

The position of the colonial nation in the process of the fight for independence by the oppressed

by Munalula Sa-Nyambe

Can a nation that oppresses another be free? Surely it cannot be. In the same manner, Zambia that oppresses Barotseland cannot be free—politically, economically and socially. Zambia can only pretend to be free. If the Barotse are interested in their freedom, that is to say, in achieving their independence, they must suspend the wishful thinking that someone else will come and rescue them as demonstrated by their continued voting for the opposition. It has not worked in the past 53 years and it will never work. Wake up from the slumber. Arise and fight for your rights using all means possible—“Munanule malumo ane ba lobaize bashemi ba mina, musika miziwa kale ki likuba.” The oppressor must be met with the utmost resistance to much the cruelty he exerts on us. He arrests, tortures and kills, yet we only lament behind closed doors. Therefore, the Barotse need to respond in a much more decisive manner against Zambian subjugation.

For more than 50 years, Kaunda and subsequent Zambian regimes carried out systematic propaganda, slander and blackmail targeted against Barotseland. The Barotse have been labelled tribalists when they are, in actual fact, victims of Northern Rhodesians (Zambians or whatever they will call themselves) tribalism. Successive Zambian regimes have been at the core of destroying Barotse culture, tradition and the age-old democratic governance system in an effort to delay Barotseland independence and create a prejudice that it is wrong for the Barotse to demand independence but should forever remain under their subjugation. The Zambian government deliberately fostered and encouraged these prejudices. The Barotse should realise that Kaunda planted and nurtured the seed of subjugation against them. As a result, both central and local government in Barotseland is run by Northern Rhodesians, a process which is showing its ugly head even in the private sector and religious circles. The reason for this is simple—to make it difficult for the Barotse to achieve their goal of independence. It means, we must systematically counter these prejudices and eject-out the oppressor. It means, the Barotse must be educated in the spirit of achieving their independence.

Our friends in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia understood their enemy very well to be the Boers. With their vigilant army and police, they arrested alleged traitors and when they discovered that they were genuine, they were precisely dealt with. That was true for any group that fought for independence. Once the South Africans, Namibians and Zimbabweans declared a course of action—their mutual need for freedom—men, women and the youth stood together against their common enemy over their right to self-rule and total independence. Life also became unbearable for the Boers in those countries. They spent huge sums of money to build spy networks, huge expenditures on military equipment and personnel. Their economies were negatively affected. Eventually, the Boers were defeated, despite their sophisticated military hardware. In a similar fashion, the Zambian regime and their agents within and outside Barotseland will be defeated. They should be assured that one day they will pay heavily for their continued occupation of Barotseland and transgressions against the people of Barotseland.

As for the Barotse, this is the time to come together and be united against our common enemy—the Northern Rhodesians; against the destruction and stealing of our natural resources; against the destruction of our language, culture, tradition and customs; against taking away our jobs; against the destruction of our governance system; and against delaying actualization of our self-determination and sovereignty of Barotseland. Barotseland is a state and not a province of Zambia.