THE END OF MUYONGO’S LONG DANCING ON THE EDGE OF A VOLCANO

By Hidipo Hamutenya

For nearly three decades now, the character known as Mishake Muyongo has been desperately playing some sort of poker game with the destiny of the people of the Caprivi Region. The essence of this game has been to treat that region as his personal bargaining chip which he could use, at will, to gain favour or position of political influence and material benefit. Having convinced himself that the region was his gambling casino, he became a pathological gambler. Accordingly, he thought it wise to repeatedly threaten to tear off the Caprivi Region from the rest of Namibia and to keep that spectre of secession hanging, like the proverbial sword of Damocles, over the heads of the Namibian people, whenever his own political fortunes were waning.

What is amazing, however, is that the man from the Linyanti village has been able, more than once, to confuse and, indeed, drag along quite a good number of persons from that region to his own edge of a volcano (taking an incalculable risk).

In the wake of the current national disgust about the recent secessionist events in the Caprivi and the painful sense of betrayal among those who thought that they were close enough to Muyongo to know his moves, it is relevant to take a closer look at the person of Muyongo and the historic events which catapulted him to national prominence and his effect upon the events which catapulted him to national prominence and his effect upon the people of the Caprivi region.

One of Muyongo’s characteristics is that he is a deeply duplicitous and self-centered person. His adult life has been punctuated by incredibly good fortune, on one hand, and an impetuous drift towards disaster, on the other. It was, indeed, good fortune that propelled the treacherous and highly egocentric Muyongo to climb the ladder to national leadership, such as, being the Vice-President of SWAPO, the President of the DTA and the honoured leader of the official opposition in Parliament. Similarly, it was his propensity towards brinkmanship that has driven him to his recent panicky-stricken flight into un-lamentable exile.

Though not a charismatic person or an inspiring figure, Muyongo was, quite often, in the right place at the right time. Good luck has, in so many instances, been on his side.

At a fairly early stage in his youth, Mishake Albert Muyongo, who claims to come from the Mafwe tribe royal known as the Caprivi African National Union (CANU) in Katima Mulilo, in 1964, to fight against colonialism, he made Muyongo, then a lower primary school teacher, as his vice-president. The fact that Muyongo was initiated into political activism through what was a regional organisation, CANU, does not explain his later secessionist blood, was fortunate enough to become the confidante and protégé of two of the heroes of Namibia’s glorious struggle for liberation, namely, Brendan Simbwaye and Sam Nujoma. When, in the tempest of the wind of change that was then sweeping across Africa, Simbwaye formed what was to become the SWAPO leadership, Muyongo and the historic process, namely, of forging, in the crucible of the struggle, a common national identity out of a diversity of ethnic and cultural particularities.

The rallying slogan in that great historic process, namely, of forging, in the crucible of the struggle, a common national identity out of a diversity of ethnic and cultural particularities.

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In the face of such treachery, the SWAPO Central Committee met in the Angolan town of Kamabatela in 1980 and decided to expel Muyongo and all those who sympathized with his secessionist idiom. He stayed on in Zambia, for a while, as a businessman. But aware of the secessionist ambitions of his secessionist ambitions of his allies in Zambia’s Western Province (former Barotseland), which is adjacent to the Caprivi Region, the authorities in that country did not allow him to come to their country as a freedom fighter and not as a businessman. Accordingly, they ordered him to leave; and since none of the Frontline States would have him, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had to find him another country of asylum far way from the region. He was thus taken to Senegal where he spent barely one year before deciding to beg the South African colonialists in Namibia for mercy and permission for him to come back home as a repentant former freedom fighter and not as a secessionist.

Mishake Muyongo part of that leadership, he was pushed to the centre stage of an historic process, namely, of forging, in the crucible of the struggle, a common national identity out of a diversity of ethnic and cultural particularities. The rally slogan in that great historic process, namely, of forging, in the crucible of the struggle, a common national identity out of a diversity of ethnic and cultural particularities.

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This Rally for Democracy and Progress, RDP’s tent in Hakahana has been empty since it was put up last weekend. Photo by Levi Upola.

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“Are you sure you are SWAPO?” – Jermy Ekanji, left, seems to be asking Hidipo Hamutenya. This Rally for Democracy and Progress, RDP’s tent in Hakahana has been empty since it was put up last weekend. Photo by Levi Upola.

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