

# What Really Happened In Rehoboth

WE are hereby trying to correct the dangerously irresponsible statements made by one Alfred Stephanus Dax, a Swapo backbencher in the National Council.

This man is clearly showing his ignorance that the Swapo reconciliation policy is a total sham meant to deceive the people of Namibia. It is also very clear to us that he has been appointed to launch a racist attack against the Rehoboth Basters.

I shall hereby try and sketch to Mr Dax how the Baster people have come to ultimately settle in the Rehoboth of today. I am not sure whether Mr Dax can grasp to historical facts that I am going to present but that is not my problem. During the start of the 19th century both the Nama and the Baster people who sprang from each other's loins, felt the bad administration of the Cape colonial government. Together they decided to look for salvation across the Orange River and outside the reach of the Cape colonial government. There were many streams ever moving northwards but the main ones were the name groups of Witbooi, Afrikaner and others. Together with them were the Basters under Kaptein Hermanus van Wyk heading northwards while another group split eastwards towards Rietfontein.

It was a journey over many years of forbearances and suffering without food or water at times until Van Wyk's trek finally reached the Rhenish Mission of Brother Kleinschmidt at Rehoboth. With proper agreements between the Baster Kaptein and the Hereros, the dominant force at that time in the region, the Basters settled at Rehoboth and its environs.

Previously the Rehoboth Mission was inhabited by the Swartbooi Nama clan, but by the time the Basters arrived, they had abandoned the area for Otjimbingwe because they were involved with conflicts with Jan Jonker Afrikaner.

The Basters never took land or anything else from anybody in Namibia. The Rehoboth area where they first settled was totally unoccupied and an open area devoid of Nama or Hereros. Numerically it was also

impossible for small clans like the Swartboois and others to have occupied an area the size of the original Rehoboth gebied. In spite of this, Kaptein Van Wyk made agreements with Samuel Maherero, Jan Jonker Afrikaner and others to ensure the peaceful coexistence of the Basters with their immediate neighbours.

All that the history shows is that Van Wyk made strenuous efforts to make peace among the warring faction of Witbooi, Maherero and Afrikaner. He wanted above all else to have peace in this land and security for his people. He set up an administration in Rehoboth based on the organised ownership of land and property and law and order. His administration started to delimit and regulate the sizes of farms. The citizens started naming their farms and title deeds were issued.

Since the Basters were of mixed origin, all of them spoke mainly German, Dutch and Nama. And they freely gave names they preferred to their farms. Many preferred to give Nama names to their farms, names that still exist today.

Now along comes Alfred Dax claiming that farms with Nama names belong to Damaras. Damaras never owned any piece of land in the Rehoboth gebied.

What we know from history is that Damaras initially lived on the western hills of Rehoboth. This was a shanty town built with rusted pieces of tin. The Damara inhabitants of that part of Rehoboth town were mainly domestic servants and farm workers.

They admittedly lived in very adverse social and economic conditions. To address this eyesore, the Rehoboth government under Kaptein Hans Diergaardt built a new and modern suburb on the eastern part of Rehoboth and freely gave it to the inhabitants of the shantytown.

Today that modern suburb under the very same Alfred Stephanus Dax is fast becoming another shantytown.

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