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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL STUDIES

CONTESTATIONS OVER CAPRIVI IDENTITIES: FROM PRE-COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT.

**Thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements
for the**

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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August 2008

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ABSTRACT

Contestations over Caprivi identities: From pre-colonial times to the present

This study investigated the hypothesis that Caprivi identities exist; and that they have always been contested. These identities defined as a sense of not belonging to greater South West Africa exist in two forms: i) as a spatial or geographical entity usually divided into East and West in history for administrative purposes; and, ii) as a people, such as Subia, Mafwe, Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Barakwena, Totela, Mbalangwe, and Lozi, collectively referred to as 'Caprivians'. Through utilizing primary sources such as oral interviews and archival material as well as secondary sources, the study endeavored to establish how Caprivi identities were constructed; what the nature of its contestations are; and how 'Caprivians' responded to its construction.

It was established that Caprivi identities were the result of administrative neglect in state formation that constructed isolation on the basis of difference – that 'Caprivians' are different from other groups in South West Africa, and that Caprivi was geographically remote from Windhoek and hence difficult to administer as part of South West Africa. Resultantly, only a primitive form of indirect rule existed in the area for most part of its colonial history resulting in constant change of colonial masters. Though it was pushed more to neighboring territories administratively, it was not made an integral part of such territories but made to stand separate as a geographical entity. Even the provision of education and health services was left in the hands of missionaries of the Seventh Day Adventists and the Catholic Capuchin Order. With the implementation of the Odendaal recommendations, an East Caprivi Bantustan was established that gave 'Caprivians' a legislative council, and a government with symbols of state such as a flag, coat of arms, anthem and constitution. The study argued that this marks the fruition of Caprivi identity and the concept 'Caprivian' was coined and entered official use.

Because of its strategic location, Caprivi became a contested terrain for Angolan migrant labour extraction and military confrontation between apartheid South Africa and

liberation movements. During the pre-colonial period, contestation for Caprivi identity was in the form of competition for resources and was characterized by conquest, resistance, plunder, betrayal and rivalry.

The inhabitants of Caprivi responded to Caprivi identity in two ways. During the colonial period this was in the form of the rise of nationalism when the Caprivi African National Union was formed to fight for independence. The study concluded that the merger between Caprivi African National Union and South West Africa Peoples Organization to liberate Namibia was a rejection of isolation and separatism expressed through Caprivi identities. The second response is calls for secession from Namibia by certain 'Caprivians' in the present. The study concluded that secession is a product of the South African construction of Caprivi identities that emphasized localized notions of identity formation.

Bennett Kangumu Kangumu

04 August 2008

ABBREVIATIONS

AACRLS	Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle
AG	Administrator General
ANC	African National Congress
ASA	African Studies Association
BAB	Basler Afrika Bibliographien
BIC	Bantu Investment Corporation
BNA	Botswana National Archives
BPG	Bantu Police Guard
CANU	Caprivi African National Union
CAP	Caprivi Alliance Party
CLA	Caprivi Liberation Army
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ECZ	Eastern Caprivi Zipfel
FNLA	Front for the National Liberation of Angola
GSWA	German South West Africa
MPLA	Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola
NAP	Pretoria National Archives
NAZ	National Archives of Zambia
NEPRU	Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit
NLO	Northern Labour Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity

PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
SAAF	South African Air Force
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADF	South African Defense Force
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SSRHMP	SADC Secretariat Research Hashim Mbita Project
SWA	South West Africa
SWAA	South West Africa Administration
SWALA	South West Africa Liberation Army
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDP	United Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNIP	United Independence Party
WHAM	Winning Hearts and Minds
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

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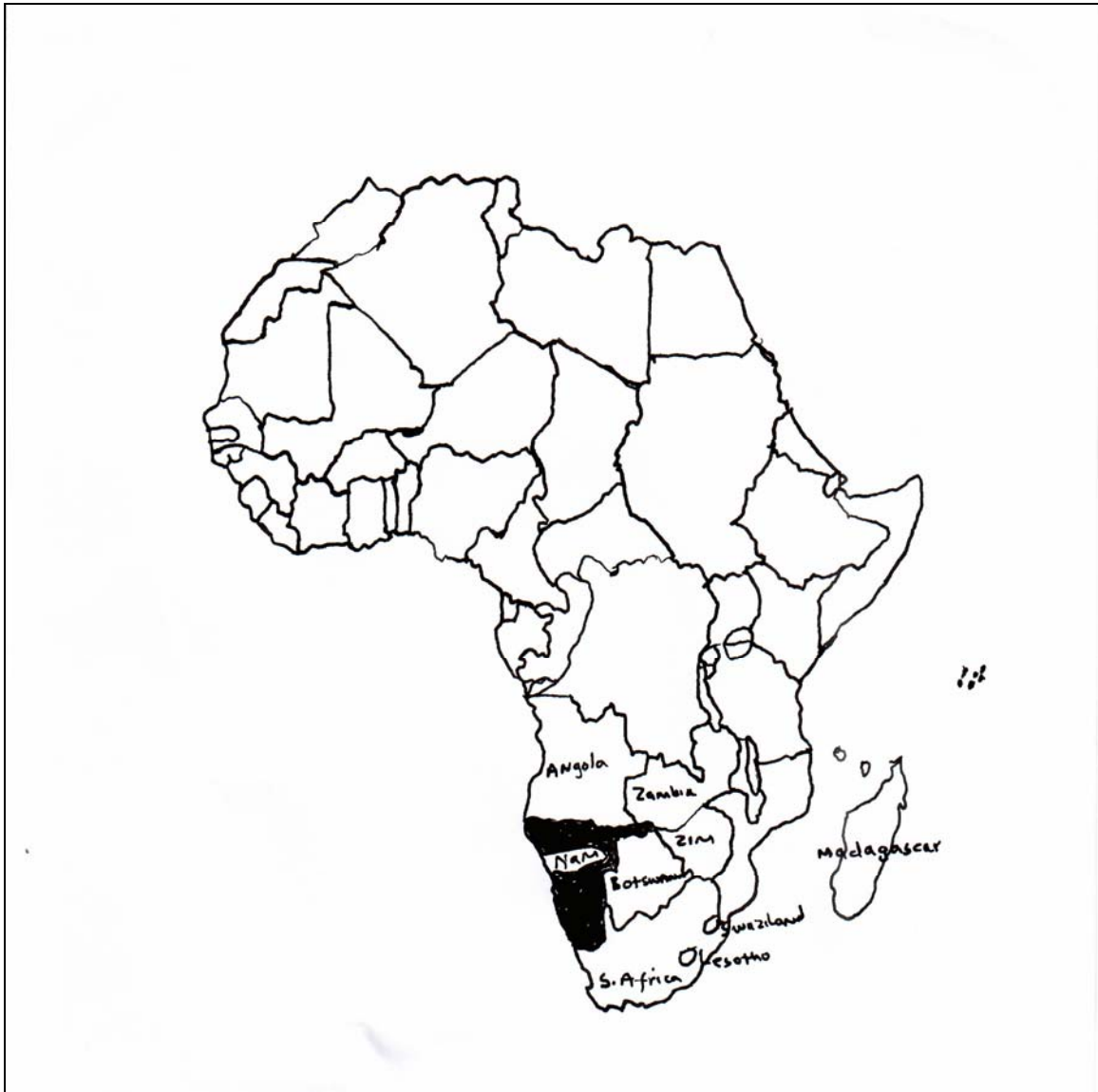
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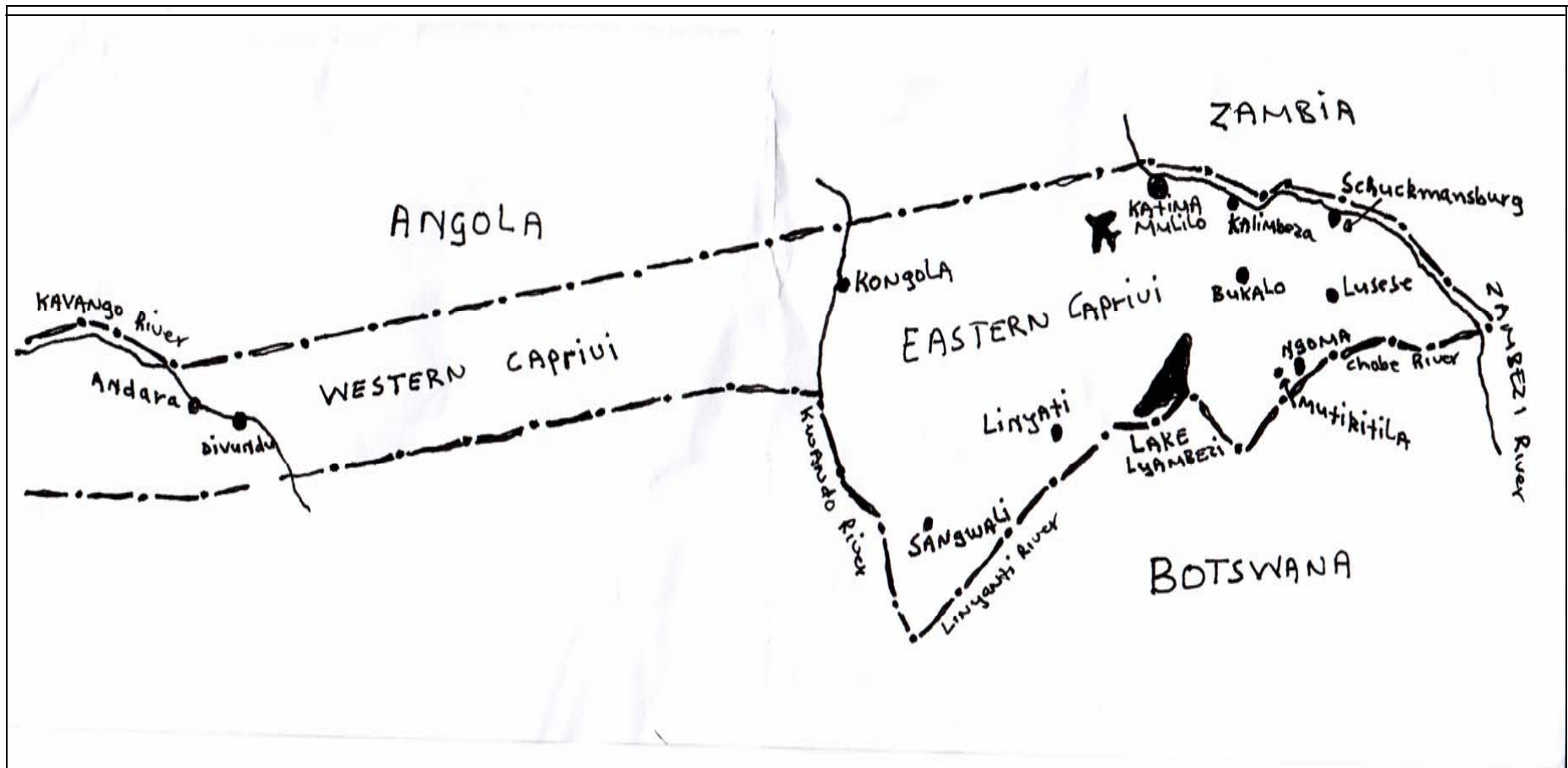
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SECTION ONE
CONSTRUCTING CAPRIVI IDENTITIES

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Caprivi is the name of the panhandle (narrow strip of land) protruding from the northeast corner of Namibia and toward Botswana and Zambia. It is one of the 13 political regions of Namibia and takes its name from the Caprivi Strip. It is named after the German chancellor Leo, Graf von Caprivi, who obtained it from Great Britain as part of a general settlement (1890) between the two countries. It gave the former Germany colony of South West Africa (now Namibia) access to the Zambezi River.

The Caprivi Region is c.300 miles (480 km) long and 50 miles (80 km) wide. It is bordered on the north by Angola and Zambia and on the south by Botswana. The Caprivi is a heavily tropical area, with high temperatures and much rainfall during the December-to-March rainy season, making it the wettest region of Namibia. The terrain is mostly made up of swamps, floodplains, wetland, and woodland.

It also is home to 450 animal species, including elephants, making Caprivi a popular game-watching spot. The wildlife is protected by several nature reserves, such as Bwabwata, Mudumu, West Caprivi Game Park, Mahango Game Reserve, and Mamili National Park. Animals travel freely across the border with Botswana, where the Chobe National Park lies. The strip is also a prime bird-watching area, with almost 70 per cent of bird species found in Namibia being recorded here. In addition to the Zambezi River,

the strip also holds the Kwando River, which marks the border with Botswana. Tributaries of the river here go by different names, including the Linyanti and Chobe.

The political geography of Caprivi is not natural, and indeed the Zambezi and Chobe Rivers are not natural boundaries. During the pre-colonial times, the Caprivi was of great strategic importance, among others being a meeting place of the Kololo, Tawana and Ndebele spheres of influence. The Impalila Island in the far east of Caprivi had a strategic importance in the 1870s as the terminus of the 'Old Hunter's Road' and the entry point to the Lozi Kingdom for white traders, hunters, travelers and missionaries from Panda Matenga in Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Population

The population size of the Caprivi Region was 79 826 in 2001, comprised of 40 749 females and 39 077 male.¹ In 1991 the population size was 90 422. 44 065 of that number were male and 46 357 females. Migration to other regions accounts for the disparity between the 1991 and 2001 population figures. Estimate population records for the Caprivi date as far back as 1905. In that year, F. Seiner, a German, was sent on an expedition to investigate conditions in the Caprivi and to determine the value of the territory to the Germans. Under the heading general survey, Seiner estimated the population of the Caprivi to be 4200 persons in 83 villages.² Seiner went on to state that

¹ Republic of Namibia, *2001 Population and Housing Census, Caprivi Region: Basic analysis with highlights*, Windhoek: National Planning Commission, March 2003, p.4.

² "Report of Expedition made by F. Seiner from Katima Mulilo to Libebe, August 1-25 1905", in Kruger, C.E., 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', (NAN: A.472), Chapter 3, p. 9.

the Masubiya area, under Letia, comprised 34 villages with a population of 1579 while under Siluka in the west there were 17 Mayeyi and 10 Mafwe villages with 978 and 432 persons respectively.

The next estimates are those made by Streitwolf in 1909, 5000 Masubiya and 4000 Mafwe and Mayeyi.³ The above figures are relatively high and thus put Streitwolf's claim that the territory was deserted in doubt. In fact Kruger shows that it was only some of the Masubiya and mostly Malozi who crossed the Zambezi River into Barotseland and also the Chobe River into Bechuanaland Protectorate at the news of the arrival of the Germans and not those in the west of Caprivi, that is, the Mafwe.⁴ Streitwolf himself noted that the Malozi were "disliked by the Masubia, otherwise they would all have gone across the river with the Malozi leaving the Caprivi depopulated in those parts."⁵ Streitwolf provides slightly higher figures in his book, "Der Caprivi Zipfel" in 1911: "The total native population I estimate as follows: 5000 Masubia, 3000 Mafue and Majee, 1,500 Mambukuschu, 200 Hukwe".⁶ The 700 more could be a result of natural population increase and also the addition of the categories 'Mambukushu' and the Barakwena.

During the war years (both First and Second World Wars) census was not taken. The Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration enumerated the population of the Caprivi Strip in 1921 as follows: "Males 2003; females 2246; total 4249"⁷ It is significant to note that the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration did not break down the census according

³ Kruger, C.E., 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', (NAN: A.472), Chapter 3, p. 15.

⁴ Kruger, 1984, p. 17.

⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

⁶ Ibid., p. 22

⁷ Kruger, 1984, Chapter 10, p. 5.

to ethnic criteria like during the German and later South African administrations. This figure does not include the few European missionaries and traders resident in the territory at the time.

Census details are available for each of the years 1930 to 1939 during which period the Caprivi was under the South West Africa Administration (SWAA). The 1930 figures were probably from an actual census and thereafter estimated. For our purposes, only the 1930 and 1939 figures will be given below.⁸ As with subsequent figures, the category Mayeyi is dropped, as is with other smaller groups such as Mbukushu. These are now incorporated into the broad category of ‘Mafwe’. Significantly, a new category, ‘children’ is introduced in the census during this period and very interestingly; this category is not subjected to ethnic categorization as well as gender break-down.

Year	Mafwe men	Mafwe women	Mafwe Children	Masubiya men	Masubiya women	Masubiya children	Totals men	Totals women	Totals children	Grand Total
1930	1036	1454	2379	750	936	1469	1786	2390	3848	8024
1939	1182	1908	3026	906	1251	2151	2088	3159	5177	10424

Table 1: Census figures for 1930 and 1939.

The respective tribal totals were 4869 Mafwe (inclusive of other groups) and 3155 Masubiya in 1930 and 6116 Mafwe and 4308 Masubiya in 1939. The Union of South Africa held its population census after the Second World War in May 1946. To coincide with that census and since the Eastern Caprivi Strip was now administered from Pretoria,

⁸ Ibid.

a locally devised population census was held for the territory on the 31 May 1946⁹ and the results were received by the Union Director of Census and the Department of Native Affairs. The following figures were generated: For the Mafwe (again inclusive of all other groups), a total of 9 563 were recorded, broken down as follows: 2173 men; 2865 women; 2370 boys; and 2155 girls. For the Masubiya, a total of 5548 were recorded, broken down as follows: 1432 men; 1549 women; 1378 boys; and 1189 girls. A further category, Europeans, was included in this census and counted to 5 men; 1 woman, and 1 boy with the category 'girls' recording none. Altogether the population added to 15 111. It can be observed that in this census, the gender aspect of children was taken into account. One could continue to list further Caprivi census statistics but perhaps that is not necessary for the purposes of this study. In May 1982 for example, the total population of Caprivi was given as 39, 500.¹⁰

To conclude this section, it is necessary to give brief remarks and observations regarding the censuses. While it certainly was the best that could be done under the prevailing circumstances, the accuracy of the census results can be doubted based on the officials designated to carry the census who were cattle guards and 'native' constables. These were not properly trained to carry out the task of enumerating people in a population census considering their low level or no education at the time. The second is the methodology used where each village was required to have four sticks of different lengths: the longest for men, the next for women, the next boys and the shortest for girls. A short distance from one end of each stick a ring was cut the space below which was for

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

people of the Caprivi out of the territory on the night fixed for the count. Village heads made the count first thing in the morning and when the notching had been completed they waited for the arrival of the constables and cattle guards and simply handed over the sticks.

In some instances very significant variations can be observed in the census figures. The increase was due not only to natural increase but also to influx from adjacent territories. A close look at the detailed figures shows that in the Masubiya area of the eastern Caprivi, villages were much smaller than in the Mafwe areas in the west of Caprivi. This was because the Masubiya areas are subject to annual flood inundation and villages had to be situated on available higher grounds (mounds) in the floodplain. The biggest Masubiya village in 1946 held 166 persons as against 406 Mafwe.¹¹ An average village figure for the Masubiya was 33 and for the Mafwe were 74. At the time there were 156 Masubiya villages to 130 Mafwe villages.¹²

It can be noted that in all censuses referred above taken during the colonial period, there is no category for “Lozi” or Lozi speakers. A common error often made even in scholarly presentations is reference to ‘Caprivians’ as Lozis, as can be discerned from the following report: ‘The Caprivi secessionists are fighting for the independence of the Caprivi Strip, where Namibia’s 92 000 Lozi-speakers live’.¹³ Apart from being a generalization, I doubt whether such a high proportion of ‘Caprivians’ speak Lozi. In any case, being able to speak Lozi does not make the majority of ‘Caprivians’ Lozis. SiLozi became the lingua franca in eastern Caprivi, for historical reasons: with the development

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Namasiku Ilukena, ‘Caprivi secession stirs Barotseland hopes’, <http://www.namibian.com.na/netstories/December98/caprivi1a.html>. Accessed on 5 March 2007.

of Bantustans, the apartheid regime instituted it as the medium of instruction in schools, partly because it was close to Sotho (Northern Pedi) and therefore learning materials and Sotho-speaking instructors could be imported from South Africa. The spread of Lozi in Caprivi is thus due largely to the fact that it is the medium of instruction in schools particularly during the early phase of primary education. The language policy of Namibia provides that a child should be instructed in his/her mother tongue during the first four years of primary education. For the people of Caprivi however, 'mother tongue' is taken to mean Lozi within education circles. The issue is political because Lozi is seen as an agent to help overcome apparent antagonism and tribal tension between the Masubiya and the Mafwe.¹⁴ The reasoning behind is that this would promote a 'common Caprivian regional identity.'¹⁵ On the contrary, it is argued here, it is this regionalism couched in Lozi terms and which stresses affinity with a Zambian population and Lozi past that is the source of secession in Caprivi and is actually detrimental to Namibian nation-building in relation to the Caprivi. Still, evidence suggests that Lozi is not the most widely spoken language in Caprivi. I provide below statistics to show ethnic break-down by language in Caprivi Region. The statistics are extracted from Chapter 7 of the 2001 Namibia Population and Housing Census under the heading Household Composition and Characteristics. On page 32 under 7.4 Main language spoken in the household, the following observation is made:

“The Census included a question on language usually spoken or most spoken at home. In the Caprivi Region several languages were identified....Caprivi languages are the most spoken languages in households in the Region, with 88% of the households communicating in these languages. Of the Caprivi languages, Sisubiya is used by 38% of the households which speak Caprivi languages.”

The distribution of households by Caprivi language spoken in Caprivi in the 2001 Census is shown in Table 7.4.2 (p. 32) as follows:

¹⁴ Cluver 1991: 44, Fosse, 1996, 180.

¹⁵ Fosse, 1996: 180.

Main Language	Number of households	Percent
Lozi (Sikololo)	3 254	21.9
Sifwe	3 129	21.0
Sisubiya	5 720	38.4
Siyeyi	1 179	7.9
Totela	1 588	10.6
Total	14 870	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of households by language spoken in Caprivi, 2001 Population Census

It can easily be noted from the above that smaller groups such as Mbalangwe, Mbukushu and Barakwena (San) are either left out because of their lesser numerical strength or probably are integrated in the category Sifwe or are integrated in the category Lozi. Either way this does not impact on the dominance of Sisubiya as the widely spoken language in Caprivi at household level.

My interest in the history of the Caprivi grew after I completed a Masters thesis in 2000.¹⁶ Whilst that thesis dealt specifically with the history and evolution of administrative control of the Caprivi during the South African colonial occupation, what emerged from that study was the pursuance of the policy of neglect¹⁷ by its successive colonial masters. This neglect seems to have been justified on the basis that the creation of the territory was, in the first place, a historical mistake. Geographically, historically,

¹⁶ B. Kangumu, 'A Forgotten Corner of Namibia: Aspects of the History of the Caprivi Strip, c.1939-1980', MA Thesis, UCT, 2000.

¹⁷ Mushingi C. 'The Impact of Colonial Policies on Ecological Control and African Cattle Production in Botswana, 1885-1984.' EASSRR, January 1991: 5. <http://www.ossrea.net/eassrr/jan91/mushingi.htm>, p.16. , Accessed 05 March 2007.

socially and culturally, the territory and its people are different from the rest of South West Africa/Namibia and its people had closer affinities to their kin in Zambia and Botswana than to others in the country on which they found themselves a part. The Caprivi and its people remained peripheral as far as Namibian colonial state formation went, and while the inhabitants of the area were depicted largely as Lozi in contemporary historiography and ethnographic literature, they were not fully integrated as such. This sense of ‘not belonging’ has produced what is referred herein as a separate and troubled ‘Caprivi identity’.

On an individual level, one feels ‘compelled to continuously ask oneself: In reality, who am I’?¹⁸: A ‘Caprivian’, Namibian, Zambian, Botswanian, Angolan, or all of the above? On the local level, my ethnic background is that my paternal grandfather is Subiya while my paternal grandmother is a Yeyi. Both my maternal grandparents are Subiyas. While I have surviving relatives residing in the Yeyi area, I consider myself a Subiya, where I grew up. I should add that a Subiya of Caprivi, even though I have aunts and uncles who reside in and are Subiyas of Botswana. The above would thus make me a ‘Caprivian’, at a regional level, and a Namibian, at the national level. My ethnic, regional and national identities are not conflicting but live in harmony within me. This identity, the “I” in me, is informed by historical and cultural attributes. The problem of personal identity is chiefly concerned with what is the “I,” or self, that remains the same from year to year? A host of endless questions and debates arise, such as, is there anything in body or mind that has the necessary persistence? Does identity lie in the body? Probably not since cells

¹⁸ Frantz Fanon, quoted in Birt, E. Robert (ed.). The Quest for Community and Identity: Critical Essays in Africana Social Philosophy, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, p. 3.

of the body constantly change. Then, does it lie in the mind, probably not since the mass of feelings and ideas forming consciousness constantly change. Consciousness itself seems to be suspended by sleep every night.

My interest in the topic partly stems from my academic training in history but also a desire for self-discovery – wanting to know more about myself, my past and my people (meaning the “we-ness” in me). What are the borders of inclusion and exclusion in my “I” and “We”? This quest resulted in a Master of Art degree at the University of Cape Town on the history of the Caprivi and as reflected in my bibliography I am engaged in a number of research projects on various aspects of Caprivi history. The research projects benefit in many ways from the fact that I originate from the study area and thus general problems concerned with research such as language barriers, lack of trust, networking and logistical issues did not present much difficulties in this instance.

This thesis will provide no definitive answer to the above questions, for it is recognized that both self-ascription and ascription by others are critical in the processes that produce ethnic groups and identities. In other words group identities form in an interaction between assignment – what others say we are – and assertion – who or what we claim to be (Ito-Alder 1980). What the thesis will do is to provide a ‘Caprivian’ perspective on Caprivi’s history, though it is hoped that this thesis, while written by one who comes from the Caprivi, is as objective as it is possible to be. All histories are written from a particular perspective and therefore whether a historical work is objective or subjective depends on the assessor’s views and perceptions, itself a highly subjective exercise that

involves value judgment. The shortcomings related to subjectivity are not mine alone. At times they are inherent in the nature of the subject and object of research, for example, ‘researching violently divided societies’¹⁹ might present its own difficulties. This fact is recognized by Tamar Hermann, who opines:

The problem in the study of socio-political conflicts, as well as finding ways to resolve them, is that social scientists, who are themselves members of society and of a specific socio-political group, often either take a stand on the conflict they are researching, or are, in one way or another, involved in it.²⁰

Being an ‘insider’ though has its own advantages, Hermann continues:

It appears that researchers who belong to one of the sides of a conflict, that is, insiders, are best qualified for gathering the hard data on their own side: they are proficient in the language, familiar with the socio-cultural and political contexts, have detailed and sometimes first-hand information regarding relevant events, and have incomparable access to primary resources and informants.²¹

Aims and Preview of the Dissertation

A major concern in this thesis is Caprivi identities and their contestations: What is it? Briefly, Caprivi identity is herein defined as a totality of feelings, perceptions and actions that colluded over time to produce a sense of not belonging: separate, different, isolated,

¹⁹ Marie Smyth and Gillian Robinson, *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, New York, United Nations University Press, [n.d.]

²⁰ Tamar Hermann, ‘The Impermeable Identity Wall: The Study of Violent Conflicts by “Insiders” and “outsiders”’, in Marie Smyth and Gillian Robinson, *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*, New York, United Nations University Press, [n.d.], p. 77.

²¹ *Ibid.*: p. 82.

remote, troublesome and contested. In this analysis it is shown that Caprivi identities have always been, and continues to be, a highly contested terrain; and that this contestation predates formal colonialism; that it outlived the colonial state, and is present in the independent state. It will also be shown that the contestation over Caprivi identities took a variety of forms and divergent interests, among others: contested identities and rival histories; contested labour and military frontiers; contested regional nationalism; and lastly, contested state formation. The above, when combined, support another assertion or aim of the thesis, that is, the argument that Caprivi as a space was not situated on the periphery of power, whether that of the Lozi or Kololo empire, colonial state, or independent Namibia. In brief, Caprivi might seem geographically peripheral when viewed from a Namibian, national perspective, but it could also be seen as geographically central if viewed from a more regional African perspective. This thesis aims to show this to be the case.

The study is divided into two parts. Section A examines contest in the construction of the Caprivi identities; Section B is concerned with attempts to deconstruct Caprivi identities, and to re-enforce the identities with calls for secession. Different questions about Caprivi identities will be tackled in the various chapters of the thesis. After the Introductory Chapter One, the discussion in Chapter Two focuses on the contest to control the Caprivi, space and people, during the pre-colonial period, involving outside powers such as the Aluyi (Lozi), the Makololo of Sebetwane, the Batawana, and the Matebele (Ndebele) of Mzilikazi. For these groups, Caprivi offered a safe haven or refuge because of its natural environment, bounded by rivers; but also enough grazing pastures and fields for

cultivation. While the aim in this chapter is to show the nature of conquest, betrayal and rivalry that characterized pre-colonial Caprivi, what emerges also are two equally important points, 1) that the depiction of the inhabitants of the Caprivi as ‘slaves’ or ‘little serfs’, almost to the level of sub-humanity, in contemporary pre-colonial historiography is misplaced. The impression created, that the people of Caprivi ‘resigned’ themselves to the suffering and disdain allotted to them by the conquering powers, especially the Lozi and Makololo, is refuted. It is argued and shown in this chapter that the ‘colonized’ attempted to regain their independence at various points in their relationship with their masters, even if this meant betraying this master and paying allegiance to the other. As Albert Memmi correctly observes, “In all of the colonized there is a fundamental need for change.”²² It is shown that it is untenable to think that the colonized inhabitants of Caprivi could have been expected to ‘disappear’ into their master, to be Lozi. Lozi and Kololo subjugation of the inhabitants of Caprivi was tantamount to ‘colonialism’, and should be classified as such. The Lozi regime especially was as or even more exploitative and cruel²³ than some colonial powers that came later. As Jean-Paul Sartre concluded, there are neither good nor bad colonists – there are colonists.²⁴ Contemporary historiography on Caprivi does not acknowledge this fact and rather concentrates on glorifying the ‘powerful Lozi’ kingdom and its expansion southwards. This historiography neglects a basic fact, that where there is a powerful entity, there is bound to be a powerless one. Resistance to Lozi expansion is not

²² Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Expanded Edition: Introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre; Afterword by Susan Gilson Miller). Boston: Beacon Press, 1965, p. 119.

²³ See descriptions in Pretorius, J., ‘The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel: A Study of their Historical and Geographical Background, Tribal Structure and Legal System, with reference to the Fwe Family Law and Succession’ (MA, University of Stellenbosch, 1975).

²⁴ In an Introduction to Albert Memmi’s book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. xxv.

discussed as part of citizenship and subjectivity in the Lozi state. In brief, Chapter Two will seek to provide answers to the following questions: whether there were pre-colonial or pre-Caprivi identities and what role these may have played in shaping later Caprivianness? What was the nature of societal relations in the pre-colonial space that became the Caprivi?; And What was the nature of contestations over identities in that pre-colonial space that became the Caprivi?

Chapters Three and Four discuss formal colonialism in the Caprivi and how this was conducted and contested by European imperial powers during the so-called 'Scramble for Africa', which resulted in the 'deals and treaties' that created the Caprivi Zipfel. The chapters discuss the role of state formation both during the German and South African colonial periods and how this helped shape Caprivi identities. It is shown how the more things changed (in terms of colonial administrations), the more they remained the same, in that there was really stagnation, isolation and neglect of the Caprivi administratively in the periods 1890-1909, 1909-1914, 1914-1918, 1918-1922, 1922-1929, 1929-1939, 1939-1964. During all those periods, the Caprivi was administered at the local level by one European official with an assistant, while the provision of education and health services was the responsibilities of missionaries from the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and later from the Catholic Capuchin Order. The period 1964 until independence marked a shift from neglect to intense focus, with the appointment of the Odendaal Commission and the implementation of a roadmap towards Caprivi self-governing status. While a major conclusion is that Caprivi identities are a result of neglect, the focus in Chapter Three and Four is to understand how Caprivi identities were formed during the colonial period. The

following questions are asked: What role did state formation play in the construction of Caprivi identities? How was the Caprivi administered? Did the nature of the different administrations make the Caprivi peripheral or central, firstly, in relation to Namibian state formation; and secondly, in relation to central southern Africa? To tackle these issues effectively mainly for practical purposes, Chapter Three deals with the period 1890 to 1939 of colonialism in Caprivi, in which a major characteristic of Caprivi identities are the transferability of the Caprivi from one colonial master to the next for administrative purposes, and asks how this aided the formation of Caprivi identities? Chapter Four is concerned with the period 1939 to 1982 of colonialism in Caprivi, during most of which the Caprivi was administered directly from Pretoria through the Union of South Africa's Department of Native Affairs. This period can usefully be divided into two parts, i) the period of the Bantu reserve (1939 -1964) which was characterized by neglect in all spheres; and, ii) the Bantustan period (1964 -1980) which saw the implementation of the Odendaal Recommendations for Caprivi self government. It is argued that in this latter period the Caprivi was the subject of intense focus by the administration, asks how this shift, from total neglect to intense focus over a period of less than half a century, affected, and helped construct or deconstruct Caprivi identities?

In the main during the early part of the period of Caprivi colonial administration, the provision of education and health services was left in the hands of the Seventh Day Adventist and, later, Catholic missionaries. The general trend of both missions was to apply Northern Rhodesia school curricula in the Caprivi schools. Written examinations were those of Northern Rhodesia, and the officials who inspected schools in the Caprivi

were from Northern Rhodesia. In addition, all illnesses of a serious nature were referred to hospitals in Northern Rhodesia. The impact that this could have had on the construction of Caprivi identities is interrogated.

It was during this period of colonial rule that the Caprivi became a contested frontier. The Caprivi was isolated and remote, so why was it that the Caprivi and Caprivi identities were continually under contestation, and what was the nature of this contestation? This forms the basis of the discussion in Chapter Five, which sets out to describe the Caprivi as a contested frontier and asks what the nature of this frontier was, and what its constituent elements were. This frontier is described, among others, in terms of labour migrancy and militaristic aspects (military frontier). What role did these different aspects play in the consolidation of Caprivi identities? Did the routes of migrant labour point: towards, or away from, South West Africa/Namibia, and what effect would this have had on Caprivi identities.

In Chapter Six, the discussion will move into the question of what form Caprivi identities took at the local level: how it was consolidated at the local level; did it create or recognize any local identities; did its construction involve loss of local identities, did it create competition among local identities, and did this competition evolve into contestation? Finally it asks what form this contestation took and over what aspects? All these questions are explored in Chapter Six, entitled 'Contested identities and rival histories'.

The last three chapters of the thesis, Seven, Eight and Nine, are devoted to the African responses to Caprivi identities, both past and present. In Chapter Seven the rise of Caprivi nationalism is examined, specifically the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). The following questions are asked: was the rise of CANU a direct response to isolated Caprivi identities; how was CANU formed; what were the issues the nationalists were concerned with; how did this threaten Caprivi identities; and how does Caprivi regional nationalism fit into broader Namibian nationalism? Chapter Eight looks at how the state responded to the threat to Caprivi identities embodied in the rise of CANU. The focus here is on political repression, particularly the arrest, detention and disappearance of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, founder president of CANU. It asks what happened to him after his arrest in 1964; where was he taken; and, if he was killed, where was his body taken? Chapter Nine is concerned with Caprivi identities in the present: Are they still being constructed and, if so, in what form? It asks whether contestation over this present construction is on-going and if such construction (secession) is a direct result of the construction of Caprivi identities of the past? Finally, it asks whether there is a historical basis for Caprivi secession. The concluding Chapter Ten provides a brief summary of conclusions to the study.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to determine how Caprivi identities were constructed in the past; and whether such construction still continues in the present; what contestations over Caprivi identities emerged; and whether pre-colonial identities laid a foundation that shaped later Caprivi identities?

Ethnic Terminology

In this thesis the terms Lozi, Malozi, Barotse and/or Aluyi are used interchangeably to refer to the same group. Similarly, the term Makololo (or just Kololo) also refers to the same group of people under Sebetwane. The inhabitants of the Caprivi were classified into two main groups for administrative purposes: the Subia (also known as Masubia, Subiya, Masubiya, Kuhane or Bekuhane) and the Mafwe (also known as Fwe). The latter group, identified as Bafwe (Bayeyi) between 1909 and 1972, included within its ranks, smaller groups such as the Mayeyi (also Yei, Yeyi or Bayeyi), Mbukushu (also Mambukushu), Totela (also Matotela), Mbalangwe (also Mambalangwe), BaMashi (also Mashi or Mayuni people) and Barakwena (also Barakwengo or San). Reference to these groups in this thesis will conform to the broad categories of Subiya and Fwe or Masubiya and Mafwe when dealing with the colonial period. In the post independent state, reference to the Mafwe (or Fwe) excludes Mayeyi (Yeyi or Yei) and BaMashi (or Mayuni), since these are now independent chieftaincies.

It is clear from the above that this thesis deals with a multiplicity of ethnic identities and in a way with ethnicity in Caprivi. As Royce contends, ethnicity result from the existence of more than one ethnic group in a given society and that at times ethnic identity can even be the product of increased inter-group interaction.²⁵ It is logical then to begin by defining the concepts ethnic identity, ethnic group, ethnicity and national identity as used in the thesis. Royce defines ethnic group as a 'reference group that may share common

²⁵ Royce, Anya Peterson, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 40.

values, beliefs, and history. Through the process of interaction members come to identify themselves as sharing a certain style.’²⁶ As for ethnic identity, Royce defines it as ‘the total of the feeling, beliefs, and history that identify the members as being part of a distance past.’²⁷ To accept the above definitions in the context of this study present difficulties, such as the risk of reading some of these contemporary identities back into the 17th or 18th centuries and negotiating issues related to borders of exclusion and inclusion in the construction of identities, from above by the state or from below by the people themselves. For Anthony D. Smith, there are two extreme views on ethnicity, those who find a primordial quality in ethnicity, which “exists outside time”, and those who see ethnicity as “situational”, dependent on the individual’s situation and open to instrumental manipulation by competing elites.²⁸ Smith chooses to stress the “historical and symbolic-cultural attributes of ethnic identity”.²⁹ In this sense, it is fairly clear that there were ‘Subiya’, ‘Mafwe’, Mayeyi and other ethnic groups in Caprivi in the 18th century and previously. However, these probably meant different things at different times and in different places, as ably put by Mai Palmberg: “Identities are relational, they are different at different times, and they are contested, and hence, unstable.”³⁰

An oft-quoted writer on the theme of identities, Benedict Anderson, coined the concept ‘imagined communities’.³¹ Are the above identities, one may ask, ‘imagined’ as

²⁶ Royce, 1982, p. 18.

²⁷ Royce, 1982, p. 18.

²⁸ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991, p. 20.

²⁹ Ibid.: p. 20.

³⁰ Mai Palmberg, ‘Introduction’, in Palmberg, M., (ed.), *National Identity and Democracy in Africa*, Uppsala, The Human Sciences Research Council of SA, the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape and the Nordic Africa Institute, 1999, p. 14.

³¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London and New York, 1992. (The book was first published in 1983, the revised and enlarged edition in 1991.)

according to Anderson? On this point Anderson is largely irrelevant because he dealt mostly with national identities as opposed to ethnic identities. It is helpful to remember that for Anderson, “imagined communities” did not mean “fabricated” or “invented”. He described the nation as “an imagined political community” because the “members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”³² For Anderson all communities other than primordial villages with face-to-face contact are in fact imagined.³³ There is a danger of adapting much of what Anderson writes to suit circumstances in Africa since his examples are mainly from Asia as observed by Palmberg:

On a more general level we have seen how the authorities on national identity, Anthony D. Smith and Benedict Anderson, do have much to tell us, but also leave us largely without analytical tools when it comes to Africa. More research is needed on ‘the special cases’ represented by Africa.

Anderson’s concept of ‘imagined communities’ can perhaps be better employed in this thesis in the context of dismantling ‘Caprivi nationalism’ and secession. According to Smith, the central idea of nationalism is that “nations exist from time immemorial, and that nationalists must reawaken them from their slumber to take the place in a world of nations.”³⁴ Similarly, the Chatham House Report defines nationalism as “a consciousness, on the part of individuals or groups, of membership in a nation, or of a

³² Ibid.: p. 6.

³³ Palmberg, 1999, p. 11.

³⁴ Smith, 1991, pp. 19-20.

desire to forward the strength, liberty or prosperity of a nation...”³⁵ Based on the above definitions of nationalism and without engaging in in-depths discussion on how new nations come to be imagined, it become impractical to think of a Caprivi ‘national identity’, as professed by the secessionists. To begin with, the spatial identity of what is today Caprivi did not exist since time immemorial. It is a colonial creation just like any modern African state, the results of colonial rivalries, partition conferences and conquests. National identity for Smith is founded in culture and involves both cultural ideas (such as ideas on common ancestry or history), and cultural symbols, (such as monuments, poetry, architecture). It is shown in the thesis that history is such a divisive and contested element of contemporary Caprivi and with so diverse ethnic backgrounds, the issue of common ancestry cannot be imagined. If Caprivi nationalism manages to invent a nation where it does not exist, definitely myths of ethnic origin will not form the ideological basis of its imagined multi-ethnic state.

Sources of data and methodological considerations

This study is informed by ‘revisionist’ historiography, more especially Marxist social history of the 1980s, with its strong emphasis on “history from below”.³⁶ Such an approach is necessary to break contemporary trends that see the history of Caprivi through the lenses of Lozi and Kololo subjugation and portray ‘Caprivians’ as a ‘Lozi underclass’. Emphasis on social history does not, however, mean ignoring the structuralist scholarship of the 1970s, the primary concern of which was with questions of

³⁵ In Thomas Hodgkin, ‘Introductory’, in Hodgkin, Thomas, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, London, Frederick Muller, 1956, p. 20.

³⁶ B. Bozzoli. *Class, Community and Conflict*. (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), pp. xiii-xx.

theory, of state and capital accumulation. As Nefale correctly observes, “the lives of ordinary men are tied by a conflicting relationship with the state, particularly after the demise of independent African chiefdoms that led many Africans to flock to the cities and their confinement to the reserves”.³⁷ A study seeking to portray ‘history from below’ should undoubtedly benefit from the use of oral sources. Current political conditions in the Caprivi are not conducive for oral interviews on sensitive themes such as identities, secession, and regional nationalism. Apart from the on-going treason trial, the current land dispute between the two main groups in the area, the Mafwe and Masubiya, makes oral interviewing very difficult.

However, I have done extensive oral history research, for the present study, and other related projects. These were quite beneficial and informative alternative sources of data that complement and complete gaps in written materials. This thesis, however, benefited tremendously from unrelated field work interviews I conducted in the Caprivi for projects on the history of the Caprivi, for it has been easier for interviewees to talk about the past. The first is a three-phased project on the ‘life history’ of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye which is sponsored by the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle Project (AACRLS) of the National Archives of Namibia. Phase One of this project involved the compilation of a comprehensive literature study of mainly archival sources on Simbwaye and the history of regional nationalism in Caprivi, particularly the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). Phase Two consisted of oral interviews with family, friends, work colleagues and political acquaintances of Brendan

³⁷ M. Nefale. ‘The Politics of Land in Levubu, Northern Province, c.1935-1998’ (MA Thesis, UCT, 2000).

Simbwaye, mainly in Caprivi and other parts of Namibia. Reports for Phase One and Two are filed at the National Archives of Namibia, including tape recordings of the oral interviews. Phase Three of this project will commence in August 2007 and its primary aim is to produce a biographical manuscript on Simbwaye (for possible publication) and a Mobile Exhibition which will hopefully find a place in the planned Museum in the Caprivi Region. To coincide with the 2006 Heroes Day Celebrations, which were held at Katima Mulilo in Caprivi Region for the first time since independence, I published my research results on this project in *New Era* of 25 August 2006 in an article entitled 'Heroism: A Glance at Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye'. That the celebrations were held in Caprivi is significant in the wider debate on the role and place of Caprivi in the Namibian liberation war. This forms part of the discussion in Chapter Five which examines the military frontier identity of Caprivi. It is shown in that chapter that Caprivi was a key operational front for both SADF and PLAN during the liberation war. Apart from Chapter Five on the military frontier, material from this research was helpful to and informed discussion in Chapter Seven and Eight that deals with African responses, and focuses especially on the rise of CANU.

The second project I am involved in concerns the current land dispute between the Mafwe and Masubiya Traditional Authorities involving ownership of the Muyako area. In early 2007, the head of state Hifikepunye Pohamba issued a Presidential Decree based on the recommendations of the Council of Traditional Leaders that the disputed piece of land, which includes Lake Lyambezi, was to fall under the Masubiya Traditional Authority. The Mafwe Traditional Authority is contesting that decision on the basis that

the right procedures were not followed before the decision was taken and therefore it has asked the High Court of Namibia to set aside the decree. As the case involves digging deep into history to determine ancient rights to Muyako, I have taken a keen interest in following developments both in the High Court and at the traditional courts, where oral histories are presented by elderly informants to strengthen the cases on both sides. Information from these sessions, which I capture on tape recordings and handwritten notes, was very useful on the chapters dealing with pre-colonial Caprivi and on contested identities and rival histories. Much of the construction and, especially, the display of these oral histories take place during annual cultural festivals held by the traditional authorities, at which song and dance is mingled with narrations (mainly triumphant) of the past: legends, traditions, heroes and heroines. To put these traditional festivals into historical perspective, I published an article, in response to one that appeared earlier on the subject, in which I argued that the history of traditional festivals in the Caprivi in the form they exist was an imposed initiative of Apartheid South Africa, in celebration of Republic Day. The article, entitled 'Andrew Matjila and Traditional Festivals in the Caprivi: The other side of the coin' (*New Era*, 6 October 2006) emphasized that festivals in this form were one of many projects undertaken by South Africa to further isolate and strengthen Caprivi identities, in being repackaged to serve its "nation building" project.

The present study also benefited in many ways from focus group and informal discussions I engaged in during fieldwork in the Caprivi while gathering information in the course of writing research papers: "The evolution of mission education and health provision in the Eastern Caprivi Strip: 1920s to 1960s" is an unpublished joint paper with Gilbert Likando of the Education Department of the University of Namibia, while two

other papers were written in 2006 in conjunction with Wolfgang Zeller of the Institute of Development Studies in Finland. One of these, 'From Apartheid Bantustan to Namibia's Socio-economic Tail-Light: Caprivi Under Old and New Indirect Rule' is published in a book³⁸ edited by Henning Melber, while 'From Apartheid Garrison to Transnational Boomtown: Katima Mulilo Before and After Namibian Independence' was presented at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in San Francisco, USA, in 2006.

The last project I am involved in, from which the present study has benefited in terms of oral interviews is the SADC Secretariat Research: Hashim Mbita Project (SSRHMP). This is recording the history of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, and I am contracted by the Namibia Chapter of the Project to conduct interviews with participants in the liberation war from the Caprivi Region on their behalf.

From the interviews undertaken, it was apparent that a lot of oral histories in the Caprivi are diluted by textbook histories. The dividing line between the two has grown very thin and therefore over-reliance on oral interviews would affect the credibility of any research project. But as Vansina reminds us, the limitations of oral evidence, such as lack of chronology, numbers and locality, need to be 'remedied by recourse to outside sources.'³⁹

It is to these 'outside sources' that I now turn.

³⁸ Melber, Henning (ed.), *Cross-Examining Transitions in Namibia: Socio-Economic and Ideological Transformation since Independence*, Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, 2007.

³⁹ J. Vansina., *Oral Tradition as History*. London: James Currey, 1985, p. 187.

Most of my archival research was undertaken in the National Archives of Namibia, where files related to the Caprivi during the South West Africa Administration (SWAA) are held. Among the most useful are Caprivi Native Affairs and Magistrate (CNAM); Commissioner Eastern Caprivi (KCA); Magistrate Katima Mulilo (LKM); and the Bantu Administration Files (BAD). The last named were particularly useful on the chapter dealing with CANU, for they contain letters between Brendan Simbwaye and Israel Goldblatt, an advocate who was active in defending political prisoners in South West Africa. In addition, and related to the Simbwaye-Goldblatt connection, I received a transcript of material related to the two from Dag Henrichsen of Basler Afrika Bibliographien, who is working on a project on the Goldblatt papers.

What was of particular importance in the National Archives of Namibia was nine boxes of archival material on the history of the Caprivi, recently donated by Mr. Andrew Theunissen of the Attorneys Theunissen, Louw and Partners thanks to the good offices of Antje Otto-Reiner, who also organized and listed the material. The documents were compiled in the context of an intended court case to clarify the issue of the boundary between the Mafwe and the Masubiya traditional authorities in the early 1980s. Even though the case never went to court, the attorneys managed to put together useful documents on the history of the Caprivi that include copies from historical and ethnological literature, minutes of meetings, correspondences, statements, photographs and a map showing a proposed boundary between the two groups.

The National Archives of Namibia has also received material from the South African National Archives in Pretoria, dealing with the period when the Caprivi was administered directly from Pretoria. Another invaluable resource was private collections, in this case, Log Books, in three volumes, of the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo. I made three journeys to Katima Mulilo to access this material. It covers the period 1943 – 1994 and incorporates the general history of the Caprivi, church history, education and health; and most interestingly, church-state relations in the history of the Caprivi. For the pre-colonial period history of the Caprivi, a trip to the Zambia National Archives in Lusaka proved a worthy exercise. I could not make a trip to the National Archives in Botswana, but received photocopies of materials on Caprivi held in that archive from my colleagues Jeremy Silvester and Werner Hillebrecht. Particularly useful was recently de-classified material from the Botswana President's office that sheds light on the relationship between SWAPO and CANU in Lusaka, a subject not often talked about, and the source of secessionist attempts in Caprivi.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of a study such as this are apparent. It is limited by the available material, which is valuable but patchy. It is limited in scope to certain selected aspects of Caprivi's history. It is limited geographically to what came to be known as the Caprivi Strip after the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty: that ignores the fact that the areas of an ethnic group straddle the borders of more than one country. Nonetheless the thesis provides a rich source of valuable material on the making of Caprivi identities, WNLA, the careers of

Simbwaye and Muyongo, the emergence of CANU and its relationship with SWAPO. The topic is timely for broader scholarship and to Namibia in view of the current Treason Trial of some 100 'Caprivian' Separatists.

Literature review

There is a general lack of research on the history of the Caprivi region. The bulk of what exists is in the form of reports compiled by officials working for the colonial state. The information contained in such reports reflects the authors' intentions and biases and are not of scholarly nature. Information available on the pre-colonial period consists of travelogues (travel literature) by traders, missionaries and trophy hunters. These are often not available in Namibia, but are held by libraries outside the country.

Major works of substance on the history of Caprivi have still to emerge. What does exist are studies dealing with isolated aspects pertaining to the history of the area. In 1972 DM Shamukuni published a 23 page article on the Subiya entitled 'The Basubiya', in *Botswana Notes and Records* (4, 1972, pp. 161-184) giving useful insights into the history of the Masubiya. Although useful for the present study, he places too much emphasis on the Masubiya in Botswana and not enough on those in Caprivi. His article does not say much on the politics and local geopolitics in the making of the Caprivi. Shamukuni has been accused of being a 'Subiya historian', among others by Flint.⁴⁰ His work was followed in 1975 by that of Johan Pretorius. His MA thesis submitted to the

⁴⁰ See Flint, L., State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, Issue 2, 2003.

University of Stellenbosch focused on the Mafwe people of the Caprivi. He looked at their historical and geographical background, tribal structure and legal system. Special reference was made to Mafwe family law and succession. Critics⁴¹ of Pretorius have found fault in the fact that he relies heavily on the narration of a Subiya school principal at Kanono in the Mafwe area to relate the history of the Mafwe. In other words, he is biased towards the Masubiya viewpoint.

In 1984 C.E. Kruger, the longest serving Native Commissioner/Magistrate in Caprivi during the South African period, produced a manuscript on the history of Caprivi, entitled: 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984'. Although written from an amateurish historical perspective, this contains useful reference material on the history of the Caprivi and was quite helpful in the present study. More bulky, and largely incoherent in presentation, is a manuscript compiled by Ernest Likando in 1989, entitled: 'The Caprivi Strip: A historical perspective'. Although rich in assertions that are not sufficiently substantiated, Likando's manuscript nonetheless provides important pointers for further enquiry into the history of the Caprivi. A major criticism is his over-reliance on Subiya oral history, making him biased towards Subiya history.⁴² Sections dealing with the political history of the Caprivi appeared in Pütz, von Egidy and Caplan's 1989 *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, but Caprivi nationalism is still portrayed as an appendix or footnote to Namibian nationalism.

⁴¹ See Maritz, Chris, 'The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi: Any Historical Grounds for a Status of Primus Inter Pares?' *Africa Insight*, (An independent publication which promotes insight into the process of change in Africa), vol. 26, no. 2, 1996, pp. 177-185.

⁴² See Sehani, M., 'The Mafwe/Mayuni Crisis: Rival Histories and the Assertion of Identity in the Caprivi', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, 2000.

Two scholarly works on Caprivi appeared in 1996: 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi, Namibia', was the title and theme of an MA Thesis submitted by Leif John Fosse to the Department and Museum of Anthropology of the University of Oslo. Even though his main concern was how the Caprivi is a difficult case for Namibian nationalism, Fosse managed to bring out relevant socio-politico-historical issues in the Caprivi, including conflicting claims to history; land disputes, public service appointments and its contestations, and how these are products of colonial historical processes and interactions. Fosse's narrative was more anthropological than historical, however, and he failed to critically engage with the literature he quotes.

Chris Maritz's 'The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi', published in *Insight* (26, No. 2, 1996), examined whether there was historical cause for the Masubiya to claim 'indigenouness' in Caprivi. His conclusion was that there was none: that the Mafwe and Masubiya co-existed in history and that there was no proof of domination of one by the other. A major weakness of his analysis is that for him the history of the Caprivi begins in 1909. Before then, the people of the Caprivi were just little 'serfs' of the Lozi and Kololo. This is not surprising since Maritz collected his data during fieldwork in the 1980s, when colonial anthropology informed many publications on the history of Caprivi. He was part of the team that worked on the Mafwe case. Even though short, Maritz's paper is very relevant for the purposes of the present study. Both Maritz's work and the present study look at conflict as history in the history of the Caprivi.

The most widely read works on the Caprivi's history relate to the German period, accessible to this researcher thanks mainly to Maria Fisch's two publications, in English which both appeared in 1999. The first, *The Caprivi Strip during the German colonial period, 1890-1914*, is detailed in its focus on the achievements of Kurt Streitwolf and is almost a biography. The narration in this book, almost along the lines of 'Thank God the Germans came'⁴³, credits Streitwolf with 'giving' the people of the Caprivi an 'identity' in the form of more centralized traditional institutions. Fisch is silent on loss of identities during this period, especially when the Mafwe ethnic coalition was established, and incorporated within its ranks non-Mafwe ethnic groups such as Mayeyi, Mbalangwe, Barakwena (San) and Mbukushu. This is despite the fact that by the time of publication Fisch knew that in 1993 the Mayeyi community in the Caprivi had already decided to break away from the above coalition by not accepting Mamili, the Mafwe chief, as their leader.⁴⁴ The same action was taken by the Mayuni community along the Mashi area.⁴⁵ In both communities traditional authorities were recognized and gazetted by the government. A strength of Maria Fisch's publication is the rich knowledge she demonstrates of archival documents in the National Archives of Namibia relating to the German period. Since she is a German speaker and, given that most of them are in the

⁴³ Lau, Brigitte. 'Thank God the Germans Came': Vedder and Namibian Historiography', in Keith Gottschalk and Christopher Saunders, eds. *African Seminar: Collected papers*, vol. 2 (Cape Town, 1982).

⁴⁴ Sasa, D., 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', Paper presented at the 'Public History: Forgotten History' Conference hosted by the History Department of the University of Namibia, 2000.

⁴⁵ See Sehani, M., 'The Mafwe/Mayuni Crisis: Rival Histories and the Assertion of Identity in the Caprivi', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, 2000.

German language, the level of engagement with this source material is critically high and beneficial to non-German speakers researching on Caprivi history during this period.

In her second publication, *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi: A historical perspective*, which does not draw upon oral interviews, Fisch interprets the above form of identity disintegration as partisan politics, particularly on the part of the ruling SWAPO party. While Fisch asserts correctly SWAPO benefited in political terms, her argument that if SWAPO had not come into power those communities would not have re-asserted their independent identities is a limited one. Does that not still show that the colonial state suppressed identities? A major weakness of Fisch and other researchers on Caprivi history is to make the history and people of the Caprivi extensions of cross-border history. In explaining settlement history in the Caprivi, for example, it is suggested that the people of Caprivi were Lozi, and by implication, did not exist as separate entities, did not have identities of their own. Their histories and cultures are taken to be so intrinsically situated in Lozi history and traditions that they do not seem to have perceptions of themselves, either in the past or the present. Fisch's two books were followed by Wolfgang Zeller's useful paper entitled 'Interests and Socio-economic development in the Caprivi region from a historical perspective', a *NEPRU Occasional Paper* (19, May 2000). This study discussed divergent colonial economic interests in the making of the Caprivi and placed these in their historical context.

In 2003, Lawrence Flint published a very useful account of the history of the old Lozi kingdom as it encompassed Caprivi, entitled 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa:

Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi’, in the *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 36, 2, 2003, based on a doctoral thesis on the same subject that he submitted to the University of Birmingham in 2002. Even though his PhD is not accessible in Namibian libraries, core chapters are posted on his website, which is dedicated to the ‘preservation of Lozi culture and traditions’. Flint is the first to argue for the centrality and importance of the Caprivi, as a space, to the survival and existence of Buluzi, and he shows how the quality of life in Zambia’s western province was affected by the excision of the Caprivi from the kingdom in 1909. This is relevant to the present study in that it supports the assertion that the Caprivi is strategically located and that it is this geographical positioning that had put it under contestation since pre-colonial times.

However, some of Flint’s ideas are challenged in the present study. These ideas include his views on subjectivity and citizenship as aspects of state formation or ‘state-building’. Yes, the inhabitants of Caprivi were citizens of Buluzi and subjects of Lozi kings. This, however, did not make them Lozis, nor did they lose themselves in the category ‘Lozi’. To assert, as Flint does in his conclusion to the paper, that people started losing their Lozi identity only from the German period, and that it was only then that group identities such as Subia, Yeyi and Mbukushu ‘resurfaced’ and took precedence over “Loziness”, is misplaced. What Flint neglects in this analysis is the fact that resistance is an integral part of subjectivity in state formation. The basic question is how the inhabitants of the Caprivi responded to Lozi occupation and expansion. The present study argues that the inhabitants of the Caprivi tried at various periods in their history, including while under the Lozi, to re-assert their autonomy. Similarly, the argument that divergent economic

developmental processes made these people choose the above group identities over Lozi-ness needs further substantiation. What about the Masubiya or Matotela people who still reside in Zambia's western province? Do they regard themselves as Lozis and not Subiya or Totela because they have nothing to lose? Can identities be interpreted only in economic terms? If that were the case, 'Caprivians' would not be fighting to secede from Namibia because they have everything to lose economically by such a move.

Flint applies the terms 'Lozi' and Lozi-land loosely to 'Caprivians' and the Caprivi. The present study takes issue with the description of Caprivi as a 'no man's land', in other words, to give ancestral rights of ownership to Lozi kings rather than to the inhabitants of the Caprivi. I argue that the Lozi royals were occupiers who were bound, just like the European colonizers after them, to be overthrown at some point. It is this description of the Caprivi as a Lozi land that often leads commentators to equate Caprivi secession with separatist tendencies in Barotseland as a 'Lozi thing'. In fact, Flint describes the two as forms of 'nationalism', which begs the question: which 'nation' in terms of the Caprivi? While Lozi might be a more homogenous identity, in the Caprivi opinions are divided along ethnic and political lines. Flint's assertion assumes the people of Caprivi are united behind calls for secession. This has not been empirically established and it is not surprising to find that he undertook his oral research mainly among refugees of the United Democratic Party (UDP) in Botswana and by interviewing the leaders who were given refuge in Denmark.

Thirdly, Flint's research, just like many others before him, did not break new ground in the periodization of Caprivi history. He conforms to the old Lozi, Kololo, Lozi restoration, and then European colonization periodization, and again adopts C.E. Kruger's myth that the coming of the Europeans is 'of the greatest significance to these parts...' This begs the question: most significant to whom in terms of local history? Such a periodization fails to recognize that there were social and political formations in the Caprivi before its invasion by the Lozi. In this sense, when contemporary historiographies speak about local history, this automatically becomes Lozi and Kololo history. The rest were just servants but, of course, even servants have a past.

Lastly, the fact that Flint conducted most of his fieldwork in Barotseland and not in the Caprivi adds another dimension to what he writes about the Caprivi. Even though he states in footnote 56 that he undertook fieldwork in the Caprivi, where village elders pointed out Sekeletu's burial site, he makes simple historical mistakes. He states in footnote 48 that Sebetwane's body was taken to Naliele in Barotseland for burial after his death in the Caprivi. The present study shows that Sebetwane was buried on an island in the Caprivi. It is surprising that the 'village elders' did not point this out to Flint on his visit.

Research by students from the Caprivi is emerging very slowly. At the August 2000 "Public History: Forgotten History" Conference hosted by the History Department of the University of Namibia, two student papers from the department were presented. David Sasa (now deceased) looked at Mayeyi identity in the Caprivi and Botswana. The

Mayeyi/Wayeyi in both countries re-asserted their autonomy from the Mafwe and Tawana dominion, in 1993 and 1999 respectively. Michael Sehani looked at the Mafwe breakaway, and the Mayuni community of the Mashi area in the Caprivi. Both papers are useful starting points on the political histories of the two communities, but the present work is the first full-scale academic study of the Caprivi to be written to date.

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CHAPTER TWO

PRE-COLONIAL CAPRIVI: CONQUEST, BETRAYAL AND RIVALRY

Introduction

It will be established in Chapter Three that colonial administrative control in the Caprivi was informed largely by negative perceptions of land and people. While the land was imaged as unhealthy, malarial and useless, its inhabitants were classified as neither prepossessing nor attractive ‘wandering Bushmen’ who showed no tendency to abandon their own customs.¹ Clearly, these customs were considered to be primitive, or, at worst, as non-existent. In his 1938 Inspection Report, Trollope concluded that tribes that inhabited the Caprivi had no any very real background of tradition, sentiments that would be reproduced repeatedly over generations, most notably by Kruger, who added that since the people of the Caprivi had until comparatively recently been a subject people, they “consequently have no background”.²

The pre-colonial and colonial history of the Caprivi, therefore, is filled with stories of servitude in the current historiography, particularly Lozi and Kololo domination. More recently, Lawrence Flint has sought to reconstruct the ‘Lozi State’ as it encompassed Caprivi. While he emphasized, rightly so, that the Caprivi (space or land) played a significant central role in the expansion and existence of Barotseland or Lozi state, Flint’s discussion of the inhabitants of Caprivi and their role in the Lozi state is weak. Flint seemed too eager to conclude that ‘Caprivians’ were Lozis at this stage, and that it was just the advent of European colonization that made them rediscover their separate identities. Indeed, most colonial administrative reports on the Caprivi conclude that the constitution of tribal groupings in the area only dates back to the arrival of the Germans:

¹ Trollope, L.F. Report on the Administration of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel, 1940, p.11 ((NAN: 2267, A 503/1-7).

² Kruger, 1940, pp. 11-12.

“It is true the constitution of the two tribes must be regarded as dating back to the coming of the German Administration in 1909”, Kruger emphasizes.³ Therefore, under the Lozi and Kololo domination, the subordinate peoples were not even communities. It is argued here that even vassals have a history – and as thus have a community of memory, which is a shared reflection of past experiences – both painful and celebratory.

There were generally two basic kinds of traditional political organizations in pre-colonial Caprivi: centralized states, with political authority vested in the hands of hereditary rulers (such as in the case of Itenge), and more egalitarian decentralized communities, where political power was regulated by interactions between kinship groups, such as clans or lineage, or was maintained by elders in an age-set system. The latter was the more dominant. In centralized states leadership was by a select few based on hereditary claims. Competition and conflicts for the throne existed. Judicial systems were well established. In decentralized societies, the lineage of clan formed the political units. Heads of lineages exercised authority in such a way that elders could cooperate and arrive at consensus. Judicial and religious authority was with certain people. Despite a slight patrilineal bias, kinship in Caprivi is reckoned bilaterally, with relations traced as widely as possible through both consanguineal and affinal ties. Cousin terminology is Hawaiian; terminology in the first ascending generation is bifurcate merging. Kin terms used for the first ascending generation are used for members of the third ascending generation as well. In contrast, members of the second and fourth ascending generations are all lumped together under a single kin term.

The division of labor in subsistence pursuits largely follows lines of sex. Men are responsible for livestock, hunting, most of the fishing, and the more arduous agricultural tasks; while women do most of the work in agriculture and collecting, a little fishing, and most of the routine domestic chores. Women played dynamic and varied roles. Women were essential in religious and economic affairs. Women dominated areas of the economy - controlling facets of agricultural production, flow of commerce, a wide variety of

³ Kruger, 1963, p. 4; see also his submission to the Buddack Commission.

industries and crafts. Women milled flour, preserved food, built houses, manufactured clothing and ornaments, brewed beer, established markets -- and composed songs, poetry and stories. In previous times, economic exchange was effected through barter and redistribution by the king, but the people of Caprivi are now part of a full-fledged cash economy with market mechanisms.

This chapter will briefly examine societal relations in the pre-colonial Caprivi and essentially argue for the existence of pre-colonial political formations in the Caprivi. In this regard due emphasis will be placed on the claim by the Masubiya that an old Subia Kingdom they name as Itenge⁴ existed before Lozi and Kololo domination. This claim is very often dismissed by many commentators who argue that it is doubtful whether the Subiya had ever entirely independent status in their existence.⁵ Apart from examining the Subia claim, the chapter will also trace the development of other chieftainships in the Caprivi: Mamili, Mayuni and Shifu (of the 'Mafwe', BaMashi or 'Mafwe proper' and Mayeyi respectively). Lozi and Kololo domination will also be briefly discussed as far as these impacts on events in the Caprivi.

⁴ As expressed elsewhere, the most critical of authors in regard to the origin and existence of the name Itenge is Maria Fisch. In her publication *The Secessionist Movement in the Caprivi: A Historical Perspective* (NSS: 1999), Fisch dedicated a whole section to this issue (pp. 46-47), which she claimed was intended to 'reveal the origin' of the name. However, not much is revealed, apart from the claim that Itenge was not in Caprivi but denoted an area regularly raided by the Subiya Chief Nsundano. Fisch does not name the sources of her 'revelation', apart from 'two very old and respected experts on tribal history' that keep assuring her. Respected by whom and experts on which tribal history, one may well ask. Even then, she does not directly credit these two as the sources on this particular issue. She claims that the first mention of Itenge was in Shamukuni's 1972 publication. This is refuted elsewhere in this thesis. While she accuses Shamukuni's of 'strong patriotic undertone and being unreliable', the same can be said in respect of her when she appears to suggest that the use of the name Itenge instead of the Caprivi is 'unfortunate'. Since she is of German descent, the preservation of the name 'Caprivi', and all it represents, also has patriotic undertones to it. It is also a bit offensive for her to describe Nsundano's raids on neighboring communities to capture cattle and people to swell his ranks as 'theft'; surely any scholar of pre-colonial times would know this was the order of the day, a kind of survival tactic which defined and strengthened societies. When communities in the Caprivi were at the receiving end of such raids from the Lozi and Kololo, the same writers ascribe this to the fact that the raided communities were weak and not centrally organized, which pointed to the ingenuity of the conquering forces. The fact that Fisch links the name Itenge with Chief Nsundano is most telling, regardless of the area it denoted because this is precisely in agreement with the Subiya assertion that it was Chief Nsundano who established the Subiya Kingdom of Itenge. Fisch would agree therefore that it is difficult to discuss Nsundano without mention of Itenge, and vice-versa.

⁵ See among others: Kruger, C., 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', 1984 (NAN: A.472)., Kruger, C.E., 'The Eastern Caprivi Strip', 1963, p. 5 (NAN: P/B0139), and Maritz, Chris, 'The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi: Any Historical Grounds for a Status of Primus Inter Pares?', *Africa Insight*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1996, pp. 177-185.

The Subiya-Lozi relations

Not much is recorded about the history of the Caprivi prior to Lozi domination. Apart from other factors, such as the late arrival of outside (particularly European⁶) influence and cross border migration, the area's relatively small size⁷ meant that its history was intertwined with that of surrounding territories. Thus historians have tended to read and heavily rely on historiography pertaining particularly to Barotseland in an attempt to make sense of the order or disorder of things in the pre-colonial Caprivi. Even when, as Kruger rightly observes, the territory and goings-on that such literature discusses hardly feature 'tribes' in Caprivi and the centre of such goings-on was generally more to the north.⁸ One such key source was a study made by the Reverend A. Jalla, C.B.E. of the Paris Missionary Society, which is *Litaba za Sicaba sa Malozi*, translated as *The Story of the Barotse Nation*.⁹ It is significant to record that Jalla's work was read to the Kuta (Traditional Court) of the Lozi before it was published, and therefore wholly approved by the Kuta.¹⁰ It is therefore safe to conclude that Jalla's account, which would form the basis of Lozi history and influence other accounts on the subject,¹¹ is a Lozi narrative on Lozi. What the work says about events in the Caprivi especially kingships and societal relations should thus be critically engaged from such a perspective.

Similarly, it is to this publication that I turn to glean clues on the subject of the relations between the Masubiya and the Lozi. What attracted the Lozi to what Flint calls 'Bulozi floodplain' and eventually to proceed further downstream to conquer the Caprivi was

⁶ The first recorded significant visit was by David Livingstone in 1851.

⁷ The Caprivi Region is c.300 miles (480 km) long and 50 miles (80 km) wide.

⁸ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, Chapter 2, p. 2, 1984.

⁹ See A. Jalla, '*History: Traditions and Legends of the Barotse Nation*' (1909), an original typescript held, according to Lawrence Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, issue 2, 2003, p. 399, at the Institute of Economic and Social Research (NESOR), Lusaka, 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹ See among others, A. Jalla's later version of this work: 'History, Tradition and Legends of the Barotse People' (Colonial Office, African No. 1179, 1921); M. Mainga, 'The origin of the Lozi: Some Oral Traditions', in E. Stokes and R. Brown, eds, *The Zambesian Past: Studies in Central African History* (Manchester, 1966), pp.238-47; *Bulozi Under the Luyana Kings* (London, 1973), and more recently, L. Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2 (2003), pp. 393-428.

mainly the availability of grazing pastures, prospects for reed cutting, fishing, and the suitability of certain areas for making winter gardens.¹² Needless to mention that when the Aluyi¹³ arrived, the Subiya and the other groups were already occupying these parts and therefore the Aluyi (Lozi) conquest state effected displacement and to some extent forced migration from these parts. The first recorded encounter between the Subiya and Aluyi (Lozi) seem to be during the reign of Mwanambinyi, a young brother of Mwanasilundu (the first Lozi king, also known as Mboo). Jalla records that Mwanambinyi broke away from Mwanasilundu and moved downstream with the Zambezi and established his kingdom at Senanga.¹⁴ It is reported that Mwanambinyi then waged war against the Mbukushu and Subiya at Nakabunze (Katima Mulilo) and at Longa Island, causing Chief Liswani of the Subiya to flee to Kazungula, while Cheete of the Mbukushu with his followers fled to Butoka.¹⁵ It is further reported that it was Mwanambinyi's son, Mulia, who continued his father's terror campaigns as far as

¹² J.H. Venning, 'Newly acquired country between the Zambezi and Mashi Rivers' p. 6 (NAN: A. 589).

¹³ Now known as Lozi.

¹⁴ In Chris Maritz, *The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi*, 1996, p. 178., after A. Jalla, *History of the Malozi*, (a translation of the writer's work *Litaba za Sicaba sa Malozi*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 4.; See also M. Gluckman, 'The Lozi of Barotseland in Northwestern Rhodesia', in E. Colson and M. Gluckman (eds.) *Seven tribes of British Central Africa*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959, p. 2; M. Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana Kings*, London: Longman, 1973, p. 24.

¹⁵ *Op cit.* p. 26. Chief Liswani of the Masubiya and Cheete of the Mbukushu lived together at Nakabunze, where the famous Baobab or toilet tree is, now Katima Mulilo. Some historians misconstrue the fact that Chief Liswani lived with Cheete of the Mbukushu at Katima Mulilo to mean that Subiyas are of Mbukushu origin. Flint (2003:398) actually quotes his 'Lozi historians' as stating that Subia people were once part of the Mbukushu before they were dispersed by Mwanambinyi. It is argued here that this dispersal may only account for the movement of one Subiya splinter group, possibly one under Chief Liswani but does necessarily represent the origin of the Subiya as a group; possibly pointing to Liswani as an individual. Even then, there is no conclusive evidence to this effect. There are at least two versions pointing to the 'myths of origin' of the Subiya, that both put them together with the Mbukushu, does not necessarily point to the fact that one originated from the other but rather emphasizes co-existence. One version has it that the Subiya, together with the Yeyi (whom they called Bezanza) and Mbukushu, lived at Goha Hills (in Botswana) before they migrated to Caprivi and Kavango respectively (a version which Flint seem not to consider because it is held among others by Shamukuni whom he describes as a 'Subia Historian' as a way of discrediting the value of his contribution; and the second version, which Flint seem to support, is found in T.J. Larson ('The Hambukushu Migrations to Ngamiland,' *African Social Research*, 11[1971], 27-49) and A.St.H. Gibbons (*Africa from North to South through Marotseland* I[London, 1904], 217-18) who state that the Subiya and Mbukushu lived around the Zambezi at or near Katima Mulilo, and that their leaders fell out over inheritance of rainmaking rights; that Mwanambinyi wanted to end the quarrels and bloodshed and ordered the Mbukushu to leave the Zambezi region from where they migrated to the Mashi. Even though Flint admits that Larson and Gibbons' versions were narrated by Lozi 'royals', he does not adequately engage with the subject. Was he biased towards a Lozi nationalist agenda?, that evidently presents Mwanambinyi in the line of 'Thank God the Germans came', otherwise the Subiya and Mbukushu could have finished each other off. For another version of Subiya myth of origin see Pretorius, J.L., 'The Fwe of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*' (M.A. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1975), 21, where he claims the Subiya lived around the Kafue floodplains where they were called 'Batwa' before they migrated into Caprivi around 1700.

Mwandi (old Sesheke) where he conquered the Subiya and brought them with their chief, Mwanamwale, to Senanga and settled the Mbukushu on Sitoti and Mbeta Islands.¹⁶ Thus this encounter between the Subiya and Aluyi (Lozi) was not cordial. Apart from effectively subjugating the Subiya, by capturing their chief and taking him prisoner to Senanga, the Aluyi (Lozi) were determined to destroy the Subiya chieftainship. There appears to have been a deliberate attempt especially on the part of the Lozi royals to suppress Subiya history. Flint records how when the British colonial administrators were trying to write a history of the region with the help of Lewanika, how the king was most anxious that they should not leave out the history of Mwanambinyi's conquests over the Caprivi, 'in particular over Subia', which the British had apparently tried to do because of the 'magical' content in the story.¹⁷ This was because, Flint believes, 'in order to eliminate the notion that the Subia had previously exerted influence in Caprivi.'¹⁸ It is this history with a 'magical' content that is taught in schools in Barotseland, and willingly reproduced by scholars on the Caprivi as testimonies on the early history of the area. Thus when one presents an array of 'Lozi historians' as informants on the Caprivi, it is difficult to tell how much is oral traditions from their accounts, and how much they reproduce from the textbook histories taught in schools. Kruger observed the same point: '...Jallas' book was freely distributed as a set-work in the schools and one can never quite tell when hearing someone relate early history how much came from that treatise.'¹⁹

The question still is: did the Subiya exert any influence independent of the Lozi in the Caprivi, especially before the Lozi conquest? Evidence presented above that Mwanamwale was chief of the Subiya before the Lozi came to take him into bondage, is accepted here. In fact, Subiya acknowledge that Mwanamwale was chief at Sesheke but name four other chiefs before him, rarely mentioned in oral history: Munitenge²⁰ Itenge,

¹⁶ Maritz (1996: 178), after M. Mainga, *Op cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁷ According to Flint, revisions made on the advice of Lewanika are reflected in a revised report: "History of Barotseland, 'Prepared by the Office of the Provincial Commissioner, Mongu, 20 February 1936, KDE 2/44/1, NAZ.

¹⁸ Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, 399.

¹⁹ Kruger, C.E. 'History of Caprivi', 1982, Chapter 2, p. 6 (A.472, NAN).

²⁰ Literally, Chief.

Munitenge Litundu-Lituu, Munitenge Ikuhane and Munitenge Mwale.²¹ The dynastic heritage of the Subiya has been the subject of largely dismissive discussions,²² and is certainly not of great concern here. It is to reiterate here what was stated by Pretorius in 1975 that the Masubiya has ‘...a recognized line of chiefs dating back two and half centuries’.²³ The fact that the Lozi accepts that Mwanamwale has always been the rightful chief of the Subiya²⁴ supports the existence of autonomous status in the history of the Subiya. Flint himself states that when Mwanambinyi dispersed the Mbukushu at Katima Mulilo, the Subiya became recognized as an autonomous group.²⁵ Indeed, the Masubiya, as Kruger has shown, always maintained that before the coming of the Makololo under Sebetwane to the Zambezi regions they were an independent chieftainship, which was broken down by the Kololo by conquest, and that when the Kololo were overthrown by the Lozi the latter simply took over and ruled as the Makololo had done.²⁶

Two issues emerge from the foregoing discussion: First, that Lozi control over the Subiya intensified and became more effective only after the ‘restoration’ or second Lozi Empire, and, secondly, that the Subiya autonomous status was linked to territorial rights. A discussion on how effective Lozi control over the Caprivi was before the Kololo invasion should take cognizance of three factors: the spatial distribution of the population at the time; the numerical strength of the population; and lastly, mobility and trans-boundary nature of societies at the time. All these factors combined mean that Lozi domination of Subiya of Sesheke (which is not in the Caprivi) does not necessarily mean domination of Subiyas wherever they lived, considering that communities lived in small and autonomous clans scattered all over what is now different territories. While it is recognized here that the Lozi appointed representatives to supervise the collection of

²¹ Main Organizing Committee [The], ‘Report and Background Information on the Fourth Masubia Annual Cultural Festival held on 30 July 2005, at Munitenge Royal Headquarters (Bukalo Kuta), and prepared for the Munitenge Royal Establishment 1652, July 2005’, pp. 22-27. Copy in the possession of the author. Mwanamwale literally translates as child of Mwale.

²² Among others, see Fisch, Maritz, Flint, and Kruger.

²³ Pretorius, J.L., ‘The Fwe of the Eastern Caprivi Strip’, (MA, Univ. of Stellenbosch), 1975, p. 22. Pretorius is largely accused of relying on Masubiya informants, particularly a Subia schoolmaster at Kanono School.

²⁴ See Flint, *Op cit.*, p. 399.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Kruger, in a contribution submitted to the Buddack Commission.

taxes, I am inclined to argue that communities were largely still free to live according to their laws and customs and appoint their chiefs. In other words the work of the representatives, as Flint, quoting Mainga, has observed, was mainly economic.²⁷ Cases of a serious political nature were referred back to the Lozi capital. It follows then that Lozi control over the Caprivi before the Kololo invasion was mainly by 'remote control', especially through occasional punishment parties sent for that purpose, but also to plunder.

One such expedition, in fact of significance as far as the Caprivi is concerned, was undertaken by the sixth Lozi ruler, Ngombala (1725-1775).²⁸ Unlike Mwanambinyi and his son Mulia who ended their exploits at Sesheke where they captured the Subiya chief Mwanamwale and brought him and a section of the Subiya to Senanga (Kaonga near Senanga to be precise), it was Ngombala who extended Lozi influence further southwards to cover the present-day Caprivi. According to Flint, Ngombala commanded an expedition "to put down an apparent rebellion on the part of certain groups south of Bulozhi, including the Subia",²⁹ once again showing that the latter were constantly resisting being under Lozi rule. Maritz, after Jalla, has it that the regiments of Ngombala moved from Nakaywe via Sioma to Sesheke and Kazungula.³⁰ During this campaign, Ngombala plundered the Subiya, Toka and Leya on his way past the Victoria Falls to Hwange³¹ in present day Zimbabwe.³² From Hwange Ngombala is reported to have descended down the Chobe river past Ngoma as far as the Mbunda in present day Angola, subduing all the groups living along the river. This seem to be the first recorded passage of any Lozi royal this way, and hence, I argue, is when one can talk of Lozi control of the Caprivi. As stated earlier, this control, apart from the representatives or Lindumeleti, was largely in the form of raids aimed at plunder of resources and to effect punitive measures. Ngombala appointed deputies or representatives to collect taxes and

²⁷ Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 400.

²⁸ Maritz, after Pretorius (1975, p. 26).

²⁹ Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 399.

³⁰ Maritz, 1996, p. 178.

³¹ Maritz (p. 178) believes that this is derived from the name of another representative of Ngombala, namely Wange/Hwange.

³² According to Lozi sources of Flint (p. 399), Ngombala remained at Victoria Falls while a contingent of his warriors crossed the river to plunder further into the present-day Hwange region of western Zimbabwe.

oversee the supply of labour and generally to guard the fords: Linyanti³³ and latter Mwanangombe at Linyanti (now Sangwali), and others on the Mashi river: Sekau, Masiala and Mwambwa Seluka.³⁴

Flint notes that very little is known or preserved (in his words 'recorded') of Lozi-Caprivi interaction in the period between Ngombala and the arrival of the Makololo in the late 1820s/early 1830s.³⁵ On the strength of Jalla,³⁶ he further notes that even the four wars that were fought for the purpose of plunder and subordination of surrounding peoples during the reign of King Mulambwa (1780-1830), none involved the Caprivi.³⁷ One assumption, which Flint makes, is that the people of Caprivi continued to pay tribute and labour to the Lozi. However, as he hastily emphasizes, this is purely an assumption.³⁸ The other assumption would be that Lozi control over the Caprivi and the Subiya during this period (well over half a century) was at its weakest. This allowed the penetration and conquest of Buluzi by the Makololo from the south, which was through the Caprivi with the assistance of Chief Liswani of the Subiya. It was sometime during this period that a Subiya kingdom they name as Itenge became consolidated. Itenge was founded by Munitenge Nsundano Shanjo, who took over from his brother Mafwira (now Mafwila) Shanjo as chief of the Subiya. Munitenge Nsundano Shanjo was reportedly a contemporary³⁹ of Mulambwa, a Lozi ruler referred to above. According to Shamukuni, it was during the rule of warrior⁴⁰ chief Nsundano that the Basubiya became identified as

³³ While not refuting this assertion (which is itself not supported by other evidence), the researcher is reluctant to support the implication that this is the origin of the name, since it will be shown later that in fact it was the Makololo who gave the place the name Linyanti (place where I will suffer and die), later to be known as Linyanti.

³⁴ See M. Mainga, *Buluzi under the Luyana Kings*, pp. 59-60.

³⁵ Flint, 2003, p. 400.

³⁶ A. Jalla, 'History: Traditions and Legends', 1909, p. 14.

³⁷ Flint, *op cit*;

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Maritz, after Shamukuni, 'The Basubiya', p. 164.

⁴⁰ Because of his bravery, Nsundano became known as Liberenge (Libelenge or Lipelenge) Cisunda Manyika, wakasundankanda nobuta; The name Liberenge is derived from the Subiya verb 'bera' meaning to peel. 'kuSunda' means to push; 'Manyika or Inkanda' means countries in Subiya. 'Buta' means an arrow; So in praising Nsundano, a Subiya elder or praise singer would say "Nsundano, Liberenge, cisunda manyika, wa ka sunda nkanda no buta." This translates as "Nsundano, the Peeler, and the Pusher of countries, who pushed away countries with (by means of) an arrow." He was so named because he defined and defended Itenge. He would die while on one of his war expeditions. See Likando, E., 1989, 'The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective', Lusaka: UNIN (NAN), p. 30; Also Shamukuni, D.M., 'The Basubiya', *Botswana Notes and Records*, vol. 4, 1972, pp. 161-183, p. 163.

an independent tribe.⁴¹ The extent of Itenge were as follows (see map below): Sakapani south of Goha as the most southern point, Nunga to the southeast, Chungwe Namutitima (Victoria Falls) to the east, along the Zambezi upstream as far north as Sioma, and to the west downstream along the Kwando, through Kaunga and Singalamwe, past Savute (Savuti) and down to Sakapani.⁴² With the intrusion of the Lozi on his territory, Munitenge Nsundano sought to expand his territory eastwards. He reportedly entered into an alliance with a Mutoka chief, by the name of Sikute, against Makuni who lived east of Chungwe Namutitima (Victoria Falls), the intention being to conquer the territory of the Makuni. It was during the expedition against Makuni that Munitenge Nsundano met his fate in battle.⁴³ Nsundano was succeeded by his nephew Liswani I.

As stated earlier, Maria Fisch is one critic of the claim that Itenge existed, her argument being that it was not in the Caprivi but denoted an area possibly raided by Nsundano in the land of the Toka-Leya. Secondly, which is the point of the Mafwe that at no point in history did the Masubiya subjugate them? According to this reasoning, Mafwe never paid tribute to Subiya chiefs. Fisch does not show support of her assertion that Itenge was not in the Caprivi. The fact that she acknowledges Nsundano and his exploits that it targeted the Toka-Leya, is itself telling. As for taxes, while we accept that Sebetwane of the Makololo subdued the Lozi, whether the latter paid tribute to the Kololo has never been a subject for discussion, or is it expressed in historical sources. This, however, does not change the fact that the Lozi were subject to Makololo. Similarly, while the Subiya claim

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 163.

⁴² Maritz, 1996, p.182.

⁴³ Main Organizing Committee, The, 'Masubia Annual Cultural Festival, 2005', p. 18, (copy in my possession). According to Shamukuni (p.165), Munitenge Nsundano was killed by the baLeya after his warriors had refused to carry out his orders. It is said that he had been away for over a year fighting the baLeya. His warriors became tired and homesick, and asked the Munitenge to return home but he told them that he had decided to fight longer than they had fought already. After chasing the baLeya for days the warriors violated Liberege's orders (Nsundano) and returned to Luchindo (his royal headquarters in the Caprivi). When Liberege saw that his warriors were going home against his orders, he broke the shaft of his spear in rage, sat on his shield and uttered the following words: *Mubelyowa ciinenkuba, bahikaana benu nibakamisuwe*, meaning, 'Be ye cowardly as doves, let thy slaves subdue thee. He was found there by the baLeya warriors who killed him. When some of the Basubiya returned to where they had left him, they found that he had already been killed. It is said that the baLeya cut off his head, but his mouth kept on opening and shutting itself and his eyes winking as though he was still alive for many days.

by discussing them, it may be pertinent to interject an observation, this being the fact that the nature of pre-colonial societies were not defined by 'land' and 'territory' as much as by allegiances among specific groups of people. As Seleti had shown, 'land occupied by pre-colonial governing structures could expand and contract at will, due to relatively low population densities and people could migrate according to the need and availability of resources'.⁴⁴ Even Lewanika, Paramount Chief of the Lozi Kingdom, recognized the difficulty in defining 'territoriality' during pre-colonial times as seen from the following quote: 'When Major Goold Adams questioned King Lewanika asking him to describe the boundary of his kingdom, he replied "I do not know what you mean by kingdom, but I will tell you where my people live...."'⁴⁵ Therefore, in the case of Itenge, too much emphasis is put on 'land' and 'territoriality' in interpreting its existence. Rather the fact that it existed, and continues to exist in the present, should not be ignored. If anything, it represented resistance and defiance to Lozi rule: a refusal to be Lozi, to identify with Lozi expressions and notions of citizenship. The next section will show Subiya attack on Lozi dominion.

Subiya-Makololo Interaction

Of the groups that traversed pre-colonial Caprivi, the Makololo of Sebetwane is perhaps the better described, possibly after the Lozi. Their migration and settlement in the Caprivi and Buluzi has been the subject of many studies.⁴⁶ Briefly, Sebetwane was a Difagane (Mfecane) escapee who belligerently plundered as he moved northwards. After taking part in an attack on the Tlhaping great-place, Dithakong,⁴⁷ he plundered numerous Tswana tribes in the Western Transvaal and Botswana and also clashed with his arch-

⁴⁴ Seleti Y. 'Chapter 1 – State Formation in Nineteenth century SA.' Turning Points Book 3: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/chronology/turningpoints/bk3/chapter1.htm>.

⁴⁵ SEC22 (NAZ)

⁴⁶ See, for example, E. W. Smith, 'Sebetwane and the Makololo', *African Studies*, Vol. 15, 1956, p. 49; D.F. Ellenberger and J. C. Macgregor, *History of the Basuto*, London: Caxton, 1912 (reprinted New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 305; V. Ellenberger (1939); D. L., Livingstone, *Missionary travels and researches in South Africa*, London: John Murray, 1857; I. Schapera, *Livingstone's private journals*, 1851-1853, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960, pp. 16-28; M. Mainga, *Buluzi under the Luyana kings*, London: Longman, 1973: 65-104.

⁴⁷ Moffat, 1842:355

enemy, Mzilikazi of the Matebele,⁴⁸ finally arriving on the Chobe River. According to the Yeyi sources of David Sasa,⁴⁹ Sebetwane was helped to cross the river by Induna (headman) Kuratau (a Muyeyi) at the Matwatwa crossing point in the Lyashulu area.⁵⁰ Sebetwane then brutally murdered Kuratau to prevent him giving further assistance to others⁵¹ whom might come that way, possibly the Matebele or the Batawana. Kuratau thus became Sebetwane's first victim in a pre-colonial Caprivi where societal relations and friendships were not permanent but defined by survival, even if this meant assassinate friends to fend off one's rivals.

Sebetwane moved eastward on the Chobe until he reached the confluence between the Zambezi and Chobe Rivers where he met Liswani, at the time chief of the Masubiya.⁵² The significance of the meeting between Sebetwane and Liswani is often underplayed and presented as one in which the latter did not even have a say.⁵³ This was, for the Masubiya, the start of the disintegration of their kingdom of Itenge. Munitenge Liswani agreed to cross Sebetwane, first to Impalila Island over the Chobe and from the upper part of the Island over the Zambezi to Mambova,⁵⁴ on two conditions: first that he assist him to attack the Leya to revenge the death of Nsundano⁵⁵, and, secondly, that he promise to give them part of the war booty that he would capture from the Toka-Leya and other groups that he would conquer.⁵⁶ While the Lozi reportedly engaged in battle with- and lost to - Sebetwane's general Mbololo on an open plain a few kilometers to the north of

⁴⁸ Smith, 'Sebetwane and the Makololo'; Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*.

⁴⁹ A former student in the History Department at the University of Namibia, Sasa did research in Botswana and Namibia (Caprivi) focusing on the revival of the Mayeyi identity in both countries. At the time of his passing away, he was a Candidate for a Master's of Arts Degree in History, on the same topic, at Unam. The whereabouts of Sasa's fieldwork, comprised mainly of oral interviews in Botswana and Namibia, is not known. He was a dedicated scholar; May his soul rest in peace.

⁵⁰ Sasa, D., 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', paper presented at the 'Public History: Forgotten History' Conference hosted by the History Department of the University of Namibia, 2000, p. 10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Other sources mention that Sebetwane met Nsundano.

⁵³ See for example Trollope, 'Report on the Administration of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*', 1940, p. 12.

⁵⁴ Other sources state that Sebetwane crossed the Zambezi at Kazungula with the help of the Toka of Musokotwane. See Maritz, 1996, p. 179.

⁵⁵ Most sources just mention that Sebetwane got involved in a tribal dispute at the request of the Subiya. See Maritz, 'The Subia and Fwe', 1996, p. 179.

⁵⁶ Likando, 'History of the Caprivi Strip', 1989, p. 33.

Mazumani (presently Linyanti)⁵⁷, it can be accepted that the Lozi were unaware of Sebetwane's plans to attack them from the east. One explanation would be that their relations with the Subiya were at such a very low point that they (the latter) could not warn them of the threat, the other could be that Lozi control over the Subiya was weak, or non-existent during this period. The Subiya therefore showed defiance in helping Sebetwane to cross the rivers on his way to attack the Lozi, this being a sign of where their allegiances were at the time. Sebetwane comprehensively subdued all the groups he came in contact with north of the Zambezi, including the Lozi, and thus became supreme chief of all the tribes in that vast region. Sebetwane made his headquarters at Naliele in the upper Zambezi, and declared that the Zambezi would henceforth be his line of defence. He posted his villages at strategic points along the river's bank.

Even though Sebetwane became very friendly with the Subiya of Liswani this friendship did not last for long. One version has it that Munitenge Liswani was upset by a favour shown to Induna Soha Mwanamwale (a Musubiya in the form of a cow sent to him probably as a token of preference over Liswani)⁵⁸ by Sebetwane. So Liswani asked for the aid of the Matebele. This which led to an ill-fated attack on Sebetwane by the Matebele and their allies, the Masubiya. Even though Liswani fled to his former place at Kazungula, Sebetwane called him to Naliele on what the former thought to be a friendly visit thinking that all was forgiven, but there he was put to death.⁵⁹ The other version is that Sebetwane, having defeated other tribes in the area, then returned and attacked the Subiya at Nyungu on the Chobe. The Subiya, surprised in their sleep, fled and their chief, Liswani (son of Nsundano's sister), went to find refuge with Mzilikazi, chief of the Matebele. It is said that the Matebele offered Liswani their assistance and returned with him to Nyungu, but found that Sebetwane had gone back to Barotseland.⁶⁰ Sebetwane then treacherously invited Liswani to visit him, promising peace and, to make good on

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 32. on the strength of M. Mainga, *Bulozi Under the Luyana Kings*, 1973, p. 66; A. Schulz & A. Hammer, *The New Africa: A journey up the Chobe and Down the Okavango Rivers: A Record of Exploration and Sport*. London: William Heineman.

⁵⁸ Could be the same Mwanamwale taken to Kaonga, near Sioma.

⁵⁹ Kruger, 1984: p. 6.

⁶⁰ Ernest Likando (1989, p. 34) believes that the Kololo attacked the Subiya after the Matebele had left, in a battle known in Subiya legend as the 'Battle of Nabulankoli', after the manner in which it was fought, using mainly spears made out of sticks from wood. He gives the approximate year in which this supposedly took place as 1838 (p. 173).

his promise, to share the war booty. Liswani accepted the invitation against the advice of his people, and was murdered in Barotseland on Sebetwane's orders.

The two versions agree on the fact that Liswani was killed by Sebetwane in Barotseland at Naliele on the Zambezi River. It is also evident that Liswani was unhappy with the fact that Sebetwane had laid claim to the territory that belonged to his people. The request for Sebetwane to intervene in local disputes and to attack the Lozi was intended by the Masubiya to consolidate their position and ensure stability in their territory. Nevertheless they found themselves betrayed by Sebetwane. A slight difference is observed; in the second version no attack by a joint Matebele-Subiya force is reported. Evidence shows that indeed an attack took place.⁶¹ In a pre-colonial Caprivi where things were uncertain, betrayal was unfortunately an art of survival. That was what befell the group of Matebele warriors on a mission to attack Sebetwane, when a Musubiya man named Simalumba agreed to cross them to the mainland but instead deposited them on an Island where they died of starvation and or were finished off by the Makololo. The Island became known as 'Sioli sa Matebele' or Island of the Matebele (also Sikachila). It is not known whether this is the same group invited by Liswani to assist him attack Sebetwane, or whether it was a different group.

Liswani's death cleared the way for Sebetwane to set up his headquarters in the Caprivi, at Linyanti,⁶² possibly because the Matebele allies, the Masubiya, were now completely subdued. The empire of the Kololo was short-lived. Sebetwane died on 7 July 1851 shortly after he had met David Livingstone and he lies buried on an island named Sheshe near Sangwali village in the Caprivi,⁶³ contrary to Flint's claim that Sebetwane's body was returned to Naliele, his capital in Barotseland, after his death.⁶⁴ Sebetwane was succeeded by his daughter Mmamochisane according to his wishes but she abdicated and gave over the chieftainship to Sekeletu, a son (possibly 'stepson') of Sebetwane. Sekeletu

⁶¹ Trollope, 1940, p. 13.

⁶² According to David Sasa (2000:10), Sebetwane named Linyandi (now Linyanti) in the Sangwali area as his headquarters in 1850, its name meaning 'a place where I will stay and suffer'. He was suffering from a wound on his thigh that had been inflicted in war and he was apparently coughing badly.

⁶³ Kruger, 1984, Chapter 2, p. 3.

⁶⁴ See footnote 48 of Lawrence Flint's work: 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 403.

did not possess Sebetwane's leadership qualities, consequently resistance within the Makololo and as well as within subordinate groups to his rule started to mount which weakened the kingdom. He was reported to have been indecisive, extremely mistrustful, appointing only Kololo in positions of authority, and ordered the killing of all rivals.⁶⁵ Because of competing claims to the throne particularly from his uncle Mamili, Sekeletu lived a secluded life, and according to Pretorius, 'he took almost no part in affairs of state.'⁶⁶ Commenting on the decay of Makololo prestige, previously feared in the land, A.J. Wills remarked: 'The rapid descent from the pinnacle of warrior statesmanship achieved by Sebetwane can perhaps be ascribed to a lack of common tradition among the Kololo, a heterogeneous group born in disintegration and held together only by the personality of a great leader.'⁶⁷ In 1863 Sekeletu died of leprosy⁶⁸ for which David Livingstone had treated him, leaving an infant son. A headman called Mbololo was appointed to act as regent. Mbololo shifted the Makololo capital from Linyanti in the Caprivi to (old) Sesheke or Mwandu an old Subiya settlement, in present day Zambia. This did not help as the Kololo were deeply divided, and Mbololo himself became an unpopular leader.

Subiya defiance after Lozi restoration

It was during the reign of Mbololo that the Lozi called on Sepopa to return from Lukwakwa (the meeting point of refugees outside the kingdom) to lead an invading force southwards. Sepopa, a Lozi prince who lived for a while at the royal headquarters of Sebetwane and Sekeletu at Linyanti, led a revolution joined by the Masubiya and Toka against the Kololo in 1864, with Njekwa, his subsequent Ngambela (prime minister), in the forefront. An extermination of all Kololo men by Njekwa ensued⁶⁹, while children and women were distributed among Lozi rulers. Lozi hegemony over the Masubiya and Toka was by this time not firm if not lapsed. In fact the two groups indicated that they

⁶⁵ Maritz, 1996, p. 179.

⁶⁶ Pretorius, 1975, p. 29.

⁶⁷ A.J., Willis, *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 63.

⁶⁸ He is buried at Malengalenga, from where he ruled.

⁶⁹ E. Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, London: Sampson, Marston, Searle and Remington, 1881, vol. 2, p. 143.

had become autonomous with the end of the Makololo authority.⁷⁰ Sepopa then descended on the Subiya and Toka with ruthless vigour in order to subject them. He began with the Toka with whom he fought for supremacy, reducing them to submission before embarking on a campaign to subdue the Subiya. It was during this time (about 1876) that an exodus of Masubiya people from the Caprivi took place, led by Chief Nkonkwena. They settled at Rakops near the Makgadikgadi Pan on the Botletle River. Here the Masubiya were guests of Chief Khama III of the Ngwato, for this was his area. After the death of Nkonkwena, the group continued to live at Rakops, now under Chika Liswani, until scarcity of food and water forced them to migrate to Mababe where they lived until 1902 when the Mababe Pan began to dry up. Here the Masubiya split again: one group returned to the Chobe and settled at Munga near what is now called Kachikau (otherwise known to the Masubiya as Kachekabwe)⁷¹, while a splinter group under Chief Nkonkwena's son, Mafwira (Mafwila), broke away with a number of followers and settled at Tlhale near Gomare in Ngamiland, in the area of Moremi, chief of the Batawana. A small section remained on the Mababe where old Liswani's village could easily be distinguished in the past by castor oil plants that grew on it. As for the group that remained behind in the Caprivi during the 1876 migration to Botswana, they were ruled by chieftainess Ntolwa Malyansanzwe, from Isuswa west of Ngoma.

After Ntolwa's death, a leadership vacuum occurred for the Masubiya in Caprivi until the Germans appointed a commoner, Chikamatondo, as regent to Liswaninyana, Ntolwa's young nephew and heir in 1909, after which Liswaninyana took over. Since then the Masubiya chieftainship in Caprivi reverted back to the Liswani dynasty. Thus instead of submitting to the Lozi under Sepopa, Chief Nkonkwena of the Masubiya and his people showed defiance by simply 'moving away'. This could be interpreted in the present as 'fleeing', but in those days, it was certainly an act of survival. Commenting on this migration and the difficulties that ensued for Sepopa as a result, Holub had the following to say: 'As a consequence of Sepopo's [Sepopa or more correctly Sipopa) oppression, many of the natives have withdrawn from the kingdom, generally going south, and the

⁷⁰ Maritz, 1996, pp. 179-180.

⁷¹ Referring to a process of sharpening spears on a particular stone before going to war.

difficulty of collecting tribute anywhere has greatly increased.’⁷² According to Flint, this added to Sepopa’s dependence on trade with Europeans and the Afro-Portuguese Mambari,⁷³ who traded mainly in slaves, it should be added. Sepopa was a cruel autocrat and was driven from power into exile by a force led by his prime minister, and according to Flint, ‘Mwanawina II, who obtained much of his support from the Subiya, was installed as the Lozi king between August and November 1876.’⁷⁴ Both Mwanawina and Sepopa’s mothers were Subiyas.

The 1876 Subiya migration from the Caprivi did not diminish their zeal to influence events in Barotseland. Mwanawina II⁷⁵ did not reign for long, being overthrown shortly, with Lubosi (who assumed the name Lewanika⁷⁶) being installed in his place in 1878. Lewanika was himself overthrown in 1884 and forced to flee to the west but regained his throne a year later in what is described as the ‘longest and hardest-fought battle in the history of Barotseland’⁷⁷, and in which Lewanika sought the aid of the Mbukushu and Mambari mercenaries.⁷⁸ The Subiya played a pivotal role in the 1884 rebellion that overthrew Lewanika. In fact the rebellion, even though it was organized by Mataa, an ambitious Lozi commoner who became Ngambela (prime minister) to the new chief Akufuna who ruled from Sesheke (also a Subiya area), broke out in the Subiya area in the Caprivi.

The discussion has hitherto focused on the conflicts that characterized relations between the Masubiya and the Lozi. This was necessary to show that ‘citizenship and subjectivity’ has an element of resistance in state formation, and therefore, the Subiyas were not ‘willing’ Lozis in the state of Barotseland as conventional historiography would make it. They constantly sought for ways to free themselves from Lozi bondage. However it should be recorded that the Subiya and the Lozi had a mutually reinforcing

⁷² Holub, p. 146.

⁷³ Flint, 2003, pp. 408.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 408-409.

⁷⁵ According to Mainga (*Bulozi under Luyana Kings*, p. 118), Mwanawina II escaped first to the Mashi, then to Sesheke, and finally to the Batoka highlands.

⁷⁶ Meaning ‘uniter’, see Flint

⁷⁷ See Jalla, ‘History: Traditions and Legends’, p. 54.

⁷⁸ Flint, p. 410, after Jalla, *Ibid.* p. 55.

interrelationship. The fact that some Lozi kings such as Sepopa and Lewanika had Subiya mothers elevated the position of Sesheke to be one of enormous importance and significance to the Lozi, and they, in turn, were accepted as being 'home' among the Masubiya. As a result, Masubiya enjoyed influential positions in the Lozi state, some being appointed as headmen. In fact Subiya legend has it that their name 'Subiya' was given to them by the Aluyi (Lozi) apparently because of the active part they played in the government of the Aluyi and Makololo and that there was a saying: 'Subiya nokusubalala umulonga', meaning the Subiya are trying to push the kingdom.⁷⁹

Other Groups in Pre-colonial Caprivi

An impression should not be created that there were only Masubiya in the pre-colonial Caprivi. The early history of the Masubiya groups them with Mayeyi and Hambukushu (Bantu botatwe⁸⁰) at Goha Hills in Botswana before they migrated into the Caprivi. Here the Mayeyi (whom they called Bezanza – those who are coming), were under the following Mashikati (chiefs or leaders): Hankuze, Matsharatshara, Qunku and his brother Qunkunyane;⁸¹ the Mbukushu under their chiefs Mashambo, Mbungo, Dibebe I, and Dimbo I, who was known to the Tawana as Andara,⁸² and of course the Barakwena (San).⁸³ Another group that features prominently in early literature on the Caprivi is the Matotela, the bulk of whom lived in today's Zambia, under their leaders Mayuwa, Mokwe, and Malala, who was resident on the upper Njoko river.⁸⁴ The Matotela in the Caprivi were an overflow from the main body, and resided eastwards of Sibbinda, including the area within a radius of 15 miles of Katima Mulilo.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ See Pretorius, J, 'The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*: A study of their historical and geographical background, tribal structure and legal system, with reference to the Fwe family law and succession.' (MA, University of Stellenbosch), 1975, p. 22.

⁸⁰ Literally three people; referring to the three groups.

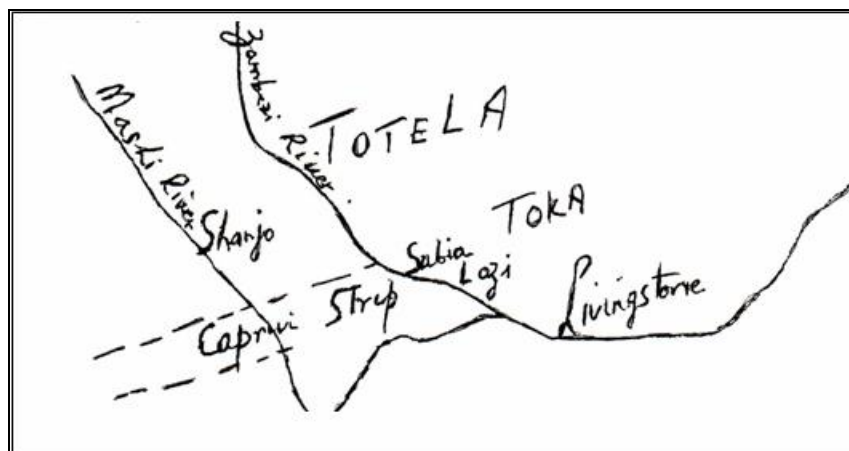
⁸¹ Sasa, David, 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', a paper presented at the "Public History: Forgotten History" Conference hosted by the History Department at the University of Namibia in Windhoek, 2000, p. 2.

⁸² G.E., Nettelton, 'History of the Ngamiland Tribes up to 1926', *Bantu Studies* Nr. 8, 1934.

⁸³ Rather known locally as Makwengo, which has a derogatory tone.

⁸⁴ NAZ, KDE2417

⁸⁵ C.E. Kruger, 'The make-up (tribal origin) of the inhabitants of the Mafwe Tribal Area, with special reference to the Matotela', Report dated 13May 1976, p. 1 (NAN A. 871, Box 2, File 2).



Map 4: Extract from a map showing tribal distribution in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland compiled in December 1957 by the Department of African Studies, University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland showing Matotela and Subiya, also found in Caprivi, hand drawn by C.E. Kruger on 13/05/1976

With the advent of German administration in the Caprivi, these groups collectively assumed the identity Bafwe (Bayeyi), and later became known only just as Mafwe. These groups are not included in the above discussion mainly because, as it has been repeatedly reported by several writers,⁸⁶ ‘they were not deeply involved in the bloody feuds of the two decades...as the politically-minded and ambitious Subiya.’⁸⁷ One reason might be that it was because they inhabited areas far removed from the main theatre of activities, that is, the Zambezi River, with principal trade routes pointing to the east through Impalila, Kazungula and Pandamatenga at the time. Apart from inhabiting remote areas away from the Zambezi, Kruger adds that the Mafwe at this time ‘were in any event a relatively small and humble tribal group of no contention in the way of things in the period with which we are dealing.’⁸⁸ More research into the pre-colonial history of the Caprivi could still paint a different picture. An informal census conducted in 1976 showed that the make-up or composition of the Mafwe tribal area was as follows:

⁸⁶ See Pretorius, ‘The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi’, 1975, p. 29; J. Fossé, 1996, ‘Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi’, (MA Thesis, University of Oslo, NAN), 1996, p. 104.

⁸⁷ Pretorius, ‘The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi’

⁸⁸ Kruger, *Ibid.* op cit., Chapter 2: p. 8.

Ethnic Group	Number of villages out of 298	% (±)
Matotela	95	30
Mayeyi	75	25
Mafwe	61	20
Mbukushu	30	10
Lozi	14	4.7
Subiya	13	4.6

Table 3: Informal census showing composition of the Mafwe tribal area in 1976.⁸⁹

Very little is known, comparatively, about the origin and history of the Mafwe. According to Pretorius, ‘they are historically also the least known tribe’⁹⁰ in the Caprivi. Pretorius observes that the first reference to the Fwe is to be found in Streitwolf’s report about the Eastern Caprivi which appeared in the *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* in 1910. He further states that ‘even the oldest members of the tribe can recall no tradition of tribal chiefs prior to Simataa Kabende, who was appointed as representative at Linyanti by the Lozi in the 1860s.’ Another writer, John Leif Fossé (1996: 104) contends that the first mention of the Mafwe in written sources appears to be in A. Jalla’s ‘Lozi History’ extracted from an undated manuscript, which he estimated to be from around the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹¹

There is no mention of the Mafwe in the entire literature covering the Makololo period, except for the name Mamili which is encountered several times.⁹² This Mamili, whose surname was ‘Ncumbe’ (according to Pretorius⁹³) or Bogatsu (according to Schapera⁹⁴),

⁸⁹ Extracted from C.E. Kruger, ‘The make-up (tribal origin) of the inhabitants of the Mafwe tribal area, with special reference to the Matotela, 13/05/1976 (NAN: A. 871, Box 2, File 2).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 24.

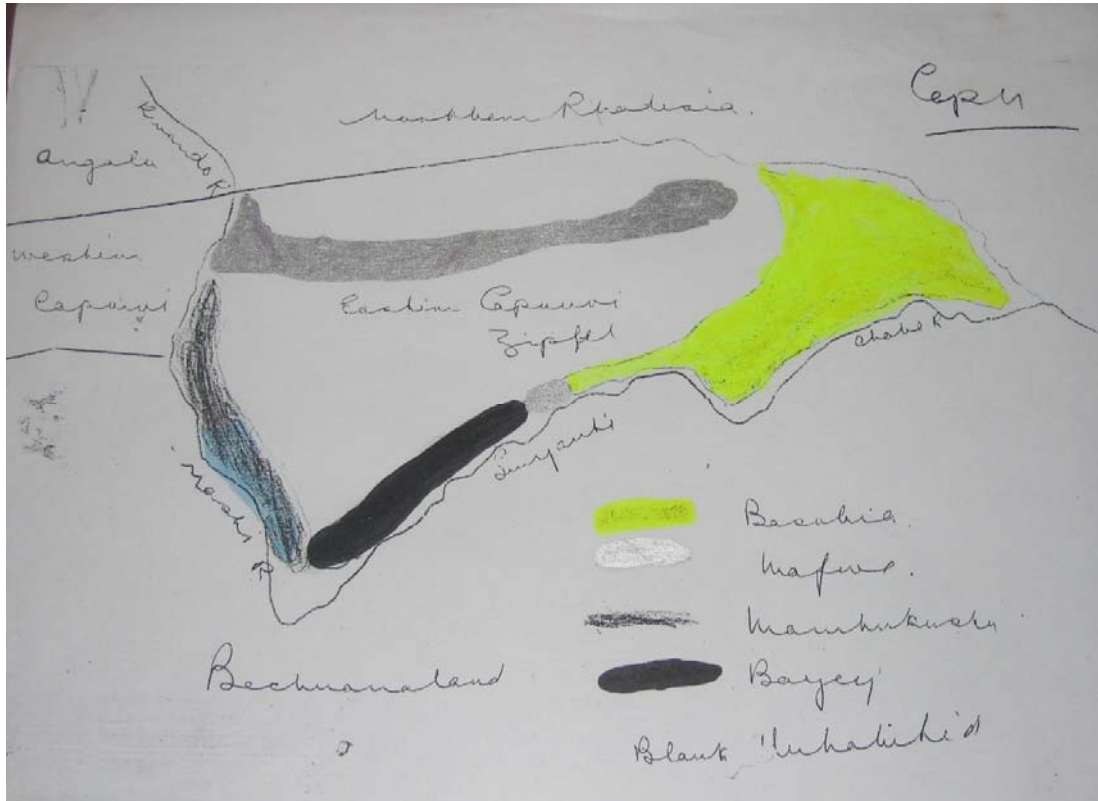
⁹¹ A.D. Jalla’s book, *History: Traditions and Legends of the Barotse Nation* (Sefula) appeared in 1939.

⁹² See for example, F. Westbeech, *Trade and Travel in Early Barotseland*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1963, p. 63; D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, London: John Murray, 1857, p.513; I. Schapera, *Livingstone’s private journals, 1851-1853*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960, p. 236; M. Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana kings*, London: Longman, 1973: pp. 95-96.

⁹³ Pretorius, ‘The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi’, 1975, p. 30.

⁹⁴ Schapera, *Livingstone’s private journals, 1851-1853*, p. 326.

was a Kololo and an uncle to Sekeletu, and should not be confused⁹⁵ with the Lozi Mamili who came to the forefront in Linyanti with the restoration of the Lozi kingdom in 1865.



Map 5: Sketch map hand-drawn by Native Commissioner A.B. Colenbrander for Caprivi (1953 -61) on 8 Nov 1954 showing distribution of tribal groups in eastern Caprivi discussed here

At the close of Makololo rule, Livingstone described Mamili Nchumbe (or Bogatsu) as the ‘most influential in the tribe’ and that he tried to take over the reins of power and have his son succeed Sekeletu, but faced resistance from the Makololo under Mbololo, the Lozi and other groups.⁹⁶ On the accession of Mbololo to the throne, Mamili Nchumbe fled south with his followers to seek refuge from the chief of the Batawana,

⁹⁵ See Westbeech. *Op cit.*, p. 63. Flint believes the Lozi Mamili, Simataa Kabende was an uncle to Sekeletu. No evidence could be found to substantiate this assertion. Instead it was the Kololo Mamili (Ncumbe or Bogatsu) who was an uncle to Sekeletu.

⁹⁶ D. Livingstone, 1857:514.

Letsholathebe. Instead of receiving protection, Mamili Ncumbe and male members of his group were reportedly killed by the Tawana on the instruction of Letsholathebe.⁹⁷

The overthrow of the Makololo consolidated Lozi control over the Caprivi by appointing regional representatives in positions in which there had been Makololo before. The southern boundary of the Caprivi was the one that needed careful vigilance, to prevent attacks from the Matebele, but also the possible return of the Makololo. At Impalila Island in the east, the Lozi placed Makumba in control, followed by subsequent appointments as follows: Kabuku at Kasenu, Kabulabula at Ibembe (now called Kabulabula), and Mutwamezi near Ngoma. Westwards the following representatives were put in charge: Imataa or Simataa Kabende (who took over from Mwanangombe, and Linyanti before him) at Linyanti, Mwanota, Sekau, Masiala and Mwambwa Seluka who was deputized by Mayuni on the Mashu (Kwando) River. The Lozi divided the Caprivi into four zones for administrative purposes: The Masubiya were under the direct control of the Lozi sub-chief at Mwandu (old Sesheke) who was accountable to the Paramount Chief. Perhaps it was because of constant political unrest with repeated attempts to become independent that there was need to tightly control affairs in the Masubiya area, as opposed to the Mafwe who had some degree of semi-autonomous status under the Lozi rule. As related above, the Mafwe were not much affected by the turbulences of the time because they lived far from the principal district centres of the south-eastern province of Senanga, Sesheke and the island of Impalira (Impalila) or Makumba. Mwanota was the leader of the Matotela on both sides of the Zambezi. Even though he resided in what is today Zambia⁹⁸, his area of influence in the Caprivi extended from Katima Mulilo to Sibbinda in the west. Mwambwa Seluka controlled the area from Sibbinda to Lizauli but through Mayuni, whose mother was a Yeyi, his control stretched up to the area east of the Sangwali swamps.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ See D.F. Ellenberger and J. C., Macgregor, *History of the Basuto*, London: Caxton, 1912 (reprinted New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 177; Holub, *Seven years in South Africa*, p.144; and Schapera, *Livingstone's private journals*, 1851-1853, p.236.

⁹⁸ Mwanota's headquarters were situated north-west of Katima Mulilo, at Silolo. He was called Monawuta (Mwanota) or son of the bow because he hunted with a bow and arrow while the Yeyi and Few used only a spear (Fisch, Maria, *The Caprivi Strip during the German Colonial Period 1890 to 1914* [with a chapter on the boundary dispute up to the present], Windhoek:, Out of Africa, 1999, p. 55).

⁹⁹ Fisch, p. 56.

Simataa Mamili is the best known of the Lozi Indunas (headmen) of the time, probably because he inherited the name 'Mamili' from the famous Kololo general. Further, he chose to live not very far from Linyanti of the Makololo, and of the three Lozi Indunas responsible for the western side, he was the only one resident in the Caprivi. He controlled the area in the west, what remained from Mwanota and Seluka inhabited largely by Masubiya and Yeyi people with a few Mafwe scattered among them.¹⁰⁰ This was the state of things when the Germans arrived in the Caprivi in 1909 to set-up administrative control in the area. Since Streitwolf failed to convince Liswani of the Masubiya at Mababe in Botswana to come back to the Caprivi, and as the only surviving member of the Liswani family in Caprivi was Liswaninyana who was still a boy, a commoner, Chikamatondo, was installed as regent. Similarly, Streitwolf attempted to persuade Mwanota and Seluka to relocate to the Caprivi and assist him to administer their people but both declined the offer. He then gave their subordinates the choice to follow their leaders or be under Induna Mamili, who was elevated to the position of chief over all non-Subiya speaking inhabitants of the Caprivi. Even though composed of different ethnic groups such as Mbukushu, Totela, Yeyi, San and Fwe, this group would henceforth (1909) be known as Bafwe (Bayeyi). This marked the beginning of the Mafwe Chieftainship as it is known today. In 1864 Imataa Kabende¹⁰¹ was posted as Lozi representative at Linyanti, and in 1909 the Germans confirmed him as chief until his

¹⁰⁰ Fisch (p. 57) believes Simataa Mamili's control extended from Ngoma in the east to Lizauli in the west, and in the north 'nearly' up to the Caprivi highway of today. This claim is not supported by any other source nor does Fisch indicate support for it.

¹⁰¹ The only claim that exists to show the dynastic history of Simataa Kabende is a letter to *The Windhoek Advertiser* of 31 May 1996, in which the writer, M. Kozo of Windhoek, states that the Mafwe chieftainship dates back to 1760 when the son of Kabainda Muyongo, Imataa Kabende (corruption of Kabainda), was installed as chief of the Linyanti district because he was first cousin to King Lewanika of the Lozi. While the relationship of Imataa Kabende to the Lozi royals is still to be investigated, the reign of King Lewanika was not in the 1700s as the writer would have it. He was installed in 1878, deposed and reinstated in 1884. The coming of Simataa Kabende and his assumption of the title Mamili is well documented elsewhere even in this thesis and therefore does not need repeating here. At the very least, to suggest that Simataa Kabende Mamili was chief in 1760 is pure ignorance of historical evidence on the part of the writer. Among the many historical 'lies' in this letter the writer tells readers is that Chancellor Von Caprivi of Germany, after whom the territory is named, visited Linyanti. There is no evidence that the Chancellor visited Africa at all during his short reign.

death in about 1916. The Mayeyi and BaMashi or Mayuni have since re-claimed their individual identities by breaking-away from the Mamili Chieftainship.¹⁰²

Summary

This chapter examined the contest for the control of the Caprivi during the pre-colonial period. It was essentially argued that there were pre-colonial political and social formations in the Caprivi which transcended Lozi and Kololo conquests and domination, chief among which was the Subiya kingdom of Itenge which has been the subject of often dismissive discussions in the current historiography. It was concluded that the existence of Itenge should not be interpreted only in terms of 'land' and 'territoriality' as relationships in pre-colonial societies were defined more in terms of allegiances than the space of habitation, which expanded or contracted at will.

The advent of Lozi and Kololo domination brought conquest and servitude to the people of the Caprivi to an extent that especially colonial historiography depicts the inhabitants as having no 'real' background, traditions and customs. The belief is that what traditions the inhabitants of Caprivi practice is what was bequeathed to them by their Lozi and Kololo overlords. On a cultural level, therefore, the contest for Caprivi identities involved the loss of cultural practices and values, the gap being largely filled with negative depictions of such traditions. It was shown, however, that resistance was an integral part of the process of state formation (citizenship and subjectivity) in the pre-colonial Caprivi, with especially the Subiya clashing with the interests of their masters and forming alliances to consolidate their quest for autonomy. It was, however, not only the locals who strove to wrestle the control of the Caprivi away from one enemy or another during this period. Sebetwane of the Makololo and his erstwhile arch-enemy Mzilikazi of the Matebele 'played out' their enmity in the Caprivi, so did the Makololo against the Lozi,

¹⁰² For a fuller discussion and description of the re-assertion of Yeyi and Mayuni identities, see M. Sehani, 'The Mafwe/Mayuni Crisis: Rival histories and the assertion of identity in the Caprivi', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, 2000; and Sasa, D., 'The Mayeyi Chieftainship', Public History: Forgotten History Conference, University of Namibia, August 2000.

and the Lozi against the Batawana. In brief, state formation and social relations in the pre-colonial Caprivi was characterized by conquest and displacement, betrayal and rivalry.

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CHAPTER THREE

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE IDENTITY

FROM 1890 TO WORLD WAR II

Introduction

The creation of the Caprivi or 'Absurdity' has its direct origin in the 'Scramble for Africa' when in 1890 Britain conceded to Germany a small corridor of land jutting off from DSWA to the Zambezi basin. Since then the Caprivi *Zipfel*, as it became known, has been described variously by different actors in its painful history, as being an 'outrage to geography'¹; 'a dream frustrated'²; and '...the poorest district that have come under my notice'³, to one of utmost military strategic importance⁴. Its inhabitants were regarded as 'little children' by the different colonial administrators, a situation which was often justified on the basis that historically they had never been an independent people but were for most part a 'subject tribe' especially of the Aluyi. Administrative identity or, more broadly, state formation in the Caprivi is regarded as rooted in European colonialism⁵. As stated above, the only recognition during pre-colonial times is that of the Lozi state, and then Makololo rule. This is disputed in Chapter Two where it is argued that indeed state formation predates Lozi domination, as is shown, among others, by the existence of the pre-Lozi Kingdom of Itenge of the Basubiya.

The concern in this chapter is the evolution of colonial administrative control in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* and how this helped shape Caprivi identities. The nature of colonial administration in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was, for most part, not actual and direct, but indirect and persuasive. What this meant was that the chiefs and headmen were the most important means of controlling mainly rural blacks. With the establishment of

¹ Kruger, 'History of the Caprivi Strip, 1890-1984', 1984: p. 8 (NAN: A.472).

² (Louw: 1979, 155)

³ Gibbons, in Fisch: 1999, p. 17

⁴ A.B. Colenbrander, Native Commissioner/Magistrate of ECZ to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 20 December 1954.

⁵ Kruger, 1963: p.3.

the Bantustans under the South African administration, chiefs became traditional elites or politicians. This pitted them against the rising nationalists or intellectuals (see Chapter Seven) for the control of the masses. Since the majority of Africans lived in rural areas at this time, and though they understood the fact of their subjugation, they often lacked the education and awareness to fully understand South Africa's subtle methods of control. Chiefs could therefore collaborate with South Africa's colonialism and still manage to remain credible in the eyes of the people. The chiefs were under the local supervision of one government officer. It will be shown that the Caprivi colonial administrative identity was shaped by two related factors: history and geography (remoteness), which arguably made it difficult to administer. For this reason it was often off-loaded onto another territory. These were either adjacent or far-flung territories and with regard to the provision of services such as education and health, the burden was usually transferred to missionaries. This, in turn, produced Caprivi identities, which can be described as a separate but still forming part of South West Africa's territorial integrity. It is argued here that the Caprivi has produced an identity of separateness and was administered as such. In present times this identity of separateness has translated into secessionism (see Chapter Nine).

To flesh out all the above issues, the chapter will be sub-divided into the following: a discussion of the role, influence and interaction of missionaries, traders and travellers on the creation of the Caprivi; the Caprivi as Germany's riparian state on the Zambezi; the Caprivi 1914-1939 as a transferable identity; and lastly, the Eastern Caprivi Strip as a Bantu Reserve and a Bantustan under South African rule.

Informal Colonialism: Missionaries, Traders, and Their Interaction with the Caprivi

A considerable number of missionaries and travelers interacted with the Caprivi during the pre-colonial period. The best known are perhaps those belonging to the London Missionary Society, led by David Livingstone and, in his footsteps, James Helmore and

Roger Price. It is believed that Livingstone intended to set up a mission station in the southern parts of today's Caprivi.⁶ The contention here is that rather the idea was to set-up a mission station among the Makololo envisaged to be situated on the healthy highlands immediately north of the Victoria Falls. With the death of Sebetwane, Sekeletu, his successor, was persuaded - and agreed - to move northwards to the healthier Toka Plateau. This could happen either with or without the indigenous groups of the Caprivi shifting with Sekeletu. Sekeletu's desire was for a missionary to be placed at his capital to protect him from constant attacks by the Matebele⁷. A mission station among the Makololo was part of Livingstone's twin scheme: of radiating the Gospel to two of central Africa's most powerful kingdoms (the Matebele and Makololo), and establishing legitimate commerce in the area. How to put an end to the rampant slave trade by Arab traders and half-caste (Mambaris), and cruelty within Sebetwane's country was also of great concern to Livingstone⁸.

On his second trip to Linyanti on 23 May 1853 (his first was in early 1851), Livingstone (or Munare to the Makololo, probably the same as Moneri - the Sesotho name for doctor or missionary) decided to follow one of several established trade routes used by traders from the Atlantic coast until he reached Luanda on the west coast, and then retraced his steps to Linyanti. He left Linyanti on the 3 November 1855, passing through Bechuanaland, accompanied by about 114 Makololo men carrying elephant tusks, to the Indian Ocean, where he boarded a ship for England⁹. Sekeletu accompanied him half-way as far as Chungwe Namutitima (Subiya for 'The smoke that thunders'). The 114 men who accompanied him were left behind at the mouth of the Zambezi when he went to Europe, staying there until he returned in September 1858. Even though some of them had died of small pox (about 30 according to Likando) and six others were murdered, Livingstone left these men once again when on another journey of exploration on which he discovered Lake Nyasa.¹⁰ The London Missionary Society approved Livingstone's

⁶ Pretorius, 1975: p. 31

⁷ Seaver, 1957: p.376

⁸ Smith, 1957: pp. 22-23, Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 508

⁹ Likando 1989: 99; Pretorius records 120, 1975: 34

¹⁰ MacNair, 1956: pp. 53-54, 251

proposal for a mission station among the Makololo even though there were delays caused by personal differences between Livingstone and the Secretary of the Society, Dr. Tidman¹¹. This resulted in the envisioned mission being deprived of its 'natural leader', David Livingstone.¹²

It was then that in 1859 the London Missionary Society sent out James Helmore and Roger Price on a fateful journey to found a mission among the Makololo. They were accompanied by their wives and Helmore's three children with a fourth born during the journey. When the Helmore/Price expedition set out by ox wagon, they were hoping to meet Livingstone at Linyanti (who had returned to the Zambezi the previous year), but this was not to be. They arrived at Linyanti at a time when the chief, Sekeletu, had become distrustful of 'southerners' and meted out bad treatment to them, as can be discerned from the writings of James Chapman, one of the earliest traders to have traversed those parts.¹³ Their arrival without Livingstone was a great disappointment to Sekeletu. As a result, it is reported that he offered the visitors no hospitality and allowed them to be robbed and maltreated¹⁴. Sekeletu reportedly offered poisoned meat to the missionaries which led to the death of Helmore, his wife and two of his children. Roger Price managed to escape with his wife, only child and the two surviving Helmore children, but his wife and baby succumbed on the way. He was later discovered in a desolate state at Lake Ngami by John Mackenzie, another missionary who was sent to search for Price's party. A variety of theories abound as to the real reasons why Sekeletu treated the Helmore-Price in this cruel manner. One is that they were caught up in his foreign policy quagmire: He wished to have a missionary of stature, particularly Livingstone who was married to a daughter of Robert Moffat, a missionary whom Mzilikazi of the Matebele held in high regard, as a restraint for further raids. As Sekeletu would later concede to Livingstone: 'Had Ma-Robert (Mrs. Livingstone) come, and then I should have rejoiced, because Mosilikatse would leave her alone, and us, she being a

¹¹ Pretorius, 1975: p. 33

¹² Smith, 1957: pp. 25-26

¹³ Chapman, 1868: pp. 99-100

¹⁴ Pretorius, 1975: p. 33

child of Moshete (Moffat).'¹⁵ The second explanation is attributed to the non-appearance of Livingstone and the party of carriers who had accompanied him to the east coast several years before¹⁶. According to Mr. Conrad Siyanga, a village Induna (headman) of Malengalenga (formerly Malimba-Sekeletu's former village), Sekeletu feared that the missionaries would rob him of his people because of the way they got attracted to them and that he was envious of their possessions.¹⁷

Indeed when Livingstone visited Sekeletu shortly after the deaths of the missionaries, he found their wagons in the hands of the chief. Lastly, it is also believed that the Makololo never forgave Livingstone for failing to save their chief, Sebetwane, from his ailments. Sebetwane died on 7 July 1851 shortly after he met Livingstone, from a wound he sustained while riding a horse but also from a bad cough. The horse was given to Sebetwane by Livingstone as a present. After a few lessons Livingstone suggested that the horse be made to run. Sebetwane fell off sustaining an injury to his leg. Induna (Headman) Sangwali asserted that the people believed that this injury was the cause of Sebetwane's death and that the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Helmore and others at the hands of Sekeletu, Sebetwane's nephew, were in response to Sebetwane's death.¹⁸ Apparently Sekeletu feared that the missionaries would do him some harm. I tend to agree with Kruger's assertion that it is probable that the Helmore-Price mission was diminished by malaria, to which they were not accustomed, and given the fact that not only did some members of the party arrive in an already weak state, but also during the rainy season when malaria is at its peak. Of course they received bad treatment from Sekeletu, owing largely to unfulfilled promises made to the Makololo by Livingstone, among others that he would open up trade routes to the west and east and bring trade and better prospects to their country. It is difficult to establish the source of the story of food poisoning. It appears only in Price's letter, even then as a suspicion and a story told to him by someone close to Sekeletu. Could it be just a story? It is impossible a task to enumerate all the traders and travellers who passed through and got involved in business deals in the

¹⁵ Wallis, 1954: pp. 395-396.

¹⁶ Pretorius, quoting Clay, 1968: p. 11

¹⁷ Sasa, 2000: p. 10

¹⁸ Quoted in Kruger, 1940: p. 9

Caprivi. A few unknown known within Caprivi hereby follows. It appears that Chalmers, a trader, was the first white man to settle in the Caprivi on 2 April 1904 at Impalila Island where he was given a permit to farm and conduct his carpentry work. Two months later, on 29 June he received a letter from Lewanika of the Lozi demanding his withdrawal from the island since it belonged to Barotseland even though legally the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty was in force. It appears the contention was that Lewanika did not want Chalmers to trade with the Masubiya who had defied his orders to supply salt to him from the island. Also, the island served as an important ivory trade station with Bechuanaland. Another trade station was established at Ngoma in Caprivi in 1906 by Aristotle Troumbas, Phelany Moody (Muuti) and Jappe (the last two were mulattos). This trade station did not last long because Jappe and Moody murdered Aristotle Troumbas and seized his properties.¹⁹ In reply to a letter from Kruger enquiring about Moody's estate, Brittz²⁰ had the following to say about Moody (dated 27th October 1941):

Well, I will first of all give you what I can still remember about this jig-jaw puzzle of Moody's and his many bastard children in the Caprivi Zipfel. From what I was able to gather, Moody arrived in the Caprivi about thirty or forty years ago. He appears to have an unquenchable desire to possess the largest harem in those parts with the result that every second Native woman in the Caprivi Zipfel as well as in the adjoining Territories belonged to his harem. When he added a new wife, he usually gave one or two herd of cattle to her. When I arrived in Caprivi Zipfel in 1929, Moody had left for Barotseland some years previously. Round about 1934 or 1935, when Moody was about dying he wrote a letter to me wherein he mentioned cattle he had left about twenty years ago with certain Natives in the Caprivi Zipfel. Then Moody died and in the copy of his will, he self appointed me as his executor, protector, etc. of all his children and property in the Caprivi Zipfel....²¹

If the Moody²² of the Ngoma trade station is the same as the one mentioned by Brittz, then he was an established trader and blacksmith in partnership with a certain H. Chipman at Katima Mulilo in 1914, except that the latter is identified as I. Moody. Moody and Chipman operated from the site where the Roman Catholic Mission stands today. It is here where they had their boat factory. At the beginning of 1921 two more people were issued with trading licenses. They were M. Michelson at Linyanti and J.A.

¹⁹ NAZ: BS 2/185, Vol. II

²⁰ Sergeant Brittz was the representative of the South West Africa Administration in Eastern Caprivi from 1929 to 1939.

²¹ NAN: 19/1/2

²² There is high probability that Phelany Moody is the same as Isaac Moody.

Legge at Nsundwa, a place in the Masubiya area not far from Schuckmannsburg. Michelson was a Dane from Schleswig Holstein, well educated and spoke German fluently. He had two brothers, both captains in the German-East Africa Line. It is known that he had resided in the Caprivi *Zipfel* for some 10-12 years, had a good reputation and had previously been a trader in Basutoland. Michelson was later given a general dealers' license to trade at Kabulabula which became his permanent place of residence in the Caprivi. He entered into a union with a Musubiya woman by whom he had two sons. Charlie, his elder son, joined the army in the Second World War and became a sergeant in the Special Company, Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Afterwards he entered the civil administration in the Caprivi as clerk/interpreter. J.A. Legge was a member of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police who had been posted to Schuckmannsburg in 1914. At the time he was 57 years of age, single, had formerly been in the South African Constabulary and had retired from the Protectorate Police certified as of good character. Legge was given a trading site at Impalila Island during the Bechuanaland Protectorate administration where he ran cattle and cultivated land. Until recently, the dipping tank he built on the island was the only such facility in the Caprivi. In addition to having the general dealers' licence, Legge was authorized to deal in arms and ammunition. Kruger recalls coming across Legge's son named George (by a Musubiya mother) who had abandoned his Caprivi identity for that of Northern Rhodesia. Legge himself left Impalila Island in the 1930s to go to Livingstone.

In the out-of-the-ordinary circumstances in the secluded Caprivi frontier, it was believed that Europeans could 'go native'. A story is told of the death of two derelicts who had 'gone native'. Harris Johns had adopted the name John the Greek because he was a Cypriote Greek, and Ben Johnson. This incident took place during the Bechuanaland period and actually occurred in Angola, but since the boundary had not then been defined it was assumed that the location was the Caprivi *Zipfel*. The two men lived by poaching elephants and hippos and selling ivory, hides and fats. John the Greek bragged to Colonel Statham (as stated in Statham's book: *With My Wife Across Africa by Canoe and Caravan*) that he had killed 500 hippos, mostly by stalking them bare-footed on moonlight nights when they had gone ashore to graze. The locals called him 'Miela' or

'Mielies' probably because he cultivated a large area with mealies, irrigating his land by a canal he had cut from the Kwando River. An argument arose between Johnson and John the Greek as to who had shot a certain elephant and this led Ben Johnson (Harris Johns) to shoot John the Greek while they were enjoying a sundowner. The native servants, concubines and children deserted the camp and the son of the murdered man proceeded to Schuckmannsburg to report the matter. Ben Johnson (Harris Johns) fled to Angola but was warned off by the Portuguese and returned to his camp where he was joined by his hangers-on. Upon hearing that police from Schuckmannsburg were on their way to arrest him he collected all his stock and other belongings and destroyed everything, throwing metal and other objects which were not consumable by fire into the river. He then presented a sovereign to each of those present and to his offspring, stripped and burnt his clothing, and eventually stood on the edge of the river stark naked with his rifle and one cartridge. He waded as far as he could and blew his head off. Quite a sad side of white life in Africa, Colonel Statham concluded.²³

Just some 14 miles down the river lived 'Mafoota' or 'Mafuta', Johnson's nearest white neighbour. He was nicknamed 'mafuta' by the locals because he was fat. His real name was Keys. He had a store and dwelling-place in those parts of the Caprivi, otherwise not much is known about him. He is the same man that Seiner had met on the Mashi in 1906 and whom old Chief Simasiku Mamili mentioned was present when the chief was sent by his father to pay respects to Captain Streitwolf in 1909. Close to Katima Mulilo there lived another fairly prominent resident of Caprivi, this being Tommy Harris, a son of Harris Johns, identified above as John the Greek. Following the suicide of his father his mother fled with him, then a baby, to her parental home in the Caprivi. Tommy Harris would have been born at the beginning of 1923, Kruger reckons. Tommy Harris established his village 8 miles south-east of Katima Mulilo and ran a restaurant in Ngweze, a Black residential area of Katima Mulilo during the colonial period. (Descendents of the Harris family still live in Katima Mulilo at the present). Another European who should be included in this section is Robert da Costa Blake. He was a

²³ Kruger, 1984; Trollope, 1940: p.7

eccentric millionaire who lived in Cape Town and was granted a site on lease at the Katima Mulilo Rapids by the High Commissioner in the first half of the 1920s. He owned race horses and had a farm somewhere in South West Africa which he would occasionally visit in his light aircraft which he piloted. From that farm he would fly to the Caprivi and stay at his place at the rapids which was used mainly as a base for his activities as hunter and, sometimes, capturer of wild animals in Northern Rhodesia and Angola. Blake had in his employ as caretaker Mr. Side Mubyana Mabate, who later became Induna (village headman) of Sibbinda in the Caprivi. The Katima Mulilo site was taken away from him during the war as he had stopped visiting it and had failed to renew his annual lease agreement.

This section will be incomplete without the mention of William (Bill) Finaughty²⁴, widely remembered in the Caprivi who came there in the 1940s. "Fin", as he was affectionately called, hailed from Pietersburg in the then northern Transvaal. His parents had a hotel at Chunie' Spoort some 20 miles south of that town. William Finaughty was posted to Kazungula in Bechuanaland Protectorate by WNLA, and then to Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was an organized labour hire company that recruited migrant labourers from most southern African countries for work on the Rand mines in South Africa. After a year or two in that service, he developed interests in trading which resulted in him in 1945 being granted, an extensive general dealer's site at the Katima Mulilo Rapids, immediately below where Robert da Costa Blake once had a lodge. His business grew and included a large shop, butchery, workshop for repairing motor vehicles (for he was a mechanic and worked as such for WNLA), carpentry, stores for goods and produce of all kinds, compound for local staff, cattle kraal, and gardens. He also had two tennis courts, for he loved playing that sport. As time went by, he acquired other sites scattered across the Caprivi and as well as two outside it, one at Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia and one at Kavimba in Bechuanaland Protectorate. While Finaughty's businesses had a slow start, events in the country and neighbouring territories turned the tide in his favour largely because of the

²⁴The Finaughty in *The Recollections of William Finaughty, Elephant Hunter 1864-1875*, edited with an introduction by Edward C. Tabler, was an uncle or great-uncle of his. (no date and place of publication).

security situation. The independence of Zambia prevented the movement of people into that country to buy goods freely, but later the increased flow of SADF personnel into Caprivi and expanded workforce improved money circulation and the buying power at Katima Mulilo. The arrival of his nephew, Douglas Finaughty, as manager, and his wife Pauline was quite helpful to the business. The Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC) came to the Caprivi in 1967. It was understood that its aim was to build up local prospective businessmen so that in time all enterprises would be taken over by them. William Finaughty was to sell everything to BIC to enable it to achieve its objectives. This he did, at a fair price which enabled him to retire as a wealthy man to the Victoria Falls about 1970/1. He suffered a severe stroke and was an invalid until his death in 1975.

The above exposition does not claim to be a complete account of all the Europeans who left a mark on the Caprivi in its early history. However, it is a good picture of those who imprinted their footsteps in very significant manner in that territory. Two vital issues became apparent. One is that mixed marriages were very prevalent and part of the fabric of the Caprivi at that time and the authorities did nothing to discourage such unions. Many children were born to local women by European men. Probably it was because of this that the authorities regarded those whites who resided in the Caprivi as having 'gone native'. What this meant really was that their standard of living had deteriorated as has their moral fibre, this being the description attached to being native, to being a 'Caprivian' at that stage. The administration, however, could do little since it was not part of its policy to encourage whites to settle in the territory. Unlike as in other parts of the mandated territory, no incentives were provided to encourage white settlement in the Caprivi. Secondly, the mere fact that those few whites albeit being 'derelicts' and 'native', managed to settle in the territory and were able to withstand malaria and other diseases, challenged the official policy of discouraging whites from settling in the area because it was malarial and therefore not suitable for white settlement. All of this contributed to the creation of some aspects of the Caprivi identities, their being isolated, poor, backward, and dependent.

The Creation of the Caprivi Identities: Germany's Riparian State on the Zambezi

At the suspension of the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty in 1914 the territory comprising the Caprivi had, in principle, been 24 years under German rule. In practice, however, Germany's presence in the Caprivi was just five years old. Germany's presence in the Caprivi is usefully divided into two periods, 1890 to 1909, and 1909 to 1914. This section will follow this sub-division in discussing a variety of related themes: the spatial creation of the Caprivi identities and, how the Caprivian 'absurdity' was administered during the German period, until the intervention of World War I.

Creating the Caprivi Identities

The foundation of the Caprivi identities was laid down during the pre-colonial times (Chapter Two). During that time, the native inhabitants of the area roamed freely throughout their different areas and were conscious of the extent of their spheres of influence. However, the scope of the modern Caprivi identities has its roots in the so-called Scramble for Africa which caused a shrinking of the pre-colonial geographical dimensions of this entity. The boundaries of the Caprivi have been defined either by treaty, agreement or exchange of notes but only portions have actually been demarcated. Two most important treaties that account for the Caprivi are the Portuguese-German Convention of 30 December 1886 and the Anglo-German Treaty of 1 July 1890. According to the Portuguese-German Convention the boundary ran from Andara to the Katima Mulilo Rapids. Thus the 'straight line' from Andara to Katima Mulilo no longer simply formed an international boundary between South West Africa and Angola, but also between South West Africa and Northern Rhodesia from the Kwando to the Zambezi.²⁵ The so-called Protectorate Act of 27 June 1890, which placed King Lewanika under the protection of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) at the behest of Chief Khama of the Mangwato²⁶ as a deterrence against internal feuds and

²⁵Hangula, 1993: pp. 47-48

²⁶Mackintosh, 1907: p. 382

attacks from the Matebele, and the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 11 June 1891, placed Barotseland within the British sphere of influence to the north of the Caprivi.

The 1 July 1890 Anglo-German Treaty was a result of protracted negotiations between the two imperial powers in which Great Britain recognized an extension of Germany's sphere of influence so as to give the latter access to the Zambezi. Zeller has argued that the Caprivi Corridor was an insignificant issue in the negotiations for the 1890 treaty, a 'by-product in the course of a far more important exchange of territory'. He continues: 'the islands Heligoland and Zanzibar were central to the German-British agreement, and Germany made very far-reaching concessions to the British interests in East Africa to regain the small, but symbolically and, at that time, strategically crucial rock in the north sea'.²⁷ This might well have been the case. However, lest it be forgotten, Germany had already gained access to the Zambezi some three or four years before this treaty was signed via the 1886 Portuguese-German Convention which provided a boundary that ran from Andara to Katima Mulilo Rapids *at the Zambezi* (my emphasis). A close look at the wording of the treaty reveals that the key provision was 'free access to the Zambezi', which was intended to guarantee access and to prevent an encroachment of English territory on the German strip, or rather influence, embedded in the Portuguese-German Convention. The dilemma for Great Britain at this time was that this German area of influence in central Africa (except access to Zambezi) had not been - and needed to be - defined. Whatever it was that Britain intended to do in that region, she felt confined by this anomaly. It is because of this that the importance of the creation of the Caprivi is recognized here. It is the political, rather than the economic, factors that were crucial in the creation of this entity, and this should not be brushed aside. 'For the time being its political value is greater than its economic worth', Seiner reported.²⁸

This is supported by the thinking of Lord Selborne, then High Commissioner of South Africa when the issue of the settlement of the southern boundary of the Caprivi was being discussed. The British Colonial Office had received various suggestions from the

²⁷Zeller, 2000: pp. 34-35

²⁸*Report of Expedition made by F. Seiner from Katima Mulilo to Libebe.*

authorities in Bechuanaland and in South Africa. Most important among these was the suggestion of Major H.J. Goold-Adams, Resident Commissioner in Bechuanaland, and one by Lieutenant-Colonel Francis W. Panzera, former Resident Commissioner at Mafikeng in Bechuanaland. Goold-Adams suggested that Germany should renounce the right of 'free access' to the Zambezi and in exchange, the boundary of GSWA between the 22° S and 18°S would be extended eastward and run along the 21° 15' E, so as to give an equivalent piece of territory to Germany.²⁹ According to Akweenda, this territory suggested by Goold-Adams was smaller. Alternatively, Goold-Adams suggested, that Britain might agree to a strip of miles south of the 18th parallel extending eastward from the 21° E to about 23° 30" E.³⁰ Panzera disagreed with the suggestion made by Goold-Adams. On 10 December 1907 he advised the High Commissioner that Britain should instead acquire the whole tongue of the country owned by Germany north of Bechuanaland.³¹ According to Panzera, to give Germany a territory north of the 22° would interfere with the vested interests of the white farmers. Panzera suggested instead that the Caprivi Strip could be exchanged for the territory situated north of the Nossob River, south of the 22° S, west of the 21° E, and east of the 20° E. According to Panzera, the suggested area was valueless, caused considerable trouble to the British, and had no recognized vested interests in it.³² He also feared that if the German interpretation were adopted, the boundary would cut about four miles south of the Colonial Administration's police camp which was at Muhembo Drift on the west bank of the Okavango River. According to Akweenda, not only was the Muhembo Drift the only place where the police could cross the Okavango River, but the police camp was extremely important as it enabled the Colonial Administration to control the border and particularly the prevention of 'diseased cattle' from entering Bechuanaland.³³ It was reportedly built at a cost of £575.00.

²⁹Akweenda, S., *International Law and the Protection of Namibia's Territorial Integrity: Boundaries and Territorial Claims*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1996, p. 134.

³⁰F.O. 637/79, Folio 8448, in Akweenda, *Ibid.*

³¹Panzera to High Commissioner, 10 December 1907, para. 10, F.O. 367/79. see also The Colonial Office List, 1907, p. 580; in Akweenda, *ibid.*

³² Dispatch No. 2487, F.O. 371/5757, p. 240

³³ Akweenda, 1996, p.134.

Even though Lord Selborne requested the Colonial Office to propose to the German Government either the Goold-Adams or the Panzera solutions, Lord Crewe, former Secretary of State for Colonies, advised against communicating the above suggestions to the Germans who might evoke a counter-proposal, especially the exchange of the Strip for Walvis Bay.³⁴ Indeed on 22 July 1908, the British Ambassador in Berlin presented an exchange offer to Germany in the form of an inferior part of the Kalahari in the southwestern part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, which was of course unacceptable to Germany.³⁵ To revert back to Lord Selborne in regard to the political importance of the Caprivi Strip at this time and indeed to re-emphasize that the territory was after all not so very insignificant during the negotiations which resulted in the 1890 treaty, let us examine what Selborne had to say:

Politically, Caprivi Strip is most disadvantageous to Britain...such a strip, penetrating like a wedge between three British Administrations (Bechuanaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia), is sure to be a source of trouble. Further, the strip could not be delimited without causing annoyance and irritation to the Barotse and Batawana Chiefs who lived in that area.³⁶

It is argued elsewhere in the thesis that ultimately, Germany desired to be a neighbour in central Africa to Britain, to be '...a thorn in the English flesh,'³⁷ particularly during a time when Cecil Rhodes desired to push northwards, with his grandiose schemes, among them the Cape to Cairo rail route. Coincidentally, this would either terminate at or cross the Zambezi, over which Germany had gained access. The scheme envisioned an east-west link, either by waterways or rail links. This was to be a cross-road. Was the creation of the Caprivi Strip an attempt to stem Cecil Rhodes's push northwards? If yes, would this make the Caprivi less important in relation to Germany's other colonial projects? Rothe, in his report, viewed the importance of the Caprivi Strip in relation to the Cape to Cairo project: 'Owing to the increased importance of German Barotseland to German S.W. Africa, in consequence of the opening of the Cape to Cairo railway to Victoria Falls, I decided to make the acquaintance of this little known land and people.' In fact, he

³⁴Letter No. 1280/1908 from Lord Elgin, signed H.W. Just, to F.O., 10 March 1908, F.O. 367/79

³⁵Fisch, 1999: pp. 16-17

³⁶Selborne to Secretary of State, 23 December 1907, F.O. 367/79, Folio 8448, In Akweenda, *ibid.*, p.133.

³⁷Seiner, in Kruger 1984: p.8

suggested an alternative to the Cape to Cairo route, a rail communication by extending the Otavi line (GSWA) as far as Katima Mulilo or Sesheke, emphasizing the important geographical position of this area in relation to British possessions:

There is no question as to this trans-African line being a financial success, for both passengers and mails would undoubtedly elect to shorten the journey by 1300 km by taking this route in preference to that of the Cape to Cairo railway. Cape 2640 km to Victoria Falls whereas W. African line at most 1300; shorten voyage; more interesting country; further colonization, Rothe concluded.³⁸

It is often remarked that the colonial administrators missed an opportunity to reverse “the outrage to geography and all common sense”³⁹ when they failed to incorporate the Caprivi either into Bechuanaland Protectorate or Northern Rhodesia. As both were under British control, it was assumed that this could be done with less difficulty. As Selborne correctly argues above, this was equally a Pandora’s Box. The Barotse believed the Caprivi rightly belonged to them, as indeed they continued to be given privileges to fish and cut reeds in its waters even after the signing of the 1890 Treaty. On the other hand, the Batawana Chiefs also had vested interests in the Caprivi Strip. Could an attempt to ‘give back’ the strip only have flamed other conflicts, and resulted in a further partition of the territory? While it may be argued that Barotseland had a stronger claim in this case, there is no basis to exclude Bechuanaland. In fact, as Akweenda reveals, even though the independent Government of Botswana did not challenge the southern boundary of the Caprivi at independence, maps produced in that country, both official and private, indicate otherwise.⁴⁰ Of interest here is the proposal by Mr. Tsheko, an elected member of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Legislative Council. On 22 November 1963, prior to the independence of Botswana, he proposed that the government take steps to resume responsibility for the administration of the Caprivi Strip.⁴¹ Akweenda believes Tsheko wished to achieve more than just administrative control, maintaining that Tsheko wished Britain or newly-independent Botswana to claim title to the territory in question. Tsheko

³⁸Rothe, quoted in Kruger 1984: p. 4

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 16. The quotation is found in Frank Debenham, *Kalahari Sand*, London: G. Bell and Sons, p. 87.

⁴⁰Akweenda, 1996, p. 141

⁴¹*Ibid.*

argued that the Caprivi Strip was part and parcel of Ngamiland administered by the Chief and District Commissioner for Ngamiland, and, further, that the indigenous inhabitants of the strip are one and the same as the inhabitants of Ngamiland and the Chobe, and the 'people of SWA have no interest whatsoever in the Strip because they know it has never belonged to them'. For him, the disadvantage of the Strip, which he called this part of Bechuanaland, lay in the fact that it cut off Bechuanaland completely from a common frontage of two African states - Northern Rhodesia and Angola. Economically, he reasoned, the connection of Bechuanaland with Angola is very important because it affords Bechuanaland access to the sea coast in Angola for both exports and imports. Connection with Northern Rhodesia on a much wider frontage than was the case could link Bechuanaland with the rest of the African continent and therefore provide it with an outlet to its beef market. The motion was supported unreservedly by Mr. Masire, member of the Legislative Council, who declared: 'Here at any rate we have a territory which is wrongly occupied and which is so vital to our economy and...to our defense'.⁴² Masire urged the Council to 'press on Government to do something about this Caprivi Strip'.⁴³ It is significant to record that the dispute between Botswana and Namibia over Kasikili/Sedudu began during Quett Masire's presidency. The missing equation in this contest for the Caprivi is the indigenous people of the territory. Their wishes as to which territory they would belong was ignored. It is suffice to reiterate here what is recorded in Chapter Seven, during consultations for the incorporation of SWA into the Union in 1946. The Native Commissioner reported then that the people of the Caprivi looked on any return to Barotse rule with fear, in other words, they would not have willingly returned to that exploitative regime.

The preceding discussion has illustrated how the Caprivi was created, such a creation being best described as a 'political and geographical freak'.⁴⁴ It became clear that its spatial identity was highly contested and that it was just a corridor - pointing like a pistol or dagger at the heart of central southern Africa. Regardless of the shape it was to take and the implications of its existence, its foundation was to quench Germany's thirst for

⁴²*Africa Research Bulletin [Political, Social and Cultural]*, Vol. 1, No. 1 [January 1964], p. 4

⁴³Akweenda, *op.cit.*, p.142

⁴⁴*East London Daily Dispatch*, 28 August 1929, in Kruger, 1984, p. 14.

water (free access to the Zambezi), human labour and other resources, believed at the time to be in abundance, such as coal, diamonds and blue earth. For some, the creation of the Caprivi was to serve ‘... as a jumping off place for further territorial acquisitions; and if the strip had been all it was believed to be, it certainly might have given Germany a strategic advantage, for it points like a pistol at the heart of Rhodesia...’.⁴⁵ When this perception of plenty came to naught, Germany used the Caprivi as a bait for territorial exchange, desiring to receive Walvis Bay from the British. Largely, the perception of its uselessness had set in, and its inhabitants were in any case being portrayed as just little serfs of the Barotse, and being not of much significance. In fact, they are imaged as Barotse for most of this time. Indeed, even the territory was not referred to as GSWA, and therefore the foundation for separateness from the Mandated Territory was laid during this time. Most maps refer to the area as the German Zambezi region or German Barotseland or as Deutsch Bechuanaland or Sambezi Korridor.⁴⁶ Indeed, geographically, and on the map, the Caprivi is embedded in the Zambezia region, far removed from the rest of SWA. This would confer on it the attribute of a remote and unhealthy place, which is a strong constitutive element of the Caprivi identities.

Administering the Caprivi during the German Colonial Rule

A Sphere of Influence, 1890-1909

It is usually accepted that the area that constituted the Caprivi Strip was a 'no-man's-land' between 1890 and 1909. This claim is refuted elsewhere in this dissertation. Rather there was no effective European presence or administration but the indigenous people owned the land, under effective control of their tribal leaders. Another misinterpretation is that Germany lost interest in the area upon realization that the Zambezi River was not navigable and that the territory was a useless or poor piece of colonial acquisition. That is why, it is believed, it took almost 19 years to establish an administration in the area and

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Fisch 1999: p. 12 and Zeller 2000: p. 8

even then, only after several complaints from the British. This perception is also not entirely correct. Factors which account for Germany's long delay in setting up a presence in the Caprivi Strip are recited by Fisch (1999), Zeller (2000), Flint (2003),⁴⁷ and many others who support the theory of 'uselessness' or frustrated dreams in this regard. While it is recognized here that there was simply no German presence in the Caprivi during this time, it is also correct to state that the territory remained a German sphere of influence. A sphere of influence described the 'territory exclusively reserved for future occupation by a power which had effectively occupied adjoining territories.'⁴⁸ Contributing to the meaning of sphere of influence is Hall:

...[it] indicates the regions which geographically are adjacent to or politically group themselves naturally, with possessions or Protectorates, but which have not actually been so reduced into control that the minimum of the powers which are implied in a Protectorate can be exercised with tolerable regularity. It represents an understanding which enables a state to reserve to itself a right of excluding other European powers from territories that are of importance to it politically as affording means of future expansion to its existing dominions or Protectorates, or strategically as preventing civilized neighbors from occupying a dominant military position.⁴⁹

It is noted from the above quotation that the purposes of spheres of influence was, firstly, to constantly and gradually extend the occupation of the colonizing State into the hinterland, and secondly, to avoid conflict with other states. There was no given time period for occupation of a sphere of influence from the date of declaration. Indeed, as Oppenheim⁵⁰ and Lindley⁵¹ remind us, a declaration of a sphere of influence did not in itself vest territorial rights of a legal nature in the State exercising the influence. That is why declarations of spheres of influence were normally followed by 'agreements' which served to delimit the sphere of influence but also amounted to a 'promise on the part of each of the parties to it to abstain from doing anything that might lead to the acquisition of sovereign rights within the sphere allotted to the other'⁵², what Akweenda refers to as a contractual right in the nature of forbearance or preclusion.⁵³ It should be noted that agreements to respect spheres of influence were only binding on parties to the agreement.

⁴⁷ Flint, Lawrence, 2003.

⁴⁸ L. Oppenheim, 1955, p. 562; see also M.F. Lindley, 1926, pp. 207-236; G.B. Davis, 1908, p. 109.

⁴⁹ W. H. Hall, 1894, p.228.

⁵⁰ Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise* , p. 562.

⁵¹ Lindley, *The Acquisition and Government of Backward Territory in International Law*, p.236.

⁵² Lindley, *The Acquisition and Government of Backward Territory in International Law*, p. 207.

⁵³ Akweenda, 1996, p. 10.

Hall maintains that the agreements 'warns of friendly powers' but not 'covert hostility' from third parties.⁵⁴ Hence the British could not intervene or even acquire the Caprivi Strip because they were party to the 1 July 1890 Anglo-German Treaty, whereas the British laid claim to the territory situated between Angola and Mozambique even though it was within Portugal's sphere of influence recognized in the German-Portuguese Declaration of 30 December 1886. The British when laying claim to Mashonaland and Matabeleland, which Portugal recognized through the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement of 11 June 1891⁵⁵, stated that they had a better claim (Agreement with King Lobengula) and that there was no effective occupation.

To summarize, the Caprivi *Zipfel* was administered as Germany's sphere of influence only between 1890 and 1909. This accounted for the tardy establishment of a European presence in the territory because spheres of influence are, by their nature, demarcations of future action or occupation which do not have a time limit. A colonial power could decide not to occupy a sphere of influence after all. It is argued here that Germany did not lose interest in the Caprivi as often remarked and that it was not legally bound to set up an administration in the territory as per British protestations. This is because spheres of influence do not by their nature vest territorial rights. Germany considered infrequent reports on this sphere of influence (Rothe 1904; Seiner 1905) sufficient administrative tool during this period. Of course this was not tolerated by the British who complained about the territory being a safe haven for wrongdoers and poachers. Germany's attitude was that it was not necessary to incur the expense of maintaining officials in the territory, noting that those 'committing misdemeanors were in any case mainly British subjects and were, therefore, a British responsibility'.⁵⁶ While no doubt all sorts of white vagabonds inhabited the Caprivi Strip, it appears British concerns were not purely administrative but were motivated by a desire to retake the territory. Seiner believed that the British were merely piling up evidence to show Germany's incompetence as a pretext to lay claim to the Caprivi Strip. Incidentally, he also reported that they were doing the same with the Portuguese Government, accusing it of allowing Mambaris (half-castes) to conduct slave

⁵⁴Hall, *A Treatise on the Foreign Powers and Jurisdiction of the British Crown*, p. 229.

⁵⁵83 B.F.S.P., pp. 27-41, in Akweenda, 1996, p. 11

⁵⁶Von Schuckmann to Selborne, 6 March 1908, BS2/4, NAZ

trading on its soil. This line of argument is cemented by Zeller who writes that British misgivings were situated within a broader international debate of Germany's capability to run her overseas territories in a sound manner, sparked by the brutal handling of the Nama and Herero uprising, and similar events in Tanganyika.⁵⁷

Ma-Dostela⁵⁸ in *Der Caprivi Zipfel*⁵⁹, 1909-1914

Germany's attitude to events in the Caprivi Strip promptly changed when German nationals began to engage in importing potentially diseased cattle, arms and ammunition from Northern Rhodesia and Angola into GSWA through the Caprivi Strip.⁶⁰ What was perceived before as a British problem suddenly became a mutual concern. It was then that Captain Kurt Streitwolf (Kambungu to the Masubiya; and Kataramatunga to the Mafwe, meaning one who surveys the country) was sent to the territory which did not even have an official name (see above). It was only in 1911 that the name *Caprivi Zipfel* appeared in official documents. Zeller has convincingly argued that the name is often wrongly taken to have been given to honour Duke Leo von Caprivi, the German Chancellor whose signature is affixed to the Heligoland-Zanzibar treaty.⁶¹ In reality, instead, it bore an undertone of ridicule aimed to mock the man whose poor 'state-crafting' had left the colony of GSWA with a disgraceful territorial appendix allegedly without value.

Kambungu (Streitwolf) departed Gobabis on 15 November 1908 to arrive at the Zambezi River opposite the British station of Sesheke in February 1909.⁶² Accompanied by fourteen Herero and Nama and three whites, Kambungu's expedition travelled through Bechuanaland and was equipped with one wagon, one cart, three horses, six mules and

⁵⁷Zeller, 2000: p. 37

⁵⁸ The local moniker for German-speakers (*Deutsch*).

⁵⁹ *The Caprivi Strip*; Also the title of Captain Streitwolf's book, *Der Caprivizipfel*.

⁶⁰See Flint (2003).

⁶¹Zeller, 2000, pp. 35-36; see also Zeller, W. & Kangumu, B., 'From Apartheid Bantustan to Namibia's Socio-economic Tail-Light: Caprivi Under Old and New Indirect Rule', Melber, Henning, (ed.), *Cross-examining Transition in Namibia: Socio-economic and Ideological Transformation since Independence*, Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007 (Forthcoming)..

⁶²Flint (2003) incorrectly has it that Kambungu arrived in Caprivi in November 1908 from Gobabis. This was actually his date of departure.

thirty oxen. The passage through Bechuanaland was a difficult one, but afforded Kambungu an opportunity to familiarize himself through discussions with Lieutenant Hanney (British official stationed at Kazungula in Bechuanaland Protectorate), with the English approach to native administration in their colonies. Kambungu recorded places en route, among others Sebetwane's Drift, Mababe, Letschuane's (Liswani, of the Masubiya, more correctly Chika) - the first of these named after the Makololo leader. He crossed the Chobe River at Ngoma after making his way to Kazungula to see Captain Eason, the Bechuanaland Protectorate magistrate stationed there. It was at Ngoma that Kambungu apparently received the news, for the first time, from three white men he met, that all the Malozi had moved out of the Caprivi taking all the cattle, their own as well as those of the subject people. From Ngoma Kambungu made for the Zambezi, passing Lusese, a Masubiya village, on the way.

The effects of the 1904-1907 Herero-Nama uprising on the turn of events in the Caprivi Strip have not yet been fully appreciated. When the arrival of the *ma-Dostela* (the best the old people could make of *Deutsch*) was eminent, so oral history in the Caprivi has it, the people were forewarned (probably by the British) that the Germans were cruel and killed and ate people. One conclusion could be that the news of the above genocide travelled ahead of the Germans. This accounts for why the Lozi fled, and a number of especially Masubiya, chose either to cross into Bechuanaland or Northern Rhodesia. Those numbers that stayed behind went into hiding in the thickets of the forests or on islands. The choice by Kambungu, discussed below, to reconstruct tribal administration, a sort of indirect rule which he partly copied from the English in Bechuanaland, should thus be interpreted as flowing from a desire to counteract the negative perceptions people had of German rule as a result of the 1904-1907 genocidal war. Kambungu reportedly wrote letters to his superiors in which he expressed his 'admiration for the English approach and his regret about the mistakes the Germans had made in their treatment of the Herero'.⁶³

Kambungu immediately set about establishing a town on a slight elevation, known locally as Luhonono (*Terminalia Sericea* tree), which he named Schuckmannsburg in

⁶³Streitwolf 1911: 12, 72, in Fisch 1999, p. 76.

honour of Bruno von Schuckmann, the imperial governor of GSWA at the time. Schuckmannsburg was ideally located because it was directly across the Zambezi from Sesheke (Mwandi), which was the administrative centre of the British in Northern Rhodesia. It afforded the ma-Dostela proximity to 'civilization', a post office and the Paris Mission hospital. The duties of the Imperial Resident included the establishment of effective administration, keeping undesirable immigrants out of the territory, removing from there white people of bad reputation⁶⁴ and clarifying 'the state of the land and its people'.⁶⁵ Of importance, too, was the need to forge a spirit of harmony with adjacent territories. What did the ma-Dostela achieve within such mandate? The most eventful of year during the German period in the Caprivi was undoubtedly that of the one year tenure of Kambungu (Streitwolf). Fisch describes Kambungu's work as thus:

'In one brief year, Streitwolf had not only managed to make proposals to his government regarding the future of the Caprivi Strip, but had also laid the foundations for a stable, local administration. At least 2 000 people had returned from British territory. The population appeared to be peaceful and disciplined. They owned only 28 firearms and had no military strength. Psychologically, too, the Subiya had broken the link with the Lozi.'⁶⁶

Four 'achievements' can be discerned from the above: the completion of a report on the character of the territory and people; the establishment of local administration through chiefs; the establishment of peace both within and without territories; and lastly, the overthrow of the exploitative Lozi regime.

I will comment on the advent of local administration and on what has become known as 'the Masubiya Cattle Case' which seem to be the most significant aspect of the German period in the Caprivi Strip. As discussed above, Kambungu did not have much option but to decide to administer the indigenous population through local leaders in a system similar to indirect rule practiced in British territories. In fact, the idea to adopt the policy of indirect rule and to appoint local leaders was not Kambungu's. Both Rothe (1904) and

⁶⁴Von Schuckmann to Selborne, 16 October 1908, A3/16/1, NAZ.

⁶⁵DSWAZ, No. 86, 1908, in Zeller 2000, 37.

⁶⁶Fisch, 1999, p. 103; after Streitwolf 1911: 217, 227.

Seiner (1905) had recommended this model long before the arrival of Streitwolf. Consider the following by Rothe:

Letia's nervous attitude is also shown by the extremely slack discipline prevailing in German Barotseland. I am of the opinion that the paramount chief in the German territory, Mamili of Mamili, is well aware of this fact. His promotion to the position of head of the German Barotse when the country is definitely occupied might, under favorable circumstances, enable us to keep those native tribes which are composed of Maijes (Mayeyi) and Masubias (the latter have given their name to the country in the native language) but the possibility must be faced, in the event of the establishment of German administration, of the kaffirs leaving German territory, if ordered to do by Lewanika, actuated, not by hostility towards us, but by their personal attachment to him.⁶⁷

The above suggestion was to be repeated by Seiner: 'In view of the exclusive policy of the British, it should be extremely desirable to find some happy solution of the question of the relations of the German Barotses to those living under British rule by making Captain [Chief] Mamili head of the German Barotses; this should be done as soon as the administration has been inaugurated. If only he be wisely handled, I have the utmost confidence in the tact and ability of this chief. If this was done the question of the natives and the security of stock would be settled once and for all, and the support of the Barotses...would be of the greatest advantage to German S.W. Africa.'⁶⁸ Clearly, Rothe and Seiner's suggestion to appoint Chief Mamili of Linyanti, whom they incorrectly describe as paramount chief, was motivated by the fear of a revolt by the Marotse over a German occupation of the Caprivi Strip. They reasoned that appointing Mamili, whom the Marotse had themselves appointed at Linyanti, would serve to appease them and ensure that the Lozi felt they still controlled the people of the Caprivi Strip perpetually. This suggestion was taken up by Streitwolf himself at his arrival because he made several overtures to the Lozi to come back to the Caprivi, and particularly to Letia, to assist him in administering the territory, which was overturned. He would soon regret having

⁶⁷From Letter and Report from Richard Rothe, of 29 March 1906, Heidelberg, in Kruger 1984, p. 4. Rothe's identification of only two groups, the Mayeyi and Masubiya, as the occupants of the Caprivi Strip at this time is misleading, as is his misplaced conception that Chief Mamili was paramount chief. This wrongly feeds into Fisch (1999), that when the Masubiya royal dynasty fled into Bechuanaland, Chief Mamili, being the 'only' Chief left in the territory, exercised powers over the Masubiya as well. There is no evidence to suggest this or even that he ever ruled over the Masubiya. The most common forms of control over a people in those days was through imposition and collecting of tax, in money or kind, and the appointment of Indunas (headmen) in the such areas to oversee affairs. Without evidence of any of this exercised by Chief Mamili over the Masubiya, such claims become difficult to appreciate.

⁶⁸Report of Expedition made by F. Seiner from Katima Mulilo to Libebe, in Kruger 1984: 9-10.

wanted to do that as can be seen from his remarks:

It was as well that this did not happen. It would have been simply impossible to have had a subject of Luanika's [Lewanika] in our Territory as quasi-Chief. The clear-cut separation was the only correct way and this I strove for while keeping within my rights because Luanika had renounced our country.⁶⁹

The other fear was that the remaining people would all follow Lewanika into Barotseland if he ordered them. Indeed, Flint (2003) reports that Letia actively tried to persuade the 'remainder of the Caprivians, mainly consisting of the Subia to whom Litia was himself closely aligned [his mother and wives were Subia] to follow the cattle north'. This was a misplaced fear. Streitwolf himself reported that '...the Malozi were disliked by the Masubia, otherwise they would all have gone across the river...leaving the Caprivi depopulated in those parts'.⁷⁰ This is why conclusions, such as the one by Flint that the Masubiya and other people in the Caprivi shed away their Loziness thanks to the coming of the Germans and events such as the Masubiya cattle case, are not entirely correct. As shown in Chapter Two of this dissertation dealing with pre-colonial Caprivi identities, people never lost their identities regardless of the dominance of the Lozi identity, and in fact they never regarded themselves as Lozis. They always sought for ways to shake-off the Lozi identity, and German colonialism just aided or gave impetus to those attempts. It appears that even Chief Mamili, himself a Lozi, did not want to follow 'Loziness' even when he was recalled, partly because of his advanced age but also because of other factors, perhaps a dislike of a Lozi identity. This is revealed by his remarks after Streitwolf (Kambungu) told him that Lewanika had renounced his authority over Caprivi and its people. In expressing his thanks, Chief Mamili is said to have muttered: '...At long last they [his people] could settle down'.⁷¹

Unlike Seiner, Streitwolf did not believe the Marotse posed a danger to the new German riparian state on the Zambezi. He wrote in a report: 'They are not a fighting people and would scarcely risk a rising, which could, of course, be directed against the Chartered

⁶⁹in Kruger, 1984, p. 17.

⁷⁰In Kruger 1984: p. 14.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 15

Company only. In such a case, we would be left in peace as the Marotse would scarcely be so foolish as to attack two powers simultaneously.’⁷² Such an attack in Barotseland, Streitwolf reasoned, had its advantages: ‘A Marotse rising could only mean our gain, as it will drive thousands of natives across to us. Should the Marotse actually rise I should feel perfectly safe with the 16 Masubia and Matotela Police constables who are now being drilled by me.’⁷³ It was not strange for one to pray for an uprising in the neighbouring territory if this would benefit oneself. Being administrator over a depopulated area which did not bring any income towards its administrative expenses, Streitwolf found himself between a rock and a hard place. As an incentive to attract people to re-settle in Caprivi he was forced not to impose the Hut Tax which was in place in British Territories. He even contacted Mathibe, Chief of the Tawana of Mababe under whom a sizable number of Masubiya who escaped from Caprivi were living, to persuade his new subjects to return to Caprivi.⁷⁴ Of course Mathibe did nothing of the sort since he was also benefiting from the hut tax paid by the Subia. He was reported to have been very pleased with the Masubiya settling in his area as it meant ‘an increase in the Hut Tax in the Batawana Reserve...’⁷⁵

The history of chieftainships in the Caprivi is discussed in great detail in Chapter Two of this dissertation. It is enough to mention here that Streitwolf (Kambungu) appointed chiefs over two main groups: Chikamatondo (evidently as regent for Liswaninyana who was still young) for the Masubiya and Simataa (Mamili) for the Mafwe. For the Masubiya, Streitwolf did not ‘give them a new administration’⁷⁶ but rather a foundation on which to build anew. Their chiefs, the ruling Liswani family, were almost absent in the Caprivi Strip during 1909, having fled either away from Lozi attack or at the approach of the arrival of the ma-Dostela. Streitwolf himself records persuading Liswani (Chika), chief of the Masubiya in Bechuanaland, to go back to the Caprivi but he refused. This lays rest to claims by some scholars that the Masubiya chieftainship begins with

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴Hannay to Panzera, 26 May 1909, File A3/16/1, NAZ.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶Fisch, 1999: p. 82.

Chikamatondo. Indeed, at the passing away of Chikamatondo in 1945, the Masubiya chieftaincy reverted back to the Liswani dynasty. As regard the Mafwe Chieftainship, it was constructed under German rule and is disintegrating in the present times as illustrated by the break-away and the re-assertion of identity by the Mayeyi and baMashi. Noting that Seluka and Mwanota were living outside the borders of present day Caprivi, Streitwolf experimented with the idea of imposing Simataa Mamili over the Mafwe proper, Matotela, Mayeyi, Mambukushu and Mbalangwe, suggested by Seiner and Rothe in 1905 and 1904 respectively. They collectively assumed a new identity, Bafwe-Bayeyi. This invented identity did not last long. As early as 1961 there were calls for its disintegration as well as in 1972 when Bayeyi was dropped and the ethnic alliance became known just as Mafwe. In present times this identity has produced two more chieftaincies, Mayeyi and Mayuni (Mashi). What is more, a contest in the form of who is the 'true Mafwe' has also emerged between the BaMashi (Mayuni) and the remaining elements of the ethnic alliance.

An outstanding achievement for Kambungu was perhaps the return of Masubiya cattle which were driven across the Zambezi River by the Barotse shortly before his arrival. Two claims for the return of cattle on behalf of the Masubiya were lodged. The first was by Chief Mathibe of the Tawana in Ngamiland. He sought and was given permission to travel through German territory to Sesheke to see Letia. He arrived with 70 men, 50 of them armed, to plead on behalf of the Masubiya for the return of their cattle. It seems Chief Mathibe represented those Masubiya who moved into Bechuanaland upon the news of the approach of the Germans. According to Streitwolf, Letia's answer was that people who abandoned their chief forfeited their possessions and Mathibe departed without achieving his purpose. Streitwolf went ahead to claim the cattle on behalf of the Masubiya. Even though the case came to be known as the 'Masubiya Cattle Case', there were also claimants from the Mafwe side. Chief Mamili's subjects who claimed cattle included headman Mutumuswana of Kanono, Musisanyani Simataa I, Mufale, Matende, Batubadja, Mulawato and Salupeto. The delegation of Chief Chikamatondo consisted of Munihango, Muhatalizwi, Silumbu, Likando, Munimahela, Joba Muhulumwe, e.t.c. The first hearing was on the 9 February 1909 and the second on 16 February 1909. Letia

initially claimed that all the cattle belonged to his father, King Lewanika, and were simply lent to Subia chiefs to graze and enjoy the dairy produce on behalf of the chief. As both Streitwolf and British officials could have none of this, he was forced to modify his statement and stated instead that he confiscated the cattle as an incentive for the people of Caprivi to come over to him.⁷⁷ The verdict was the return of 291 of the 486 disputed cattle.⁷⁸ Only one person, according to Fisch, was unhappy with the outcome of the cattle trial: Chief Simataa Mamili.⁷⁹ According to Fisch, although Chief Mamili lost about 100 cattle, only forty were recovered, largely due to the cowardice of his Ngambela Mutumuswana who dared not open his mouth because he was terrified of Letia. When Streitwolf reminded the chief of this, apparently he replied: 'It is all not that serious, the number of cattle will increase again'.⁸⁰ The other reason why the chief was hesitant to send more witnesses was because he knew Letia won't give him back the cattle. Consider the following words from Letia addressing Chief Mamili:

I do not have a case with Mamili besides eight [8] people from Linyanti who bought the cattle and the rest are Lewanika's cattle. Mamili is our man whom we appointed there to represent the Lozi State in Itenge. 'You Mamili had no right to be on the Masubiya side because you have no case against the Lozi as you are a Lozi and the cattle you are now claiming were given to you by Lewanika as a Lozi subject and as a Lozi representative in Itenge.'⁸¹

Supporting the above statement by Letia is Kruger, who asserts: 'Simataa [or Imataa as the Malozi called him] had been selected by the Malozi regime for the important position he was given by reason of good deeds in one or other campaign. It is said that the cattle he had accumulated, which were taken away by the Malozi when the Germans came, had come from a herd of 10 given to him when he was sent to assume his post at Linyanti in recognition of those services.'

The remainder of German administration of the Caprivi Strip was mainly uneventful. As Kruger correctly summarizes: 'After Streitwolf had laid a good part of the foundation for the orderly administration not much time was left for others to build on it in any

⁷⁷Willis to Wallace, 17 April 1909, File A3/16/1, NAZ; BS2/185 Vol. 2: Masubiya Cattle Case 1907 - 1909, pp. 45-49, NAZ.

⁷⁸Willis, *Ibid.*

⁷⁹Fisch, 1999: p. 102.

⁸⁰Streitwolf 1911: p. 218.

⁸¹BS 2/185, Vol. 2, NAZ.

particular direction"⁸² Streitwolf was followed by Lieutenant Hans Kaufmann (the locals called him Samukosi - one with a thick neck) who served in 1910 as Acting Resident and again from 1913-1914. Samukosi (Kaufmann) was followed by Lieutenant Viktor von Frankenberg, who was known to the locals as 'Mutatosi' - one who has a strutting walk, alternatively also known as 'Sankonko'. Von Frankenberg served from 1911 to 1913, during which period he produced excellent maps on Caprivi. He returned to the Caprivi on 4 June 1914, only to be removed from office on 21 September by Allied forces. German colonial administration of the Caprivi Strip was best summarized in the words of Trollope: '[the] Administration, largely indirect...did not leave any mark on the strip - it was featureless and consisted mainly of preserving the status quo'.⁸³ It was a *laissez faire* sort of administration. The only reminder left, apart from the Caprivi itself, of the German period is a small building of burnt brick with corrugated iron roof at Schuckmannsburg believed to have been the armory of German days. German colonial administration of the Caprivi is generally remembered by the older generation in the Caprivi as being good, even though there were reports of fairly severe physical punishment to attain discipline.

The end of German rule in the Caprivi Strip as a result of the outbreak of WWI is quite telling from an administrative perspective. It became the first Allied occupation of enemy territory and actually Germany's first loss in the war while the rest of GSWA was still occupied. A Southern Rhodesia force of the BSAP gathered at Sesheke, occupied Schuckmannsburg and formally took control of the Caprivi Strip. A full account of the occupation of Schuckmannsburg by a B.S.A.P. contingent is provided by Lieutenant Stephens of the B.S.A.P., entitled 'With No. 1 Mobile Troop B.S.A.P. to Schuckmannsburg'.⁸⁴ The BSAP column which occupied the Caprivi Strip was commanded by Major Capel, D.S.O and was formed at Palm groove siding in Southern Rhodesia. It consisted of No. 1 Troop from Salisbury under Lieutenant Stephens, which

⁸² Kruger, 1984, p. 24.

⁸³ Trollope, 'The Eastern Caprivi Zipfel', in *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, Vol. 3 [1956-1958], pp. 107-118.

⁸⁴ In the *Rhodesia Defence Force Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, January 1915, p.2.

was mobilized on 8 August 1914 and congregated in Salisbury on 10 August and began a two day train journey to Victoria Falls; No. 4 Troop from Bulawayo under Lieutenant Parsons; a machine gun section from the Depot under Lieutenant Tribe; and 40 armed Native Police. On 26 August No. 1 Troop was ordered to proceed to Kazungula to erect a fort which was completed on 13 September. The column then proceeded to Sesheke in Northern Rhodesia opposite the German town of Schuckmannsburg via Livingstone and was joined by a garrison from Kazungula on the way, to arrive at Sesheke on 21 September 1914. Lieutenant Stephens, locally known as 'Sirupula' or 'Chirupula', was immediately sent across to ask the Germans to surrender to avoid bloodshed. Sirupula, accompanied by Corporal Vaughan and Native Corporal Kapambue, met Sankonko (Herr von Frankenberg), the German Resident, and after prolonged discussion it was agreed that the camp would be handed over without resistance. The German Resident surrendered to Major Capel on 21 September 1914 and the next day, 22 September 1914, the troops were assembled in the square for the raising of the Union Jack. Sankonko (Frankenberg) and his European Sergeant, Fischer, were sent to Livingstone and the Native Guards were held captive for a couple of days and made to dig trenches for the British anticipated trouble from the west. They were released when Letia intervened on their behalf.

A Transferable Identity: The Caprivi Between 1914-1939

An administrative tool during this period, justified on the basis of the remoteness and geographical location of the Caprivi Strip, was the neglect of responsibility by off-loading the territory onto the next administration. The Caprivi changed hands four times during this period—from SWAA to Bechuanaland Protectorate (1921-1929), back to SWAA (1929-1939), and then to the Union Department of Native Affairs (1939-1980). A second and related administrative aspect which emerged during this period was the parceling of the territory into two, the great divide of the West and East Caprivi. West Caprivi was controlled by a police post at Andara and administered from Maun during the Bechuanaland period and from Rundu during the SWAA, while East Caprivi was controlled by a police unit at Schuckmannsburg and administered from Kazungula (later

Kasane) during the Bechuanaland period and from Schuckmannsburg, later Katima Mulilo during the SWAA.

Military Rule, 1915-1921

The Union forces which invaded GSWA during World War I had sailed back to Cape Town by August 1915. A military government was effective in SWA as from 9 July 1915 and had as advisor on matters affecting the civil population and to exercise direct control as would vest in the civil administration in normal times, a Chief Civil Secretary, Sir E.H.L. Gorges. Shortly thereafter, in October 1915 the posts of military governor and chief civil secretary were abolished and replaced by that of Administrator, who took over powers and functions of both. This was the position until the war had run its course, which led to the establishment of the League of Nations, the body which concluded that the people of South West Africa were not yet ready to govern themselves and that another power was needed to safeguard and promote their material, moral wellbeing and social progress, and to lead them on the path to self-determination. The Mandate System was born, and SWA was placed under the Union Government on behalf of the British. At a special session in September 1919, the Parliament of South Africa passed the Treaty of Peace and South West Africa Mandate Act, 1919 (Act 49 of 1919), to give effect to the Mandate. This was followed by another enactment, the Treaty of Peace Act (Act 32, 1921). In October 1920, a parliamentary commission was appointed to enquire and report on a suitable form of civil administration for SWA, which was virtually under military rule until 1 January 1921.

As for the far-removed Caprivi Strip, immediately after the removal of the German Resident, a submission was made by Mr. J.H. Venning, District Officer at Sesheke, famously titled 'The Newly Acquired Country Between the Zambezi and Mashi Rivers' in which he pleaded for restoration of Barotse Rule in Eastern Caprivi, concluding:

Although it may be unwise to allow the powers of the Marotsi to spread beyond its present limits, yet Lewanika has undoubtedly claim to the strongest consideration in the ultimate settlement of

the Strip. The Caprivi Strip, at least a portion of it between the Mashi and Zambezi Rivers, could be administered in the same way as other districts in Northern Rhodesia outside the Barotsi Reserve, and the people of this country could then freely enjoy their former privileges of grazing, fishing, reed-cutting and ploughing, without interfering with rights of the present occupiers of the land.⁸⁵

Venning went in great detail to show how the people of Caprivi Strip were just serfs of the Lozi and how their claims to sovereignty and independent dynastic rule before Lozi subjugation was just a figment of their imagination. This is not surprising, for he was serving the interests of his people - the Barotse. Unfortunately Venning's exposition, regardless of its context, had been quoted by several scholars over time as proof that there were no chieftainships in the Caprivi prior to the arrival of the Lozi (see Chapter Two). It is not known under whose instruction Venning's submission was prepared. A copy of it was passed over to the SWAA by the Chief Secretary of Northern Rhodesia when discussions for the so-called Barotse privileges were underway. Whether the case was presented by Northern Rhodesia or not, is also not known. Venning even went to the extent of summoning the people of the Caprivi Strip to explain the change in administration and how they should not fear the Barotse anymore, sort of preparing them for eventual Barotse occupation.

Venning's attempt was stopped in its track by the designation of Captain Eason, Magistrate at Kazungula (Bechuanaland Protectorate), as the authority responsible for the control of the Caprivi. It has been difficult to establish why the British, acting on the advice of the High Commissioner, decided on this arrangement. It is possible that the decision not to transfer the Caprivi Strip to Northern Rhodesia was as a result of South African pressure. Also, while there is no evidence to suggest that the people of the Caprivi were formally consulted, one might go along with Kruger's conclusion:

But the magistrate at Kazungula, whose seat was close to the Masubia in the east and who had a good number of those people in his own district, with fairly free movement both ways across the border [Mr. Venning himself reported that many of the people had cleared across to Bechuanaland], would have been well aware of Masubia sentiment respecting the talk about joining or rejoining Barotseland. That sentiment would have been firmly against, just as there would have been strong opposition from the tribesmen westwards, however kindly disposed the Malozi may have declared themselves to be.⁸⁶

⁸⁵J.H. Venning, [undated] p. 8.

⁸⁶ Kruger, 1984.

Kruger concluded, 'The Masubia themselves, if not the other inhabitants of the Caprivi, may well have made it their business to present a petition of sorts through the Magistrate at Kazungula.'⁸⁷ Captain H.V. Eason resumed his duties as Special Commissioner for the Caprivi east of the Mashu River on 20 November 1914 at Schuckmannsburg but retained Kazungula as his headquarters since he had the northern district of Bechuanaland under his charge. A non-commissioned officer of the Protectorate Police, the first being Corporal (later Sergeant) Legge (mentioned above), was posted to Schuckmannsburg and was instructed to report regularly to the Special Commissioner at Kazungula and also to the Rhodesian Authorities at Sesheke on any matters that affected them. Therefore a kind of dual, albeit unofficial, reportage structure existed at the time. The names of the Special Commissioners who served the Eastern Caprivi during the period of military rule are: Captain H.V. Eason (1914-1915), Captain W. Surmon (1915-1916), Captain F. Garbutt (1917) and Captain H. Neale (1918-1920).

The administrative yardstick during this period was that while law and order was to be maintained, authority was not to be asserted to an extent than was absolutely essential and no revenue was to come from the inhabitants. A couple of decisions and tasks were undertaken and implemented during this period. On 28 January 1916 the Barotse in the surroundings of Sesheke district were allowed access to the Caprivi for cultivation, fishing and reed-cutting for an initial period of one year beginning 1 July 1916. Perhaps it is necessary here to clarify the concept of 'Barotse' as it applied to the people of the Sesheke district, by merely adding that even though the concept is usually employed in a blanket manner, the majority of them were actually Masubia. The fact that Lewanika appointed his son, Letia, to govern over those people does not make them Barotse. Of course there were small numbers of Barotse among them. It was thus difficult for the Masubia in the Caprivi to deny their kin across the river access to natural resources which they had shared since time immemorial. In 1918 permission was granted, with the blessing of Chief Chikamatondo, to the Zambezi Transport Syndicate to open a store at

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Kabulabula in the Masubia area. On 20 April 1920, the High Commissioner gave permission to the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church to build a mission school at Ikaba, believed to have been the principal village in Chief Chikamatondo's area. The school was established and a native teacher appointed. He was supervised by a European named G. Wilmore whom the Mission had sent to Caprivi and who had his headquarters at Kalimbeza near Lifumbela's village. The average attendance at the school was 40 and each learner was required to contribute 6d (sixpence) a month.⁸⁸ This was the first school to be established by the SDA Church and, indeed, the first modern school in the Caprivi. Apparently a population census was conducted in 1921, giving 2003 males and 2246 females, a total of 4,249 people. It is not known whether this number includes children and since no other census was carried during this period, this figure is repeated in successive annual reports.

Under the Bechuanaland Administration, 1921-1929

When the Union Government became the Mandatory Authority over SWA it decided that the arrangement whereby the Bechuanaland Protectorate would continue administering the Caprivi was reasonable, the only addition being that the Bechuanaland Protectorate now acted as agent of the Union Government, significantly, with due regard to the terms and spirit of the Mandate. The formal transfer of the administration of the Caprivi Strip to the Bechuanaland Protectorate was expedited by two legal instruments, the Governor-General's Proclamation 12 of 1922 and the High Commissioner's enactment 23 of 1922. According to these proclamations, the laws of the Bechuanaland Protectorate were made applicable to the Caprivi Strip as from 1 January 1921. The pattern of administration applied in this period continued between 1914-21 and was not affected by the new responsibilities introduced by the Mandate. The people were left to their own devices and permitted to live in peace and quiet, which was necessarily a distinction between the new and the unforgiving hand of the old rulers, the Lozi. A number of traders were permitted to engage in activities in the Caprivi (see also above). These were M. Michelson (1921),

⁸⁸Kangumu, B, & Likando, G, *Mission Education and Health Provision in the Eastern Caprivi Strip During the Colonial Times, c1920-1964*, p.6 [Namibia Scientific Society, Forthcoming).

J.A. Legge (1921), R.F. Sutherland (1926) and Harrington (1927). As regards education, the number of schools run by the SDAs was increasing. Whereas there were only three schools in 1925 at Ikaba, Katima Mulilo and Linyanti, two new schools were added in 1926, one at Nsundwa and another at Lusese.⁸⁹ These were what were then known as bush schools, constructed using temporary materials such as thatch and reeds. Their continued existence from year to year was not always secure as communities moved from time to time due to floods, as occurred in 1925. During April, May and June of that year, large tracts of the eastern flood plains inhabited by the Masubia were flooded to a greater extent than had been the case for 20 years. A report by the Administration of 1926 describes this flood as thus:

...flood waters reached the highest level within the memory of the oldest inhabitants...In large tracts of the eastern portion of the Strip there was hardly a village which escaped being swamped and, in some cases, the inhabitants had to build their huts with the floors raised 3 or 4 feet above the ground level in order to escape the water.⁹⁰

By 1925, the number of schools in the Caprivi had increased to 14, with the one at Katima Mulilo, where the headquarters of the SDA were now situated, being the most important one. The 1928 Annual Report reflects a grant of £46 made to the school at Kasika, its first mention and the only one in the eastern Caprivi Strip that was not under the management of the SDA but of the London Missionary Society (LMS). Kruger believes the school could have been established long before 1928, probably in 1921, that is, under the LMS banner, but did not survive long after 1928. In any case, the school was the only testimony within Caprivi of the efforts of the LMS through the work of Livingstone, of Helmore and Price and their families to create a mission station with widespread Christian influence in the Kingdom of the Makololo.

It is reflected in the Annual Report of 22 December 1927 how Africans east of the Mashi River were flocking in steady streams to Livingstone to sell produce such as fowls and skins. Furthermore, even though there was no taxation in German times, free labour to the Administration was required, but when Bechuanaland Protectorate people moved to

⁸⁹Kangumu & Likando, *Mission Education*, p. 6.

⁹⁰In Kruger 1984.

the Strip they were to continue to pay Bechuanaland Protectorate Tax. The taxation of the people in the Eastern Caprivi during this time became an issue of control. In a letter dated 25 November 1927 addressed to the Government Secretary at Mafikeng, the Acting Resident/Magistrate of Kasane wrote: 'The taxation of Natives in the Caprivi Strip has become necessary only for the reason that the Basubia have each year become more indolent and their Headmen are having difficulty in collecting a crew of paddlers for Government work.'⁹¹ It appears that since people were being converted into participants in a cash economy (through the sale of produce at Livingstone), it was no longer possible to work for the Government without pay. What compounded the problem, the Acting Magistrate wrote, was because '...Nearly every Native...is the owner of cattle and a man in possession of 30 head is regarded as a person of moderate means'.⁹²

As to native administration, affairs were regulated by Proclamation 1/1919 of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. According to this proclamation, the chief's kuta (court) was the principal one and its judgments were final except that provision was made for appeals against the judgment of a chief, in the first instance to a court composed of the Assistant Commissioner or Magistrate of the District and of the Chief, and in the event of their disagreeing, then the Resident Commissioner made a final decision. There was no evidence found to suggest that matters dealt with in the chief's courts in the Caprivi went on appeal during the period under review. Otherwise administration was limited to sending a police patrol once a year to the posts which were established at Schuckmannsburg, Katima Mulilo, Sambala (presumably Singalamwe), Bwabwata (West Caprivi), and west of the Okavango River, at Andara and Mbambi. It should be mentioned that during this time, the Caprivi territorial identity included parts of present day Kavango, east of the Okavango River. The rating of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration in regard to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Eastern Caprivi Strip is ranked high and favourably remembered by the inhabitants. Confronting Trollope on his inspection tour in 1937, one inhabitant said: 'Then the Bechuanaland government took us over and gave us many things including arms, ammunition, stores, schools and

⁹¹Kruger, 1984.

⁹²*Ibid.*

the sale of our cattle...'⁹³ A full assessment of the impact of the Bechuanaland Protectorate administration of the eastern Caprivi strip is to be found in the Trollope report:

The handing over of the administration of the Strip to the Bechuanaland authorities was regrettable, though probably unavoidable at the time. During that period the natives enjoyed all the privileges of natives in Bechuanaland, privileges which we did not and could not continue. Stores sprung up and their profitable continuance was ensured by their possession of arms and ammunition licenses and by the fact that the natives were able to sell their cattle. Schools were started by missionary enterprise....So that the local natives when they start comparing their conditions, do not compare them with those of South West African natives (in comparison with whom they are well off), but with those in Barotseland of which they are really a part, or of Bechuanaland which they have experienced..⁹⁴

It can be noted from the above that even the authorities at the time regarded the Caprivi as part of Barotseland and not South West Africa. It is not surprising, therefore, as to why the inhabitants of the Caprivi chose to compare their situation with Barotseland and Bechuanaland, because they were administered as part of those territories. This aided the formation of a separate Caprivian identity.

Appended to SWAA, the Caprivi Strip 1929-1939

Even though Union Proclamation No. 196 of 1929 which transferred the control of the Caprivi Strip back to the SWAA expressed the 'expediency' of the move at that time, there was in fact nothing 'expedient' or that changed in the position of the territory-geographically or in its remoteness to the rest of SWA. The reasons for taking back the Caprivi Strip are ably expressed by the *East London Daily Dispatch* of 28 August 1929:

Another explanation, however, is that the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations only recently discovered that the Strip, with its few hundreds of Bushman inhabitants, is being administered by the wrong authorities. The Union Government, which was entrusted with the mandate over South West Africa, has, in the opinion of the Commission, evaded its full responsibility by offloading onto Bechuanaland the Caprivi Zipfel, its swamp, its fever and its wandering Bushmen. ...The Commission has therefore ordered the Strip to be restored to South West Africa and placed under the direct charge of the Administrator of that Protectorate.

⁹³Trollope, L.F.W., 'Inspection Report', 1937, p.20.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

Thus the perception of the Caprivi was still remote and unhealthy, pretty much the same as it had been seven years before when the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration took it over. It was still inhabited by 'primitive savages' as can be gleaned from the above description, and not much in the way of change was in the pipeline. Consider the following from the same news report: 'The only result will be the stationing there of a couple of South West policemen who, if they do not die of fever, will have as much game-shooting as they care to indulge in, but little else to occupy their time'. Was this what happened?

The SWAA resumed responsibility of the Eastern Caprivi Strip on 1 September 1929. Now that the territory had been incorporated into SWA (Proclamation 196 of 1929), the laws of SWA were made applicable (Proclamation 26 of 1929) though in practice nothing much changed. The Native Administration Proclamation (which followed the Union Native Administration Act of 1927) provided the means for regulating the administrative order, tribal organization, appointment and recognition of chiefs, the Administrator of South-West Africa being the upper authority and indigenous laws and customs were accepted as long as they were not repugnant to 'natural justice and morality'. The Criminal Procedure Law was to be followed, and the magisterial jurisdiction was given to the Magistrate at Grootfontein, which was a necessary formality. The appointment of Britz as a Special Justice of Peace was also another formality. Higher Jurisdiction lay with the High Court of SWA. The Arms and Ammunition Proclamation and the Game Laws, too, were applicable. The classification of the territory as outside the 'Police Zone' or 'Red Line' meant that it was officially a prohibited area where persons who did not belong there could only enter with a special permit given by the Secretary for SWA and only if there was a good reason to enter. It also meant that the ordinary police did not operate there, the policy being to rely on tribal authorities in a kind of 'Indirect Rule' system. There was a relaxation concerning people from adjacent territories coming on friendly or family visits, entries being made subject to the issue of simple 'passes'. The arrangement of the 'two Caprivi's' from the days of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration was retained for purposes of local control - the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*,

that part east of the Mashi River; and the Western Caprivi Zipfel west of the Mashi and taking also the area that lay west of the Okavango River upwards as far as Mbambi, and which by definition of the boundary in the 1890 Agreement formed part of the Anglo-German deal. A post was established at Andara to control the western area and a superintendent appointed to control the eastern portion. The above, while not conclusive, covers broadly how things were constituted during this period where in ordinary administrative matters the submission of periodic reports and direct correspondence between the Superintendent and the Secretary for SWA sufficed. Another administrative instrument which became important during this time, as will be shown below, was Inspection Tours by senior officials in Windhoek to outlying posts such as Schuckmannsburg in the Eastern Caprivi. These, it will be argued, while necessary, were not very effective partly because they were very infrequent. Annual Reports under prescribed headings were submitted for incorporation as 'appendices' in the overall report of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. In this way, the Caprivi Strip was administered as an appendix or footnote to South West Africa between 1929 and 1939.

Before handing the Caprivi over the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration had impressed on the South West Africa Administration two important issues pertaining to the Caprivi Strip, one being that in appointing a magistrate for the area the South West Africa Administration should consider an experienced person bearing in mind the troubles which resulted from ineffective German occupation, and also the importance of the Strip due to its isolation and geographical position adjoining no less than four separate governments which included that of Portuguese Angola. The other issue concerned veterinary supervision in the Strip and the danger of lung sickness arising from cattle movements from both SWA and Angola. The SWAA immediately responded to the second issue by stating that they will not provide either a veterinary officer or a stock inspector. The standpoint of the SWAA on this issue was that the quarantine of cattle and control of lung sickness was maintained principally in the interests of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Indeed, keeping the strip free of stock diseases was important to the Ngamiland cattle trade. All cattle from Angola, Maun, Tsau, Toteng and Mohebo

arrived at Kazungula (some passed through the Strip) and were inspected by the government veterinary officer (GVO) before being crossed by barge to Northern Rhodesia for use as meat on the copper mines. After these crossings, the GVO of the Protectorate would then trek into the Strip making a crossing at Mahundu and travel as far as Mohembo to examine all the cattle in the Strip. The cattle found to be infected were immediately destroyed as was those suspected to have been crossed illegally from West Caprivi which was a quarantine area into or out of which the movement of cattle was strictly prohibited under penalty of immediate destruction of cattle without compensation. In this way, the introduction of cattle diseases from outside was suppressed. The SWAA's interpretation of this issue as in the interest only of Bechuanaland Protectorate was also misplaced and unfortunate, for report after report mentions the lack of a market for the disposal of surplus cattle from the Strip because of a lack of veterinary control. The Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration, seeing that from their viewpoint the issue of veterinary control was the most important aspect of the change of administration, offered that its veterinary officer stationed at Kazungula should pay two annual visits, and such further visits as might be necessary, to the Strip to inspect cattle. The SWAA was asked to pay for the travelling expenses thus incurred. This suggestion was gracefully accepted by the SWAA and Mr. Webb, then GVO at Kazungula, paid visits to the Strip in 1930 and 1932, the year in which his services were terminated. What is more, Mr. Webb agreed to one of his right-hand men going over to the Caprivi service to assist the new administration, particularly in matters related to stock control and employment of local tribesmen in the service. That person was Songeya (Songiya) Longone Chaka, briefly described in 1929 as follows:

Chaka, 6'5, about 55 years of age, had, after an adventurous career, settled in the Strip some years ago. A Zulu of the royal house, he was alleged to have fled on the murder of his father and was a man whom the Bechuanaland authorities considered could be implicitly trusted and would be suitable for posting on the Mashi River with a Native Constable under him.⁹⁵

Advice to appoint an experienced magistrate in the Caprivi Strip was not followed. Instead Mr. W.S. Chadwick was appointed. His qualifications are not known, apart from

⁹⁵In Kruger 1984.

the fact that he was a Native Affairs official and a writer of big game hunting stories. Judging from the afore-mentioned article from the *East London Daily Dispatch* on hunting, he had the 'right credentials' for the Caprivi. It appears, though, that his appointment was temporary. In fact, he was sent there before the hand-over, probably to ascertain the situation on the ground before hand over. He took up his position, only to be withdrawn or resign and was replaced by E.P. Brittz of the SWA Police, whom the locals called 'Namatama' (one with big cheeks), and was assisted for a short time by Constable Bignaut. For the west, Sergeant Wright was in charge. The instructions given to Namatama (Brittz) when he was posted to Schuckmannsburg related to the control of movement of stock; to prohibit hunting especially of species classified as 'royal game', these being elephant, giraffe, rhino and hippo; restriction on the sale and supply of arms and ammunition; and the control of the issue of trading licenses and the hire of government land. He was however cautioned not to interfere with the authority of the chiefs and their customs more than was absolutely necessary.

One of the very first tasks which Namatama (Brittz) accomplished in 1931 was the registration of firearms. This was necessary mainly for two purposes, firstly to determine the extent to which the people were armed as a control measure in case of an uprising, and, secondly, for observing the Game Laws. It was only those with registered firearms who were allowed to buy ammunition and even then, only from the superintendent. This was on top of the above provision of not killing royal game. The following tabulation indicates the number and make of firearms in the Caprivi in 1931, of course with provision made for those who did not care to register their firearms:⁹⁶

⁹⁶Kruger: 1984, p.7.

Rifle	Masubia	Mafwe	Totals
Martini/Henry	71	22	93
Lee-Met fords or Lee-Enfield	28	3	31
Muzzle-loaders	38	208	246
Shotguns	47	2	49
Other	5	2	7
Total	189	237	426

Table 4: Table showing number of firearms owned by tribesmen in Eastern Caprivi in 1931.

The above ethnic classification is what was used at the time, therefore the Mafwe column includes those firearms owned by Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Totela, Mbalangwe and other groups then embedded in that broad identity. It can be noted from the above diagram that a greater proportion of what might be regarded as the more modern firearms of the time were in the hands of the Masubia living in the east, whereas the Mafwe and associated people in the west had mostly muzzle-loaders - tower-muskets of American manufacture. A possible explanation was that most of the arms especially owned by the Masubia were acquired during the Bechuanaland period, during which time an ex-Sergeant Legge had a license to deal in arms and ammunition on Impalila Island. The records are silent on how these firearms of American origin were acquired, surprisingly enough, in high numbers, considering that it was only in 1909 that Streitwolf (Kambungu or Katara matunga) reported that 'these natives are practically unarmed', or Seiner's report (1905) that only 'five chiefs are in possession of firearms'. Could it be that some of these firearms were relics left by traders and hunters?

The significance of the variations in type of firearm by ethnic group is to show the period of acquisition. The Mafwe had a large number of muzzle-loaders suggestive of an earlier period while the Subiya had more .303s and shotguns suggestive of later acquisition, which is during the Bechuanaland administration period. Also, it shows that the Subiya had proximity to trade routes of the time. The issue of strict observance of no hunting regulations imposed in the Caprivi Strip was a continuous source of discord between the

administration and the inhabitants,⁹⁷ particularly since in neighbouring territories the same was not done. On the one hand, the inhabitants felt that they were deprived of a source of livelihood, and also income since skins and hides fetched good money in Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland. Whereas the authorities restricted the amount of ammunition sold per annum as a control measure, this did not deter the inhabitants who turned instead to widespread use of snares as a form of catching animals. The chiefs were not happy with this either, even though there was a provision made for them to shoot two hippos for the pot per annum. The problem was partly compounded by the fact that officials especially from the Union hunted for sport in the Caprivi and were not subject to these restrictions.⁹⁸ Elephants and hippos were also pests which destroyed people's gardens while they were not allowed to be killed. As will be shown below and also in Chapter Seven, the inhabitants accused the administration of protecting the lives of wild animals more than they cared about the people over whom they govern.

While on this issue, it is perhaps appropriate to report on the two related incidences between Namatama (Brittz) and Chief Simataa Mamili of the Bafwe (Bayei). On 15 March 1937 Chief Simataa Mamili defied procedure (perhaps he might have lost patience with Namatama) and wrote directly to the Secretary for SWA requesting the issue of a larger allowance of ammunition and for permission to shoot elephants when they destroyed gardens. The response from Windhoek which was sent to the superintendent was that the matter was receiving attention and that Chief Mamili should be told to desist from writing straight to Windhoek but rather through the superintendent. It is not known whether Namatama forwarded this response to the chief. Instead one finds a letter the chief wrote to Namatama (Brittz), dated 9 May 1937:

I am very sorry for the letter I received from the Secretary for SWA. You prevented it to come to me. Why? I want you to send it here so that I can hear how they did write to me...P.S. If you will

⁹⁷ It was one of the reasons for the removal of Chief Simataa Mamili from his throne apparently because he hunted without permission from the authorities. At the Odendaal Commission public hearings the people complained that the government was more interested in preserving wild animals than it was in their welfare and demanded that it withdraw from eastern Caprivi.

⁹⁸ Kruger [1984: 10] reports of a ministerial party accorded hunting facilities by Pretoria that went to excess, even unto the shooting of a giraffe, classified as royal game, during this period that it did not please.

not send it here I am going to write to Secretary SWA Windhoek again.⁹⁹

Another incidence, which occurred immediately following the above, pertained to the permit to kill only two hippos per annum. On 5 April 1937 Chief Simataa Mamili wrote to the Superintendent intimating that he had shot one hippo and asked for a pass to take the hide to Sesheke (Northern Rhodesia) to sell. The pass was duly given. Subsequently Brittz (Namatama) received information that Chief Mamili had taken more than one hide to Sesheke. On 23 April 1937 the Superintendent wrote to the Chief asking him to state how many hippos he had shot and noting that the matter was very serious. Initially no reply was received upon which the Superintendent dispatched a reminder. To this an evasive reply was given and on 5 May 1937 the Superintendent wrote again pointing that his question had not been answered and instructed Chief Mamili to come to Katima Mulilo for interrogation. The Chief answered back on 9 May 1937, demanding: 'if you have heard that I am a thief you must also tell me...I also need not to be worried by the case which I do not know.'. When the Superintendent persisted in instructing the Chief to come to Katima Mulilo and that the question was still not answered, the Chief replied that he would come the next week to talk about it. But he never came to Katima Mulilo and never informed the Superintendent how many hippos he had killed. What became of Chief Mamili (his removal from the throne and subsequent banishment) is discussed in Chapter Four. The above should however not be interpreted merely as disregard of authority but deep seated resentment and defiance of colonial rule. It was a way, limited as it might have been, of showing that the Chief and indeed his people, did not approve of the policies under which they were governed. They perceived these policies as discriminatory and intended to impoverish them further. They could not sell their excess cattle for there was no market; they tilled the fields only for elephants and hippos to destroy these; wild animals which they were not allowed to hunt to supplement their diet as before.

Chief Simataa Mamili was not the first to show his displeasure with the administrative set-up in the Eastern Caprivi. Chief Chikamatondo had earlier written a letter on behalf of

⁹⁹Trollope 1937, p. 10.

the Masubia to the Chief Native Commissioner for SWA in Windhoek requesting the removal of Superintendent Brittz (Namatama) from the Caprivi. According to a response from the Chief Native Commissioner addressed to Chief Chikamatondo (dated 18 May 1938), the Masubia accused Brittz, among others, of lowering the selling price of mealies from 10/- to 3/- per bag; of keeping them in the dark as to what was happening to the tax money being collected from them since there was no improvement in schools and no provision for shops; and lastly, that he threatened them with what happened to Chief Ipumbu would also happen to them if they opposed the administration.¹⁰⁰ Chief Chikamatondo and his people suggested that the Northern Rhodesian system of leaving an officer in charge of an area for a short time only was the better course. It took a long time for the Masubia to get their response because the Administration in Windhoek was finalizing plans for the Additional Native Commissioner for SWA to undertake an inspection tour of the Caprivi Strip in 1937. One of the purposes of his tour was to investigate the Masubia complaints, which he duly reported on in his 1938 Report. Even though this official reported that the Masubia were ‘...undoubtedly...antagonistic towards Sergeant Brittz...’, and recognized the administration's weaknesses, he advised against fulfilling the demand for Namatama (Britz)'s transfer, maintaining: ‘I am, therefore, quite unable to support the request for Sgt. Britz's transfer. To do so now, even on other grounds than those advanced by the natives, would be creating a most undesirable precedent as such action would undoubtedly be misinterpreted as a pandering to their desires.’¹⁰¹ So Namatama was not transferred, despite all the complaints - as to forbid the people from concluding that the administration was weak if it listened to their demands.

Taxation was introduced in the Caprivi Strip in 1930 (Government Notice 160/1930), for the first time by written law. Each male between 18 and 65 years of age were required to pay 5/- per annum as a contribution to the Tribal Trust Fund, the accumulated moneys to be used for the benefit of the respective tribes (Bafwe-Bayei and Masubia). Although it

¹⁰⁰Chief Ipumbu ya Tshilongo (see Chapter Seven).

¹⁰¹Trollope 1937: p. 15.

may appear that this was the first tribal levy, it was not. Such a limited definition of tribal levy does not take cognizance of the fact that tribal law provided and had always required tribesmen to contribute to the needs of the chief and the Kuta (court) by means of service or produce of the fields or of the hunt. It is the strong view here that the introduction of a tribal levy by the Administration succeeded with some ease because it was more or less modelled along the lines of the traditional tribal levy structure already existent in the Caprivi Strip. In fact, it is the strong belief that this same was applied during the German and Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration in the Caprivi where no taxes were collected from the inhabitants and, in return, were expected to render services to government work at no cost whenever required to do so. A variety of examples abound, such as communities providing paddlers for the barge, guides from one village to the next whenever the Superintendent was travelling, or the clearing and widening of roads from one village to the next. This is contrary to what was happening in neighbouring territories at the time where inhabitants were required to pay a hut tax, and this money was, in turn, used to pay for services provided to the administration.

Even with the introduction of the modern tribal levy, the inhabitants did not consider this as an exemption from the traditional levy. They were still expected, and did, to participate in doing work at tribal headquarters and continued to bring food, which was not an amount expected to be unduly burdensome. Because of the depression, the two tribes were exempted from payment of the levy in the years 1933 (Government Notice 128/1933), 1934 (Government Notice 78/1934), 1937 (Government Notice 180/1937) and 1938 (Government Notice 185/1938). Commenting on the 1936 tax collections, Trollope was satisfied: 'I checked these (Trust Fund Stamps)...[the] cash collections for last year [vide Annual Report] shows an average payment of 34% of the total population, a very satisfactory position [Ovamboland percentage 5%, excluding corn payments].'¹⁰² Police patrols inspected receipts for defaulters, and where they did not pay, defaulters were dealt with summarily by being ordered to work on such work of public importance such as aerodromes or roads when and where necessary. The introduction of taxation

¹⁰²Trollope, 1938: *Ibid.*, 6.

should also be viewed as a form of administrative control. The two chiefs each received annual allowances of £20 from the Tribal Funds in the form of a salary. This reduced them to being government employees. As for the general inhabitants, it put them at the mercy of being forced into rendering free service to government as they could not afford to pay the required annual amount. Secondly, it also put them at the mercy of being abused by Tax Collectors who were administration employees. The Native Tax Collectors usually took cattle to the value of several times more than the amount of tax. They then took the cattle to the stores, sold them and pocketed the balance. In most instances villagers feared retribution and never reported this to the authorities thus leaving tax collectors who overcharged unpunished.

Schools remained under the SDA Mission. Tuition was based on the Barotseland system, and Northern Rhodesia was kind enough to allow their Inspector of Schools for Barotseland to take care of the Caprivi schools also. The mission was unable to cope and a marked decline was recorded. The decline was mainly in terms of facilities such as classrooms which were of a temporary nature and required constant repairs. Furthermore, because of the absence of a government financial subsidy, the mission was unable to attract and retain suitably qualified teachers. There were no health facilities in the Strip at this time.

A dreaded lung sickness struck the Caprivi Strip in 1937. More than a thousand cattle were destroyed in an attempt to render the area non-infectious and the remainder were cordoned off and in due time inoculated with serum obtained by air from Kabete in Kenya where it was reportedly developed.¹⁰³ This was an expensive exercise. The SWAA sent veterinarian Dr. Schmidt to take charge of the campaign under the guidance of Onderstepoort in the Union and with the collaboration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Veterinary Service. The campaign would not have succeeded were it not for the participation of the South African Air Force (SAAF). The Kabete vaccine had a short life span and this necessitated sending it by air at arranged intervals, firstly to Livingstone by scheduled air service, then by the SAAF to landing strips hastily prepared at scattered

¹⁰³Kruger 1984: p. 15.

places in the Caprivi Strip. According to Robert Nchindo, who was on the staff establishment of Superintendent Brittz (Namatama) at the time, the landing strips made for the Air Force pilots to land their small aircrafts carrying the vaccine were found, among other places, at Singalamwe, Lizauli, Sikanjabuka, Kalimbeza, Mwauluka, Kabbe, Kasenu.¹⁰⁴ With Robert Nchindo, this would be inconclusive account if no mention was made of those from the Caprivi who served the administration during this time in various capacities, becoming the very first 'public service' in the territory. The following table was drawn in 1937 by Trollope (p.4):

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointed</u>	<u>Emoluments</u>
Native Constable	Songiya Chaka (Longone)	1.12.1929	\$75 p.a & \$5 uniform
N/Constable Labourer	Matali Milinga	1.5.1930	\$24 p.a & free uniform
do.	Robert Nchindo	1.2.1935	\$18 p.a do.
do.	Mumbone Mukendwa	1.12.1935	\$18 p.a do.
do.	Silumbu Manwela	1.6.1937	\$18 p.a do.
do.	Mubita Ntelamo	Probationer	\$18 p.a do.
Herdboy	Muyongo Mamili	1.5.1936	15/-p/month (inclusive)

Table 5: Table showing the Caprivi public service employees in 1937.

Others, such as Mubyana Simon Simalumba and Mubita Sakutiya followed. The unsatisfactory designation of Native Constable/Labourer given to these men was apparently to distinguish them from the Native Constables of the SWA Police. There was a difference, as Trollope found out, in the salary structure applied in the Caprivi Strip. In fact, the workers complained in regard to their pay to him. While Trollope conceded that 30s.0d per month (10s,0d was *in lieu* of rations) plus free uniform was a fair wage, this was only when compared with the predominant wages in the vicinity at the time. It was revealed, however, that the Caprivi wages were much lower than that which was paid to the majority of government 'boys' in Ovamboland. Once again, one sees the influence of neighbouring territories on what went on in the Caprivi. To rehearse the main argument in this chapter, the colonial administrative construction of the Caprivi was dictated frequently by events and happenings in neighbouring territories than in greater SWA, in a

¹⁰⁴In Kruger, 1984, p. 15.

sense, the territory was more aligned administratively to Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate.

It should also be recorded that the administrative centre shifted from Schuckmannsburg to Katima Mulilo during this time. Sergeant Brittz (Namatama) reported the date of the opening of the 'New Station Katima Mulilo as 28 January 1935.' The centre was less than 4 miles from the famous Katima Mulilo Rapids which featured prominently in the 1880s-1890s in the determinations of the Anglo-German Treaty. The actual spot is easily identified by the prominent Baobab tree, known as Nakabunze, to the Masubia, who assert it to have been the residence for a time of one of their early chiefs', Kruger records.¹⁰⁵ Tradition has it that the Katima Mulilo,¹⁰⁶ (the name translates as 'tima mulilo or quench the fire'), was used long before to describe the experiences of canoe men who had to 'shoot' the fast-flowing rapids; At low water especially a particular channel towards the left bank had to be negotiated on the route down.. This channel contains a particularly mean rock onto which canoes were always swept by the powerful waters unless expert care was taken. The unwary were capsized by the impact and the firebrand that they always carried from spot to spot, on going ashore to get their fires lighted (as matches were not available), were extinguished.

The starting point to a fair assessment of the administration of the eastern Caprivi Strip between 1929 and 1939 should be the inspection reports. As is stated above, inspection tours became an important administrative tool during this period, but how many visits, in fact, occurred? What verdict do reports which resulted from inspection tours tell us? Surprisingly, the most critical voice regarding the poor administrative set-up in the Caprivi Strip is to be found in two inspection reports, one by Trollope (1938) and another by Eric Louw (1939). That both reports come at the end of the period under review is,

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ In a letter of 14 April 1930, from the District Commissioner of Sesheke to the Secretary for Native Affairs at Livingstone, the former had it that 'Katima Mulilo' referred only to a small side stream between an island named Lusibi and the Northern Rhodesia bank, that the Rapids should properly have been named 'Muchilansimba', meaning the tail of the Sipa Cat (Genet). He claims to have been given that information by Induna (Headman) Mukengami, who occasionally visited the Caprivi from his nearby Northern Rhodesian village and was killed by a buffalo.

however, not surprising. At the time of his tour of the Caprivi Strip Leslie French Trollope was the South West Africa Administration's Additional Native Commissioner for the northern territories, including the Caprivi. What he says in the report should be viewed from this perspective. He begins his criticism by endorsing Sergeant Brittz (Namatama) and the inhabitants' request for more frequent visits by senior officials to the area. During the period under review two inspection visits took place. The first was by Major du Preez in 1929, shortly before the South West Africa Administration took control of the Strip - although Mr. H.P. Smit paid a fleeting visit to Schuckmannsburg (three hours only) in 1931. The second and last was the 1937 visit. It is from the report on this visit that I am quoting. This meant that there was a gap of nine years without any official of significant standing visiting the Caprivi. Two sets of criticisms can be gleaned from the reports, one set leveled against the Administration, and the other, against Sgt. Brittz. With regard to the Administration, Trollope concluded:¹⁰⁷

To the natives themselves the Government at Windhoek is a very nebulous abstraction. Our administration in the Strip is largely a negative one - the orders are mainly to what is 'verboden' and surveillance to see that those orders are observed. The natives gradually come to the conclusion that these restrictions are all Sgt. Brittz's own responsibility with the result that he is placed in a very invidious position which more frequent visits of senior officials would help to alleviate.

He continued (p.21): 'When we took over control from Bechuanaland most of the stores closed down [none left in 1937], in pursuance of our policy of game preservation...we restricted the amount of ammunition that the natives could buy and forbade the purchase of any fresh firearms. An indirect result of our assumption of control was the immediate collapse of the market for cattle. These had previously been sold through Bechuanaland but this avenue was closed to us as we had no veterinary control. So that actually our Administration cannot appear in too favourable a light to the natives. The blunt fact is that our control of this small territory, remote from SWA to which it is connected by a 20-mile wide elongated strip of desert, and almost completely surrounded as it is by other administrations, is wholly artificial. It is politically anomalous, economically unsound

¹⁰⁷ Trollope, 1938, p. 3

and administratively well-nigh impracticable.’

Trollope made two suggestions to remedy the situation: the first was that besides more frequent visits, say once every two years, to the Strip, he recommended that three or four ‘natives’ from there should pay a visit every other year to pay their respects to the Administrator and Chief Native Commissioner at Windhoek. Such ‘natives’ could proceed at no expense as far as Kachikau in Bechuanaland and then board a lorry proceeding to Gobabis. The cost would consist of the lorry fares, train from Gobabis, and a small subsistence allowance of 1s.0d per day, all met from the Trust Funds. The idea was an excellent one because it could have exposed the inhabitants of the territory to what was happening in greater SWA. It is not difficult to guess why it was never implemented. Its principle was anyway misplaced, for it was ridiculous to suggest that people travel all the way from the Caprivi Strip only to pay respects to an ‘Administrator’ of a Government which had taken so much away from them and was doing nothing to improve their lot. All this was to be on the visitor’s expense, from Trust Funds earmarked for developing the areas in the Caprivi. Secondly, and perhaps his most sensible suggestion, was:

Insofar as the Eastern Caprivi is concerned, to avoid the taunt of the Constitution Commission’s criticism of our general native policy would necessitate a permanent minimum staff of an administrative official (Native or Assistant Native Commissioner), a veterinary officer (or stock inspector) and a doctor -and complementary native staff. All this for about 9, 000 people. These services cannot be combined with other areas owing to the geographical position. The expenditure involved in administration would be irrecoverable directly or indirectly. The Strip is no labour source for us nor an outlet for our products.’

At least this was one suggestion from Trollope which was implemented in part in August 1939, when the SWAA offloaded the Eastern Caprivi Strip onto the Union Department of Native Affairs. Kangumu (2000) argues that in fact it was not for geographical remoteness that the SWAA requested to be relieved of the administration of the Caprivi Strip but rather the failure to implement the above suggestions, the expense of the just completed (1937) expensive inoculation campaign in the territory, and on the Union’s

part, the strategic importance of the Strip on the verge of the outbreak of World War II.¹⁰⁸ In regard to Sgt. Brittz, Trollope made the following two observations about him. He stated (p. 15) that Brittz had as a strength the attribute of being a 'disciplinarian, a trifle insistent on rules and regulations' and was a man quick to show his displeasure to any one who forgot what is expected of him. While conceding that absolute firmness was essential, Trollope considered this again to be Sgt. Brittz's weak point. In a setting based on indirect rule, Trollope argued, a further quality was essential - the confidence of the chiefs and people. That certainly Sgt. Brittz did not possess, so he might have been looked at with respect as a representative of a distant Administration, and not as the people's counsellor and confidant.

The other inspection report which makes interesting reading was compiled by E.W. Louw, then the Union's Chief Native Commissioner for Northern Areas. He undertook an inspection tour of the Eastern Caprivi in 1939, shortly before Pretoria took over control of the territory. Louw concurs with the above conclusion that the South West Africa Administration was prompted to get rid 'of the incubus of the Caprivi by a growing anxiety over its neglect of its responsibilities for the welfare of its people to the League of Nations, to which body it is under obligation to report annually'.¹⁰⁹ He emphasizes: 'Apart from the cost of administration ...and the cost for inoculation which it was obliged to pay in connection with outbreaks of lung-sickness, the South West African Administration has done next to nothing for the natives during the ten years it has administered the territory'.¹¹⁰ As to the administration of the territory between 1929 and 1939, Louw explains:

There is little doubt in my mind that the Administration was anxious not to incur any expense in the control of the territory and left the superintendent to rely on his own initiative to establish what measure of control he could (pp.16-17). It was evidently intended, as with the Instructions in 1932

¹⁰⁸ 'Useful Bantustan'. Kangumu, B., 'Forgotten Corner of Namibia', (MA, UCT: 2000).

¹⁰⁹ E.W. Louw, 1939:32.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

on which control is based, to maintain a status quo. (pp.17-18). They [the measures] take no account of human development, and should now be expanded to meet the changing circumstances of the population (p.4).

While appreciating Sgt. Brittz's work of ten years which he achieved alone and single-handedly under difficult circumstances with practically no assistance from his headquarters in Windhoek, Louw is critical of the system of Administration:

Appreciation of his work need not, however, hide the obvious shortcomings of his system of administration and control. It is, in fact, a weak system. Its efficiency depends on two factors, firstly the man himself, and secondly, the fear of those ruled of his punishments. The danger to any administration which is based on the character of one outstanding individual lies in this that a break-down in the administration immediately follows upon his removal at any time or through any cause. This is obvious. The people do not like the superintendent. He himself says candidly that it is so, so that his position becomes difficult as the people begin to find ways of obviating his orders without being discovered (p.17).

What needed to be done was the following:

What is now virtually a dictatorship will no longer meet the case and will needs be replaced by more up-to-date methods of administration, which will involve a greater cost than has hitherto been the case (p.19).

CHAPTER FOUR

COLONIAL ADMINISTRATIVE IDENTITY (CONTINUED)

A BANTU RESERVE AND BANTUSTAN, 1939-1982

A Bantu Reserve, 1939 -1960.

The question of the control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* being taken over by the Union Native Affairs Department was first discussed in Cape Town between the Administrator of SWA and the Prime Minister of the Union, General Hertzog; and was confirmed by a minute dated 4 March 1938 from the Administrator to the Prime Minister.¹ It is argued above that the SWAA chose to off-load a financial burden that was the ECZ onto the Union Native Affairs Department, not for geographical remoteness, because, as D.L. Smit insisted: ‘the Caprivi strip is even more remote from the Union than from Windhoek’², but an inability to implement recommendations made by Trollope regarding the future control of the ECZ, which were deemed to be expensive and unjustified for a small population.

On the Union's side, visionaries saw an opportunity to bring under direct Union control an area of high strategic importance, this on the verge of World War II. This section will answer the question as to whether there was a transition in administrative systems between the preceding periods and after the Union took over control. The two officials who authored the critical reports discussed above were both intimately involved in the affairs of the ECZ after the transfer, one as Native Commissioner/Magistrate and the other as Chief Native Commissioner responsible for Northern Territories. What did they change *in lieu* of the dictatorship which they inherited from Namatama (Brittz) of the SWAA? As the sub-heading indicates, nothing much changed, the area was administered just as another SA Bantu Reserve, except that this one was situated in central Africa. Of

¹Letter from Acting Secretary for SWA to Secretary to the Prime Minister dated 11 May 1938.

²In a letter dated 22 June 1938 to Mr. Courtney-Clarke of the SWAA; see also Kangumu, 2000: 15, for an expansion of this argument.

particular focus in this section would be the provision of education and health services, which I argue, the administration offloaded as well to missionaries. The section will begin by briefly highlighting the negative perceptions of the land and its people and their impact on the evolution of the colonial administrative identity during this time.

Perceptions of Land and People

The perceptions of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel land and people over time can be summarized as this: swamps, fever and wondering Bushmen. On the one hand, the land was classified as fertile and rich in game, fruit and fish and therefore able to provide for every need of its inhabitants. It was spacious, for the few inhabitants could roam from one corner to the other, in search of food or security in times of looming danger. Droughts and famines were unknown. On the other hand, however, the Europeans considered it a useless piece of land, for it did not have mineral resources such as diamonds and copper, nor, with its few inhabitants, was it a labour reservoir or even an outlet for products. While prospects for agriculture, especially cattle ranching, were good, this was not encouraged. The area was classified as not only remote, but also unhealthy for European settlement. Unlike in other territories where there was massive resettlement of whites, this was discouraged in the ECZ. Because malaria and black water were rife this impacted on the selection of administrative officials. For example, we find this entry about Sgt. Brittz in one letter, urging for his absorption into Union Administration from the SWAA and his retention in the administrative structures of the ECZ: "Sergt. Brittz has been there for nine years and has not contracted these diseases - which seems to indicate that he has a natural resistance thereto."³ The ECZ administrative station was considered a difficult assignment to be posted to. This was mainly because of its isolation and distance from Windhoek and its geographical situation of being surrounded by different colonial administrations, where 'natives' enjoyed privileges much more generous than those offered in the ECZ; Furthermore, all eager to observe and point out any diversions or shortcomings in Native Policy and to use these when arguing for the

³From Trollope to the Chief Native Commissioner, dated 21 November 1938.

impropriety of administering the territory either from South West Africa or the Union. Officials to be posted to the ECZ were not considered unless married, experienced, and also showing resilience against diseases particularly malaria. It was this latter perception of the land as unhealthy which led to its declaration and subsequent administration as a Bantu Reserve, where the 'natives', it was presumed, would be happy to live under their own laws and customs and where 'detrribalization' should be kept to a minimal level. This was tantamount to maintaining a *status quo* which was, in all respects, the construction of isolation and impoverishment as an administrative mechanism.

The perceptions become more negative when referring to the inhabitants of the ECZ. They are referred throughout in the colonial ethnographic and historical literature, perfected by colonial administrators, as Barotse or to use a more recent label, of Lozi origin. The basis for such claims is not difficult to appreciate since the very literature concludes, rightly so, that the inhabitants of the Caprivi, were for a long time subjugated by the Barotse, and were thus part of the Lozi Kingdom. However, being thus subjugated does not make them 'Lozi'. As late as 2003 Flint unconvincingly argued that it was only with the advent of German rule in 1909, citing incidents such as the Masubiya Cattle Case that according to him served as catalysts in the process whereby people lost their 'Loziness', that group identities such as Subia, Yeyi and Mbukushu 'resurfaced' taking precedence over 'Loziness'. These are misplaced assertions regarding identities in the history of the ECZ. There is no evidence to suggest that at any point in their history people shed away their identities for those of their masters. Flint was over-concerned with constructing a Lozi identity in the Caprivi and in the process put undue emphasis on 'citizenship' and 'subjectivity' as aspects of state-building but totally ignored another equally vital aspect of state-building, which is resistance - how did the colonial subjects respond to the expansion of the Lozi state? It leaves much to be desired for if one writes about the early history of the Caprivi and neglects resistance, trickery and betrayal as part of conquest, for this was a period of endless feuding. The result of this denial of identities in the Caprivi led to a paternal benevolence towards them, especially the Masubia, being referred to as 'Lewanika's children'.⁴ The two reports which preceded the Union take over

⁴Letter from Trollope to Eldridge, District Commissioner of Sesheke, dated 30 July 1952.

of control of the ECZ were full of negative descriptions of the inhabitants and their mode of life. Some perceptions are drawn from colonial officials serving during this time. Trollope, for example, wrote in his 1940 (p. 11) Annual Report:

The people are, with natural exceptions, neither prepossessing nor attractive. As far as money is concerned, they are very poor...Except for the desire to adopt European clothing, and a very superficial desire for very superficial education, the Natives show no tendency to abandon their own customs.

In an earlier report (1938), Trollope concluded the following about the inhabitants of the Caprivi: 'Although we refer to the Strip as being inhabited by the Mafue and Basubia, those tribes are not really very distinct nor have they any very real background of tradition. They were vassals and hangers-on of other tribes - mainly the Barotse - and have little actual tribal organization or authority,...They never have had, therefore, any real separate existence.' The same negative perception is reproduced by Trollope's Assistant, Kruger, in his 1940 Report (pp. 11-12) after a tour of Mafwe areas: 'My opinion is that these people need very firm guidance. Until comparatively recently they were a subject tribe and consequently have no background. Their laws and customs are uncertain and I incline to the view that a written code of laws would be a good thing. They live in a land of plenty which state has, in their case, brought about a weak fibre.'

It is not surprising that Kruger reproduces his senior's negative perception. In fact he admits to inadvertently using some of the conclusions expressed by Trollope in their conversations (p.12), so that what he writes should not be interpreted as what he observed during his tour but the 'official' applied to local conditions. Another addition that can be made is from the Louw Report (1939), Louw being a Union Chief Native Affairs Commissioner who was sent to the ECZ to accept the transfer of control. He was more concerned with the physical appearances of the inhabitants, which he used to distinguish and condone the difference between Mafwe/Bayeyi and Basubia. He wrote (p. 8):

'The Masubia people appear to be more industrious and progressive of the two tribes. The men generally were clothed in dungaree shirts and loin cloths or khaki shorts. They appeared to be

cleaner and more intelligent than the Mafwe. The Mafwe were dressed mostly in loincloths only, except for the thick coating of dust over their bodies which, judging by the particularly strong and overpowering odour they carry with them, must have been unrelieved of any acquaintance with water or other cleansing element over a considerable period. The physique of the men, more especially the Mafwe, was in many cases strikingly good and showing little signs of malnutrition.'

The above section serves to show that the Union take over was preceded by negative perceptions of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel land and people, and therefore the resultant administrative set-up that followed was a product of such perceptions. In short, the colonial administrative identity during this time was geared for a primitive people, who should not be 'detrribalized' because although they were poor and living in an unhealthy place, they were content in their 'Black man's diet'. Now, how was the Bantu Reserve administered?

A place of natural beauty, the ECZ Bantu Reserve

The transfer of control of the ECZ to the Union Department of Native Affairs received a fair share of attention from the international community. The transfer was viewed mainly as 'mysterious', with an influential Italian newspaper *Giornale d'Italia* of 2 August 1939 describing it as an annexation, while the *Rand Daily Mail* of the same date viewed it as illegal. *The Star* (2 August 1939) headlined its article 'Caprivi Strip mystery' in which it argued that the official explanation that the takeover was a matter of administrative expediency was not convincing but added that there was no satisfactory reason which could be visualized at the time. While the British attitude was that the issue was entirely a matter for the Union Government and indications were that Britain, on whose behalf the Union was administering the Mandate, was not informed of the planned transfer, the view expressed in Europe was that Britain had a hand in the affair. *Giornale d'Italia* compared the transfer of the control of the ECZ to Pretoria to the 'heinous barter concluded by France to the disadvantage of Syria', all in the frame of the British Commonwealth. In Germany the transfer was seen as "worse than the bartering away of the Sanjak of

Alexandretta by France, which was also done at the request of Great Britain'.⁵ For Germany the transfer represented a challenge to her colonial rights which were robbed from her after World War I, and required a demand for their return.

Although the Permanent Mandates Commission was informed of the intended transfer in early 1939, its reply was in the affirmative: 'The administrative arrangement contemplated calls for no observation on its part provided all the provisions of the mandate are properly applied in the eastern portion of the Caprivi Zipfel'.⁶ In its 1939 Annual Report, the League of Nations expressed the hope that with the transfer 'the Government will be able to comply more fully with the terms of the Mandate by devoting more attention to the welfare of the Native population.'⁷ By Union Proclamation No. 147 of 1939 the Eastern Caprivi Strip was transferred⁸ to the Union Department of Native Affairs as of 1 August 1939. Following the transfer Proclamation 243 of 1939 constituted the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* as a magisterial district. By Government Notice 1607 of 1939 a Bantu Affairs Commissioner's Court was established while Government Notice No. 1210 of 1940 provided for the declaration of the territory as a Nature/Bantu Reserve. This meant that the disposition of land to others than the inhabitants of the ECZ could only take place with specific consent of the Union Parliament.

⁵*Rand Daily Mail*, 2 August 1939.

⁶Permanent Mandates Commission, Session XXXVI, pp. 280-281.

⁷U.G. 30 - 1940, p. 175, in Pretorius 1975: 46.

⁸ With the transfer, the SWAA handed all files pertaining to the Eastern Caprivi Strip to the Union Native Affairs Department. The following files were handed over in 1939: A. 503/1 (Administration); A. 503/2 (Forests); A. 503/3 (Game); A. 503/4 (Reports); A.503/5 (Boundaries-I & II); A. 503/6 (Transport); A.503/7 (Trading); A.503/8 (Education); A.503/9 (Missions); A. 503/10 (Estimates); A.503/11 (Trust Funds); A. 503/12 (Lease of Crown Lands); A. 503/13 (Native Affairs); A. 503/14 (Buildings); A.503/15 (Prospecting); A. 503/16 (Health matters-general); A. 503/17 (Mining Law); A. 503/18 (Implements); A. 503/19 (Lions-destruction of); A. 503/20 (Permits to enter); A. 503/21 (Annual visit of leading Natives to Windhoek); A. 503/22 (Native Staff); A. 503/23 (Barotse Privileges); A. 503/24 (Return of Kaluwe E.F. Lewanika to Caprivi Zipfel); A. 215/3/20 (Stocktaking); A. 28/108 (Law Books); A. 470/18 (Stock diseases); A. 521/63 (Native Labor); A. 84/12/2 (Customs); A. 342/19 (Medical work); A. 413/8 (Drought); A. 326/21 (Malaria); A. 460/23 (Native Chiefs and Headmen); A. 531/23 (Locusts); A. 502/37 (Movement of stock); A. 532/24 (Cash Accounts); A. 376/25 (Roads); A. 9/27 (Arms and ammunition). These files, kept mainly by the SA National Archives in Pretoria, were only returned to the National Archives of independent Namibia in 2005/2006 and can now be accessed from there. In the past, one had to travel to Pretoria to access records concerning the Caprivi Identity.

On 25 October 1939, Major Leslie French W. Trollope⁹ assumed duty as Magistrate and Native Commissioner with Mr. C.E. Kruger as his assistant in both capacities. The two were given written instructions as a basis for administration. These were: to foster the operation of 'native' institutions and to endeavor to improve them and make them an effective instrument of Government; to combat witchcraft; to control stock diseases; to preserve the indigenous fauna; and to pay particular attention to the promotion of the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants. These officials, in addition to the functions ordinarily required of Native Commissioners and Magistrates, became the heads of the police in the area and had to perform the functions of a district surgeon and of a veterinary officer. In short, they acted as the fathers of the people and were expected to look after their every need. The incorporation of tribal chiefs into the administrative system during this time is best described by Kruger¹⁰:

The tribal set-up and its chieftainships were accepted and confirmed as the basis for local government and arrangement, interference with that order having been insignificant (except for elimination of features against natural justice or morality) and development taking a natural, even and accepted course, under local supervision, lightly applied, of one government officer.

Thus Pretoria's takeover changed nothing in regard to local government in the territory. The divide between the Mafwe (Bayeyi) under Chief Mamili and the Basubia under their chief, Chikamatondo dating back to the German period was adopted. Two issues are important to record in this arrangement. Firstly, it is often remarked, lightly though and in the form of an achievement, that the Mafwe consists within its ranks of subordinate groups such as Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Totela and small bands of Barakwengo (San). The literature is silent on why the Germans decided to group these identities under Mafwe, except to state that they were leaderless at the time and that they expressed their consent to be placed under Chief Mamili. But the Masubia did not have a leader too within Caprivi at this time. It is remarked elsewhere that instead of viewing this as a great German achievement, on the local level, it entailed a loss of identities the consequences

⁹ The Masubia nicknamed him "Makabi Kuyenka" due to his manner of shaking his body.

¹⁰ Kruger, 1963, p. 4.

of which haunt the Caprivi today and expressed in forms of identity disintegration, reassertions and often in open and fatal tribal clashes. Secondly, the local administrative establishment survived because of the sustained division of the inhabitants of the Caprivi into Mafwe and Basubia, this was very much fragmented and contested (see Chapter Six).

It was decided during a visit to the Caprivi in 1941 by the Secretary of Native Affairs, Mr. D.L. Smit to remunerate not only the chiefs, but also the Ngambelas (prime ministers) and the ordinary members of the Kuta (court) – this in order to make tribal institutions 'effective instruments' of administration. Before 1941 only the chiefs received allowances of £20 per annum, this coming out of the tribal funds. By 1945, however, the allowances of the chiefs had increased to £30 per annum, those of the Ngambelas (prime ministers) to £18 while ordinary Kuta members received £12. In addition, Kuta secretaries were now also paid from the Departmental vote instead of from tribal funds. Chiefs, Ngambelas and Kuta members were also paid-out of the same vote.

The administration of justice was tribally organized on the usual 'native' basis of village heads responsible for their small communities, larger disputes going to the district headman for settlement and, failing such, to the chief's kuta (court) which offered a binding judgment. In such event the Native Commissioner/Magistrate could be called upon to give assistance in the execution of the judgement. A provision for appeal was introduced into tribal law at this stage. A dissatisfied party could lodge an appeal before the Native Commissioner's Court that had powers to examine or hear such cases and confirm or overturn the chief's judgment. In rare instances parties chose to bypass their chiefs and take their dispute to the Magistrate who would summarily deal with it and therefore assume powers of a chief-in-council. The Native Commissioner/Magistrate had the powers to inspect, on intervals, the judgment records kept by each council and in the process, even without appeal, confirm the judgments or give instructions for any matter to be reopened or to be brought before him for a re-hearing. The following matters were brought to the Commissioner's Court in the first instance:

- Persons killed or who had died from unnatural causes, such as murder, drowning or fighting, or were killed by wild animals
- Serious assault cases
- Rape
- Witchcraft
- All cases in which parties belong to different tribes
- All cases between council members
- All cases involving the chief himself.

Immediately on the assumption of control by the Native Affairs Department, the remuneration of the Native Constable-Labourers was improved and a number of cattle guards were appointed to keep a strict watch over the movement of cattle and guard against the introduction of stock from neighboring territories where lung sickness prevailed. The cattle guards kept stock registers and from 1942 the services of the guards was made use of for the registration of births and deaths among the population as well. Indeed, the guards were responsible to conduct the population census in the villages. The population census of the ECZ was taken in 1921, and then yearly between 1930 and 1939, in 1941 and again in 1946. During the duration of World War II the census was not taken. A step was taken in 1941 to prevail upon the chiefs to pass tribal laws enforcing measures for the culling and castration of bull calves in order to improve stock-breeding. Interbreeding was discouraged and cattle guards were required to report on the availability for sale or lack of good bulls in the herds under their control so that these could be better distributed. It was not until 1945 that an official from Pretoria, Dr. H.H. Curson, then Deputy Director of Native Agriculture, visited the ECZ. He made a comprehensive survey of the agricultural conditions of the territory and made recommendations to be implemented. One of Dr. Curson's recommendations was that a first grade agricultural officer should be stationed in the territory to give special attention to improvement of stock by selective breeding of 'native' cattle, as opposed to the practise of grading up by introduction of other breeds.

The cornerstone of the policy of indirect rule applied in the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel during this period relied on the presumption that the inhabitants should be left largely to their own devices, under protection, but in a system that entailed slow evolutionary and natural processes in a territory reserved *in toto* for its inhabitants. In reality local government at the time took the form of tribal structures presiding over the majority of the people who for the most part lived in rural areas. Apart from occasional trips to outlying areas and reports received from cattle guards, the Union control of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel can be reduced to the overseeing of an administrative post - Katima Mulilo. For this reason it is necessary to examine what was happening at the headquarters.

As is mentioned elsewhere, the administrative centre shifted from Schuckmannsburg to Katima Mulilo in 1935, as the former was too far to the east, was affected by annual flood inundation and was generally considered unhealthy. Expenditure of £1,100 was authorized for the building of a house, offices, a detention cell and outhouses. The station at Schuckmannsburg was demolished save for one stone building from the German period (still standing at present) and the bricks were transported by barge for the construction of Katima Mulilo. All the 1935 buildings were replaced in 1945 by specially designed residential and administrative buildings for the Government Headquarters at Katima Mulilo. These were a residency, courthouse, gaol and outhouses, as well as the installation of a pumped water supply and a power driven maize mill. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) camp was in the immediate neighbourhood of Katima Mulilo as was the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Mission. The mission was the only one in the area at the time. Missionary Owen, his wife and their two small children and one white person at WNLA were the only Europeans stationed at Katima Mulilo at the time. The closest society of Europeans in the strip closest to Katima Mulilo was the British station at Sesheke in Northern Rhodesia where the District Commissioner, the Stock Inspector, Paris Mission staff and a few traders lived.

In June 1940 both the Native Commissioner/Magistrate and his Assistant applied to be released for military service. The administration of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was to be

transferred yet again and placed under the control of the Northern Rhodesian District Commissioner at Sesheke. However, defence authorities of both the Union and Northern Rhodesia raised objections to these proposals. Instead, a special company of 'native' soldiers was formed for service in the strip as part of the general military arrangement for the protection of the Victoria Falls bridge. This Special Company is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six. It is enough to mention here that administratively the Native Commissioner/Magistrate and his Assistant were appointed as Commanding Officer and Second-in-Command, respectively, and were entrusted with the formation and training of the Unit, in addition to their civil duties.

The Imperial War Graves Commission and the Caprivi

Three members of the Native Military Corps (No. 5836 Cpl Sihope Mbala; No. 5815 Pte. Luniso Silongo; No. 5852 Pte. Machinga Simataa) lost their lives as a result of drowning on 6th April 1941. They were buried in the grounds of the Magistracy at Katima Mulilo. The Imperial War Graves Commission sent temporary wooden crosses which were erected on the graves. However, because the area was in a termite-ridden country, the wooden crosses disappeared within a short time. This raised the question of how the graves could be maintained in perpetuity, and what alternative form of commemoration could be used to make sure that the graves did not become 'unmaintainable'. The IWGC decided that the 'native' Graves at Katima Mulilo were to be obliterated along with others in certain areas described as 'inaccessible', thereby confirming the general characteristic of the Caprivi as being inaccessible or remote. As a form of commemoration, it was decided to erect an obelisk either at Serowe in British Bechuanaland, or at Tsumeb, SWA. Once again, the Caprivi, its people and its history, was to be appended and commemorated in far flung areas. Objection to this was raised among others, by Mr. J.A. Smuts of Pretoria, previously Adjutant of the Special Company of N.M.C., Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, in correspondence to the IWGC, from which the following is extracted:

Major Trollope informs me that it is your intention to erect an obelisk either at Serowe, British Bechuanaland, or Tsumeb, SWA, and in this connection I would respectfully point out that neither of these places can be described as adjacent to Katima Mulilo and that members of the Masubia

Tribe, to which these deceased soldiers belonged, never have occasion to visit either Tsumeb or Serowe. Furthermore, as you will well appreciate the deceased soldiers belonged to quite a different tribe to the Natives of Serowe or Tsumeb and to inscribe their names on an obelisk at these places would really serve no purpose at all.¹¹

It is not clear from the records whether the obelisks were erected at those places or anywhere else. What is known is that the graves might be obliterated at Katima Mulilo, for the Magistracy of the time had been overtaken by new buildings. That part of the Caprivi and its identities now exists only as an archival record.

Chief Simataa Mamili and the Administration

While the chiefs were the cornerstone of administrative control during this period, the authorities were not hesitant to express displeasure and take steps against any chief who disobeyed orders. The misunderstanding between Chief Simataa Mamili of the Mafwe/Bayeyi and the administration started during the period of the SWAA, and is discussed in part above. The administration charged that Chief Simataa Mamili was ‘...an excessive drinker and endeavours to rule autocratically ignoring the advice of the elders of the tribe. [And that] His tribal organization and control are weak.’¹² However, the real concern was that Chief Mamili frequently violated the prohibition to kill what was classified as ‘royal game’ and refused to explain himself to the authorities when called to do so. The chief refused to come to Katima Mulilo to meet officials from Windhoek sent to enquire into such issues. In 1937, Trollope, then Additional Native Commissioner for SWAA, visited the Caprivi on an inspection tour and told Chief Simataa Mamili that his behaviour and administration of his tribe were unsatisfactory, unjust and ineffective but that he would be allowed to remain in the position for one year, at the end of which the Superintendent would report and if it was found to be

¹¹ Letter from J.A. Smuts of P.O. Box 1311, Pretoria to the Officer I/C War Records, Graves Registration and Inquiries, IWGC, dated 3 January 1948.

¹² Trollope, 1938, p. 9. It is also alleged that due to his unsatisfactory behaviour, he fled to Bechuanaland to escape his father’s anger, remaining there until when he was called to replace him. Apparently he had fled from the Strip as he had been caught by his father interfering with one of his (father’s) younger wives (Trollope, 1940: 14).

unsatisfactory, he would be deposed.¹³ Chief Simataa Mamili ‘proved an unsatisfactory chief and was deposed by the South West Africa Administration in 1938.’¹⁴ He was removed to Katima Mulilo where he lived under the supervision of the Superintendent. In 1939, however, and at the request of the Mafwe people, the Chief Native Commissioner, Mr. Eric W. Louw, reinstated the chief ‘as an act of grace’ to coincide with the Union takeover of the Strip.

In 1944, Chief Simataa Mamili was convicted again and fined for killing royal game. This raised the whole question of unsatisfactory conduct over the years and lack of co-operation. Chief Chikamatondo of the Masubia was told by Superintendent Brittz of what happened to Chief Ipumbu (threat of banishment), which was now applied to Chief Simataa Mamili, making him the first person to face banishment under colonial rule in the Caprivi Strip. By the following Removal Order (reproduced in part) signed by Piet van der Byl, the Minister of Native Affairs, Chief Simataa Mamili was dismissed from his Chieftainship and placed at a new village outside the Mafwe tribal area:

Removal Order: To Simataa Mamili, Chief of the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribe, Eastern Caprivi Zipfel Area.

Whereas I deem it expedient in the public interest that you should be removed from the Chieftainship of the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribe in that you are addicted to the excessive use of intoxicating liquor, that you have been convicted of contravening section four of the Game Preservation Ordinance of South West Africa, 1927, (Ordinance No. 5 of 1927), and that you are incompetent.

Now therefore, ...I hereby order that you be forthwith removed from your position as Chief of the Mafue(Bayeyi) Tribe and that within thirty days from the date of service of this order you remove yourself and your family from Linyanti Village in the Mafue Tribal Area...to the Masubia Tribal Area...under Chief Chikamatondo, there to reside at Kalundu under the supervision and control of Headman Kamwi Folsi on a site to be pointed out by the said Headman Kamwi Folsi.

And I further order you not to leave Kalundu without the written permission of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria, first had and obtained.

¹³ Trollope, 1938, p.12.

¹⁴ Trollope, 1940, p. 14.

Given under my hand at Pretoria this Seventeenth Day of July, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-Four.

(Signed) Piet van der Byl, Minister of Native Affairs, Union of South Africa.”¹⁵

Chief Simataa Mamili did not relocate to Kalundu village as ordered but made representations to the administration to be allowed to settle at Kalengwe in another part of the Masubiya Tribal Area. This was expressed in a communication dated 25 October 1944 from the Magistrate Eastern Caprivi Strip to the Secretary for Native Affairs:¹⁶

To the Secretary for Native Affairs

Re: Mafue Tribe: Ex-chief Simataa Mamili

Your letter of 18 July 1944 refers; The Minister’s notice was served on Simataa Mamili on 12 August 1944 in the presence of the members of his kuta. Simataa expressed thankfulness at being relieved of his duties but stated that Kalundu would be unsuitable place for him to live; I told him that if he could tell me where he desired to live, provided it was outside the Mafue Tribal Area, I would recommend his request to you; By 12 September 1944 Simataa had not done so and had not, indeed, carried out the Minister’s order; He has now however, removed from the Mafue Tribal Area and has made application to live at Kalengwe under Headman Muraliswani in the Masubia Tribal Area and I recommend that his request be granted; He has not yet transferred his belongings to his new residence but I am making arrangements for that to be done. Signed L. Trollope, Magistrate Eastern Caprivi Zipfel.

Ex-chief Simataa Mamili was allowed to return to the Mafue (Bayeyi) Tribal Area thanks to a permit signed by the Secretary for Native Affairs at Cape Town on 3 September 1953, then, but only after signing a document embodying strict provisions. Regardless of the circumstances under which Chief Simataa Mamili was removed from the Chieftainship, this case shows dissent, resistance and defiance of colonial orders. It also relates much about state-society relations in colonial Caprivi, much of which still needs further enquiry. While this thesis is certainly not a study of cultures of resistance in the Caprivi, it is important to emphasize that an important aspect of, regional nationalism in the Caprivi, embedded in tribal politics and actually the forerunner of, such regional

¹⁵ Removal Order, Signed by Piet van der Byl, Minister of Native Affairs of the Union, dated 17 July 1944, NAN: A. 871, Box 2, File 2.

¹⁶ Ibid.

nationalism, is the human-wildlife conflict. This is drawn out clearly in the public hearings of the Odendaal Commission (see Chapter Seven), where inhabitants accused the Administration of caring more for animals than humans. People were not allowed to hunt. In fact, the buying of arms and ammunition was highly controlled in an area where there was no outlet for the disposal or sale of access cattle, no stores. In short the area was impoverished and its economy one of subsistence. The only abundance was in game, fish, and fruit, and the very commodities that the authorities were determined to protect by hook or by crook, while they had carte blanche to shoot as they wished. While people practiced subsistence agriculture, their crops were often destroyed, without compensation, by the same elephants and hippos which were protected. These were perfect pests which they were not allowed to kill. This was a sore point in state-society relations, and with the shift from tribal to political (nationalist) representatives, formed a stronger basis for the desire to overthrow the 'white man's rule'.

Education and Health

The discussion of the Union control of the Eastern Caprivi Strip has revealed that administration continued on the same lines as Sergeant Brittz (Namatama) had evolved and established, that is, tribal authority under the supervision of one government officer and an assistant. Of course increased visits by senior Department officials were observed during this period. The provision of services especially education and health facilities was, just as was the case with the control of the Strip, 'off-loaded' to the next recipient. In this case, these services became the burden of missions. It was discussed above how mission education¹⁷ in the Caprivi Strip developed under the SDA Mission during the Bechuanaland period, from one school in 1921 with an average attendance of 40 to 14 schools in 1928, with the Katima Mulilo school having an average attendance of 107. The tuition at out-schools (or 'bush schools') which served as feeders to Katima Mulilo was up to Standard II (present Grade Four), and at Katima Mulilo tuition was up to Standard IV (present Grade Six). From Katima Mulilo learners would proceed to Lower Middle

¹⁷ For a detailed history of education in the Caprivi see Kangumu, B, and Likando, 'Mission Education'.

School at Rusangu in Northern Rhodesia, from which they would go to Solusi Training School in Southern Rhodesia. The curriculum used by the SDA was that laid down by the Northern Rhodesian Native Education Department and an official from that department inspected the schools. Only one school received assistance from the Administration, and later, during the SWAA period, an allowance of £50 per annum was paid to the Mission. This was withdrawn by the Union at the time of the transfer of Administration. The village where the school was situated was required to contribute communally £3 per annum to Mission funds. When a village headmen wanted a school his village was required to donate 90 bags of grain annually or £4.10s.0d to the Mission. This excluded payments made in respect of books and other school necessities. From 1944 onwards, these expenses were met with assistance from the tribal funds. A critical assessment of the SDA education project is found in Trollope (1940: 18-19):

The mission has a history of some fifteen years in the Strip but it is gradually retrogressing. The number of out-school has decreased year by year. Considering the time the Mission has operated in the area the results are extremely poor...On paper the syllabus and educational schemes are impressive but in fact the position is the reverse...The Native teachers are on the whole poorly educated and not of a high standard otherwise. Last year three out of eight of them were dismissed for misconduct. The salaries paid are insufficient to attract any better material. The schools themselves are shabby and inadequate. School furnishings are poor. There is a dearth of text books. Vocational teaching is, despite pretence to the contrary, non-existence.

The whole SDA educational project was withdrawn in 1943. The above negative assessment is a reflection of the Administration's failure to provide education to the people of the Caprivi Strip. In fact the official position was that education was of little use to the Strip Natives: 'The educated natives will have to look beyond their borders for employment'.¹⁸ It is surprising that even though the demand for education was real, officials described this as "...a very superficial desire for a very superficial education".¹⁹ The Administration was not really in a position to criticize the SDA Mission since it was doing nothing itself.

¹⁸ Trollope, 1938.

¹⁹ Trollope, 1940, p.11.

The withdrawal of the SDA forced many learners to attend school either in Northern Rhodesia or Bechuanaland. Learners from the Caprivi Strip on the north bank of the Zambezi River went to school at Sichili and also at the Paris Mission School at Sesheke. The Roman Catholics – the Capuchin Order, accepted the Administration's invitation and moved across the river into East Caprivi in July 1945 from Sichili in Northern Rhodesia, even though their headquarters were at Victoria Falls. The Catholics, who occupied the site vacated by the SDA, drastically improved education in the Eastern Caprivi Strip, so much so that by 1959 there were 15 schools under their management, subsidized by the Government, with a total of 884 learners of whom about 165 were in boarding at the Katima Mulilo main school. The curriculum used and the examinations written were still those of the Northern Rhodesian Education Department which continued to inspect the schools.

There were no medical services in the Eastern Caprivi Strip before the Union took administrative control. It should be recalled that one element of the Caprivi identities was that the area was an unhealthy place in which malaria, dysentery, scabies, goitre, tropical ulcers, sleeping sickness, leprosy and mental illness, were all prevalent. The Administration's instruction to the officials to prohibit and eradicate witchcraft should be viewed in this light. People turned to witch-doctors in the absence of medical services. As Trollope wrote in 1940 (p.25): '...the only way to entirely to supplant witchcraft is, not prohibition, but substitution. And by substitution I mean substitution by instruments which will perform the variety of functions of the supplanted witch-doctors- i.e. religious teaching, doctors and an efficient and enlightened system of administration of justice..' Also, it is difficult to appreciate how the Administration could endeavor to abolish witchcraft while at the same time working to maintain and foster the operation of 'native institutions'. This was quite a contradiction since witchcraft was closely interwoven with tribal organization. In any case, Trollope found out that there were no excesses of witchcraft in the territory.²⁰

²⁰ Trollope, 1940, p. 25.

Despite the necessity for a medical doctor, the Administration thought it adequate to supply the Magistrate with a quantity of drugs to attend to inhabitants who reported at headquarters with various ailments. The arrival in 1940 of the Special Company of Military Corps, with a South African Medical Corps Orderly on its establishment, provided the basis for the introduction of medical services in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The Corps established a clinic at Katima Mulilo where all minor ailments were treated. Serious cases were sent either to the Sesheke Mission Hospital or to Livingstone Hospital (both in Northern Rhodesia), and the cost was met by an annual stipend to that hospital. When the Special Company was disbanded in September 1943, Joshua Ilukena and Nathan Mwanga, from the Caprivi who, as members of the Special Company had had useful training in the army clinic, inherited a wide range of medical supplies and carried on the service of the Administration as Medical Orderlies. Severe cases of leprosy and mental illnesses were taken to the Union and iodized salt was distributed to arrest the local cause of goitre which was troublesome in certain villages between Katima Mulilo and the Mashi River. The clinic at Katima Mulilo was overtaken by the opening of a hospital in 1948 by the Roman Catholic Mission. The hospital consisted of over 100 beds, and offered the services of a resident doctor, matron and qualified sisters (nurses).

The discussion on the provision of education and health in the Eastern Caprivi Strip has revealed that the Caprivian identities had been shaped in this regard by adjacent territories. People went to schools and hospitals in Northern Rhodesia. As explained above the curriculum used, examinations written and school inspectors were those of Northern Rhodesia. In a nutshell, as far as services were concerned, these were made the responsibilities of the missions which eventually depended on their headquarters in adjacent territories. During this period, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that the Caprivi and its identities were shaped more by Northern Rhodesia than the Union Government. Mention must be made, however, of the fact that Northern Rhodesians and even people from Bechuanaland, crossed into the Eastern Caprivi Strip for education or health services at certain times. This was typical of border identities. When a school ceased to exist on the north bank of the Zambezi (Northern Rhodesia), learners could

simply cross to the south bank (Caprivi Strip) for schooling. If medical services were closer across the river, people would simply be attended there. Thus one finds interesting 'labels' or 'identities' entering the education vocabulary in colonial Caprivi during this period, produced by this interaction between identities. The most common are 'alien learner', 'alien teacher', 'alien Natives as opposed to Strip Natives', and 'WNLA parents'. In a letter addressed to the Magistrate of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, dated 3 March 1955, the Secretary for Native Affairs enquired:

- How it came about that the children of Northern Rhodesia Natives attended schools in the Caprivi Strip?
- How many Northern Rhodesia Natives (with or without children) are residing in the Strip and for what purpose?
- What is meant by the term W.N.L.A. parents?

The 'identities' of alien learners, alien natives and W.N.L.A. learners and parents described outsiders, not Caprivians. Their's was thus an exclusive identity. Even though all were 'natives', administratively a distinction existed between "Strip Natives" or "Caprivians today" and those from outside. While there was constant interaction, fusion was strictly controlled. The concept 'alien' therefore applied to citizens especially of Northern Rhodesia who attended school or took up employment in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. While figures for the period before 1944 are not available, records show a steady increase of 'alien learners' from 1944 onwards, as shown below:²¹

²¹ Figures Extracted from a Letter from the Magistrate, Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, Addressed to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 15 March 1955.

Year	Number of Alien Learners
1944	1
1945	5
1951/2	24
1954	71
TOTAL	101

Table 6: Diagram showing the number of those classified as 'alien learners' in Caprivi schools

The increase in 'alien' learners in the Strip was due to the fact that there ceased to be any school on the Northern Rhodesian side (north bank of the Zambezi River) and that the tuition now received at the Caprivi School was superior to that of other Northern Rhodesian schools further afield. Perhaps the most important was the fact that a large percentage of the labour force in and around Katima Mulilo at the time was composed of the so-called 'alien natives'. Since no 'Strip Natives' were qualified to be appointed as teachers, Northern Rhodesians were appointed to teach. In 1955, for example, there were only nine 'Strip' teachers as compared to twenty one 'alien' teachers from Northern Rhodesia employed by the Roman Catholic Mission at the main school and 13 out-schools.²² The 'alien natives' working in the Eastern Caprivi School in 1955 numbered one hundred and twenty seven, broken down as follows:²³

Origin	Number
Northern Rhodesians	114
Nyasa (Malawi)	5
Angolans	4
Bechuanas	4

Table 7: Diagram showing number and nationalities of those classified as 'alien natives' employed in Caprivi

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

The 'alien natives' were employed by the WNLA, the Mission and trading stores as Store Capitaos (Head Boys), teachers, clerks, drivers, hospital orderlies, lorry 'boys', builder 'boys', capitaos for rest camps, on the pontoon, labour gangs, at the compound, and as domestic servants. The concept of 'boys' is used here not without sensitivity to its derogatory nature but simply to conform with the period under discussion. It would be observed that the number of outsiders employed in the Eastern Caprivi Strip is relatively quite high considering the fact that the Administration considered education as of no use to the inhabitants of the territory. The Magistrate at the time, Colenbrander, justified this as follows:

Among the employees there are 'Strip' natives, but very few in proportions. It may not be realized but the natives of the Strip have just began to 'develop' and are still very primitive, indeed, very few make good servants and none remain at work for any length of time.²⁴

This shows that the Administration of the Union had failed to transform the Eastern Caprivi Strip and its inhabitants, at least to a standard obtained in adjacent territories. Educationally they were still backward, and indeed, as the description goes 'still left behind'. However, 'primitiveness' should not be taken as the reason why 'Strip Natives' did not remain at work for length of time. The perceptions of 'work' were what differed. Most of the inhabitants of the Caprivi at this time regarded work outside their subsistence living as 'piece-work' or temporary chores, mainly to supplement what they produced in their fields. That is what they defined as real work, which could not be classified as 'work' by the Administrative officials. The urge to 'work' outside traditional settings was regarded as pastime in contrast to their subsistence lifestyle which was able to provide for their needs,

Barotse Privileges, Muntunjobuswa²⁵ and the Caprivian Identities

A Northern Rhodesian Native Commissioner fondly known as 'Hippo' Francis became a

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ A Subia word, literally meaning, 'Only a person can be ruled'.

joke when on a station bordering on the Belgian Congo he once sent in an annual report headed 'Foreign Affairs' to the effect that his relations with foreign powers continued to be friendly.²⁶ This applies to the annual reports on the administration of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, so much that one gets a feeling that a dichotomous administrative arrangement existed, namely tribal organization for internal affairs (indirect rule) on the one hand and on the other the Union officials being afforded adequate time to concentrate on 'foreign affairs'. In fact, officials endeavoured to be on friendly terms with neighbouring territories and this continued to be an 'achievement' resonating in every single annual report. This was indeed necessary for two reasons. The first is that geographically the Eastern Caprivi Strip was more Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate than South West Africa. The Strip was hinged on all sides by other administrations whose policies were bound to be felt there, yet it had no machinery to keep its administration in step with that of South West Africa: it was bound to develop along different lines. This made the Administration vulnerable on two grounds, these being the issues of hunting grounds and the fact that it was a target for agitators, and most importantly, a butt for external criticism in the United Nations General Assembly in regard to the Mandated Territory of South West Africa. Neighbouring territories were quick to highlight even small differences in an area not enjoying the same attention as other native areas in the Union. Officials were thus naturally inclined to keep in step with what was happening in those territories.

The second reason was the vested interests of neighbouring territories in the Caprivi Strip because of its geographical position. Lying as it does along the three main rivers of the central portion of southern Africa, the Caprivi always exerted an influence quite out of proportion to its size on its neighbours. Grandiose schemes were proposed during this period: use of the rivers as waterways; schemes for generating electric power or irrigation on a large scale which ultimately will make lower 'riparian owners' feel the influence of the Caprivi; the role and place of the Caprivi in the construction of a transcontinental railway to the West Coast; for the Union, the native policy practiced in the Caprivi and its

²⁶ *The Northern Rhodesia Journal*, Vol. 3 (1956-1958), pp. 107-118.

impact on the scheme for the incorporation of Bechuanaland; and lastly, the strategic and tactical value of the Caprivi Strip in time of war. To replicate Professor Patricia Hayes's wording: 'Caprivi [was] a kind of threshold or holding space against the rest of Africa.'

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For Northern Rhodesia, one such vested interest were the so-called 'ancient rights' for the Lozi which became part of the Caprivi and were administered as 'privileges'. Even after the advent of colonial rule, Northern Rhodesia continued to occupy a part of the Eastern Caprivi Strip five miles wide bordering on the Zambezi from the Katima Mulilo rapids to the point of confluence of the Zambezi and Machili Rivers, about 60 miles in length. This area was known as the 'privileged area'. Barotses were allowed to fish, cut grass and reeds, and build huts and cultivate gardens there. The privilege was originally granted for one year and was renewed annually and gradually became restricted to Sesheke 'natives'. As stated above, the privileges were granted on the basis that from 'ancient times' the Barotse had such rights in the Caprivi Strip. The 'ancient rights' of the Barotse/Lozi in the Eastern Caprivi was challenged in Chapter Two. It is argued here that in fact the Barotse did not have any 'ancient rights', these, in fact, vested in the people subjugated by the former.

Why successive colonial administrators in the Eastern Caprivi Strip continued to grant such privileges was not on the grounds of 'ancient' anything but rather because of the need to maintain cordial relations with Northern Rhodesia. This was important because people from the Eastern Caprivi Strip depended on Northern Rhodesia as a market to sell at Katombora fish needed in quantities for feeding workers on the copper mines, grain at Sesheke and also to seek work in Livingstone, activities which could be prevented by Northern Rhodesia. Even though officials knew that 'the balance is [was] strongly in favor of the Barotses', for they benefited more, not much could be done. It is argued here that concessions such as the 'Barotse' privileges were just overtures to keep particularly Northern Rhodesia 'happy'.

²⁷ Made as part of an External Examiner's Report: Bennett Kangumu Kangumu. 'A Forgotten Corner of Namibia: Aspects of the History of the Caprivi Strip, c.1939-1980'. (MA, UCT, 2000). Patricia Hayes is Professor of History at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

If 'ancient rights' was an accepted yardstick to parcel away portions of the Eastern Caprivi Strip's territorial identity, then this was applied selectively as the case of Muntunjobuswa indicates. In 1950 Chief Chika of the Basubiya (Bekuhane) of Bechuanaland filed a complaint against the Native Commissioner/Magistrate of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, Major Trollope, who in 1944 arrested certain Bechuanaland 'natives' living on and cultivating Muntunjobuswa,²⁸ an island in the swampy Chobe River, brought them to Katima Mulilo and fined them. Apparently the Bechuana tribesmen were warned in 1930, 1940 and 1943 to stop cultivating and leave the island since it was not Protectorate territory. They however used to return surreptitiously in subsequent years and cultivate the lands. It is, perhaps, as well to record that the Chobe which is the boundary that separated then Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (Namibia), cuts through the area of the Masubiya tribe in the Katchikau-Mahundu to Ngoma area and there are thus members of the tribe on both sides of the boundary. At the prosecution which ensued there was no defence, and convictions followed guilty plea.²⁹ For Trollope the whole issue rested on the question of whether Muntunjobuswa was in Caprivi or Bechuanaland territory.³⁰ In light of the 'Barotse privileges' this could certainly not be the major consideration. The question was whether there was any assertion of rights?

Though Trollope makes us believe not, Chief Chika's complaint is enough assertion of rights in its own right. The Bechuanaland people were also prevented from fishing in the Lake Lyambezi, a depression of the Chobe River in the southern part of the Eastern Caprivi Strip. In fact, a few were arrested and their fishing nets impounded by the officials of the Eastern Caprivi authorities. The reasons why Northern Rhodesian 'natives' were permitted to have privileges based on 'ancient rights', flimsy ones at that, which Bechuanaland 'natives', on the same basis, did not, are difficult to appreciate and

²⁸ In Lake Lyambezi; at times the Masubiya referred to the whole lake as Muntunjobuswa.

²⁹ Letter from Trollope, Native Commissioner of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, to the District Commissioner, Kasane, Bechuanaland, dated 14 October 1950. NAN: LKM File No. N.1/15/3-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

point to the argument above. In fact, the Bechuanaland natives, being descendants of Masubiya who fled the Eastern Caprivi Strip due to Barotse subjugation, had a better claim to 'ancient rights' than did the Barotse.

A South African Bantustan in Central Africa, the Caprivi Strip 1960 – 1980

The 'winds of change'³¹ that swept across the African continent during the late 1950s and early 1960s did not by-pass the Eastern Caprivi Strip. An accelerated quest for self-determination and independence was felt the world over. The UN demanded SA deliver on its mandate to propel the inhabitants of the Mandated Territory of South West Africa to full self-determination and improved well-being and social progress of its inhabitants. In South West Africa, the late 1950s saw the formation of the Ovamboland People's Organization, the forerunner to SWAPO; the December 10, 1959 Old Location Massacre; and the formation of the SWANU. In central Africa and territories adjacent to the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*: in Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate, nationalist movements were unwavering in their demand for independence. At the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a case against SA in regard to the Mandated Territory of SWA was brought by Ethiopia and Liberia. In the Eastern Caprivi Strip itself the Caprivi African National Union (CANU), a nationalist movement under the leadership of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, had already been formed in the late 1950s and operated underground (see Chapter Seven). All these conspired to force SA to appoint a Commission to enquire into SWA Affairs to avert criticism that it was doing next to nothing to honour the provisions of the Mandate.

As a result, fundamental shifts occurred in the history of the Eastern Caprivi Strip during this period. Firstly, the perception of uselessness gives way to usefulness as can be observed from increased SADF involvement in the Caprivi and the fact that Katima

³¹ Harold Macmillan, former British Prime Minister.

Mulilo houses a 'sophisticated airbase in an underdeveloped backwater like Mpacha'³² (see Chapter Seven) to counter the advance of 'Black Africa'. Secondly, therefore, an administrative shift takes place, that is, from neglect to intense focus: increased state expenditure; the formation of a planning committee composed of high ranking Union Native Affairs Department officials to direct the course of project development; and the Government takes over schools, hospital and clinics. Thirdly, with the roadmap to 'self – government' proposed by the Odendaal Commission, 'Caprivians' moved from tribal to political representation, though characterized by intense local politicking along tribal lines. All this over the course of a century should surely rank as a turning point in the history of the Eastern Caprivi Strip.

The above shift was characterized by the waning powers of the chiefs, the rise of the intellectuals, mainly teachers, and a clash between the two fuelled by the Administration which believed that it was protecting 'duly constituted' authority (the chiefs) from being overtaken by young men 'of no consequence' (see Chapter Seven). The old order was being replaced by a new one and Pretoria was forced to advance the pace of 'development', by which I mean an increase in local administrative staff and infrastructural extension and not necessarily social progress where the people generally benefited. As stated above, all this was prompted by events outside the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The independence of Zambia had an immediate impact in the form of the severing of local ties and the end of 'friendly relations' that so much characterized every annual report. The Administration could no longer keep its official bank account in Livingstone or continue to use Northern Rhodesian currency.

This section will briefly discuss the Odendaal Commission's recommendations as they pertain to the establishment of the Eastern Caprivi Bantustan; the role of the Planning Committee as a relatively more progressive administrative force; the establishment of the Caprivi Legislative Assembly (1972); the Caprivi 'Constitution' and 'Government' (1976); the involvement of the 'Caprivians' in the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)

³² Professor Hayes.

sponsored Multi-Party Conference (MPC); and lastly, the Second-Tier ‘Administration for Caprivians’”, considered here as the apex of the ‘historical constructions’ of the Caprivi Identity.

The Odendaal Recommendation for a Bantustan

South Africa became more determined than ever to implement her racial policies both in the Republic and in SWA even after her ‘independence’ in 1961, amidst domestic and international pressure. The Odendaal Commission of Enquiry was appointed in 1962 to investigate the social, economic and political conditions in South West Africa and to make proposals ‘to accelerate the black population’s socio-economic development’.³³ The Commission’s work and recommendations were premised on the policy of ethnic fragmentation, firmly believing that ‘mixing [the] groups would adversely affect the climate for socioeconomic progress and ultimately lead to discontent and violence’.³⁴ For the Caprivi, as for others in South West Africa, the administrative system proposed by the Odendaal Commission was a legislative council with limited powers, composed of chiefs and elected representatives.³⁵ In the context of this chapter, Odendaal provided a roadmap for a Caprivian identity – legislative assembly, a Caprivi Government with symbols of state (constitution, flag, coat of arms, national anthem), and eventually the term ‘Caprivians’ was given prominence. Chapter Seven will discuss the public hearings conducted by the Odendaal Commission at Katima Mulilo over two days. Three things were observed: that on the whole the commission interviewed more Europeans resident in the Strip than ‘Caprivians’. Secondly, that while people still complained generally about poor standard of schools and health system; elephants damaging crops; lions, hyenas and crocodiles killing cattle; and no new firearms allowed, a concerted call for the withdrawal of the ‘white man’s government’ was vocal. Thirdly, that the Odendaal hearings at Katima Mulilo was a men’s affair. There was a marked difference between what the inhabitants called for and the outcome/content of the Odendaal Commission Report.

³³ Du Pisani 1986, p. 159.

³⁴ Cockram 1976, p. 305f, quoted in Zeller, 2000, p.43.

³⁵ Du Pisani, 1986, p. 162.

The UN, Odendaal and the Caprivian Identities

Both domestic and international reactions to the Odendaal findings were negative and full of condemnation. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided on a radical approach,³⁶ an accelerated support to liberation movements through the Africa Liberation Committee, while the UN condemned the Report and its General Assembly protested by passing Resolution 2074 in 1965.³⁷ The Eastern Caprivi Strip was the focus of attention in the legal battle at the International Court of Justice in the SA *versus* Ethiopia and Liberia Case, as legal teams from both sides wished to make assessments of the state of things. The Eastern Caprivi offered better observation reference especially for the UN, since it was perceived as neglected and isolated but also because it was surrounded by other territories it offered better comparative advantage and opportunity to compare notes with such territories. For SA, the Eastern Caprivi was a perfect model of a 'Native happy in his environment' under his traditions and customs, distinct and with less detribalization and contented to subsist on game, fish and fruit. Legal teams from SA visited very often, the biggest group being the September 1964 visit by the then Deputy Minister of Native Affairs accompanied by a contingent of the Native Affairs Commission, come to acquaint themselves with the shape of things.³⁸ It is reported that word of the judgment in favour of SA came at the time when Minister Maree of Education was in the Caprivi, and had a 'sundowner celebration' in the guest house at Katima Mulilo upon hearing the news over the portable radio he carried.³⁹

Also in the context of the hearing at The Hague, was a visit in April 1965 by General Marshall of the United States of America. He asked to have included in his short stay a visit to the Roman Catholic Mission where he had a talk with Father Raphael, the priest-

³⁶ Du Pisani, 1986, p. 166.

³⁷ Zeller, 2000, p. 45.

³⁸ Kruger, 1984, p. 45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

in-charge.⁴⁰ Other visitors from the United States were Mr. Charles Burton Marshall and his wife during 1965, and, Professor Molnar and his wife in January 1966. At about the same time, and not to be outdone, two attempts by the UN to go to the Eastern Caprivi Strip are also recorded. The first was to be a visit by the World Court Judges to come and see for themselves. The visit did not take place even though SA agreed, probably because of the conditions which were attached to the visit, namely, that the Court should first examine conditions in Liberia and Ethiopia.⁴¹ The second attempt by the UN was at the end of 1967, probably triggered by the decision (or failure of it) of the World Court which favoured SA. SA intelligence sources reported a possible landing of a UN representative on the Mpacha Aerodrome (a military airfield) at Katima Mulilo, in a deliberate and unannounced attempt to proclaim, in a symbolic way, its right over SWA.

At this time, an array of SA officials had just left the Caprivi. These were the Prime Minister, Mr. B.J. Vorster (3-7 July 1967), the Minister of the newly named Bantu Administration and Development department (formally Native Affairs), Mr. M.C. Botha, Minister Maree of Bantu Education, and the ministers for Justice and Health, and finally, and specifically for the proposed UN visit, an overnight visit by the Minister of Defence, General Fraser, then Head of the SA Army, and other top generals. Following this quick visit, the Army (SA) sent a contingent of troops to lie in wait for the UN officials and to contest their manoeuvre to land at Mpacha should it come about. It did not.⁴²

The above shows a contest, international in dimensions, for the Caprivi. Both SA and the UN intended to use this isolated territory, seemingly peaceful and contented for SA, and neglected and impoverished for the UN, to prove or solidify their positions at The Hague. It would seem for the UN that the best area of the Mandated Territory of SWA to proclaim its right over that of SA was the Eastern Caprivi Strip. To repeat the position stated above, the Caprivi indeed became a threshold or holding space against the rest of the world during this period, way beyond its dimensions of being a corridor.

⁴⁰ On the way back from the Mission, the General is reported to have remarked in a light-hearted fashion about Father Raphael: 'If I had that man's looks I would rule extensively'. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴² Kruger, 1984, pp. 27-28.

The Planning Committee

To bridge the administrative gap between 1963 and 1972 when the Legislative Assembly proposed by Odendaal became operational, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development (Mr. de Wet Nel), appointed a Planning Committee with fairly wide-ranging terms of reference to apply itself to the various aspects of 'development' in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. This period is a transitional phase in the administrative framework in that the old order of the chiefs was to be replaced by the elected representatives and the powers of the chiefs relegated to advisory capacities. The Planning Committee was composed of the following members: The Native Commissioner (Eastern Caprivi) as chairman; H.H. (Bill) Harvey, head of the engineering branch of the Department; Jan Vorster, a senior member of the agricultural branch of the Department; and Piet Muller, accountant. Attached to the Committee in advisory capacity were two senior members of the Forestry Department – W.F.J. Immelman and A.E. Sonntag. A geologist, Mr. Wilson, was also attached to the Committee. This Committee did not only exclude the chiefs or their representatives in its ranks but all, except the Native Commissioner, were based in Pretoria. It is significant to underline that whereas in the past, the Native Commissioners were left to their own devices in the far-flung Eastern Caprivi and depended on the chiefs, this time the affairs of the territory were managed directly from Pretoria. It is difficult to discern from the records why this was necessary.

The Committee made a comprehensive tour of the Eastern Caprivi Strip during June/July 1964, including formal calls on both chiefs and their councils. Even though the main direction and content of the findings and recommendations were agreed to in talks at Katima Mulilo after the tour, the Committee's report was drawn up in Pretoria, without its chairman. The report was presented on the 7 October 1964 and was approved by the Minister on the 20th October 1964, with an estimated expenditure of R576, 000.⁴³ This is surely not a lot of money but compare an Eastern Caprivi Strip that was used to the

⁴³ Kruger, 1984, Chapter 12, p.14.

following administrative expenditure:⁴⁴

Financial Year: 1929 – 1938	
Superintendent's salary	£355
Superintendent's Allowance	£69
Police	£530
2 cattle guards	£36
Total	£990

Financial Year: 1939 -1940	
Acting Superintendent's Salary	£480 - £320
Acting Superintendent's Allowance	£67
Assistant's salary from 1 November 1939	£184
Assistant's allowance	£42
Native police	£354
Cattle guards	£84
Contingencies from 1 November 1939	£150
Total	£1,201

Financial Year: 1940 - 1960	
Superintendent's salary	£600
Superintendent's allowance	£100
Assistant's salary	£440
Assistant's allowance	£100
Native police	£530
Cattle guards	£180
Contingencies from 1 November 1939	£250
Total	£2,200

Table 8: Showing Administrative Expenditure in Caprivi from 1929 to early 1960s

While a slight increase in the salaries of cattle guards is noticed, it is not clear whether, in fact, it was a rise in salaries or was due to additions in staffing. The salaries of Native Police did not improve during this period. It can also be noted that the costs of administration does not reflect expenditure expended for services, that is because these were transferred to missions, even though later these received annual subsidies from the Administration. Also not reflected are the allowances paid to chiefs, ngambelas and headmen. Before these allowances were supplied out of the Department's vote, they were met for a considerable period from the Tribal Trust Funds. The Planning Committee's

⁴⁴ Reflected in Louw, 1938, p. 31.

recommendations in respect of the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry, road construction, improvement of water supply to inland villages and schools, and the construction of modern structures at each tribal headquarters were meant to be covered by the estimated expenditure. The Committee also recommended the building of a new hospital at Katima Mulilo and clinics in outlying areas and the introduction of a bus service upon the completion of roads in the territory. A major recommendation was the construction of the Ngweze 'Black' residential area (discussed below). It was the Planning Committee's Recommendations and not Odendaal, as intimated by Kangumu (2000), that put the Eastern Caprivi Strip on a fast pace of infrastructural development. The concept of development should be applied with caution in this context. As Zeller correctly points out, the Odendaal Recommendations were not concerned with social services and agricultural development, but large scale-scale infrastructure projects such as proposed dams for electric power generation and irrigation schemes.⁴⁵ This slightly differs from the more social emphasis of the Planning Committee. In both cases, though, the envisioned development was planned for the people and not with the people. They were not participatory in nature. Regardless of the good intentions, non-participatory projects excludes a social angle to development as it removes the aspect of ownership and acceptance.

Growth of Katima Mulilo and Social Control

The implementation of projects recommended by the Planning Committee required increased personnel both from the Union and locally, such as additional Magistrate and Native Commissioner; agricultural officer; a senior superintendent of works and his two assistants, one for roads and services such as water supply, and the other for general maintenance. It also necessitated an increased demand for office and accommodation space. The other factor was the rapidly increasing population of Katima Mulilo with people migrating from rural parts, since this period also marks an intense shift from a subsistence livelihood to a cash economy. Arrangements were begun in November 1964

⁴⁵ Zeller, 2000, p. 44.

for the layout of the town in all its new dimensions, which were just 7 or 8 miles in length with a width varying from 1 to 3 miles. It included the administrative headquarters and the area set aside for White settlement; the Ngweze Village, a residential area set aside for Blacks; the trading post at the Katima Mulilo rapids that belonged to William (Bill) Finaughty; the mission with its hospital and schools, including the Namwi Island. The 'new' Katima Mulilo and its environs were declared a nature reserve even before construction could take place. As such, no people were allowed to reside, cultivate or keep stock in the nature reserve except those living either at the Ngweze Village, at the mission, at headquarters or at Finaughty. Dogs were not allowed to be in the nature reserve except on a permit embodying strict conditions on control. The cutting of live trees without permission and hunting were not allowed. In March 1965 a construction company from Southern Rhodesia, Lewis Construction, arrived to start work on the Ngweze Village and the Headquarters that included the area set aside for white settlement. At the same time another team arrived from the Transvaal Provincial Administration to carry out the work of constructing the Mpacha aerodrome.

Ngweze⁴⁶ Village Development

As stated, Lewis Construction was entrusted to construct the Ngweze Village, the first 'formal' residential area set aside for Blacks along a watercourse (mulapo) bearing the same name. Work proceeded quickly. A number of locals were employed as learner-artisans and others in lesser capacities so that by January 1966 about fifty houses were ready for occupation. To maintain 'health standards' in the village - in reality to effect social control - the Administration recalled John Matali Milinga from retirement in March 1966 to be the first 'superintendent' and disciplinarian of the Ngweze Village. Part of his work involved ensuring that rules were adhered to, amongst them being that no structural additions were to be made, no nails hammered into walls, and that all visitors were to be reported.

⁴⁶ Ngweze is a Subiya word for 'stab me'. It is the name of Subiya Chief Liswani I who resided at Nakabunze, now Katima Mulilo, at the baobab tree famously known as the toilet tree.

When Mr. John Matali Milinga finally retired in about 1968, control of the Ngweze Village was vested in an Advisory Board which was formed in 1968 and had its first meeting on the 19 October 1968 at Ngweze Bantu Community School. The Board worked in conjunction with Mr. Morule, appointed Supervisor of Ngweze Bantu Township. The first elected office bearers were: Mr. J.M. Sechocho: Chairman; Mr. I.M. Selebogo: Vice-Chairman; and Mr. D.K. Ntuntu: Secretary. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner and his Assistant, the Circuit Inspector of Bantu Education, the Superintendent of Works, a Representative of the Bantu Investment Corporation and the Police were also invited to these meetings.⁴⁷ As if this was not enough of a control measure, a traditional council system was introduced in Ngweze Township. These were representatives of the chiefs in the township, functioning as a kind of ambassadors. It consisted of headmen from both the Masubiya and Mafwe (Bayeyi) tribal groups who were to administer (traditional) justice to their respective peoples. If a case involving members from the Mafwe (Bayeyi) was brought to this court, it was heard by the headmen from the Mafwe side only, and *vice versa*. If a case involved members of different groups, however, then it was taken to the Native Commissioner's Court. Cases heard in this court were subject to review or appeal at each respective traditional headquarters of their people, even while they (the people) were resident in the town. The traditional court (chiefs' representatives) was responsible, among others, to issue permits for visitors to Ngweze township and when visitors wished to stay longer, the matter was referred to the Native Commissioner. There was, however, conflict between the Advisory Board and the traditional court in Katima Mulilo. While the latter were required to attend Advisory Board meetings, they boycotted them, claiming that the Board had taken away their powers despite the fact that they were the chiefs' representatives. This was resolved only with the intervention of the Native Commissioner.⁴⁸

The construction of Ngweze Village should be viewed, with all its good intentions, as just

⁴⁷ The ordinary members who served on this committee over time include: Mr. Kabunga, Mr. Masule, Mr. Simasiku, Mr. Ramoba, Mr. Mabuku, Mr. Sikabala, and Mr. Morule.

⁴⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Board held at the Court House on the 13 February 1970, at 4 pm. NAN: No. N.1/15/3-9

another form of social control. It occurred at a time when the authorities were confronted with the rising tide of nationalism, directed from the Mafulo informal village, where Kruger says there was no form of control. In fact Mafulo was demolished after the completion of the Ngweze Village and its residents moved to the new township where the CANU activists were either kept out, or closely monitored. Two other villages that were within the boundaries of the newly designed town of Katima Mulilo were removed to localities outside. As the town began to define itself, ordinary people were pushed more and more to the margins. As Kruger concedes, the idea of declaring Katima Mulilo a nature reserve, 'apart from the idea of preserving the natural order...it was schemed to prevent loose settlements moving in to no good purpose – an inevitable development unless checked from the beginning'.⁴⁹ The declaration of spaces as exclusive 'conservation areas' or 'military zones' as a form of social control (*cordon sanitaire*), was widely used by the Apartheid regime. In the Caprivi itself, a classic example is that of Western Caprivi. The area was proclaimed as a Nature Park in 1963 and upgraded to a Game Reserve in 1968 but declared a South African military zone and closed to civilians before any activities could start.⁵⁰

However, despite the vow to prevent informal settlements around Katima Mulilo, a number of them sprang up. Just outside Ngweze Village an informal settlement developed at the site where Lewis Construction camped during the construction of Ngweze Village, and was incidentally named Lewis after that company. Lewis informal settlement was only demolished after independence when its residents were moved to Chotto, the biggest informal settlement in Katima Mulilo at present. Lewis Construction Company's corporate stamp on Katima Mulilo did not end with Ngweze village. The company was also contracted to build Katima Mulilo headquarters and the area set aside for white settlement. This way Apartheid South Africa's policy of segregated residential areas was transplanted to the emerging urban landscape of Katima Mulilo. The segregated spatial urban landscape of Katima Mulilo, however, defied the colonial push northwards (hinterland) for blacks. In this case headquarters and white settlement

⁴⁹ Kruger, Chapter 12, p. 48.

⁵⁰ See Brown & Jones, 1994, p. 85. see also Brenzinger, 1997, p. 30.

occupied the northern end, along the scenic Zambezi River while Ngweze was sited in the south end of Katima Mulilo. Apart from the fact that the river was an attraction in this arrangement, consideration might also have been given to the fact that if Blacks were to reside along the river, it would make uncontrolled crossing into newly independent and seemingly hostile Zambia easier, this being where a good number of CANU activists had fled. A belt of forest separated the two settlements. This would prove a security risk when the armed liberation struggle launched by PLAN (SWAPO's military wing), was intensified since it exposed whites living along the river to constant shelling across from Zambian soil. The SADF (South African Defence Force) responded by constructing the Katima Military Base, right in the centre of Katima Mulilo in the forest belt separating the black residential area from the white. In this way, social interaction between whites and blacks was made impossible by a buffer zone created by the military base. This social interaction was considered highly undesirable on the part of the Administration as reflected below in a heading in the minutes of the Advisory Board titled 'Irregularity: Movement of Whites in the Bantu Township':⁵¹

Captain Malan [police] replied that this case was under police investigation. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner requested that cases of this nature be reported immediately to the police and stated that only those who [whites] are permitted by their services would be allowed to enter the Bantu Township.

The corporate stamp of Lewis Construction on Katima Mulilo was not limited to buildings but affected the social life of the residents of the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The Advisory Committee raised objections to 'unregistered marriages' which it perceived would place a "burden upon the people of Caprivi in future caused by temporary marriages between Caprivi ladies and foreign men."⁵² The Native Commissioner's response was that this was a matter dealing with custom and tradition in which he was not prepared to interfere. He however offered to contact the manager of Lewis Construction to impress upon him the fact that before any of his employees leave Caprivi he should be asked of his marital status and that the Kuta (traditional court) representatives should

⁵¹ Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting held at Ngweze Bantu Community School on the 9 May 1969 at 4pm.

⁵² *Ibid.*

certify such status.⁵³ It could not be found from examined documents that any case concerning this was brought, either before the Advisory Board or the Kuta. This is not to suggest that such unions did not exist. The writer has cousins who were fathered in this way and who were never able to know their father as he left while they were still young. The issue of unregistered marriages was broader than the aspect of Lewis Construction in the social life of Katima Mulilo during this time and bordered on social control, particularly the influx control of women, classified at the time as ‘Unemployed and unattached Women’.⁵⁴ The Advisory Board complained that these women were earning their living through the selling of beer and immoral practices. It was resolved that all unemployed people should be sent back to their villages as all accommodation available was for workers. This was a very male chauvinistic interpretation of the social problem. Firstly, it assumes that the ‘immoral practices’ were brought about as a result of women being in town, the role of men there being overlooked. Secondly, save for a few, most workers of the time were men and therefore the bulk of those forced to go back to villages were females. This added to the fact that the majority of expatriate workers were themselves male, both Rhodesians working for Lewis Construction and scores of South Africans (black and white) who were imported to construct the Mpacha Military Airfield by the Roads Department of the Transvaal Provincial Administration. By bringing in these men without their spouses, the Administration laid a foundation for immoral practices which they now blamed only on Lewis Construction. The Mpacha military Airbase is discussed in detail in Chapter Six in a section dealing with the Caprivi as a military frontier. It is enough to add here that from an administrative and developmental point it was an anomaly to have a sophisticated airbase in an underdeveloped backwater like Mpacha. The Airbase, about 15 miles west of Katima Mulilo, was connected to the town by a road which was the smoothest and widest in the whole Caprivi Strip at the time.⁵⁵

Apart from Lewis, other informal settlements that developed in the townscape of Katima

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Kangumu, 2000, p. 68.

Mulilo during this period are: Piggery; Dairy; Coloureds, and Wenela (WNLA). The naming of these emergent urban landscapes follows functional designations common in African sections of towns. The Piggery and Dairy informal settlements developed around and were named after projects proposed by the Planning Committee took off in those locations to provide pork and dairy products to the residents of Katima Mulilo. On the other hand, for places where people lived to carry such names was really a mockery on the poor living conditions existent in those areas, filthily unbearable only pigs would survive in them. The term 'coloureds' was self explanatory, the section of the town reserved for 'mixed' blood, while Wenela was the site of a migrant labour recruitment depot used by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.

The Caprivi Legislative Assembly and Caprivi Government

From 1939 when the Union Department of Native Affairs took direct control of the Eastern Caprivi Strip to 1972, administration remained vested in a magistrate who acted in consultation with the two chiefs. Under this system of rule the magistrate had limited influence in the day to day affairs of the people. The chiefs retained a very large measure of authority in tribal affairs. The normal exercise of powers by the chiefs could not be termed as autocratic because a full discussion in the Kuta (tribal court) was held in all matters affecting the tribe, which had been described by Lord Hailey (in reference to Bechuanaland) in *An African Survey* (revised in 1956) as a 'sort of parliamentary *levee en masse* of the tribe'.⁵⁶ Debates in the Kuta, often keen and frankly expressed, were regularly attended. The Kuta is an ordinary tribunal for the trial of all cases presided over by the chief or his Ngambela (prime minister).

The first stage of constitutional development towards 'self-government' or Bantustanism was bestowed on the Eastern Caprivi Strip when Mr. M.C. Botha, then Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and of Bantu Education opened the first inaugural session of the Caprivi Legislative Council on the 15 March 1972 at Ngweze, apparently

⁵⁶ Quoted in Kruger, 1984, Chapter 12, p. 62.

at the unanimous request of the ‘leaders’ of the Caprivi in 1971.⁵⁷ This cast away the old order of administration through a magistrate/native commissioner. The officials who served as magistrates and their terms in the Eastern Caprivi Strip are as follows:

Name	Term	Comment
L.F.W. Trollope	25/10/1939 – 31/12/1945	*See footnote below ⁵⁸
C.E. Kruger	1/1/1946 – 31/12/1946	
L.F.W. Trollope	1/1/1947 – 12/1/1953	
A.B. Colenbrander	13/1/1953 – 6/12/1956	
M.J. Verceuil	7/12/1956 – 13/1/1959	
D.J. Wium	14/1/1959 – 5/4/1961	
N.W.D. Boshoff	6/4/1961 – 25/8/1963	
A.B. Colenbrander	26/8/1963 – 29/10/1963	Temporarily there waiting next fixed appointment
C.E. Kruger	30/10/1963 – 1/4/1968	
P.N. Hansmeyer	2/4/1968 -31/7/1971	
J.J. Rossouw	1/8/1971 – 31/1/1972	
E.L. Gregory	1/2/1972 – 23/3/1972	Thereafter Chief Director in the new order

Table 9: Native Commissioners who served in Eastern Caprivi during the South African period

The Legislative Council of the East Caprivi ‘Homeland’ consisted of both chiefs and representatives from the Masubiya and ‘Mafwe’ tribal groups with its seat in Ngweze.

⁵⁷ See Opening Address by the M.C. Botha, Eastern Caprivi Legislative Council at Ngweze; see also ‘Verrigtinge van die Eerste Sessie van die Tweede Wetgewende Raad van Caprivi 21-23 September 1976’.

⁵⁸ Leslie French Watts Trollope did not resign from the service as is stated to Kruger, he was dismissed from the service evidently ‘owing to inefficiency – never kept any books or accounts. A brilliant man but too lazy’ (Entry of 25 December 1952, Log Book of the Holy Family Mission, Katima Mulilo, Caprivi Strip, SWA/Namibia, Book I, 1943-1994, p. 31). When his replacement arrived to relieve him, he expelled him from the Eastern Caprivi Strip for not having ‘appropriate permits’. He eventually left on 25 December 1952 and took up an appointment with the Southern Rhodesian Immigration Department overseeing the transport of men from Barotseland, wishing to take up work in Southern Rhodesia, to the Victoria Falls and all matters related to enlistment. Later he served as Manager of the Uleze and also as Manager of the Boat Club. He died on 28 July 1965 of a heart attack at Mwandu Hospital (old Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia) while on his way to visit Kruger at Katima Mulilo. He was buried at Katima Mulilo in the grounds between headquarters and the mission under a Muchenje Tree (*Diospyros mespiliformis*) in the grounds of the Zambezi Lodge today. He never returned to South Africa.

The Legislative Assembly had an Executive Council to give effect to its decisions which was composed of Chief Josiah Mutwa Moraliswani of the Masubiya, elected as first Chief Councilor, his portfolio Authority Affairs and Finance; Chief Mamili of the Mafwe as councilor for Justice; Simasiku Simwanza for Agriculture and Works; David Siukuta for Education. The Administrative link with Pretoria at this time was a Commissioner-General, E.F. Potgieter, appointed to 'guide Caprivi to self-government'. The seconded staff who were directors of departments were: Maytham as the Chief Director; Louis Nel for Education; Paul Fouche for Agriculture and Works; and Nic (N.J.) Badenhorst for Justice. This was the state of things until on 19 March 1976 when a new Constitution ushered in a 'Caprivi Government' with complete symbols of 'state': an anthem, a flag and coat of arms. In this way, the Caprivi and its identities were inaugurated and the territory now became a fully fledged South African Bantustan up to 1980 when AG8 (Legislation concerning the three-tier ethnic system of central, regional and local government) brought the region administratively back into (SWA)Namibia.

The process to bring back the Eastern Caprivi Strip into the administrative armpit of the SWAA started with the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference (1975-1977). A delegation from the Eastern Caprivi Strip attended sessions of the Turnhalle Conference in Windhoek under a loose grouping called the 'Caprivi Alliance.' The Caprivi Alliance transformed into the Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP), founded in November 1977 by members of the Masubiya and Mafwe tribal authorities with the two chiefs as leaders. The party joined the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) in 1977 under the leadership of Mafwe chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili. One can conclude therefore, that an identity specific to the Caprivi was already being dismantled by the time it reached fruition in 1976 since the Turnhalle process brought the Caprivi back into mainstream SWA politics.

The Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP, of the DTA) stood unopposed in the 1980 elections held for the newly created Caprivi Second Tier Legislative Assembly after the promulgation of AG8 (1980). To cater for a two-legged Caprivi (Mafwe and Masubiya),

the 20 seats in the Assembly were divided as follows:⁵⁹

- Elected Seats: Eight elected seats – divided equally among the two tribes;
- Nominated seats: Six seats for each tribe, with the two chiefs automatically receiving a seat each;
- Executive Committee: Composed of the two chiefs as rotating Chairmen and with equal representation for each tribe.

It is necessary to remark on the historical continuities which characterize the identities of the Caprivi. An important aspect of the fruition of the Caprivi Identity is the transition from tribal to political representation (see above). It is apparent from the above that the constituencies for political representation still carried along the historical divide of two tribal groupings, the Mafwe and Masubiya. It is this historical continuity which paralyzed the functioning of the East Caprivi Second Tier Government, and indeed the greater source of sore points (see Chapter Six) in the Caprivi and not necessarily the involvement of the chiefs in politics as argued by other writers.⁶⁰ A proposed amendment to AG29 in 1985 sought to change representation from the two-legged tribal formula to representation by elected political parties after repeated attempts by the Administrator and other emissaries from Windhoek failed to heal the breach between the two composite constituencies of the Caprivi. The amendment, tabled in the National Assembly in Windhoek, was being considered by the Administrator-General when UN Resolution 435 took centre stage. Another aspect to record about the two-legged Caprivi which occurred during the transition from tribal to political representation, especially with the establishment of the Legislative Assembly in 1972, was the withering away from the Mafwe identity of the sub-identity of Bayeyi. Whereas previously that identity was known and written in official documents as Mafwe (Bayeyi), since 1972, this was dropped. (see chapter 2 for detailed discussion).

⁵⁹ Adapted from Pütz, von Egidy & Caplan, *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, Windhoek: Magus, 1989: p. 420.

⁶⁰ See Pütz, et al, *Ibid.*, who argue that the source of complication in Caprivi politics has been the involvement of chiefs in politics who are traditionally not supposed to align with any political party. For me, this is a narrow definition of the problem. The traditionally ethnic rivalry between the two tribal groups predates the transition to political representation from tribal formula. Their view that previous Mafwe Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili was deposed due to his involvement in politics is debatable, to say the least.

Summary

The discussion in this chapter dealt with two issues: firstly, the evolution of colonial administrative control in the Caprivi Strip, particularly the eastern part, the territory that lies east of the Mashi/Kwando River, and secondly, how this helped shape the process of the creation of Caprivi identities. With regard to the first issue, it was observed that colonial administrative identity in the Caprivi Strip dates back to its creation in 1890 in an agreement between Germany and Britain which guaranteed the former access to the Zambezi. Four phases were identified in the Caprivi colonial administrative identity. In the first phase (1890-1909), the Caprivi Strip was administered as a German sphere of influence. Because of this, it was argued, it took almost nineteen years before Germany decided to set an administration in the territory. The theory that this was due to the fact that Germany lost interest in this 'poor' territory during this time was refuted. Rather, it was the nature of spheres of influence that do not vest territorial rights in the holder, that are areas reserved for future action. A holder could decide not to occupy a sphere of influence after-all. Another misconception refuted is the usual argument that the territory turned into a no-man's land during this time. The territory still rightly belonged to its indigenous inhabitants, under subjugation, of the Aluyi. Perhaps what was lacking was an effective European administration during this time. An administrative tool for spheres of influence was periodic reports, which Germany received (1904; 1905).

During the second phase (1909-1914), the German Resident Captain Streitwolf managed to establish a local administration based on two tribal authorities, the Mafwe (Bayeyi) and the Masubiya. This laid the foundation for two-legged Caprivi identities, a *status quo* that was maintained in subsequent phases of the colonial administrative identity. Otherwise Germany colonial administrative identity of the Caprivi *Zipfel* was featureless. A pertinent aspect of the third phase (1914-1939) is the transferability of the Caprivi. Often it was offloaded onto the next territory (Bechuanaland, SWAA, and Union Native Affairs) arguably because of history and geography (remoteness). The colonial administrative tool during this phase, apart from the resident police man as

superintendent, was inspection tours which were very irregular. Otherwise a yearly police patrol across the territory to outlying posts accounted for control during this phase. The last phase (1939-1980), can be usefully divided into two, a Bantu Reserve (1939-1962) when the Eastern Caprivi suffered total neglect and a Bantustan (1964-1980) when a shift in administrative identity occurred, characterized by intense focus but also a transition from tribal to political representation.

The second part of the objectives was to see how colonial administrative identity helped shape Caprivian identities. Two important colonial administrative characteristics of the Caprivi emerged: one that it was swampy, feverish (malarial) and consisted of wandering 'bushmen', and as thus it was not suitable for white (read human) settlement. Secondly, that 'historical' and 'geographical' factors made it difficult to administer. The result was that it was administered as a separate whole within a complex, being pushed more to neighbouring territories than as part of SWA. Even the provision of services such as education or health were either entrusted in the hands of such adjacent territories or left in the hands of missionaries who themselves were headquartered in those territories. The result of this was that an image of the Caprivi emerged: unhealthy, remote and separate. The inhabitants were administered to feel more a part of Barotseland and Bechuanaland than SWA. When events so dictated, the Caprivi was forced to cut ties with those territories, either to be 'independent' (read Bantustan), or brought back into mainstream SWA. By this time however, the Caprivi Identity had already emerged and people had begun to identify themselves as 'Caprivians'.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FRONTIER IDENTITY OF THE EASTERN CAPRIVI *ZIPFEL*

Introduction

Germany managed to acquire an ‘access corridor to the Zambezi’ through a territorial swap as part of the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty with Great Britain.¹ However, its high-flying colonial utopia of a rail link or shipping route via the Zambezi connecting German Southwest Africa (DSWA) and German East Africa became a ‘dream frustrated’² partly because the Zambezi was not navigable in some parts because of its many rapids. She managed, though, to poke her nose deep into the interior of southern Africa and cut like a dagger through two British territories, the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Northern Rhodesia. In this way, Germany was able to keep in check British influence and expansion by being a neighbour next door in southern Africa. The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* thus became Germany’s frontier into unknown British territories, not merely an access corridor to the Zambezi.

This frontier identity of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel would later transform the place from a mere backwash on the Zambezi to one of utmost strategic military importance during SA rule and independent Namibia’s ‘Socio-economic Tail-Light.’³ This chapter will examine the different ‘frontiers’ which are embedded in the Caprivi, as perceived and defined by different state and non-state actors in its history. This identity stretches over many centuries and is multi-faceted. Focus here will be limited to labour migrancy as an aspect of frontier identity, lawlessness and no-man’s land as aspects of frontier identity, military

¹ For detailed discussion see Chapter Two of this Dissertation.

² Louw, W., ‘Caprivi: A Dream Frustrated’, in S. Davis and Sey Davis (eds.), *SWA ANNUAL*, 1979, Windhoek: SWA Publications.

³ This argument is made by Zeller, Wolfgang and Kangumu Kangumu, Bennett, in their forthcoming paper ‘From Apartheid Bantustan to Namibia’s Socio-economic Tail-Light: Caprivi Under Old and New Indirect Rule’, in Melber, Henning, (ed.), *Cross-examining Transition in Namibia: Socio-economic and Ideological transformation since Independence*, Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 2007.

frontier identity for both PLAN (Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia) and the SADF, and lastly, refuge as an aspect of frontier identity particularly during the pre-colonial period.

The construction of the frontier identity was initially fed by the (mis)conception that the territory of the Eastern Caprivi was not an end – but a means to an end, a transit or nodal point. This was largely a perception of 'uselessness'. During SA rule, the quality of 'usefulness' emerged strongly, particularly in the confrontation against the advance of 'Black Africa'. The definition of frontier adopted here is that which implies extremity, the extreme limit of settled land beyond which lies wilderness.⁴ Embedded in here is the disregard of the native population, their existence and wishes. 'Unsettled' refer to lack of European settlement and 'wilderness' was the opposite of western civilization.

The Mfecane and Refuge as an Aspect of Frontier Identity

The Aluyi⁵ had subjugated the people of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* before the arrival of the Makololo, to whom they also fell victim. For the Aluyi during this time, the territory was utilized mainly as a granary, hunting and fishing ground.⁶ As Venning put it: 'What makes the strip of value to Lewanika [of Barotse] is on account of the grazing, reed cutting, fishing and suitability of certain areas for making winter gardens'.⁷ The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was thus a 'frontier of plenty' for the Aluyi at this stage.

With the advent of the Mfecane movement (also known as Difagane⁸), the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* transformed from a land of opportunity for the Aluyi to a source (frontier) of danger posed by the migrating hordes of Makololo under Sebetwane and the Matebele

⁴ Soanes, Catherine & Stevenson, Angus (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 571.

⁵ Now commonly known as Lozi or Barotse. Together with the Makololo, they are discussed in Chapter One.

⁶ The use of certain Caprivi Islands for fishing by Northern Rhodesians continued even during the colonial period in what became defined over time as 'Barotse Privileges'. See discussion in Chapter Two.

⁷ J.H. Venning (undated), 'Newly Acquired Country between Zambezi and Mashi Rivers.' (Manuscript, NAN: A.589).

⁸ Difagane is an Nguni word for 'forced migration'. See Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, *The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. 1: South Africa to 1870*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, p.391.

of Mzilikazi. The Mfecane started as a social, political and military revolution in the 1800s and resulted in the creation of the Zulu Kingdom under Shaka Zulu. The movement produced conquest, warfare, population flight and social dislocation.⁹ As Omer-Cooper correctly observes, the Mfecane is:

one of the greatest formative events of African history, (which)...permanently modified the ethnic map of much of Bantu Africa and thereby played an important part in establishing the framework of political and cultural life in a number of modern African states.¹⁰

Sebetwane was assisted to cross the Zambezi at Impalila Island by Chief Liswani of the Masubiya on a promise that he would give the latter part of the war booty (cattle and people), on his way to conquer the Toka-Leya (Chief Liswani's arch-enemies) before he overran Barotseland and established himself at Naliele. Nothing came of his promise to Chief Liswani. Instead, Sebetwane consolidated his rule, incorporating Chief Liswani's area of influence. This, however, was counter-productive for state formation in a period characterized by territorial feuds. Indeed, this was a very restive period in the history of pre-colonial central southern Africa, marked by military confrontation, murdering, pillaging, treachery and alliance building. Sebetwane found an immediate foe in Chief Liswani. The latter formed an alliance with Mzilikazi and invited a Matebele army to attack Sebetwane. A joint force of Chief Liswani and the Matebele army harassed Sebetwane several times to an extent that he became strongly distrustful of the Masubiya. The Makololo of Sebetwane called Chief Liswani to Naliele with the promise that they would give him the cattle which Sebetwane promised him but instead murdered him in cold blood.¹¹ A latter invading army of the Matebele was destroyed on its return from Barotseland by a cunning move on the part of one Simalumba of the Masubiya. When the Matebele army reached the village of Simalumba, he undertook to take them across the Zambezi, but instead of doing so he landed them on an island – Sikachila. As the last of the Matabele were being taken over to the island, Simalumba capsized the canoe and

⁹ P. du Toit, *State-Building and Democracy in Southern Africa :A comparative study of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe*, Pretoria: HSRC, 1995, p. 75.

¹⁰ J.D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa*, Evaton: Northwestern University Press, 1966, pp. 4, 174.

¹¹ For a further discussion on this incidence see Masubiya Chieftaincy in Chapter One.

swam back to the bank. The Matebele who were not used to the conditions on the island and were unable to get to the mainland, consequently died from exhaustion, starvation and disease. The remnants were killed by the Aluyi on the island, which became known as 'Sioli sa Matebele' (Island of the Matebele).¹²

The death of Chief Liswani and the demise of this contingent of Matebele army cleared the path for Sebetwane to establish his headquarters at Linyanti (Sangwali today) in the what became known as the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. In this way he felt safe from the constant danger posed by the Matebele of Mzilikazi (his natural enemy) because he was well protected by the swampy boundary rivers. The territory therefore provided a natural refuge or hiding place for him and his vast herds of cattle. Ironically, his people were reduced by illnesses in this river-bounded frontier of refuge. This provided the Aluyi with a perfect opportunity to reclaim their sovereignty in Barosteland and the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* in 1864. After reasserting their control, the Aluyi posted representatives in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to guard against the return of the Makololo and prevent attacks from possible enemies such as the Matebele and the Batawana of Ngamiland. Once again, the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* became a buffer zone, the southernmost frontier of Bulozhi.

The Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* had provided a sense of security – refuge – for its inhabitants over generations. While it is accepted that people habitually moved either away from diseases or other calamity, even in search of food, often within the bounds of the then under-populated Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, they would simply move to another corner to avoid looming danger. This way they kept clear of attacks from invading parties. It is believed that the majority of Matotela (Totela) fled away from the cruel rule of Sepopa of the Aluyi into the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to hide in the thick Hukwe veld (forests) as a deterrence for an attack. Chief Liswani II (Nkonkwena, Mutola Lizuku) of the Masubiya

¹² Lozi Language. Unpublished notes on Interview with Chief Chikamatondo of the Masubiya on the subject of his position as Chief of the Masubiya Tribe and having a bearing on the repeated claims by one Mulwaliswani (Moraliswani) to chieftaincy (NAN: A.871). See also Kruger (1963), Trollope (1940) and Likando (1989).

established his headquarters at Impalila (Mparira) Island because he did not want to live in the same village with Isuswa, Sebetwane's emissary, who was posted there following the murder of Chief Liswani I by the Makololo. The island became his place of refuge. When Sepopa pursued him, Chief Liswani II left Impalila Island with his people into Bechuanaland Protectorate (Chapter Two).

More recently, when the German Captain Streitwolf¹³ went to the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to establish an administration there, he apparently found a territory 'deserted'. The inhabitants did not follow their Lozi overlords as was widely accepted, they went into hiding either on islands or swampy areas or in the thicket of the forests. The Aluyi, and possibly the British, had warned them of the cruelty of the approaching Germans who had the 1904-1907 Herero-Damara-Nama Genocide hanging over their heads. People in the territory were used to migrate in order to survive. This migration transcended contemporary boundaries. When danger loomed on the north bank of the Zambezi (Northern Rhodesia, Zambia), people moved across to the south bank (the Caprivi), or simply into Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana). The rivers formed natural barriers (frontiers) in this equation and the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, being the rivers' depression, formed a natural place of refuge.

Outlaw Frontier, 1890 – 1909

A detailed catalogue of 'lawlessness' in the Caprivi *Zipfel* between 1890 and 1909 has been provided by Maria Fisch and others.¹⁴ During this time, the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* turned into an El Dorado¹⁵ for shady characters, criminals or prisoners who went into hiding and a happy hunting ground for both part-time and professional trophy hunters. In some instances these ne'er-do-wells competed with the locals as hunting guides for

¹³ The Masubiya called him Kambungu while to the Mafwe he was known as Katara Matunga, one who surveys the land.

¹⁴ Fisch, Maria, 1999, *The Caprivi Strip during the German colonial period, 1890 to 1914 [with a chapter on the boundary dispute up to the present]*, Windhoek: Out of Africa, pp. 43-51. See also Zeller (2000), Pretorius (1975), Trollope (1940, 1956/7).

¹⁵ Fisch, 1999, p. 37.

Englishmen who lived in Sesheke and Livingstone.¹⁶ The locals benefited from the meat which resulted from hunting trips. There were other Bechuanaland nationals and SA Boers involved in this trade, particularly after a number of them were uprooted during the South African War. Fisch states that most of the Boers entered the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* via Kazungula and Linyanti and that their number was put at fifty in 1904 and continued to increase.

It is believed that they made fortunes from hunting, farming and smuggling of arms and ammunition. Rothe (1906: 1-34) is quoted by Fisch that one could make a profit of approximately 4 000 Mark every season. Game was plenty in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* partly, according to Streitwolf, because the territory was Paramount Chief Lewanika's private hunting reserve until 1895 (Streitwolf 1911: 227f). The other fact is that the area was very sparsely populated at this time and therefore game was virtually undisturbed in its habitat. Indeed, this is partly why the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* became an 'outlaw frontier' because criminals could hide and carry on their activities without the prying eyes of the people.

Intertwined with the concept of lawlessness is often the description of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* as a 'no man's land'.¹⁷ This is because there was no official European presence in the territory at this time. The native population was disregarded in such a definition, probably because most commentators describe them as 'spineless', 'little serfs', and 'slaves' of the Aluyi. Basically, they were considered of no consequence. Still, even the Lozi presence was not recognized in this instance and, indeed, if the Lozi state had such effective grip on the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, it is doubtful whether such acts would continue undeterred. The fact that the chief had to receive a third of every annual hunting licence paid in British territories¹⁸ would have made Lozi chiefs expel these outlaws or compel them to obtain hunting licences. The likely scenario is that Lozi chiefs either benefited from such trade indirectly without the knowledge of British authorities or their

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Trollope (1956/7)

¹⁸ Fisch (1999)

grip on the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* is grossly exaggerated. More than any other time, this is when Lozi rule over the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was supposed to be at its peak and more organized.

In any case, the outlaws managed to find a safe haven, a river bounded frontier where they were not subjected to restrictions and were out of reach of the long arm of the law. In this frontier, they acted as the law and therefore made sense of the assertion in this paper that indeed the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* had the attribute of 'refuge' as part of its Frontier Identity.

Migrant Labour as an aspect of Frontier Identity

Any study of labour extraction in central southern Africa during the pre-colonial and colonial period should recognize the following factors, the first being the highly mobile nature of the inhabitants. People moved freely from one part to another across what are now contemporary political boundaries. Movement was ignited either by bad harvests, family squabbles, high flood levels, or outbreaks of cattle diseases.¹⁸ Secondly, especially for the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, artificial boundaries split some tribes whose people occupied both banks of a river. Thirdly, the general rise in labour shortages in Southern Africa in the early 1900s restricted agricultural, mining, infrastructure, and industrial development.¹⁹ Finally, a factor as regards the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* that was present in the pre-colonial past was the abundance of food in fish, game and fruit. An entry in 1940 Annual Report recognizes this fact: 'There is very little economic urge for the Strip Natives to leave their homes to seek work elsewhere. Their subsistence needs can all be met from local resources and taxation is not on a scale to force them to go out and work'.

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However, a number of able-bodied men periodically left their homes to seek work opportunities outside the territory. Many of these made use of arrangements in respect of

¹⁹ Pretorius 1975 p.10

¹⁹ Zeller, 2000, p. 40.

²⁰ Trollope, 1940, p. 24.

contract/organized labour. It will be shown that the Eastern Caprivi Strip became a sought-out frontier for labour supply during the colonial period and that this 'going away' and 'coming back' reinforced a 'Caprivianness'. It will also be shown that the routes to contract work travelled north, east and south and excluded the west (SWA). Had this not been the case the 'Caprivians' at that early stage could have been 'Namibianised'.

Labour extraction from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* dates back to pre-colonial times. From the writings of Livingstone, Pinto, Arnot, Colliard, Jalla, Bertrand, Gibbons, Harding, Hamilton and others, descriptions of forced labour and slavery are vividly expressed. Consider the following, provided by Capt, Bertrand (circa 1895), about slavery as practised by the Lozi:

The (Lozi) chiefs can carry off a child from a family who... are not Lozi; the child then becomes a slave. All his labour he gives to his master who has the right of life and death over him... The King and his elder sister, Queen Mokwai receive every year as tribute a number of children of both sexes who become their servants.... They give those they have no need of to their chiefs or other persons." " A Morotsi (Lozi) can never be a slave.... All the kings' subjects' excepting the Barotsi are liable to enforced labor.²¹

Slave trading by Mambari from Angola was stopped in 1889. Mainly as a result of pressure, Lewanika issued a Royal Proclamation in 1906 which freed 30 000 slaves.²² The practice of slavery continued, however, albeit illegally. Writing in 2006, Andrew N. Matjila observes that up to the late 1970s guns from the 'period of the Mambaris' were still found in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. The Mambaris were armed men and their assistants who captured slaves in the territory and chained them to the long line of people on their way to the Dar [Dar-es-Salaam].²³ Their final destination was the Americas. It is possible therefore that slave-trading took place in this secluded frontier on the Zambezi even though not much research on this topic has been undertaken as yet.

²¹ Bertrand, A., *The Kingdom of the Barotse*, T. Fischer Unwin, 1899, pp.274, 276.

²² Pretorius, 1975, p. 37. See also Clay, G., *Your Friend*, Lewanika, London: Chatto and Windus, 1968, pp. 140-141.

²³ Matjila, Andrew N., 'Lusata Traditional Festival of the Mafwe People', in *New Era*, 29 September 2006.

While the Caprivi *Zipfel* was not a major issue in the negotiations which resulted in the 1890 Anglo-German Treaty,²⁴ it nevertheless held prospects in the view of the German colonial lobby for natural resources and human labour. The negotiations came at a time after the 1885 agreement between Germany and Portugal on the northern border of DSWA was heavily criticized within the Germany colonial lobby for blocking further expansion north-east where resources (natural and human) were believed to be in abundance (Zeller, 2000: p. 35). Streitwolf concluded soon thereafter that the potential of the Caprivi *Zipfel* lay in its human population which he estimated to be between 10 000 and 12 000 in 1909 but that the carrying capacity of the land was at least 100 000 people. Even though the leading newspaper of the time (DSWAZ No. 9, 1911) described the territory as a 'labour recruitment district', no concrete plans for commercial exploitation were made (DSWAZ No. 100, 1911, in Zeller 2000: 38).

Scouting for labour recruits in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* by agents of organized labour dates back to 1909. In that year, Streitwolf encountered British agents of the Labour Agent Bureau in Bulawayo (Southern Rhodesia) who tried to recruit Fwe (Mafwe) on Germany territory. Von Frankenberg reported in 1911 to have encountered a British agent who had recruited Mbukushu in western Caprivi for work on the South African mines (ZBU 118 and ZBU 1010).²⁵ The earliest recorded formal request to recruit labourers for mine work from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* dates back to March 1928.²⁶ In a letter addressed to the Government of the Bechuanaland Protectorate under whose administration the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* fell at the time, the Northern Labour Organization (NLO) requested permission to recruit labourers from the territory for mine work and other industries in SWA. The organization was already recruiting in the adjacent Batawana Reserve in Bechuanaland. The Secretary for SWA supported this

²⁴ Zeller describes it as a 'by-product' in the course of a far more important exchange of territory (2000, p. 35).

²⁵ Zeller, 2000: p. 40. He cites Fisch, 1999, pp. 108, 126.

²⁶ Kangumu, B, 2000, p. 73. Kruger believes the date to be 1927.

move by adding that the NLO represented a variety of credible companies in SWA such as the Otavi Minen Gesellschaft at Tsumeb and the SWA Company at Grootfontein.²⁷

It proved difficult to find evidence to suggest that the Northern Labour Organization recruited from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* even though it was granted permission to do so and had in fact erected a camp on the west side of Manyeha. There is reference to its involvement in the Caprivi found in the Report: 'Caprivi Zipfel: Handing Over to the SWA Administration', signed by J.W. Potts, Resident Magistrate of Bechuanaland. In this report, dated 26 October 1929, the following appears:

He explained that the Administrator intended to proceed through the strip by motor transport and, if possible, to proceed to Livingstone by a route said to have been cut and blazed by Mr. Balme the representative of the Northern Labour Organization in the Caprivi Strip.²⁸

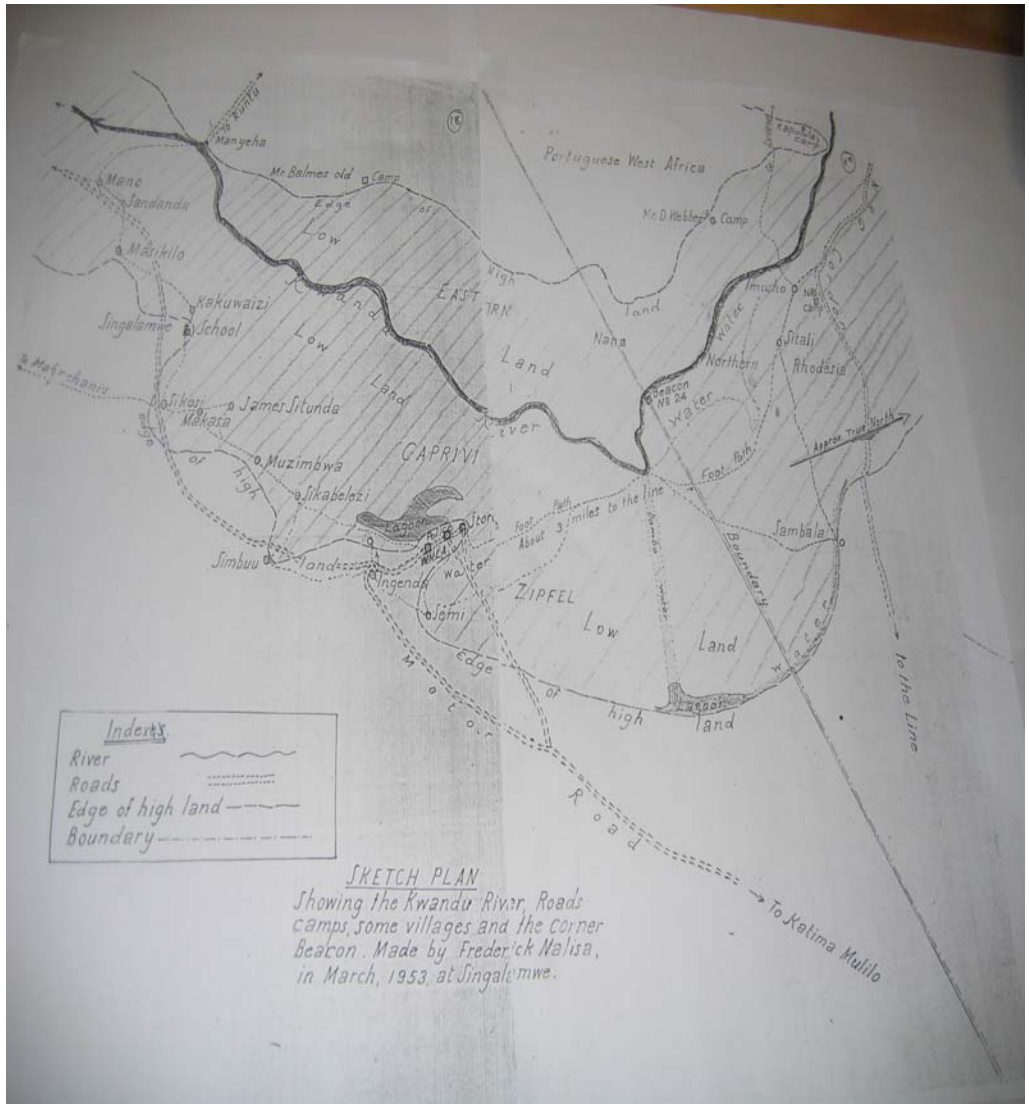
It appears that Mr. Balme was established in the western and not eastern part of the Caprivi *Zipfel*. It even becomes more difficult to speculate on the possible factors which inhibited the NLO from recruiting in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. One possible explanation for such inhibition could be competition between the Northern Labour Organization and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA). This can be gleaned from a letter to the Chief Native Commissioner in Windhoek, signed by the Native Commissioner of Rundu, regarding the transfer of the Western Caprivi *Zipfel* to the Union Native Affairs Department, from which I quote in length:

The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association is at present getting numbers of recruits from the Portuguese portion of the Okavango area, and these are sent to the Rand via the long and expensive route – Mohembo, Shakowe (Shakawe), Maun and Franscistown...It would...simplify matters for the administration if the portion of the Western Caprivi Zipfel east of Beacon No. 5 was handed over to the Union Government. In this event the WNLA may obtain permission to establish a recruiting depot anywhere in the Western Caprivi Zipfel, and it will then become a much closer competitor to the Northern Labour Organization, which has the recruiting 'rights' in the Portuguese portion of the Okavango area, and a recruiting Concession in the Okavango Native Territory. WNLA, if established on or near the Okavango River, should come to a working arrangement with the Northern Labour Organization in regard to the division, exchange etc. of

²⁷ Letter from the Secretary for SWA to the Government Secretary of Bechuanaland Protectorate dated 2 March 1928 and one from the Managing Secretary of the Northern Labor Association to the same dated 9 March 1928 (in Kangumu, B., *Ibid.*).

²⁸ The Administrator, Mr. Werth and his party, were advised not to take this route because the spoor cut by Mr. Balme in 1929 for the greater part of the way passed through Angola. Instead they attempted to traverse the Western strip from Bagani to Bwabwata Police camp on the Portuguese border and thence to the Mashi River.

recruits from western and south eastern Angola. If this is not done, the labour supply for SWA from Angola will perhaps become seriously affected because it could all be diverted to the Rand.
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Map 6: Sketch showing Frank Balme's Camp at the Kwando River.

It is clear from the above that the WNLA and the NLO were in direct competition for the Portuguese portion of the Okavango area. In fact the idea of transferring a portion of the

²⁹ Dated 18 November 1942 (Manuscript, NAP).

Western Caprivi *Zipfel* to the Union Department, was Gemmill's proposal (of WNLA), aimed at affording him facilities in western Caprivi closer to this area. This is shown in a letter Gemmill wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs entitled 'The Caprivi Strip in Relation to the Native Labour Supply of the Union':

On the Western Caprivi side the flow of Angola natives through the strip to Mohebo, the WNLA station in Northern Bechuanaland, situated at the point where the Okavango River enters Bechuanaland, is rapidly increasing and within four years has grown to as much as 1, 000 per month. This route is greatly favored by the Angolas, and a very large output through it is to be expected, but so long as the Western Caprivi remains under the SWA control, the position is insecure, and it is therefore most desirable that the Western Strip, like the Eastern, should be administered by the Union Government.³⁰

Such a facility would have changed the route taken by the WNLA's migrant labourers destined for the Rand. William Gemmill's (of WNLA) idea was to convey his recruits over the much shorter and less expensive route – envisaged to be through the western and eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* on the military road to Katima Mulilo, and from there down the Zambezi River by barge to Kazungula.³¹ As regard remoteness of the envisaged route, Gemmill had the answer:

It is true that the conditions for road communication between the Eastern and Western Strips are bad, but just as WNLA has made a road from Katima Mulilo in the Eastern Strip to the Cuando (Kwando) River, so a road could be made through the Western Strip from the Kwando to the Okavango. In any case, air transport will make communications easy. The probable administrative scheme would be a Union Headquarters at Katima Mulilo, with subordinate administrative stations at the Cuando and at Andara, on the Okavango. The extra cost of this could be recovered by the imposition of a small traveling pass fee on the WNLA output.³²

The WNLA's fight for monopoly of labour over the Caprivi frontier was also a concern for the authorities especially since it involved a transfer of administrative powers. Not certain about how to proceed, Mr. D.L. Smit wrote to Mr. Forsyth (SWAA) to solicit his views before formally engaging the SWAA: 'It is not quite clear in my mind why Gemmill should be so anxious that we should take over this additional territory. Can you

³⁰ Dated 19 October 1944 (Manuscript, NAP).

³¹ Native Commissioner (Rundu) to Chief Native Commissioner (Windhoek), dated 18 November 1942, p. 2.

³² Gemmill to Union Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 19 October 1944 (Manuscript, NAP).

throw any light on this aspect of the matter?’³³ In a scathing and almost personal tone, Mr. Forsyth replied on 22 October 1942,³⁴ quoted here in length:

It is with much surprise and some amusement that I learn of Gemmill’s proposal. We always had the sneaking suspicion that when he declined to take through the Northern Labour Organization at Grootfontein the surplus labour from Ovamboland, the Okavango and Angola, it was because he wished to take the stream of Angola labour which we in SWA had created by dint of hard work over a long period and much judicious expenditure. We felt that he would sooner or later endeavour to get into closer contact with Angola and now he seems to be attempting to do so. If he could have a station closer to Runtu (Rundu) things would, of course, be much easier for the WNLA. However, from the purely labour aspect the question seems to be ‘How can the Angolan labor be used to the best advantage from all points of view?’.

The WNLA’s aggressiveness for the Angolan market could partly be because it was not allowed to recruit, at least legally, SWA ‘natives’, these being reserved for the mines and industries in the country. As shown on the map below, the WNLA had in the past recruited migrant labourers in SWA, from both the central and northern areas. Migrant workers would either travel from Gobabis through Ghanzi to Maun, Nata³⁵ and thence to Francistown. The other route was from Oshikango through Ondangua, Tsumeb, and Grootfontein, Karakuwise thence to Maun, Nata and on to Francistown. The third route was from Oshikango to Runtu (Rundu), Andara, Mohembo, Shakawe through Maun, and Nata to Francistown. Migrant workers who undertook the latter route did so mainly to evade the authorities who were bent on preventing them from enlisting for the Rand mines. In most cases, they paraded as Angolan nationals to be accepted by the WNLA. This aspect was highlighted by the WNLA in their communication to the Secretary for Native Affairs titled ‘Natives from South West Africa’:

I have the honour to refer to certain discussions which have taken place between your Department, the South West Africa Administration, and this Association, in regard to the engagement by the Association of South West Africa natives for employment on the Witwatersrand gold mines. ...As the result of these discussions it has been agreed that, provided the SWAA places no obstacles to the passage, across the Caprivi Strip, of ANGOLA natives on their way to Mohembo, the Association, on its part, will do everything in its power to ensure that no native resident in the Territory of South West Africa shall be engaged by it. The arrangement is to come into force as from 1st January, 1940, and in the meantime no active steps will be taken by the Association to attract South West Africa natives to Mohembo. The practical difficulties associated with the restriction are recognized by all concerned. It may not be always possible for the Association to

³³ D.L. Smit to Mr. Forsyth, dated 19 October 1942 (Manuscript, NAP).

³⁴ Manuscript, NAP.

³⁵ For the Basubiya (Bekuhane) of Botswana, Nata is supposed to be Nanta, meaning finish or boundary. It marked the end of the southern boundary of their pre-colonial Kingdom of Itenge.

avoid the engagement of a native from South West Africa who purports to be a native from Angola, but the Association will do everything in its power to exclude South West Africa natives from engagement.

On the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* side, WNLA reception depots were established in adjacent territories before the territory of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was taken over by the Union Government. These were placed at Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia across the border at a place with the same name and another at Kazungula in Bechuanaland at the confluence of the Chobe and the Zambezi River. The existence of these stations depended on the goodwill of Northern Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. In the event of interference by those governments, the WNLA was conscious that a station in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* could take their place with quite satisfactory results. The government of Northern Rhodesia suspended the WNLA from recruiting people in Barotseland and operating on its soil in about 1942 or 1943.³⁶ Recruits from those areas however continued to be engaged by WNLA by traveling to the station at Kazungula. As a replacement, the Association just simply moved their station to Katima Mulilo in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Migrant labourers from Barotseland, Angola and beyond³⁷ could thus cross into Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* for recruitment by the WNLA. The total output of migrant labourers from this region was put at 6, 000 per annum in 1944 and was steadily increasing.³⁸ From the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, Kruger gives a figure with a monthly average of 30 in 1962³⁹, but by 1975, Pretorius records a figure of 300 per annum⁴⁰ which is about 25 per month. The slight drop can be attributed to two factors: firstly, the Zambianization policy implemented at independence rendered it difficult for people from the Eastern Caprivi Strip to find employment in that country. And secondly, job opportunities through government driven projects in the Eastern Caprivi Strip increased.

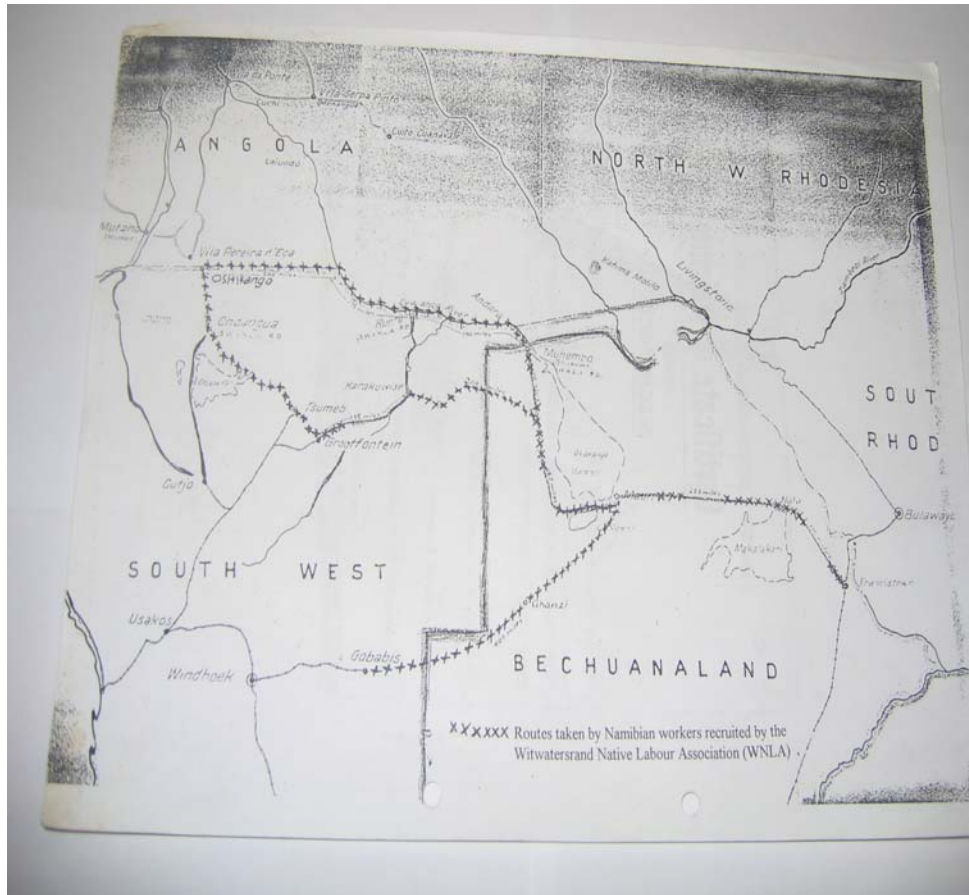
³⁶ Recruitment was suspended probably owing to local demand for labour for the war effort. The suspension was for two years only.

³⁷ There is evidence showing that the WNLA recruited from as far as the Congo. See, for example: Musambachime, M.C., 'Bantu Ba Anglais: The Function and Role of Northern Rhodesian (Zambian) Workers in Katanga (Shaba) from 1911-1940', Paper presented at the School of Education, University of Zambia, October 1992.

³⁸ Gemmill to Secretary: Native Affairs, dated 19 October 1944 (Manuscript, NAP).

³⁹ Kruger, C.E., 'History of Caprivi Strip', Chapt. 9, p. 10 (NAN, A472).

⁴⁰ Pretorius, 1975, p. 11.



Map 7: XXXX: Routes of WNLA migrant labourers from SWA to the Rand Mines

It was, in turn, difficult to employ ‘non-Strip-natives’ or ‘alien natives’ as they were differently called, because the administration required employers to reverse the trend of preferring the latter to the locals. Still, in 1975, about 4% of the total population of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (1000 males) was estimated to be outside the territory on migrant work at any given time though the actual figure could ultimately be higher.⁴¹ The strategic location of the Caprivi *Zipfel* as a frontier for tapping migrant labourers from Angola put the WNLA at loggerheads with another potential competitor, the Government of Southern Rhodesia. The latter requested the Union Government in 1945 to grant it the lease of land in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* to establish a labourers’ rest camp, despite the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

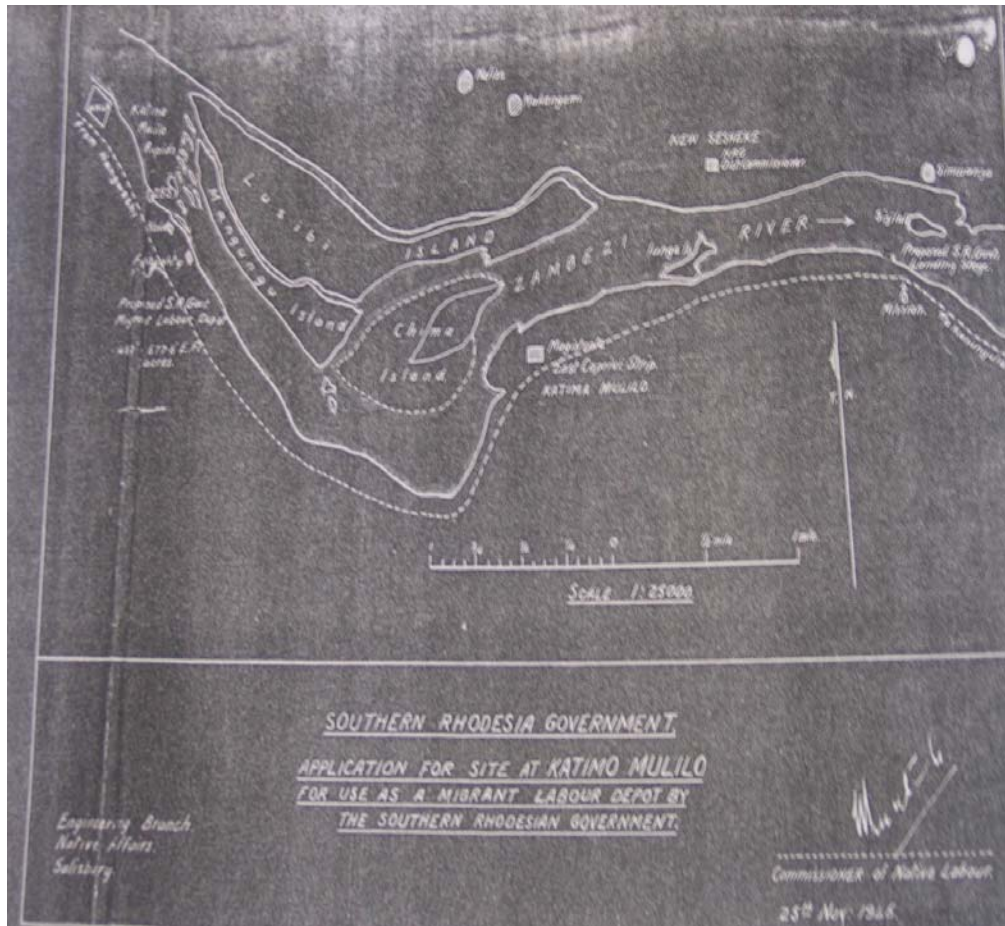
fact that it was already running a similar site in Northern Rhodesia. The site requested was about seven acres, an increase from the initial one acre. The WNLA and the Gold Producers' Committee fiercely protested against this move, arguing that the Government of Southern Rhodesia wanted to preserve the labour resources of the Northern Territories for its exclusive use and that therefore the attempt to lease a site in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was another link in the chain to prevent such labour reaching the Union.⁴² They particularly stressed that the Government of Southern Rhodesia in the meantime had cordoned off its border with the Union to make it difficult for labourers from Southern Rhodesia to be engaged on the Rand. The Union Government sought legal advice in this matter and it was found that there were no legal grounds to deny the Government of Southern Rhodesia the right to lease a site (indicated on the map below) in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

Even though the above site was granted, there are no records to indicate that it was taken nor could it be conclusively established what the inhibiting factors might have been which prevented this from happening. One factor is probable, this being the labour stand-off that existed at the time between the Government of Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese Government.⁴³ The two governments entered into an agreement in 1934 whereby the Southern Rhodesia Government was to recruit 15, 000 labourers from Portuguese East Africa. Instead about 75, 000 were clandestinely recruited from the area. When the Government of Southern Rhodesia asked the Portuguese for a recruiting station in Portuguese East Africa, the latter demanded that the clandestine recruits be returned first.⁴⁴

⁴² Letter from the General Manager of WNLA to the Secretary for Native Affairs dated 28 April 1947 (Manuscript, NAP).

⁴³ Kangumu, B., 2000, p. 74.

⁴⁴ Letter from the Dept.: Native Affairs to the Secretary to the Prime Minister, dated 07 May 1947 (Manuscript, NAP).



Map 8: Map showing site allocated to the Southern Rhodesian Government for a camp in the Eastern Caprivi Strip.

For Northern and Southern Rhodesia, the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was more than just a conduit (frontier) for labour. In a reversal of the thinking of the colonial lobby in relation to the Germans, who considered the Caprivi *Zipfel* their link from West to East Africa, legislators in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia perceived the Caprivi *Zipfel* as that country's link to the west coast. A motion brought by a Mr. C.S. Knight was introduced and discussed as far back as 1932 for the Caprivi Strip to be added to Rhodesia and extended to the western ocean. It was believed that this could happen in the event of the then envisaged amalgamation of the two Rhodesias which could not afford to depend on outlets (port facilities) controlled by other powers. Mr. Knight expressed the undesirability of the Walvis Bay route which ran through barren country. The idea was to establish a port at the Kunene mouth or thereabouts, which he described (obtaining a port) as a duty to themselves and to posterity - except that his 'posterity' did not include

the people who occupied the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. According to the lawmaker ‘...there was no white population on that Strip, and the natives comprised only a few nomads, so that no injustice would be done anybody’.⁴⁵ Another member of the Legislative Council, a Mr. Kennedy Harris, supported the motion. However nothing seems to have come out of this motion beyond the deliberations in the Legislative Council. The issue would resurface again in June 1951 in the House of Assembly through a Mr. H. Eastwood, a Labour member for the Bulawayo District, who urged: ‘The Caprivi Strip was a no-man’s-land and the Government of Southern Rhodesia should stake a claim to it immediately’.⁴⁶

Having outlined in detail the nature of frontier labour disputes involving the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* and argued that the market was Angola, it might be logical to examine the nature of the Angolan market and also the benefits which accrued to it from migrant labour. Angola was one of the relatively densely populated countries in Southern Africa at this time. The total population of Angola was estimated to be well over three million and the area with which the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* formed a sought-after frontier was estimated to have about 1, 600, 00 people. About 400, 000 male adults could thus be directly tapped from this area through the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.⁴⁷ The WNLA planned to extract a total output of 40, 000 migrant workers per annum from this area.

For the local economies migrant labour was a source of income for most families. Labourers were subjected to compulsory deferred pay and repatriation at the completion of their period of service. ‘Every labourer returned from the mines with about £10 cash besides goods.’⁴⁸ For the young men, it was adventure and prestige, a chance to acquire wealth, particularly bride-wealth. Since they would become migrant labourer to get money for lobola, migrant labour turned into a form of initiation, a preparation for marriage and therefore manhood. Of course there were also other social impacts such as

⁴⁵ *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, Saturday 24 December, 1932.

⁴⁶ SAPA, June 1951.

⁴⁷ Letter from Gemmill of WNLA to Secretary for Native Affairs dated 19 October 1944 (manuscript, NAP).

⁴⁸ Kangumu, B., 2000, p.74.

societal break-down when men go away and leave their households in the care of their wives.⁴⁹ Infrastructure development was another contribution which the WNLA made to the economy of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* especially the making of roads. To give sense to the pioneering work of the WNLA in this respect, the following quotation about transport facilities in Katima Mulilo in 1939 will suffice:

The transport available to the officials included, on land, a scotch cart drawn by oxen and two mules for riding and by river, a barge paddled by a crew of 12 to 14 men and a small out-board boat that was mostly used for occasional nearby trips. There were no roads at this stage apart from sledge tracks and footpaths and indeed no motor vehicles, these being introduced only in 1940 by the Special Company of Native Military Corps that was formed in the Caprivi Strip after the outbreak of the Second World War.⁵⁰

The WNLA was instrumental in making the road from Katima Mulilo to Kwando, linking eastern and western Caprivi, another from the Northern Rhodesia border bypassing Katima Mulilo headquarters to their depot near Namwi Island, and in surveying a road linking Katima Mulilo with the pontoon service at Mahundu near Luhofu (now Ibbu) which was then the crossing point into Bechuanaland before the construction of the Ngoma Bridge. A vital instance in this regard was the WNLA's transnational engagement in those parts: a classic is the Katima Mulilo-Singalamwe road ending at Manyeha crossing (now Kongola Bridge). This road ran along the surveyed northern boundary with Northern Rhodesia and at some points it ran into Northern Rhodesia and into the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* – an international road indeed. The government of Northern Rhodesia, expressed concern about this transgression, although not very vociferously. Both accepted this as inevitable because the WNLA was involved in both countries and probably because this road acted as a firebreak to both territories. Since motor transport was not certainly to be relied on at the best of times as a way to get out, the WNLA river transport was crucial in the development of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. As illustrated by the map below, to get to the outside world, a person traveling from Katima Mulilo would travel by barge/boat to Kazungula, from there by road through Kachikau, Nunga, Nata, Francistown, Palapye and on to Pretoria or alternatively, through Kachikau, Maun,

⁴⁹ For a detailed discussion on the social impact of migrant labor on northern Namibia, see Ndeutala Angolo Hishongwa, *The Contract Labor System in Northern Namibia*.

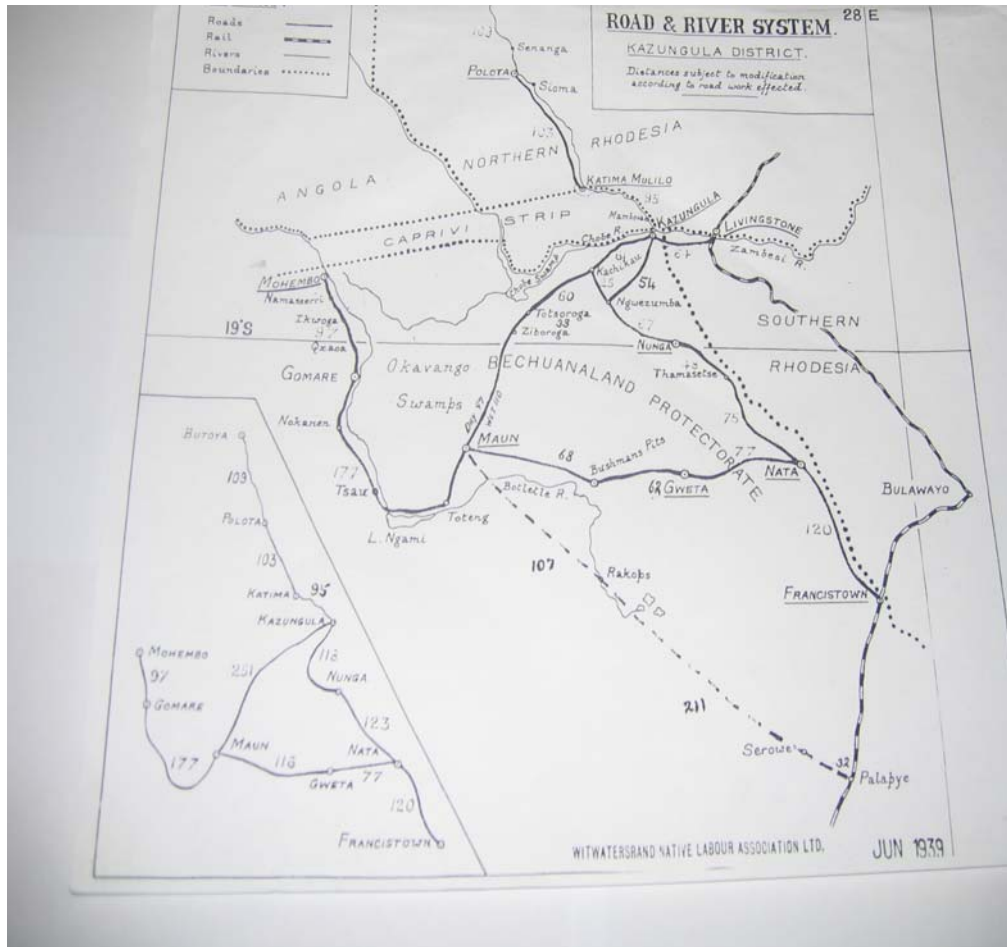
⁵⁰ C.E. Kruger, In Kangumu, B., 2000, p. 64.

Palapye and then Pretoria. The other route would be from Kazungula to Livingstone then by rail through Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia and then Francistown to Pretoria. An even easier way to travel was by airplane on the weekly (at times bi-weekly) WNLA flights from Katima Mulilo to Francistown and Pretoria. An airstrip made by Jack Ashwin of WNLA had existed at Katima Mulilo since the beginning of World War II. According to Zeller and Kangumu, 'it became the most important direct traffic link to both SA and SWA and was also used for military and air training exercises by the SADF and SAAF. Both goods and people, including migrant laborers to the Rand mines were transported to and from Caprivi by Air.'⁵¹

In concluding this section on frontier labour migrancy, it is important to reiterate the view expressed above of the role of transport systems in identity formation. It is stated that the routes for migrant labour from the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel faced north, and especially east and south (see above map). The Eastern Caprivi therefore developed in a peripheral enclosure – its outside interaction pointed away from SWA of which it was politically an integral component, to neighbouring territories of which geographically it was an integral component. These countries were conscious of SA's administrative control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, although the Caprivi was a long way away from the administrative centre. Even when residents 'went' away on migrant work, they had to return (note compulsory repatriation upon expiration of contract work) to the Caprivi. It is argued here that migrant labour through the Northern Labour Organization to other parts of SWA was a missed opportunity to instill in 'Caprivians' a sense of SWA 'national' identity at that early stage of the country's development. While the Apartheid policy of fragmentation would have required migrant workers from the Caprivi to still 'come back', the situation would not be as it turned out – that former President Sam Nujoma, a nationalist – would meet a person from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* for the first time only in 1964 - 74 years

⁵¹ Zeller & Kangumu, 2006b, p.6.

after the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel was appended to DSWA - in the person of fellow nationalist Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye.⁵²



Map 9: Map showing WNLA road and water transport system from Caprivi to Pretoria

Military Frontier as an aspect of Caprivianness

The death of two South African policemen on the border between Caprivi and Zambia must bring to every thinking person in this economically prosperous country the shocking realization that the Republic is involved in a *Titanic Struggle* [my emphasis]. The next few years may prove to be decisive for our country's future and the survival of Whites in Southern Africa.

⁵² Nujoma, Sam, 2001, p. 136.

So declared the influential government mouthpiece – *Die Vaderland*.⁵³ This comment came in the wake of the widespread landmine explosions in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* blamed on PLAN, SWAPO's military wing. Two points stand out monumentally clear in the above quotation: Firstly, that the war of liberation in Namibia, as elsewhere in southern Africa, had strong international foreign policy dimensions, which pitted the then two superpowers, the Soviet Union and USA, against each other in Africa during the cold war. For Apartheid SA and her apologists, SWAPO and other nationalist movements were just 'communist-cum-Soviet Trojan horses': thus SA presented herself as an 'anti-communist bulwark and bastion of *white*-Western values.'⁵⁴ For the USA and its allies, Soviet expansionism and communism were greater evils compared with Apartheid. With the fall of the Portuguese regime in Angola and Mozambique, precipitated by the 25 April, 1974 *coup d'etat* in Portugal and world wide advances against imperialism in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia), the USA was forced to abandon its earlier policy towards southern Africa. As recommended by the National Security Study Memorandum 39 (NSSM39), the view that 'whites are here [southern Africa] to stay and the only way that constructive engagement can come about is through them. There is no hope for the blacks to gain the political rights they seek through violence, which will only lead to chaos and increased opportunities for the communists.'⁵⁵ What needed to be done, and soon, was to at least delay transition to majority rule in South Africa itself and install neo-colonialist regimes in neighboring territories. As Moleah correctly tells us: 'imperialism found itself not only on the defensive but on the run.'⁵⁶ Secondly, the above quotation put the Caprivi Strip at the centre of SA's growing confrontation with advancing 'Black Africa': 'the Eastern Caprivi Strip is our frontline...', declared the *Johannesburg Star*.⁵⁷

It is this perception of the Caprivi Strip as a 'frontline', which is the concern in this section. The section will trace a strategic shift in the perception of the territory from a

⁵³ Quoted in Katjavivi, 1986, p. 268.

⁵⁴ Moleah, 1983, p. 260.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵⁷ In Vigne, Randolph, *A dwelling place of our own*, 1973, p. 32.

useless corridor to a useful one,⁵⁸ 'with far greater political significance than the German Chancellor could ever have foreseen.'⁵⁹ Due to its wider frontage with Angola and convergence of Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia, the Caprivi Strip was described by *Uniform*, the newspaper of the SA Army, as the '...most sensitive point of South Africa's finger in Africa.'⁶⁰ For Apartheid SA, the Caprivi Strip was a first line of defence against the advance of Black Africa, a training base for her military forces as well as a springboard for attack and destabilization against the frontline states. An even better description is provided by Brigadier HJ Zinn of the SADF when he accompanied the Minister of Defence to the Eastern Caprivi Strip in 1954. In a special article written for *Kommando* (September 1954, p. 6),⁶¹ Zinn described the Caprivi Strip as an important 'launch-pad and shock absorber in case of unrest/attack in surrounding areas which has totally different landscape than that of the Union.' For Black Africa, the Caprivi *Zipfel* is 'Freedom Alley', Ian Forsyth wrote in the *Cape Times*. He continued: 'Strategically, this narrow finger is today one of the most significant areas in the whole of Africa. For the terrorist, whether he is based in Zambia, Angola, or even Northern Botswana, it represents a soft underbelly which might be waiting to be hit hard.'⁶² Resultantly, this small finger or corridor became one of the most heavily militarized areas in the whole of Southern Africa, basically, a military frontier.

It would be far-fetched to argue that the above military strategic shift can be traced back to World War I. Even though there were people in the territory who served in this war, this was not peculiar to the Caprivi *Zipfel*. What is peculiar, though, is the fact that the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, apart from being the first German loss of territory in WWI and the first Allied occupation of enemy territory in the war, was administered continuously as a military/police state right to the verge of the outbreak of WWII. On the outbreak of WWI British troops from Southern Rhodesia collected at Sesheke (Northern Rhodesia) and formally took control of Schuckmansburg, the German post in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

⁵⁸ Kangumu, B., 2000.

⁵⁹ Forsyth, Ian, 'Significant Corridor: A close-up look at the Caprivi Strip', *Cape Times* [Undated].

⁶⁰ *Uniform*, No. 91, March/April 1983.

⁶¹ Another SADF Magazine.

⁶² Ian Forsyth, *Ibid.*, op.cit.

The German resident surrendered without a fight on 21 September 1914. It is reported that he was arrested and removed from office – ‘ironically while enjoying a cup of tea with his counterpart, the Northern Rhodesia Commissioner at Sesheke.’⁶³

A police post under the Bechuanaland authorities was established at Schuckmansburg to administer affairs in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* while various outposts were created for the Western Caprivi. In 1929 the SWAA resumed control of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, again, through police superintendents. The first was Superintendent W.S. Chadwick, the hunter and writer,⁶⁴ but he stayed a few months only and was replaced by Sergeant E.P. Brittz who was the sole European official in the area until 1 August 1939 when the Union Department of Native Affairs took over. On 25 October 1939, Mr. L.F.W. Trollope assumed duty as Magistrate and Native Commissioner with Mr. C.E. Kruger as his assistant in both capacities.

Their roles would soon take on a military flavour. Shortly after the outbreak of WWII a Special Company of Native Military Corps was formed in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Its main purpose was to protect the Victoria Falls bridge connecting the two Rhodesias, which the Allied Forces anticipated would be a strategic enemy target in WWII. Mr. Trollope was appointed Commanding Officer with the rank of Captain and Mr. Kruger 2i/c with the rank of Lieutenant. The European members were: Lieutenant L.D. Thompson, 2nd Lieutenants H.H.L. Smuts, A.W. Leppan, J.M. Whittle; Warrant Officer E.S. Edminson; Staff sergeants H.E.F. Hillebrand, V.P. Barrell, E.M. Bassingethwaite, J.A. Smuts, A.J. Potgieter, H.J.H Stewart, P. Hansmeyer, J.M. van Helsdingent. Some of the ‘Caprivian’ non-commissioned officers were sent on courses to the Union. The courses were mainly in ‘driving’ and ‘first aid and hygiene’. European members attended courses at Voortrekkerhoogte and Zonderwater from time to time. Not much activity took place during the war period in the area of which the Caprivi *Zipfel* formed a part. The military company was kept busy by improving the east-west landing strip made by

⁶³ See Fossé, J.L., 1996, p. 71, who quotes from Curson, 1947:124. Apparently while they were at the table, the host called to receive an urgent message, which was simply: the two nations were at war.

⁶⁴ The writer of *Big Game Stories*

Superintendent Brittz at Katima Mulilo, widening sledge tracks to allow use by motor transport and the clearing of the Northern Rhodesia-Capriivi boundary 'cut-line' which ran from the Katima Mulilo rapids to the Mashi River of stamps and bushes. The intelligence section covered neighboring territories and carried out reconnaissance surveys in the territory for the character of the country and road systems. Meteorological observations were taken daily and passed to the S.A.A.F. Meteorological Section by radio – on call sign ZUBC. This military company was disbanded in 1943.

The late 1940s to the 1950s were relatively quiet on the military front in the Eastern Capriivi *Zipfel*. There was however, increased utilization of the airstrip by the SADF and SAAF for military and air training manoeuvres, as well as for border patrols. In fact, these training exercises were part of a scheme for air training in SA, which began as far back as 1937.⁶⁵ The scheme was greatly expanded after the outbreak of the war when the United Kingdom was offered facilities for training R.A.F. aircrews in SA. Schools were immediately opened in SA at Baragwanath, Randfontein, Kimberley, East London, Oudshoorn, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. At its peak 36 Air Schools had been established necessitating new airfields with extensive hangar and housing facilities. By 31 December 1945, 33,347 men had been trained as pilots, observers, navigators, bomb-aimers and air-gunners. Of these 20,800 were R.A.F., 12,221 were S.A.A.F. and 326 Allied personnel.⁶⁶ At the same time, plans to build a Tropical Military Training School in the Capriivi *Zipfel* were accelerated in the 1950s, it being the only territory under Union control where soldiers could train under tropical conditions. Plans to establish such a school culminated in a visit by Mr. F.C. Erasmus, Minister of Defence, the Chief of Staff, and the Under-Secretary for Defence to the area in 1954 for discussions. Writing in the same year, the Magistrate and Commissioner at the time, A.B. Colenbrander, urged for interest in the development of the Eastern Capriivi *Zipfel*, adding: 'There is no question of its strategic and tactical value in time of war in my mind.'⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Year Book*, Article, No. 23, 1946-Chart. XXIX, p. 12 (SA Military Archives, 11WH, Civil, 169).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ In a letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 20 December 1954 (Manuscript, NAN).

A police post was established at Katima Mulilo in 1961 with responsibilities, among others, for border patrols and counter-insurgency. It consisted of a dwelling house, an office with single quarters under the same roof, a store, garage, and one or two cells for detaining wrongdoers. It was manned by two white personnel,⁶⁸ a sergeant and a constable and was assisted by four or five black units.⁶⁹

It was two events in the 1960s that had a significant bearing on the future of the Caprivi and the continuing development of a 'Caprivianness'. These were the formation of the OAU (Organization of African Unity) and the outcome of the ICJ (International Court of Justice) case against South Africa in respect of its South West African responsibilities. The formation of the OAU Liberation Committee was a signal, at least in principle, that independent African states will not stand idle while the rest of Africa was still colonized. It was a source of great inspiration. While SWAPO believed the ICJ ruling will be in its favour, military training of PLAN combatants, which began in 1962, continued.⁷⁰ The ICJ's announcement came on 18 July 1966 to the effect that it had no power to decide on the matter. SWAPO was extremely disappointed and the PLAN combatants, who had by this time set up camp in Northern Namibia, immediately launched the armed struggle on 26 August 1966. In a statement released the same day, SWAPO announced its preparedness to take up arms, thereby acceding to the OAU's Liberation Committee's pre-condition for assistance: 'We have no alternative but to rise in arms and bring our own liberation. The supreme test must be faced and we must at once begin to cross the many rivers of blood on our march towards freedom...'⁷¹ The launch of the armed struggle can be interpreted as having its immediate origin in the negative judgment of the ICJ.⁷² This is strongly reflected in a SWAPO publication of 1968:

As long as we waited for the judgment at the ICJ in The Hague, the training of fighters was a precaution rather than a direct preparation for immediate action...We hoped the outcome of the case would be in our favor. As long as we had that hope, we did not want to resort to violent

⁶⁸ Sergeant F.P. Hartman and Constable Sakkie Bosman. Constable Bosman later married Hartman's daughter, Susan.

⁶⁹ Names of blacks in the Police;

⁷⁰ Shityuwete, H., *Never Follow the wolf*, 1990, p. 96.

⁷¹ Quoted in Vigne, R., *Op.cit.*, 1973, p. 29.

⁷² See Katjavivi, P., 'The rise of nationalism in Namibia and its international dimensions', p. 263 (D.Phil, Oxford, 1986).

methods. However, the judgment let us down, and what we had prepared for as a kind of unreality, suddenly became the cold and hard reality for us. We took to arms, we had no other choice.⁷³

While accepting the ICJ failure as the critical reason for taking up arms, SWAPO was generally disillusioned with the UN for the failure of the world body to take immediate action against SA. A shift away from petitioning as a tool was in the offing. As early as 1963, Sam Nujoma, president of SWAPO, wrote to Andimba Herman Toivo ja Toivo expressing his displeasure with the UN and the failure of petitioning:

During my stay...in Dar-es-Salaam I petitioned the UN many times. When nothing happened it dawned on me that the freedom of our country will never come about through peaceful means...⁷⁴

The Caprivi Strip was the only area of occupied SWA which was closest to PLAN's Kongwa camp in Tanzania, for Angola was still occupied by the Portuguese at the time of the launch of the armed struggle. The territory thus inevitably played a central role in the development and formative years of the armed liberation war. PLAN established contact in the territory, made easier by the 1964 merger between CANU and SWAPO. Helao Shityuwete, a member of one of the first groups that passed through the Caprivi Strip, writes in his autobiography about Joseph Nawa who met them on the border and whom they briefed concerning their mission.⁷⁵ To win the support and confidence of the locals was vital in guerrilla warfare. PLAN combatants were able to acquaint themselves with the terrain and identify enemy troop movements while disguised as civilians. In this way they could stay for longer periods in the country without being detected. Of course logistically, this was advantageous because the fighters went into the field with only what they could carry and light arms, since their bases were far removed from the operational zone. They relied on the locals for food, water and other necessities; assistance, which SWAPO acknowledges, was forthcoming.⁷⁶ What this required from the combatants was a gun in one hand and a manifesto in another. This was in line with the stated principle of the movement that 'it is politics that leads the gun.'⁷⁷ PLAN combatants were effective

⁷³ *Namibia News*, (London) 6-7, 1968, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Shay, R. & Vermaak, C., *The Silent War*, 1971, p. 160.

⁷⁵ Shityuwete, H., *Never follow the wolf*, 1990, p. 106.

⁷⁶ SWAPO Department of Information and Publicity, *SWAPO Information on SWAPO: An Historical Profile*, Lusaka, July 1978, p. 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

armed political militants, as can be discerned from the following account by the SA Minister of Police, issued in October 1968 about 'a new threat' on Namibia's northern borders, where literally hundreds of trained men were waiting to enter the country:

They were using new tactics. In the past, men had crossed the border heavily armed, using their weapons to terrorize the local inhabitants. Now they were coming unarmed, avoiding clashes with the police, and attempting to influence chiefs and others to cooperate with them.⁷⁸

This support for the combatants by the locals in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* led to brutal police reprisals and culminated in the October 1968 Singalamwe massacre discussed in detail in Chapter Seven. About sixty-three people were killed and hundreds rounded up for interrogation and torture. Scores fled into neighbouring territories, many, especially children, dying en route.

A much heavier blow was dealt to PLAN⁷⁹ on 18 May 1967 when Tobias Hainyeko, its first commander, was killed on the Zambezi River by the SA Police (SAP) while drawing their fire in the process of enabling the guerrilla party he was conducting to cross the Zambezi river into the Caprivi in safety. He was engaged against two SAP officers – Warrant Officer P. Grobler and Constable A. Jacobs, who were accompanied by an African Constable K.L. Chaka. Warrant Officer Grobler and Constable Chaka were badly wounded from Hainyeko's bullets and were immediately removed by helicopter to a military hospital near Pretoria. They were presented with the SAP Star for Distinguished Service which was the SAP's second highest decoration. This account, however, is contrary to Sam Nujoma's version. He contends that Hainyeko shot dead Grobler and wounded another who later succumbed from injuries.⁸⁰ Nujoma's version could not be verified by any other source. It is highly unlikely that his version could be correct. What could be established concerning the injuries is that Grobler was penetrated by a bullet in his lung and in fact it was Chaka who had underwent an emergency operation. It could be that Chaka was more seriously injured compared to his senior officer. In his book on PLAN's combat operations, Oswin Namakalu chose not to reveal whether there were any

⁷⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 October 1968, cited in SA Institute of Race Relations, *A Survey of Race Relations in SA*, 1968 (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1969), p. 64. quoted in Katjavivi, *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁷⁹ Then known as SWALA - South West Africa Liberation Army.

⁸⁰ Nujoma, 2001, p.172, 179.

deaths apart from Hainyeko's, except to state that a third officer was also shot.⁸¹ Tobias Hainyeko was on a mission to investigate conditions in the Caprivi Strip in order to determine how to improve communications between the operational headquarters in Tanzania and PLAN's fighting units in Namibia. SWAPO's account is that the local manager of the Caltex Company, which operated the Zambezi River Transport, betrayed Hainyeko to the SAP.⁸² Shityuwete, Nujoma and Namakalu however point fingers at his deputy, Leonard Philemon Shuuya 'Castro'. Castro was apparently detained by the South Africans in February 1966 and then planted back in SWAPO as an agent.⁸³ Castro briefly succeeded Hainyeko until he was arrested and handed over to the Tanzanian authorities that, in Nujoma's words "kept him away while the struggle continued."⁸⁴ Castro was released 17 years later, and settled abroad.

PLAN's 'hit and run' tactics at this stage of the war has been usefully described by Susan Brown.⁸⁵ From her account it can be concluded that the SADF's losses in this phase were 5 dead and 35 wounded. To this could be added the 10 dead and 10 wounded in the 23 August 1978 PLAN bombardment of Katima Mulilo. She records a much higher figure of casualties on PLAN's side. For example, of the two large PLAN groups which entered the Caprivi in 1968, a total of 178 had been killed or captured and the remaining combatants withdrew into Zambia.⁸⁶ This however, could be only SA official figure. As can be expected, a review of PLAN, SWAPO and international media sources on SADF casualties' paints a different picture as reflected in the diagram below:

⁸¹ Namakalu, 2004, pp.17-18.

⁸² Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, 1988, p.60.

⁸³ Brown, Susan, 'Diplomacy by other means' in Leys and Saul, *Namibia's liberation struggle*, 1995, p.21.

⁸⁴ Nujoma, *Ibid.*, p.180

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.21-23

⁸⁶ Susan Brown, *op.cit.* p. 21. It is accepted given the fact that she relied on Steenkamp (see ^{n.380}) as a source of information in this regard.

No.	Name of battle/ attack	Place	Commander	Date	Casualties	Equipment captured	Source
1	Attack on SADF Convoy between Kongola and Libebe			2 April 1971	(Just) many		<i>Namibia News</i> -vol.4, No.3-10, March- October 1971
2	Ambush of SADF Armored car	Katima Mulilo		19 th April 1971	4 officers and 2 NCO'S Killed		
3	Landmine Explosion	Between KM And Singalawe			15 killed		<i>Namibia New</i> , vol. 4 No. 3-10 March- October 1971
4	Guerrilla attacks			SWAPO War Communiqué- 20 October 1971	9 killed, 17 wounded		<i>Namibia News</i> , Vol.4, No. 11-12 Nov-Dec 1971
5	Landmine explosions			22 February 1972	18 dead		Mr. BJ van der Walt Administrator, in <i>Daily Telegraph</i>
6	Ambush enemy Platoon	Near Kamene military base		Friday 20 April 1973	37 killed, 2 wounded and escaped	Nato weapons, Belgian made FAL, 308 and light machine guns, British made LMG's 'Bren', ammunition a radio transmitter., etc	SWAPO Communiqué No. 2 (1973), in <i>Namibia News</i> , vol.6, No.5-6, May- June 1973
7	Capture of Singalamwe base	Singalamwe		9 April 1975	Many killed including two SA agents captured	Six land rovers, two trucks and five Danish radios	<i>Namibia News</i> , vol. 8, no. 9-12 Sept-Dec 1975
8	Landmine explosion	Caprivi		15 October 1975	One		<i>Namibia News</i> , vol. 8, Sept-Dec 1975

Table 10: Diagram showing PLAN battle encounters

The above statistics were provided by SWAPO war communiqués in its various publications mainly the *Namibia News* (1971-1978), and could therefore as easily be interpreted as that movement's war propaganda as could SADF statistic for its propaganda. On both sides there was a deliberate willingness to conceal the number of their dead. For SA the aim of this was to portray their frontline-, the Caprivi Strip, as being under their control. The little information which was divulged was just enough to - and calculated to - instill a sense of insecurity mainly in white South Africans who continued to endure and sacrifice their lives in this border war. Secondly, many of what was reported were casualties in respect of policemen not members of the SADF. Also, these isolated incidences occurred on the Zambian border. This was to deny, firstly, the fact that SADF had been involved on this frontline during this period, and secondly, that PLAN operated from inside Zambia thereby justifying 'hot pursuits' into that country which was a violation of its territorial integrity.

In respect of SWAPO, the portrayal of heavy casualties on the part of SADF was mainly intended for the international community, to show that the armed struggle was as effective a tool for liberation as political or negotiated settlement in its 'two-edged sword'.⁸⁷ Also, it was intended to encourage Namibians, especially the youth, to go into exile and join PLAN while at the same time creating a favourable environment for combatants to operate from inside the country and for locals, especially, to provide shelter, food, and water. If SWAPO's statistics are anything to go by it will be noted that generally accepted view that SA suffered its worst casualties up to that time during the August 1978 Katima Mulilo attack⁸⁸ is challenged. A rundown of the above figures put SA's deaths and casualties at 103, and does not include major attacks such as the Katima Mulilo attack, and the casualties of two attacks on Singalamwe, etc.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Saul and Leys, 1995, *The Two-Edged Sword*.

⁸⁸ See Kangumu, *Forgotten Corner of Namibia*, 2000.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of major PLAN combat attacks see the recently published book by Oswin O. Namakalu, *Armed Liberation Struggle: Some Accounts Of Plan's Combat Operations*, Windhoek: Gamsberg, 2004. One weakness of Namakalu's work is that even though his exposition is a useful catalogue of encounters, it is very silent on casualties. This is probably due as much to a lack of proper statistics in the 'hit-run' nature of the war as maybe a desire not to venture into the propaganda which characterized much of this period.

The war casualties on this frontline during this period are often interpreted in terms of military personnel, installations and equipment only. Hardly ever does one come across a study of the impact of the war on the civilian population and such a study is long overdue.⁹⁰ An exception is the October 1968 Singalamwe massacre, which was reported by SWAPO in 1974 (discussed in Chapter Seven).

This opens up into the next aspect of the military frontier: the militarization and use of the Caprivi Strip as a springboard or launch-pad for attacks and for the destabilization of neighbouring states dotting the frontier line. The SADF aggression and intervention in Angola and Zambia had been widely discussed by others.⁹¹ The SA response to the escalating war against SWAPO took various forms: from complete denial of losses on the battlefield, militarization, the détente campaign to win regional governments to her side and the nationalization of the liberation war through the creation of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF). The Caprivi Strip became one of the most heavily militarized areas in southern Africa at this time. On the western side, the SADF had three major army bases and two military training bases: Buffalo (also known as Bagani), Omega, Chetto and the Fort Doppies and Hippo training bases. On the eastern side of the Caprivi Strip, four major bases dotted the frontier: these being the Mpacha airbase, Katima base, the WENELA base⁹² and the Katounyana military base. In total, nine major military bases were strategically located in the Caprivi Strip. This excludes smaller bases and airfields such as the one located at Bukalo and Impalila Island on the Zambezi and Chobe Rivers. It was from these military facilities that SA both trained the Reconnaissance Commandos (Recces, Special Units) such as Koevoet, the Barotse surrogates and the Inkatha movement from KwaZulu Natal in SA, and launched attacks

⁹⁰ My colleagues Dr. Jeremy Silvester and Ms. Martha Akawa are currently (2006) conducting research under the auspices of the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle (AACRLS) examining the impact of the war on the Namibian civilian population both inside and outside Namibia. Hopefully this would address this aspect of the war in the Caprivi strip and not suffer from the usual historiographical anomaly of treating the Caprivi strip as separate from the rest of Namibia.

⁹¹ See among others: Moleah, A.T., *Namibia: The Struggle for liberation* (1983), Steenkamp, *Borderstrike*, (1983), Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics* (c1983), Breytenbach, *They live by the sword* (1990), Stiff, *The silent war* (1999). For a focused discussion in relation to the Caprivi Strip, see Kangumu, B., 2000.

⁹² Situated right on the border between Namibia and Zambia, where the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association had their camp built as a rest camp for migrant workers.

on Angola (Operation Reindeer – code name for the attack on Kassinga) and Zambia (Operation Dingo).

Operation Dingo involved training a group of dissidents from Zambia's western province (Barotseland) at Fort Doppies in the Western Caprivi from 1971 to 1977. The Barotse of western Zambia historically regarded their area as a separate state but this wish was ignored by British imperial rule at its close, a state of affairs which was upheld by the nationalist government of Kenneth Kaunda. A crack-down on protesters led many to cross into Angola, prominent among was one Adamson Mushala,⁹³ who led a group for training in Caprivi and thus the group became known as the 'Mushala group'. Their training was jointly coordinated by PIDE (Portuguese security police) who flew them into Caprivi, the Bureau for State Security (BOSS), and the Recces. The aim was to discourage Kaunda's government from offering rear bases to SWAPO and the ANC (SA's African National Congress). It is reported that this worked to some extent following the Detente talks between Pretoria and Lusaka, which led to the brutal sacrifice of Mushala's group.⁹⁴ One day the group was loaded into a truck by operatives of BOSS before the completion of their training, apparently to be deployed into Zambia for an urgent operation. It was later discovered that they were put into boats on the Zambezi. These headed across the river into the waiting arms of Zambian Defence Force members who opened fire on them. This happened while both Mushala and Jan Breytenbach, their chief instructor, were away. Although they regrouped back at Fort Doppies, SA cut ties with the group in 1977⁹⁵ and Mushala was killed in combat against Zambian soldiers in 1982.

Operation Reindeer was, until then, SA's most brutal campaign against SWAPO in Angola after its failed invasion of 1975/6. About 800 died on the 4 May 1978, and

⁹³ The link between Adamson Mushala and Barotseland secessionism was however not very clear. It is possible that he had little or nothing to do with Lozi secessionism since he was Kaonde and recruited in a Lunda area. It is also possible that the SADF would capitalize on the existence of secession in Barotseland through utilizing their agents such as Mushala to destabilize Zambia and not necessarily to aid secession.

⁹⁴ See Stiff, *The Silent War*, 1999, p. 41.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.42.

SWAPO decided to reciprocate with Operation Revenge, the 23 August 1978 attack on Katima Mulilo. It appears that SADF and PLAN knew that an attack by the other was imminent. While PLAN wanted to take revenge very soon, it received intelligence information that SADF planned an incursion into Zambia scheduled for 26 August 1978. Namakalu reports that increased reconnaissance flights and above-normal enemy activities on Zambian soil were observed at this time.⁹⁶ Also, that a top-secret aerial map of all known PLAN bases marked as targets which fell into the hands of the SADF in the planned operation was obtained by PLAN commanders. These bases were evacuated, and because of the SADF's 'hot-pursuits', they were not inhabited after the attack. PLAN had to strike first. From this perspective, it can be argued that Operation Revenge was also a pre-emptive strike. SA intelligence reported a heavy PLAN military build-up across the border and a significant visit to western Zambia by Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO, in a move, which was seen in SA circles as aimed at boosting the morale of the soldiers before the attack.⁹⁷ The other theory linked the tour to a planned visit to those parts by Marti Ahtisaari, the newly appointed UN Commissioner for SWA. In any event, an attack on Katima Mulilo during a time when a UN envoy was visiting would have given it the necessary publicity especially, at a time when the UN Security Council was about to meet and discuss the question of Namibian independence.

The following entry in the Log Book⁹⁸ of the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo describes the 1978 attack:

⁹⁶ Namakalu, 2004, 76.

⁹⁷ Steenkamp, *Borderstrike*, 1983, p.149.

⁹⁸ Entry of 23rd August: Log Book of Holy Family Mission, Katima Mulilo, Caprivi Strip, SWA/Namibia, Book I, 1943 – 1994. The mission also maintains a second log book on Pius XII Girls School, which was established to enhance the attendance of the girl child in school. According to the database of the National Archives in Pretoria, an Accession (Reference A 409) of primary materials is held by the Roman Catholic Mission Katima Mulilo containing the following in one volume: Diaries of Roman Catholic Mission, Katima Mulilo, 1975-1983; Correspondence of Holy Family Mission Katima Mulilo on: Occupancy, Mafwe schools, Kuta, Hospital, 1944-1978; Notes on Katima Mulilo, 1960-1983; Manuscript: How Civic Action has helped Kizito College, 1975-1984; Extract from *Zambezi Mission: A History of the Capuchins in Zambia*, 1931-1981, on Holy Family in Caprivi, 1944-1982; and, Photographs of Roman Catholic Church, Katima Mulilo. Unfortunately, none of the above could be found during my fieldwork at the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo except for the two Log Books. Father George, with whom I had discussions, maintained that he was not aware of the existence of such materials. I got the impression that their archive was not well organized. This is a real concern in Namibia where a lot of private archives are virtually unaccounted for and not usually accessed by researchers; or else probably they were not comfortable to let me access the required information, not that I have any particular reason why they would be distrustful.

The mission was awakened at 1:00 am by a fierce rocket attack by the Zambians from across the river at Sesheke. The sisters got the girls to be wrapped in their blankets under their beds and prayed with them until the attack ended at 4:30. Major du Toit and his men call at the end of the attack to see if everybody was all right. No damage was done on the mission, although some small missiles landed nearby. However, heard next day that bedroom where our civil-action-soldier teacher's sleep was it by a rocket and ten killed (all S.Africans) RIP. Ours teachers escaped injury.

The perception that the attack was carried out by the 'Zambians', as displayed above, was reinforced by the fact that it was carried out from Zambian soil.⁹⁹ This was not the case. However, the attack was undertaken with the knowledge of the Zambian authorities. It took place at about 01:15 am, just fifteen minutes after a routine broadcast by Radio Zambia carried a news report stating that the war against SA was about intensify. This was intended to forewarn the civilian population on both sides of the Zambezi in case of a SA retaliation, which indeed took place. There were no civilian casualties reported in this attack, which concentrated mainly on Katima and WNLA bases. Two factors might account for this. The first was the precise planning/calculations not to cause civilian casualties on the part of PLAN combatants when attacking.¹⁰⁰ Apart from the few missiles, which landed near the Holy Mission reported above, only one other stray missile was reported to have landed in the civilian residential area of Ngweze, and which caused damage to the primary school there. The second is that bunkers/bomb shelters, were constructed around Kaima Mulilo (both in the White and Black sections) in

⁹⁹ According to Namakalu (*Op.cit.*, p. 75), the original plan was to attack from Namibian soil but this was shelved as more information came in on the location of bases and the enemy's routine patrols and other observations. Another consideration was that the heavy weapons and ammunition used during the attack was carried by shoulder.

¹⁰⁰ The impact of the attack on the civilian population is yet to be researched. It is reported that some residents of Katima Mulilo fled under the cover of the night and walked for miles to their villages of origin, some reaching Bukalo and Ngoma on the Namibian-Botswana border. It is told how parents left behind their children, how men wore their wives' skirts and dresses in the rush of things, and how one mother picked up a pet dog thinking it was her infant child. It is not clear how Katima Mulilo was selected for Operation Revenge, in light of the fact that PLAN's theatre of war had already shifted by this time. Likando (*Op.cit.*, 1989: 149-50) briefly tells us about the 'behind the scene' planning of Operation Revenge and places it in the wider conflict (what he terms 'Owambo tribalism') between those PLAN fighters from the Caprivi and their Oshiwambo counterparts. He states that the aim was apparently to 'destroy' the town by shelling it indiscriminately and the advice to select enemy targets was perceived as treacherous. He further reports continued misunderstandings between the fighters even after the attack. These were resolved only by the intervention of the leadership. Apparently a delegation led by Albert Mishake Muyongo accompanied by Lemmy Matengu and some junior PLAN officers had to travel to the frontline to establish the tenacity of the reported clashes. While dissatisfaction might have existed between the two groups, it could not be established from any other source whether it was to the extent as reported by Likando. In any case the fact that no civilian casualties were reported shows that the aim could not have been to inflict indiscriminate damage to the town.

preparations for the attack. These structures, which are largely dilapidated at present are a vivid testimony to the strike, and give Katima Mulilo the impression of a border town in a military frontier. The day following the attack high government officials from SA flew to Katima Mulilo. These included General Viljoen, General Gleeson Geldenhuys, and the Administrator for SWA, Judge Marthinus Steyn. The Super Felon¹⁰¹, which was carrying them, was nearly struck by an anti-craft shell and two mortar bombs, which were fired from Sesheke.¹⁰² Reinforcements were called in from SA and Grootfontein and the SADF, as expected, pursued PLAN fighters inside Zambia for up to a hundred kilometers north of the cutoff line.

Two other aspects of the military frontier in the Caprivi Strip deserve brief mention: the impact of the war and militarization on the San population in West Caprivi and the Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) project in the Eastern Caprivi. SA's intention was to nationalize the war of liberation, turning Black on Black. For this reason the so-called 'Bushmen' Battalion was the first to be formed in 1974¹⁰³ in what came to be known later as SWATF (South West Africa Territorial Force). The SWATF was ethnically based and spread along the operational zone. The Caprivi Strip was designated as Sector 70 of the operational zone and housed two full battalions: 201 Battalion ('Bushmen') at Omega and 33 Battalion, later named 701 Battalion, at Mpacha near Katima Mulilo. The medium of instruction in the Mpacha battalion was English as opposed to Afrikaans which was used in Omega. The San (Kxoe) who fled from Angola were received in West Caprivi by the SADF in a reception camp built for them.¹⁰⁴ West Caprivi was proclaimed as a nature park in 1963 and upgraded to a Game Reserve in 1968.¹⁰⁵ The area was however declared a SA military zone and closed to civilians before any activities could start.¹⁰⁶ A number of San families were forcibly removed from the Angolan border where a one kilometer

¹⁰¹ SADF aircraft.

¹⁰² Steenkamp, *Borderstrike*, 1983, p. 158.

¹⁰³ Moleah, *Op cit* 1983, p. 268.

¹⁰⁴ Brenzinger, 'Moving to survive', in *Khoisan Forum*, 1997, P. 30.

¹⁰⁵ Brown & Jones, *Results of a Socio-ecological Survey of the West Caprivi Strip*, 1994, p. 85.

¹⁰⁶ Brenzinger, 'Moving to survive', 1997, P. 30.

wide strip was proclaimed as a free-fire zone.¹⁰⁷ By concentrating the San in army camps, their traditional way of living that of hunting and gathering, was destroyed. They however possessed one vital skill badly needed by the SADF: tracking. Sixteen San volunteers plus one white officer and six national servicemen initially kick-started the recruitment of the Kxoe into the SA Army at the Omega base in West Caprivi.¹⁰⁸ Their numbers in the army steadily increased to about a thousand strong force composed entirely of San troops under white SA commanders. As trackers they moved in front of patrols and armoured vehicles thereby exposing themselves to landmine explosions. In short, they were used as human shields for the mainly white SA Army. Their families lived with them at the Omega base bringing the number of those involved to 5, 000 or eighty per cent of the population of West Caprivi.¹⁰⁹ Those who were not fit for recruitment in the army, such as women and older men, were employed as labourers, dressmakers and cooks. SA kept the existence of the Omega base secret until 1977 when the SADF started using it extensively for propaganda purposes as a prime example on how the army was winning the 'hearts and minds' of people. It was also claimed that care was being taken not to westernize these San soldiers, by encouraging them to return to the bush from time to time to hone their tracking skills¹¹⁰, and in a way, to learn how to be 'Bushmen' again. Apart from Omega, other San families were resettled at Fort Doppies near the Botswana border and the Chetto army base. The Chetto Army base was also used by UNITA. In fact, the SADF used the base only from 1976 to 1983 and UNITA started using it since then until just before Namibian independence.¹¹¹ Contrary to SA denials, the war cost her immensely in human terms as can be deduced from the writings of Breytenbach, a long serving SADF officer in West Caprivi: He writes:

It is difficult to cast my mind's eye back to the Caprivi, where I see rows and rows of white crosses, many of them marking the graves of men I had known intimately. There are hundreds of them, all identical, at the heads of little heaps of earth on which wives, children and friends used to

¹⁰⁷ World Wildlife Fund, *Report on Mbukushu Migration to Kxoe Use Areas to the East of the Okavango River*, June 1997, p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, c1983, p. 254.

¹⁰⁹ Committee on South African War Resistance, 'The South African military occupation of Namibia', in

¹¹⁰ *New York Times*, 6 October 1977, p. 35; *South Africa Digest*, 28 April 1978, pp. 16-17; *Sunday Tribune*, (Durban), 19 October 1981; and *Sunday Express* (Johannesburg), 30 May 1982, p. 6.

¹¹¹ Diemer, J., (1996), 'The Barakwena of the Chetto Area', in *World Wildlife Fund*, *Op.cit.*, p. 11.

lay bunches of indigenous flowers and personal relics from the daily lives of the fallen heroes. Apart from those buried at Buffalo, there are many other unmarked graves in Angola....¹¹²

The mass exodus of young people into exile to join SWAPO in the mid-to-late 1970s and the PLAN advances on the battlefield forced SA to rethink its strategies. Concurrently with military force, the colonial state turned its attention to the WHAM (winning hearts and minds) project.¹¹³ Alongside sister organizations in northern and central Namibia such as Etango in former Owamboland, Ezuva in Kavango, Waaksaamheid en Belange Organisasie vir Namibia in central Namibia, there was established in Caprivi the Caprivi National Service or, more specifically, the Namwi Foundation. Through these organizations, SA waged its dangerous socio-psychological war in and on Namibia. The Namwi Foundation was a pseudo-cultural organization founded under the wing of the SADF to promote, among others, an exclusive geographical and ethnic loyalty and to distance Namibians from SWAPO. Through cultural, sporting and religious activities, the Namwi Foundation promoted tribalism and allegiance to the 'homeland' as a further scheme in the divide and rule policy applied in the country. Those who were in school at this time remember being taken to Nambweza near Lisikili in the Eastern Caprivi Strip basically for indoctrination using a passive and negative attitude towards the liberation struggle waged by SWAPO. More recently (up to 1989), the famous annual Easter Soccer Bonanza, which was sponsored by the SADF in the Caprivi, was added to the Namwi Foundation's bag.

¹¹² Breytenbach, *They Live by the Sword*, 1990, p. 263.

¹¹³ This section on WHAM is adapted from an earlier newspaper article on traditional festivals in the Caprivi region written by the author and entitled: "Andrew Matjila and Traditional Festivals in the Caprivi: The Other Side of the Coin", in *New Era*, 6 October 2006.

Summary

It is generally accepted that the creation of a Caprivianness was a by-product of Germany's wish to have access to the Zambezi River. An addition to this theory is advanced in this chapter, being that Germany aspired to be a neighbour in southern Africa adjacent to, and by poking her nose deep into, the British sphere of influence where resources – both natural and human - were believed to be in abundance. The Caprivi thus became the frontier which bordered unknown British territory. It was this Frontier Identity of the Caprivi, which was the focus of this chapter. It was concluded that there are multi- frontier identities embedded in the Caprivian identities. The discussion was thus limited to the following: refuge as an aspect of frontier identity, labour extraction as frontier identity, military frontier identity and lastly, the Caprivi as a frontier for outlaws.

Refuge as an aspect of frontier identity dates back to pre-colonial times. During that period, the inhabitants of the now Caprivi moved in order to survive, either to another part of the territory or simply across the rivers. Movement was usually away from looming danger or in search of food. The rivers that bounded the Caprivi served as a natural refuge for its inhabitants. With the advent of Lozi/Rotse subjugation, the latter regarded the Caprivi as a granary, as well as hunting and fishing ground. In this way the Caprivi became their frontier of plenty. This however changed with the rise of the Mfecane/Difagane movement in the Eastern Cape (SA) in the 1800s. Migrating hordes under renegade generals of Shaka Zulu (Mzilikazi and Sebetwane), trekked northwards. Sebetwane's Makololo reached the Caprivi in the 1820s. He soon formed an alliance though short-lived with the Subiya chief, Liswani, who assisted him to cross the Zambezi on his north-bound journey of conquer and plunder. Sebetwane conquered the Rotse/Aluyi/Lozi and established himself at Naliele as supreme leader in those parts, including the area, which fell under Chief Liswani's influence. The Caprivi then turned into a source of danger for the Rotse. Even Sebetwane was not safe, for he feared constant harassment from Mzilikazi of the Matebele, his natural enemy. Indeed, angered by Sebetwane's actions, Chief Liswani of the Masubiya invited a contingent of

Mzilikazi's army and mounted a joint attack on Sebetwane. For this act, considered treacherous by Sebetwane, Chief Liswani was invited to Naliele and killed by the Makololo. It was then that the way was cleared for Sebetwane to establish himself at Muzumani (which he named Linyanti, today known as Sangwali) in the Caprivi, thereby recognizing its characteristic of being a safe haven. Ironically, it was this safe haven, which diminished the numbers of his people due to illnesses and led to their total annihilation after the death of Sebetwane. At the close of Makololo rule (at its weakest), the Rotse re-captured the Caprivi and subjugated its people until the advent of European colonialism. Between 1890 and 1909, the Caprivi was regarded as a haven for criminals or prisoners who went into hiding and it was a happy hunting ground for trophy hunters because there was no official European administration in the territory. For this reason, it is argued here, it turned into an outlaw frontier. It has been described as a 'no-man's land'. This should not be condoned since it disregards the presence of the indigenous people of the Caprivi.

With the advent of European colonialism, the Caprivi became a frontier for organized labour extraction in central southern Africa. Labour agents of organizations such as the Labour Agent Bureau based in Bulawayo (Southern Rhodesia), the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) and the Northern Labour Organization (NLO, SWA) competed for recruitment rights and the setting up of recruitment camps in the Caprivi. It was established though that the attraction was not necessarily the Caprivi, which was sparsely populated, but Angola, which was one of the most densely populated areas in southern Africa at the time. The Caprivi therefore was described in this equation as a frontier for extracting Angolan migrant labour. A closer look at the routes of migrant labour and road systems at the time revealed that the Caprivi's external interaction pointed away from SWA, to the north, east and especially south to the Rand mines. It was argued that the idea for the Northern Labour Organization to hire from the Eastern Caprivi Strip for SWA was a missed opportunity to Namibianize the Caprivi. People from the Caprivi 'went and came back' to the Caprivi due to compulsory repatriation at the end of their service. It was also argued that labour extraction in the Caprivi, in fact, pre-dates colonialism to the period of slavery where 'Mambaris' (people of mixed blood),

especially from Angola, chained people to long lines on their way to the west coast for shipment to the Americas and occasionally to Dar es Salaam (east coast). Slavery under the Rotse/Lozi, which was just as cruel, was also discussed.

Lastly, the chapter discussed in great length the military frontier identity of the Caprivi Strip. It was found that the Caprivi Strip was regarded by SA as its military frontline – central to the survival of whites in southern Africa. As the confrontation in southern Africa became situated in the East versus West Cold War, SA presented her racism and Apartheid as anti-communist and itself as a bulwark and bastion of *white western* values. As a result, the Caprivi Strip became a trench, and a first line of defence, a training base for its forces especially special units, and a launch-pad/springboard for attacks and the destabilization of the countries dotting the frontier – the frontline states. It was SA's shock absorber in case of attack from outside. The military strategic importance of the Caprivi Strip was traced back to WWI when it became the first enemy territory to fall into the hands of the Allied forces. Since then, it was continuously administered almost as a 'police state' right to just before the outbreak of WWII when it was transferred to Pretoria for same strategic reasons. At the outbreak of WWII a Company of Native Military Corps was formed in the Caprivi Strip with the purpose of protecting the Victoria Falls bridge which the Allied forces feared would be a natural enemy target in the war, but the Company was disbanded in 1943 without complaint. The SADF and SAAF continued to use the Caprivi Strip for air training exercises and border patrols through-out the 1950s and plans existed at that time for the construction of a tropical military training school in the territory. A number of military installations (bases and airfields) were in place in the Caprivi Strip from where SA conducted its Operation Reindeer (Angola) and Operation Dingo (Zambia).

For black Africa and especially SWAPO, the Caprivi Strip was Freedom Alley. For PLAN, SWAPO's military wing, the territory represented a soft underbelly which was waiting to be hit hard. Indeed the Caprivi Strip was the theatre of war in the formative years of the armed liberation struggle. PLAN successfully employed hit and run tactics and mounted its monumental Operation Revenge with the 23 August 1978 Katima Mulilo

bombardment. To conclude, the chapter also examined the WHAM project as an alternative to military force by the SADF. It was discussed that in regard to the Eastern Caprivi Strip, the SADF formed the Namwi Foundation to spearhead its dangerous socio-psychological warfare. Thus the Caprivi Strip was engaged and perceived by SA as a military frontier where the war was to be contained.

University of Cape Town

SECTION TWO
CONTESTED CAPRIVI IDENTITIES

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER SIX

RIVAL HISTORIES AND CONTESTED IDENTITIES

Introduction

Section one of this dissertation established that Caprivi identities were established over the course of a century in the service of very ambiguous colonial objectives that revealed and emphasized the uniqueness of the place and its history. It is this uniqueness that produced these identities because of the divergent views/perceptions regarding the Caprivi: either as useless or useful and the constant shifting of these perceptions during colonial rule. A continuity, however, underlies these changes in perceptions, that is, the desire to keep the Caprivi remote and separate from the rest of the Mandated Territory for most part of the colonial period. Hence the one of the Caprivi is an identity of separateness. Section Two will focus on internal perceptions and reactions to the Caprivi (responses to identity, Chapter Seven); in relation to each other (rival histories, Chapter Five); and lastly, the identity of people, as ‘Caprivians’, and asks whether this is expressed and/or manifested in secession (Chapter Nine)?

From the colonial administrative perspective, the successive powers accepted that the Caprivi, on the micro-level (internally), was inhabited by two tribal groups only, namely Mafwe (Fwe) and Basubia (Subia); that they had equal status; and that each one owned its separate tribal area. However no officially recognized internal boundary line separated the two tribal groups. According to some scholars¹ it is this lack of an officially recognized internal boundary line which is [was] the cause of numerous struggles and tensions between the two groups, resulting, among others, in open tribal clashes (1992 and 1993). The real cause, I argue, is the basis upon which the Caprivi was premised. Firstly, the Caprivi, as described in this dissertation, emerged out of social upheavals as a

¹ See Maritz, Chris, ‘The Subia and Fwe of Caprivi: Any Historical Grounds for a Status of Primus Inter Pares?’, *Africa Insight*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1996.

direct result of the involvement of outsiders in the Caprivi, beginning with the Aluyi (Lozi), Kololo, Lozi, Germans, and later the South Africans. This interaction with outsiders was accompanied by severe cultural erosion and the disappearance of many customs that could distinguish the people of the Caprivi from that of their subjugators. In short, they lost their distinctness to such an extent that it became difficult for the colonizers to distinguish between the cultural traits of the people of the Caprivi and those of the Aluyi or Makololo. Not surprisingly, the colonial administrators chose to label them just as of 'Lozi' origin. What this meant was that these people had no historical background apart from being 'serfs' of the Lozi and Kololo. In fact Kruger (1963: 4) states the following in the case of the Masubiya:

Their independence and status as a recognized separate tribe dates back (in historical times at any rate) to the German Resident appointed Chikamatondo, a chieftainship supported and strengthened from the time of the Mandate. They themselves name four chiefs before Liswani (circa 1830) but it is doubtful if there was ever entirely independent status....

Thus in constructing a Caprivianness, which is supposedly based on 'historical' grounds (which is the history of the Lozi), the colonial administrators disregarded local history and neglected to trace the path of historical development beyond Lozi rule as a starting point in showing how the present has grown out of the past. Such a quest could have revealed much about the migration and settlement history of the present inhabitants of the Caprivi, which I am inclined to link with what Maritz, after Cohen and Middleton, call 'indigenusness';² This I consider, although an extension of the first, the second or other cause of tensions in the constituencies of Caprivianness. That is, when the identities of the Caprivi were being formed, it had no historical basis apart from subservience to the Lozi, and thus the more important question of 'being first' in the territory remained and still remain unresolved in the historical and political discourse of the area. As noted by Kopytoff, 'being the first settler in an area gave one a special kind of seniority, it gave

² Ibid, p. 177. see also R. Cohen and J. Middleton, 'Introduction', in R. Cohen and J. Middleton, *From tribe to nation in Africa: Studies in incorporation processes*, Maynard MA: Chandler, 1970, p.13.

one the right to 'show the place' to those who came later'.³ Instead of assisting the Caprivians to come to terms with this aspect of their history, the colonial administrators maintained the Lozi *status quo*. The present was more important: Epstein notes with reference to the Copperbelt in Zambia: 'a critical issue is how that identity is to be maintained over a number of generations.'⁴ The Caprivian identities were maintained by denying their historical past beyond Lozi rule; by recognizing only two tribal groups which were supposedly equal and hence submerging those identities that were grouped together under the Mafwe identity; and by showing how different the two groups are from each other. It was premised on divisiveness and the denial of the past in constructing the present. The constituent elements of the Caprivi identities were not afforded the opportunity to stress and select certain values from their past 'to make positive identifications with their forebears'.⁵

The discussion on migration and settlement history in the Caprivi is out of the scope of the present study. The extent to which these issues will be tackled here will be limited to assisting me to catalogue the different instances of tensions in the Caprivi identities, such as the internal boundary and user-rights of land; and the appointment of teachers, positions and promotions in the public service (both before and after independence).

The dispute over 'indigenouness' between Mafwe and Masubiya

Two sets of conflicting claims to indigenouness (rival histories) over Caprivi can be found.⁶ The Subia (Masubia) reasons that the present Caprivi formed part of an historical Subia Kingdom which was supposedly conquered by their chief, Nsundano I; that he named his kingdom Itenge with himself as munitenge (governor, ruler or owner of Itenge: mwinetenge); and that within Itenge were to be found groups such as Totela,

³ Kopytoff, Igor, 'Introduction. The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture', In I. Kopytoff (ed.), *The African Frontier: the Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987, p.22.

⁴ Epstein, A.L., *Ethos and Identity. Three Studies in Ethnicity*, London: Tavistock, 1978: p. xiii.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Adapted from an 'Annexure C: Motivation for Research, Objective and Hypotheses', undated and author unknown, which is in my possession.

Mambukushu and Fwe who were all subject to the authority of munitenge (see Chapter Two).⁷ The Subia further reason that the Fwe as a tribal group does not include the Totela, Yeyi, Mambukushu and Makwengo (Barakwengo or San), but that these groupings were supposed to be independent from the Fwe; that the Subia is the legitimate owner of the Caprivi; that the Subia tribal chief is the 'paramount chief' of the territory (or supposed to be), and that, under these circumstances, there cannot be a border between the two tribal groupings because the whole territory is supposed to belong to the Subia.

Contrary to Subia claims, the Fwe reasoned that the Subia, after they revolted against the authority of the Lozi king, Sipopa, during the nineteenth century when the Lozi re-asserted their control after the overthrow of the Makololo, fled the Caprivi and later came to Mamili (then representative of the Lozi king at Linyanti), to ask for a space to live. Mamili, after consultation with Lewanika, designated a living place for the Subia in the eastern corner of the present Caprivi. The Fwe reasoned furthermore that 'the Germans' (probably Captain Streitwolf, whom they called Katara Matunga - one who surveys the land) drew a border between the Fwe and the Subia and that Resident Streitwolf recognized Mamili as tribal chief in 1909 and 'extended his jurisdiction over the entire non-Subia area of Caprivi'.⁸ For the Fwe thus they existed as a tribal group within an own territory and forms the Yeyi, Totela, Mambukushu and Makwengo components of the Fwe as a tribe. They denied completely that the Subia ever had, or executed, authority over the Fwe.

A host of historical issues arise from the two contrasting views presented above, which beg analysis. To begin with the Subia as the proponents of indigenoussness, the existence of a pre-colonial kingdom of Itenge is accepted (see Chapter Two). Contrary to the view

⁷ The proponent of this view in scholarly circles is a Subiya of Botswana, D.M., Shamukuni, 'The Basubiya', in *Botswana Notes and Records*, Gaborone: The Botswana Society, Vol. 4, 1972, pp. 161-183.

⁸ Pretorius, J.L., 'The Fwe of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel. A Study of their Historical and Geographical Background, tribal Structure and Legal System, with Special Reference to Fwe Family Law and Succession' (MA, Stellenbosch), 1975, p. 42.

held by Maria Fisch⁹, the name Itenge did not begin with Shamukuni's 1972 article (Fisch actually argues that the earliest mention of Itenge was made by Shamukuni) but dates back to at least 1904. In that year Richard Rothe made an expedition to the Caprivi Strip and made the following observation:

His promotion (Mamili of Mamili - others use Linyanti) to the position of head of the German Barotses when the country is definitely occupied might, under favorable circumstances, enable us to keep those native tribes which are composed of Maijes [Mayeyi] and Masubias (*the latter have given their name to the country in the native language*)....¹⁰

Undoubtedly, the name Rothe referred to which the Subia had given the Caprivi is Itenge. Another instance is to be found in February 1909 during the hearings of the so-called Masubiya Cattle Case. In addressing Chief Mamili, Lozi Chief Letia is quoted to have said: 'I do not have a case with Mamili...Mamili is our man whom we appointed there to represent the Lozi State in Itenge. ...the cattle you [Mamili] are now claiming were given to you by Lewanika as a Lozi subject and as a Lozi representative in Itenge'.¹¹ Does this constitute an admission on the part of Letia, an overseer of the Lozi State in its southernmost part, that there was an Itenge before Lozi rule? At its formation, CANU was fighting to free Itenge, and the present secessionists attempt is to have an independent 'State of Itenge': these indicate that the name Itenge existed, regardless of its present use and /or abuse. Further, the Subia contention that within Itenge other groups such as Totela, Mambukushu, Yeyi and Makwengo were to be found, is accepted. In fact Shamukuni (1972:163), in his contribution on the Subia refers accordingly that the Fwe in the time of the Subia chief Nsundano I, inhabited at Linyanti, thus he accepts a Fwe presence in the Eastern Caprivi before the arrival of the Makololo. However whether these groups were under the authority of a munitenge could not be established. There is no evidence to show that the munitenge appointed headmen in Mafwe areas. Until further evidence emerges, one can just affirm Maritz's conclusions regarding 'indigenoussness' in Caprivi:

⁹See Fisch, Maria, *The Secessionist Movement in the Caprivi: A Historical Perspective*, Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1999, p. 46.

¹⁰ Quoted in Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.4. (NAN: A.472).

¹¹ NAZ: BS2/185, Vol. 2.

The available material on the Caprivi does not point to domination of the Fwe by the Subia at any point. In fact, both groups were throughout treated as groups of equal status. From the ethno-history of the Fwe as well as that of the Subia it is clear that there does not exist known historical grounds which can be cited to support a claim that the present Eastern Caprivi as a whole 'belonged' to the Subia and that the Subia chief is - or should be - the only chief (or paramount chief) of the area. No grounds for a claim on 'indigenouness' on the side of the Subia vis-à-vis the Fwe could be found.¹²

However, it could be helpful to make a distinction between dominating a people and having territorial control and Maritz does not seem to be sensitive to this fact. The ethno-history which Prof. Maritz refers to needs contextualization. This is the history which does not go beyond Lozi rule. Maritz's article came in the wake of the Subia Royal House Declaration of 19 October 1991 for indigenouness and was based on field-work notes he compiled over the years in his capacity as part of the Defence team of the Mafwe chieftainship. His conclusions should thus be viewed within those limitations, and indeed, he is not presenting anything new but conforms to the accepted official view on this matter, to keep the *status quo* regardless of the 'past', which was crystallized by the Buddack Report but itself really just an extension of Kruger's view of the matter. I quote at length from both:

Assuming there were in the long distant past something of the kind, is one entitled to brush aside all that has happened since, say in the last 150 to 200 years, and which has operated against a continuation of whatever order there may have been and claim a re-instatement? Surely not! Furthermore, he who asserts a relationship of authority over people would be taking a great risk if he could not rely on their submission: there would be endless trouble in the land.¹³

Replicating Kruger's position is Buddack¹⁴:

Even the principle of legitimacy should not be considered in the absolute. It is doubtful whether, after more than a century of mutual acquiescence in the status quo, there is any good reason for disturbing the established order by force. An argumentation culminating in claims for unconditional sovereignty over the whole of the country and its people, or even the expulsion of some of the inhabitants, will surely lead to armed conflict. Your commissioner finds himself in complete agreement with Capt. Kruger when the latter refers to the implications of restoring an order that possibly existed several centuries ago¹⁵

¹² Maritz, 1996, p. 184.

¹³ Appendix 22b, Para. 93, to the Buddack Report, 1982 (Caprivi Boundary Commission).

¹⁴ Buddack

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

The contention by the Subia that the Fwe does not include Totela, Yeyi, Mbukushu and Makwengo, really depended on the period. During the period under review, indeed, as the Fwe correctly point out, the above-named groups formed part of the Mafwe Identity since 1909 when Streitwolf recognized Simataa Mamili and elevated his position to chief over the Mafwe and all other non-Subia people in the Caprivi. Before that, however, even though consisting of groups which were not centrally organized, the identities under discussion were not part of the Mafwe. More recently, the Yeyi and Mayuni (BaMashi) have successfully splintered off from the Mafwe and reasserted their identities and formed chieftaincies independent of the Mamili dynasty (see Chapter Two). However the issue of the discourse between the Fwe and the Subia is not limited to the issue of a boundary line or indigenusness but also extends to the relative power position within the political structures of the Caprivi, as well as economic opportunities and co-operation in terms of political parties and groupings. Subjacent to all this is the yet to be researched issue of ethnical amalgamation (the merging process) particularly of the Mafwe and its constituent elements, and particularly since the Subia contest this identity, among others by maintaining that the Mafwe and themselves are but one and the same. The questions that ought to be investigated (as according to a research proposal referred to) and which are not within the scope of the present study are:¹⁶

- Who is the Fwe? Origin, background, course of the amalgamation process;
- What is the relationship between the original Fwe (as nucleus) and these elements which are seen as components of the Fwe (Totela, Yeyi, Mbukushu, Mbalangwe, and Makwengo?); and
- What is the nature of the relationship (in terms of ethno-psychological distance) between the components of the Fwe among themselves (interrelationship) and in relation to the Subia?

¹⁶ These are just partially addressed by Pretorius, but he does not delve into the issue of amalgamation processes. Rather the Fwe are treated as a composite group. Adapted from Annexure C, research proposal, *Ibid.*

Two contentions from the Fwe side deserve discussing, firstly, the issue of the Subia asking for a living space from Mamili, and secondly, the issue of an internal boundary line supposedly drawn by the Germans separating the two groups. It is historically correct to state that the Masubia, under chief Nkonkwena, or Liswani II (Mutola Lizuku) fled Impalila Island, his royal residence around 1876 to settle at Rakops near the Makgadigadi Pan in what is now Botswana and stayed there as guests of Khama III of the Nkwato (see Chapter Two).¹⁷ This was due to the fact that after the overthrow of the Kololo, in which the Subia played a crucial role, the latter did not want to submit to Sepopa and rightly claimed their independence status. The Lozi had to re-impose their authority on the Subia and other tribal groups such as the Toka who had stopped paying tribute to them. For the Subia of Sesheke, one way to avoid the tribute was to flee south into Itenge which made it difficult for Sepopa to collect tribute from them. Flint, on the strength of Holub, reiterates that less than a quarter of the subject tribes were actually paying any tribute to Sepopa.¹⁸ It should be noted that Lozi hegemony over surrounding tribes at this time was either insecure or had lapsed.¹⁹ As a consequence of his cruelty and autocratic manner of rule, Sepopa was overthrown by a rebellion organized by a commoner, Maata, and Mwanawina II was installed as King. Thereafter Lozi headmen were placed in the Caprivi. Fearing a similar fate to what happened to Sepopa, chief Nkonkwena then decided to seek refuge in present day Botswana. The significance of this rebellion is that not only did it obtain much support from the Subia²⁰ but it was organized and broke out in Itenge (Caprivi). The role of Mafwe-Mayeyi-Totela in these conflicts is not clear. For this reason I turn to Pretorius for an explanation:

Apparently the Fwe-Yeyi area was not as deeply involved in the bloody feuds of the two decades following Sekeletu's death and the massacre of the Kololo as the politically-minded and ambitious Subiya.²¹

¹⁷ See also Maritz (1996), Shamukuni (1972), and Pretorius (1976).

¹⁸ See footnote 78 of Flint, L., 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36, Issue 2, 2003. Flint quotes from Holub, *Seven Years in south Africa*, p. 146.

¹⁹ Pretorius, 1975, p.20.

²⁰ See E.G. Tabler, 'Introduction' in E.G. Tabler (ed.), *Trade, and Travel in Early Barotseland* (London, 1963), p. 8 and Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, pp. 284-285.

²¹ Pretorius, 1975, p. 30.

Among the group that went to Botswana were the late chief Liswani I's three sons, Muniango, Chika and Maiba, significantly joined by Chikamatondo, a commoner, to whom I will return shortly. It is from this group that a section returned which seem to be at the centre of Fwe claims. It could not be established anywhere, though, that this group reported to Mamili, then not a chief but a representative of the Lozi. In any case, even if they did, it was because of his position as representative of the Lozi that they would report to him in order for him to announce their arrival back to the Lozi Paramount chief. Can one therefore say it is the Mafwe chief who gave the Subia a place to live? As can be expected, the Subia's version of this event is different; that upon their return from Bechuanaland, the group under the leadership of the elderly Chikamatondo went to Barotseland where they were received by Lewanika who had succeeded Mwanawina as paramount chief of the Lozi.

When some of the members of the group expressed the desire to return to their former land (now the Caprivi), Chikamatondo was made headman by the Lozi and sent with the group in recognition of his record of bravery.²² The evidence favours the latter. Firstly, many have commented on Chikamatondo being placed in a position of authority by the Lozi.²³ Indications are that his appointment emanates from this sequence of events. Secondly, lest it be forgotten, Paramount Chief Lewanika was none other than the father of Letia, the Lozi appointee at Mwandu (Sesheke) who was a prince and an important member of the royal family and headed the sub-khuta in the Masubia areas. He adopted the name Lubosi when he was installed in 1878, but changed it to Lewanika (the uniter), which was logical according to Flint because he was at the 'helm of a nation riven by splits and intrigues, where few of his recent predecessors had died a natural death.'²⁴ Thus it would be illogical for the Subia to fear to approach Lewanika directly if they needed a space to live, after-all not only was he the father of their sub-chief but also knew them personally because they were blood relations, as Paramount Chief Lewanika's son, Letia, was a Subia on his maternal side, just like the maternal relations of Mwanawina

²² Notes on Interview with Chief Chikamatondo and others on the subject of his position as chief of the Masubia tribe and having a bearing on the repeated claims by one Mulwaliswani to Chieftainship

²³ See for example Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa'.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

and Sepopa.²⁵ Interestingly, why would the Subia report to the Lozi representative Mamili if Letia was still sub-chief at Sesheke? One possibility would be that Letia was by this time Yeta III and had succeeded his father Lewanika, in which case it would make sense since there was no other chief left than the Lozi Mamili. The other would be the route of travel which the Subia took from Bechuanaland which could allow them to pass-by Linyanti, in which case they would be obliged by custom to pay a courtesy visit to Mamili's court.

It should be noted too that as I argued against Subia authority over the Fwe, there is also no evidence to suggest that Simataa Mamili ever exercised authority in the Subia areas as Fisch would make us believe, that since he (Mamili) was the only chief (not even chief at the time) left in the Caprivi after Nkonkwenwa had fled, he exercised powers over an extensive district that extended from Ngoma in the east to Lizauli in the west.²⁶ Ngoma is nearly in the mid-south extreme of the Subia area. Fisch does not back her assertion with any sources. It is probable, though, that Mamili might have been the headman over certain Subia who resided in Mafwe areas. It is also likely that the oral tradition cultivated by the Fwe in this regard referred to the movement of one group of Subia only. It is difficult to measure whether all the Subia left the Caprivi during the 1876 flight.

The Internal Boundary Issue

Closely related to the contest for indigenosity in the Caprivi was the issue of whether there existed an internal line of division and whether this was at all demarcated. To recap, the colonial administrative discourse recognized two separate tribal identities of equal status each within its own tribal territory. However, the two tribal identities shared an ill-defined line of division and which led to various controversies. The two were at opposing ends of the issue, once again. As stated above, the Fwe reasoned that the

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Fisch, 1999: 57

'German' drew a border between themselves and the Subia while the Subia reasoned that since they are the legitimate owner of the territory (Caprivi) and that their chief is supposed to be the paramount chief, there cannot be a border because the whole territory is supposed to 'belong' to them.

History of the Internal Boundary Dispute

Even though witnesses to the Budack Commission (appointed in 1982 to enquire into the boundary dispute) from both the Fwe and Subia recited past controversies regarding the border dispute during the German period, it proved difficult to corroborate such claims without any evidence. The earliest recorded reference to the boundary line between the Fwe and Subia is found in a letter of 25 July 1930 from Superintendent Brittz of the SWA police, then posted at Schuckmannsburg as resident representative of the SWAA, to the Secretary for SWA in which he stated:²⁷

I have the honour to advise that Chiefs Chikamatondo and Mamili have interviewed me regarding the boundary between their areas, but they both give different names of places which are supposed to form the boundary between the two areas, which Captain Streitwolf made when he was stationed here. The Chiefs have asked me to make enquiries if there are any records at Windhoek which may give the names of the places which form the boundary which Captain Streitwolf mentioned to them when he cut the boundary between the two areas. Chief Chikamatondo claims that the boundary commences at Katima Mulilo Rapids, whereas Chief Mamili claims that the boundary commences at Musuma about 25 miles further eastwards down the Zambezi River."

It can be noted from the above that the discord at this stage was not so much the existence of a boundary between the Fwe and Subia but the course of the actual demarcation line. Does this constitute an acceptance from the Subia chief, Chikamatondo, that indeed a boundary existed between them? The response which came from Windhoek dated 16 October 1930 stated the issue thus:

...an exhaustive search through the records of the late German Administration has failed to discover any report of the supposed fixing of a boundary line between the above tribes by Captain Streitwolf. In 1911 there was published in Berlin a book by that officer on the Caprivi Zipfel. There are references in this book to the absence of any fixed boundaries between the three (sic) tribes, and the author indicates that it would be a very difficult matter to define such a boundary.²⁸

²⁷ Quoted in Budack, 1982, p. 25, see also Kruger 1984, p.13.

²⁸ Kruger, 1984, p. 13.

In fact Buddack reveals there is not even the slightest reference in the book to any demarcation of an internal boundary. On the contrary, Buddack continues, Streitwolf when referring to the Masubiya, Mayeyi and Mafwe, stressed:

Alle diese drei Stämme wohnen recht durcheinander, ohne Stammesgrenzen und ohne jede Stammeseinheit (The three tribes live interspersed, without tribal boundaries and without any tribal cohesion)²⁹

If indeed a boundary was demarcated during the German period before the outbreak of World War I as the Fwe asserted³⁰, perhaps it would have been done by Viktor Herr von Frankenberg und Proschlitz, the Resident who took over from Streitwolf and served from 1911 until 1914. Again there was no reference to any demarcation of a boundary in Herr von Frankenberg's many reports and correspondences to his superiors. Moreover, von Frankenberg compiled a map of the Caprivi in 1912. In it he defines the 'residential area' of the Masubiya tribe as being identical with the Zambezi flood plain to the east of an imaginary line starting at "Lifumbera's (Lifumbela's) kraal' (at or near present Kalimbeza), crossing the Lilonga mulapo (watercourse) at approximately 17° 41`S. and 24° 28`E. (i.e. to the northwest of Bukalo, the tribal headquarters of the Masubiya), and eventually ending at a place called 'Livesa' (approximately at 17° 54` S. and 24° 31` E.) on the Chobe/Linyanti River.³¹ Von Frankenberg did not indicate the tribal area of the Fwe on this map.

It is not clear from the records the source of the imaginary line on which von Frankenberg based his map. At least it shows that the inhabitants had an idea, whether imaginary or not, on which they based their boundary. Therefore the non-existence of a legally or officially drawn boundary line should not be taken to mean that there was no form of territorial rights in a traditional form and interpretation. Rather the problem here seems to be its expression which is influenced by mutually exclusive claims. In examining the Fwe claim, Buddack notes though that the boundary shown on von

²⁹ Streitwolf 1911: 118, translated by Kuno Budack, 1982, p. 25.

³⁰ Budack, 1982, p.21

³¹ Budack, 1982, p. 26.

Frankenberg's map does not conform to the course of the demarcation line as advocated by the Fwe. Also he found lots of inconsistencies and disagreement among Fwe informants with regard to those present at the time of demarcation and even the points of reference of the said boundary as shown on the map below. Budack's conclusion on this issue was as follows:

Considering the inconsistencies contained in the oral traditions, and the lack of sufficient documentary evidence, your commissioner is, to his regret, unable to accept without doubt that a tribal boundary between the Mafwe and the Masubiya areas was officially demarcated by the late German administration. He is, therefore, not prepared to attach great importance to informal marks such as heaps of stone, scars on trees, or dilapidated wooden poles that were adduced by some informants as bearing testimony to the actual course of the alleged demarcation line. On the flimsy evidence at his disposal, your commissioner feels compelled to abandon the idea of using this reputedly historical line of division as the basis for a fair solution to the present dispute.

The boundary issue should be placed in the wider perspective of settlement patterns and population density in the Eastern Caprivi at the time. Whereas there was little pressure in the past for the sparsely populated people to require the demarcation of a boundary, this changed with the times. In the case of the Masubiya who represented about 40% of the population and occupied only about one third of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, an area which was mostly swampy and subject to annual flood inundation, the population density was much higher than in the western areas settled by the Mafwe, a situation that led Budack to conclude:

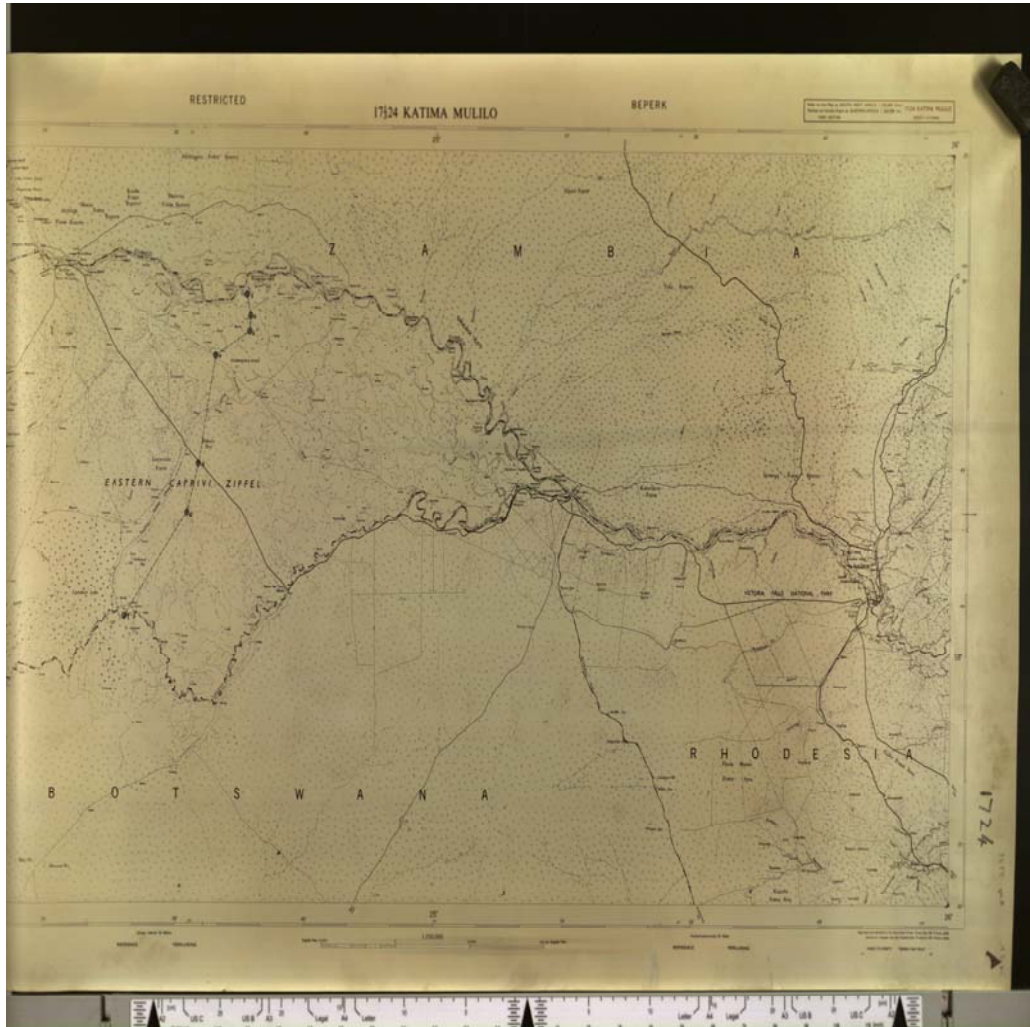
...thoroughly convinced that any further restriction of the Masubiya living space by demarcating a boundary along the lines suggested by their opponents, will inevitably lead to endless perpetuation of the present trouble.³²

Regardless of his conclusion, Budack went forth and recommended a line of demarcation (which he called temporary) that corresponded 'fairly well to what the Mafwe holds as the correct delineation of the borderline, except that it included Kalimbeza and the present 'tribal headquarters' of the Masubiya, Bukalo, in the Masubiya area.'³³ The authorities were reluctant to endorse Budack's recommendation. One consideration would have been possible counter-claims made especially by the Mayeyi and other

³² Quoted in Fossé, 1996, p.116.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118. Just to add that Buddack's whole report was rejected by both the Fwe and Subia.

groups against the Mafwe. Were Eastern Caprivi to be parceled out in such manner, it would have been reduced to cross-roads of internal boundaries, and become a recipe for further tribal conflicts.



Map 1: Map of Eastern Caprivi showing a proposed internal boundary line between the Fwe and Subia, drawn by the Mafwe legal team in preparation for a Case in the High Court of Windhoek between Chief Mamili of the Fwe and Chief Moraliswani of the Subia.

Katima Mulilo: A Communal Capital

It was discussed in Chapter Three that Katima Mulilo served as the administrative centre of the Eastern Caprivi Strip since 28 January 1935. According to the above proposed boundary demarcation line clearly it resorted under the Mafwe chief. It is also noted in Chapter Three that when Katima Mulilo proper was designated in about 1964 and construction begun in all its new dimensions, it was reserved as government land. There was no question therefore regarding the status of Katima Mulilo at the time of the Budack Commission in 1982. In the early 1990s, however, Katima Mulilo became the centre of violent tribal clashes between the Mafwe and Masubiya, and later between the Mayeyi and Mafwe. However, the commissioner applied himself to this issue too. By this time Katima Mulilo proper (administrative centre and white residential area) was complemented by Ngweze, Mafuta, Mission, Wenela, Piggery, Dairy, and housed the Legislative Assembly, various government departments, the official residences of the chairman, vice-chairman (which were chiefs), and other members of the executive committee. It also had two senior secondary schools, a post office, police and army headquarters, a Roman Catholic Church, Seventh Day Adventists, supermarkets, bottle-stores, and filling stations. Economically, general employers included Katima Farm, Eagle Maize mill of the First National Development Corporation and also location of the African open market.

As regard the population, Budack found out that Katima Mulilo was habited by nearly 16 per cent (excluding the whites) of the entire population of the Eastern Caprivi Strip, or 5,945 out of a total figure of 37,419.³⁴ The majority of the people in Katima at the time, Budack found out, were Masubiya in an area considered to be under the Mafwe, as reflected in the diagram below:³⁵

³⁴ Based on the August 1981 census figures, in Budack, 1982, p. 31.

³⁵ Adapted from Budack, 1982, p. 31.

Part of area	ESD No.	Fwe	Subia	Yeyi	Totela	Other	Total
Katima Mulilo	0001	61	39	4	5	3	112
Ngweze	0002-0008	945	2506	217	8	130	3806
Mafuta	2001	367	810	37	26	129	1369
Mission station	2002	167	291	41	5	26	530
Katima Farm	4001	55	26	31	11	5	128
Total		1595	3672	330	55	293	5945

Table 11: Table showing the August 1981 Katima Mulilo Census Figures.

It was important, therefore, to declare the town as a communal capital due to its economic, political, social and religious importance, and Buddack recommended just that. Buddack recommended further that the town be exempted from the jurisdiction of any tribal government and that it should be administered by a village management board elected by those inhabitants entitled to vote. The board was to be placed under the direct control and jurisdiction of the Administration for Caprivians, or the S.W.A. Central Government.

Bukalo, Seat of Munitenge Royal Establishment

The tribal headquarters of the Masubiya shifted from Kabbe in 1969 following a decision by the tribal council meeting held on the 19 June 1968, which was attended by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Mr. P.N. Hansmeyer. The main reason for the transfer was that Kabbe was inaccessible especially during the annual inundation of the eastern flood plains. This was not the first time the Subia made use of Bukalo, though. Oral tradition has it that the correct name should be 'Buikalo', a resting place; that was used by their chief as a stop-over when travelling to Mahundu, another royal residence. Although the move to Bukalo was welcomed by many Subia tribesmen and encouraged by the Bantu

Commissioner, it met with protest and aroused the issue of the boundary in the Mafwe Kkuta (court). Buddack reports that all but late chief Simasiku Mamili rejected the idea of shifting the Subia tribal headquarters to Bukalo. In the end the Fwe accepted the matter as a *fait accompli*. The issue, however, kept resurfacing over the years in different forms. At the time of the Buddack boundary commission, the Fwe had put forward what would seem as a compromise proposal on the issue, which was to leave the Masubiya tribal headquarters undisturbed while extending the Mafwe jurisdiction further to the east. This Buddack found impracticable³⁶, as it meant the Subia tribal authority would operate from a 'recognized' Mafwe tribal area of influence. Buddack recommended that the status of Bukalo should remain as it was, as part of Subia territory and east of his temporary line of boundary demarcation.

The Lake Lyambezi Area

The main economic activities that took place around Lake Lyambezi, or Muntu Njo Buswa to the Subia, were fishing and the cultivation of fields. When the lake is full of water, about two thirds of its total area extending over more than 30 000 ha is covered by reeds while the remainder (about 10 150 ha), consists of an open surface of water.³⁷ Fishing in the lake attracted people from all walks of life and of different tribal groupings, the majority at the time of Buddack's visit being Masubiya followed by the Mayeyi due to the two groups' ancient tradition of freshwater fishing, then the Mafwe and Matotela. Even though most of the fishermen did not fish throughout the year, returning to their villages during planting and harvesting season, a number of fishermen's villages around the lake, as well as temporary fishing camps on the shore and on some islands sprang up. According to a survey done by Dr. van der Waal in 1980, the income per fishing day was R4, 75 while the maximal annual production was 98, 7 tons.³⁸ A fishing cooperative existed on the lake, with a freezing room and the organized marketing

³⁷ Van der Waal, 1976: 7, quoted in Buddack, 1982, p. 33.

³⁸ Van der Waal, 1976, p.7.

of the fish. Still, the majority fished for their own consumption while a third, according to Buddack, sold fish commercially.³⁹

A dried up Lake Lyambezi (as it is presently) revealed fertile soil for agricultural purposes. Lake Lyambezi formed part of the maize producing axis of Sikanjabuka, Luhofu (Ibbu), Mahundu and Zilitene. However it was not only people from those areas who cultivated lands there for there was a seasonal concentration of farmers from different corners of the Caprivi. As can be expected, the concentration of people led to competition with one another, numerous controversies, and even more serious clashes. Under the prevailing circumstances there was no regulation pertaining to fishing especially, and since the tribal authority did not interfere there was no local authority to which fishermen could report.

The fishing and cultivation rights soon got entangled in the wider issue of ownership of the lake and the resurrection of the boundary line between the Mafwe and Masubiya. Buddack recommended that the lake be proclaimed as a communal territory and placed directly under the authority of the Administration for the Caprivians. To settle local disputes and to regulate fishing on the lake, Buddack recommended the establishment of a Lake Lyambezi Fishery Board to be elected by all fishermen active in the area.⁴⁰ In more recent times, a government initiated sugar-cane project at Lake Lyambezi grounded to a halt when it was caught up in the land rights fiasco, masked as lack of consultation, and led PIDICO, the company awarded the tender, to pull out.

On the surface, Buddack's proposals to put the Administration for Caprivians on top of all regulatory issues dealt with above seem workable but it should not be forgotten that similarly, that institution was ridden and paralyzed by the issues of indigenoussness, paramountcy and land rights. In the 'thick of things' of the Administration for Caprivians were the chiefs who alternated as chief minister and ministers in the cabinet (see below)

³⁹ Buddack, 1982, p.35.

⁴⁰ Buddack, 1982, p. 35.

and were involved in the Legislative Council and day-to-day running and administration of affairs required of a minister.

Caprivi Politics and the Issue of Indigenusness

The colonial state granted the status of 'indigenusness' to two groups, Mafwe and Masubiya. As illustrated above, this continued to be a source of trouble throughout the history of the Caprivi.

The Mafwe Kuta

The troubles that engulfed the Mafwe Kuta in 1961 had much to do with the interpretation of the concept of indigenusness as it applied to what constituted a Mafwe, that is, as it included within its ranks Yeyi, Totela, Mbukushu, Mbalangwe and Makwengo. In short, at the core of it was the question of how Fwe became the nucleus of their identity, and how the elements composing the identity viewed themselves in relation to the nucleus (centre), and their status as peripheral. In 1961 Mr. Jackson Mazazi Lukonga was at the forefront of questioning indigenusness among the Mafwe. In February of that year, he wrote letters to a couple of Indunas (headmen) under Chief Mamili of the Mafwe. In those letters, the writer discussed the dismissal of the Ngambela, the Secretary of the Kuta, and two ordinary members.⁴¹ On the 2 July 1961, tribesmen in attendance at a Kuta meeting forced the dismissal of the Ngambela (Musiyalela), the Secretary (Benjamin Mamili) and two ordinary members of the Kuta (Mutimani and Mwala).⁴² Among the accusations leveled at the dismissed Kuta officials were that the Ngambela had done nothing for the people in his 21 years of service, that the two headmen did not respect the chief, and as far as the secretary was concerned, that since he was of royal blood he was not suitable for the position since it was reserved for

⁴¹ Letter dated 24 February 1961 from Jackson M. Lukonga, addressed to Induna Lisita, Induna Sangwali, Batubaja, and many others (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, N1/1/3, Chiefs and Headmen Caprivi Zipfel).

⁴² Letter from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, dated 16 March 1964 (NAP, NTS, 10325, 2/431)

commoners. They also complained that the chief's family was over-represented in the Kuta.

However, Jackson Lukonga's intentions were broader than the dismissal of these officials, as indicated in his letter: '...And then later on we shall install a new chief who is Thomas M. Kabende – because he is the one we see to be clever to be a chief...also that he is suitable to be a chief'.⁴³ In a letter of complaint dated 2 August 1961, addressed to the Magistrate, Chief Mamili identified those behind the dismissals as Joel Mwilima, Mutumuswana, Lota Mifilifili, Isaac Simanyonga and Alfred Siloiso. The link between this group and Jackson Mazazi Lukonga appears to be Alfred Siloiso, a close relative (or brother) of Jackson Lukonga. The motive behind dethroning the chief is summarized by Lukonga in one of his letters:

I have some matters to talk to you – and would like to ask how you feel about these big troubles affecting us as slaves which do not come to an end from the time when people were being captured to the present time. We have, now, observed that this is caused by you elderly people as you do not take heed when we, your sons, advise you. I myself I would like to tell you that we would like to have a Muyeyi (Yeyi) or Mufwe (Fwe) chief. If you still want to be under the rule of the Malozi do so as you like – and of course, I am not trying to cheat you – and warn you that anything you will see in future should not surprise you – and think that we, your children, are not good – and I also would like to let you know that chief Mayiba (Maiba) is treating his people very well because he is also Musubiya (a Subia) – and a person not related to the tribe cannot treat well people of a different tribe.⁴⁴

As summarized by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner when Mr. Jackson Mazazi Lukonga visited him at headquarters in February 1964, the latter was against what he perceived as a Lozi ruling dynasty:

...after expressing a number of complaints about Chief Mamili [he] asked permission to go amongst the people getting their opinions about the chief, claiming that the Mafue and Mayeyi sections of the tribe did not want the ruling Mamili family. Since then it has come out that prior to the visit to this office he had actually written to a number of headmen openly seeking their support against the chief, at least this is what was said at Linyanti.⁴⁵

⁴³ Lukonga letter, *Op cit.*

⁴⁴ Letter to Induna Sangwali of Sangwali, dated 24 February 1961 (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, N1/1/3, Chiefs and Headmen Caprivi *Zipfel*)

⁴⁵ Bantu Affairs Commissioner to Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, 29 March 1964 (NAP, NTS, 10325, 2/431).

The quotations above serve to show that in some quarters people believed that the status of indigenusness was wrongly conferred on the Lozi, and not 'true Mafwe'. A distinction between the Mafwe ruling dynasty and the constituent elements of being a Mafwe is called for, as it translates into a contest for indigenusness between the chief's family, and the followers. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner interviewed an unnamed man in another district of the Mafwe chief about this issue, and this is what he got:

A few days later in another part of the tribal area I asked an old village head of the Mafue section whether any one from his area had attended the meeting and whether they were pleased with what had there been said and received the reply that some words had been good, some not: as to the latter they (the Mafue) did not want to be subject ("Batanka, rather Batanga" – "slaves") to the Mamili family who traditionally had no right to chieftainship in these parts; he acknowledged Lewanika's day and the Makololo before him (when there were regional indunas) but not that Mamili has or had independent status as chief in these parts. (The original Mamili was, of course, a Mukololo Induna at present-day Linyanti); when the Malozi turned on the Makololo and pretty well exterminated them (the men) in the 1860s Simataa was made headman and he assumed the name of his Mukololo predecessor Mamili and had jurisdiction in those parts. Other regional Indunas or representatives were placed, amongst other places, up the Zambezi River not far from Katima Mulilo (Mwanota) and up the Kwando River some miles north of the Caprivi (Seruka, Seluka)...It was only when the Germans came in 1909 that Mamili was elevated to the rank of chief. The old man wanted the 'White Man's rule'.⁴⁶

Clearly, the old man was involved in a deconstruction discourse aimed at the Mamili family's claim to the 'nucleus' and indigenusness of a Mafwe Identity. This differentiation is still being questioned and playing itself out in the current troubles in the Caprivi, including secession (Chapter Nine). As late as 1994, in a letter writer to a local newspaper, Michael Allan Munyandi, assessed the crisis situation in the Caprivi in the following terms, and addresses the difference between 'True Mafwe' and Mbalangwe:

I am writing to express dismay at the manner in which the Mafwe people are being negatively portrayed as being the cause of the tribal squabbles in the Caprivi region....The cause of the present troubles in the region is between the Mbalangwes at Linyanti and the Masubia at Bukalo, namely, the Mamili and Moraliswani tribal Khutas (courts). They are waging a power struggle in the region to determine which tribe should take overall administration. The people of Namibia must be made to understand that chief Mamili and Mishake Muyongo are not Mafwe, but Mbalangwes. The true Mafwe people are those living at Kongola, Choi, Sesheke and Singalamwe up to Imusho and Sinjembela in Zambia. And collectively, they share the same Sifwe language. Therefore, the Mbalangwe clan's association with the Mafwe people is in dubious nature. Maybe, Mafwe elders should clearly explain to us, the young generation, their association with a tribe which speaks a mixture of Lozi and Subia. ...The Mafwe elders should also work to restore our

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

lost identity and culture. We live in a democratic society and this domination and intimidation of one tribe by another must not be allowed to continue.⁴⁷

Nothing much seems to have become of Jackson Mazazi Lukonga's efforts to question indigenusness within the Mafwe identity. His relative, Alfred Siloiso, was fined £50 or £30 plus twenty cattle for his participation in this affair.⁴⁸ The authorities interpreted this as an element suggestive of an emerging nationalism, at a time when CANU's influence was in the air, and ordered Jackson Mazazi Lukonga to do nothing of the kind, adding 'Mazazi Lukonga has had some association with office bearers of the Caprivi African National Union' (p. 1) and that the situation was difficult to assess, ...what with advanced political thought also playing its part.'(p. 2)⁴⁹

Self-Government and indigenusness

Mindful of the preceding troubles in the 1960s in regard to the issue of indigenusness, the Mafwe consolidated themselves in 1972 at the time of the establishment of the Caprivi Legislative Council. The first move was to ensure that its double-barrel form of the people's name was revised. The appellation Mafwe (Bayeyi) had previously been changed to Mafwe only with the Bayeyi component being completely dropped. Protestations about this by the Mayeyi did not yield results. Secondly, a Mafwe element that was featured in the symbols of the Caprivi government: the flag and coat of arms, and on identity cards. As shown below, two elephants representing the authority of the two chiefs were superimposed in the centre of the white panel of the flag.

⁴⁷ "Mafwe suffer unfair abuse" by Michael Allan Munyandi. Letter to the Editor, *New Era*, 16-22 June 1994.

⁴⁸ Anonymous letter dated 21 May 1961, addressed to the Native Commissioner.

⁴⁹ Bantu Affairs Commissioner to Secretary: Bantu Administration, dated 29 March 1964. Just to add that indeed Jackson Mazazi Lukonga was a member of CANU and fled into exile in 1964. He is one of the members expelled together with Muyongo from SWAPO in July 1980, having served on the Politburo of SWAPO.

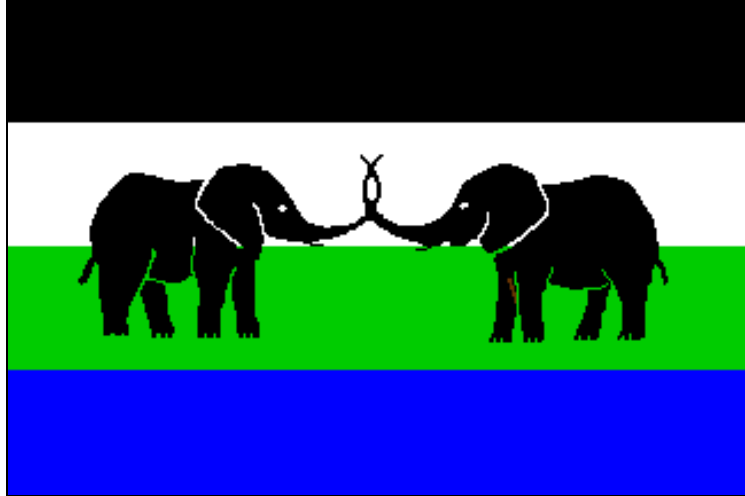


Figure 1: Flag of East-Capriivi adopted in 1976

Apparently the symbolism represented peace, and on the coat of arms and identity documents, it was accompanied by the words *Luyemi Hamoho*, translated literally as ‘Together We Stand’. Ironically, it is this symbolism that was very divisive. Firstly, it only accommodated Mafwe and Masubiya, and even when some Mayeyi had already voiced their desire to keep their independence, this symbolism ignored their wishes. Secondly, this symbolism did absolutely nothing to unite the Mafwe and Masubiya as one group, particularly against the colonial oppressors. Indeed its very purpose was to keep the two separate for the benefit of indirect rule.

The symbol however was challenged constantly. One such challenge came from Chief Moraliswani of the Masubiya. After serving his term as Chief Minister he refused to hand authority over to his Mafwe counter-part in 1976, as per the constitutional provision. Chief Moraliswani invoked the whole issue of indigenusness, arguing how he could hand over to Chief Mamili who is supposed to be his junior. The Administration, however, would not have any of this and eventually, after prolonged discussions which nearly derailed the realization of self-government, Chief Mamili assumed the position of Chief Minister. The Masubiya position was that the constitutional provision that stated that one chief would automatically replace another after a term without an election was not democratic. They favoured an election after every term and if the incumbent was

found to be a good leader during his term, the electorate could choose to re-elect him or her. As good as it sounded, the issue behind this argument was just that the Masubiya believed their chief to be the 'first settler' and therefore owner of Caprivi. In this case, however, the issue remained the implementation of what was agreed to in 1972, the rotation of the chiefs. If it came to an election, the Mafwe were still assured of more votes since they still included Yeyi, Totela and other groups within their ranks.

Chief Moraliswani decided henceforth to challenge the issue of indigenesness through the court of law, partly as a result of a disappointment with the Buddack Commission report. He lodged an application in the Supreme Court in Windhoek in 1983 (with an appeal to the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein, SA). The application was rejected on the grounds that it would not be consistent with the prevailing legislation.⁵⁰ It should be noted that once again a case that is embedded in history was not judged on historical grounds but rather on 'prevailing legislation'. Chief Moraliswani and his people could not in time raise enough money to appeal the courts decision. Perhaps this accounts for the unilateral 'Royal House Declaration' of the Subia on 19th October 1991, which decreed that Moraliswani was Paramount Chief on the basis of indigenesness. But the 1990s were turbulent years in the history of the Caprivi. The Mafwe responded by rejecting Masubia teachers in their schools and there were widespread demonstrations against the promotion of certain officials, which on 31 October 1991 led to the appointment of Judge Levy to investigate protests with reference to promotion of certain officials.⁵¹ The protests continued and the situation was exacerbated by the Mayeyi decision in 1992 to break-away from the Mafwe, installing their own chief in August 1993 (Chapter Two).⁵²

⁵⁰ Maritz, 'The Subia and Fwe', 1996, p. 177.

⁵¹ See Levy, 'Commission of inquiry into the cause of resistance by certain members of the Caprivi Community to the appointment of certain senior public servants [Education]', Levy Report, Windhoek (not dated).

⁵² A personal note about this period: On 8 August 1993, while a teacher at a Secondary School in one of the tribal areas, my colleagues and I were caught up in the tribal conflict between the Mafwe, Masubia and Mayeyi. A group of about 12 young men came to our school and demanded what we were doing in their schools, and that we had no right to be there. The group further claimed that they had the right to do whatever they wished with us or take us wherever they wished. Fortunately a group of local parents congregated at the school and told the young men from a different village to leave us since if we left, the school would be left with no teachers. Therefore, even though naturally they would support the idea to

The Katima Declaration on National Reconciliation

The product of government intervention during this period was the peace agreement, known as the Katima Declaration on National Reconciliation of May 1993. The declaration provided that:⁵³

- There should be mutual recognition of each other as chiefs of equal status, their royal courts as well as their subjects;
- Each tribe shall be entitled to call its supreme traditional leader by whatever traditional or ancestral title or name provided that title does not purport to impose a form of superiority of one tribe over another;
- There shall be mutual recognition of each other's area of jurisdiction based on existing tribal districts;
- It is a prerogative of government to appoint or post public servants to any part of Caprivi without reference to tribal or ethnic origin;
- The conference accepted the freedom of the inhabitants of Caprivi to reside in any part of the region subject to government policy on reconciliation, the payment of tribal land levies and the seeking of permission from the relevant tribal authority;
- It also agreed that respect for traditional chiefs in Caprivi shall be accorded to all chiefs on an equal basis irrespective of the tribe one belongs to;

chase us away, the education of their children was more important. That was on a Sunday. The following Monday at noon the locals had to hide us on one of the islands until midnight, when we started off on foot to Katima Mulilo, a journey of about 100 kilometers, without food and water. The next morning, Tuesday 10 August 1993, we were so exhausted from the journey, lack of food and water that we decided to risk stopping passing vehicles instead of avoiding traffic by walking through the thicket of the forest. The trouble was that we could stop a vehicle full of people sent to hunt for us since we were in a 'wrong' tribal district. Fortunately for us, one car stopped. It belonged to a Yeyi, who immediately took us to Katima Mulilo. The path to Katima was cleared of illegal roadblocks by the police special field forces from Windhoek and Grootfontein shortly before we passed, therefore our journey was uneventful. Despite our protestations, the Ministry of Education sent us back after almost two months long break due to these tribal clashes. Colleagues in some other schools lost their lives in these clashes. That episode was, for us, a close encounter with the issues concerning on an element of Caprivi identity.

⁵³ Recorded in my personal notebook on 12/10/1993. See also *Die Republikein*, 26 May 1993.

- In the event of a dispute arising between the two royal courts, the same shall be settled peacefully in accordance with applicable traditional procedures.

A close scrutiny of the provisions of the Katima Declaration reveals that in fact nothing new was added to alter the neglect of the historical basis on which the issue of indigenusness so much rests. As with the colonial governments before it, the Namibian government was more interested in national reconciliation. For the government, its prerogative to post public servants to any corner of the Caprivi is enshrined while for the Fwe, their demand for their chief to be of equal status with the Subia chief is also guaranteed. For the Subia, the basis for the Royal House Declaration was not realized, at least not to the extent of government recognition which does not confer such status under the provisions of the Traditional Authorities Act, or even by the Fwe for whom it was really intended. However, the Katima Declaration unconsciously confers upon Moraliswani the status of munitenge when it provides that each tribe should address its supreme leader by 'whatever ancestral title' provided the title does not purport to impose a form of superiority of one tribe over another. The title of munitenge, however does just that, it still purports the ownership of Itenge and therefore indirectly still claims indigenusness. The Fwe have since countered this with an equally exclusive title for their chief by adopting the Lozi 'Litunga' which is really the term for paramount chief. The contest for indigenusness has taken a conceptual framework.

Equally, the Declaration's decree that there should be mutual recognition of each other's area of jurisdiction based on 'existing tribal districts' can be seen as yet another problem. It is these existing tribal districts that are partly the source of friction, since there is not one that recognized, but many, and these are highly contested. A number of questions need to be asked. Which one did the declaration recognize and on what basis? Does the declaration recognize and entrench an imaginary line of division, as had been the case previously? Who is the keeper of this imaginary line? In short, the declaration stopped short of adopting the Buddack recommendation to draw a 'temporal' line between the two tribal areas, understandably, as Fossé argues, to do that is to err in anthropological terms because to delineate a border between two communities according to history and

cultural distribution ignores the contingent nature of ethnicity.⁵⁴ Fossé makes this point on the strength of Fardon⁵⁵ who a decade earlier made the following observation about anthropologists and ethnic boundaries:

Since ethnic boundaries do not necessarily coincide with cultural distributions, and since these boundaries are situational, when looked at in contemporary terms, and unstable, if looked at historically, then it follows that it is counterproductive for anthropologists to try to legislate regarding their locations.

To reiterate what is mentioned above, this would be difficult a task to even attempt in the Caprivi. It now has four traditional authorities instead of the two discussed here and it has become a quagmire.⁵⁶ Instead of one virtual or imaginary line of division, there are now four; whether all rest on indigenusness still needs to be seen. The Yeyi and Mashi (Mayuni) anyway had contested being part of the Fwe identity (see Chapter Two).

Summary

This chapter discussed rival histories in the Eastern Caprivi Strip mainly between two identity classifications of the colonial period, namely, Fwe and Subia. The colonists decreed and recognized only the above two ethnic categories which were presumed to be of equal status with each owning its separate area of influence (tribal territory). No

⁵⁴ Fossé, L.J., 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi'. MA Thesis, University of Oslo, 1996, p. 119.

⁵⁵ Fardon, Richard. 'African Ethnogenesis: Limits to the Comparability of Ethnic Phenomena', in Ladislav Holy (ed.), *Comparative Anthropology*, Blackwell, 1987, p. 176.

⁵⁶ As if to conclude the chapter in a 'Caprivi way', I woke up to a headline in a local daily titled 'Masubia Win Land Dispute' (New Era, Tuesday, 20 February 2007). The report had it that through a presidential decree, the disputed land over Muyako near Lake Lyambezi was handed over to the Subia. The President, through the Minister of Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, informed the relevant tribal authorities of his decision at a local lodge in Katima Mulilo. The report says the President acted on the advice of the Council of Traditional Leaders that 'conducted protracted investigations' as provided for by the Council of Traditional Leaders Act of 1997 (Act No. 13 of 1997), as amended by the Council of Traditional Leaders Amendment Act of 2000 (Act No. 31 of 2000). The report continued: 'Though the victors at Muyako greeted the announcement with song and dance, their rivals were not amused. They barred an NBC crew dispatched to the meeting.' The Mafwe Kuta responded in the same newspaper through a letter to the Editor in which they said they 'will not sit idle' and let the Masubia 'grab their ancestral land.' In late 2006 Mafwe tribesmen were arrested in Lake Lyambezi by the Namibian Police for cultivating fields in the Masubiya area. The Fwe maintain that they were not trespassing on Subia land but that they were cultivating fields in Mafwe territory. They accuse a Subia policemen of abusing authority in arresting the said farmers. Muyako village is on the fringes of Lake Lyambezi and encompasses a large section of the disputed boundary. The case is now before the High Court of Namibia.

attempt was made to demarcate or officially recognize the line of division that separated the two groups, this not being necessary at the time probably because of the sparse nature of the population density. While some scholars argue that it is this lack of a clearly defined internal boundary that is the cause of endless struggles and tensions in the area which at a certain stage resulted in open tribal clashes, I argued here that rather the cause of tensions is the basis on which what constitutes the identities of the Caprivi was premised.

Firstly, these identities emerged out of social upheavals as a result of outside intervention in the Caprivi, beginning with the Lozi, the Kololo, and then the Europeans. This interaction resulted in severe cultural erosion and the disappearance of many customs that could distinguish the inhabitants of the present Caprivi from that of their subjugators, in short, they lost their distinctness. Secondly, and therefore, when the processes of constructing the Caprivi was put in motion, it was naturally based on what the outsiders had bequeathed to the people of Caprivi, in this case, 'Loziness'. The people of Caprivi were regarded as having no history of their own beyond Lozi rule. The colonial authorities' construction of what it was to be a Caprivian was therefore based on apparatuses left by the Lozi, the traditional authorities. However the Lozi intervention had deprived many communities of their local leaders up to the time of colonization, and since the Lozi declined the offer to remain in the Caprivi, the colonial administrators modified the tribal structure by grouping certain ethnic identities under an alliance and so reducing tribal structures to only two. What is more, it is the Lozi representative in the Caprivi who was elevated to a position of chief of this ethnic alliance while on the other side, they chose a commoner (someone not of royal blood), to be chief. These were inventions since they did not conform to custom.

This is certainly not how the inhabitants had wanted to be perceived: to owe their status to Loziness, which effectively meant the Lozi could still make a better claim to the Caprivi than they. The locals desired to be perceived as indigenous, but the question remained, which of the two officially recognized identities was more indigenous than the other? The result was a race for indigenusness, which to me, lies at the core of the

tensions in the Caprivi and has successfully paralyzed the Caprivi for most part of its existence. To justify indigenoussness, each group presented a rival and mutually exclusive version of historical development. The Subia reasoned that the present Caprivi formed part of their pre-colonial kingdom of Itenge in which the other groups settled under the authority of the munitenge, ruler or owner of Itenge. This is the basis of their claim to indigenoussness. Contrary to this, the Fwe reasons, it is they who gave land to the Subia upon their return from Bechuanaland where they had fled after a revolt against Sepopa which forced the Subia to leave the Caprivi. This was between 1864 and 1876.

Since then the issue of indigenoussness had been expressed in a variety of forms. For the most part of the colonial period, it was in a form of an internal boundary between the Fwe and Subia. The Fwe reasoned that an internal boundary was demarcated during the German rule of the Caprivi, while the Subia claim that no such line was cut and that it was in any event not necessary since the whole of the Caprivi belongs to them. There is no evidence to suggest that an official cutoff line demarcating the tribal spheres of influence of the two groups was ever made. A commission of inquiry was appointed in 1982 to look into the boundary dispute between the two groups, its recommendations were not implemented but both groups rejected its report. In the early 1960s indigenoussness was a contentious concept among the Mafwe, with certain groups and individuals claiming that the ruling Mamili dynasty was not indigenouss and not true Mafwe. The colonial administration would not have contenance and therefore a Mafwe identity was consolidated further in 1972 when the Yeyi label was dropped officially from the identity, their becoming known as Mafwe instead of Mafwe-Bayeyi. This was at the time of the establishment of the Caprivi Legislative Assembly when again, only two identities – Subia and Fwe - were allowed representation in the house. A provision for the two chiefs to alternate in the position of Chief Minister was entrenched in the Caprivi Bantustan. Chief Moraliswani was the first to serve and when the time came to hand over to Chief Mamili, he refused to do so, again raising the issue of indigenoussness and thereby sparking a constitutional stalemate. In the end, the colonial administration prevailed on the issue and Chief Mamili assumed the position.

The issue of indigenesness would be taken to court; revoked in land rights especially pertaining to the use of Bukalo, Katima Mulilo and the Lake Lyambezi. The contest for indigenesness did not die with colonialism. In 1991, the Subia issued a Royal House Declaration for indigenesness which the Fwe never accepted and led to tensions that resulted in the refusal of public service appointments, thereby leading to the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the matter (the Levy Commission); tribal clashes and eventually a peace conference on the Caprivi which produced the Katima Declaration of National Reconciliation. Briefly put, rival histories based on indigenesness paralyzed the Caprivi and filled it with tensions, commissions and mediations.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

AFRICAN RESPONSES TO THE CAPRIVI IDENTITIES

Introduction

The responses to the creation and consolidation of the Caprivian identities within the Caprivi were varied: the colonial subjects learnt over time to work with, around and against the imposition of foreign rule in their territory. This chapter examines three major events which show both consent and dissent: firstly, the results of the ‘incorporation’ referendum conducted in 1946; secondly, the public hearings conducted by the Odendaal Commission; and lastly, the rise of regional nationalism in the Caprivi Strip, specifically the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU).

The last two, both taking place in the first half of the 1960s, would have far reaching implications and actually mark a turning point in the history of the Caprivi: the Odendaal Commission provided a roadmap towards the inauguration of a Caprivi ‘government’-complete with symbols of state such as an anthem, a flag and a coat of arms. This was the apex of the processes leading to the attainment of a single Caprivi identity. On the other hand, CANU represented the most organized association yet to emerge from the Caprivi Strip through which this single identity was challenged.

Sources of Discontent Prior to 1946

During 1937 Major Leslie French Trollope¹, then Additional Native Commissioner in South West Africa, undertook an inspection tour of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. He found a people ‘better off than most natives’ and a territory where ‘famines and droughts are unknown’; where food in abundance was present in game, in fruit and in the river.

¹ He would become first Native Commissioner/Magistrate of Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* in 1939, deputized by C.E. Kruger.

However he reported that there was no doubt that the 'natives of the strip [were] discontented and that that feeling [was] vocal and was being aired and discussed amongst themselves'.² In fact a written request had already been lodged with the Chief Native Commissioner for South West Africa by Chief Chikamatondo³ of the Masubiya for the replacement of Sergeant Brittz⁴ by another officer. Chief Chikamatondo and his people accused Sergeant Brittz of lowering the selling price of mealies from 10/- to 3/- per bag, and that on one occasion he had told them of what had happened to Chief Ipumbu⁵ when he opposed the administration. Trollope describes the people's attitude towards Sergeant Brittz as being 'antagonistic'. Similarly, Eric W. Louw, Chief Native Commissioner for Northern Areas of the Union Government, reported in 1939 that the people do not like the superintendent.⁶ The people had suggested in their request that the Northern Rhodesian system of leaving an officer in charge of an area for a short time only was the better course. Superintendent Brittz had served for a continuous period of ten years in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

The native population believed that restrictions on the sale of arms and ammunition and the killing of hippos and elephants were all Sergeant Brittz's doings, since these were mainly '*verboden*' orders. All the same, being the only visible representative of the administration in the strip, Sergeant Brittz had to bear the odium for the non-fulfillment of the promises which Major Du Preez made in 1929. Shortly after the Bechuanaland administration was replaced by the South West African administration in 1929, Major Du Preez undertook an inspection tour of the Caprivi Strip during which he apparently made

² Trollope, L, 'Inspection Report: Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*', 16 November 1937, p.19 (NAN: SWAA, File. No. 2267, A503/4).

³ It will be remembered that it was he whom Captain Streitwolf installed as regent Chief of the Masubiya in 1909 at Schuckmansburg, in place of Chief Liswaninyana, who was still young. In 1939, he was about 90 years of age and had been blind for many years and left the administration of the tribal affairs to his son, Mubusisi.

⁴ Resident or representative of SWA in the Eastern Caprivi: Locals called him Brittz Namatama owing to his big cheeks.

⁵ Ipumbu ya Tshilongo was chief of Uukuambi. In 1932 he refused to obey orders from the Hugo Hahn 'Shongola' (whip), SA Native Commissioner for Owamboland. For this act of rebellion the SA air force bombed his palace at Onatshiku and was captured in the process and was deported to Kavango region.

⁶ Louw, E., 'Report on Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*', September 1939, p.17. (NAP: TES 2751, F11/243).

promises which were never honoured by the administration. The promises are said to have been:

- That traders would come from Windhoek and open stores;
- That there would be hospitals;
- That there would be more schools; and
- That more arms and unrestricted ammunition would be supplied by the Superintendent.

Trollope believed the reasons for discontent with the administration at this time to be partly geographical and partly historical. Geographically, the Strip lies between, and was in the closest of contact with, the then protectorates of Bechuanaland and Barotseland. Between 1922 and 1929 the administration of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was handed over to the Bechuanaland authorities. During that period the people of Caprivi enjoyed all the privileges of their counterparts in Bechuanaland, which could not be continued by the South West Africa Administration. The privileges included the buying of arms and ammunition, stores, schools and the sale of cattle.⁷ By Trollope's admission, at the South West African Administration take over, most of the stores closed down, the market for cattle collapsed because these were previously sold through Bechuanaland, and of course in pursuance of the policy of game preservation, the authorities restricted the amount of ammunition to be sold and forbade the purchase of any fresh firearms.

In comparing their conditions therefore, the 'strip natives' did not compare themselves with those of South West Africa in relation to whom they were well off⁸, but with those in Barotseland or of Bechuanaland. Obviously the administration of South West Africa did not appear in too favorable a light with the 'strip natives'. One discontented 'native' addressed Trollope in the following manner to show his disappointment:

We were first under the Barotses...we were happy. Then we were given to Germany. They sent Capt. Streitwolf here. When he came many people ran away as we heard they were cruel and would kill us. But they did nothing to us and left us alone. Then the Bechuanaland government took us over and gave us many things including arms, ammunition, stores, schools and the sale of our cattle. Then the S.W. Government took us over. What have you done for us?⁹

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

Reading the signs of the times even at this early stage, Trollope sounded a caution regarding the developing questioning attitude of the 'natives'. It would be unwise, he wrote, to totally ignore troubles which the authorities in the Rhodesias had been having lately. Such troubles, he believed, had the flavour of Communism and were connected by the authorities with the literature of the 'semi-religious Watch Tower movement'¹⁰. Even though he conceded that he was not suggesting any communist peril in the Strip he pointed a finger at a few educated natives who had been to Rhodesia, and one of whom was present at one of his meetings. Nothing much had changed by 1946 when the 'incorporation' referendum was held. The Eastern Caprivi Strip, however, was now under the South African Department of Native Affairs, represented by one government officer and an assistant. It is against this background that the next section examines the referendum.

The Proposed Incorporation of SWA into the Union

In 1946 the Union of South Africa set out to seek the approval of the United Nations Organization for the incorporation of the Mandated Territory of South West Africa into the Union of South Africa. The Legislative Assembly of South West Africa, representing the European voters, had unanimously asked for incorporation.¹¹ The Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa instructed that the 'native' inhabitants of South West Africa should also be consulted and that the result be reported to him. As the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* was administered by the Department of Native Affairs of the Union, such consultation was carried out by the representative of the said department in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, the Native Commissioner.

The people were summoned to their respective tribal headquarters: the Mafwe at Linyanti on the 24 May and the Masubiya at Kabbe on 27 May 1946. After a lengthy address (a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹¹ Letter from Mr. J. Nesor, newly appointed Secretary for South West Africa, dated 19 March, 1946, to Mr. Mears, Secretary for Native Affairs. (NAN: LKM 3/1/1, File No. 14/1/7).

duplicate of the one used by all native commissioners in Okavango, Ovambo and the Kaokoveld, but adapted slightly to suit the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*) detailing mainly German atrocities in South West Africa and the two world wars, the Native Commissioner withdrew from the gathering to let the people reach a decision and then report to him. In both instances, the two Kutas replied in the affirmative, and were made to sign a Memorial which read in part as follows:¹²

‘We, the undersigned, the Chief, Ngambela¹³, Members and Secretary of the Kuta¹⁴...and our people, wish the following matters to be made known to the peoples of the world:

1. That our people have been happy and have prospered under the rule of the Government of the Union of South Africa and that we should like that Government to continue to rule us;
2. That we do not wish any other Government or people to rule us; and
3. That we would like our country to become part of the Union of South Africa.’

On the surface, the response to incorporation seems to be that of consent. However, such a response should be seen as a product of the processes of consultation used and also the alternatives which were given to the people. Firstly, as noted above, the address and memorials used during the consultations were similar to the ones used by native commissioners in Ovamboland, Okavango, and the Kaokoveld, adapted only slightly to suit the conditions in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. The significance of this is that it indicates predetermined responses, to which the people were just supposed to affix their signatures.

Indeed, Trollope reports that ‘in each case the Chiefs wished to give an offhand reply, similar to the final statement...’¹⁵ Before the people in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* could decide, they were told that the Native People in the Kaokoveld, Ovamboland and Okavango have ‘wholeheartedly expressed their desire to become part of the Union of South Africa and to remain under its flag’.¹⁶ Even though they were administered separately, it would seem this move was designed to show how unwise it would be for

¹² Adapted from a copy of a Memorial marked as Annexure “C”, attached to an affidavit report recording the events, signed by C.E. Kruger on 30 May 1946 before Mr. George Billing, District Commissioner, Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia.

¹³ Prime Minister

¹⁴ Traditional Court

¹⁵ Trollope in a letter to Mr. W.J.G .Mears, Secretary for Native Affairs dated 7 July 1945 (NAN: LKM 3/1/1, file No. 14/1/7).

¹⁶ Address by the Native Commissioner to both the Masubiya and Mafwe Kutas, on 24 May and 27 May 1946, respectively (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, File No.N1/2/1).

them to decide otherwise. Indeed, in deciding in favour of incorporation, the people of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* showed a willingness to be in tandem with the rest of South West Africa, of which their territory was an outpost, and thereby undermine the identity of separateness.

As for the alternatives, Kruger's summary is most telling: 'It was a matter of a simple choice between remaining with South Africa or accepting other named alternatives...'¹⁷ This shows the deceit involved in the process, the difference between 'incorporation' and deciding to 'remain with South Africa', which would not necessarily mean the same thing. The official attitude to this incorporation referendum is best revealed in Trollope's letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs where he says:

I saw the Chiefs, Ngambelas and Kutas of both tribes and as tactfully as I could put the matter to them explaining most carefully that they were in no sense being asked to give a decision in the matter - indeed that if they so desired they could entirely ignore the matter and give no reply at all.

Now what were these alternatives which required tact in order to explain them to the people? Firstly, it was explained to the gatherings that there could be no question of the return to German rule. The people were reminded in the Native Commissioner's address of the chaos created by the German occupation of South West Africa: 'that native tribal organizations had been smashed by the Germans; that they had been left without proper land which they could call their own or their home; that their cattle had been taken away from them, that they were prohibited from owning large stock; and lastly, for the Herero, that they had been scattered far and wide and that they had lost heart and felt themselves enslaved'.¹⁸

Even though none of the above conditions applied to Germany's Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, it should be remembered that when Streitwolf¹⁹ arrived in the Caprivi, he found it apparently 'deserted', the inhabitants and particularly their Lozi Overlords, having fled

¹⁷ Kruger, CE, 'History of the Caprivi Strip 1890-1984', Salt River, 1984, p.4 (NAN: File No. A472).

¹⁸ Address by Native Commissioner, *Ibid.*, op. cit., p.1.

¹⁹ First German Resident in Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*.

from the approaching German rule, having heard most probably from the British in Northern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland how cruel German rule was. This incident was still fresh in the memories of surviving elderly tribesmen. The following four options were put forward as put forward by the administration:

- Return to Barotseland domination;
- Amalgamation with Bechuanaland;
- Re-absorption in South West Africa; or
- Continuance of Union Administration.

It would be noted that the terminology used above is 'continuance' with Union administration and not incorporation. Trollope reports that in conveying their wishes (the acceptance of an alternative four above), the people made no comment on the other alternatives with the exception that they, in particular, looked on any return to Malozi rule from Barotseland with fear. A closer inspection shows that, in fact, the people were not given any options. They could not return to Barotseland enslavement, a yoke they had always wanted to free themselves from. Nor could they choose to amalgamate with Bechuanaland since it was explained to them during the Native Commissioner's address that though they were happy under Bechuanaland administration eventually legal difficulties with the Mandate system made this arrangement fall away. Re-absorption into South West Africa was not considered an option either, both from the government's position as well as that of the inhabitants.

It could be recalled that the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* had been transferred to Pretoria in 1939 due to its 'geographical features'. However, as clearly spelt out above, people were generally too unhappy with the South West Africa Administration to consider a return to that administration. Moreover, the Native Commissioner had stressed in his address how different people of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* were from those in the rest of South West Africa: 'You have not any affinities either of language or of blood or otherwise with

these South West African Natives...'²⁰ Given such limited choice, acceptance of the continuance of South African rule was the most logical conclusion. At the same time, a caution was sounded by the Chief of the Masubiya, Moraliswani Maiba.²¹ He said, even though we desire to be under the Union Flag, 'we do not know what lies in the future but if things do not please us we will complain'.²² It would be seventeen years before they were afforded a real chance to complain about their conditions at the 1963 Odendaal Commission public hearings.

The Odendaal Commission Public Hearings

Overview

A Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Republic of South Africa to look into South West Africa affairs was announced on 21 September 1962 through the Official Gazette Extra-Ordinary of South West Africa, No. 2430. The notice published the terms of reference of the commission as follows:

Having regard to what has already been planned and put into practice, to enquire thoroughly into further promoting the material and moral welfare and the social progress of the inhabitants of South West Africa, and more particularly its non-white inhabitants, and to submit a report with recommendations on a five-year plan for the accelerated development of the various non-white groups of South West Africa, inside as well as outside their own territories, and for the further development and building up of such native territories in South West Africa...

As a general observation on the terms of reference, it is perhaps important to point out that the Commission was specifically asked to carry out its work within the context of '*what has already been planned and put into practice*'. The planning content would therefore be informed and conform to the Apartheid oriented socio-political structure. Indeed, the commission argues for the rightness and appropriateness of separate

²⁰ Address by Native Commissioner, *Ibid.*, p.1

²¹ Maiba Moraliswani succeeded Chikamatondo as chief of the Masubiya in 1946.

²² Adapted from a copy of a Memorial marked as Annexure "C", attached to an affidavit report recording the events, signed by C.E. Kruger on 30 May 1946 before Mr. George Billing, District Commissioner, Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia.

development in different contexts in the report to the exclusion of any other possibility in line with the strategy of development. The Commissioners did not ever try to challenge the basic assumptions of separate development or to examine critically the assumption on which Apartheid thinking was based: the thesis that racial differences imply cultural and spiritual differences. Apartheid was believed to be the sacred principle of organization which could ensure harmonious development.

The Public Hearings at Katima Mulilo

The Odendaal Commission conducted public hearings over two days at Katima Mulilo: Tuesday February 5, 1963 and Wednesday February 6, 1963. The Commission heard oral testimonies from 328 witnesses with the following representational break-down:

- Mafwe Tribe: Chief Mamili and his Chief Councilor, Ngambela David Mutonga and about 191 followers.
- Masubiya Tribe: Chief Maiba Moraliswani and his Chief Councilor, Ngambela Kalundu Munihango, the Secretary of the Kuta Sipensa Lifumbela and about 124 followers.
- Native Constable Robert Nchindo
- Dr. H.J. van R. Mostert, Medical Officer of the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel
- Roman Catholic Hospital: The Priest-in-Charge Rev. Father Curron, Father George, Sister M. Patricia, and Sister Celsa.
- Mr. Jack Ashwin, Manager of Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA).
- Mr. Finaughty, Store owner and resident of the Caprivi for 20 Years.

As a general comment on the public hearings, it is perhaps relevant to point out that the two chiefs and their people were interviewed in one sitting. Apparently due to poor roads the Commission could not visit the traditional headquarters of each chief. Typical of large gatherings, only a handful participated in the deliberations. Of the 320 present at the meeting, only ten cared to register their concerns. On average, the Commission

interviewed more Europeans than people of the Eastern Caprivi. This formed the basis of their recommendations. It is not surprising that the recommendations of the Commission are very much different from what the people demanded. A matter of considerable interest, however, is the fundamental shift from the general grievances of the late 1930s and 1940s to more specific calls for the removal of the Union government from the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*. Of the 10 respondents who expressed their opinions before the commission, only one restrained others from calling on the South African government to leave the Caprivi Strip. The unanimous and vocal call was for the Caprivi to be entrusted in the hands of another government which would have the people's interests rather than the protection of wild animals at heart. The people mentioned such governments as Russia, America, Rhodesia, Ghana, 'UNO'²³, and even the Queen's government as willing to assist them to be independent. The more radical of them believed the people of the Caprivi could govern themselves.

The public hearings were marked by notable absences. All respondents from the African community who gave evidence before the Commission were men. Considering the nature of male dominated traditional authorities on which representation was based, it would not be far from the mark to conclude that the hearings were a male affair. This is in consideration of the fact that people had to travel long distances to Katima Mulilo to attend the hearings. Naturally, in those days, women would stay home. Unsurprisingly enough, the complaints to the Commission were about elephants, hippos, arms and ammunition, and the sale of cattle.

A notable absence, however, remains the political elite or the intelligentsia, particularly the teachers. It appears that the Commission believed that the grouping of people in a tribal formula was more representative of the population of the Caprivi, even though it emerged from the hearings that the educated young men were influencing the turn of

²³ When told by one of the Commissioners that the UNO is not a government but a grouping of different governments, the Ngambela of the Masubiya, Kalundu Muniango, replied that it is even better because where there are many people with different opinions, they should be able to rule better.

events in the Caprivi. CANU itself was about to be launched though it was still operating as an underground movement. One political ‘upstart’, as the authorities called him, managed to hand in a written submission which castigated the government for lack of proper roads, schools, hospitals, lack of markets for products and cattle, and so forth.

Regardless of the impact of the Commission’s recommendations on the course of development in the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, the people used the public hearings as a platform to call for the removal of the South African administration from Caprivi. This, a signal of things yet to come, marked the beginning of the rise of modern politics in the Eastern Caprivi, where a new order comprised of young intellectuals aspired to replace the old order, the regime of the chiefs in cahoots with the Pretoria administration. What forces, both internal and external, were at work to supplant the old order?

The Caprivi African National Union (CANU)²⁴

The formation of the Caprivi African National Union in the late 1950s owes much to both internal and external factors. For the people of the Caprivi, the rise of nationalism was in response to a ‘government which had forgotten us’²⁵, which was doing nothing to improve the lot of the people in terms of health, education, markets, roads, and was more interested in the preservation of game than the wellbeing of the people. For the intellectuals in CANU it was prompted by the desire to replace an oppressive and racist regime with one in which the people of the East Caprivi *Zipfel* were their own masters. For the white South African regime, the formation of CANU and the desire to be independent was driven from outside, what is termed below as ‘the changing world beyond our borders’. The discussion on the rise and demise of CANU will be preceded by a paragraph dealing with the situation in Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia) as perceived by South African colonial officials in the Eastern Caprivi.

²⁴ This section draws much from a Chapter on the Formation of CANU in my MA Thesis submitted at UCT in 2000. In fact, this is more of an expanded and revised version of that chapter.

²⁵ Ngambela Kalundu Munihango of the Masubiya, Transcript of the Odendaal Hearings. Copy held by the author.

The Changing World Beyond our Borders

Introducing their book, *Namibia's Liberation Struggle: The Two -Edged Sword*, Leys and Saul correctly states that the Namibian liberation movement constituted one front of a much broader struggle against white minority rule in Southern Africa between 1960 and 1990.²⁶ It was in the early 1960s that armed resistance broke out in Angola, that the Sharpeville massacre took place in South Africa, these events following on Ghana's independence under Kwame Nkrumah. CANU's founders concede that they were greatly influenced by other nationalist leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda, Joshua Nkomo, Kamuzu Hastings Banda, Jomo Kenyatta and further afield, Ben Bella of Algeria, Nasser of Egypt and particularly by events such as the independence of Ghana and the Belgian Congo under Patrice Lumumba.²⁷ "Everyone was caught in the whirlwind of African nationalism"²⁸, recalls Muyongo. It is no coincidence that Kruger, long serving Native Commissioner²⁹ in the Eastern Caprivi, writes in his memoirs about the rise of nationalism in the Caprivi that it was an attempt to inflict a new order which was generated from outside with the aim of supplanting the South African government. He believed that the attempts were encouraged in Zambia by UNIP and in Angola by other movements.³⁰ Indeed, the Caprivi African National Union (CANU) shared offices with UNIP at Sesheke in Zambia and the party's first membership cards were printed in Lusaka with the assistance of the Zambian government.

Undoubtedly, prominent personalities in UNIP such as Nalumino Mundia,³¹ a former teacher in the Eastern Caprivi Strip, and Munukayumbwa Sipalo, UNIP's Secretary-General, made relations between CANU and UNIP easier. In his autobiography, Sam Nujoma, who was in Lusaka at the time of Simbwaye's visit, comments that Simbwaye

²⁶ Leys, Colin & John Saul, *Namibia' Liberation Struggle: The Two-Edged Sword*, London: James Currey, 1995, p.2.

²⁷ Personal interview with Mr. Albert Ndopu, 16 April 2006. Mr. Ndopu is a founding member of CANU and served as the organization's Secretary for Publicity.

²⁸ Biography of Albert Mishake Muyongo, *Namibia News*, Vol.3, No.1-3, Jan/March, 1970, pp.9-12.

²⁹ He served three terms, being recalled from retirement at some stage.

³⁰ Kruger, C., *History of Caprivi*, Chapter 12, p.1

³¹ He would later serve as Prime Minister in Kenneth Kaunda's government.

was in ‘...in close touch with UNIP in what was then Northern Rhodesia’³² and that ‘the struggle in then Northern Rhodesia led by UNIP inspired the Caprivians to form their own party since they had no contact with Windhoek’.³³ One Jackson M. Lukonga, in a letter to Induna Sangwali of the Mafwe Tribal Authority³⁴ enquired what the latter makes of UNIP: ‘..I would like to know how (what) you think about UNIP-and I want to advise you that UNIP is alright because it is fighting for us to gain freedom.’³⁵ This close association between CANU and UNIP led commentators to believe the two organizations have joined forces.³⁶ The harsh response the South African officials meted out to CANU and its supporters was therefore also partly influenced by events in adjoining territories. This is apparent in Kruger’s’ remarks: ‘When one measures what is now being asked against the killing of well over 500 people in Northern Rhodesia in the last few weeks it hardly seems drastic’.³⁷ Fears by the officials that the Caprivi would be a hunting ground for political agitators from across the border³⁸ were not entirely misplaced. The Magistrate/Native Commissioner frequently received letters from such people, originally from the Caprivi but based in adjacent territories. Andrew Masuku Simubali of Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia directed a highly critical letter to the Native Commissioner in May 1965. Referring to the latter as a settler not worthy to rule East Caprivi, the letter raised the following concerns among others:

- Inadequate schools;
- Lack of trained agriculturalists;
- Lack of properly trained police equivalent to the B.S.P. (British South Africa Police);

³² Nujoma, S. *Where Others Wavered: The Autobiography of Sam Nujoma*, London: Panaf, 2001, p.135.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.136.

³⁴ The current setting is that Sangwali now belongs to the Mayeyi Chieftainship since their break-away in 1992.

³⁵ Letter dated 24 February 1961 (Manuscript, NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2).

³⁶ Kruger in a submission to the Department of Native Affairs requesting the removal of Brandon Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu from the Eastern Caprivi to some other part of South West Africa. (15 August 1964), p.2. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³⁸ Magistrate A.B. Colenbrander of the Eastern Caprivi in letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs, dated 20 December 1954. (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, file. No. N1).

- Lack of market squares for selling fish and vegetables;
- Lack of proper roads;
- Lack of representation in Pretoria.

As a result of changing relations between the territory of East Caprivi and her neighbours, the South African Government decided to establish a police post at Katima Mulilo in 1961. The Native Commissioner at the time, Boshoff, opposed the move as being not necessary. A dwelling house, office with single quarters under the same roof, a store, garage, and a cell for detaining wrongdoers or those suspected of it, was then built, just above the Commissioner's office. The police post was manned by one Sergeant and a Constable from South Africa, assisted by four or five Black units. The security responsibilities would later be transferred to the Army. The independence of Zambia in 1964 resulted in the severance, if not explicitly, by that new government and its agencies of practically all ordinary friendly relations which so characterized every annual report which native commissioners stationed in the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel commented on.

The above section endeavoured to establish a link and show the influence of neighbouring territories on the rise of nationalism in the Eastern Caprivi. It would, however, be wrong to conclude that were it not for such outside influences, nationalism in the Eastern Caprivi would not have emerged. Kruger, in fact, admitted that while the attempt to inflict a new order on the territory of East Caprivi was generated from outside, there was 'appreciable internal activity by agents and their tentative converts, [with the aim of] supplanting of the South African government.'³⁹ While the rise of nationalism in other parts of Namibia emerged largely out of the inhumane contract labour system and systematic land dispossession, neither of these conditions was prevalent in the Eastern Caprivi.⁴⁰ The next section examines the conditions that led to the rise of nationalism in Eastern Caprivi, the formation of CANU and the subsequent political repression which led many to flee into exile.

³⁹ C.E. Kruger, in B. Kangumu, 'A Forgotten Corner of Namibia: Aspects of the History of the Caprivi Strip, c.1939-1980' (MA Thesis, UCT, 2000), p.43.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The Formation of CANU

The Caprivi African National Union (CANU) existed as an underground movement at least since the end of 1958.⁴¹ Its history is rooted at the Holy Family Mission at Katima Mulilo where two of the organizations founders, Brandon Simbwaye and Albert Ndopu were teaching. It is here at the Holy Family Mission that CANU held secret meetings in Brendan Simbwaye's house (which still stands to this day) at night to avoid police detection. The first mention of CANU in the media seems to be in 1961 when in Lusaka, the *African Mail* of 17 October 1961 reported that a nationalist organization was about to be launched in the Caprivi Strip. The report mentioned that the chief architect behind the move was Mr. George Liswaniso Mutwa.⁴² On the 19 May 1962 the Native Commissioner for the Eastern Caprivi received a copy of a letter the Senior Information Officer for South West Africa had written to Albert Meshake Muyongo, then a young man of about 20 years old and a teacher at Kanono Bantu Community School in the Eastern Caprivi Strip. The letter was in reply to one in which Muyongo had asked certain questions of a political nature.⁴³ CANU was formally founded on 7 September 1962⁴⁴ with the following elected office bearers: Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye as President, Crispin Simasiku Mulonda as Vice-President, Thomas Muyunda as General Secretary and Albert Zacharia Ndopu as Publicity Secretary. A re-organization to cater for tribal inclusiveness which was effected in May 1964 expanded the CANU Executive Committee and the new structure was as follows: Brendan Simbwaye as President, Albert Mishake Muyongo as Vice-President, Crispin Simasiku Mulonda took over as General

⁴¹ Personal interview with Mr. Adrian Waluka Simubali, 16 April 2006. Mr. Simubali is a founding member of CANU, with the executive responsibility of Treasurer.

⁴² Kangumu, 'Forgotten Corner', 2000, p. 43.

⁴³ Kruger, C.E., History of Caprivi, chapter.12, p.3

⁴⁴ Personal interview with Mr. Albert Zacharia Ndopu, Katima Mulilo, 17 April 2006. Mr. Ndopu is a founder member of CANU and colleague of Brendan Simbwaye. He was a CANU Executive Committee member serving as Secretary for Information and Publicity. Different writers put the formation of CANU at different dates: Kaire Mbuende (*Namibia, the Broken Shield*, 1986, p.154) writes that it was formed in 1962 while Peter Katjavivi provides two different accounts in separate publications, 1963 in his book *A history of resistance in Namibia*, 1988, p.51, and 1964 in an article published in Brian Wood (ed.), *Namibia 1884-1984*, 1984, p.575. Ernest Likando, a CANU activist, opts for early 1963 as the date of formation in his unpublished manuscript, 'The Caprivi Strip: A historical Perspective', 1989, p.139 (The manuscript is held by the National Archives of Namibia. A copy is in the possession of the author). Pütz, J. H. von Egidy, P. Caplan (*Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, Windhoek: Magus, 1989, p.90) states that the organization was founded in 1963.

Secretary, Albert Ndopu as Publicity Secretary, Vernet Maswahu as Education Secretary, Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa as Youth Secretary and Gideon Matengu as Transport Secretary. When Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa was arrested in July 1964, his position of Youth Secretary was taken by Mr. George Mutwa. Other political leaders in CANU were Joseph Nawa (now residing at Simungoma in Zambia), Siloiso Lukonga (a former Ngambela⁴⁵ at the Mafwe Kuta), Jonathan Mutabi, Charles Mubuyaeta Mubiana, Samuel Musialela and Mr. Matongo (at present a member of the SWAPO Elders' Council). On this day (7 September 1962), the following decisions and resolutions were taken:

- The name CANU was chosen for the organization;
- The political slogan 'LyaZwa Twaa' was formulated;
- That the drafting of the Constitution of the organization be embarked on;
- That membership cards were to be printed;
- That the formation of the organization be kept secret in fear that the South African government would ban it before it is formally launched and publicized in Caprivi;
- That recruitment drive for membership be strict and targeted to avoid infiltration and leakage of information to wrong people; and
- That CANU would work hand in hand with UNIP.

In its 1964 Constitution, CANU as a revolutionary movement vowed to 'promote independence for South West Africa and the Caprivi, to establish democracy and ensure an equitable distribution of land and wealth'.⁴⁶ CANU campaigned, more generally, to terminate South Africa's rule in the Caprivi and more specifically against the introduction of Bantu Education in the Caprivi through Bantu community schools, the introduction of Afrikaans in Caprivi schools, the intention of the South African Government to take over mission schools and hospitals, the restriction of movement of people to and from adjacent territories, the restriction on hunting yet officials even from

⁴⁵ Prime Minister, second in command after the chief in traditional authorities in Caprivi.

⁴⁶ Pütz, J. H. von Egidy, P. Caplan, *Namibia Handbook and Political Who's Who*, 1989, p.91, see also Fossé, L. J., 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi', Namibia (MA Thesis, Department and Museum of Anthropology, University of Oslo, 1996), p.155.

South Africa hunted and shot animals at will during Safari tours, in what came to be known as shooting for the pot. CANU also advocated doing away with the name Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel*, to be replaced with the name Itenge.⁴⁷ Even though the movement was operating underground at this time, a successful politicization campaign was carried out. CANU divided the Eastern Caprivi into 5 political zones, with Katima Mulilo serving as the main centre, as follows: from Katima to Singalamwe; from Katima to Linyanti; from Katima to Ngoma, on to Impalila Island; from Katima to Ikaba and then Katima Mulilo and its surrounding areas. Often, with no transport available, members travelled on foot to different parts of the Caprivi to address meetings, most of them taking place at night. Within this short time, CANU managed to draw up a constitution for the organization, draw up a format of the membership card which was printed in Lusaka with the assistance of UNIP and sold them to members, and, very significantly, sent a petition to the United Nations in New York with regard to the plight of the people of the Eastern Caprivi. Since the first petition was confiscated by the authorities, this one was drawn up in Lusaka in February 1964 with the assistance of individuals such as Mr. Josephat Siyomunji (a relative of the former Regional Governor for Caprivi Bernard Sibalatani) and Mr. Jalarth Mutoyongwa Sinvula (at present residing in Ndola Rural, Zambia).

At the end of 1963, Brendan Simbwaye⁴⁸ left the Caprivi for Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, to seek support for CANU's cause from the United Nations which was then involved in Zambia's transition to independence, and also to cement already existing ties with UNIP, which, as mentioned above, assisted with the printing of the first CANU membership cards and the organization's constitution.⁴⁹ Subsequently, CANU membership cards numbering ten thousand were printed by P.P.S. Ltd, Lusaka and the first one was sold to President Kenneth Kaunda of UNIP.⁵⁰ The membership card (fig.1, below), according to

⁴⁷ The name Itenge is presumed to be the pre-colonial name of the Caprivi Region. For a discussion of the pre-colonial Kingdom of Itenge, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

⁴⁸ It is not clear whether Simbwaye went alone on this trip. Likando writes that he was accompanied on this trip by J.M. Sinvula and Thomas Muyunda. This information is not corroborated by any other source.

⁴⁹ Bennett Kangumu Kangumu, 'Heroism: A Glance at Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye', *New Era*, 25 August 2006, p.8. This article was written to coincide with Heroes Day (August 26) Celebrations, which were held at Katima Mulilo.

⁵⁰ Likando in Kangumu, 'Forgotten Corner', op. Cit., p45.

Kruger, was issued upon payment of a fee of three shillings and sixpence (3/6) for a man, two shillings and sixpence (2/6) for a woman and one shilling and sixpence (1/6) for children. There was a card making provision for annual subscription.

C.A.N.U.
Membership Card
No.....

Forward to Freedom
Let us Unite Now

.....Branch
.....Secretary
.....Date

H.Q. C.A.N.U. House, P.O. Sesheke, Katima Mulilo, Northern
Rhodesia

Members Name: Bwana.....
Residential Area:.....

Figure 2: Specimen (front) of a CANU membership card, adapted from Kruger. On the back was written Caprivi African National Union, Caprivi Strip, South-West Africa, and the slogan Lyazwa Twaa! Printer: P.P.S. Ltd, Lusaka

Because of political repression which followed the arrest of Simbwaye, many people who bought CANU membership cards either destroyed them or hid them in places where they were difficult to find. Being in possession of the card would land one in jail. Attempts to get a copy of the card proved futile. It is reproduced above to give an idea of what it looked like. It should not be surprising that the Post Box address on the card is for Sesheke, Northern Rhodesia. The Eastern Caprivi Strip was using that postal agency even for official purposes for there was no post office in the territory at the time.

It was in Lusaka in his deliberations with the UN and UNIP that Simbwaye was introduced to SWAPO. He was advised that it would be better to broaden the scope of CANU's aims and objectives to reflect a nationalist cause, that is, the independence of the rest of South West Africa. He was told that the UN would only support broad based nationalist movements fighting for the liberation of the whole country and not smaller parties based on tribalistic or regionalistic ideals. He was advised that there were representatives of SWAPO in Lusaka with whom he could hold discussions to see how they could work together.⁵¹ Nujoma writes that he met Simbwaye in 1964 and suggested to him that they should merge 'in order not to have too many political parties.'⁵² According to Simubali, Simbwaye could not commit to such an idea before consulting his colleagues back home⁵³ and therefore his reply was that he would first 'discuss the proposal with his colleagues.'⁵⁴ Simbwaye returned at the end of March 1964, but as the authorities were already looking for him for leaving the territory illegally and for fermenting political problems in Caprivi, he was advised to remain on in Sesheke (Northern Rhodesia). In May, when CANU members in the territory had finished selling the membership cards and recruited many to their cause, Simbwaye crossed into Caprivi to prepare for the first CANU public meeting. Meantime he reported on his successful trip but indicated that he would go back and sit down with Sam Nujoma to discuss matters.⁵⁵

CANU began to engage the authorities even before it was publicly launched. Early in January 1964, two young men appeared at Native Commissioner Kruger's office and identified themselves as Vernet 'Mussolini' Maswahu and Simasiku Mulonda. Kruger describes the two as disrespectful young political upstarts for they put themselves on the only chair in the office (half a chair to each) without waiting to be offered it. They had with them a constitution for a political organization called the Caprivi African National Union. Their mission was to ask that the constitution be registered and that the office bearers named in it be allowed to propagate the stated objectives. These objectives were

⁵¹ Interview with Adrian Waluka Simubali, Bukalo, 16 April 2006.

⁵² Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p.136

⁵³ Simubali interview

⁵⁴ Nujoma, *op.cit.*

⁵⁵ Simubali., *op.cit.*

along the lines of the formation of an independent government for the Caprivi to come into being under the supervision of the United Nations. Kruger describes the CANU Constitution 'as fluent, typewritten and having been drawn by elements outside the Caprivi.'⁵⁶ Indeed Sam Nujoma reveals in his autobiography that the CANU constitution was printed with the assistance of Munukayumbwa Sipalo, who was then UNIP Secretary-General and who later became Minister of Health in the first UNIP government, and Nalumino Mundia, a former teacher in the Caprivi together with Simbwaye, who later became Prime Minister in Kaunda's government. More than once Vernet Maswahu and Simasiku Mulonda refused to leave the Commissioner's office after they were told that there was no such thing as registration of a constitution of that kind and that they would be sent for in a months' time after studying the document and its implications. They were in the meantime not supposed to engage in any activity to further their scheme and particularly to be careful about disrespect towards constituted authority. The police were informed to keep track of these men especially as regard to the holding of meetings prohibited by regulation and tribal law unless specially permitted.

Before the month was up, the young men came back, wanting a reply. When they were reminded that they were to be sent for, Kruger recalls that they were ready with something else, shifting from one thing to another but always with the same badgering tactics to 'create a situation that they could turn to their advantage, testing government authority and hoping for an opening'⁵⁷ The laws applicable to the Caprivi at this time were those of South West Africa up to 1939, with nothing relevant to the new situation. In the instances where administration was being undermined, the only provision available therein was about meetings where a maximum punishment for contravention hardly fitted the new circumstances. As a last resort, the Administration Proclamation of 1928 provided for removal under Ministerial Order to another part of the territory when any behaviour amounted to a serious undermining of constituted authority.

⁵⁶ In Kangumu, 'Forgotten Corner', p.44. See also Nujoma, S. op.cit.

⁵⁷ Kruger, 'History of Caprivi', 1984, p.4.

Meanwhile increased activities with ‘subversive’ intent, particularly the advent of CANU and its schemes, were reported to Pretoria with a recommendation that a statement (a draft of which was submitted) be made at both tribal headquarters at meetings of tribesmen assembled to hear. Pretoria gave its blessing to this line of action. As a first step a meeting was arranged with the Masubiya Khuta at Kabbe and CANU was informed they would get their answer there. Whilst it was hoped that the declaration which was made at the huge gathering assembled would discredit CANU as an organization composed of young men with ‘no credentials’, and influence the people against being taken in by it, Kruger concedes that there was little noticeable reaction except that the Ngambela put it to him that the CANU representatives present had asked whether they could address the meeting. This request was denied.

The Northern News of Northern Rhodesia reported on 8 May 1964 that a new political party had been formed in the Caprivi Strip and that it had offices in Lusaka. The report quoted the founder and President of CANU, Brendan Simbwaye, as the source. CANU also maintained offices at Sesheke, which is immediately across the border adjacent to Katima Mulilo. It was also the UNIP offices in this region. In the Caprivi Strip, CANU had its headquarters at a place called Mafulo, meaning an encampment where they had what Likando⁵⁸ refer as ‘Freedom House’, a thatched house they used as an office for administrative purposes. This small house was given to CANU by an old man named Maxwell, who had a number of them from where he ran his small business.⁵⁹ This was not, however, the first CANU office in Katima Mulilo. According to Adrian Waluka Simubali, the first CANU office was at Mahohoma Township behind the Holy Family Mission in a small brick house which was not then occupied. The original house was thatched and belonged to an old man called Soja who had built it with the intention of starting a small business of selling fat cookies – something that did not materialize. Crispin Mulonda’s father had a hawker’s license so CANU members used it under the pretext of running a business from this small house. This is where meetings were held until Brendan Simbwaye and Albert Ndopu left their teaching positions at the Holy

⁵⁸ Likando. *History of Caprivi*, 1989, p.140.

⁵⁹ Personal interview with Mr. Adrian Waluka Lukas Simubali, op.cit.

Family Mission and moved to Mafulo.⁶⁰ Mafulo, which could well be the first proper African township of Katima Mulilo, was originally a site chosen for the rest camp of the chief of the Mafwe and his councillors when visiting headquarters, and then still served this purpose.⁶¹ It was situated about 3 miles from headquarters just off the road to Finaughty's⁶² shop leading on to the Northern Rhodesia border where there were large shops and a facility for cashing cheques. The Caprivi Strip inhabitants as well as government agencies, were using Northern Rhodesian currency at the time. Because of its location, Mafulo attracted many people from adjacent and surrounding places, for the purpose of 'doing a bit of trading by way of tea-rooms, others selling fish, produce or wares brought from the countryside, and others doing nothing in particular'.⁶³ Not much control existed in Mafulo, and that state of 'lawlessness' was particularly conducive to CANU's objective of mobilization and the spread of ill-will towards the administration and Kruger writes that they (CANU) made the most out of it. He recalls at Mafulo placards on trees declaring "Down with Verwoed", 'Go Home Boers'. A lot of CANU politicians moved into Mafulo's residential area, including Brendan Simbwaye after resignation from his teaching post.

CANU's Subversive Activities against the Authorities

CANU's launch was preceded by a student strike at the Holy Family Mission School at Katima Mulilo in March 1964. According to the authorities, the 'night disturbance', as Kruger terms it was set going by two CANU members. This resulted in their arrest as well as that of four bigger school boys who had taken part. The CANU members were sentenced to a term of imprisonment and the boys to a caning.⁶⁴ Kruger ascribes the causes of the strike to the fact that a number of CANU office-bearers were dismissed from their teaching posts at schools managed by the Roman Catholic Mission for their political involvement and 'questionable loyalty'. The two CANU members who were

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ The rest camp for the chief of the Masubiya was at a site not far from Namwi Island and next to Kambinda's village, east of Katima Mulilo, (Interview with Adrian Waluka Simubali, 16 April 2006).

⁶² Bill Finaughty was a trader who had lived in the Caprivi for 20 years by 1963.

⁶³ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.6.

accused of involvement and were arrested were Adrian Waluka Simubali and Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa. CANU and the learners maintain that the strike was held to demand for improvements especially in the way the hostel was run. Even though learners paid hostel fees, they were not provided with mattresses and therefore slept on the floor or on traditional mats they brought with them from home; they used to cook for themselves in the hostel and the quality of food was very bad: almost rotten fish and cabbage, porridge without sugar (learners had to resort to adding salt and fresh lemon juice from lemons that they picked in the garden to make their porridge tasty). Sugar was only occasionally provided to the girls but even then only in small quantities. Meat was only provided to the learners once a week, every Saturday, otherwise during the course of the week learners had to fend for themselves. According to former learners interviewed, some of them who had no relatives or parents in Katima Mulilo would be forced to go fishing in the Zambezi after school to provide for their needs.⁶⁵ These were the grievances which led to the strike.

In any event, the school environment was a fertile breeding ground for CANU. As an organization started by teachers, it would have profound influence and its recruitment systematically targeted schoolboys who were taken to Zambia and were probably induced thereto by some promises. Reports from headmasters about missing children abounded. In a letter dated 27 March 1965 and another one dated 29 March 1965, Mr. A. Kasu, head of Nakabolelwa Community School reported that two scholars had run away from his school to Zambia with CANU members. The two scholars, Boniface Chandu Sekelo and Sinvula Shantambwa (Santambwa), were led by Godfrey Kawana Mwananawa of Ikaba. The report named six other boys who were planning to follow: Robson Musialike, Alfred Simataa Kabajani, Kangumu Nechenge, Milinga Munguni, Shoni Musipili and Nkonkwena Mukena Musialike.⁶⁶ In 1964 when books and other materials were sent to the newly-established Bantu Community School at Kasheshe, about 30 kilometers west of Katima Mulilo, people refused to accept them saying Simbwaye had told them not to

⁶⁵ Personal interview with Adrian Waluka Simubali. (16 April 2006). Former learners interviewed are Fidelis Mayumbelo (15 April 2006), Konard Kaela Machinga (16 April 2006) and a group interview consisting of Michael Matengu, Sylvester Matengu and Ignatius Matengu (14 April 2006).

⁶⁶ Letter to the District Officer, possibly the Native Commissioner. (NAN: LKM 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

accept the school or Bantu education. The administration had to rely on the assistance of the traditional leaders. In a letter to Chief Moraliswani Maiba, Kruger writes:

I have had reports that a man named Godfrey Kawana Mwananawa, acting as a CANU agent, is persuading children at school in the Caprivi to leave the particular school on a promise that they will be educated in Zambia. I hear also that Chaka of Muyako is helping – that he wrote a letter. It is said that this matter was reported to you and that you are dealing with it. I shall be glad if you will let me know what is happening. I wish just to mention that anyone leaving his country without proper authority commits an offence and anybody helping him to do that is likewise liable to punishment.⁶⁷

It is discussed elsewhere in this dissertation that colonial administration in the eastern Caprivi Strip was not actual and direct but persuasive and indirect.⁶⁸ As such, the confidence of the chiefs and their people was an essential quality to both the colonial officials and the political intelligentsia. While the administration sought to use tribal gatherings, as in the case discussed above, to discredit CANU as an organization composed of young men ‘without any credentials’, CANU too knew that it needed the support of the chiefs in its endeavour to unseat the Pretoria government. As early as April 1964, the two traditional authorities of the time were influenced by CANU to both submit formal complaints against the administration about all kinds of things and employees of the administration also did the same about their conditions of service.

In the same year, another shocking revelation awakened the administration. There came a letter from the Department of Bantu Affairs in Pretoria with papers sent from Pretoria’s representative at the United Nations. Among the papers was a petition⁶⁹ addressed to the United Nations and signed by both chiefs and one or two of their Kuta members asking that the South African government be replaced by a United Nations body. Kruger, in his disbelief, investigated the matter and found out that indeed the petition had been signed on behalf of the two chiefs (who themselves could not read or write English) in their presence by one or two of their councillors. He blamed the move on CANU and its associates. In some instances, CANU resorted to making traditional institutions

⁶⁷ Undated letter from Kruger to Chief Moraliswani Maiba of the Masubiya, reference no. N1/9/3 (NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2)

⁶⁸ Trollope, Inspection Report, *op. cit.*, p.15.

⁶⁹ Efforts to locate a copy of this petition have not yielded any results.

ungovernable for the administration. A case in point is the trouble which engulfed the Mafwe tribal authority and led to the dismissal of the Ngambela, David Siukuta. During May 1964 Ngambela Siukuta was called to an irregular hearing at Mafulo attended by one regular Kuta member, Induna Chunga. The Ngambela was allegedly subjected to threats, thrown out of office and warned not to go near the tribal headquarters at Linyanti. Fearing for his life, the Ngambela resorted to spending nights in hiding in the forest. This was not the first time the said Kuta experienced such trouble. As early as 29 July 1961, tribesmen in attendance at a meeting obtained the dismissal of the Ngambela (Musiyalela), the secretary (Benjamin Mamili) and two ordinary members of the Kuta (Mutimani and Mwaala). Davidson Mubonenwa was appointed as Kuta Secretary and Solomon Kanyanso and Solomon Nkando in the places of the two ordinary members. The new Ngambela was David Siukuta. The Chief complained then that by submitting to the tribesmen the administration damaged the authority and position of the chieftainship, retorting:

..you have taken my powers and gave it to my people-who took off my three Indunas from their work without my consent. I am the one who chose them to help me in this native court-and have the power to dismiss who make wrong.⁷⁰

Even though the administration was warned that the people who caused these troubles at Linyanti Kuta in 1961 were also 'planning to take out these people who come from South Africa who are ruling us',⁷¹ the administration did not find any direct link between this event and CANU. However, the administration seems to have regretted this later. This time the police were ordered to arrest immediately those perceived to be behind the dismissal of the Ngambela, brothers Jackson Mazazi Lukonga⁷² and Alfred Siloiso Lukonga pending a trial by the Kuta. In a letter to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner describes the two as having a critical turn of mind and having had some association with office bearers of the Caprivi African

⁷⁰ Letter from old Chief Simasiku Mamili of the Mafwe to the Native Commissioner dated 7 September 1961 (NAN: 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

⁷¹ Letter from K. Band and M. Kunana to the Native Commissioner dated 2 January 1963. (NAN: 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

⁷² Jackson Mazazi would indeed play a crucial role in CANU politics, went into exile and was part of CANU leaders in SWAPO, serving on the the Committee of SWAPO until 1980 when he was expelled together with 8 others, including Albert Meshake Muyongo.

National Union.⁷³ For the Commissioner, this is what confounded the problem: 'what with advanced political thought also playing its part.'⁷⁴ A clear reference to CANU's involvement in the 'throwing-out' of the Ngambela at Mafulo is made by the Bantu Commissioner in a letter dated 15 August 1964: to Induna Chunga of Linyanti,

I hear...that you and others are supporting a letter written by CANU. Did you support your chief ...or did you side with the rabble that threw out the Ngambela at Mafulo? Were you sitting on the important chair at Mafulo when the Ngambela was called by these men, through you, and did you respect him? You will answer these things, Chunga, you and the others with you. What is this nonsense I hear about the chief selling the country to the white men?"

A meeting of the whole Kuta was arranged with the chief and the Bantu Affairs Commissioner went to the tribal headquarters at Linyanti a day before, accompanied by Constable Bosman of the police, in whose care the two prisoners were, and the Ngambela. In the late afternoon they were astonished to see a 3-ton lorry pull up. It was transporting a score or more of shouting and singing CANU members duly organized for the occasion to join those living thereby. The Commissioner put it to the assembled Kuta members as to whether they were prepared to see justice done by, firstly, upholding the Ngambela and then proceeding to the trial of the two men. To his disappointment, 'not one of the Kuta members present was prepared to agree'.⁷⁵

The exception was the chief who agreed with Commissioner Kruger but this was of no help. Consequently, the only option left was to withdraw, at which point Constable Bosman released the two men from his custody. They were immediately and heroically surrounded by their jubilant supporters. Kruger saw this as 'another gain, if shallow, for the CANU upstarts'.⁷⁶

⁷³ Letter from Bantu Affairs Commissioner of the Caprivi to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, dated 29 March 1964, p.1. (LKM 3/3/1, N1/2/1).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2

⁷⁵ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.9

Cattle Sale⁷⁷ as a Contested Terrain

The nature of indirect rule in the Eastern Caprivi Strip was such that government representation comprised only of one officer plus an assistant. Therefore the development of nationalism in that part of Namibia did not benefit from the usual trends or routines of resistance and defiance such as labour unrest and stay-aways, boycotts of services (for there were none), etc. The economy was highly rural and subsistence. To show defiance, CANU had to get the better of the administration even in less obvious spheres such as a cattle sale, designed, with all intents, for the benefit of the people. It will be recalled that the people of the Eastern Caprivi bitterly complained about a lack of markets for the disposal of their cattle. During the Bechuanaland regime cattle from the eastern Caprivi Strip went freely into Bechuanaland for sale as there was veterinary control of the area. When the South West Africa Administration took over in 1929 this market was closed as the Bechuanaland authorities feared the introduction of lung sickness from Barotseland via the Strip.

To illustrate the above point, just as the authorities managed to obtain permission to export 800 head of cattle from the Strip to Bechuanaland after a struggle of eight years, lung sickness was detected the very week that the permit arrived and the export was stopped. Following the South African take-over, there was no outlet for stock from the strip and therefore no trading in cattle that by 1939 Louw found that the area was becoming overstocked.⁷⁸ Any sale there was remained insignificant and illegal. A small avenue for disposal was through the Barotseland traders who would buy cattle in Barotseland for sale for rationing purposes to the saw-mills which operated in the province. As the movement was from one infected area to the other, they were permitted

⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion of the Barotseland Cattle Trade, especially at the Zambezi Saw Mills to which many cattle from the Eastern Caprivi were sold for consumption, see Hugh Macmillan's *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901-2005*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2005.

⁷⁸ Louw, 'Inspection Report', 1939, p.10.

to purchase cattle from the Strip.⁷⁹ Stock control and inoculation was therefore dependent on what was taking place in adjacent territories.

A market for surplus cattle, therefore, had always been of great concern to the administration. Protracted negotiations to buy cattle in bulk from the strip were concluded with the Northern Rhodesia Cold Storage Commission in 1963, and when arrangements were finalized for a two-day sale in April, a weighbridge was installed at Katima Mulilo with necessary kraals and races so that the transaction was one of a fixed rate by exact weight. The commission related their offer to what they paid across in Northern Rhodesia, making allowances for additional costs such as placing the cattle in quarantine and the risks involved in driving them across to Livingstone through Impalila Island. The representative of the Commission arrived an afternoon before the appointed date, so did herds of cattle around the sale pens.

The atmosphere during the day of the cattle sale, according to Kruger, was oppressive because of the way CANU agents 'were mingling with the crowd in a way that suggested they were up to no good'.⁸⁰ Indeed, when the prices for the first cattle were announced, they were flatly rejected and following that no single beast was offered. Upon investigation, it emerged that people were not satisfied with the price offered which was far below that paid across the river in Barotseland. A few days later, someone brought a Northern Rhodesian newspaper to Kruger wherein prices paid by the Cold Storage Commission in Northern Rhodesia were published. He (Kruger) was astonished to find that they were considerably higher than what they offered in the Caprivi. Kruger remarked: 'I don't believe the CANU agents, in their ignorance, knew the difference – if they did so much the worse. But their scheming had all the appearance of getting the better of the administration, leading the people generally, in their confused state, to a belief that I myself was not to be trusted'.⁸¹ Subsequent events would prove that the CANU 'agents' knew the difference and that they were not ignorant. After the break-

⁷⁹ Mr. Bennett of Mulobezi applied for permission to buy 1000 head of cattle for cash in the strip in 1937 for this purpose. (Trollope, 1937 'Report', p.24).

⁸⁰ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.7.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

down of this cattle sale, CANU decided to bypass the administration and negotiate with the Northern Rhodesia Cold Storage Commission on behalf of the people, to which end two men were sent to Livingstone to see what they could find out. This was only revealed to Kruger in a letter from the representative of the Cold Storage Commission there.

A cattle sale provided a perfect opportunity for a clash between CANU and the administration. For once, albeit momentarily, CANU managed to make Kruger, a representative of an oppressive regime, feel oppressed, powerless. This open defiance of authority enhanced CANU's position and spread its influence to rural areas. It was not uncommon, Kruger wrote, when travelling outside Katima Mulilo to hear even small children shouting 'Kwacha', a word denoting freedom or waking up from colonialism, as one passed through the villages, with no one doing anything to restrain them.⁸² There were common references to 'the boers', and in a song people called upon 'the boers' to go back to their country, telling them 'we are not afraid of your guns', Kruger recalled.⁸³ Most likely, the song being referred is the famous CANU song: *Cenjela maburu cenjelaa, CANU ci ya sika lya zwa twaa. Cenjela cenjela maburu cenjelaa, CANU ci ya sika lya zwa twa: Lya zwa Twaa, Lya zwa Twaa.*⁸⁴ Because of such defiance, the administration was eager to assert its authority. Until then, Kruger believed, 'CANU has had pretty well a free hand in their disruptive activities', continuing, 'I am firmly of opinion the time has come to act against them. This, it is thought, is a crucial stage in Caprivi affairs: if we do not act now when will we do so?'⁸⁵ This marked the start of a clampdown on CANU and its activities in the Caprivi and a ruthless political repression that would leave CANU leadership and their followers either in detention, in hiding or on the run. The focus of the next section is therefore on political repression in the Caprivi and particularly the arrest, detention and disappearance of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, CANU's founder, together with Vernet Maswahu, another missing CANU leader.

⁸² *Ibid.* P.7

⁸³ Kruger, in a Submission requesting the ministerial removal of or an order banishing Brendan Simbwaye from the eastern Caprivi, dated 15 August 1964, p.2. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II.)

⁸⁴ Translates as 'Beware Boers beware, CANU is here. The sun has risen and is bright denoting awakening. Interview with Mr. Fidelis Mwiya Mayumbelo at Bukalo, 15 April 2006.

⁸⁵ Kruger, Submission, (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II.), p.4.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AFRICAN RESPONSES TO THE CAPRIVI IDENTITIES: REGIONAL NATIONALISM (CONTINUED)

Political Repression and Simbwaye's Disappearance

The advent of CANU benefited from an absence of legal provisions to contain its subversive activities, the laws applicable to the eastern Caprivi Strip being those of South West Africa up to 1939, with nothing relevant to the new situation added since. However, political repression in the Caprivi found expression in two provisions of administrative law. The first was the Native Administration Proclamation, 1928 (Proclamation no.15 of 1928, South West Africa) read in conjunction with section three of the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* Administration Proclamation, 1939 (Proclamation no. 147 of 1939). Paragraph (d) of section one of the above proclamation (1928) provided for removal under ministerial order to another part of the territory (SWA) in the event of behaviour amounting to a 'serious' undermining of authority. This, however, was meant to be a last resort. The second provision was the prohibition of gatherings in 'native' areas unless specifically permitted by the tribal chief or the Native Commissioner. This was enacted in Proclamation No. 198 of 1953, which sought to impose severe penalties upon any person who holds a meeting without the prior knowledge of the chief and the approval of the Native Commissioner. In an Identical Minute issued with the concurrence of the Secretary for Justice on 4 July 1958, the Secretary for Native Affairs reminded all officials of the Department of Native Affairs that:

Because attempts are being made nowadays to undermine the authority of the chiefs and the government, often through the medium of unlawful gatherings and meetings, it is imperative that the provisions of Proclamation No. 198 of 1953 should again be brought to the attention of all chiefs and headmen.The Department has reason to doubt whether the chiefs really understand the implications of, and the firm support given them by, this legal enactment.¹

¹ Minute issued by the Secretary of Native Affairs dated 4 July 1958 entitled 'Control of Meetings or Gatherings in Native Areas'. It was addressed to all officials of the Department of Native Affairs, all Magistrates, Additional and Assistant Magistrates and full time Special Justices of the Peace. (BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

If the chiefs in the Caprivi Strip did not understand the implications and ‘firm’ support given by the above proclamation, surely this was not the case with the police and the Native Commissioner. The police informed the native commissioner that they had information that Simbwaye would address a meeting at Mafulo where quite a large number of supporters had gathered and that they were determined to make arrests if indeed they found a meeting in progress since no permission had been given as required by tribal law as well as by regulation. According to CANU activists, even though permission for the meeting was requested several times, this was refused by the Native Commissioner². Despite this refusal it was decided that the meeting would go ahead..

At Mafulo, Sergeant Hartmann and his son-in-law Sakkie Bosman of the police accompanied by a score of Black askaries³ found a CANU meeting in progress, the first public rally⁴ at which the organization was to be launched and the political programme to

² Adrian Waluka Simubali, personal interview on 16 April 2006. See also Notes of Conversation between Brendan Simbwaye and Advocate Israel Goldblatt of 2 October 1964. In this entry, Goldblatt states that Brendan Simbwaye told him that he asked the native commissioner three times for permission to hold a political meeting but this was refused. These notes by Israel Goldblatt, which includes other stuff on and from Clemens Kapuuo, Kutako, etc, are held by the Basler Afrika Bibliographien which hopes to publish them in yet undecided format. They were kindly provided to me confidentially by Dag Henrichsen of BAB.

³ Black policemen of the time were known as UG, and wore clothes marked as such, possibly Union Government. People teasingly called them ‘Useless Government’. The ones who were present at Simbwaye’s arrest are: Francis Lilungwe Ilukena, Raymond Mowa Mwilima, Leonard Kachenje Chaka, Lawrence Nchindo, David Lopa Mbeha, Moffat Matali, Nfwile (Personal interview with Albert Zacharia Ndopu). Ignatius Mazambani Matengu added the following names to this list: Wilson, , Nathan, Lubembo and Muyongo (personal interview, 16 April 2006).

⁴ There is confusion as to when this meeting took place. CANU activists interviewed separately maintain that it was in mid July (Albert Ndopu and Ignatius Matengu), with the later even stating that Simbwaye was arrested on the morning of 15 July 1964 which would also be the date of the meeting. Ignatius Matengu, apart from being a CANU youth, was a nephew to Simbwaye and was in fact staying with him at the time of the arrest. The Native Commissioner, Kruger, believes the meeting took place in the second half of August 1964. This is supported by Albert Mishake Muyongo, CANU’s Vice President, in a biography he submitted to SWAPO and published in SWAPO’s publication *Namibia News*, vol.3, No.1-3, January/March 1970, pp. 9-12. However, instead of a meeting, Muyongo rather tells us that it was a mass protest demonstration (the biggest demonstration of its kind and the first in the Caprivi) covering the entire Caprivi Strip, and that the demonstrators marched on the headquarters of the South African Government at Katima Mulilo. This assertion could not be supported by any evidence, oral or otherwise. Similarly, Muyongo’s assertion that CANU convened a conference in March 1964 where over 2,500 delegates from all corners of the Caprivi Strip attended could not be corroborated by any other source. He maintains that this is where CANU was born and where Simbwaye was elected President and himself Vice-President. It would be recalled that these elections took place in Brendan Simbwaye’s house at the Holy Family Mission. Indeed it is doubtful that such a big gathering would be feasible at that time and therefore Muyongo’s version is flawed.

be outlined. This public rally was to be addressed by the president of CANU, Brendan Simbwaye. When the the police arrived it was Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa who was addressing the meeting and he was picked first, followed by Brendan Simbwaye, the only two arrested at that meeting.⁵ Even though people followed the police car, shouting and protesting, there occurred no casualties during this event.⁶

The trial of Brendan Simbwaye and His Co-accused

The case against Brendan Simbwaye and the two others, Vernet Maswahu and Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa, charged with holding a meeting without authority, was brought to court at Katima Mulilo.⁷ The court, attended by an unusually large crowd according to Kruger, was heard by Assistant Magistrate/Native Commissioner Bezuidenhout on the bench while Sergeant Hartman was the prosecutor with Kruger there to give evidence that no authorization was given for the meeting as the administrative head. Upon the charge being duly read and the accused called upon to plead, no answer was forthcoming upon which a plea of “not guilty” would have been entered. The accused were therefore asked if they wished to put any questions. Simbwaye ignored the presiding magistrate and declared in a loud voice that ‘he did not recognize the court, that they wanted to be

⁵ Albert Meshake Muyongo incorrectly states in his biography cited above that Vernet Maswahu and Brendan Simbwaye were the ones arrested at the meeting. Contrary to this, Maswahu would join Simbwaye and Nalishuwa in detention after he was arrested on his way to take a petition (which got confiscated) to the United Nations in Lusaka, According to Adrian Waluka Simubali, after the arrest of Simbwaye, they wrote a petition which was given to Vernet Maswahu to take to Zambia. He was to depart with a WENELA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) vehicle which was going that way on the same day. As he left to wait for the vehicle at the Mission, someone among his followers,, an informer, alerted the police who came and arrested Vernet Maswahu.

⁶ However, Kruger writes that UNIP published a far-fetched account of the brutality on the part of the administration with two killed. Muyongo supports this by stating that two were killed after police opened fire and scores of others injured. He might have been the source of UNIP’s report. For his part, Ernest Likando (1989, p.140) records violent clashes in which nine Black militants and two ‘Boers’ were killed. As stated, no evidence of such casualties has been discovered yet.

⁷ Adrian Waluka Simubali maintains that there was no court hearing held at Katima Mulilo for Simbwaye and the others. He stated that when they went to see Native Commissioner Kruger about the case, they were told to come back on a Monday for the hearing. On the appointed Monday, they were told by Black policemen that the three prisoners were smuggled out at night to an unknown destination. However, according to Simbwaye in a conversation with Advocate Israel Goldblatt on 2 October 1964, he was sentenced to pay a fine of £4 on each count of the case against him. This concurs with Kruger’s assertion. It would seem that perhaps Mr. Simubali missed the trial or maybe the trial was held secretly, which is contrary to what Kruger asserts was an ‘open court’.

tried internationally on an international level’, continuing, ‘that they would only submit to the United Nations’⁸. This statement was echoed by his co-accused. For this, the accused were immediately sentenced to one month imprisonment for contempt of court without the option of a fine. At the end of the prosecution the accused declined to offer any statements, repeating their recognition only of the United Nations, upon which they were found guilty and sentenced.⁹ On the main count they were fined £2.00 for holding an illegal meeting and Simbwaye was fined another £2.00 for having left the country without a permit.

Even before sentencing could take place, Kruger had already reached a conclusion to banish Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu from the eastern Caprivi Strip. In a submission for presentation to the Minister arguing for the removal in terms of South West Africa Proclamation 15 of 1928 (see footnote No. 88), he exhibits a total dislike for Simbwaye whom he describes as:

Generally obnoxious and trouble seeking...aggressive in his talk and approach, recognizes no status in White officials, openly says (to Kruger) they will not have a Transkeian Bantustan here (in Caprivi). He declined to accept (at the court hearing) the Court’s directions on procedure and his whole bearing was one of contempt. They are (with Maswahu) fanatical types with whom it is almost impossible to reason.¹⁰

If anything, Kruger felt threatened about the assumed importance of the new elite in society and the subsequent influence they might have on the people and events in Caprivi. In his memoirs he recalls his encounter with Brendan Simbwaye when he came to his office: “I found him robed in some exotic cloak¹¹ and headdress sitting prominently outside on a chair offered by one of the staff as a gesture to his assumed

⁸ Kruger, in a Submission for Removal in terms of South West Africa Proclamation 15 of 1928 of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye and Vernet Sibanda Maswahu, dated 15 August 1964. (BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II). A copy is in the possession of the author.

⁹ It appears from the charge sheet that the sentencing took place on 28 August 1964 in the Bantu Commissioner’s Court, who was also the District Magistrate at Katima Mulilo in the Case No. 16/64 (NAN: File no. 1566, Storage Unit 1/1/12, Archival Group LKW 1/2/22, 1945 – 1969).

¹⁰ Most informants do not have this picture of Simbwaye however. They describe him as deeply religious, quiet, kind and most often than not, engaged in prayer. Slow to anger, in fact most do not remember him involved in an argument, not even with his peers or learners.

¹¹ Most informants describe Simbwaye’s dress code as similar to Kwame Nkrumah’s, who undoubtedly had a big influence on him.

importance...demanded acknowledgement of party or reason for not so doing. Refused to accept answer that no statement would be made at that time".¹² He continues, "He assumes flamboyant attire, robes, etc., and walks about with an assumed air of great importance". At the adjournment of the court hearing apparently about 60 supporters (Kruger describes them as a mob) who attended shouted and chanted and the behaviour was generally unpleasant "with Simbwaye raising his hands in the air and waving in the style of a martyr and hero".¹³

In an impromptu trip to Pretoria, Kruger reported on what has taken place in the Caprivi Strip and also requested a Ministerial Removal Order against Simbwaye and Maswahu - to some 'suitable' (read far) place elsewhere in South West Africa to follow on the completion of their terms of imprisonment until, as he would write later, 'common sense returned.'¹⁴ It was also decided at that Pretoria meeting to approve Kruger's application for the three to serve their sentences at Grootfontein in South West Africa and not at Katima Mulilo where facilities were inadequate. Before they could gather together the money for the fines, the three prisoners were received by police from Rundu at the dead of the night at Manyeha crossing, now Kongola, the boundary between the eastern and the western Caprivi Strip for escort to Grootfontein. At Grootfontein, Simbwaye told Advocate Goldblatt, they were told that the sentences were for three months instead of one. He was handcuffed and taken to Windhoek where they served one month and then were released.¹⁵ At their release from prison, a Ministerial Order of Removal was served on Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu, whilst the third prisoner, Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa, was brought back under escort to the Caprivi which he immediately left for Zambia.¹⁶ Below is the Order of Restriction served on Simbwaye by the Honorable

¹² Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, p.6. See also submission for removal.

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Kruger, 1982, p.18.

¹⁵ Simbwaye in a discussion with advocate Goldblatt on 2 October 1964. (BAB: Goldblatt Notes).

¹⁶ Even though Kruger believes he never returned to the Caprivi and that he was last heard to be somewhere in North Africa, Alfred Tongo Nalishuwa lived the rest of his life shuttling between Zambia and the Caprivi Strip for fear of being apprehended, which occurred several times in any case, until his death in an independent Namibia.

Michael Daniel Christian De Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Administration and Development of the Union Government:¹⁷

'To Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, a Native of the Masubiya in the district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel in the territory of South West Africa.

WHEREAS I am satisfied that you are engaged in activities likely to undermine duly established authority and the maintenance of law and order in the district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel in the territory of South West Africa, and to cause dissension, unrest, violence and lawlessness in the said district;

AND WHEREAS your said activities have resulted in a request from the Masubiya tribal authority for your removal from the said district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel;

AND WHEREAS I am satisfied that your presence in, or at any place within easy access of the said district of Eastern Caprivi Strip in the territory of South West Africa is inimical to the peace, order and good government of the Natives in the said district;

AND WHEREAS I deem it expedient in the general public interest that you be removed from your present place of residence in the said district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel;

NOW, THEREFORE, under and by virtue of the powers vested in me by paragraph (d) of section one of the Native Administration Proclamation, 1928 (Proclamation No. 15 of 1928) (South West Africa) read with section three of Eastern Caprivi Administration Proclamation, 1939 (Proclamation No. 147 of 1939) (South West Africa), I do hereby order you, the said Brandon Kangongolo Simbwaye, that within two days of the service of this order on you, remove yourself from your place of residence in the said district of Eastern Caprivi Zipfel to Ohopoho in the district of Kaokoveld in the territory of South West Africa, subject to the following terms, conditions, and arrangements:-

- a) At Ohopoho you shall reside at a place to be indicated to you by the senior officials of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development of Ohopoho.
- b) Until such time as this order is withdrawn you may not return to the Eastern Caprivi Zipfel except with written permission of the Secretary for the Bantu Administration and Development.

Given under my hand at Pretoria on the 24th day of September One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty Four

Minister of Bantu Administration and Development

¹⁷ Extracted from a press release issued jointly by CANU and SWAPO announcing their 'merger' in Lusaka on 5 November 1964. (Copy in possession of author).

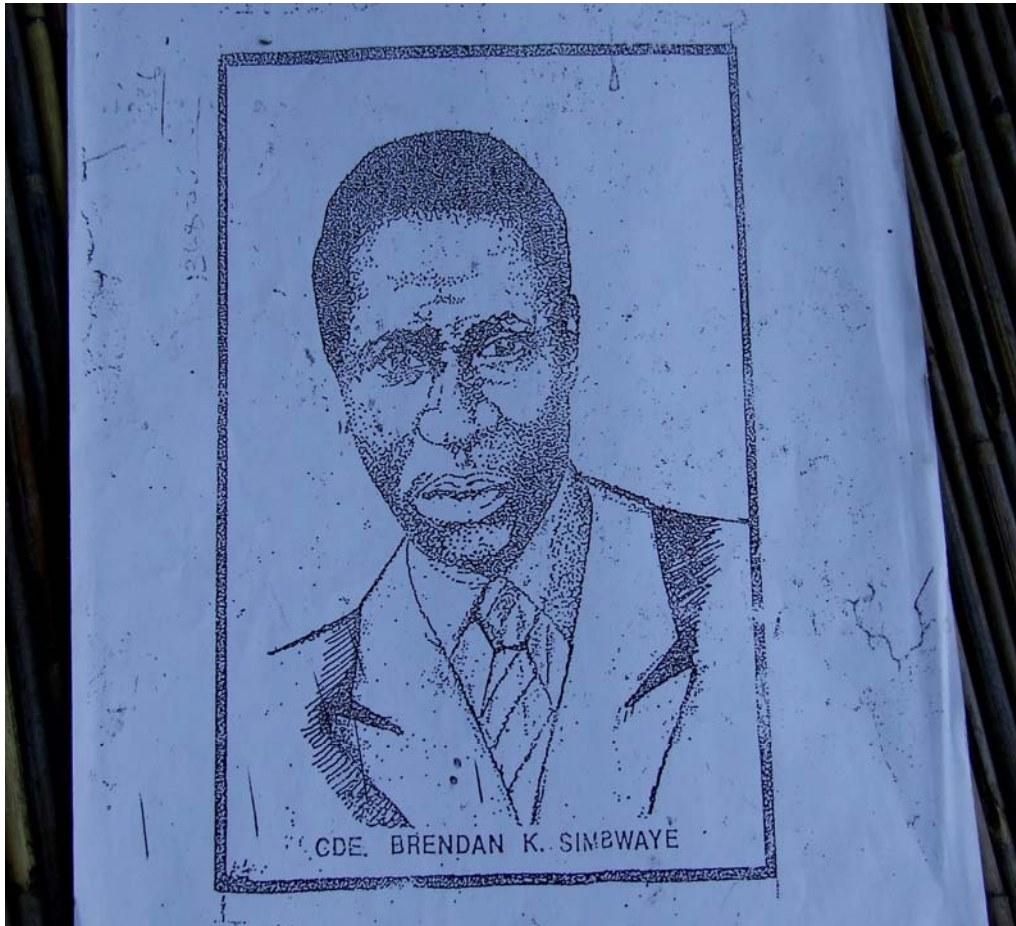


Figure 1: Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, founder president of CANU and Vice-President of SWAPO and on whom the above restriction/banishment order was served.

As a general comment on the restriction order, it is misleading to suggest that the Masubiya tribal authority requested the removal of Simbwaye from the eastern Caprivi Strip, not at this stage and indeed there is no evidence to suggest, support and confirm that this was the case. On the contrary, Kruger admits in his submission presented to the Minister requesting the restriction order to be issued that 'I have reason to think that the chiefs would favour their removal though they have not been directly asked'.¹⁸ The two

¹⁸ Kruger, in a Submission for Simbwaye's removal, p.4

days given to Simbwaye and Maswahu within which to report to Ohopoho meant that they did not return to the Caprivi Strip but were taken to their new place of abode at Ohopoho, the beginning of their life in perpetual detention.

The Simbwaye-Goldblatt-Kapuu Connection¹⁹

Not much is known about the duo's time at Ohopoho except in Simbwaye's conversations with Goldblatt. On 2 October 1964, Simbwaye was accompanied by Clemens Kapuu²⁰ to see Goldblatt, probably to get advice on the removal order. Goldblatt's conclusion was that indeed section 1 (d) of Proclamation 15 of 1928 read with section 3 of Proclamation No. 147 of 1939 permits removal and empowers the Minister to make that order and therefore the removal was perfectly 'legal'. As with many Apartheid laws, the Minister was somehow placed above the law: Section 2 of the Proclamation (No. 15, 1928) had a provision stating 'that the Minister shall not be subject to any Court of law for or by reason of any order, notice, rule or regulation professed to be issued or made or of any other act whatsoever professed to be committed, ordered, permitted or done in the exercise of the powers and authority conferred by this proclamation.' Therefore it was futile for Simbwaye to launch a court challenge against the removal order. Simbwaye and Maswahu were given R5 each with which to buy blankets, cloth, and R4 per month while at Ohopoho. Even though the Minister wrote to Simbwaye that close relatives could join him at Ohopoho and that items of personal property could be brought from the Caprivi Strip to Ohopoho at government expense, this promise seem never to have been fulfilled. In a letter to Goldblatt written while in the Windhoek Central Prison dated 18 July 1966, Simbwaye accused the government of rescinding on its promise in that since he put a claim on 10 October 1964 for books such as the *Universal Home Lawyer*, works on politics and government and a bookshelf to be brought from the Caprivi Strip, no reply to this was received.

¹⁹ From information kindly provided by Dag Henrichsen of BAB, Basel.

²⁰ It is not known how Simbwaye and Kapuu met, but Kapuu might be the one who introduced Simbwaye to Advocate Goldblatt, as their subsequent contacts would show.

In this letter, he complains about a number of other things: that he is illegally and inhumanely restricted to Warmbad with no adequate supplies of food, that he had to resort to begging since the monthly £2 for food which government provides is not enough compared to the high cost of living at Warmbad and the standard of living he had in the Caprivi Strip; that even though government bought one pair of trousers, one shirt, two small blankets at 14 s each for him, he was not provided with shoes and had no bed. He retorts: 'I have to use a sack as a blanket...And yet the law which had removed [me] from Caprivi Strip was supposed to compensate me in full'.²¹ Goldblatt adds that Simbwaye told him that he was badly beaten by the White Police and had shown the marks and his torn shirt to the magistrate.²² It appears that Simbwaye and Maswahu were starved as a way of forcing them into submission. In a meeting with an official of the Bantu Affairs Department, Advocate Goldblatt was told that Simbwaye could get employment under the government and would be paid R18 for working in the location doing unspecified work but apparently, there was nothing that could be offered him by which his experience as a teacher could be made use of.²³ This was not to be for Simbwaye had already made known his stance to Goldblatt: 'The administration ascertains that I should get employment, and who can employ a politician?'"²⁴

It is not known when and under what conditions Simbwaye and Maswahu got transferred to Warmbad. When Simbwaye found himself in the Windhoek Central Prison for a second time, he asked Captain Slabbert, the officer in charge of the gaol, to write to Clemens Kapuuu, a prominent member in the circles of the Herero Chief's Council. Kapuuu then sent a message to Goldblatt informing him that Simbwaye was in solitary confinement in the Windhoek Central Prison. When Goldblatt contacted the prison official to arrange to see Simbwaye, he was told that the instructions from Bantu Affairs were that Simbwaye was to receive no visitors.²⁵ With the assistance of an official at Bantu Affairs whom Goldblatt knew from previous interviews on behalf of Kapuuu, he convinced the prison official that he would see Simbwaye as a professional advisor and

²¹ Simbwaye in a letter to Goldblatt dated 18 July 1966. (BAB, NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

²² Goldblatt Notes, 27 June 1966. (Held by BAB).

²³ Goldblatt in a letter to Simbwaye dated 23 July 1966. (BAB, NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

²⁴ Simbwaye to Goldblatt, dated 18 July 2006. (BAB, NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

²⁵ Goldblatt Notes, 28 May 1966 entry. (BAB).

not just a visitor but even then, only in the presence of a prison official and the instructions were that he confine himself to Simbwaye's appeal. He was thus able to see Simbwaye for one and half hours on 27 May 1966 at 10 o'clock. The prison official explained that Simbwaye was not in solitary confinement but was kept separate from the other prisoners (as if there is any difference) as he was regarded as a political agitator, being the reason why he was removed from the *Caprivi Zipfel*. He was also informed that provided Simbwaye behaved himself he would receive a remittance of two months of his sentence and which rendered the appeal unnecessary and the application for bail pending appeal useless. Goldblatt enquired of Simbwaye as to why he was in jail, and about his appeal?

On 14 October 1965²⁶ Simbwaye was sentenced in the Karasburg magistrate's court for common assault and malicious damage to property. He was given a jail term of 70 days of which the first four weeks were in solitary confinement and with a spare diet.²⁷ He served the jail term at the Keetmanshoop prison. As he would tell Goldblatt later, he was convicted for assaulting a woman, a sister²⁸ The incidence took place when the woman referred tried to prevent Simbwaye from sitting in the 'whites only' section of a church in Warmbad. Simbwaye denied this, maintaining that he couldn't have gone to a Dutch Reformed Church in the first place since he was born a Catholic and had married a Catholic. He was discharged from Keetmanshoop prison on 4 December 1965 and went back to Warmbad. The same day, he was seen talking to some people who had come to his small hut. A White policeman came up to him at the time and demanded an explanation but nothing happened. Four months later, on 8 April 1966 he was arrested on a charge of contravening Section 20 of Proclamation 15 of 1928 which prohibited the promotion of any feeling of hostility between Non-Europeans and Europeans. He was

²⁶ Goldblatt records the date as 6 October 1965. However, the date of sentence indicated on the court papers (docket), is 14 October 1965. Perhaps Simbwaye remembered the day on which the trial began and this is what he conveyed to Goldblatt. The docket papers are found in the National Archives of Namibia on file no. 1566, storage unit 1/1/12, archival group LKW 1/2/22, 1945 – 1969.

²⁷ Bennett Kangumu, Archival Research Report: The life history of Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, A missing SWAPO Vice-President, February 2006, p.11. (This report was submitted to the Steering Committee of the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle, AACRLS, a project of the National Archives of Namibia.

²⁸ Goldblatt Notes, (BAB).

accused of fermenting racial strife. Simbwaye explained during the trial that he was complaining about a lack of food and his poor living conditions in general, and answered questions which he was being asked by those present. A state witness, Constable Mteka, testified that Simbwaye was 'fighting the government, and that he uttered the following to those present:

Julle is te sleg, julle is toe. Julle moet vergaderings hou en saamstaan. Julle moet veg teen die boere. Julle kan klippe en ysters vat om te veg. Julle moet die boere met klippe vrek gooi. Ons sal Windhoek brandsteek en sal al die boere vrek maak. Die wat oorbly, sal onder ons werk, en self vir ons kinders 'baas' sê. Julle moet teen die witmense veg, en ons sal julle wapens gee. Januarie, sal julle ander dinge sien. Julle en die Roomse Vader is mos toe. Bantoestans is dood, Angola, Sudwes-Afrika, Mossambiek en die Republiek sal in Januarie val.²⁹

He was sentenced to six months imprisonment on 14 April 1966 and sent to the Keetmanshoop prison where he served two months and then transferred to Windhoek Central prison hence his second meeting with Goldblatt. His case was sent for automatic review and was confirmed by Badenhorst J. on 21 April 1966. While Simbwaye and Maswahu's banishment to Ohopoho was 'perfectly legal' according to Goldblatt, this seems not to be the case with their removal or transfer to Warmbad as no Ministerial Order was issued to this effect. Addressing this issue, Goldblatt wrote to Simbwaye:

If your removal was effected without an order by the Minister it is in my opinion illegal, and if you will be again removed, as you fear, to some other place, again without a proper order, it will also be illegal.³⁰

Simbwaye's fears were not without grounds, for the pair would shortly³¹ find themselves isolated on a remote farm (Halt Farm No. 379) near Welwitschia (now Khorixas) in the former Damaraland Reserve, probably about 1968 and most likely without a proper

²⁹Testimony of Constable Mteka, state witness in the prosecution of Simbwaye in the Karasburg magistrate's court, April 1966. For reference, see Bennett Kangumu, Archival Research Report, *op.cit.*, p.10.

³⁰ Goldblatt to Simbwaye, dated 26 March, 1968. (BAB).

³¹ The earliest reference to Simbwaye in Welwitschia seems to be June 1968, when the Damara Council registered a concern with the Bantu Affairs Commissioner with regard to his presence in Damaraland. See for example Letter from Bantu Affairs Commissioner to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, dated 16 June 1972. (BAD, File No.V5, Vol. II).

Ministerial Order.³² Fate would separate them there for Vernet Sibanda Maswahu would be sent to the Windhoek State Hospital on 15 July 1969 for a mental referral. Nothing has been heard of him since then. Simbwaye's stay in Damaraland was not all welcome, at least not in the books of the Damaraland Bantu Affairs Commissioner, H.F.J. de Bruin. The Commissioner argued in several letters to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek and to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development in Pretoria for Simbwaye to be removed from his jurisdiction. He declared that Simbwaye was politically active and had contacts with people of influence (judging from letters which pass through his office to and from people such as the Herero leader Clemens Kapuuo). Furthermore, he was fluent in Afrikaans and as Damara spoke Afrikaans he would easily influence them, especially learners at the High School with whom he mingled at the local stadium when he came to town. De Bruin added that the Damara Council had made representations to him on 25 April 1972, asking for the removal of Simbwaye, a repeat of a request they made in June 1968; that in any case if Simbwaye is permitted to travel to the Caprivi he will immediately cross into Zambia where his wife was. The police expressed concern about permitting Simbwaye to travel to the Caprivi Strip at this time, explaining:

Met die huidige situasie wat in die Oos Caprivi heers, is dit vanuit 'n veiligheidsoogpunt beskou, glad nie gewens dat hy daarheen verwyder word, en weer by sy mense geplaas word nie. My hoofkantoor is daarmee eens dat Simbwaye in Damaraland moet aanbly soos aanbeveel, totdat die huidige politieke klimaat verbeter het.³³

Despite police reservations, and representations from the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner³⁴ against the move, the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development signed a permit for Simbwaye on 9 August 1972 to travel to Katima Mulilo through Rundu on a six month visit. The question is why? In 1972 the Caprivi Legislative Council was established – and were therefore mindful of the fact that the government was

³² There is no evidence that was found during this research that indicate why Simbwaye and Maswahu were transferred from Ohopoho to Warmbad and Damaraland; neither was any reason given for their removal, most likely without a banishment order being issued.

³³ Letter from J.G. Myburgh of the South African Police to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek, dated 25 May 1972. (BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

³⁴ He did so again in 1972 arguing that there was no guarantee that Simbwaye would cease to work against the government of SA if permitted to go to Zambia. See letter dated 25 February 1972 addressed to the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development. (NAN: BAD, File No. V5, Vol. II).

keen to make Simbwaye denounce the struggle and cooperate with the authorities. Perhaps they wished that such ‘progress’ towards ‘self-determination’ as they saw it, would win him over to their side. This issue was first tested on Simbwaye by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner of Damaraland, who relates:

Ek het Brandon persoonlik al gevra wat hy dink van die Tuisland ontwikkeling. Hy het erken dat wat hy sien watter Welwitschia gedoen word 'n goeie ding is maar dat hy nooit met die Hoofmanne in die Caprivi sal kan saamwerk nie, omrede hulle die Blanke regering steun. Hy verklaar egter dat indien hy ooit teruggestuur word hy liewers na Zambia toe sal gaan waar hy baie vriende het.³⁵

Indeed, this is what he told people in the village in 1972, that the authorities offered him to denounce politics in return for freedom but that he had replied that ‘he will never stop, until when they cut and separate his head from the rest of his body will he keep quiet. That he doesn’t see the future of the country the same way as the current rulers see it.’³⁶ Another related issue which might have significantly influenced the decision to send Simbwaye to the Caprivi could have been the visit of the United Nations Special Representative, Dr Alfred Escher,³⁷ to Namibia in October 1972. Part of Dr Escher’s mission was to visit the eastern Caprivi Strip to ascertain facts on the reported massacre (discussed elsewhere in this chapter) which occurred there in October 1968 and political repression in general. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Simbwaye was presented to the UN official during his visit to the Caprivi Strip nor suggesting that Dr Escher enquired about him. In any case people were prevented from getting an audience with Dr Escher, except for the late Pax Imbuwa Sibungo and Mr. Solomon Puzeli³⁸ who were direct victims of the 1968 event. Apart from the two, Gilbert Mutwa managed to secretly hand in a document explaining the 1968 massacre and giving a broad overview of the general political climate in the Caprivi.³⁹

³⁵ Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Damaraland in a letter to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek, dated 12 February 1971. (NAN: BAD, File No.V5, Vol. II).

³⁶ Personal interview with Pastor George Matali, a nephew of Brendan Simbwaye, at Kabbe (Caprivi), 16 April 2006.

³⁷ Dr Escher’s report would be rejected both by SWAPO and the United Nations.

³⁸ Mr. Puzeli, who is still alive, lost his arm during the political repression in 1968.

³⁹ Likando, ‘History of Caprivi’, 1989, p.148.

The conditions of the permit which was granted to Brendan Simbwaye specified that the visit was for six months only, that he report to the Commissioner in the Caprivi and also in Welwitschia upon his return. He was also under the impression that he will be taken back to Welwitschia, for he told people in the village how maize was growing in his garden and how worried he was since no one was taking care of the plants. This was never to happen. The police took him to the village apparently to say goodbye to his mother. When they came back for him that was the last time he was seen. It is not known whether he reached Katima Mulilo or not, whether he was killed or indeed escaped as the authorities claim. Since then, numerous stories about his disappearance or death abound.⁴⁰ What is known is that he disappeared while on a visit to his home area and presumed dead but no one knows how he died and whether he was buried at all.

The final expulsion of CANU from the Caprivi Strip did not take the form of ‘banning’ the party, as often remarked by activists and commentators⁴¹ alike. It has proved difficult to find proof of official government regulation or directive banning CANU from the Caprivi Strip. However, this took the form of wide-spread victimization of CANU leaders (with dismissal from teaching positions at the Holy Family Mission schools) and the harsh clampdown on its supporters and activities, for, as Fosse correctly observes, the non-violent, active and peaceful campaign had become ‘too successful’ for the

⁴⁰ SWAPO’s latest account is published in its book *Their Blood Waters Our Freedom: Glory to the Heroes and Heroines of the Namibian Liberation Struggle*, Windhoek: 1996. On page 317, there is the following about Simbwaye: ‘According to the Simbwaye family, Brendan Simbwaye, who was recorded as missing in 1964, was brought to his home village of Malindi by the South African Police in December 1971. He was permitted to spend a short period of time with his family and was then taken back into police custody. When subsequently informed that he was free however, he apparently demanded to be transported home and was taken by police vehicle to the Namibia/Zambia border and ordered to cross to Zambia. His last words were “I am going but don’t follow me”. He had barely walked a few metres when he was shot in the back. Simbwaye’s body was apparently buried in Zambia, although his grave has never been identified. A different version was established during fieldwork. Most of the informants believe he is dead, that he was never buried because his body was thrown into the Zambezi river, this from a former policeman who is also a relative of Simbwaye and one who was present when they last took him from the village, which is Limbeza instead of Malindi as wrongly reported by SWAPO. The general consensus seems to be that he was killed by the South African Police. A different version was alleged by the *Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper in 1980. Quoting an article in the *Johannesburg Star* newspaper, the *AZ* alleges that Simbwaye was killed by SWAPO.

⁴¹ See for example, Pütz, Von Egidy, Caplan, *Namibia handbook and Political Who’s Who*, Windhoek: Magus, 1989, p.44.; Fosse, ‘Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi, Namibia’ (MA Thesis, Department and Museum of Anthropology, University of Oslo, 1996), p. 155.

authorities.⁴² Kruger himself concedes that ‘certainly the agents (of CANU) had sold their prospectus to a good many who were seen to go along with them; some may not have been happy with what the future offered as they saw it’.⁴³

The first such clampdown occurred on the night of 28 August 1964 at Mafulo following the trial of Simbwaye and the two others. It was a clash⁴⁴ between the employees of the administration and CANU supporters. Apparently the former had reached the end of their patience for being taunted for working for the White man. In the process, the CANU office and dwellings of CANU officials and supporters at Mafulo were set on fire, causing a great number of them to either cross the river into Zambia or flee Katima Mulilo to lie low in the villages. CANU supporters took refuge mainly at Katima Mulilo⁴⁵ (Northern Rhodesia), Sesheke and Mwandu.

Seizing this opportunity to cleanse the Caprivi strip of CANU, the administration held a series of meetings with traditional authorities and village heads to ‘clear the air’, as Kruger put: ‘to declaim against young men having been elevated to the status of all-wise, as might be deduced from the support CANU had received.’⁴⁶ Fearing that CANU would now direct their activities from Zambia, the Commissioner wrote to Chief Moraliswani Maiba:

There are certain young men of CANU who, as you know, have been creating trouble here, doing and saying things to try and poison the minds of the people against the government. You will understand that we cannot allow this sort of thing to go on. Recently they started trouble at the Mafulo village but when our men turned on them they ran away to Katima Mulilo in Northern Rhodesia. Now I hear they have moved to Mwandu and it is believed they will try to cause trouble in the Caprivi by crossing at or near Schuckmansburg. My policemen are being instructed to arrest them if they cross over for they are wanted here to answer to the things they have done. I shall be glad if you will send an Induna (headman) with the police car that is going to Schuckmansburg

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, p.21.

⁴⁴ Kruger describes it as an uprising by administration employees against CANU and the mob of supporters who remained at Mafulo.

⁴⁵ There is a place in Zambia with the same name, not far from Namibia’s Katima Mulilo. Reference thus is made of Katima Zambia and Katima Namibia/Caprivi to differentiate these two Katimas.

⁴⁶ Kruger, *History of Caprivi Strip*, 1984, p.21.

and arrange that the Silalo (district) Induna there and trustworthy village heads and people will assist my men if they ask for it.⁴⁷

The additional magistrate, Mr. Bezuidenhout and the Sergeant of Police, Mr. Hartmann, departed for Schuckmansburg to seal the Caprivi-Northern Rhodesia frontier against CANU insurgency. In letters sent to Bantu Police Guards (BPG), they were instructed to go to this frontier ‘about certain work I wish you to do in connection with CANU trouble-makers’.⁴⁸ This marked the end of CANU in the Caprivi Strip, a movement which did not live beyond its official launch. It would join SWAPO in exile, in a ‘fateful merger’, that saw the expulsion from SWAPO of nine CANU members, including Albert Mishake Muyongo.

The 1968 Singalamwe (Mayala village) Massacre

With the dispersal and detention of CANU leaders and the flight of its supporters, police brutality was re-directed to ordinary inhabitants of the Caprivi Strip who were supposed to provide information about CANU, which was now in cahoots with SWAPO. Following the death of Tobias Hainyeko (first PLAN commander) near Namwi Island at the Zambezi River in Caprivi Strip on 18 May 1967, the clamp-down was stepped up. It culminated in Apartheid South Africa’s flagship monument of brutality in Caprivi Strip, the infamous and much publicized Singalamwe Massacre of 1968.⁴⁹ Information about

⁴⁷ Kruger, in a letter to Chief Moraliswani Maiba, dated 8 September 1964. (NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2).

⁴⁸ Letters sent by the Native Commissioner, Kruger, to the following Bantu Police Guards: Senior BPG Anderson Manwela, BPG Robert Ntelamo, and BPG Bonaventure Sambi, dated 8 September 1964. (NAN, LKM 3/3/3, File No. N1/15/2).

⁴⁹ The latest acknowledgement of this massacre, the first in independent Namibia, was made by President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia in an address to the nation responding to the demands of the Committee of Ex-PLAN Combatants which is pressuring government for compensation for their role in the liberation war. He happened to repeat mention of the massacre at Katima Mulilo on August 26, 2006, during commemorations of Heroes Day. A critique of this massacre is to be found in Kenneth Abrahams’s Film Review of ‘This is Namibia’ by Per Sandén and Peter Berg, from Swedish TV, of 24 May 1978. In an attack, almost personal, on Sandén, Kenneth Abrahams accuse him of being a well-known SWAPO camp-follower who functioned as semi-official SWAPO representative in Stockholm while the then representative, Ben Amathila was away. The Singalamwe massacre appeared in Sandén’s film “The Liberation Struggle in Namibia” which appeared in 1974. While Abrahams acknowledges that the massacre might have taken place since after Cassinga nobody doubts that such things occurred, he argued that the film produced no convincing evidence and was full of inherent inconsistencies which were never resolved.

this massacre first came to the attention of the world in a testimony presented to the *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts of the Commission of Human Rights by Peter Katjavivi, then SWAPO Representative in the United Kingdom and Western Europe. According to Katjavivi, the massacre took place in October 1968 when the South African troops killed about 63 people. In the process, 350 people were arrested, and 2000 forced to flee the area. Of the 100 small babies that accompanied their parents in the flight to Zambia, 53 died of starvation and disease on the way. The massacre allegedly happened in the following manner:

“First the headman of the village was dropped from a helicopter, as a warning of what would happen to anyone who withheld information about SWAPO freedom fighters or who gave support to the freedom struggle. Next the area was strafed and bombed, and then troops moved in, using fixed bayonets on anyone still alive in the village – thus adding a further chapter to the South African mission of civilization in Namibia.”⁵⁰

In his memoirs, Kruger acknowledges the flight of people as a result of this incidence even though he does not mention the massacre. His version⁵¹ is that a group of ‘terrorists’ entered at the locality where Namibia in the Caprivi Strip, Angola and Zambia have a common beacon. This group ransacked Finaughty’s shops at Singalamwe and Sibbinda. Then the police force reacted quickly in pursuit, seeking out also possible local collaborators. Regrettably, he adds:

Numbers of villagers down at the Mashi left their homes to cross the border northwards, either into Angola or Zambia there to remain, amongst them Mano of Nkongola,...and also Wankie.⁵²

A Swedish television team from Sveriges Radio visited the Caprivi Strip allegedly at the invitation of SWAPO, consisting of two reporters, Per Sandén and Rudolf Spee of TV2. The reporters offered an interview to a staff reporter from the *Argus* Group Office in

For Abrahams, the showing of two skulls could not be regarded as evidence. But there are witnesses to this massacre which are still alive. For example, Mr. Puzeli, mentioned above, lost his arm in one of these 1968 so-called security sweeps in Caprivi strip. While Kenneth Abrahams accused Per Sandén of blurred objectivity because of his close association with SWAPO (He happens to be in Namibia at the moment, apparently working on the SWAPO Archive), he could also be accused of not being objective in his assessment of whether the massacre took place because of his dislike of SWAPO after he fell out of favor. He was writing in 1978 in *Namibia Today*.

⁵⁰ *Namibia News*, Vol.7, No.6/7, June/July 1974, p.4.

⁵¹ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, pp. 24-25.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.25. For a discussion of this incidence of Finaughty’s shops, see also Likando, ‘History of Caprivi’, 1989, p.145.

London, who travelled to Stockholm to attempt to establish the veracity of the report. They claimed to have indeed been in the Caprivi Strip during January/February 1974. One night they were taken to the site by Peter Nanyemba near Kalonga where they saw about 30 skeletons lying around. Even though they refused to be drawn on whether there were any shallow graves, signs of violence or anything pointing to unnatural death, they revealed that they found remains of huts, cooking utensils and skeletal remains above the ground. Some remains showed signs of being burnt as did the surrounding bushes and vegetation. Apparently Nanyemba told them that the massacre took place during September 1973, and not October 1968 as alleged by Katjavivi, who explains the confusion about the dates by averring that there had in fact been two massacres, one in 1968 and the other in 1973.⁵³ This security sweep claimed the lives of Simeon Muyongo (Mishake's father), Judea Lyaboloma, Benjamin Bebi and Maxwell Kulibabika while others such as Pax Sibungo Imbuwa⁵⁴ were left in a state of near insanity.

⁵³ Correspondence from the South African Legation in Stockholm to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, dated 24 July 1974. See also telegram from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria to the same in Cape Town, dispatched on 30 July 1974. (NAP, File No. TES 2751, F11/243).

⁵⁴ He was charged with holding an illegal meeting and was given a suspended sentence. Later he would be em⁵⁴ Kruger, *History of Caprivi*, 1984, pp. 24-25.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25. For a discussion of this incidence of Finaughty's shops, see also Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.145.

⁵⁴ Correspondence from the South African Legation in Stockholm to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, dated 24 July 1974. See also telegram from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria to the same in Cape Town, dispatched on 30 July 1974. (NAP, File No. TES 2751, F11/243).



Figure 2: Remains of Mayala village, site of the 1968 Singalamwe massacre in the Caprivi after a visit by the South African forces, which apparently petrol-bombed the village using helicopters.⁵⁵

CANU: 1964 AND AFTER

The arrest of Simbwaye in 1964 threw CANU into disarray and total state of confusion: ‘we didn’t know how to proceed; we didn’t have a clear beginning’.⁵⁶ What remained of the leadership then met and decided that the logical cause would be to follow up on the talks with Sam Nujoma of SWAPO which Simbwaye had initiated. This task was given to Albert Mishake Muyongo and Crispin Mulonda who then departed to Lusaka in September 1964.⁵⁷ Once in Lusaka, Mishake Muyongo wrote a letter to Sam Nujoma who was then in Dar es Salaam asking him to meet for talks.⁵⁸ According to Muyongo,

⁵⁵ Photograph reproduced from *Namibia News*, Vol. 7 No. 6/7, June/July 1974, p.3, and was provided to SWAPO by the Swedish Television Team.

⁵⁶ Adrian Waluka Simubali, personal interview, 16 April 2006.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Mishake Muyongo, in a Biography submitted to SWAPO, in *Namibia News*, Vol.3 No.1-3, January/March 1970, p.11. Note that Muyongo does not state that he was sent by the CANU leadership to follow-up on the talks, and in fact he does not mention that the talks had already been initiated by Simbwaye. He presents the initiative to be solely his: “realizing the need for national unity in the struggle

this meeting took place between himself, Sam Nujoma and Jacob Kuhangua, then Secretary-General of SWAPO⁵⁹ while Sam Nujoma writes that he met Muyongo, Crispin Mulonda and Joseph Nawa and ‘...repeated my proposal for uniting the two parties, and we finally formalized the merger of SWAPO and CANU under the name of SWAPO’.⁶⁰ The ‘merger’ was announced in Lusaka on 5 November 1964 in a joint press statement by CANU and SWAPO and signed by Albert Muyongo (Vice-President of CANU) and Sam Nujoma (National President of SWAPO). The press statement read in part:⁶¹

We the under-signed members of the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) and Caprivi African National Union (CANU) do hereby declare that, for the interest of our people and freedom and independence of our Fatherland South West Africa CANU and SWAPO cease to exist as separate organizations. We further resolve that CANU and SWAPO merge and unite as one organization with the following aims and objectives:-

- a) To fight relentless for the total liberation of South West Africa from the yoke of the South African imperialism;
- b) To foster the ideal of Pan-Africanism and to rally the African masses into a cohesive national organization;
- c) To strive for the creation of true democratic Government in South West Africa, a government that would serve the interest of all the people of our country irrespective of their color, race, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

Following the ‘merger’, Simbwaye was made Vice-President of SWAPO but since he was under arrest inside the country, Mishake Muyongo was appointed as Acting Vice-President in his place.⁶² According to later CANU leadership, the merger between the two parties was rejected by some in the party.⁶³ It might be important to clarify why there

to free Namibia, wrote a letter to Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO who was then in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, asking him to meet him for talks of a united front."

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Nujoma, Sam, *Where Others Wavered*, p.136.

⁶¹ Extracted from a joint press release by CANU and SWAPO of 5 November 1964, signed by Muyongo and Nujoma, p.5 (Copy in possession of author).

⁶² It is unclear who else got positions in SWAPO from CANU as a result of the merger. Two others, Lemmy Matengu and Jackson Mazazi Lukonga are reflected at their dismissal from SWAPO in 1980 as former members of the SWAPO Central Committee (SWAPO Information Bulletin, No.4/80, July 1980, p.4). Indeed, it is not clear whether the Vice-Presidency was always going to be reserved for CANU within SWAPO as long as the ‘merger’ existed.

⁶³ Fossé, ‘Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms’, 1996, p.155. There was a misunderstanding as to the functioning of the merger. Some CANU members believed that the party still existed as an entity within SWAPO while another group believed that the two organizations were supposed to dissolve to form a new one, with a new constitution and under a new name. This misunderstanding, according to Likando, led to the arrest and detention of Gilbert Mutwa of CANU in Tanzania’s Maximum Prison (Likando, ‘History of Caprivi’, 1989, p.142). Likando further writes that on 29 November 1965 a Commission was appointed and assigned to explore ways to solve the impasse especially to recommend amendments to the constitution and

was a ‘merger’: Did SWAPO really need CANU? Apart from the fact that unity of the Namibian people for a common cause was requisite for a successful campaign to overthrow the South African regime from Namibia, it should be remembered that internationally, both SWAPO and SWANU were canvassing for support, especially from the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. This support depended firstly on unity within national liberation movements and, secondly, on how representative such an organization was of the people in a given country. With the formation of the OAU Liberation Committee, preparedness to take up arms became important. Up to this time SWAPO had not yet been officially recognized as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people by the United Nations. CANU was important to SWAPO in two other ways: Firstly, CANU had a good and well-established relationship with UNIP of Zambia through personalities such as Munukayumbwa Sipalo (UNIP Secretary-General) and Mundia Nalumino (a former teacher in the Caprivi Strip together with Simbwaye) who went on to become Zambia’s Prime Minister in the government of Kaunda, long before SWAPO leaders went to Lusaka. Zambia, being the only independent African country with a frontier touching South West Africa, was crucial in the logistical development of the Namibian armed struggle and therefore the support of the Zambian government was vital. That frontier comprised the Caprivi Strip and the area would indeed play a crucial role in the early and formative years of the armed liberation struggle, as Nujoma would remark in 2001:

Since many of these comrades were living along the Zambezi River, they were especially skilled in rowing canoes. They made important contributions to the struggle by imparting their skills to their fellow freedom fighters. Thus SWAPO fighters were enabled to cross the Zambezi, Kwando and Kavango rivers into the interior of the country with their arms and ammunition.”⁶⁴

The alliance would eventually collapse in July 1980 when Mishake Muyongo and eight others: Lemmy Matengu, Jackson Mazazi, Ignatius Matengu, David Mutabelezi, Dennis Kachilombwa, Ernest Likando, Benjamin Mabuku and Calvin Songa, were expelled from SWAPO at the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Central Committee of SWAPO held from

review structures to accommodate CANU’s concerns. He does not tell us however what became of this Commission, and, in any case, this could not be verified by any other source.

⁶⁴ Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p.137. For a detailed discussion on the role of the Caprivi Strip in the Namibian Liberation War, see chapter on Frontier Identity especially section on military frontier, of this Dissertation.

17-19 July 1980 at (N)Dalatando,⁶⁵ Kwanza Norte, in Angola. They were expelled apparently for engaging in ‘counter-revolutionary and secessionist activities aimed at dismembering Namibia’s National territory. They have actively been advocating and organizing for the breaking away of our Eastern Region-Caprivi-from the rest of the country.’⁶⁶ In a lengthy Editorial in its mouthpiece, *SWAPO Information Bulletin*, SWAPO castigated Muyongo thus:

On one hand, he was happy to occupy the position of Acting Vice-President of SWAPO and enjoy the authority and prestige which went with that position and on the other hand, Muyongo was not ashamed to indulge himself in tribalistic and regionalistic activities. Specifically, Muyongo had always sought to build up a personal following within SWAPO on a tribal basis. He wanted and expected all SWAPO members from Namibia’s eastern region of Caprivi to be loyal to him personally and to regard him as their tribal, rather than national representative within the SWAPO leadership. Those Caprivi members of SWAPO who failed to demonstrate personal loyalty to Muyongo had to face tribal ostracism or exclusion from his personal favor. Muyongo was always hesitant to make personal sacrifice when that was demanded of him in the interest of the liberation struggle of Namibia. It can be recalled, for example, that when the Provisional Headquarters of SWAPO were located in Dar-es-Salaam in the early 1960s, Muyongo preferred and actually opted to stay with his family and friends in Lusaka. Again, when he was recently confronted with a unanimous decision of the Central Committee to shift his residence from Lusaka to Luanda where the Movement’s Provisional Headquarters are now located, he refused to do so.⁶⁷

The “New CANU”

Muyongo and his accomplices did not attend the Central Committee meeting to answer to the charges leveled against them.⁶⁸ Instead, he issued a press statement on 7th August 1980 in which he announced the revival of what Richard Kapelwa called ‘a tribal and regional mini-party known as CANU’ to ‘fight for the liberation of Itenge – the term he always used when referring to the Eastern Region – and not Namibia’.⁶⁹ Now that CANU

⁶⁵ Two spellings are provided in one publication, Dalatando and Ndalatando.

⁶⁶ Declaration of the First Extra-Ordinary Central Committee Meeting of SWAPO held at Ndalatando, Kwanza Norte in the People’s Republic of Angola from 17-19 July 1980, in *SWAPO Information Bulletin*, No.4/80, July, 1980, pp.3-4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1

⁶⁸ Even though invitations were extended to all members of the Central Committee to attend, Muyongo, together with two others, Lemmy Matengu and Jackson Mazazi, both members of the Central Committee, refused to attend this Extra-Ordinary Session of the Central Committee convened specifically to deal with documents which ‘revealed’ the intention of Muyongo to secede the Caprivi from the rest of Namibia. Likando maintains that the reason why they did not attend was because they received information that they were going to be murdered (Likando, ‘History of Caprivi’, 1989, p.150).

⁶⁹ Richard Kapelwa, ‘Letter to the SWAPO Regional Chairman of Eastern Caprivi’, in *The Combatant*, vol.11, No.3, October 1980, pp.13-15. At the time, Richard Kapelwa was Deputy Secretary of Defence and

was a 'tribal mini-party', it is not clear whether the expulsion of Muyongo meant the scrapping of the merger of 1964. What is known, however, is that many CANU supporters continued with the war for liberation under the banner of SWAPO. According to Muyongo, repeated charges of discrimination and tribalism, the suppressed role of CANU in SWAPO and disagreements with the SWAPO leadership over strategies in negotiating between the Western Contact Group, SWAPO and South Africa after the passing of UNSCR 435 in 1978 were some of the sore points in his relationship with SWAPO.⁷⁰ He accused the SWAPO leadership of failure to deal adequately with internal problems and predicated severe future problems for SWAPO.

It was to be his revived CANU that would soon be engulfed by severe problems. No leadership was chosen at the time of the revival of the party. Attempts to do so were seen by Muyongo as undermining and subversive against him and led to the sidelining of his two top aides, Chibeya Siseho Simasiku and Lemmy Matengu, whom he accused of plotting to assassinate him.⁷¹ Zambia refused to acknowledge an official CANU presence and Muyongo returned to the Caprivi in June 1985 through the Ngoma Border Post, possibly from Senegal.⁷² A party congress held in May 1982 elected a leadership which Muyongo refused to accept and led to his first expulsion from the party, readmitted in 1985 and expelled again over the question of the merger with the DTA. In 1985 CANU's application to join the Multi-Party Conference (MPC) was rejected. Muyongo reconstituted the Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP) into the United Democratic Party (UDP) and led it into the DTA. After some internal squabbles, CANU split and joined alliances (NPF and UDF) to enter into elections under UN Resolution 435 and marked the end of an era.

Member of the political Bureau of the Central Committee of SWAPO. He is from the Caprivi Strip. At independence, he served as Namibia's first Minister of Works, Transport and Communications. Richard Kapelwa passed away in May 2007 and is the first 'Caprivian' to be buried at Heroes Acre in Windhoek.

⁷⁰ Fossé, 'Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p.155. See also Pütz, Von Egidy & Caplan, 1989, *Namibia Handbook*, p.90.

⁷¹ Likando, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.157.

⁷² Likando has it that Muyongo was deported there from Zambia in 1984, 'History of Caprivi', 1989, p.161.

Summary

The discussion in this chapter centered on the different ways in which the people of Namibia's Caprivi region responded to the creation and consolidation of the Caprivi identities. These identities were constructed through state formation and were premised on the assumption that since the people of Caprivi Strip 'have not affinities either of language or blood or otherwise with other South West Africa natives' and since they occupy a different geography, they should be administered separately and indeed, have a separate identity from that of the rest of South West Africa/Namibia..

It was observed that the people learnt over time to work with, around and against the imposition of these identities on their lives, which was done through the medium of traditional elites and institutions. For most part, colonial administration in the Caprivi Strip was not actual and direct, but persuasive and indirect – preferring to subjugate the people through their own traditional institutions. Traditional elites acted as agents of the successive colonial administrations, and with the rise of regional nationalism, competed with the intelligentsia, mainly teachers, for the control of the masses. In its quest to silence dissent, specifically CANU, the administration endeavoured to show that it was merely doing so to preserve tradition or 'duly constituted authority', that is, the rule of the chiefs through which its subjugation found expression and therefore created unnecessary friction between the traditional elite and the nationalists.

To show both consent and dissent, the discussion used three illustrations: firstly the attempts by South Africa in the mid 1940s to incorporate South West Africa as a fifth province. The people of Caprivi were involved in a referendum to decide on this issue. Even though the result shows consent, a closer examination revealed that people were not clearly informed on the difference between 'incorporation' and continuation of South African rule. Given the options, they chose to continue being under the 'Union Flag', but sounded a warning that 'we do not know what lies in the future but if things do not please us we will complain'. Significantly, people rejected the identity of being 'Lozi' as it was one of the options given, the return to Barotseland domination, declaring that they looked

upon such a return with 'fear'. Part of the reason why the concept of Caprivianness emerged was the belief that the people of the Caprivi region were more 'Lozi' than South West African due to historical factors, language and cultures which implied that they would be happy to return to Barotseland. It was shown that the identity of being Lozi was rejected by some at various points.

Secondly, the discussion examined the Odendaal Commission public hearings which were held at Katima Mulilo (Caprivi) over two days in February 1963. A fundamental shift was noted at the hearings. Instead of the general grievances of the 1940s and 1950s directed mainly at government officials in the Caprivi Strip for not allowing people to buy arms and ammunition, restrictions on killing of game, and lack of stores and market for the disposal of cattle, and the usual call for their transfer, a unanimous call for the withdrawal of the South African Government from the Caprivi Strip was vocal. Interestingly, this came from the traditional elite (chiefs) who served as South Africa's medium of power dissemination, for the Commission refused to meet any other group except Europeans resident in the Caprivi Strip. On average, it was found, the Commission interviewed more Europeans than 'Caprivians'. Their recommendation was a roadmap for the consolidation of the Caprivi identities through a legislative council (1972) and a Caprivi government (1976).

Lastly, the discussion examined in great detail the rise of regional nationalism in the Caprivi Strip, specifically the formation of the Caprivi African National Union (CANU). It was concluded that CANU constituted the most organized association to emerge in the Caprivi Strip through which the South African rule of Caprivi Strip was challenged. The response of the administration to the rise of CANU was harsh and swift. The party did not exist in Caprivi Strip beyond its first public meeting. A harsh clamp down on its leaders and supporters alike left many under detentions such as Brendan Simbwaye and many others on the run. Police brutality in what was regarded as security sweeps aimed at the population resulted in a massacre in 1968 in which scores of people were killed and some fled into neighboring territories.

This dispersal of CANU leaders and supporters would aid the nationalists in their quest to disintegrate the Caprivi Identity. Once outside, they joined forces with SWAPO and realized that their struggle was part of a broader cause to free the rest of South West Africa of which they were an integral territorial component and that they form part of a 'Namibian Identity' in the making. Consequently, this would open the Caprivi Strip as a strategic front for the Namibian liberation war. A regional cause which started with CANU's desire to deconstruct the Caprivi Identities as constructed by South Africa now and create a new identity of 'Caprivianness' took on a national outlook, with the war against South Africa not only in Caprivi Strip but in the rest of Namibia making use of the Caprivi Strip strategically and militarily. Similarly, the banishment of Brendan Simbwaye and Vernet Maswahu to other parts of South West Africa put them in touch with other nationalist leaders such as Herero leader Clemens Kapuuo. By removing them to Ohopoho (Opuwo), Warmbad and Welwitschia (Khorixas), the administration reinforced and exposed them to a greater South West Africa and therefore indirectly aided their crusade to dismantle the view of Caprivi as constructed by all powers that had subjugated or ruled the region, and integrate it into South West Africa.

CHAPTER NINE

SECESSION: THE IDENTITY OF PEOPLE AS 'CAPRIVIANS' AND NOT NAMIBIANS

Introduction

In the early morning hours of 2 August 1999, separatist rebels calling themselves the Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) launched armed attacks on a Police station, army base and NBC (Namibia Broadcasting Corporation) building at Katima Mulilo. Five officers and three soldiers were killed, while five separatists were killed and eight captured.¹ The group advocating for the secession of the Caprivi region is led by former SWAPO Acting Vice-President and leader of the former official opposition, the DTA (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance), Albert Mishake Muyongo, now leader of the UDP (United Democratic Party). Muyongo and his group reportedly want Caprivi to secede from Namibia as he feels there is nepotism and tribalism in the SWAPO-led Government and that he believes the four northern regions of Oshikoto, Oshana, Omusati and Ohangwena (formerly Ovamboland) are being developed at the expense of other regions.² During 1998 and early 1999, scores of people including the marginalized San fled the Caprivi into neighboring Botswana as refugees fearing repercussions after government unearthed a scheme to secede the Caprivi from Namibia. The Namibian government requested Botswana to extradite those responsible but this request was turned down for fear that the refugees' human rights might be violated if returned. The two governments however agreed to the voluntary repatriation of refugees. Scores have since returned. While the Namibian Defense Force managed to quell the resistance in just a few hours and

¹ On their website (see below) the secessionists dispute the figure of casualties provided by government and other sources. According to their information all those who were in Mpacha military base and those who were arriving in the morning very few survived. That at Wenela (WNLA) military base and Katima Police station many were killed; three were killed at the Katima Mulilo shopping centre and killed at the Katounyana (Special Field Force) Base. The secessionists' claim could not be verified by any other source. At best it appears to be propaganda aimed at the international community.

² Chrispin Inambao, 'Governor joins Caprivi Exodus: Botswana launches manhunt', in *The Namibian*, <http://www.namibian.com.na/netstories/November98/caprivi2.html>, accessed on 3 March 2007.

normalcy seems to have returned to the Caprivi, the issue of secession is still very much alive in Namibian courts where over a hundred suspected secessionists are being tried for treason, sedition, murder and the illegal possession of firearms.

At the heart of secessionist attempts is the battle for a Caprivi Identity', as Muyongo put it 'We are Caprivians....Nobody will make Namibians out of us – not even by force'.³ The intention to occupy the NBC radio station by the rebels was to announce 'that Caprivians were no longer considered Namibians, but Caprivians'.⁴ Those being tried for treason questioned the Namibian courts' jurisdiction to try them since they were not Namibians. The Caprivi Identity now becomes a spatial or geographical: own identity in a historically own territory. For the secessionists, the question of Caprivi 'is not of secession, it is a question of the area regaining its original status as a country'.⁵ In the advent of secessionist attacks on government installations at Katima Mulilo on 2 August 1999, Maria Fisch published a useful, albeit historical, justification of secession in the Caprivi Strip, titled *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi: A historical perspective*.⁶ Therein lies the question to be examined in this chapter: does secession in the Caprivi Strip have a historical basis (which is really Fisch's argument)? And if so, which history? I will argue that the secessionist movement in the Caprivi Strip has a historical construction (mainly by apartheid SA) or perspective as Fisch contends, but that secession does not have a historical basis or justification. This is because the historical argument on which it is based is flawed in many respects, which is largely the history of Lozi subjugation in Caprivi. Rather, I will conclude, the Caprivi Identity is a normal process of 'negotiating the Namibian nation in local terms',⁷ which is a blend of ethnicity and nationalism, and secession, is just an extreme expression of this process.

³ Brigitte Weidlich, 'Muyongo hits out at Govt: Charges not even force will deter secessionists', in *The Namibian*, 11 September 2006, p.1.

⁴ History: Caprivi Zipfel: The controversial strip (Part III), posted on 23 August 2005, at <File://E:\CapriviFreedom> - history.htm; source: www.caprivifreedom.com; <http://www.caprivifreedom.com/news.i?cmd=view&nid=818>. Website accessed on 20 November 2006. This is the official website of the Caprivi secessionist movement.

⁵ History: Caprivi Zipfel, the Controversial strip (Part II). *Ibid*.

⁶ Fisch, Maria, *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi: A historical perspective*, Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1999.

⁷ Expression borrowed from a thesis title by John Leif Fossé, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Eastern Caprivi (MA, Oslo), 1996.

This chapter will critically examine the basis for secession in the Caprivi region, which rests primarily on two arguments, the fact that Caprivi has ‘historically never been’ part of Namibia; and the fact that SWAPO, then a liberation movement, pledged in 1964 to let ‘Caprivians’ attain self-rule at independence when CANU (Caprivi African National Union) and SWAPO merged. The third motivation for secession often mentioned, that of under-development or neglect of the Caprivi region by the SWAPO Government, will be discussed only in minor detail.

A Peripheral Identity, Caprivi Under Colonialism

A prosecution witness in the second treason trial, Sackey Akweenda,⁸ added his voice in describing the Caprivi region as a creation of colonialism, ‘its peculiar shape the result of deals and treaties that colonial powers – Germany, Portugal, Great Britain and later also South Africa – concluded with each other’.⁹ It is this peculiar shape which became the curse of the Caprivi apparently as it rendered it difficult to administer which resulted in the territory being tossed from one administration to the other. Some academics described the colonial creation of the Caprivi Strip ‘...as one of the most bizarre results of the scramble for Africa’¹⁰ while others concluded that the Caprivi represented an unfortunate anachronism which should have been amputated from the former South West Africa at the creation of the League of Nations Mandate after World War I and assigned to Botswana and Zambia.¹¹ It is this line of argument which feeds the secessionists’ thinking that Caprivi historically never belonged to Namibia. My argument in this chapter is that indeed Caprivi was part and parcel of South West Africa since 1890, just that it was kept on the periphery of mainstream political, cultural and social happenings in greater South

⁸ Author of *International Law and the Protection of Namibia’s Territorial Integrity: Boundaries and Territorial Claims*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997.

⁹ Werner Menges, ‘Second treason trial provides a lesson on border history’, *The Namibian*, 21 November 2006, p.7.

¹⁰ Pretorius, J., *The Fwe of Eastern Caprivi: A study of their historical and geographical background, tribal structure and legal system, with reference to Fwe family law and succession* (MA: Stellenbosch) 1975:47.

¹¹ Logan, 1968, 25 quoted in Fossé, ‘Negotiating The Nation in Local Terms’, 1996, p. 179.

West Africa. I am yet to be shown any country in Africa which is not a creation of colonialism and, especially in Southern Africa, one which evaded the imperialist expansionism of the British, Germans and the Portuguese.

The peripheral status of the Caprivi was ambiguous as both useless and useful and this shifts during colonial rule. For most part of German and South West Africa Administration rule, the Caprivi was largely viewed as a useless piece of land, a problematic vast disease-bearing flood plain which was not suitable for white settlement. For this reason, the SWAA offloaded the territory onto the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration and later onto the Union Native Affairs Department. This changed because of its military strategic importance, being located between Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, the Caprivi constituted the main infiltration route for SWAPO in the early stages of the liberation war, as well as a convenient base for SA to launch aggressive attacks on neighboring states. As a result, Caprivi became one of the most heavily militarized regions of Southern Africa. Contrary to arguments that Caprivi was never part of Namibia, the war served to integrate the territory into Namibia to a very much larger degree than before, especially in terms of infrastructural development. Because of its military importance, Caprivi became a very useful South African Bantustan in south central Africa. All the same, Caprivi was deliberately kept peripheral during this period in economical, political, cultural sense, and especially in relation to the process of nation-building, for as I argue, precisely because of military purposes. The intention of the SA government was to keep the area isolated and inaccessible from outsiders who might question its use for military purposes against the provisions of the Mandate System which prohibited any part of the Mandated Territory to be used for such purposes.

Whereas the rest of South West Africa was nominally 'independent' or indirectly administered by South Africa, the Caprivi Strip was administered directly from Pretoria. Even radio, one of the most common means of communication in those days,¹² was

¹² The other being letters writing. This should however not be overemphasized given the low literacy rate of the communities at the stage.

strictly controlled by the South Africans. This was followed by the 'self-government homeland' status between 1972 and 1980 when the Caprivi had its own national anthem, flag, coat of arms and a constitution. This, I argued elsewhere, was the highest point, of the Caprivi Identity (read secession). It should be mentioned that although the Caprivi was administered directly from Pretoria, the legislation which was applied in the territory was that of the South West Africa Administration. It was this long period of isolation and special status of the Caprivi which accounts for feelings of 'Caprivianness' as opposed to 'Namibianness'. Three events account for the integration of 'Caprivians' into mainstream Namibia before independence: the liberation war, the Turnhalle Conference and AG8, legislation that introduced the three-tier ethnic system of central, regional and local government. Even then, as it is argued here, the Caprivi was never independent during this period. It was just closer to South Africa than to the rest of Namibia, which was referred to as South West Africa, that is, as some country other than their own, among people in the Caprivi region'.¹³

Territorially, Caprivi remained part of Namibia throughout its colonial history. It would be remembered that the reason why the Caprivi was withdrawn from the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration was because the Mandates Commission 'discovered that the territory was being administered by the wrong power' and demanded that it revert to SWA. The territorial boundaries of Namibia have been defined by the German-Portuguese Treaty of 30 December 1886 and the Anglo-German Treaty of 1 July 1890. In terms of the mandate that was granted to South Africa, any changes to the boundaries of the territory that South Africa had to administer had to be approved by the League of Nations. There is no evidence to suggest that any step to alter the status of the Caprivi in relation to the territorial integrity of SWA was effected during colonial rule. The Namibian Constitution in turn states that the national territory of Namibia shall consist of the whole of the territory recognized by the international community through the organs of the United Nations as Namibia. According to Akweenda, this would include the

¹³ Fossé, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 178.

Caprivi Strip.¹⁴ Therefore the secessionist argument that Caprivi has historically never been part of Namibia is difficult to appreciate. This leads me to look for the basis of this argument in the pre-colonial period. A starting point logically is the secessionists' presentation of their history which they date back to 1600 with the Caprivi being part of Buluzi or Lozi Kingdom. The Lozi were defeated by the Makololo of Sebetwane in the late 1820s but were able to regain control in the early 1860s (see Chapter Two). This was the state of affairs until Europeans appeared on the scene in the 1890s. According to this history, the Caprivi was never an independent entity and therefore for the secessionists to advocate its independence on historical grounds, leads one to ask the question which history?

It is apparent, then, that it is the history of the Lozi, and indeed, according to the Masubiya, the ruling Mamili dynasty that wants to revert to Lozi suzerainty in the Caprivi. Fisch has it that Muyongo actively promoted the slogan 'Revival of the Lozi culture in Caprivi' during the final years of his political career.¹⁵ This is not surprising in light of the following. Firstly, the Mafwe Chieftainship, the ruling Mamili dynasty to be specific, are descendants of a Lozi representative in Caprivi, Simataa (Imataa) Mamili, who was posted to Caprivi in 1864 to guard against the return of the Makololo and others such as the Matebele of Mzilikazi. It was Simataa Mamili whom the Germans found at Linyanti in 1909 and made chief of the Mafwe, including all other non-Subiya speaking inhabitants of the Caprivi. Therefore the secessionist movement is really grounded by Lozi nostalgia by the descendants of Simataa Mamili in Caprivi. The second is the claim of Barotse support for the secessionist cause in Caprivi. It was reported in the media at the time of the secessionist attack on Katima Mulilo that the Lozi of Zambia's western province were crossing into the Caprivi to 'help separatist rebels fight for the regions' secession from Namibia', a leader of the Barotse Patriotic Front (BPF), Imasiku Mutangelwa, was quoted in Lusaka.¹⁶ Mutangelwa called on 'all Lozis worldwide to

¹⁴ In Werner Menges, 'Second treason trial provides a lesson on border history', *The Namibian*, 21 November, 2006, p.7.

¹⁵ Fisch, 1999: 22

¹⁶ Tabby Moyo, 'Claims on Barotse support surface', <http://www.namibian.com.na/Focus/Caprivi/barotse.htm>, posted on 4 August 1999. Accessed on 5 March 2007.

contribute materially to the cause of the Caprivi secessionists', adding, 'We are ready to defend our democracy, brothers and the UN charter'.¹⁷ The Caprivi rebels, who attacked Katima Mulilo are believed to have entered Namibia from south-western Zambia. The Lozi of Zambia had been fighting for their 'independence' since Zambia's independence. Rendering support to the Caprivi secessionists was really intended as a wake-up call to President Fredrick Chiluba of Zambia. In fact, Mutangelwa warned the Zambian Government of Fredrick Chiluba at the time to 'take a leaf' from what was happening in Caprivi. When Mutangelwa was served with an order to report to the police over statements he made that Zambian Lozis¹⁸ were moving into Namibia to re-inforce Caprivi secessionists, he sought refuge at the residence of the South African High Commissioner in Lusaka and requested South Africa to grant him political asylum.

It is significant to record that Lozi cultural influences are not very welcome in Caprivi, as can be seen from the following lengthy quote provided by Fossé, taken from a letter to the editor of *New Era* about the origins of the Siyomboka dance:

Allow me to comment on an article in your recent edition which suggested that Caprivians no longer perform siyomboka. First, I would like to state that the person who made this claim is not a Caprivian, and cannot pass himself as an expert on Caprivian cultures. The person who made this claim is actually a Zambian and he should be told that Caprivians will not allow cultural influences from his land of origin, especially if such influence has the potential to undermine our traditional way of living as inherited from our ancestors. This said, I would like it known that Caprivians are a people with a rich traditional base and who show respect to their customs and beliefs. And contrary to the author's claim, the siyomboka was never popular nor was it traditionally taught to people in Caprivi as the author claims. Rather, it came into Caprivi, especially into the Musanga area where the author is known to have family attachments, from the other side of the Zambezi. And the question is: What has a Zambian dance got to do with Caprivian cultural way of living, birth, growing up, education and marriage system? Caprivi has prominent tribes which have different traditions as well as foundations of respect:

- The Mayeyi tribe has a traditional dance called Shibboli;
- The Masubiya tribe has a traditional dance called Sipelu;
- The Mafwe tribe has a traditional dance called Moyaluke;
- The Mambukushu has a traditional dance called Umpera.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Secessionism is a minority interest in Western Province of Zambia as is in Caprivi.

Namibians have a responsibility to defend their traditions, and to protect such traditions from neighboring countries.¹⁹

What becomes important is the reaction of other groups in the Caprivi, apart from Lozi and the Mamili lineage, to secession. In an article which appeared in the local media on this issue titled 'Secession of Caprivi a minority interest',²⁰ the writer quoted Chief Liswani III of the Masubiya as follows:

A group of people from one village (Linyanti) cannot say they own Caprivi and, apart from Mamili, they didn't even consult the other chiefs about their plans... (Emphasizing that none of his subjects had joined Muyongo's group, the chief added) It is only from the Linyanti area and a few individuals from Kongola, but no one from the Subia tribe has run away.²¹

In a letter to a local daily, a reader assessed support for the secession in Caprivi as follows: 'It is a well-known fact that the ill-advised ambition of secessionism is entertained in only one or two out of the six constituencies in the Caprivi Region. Even in such one or two constituencies, it is doubtful whether the most people there support the idea of secessionism. The democratic principle dictates that the minority conform to the wishes of the majority. The same is true of the few secessionist-minded people in that region. It is a pity they cannot be wished away.'²²

Limiting the support for secession to the Linyanti area needs further contextualization and actually brings in an interesting aspect of identity formation in Caprivi. There exists conflict within the Mafwe over who is considered genuine and 'true' Mafwe. As shown in a quotation from a letter writer in a previous chapter, a distinction is usually made between Mafwe residing at Kongola, Choi, Sesheke and Singalamwe (taken to be true

¹⁹ 'Siyomboka is not Caprivian' by Lawrence M. Simbilu. Letter to the Editor, *New Era* 28 September – 4 October 1995, in Fossé, 1996: 181.

²⁰ Chrispin Inambao, 'Secession of Caprivi a minority interest', at <http://www.namibian.com.na/netstories/november98/caprivi8a.html>, accessed on 5 March 2007.

²¹ Actually one Subia man, Mr. Tawana of Nakabolelwa, who had long connections with the DTA, is known to be among the secessionists facing treason trial in the High Court.

²² Benjamin Chika Mabuku, 'Response to Mr. Chrispin Matongo's Secessionist Outbursts', in *New Era*, 15 September 2006, p. 11. This is very ironic because, as shown in Chapter Six, this letter writer is among those expelled from SWAPO in 1980, together with Mishake Muyongo, precisely for secession. Is it possible in the Caprivi Identity to switch from being Namibian to being Caprivian and then Namibian again?

Mafwe)²³ and those inhabiting the Linyanti – Chichimane – Kanono area, usually referred to as Mbalangwe. As the writer says, ‘The people of Namibia must be made to understand that Chief Mamili and Mishake Muyongo are not Mafwe, but Mbalangwe...the Mbalangwe clan’s association with the Mafwe people is in dubious nature....Mafwe elders should clearly explain to us, the young generation, their association with a tribe which speaks a mixture of Lozi and Subia.’²⁴ This is what Anton Bredell had to say about the Mbalangwe language: ‘It is a sociolectal variety of Cisubiya [Subiya] and that Mbalangwe is the name applied to Cisubiya speakers residing in the Mafwe area.’²⁵ There is a close interrelationship between the Masubiya and Mbalangwe, to an extent shown above that Mbalangwes are taken to be Masubiya residing in Mafwe areas. This corroborates the claim by the Masubiya chief that people living in villages surrounding Lake Lyambezi such as Lusu, Masokotwane, Zilitene (Kwena), Machita and Silumbi, who consider themselves Mafwe, were once all his subjects.²⁶ What is more, Fossé concludes, ‘the Masubiya also provided the present ruling dynasty of the Mafwe’.²⁷ Kruger (1963:3) actually says Simataa is a ‘Musubia placed by the Malozi as headman in the western area and who had assumed the name Mamili from his Mukololo predecessor’.²⁸ The above shows that secessionist support in Caprivi is the concern of a clan, the descendants of the Lozi Simataa Mamili. A major argument in this section has been that secession does not have historical justification since the history on which it is based is also foreign and not ‘Caprivian’, if you would like. Such a history is unacceptable to other groups in the Caprivi, particularly the Masubiya. It would be recalled from Chapter Two that the Subia assisted Sebetwane of the Makololo to cross the Zambezi on his way to conquer the Lozi; and that the Lozi revolution against the Makololo in 1864 was centred in the Subia area. When the Makololo were overthrown and the Lozi kingdom restored, the Subia indicated to the Lozi that they became autonomous with the end of the Makololo authority. This led to Sepopa, then Lozi King,

²³ It is this group which has formed its own chieftaincy, the Mayuni or Mashi Traditional Authority.

²⁴ ‘Mafwe suffer unfair abuse’ by Michael Allan Munyandi, *New Era*, 16-22 June 1994.

²⁵ Anton Bredell, in Maho, *Few People, Many Tongues*, 1998, p. 51.

²⁶ *New Era*, 29 June – 5 July 1995, quoted in Kangumu, Bennett, ‘The Land Dispute between the Mafwe (Fwe) and Masubiya (Subia): An historical contextualization’ (unpublished manuscript, 2007).

²⁷ Fossé, 1996: 106. The original citation is from Pretorius, 1975:22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

to descend on the Masubiya and force a great number of them to flee to Botswana about 1876. The Masubiya therefore loathe any attempt aimed at restoring Lozi rule in the Caprivi. The close association of secession to Loziness therefore automatically excludes them from participating.

If secession does not have a historical justification, what accounts for the actions of the secessionists? At least two factors are responsible for secessionist tendencies in Caprivi, it is argued here. The first is that it is a South African construction due to the special status (read peripheral) the Caprivi was accorded during the liberation war, and the second has to do with the political fortunes and misfortunes of one person, Albert Mishake Muyongo, who has successfully manipulated the existing tribal tension between the Mafwe and Masubiya to aid his checkered political career. The result is that Mafwe feel marginalized by the present government but importantly, they believe, this because of misinformation from the Masubiya.²⁹ Is secession therefore an extension of the tribal feud between the Masubiya and the Mafwe?

South Africa's Construction of Caprivi Secession

It became apparent from the above that the Caprivi enjoyed a special status due to its geopolitical potential for the Apartheid regime in Pretoria. To recapitulate,, this was because it was squeezed between Angola, where Portuguese colonialism had crumbled and SWAPO opened another front in its liberation war; Zambia, which was really a logistical hub for many liberation movements in Africa (SWAPO, ANC, ZAPU) and whose Western Province not only bordered Angola but it was where SWAPO had a number of bases and transit (retention) camps for refugees joining the movement; and Botswana, which provided an alternative transport corridor, particularly rail transport, for heavy cargo to the Caprivi Strip. Supplies of both men and equipment criss-crossed the Caprivi during this period, and the area became a sophisticated military base for South Africa from which to launch attacks on Zambia and Angola at the same time being a transit point for SWAPO fighters.

²⁹ 'Mafwe will not stand idle', *New Era*, 20 February 2007.

The presumed special status of the Caprivi influenced the nature of South Africa's power dissemination in the area and aimed to maintain what Flint terms a 'clientelist population'.³⁰ Such a population was to be different in many respects to other population groups in the mandated territory of South West Africa. Firstly, the great divide between the Masubiya and Mafwe became the hallmark of administrative policy; that they had equal status by right, which was bequeathed by their common Lozi ancestors. Secondly, that it was only colonial intervention which disrupted their 'Loziness' in 1909 when the Germans set up an administration at Schuckmannsburg. This colonial process, Fisch argues, ensured that 'indigenous groups that bore no ethnic, linguistic or historical relationship to other Namibian tribes were incorporated into German South West Africa.'³¹ This has been the basis for a Caprivianness, and now secession, the curse of being different. Amazingly, adherents of 'Loziness' in the origin of Caprivi inhabitants chose to ignore the fact that the Mbukushu of Kavango for example, migrated largely from the Caprivi where a section which remained still live.

However it was counter-productive for Apartheid South Africa to place too much emphasis on this Lozi connection given that SWAPO was housed in Zambia. Instead the Caprivi was to be brought closer to Pretoria but allowed to develop on its own which was really the construction of isolation. This period was marked by intense focus. Drove of officials, including the Prime Minister and his ministers, visited the Caprivi more often than before especially during the preparation of the case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) brought by Ethiopia and Liberia against South Africa. As noted elsewhere, the Caprivi was presented as a model Bantustan at this time. The two chiefs of the time and their delegation were also accorded a visit to the Union of South Africa. Furthermore, scholarships were given to 'Caprivians' to further their studies in South Africa. It is during this period that the identities of 'Caprivianness' are consolidated. This

³⁰ Flint, L, The construction of clientelist identity in Caprivi, north-eastern Namibia, 1960-1985 (Research proposal, undated, copy in the possession of the author). It is not known whether this research was carried out.

³¹ Fisch, 1999:7

consolidation involved a transition from Eastern Caprivi Zipfel (ECZ) of the 1930s through the 1960s to the East Caprivi of the 1970s during the establishment of the East Caprivi Bantustan (Homeland), and eventually its inhabitants were invariably being referred to as 'East Caprivians' or just 'Caprivians', as in 'Administration for Caprivians' (AG8).

When it dawned on South Africa that Namibia would have to be allowed to succeed to independence, the idea of Caprivi as an independent state was given serious consideration. It could offer South Africa a vantage point to watch and influence political events in neighboring independent African states. In the words of Flint, 'the South African regime renewed Streitwolf's policy of creating a separate colonial constituency but hybridized it so that Caprivi could become a friendly 'independent' satellite of South Africa in what was rapidly becoming a very unfriendly region for Pretoria'.³² The *Windhoek Advertiser*³³ reported that the secession of the Caprivi area and the formation of an independent 'state of Itenge'³⁴ was discussed at a meeting between South African President Botha and the two Caprivi tribal chiefs. This was linked to the move by the Rehoboth Bantustan leader to declare the area a 'republic' thus excluding it from the conditions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435.

The other option considered by South Africa at the time was to sabotage a SWAPO victory at the UN supervised elections, once again with the Caprivi being at the centre of such an endeavour since it bristled with South African military personnel. The creation of a rebel group along the lines of UNITA³⁵ in Angola and Renamo (MNR) in Mozambique was considered to destabilize a future SWAPO Government. Mishake Muyongo was apparently approached by the South African government on this scheme which would incorporate members of 101 Battalion which operated in the former Ovamboland area to

³² L. Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi', in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2. (2003), p. 420.

³³ Of 3 January 1989. See also *The Namibia* of 25 November, 16 December 1988; and one for 13 January 1989.

³⁴ Name of a pre-colonial Subia kingdom.

³⁵ National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

give a semblance of a broader base.³⁶ It is not surprising that the Caprivi secessionists received both equipment and training from UNITA, as reported by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and other media.³⁷ The Caprivi Strip had been the key supply route for UNITA rebels especially by apartheid South Africa. As noted in an earlier chapter, UNITA had a military base in western Caprivi. The involvement of outside paramilitary forces in Caprivi is not new. In 1987 British media³⁸ reported that South Africa was preparing a 200 strong mercenary unit for attacks on the frontline states and exiled Namibians and South Africans using a ‘terrorist’ force that contained former Rhodesian Selous Scouts, members of the SA-backed FNLA³⁹ and UNITA forces in Angola, former members of the Portuguese PIDE (secret police) and members of Koevoet. These forces were being assembled, according to the reports, at the Katima Mulilo military base in the Caprivi Strip where they were well placed for attacks on most of the frontline states and were supported by three companies of the SADF.

Given the above, it is argued here that secession in Caprivi is a direct product of South African occupation in that it was this occupation which created and emphasized local notions of identity that served to alienate local people from other groups in Namibia. It is these localized notions of identity which are expressed as secession in the post-colonial era. Indeed, it is here where one should look for the causes of secession instead of the pre-South African colonial era normally dressed as historical, social and cultural differences between ‘Caprivians’ and other Namibians.

Mishake Muyongo and Caprivi Secession

It was established in the preceding paragraphs that Caprivi secession, usually passed as having historical origination, is actually a South African construction especially of the

³⁶ INON (International News on Namibia), No. 66, February 1989.

³⁷ Quoted by XINHUA News Agency, ‘Angola’s UNITA Implicated in Namibian Unrest’, at <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-55357402.html>.

³⁸ *Morning Star*, 27 June 1987 (published by the Communist Party of Great Britain); and the BBC of 27 June 1987.

³⁹ Front for National Liberation of Angola.

1980s with its interventionist policy of aggression in Southern Africa. Albert Mishake Muyongo was central to the South African plans that conceived Caprivi as a separate independent state at the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435. The Caprivi secession is therefore, it is argued here, debatably, tied to the political fortunes and misfortunes of its leader, Albert Mishake Muyongo. To support this assertion, this section will briefly examine Muyongo's political career as well as his traditional (chiefly/royal) heritage. The latter is in answer to the question of 'how Muyongo, one single individual, could have succeeded in contaminating so many people with his ideas and influencing them to take up arms – even though, realistically, a secession of the Caprivi from the rest of Namibia had no chance of succeeding.'⁴⁰

There is no better place to search for the political career of Mishake Muyongo than his own autobiography which he submitted to SWAPO at the 1969 Tanga Consultative Conference where he was made acting vice-president of the movement.⁴¹ This will be supplemented, and contrasted to some extent, by information extracted from the website of the secessionists, presumably also provided by Muyongo, on the history of 'Caprivi Zipfel: The controversial strip – (part one)'.⁴² In his autobiography, Muyongo traces the cradle of his political consciousness to Kilnerton College near Pretoria where he was preparing for his university entrance. On arrival there, he found that Afrikaans was one of the requisites for entrance to a University in South Africa and since he did not study Afrikaans in the Caprivi where Latin was studied in its place at the Catholic Mission School where he attended, he approached the Principal of the college and requested to be allowed to do Latin in place of Afrikaans. This was turned down. He took Afrikaans but apparently passed with very low marks. In 1962 he was due to commence his university education at Roma College (Pius XII University College) in Basutoland (Kingdom of Lesotho) but as he states, his '...political consciousness had reached such dimensions that he could not hold it in check any more'.⁴³ As a result, he contends, the '...South African

⁴⁰ Fisch, M., *The secessionist movement in the Caprivi*, 1999, p.40.

⁴¹ Published in *Namibia News* vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, pp. 9-11.

⁴² Posted on June 16, 2005, at <file://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm>., accessed on 20 November 2006.

⁴³ 'Biography of Muyongo', in *Namibia News* Vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, p. 10.

authorities, in April 1962, virtually deported him from South African territory'.⁴⁴ In fact, he disputes the fact that CANU was formed in the Caprivi, claiming that it was formed in Mafikeng, on his initiative after having been influenced by the politics of South Africa, together with Mason Liseli Mamili, George Mutwa and Charles Mubuyaeta Mubiana, "who welcomed the idea with open arms."⁴⁵ Back home in 1962, Muyongo secured a teaching position at the Kanono Bantu Community School. It was at this school that he reportedly established a teachers' union, the African Teachers' Union, purportedly the 'first African organization of its kind – in the Caprivi Strip' and he became its first president.⁴⁶ A few months after its formation, the ten teachers that comprised the union reportedly went on strike demanding higher pay, the school remained closed for five days until the School Board succumbed to the demands of the protesters. To remove him temporarily, Muyongo reports that the school offered him a bursary in 1963 for a teacher's training course in Mafikeng, South Africa, where he remained until the end of 1963. When he returned he was offered a teaching post at his former school, Katima Mulilo Mission School.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, events in the Caprivi were moving very fast. CANU canvassed for support from village to village until most people understood their objectives. Muyongo reports that it was after this 'canvassing' that a conference was convened in March 1964 'representing every corner of the Caprivi Region of Namibia' and was attended by about 2, 500 delegates. He further states that 'it was here that the Caprivi African National Union (CANU) was born' where Simbwaye was elected as the President and himself as Vice-President.⁴⁸ Muyongo's exposition ends with what he calls 'the first test of strength

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Political History of Caprivi, at [file:///E:/Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm](file:///E:/Caprivi%20Freedom%20-%20History%20II.htm), *Op. Cit.*, p. 2. It is further stated on this website that when the four came for holiday, they spread the idea in the whole Caprivi, and that the name (CANU) which Muyongo proposed in Mafikeng in 1961, was endorsed in 1963. A contradiction in the dates can be observed. In his biography, Muyongo has it that he went to Mafikeng in 1963 and not 1961, the year in which he supposedly proposed the name CANU at Mafikeng. In any case, it was established from other informants in Chapter Six that CANU was already in existence by this time, albeit being underground.

⁴⁶ 'Biography of Muyongo', *op. Cit.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

between the South African Government and CANU [that] occurred in August of the same year (1964)'.⁴⁹ He continues:

In ... mass protest demonstrations, covering the entire Caprivi Strip, CANU challenged the authority of the South African Government. Brendan Simbwaye and Mishek led these demonstrations from the very beginning. Finally, they marched on the headquarters of the South African Government at Katima Mulilo. It was the biggest demonstration of its kind and again, the first, in this region of Namibia. There were clashes between the crowd and the South African Police. The Police opened fire and two people were killed. Scores of others were injured. Simbwaye and Maswahu were arrested (they remain in detention to date).⁵⁰ Mishek Muyongo escaped to Zambia. This was in September 1964.⁵¹

Much of what is recited above on Muyongo's political *vita* as presented to SWAPO in 1969 could not be supported by any other source, written or oral, to put it mildly. It is difficult to appreciate why South Africa would virtually deport him in 1962, only to allow him back in the country the following year, especially after organizing a teachers' protest strike that purportedly disrupted classes for five days. Surely the authorities would have taken cognizance of the formation of this 'first ever African Teachers' Union'. The facts surrounding the formation of CANU are dealt with in a previous chapter Six, Muyongo was part of the group that founded the movement, but the claim that he initiated it in Mafikeng, is treated here just that – as a claim. Also, there is no record, oral or otherwise, of a conference organized in Caprivi during this period, to the magnitude of attracting 2,500 delegates. In fact, it is unimaginable that it was allowed to take place, while the claim that CANU marched, with Muyongo and Simbwaye at the forefront, on the headquarters at Katima Mulilo, to 'challenge the authority of the South African Government' is also disputed.

Instead of a protest march, as claimed by Muyongo, CANU organized a public rally at Mafulo, near Katima Mulilo, at which the party was to be launched by its president, Brendan Simbwaye, but he was arrested before this could happen. In fact most

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* This incident is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

⁵⁰ At the time of writing in 1970. While Simbwaye's whereabouts remain unknown, we know that he was permitted to visit Caprivi in 1972, from where he disappeared. As for Maswahu, he was transferred from Welwitchia (Khorixas) on medical grounds to the Windhoek State Hospital, where research still needs to be conducted to establish whether he was discharged from there, if so, to where?, or even whether he left the hospital at all. His whereabouts also remain unknown.

⁵¹ 'Biography of Muyongo', in *Namibia News* vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, pp. 10-11.

informants do not remember whether Muyongo was present at that meeting or not, and if he was, how he evaded arrest, being a senior member of the party, remains unclear. There is another contradiction, in respect of his escape to Zambia. While in his biography it is stated that he went into exile in September 1964⁵², it is reported on the official website of his movement that he left on the night of 2 August 1964, after security forces ‘pounced on a meeting called to discuss the arrest of Brendan Simbwaye...’⁵³ Does this show a willingness to celebrate August 2, on which the secessionists attacked Katima Mulilo in 1999? The information provided in the résumé to SWAPO is therefore a bit spiced up, probably to cement his position in the movement but also, as he was in an acting capacity, to show that he had the qualities and credentials to take the place of Simbwaye, his senior in CANU. Biographies and autobiographies are important tools in determining a person’s nationality. It is interesting to note that Muyongo, in this one, throughout refers to the ‘Caprivi Region of Namibia’. At this time, he would agree, he was a Namibian.

Once outside (in Lusaka), Mishake Muyongo wrote a letter to Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO, who was then in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) asking him to meet for talks.⁵⁴ The meeting took place in Lusaka where Sam Nujoma repeated the same proposal to unite the two parties that he had made to Simbwaye.⁵⁵ Those present, according to Muyongo, were himself, Sam Nujoma as President of SWAPO, and Jacob Kuhangua, then Secretary-General of SWAPO.⁵⁶ Nujoma has it that Crispin Mulonda and Joseph Nawa were also part of the CANU delegation to these talks.⁵⁷

Messrs Nujoma and Muyongo agree on the fact that CANU and SWAPO entered into a ‘merger’ which was announced on the 5 November 1964 in Lusaka.⁵⁸ Nowadays, though,

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵³ <File://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm>. *Ibid.*, p.3

⁵⁴ ‘Biography of Muyongo’, in *Namibia News* Vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, p. 11.

⁵⁵ <File://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm>. *Ibid.*, p.3; Nujoma, Sam, *Where Others Wavered*, London: Panaf, 2001, p.136.

⁵⁶ ‘Biography of Muyongo’, published in *Namibia News* Vol. 3, No. 1-3, Jan/March 1970, p. 11.

⁵⁷ Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p. 136.

⁵⁸ A copy in my possession.

the secessionists maintain that CANU leadership did not want this merger, so much so that SWAPO had to use the influence of the Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda and Nalumino Mundia to convince the CANU leadership into accepting the merger.⁵⁹ This claim is repeated by Fossé who states, without naming his sources (apart from saying that later CANU leaderships), that the alliance between CANU and SWAPO was rejected by a large majority in the party.⁶⁰ Flint quotes a statement to the press by Mr. F.M. Siomunyi, whom he identifies as CANU's regional secretary in Livingstone, as having stated in December 1964 that 'the people of Caprivi are not struggling for their independence to join up with any of their neighbours...We are dedicated to the freedom of Caprivi alone. When we are free, it will be up to the people to decide whether or not to join any country'.⁶¹

Where Nujoma and Muyongo's views diverge is firstly on the functioning of the alliance and, secondly, on the interpretation and constituent elements of the 'merger agreement'. For Nujoma, the agreement formalized the merger of SWAPO and CANU under the name of SWAPO.⁶² CANU believed that it existed as an independent entity in SWAPO or at least that if the two organizations merge into one, their constitutions should be reviewed and a new one drafted to pave the way for a new party with a different name. According to Fisch, undoubtedly quoting Muyongo, it was agreed that the organizations 'should either exist together under a new name, or CANU should retain its name and identity'.⁶³ In reality, CANU dissolved into SWAPO. Questions still remain, though, as to the exact nature of this 'alliance', on which the press release announcing the 'merger' is silent. For example, how did it come about that the vice-presidency of SWAPO was given to CANU? And most importantly, on what terms or conditions? Also, was the

⁵⁹ <File://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm>. *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁶⁰ Fossé, J.L., 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', (MA, Oslo), 1996, p. 155.

⁶¹ F.M. Siomunyi, in *Central African Mail*, Friday December 4 1964, p.2, in Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 420. It could not be established whether indeed Mr. Siomunyi was CANU regional secretary. Also, Flint does not provide the context under which such a statement was made, whether it referred to the merger between SWAPO and CANU or some other neighbors which might have made overtures to CANU.

⁶² Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p. 136.

⁶³ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p.18.

position to remain in CANU as long as the alliance was in force? What is telling is the fact that the president of CANU held this position for a long time, in *absentia*, during which his deputy acted in his place. The secessionists allege on their website that one of the provisions in the agreement was that 'If the first President comes from SWAPO, then CANU must automatically produce the vice president and vice versa'.⁶⁴ According to Likando, the misunderstanding as to the functioning of the 'alliance' led to clashes in the Kongwa camp (Tanzania) that led to the detention of George Mutwa, one of the CANU leaders.⁶⁵ This is supported by Samson Ndeikwila who, in contributing to the debate on arbitrary detentions in the liberation movement, states the following:

The history of arbitrary detentions among Namibians in exile started in 1965 in Tanzania with the detention of George Mutwa and Alfred Tongo Nalisa, the leaders of the Caprivian group at Kongwa. Their complaint was that the Caprivians were being discriminated against; not regarded as full SWAPO members. After the two's release from detention, SWAPO disowned them and they made their way to Kenya.⁶⁶

It appears that the mistrust between the two main ethnic groups in Kongwa camp, the 'Caprivians' and 'Ovambos', continued well into the late 1960s, as can be seen from one of the demands of a group in the Kongwa Military Training Camp. They wrote a strong memorandum to the SWAPO political leadership in Dar-es-Salaam in 1968: 'Thirdly, we demanded that the rift between the two main ethnic groups, Ovambos and Caprivians, at Kongwa Military Training Camp be brought to an end'.⁶⁷ This mistrust is what is reconstituted as 'Ovambo tribalism' mainly by the secessionists, but also by some scholars.⁶⁸

A cause for considerable disagreement between Messrs Nujoma and Muyongo, and actually a major basis for secession often cited, is the terms of the 1964 'Agreement', in which SWAPO allegedly made an undertaking that the Caprivi would be granted either special status or complete autonomy after Namibia's independence. 'Instead of being

⁶⁴ <File://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm>, p.3. *ibid.*

⁶⁵ E. Likando, *The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective*, 1989, p. 142 (Unpublished manuscript, in the author's possession).

⁶⁶ Samson Ndeikwila, in a letter sent to *The Namibian* Newspaper, dated 14 October 2006, p. 2 (copy in my possession).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁶⁸ See, among others, Fossé (1996:155); Fisch (1999:19-20); Likando (1989: 142-164).

asked whether we want to be part of Namibia or not, the Namibian government imposed themselves on Caprivians. It is therefore that the Caprivi case is [a] question of forced occupation. The Namibian government never honored their end of the bargain', so the secessionists argue.⁶⁹ SWAPO, through its president, Sam Nujoma, the co-signatory to the agreement, refutes this version of events, saying that there was always an agreement for one nation.⁷⁰ Nujoma's version of events seems to be the one supported by a press statement issued on 5 November 1964⁷¹ that announced the 'merger'. SWAPO argues that Mishake Muyongo was a member of the Constituent Assembly that drafted the Namibian Constitution, and never mentioned the now controversial promise regarding the Caprivi's status after independence. 'At best, Mr. Muyongo could have supported the idea propagated then by the late Kaptein⁷² Hans Diergaardt to make Rehoboth an independent entity within Namibia. Of course, even the DTA could have dumped and replaced him with someone with a Namibian agenda.⁷³ Muyongo defends himself as thus:

The question that the Caprivi case was not mentioned in parliament is in the first place not correct, because on numerous occasions the president of UDP reminded the SWAPO party to honor their agreement. It is also on record that one Caprivian parliamentarian was almost suspended from parliament just because he said he represented Caprivians. In fact any Caprivian who mentioned the idea of a merger was often labeled a tribalist and received a harsh opposition from SWAPO.⁷⁴

The above sentiments show that the issue of the 1964 'agreement' remains emotionally and politically charged in contemporary Namibian politics. As a result, it becomes shrouded in secrecy and near mystery since it is not openly discussed. This state of affairs was exacerbated by the government's decision to ban the United Democratic Party (UDP): "No UDP meetings will be allowed in the Republic of Namibia from 1 September

⁶⁹ File://E: ⁶⁹ E. Likando, *The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective*, 1989, p. 142 (Unpublished manuscript, in the author's possession). *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Samson Ndeikwila, in a letter sent to *The Namibian* Newspaper, dated 14 October 2006, p. 2 (copy in \Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm, p. 3. *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Quoted in Flint, 'State-Building in Central Southern Africa', 2003, p. 421.

⁷¹ Press statement made by Sam Nujoma, representing SWAPO and Albert (Mishake) Muyongo, representing CANU, Lusaka, 5 November 1964 (copy in author's possession).

⁷² Afrikaans for Leader or Chief.

⁷³ Benjamin Chika Mabuku, 'Response to Mr. Chrispin Matongo's Secessionist Outbursts', in *New Era*, Friday, 15 September 2006, p. 11.

⁷⁴ File://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm, p. 3. *Ibid.* It proved difficult to corroborate this claim with any evidence from the parliamentary proceedings.

[2006]. The secessionist activities of the UDP render it an illegal organization.’⁷⁵ In early 2007 Namibians woke to a catchy front page headline in a local daily: ‘Secret’ Nujoma – Muyongo document surfaces’, which proclaimed: ‘A potentially explosive document related to the Caprivi, which the SWAPO Party has persisted in saying does not exist, has suddenly surfaced in Namibia’.⁷⁶ The impression was created that efforts were being made especially on the part of SWAPO to keep such a document secret, or at least deny its existence. The view here is that the said document is a press release which, by its very nature, makes it a public document. Researchers on Namibian history had known for a long time that the document existed and was held by certain archives and libraries.⁷⁷ Rather SWAPO’s contention was that the ‘agreement’ did not make provision for ‘special status’ or ‘complete autonomy’ for Caprivi as claimed by the secessionists. Indeed the document does not mention anything about a separate or independent Caprivi state. Probably this was not ‘all’ the agreement; perhaps, some ‘oral’ undertaking was made. Thus according to SWAPO Secretary-General Ngarikutuke Tjiriange: ‘There had only been a verbal agreement to merge the two parties...the CANU members then became SWAPO members, but there was no talk of a separate Caprivi after independence’.⁷⁸ How realistically do you enforce such a verbal agreement, let alone make it a basis for a cause such as secession?

It is difficult to dismiss outright that the options being propagated by the secessionists were not tabled or even considered during the deliberations that led to the ‘merger’ between CANU and SWAPO because of the geopolitical dimension or what was taking place in the countries in which the two movements were based. The negotiations between the two parties on this issue were bound to be influenced, on one hand, by events in Tanganyika and Zanzibar where on April 24, 1964, the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was declared, being renamed Tanzania in October of the same year. The

⁷⁵ Announcement by Namibian Deputy Information Minister Raphael Dinyando at a Media briefing, in *Informanté*, 14 September 2006, p. 10.

⁷⁶ Weidlich, Brigitte, ‘Secret Nujoma-Muyongo document surfaces’, in *The Namibian*, Wednesday January 24 2007, p. 1.

⁷⁷ The author obtained a copy since 1999 from the University of Cape Town’s Manuscripts and Archives Department.

⁷⁸ Dinyando. *Op. Cit.*

creation of Tanzania did not mean full integration. Zanzibar retained independent status within Tanzania, responsible for local affairs whilst foreign affairs were dealt with by the Union Government in Dar es Salaam, to which Zanzibar paid an annual contribution.⁷⁹ It should be remembered that SWAPO was based in Tanganyika during this period and would therefore have been well versed with political developments in the host country. The CANU-SWAPO agreement came right on the heels of the Tanganyika developments. On the other hand, negotiations for the 'merger' took place in Lusaka, Zambia, where on the eve of Zambia's independence in 1964, UNIP⁸⁰ of Kenneth Kaunda successfully negotiated to incorporate the nominally autonomous Barotseland state into the new independent Zambian state. Kenneth Kaunda and the Litunga of Buluzi (King of Barotseland), Sir Mwanawina Lewanika, signed the agreement. The impact of this process cannot be underestimated. Therefore the negotiators were torn between the Tanganyika (Tanzanian) and the Northern Rhodesian (Zambian) model. As events turned out, the Zambian model prevailed.

In the final analysis, the fundamental issue is not whether CANU and SWAPO entered into an agreement, or even what was agreed upon, but what was the purpose of the 'merger' agreement, and most importantly, what implications, if any, did that have on the internationally recognized territorial boundaries of the then South West Africa, now Namibia. It does not appear that the Agreement was meant to merge Caprivi with mainland South West Africa (or perpetuate the separation). Rather the purpose of the Agreement was to 'merge' the two movements into one organization to fight a common enemy, as it turned out, to incorporate CANU into SWAPO. Both parties to the Agreement were not at this stage competent authorities to decide on the international status of the territorial integrity of South West Africa, that being the preserve of the United Nations Organization (UNO). Even SWAPO was not yet recognized as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people. As a letter writer to a local daily

⁷⁹ AAZ: Zanzibar History, at <http://www.allaboutzanzibar.com/indepth/history/id-01-01-timeline.htm>. Accessed on 01 March 2007

⁸⁰ United Independence Party

pointedly ask: 'Who of the two leaders who signed that Agreement was mandated by the people of the 'two countries', if ever, to conclude and sign such Agreement?'⁸¹

After the 'merger' between CANU and SWAPO, Mishake Muyongo was made SWAPO chief representative in Lusaka, responsible for educational affairs in 1966, being promoted to the position of Acting Vice-President at the 1969 Tanga Consultative Conference. Two others, Jackson Mazazi and Lemmy Matengu served on the SWAPO Central Committee. Tension started building up between Muyongo and SWAPO in the mid-to-late 1970s, according to the former, because of the suppressed role of CANU within SWAPO⁸², which led to his expulsion in July 1980. However, according to Richard Kapelwa, a fellow 'Caprivian', Muyongo and company were expelled because of their intention to form a 'new CANU' with the aim of seceding the Eastern Region from the rest of the country. He continues:

From the availed evidence, it was proved that Muyongo, since his appointment to the position of Acting Vice-President ten years ago, he has been fully committed to either overtly or covertly keeping alive a tribal and regional mini-party known as CANU-Capriivi African National Union. By so doing, Muyongo, Mazazi and Matengu have betrayed the Namibian people in their struggle for National Unity.⁸³

Now that CANU had become 'tribal' and 'regional mini-party' within SWAPO, it remain unresolved in historical discourse whether the alliance or 'merger' collapsed with the departure of Muyongo, even though former CANU members continued fighting for liberation under the banner of SWAPO. In fact the same meeting that expelled Muyongo and others re-confirmed its support and confidence in the SWAPO leadership which still included Brendan Simbwaye. Was SWAPO just expelling Muyongo and his group or was it scrapping the 'merger' with CANU?

⁸¹ Mabuku, Benjamin Chika, 'Response to Mr. Chrispin Matongo's Secessionist Outbursts', in *The Namibian*, Friday, 15 September 2006, p. 11.

⁸² Fossé, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 155.

⁸³ Richard Kapelwa, A letter to SWAPO Regional Chairman of the Eastern Region, dated 2 October 1980, in *The Combatant*, vol. II No. 3, pp. 13-15. At the time, Richard Kapelwa was SWAPO Deputy Secretary for Defence and a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. At independence, he was appointed the first Minister of Works, Transport and Communication, and held several other Ministerial positions, before being sent to Cuba as Ambassador. He passed away in May 2007 and was buried at Heroes Acre in Windhoek.

After the split, Muyongo revived CANU in Lusaka but no leadership was elected apart from him. This move was condemned by other CANU members and attempts to do so were interpreted as subversive and undermining. Since then, the story of the 'revived' CANU and that of Muyongo is filled with intrigue – and characterized by infighting. Muyongo sidelined two of his top aides, Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Siseho Simasiku and instead chose to work with Messrs Gideon Matengu Mwilima, Godwin Siyongo and David Mutabelezi.⁸⁴ Muyongo accused the pair of constantly plotting against him. As a result, Likando (1989: 158) writes, on 28 March 1981, that Muyongo organized a group of CANU youth which he paid to discredit the two. This was apparently after a failed scheme hatched by Muyongo and the South African delegation to abduct the two in Geneva and secretly take them to South Africa. Muyongo's note to the South African delegation was given to a Mr. Reginald Z. Katembo.⁸⁵

In mid-October 1982, the Zambian Government invited the CANU leadership in Lusaka to discuss the internal crisis within the organization. Mr. Muyongo left for Botswana on the scheduled date, but before he left, he went to the Zambian police and alleged that he escaped death and that his CANU colleagues Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Simasiku were behind the assassination plot. The two were detained by the police for questioning and were only released on the instruction of the then Prime Minister of Zambia, Nalumino Mundia.⁸⁶ Again, on 5 December 1982, Muyongo had an audience with the Zambian President where he repeated allegations of assassination attempts on his life to the media, especially after what he called the 'sacking' of Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Simasiku from CANU.⁸⁷ A major source of discord between Muyongo and the two seem to be not only contest for control of CANU but also Muyongo's secret contacts with Apartheid South Africa. *The Sunday Times of Zambia* of 14 November 1982 reported a secret meeting between Mr. Muyongo and Peter Kalangula of the Christian Democratic Alliance [Action] (CDA) that was also attended by UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. The same report was also carried out in the *Windhoek Advertiser* of 20 October 1982. The two

⁸⁴ Likando describes them as Muyongo's cousins and tribesmen. This is because, as with Muyongo, they were Mafwe speaking.

⁸⁵ Likando, 1989, *The Caprivi Strip: A Historical Perspective*, p. 158.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 159.

⁸⁷ *Zambian Daily Mail*, 8 July 1983.

(Lemmy Matengu and Chibeya Simasiku) issued a press release on 25 November 1982⁸⁸, under pressure from the Zambian authorities that remarked that ‘Muyongo’s recent participation in the Pretoria sponsored meeting over the formation of a puppet government of national unity was secret and without authority’.⁸⁹ Shortly thereafter, the *Zambian Daily Mail* of 30 June 1983 reported the expulsion of Mishake Muyongo from CANU, who was picked up by the police for questioning. In a headline titled ‘New Twist to Namibian Saga: Who is who in the South Africa Link’, *The Sunday Times of Zambia* of 23 July 1983 had it that Mishake Muyongo confirmed he had secret meetings with South Africa and revealed all his contacts and activities between 1980 and 1982 during interrogation. The Zambian authorities considering him to be a security risk so Muyongo was deported to Senegal.⁹⁰ Contrary to Fisch’s version that Muyongo was deported to Senegal alone,⁹¹ we now know that he was accompanied by Godwin Siyongo, David Mutabelezi and Gideon Matengu Mwilima, according to the secessionists.⁹² It is not surprising, therefore, that this group returned to Katima Mulilo through the Ngoma Border Post via South Africa on the 8 July 1985. Mishake Muyongo and his colleagues were kept in detention for four weeks at Katima Mulilo while investigations into their political activities were being conducted. After his release, he was re-admitted into CANU but this did not last long. The Caprivi at this time was plunged in local politicking regarding the tribal land dispute between the Mafwe and Masubiya over whether or not there existed an internal boundary between the two groups. After his proposal that CANU be dissolved and that a new party with a new name be formed was soundly defeated, Muyongo left CANU and merged with the Caprivi Alliance Party (CAP) under Patrick Limbo, to form the United Democratic Party (UDP) on the 5 August 1985. UDP’s first

⁸⁸ Likando, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Muyongo’s version is that because of imprisonment, he was forced to leave SWAPO and seek refuge in Dakar, Senegal (<file://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm>, p. 3, *op.cit* He is quoted by Fisch (1999: 20) that he spent half a year in a prison in Zambia in 1978 and a year in prison in Tanzania after that, as well as a further seven months in a Zambian prison under inhumane conditions. Also that he allegedly spent a short time in what have been called the ‘dungeons’ – holes dug four metres underground, used as prisons for suspected SWAPO spies. However, even Fisch doubts, according to her sources, that this was the case.

⁹¹ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 20.

⁹² See [File://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm](file://E:\Caprivi Freedom - History II.htm), p. 4, *op.cit.*

congress was held on the 26 August 1985.⁹³ The impression created in some circles that CANU was UDP's predecessor is not correct.⁹⁴ CANU never dissolved or gave way to UDP. Soon after its formation, the UDP joined the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) where Muyongo was made Vice-President in 1987, and with the resignation of Chief Kuaima Riruako as DTA President in November 1991, Muyongo took his place. According to Maria Fisch, Muyongo never gave up his idea of a separation of the Caprivi even now that his party had joined the DTA. He reportedly put forward the topic of separation for discussion at a DTA congress in Swakopmund in around 1987, but it was roundly rejected'.⁹⁵ Fisch reasons that Muyongo turned to hoodwinking his colleagues in the DTA, pretending to promote national interests while he hoped that if the DTA won the 1989 Constituent Assembly elections, there would be improved chances for him to realize his secessionist ambitions.⁹⁶ I tend to argue that secession, or rather the threat of it, was something that Muyongo kept in reserve as a political tool (something he was not serious about), for use when his political position became threatened, otherwise how does one explain the fact that after being expelled from SWAPO and vowing to fight for an independent Caprivi, he aligned himself with political developments in South West Africa? Why did he prefer to join the DTA other than be on his own, in Caprivi?

Partly, the answer is to be found in what Richard Kapelwa harshly terms 'a serious political weakness' and Muyongo's apparent contradictory tendencies.⁹⁷ He summarizes:

For the last 16 years, Muyongo displayed two contradictory tendencies. On one hand, he was happy to enjoy the prestige and political power which go with the position of the Vice-Presidency of a nationally powerful and internationally renowned movement – SWAPO. On the other hand, he always tended towards tribal or regional cliquism at moments when the revolution demanded a bit more from him, especially with regard to his personal comfort. The idea of moving from Lusaka to Dar-es Salaam in the 1960s and from Lusaka to Luanda recently has been a problem to him. Lusaka was apparently too good for him. Therefore, he has persistently refused to accept and

⁹³ www.caprivifreedom.com (<http://www.caprivifreedom.com/news.i?cmd=view&nid=776>), p.4, accessed on 20 November 2006.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 22.

⁹⁷ Richard Kapelwa, in *The Combatant*, vol. II No. 3, October 1980, p. 15.

appreciate the necessity for strategic shifts in accordance with the requirements of the struggle at given times...

Was joining the DTA just another quest for personal comfort on the part of Muyongo? In seeking answers to this question, I move into the aspect of the involvement of traditional chiefs in politics, which was also the support base for Muyongo's political career. In explaining this move, Muyongo almost entirely blames the traditional chiefs. He maintains that while on one hand his UDP was advocating for an independent Caprivi, on the other hand 'Caprivian' chiefs "who had been made members of the then council of ministers and later the government of national unity were of the opinion that should the Caprivi become independent they would lose their positions and the new 'Caprivian' government would be run by politicians and not chiefs'.⁹⁸ As a result, Muyongo further states, the chiefs chose to remain with Namibia. The impact was that their followers, being traditionally inclined, did not want to disappoint their chiefs. The UDP had no option than to join the DTA. It follows therefore that the contest was set between Muyongo and the traditional chiefs. Two things should be noted, firstly, that the Caprivi Alliance Party, which Muyongo incorporated into his UDP, was already a member of the DTA, and secondly, that it was under Mafwe Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili that the CAP joined the DTA. It is not merely coincidental that Chief Richard Temuso Muhinda Mamili was deposed from the chieftaincy at about the same time (in 1987); apparently for "neglect of duty"⁹⁹, because he spent most of his time advancing political issues. Though he was deposed by his people, could it be this rift between him and Muyongo that played itself out in the DTA alliance cost him his traditional job?

The dynastic heritage of Mishake Muyongo has been detailed by Maria Fisch. It is enough to mention here that he was a member of the Mafwe ruling (more specifically Mbalangwe) dynasty, being a direct descendent of Simataa Mamili, the first chief. Even though he was definitely entitled to succession, he waived this on two occasions in favour of a political career. The first of these was in 1971 when, two years before the death of Chief Simasiku, the Mafwe tribal authority dispatched a senior representative to Lusaka

⁹⁸ www.caprivifreedom.com.

⁹⁹ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 44.

to persuade Muyongo to return since the chief's old age was preventing him from executing his duties properly. The second was before Chief Muhinda Mamili was deposed in 1987, when Muyongo announced beforehand that he would waive his candidature, upon which Boniface Bwima, his younger cousin, was installed. Unlike in the case of Chief Muhinda, Muyongo was able to exert strong influence over the young Boniface Bwima, to an extent that it was common knowledge that 'events in the Fwe-area were directed by Muyongo from Windhoek', Fisch pointedly argues.¹⁰⁰ 'Muyongo simply knew how to manipulate Bwima to execute his instructions', Fisch adds.¹⁰¹ Keeping a tight loop on Boniface Bwima Mamili held two advantages for Muyongo. Firstly, in a society where people, especially the majority residing in rural areas, heed the decisions taken by their chiefs, it goes without saying that they change political allegiances when their chiefs do. Thus according to Fossé, patronage and clientilism enter into modern political processes, the public service and other spheres of influence which essentially are the prerogative of the state.¹⁰² This, Fossé further states, allowed politicians from the Caprivi an 'additional power-base and channel of influence.' It was essentially Chief Boniface Bwima Mamili's people that were Muyongo's political constituency. 'Mishake Muyongo needs a constituency', was Petlola's analysis on ethnic disputes in the Caprivi.¹⁰³ This political constituency was weakened by the decision by the Mayeyi to break-away from the Mafwe, to assert their independence. The reduced support base saw the DTA loose elections in the Caprivi and move from being majority party to one with no seat on the regional and local councils. What is even more telling is that, with the departure of Chief Boniface Bwima, the current chief is a declared SWAPO sympathizer, which saw the ruling party win the constituencies under the Mafwe area, a previously DTA stronghold. This is partly why the secessionists accused SWAPO of being behind the move to install a chief for the Mayeyi. Secondly, by keeping Chief Bwima Mamili on his side, Muyongo ensured that he gained the sympathy of the Lozis in Zambia's Western Province. To serve this cause, it is reported that Chief Boniface Bwima Mamili undertook several visits to Zambia, with such a frequency that Fisch

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Fossé, 'Negotiating the Nation in Local Terms', 1996, p. 153.

¹⁰³ Petlola, in Fossé, *ibid.*

writes that former President Nujoma had to reprimand him.¹⁰⁴ This coincided with the slogan 'Revival of Lozi Culture in Caprivi' which Mishake Muyongo promoted during the final years of his political career.¹⁰⁵ As it were, Chief Boniface Bwima Mamili fled with Muyongo to Botswana, once it became public that they held secret meetings with a South African mercenary hire company (Executive Outcomes), to discuss Caprivi secession. Muyongo was dismissed as President of the DTA and banned from the party in September 1998. The pair are now granted asylum in Denmark, while their followers are either languishing in prison facing treason charges or living in deplorable conditions in the Dukwe refugee camp in Botswana. Secession, which Muyongo used as bait for political comfort for a long time, now seemed to be the only option available to him, and unfortunately for him, is able to be achieved only through violence.

The secessionists deny the argument that they went to South Africa to negotiate with a mercenary outfit for the secession of Caprivi from Namibia. Instead they maintain that the purpose of their trip to Pretoria was to meet a Mr. Zimmerman who had promised development assistance especially in the agricultural sector. In fact underdevelopment of the Caprivi is one of the reasons that, they profess, led them to want to secede. It is difficult to provide a historical contextualization to underdevelopment in the Caprivi without mention of the South African Defense Force (SADF). During the liberation war, Caprivi received a fair share of both personnel and equipment, but also infrastructural development between the 1960s through to the 1980s. The withdrawal of the SADF in 1989 also meant the decline in services which the military readily provided. As a result, when people from Caprivi begin to question the slow pace of development in the area, this is obviously contrasted with pre-independence years. Being an area with great agricultural potential, the lack of large scale agricultural projects is a cause for concern. Government and development agencies point to the instances of tribal tensions as not being conducive to long term investment. The case of the failed Egyptian Development Company (PIDICO) that got entangled in the land dispute between the Mafwe and Masubiya is usually thrown in the face of critics of lack of development in Caprivi.

¹⁰⁴ Fisch, *The Secessionist Movement*, 1999, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Summary

Colonialism, especially South African in this instance, created and emphasized local notions of identity that served to alienate local people in the Caprivi from other ethnic groups in South West Africa. It was argued in this chapter that it is these localized notions of identity which are expressed as secession in the postcolonial era. Because the Caprivi was kept on the periphery of political, social, cultural and economic developments in the rest of South West Africa, local people feel more 'Caprivian' than Namibian. This is not to suggest that secession has wide appeal in the Caprivi, in fact its support base is very limited. Regardless, however, it takes only a couple of individuals committed to a cause such as secession to destabilize an area, especially one as small as the Caprivi.

The chapter examined two issues, whether there is a historical justification to secession and secondly, whether the 1964 CANU-SWAPO 'Agreement' can be a basis for secession. The argument that the Caprivi has historically never been part of Namibia and therefore should be allowed independent status was found to be without basis. It was argued that indeed, since 1890, the territory formed an integral part of South West Africa, albeit being transferred either to Bechuanaland or South Africa for administrative purposes. Even then, it was established, the laws that were applied were mainly those of South West Africa. Even during the pre-colonial period, the Caprivi was under Lozi and Kololo rule, and therefore not very 'independent'. To argue for the return to pre-colonial status would mean the restoration of Lozi rule, which I argued, as also a history of subjugation, was also bound to be overthrown. Lozi identity in the Caprivi appears in the form of nostalgia on the part of the Mamili dynasty, direct descendents of Simataa Mamili, the Lozi representative in Caprivi. To think that 'Caprivians', apart from the said group, which are now identified as Mbalangwes, are Lozi, is a misplaced assertion. In fact this is why secession does not enjoy popular support in the Caprivi because other groups do not share this Lozi myth of origin.

Secession was instead ascribed to two factors: the first is that it is a South African construction especially of the 1980s with its interventionist policy of aggression in Southern Africa. At the close of its rule, South Africa visualized a friendly independent Caprivi in a rapidly growing pool of independent and hostile Southern African countries. The Caprivi would therefore be a watch tower to monitor developments in the rest of Africa, which could pose a threat to that isolated last bastion of Apartheid and white supremacy – South Africa.

Secondly, secession was arguably linked to the political fortunes and misfortunes of its leader, Albert Mishake Muyongo. It was no coincidence that feelings of ‘Caprivian-ness’ took on a radical profile only when he lost political power, something unbearable for his ambitious character. Albert Mishake Muyongo had always kept secession in reserve, and used it as a political tool whenever he felt threatened politically, for most of his political career. He had successfully manipulated existing tribal disputes and divisions in the Caprivi especially between the Mafwe and Masubiya to aid his checkered political career. Because of his influence as a traditional leader, he made the Mafwe believe that they are marginalized by the Government (maybe they are) through misinformation from the Masubiya. For the majority of those who participated in the secessionist cause, they were merely expressing anger on government for the alleged acts of discrimination against the Mafwe. Thus I argued, secession when seen in this context, is just an extension of the tribal feuds between the Masubiya and Mafwe.

Similarly, Muyongo made his followers believe that SWAPO gave an undertaking in 1964 at the time of the ‘merger’ between CANU and SWAPO that Caprivi will be given independent or special status at Namibian independence. It was argued here that neither Muyongo nor Nujoma was competent to decide on the territorial status of South West Africa at the time, that being the preserve of the United Nations Organization. Therefore even if such an undertaking could have been made, it was going to be difficult to enforce. What is more, it does not appear that the undertaking was made. The so-called merger agreement (press release), does not say anything of the sort. The position here is that the purpose of the ‘agreement’ was to merge CANU and SWAPO, in fact to incorporate

CANU into SWAPO and not to incorporate Caprivi into South West Africa or even to decide to perpetuate the former's isolation.

That lack of development in Caprivi accounts for secession was not given serious consideration in this chapter, partly because developmental history is not my strength, but also because it is a matter of opinion. While proponents of this view point to lack of projects especially undertaken by government in Caprivi, development agencies (private sector) and even government in turn point at the instability in the Caprivi caused by tribal divisions as being an inhibiting factor, not conducive to attract investment. Historically, such claims should be located in the context of the special status Caprivi enjoyed during the liberation war – being a frontline – it received a lion's share of military equipment, personnel and infrastructure well into the 1980s. With the withdrawal of the SADF and therefore such benefits, the inhabitants felt neglected.

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CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued both that a Caprivian-ness exists; and that sustained contestation characterizes its existence. This was defined in the Introduction as a set of feelings, perceptions and actions that colluded over time, a result of both self-ascription (an assertion of who or what we claim to be) and assignment (what others say we are), to produce a sense of not belonging. This Caprivian identity, it was suggested, existed in two forms, i) as a spatial or geographical entity, usually divided into East and West Caprivi in history for administrative purposes; and, ii) as a people – Subia, Mafwe, Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Barakwena, Totela, Mbalangwe, and Lozi, otherwise collectively known as ‘Caprivians’. This thesis has sought to determine how these Caprivian identities were constructed in the past; and whether, and if, this construction still continues in the present; in what form; and if contestation is inherent in this construction?

It was argued in the Introduction that the creation of the Caprivi, as a space, was a bi-product of German and British imperial expansionist and interventionist policies in central southern Africa in the late 1800s. Through the Anglo-German Treaty of 1890, Britain ceded a strip of land giving Germany access to the Zambezi River. Since then, the territory that would become the Caprivi Strip has continually shifted and been offloaded onto another power to exercise control over the territory and over-lordship over its inhabitants. This was, arguably, due to ‘geographical’ and ‘historical’ factors which made it difficult to administer as part of South West Africa. As a result, the Caprivi was

administered separately for most part of its colonial history: it was neither fully integrated into South West Africa nor made part of its neighbouring territories. Similarly, though 'Caprivians' were depicted as different from other Namibians in contemporary historiography and ethnographical literature, in that they have closer cultural affinities to their kin in Zambia and Botswana than fellow Namibians, they were not fully integrated as such either. It was this sense of being 'different' and 'not belonging' that produced what we have described as a feeling of the Capriviennes. 'Caprivians' have been, and are, Namibia's 'other'.

When we focused in Chapter Two on pre-colonial Caprivi identities, the first question raised was whether there were any forms of social and political organization in pre-Caprivi times, especially before the advent of Lozi and Kololo rule. It was argued that indeed local identities such as Subiya, Yeyi, Fwe, Mbukushu and Totela existed in pre-Caprivi period and even before the arrival of the Lozi, but that their social and political forms of organization was not very centrally organized, which rendered them vulnerable to outside conquering influence. However, it was also shown that local chiefdoms such as the Subiya kingdom of Itenge, often a subject of dismissive historiographical discussions, existed before the advent of Lozi rule.

The second issue discussed in Chapter Two was the nature of societal relations in pre-colonial times in the geographical space that is now Caprivi. These took the form of contest for the control of both space and people, involving outside powers such as the Aluyi (Lozi), the Makololo of Sebetwane, the Batawana, and the Matebele (Ndebele) of

Mzilikazi. Pre-colonial Caprivi offered protection, grazing pastures and winter gardens that attracted the above groups. Because of competition for such resources, societal relations in pre-colonial Caprivi revolved around conquest and resistance, plunder, betrayal and rivalry. In this regard, two important conclusions were reached. The first is that the inhabitants of pre-colonial Caprivi did not resign themselves to the suffering and disdain allotted to them by the Lozi and Kololo but attempted to regain their independence at various points in their relationship with their enslavers. Thus to depict them just as 'little serfs' is a misplaced assertion which neglects a basic fact, that resistance is part and parcel of subjectivity in state formation and the Lozi and Kololo pre-colonial conquest states are no exceptions. The second conclusion proposes that the Lozi and Kololo rule and subjugation of the pre-colonial Caprivi should be classified as foreign and colonial in nature. Colonial historiography and ethnographic literature often tends to dust off the history of exploitation during the pre-colonial period and reconstitute it as the history of the territory, and in the process local histories are replaced by Lozi or Kololo history. Locals have no history in this scheme of things, save for being slaves during Lozi and Kololo rule. This was refuted strongly in the chapter.

The third question addressed in Chapter Two was what role, if any, pre-colonial identities played in shaping later 'Caprivian' identity. While much can be said about continuities in Caprivi identity from the pre-colonial era, especially perceptions of space and people, two issues stand out: i) strategic importance; and ii) contestation. Strategically, pre-colonial Caprivi offered refuge and plenty of game, fruit and fish to its inhabitants all of which attracted external forces especially the Lozi and Kololo. As a result territorial

battles for control ensued between Lozi and the locals, Lozi and Kololo, and Kololo against the locals. These wars for conquest resulted in displacement since the locals simply moved away from danger even if it meant crossing rivers. While identities scattered in this way, territorially the space that would become the Caprivi, home to Caprivi identity, was shrunk to a panhandle. This shrinking or wresting control away from the locals began during the pre-colonial era, continued during the colonial period, and was even greater after independence with the delimitation of regions. Because it was strategically located, spatial Caprivi identity was a contested terrain from pre-colonial times over people and territory. This was based on difference. 'Caprivians' are different from the rest of Namibians, fundamentally because they are perceived as Lozi, which is a pre-colonial or pre-Caprivi identity. But this identity, it was argued, was not unchanging; we cannot ignore factors such as the fusion of 'Caprivians' with other Namibians that began before independence and continued at the time of the liberation war in SWAPO camps and of course included social interaction before and after independence involving inter or cross-cultural marriages.

A major assertion in this thesis is that these Caprivi identities were formed largely through state formation. To support this analysis, Chapter Three focused on the evolution of colonial administrative identity in Caprivi, particularly the eastern part, the territory that lies east of the Mashi/Kwando/Chobe River variously known over time as the Eastern Caprivi *Zipfel* (ECZ) or Eastern Caprivi Strip. It was shown that the history of colonial administration in Caprivi can be divided into six phases.

Phase one began with the creation of Caprivi in 1890 through the Anglo-Germany Treaty of 1 July and concluded in 1909. During this period, there was no official German administrative presence in Caprivi apart from occasional fact finding missions. The consensus seems to be that Germany lost interest in the Caprivi during this time after it became apparent that the Zambezi was not navigable in some parts all the way to east Africa due to many rapids. However, it was argued in the thesis that it is possible that Germany administered Caprivi just as a sphere of influence, an area reserved for future action. Spheres of influence did not, by their very nature, vest territorial rights in the occupier and needed enabling treaties to protect and prevent other powers from claiming rights in such a territory. Even then, only powers that were signatories to the treaty were bound to respect such a sphere of influence.

The second phase began in 1909 when Kurt Streitwolf was sent to establish administrative control in the eastern part of the Caprivi and ended in 1914 when the Caprivi was taken away from German occupation by the Allied Forces during the First World War. Apart from the installation of two tribal chiefs in a primitive form of indirect rule, the German period in the Caprivi, the thesis concludes, was uneventful. The third phase began in 1914 and ended in 1922 during which time, like the rest of South West Africa, the Caprivi was under military rule, but in its instance, a police contingent stationed at Schuckmannsburg reported to a resident commissioner at Kasane in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The period 1922 to 1929 constitutes phase four during which time the Caprivi was formally handed over to the resident commissioner of Bechuanaland stationed at Kasane to exercise administrative control even though it still formed part of

South West Africa. The western part of the Caprivi was administered from Maun, also in Bechuanaland. This position changed at the behest of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations that complained that this was tantamount to a violation of the Mandate agreement.

The rectification of that anomaly ushered in the fifth phase (1929 – 1939) of the colonial administrative history of the Caprivi, and saw the territory incorporated back into South West Africa. A member of the South West Africa Police was stationed at Schuckmannsburg to exercise administrative control in conjunction with the two chiefs appointed in the 1909 set-up. An administrative tool at this time, it was found, was an annual police patrol through the territory and irregular inspection tours from officials at head office. In August 1939, the Union Department of Native Affairs assumed direct administrative control of the Eastern Caprivi Strip until 1980 when the territory reverted back to South West Africa Administration under the Second Tier system of government until the implementation of the United Nations Resolution 435. The period 1939 to 1980 thus constitutes phase six of Caprivi colonial administrative identity and can be subdivided into two periods, 1939-1964 (the period of the Bantu reserve) and 1964 to 1980 (the Bantustan period).

Administrative neglect ensured that a sense of isolation and not belonging developed in the Caprivi. This neglect began when Germany administered it just as a sphere of influence for almost twenty years. Even when an administration was established in 1909, rule of the territory remained benign, an approach adopted by successive colonial

administrations. This neglect, for most part, was justified on the basis that geographical and historical factors rendered it difficult to administer as part of South West Africa. The territory was perceived to be swampy, feverish (malarial) and consisted of wandering 'bushmen', and thus was not thought suitable for white settlement. Consequently, the Caprivi was pushed towards neighboring territories administratively, rather than being seen as part of South West Africa. At the same time it was not made an integral component either of Bechuanaland or Barotseland. In other words, the inhabitants were administered in a way that made them feel as though they belonged more to Barotseland and Bechuanaland than to South West Africa. So a Caprivian identity emerged based on the idea that the territory was unhealthy, remote and separate.

A central question addressed in Chapter Three is how colonial administrative identity helped shape this Caprivi identity. What role did state formation play in the construction of a Caprivian identity? As the Caprivi changed masters six times in its colonial history, being transferred from one colonial authority to the other, its inhabitants were not made to feel that they were part of anything. What changed was the nationality of the colonial officials who left little imprint on the lives of the people. Neither German nor Afrikaans, in the case of the South African administration, is spoken in the Caprivi. Apart from one small brick hut left at Schuckmannsburg, there is no colonial architecture to point out in the Caprivi. Colonial history is remembered largely in an intangible form.

A second aspect is the provision of services such as health and education. Up until 1964 these were left in the hands of missionaries of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church

and, later, the Catholic Capuchin Order. These churches had their headquarters in Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland. It is to these countries where cases of a serious nature were referred for treatment. In the case of education, the curriculum and examinations that were written in the Caprivi before 1964 was that of the Northern Rhodesian Education Department. Even officials who inspected schools in the Caprivi during this period were from Northern Rhodesia. It is not surprising that many of the inhabitants of the Caprivi engaged in migrant labour to those countries. Confusion thus reigned in that on the map, and according to international law, the Caprivi was part of South West Africa but administratively it rested and depended on the goodwill of neighbouring territories. 'Caprivians' were orientated educationally away from South West Africa. The post office that was used was that of Sesheke in Northern Rhodesia, and even the official currency applied in the Caprivi was that of Northern Rhodesia.

A third aspect is the Odendaal Commission's recommendations for the implementation of a Bantustan called East Caprivi. Implementation began in 1972 with the establishment of a Legislative Council and it eventually attained self-government in 1976. This was in a sense an attainment of an aspect of Caprivi identity in that it gave the inhabitants a flag, anthem and coat of arms, all symbols of 'statehood'. What is more, the term 'Caprivian' or East 'Caprivians' was coined and thus people were administered to feel 'Caprivian' rather than South West African during this period. This aided in the formation of the Caprivi identity. The period from 1964 onwards saw an administrative shift from neglect to intense focus, especially in regard to the military sphere, but still the trend was to lean more to Pretoria than South West Africa. In terms of state formation, the thesis concludes

that the Caprivi was central in a southern Africa perspective but peripheral from the viewpoint of Namibian state formation.

Chapter Four argues that there was a frontier aspect to the Caprivi identities, and that this frontier was contested. As early as the pre-colonial period, ideas of a frontier of plenty (game, fish, fruit, and grazing pastures) as well as danger (Makololo and Matebele invasions) surfaced. To this should be added the idea of the Caprivi as a frontier of refuge especially for European vagabonds and poachers between 1890 and 1909. The Caprivi became a frontier of migrant labour extraction and a military frontier during the colonial period. Labour hire organizations such as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) and the Northern Labour Organization (NLO) vied with each other to establish labour recruitment camps in the Caprivi, both west and east. The Southern Rhodesian Government was granted permission to establish a transit camp for migrant labour recruitment in the Caprivi, even though this was vehemently opposed by the Gold Producers Commission in Johannesburg. Hence the Caprivi was a contested frontier for migrant labour extraction during this period. It was established that actually the attraction for migrant labour was not Caprivi but Angola, one of the heavily populated parts of southern Africa at the time. A recruitment camp in Caprivi gave an organization easy reach and access to the eastern Angola market. When the labour hire dispute between WNLA and SWANLA heated up, it was resolved that WNLA should not recruit in other parts of SWA, which should be reserved for SWANLA, but WNLA retained the Caprivi. This did not however prevent migrant workers especially from the former Owamboland

walking on foot for long distances to western Caprivi and parading as Angolans in order to be allowed to go to the Rand mines. Even with its small population, East Caprivi still managed to send an average of 30 migrant workers per month to the Rand mines, all these reinforced Caprivi identities in a variety of ways: migrant labour involved not only going away but also coming back home as part of the contract. Migrant workers always knew that they had to come back to the Caprivi after completion of their tour of duty, to come back 'home' where they belonged. That home was the Caprivi. This involved deferred remuneration and thus brought income back to sustain the growth of this Caprivi identity. The routes of migrant work pointed away from South West Africa to Northern and Southern Rhodesia and mainly to the Rand mines. Migrant labourers came back speaking a variety of dialects they had learnt in the mine compounds. Had the routes of migrant labour pointed to South West Africa, 'Caprivians' would have been more integrated into Namibian state formation, like many from northern Namibia who even chose to 'break contract' and not return to former Owamboland. Thus migrant work was a lost opportunity to integrate Caprivi into mainstream South West Africa. Instead migrancy pointed to countries where 'Caprivians' were and remained foreigners.

The military frontier aspect of Caprivi identity became more pronounced from the mid-1960s with the escalation of the armed liberation struggle in southern Africa. During this period, the Caprivi became a dangerous frontier where the war was fought. Young South African conscripts were sent to this border area to fight a war as part of their compulsory military service. For South Africa the Caprivi represented the last stand against communism, a frontier for the protection of white-western values in the Cold War or

East-West confrontation. Because it served as the SADF's first line of defence against the advance of Black Africa and also as a launch-pad for the destabilization of the Frontline states, the Caprivi became one of the most heavily militarized places in Africa. For SWAPO's PLAN combatants, the Caprivi became a corridor to freedom, a transit point to Windhoek. While on the one hand the war was about the consolidation of the Caprivi identity as part of South Africa, since this was the time of the implementation of the Odendaal recommendations, on the other the war symbolized a deconstruction of Caprivi identities. As discussed below, a sizable number of 'Caprivians' joined SWAPO through CANU and fought as PLAN combatants, in a way desiring to subordinate or get rid of their individualistic identity as a Caprivian, to bring about an independent Namibia.

While on a macro level a spatial Caprivi existed, at the local or micro level the Caprivi identities were fragmented and double-edged for most part of the colonial period. State formation in the Eastern Caprivi decreed and recognized only two identities, the Mafwe and Masubiya. This involved a loss of identity for other groups such as Mayeyi, Mbukushu, Barakwengo (San), and Matotela. The latter were forced to identify themselves as Mafwe in a single ethnic alliance. The apparatuses of the state, however, did not delineate the spheres of influence of the two identities that were created, and hence many scholars tend to argue that it is because of this fact that endless tribal feuds are prevalent in the Caprivi. It was argued above, however, that the cause of tribal conflict in the Caprivi has much to do with the basis on which a Caprivi identity was premised – a heritage of social upheaval and conflict based on foreignness. While the two identities were created, they are taken to have no real historical background except what

the Lozi bequeathed to them. It was pointed out how a Lozi representative in the Caprivi was appointed as chief of the Mafwe ethnic coalition and how a commoner was appointed regent chief over the Masubiya. This was not, of course, the basis on which the inhabitants of the Caprivi wanted to identify, because it meant that they remained foreigners in their own territory. They wanted to be perceived as indigenous. So tribal conflicts in the Caprivi reflected a concern for indigenusness which resulted in contested identities and rival histories to show who came first in the area. The competition for indigenusness between the Masubiya and Mafwe resulted in a competition for resources, especially land utilization. The colonial state resolved this by arguing that none had ancestral claim to the Caprivi since it was the land of the Lozi. After independence, a further fragmentation of the Caprivi identity in terms of identity assertion was witnessed with the break-away of the Mashi and the Mayeyi from the Mafwe ethnic alliance. As the Mashi Traditional Authority claims to be the 'true Mafwe' a further split of identities may be in the offing. This shows that Caprivi identity was and continues to be contested at the local level, reflected in disputes over history.

Africans responded in different ways to the colonial creation of the Caprivi, but the most organized response before independence was the rise of regional nationalism. The formation of CANU was an expressed desire for freedom or self-rule, but not in the form of Caprivi identity or Bantustanism. The nationalists vowed to get rid of the white man's rule and CANU was a vehicle to achieve that objective. At this stage, the notion of nationalism was limited to what was taking place in Caprivi, and thus it was argued that CANU was a response to Caprivi identity and its isolation. The fact that the CANU

nationalists constantly interacted with nationalists from say Northern Rhodesia's UNIP is indicative of its desire to break this isolation. It can be concluded that the movement threatened a Caprivi identity.

One such threat to a Caprivi identity was realized in 1964 when the state harshly responded to the formation of CANU by clamping down on its rank and file which caused many to jump the border into what was then Northern Rhodesia. While in Zambia, CANU joined forces with SWAPO to embark on a joint assault on Apartheid South Africa, thereby realizing that their identity is broader than simply Caprivian, that they were part of a larger entity that is South West Africa. This fundamental realization and merger ensured that the interaction of those who went into exile managed to outlive the discrimination of being 'Caprivians'; they sacrificed to free the whole of South West Africa, not only Caprivi. This interaction that took place in SWAPO camps where they lived as refugees together with other South West Africans dispelled the myth of being different and hence increased their resolve to disintegrate a Caprivi identity. All the same, because of its harsh response to CANU's threat to a Caprivi identity, the colonial state banished Brendan Kangongolo Simbwaye, its founder president, to other parts of South West Africa. This served to put him in touch with other nationalists in South West Africa such as Clemens Kapuuo, who arranged for Advocate Israel Goldblatt to attempt to secure his release. Thus by banning Simbwaye from the Caprivi, the state indirectly aided the deconstruction of a Caprivi identity because taking him to South West Africa affirmed the fact that Caprivi was part of South West Africa. Brendan Simbwaye is still unaccounted for and presumed dead but no one can say with any certainty what happened

to him or where he might have been buried. There are strong indications that his body was thrown into the Zambezi River.

In the present certain Caprivians still call for secession from Namibia. In 1999 a group calling itself Caprivi Liberation Army (CLA) attacked government installations around Katima Mulilo that led to the deaths of several persons. A number of people fled the Caprivi into Botswana, where some still remain as refugees at Dukwe. The leaders of the secessionists, Mishake Albert Muyongo, who led CANU into SWAPO but was expelled in 1980, and former Mafwe chief Boniface Bebi Mamili, were offered political asylum in Denmark. More than one hundred men are being tried for treason, sedition and illegal possession of arms in Namibian courts in the biggest and longest running court proceedings after independence. At the core of secession is the argument that SWAPO entered into agreement with CANU in 1964 that at independence Caprivi would be allowed to decide either to join Namibia or be independent and that SWAPO seems to have forgotten that.

Does the present construction of Caprivi identity (secession) have a historical basis? Since 1890, the Caprivi had been part and parcel of South West Africa, even when it was being constantly transferred to different masters in its colonial history. Such transfer was only for administrative purposes and therefore whether CANU and SWAPO entered into an agreement is beside the point since none of the two movements was empowered to take such a decision. South West Africa, including the Caprivi was under the United Nations and thus no decision affecting the territorial integrity of the territory could be

taken by anyone other than, and without consulting, the UN. Was the secessionist movement a direct result of the construction of Caprivi identity? Apartheid South African's machinations, especially in the 1980s, helped persuade the now leader of the secessionists to lead an independent Caprivi and hence guarantee its influence in a southern Africa that had grown increasingly intolerant and opposed to Apartheid policy. This was designed as part of a Caprivi identity that ensured that inhabitants identify themselves as 'Caprivians'. So the secessionist movement in the Caprivi was a direct result of South African colonially localized notions of identities that were entrenched in the area. South African colonialism created and emphasized local notions of identity that served to alienate local people in the Caprivi from other ethnic groups in South West Africa by deliberately keeping the Caprivi on the periphery of political, social, cultural and economic developments in the rest of South West Africa. As a result, local people were orientated to feel more 'Caprivian' than Namibian. This is not to suggest that secession has a wide appeal in the Caprivi, in fact its support base is very limited and continues to dwindle. However, it takes only a couple of individuals to destabilize an area, especially one as small and as far removed from the capital and political centre, as is the Caprivi. In this way, the contest for a Caprivi identity, ongoing from pre-colonial times, continues in independent Namibia.

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