstage zu Cassel, in Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland e. V. 1912, no. 13, 185–193, q.v. 190f.

63 Kapler, Schutzgebiete, 4–7, explained it thusly: "Our German colonial law does not recognise anything similar to a regional church for the protectorates; the church there does not comprise a part of the public legal order. The individual church congregations are not recognised as public legal corporations either. Until now they have lacked even private legal capacity; only through an amendment enacted a few weeks ago to the law on the protectorates (Reichsgesetz v. 22. Juli 1913, R. G. Bl., 95) has the possibility been afforded to organisations whose purpose is not directed toward business operations, including in this consideration our German Protestant church congregations in the protectorates, to acquire private legal capacity through conferral by the Imperial Chancellor. The origins and structure of the Empire have caused a different position in its relationship to the church in contrast to the individual German states, which have historically developed in close association with a regional church. In accordance with this, the Empire also fundamentally does not recognise a financial obligation to provide for the church facilities in the protectorates [...] notwithstanding the contribution of 6000 M.[arks] annually from funds in the protectorate budget that the Protestant and Catholic missions receive for pastoral care to the white population in South West Africa. [...] Here we have an authentic diaspora on German soil. [It is] in far worse straits, however, than our domestic diaspora areas, because these latter areas are integral parts of regional churches; they have a direct share in the facilities and a claim to receive provisions from their regional church. By contrast, our German Christian brothers and sisters in the protectorates are actually homeless as far as the church is concerned."

64 Wellnitz, Gemeinden, 77f, describes how the overseas congregations contractually affiliated with the Prussian EOK were in a gravely different legal position from the Prussian domestic congregations. The overseas congregations were "involved in neither the burdens (taxes) and rights (involvement in church government) of the congregations under the summepiscopate, nor were they subject to the regional church standards for worship and the oversight of domestic church authorities." (cit. *ibid.*, 78).

65 See Christoph Link, Summepiskopat des Landesherren, in RGG⁴, 7, 1866f; Heinrich de Wall,

and colonial possessions, however, were not under sovereignty of Prussia, but of the German Empire – and thus the German Protestant church congregations there had to have the conflicted experience of being at once free of the problems of the summepiscopal system of church leadership but unable to enjoy the numerous advantages that the system routinely offered the Protestant regional churches and church congregations in Germany – benefits these congregations were often completely unaware of.⁶⁶

Thus the EOK could not offer the German Protestant church congregations in southern Africa any of the privileges that derived from the summepiscopate. At least until 1914, however, the organisation openly claimed the right to have its say in matters concerning those congregations in German South West Africa that had been affiliated to the EOK. This created a potential for conflict when the German congregations in South West Africa prepared to join forces. In 1910, the creation of a clergy fraternal among the pastors working there provided the first step towards closer collaboration. From then on, the clergy fraternal met once a year over the course of several days.⁶⁷ The idea of taking the next step and initiating a synodal association of the congregations was soon also considered.⁶⁸ Accordingly, the pastors drew up a draft of the articles of association for such an association, which – as is characteristic for synodal affairs – also planned for the free election of a chairman (note that from the start the EOK had the right to final confirmation!).⁶⁹ But Senior Councillor Hermann Kapler, who was present at the discussions in Karibib on the subject, let it be known straightaway that the EOK would claim the right to appoint the chairman of the synod, since this chair would serve as a confidant of the EOK (and not, for example, of the synod!). In addition, he stated that they ought to consider how strongly the work of the local German Protestant congregations was and would be financially supported by the EOK.⁷⁰ The course of this argument proves how accustomed the EOK was to continuing its blatantly consistorial (certainly not synodal!) thinking – more than seventy years after the introduction of the Rhenish-Westphalian church order into the western provinces of Prussia in 1835, and more than thirty years after the introduction of the Church Parish and Synodal Order into the eastern provinces of Prussia.

Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment, in Werner Heun etc. (eds.), *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*. New ed., Stuttgart 2006, 1380–1386, q.v. especially 1383.

66 On the legal position of the churches and religious communities and their relationship to the state in the Second German Empire see the contemporary description from Hermann Priebe, *Kirchliches Handbuch für die evangelische Gemeinde unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der preußischen Landeskirche*, 2., revised and expanded ed., Berlin 1914, 33–35. See also Mirbt, *Leistungen*, 345; and Heyse, *Pfarrkonferenz in Deutsch-Südwest*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland e. V.* 1913, no. 16, 246–249; *ibid.*, 247f.

67 See *Konferenz der evangelischen Pfarrer Deutsch-Südwestafrikas*. Windhoek, 17./18.10.1910, EZA Berlin 5/2924: “8. *Association of the congregations*. The conference does not yet consider it time for the Protestant congregations of the colony to be united in a synodal association. However, it is resolved that all pastors meet together preferably once a year in a *conference* in one of the congregations.”

68 As written in 4. *Pfarrkonferenz für Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, [4th pastoral conference for German South West Africa] Karibib, 18.–20.6.1913, no. 6, EZA Berlin 5/2924. The pastoral conference not only supported the creation of an association of congregations, they also had already designated a catalogue of tasks that this association was to assume: congregation newsletter, hospital, retirement home, nursing, and building fund (*ibid.*). See also the report from Heyse, *Pfarrkonferenz*, 246–249.

69 4. *Pfarrkonferenz für Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, Karibib, 18.–20.6.1913, no. 6, EZA Berlin 5/2924.

70 *Ibid.*

Nevertheless concrete steps toward the creation of a synodal association of the German Protestant church congregations in German South West Africa loomed ahead (in Africa they were even already speaking of “our German-South West African regional church”⁷¹), which the EOK was not in the position to prevent legally. The EOK let it be known that while it basically approved of these plans, it demanded that they postpone the inaugural meeting – out of supposedly practical considerations – for a year.⁷² The EOK also declared that there was “no occasion” for a formal discussion of these matters at the annual clergy fraternal in 1913.⁷³ The strategy to slow things down is all too clear.

Because of the year’s delay on the matter, this type of synodal association of the German Protestant church congregations in South West Africa did not come into being until a decade and a half later, owing to the outbreak of the First World War and the post-war chaos that followed. In 1921 there was a renewed attempt to create an association, which then failed yet again,⁷⁴ and only in 1927 was the hard-won synodal connection achieved, albeit under very different conditions.⁷⁵

At any rate, the attempts to establish an independent German Protestant church in German South West Africa can by no means be attributed to corresponding encouragement from the EOK,⁷⁶ but to the independent initiative of the pastors working in the German

71 See Hasenkamp, *Unsere deutsch-südwestafrikanische Landeskirche*, in *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Deutsch-Südwestafrika* 2, 1913, 2f, *passim*.

72 EOK to pastors in German South West Africa, Berlin, 27.4.1913, EZA Berlin 5/2924.

73 *Ibid*.

74 Pastor Heyse, who worked in Karibib, sent a draft charter to the EOK in March 1921 (Heyse to EOK, Karibib, 6.3.1921. EZA Berlin 5/2924) that had been drawn up as part of a pastoral conference in Swakopmund from 1st to 4th March 1921. He also described the further procedure that had already been agreed: “This draft shall be thoroughly discussed in the local church councils. Should agreement be achieved, the association will be considered founded and the representatives will be elected. [...] The charters shall be conclusively laid down at their first meeting. [...] I would be grateful to the high authorities if they would express to me any of their wishes that may arise.” This draft did not provide for any collaboration by the EOK at all in the leadership and practical work of the association — only a handwritten insertion had been added at the end: “Resolution: The association of congregations shall send the Evangelical Supreme Church Council in Berlin reports on its negotiations.” The EOK consequently informed Heyse that they considered the draft to be generally suitable, and limited themselves to making some practical suggestions in order to deal with conflict situations (EOK to Heyse, Berlin-Charlottenburg, 29.4.1921, EZA Berlin 5/2924). The EOK was no longer making any further demands. Even though everything now looked as though the association of congregations would come into being in the foreseeable future, external conditions that unexpectedly changed once again brought the project to collapse in the summer of 1921: the economic depression (especially the closing of diamond mines) suddenly made the continued existence of the Lüderitzbucht congregation look doubtful (Heyse to EOK, Karibib, 2.6.1921, EZA 5/2924). At the same time, Heyse took up a position against the ideas, equally virulent in this era, of cutting pastoral positions and reducing pastoral work among the Protestant Germans in South West Africa because of the enormously increased costs of pastoral salaries overseas due to inflation in Germany. He swore that he himself would not be leaving Karibib and would not close the local pastoral office (*ibid.*): “The Catholic church certainly will not leave — as I have already taken the pleasure of emphasizing — as long as there is one German Catholic left here.” The EOK interestingly did not take the bait, but instead replied to Heyse that they had confidence he would succeed in bringing the projected association of congregations into being (EOK to Heyse, Berlin-Charlottenburg, 26.7.1921. EZA Berlin 5/2924).

75 See corresponding notes in EZA Berlin 5/2924.

76 Contrary to Mirbt, *Leistungen* 351.

settler congregations. Nor did this association have recognisable roots in a struggle for independence as such, or even in a desire for democratisation; rather, it had grown out of the practical ecclesiastical requirements for closer local collaboration. Before the First World War, by contrast, the EOK had turned out to be an ecclesiastical authority that, as the years passed, desired to see its unquestionable structural superiority to the German congregations in southern Africa (who were weak in terms of personnel, materials and structure) increasingly translate into the awarding of church leadership powers. Since the EOK could not argue that any codified rights had been passed down to allow it to do so, it attempted to create new law that would correspond to its needs.⁷⁷ So the EOK paid special attention to the pastors on whom it could exercise the closest influence, those who had been despatched overseas. The financial welfare of these pastors directly depended on a favourable process by the church's administrative authorities, and their later return home to Germany even more so.

The EOK's "scheduled [ecclesiastical] provisions, proceeding year on year" were comprehended as being "of the greatest consequence also from a national point of view".⁷⁸

The suspension of contact as a result of the outbreak of the First World War

The First World War abruptly interrupted the relationship between the EOK and the German congregations in southern Africa that had been growing stronger and stronger since the turn of the century. The postal connection between Berlin and German South West Africa had already ended by late July 1914.⁷⁹ From then on, the EOK sent news only very sporadically until the German troops stationed in Africa capitulated in August 1915.⁸⁰ The German Protestant congregations and their pastors ended up under massive pressure; for a time there were even internments.⁸¹ Keetmanshoop pastor Hans Siebold later wrote an extensive description of the events during the war.⁸² Through the engagement of diplomatic arrangements with Switzerland, the EOK itself made an effort in this era to at least continue providing financial support to the German Protestant pastors who were located in South West Africa at this time.⁸³ But this too proved to be hardly feasible, especially since for

77 A rumour even arose that the superintendent's affairs in South West Africa were going to be transferred to the Windhoek pastor Kriele, but this was then denied; see Anz, *Rundschau in den Schutzgebieten*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland* e. V. 3, 1914, 359f; *ibid.*, 359.

78 *Mirbt*, *Leistungen* 343.

79 According to the notes on various letters from the EOK to Windhoek from 24.7.1914, EZA Berlin 5/2916.

80 For more on how the hostilities unfolded see Längin, *Kolonien*, 305–309.

81 See e.g. the contemporary report from Guhr, *Umschau in den Schutzgebieten*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland* e. V. 1915, no. 21, 410–412, q.v. 411f.

82 See Hans Siebold, *In Südwest unter englischer Herrschaft*, Potsdam 1916; see also Hans Siebold, *Kurze Uebersicht über die deutsch-evangelische Gemeinde Keetmanshoop während des Raubzuges der Union gegen das deutsch-südwestafrikanische Schutzgebiet*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für deutsch-evangelisches Leben in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland* e. V. 1916, no. 22, 437–444.

83 Relevant correspondence in EZA Berlin 5/2916 and EZA Berlin 5/2917; also available *ibid.* is a later report written by Swakopmund pastor Hasenkamp, "Die evangelischen Gemeinden in Deutsch-Südwestafrika während der Jahre 1914–1919 Düren (Rheinland), 8.11.1919".

years only very scant news from there had reached Germany, news that could have given closer and more reliable information about the goings-on in the local German Protestant congregations.⁸⁴

Not until December 1919 could direct business once again be conducted between the EOK in Berlin and the pastors who remained in southwest Africa. In the first message that the EOK sent to them after the long interruption, the organisation emphasised that it owed its sincere gratitude to the congregations and the pastors for their perseverance.⁸⁵ One can absolutely make out a patriarchal tone in the missive, which was apparently still shaping the work of this church authority even after the end of the summeepiscopate in Germany. Furthermore, however, the EOK immediately went on to address a financial reality that the local church congregations had not experienced until that point: The Prussian regional church's economic capability to advocate for the congregations in southwest Africa was greatly restricted, such that the EOK was incapable of bearing the costs of the local pastors' salaries over the long term. The congregations would therefore have to make their own efforts to provide for the pastors if they did not wish for the pastors to be recalled.⁸⁶ But in 1920, the declining value of the mark due to increasing inflation was already making the pastoral salary provided to the overseas pastors into a farce. In view of this, the essentially rather positive picture of the situation of the congregations in southern Africa that was drawn for the Prussian general synod on 14 April 1920 is surprising: the local congregations may be greatly weakened personally and economically, but apart from this, "the ecclesiastical work has been able to continue essentially undisturbed".⁸⁷

But a meeting of the South West African German pastors in mid-April 1920 sketched a comprehensive picture of the local situation with a clearly different accent: they urged the EOK to declare its opposition to the withdrawal of the Protestant church from the region.⁸⁸ Only through the dedication of the Gustav Adolf Association and the German Colonial Society were they able to achieve continued support of at least a meagre amount for the German congregations and pastors who remained in South West Africa.⁸⁹ In 1922, then, the only church life remaining was in Swakopmund and Windhoek.⁹⁰

84 See e.g. a note filed about a letter from Swakopmund pastor Hasenkamp to Senior Councillor Kapler of 25.11.1918: "All other pastors — i.e., apart from deceased pastor Kriele-Windhoek — are doing fine. [...] We pastors had two meetings in Karibib, in January 1917 and August 1918. These were a great consolation to all of us!" (Hasenkamp to Kapler, Swakopmund, 25.11.1918, EZA Berlin 5/2917.) Ditto Hasenkamp to Kapler, Swakopmund, 10.2.1919, EZA Berlin 5/2917: "A congregation newsletter actually no longer exists. [...] We are all very much counting on it that the existing church congregations will continue to exist, albeit with fewer members; we certainly cannot do without the aid of the home church."

85 EOK to the German Protestant congregations in South West Africa, Berlin, 22.12.1919, EZA Berlin 5/2917. Printed excerpt: *Südwestafrika*, in *Die evangelische Diaspora* 2, 64.

86 *Ibid.*

87 See *Die Preußische Generalsynode und die Auslandsdiaspora*, in *Die evangelische Diaspora* 2, 1920/21, 23–25, cit. 24.

88 Pastor Heyse to EOK, Karibib, 22.4.1920, EZA Berlin 5/2917.

89 See the relevant correspondence in EZA Berlin 5/2918.

90 *Aus Südwestafrika*, in *Die evangelische Diaspora* 5, 1923, 84–88; q.v. 84. See also *Kirchliche Lage in Südwestafrika*, in *Der Deutsch-Afrikaner*, 25. Juni 1925, 11.

Further contact between the EOK and the German church congregations in later South Africa

The relationships that the Prussian EOK fostered with the German Protestant church congregations in what is today South Africa were restricted to contact with a few congregations. A first reference to the largely Prussian origins of the settlers living in southern Africa was received by President von Uechtritz in 1859 in Berlin.⁹¹ He received information that of the 6,000 Germans living there, 4,000 were from Prussia – and it was feared that they would go over to the Anglicans or even the Roman Catholics because of a lack of sufficient pastoral support. The writer therefore requested that two pastors be despatched who had reached the level of superintendent. The costs for such services (which in the long run could be raised from the colonists) would be considerable for the EOK, but these were justified by the urgent need of the colonists and by Prussia's international standing. Nothing happened in spite of this appeal, however – the matter was dismissed with a simple note, "filed pending further suggestion".⁹²

The next recorded occurrence in the EOK file relating to South Africa is a printed "annual report on the congregations belonging to the German Ev[angelical]. Luth[eran] synod of South Africa" for the 1896–97 ecclesiastical year.⁹³

There were no closer dealings with the German Protestant congregations in South Africa until 1913. At this point in time, the German consulate general in Cape Town lodged a confidential complaint with the imperial chancellor that at the 7th meeting of the German Evangelical Lutheran synod of South Africa, a Pastor Schneider from Bloemfontein had suggested that the congregations in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Kimberley become affiliated to this synod.⁹⁴ In the words of Pastor Reylander (Johannesburg), those in Berlin were already put out that the new German church congregation in Durban had affiliated to this synod but not into the Prussian EOK,⁹⁵ which the EOK had since characterised as "completely inappropriate".⁹⁶ The matter of the Durban congregation had not even been considered, and the affiliation of Johannesburg and Pretoria to the synod was not up for negotiation.⁹⁷

The political developments of the First World War brought immediate hardship to the German Protestant congregations in South Africa that were connected to Berlin and the EOK.⁹⁸ The postwar situation was such that the congregations in Johannesburg and Pretoria

91 See Consistorial Councillor Thielen to EOK President (Uechtritz), Carlsbad, 8.9.1859, EZA Berlin 5/3033.

92 Ibid. File memo from 29.9./1.10.1859.

93 See Jahresbericht über die zur deutschen evang.-luth. Synode Südafrikas gehörenden Gemeinden. Kirchenjahr 1896–[18]97, Worcester 1897.

94 German consulate general in Cape Town (von Humboldt) to the Imperial Chancellor. Confidential, Cape Town, 12.1.1913, EZA Berlin 5/3033.

95 See Eichbauer, Aus der Chronik der deutsch-luth. Gemeinde zu Durban. Conclusion in Der Deutsch-Afrikaner 1, 1922, no. 47, 9f; q.v. 9.

96 See EOK to Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Berlin, 19. März 1913, EZA Berlin 5/3033.

97 Ibid. The relationship between the Hanover regional consistory and the Prussian EOK in Berlin concerning relations with the congregations in southern Africa seems at the least to not have been without tension; more research is necessary on this point.

98 More details are described in the report "Die Auslandsarbeit des Evangelischen Oberkirchenrats in der Kriegszeit", in Daheim und Draußen. Mitteilungen der Frauenhilfe fürs Ausland 5, 1916, 20–24, q.v.

may still have existed, but there were no local pastors available for active service for local church work.⁹⁹ Until this time, they had not been in closer contact with the other German-language congregations who were connected to the Hanover regional church, nor with the Hermannsburg congregations in Natal and the Transvaal.¹⁰⁰

Structures and goals of the EOK work with German Protestants in southern Africa until 1922

We should first declare that the forming of relationships between the EOK and the German Protestant church congregations in southern Africa for the timeframe investigated (up to 1922) was markedly situation-dependent. It was not developed in advance, but rather after the fact, meaning that they were largely due to demands by the Protestant Germans who lived there for the trusted home church support that they desired. It was understood that this included the provision of regular worship services, the exercise of religious rites, and the administration of religious education by German pastors who were as qualified as those who were in service in Germany. The goal was no more but also no less than transferring the familiar German ecclesiastical work, which had been arranged largely in the style of the established “Volkskirche” (people’s church), to the new colonial south(west) African environment. Until 1914, then, the foremost priority in this relationship was on how to deal practically with everyday pastoral matters.

At any rate, the EOK’s commitment was not the result of some special theological reflection, but rather from a linguistically, ethnologically, culturally, nationalistically, and not least confessionally motivated awareness of their solidarity. Such commitment was seen as being all the more permanent, and thus it would also be necessary to provide permanent structures; matters such as the right to colonial rule were not questioned, and instead were affirmed as a matter of course.

Just as revealing is the fact that the EOK not only took on a patriarchal role toward the congregations in southern Africa as a matter of course, but at the same time – without any legal authority! – claimed leadership rights over the church congregations it supported, in a clearly consistorial manner. Neither did the EOK shy away from legitimising this through large financial contributions to enable local pastoral services, as well as the construction of ministers’ residences and churches. At any rate, there was no equal partnership – to use a modern expression – between the EOK in Berlin and the German Protestant church congregations in southern Africa – and neither was one of this sort intended (at least from the EOK point of view).

The era of intensive EOK relations, particularly with South West Africa, before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 was ultimately too short to have a substantial con-

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99 Prussian General Synod, 23: “The former [Johannesburg] is loyally served by a German emeritus, the latter [Pretoria] by a pastor of Dutch extraction and British citizenship.” Ditto KJ 47, 1920, 291. See also Bruno Geißler, Neues und Altes aus Süd-Afrika, in *Die evangelische Diaspora* 6, 1924, 19–25, q.v. 22.

100 Südafrika, in *Die evangelische Diaspora* 3, 1921/22, 63f, q.v. 64: “It is to be hoped that the forthcoming transfer of the diaspora work to the German Evangelical Church Federation will have an encouraging effect here. [...] Close the ranks! is the order of the day.” See also Fr. Lührs, *Die Deutsche Ev.-Luth. Synode Südafrikas im Jahre 1922*, in *Der Deutsch-Afrikaner*, 17. Mai 1923, 9.

ceptual effect on the practical implementation of the ecclesiastical work from Berlin. The outbreak of the First World War put an unexpected and abrupt stop to any effective exchange for over five years – and the new connections in the aftermath (from late 1919 onward) were enormously shaped by a downright depressive streak that reflected the economic and political realities in Germany.

It should be noted that the tradition analysed here, of records from the EOK and contemporary literature, tends to be unmistakably Euro-centric, because generally the only thing that is passed on is what has been represented by actors from Germany (and the rest of Europe) who are therefore shaped by this cultural milieu. When interpreting one should also take great care to see that this lack of other sources is not cancelled out by the ultimately speculative interpolations regarding other goals and intentions of the EOK.

In conclusion, the EOK's reservations about creating a synod of German congregations in South West Africa should also be counted toward the organisation's Euro-centric perspective. The EOK did not manage to see the legally granted independence of the local African congregations as an opportunity or to develop this independence further from this foundation. Thinking and acting in terms of subsidiarity was obviously farther from the highest Prussian ecclesiastical administrative authority's perspective than acting in an authoritarian manner before the First World War. This could hardly be more obviously demonstrated than by Senior Councillor Hermann Kapler, who on his visit in 1913 did not participate in the pastoral conference put on by the pastors working in South West Africa as a guest, but rather claimed the chairmanship of this conference for himself.¹⁰¹ Neither did he shy away from allowing himself to be photographed as he sat there upon his throne, surrounded by a group of pastors.¹⁰²

101 According to the report from Heyse, Pfarrkonferenz, 246f.

102 Photograph *ibid.*, 247. It should also not be overlooked that the DEKA, in its memorandum put forward in November 1904 "on the ecclesiastical provisions for the diaspora abroad" describes its duty in a clearly less authoritarian manner; to the contrary, the organisation had underscored that "the ecclesiastical provisions [must] take into account the origin and confessional identity of the regular churchgoers who make up the congregations and the history of their emergence, when also considering them delicately and sparingly in general"; see Denkschrift DEKA, 9. This should also be declared in view of the DEKA's idea to take the initiative to found its own German congregations overseas, which the Prussian EOK had so far ignored; see *ibid.*, 19. The DEKA had in the meantime not been able to realise the "leadership claim" that it registered as a complaint in 1904 in reference to the Prussian EOK, over the further expansion of Protestant ecclesiastical work among the Germans in the overseas protectorates (*ibid.*, 20) concerning the relationships with the congregations in southwest Africa in the years up until the outbreak of the First World War.