Carrying the Sun on Our Backs: unfolding German colonialism in Namibia from Caprivi to Kasikili by Effa Okupa
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In a book that is largely non-academic in style, Effa Okupa provides quite possibly the most detailed existing account of the Kasikili/Sedudu Island conflict between Namibia and Botswana. The conflict is used as a case study to demonstrate the legacy of German and British colonial territorial negotiations, which resulted in the creation of the Caprivi Zipfel (Strip) through the 1890 Anglo-German Agreement.

The material Okupa has included is very diverse: the book certainly includes more information about the colonial occupation of Namibia than its sub-title first suggests. Discussion of Caprivi and Kasikili is relegated to the last four chapters (7–10), within which Okupa completely side-steps the important question of why the Treaty of Versailles did not return the Caprivi Strip to Barotseland (p. 248). Chapters 1–6 provide an account of pre-colonial Namibia; the events in Germany contextualising the colonisation of Namibia and the creation of the Caprivi Strip; and the impacts of German colonisation on mainland Namibia (focusing on the atrocities inflicted on the Herero and Nama ethnic groups).

Okupa offers an interesting analysis of the German Administration’s approach to acquiring land in Namibia. In particular, she highlights (even if somewhat wordily) the different conceptualisations of ‘property’ between the colonisers and the colonised. She also provides an interesting account of how African customary law can be used to determine the ‘users’ of a piece of land in a legal dispute, such as the Kasikili-Sedudu Island dispute.

However, elements of Okupa’s narrative (especially the first two chapters) are at times difficult to follow. Furthermore, the relevance of some of the material to the main theme of the book is not entirely clear. Okupa has a tendency to draw parallels with unexpected topics, which occasionally deviate from the main theme of the book (for example, her discussion of foot-binding in China and genital mutilation, p. 25). The conclusion to the book is also rather disappointing: ending with an account of proceedings at The Hague, the concluding chapter neither unifies nor reflects on the main themes of the book.

In addition to this, Okupa makes some sweeping generalisations, which can be summed up in her statement that: ‘young European historians argue that we should be quiet and forget the past, and not stir up the racial hatred about the brutal policies of German colonialism’ (p. x), which I would argue is unfounded. There are other instances where Okupa neither supports her assertions, nor names the source of evidence that is used to do so, which results in a few inaccuracies. For example, in Chapter 2, she claims that ethnic groups occupying pre-colonial Namibia did not eat game meat; in fact, they did and continue to do so.

In sum, despite Okupa’s interesting inclusion and analysis of African customary law and drawing attention to a relatively unknown case study to demonstrate the continuing implications of colonisation for the present population of Africa, there are a few questions about the overall quality of the book. For example, this account ignores important events in Caprivi’s recent history that are relevant to
the main theme of the book: the impact of the colonisers’ approach to dividing
the region now known as Caprivi to best suit their needs. These events include
the attempted secessionist movement of East Caprivi (foiled in the later stages of
1998), and the armed rebellion which followed on 2 August 1999.

The significance of ignoring these events is further demonstrated when Okupa
attributes both the reduction of tourism in Caprivi and the vast out-migration of
residents from the region during the period of the Kasikili-Sedudu Island dispute
to a potential/impending war between Namibia and Botswana. In reality, these
manifestations are more likely to have been the combined result of the Kasikili-
Sedudu Island dispute, with the fallout from the attempted secession of East
Caprivi, followed by the armed rebellion and UNITA’s border activities in the

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South Africa and the European Union: self-interest, ideology and altruism by GERRIT OLIVIER
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Soon after the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, the new
government began negotiations with the European Union (EU). These eventually
culminated in a Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) that
entered into effect on 1 January 2000. The TDCA is currently undergoing a
process of review, and discussions have also begun between the two parties to
establish a Strategic Partnership, which will enhance the level of political dialogue
between South Africa and the EU.

This book provides a rather limited account of South Africa’s relations with the
EU. Whilst it might be useful to readers with very little background knowledge
of the external relations of the EU, especially those with the developing world,
there is little added-value in terms of a contribution to the existing literature on
EU–South Africa relations. Partly this is because only three of the nine chapters
are actually devoted specifically to this relationship. Other chapters focus on the
history of Europe’s relations with South Africa, both before and during apartheid,
the history of EU development policy, and the EU’s response to the New
Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Curiously, the longest chapter is
a comparison of the regional integration efforts of the EU and the African Union,
which comes to the rather obvious conclusion that ‘these two organisations
differ in most respects and it is doubtful that the world will ever see the EU model
of integration replicated in Africa’ (p. 138).

Olivier’s central argument is that the South African government should devote
more resources towards its relations with the EU than it currently does. He
is critical of the new government’s prioritisation of its relations with other develop-
oping countries especially within Africa. However, beyond this there is limited
critical analysis of the significance and impact of South Africa’s post-apartheid
relations with the EU. For example, we might want to consider the links between
the TDCA and South Africa’s domestic political economy, and in particular the
developmental needs of its poor black majority. Olivier refers to South Africa’s