

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

Just north of the Tropic of Controversy

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Dear Peter:

Imagine a tiny so-called "homeland" formally recognized as a sovereign state under the South African apartheid policy of separate development for each racial group. Populate this bantustan with a conservative non-white people who fear domination by other ethnic groups under impending black majority rule. Give them an administration run by political leaders who swear to secede from any independent nation elected under a one-man, one-vote system unless the homeland is granted autonomy.

After international sanctions and a liberation struggle culminate in the surrounding country's independence, so the scenario goes, military troops of the new central government must be called in to evict the homeland's administration from the old municipal building. Barricades go up and the recalcitrants, armed with hunting rifles and knives, gather in the town from surrounding farms. In the ensuing conflict, a townsman is shot dead by soldiers. After the community simmers for several tense months, the controversy comes to a rolling boil when title to the bantustan's land is officially transferred to the fledgling government. This isn't unusual, since the newly democratic country has assumed control of all other ethnic homelands. In this area, however, an enraged mob marches on the house of the government-appointed interim administrator to protest what they see as the expropriation of their land without their knowledge or consent. Riot police ring the official's home and block the demonstrators at the entrance gate to the house. The crowd demands dismissal of the outside administrator and threatens a violent take-over of the municipal building to resume self-rule. School children boycott classes. The government refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the embattled homeland's pre-independence leader, spurning his communiques.

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Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young adults to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. Endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

In several heated town meetings, well-publicized in the national press, the population bitterly denounces the ruling party of the new regime. The people's accusations of bad faith and land stealing are countered by the government's allegations of ethnic racism and right-wing extremism. The whole mess is made worse by the unspoken enmity between the two sides that dates back to the days of armed struggle for independence, during which each group characterized the other as "terrorists" or "collaborators." Ironically, the leaders of the former homeland appeal for help to the same world bodies that assisted the new government in ending apartheid rule: the United Nations and the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The wrangling continues in the courts where legal proceedings will probably drag on for years and sour feelings throughout the country.

This is the pattern that will be seen in post-apartheid South Africa in a few years when the Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Movement will defend land rights to their KwaZulu homeland or when the Bophuthatswana regime of President Lucas Mangope shuns incorporation into an "undivided South Africa" now being negotiated without him. But this is not just a hypothetical example of what could happen in South Africa. I'm not looking into a crystal ball: I'm standing in the streets of Namibia's second largest city. The above drama is still unfolding in Rehoboth, where both blacks and whites are viewed with equal suspicion by the 20,000 "off-white" citizens.

The Tropic of Capricorn slices through the Rehoboth region just south of the city, according to a sign on the highway. By the time I left that area for good, I figured the sign should have read: "You are now crossing the Tropic of Controversy."

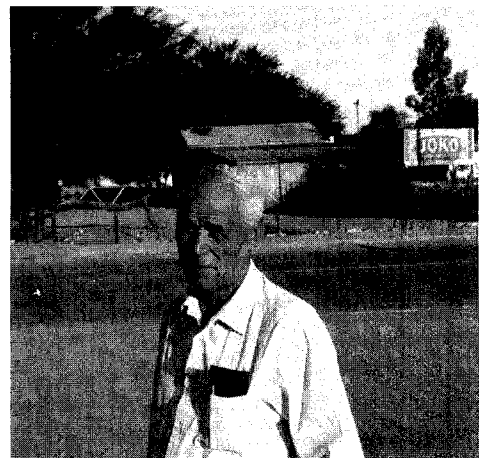
The first time I was in Rehoboth, while driving from Botswana through South Africa and then north to Namibia's capital city of Windhoek, I couldn't put my finger on why this town seemed odd. After parking my car on the main street and walking into a supermarket to buy groceries for the continuing road trip, it finally dawned on me. Almost everybody was stained a nicotine yellow color, from the shoppers and check-out clerk to the children playing on the sidewalk outside. Only the shabbily-clad security guard looked like a black African, while everyone else looked like light-skinned black Americans in their nice clothes and well-coiffed hair styles. I later struck up a conversation with a man waiting to use a public telephone, but made an unfortunate choice of words. "Excuse me, but could you tell me something?" I asked him in my broadest American accent so he wouldn't mistake me for a South African. "Everyone I see in this city is colored, so would this be a former colored township?" The man's face changed from blank passivity to an angry sneer. "I'm not colored, I'm a bastard. Don't call us colored!" Shocked at his surprising reaction, I laughed nervously. He turned on his heel and stalked away, the phone call forgotten.

On my second visit to Rehoboth, I got an equally warm reception. I was hunting around town for a man named Hans Diergaardt, the former Kaptein or mayor of the community, whose scowling photograph and inflammatory quotes were in all the newspaper accounts of the unrest here. Only one or two individuals out of the dozen people I approached for directions could speak Namibia's official national language of English. Most shook their heads and muttered something in Afrikaans. When I finally found Diergaardt's office in a small stucco building off the town's main street, his secretary greeted me in Afrikaans as well. "I'm very sorry, I don't speak Afrikaans," I said for the hundredth time. The smile snapped off her face like a circuit breaker had been tripped. Speaking more to myself than to her, I remarked on the town's scarcity of English-speakers. "Ons hou nie daarvau om Engels te praat nie," she replied in the sing-song tones of Afrikaans, which she then translated for me a few seconds later. "We don't like to speak English here."

While I waited to speak to the Kaptein, a white Toyota Landcruiser with green government license plates slowly drove by, the huge silver bell of a loud speaker dangling out of the back window. A man's deep voice (speaking Afrikaans, of course) boomed out across the neighborhood, lowering to a tolerable din only after the vehicle was several blocks away. "He says there's a meeting with the government tonight at 7 p.m. on the land issue," the secretary said. I already knew that from the previous day's newspaper notice. A presidential commission appointed to look into Rehoboth citizens' accusations that their land was nationalized would report back to the community about decisions reached by the cabinet. That's why I was here. If another riot was going to explode on this city's streets, I didn't want to miss it. One man in particular would know if it was coming.

I shook hands with tall, gray-haired Hans Diergaardt and took a seat in his office opposite his old wooden desk. I had an immediate but embarrassing question. Did he really want to be called a "bastard?" He laughed and seemed to relax.

"When I was still in the Kaptein's house, some Norwegian visitors once asked me why I don't call myself colored," Diergaardt explained. "I asked them: 'Why are you Norwegian and not Scandinavian?' and they said it was because of history. I said: 'Exactly.' The whites insulted us by calling us 'basters,' which is Afrikaans for bastards. When we became a nation,



Hans Diergaardt

when we were forced out, we chose to call ourselves Basters and be proud of it."

For Diergaardt and the few others with whom I could talk in English, the past seems ever-present. Notice that Diergaardt says "we" when he talks about events in his grandfather's day. The Basters have a unique history of which to be proud, like many other African cultures. To them, however, history justifies their militancy. Contemporary events are charged with historical significance, because the story of this singular race is one of a continual fight for their rights and land.

The Chronicles of Basterdom

The tale begins when visiting sailors of the Dutch East India Company began sleeping with the female slaves and women of the indigenous Nama tribe. Many of their descendants moved north with the trekking Afrikaner farmers up to the borders of the Old Cape Colony during the 18th century. Others were expelled to make way for the growing population of European settlers. By 1885, the "Cape Coloreds" in South Africa numbered approximately 5,000.

Some of the coloreds, or Basters as they called themselves, cleared the way for the white settlers in a 600-mile stretch along the Orange River, which later formed Namibia's present-day southern border. They built settlements on unsurveyed British Crown lands until 1865, when the Cape parliament passed the Land Beacons Act that required all those occupying lands to prove their title and buy or lease that property. The Basters understandably refused to purchase land that they considered their own, so a majority moved again farther afield. After founding yet another community, they collectively offered the colonial authorities 200 pounds sterling for some 741,000 acres. Before finalizing the sale, the Basters were told to attend a special hearing where possible public objections could be raised. At the meeting, white farmers lodged petition after petition against the sale of land to the Basters. According to accounts written at the time, a certain Andries Struis expressed the overall white sentiment when he told the court that if the land were sold to the Basters, it would be "the ruin of the country." The Basters left the hall en masse without even waiting for the outcome of the hearing, deciding to trek far north into the wilds where they would have a surer hold on their property.

I think that early discrimination provides a clue into the source of the volatile politics of Rehoboth since Namibia's independence in 1990. Land is particularly important to Basters since they still remember the injustice of their ancestors being denied those farms they arduously developed in South Africa.

In 1866, about 50 Baster families crossed the Orange River and camped at the settlement of Warmbad for a couple of weeks.

During the rest stop, the people saw the necessity of forming a government and framed a simple constitution. Continuing north year by year, the Basters stayed in the area of the present-day southern towns of Keetmanshoop, Berseba and Bethanie in Namibia before reaching Rehoboth in 1870. The name Rehoboth comes from a biblical verse in the Book of Genesis: "And he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, for now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

By 1872, a revised version of the constitution was drawn up creating the elected office of Kaptein as chief administrator, along with his two councilors in a Kapteinsraad (ruling council), and three elected Volksraad (parliament) representatives of the people. Other laws dealt with criminal and civil jurisprudence, liquor trafficking, collecting debts, cattle diseases, marriage and divorce, wars and taxes. One of the most important laws was the prohibition against the selling of any Baster land to an outsider without agreement by the entire community. Another important law guaranteed the right of each Baster burgher to own land in Rehoboth. Aside from a 1913 change in the divorce law, the constitution and legal code has remained essentially unchanged from 1876 right up to Namibian independence in 1990.

The law book was second only to the bible in Baster society. Appointed magistrates heard all criminal disputes while a special land authority handled all property issues. So Baster society was rocked to its foundations more than a 100 years later when the new Namibian government appeared to threaten their tradition. The Basters would later confront the government on **legal** grounds.

The Basters obtained "full title" to the land of Rehoboth in 1885 by paying 100 horses and five wagons to the Nama tribal chief Abraham Swartbooi, who ruled the area. Brick homes were built in the meantime, springs developed, gardens laid out and a church and school erected. When the Germans arrived to proclaim their protectorship over South West Africa a year earlier, they immediately drew up a "Treaty of Protection and Friendship" with the sophisticated Basters. (Incidentally, among those first German colonial officials who negotiated the treaty with Rehoboth was the father of Hermann Goering, a prominent leader of the Nazi attempt to colonize Europe more than five decades later.) The territory of the Basters was not taken over by the Germans, "by agreement between the two **governments**," according to the treaty.

The Baster community has always considered itself an autonomous entity with whom to be negotiated with, not ruled. In the yellowed and tattered South African colonial documents that I found in a Windhoek library, the investigating officers reported that Baster leaders repeatedly pointed out how the Germans dealt with them as a nation, with a signed treaty. In fact, the Basters always had a unique relationship with colonialists in Namibia.

To the north of Rehoboth, the pastoral Herero tribes rose up against the Germans from 1903 to 1907. The colonial power launched a genocidal war against the Herero and Nama tribes, slaughtering 80,000 Africans, or 60 percent of the native population in the central plateau of Namibia. Before the uprising and then throughout these years, the Basters invariably stood on the side of the German colonizers, who provided them with rifles and ammunition for their own skirmishes with black Africans.

The Hereros' "Great Revolt" gives yet another clue into the contemporary animosity between the black-majority Namibian government and Rehoboth. Rather than join the fight against the colonizers, the Basters negotiated away some of their rights and agreed to pay tribute to the Germans so long as they could keep their land. "Civilization is what we have always aimed at, and we have therefore always sided with the German government against rebellion on the part of the natives," said Rehoboth leader Samuel Beukes in a 1915 South African colonial report. The Basters always saw themselves as a superior people in quite a different category than the indigenous tribes. Ironically, this was the same manner in which Afrikaners looked down on them.

World War I saw the defeat of the German Kaiser. The British gave territorial administration to the South Africans, while they gave only vague assurances to the Basters that there would be no interference in Rehoboth matters. The Basters, however, expected complete independence and became resentful of increasing efforts by the Union of South Africa to control them. A bargain was struck in 1923 that guaranteed a semblance of self-government by preserving the Kaptein and the Volksraad while conceding sweeping powers to a South African administrator. The majority of the Basters refused to accept the agreement, seeing it as a betrayal of their rights and a threat to their future independence. The disaffected burghers boycotted the subsequent Kaptein election, later setting up an alternative Kaptein who repudiated the treaty. Seeing Rehoboth torn in two, the South Africans decided in their budding apartheid logic to abolish the powers of the Kaptein, the Volksraad, and the Baster courts. In place of this grassroots democracy, they installed an all-powerful South African magistrate to rule the region. The people rebelled and troops surrounded Rehoboth town in April, 1925 to quell the uprising. An appeal was made to the League of Nations, but the world body told the Basters they had to go through the local courts. Piet Diergaardt, who later fathered Hans Diergaardt, was arrested with eight other leaders of the 1925 insurrection. After a court trial, he was sentenced to death. The League did later intervene with South African authorities to prevent the execution of the elder Diergaardt and the others.

Not until South Africa passed the Rehoboth Self-Government Act in 1976 did the Basters regain their Kaptein and Volksraad. Hans Diergaardt campaigned for local acceptance of the apartheid

regime's act to establish the nominally-independent Baster homeland. In 1978, he became the first elected Kaptein in 54 years. Diergaardt also earned his reputation as a South African sympathizer when he served as a cabinet minister from 1985 to 1989 in the discredited transitional Namibian government set up by the apartheid rulers to stave off international pressure for a free and fairly elected black-majority government.

The Present Day Conflict

All this historical research was in my head as I listened to Diergaardt get more worked up over the new Namibian "four-wheel-drive government that's going right over the top of us like baboons." The more he talked, the more I understood that he feels he is righting historical injustices in this present-day confrontation. But I felt uncomfortable with the "baboon" remark. It sounded a lot like what racist white Namibians say to me.

"The case of Rehoboth is one of the biggest frauds that ever took place in the whole world," Diergaardt said. "We were living in the Cape for 80 years, then in the beginning the whites wouldn't accept their own children and we were forced out of the city. I was a citizen in the Cape and I was kicked out. Long ago, the British lost sight of right and wrong. We asked the British government for permission to buy our own land and were forced over the Orange River. Then the British came here and helped kick me out of my land here. The Allied Powers gave Rehoboth as a present to the South Africans after World War I. I can, without a doubt, say that all the sorrows I and my people are living in come from the British people."

What exactly does Diergaardt want? Power and land, that's all. "The government says the Kaptein system is defunct, but our people say the Kaptein is still good," argues Diergaardt. "If the new constitution accepts traditional leaders of the Ovambo, the Herero and the Kavango, why don't they accept me? According to their own constitution, I am the traditional leader. I can't do anything for them, yet people still come to me for advice. I don't have the say but I've got the influence. If I say tomorrow morning the Ovambos go out (of Rehoboth), they would drive them out by force."

Diergaardt says he wants to come to an agreement with "the Ovambos in Windhoek," referring to the government formed by the South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) that found its greatest support among Namibia's Ovambo tribal group. But he wants a political solution on his terms. "We can have an autonomous government and they will have certain functions -- like foreign affairs, the monetary system, and defense. We would keep control of matters like education and land allocation. I can't believe the world would be against anything like that when you look at Serbia and Russia and East Timor. I've tried in vain

for an audience for two years to see the prime minister or the president, but they said they have no interest in talking. The government has got the land now, but if they retransfer it back to the Baster people we can talk."

The land he says was stolen from his community comprises some 141,000 acres that surrounds the town of Rehoboth. Those communal fields are traditionally used for grazing in times of drought, he said, so Baster farmers desperately need that land after this year's poor rainfall.

The new Namibian constitution, however, seems to be against Diergaardt. Government officials point to Schedule Five of the constitution that states all property owned by the former government of South West Africa and all authorities of ethnic homelands or the government of Rehoboth automatically transfers to the government that assumed control at independence in 1990.

Diergaardt will agree with the government on that point, but responds that the 141,000 acres of community land was never transferred to the South African-backed homeland that he headed. He alleges the land remained community property of the Basters, not of the homeland administration he headed. But Diergaardt appears to be wrong on that score, too. Section 23 (1) of the parliament of South Africa's Act 56 of 1976 states (in the painfully convoluted legal jargon of an international treaty that I've tried to simplify here) that from the date of the act "ownership and control of all movable and immovable property of Rehoboth," which the act details to include everything vested in the Republic of South Africa, the territory of South West Africa or the Rehoboth Baster community, "shall vest in the government of Rehoboth." And the second part of the section states: "(2) The said property shall be transferred to the government of Rehoboth without payment of transfer duty, stamp duty or any fee or charge."

Diergaardt claims that the transfer was never made, even if it was required by South African law. Once again, Namibian legal experts point to a 1985 property deed which transferred the Rehoboth land from the Baster community to the apartheid-system Rehoboth authority. Diergaardt's last-ditch response? He insists that the deed is a forgery, because a handwriting analyst in South Africa will attest that the signature on the deed is not that of the now-deceased former chief magistrate of Rehoboth, Errol Louw, but a forgery. Now both sides have experts making further investigations into the deed's authenticity. As proof of record tampering, Diergaardt displays a certified copy of a 1977 deed he obtained two years ago. He says if ownership was later transferred from "Die Bastergemente," or the Baster community, in 1985, then there should be some notation on the back of the deed. But there isn't. Finally, there's the question about the actual resolution passed by the Kapteinsraad in 1985 to implement the

1976 South African act transferring the land to the Rehoboth puppet government. The document is missing.

...The Rest Of The Story

It would take a canny and politically astute man months to unravel the Rehoboth legal and political knots. If that man was an insider to the Baster community, he just might have a chance to defuse the explosive situation. Fortunately for Namibia's future unity, Neville Angermund is that man. As the government-appointed regional commissioner whose Rehoboth home was stormed by a mob last month, he admits the situation scares him.

"I was born and bred in Rehoboth: I'm a Baster, so I know these people," Angermund told me during our lengthy talk in his Rehoboth office. On this third trip to Rehoboth to meet Angermund, I arrived 40 minutes late for my appointment because I couldn't find anyone who would give me directions to the government administrative center. "Any other government official would never have been acceptable to these people except another Baster. This is the most conservative part of our country. I know how difficult it can be since I grew up in this town. Things were really boiling for awhile around here." I found Angermund very credible, especially after I learned that he is just a temporary political appointee. His term will end on the day before the November elections are held for the newly forming regional and local government. Angermund has no personal interests at stake because he emphatically states he will not run for office. Soon, he will be just another bastard like everyone else in Rehoboth.

If the 1985 transfer was forged, he says, then Diergaardt's own government failed to comply with the 1976 instructions of South Africa. "The deed transfer was definitely not forged but even if it was, how could Diergaardt sell land and make transactions that were illegal from the start? Are we to go back and reverse every land deal for the last 14 years?"

Diergaardt's pretension to being a traditional leader is also preposterous, Angermund said. Diergaardt was elected Kaptein by a vote. And even that's suspect, since that balloting was done at a meeting of the political party he heads. Only 2,000 party faithfuls voted, not the entire 20,000-member Baster community.

As for Diergaardt's concern for communal land, Angermund observed that the pasturage in question has been fenced off after the former homeland's administration sold or leased (in some cases, no one is sure which) large portions to private Baster ranchers. The commercial farmers refuse to lease back the land to the poorer communal farmers, who have only small herds of goats.

Angermund pointed out a deeper irony in the controversy. Diergaardt and the Baster community really want to perpetuate the

racism institutionalized by South Africa. Thousands of black Africans live in Rehoboth or work on the surrounding cattle ranches owned by the Baster burghers. None of them have ever been able to own land in Rehoboth, since they were considered non-citizens under the old laws. The low wages they receive allow them meager meals and a thread-bare existence. "The Basters claim sole use of the land, but now that apartheid is dead, everybody is free to live where he wants. Now everybody staying in this community is a part of this society, even the blacks," he said.

To Angermund, Rehoboth's old-guard has a more contemporary connection to apartheid than most people know. "Diergaardt has close links to South Africa and, though I wouldn't say it in public, he has links to the right wing and that's not acceptable for us," Angermund related. "Diergaardt is fighting a similar fight as the AWB. (That's the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, a right-wing white supremacist group that has bombed South African government buildings, multiracial schools and black labor union offices.) He wants a separate homeland: a Basterland exclusively for the Basters - for Diergaardt and his fanatic followers."

That's an incredibly serious charge to level against anyone. In another visit to see Diergaardt, however, I confirmed that indeed he had shared a speakers' platform with the AWB at a rally held in Pretoria last year. The Baster leader answered my question defensively: "We simply made use of what they offered us, to hold a press conference afterward. Just like I know SWAPO, I know (South African President F.W.) de Klerk and these other people, too."

Because South Africa agreed to give self-government back to Rehoboth, Diergaardt explained, there was a more "relaxed" relationship with apartheid but never a friendly one. And because "these Ovambos" (meaning the SWAPO party) were always poor people, he said, the government hates the relatively skilled and prosperous Basters. "I say bluntly and blatantly, this is the biggest untruth (that we're racists)," declaimed Diergaardt, with a rising volume to his rant. By this point, the pointed questions made him lose the urbane poise of our previous chat. "Blacks were treated as people, not as blacks. We gave erwin (land) to these people and rented homes at prices subsidized by my people, opened our schools to them and gave them nurseries. About 90 percent of our health care went to them, because we considered them poor. I've got a clean conscience about these people and if I had to do it over again, I would do nothing for them. They are ungrateful. I have a thousand blacks on my farm and I want them out now. They've stayed on my land and they steal my sheep. I want them out!" I left his office in amazement, glancing at my notes again. Did he really say he treated blacks like people and not like blacks?! Yep.

Just like in 1925, the Baster community is now split down the middle over whether to accept the outside authority of the Namibian government. Diergaardt and his followers boycotted the government's public meeting last week, so instead of a riot, a small and sullen group of about 200 Rehoboth citizens gathered to listen to Deputy Minister of Justice Vekuii Rukoro speak. At first, the crowd seemed wary of bad news, but they soon began interrupting his speech with clapping. Rukoro said his commission had consulted the community and presented recommendations to the cabinet that had been adopted. These include:

- * A year-long lease renewal for all people renting communal farm land in Rehoboth, so that local authorities to be elected in November can make their own land allocation rulings later on;

- * Small farmers with less than 300 head of livestock could either reschedule payment of overdue rental fees or even have the debt wiped out, depending on the poverty in each individual case;

- * Rehoboth burghers who hold free plots of land in town will be given full ownership rights and can register their property once Rehoboth is proclaimed an official town with elected municipal officials to govern itself. Those who were promised free plots but never got them will be guaranteed free land;



Neville Angermund (far left) and Vekuii Rukoro (far right) at the meeting

- * While black residents in Rehoboth's "Block E" African township outside the city border formerly had been considered non-residents and ineligible to own land, all those blacks who had lived in Rehoboth for more than five years have the choice of getting the deed to their municipal rental house or a new plot of land upon which to build a new home and;

- * Those drought relief welfare loans of 250 Rand per month that Baster ranchers got during the last drought from 1985-1989 would be written off entirely. No one has to pay that money back.

The decisions went "beyond our wildest expectations," said one Baster man in the audience. For a black resident of "Block

E" township, that night would be "the first peaceful night after 41 years of homelessness." The mood seemed upbeat as the crowd around me left the town hall, but I reminded myself that many who absented themselves were not yet convinced of Rukoro's sincerity.

Diergaardt, of course, reacted skeptically to Rukoro's speech when he read a transcript of the speech later that week. It was true, the deputy minister avoided Diergaardt's issue of government control over Baster land. Nobody will win that fight, since emotions and history are mixed up with property rights -- a volatile mix. A lawsuit is expected to be filed soon in Windhoek's High Court by the Basters against the Namibian state for unconstitutional expropriation. "It will cost a lot of money and we will lose, but we have to do it," Diergaardt said. "After we exhaust all the local remedies, we're going to the World Court. Then the whole case will be in the open, and everything will be seen! Don't think my friend Mr. Nujoma can ignore the World Court." Diergaardt expects two factors to boost his case onto the international stage. The United Nations has declared 1992 the "Year of Indigenous Peoples," so the Basters will be in the media spotlight with American Indians, West African pygmies and Australian aborigines. Also, Diergaardt said he has retained the services of a sharp New York City attorney, Albert Blaustein, whom he described as "a famous constitutional lawyer who helped draft something important -- I forget what."

The controversy in Rehoboth disturbs me because I keep thinking about the prospects for South Africa's future. If Namibia's new government has a problem creating a peaceful reconciliation with just one of the 11 ethnic groups here, imagine the problems ahead for Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) in forging a unity out of more than 20 different ethnicities in South Africa. Even those Basters who didn't trek to Namibia splintered into several South African groups: the "Grikwa" who migrated to the diamond-mining region of Kimberley, those who remained in the Western Cape, and so forth.

The thicket of political problems that grew dense and foul under apartheid cannot be cut away in two years' time. Perhaps one can never completely extirpate the roots of racism, once such a system has flourished in a society. I was naive to expect that the Basters, who were themselves oppressed by apartheid, would be less bigoted than whites after experiencing ugly racism. Like in any regimented society, however, those who were scorned by the privileged caste above them often emulate their masters by trampling on those below. The Basters historically built their society with its constitution and Kaptein in the image of the white world that rejected them, perhaps to show the world they were equal to the racists who drove them out of their land. In the end, ironically, Diergaardt appears equally racist in his struggle to preserve an anachronism of a separate Baster homeland in post-apartheid Southern Africa.

Sincerely,

