

SK Newsletter 13

January 2012.

Dear friends,

My very best wishes for 2012! May you enjoy good health, and many happy moments with those you love and care for!

And ...

May the anticipated economic turmoil spare its worst effect on you! Here in South Africa we are in the slipstream of the 2008 global crises when we lost 1 million jobs and struggle hard to regain any. Neo-liberal economics has caused new investment to go where labour is cheaper than in South Africa. With very high refugee numbers in our country, they are the ones for whom the unkindest cut is reserved.

This Newsletter is about Namibia and what I perceive to be hardened opposition to the prospect of national reconciliation by one population group.

I want to write about a history that hurts, whom it hurts and why it hurts. It is about pain, inflicted by a deep wound. And I want to reflect on reconciliation, equality and peace. I write as a born Namibian, of want-to-be white stock, not just any white stock, but of part German stock. There is much unfinished business to resolve in Namibia (and South Africa) if nationhood in either country is to be achieved. However inadequately I succeed to express it, this is my burden and the burden of this essay.

Namibia attained independence (from South Africa) nearly 22 years ago. Today it has a democratic constitution, holds elections, has a functioning judiciary and has a small civil society. But Namibia, like South Africa is a young democracy and unsurprisingly both countries face many challenges. To eventually move toward a more mature and full democracy, civil society needs constantly guard that the gains made are not reversed.

If it were possible I would want to reach those of German descent in Namibia but few are likely to hear of or read these lines. I am not the first one of German descent who seeks for this community to make peace with its past and therefore become a real part of the whole of Namibian society. An impressive list of courageous women and men go before me and I want to add weight to their endeavour started long ago. If my plea reaches a new audience, however small, I will be pleased.

Recent events are the impulse for my thoughts. It is the return by the Charité hospital in Berlin, of the skulls of 20 Herero and Nama fighters who rose against German colonial occupation over 100 years ago. The purpose of taking the skulls to Germany was to serve studies in racial theories and ultimately the odious claim of German superiority. The belated hand-over of the skulls has shown once more how very far we are from reconciliation and healing.

Hurt or pain is felt through loss and suffering. It is felt additionally when those in whose name it was inflicted say nothing, or worse, argue that no wrong was committed.

The open wound German speakers in Namibia cannot ignore or remain silent about

I will not repeat the horrific events here but will urge everyone to read one of three books, which I highly recommend:

1. Germany's Genocide of the Herero - Kaiser Wilhelm II, His General, His Settlers, His Soldiers, by Prof. Jeremy Sarkin published in 2011 by UCT Press and James Currey.
2. Genozid und Gedenken - Namibisch-deutsche Geschichte und Gegenwart, Edited by Henning Melber and published by Brandes and Apsel in 2005.
3. The Kaiser's Holocaust - Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism, by David Olusoga and Casper Erichsen, published by Faber and Faber in 2011.

This is not an extensive list of books. There are several others, mainly in German, including the role of the Church and Missionaries. German speakers of Namibia: we are part of and the result of that history, and Imperial Germany acted in our collective name!

What hurts the Herero and Nama people? Not individual selected and isolated colonial acts, but the sum of the colonial and pre-colonial periods, as Festus Muundjua, a Ovaherero and Ovambanderu historian laid out in an article he wrote for the German language Namibian newspaper, the Allgemeine Zeitung, on 12 August 2004, one century after the war. He recalls the Berlin Conference of 1884, where Europe's colonialists and German aspirant colonialists met to carve up Africa for themselves. Some countries were invited as observers, including Tsarist Russia and the USA, but not a single African received an invitation. Muundjua speaks for all of Africa when he says "one cannot begin the discussion on reconciliation by talking about the first shots that were fired on 12 January 1904". Dr. Werner Wienecke, a retired Namibian Pastor, supports this view. "When Governor Leutwein, in a letter in February 1904 asks Samuel Maharero why the war started, he answered him, with total justification: This war has been going on for a long time and was triggered by the traders and Lieutenant Zuern. There have already been many violent disputes and murders, and every act of violence, in which someone suffers injury or is killed, it is "ovita", which means war". (Allgemeine Zeitung, 15 January 2004)

Germany, as a latecomer in the scramble for Africa, could exercise little choice over what to occupy as most chunks of Africa had already been occupied, but they did not want to be left without. They had to act fast if their Empire was to be able to stand up to the British, French, Spanish and Portuguese Empires. Playing catch-up meant moving with furious haste to build their version of a colony - something the other powers achieved and mediated over long periods of time. With the characteristic contempt that all European powers showed for those whose land they wanted, and with a solid serving of chicanery, Germany moved into action after the Berlin conference to hoist its flag in different parts of Africa. The usual euphemisms adorned the 'purchases' of land: 'protectorate' and 'friendship treaty', terminology not unique to Germany.

Germany had not only the problem to 'catch up', in Namibia they encountered a development, unique or rare because of circumstances that had begun to shape this country when they arrived. Both Herero and the Nama had themselves already set out on the journey toward modern political power. The Herero had, around the middle of the 19th century, become strong traders. Their trade in ivory, ostrich feathers and cattle with the Cape Colony, had provided access to commodities including horses, guns, ox-wagons, European clothing and other accoutrements that brought with it significant social change and adaptation. Both Herero and Nama readily added the Christian faith and resulting access to education to the sum of what contributed to reform and the making of new elites.

These dynamics led both Herero and Nama leaders to embrace modern concepts of statehood; from the Herero defining of borders for the lands they considered theirs and the Oorlam Nama emulating governance they had seen and experienced in the Cape. Germany thus entered a land in 1885 rather different from that which other colonial powers had entered decades and centuries earlier, elsewhere on the African continent. With some hesitation I venture to suggest that this reality in the late 19th century posed, together with the desire to catch up, two formidable problems for Germany, and explains partly why the Germans, during their brief rule in Namibia, acted with such violence. But as scholars have pointed out, these were by no means the only reasons for the violence and excesses.

The Proclamation by Chief Kamaharero of September 1884, written in Otjiherero and German asserted a Herero state with boundaries in Central Namibia covering the water-rich areas where subsequently Germany saw the richest pickings for the farmers they had in mind. His declaration predates the German intentions to occupy and replace local rule in the lands on which Kamaharero's people had always practiced their animal husbandry. And aspirations of statehood and hegemony over parts of Namibia (partly in contest with Kamaharero) existed with Jonker Afrikaner in Windhoek. Jonker Afrikaner was later replaced in this pursuit by Hendrik Witbooi.

The German - Herero/Nama war started in 1904 and effectively lasted until 1908. The driving of Herero warriors with their women and children into the Kalahari, the Omaheke, and into Botswana (then the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland), denying them watering holes and poisoning others, resulted in

dramatically reducing the Herero population estimated at 80,000 at the time. Further losses took place in the concentration camps.

On 12 January 1904 the Herero attack on the Germans started with an instruction by their leaders to save German children and women, to save the missionaries, and the whites of other countries, including boer farmers. The deaths of Germans numbered 116 civilians and 13 Schutztruppe soldiers. It is true that amongst the civilians were some women and children. Comparable to wars of this kind in modern times, German revenge demanded that the casualties of their enemy had to be a multiple many times that of their own losses.

After the Omaheke slaughter, those Herero who had remained were rounded up to serve as slave labour, mostly for the building of rail links to the interior of the country. To achieve this concentration camps, were erected in Windhoek, Karibib, Swakopmund, and the most notorious of them all on Shark Island in front of Luderitz Bay harbour. Although the need for labour existed, the treatment of the inmates was such that large percentages died of exposure, hunger, beatings and hangings (hangings took place on Sunday afternoons). Women and children were not spared. So bad was the treatment that the conservative missionary Heinrich Vedder wrote about the Swakopmund Camp: "The provision of food leaves much to be desired: rice without any additives which is not enough ... to sustain those weakened from life in the veld who [previously] were accustomed to the hot sun of the interior [and now] exposed to the cold here and the demand on all their strength [for the labour they supplied]. Like cattle hundreds were driven to their deaths and like cattle they were buried."

The Nama were equally decimated (some were deported to other West African German colonies after the war). It is estimated, that half their population, some 10,000 perished, whilst guerrilla groups continued to pin down the German troops in the south. In countless skirmishes the Nama inflicted loss of men and prestige on the Schutztruppe. This was only reversed after Germany increased the Schutztruppe massively. The Nama were finally defeated in 1908.

The victors did behave dishonourably

One member of the Schutztruppe, Oberleutnant Erich von Schaubert, in letters to his father (at the time he wanted them to remain confidential. His gripe was mainly motivated by his lack of promotion), were published recently in a book called "Liebes Vaeterchen" (Dear little Papa), he makes interesting observations. In one place he says of the Nama guerrilla fighters: "These are honourable opponents. They come to us with a white flag to declare war in writing; that is 'honourable'. Elsewhere he again describes them as honourable when he observes that in the skirmishes they won against the Germans, they would come back afterwards to bury the German dead, making sure that the highest ranking officers got 'the best graves'. But crucially, he writes to his father: 'we will eventually defeat them when we have enough men in the country, but when they are defeated they deserve to be treated with honour'. As is known no

such honour was observed when they were eventually defeated; instead they were massacred.

The on-going attempts by people like the German-speaking farmer Heiner Schneider-Waterberg might be justified if they served historic truthfulness and had the aim toward reconciliation - between the former adversaries. This requires something other than belligerent challenges coming from the side of the victors.

I was born in Swakopmund

The monument commemorating the sacrifices of a marine contingent among the Schutztruppe in the war against the Herero and Nama stands in the middle of Swakopmund, in front of the official summer residence of the Namibian Head of State and, with its adjacent handicraft market, is the most frequented tourist location. It was erected in German times.

A memorial stone of those killed in the Swakopmund concentration camp was only erected in 2007, located well out of sight, on the margins of the town,

The contrast cannot be starker.



On the left the concentration camp memorial stone, out of sight, on the outskirts of Swakopmund and the Marine memorial to the German soldiers in the centre of the town. The memorial on the left was unveiled in 2007, the memorial on the right was 100 years old in 2008. In the foreground is the men's (all white) choir on the occasion of the memorials centenary.

As a child, during our annual holiday to Swakopmund, we sometimes passed the mounds and occasional crosses on the banks of the Swakop river, an unkempt and wind-swept graveyard, located somewhere beyond the white Christian and small Jewish cemeteries. This is what I remember being told: This is where the 'Blacks'

were buried who perished when the Spanish influenza hit Swakopmund in 1919, 'They died like flies, but they are not like us, they don't look after their dead in the way we do'. When I asked our mother recently, about a concentration camp in Swakopmund, she said with genuine astonishment, 'that is something I have never heard about, that is a terrible thing (if it was so)'.



Swakopmund, November 2011: The wind-swept mounds are a reminder of the graves of those who perished in the Swakopmund concentration camp. In the distance the Namib dunes

Our family connection to the Schutztruppe is real. Going through old photographs I see one of my grand-aunt on my father's side, depicting her with the man she married. He is in Schutztruppen uniform. Ironically, Aunt Mathilde was initially, forbidden to get married by the German Magistrate (in Karibib in 1911) to a German, because of our black grandmother. Another photograph is of a grand-uncle, Onkel Richard, who had come to Namibia to serve in the Schutztruppe. The photo shows domestic bliss with the sister of my grandmother sitting on his lap. I never heard any dark tales about the war, but can I be sure there were not any? My grandfather served in the Rheinische Mission and my other grandfather worked for Telefunken. Where they silent witnesses?

And there is the picture of great-uncle Ludwig Kleinschmidt, flanked by Governor Theodor Leutwein on the one side and omuhona Manasse Maharero on the other. He was employed as a translator. Kleinschmidt is said to have distanced himself from the Germans over their conduct after the 1904 war, but the evidence is not clear.



On the left Governor Theodor Leutwein, in the middle with paper in his hand, Ludwig Kleinschmidt and seated on the right omuhona Manasse Manasse, leader of the Herero in Omaruru. The picture was taken in 1895 in Omaruru at the German fortification.

During my visits to Swakopmund I meet and talk to many old folk at the retirement home where my mother stays. I try to find out about their history and what brought their families to Namibia. One old man, in his day, ran a car repair shop in Gibeon (the place of the Witbooi's until around 1908). He is typical for many when he told me: well my father farmed in the area. And when did they come from Germany? Tja, he said, as Schutztruppler, and after the war he stayed 'to take up farming'. And then he added: Yes, we are the remnants of the good, old South-Westerns. - No sense of the other people in the land, and then with a sigh: those were the good old days.

In another conversation an old biddie of some means, is convinced that her family are the rightful owners of a well-to-do farm in Okahandja. "we have the original contract signed by Maharero in which he sold this farm to us". The social circumstance in which land was eventually the only buying power left to pay traders, is met with a shrug, "that is his fault, he should have been more careful". And then the notion of justification, "he should not have succumbed to drink" ("Der haette halt nicht dem Suff verfallen sollen."). - Equally, no knowledge of history, just the well-worn arguments of justification.

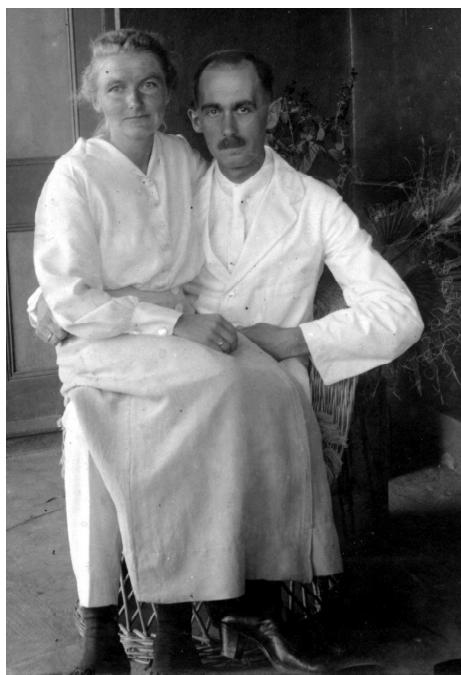
All of this points to the need for education and the search for an honest pursuit of history that is not based on victor triumphalism. It demands of young German speakers in Namibia to examine the history and to make a break with the image portrayed by a proportion of their elders.



From left: Mathilde Kleinschmidt with F.W. Ewaldt, the man she married in Windhoek, in 1911 after the marriage officer in Karibib told her of a 'new policy' in terms of which she, being considered of 'mixed blood' was prohibited from marrying a 'pure' German. On appeal the verdict was overturned in the Windhoek registry office. To the right is Gerhard Kleinschmidt, my grandfather, and probably Helene, the sister to both Mathilde and Gerhard. The picture was probably taken in Karibib, Namibia, prior to WWI. Ewaldt wears a Schutztruppen uniform and on the table is his Imperial German helmet, referred to as Pickelhaube (Spiked Helmet), typical for the German army of that period. About his role and actions in Namibia I know nothing. Gerhard was not in the Schutztruppe, although he was conscripted when WWI started. Prior to that and subsequently he worked as a mission farmer for the Rhenish Mission in Grootfontein.

The sum of the colonial wounds is a trauma for Herero and Nama children and their grandchildren who live today. Nobody should deny this or belittle the feelings it evokes. The Afrikaners remember the concentration camps the British erected in the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) and the Jewish people will and cannot forget the holocaust. For the same reason the Herero and Nama will and cannot forget, especially when there is still no collective acknowledgement, apology or restitution. Peter Katjavivi, former Namibia Ambassador to Germany said, "The repatriation of the skulls is an essential component of regaining our past and our dignity".

It is said that there are possibly another 300 skulls at different German Universities. Another return of skulls is scheduled for the first half of 2012.



From our family album: Tante Martha and Onkel Richard. I remember him as the kindly, courteous stamp collector who worked as a Bookkeeper at the German bookshop Calissen, in Windhoek. He had come to Namibia as a young soldier of the Schutztruppe. When my mothers parents came to work in Windhoek in 1911, he is said to have asked: Dear Mr. Jatow, I would want a wife like yours, is there not another one like her? Oma Jatow had a sister in Kiel Germany and she came for the explicit purpose of marrying Onkel Richard. I know nothing about his role or his recollections of his time in the Schutztruppe.

To say, "I am sorry"

There are instructive precedents where an apology was offered.

1. The Netherlands Apology in December 2011.

The Dutch government has apologized formally for a massacre in the village of Rawagede, Indonesia, 64 years ago. The massacre took place on 9 December 1947 when Indonesia fought for its independence. Dutch troops killed men and boys as young as 13 as their families and neighbours were forced to look on. Dutch officials claimed 150 people were killed, but locals say the death toll was 431. The apology follows a ruling at a civil court in The Hague, that the Dutch state was responsible for the executions. The court rejected the Dutch governments argument that no claim could be lodged because the Dutch statute of limitations of five years had passed. Recently a Dutch Government representative said, "In this context and on behalf of the Dutch government, I apologize for the tragedy that took place in Rawagede." He issued the apology in English and then in Indonesian. "I come here not only as a representative of the Dutch government, I come here as a representative of the Dutch Parliament and the Dutch people. In addition to the apology, the

Dutch government is compensating the widows and families of those killed with a payment of 20,000 euros [each]" he said. The Dutch lawyer for the widows welcomed the apology but added that no amount of money could compensate for the loss the women and families had suffered.

2. Australian apology to Aborigines, in February 2008

The Australian government made a formal apology for the past wrongs by successive governments to the indigenous Aboriginal population. The then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, apologised in parliament to all Aborigines for laws and policies that "inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss". He singled out the "Stolen Generations" of thousands of children forcibly removed from their families. A motion acknowledging all this was unanimously adopted by the Australian parliament. The "Stolen Generations" refers to Aboriginal children who were taken from their parents in a policy of assimilation into white colonists which lasted from the 19th Century to the late 1960s. "For the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry". Former Prime Minister John Howard had refused for over a decade to apologise.

3. West German Chancellor Willy Brandt apologised on December 7, 1970.

When he travelled to Warsaw, Poland, on a state visit meant to improve relations with Poland and the USSR, Willy Brandt attended a commemoration of the Jewish victims of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943. Although it had been decades since the historic uprising and the end of the Holocaust, Brandt spontaneously dropped to his knees before the monument as an act of apology and repentance. He later describe his thought: An unusual burden accompanied me on my way to Warsaw. Nowhere else had a people suffered as in Poland. The machine-like annihilation of Polish Jewry represented a heightening of bloodthirstiness that no one had [ever] considered possible.

On the occasion Brandt later said "[I] had to do something to express the particularity of the commemoration at the ghetto monument. On the abyss of German history and carrying the burden of the millions who were murdered, I did what people do when words fail them."

The image of Willy Brandt kneeling in front of the Warsaw memorial has become symbolic of accepting the past and of understanding it as an obligation toward reconciliation and as an obligation for a common future.



In August 2004 Social-Democrat Member of the German Parliament, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, then Minister for Economic Development and Co-operation, offered an apology to the Herero people. This was undoubtedly important but the German Parliament did not endorse her apology. German civil society, with newfound momentum and together with the media, is currently pushing for an apology from the German Parliament.

The Germans in Germany need to deal with the apology that has been denied for 108 years. But theirs' is not my concern. My concern is for dialogue, willingness to debate and ultimately acceptance by a truly representative group of Namibian German speakers, to offer in word and in deed, an apology that is capable of building bridges. This is different from asking for a response from a Government but undoubtedly there is a special responsibility that lies with the German speaking community.

The words 'I am sorry' seem, no are, the most difficult words to utter. President de Klerk was reported as saying, at the time of the South African transition to democracy, that he, as a trained lawyer, knew the implications of apologising unconditionally. He said apologising led to paying reparations, the limit of which could not be estimated. He therefore never offered an outright apology.

The German speakers of Namibia and similarly the white community of South Africa are yet to come to terms with what was done in the past, in their name.

Two injunctions that urge action.

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 defines Genocide as "acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group". This goes to the heart of collective punishment, of being punished for being a member of a

racial or other kind of group. In pursuit of reconciliation the present day standard of what constitutes Genocide must be applied, even though such definition and such resolution did not exist at the time the acts were perpetrated.

The other injunction is from a person who stands out for me as someone who stretched out his hand toward the prospect of reconciliation in Namibia. He is Raimar von Hase, a German-speaking farmer who spoke, he said, on behalf of the German community (how big a part of that community?) at Ohamakari (the place at the Waterberg where the German - Herero war started) when a memorial meeting was held on the centenary of the genocide in August 2004. Excerpts of his paper (translated by myself from the report in the Allgemeine Zeitung of 17 August 2004) are pertinent:

"I am thankful and deeply moved that I have the opportunity ... to speak to you, not as a historian and not as a politician, but as a German-speaking Namibian and farmer and - more importantly - as a Namibian compatriot.

I, as a German-speaking Namibian - together with other Germans, who live and work in this country - see and share the pain of our compatriots today. We mourn with you the forebears, who were killed in their own country by a foreign military superior power. The survivors were robbed of their land, their cattle and with that not only the basis of their existence, but their cultural identity ... We bow our heads in respect for all who lost their lives 100 years ago.

Our pain is also directed at our German forebears. We know that they caused an immense injustice to thousands of Namibians and that tens of thousands died in this country because of the actions of the German Schutztruppe. To know this and to accept this is also pain and grief for us.

We also mourn all the civilians who lost their lives in this war as well as the countless German men, who lost their lives in a foreign land, because they had to obey military commands. And we feel gratitude towards the missionaries and civil servants who had the courage to resist the pressure of the Colonial Government, and who did much to soften the suffering of the people in concentration camps and prisons...

On the 11 January [2004] ... Bishop Kameeta said during the ... memorial service, which was held jointly with his German colleague Bishop Keding: 'Indeed it is a divine miracle that we can now look back together at the terrible things that happened a century ago and that we are holding hands as sisters and brothers to face the future'.

This has become possible because our Namibian compatriots, for the past 100 years, never gave up the gesture toward reconciliation.

They, the children of the victims of 1904 have not shown any feelings of revenge toward German speakers.

They confronted us with respect.

They extended us the hand of reconciliation.

They remained ready to speak to us.

For that we are deeply thankful and I want to express those thanks here today.

The message of this historic day is clear: We must confront what happened in 1904. We all have to do this, so that the message of

1904, for us, and for our children, reminds us that conflict and division must never again be solved with weapons and violence... This day is an unavoidable sign that the problems that exist in this country, because of its history until today, be resolved in mutual respect in freedom in a peaceful democracy. I therefore appeal to all my German compatriots: Let us seek dialogue, to hear from our Namibian fellow citizens how we can assist to heal the wounds of the past. ... our willingness to reconcile, needs to be evident and effective both through our words and our deeds."

Ignorance or sullen silence will not help heal the wound that hurts one part of the Namibian people.

Reconciliation is necessary if a united and reconciled Namibian nation is to come about. This requires coming to terms with our history. It requires honesty and willingness to acknowledge. Whether directly or indirectly Namibian German speakers are part of the history of the land they profess to love above all others. Why is there such a lack of willingness to reconcile in tangible ways? Is it arrogance? Does it mask a continued belief in superiority? Or might it be that we as individuals or families or churches do not know to whom to say, 'I am sorry' to, and precisely for what it is that we apologise?

The Germans of Namibia are a small minority, even amongst the white population. No more than 1.1% of all Namibian households have German as a home language (3,654 households), which is much less than Afrikaans (39,481 or 11.4%) or English (6,522 or 1.9%), (2001 population survey). Yet the German community sticks out. They have their own schools, they have their own newspaper and radio station and they are very prominent in the business and farming sectors. They have without a doubt done much that developed Namibia, but humility and contrition, it would appear, is not their strength. Or am I wrong?

The following would be my outline for a reconciliation rulebook:

1. It is a great gift for anyone to be able to say I am sorry and to apologise.
2. The even greater gift is to say: My advantage derives from land, material and social benefit; I will find ways to pay back or return - something.
3. A reconciled or equal playing field is not one where some live in their current affluence imagining that the 'others' should eventually reach their standard of living. Reconciliation is, in the final analyses, about economic equality. The Have's must face their huge advantage. Equal ultimately means for those who have, to give up some of their possessions in order for others to get a little more.
6. Those who apologise cannot, should not, expect or demand forgiveness; it is not theirs to ask this.
7. The debate between former adversaries should be preceded by 'internal' discussion and a search for answers and solutions.
8. Symbolic acts are as important as deeds; both have to be performed.

9. If white people wish to live in Africa they need to become African. This does not mean giving up those things that are true values in their tradition, culture and religion. But such values cannot be a veil to practice racism, harbour superiority attitudes or to remain 'separate'.

10. Reconciliation is every individual's task, especially when a collective apology is outstanding. Don't make it the task of your Government, your Church or your organisation. They have responsibility too, but it starts with individuals and families who have the courage to think about what their role is or might be.

There are courageous German-speaking individuals in Namibia who have been outstanding for their role to correct and revise the traditionally held view of their community. They include freedom fighters in the liberation struggle, historians, clergy and those who refused to carry guns when conscripted by the apartheid army. And there are those who have helped build the postcolonial state. But they stand as individuals without speaking for a sizeable sector of the German-speaking community. The return of the skulls to Namibia opened the wound of history once more and serves to remind us that there is unfinished business. It calls on good women and men to stand up to speak and act as Raimar von Hase called for in 2004.

Germany must do the right thing, but we who have roots in Namibia need to do the right thing here. I would gladly participate in a dialogue that takes this discussion forward.

My involvement in Namibia's history comes far too late in my life. My knowledge and interpretation may not be accurate in places, but that is not the point. Deep in my heart I know that silence is not an option.

I state my sorrow for a history that cannot be changed, but I would much rather do this collectively, with others, to the Herero and Nama people of Namibia.

Horst Kleinschmidt, Cape Town.

