

Newsletter 24.  
**The wound of racism in our family.**

December 2014  
Horst Kleinschmidt

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**CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE 'UNFINISHED BUSINESS'  
OF RACE AND CLASS IN AN AFRICAN FAMILY.**

**Between 18 and 23 September 2014, members of the Schmelen-Kleinschmidt-Bam-Rautanen-Uirab family, descendants of a mixed race missionary couple who got married 200 years ago, gathered to commemorate, celebrate and reflect<sup>1</sup>. An important part of the Zara and Hinrich Schmelen family gathering was to confront our own history of racial prejudice, segregation, and oppression during German colonial rule in Namibia and in apartheid South Africa.**

**Komaggas is the village where the Schmelen couple lived and brought up their children. Few people have heard of Komaggas. It lies in an arid region at the foot of the Spektakelberg, a hundred kilometres south of the Orange River and an hours drive west of the town of Springbok, near the border with Namibia. The original people here were Khoi-khoi. Today the villagers are of mixed race, classified as 'Coloured' during the apartheid era. Komaggas has never had a white-skinned and separate population.**

**On one day of the Komaggas gathering ninety relatives and friends met in the Komaggas *Gemeenskapssaal* where they sat in one large circle to discuss what made dark-skinned, brown-eyed and naturally curly-haired relatives meet with their white-skinned, blond, blue-eyed relatives for the first time. The subject for the morning meeting was: Truth, Acknowledgement, Reconciliation and Justice.**

Below are the two opening statements made. If anyone, including those not at this gathering want to comment, please do so and your views, however long or brief will be added on my web page.

My statement has been expanded and edited for clarity. Charles Otto /Uirab spoke after me. His poem and text follows my statement.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive report on the Komaggas gathering visit [www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za](http://www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za).

<sup>2</sup> Jeff Rudin's article appeared in the Cape Times on 28 February 2014. It is titled 'In search of a non-racial society –

**Identity, Acknowledgement, Equality with Justice;  
The things I had to learn and others I had to unlearn.**

by Horst Kleinschmidt

During his inaugural speech as first democratic President of South Africa in 1994, Nelson Mandela said, "The time for the healing of the wounds has come". Twenty years later, here in Komaggas, I hear people say: the wounds of the past have not healed. The people of Komaggas are not alone; echoes of 'unfinished business' can be heard all over South Africa – and in Namibia (free and independent from South Africa since 1990).

Our family 'problem' started when a Khoi woman married a European missionary exactly two hundred years ago. The consequences reach deep into the consciousness and psyche of our family to this day. Twenty years after Nelson Mandela's appeal, admittedly late, I want to prise open his challenge, not in the abstract, but right here amongst us, members of one family. By doing this, I want to contribute toward healing and to a future where the un-said, the silence and denial has been stated and confronted.

I speak for no one else. I speak for myself only.

Two hundred years ago, a young Khoi-Khoi (Namaqua) woman in Komaggas demonstrated that she had intelligence and aptitude. Zarah Schmelen shares the honour of putting into written form the first Namaqua language grammar, of inventing a first printed symbol for the 'click' sound, and of translating and publishing the Gospels and other texts into Nama. The thrust of colonialism all but wiped out her people, their language, and culture. Zara lived at a time when Khoi life, as it was, was being extinguished by colonial land grabs, commercialism, violent suppression, social disruption and spiritual displacement. In the face of this devastating colonial onslaught, Zarah Schmelen provided an important foundation for the survival of her peoples' culture. Whether conscious or not, Zara built a bridge that embraced that which was about to be obliterated and gave it a means to survive. She helped to put an unwritten language into the written form. We owe Zara, our great, great, great grandmother far greater thanks and recognition than history has afforded her to date.

The impact of genocide, displacement, exploitation, theft and discrimination is hard to measure. Zara was a very rare exception in her generation, who at the end of her short life could say: my work is done! Zara's better-known contemporaries, Sarah Baartman and David Stuurman could not say this. Sarah Baartman died young, in Paris, a near naked exhibit for the leering eyes of European men. David Stuurman died in a Tasmanian prison because he fought for the land the colony stole from his people. The events that forced the Khoi people from freedom into serfdom, denied generations of Khoi descendant's children their true potential.

Today, at best, the Namaqua (collective term for Khoi people from South Africa and Namibia) are an object for academia who study the 'lost' culture. At worst, Nama memory in song and idiom serves the ruling man's condescending, romantic and kitsch version of what they perceive to be Khoi (or San). Not even today in democratic South Africa is the Namaqua language recognised as one of the eleven official languages.

When Kenneth Makatees, Ursula Trüper and I conceived the Komaggas family gathering, we knew that organising this gathering was not an ordinary matter. Central to the event was to reflect on what caused us to become divided, how we perceive our identity, and additionally we wanted to confer recognition and dignity to our Khoi great, great great grandmother, Zara. After the Komaggas gathering, Ursula Trüper, the author of the book on Zara titled "The Invisible Woman" was able to say, at last Zara is no longer invisible. However, when we drew up the programme, Komaggas elders enquired from me what the 'whites' in the family had to say about the past or whether instead they nimbly avoided the difficult issues of the past. This made me think afresh about who I am in my pursuit to write up our family history. I felt I was being nudged toward a new frontier of my own consciousness.

If only it was a straight and clear journey! The more I read, discussed and thought about it, the more I realised the complex matrix of issues that not just I seek to overcome but that very large sectors of the 'white' population from the apartheid era should grapple with. I hope that my journey is instructive to others.

At national level, truth and reconciliation has mostly happened in the abstract, mostly in the form of repeated and by now tired, nearly hackneyed variations of words and phrases intended to appease or redeem. Somehow, repeated national imploring by well-intentioned and respected leaders is stuck in a ritual of words that fails to get South Africa beyond the angry state it is in. It seems to me, that remedies to heal have been avoided. Some say they can be found if we staged a new Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but that only suggests a vehicle without identifying the remedy. A real remedy depends on justice with equality and restitution, something only a government with appropriate political will can do.

My suggestion is that we take the national and mostly symbolic gestures and take them right into the heart of everyday life, and in our case, right into a family who was divided and defined by race, division and prejudice. Right here in our own family we were divided into have's and have not's, into those with access to power and those who lost it. It might be put differently: There are those who clung to white privilege whatever it took and in doing so rejected those who could not escape the stigma that relegated them to the underclass. As we know, even now the age-old handicap of race and class persists tenaciously.

The question is: How do we get beyond where we are? And: how do wounds heal? How does brokenness get unbroken? - Without knowing the answers, I decided to search, so that twenty years after Nelson Mandela's call does not turn into forty years.

The wounds of the past are social and emotional wounds but they are equally wounds of injustice and inequality. Truth and Reconciliation does not merely hinge on the confessions by torturers and murderers of the apartheid security forces but depends in equal measure on the restoration of economic access and land. The economic inequality in our land is beyond the scope of what I or we can change. But when the disempowered demand restitution they should find allies from throughout our family from now on. Across the former divide, I hope, we will more than express our solidarity but will stand together with those seeking justice.

My comments are divided into: identity, truth (acknowledgement of what our parents did and taught us), and a reflection on economic justice within the crude economic order that surrounds us.

### **Identity.**

In 2014 physical and verbal injuria by white people on black people constitutes a never decreasing number of cases, reported in the media or brought before our courts. It would seem that for many white people in South Africa, 1994 had no consequences other than having to increase their guard to preserve their privilege. Swathes of white society, when dining or braaiing together on Saturday nights in their conversations find fault with all that is black but find no fault with themselves. They are stuck in an identity that fosters a culture of narrow identity based on a perceived fear of the other, expressed through disdain, hate, dismissal and a cultivated sense of superiority.

Jeff Rudin is a research associate at the Alternative Information Development Centre in Cape Town. He offers a view of what we should aspire to. His assertion is that a non-racial South Africa requires a shift from a narrow focus on race (or group) to a fundamental one of identity. He describes how he has sought to transcend his own inheritance – “the accident of his birth” – from a South African-born family of practising Jews toward a consciousness that is firstly South African; an identity that does not use narrow group identity to diminish the humanity of the ‘other’. Rudin provides examples from the way he was socialised as a child<sup>2</sup>. The ‘other’ he says are any and all the groups that I am not a part of.

Rudin’s appeal for a shift in identity requires that we cease to see our narrow identity as primary. He invokes us to join the nation-building project 1994 made possible. This demands moving out of the comfort zones that say: I am white and, within the white group, I am Afrikaans or English (or German!) and within those groups there are yet

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<sup>2</sup> Jeff Rudin’s article appeared in the Cape Times on 28 February 2014. It is titled ‘In search of a non-racial society – Still imprisoned by identities’. The following excerpt is as true in the example he cites of his family as it is of our family, though from very different situations and histories. He writes: My inheritance – the accident of my birth – includes being born in South Africa of practising Jews. They taught me that Jews must unconditionally stand together as the only protection against worldwide anti-Semitism. They taught me that the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust was only the most brutal instance of this racial hatred. The imperative of Jewish solidarity made it entirely normal to ask, spontaneously, as my grandmother did when told of the death of a child who was crossing the road to buy ice cream: “Was he Jewish?”

smaller groups that define sexuality, religion, denomination, neighbourhood, class etc. The identity configurations are many, but they mostly happen within a self-fulfilling comfort zone. There is nothing wrong with cultural values and traditions within any circle of cultural identity, but when these identities take on the dimension or belief that they are superior and better to any other, they smell of bigotry and racism. Most people in the USA are Americans first before they are Italian or Afro-Americans etc. The siblings of missionary Kleinschmidt, who immigrated from Blasheim, Germany to St. Louis in the USA from 1842 onwards, the same period that missionary Kleinschmidt came to Africa, speak English today. They see no contradiction between their Lutheran faith and being patriotic Americans. Not so in South Africa and Namibia. Here, persistent islands of Lutheran identity are tied up, I contend are confused, with being German-speaking. I am not opposed to the German language; it is my third language. I love German literature and more broadly I love classical music but it needs to be secondary to my being South African.

Despite the many rivers I have crossed in my life, my identity with Africa is not complete, I confess. I am passionate about Afrikaans but cannot speak any African language. In my social life I want to be conscious that I don't meet exclusively those of my comfort-zone and instead, through choices that are ever more normal and natural, I participate in the building of a South African identity first and foremost. Where I live in Cape Town, the white English and the white Afrikaners, when its Saturday night and dinner time, largely still stick to their narrow groups.

The question posed to me in Komaggas has other aspects to it.

### **Truth.**

Archbishop Tutu who so ably led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission<sup>3</sup>, himself today describes the TRC as deficient and incomplete.

In my view the TRC was wanting because those who gave the orders and those who devised the political system of racial oppression and provided political cover for it, were never called to account. The last apartheid President, FW de Klerk and his Cabinet were never asked to testify about the orders they gave that led to the apartheid atrocities. Mr de Klerk's form of an apology for apartheid, in the sanctuary of Parliament, fell woefully short for those whom the system oppressed. This is part of unfinished business over which I have no influence. Moreover, I acknowledge that in the political horse-trading at CODESA<sup>4</sup>, trade-offs were unavoidable. Neither side was in a position to make absolute demands on the other. In the circumstances, it was probably inevitable, but morally FW

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<sup>3</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established by an Act of Parliament, *The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act*, number 34, passed into Law on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1995. The preamble states: "... it is deemed necessary to establish the truth in relation to past events as well as the motives for and circumstances in which gross violations human rights have occurred and to make findings known in order to prevent a repetition of such events in the future".

<sup>4</sup> CODESA: The *Convention for a Democratic South Africa* began on 20 December 1991 after the unbanning of political parties and the release of Nelson Mandela.

de Klerk and the National Party leadership should have been held responsible and placed in the first line of perpetrators.

The primary concern of the TRC was with those who actually were second in the line of perpetrators. The TRC dealt with these perpetrators and their victims. Perpetrators were invited to confess who they killed, tortured, maimed and traumatised on behalf of the state. In return, and only if their testimony was considered to be truthful, would they be given amnesty from prosecution. Amnesty was given instantly to perpetrators who confessed, whilst compensation for victims was slow and often remains outstanding to this day.

Today, here in Komaggas, I propose that there is a third tier of truth that is a prerequisite for reconciliation. The third tier depends ultimately on how it is pursued in the wider social arena. Mine is at a very small scale which I hope, if repeated a thousand times over by others at their 'local' level it can lead to a new national narrative.

Truth is, also, the opposite of silence – silence about the past, denial of the past and falsification of the past. The American author William Faulkner wrote: “The past is not dead. It is not even past” And the Austrian poet Erich Fried warned that to forget and neglect what happened (in the past) makes accomplices of us. Prof Richard Drayton of King’s College London asserts that hiding the (truth) evidence of what happened in the past is often a desire “to protect the reputation of the dead. More accurately, though, what is being protected are the sensitivities of the living”. In South Africa they are most often the sensitivities of the defenders, implicit and explicit, of segregation, discrimination and oppression. “The root of these practises of secrecy (about the past) appears to be a perverse kind of historical narcissism, a desire ... for a gaze into an unblemished ... past that leads to our time”, says Prof Drayton. And, he concludes that looking at past events and evidence that informs us about the past is in the “public interest”. And, in the case of British history, he demands that documents once marked secret should be released: “It is time to grow up: no British person alive should feel pride or guilt about events that happened before they were born”. In South Africa public interest demands that the past be opened up to correct the handed down version of history.

To the young generation of whites, the born-frees, who apartheid would have described as white, I say as Drayton does: You cannot feel guilt about events and actions that happened before you were born. Nobody can apologise or ask forgiveness for the acts of someone else – even when it is your own father. But, and this is a big but: truth demands that you and I don’t suppress the ugliness of the past, because as Erich Fried says: silence makes you complicit. The hardest thing to have to confront is summed up in the phrase young Germans asked when they grew up post WWII: What did you do in the war daddy? In the South African case there are fathers who were soldiers in an army and who fought in Angola, Namibia and here in South African townships. We know atrocities took place, but few foot soldiers have admitted their role in the South African Defence Force. When will they speak out? Who were the thousands of apartheid

functionaries who implemented apartheid, who executed forced removals, who refused entry to Post Offices, libraries, etc.? Were there family members who served apartheid in these and similar roles?

To his great credit, cousin Peter Müller went into exile rather than be trained and serve the army, and from exile he served the cause that eventually ended apartheid. Even greater credit goes to his parents, who supported their son to go into exile.

I spent the first thirty years of my life in the apartheid state, the latter ten of them, from 1966 to 1976 in some or other form of active opposition to apartheid. I was lucky to have had influences at school and university that opened my eyes and made me not conform to the social rules of the day. I never served in the apartheid army. From 1976 to 1991 I was in exile, working against the system I had been socialised into as a child and teenager. My brother Immo equally chose exile rather than live from the benefits and the lies of racial oppression. My sister Heidi also left South Africa and has lived abroad ever since. You might say that this exempts us from complicity, despite being socialised into the race and apartheid-bound state in our early years.

It is popular for whites today to say, 'I never supported apartheid'. This is not plausible. It also fails to acknowledge the thousand ways in which apartheid benefited the ruling class. These are questions we cannot escape. What was our parent's role? How did we benefit from the subjugation of the majority population around us?

One part of becoming a nation entails that white people speak out – acknowledge – to those whom the wrongs were done to, those in our own family, cousin to cousin. We should feel that we can acknowledge and talk about the things that diminished the humanity, dignity and status of our relatives whom apartheid was 'done to', cousins who sit next to us here today.

Because racism and its oppression is not over I share with you things I was socialised into during my childhood; the things my beloved parents taught me, that I had to unlearn.

1. When the child of our nanny died – by law the child was not living-in with us but lived 'somewhere in the countryside' with its grandparents – I was told, not yet ten years old, that Black people don't experience grief and pain like we 'whites' do. Pain, any pain I was told, affected black people less than we felt pain. Could it be, I wondered that they felt no pain at all?

2. I recall when we saw hundreds of Black men outside Johannesburg's 'Non White' railway station, huddled together, each one wrapped in a colourful 'Basuto' blanket with a tin trunk at their side or often balanced on their heads. From the safety of our car my parents said: They love travelling! They will do anything to travel (*Die reisen für Ihr Leben gern*). In reality we saw migrant labourers returning home to Lesotho, the Transkei homeland, Mozambique, North and South Rhodesia and even Malawi, after

their eleven month stint at Johannesburg's gold mines, part of the dehumanising migrant labour system. - The 'other', though part of the same Johannesburg we lived in, was so distant from us socially that of 'love for travelling' replaced the truth about the cruel system on which class and race distinction was built.

3. I would have been seven or eight years old. I still cringe at my father taking his pipe out of his mouth, holding it upside down and pointing its mouthpiece at on-coming Black cyclists as we drove home from a days outing at our grandparents place in Rustenburg. With his window turned down, his arm protruding from the window, he pointed the mouthpiece of his pipe at on-coming cyclists. I remember it in detail! The cyclists, invariably black, jumped or fell off the cycle and scrambled into the bush, believing they were in mortal danger of yet another violent and possibly inebriated white man. Mother would say, 'don't be so cruel' and dad replied, 'I'm only having some fun'.

4. Sitting with us here today is cousin Kenneth Makatees. His mother happens to live in Swakopmund just like my mother. They have never met. When I pay Kenneth's mother a visit, I go to the old age home previously designated for 'Coloureds' and because of social convention it still is a segregated institution today. My mother on the other hand is in an old age home for whites and despite twenty-four years of Namibian independence, it remains a lilly-white institution. – Old ways die hard especially when neighbours of my mother can be heard saying to this day: We don't want one of *them* in here; once you open the door there is no stopping *them* from swamping *us*.

5. In Kenneth's and my youth, we both recall the many occasions when we travelled the 2,000-kilometre journey from Swakopmund to Cape Town by car with our parents and siblings. Apartheid was in full force. It is conceivable that Kenneth's and my Christmas holiday journeys coincided. We knew nothing of each other at that time but it might have happened that our fathers stopped at the same filling stations in Grünau or Vanrhynsdorp. Besides tanking up with fuel, we both would have headed for the shop that sold cool drinks and biltong. Kenneth remembers these experiences totally differently to me: He would head for the hatch or window at the side of the shop. Here he would wait outside until the shopkeeper had served the white shoppers inside before coming to the hatch to ask him what he wanted. I might have been the customer in that shop, and in my youth, I was entirely unconcerned that I had access to the shop that denied entry to Kenneth and his family.

6. My mother, now nearly ninety-nine, introduced me to David many decades ago. David was once a tall, but by then, bent and old Oshivambo speaking man. She told me that he worked for my grandparents as a domestic worker in Swakopmund during the 1920's and 1930's. He was a 'contract labourer' who had a permit, granted him by the authorities to sell his labour in 'white' South West Africa. When I met him he was on the verge of retiring and returning permanently home to re-join his family. He had lived through German colonial times and then the period when South Africa took over South West Africa after WWI. My mother would tell us that David used to say 'things were



much better when the Germans were still here'. Allegedly he said that in German times you would get a thrashing for doing wrong; now 'under the English', you were arrested, charged and had to serve a prison sentences. My mother was justifying German colonial rule, alleging that it was somehow preferable to British rule, - because a flogging on the spot stopped you from losing time in jail and thus forfeiting potential income. By citing this story she also expressed her belief that white people were God-chosen to exercise firm and patriarchal authority over black people. She saw nothing wrong with physical punishment being meted out by any white man to adult black people.



David (surname unknown) next to Grandparents Frieda and Hermann Jatow, in Swakopmund ca. 1925. In front of grandpa their daughter Ruth standing behind an unknown visiting child, and sitting, is son Hermann (junior). At the back on the right are uncle Horst and aunt Ilse, with Eva (my mother) in front of them.

7. Another racist statement we often heard at home was: '*They* are just not as far as *we* are yet'. The possibility of *them* catching up with *us*, seemed without prospect; in other words, eternal condemnation to second-class status.

8. We - the collective 'white', obliterated our own great, great, great grandmother from our vocabulary, from our reality and forced her into the recesses of our mind until she virtually did not exist any more. At the same time we took great pride that her husband, our great, great, great grandfather was the first white man (an incorrect assumption) to settle in Namibia. Grandmother Zara's blood and genes were hated in our part of the family, so much so that even one drop of her blood was too much to reside in our veins. Indeed, women historically are not credited for what they achieved, but Zara had a double handicap, being a black woman. We lied about you, Zara: we wanted you gone, we said that you were another person (namely Elisabeth Bam) in an effort to pretend that we descended from Elizabeth rather than you. This was a convenient but feeble lie because Elizabeth (she was the second wife of Hinrich Schmelen after Zara died) was not white either, but we pretended she was white because her name sounds white. Rejection fired by racism served the purpose to escape the consequences of a lower status and resulting social stigma. To rid the family of traces of 'black' blood, Zara's daughter Hanna, her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, were urged and

to follow the cardinal rule: marry a white person! The penalty for not adhering to this rule was ostracism. In this way, or so it was thought, the one drop would be diluted until it became infinitesimally small and the stigma eventually waned. When I started dating girls my dear mother would say: You can come home with any girl but don't dare come home with a black girl!

9. In 1972 my then wife (of Jewish descent) and I stood trial for refusing to testify before a secret apartheid tribunal, designed as a prelude to outlaw the Christian Institute we were both working for. The morning newspaper, the Rand Daily Mail did a background piece on us. Who were these dissidents, the article asked, Ilona from a Jewish and Zionist background and Horst from a German and fascist background? I am quoted as saying that my family was not as white as it claimed it was because we had a black grandmother in the distant past. The day after the article appeared one of my cousins phoned me. He said that I should cease dragging the family name through the mud. He told me that he and his wife were deeply upset by my 'allegation' that we had 'black' blood running in our veins. He ended the conversation with a threat: If anything were to go wrong with the child his wife was expecting, he would hold me responsible.

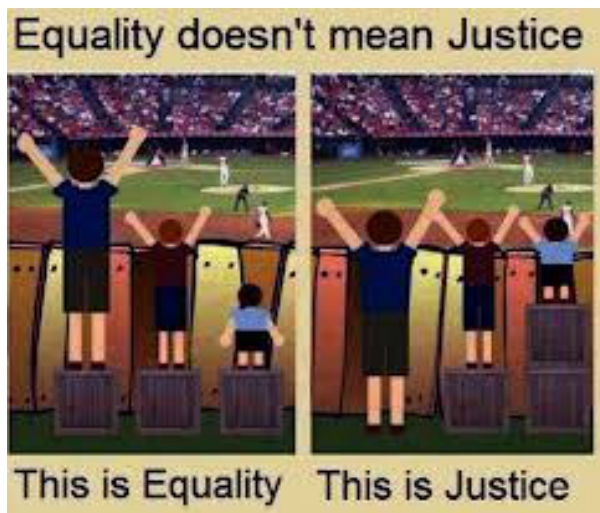
These truth's cannot be hidden in my mind; they must be stated in the open court of those whom it hurt. There is as yet no expiry date to telling these truth's, because race, class and status have left their mark so deeply that we must deal with the past – my own past.

To know the past we come from is the means by which we teach those who come after us never to allow racism and authoritarian rule to take root again.

In a future essay I intend to trace how racial profiling and classification affected my father, his father, my father's aunts and uncles, his immediate and his more distant cousins. They all suffered because of the curse of racism.

### **Equality and Justice.**

The most helpful image I came across recently expresses what I want to say:



Although South Africa has a Constitution that is hailed as the best in the world and we have a forthright Constitutional Court, there is no doubt that restitution and equality with justice remains a distant dream.

The concept of restitutive justice has gained currency in recent times. It suggests that without restitution justice is not served. In other words if I was plundered of my land and it is not returned to me (nor am I being compensated), then my chances of competing with the 'plunderer' in subsequent times is fraught to the point where I am never in a position to compete (economically) with the one who plundered. In a world order where riches begets more riches and where the poor in relation to the rich are ever worse off, the call for restitution will grow until it cannot be ignored.

In our family those who 'played for white', to my knowledge, happen not to have done well in regard to ownership of land or industrial complexes. To that extent, those of us who met in Komaggas were not as vastly unequal as might have been the case. It seems the lure of whiteness did not yield the hoped for material benefit. In the end whiteness relied entirely on a promise, underpinned by racial ideology, that stopped 'us' from acting in unity with you, the disadvantaged. And, tragically the lure of race remained. A false identity indeed! Together with all the other poor and poorer whites, my parents and grandparents did not 'make it', making their quest all the more pitiful. At the end of his life my grandfather owned no land. All he had was a small herd of goats grazing on another man's land. My father fared no better. When he died he owned no house or other property. And he stood alone, separated from a large sector of his relatives because of his chosen identity of race.

### **Conclusion.**

In Germany post 1945, the term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* – the collective action to confront and deal with the history one hails from, has powerfully brought into being people with an identity very different from that of their fathers. Such a quest has escaped the white populations of South Africa and Namibia till now. This must be deeply regretted. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is defined by Wikipedia as: a composite

German word that describes processes of dealing with the past (Vergangenheit = past; Bewältigung = coming to terms with, mastering, wrestling into submission), which is perhaps best rendered in English as "struggle to come to terms with the past". It is a key term in the study of post-1945 German literature and culture.

The South African author Antje Krog best represents this genre of writing in post apartheid South Africa. Her book *The Country of my Skull* is important in this connection.

Coming to terms with our past is the main thrust of what I have tried to convey to you here. It does not benefit those wronged in the past but it builds some elements upon which a national identity free of racial thinking becomes possible.

The need for justice with equality is a matter that neither I nor any of us can attain without being part of a major social or political movement. This eludes us to date, despite Namibia's freedom in 1990 and South Africa becoming a democracy in 1994.

I draw these conclusions:

1. This conversation is not complete until we, in our family, have all spoken and done so together.
2. Let us pursue an identity that transcends the narrow group identities, those based on the demon of race and together we identify ourselves as Africans.
3. To build a truly just society with equity is something we should act for together in the wider context of our society. Let race no longer be a barrier toward acting for the others' interests.
4. Constantly challenge our inherited biases against the 'other'.
5. Guard against survivors becoming perpetrators.

The above happened in one family, but I have a broader goal: I call on families, ordinary families like ours, to make it their business to find ways, to translate the Unfinished Business into something tangible and real that builds a new and inclusive identity. White families should all find out and speak out. It's not up to Government and faith organisations to do it for us!

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**The following poem and statement was written by Charles Otto /Uirab:**

**What was your aim?**

What was your aim?

Oh...yes...we ask...

What was your aim?

Our hands were in chains

Our feet were in chains  
These same chains around our necks.

Now we ask...  
What your aims were?  
Oh...we heard a rumour...  
That you think you were Superior.

You were holding guns  
You were killing our ancestors  
You were killing young children  
You were thinking you are "God"

You took our skulls for experiment  
Thinking you were "God"

Till today you think you are Superior.  
Coming to our Villages to Experiment  
Thinking you are Superior!!  
To do "Kama" Research

Today clearly, we see what your aim was...  
We gladly welcome you with open arms...  
For we know your thoughts, your ideas  
You "think" you were superior.

But...we know from the rivers of our blood  
The thoughts of your thinking.

Oh...yes...we know what your aims were  
We still know what your aim is now.

For this we say we love you...  
"Cause we feel the pain of hate  
We have physically experienced this.  
Oh...Jesus said: "Do not hate...  
"Cause you can not free your  
Feelings and thoughts.

For now we say we have seen the Promised Land –  
"Cause if you see a dog running to a cat there is no more greedy teeth".

For they said "Are we running to the  
Scramble For Africa ...Or...to be rescued  
From the "cliff" of our greediness by  
The little known "Red China"

Thoughts running through the Power Greediness of our time

For now we know the meaning of love ...  
Forgiveness and we say ...tomorrow is another day ...in which the sun shines  
Brightly over the horizon...

By : Charles Otto /Uirab

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The big question I want to ask today is: Who am I?

My mother is a Nama woman from the Swartbooi Clan and my father is a Damara man from Otjimbingue, but my mother also has German and British blood in her veins from her ancestors. This mean that I have blood of four different ethnic groups in my veins: Nama, Damara, German and British. Although I am thinking of myself as a Nama Boy from the Swartbooi Clan, how do I separate the other three blood groups from my Nama blood?

I think this makes me a multi-ethnic human being.

The second question I want to pose is: What really happened then in the 'Kleinschmidt Villa' in Otjimbingue? Was it forbidden love – of WHAT? What we know is that a son – our grandfather Ludwig (whose father was also Ludwig, the seventh child of Franz Heinrich and Hanna Kleinschmidt) – was born there, but he was sent away to Ondangwa, where he was raised by the Rautanens (missionary Rautanen married Frederike the older sister to Ludwig senior).

After everything that happened in the past, where to from here, here in Komaggas?

We, the descendants from grandfather Ludwig will not beg anyone to be accepted. Did grandfather Ludwig really ask to be born into the Kleinschmidt family? – He definitely did not! It was the will of the Almighty God.

Are we going to follow great grandfather Hinrich Schmelens example and follow the great Commendment of love?

Great grandfather Hinrich was a chosen gift from the heavens to our family to:

- Lead us through this journey to live our life in unity, love and with peace in our hearts.
- Come out of our box of hatred and arrogance, to live life in joy and in peace.

MAY THE SOULS OF OUR BELOVED GRANDMOTHER ZARA AND GRANDFATHER HINRICH SCHMELEN AS WELL AS GRANDMOTHER ELIZABETH BAM REST IN ETERNAL PEACE.

I thank you.

Charles Otto /Uirab.

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