

The Barotseland Agreement—missed chances and broken promises

by Samaswe

The people of Barotseland have cried in smoke for over five decades waiting for a good man to emerge in Zambia and correct the abominable faux pas Kaunda calculatingly made in 1969 to wipe out their country. Question is, 'Do good men exist?' In Zambia good men don't exist, even good institutions don't exist. The 1964 Independence Constitution which embraced the Barotseland Agreement, with all its good intentions, was blatantly mutilated.

Since then, the Barotse have borne the brunt of ruthless dictates of evil leadership. It's not easy to wipe out a people's country and their history. Kaunda would confess, if he was honest and truthful enough. For all the accolades he had been showered for liberating South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and Namibia, Kaunda unleashed the most brutal and tyrannical rule on Barotseland and its people. Fredrick Chiluba, Levy Mwanawasa, Rupiah Banda, Michael Sata and now Edgar Lungu have religiously followed in the footsteps of their spiritual leader and lamentably failed the people of Barotseland. It must be juicy to repress, suppress, torment and torture a defenceless people, whose only crime was to attempt to form a union with Zambia.

The future of the artificial entity called Zambia remains in limbo, without any remote chance of ever getting a leader magnanimous enough to honour the treaty that bound Barotseland and Northern Rhodesia. Can this artificiality last? The answer is an emphatic NO. Barotseland wants out. Barotseland has been cheated, raped, ravaged, deprived, depraved and destroyed. Its people have been impoverished, brutalised, tortured, maimed, grief-stricken and killed. The spirits of those who have survived have not been broken. Barotseland must rise. Its people must overcome and triumph.

On March 27, 2012 the Ngambela of Barotseland, one Clement Wainyae Sinyinda made a grandiose declaration to the effect that the Barotse had finally accepted the termination of the **Barotseland Agreement 1964** and that effectively Barotseland was taking steps to end the over 50 year occupation of Barotseland by black Northern Rhodesia. Sinyinda had the backing of all Barotseland. The declaration was made in full glare of local and international media and the Zambian authorities. That was the pinnacle of the struggle. Zambia's foundation was shaken. Barotseland was united.

The Barotse National Council (BNC) was the culmination of years of conscious building. It was our collective effort to forge ahead and reawaken the spirit of belonging to a family of Barotseland. Indeed, good men do not exist. Especially, good leaders are rare. The spectre of the Devil incarnate looms in the shadowy figure of one luminous Edwin Lubosi Imwiko, the invented Litunga of Barotseland. He joins the endless list of the bad men who have presided over the affairs of the fake entity called Zambia.

To all intents and purposes, the splendor and lofty declarations made at the 2012 BNC were in a flash of lightning cunningly being undermined by one Edwin Lubosi Imwiko, the scheming surreptitious Litunga of Barotseland. A leader, who had garnered the support of his people only to dramatically turn his back on them and the very country he swore to advance and protect. Lubosi used the 2012 BNC to frighten the Zambian authorities of the imminent breakaway of Barotseland. He immediately saw the **Barotseland Agreement 1964** as a project that generates a continuous flow of money handouts to himself. From that moment Edwin and his Barotse Royal Establish have frustrated every progressive move the independence activists have made. Rather than hide, Edwin now openly supports the Zambian regime to not only clamp down on his own people, but also in electioneering campaigns.

Edwin and his Zambian surrogates influenced in a very small measure the outcome of the Barotseland versus Zambia case at the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR). As Barotseland independence activists and campaigners, we are more determined than ever to liberate our country from the claws and jaws of a merciless enemy. Today Edwin and his BRE can be banded together with Zambia as the enemies of Barotseland.