

Dear friends and relations,

My occasional Newsletters date back to 2009. My intention initially was to discover, record and share the hidden history in my family – the divide between those who claimed to be 'white' and did so at the expense of those in the family whose shade of skin colouration did not meet their paradigm of 'whiteness' and all that this entailed. My side of the family were part of the colonial and apartheid system that used "race" to assert a crass class divide. It served the purpose of exceptional power and privilege for those at the top of the pile.

Despite this, in my family, those who asserted whiteness did not make it far up the white hierarchy. There are complex reasons for this, but the 'white' side did not end up with land or material wealth. Nor did they rise to high office in the political dispensations. In retrospect that is something to be grateful for but it does not detract from the role we played directly and indirectly to perpetuate minority rule. The burden of this past still weighs heavily on us/me.

To confront the past my quest was to have the two strands of the family face one another and for those from the 'wrong' side of history to acknowledge and ask to be reconciled with those wronged in the past. These two parts of our family met in 2014 and again 2016 – 150 of us on each occasion coming from Namibia, South Africa, Germany, Finland and the USA. The healing process had started and today we visit and communicate across the former divide – the 100 years of schism is in some measure overcome.

Our family journey still needs emulating! Tens of thousands of families at the southern tip of Africa remain divided in that the 'white' families maintain separation to perpetuate an identity of superiority. Like our family they have darker complexioned cousins. They deny their own uncles, grandmothers or nieces. There is no rainbow – such as Bishop Tutu once hoped – as long as a big part of 'white' South Africa and Namibia continue to stand aloof and deny what happened in the past. This requires an apology by actual perpetrators and acknowledgement by their children.

Our family project still needs nurturing. Unlearning an upbringing rooted in 'them' and 'othering', is complex and difficult. I am grateful to school friend, Reinoud Boers who pointed me to a recent essay by Inge Kühne – deputy Editor of Rapport. As someone also from the 'perpetrator class' she explores 'forgiveness' and 'paying reparations' in present-day South Africa. I urge you to read her contribution. Her piece was published in Daily Maverick. I identify with most that she says and then add a caveat: unless we build equal (more equal) societies the exploitation or oppression of one group over another will repeat itself.

In our own family not everyone is at the joint family table yet. **Otto Uirab challenged me** when we met in Fransfontein in 2016 to bring the remaining outsiders to the joint table. This task is still outstanding. It remains on my to-do list.

My recent Newsletters have been concerned with broad societal issues but their essence is another part of the unfinished business I refer to in our family. I temporarily left research and re-interpretation of our family past and am engaged in social issues, also activism, in the broad societal and political spheres. Now the baton of family research is being taken up by **cousin Kenneth Makatees** who registered for a Masters degree with **Stellenbosch University** to research our family history. His focus will be on the third daughter of the Zara and Hinrich Schmelen, Friederika (Friederike) who married Christian Bam. From what we know the tragic divide cut deeply here too – similar to the Kleinschmidt branch of the family.

As to personal news: Christine and I are well and have been supportive and productive during the confinement of the epidemic. We have not been ill. Christine continues to paint and runs her small **studio shop from above the Olympia Café in Kalk Bay**. The absence of visitors to come and appreciate her work does at times dampen her spirits, but – see on the front page of my webpage – she recently painted a portrait of Beyers Naudé. The painting complements work I am busy with (see

below).

We have both escaped the harm of the epidemic, not least because of the fortuitous conditions in which we are able to live.

My work involves:

1. I try and be an ongoing watchdog over the hopelessly inadequate role by the City of Cape Town over my neighbours in **Masiphumelele – they are Black!** See below. On 20 December 2020 a fire destroyed 1000 homes in one night leaving 6000 people without a roof over their head.
2. With friend **Walter Sauer**, we aim to complete a book on the secret letters Beyers Naudé smuggled out of South Africa between 1976 and 1990.
3. Complementing the above book is my recent task with **film director Mark Kaplan** to produce a documentary film on the secret and undercover work Beyers Naudé was involved in.
4. The **Rev Mashwabada ‘Castro’ Mayathula** was a colleague at the Christian Institute and a particular source of inspiration to Beyers Naudé. Recently his family inaugurated the Mashwabada and Monica Mayathula Foundation. I was asked to address the gathering – part gathering in Museum Africa in Johannesburg, part ‘virtual’. In my address to the meeting I seek to show layers of complexity to the way the struggle developed in the 1980s; between internal-external, between political structures vs MK structures; of Black Consciousness, UDF and ANC. The subject deserves far more attention and found a fertile response amongst those present. See below or on my website.
5. I also was asked to write and submitted a chapter for a book (due to the epidemic it will only be published in 2022) on the **extraordinary relationship between Sweden and the people of South Africa who fought for freedom during the apartheid years**. My focus is on the history of the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa. IDAF received extraordinary support from the Swedish public, its Government and public institutions. I pay tribute to this.
6. In November a wonderful, solid ally and friend died, aged 96. He was Enuga S Reddy, the man who made the United Nations Centre against Apartheid into a most capable vehicle against all and any nations seeking to appease the racist state. In the late 80s he also served as a Trustee of IDAF. We remained in touch until recently.

There are new entries on most of the subject pages of my website. As I build the time index of the years of my life I capture images, mostly augmented by short texts to identify location, persons and dates. You might be able to help – only if you feel like it – to augment where my memory has let me down. Go to www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za.

Best wishes to you all.

Yours,

Horst.