

6. Masters in Someone Else's Home

Resistance and retribution

As a lawyer in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi represented the interests of Indians battling for better wages and improved social conditions. He soon realised Indian immigrants in the newly established Dominion were patronised by British settlers, despised by the Afrikaans and hated by the indigenous Africans. Apartheid was embedded. On a journey to Durban he was removed from the train after refusing to leave a first-class compartment.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915 where his vocation began. In representing the interests of the poor, he felt he had to lead an ascetic life to empathise with their plight. When the All India Home Rule League was formed in December 1916 he refused to join, not wishing to cause embarrassment to Britain whilst still at war with Germany. When in London he met Annie Besant, who had long fought for improved conditions in the sweated industries. Their views differed. "You are distrustful of the British. I am not, and I will not help in agitating against them during the war."

Former Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, would have welcomed this attitude. "With India we are everything; without it we are nothing." With a population exceeding 250 million, and a fusion of religions, ethnicities and cultures, India was governed from London by various Secretaries of State who rarely visited, if ever.

The Government of India Bill 1919, was a complex mosaic of provincial delegation with central control and no Indian representation at all. An incensed Muslim League and Hindu National Congress signed the Lucknow Pact, committing India to independence. The fuse was now lit.

Gandhi led exploited peasants and striking textile workers and sought relief from taxes when crops failed. He believed battles should be fought by satygraha, the cornerstone of passive resistance. The Defence of India Act 1915 provided for arbitrary detention but Whitehall felt its powers were inadequate. Mr Justice Rowlatt chaired a committee of inquiry that extended their powers and limited free association. Whilst rejected by the Indian Imperial Legislative Council, his recommendations passed into law with the Viceroy's endorsement.

A nationwide day of protest was planned by Gandhi for 7 April 1919 with the closure of shops and businesses. Delhi would not wait and went ahead on 30 March. By mid-day there was rioting in the streets and by evening this had spread north into the Punjab. Gandhi set out by train to urge satygraha but was sent back to Bombay where rioting had already started. In Amritsar on 10 April, two local nationalist leaders were arrested for subversion. A mob went on the rampage, burning down the town hall and post office. They set fire to banks and the railway station, cut telephone wires and murdered four Europeans. Martial law was declared.

Fearing violence Marcia Sherwood, a missionary doctor, visited schools in Amritsar early that day to send pupils home. She was attacked and badly beaten. Only intervention by brave Hindu shopkeepers prevented her from being killed. British military commander for the area, Colonel Reginald Dyer, born in Simla and educated at Bishop Cotton School, imposed a strict night-time curfew. Anyone leaving their home after 8:00 pm would be shot.

On 13 April, the Baisakhi Festival was held. By early morning over 5,000 people had gathered in and around the Jallianwala Bagh walled garden to celebrate the Hindu New Year and also a major Sikh festival. British authorities, on edge about events of the previous few days, had

already banned processions and public meetings, impervious to the significance of religious and cultural events inexorably woven into the fabric of Indian society. They feared violence.

A request to disperse read out in four languages had little effect. By mid-afternoon the crowd had swelled to nearly 15,000. Dyer as acting Brigadier-General and his civilian administrator, Deputy Commissioner Irving, were informed. An incensed Dyer returned late afternoon with a detachment of Sikh, Ghurkha and Balachi troops. Blocking two narrow entrances and without warning his troops opened fire, aiming directly into the dense crowd that started to panic.

In ten minutes of sheer carnage, soldiers fired in excess of 1,650 rounds, leaving 379 dead and over 1,200 injured. "As soon as firing stopped, the troops and officers all cleared away. No arrangements were made by the authorities to look after the dead or wounded."

As a punishment for the attack on Dr Sherwood, Dyer forced all residents passing through the alley where the incident took place to crawl on their stomachs through the dust, grit and animal excrement. If any lifted a limb they were prodded with rifle butts and bayonets. This so-called 'Crawling Order' was withdrawn after two weeks at the insistence of Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford.

Gandhi felt he had made a "Himalayan miscalculation" in not preparing native peoples for the discipline satyagraha entailed. He observed a three day fast of atonement and on 18 April called for an end to civil disobedience. Churchill referred to the massacre as monstrous and "an extraordinary event which stands in singular and sinister isolation," whilst Asquith referred to it as "one of the worst British outrages ever committed."

Lord Stamfordham, King George V's private secretary, summed up popular opinion in a letter to the Viceroy. "On the one hand he (Dyer) is condemned for what is regarded as heartless, callousness and indifference to the value of human life; on the other hand, there are those who sum up their position in the words, Dyer saved India."

For some Indians, the real culprit was Michael O'Dwyer, the British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab. On 13 March 1940, at Caxton Hall, London, Udham Singh, a Sikh activist, who had witnessed the events, shot and killed O'Dwyer in "wanting to crush the spirit of my people." He added, "I am dying for my country. I have seen my people starving in India under British rule. I have protested against this; it was my duty." Singh was hanged for murder on 31 July. Colonel Reginald Dwyer, the officer commanding on the day at Amritsar, was removed from his post, passed over for promotion and not allowed to return to India in a serving capacity.

In a gesture of magnanimity, when the Government of India Act received the Royal Assent on 14 December 1919, an amnesty was given to all political prisoners. "The proclamation has replaced mistrust with trust," said a much encouraged Gandhi, but within a year the Viceroy's policy meant virtual subjugation of the masses, a "a subtle method of emasculation."

The national campaign of disobedience was renewed along with a trade embargo of Empire goods. In April 1921 Lord Reading, a former Lord Chief Justice, replaced Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy and soon arranged a visit by the Prince of Wales in November. In spite of riots, the Prince passed through Bombay unscathed but noted "empty streets, shuttered windows and brooding silence."

Summer capital of the British Raj

At nearly 7,000 feet, the summer retreat of Simla epitomised the power, wealth and grandeur of imperialism in the Indian sub-continent, from Burma to Afghanistan. Even the creator of

Delhi, Sir Edward Lutyens, was impressed. At the top of the pyramid sat the Viceroy and his Members of Council, the Commander-in-Chief and Governor of the Punjab. Arraigned below, in concentric circles, were senior government officials and army officers. The social ambience of Shimla was incomplete without 'grass widows' whose husband languished in the summer heat of Delhi. Then there were members of the 'fishing fleet,' sailing from Britain in search of husbands. Those coming back to Britain, without at least an engagement ring, were termed, 'returned empties.'

Clustered beneath this coterie was the 'uncovenanted service,' comprising junior officials and European traders, clinging to coat-tails of the elite. Following this imperial pied piper, each summer saw hordes of job-porters and Dhobi laundry workers, scrubbing precious clothing against rocks; proud Ayah domestics; bill-wallahs, sleeping on verandas to collect payments due the first of the month; Kashmiri shawl merchants sitting for hours weaving garments and a spell on your pocket too and, not least, 'coolies' (menial labourers) and rickshaw pullers.

"Limpets on Shimla's ermine coat" were the princes who had summer homes in Shimla, not so much to escape the oppressive heat of the plains as to rub shoulders with the great and the good. "At the top of the Indian social scale were the Maharajas, the Rajas, Jams and Nawabs – as fabulous as the jewels and women they owned; progressive or debauched, despotic to the point of tyranny, and yet so often so very generous." To some they were gods and for others an anachronism. There were 565 at independence, ruling a third of the country.

A winding railway from Kalka opened in 1903 to the cooler and delightful Shimla and splendid Vice-Regal Lodge, overlooking the distant Himalayas. George Nathaniel, 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, came to Shimla in 1899 as Viceroy and Governor-General. He arrived with stern advice from Queen Victoria; "be kind to my poor Indians." Lady Curzon, arriving before her husband wrote, "The first view of Simla amused me so – the houses slipping off the hills, clinging like barnacles to the hill-tops. A Minneapolis millionaire might revel in it (Vice-Regal Lodge) and I can live on the views for five years."

The hard-working, no nonsense Curzon was held in awe. His haughtiness was renowned, a trait not missed by his Oxford contemporaries:

My name is George Nathaniel Curzon,
I am a most superior person,
My cheeks are pink, my hair is sleek,
I dine at Blenheim twice a week.

Lord and Lady Reading were noted for memorable extravaganzas with the Lodge transformed by dragons, motifs, lanterns and lacquered gates when a Chinese ball was held, with guests attired in costumes from China, Japan and Burma. A mandarin from Ancient China, complete with steel-embossed leather coat and a gold and silver helmet, turned out to be the Maharaja of Patiala. Show and originality combined. A country fair was incomplete without elephants, whilst gymkhanas continued uninterrupted and without elaborate adornment.

Deteriorating relations

The issue for Lord Reading was lawlessness versus civil government. On 1 February 1922, a peaceful rally turned violent in Gorakhpur, a district in the United Provinces. The local police station was set on fire, resulting in the death of 22 people. Gandhi was arrested for articles in *Young India* that might incite violence. He pleaded guilty. At his trial on 10 March he invited the judge to resign or "inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe the system, and the

law you are assisting to administer, are good for the people." The judge sentenced Gandhi to six years, "as light as any judge could inflict," observed the unrepentant Gandhi. He took with him works by Kipling, Shaw and Goethe, insisting "freedom is to be wooed only inside prison, and sometimes on the gallows." He was released on 11 January 1924 after an operation for appendicitis.

In 1926 Edward Wood, later Lord Halifax, and a friend of Stanley Baldwin, became Viceroy. It was timely as a Commission was to review the workings of the Government of India Act after ten years. Before Sir John Simon's report was to be published, the Viceroy was requested to issue a statement, promising Indian self government - in the fullness of time. An outraged Simon became aware of the intention only after reading about it in the Sunday Times. In spite of his protests, the statement was made as the Viceroy had hinted the contents, though Baldwin insisted this meant Dominion status. The Simon Commission report, released on 24 June 1930, proposed cautious advance towards self-governing provinces and eventual central self-government.

Leadership of the Indian Congress was in the hands of Jawaharlal Nehru but, given Gandhi's sway with millions of poor Indians, he included him. He saw Gandhi as a breath of fresh air, "like a beam of light that pierced the darkness. He removed the scales from our eyes." Praise indeed, but whereas Gandhi vacillated, Nehru developed a clear strategy, giving the British one year to make progress towards a Dominion. He knew full well that scant progress, if any, would be made. The campaign, launched on 26 January 1930, was termed Independence Day. Whilst a Round Table Conference was being held in London on 12 November, Nehru and Gandhi languished in prison, accused of seditious speeches. Ramsay MacDonald talked of a federation. This and other terminology caused confusion, not least in India itself.

A second Conference was agreed, again inconclusive, and a third that ended on 1 December 1932. Ramsay MacDonald promised parallel progress towards regional and Indian autonomy but, as ever, complexities were introduced. such as the Viceroy retaining reserve powers. A Government of India (Amendment) Bill introduced in 1933, was dismissed by Churchill as "a gigantic quilt of jumbled crochet work." The Manchester Guardian was inclined to agree: "A constitution that seemed like self-government in India, and at Westminster like the British Raj." Nehru considered it "a charter for slavery." A further problem was the incorporation of princely states into a new nation by giving the vote to people they regarded as their property.

The dawning realisation was that India was not one country. It was made up of states with widely differing forms of government and autonomy, involving a complex web of religions, ethnicities and cultures. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, representing Muslims at the Conference, "never seemed to wish to work with anyone" and made little contribution to the report. The Congress agreed to invite Muslims into the government of provinces, with a caveat to agree the 'Congress Pledge' of full independence. Jinnah was very wary. "The fact is the Congress wants domination of India under the shelter of British bayonets." He then accused Gandhi of planning to "subjugate and vassalise the Muslims under a Hindu Raj."

Relations with Sikhs and Hindus began to deteriorate. Jinnah's remarks gave a clear signal of his intention to see a free India partitioned, and virtual end to provincial assemblies as these depended on the participation of 'princely states,' and the express agreement of Princes. Any prospect of an All-India Federation was dead. Independence was on hold, sine die, as Britain became pre-occupied with the rise of fascism and Germany's annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938, and their seeming intent to use military force elsewhere. Simla remained important

in the lead-up to Indian independence, hosting a war-time conference in 1942 as well as final negotiations that commenced in June 1945. The days of the British Raj were numbered; “a duelling scar at times proudly displayed, and at others to be shamefully hidden,” depending on your view.

The legacy of colonialism

A brief critique by journalist Louis Fischer, who wrote two biographies of Gandhi, encapsulates opinions of Indians towards imperialism. It broadly reflects the views of indigenous peoples of Northern Rhodesia before formation of an independent Zambia in 1964. Fischer’s focus is the quest for independence, free from British rule.

“The British were masters in someone else’s home. Their very presence was a humiliation. Despite the best intentions of the very best among them, their every act was a humiliation. They then complained, with pain, that Indians were ‘ungrateful.’

The complaint was a measure of the lack of understanding. Even if the British had converted India into a land flowing with milk and honey, they would have been disliked. Imperialism, like dictatorship, sears the soul, degrades the spirit, and makes individuals small; the better to rule them. Fear and cowardice are its allies.”

Louis Fischer’s final comment is the ultimate indictment. “Imperialism is government of other people, by other people, for other people. What the subjects gain, be it ever so great, is only the by-product of efforts on behalf of a distant master. Colonial administration never is, and can never be, successful. History has known no good colonisers. Every empire digs into its own grave. Imperialism is a perpetual insult, for it assumes that the outsider has the right to rule the insider who cannot rule themselves. It is thus arrogant nationalism and inevitably begets an opposing nationalism.”

An economic backwater

By January 1916 Lewanika, King of Barotseland, had become weaker by the day and half an hour before midnight on 4 February 1916 he passed away. Lewanika had reigned for thirty years. The state barge, Nalikuanda, laden with personal mementos and his own built canoe, were sunk into a deep pool in keeping with tradition.

It took time for the message of his father’s death to reach his eldest son Litia who had to journey upriver from Sesheke. He probably arrived at Lealui on 12 March and immediately prepared for the initial private ceremony he was to perform the next day. At first light, Litia visited the tomb of an ancient king to perform the secret ritual that preceded an act of enthronement. The coronation on 14 March was spectacular and for many people the first coronation they had seen.

Lawrence Wallace, elevated to Resident Commissioner for Northern Rhodesia in 1911, wanted to be certain Litia’s appointment met with the approval of his people. It was a wise move as since 1885, on his return from exile, Lewanika had faced sporadic hostility and dissent as the power and income of chiefs eroded. Several threats had been made on his life, as recently as a foiled attempt in 1911.

Now proclaimed Yeta III, Litia’s closing speech stressed the importance of strong government to maintain a civil society. Yeta was alluding to beer. “I shall combat it as my father did. Yes, I declare that I will have nothing to do with beer.”

Yeta, like his father, was staunchly loyal to the British monarchy. His palace in Lealui had portraits of Edward VII and George V hung alongside his father. The new elite were well educated and most sons of senior indunas (important chiefs) went to schools in Southern Africa, Basutoland or England. They had their own ideas for the future development of Barotseland to form an even closer affinity to the Crown.

Wallace flatly refused Yeta asserting his prerogative to be called King, unhappy the Lozi were meddling beyond their powers. His concern was, not so much illusions of grandeur in trying to recoup the past, but the legal status of Barotseland, defined as a Province, not a kingdom. Another issue was the involvement of Yeta's younger and well educated brothers dominating the Kuta (Parliament) in a form of royal fiefdom.

Whilst Barotseland remained largely immune from World War 1 hostilities, the same could not be said for North-East Rhodesia. The drain on labour was immense and German troops made their presence felt early in the war and towards the end. Prices rocketed as shortages of just about everything became the norm. The latter part of World War 1 saw the arrival of the internal combustion engine in the form of lorries and motor vehicles, almost exclusively the preserve of whites as only they could afford them. The industrial and commercial North-East benefited mostly and Fort Jameson especially. This was a great relief to Africans, not having to carry loads of sixty to seventy pounds for considerable distances.

Top of the Kuta's agenda was rectifying the errors and falsifications arising from Concessions agreed with the Company over land and minerals and with the British Government siphoning off portions of territory. The Caprivi Strip was assigned to Germany and the 1905 arbitration settlement with Portugal continued to be disputed, together with the Barotse Reserve. The iniquitous hut tax, minimal legal authority, actions of the British South Africa Company and lack of expansion of education remained burning issues.

Yeta was seething at the boundary line between the North-West and North-East being shifted west by the Company in 1905. The rich Copperbelt was deemed to come within the Lewanika Concessions by an arbitrary adjustment, giving mining rights legitimacy. This subtle slight of hand, unknown to the Barotse at the time, kept investors at bay and prospectors from sniffing around. Unsurprisingly, the Barotse did not benefit from the proceeds of mining operations that continued to soar spectacularly.

The false dawn

In 1919 Yeta expressed a wish to visit England as his father had done. This was flatly refused with the excuse there were a "number of existing evils" to address first, notably using unpaid corvée labour, in effect implying slavery. His disappointment turned to despair with the death that year of Mokamba his Ngambela (prime minister), friend, brother-in-law and confidante.

In a long, well articulated letter Yeta 'reminded' Lawrence Wallace that all land, and not just the native reserve, belonged to the King and his National Council. He corrected the 'mistaken' belief of Wallace not only on land ownership but authority to assign it. The Secretary of Native Affairs responding on behalf of Wallace was impassive, unmoving and unyielding. Clause 40 of the 1911 Order in Council stated it was unlawful to alienate land reserved for prospecting by the 1900 and 1909 Concessions.

In March 1921, in utter desperation, Yeta handed the visiting Prince Arthur of Connaught and Streatham a petition containing five points. The Prince, a grandson of Queen Victoria and Sandhurst educated, became Governor-General of South Africa in 1920. The first was direct

rule from Britain. All Concessions with the Company should be terminated and cease to have legal force. The extension of the Barotseland Reserve should incorporate the Caprivi Strip and land handed over to the Portuguese returned. Point four was adherence to ten per cent of the hut tax agreed by his predecessor Milner, rather than the underhand and arbitrary cap of £1,300 imposed by the Company. The final issue was using the large accumulated balance to foster education and economic development.

After an inordinate delay, the list of demands found its way to Resident Commissioner Wallace who responded in July with a series of negatives. Wallace insisted the reserved area could not be extended, Concessions agreed with his father could not be cancelled or amended and the Lozi portion of the hut tax could not be increased. Wallace magnanimously agreed a request for direct rule would be borne in mind; by whom, when and how was not mentioned.

Northern Rhodesia was unsuited for single government. The east was very different from the west ethnologically, economically and geographically. Fort Jameson away to the east was a virtual cocoon, travel to Livingstone took a month, and most trade was conducted through Nyasaland. The west now comprised mainly the Barotse Reserve, Kasempa District and the western portion of Kafue District, leaving an industrial central corridor with a railway running up to the Congo, carefully and judiciously placed outside the reach of the Barotse Reserve.

All trade and commercial affinities, were south of Livingstone to Southern Rhodesia and Union of South Africa and north to the Congo. Charles Roden Buxton patiently considered the many options in his enquiry of 1922 but to no avail as its recommendations were rejected. In the same year electors of Southern Rhodesia opted for Responsible Government, a euphemism for self autonomy, leaving Northern Rhodesia under direct imperial rule as a protectorate.

The Colonial Office pressed the Company hard to give up its land claims in Barotseland made under the Lewanika Concessions but they were not prepared to budge even one inch. The fundamental issue for the Company was not mineral reserves in Barotseland as it now was but the rich seams to the east, conveniently deemed to be under the control of Lewanika.

Private investors, with Colonial and/or British South Africa Company interests, had staked over 90% of investment assets, aware that massive reserves of copper probably existed thanks to the findings of Frederick Russell Burnham in his report to the Company in 1899. Burnham stated that the copper mines of Montana and Arizona had proved more valuable than the gold mines and the same might apply in the Kafue region. It was irrelevant to the Barotse and a classic case of the map not being the territory.

Yeta returned to the attack with vigour. He had spotted a chink of daylight. In the event of coming under the Crown, he envisaged the Company forfeiting these valuable copper and other mineral rights, assigned by a sleight of hand. The Colonial Office response gave the impression of good news as the Crown was to assume responsibility for Northern Rhodesia from 1 April 1924. As ever there were catches, two to be precise. All Lewanika Concessions would remain intact and the Company would retain all its mineral rights.

By subtle wording, no specific mention was made of land but the intentions of the Crown were clear. The Agreement dated 29 September 1923 between the Crown and British South Africa Company, operative from 1 April 1924, stated "all such rights and interests in lands as it (B.S.A.C.) claimed to have acquired by virtue of the Concessions granted by Lewanika would be assigned and transferred to the Crown." Full and entire control of lands throughout North-West Rhodesia would be taken over by the Crown and elsewhere in Northern Rhodesia. With some exceptions pertaining to land owned by the Company, the Crown "should be completely

free to administer such lands in such manner as the Crown might in its discretion deem best in the interests of the native population and in the public interests generally.”

What could be clearer? Well, quite a lot as land ownership, apart from alienated land, would pass to the Crown that had *carte blanche* to do as they saw fit. There was a further caveat relating to Concession granted by the Company to the North Chartered Exploration Company as the Crown would have the right to set aside agreed Native Reserves. The implications of the Agreement were stark. Apart from the Reserves set aside, Barotseland would cease to have any entitlement to land ownership within Northern Rhodesia and involvement in its use.

A living museum

The Lozi believed that, under a more benign and paternalistic regime of British protection, the former rights and privileges would be restored. Governor Herbert Stanley appeared to be a breath of fresh air. With great patience he pored over the detailed complaints, calmly listened to submissions, analysed arguments and sifted evidence, before rejecting each request. Most Colonial officials remained in post, with new job descriptions and a spattering of promotions, under a different employer. Calling a leopard by a different name does not change its spots!

Historian Richard Hall summed up the position of Barotseland “as a monument to one of the most neglected territories in Africa.” The significance of the Agreement, coming into effect on April Fools Day, wasn’t lost on Yeta, under the impression preferential status was tantamount to being under Crown control. It was, but only as one of nine provinces through the tortuous government machinery of Northern Rhodesia, accountable to the Crown.

Herbert Stanley learned from Rhodes in ‘squaring’ opposition. By abandoning his twelve days free labour, Yeta would receive £500 per annum and the Kuta £2,000 per annum, thereby removing any accusation of continuing slavery. Yeta was offered £350 a year in lieu of a half share for game licences and £500 a year for surrender of his rights to ‘ground tusks’ outside the Barotse District. Fearful the offer might be withdrawn, the royal elite and indunas agreed to be paid off. Richard Hall comments that members of the elite were eager “to augment their own personal luxury and dignity.” It is reasonable to think these sentiments were shared by most Indunas and local chiefs, hoping more than a few shekels would trickle down to them.

In his first annual report, Stanley commented that “relations with Lewanika were on the whole very satisfactory but, since his death in 1916, difficulties arose from time to time.” Civil cases could be tried but only with the advice of the Resident Magistrate. Barotseland became even more insular, trapped in a bubble and time warp. Yeta complained bitterly the government was doing little to provide roads, houses, royal barges, clothes and food, let alone repairing infrastructure, including the dirty and stagnant canal at Lealui. Feudal economics prevailed.

For the educated seeking a decent life beyond the suffocating confines of Barotseland, jobs galore existed as clerks, messengers, typists, interpreters and general factotums in the urban areas of Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere, with jobs in mines as foremen or supervisors. For the largely uneducated and impoverished Barotse, few opportunities existed.

Northern and Southern amalgamation resurfaced and reached the ears of Cabinet which, at a meeting of 29 June 1931, rejected any such proposal saying, “A substantially greater advance should be made in the development of Northern Rhodesia before any final opinion can be formed as to its future.” The Cabinet noted “Barotseland would require separate treatment.”

Whilst Barotseland languished economically, the north-east took off. The white population in the four years to 1931 quadrupled, due almost entirely to the rich pickings of copper mines in the Ndola District along the northern section of the railway to the Congo. The scale of growth was staggering. In 1926 output of copper was £112,000, rising to £346,000 in 1931 and £4.1 million in 1934, a multiple exceeding thirty six on the output just eight years before.

Even this was a dip on the previous year, affected by the depression of world copper prices. In 1937 output of all minerals was a colossal £12.7 million that reduced to £10.7 million as copper substitutes were being produced in the USA and Europe. Metals accounted for 97% of all exports with the main purchasers being the UK at 40%, Germany 32% and Italy 10%. The balance of trade surplus was a massive £8 million, reducing to £5 million in 1938.

“Do the comparative” Rhodes often urged as everything is relative, and so it was. The size of Barotseland in 1909 was 190,000 square miles, about a 20% reduction on what it was during Lewanika’s reign. Even in 1909 it comprised 66% of the entire area of Northern Rhodesia, yet its share of exports was less than one per cent, a figure so miniscule as difficult to calculate.

The contrast with the North-East was staggering. Two mail trains, complete with dining cars, ran each way every week via the Victoria Falls to the Belgian Congo. On six days a week, the second class only train ran from Livingstone to Ndola. Lacking a dining car, lunch was taken at a hotel en route. A similar length journey of 300-400 miles along the Zambezi River from Livingstone to Mongu in 1934 took twelve days, if using express mail services, or usually three or more weeks. Barges tied up for the night, travellers camped out and had to journey on foot to bypass substantial rapids. The same journey by the new air service took three hours.

Contrast the provision of education. In 1926, in the North-East, there were six government schools, three farm schools and an aided school. In Barotseland the only recognised “training institutes” were run by the Paris Mission and Primitive Methodists. Barotseland received just £1,870 annually from the Barotse National Fund, distributed between three mission societies, jumping to £2,820 by 1938. Yeta was placated as the Barotse National School near Mongu, established in 1907, provided technical training for carpenters, masons and bricklayers. A similar and much bigger trade school opened at Lusaka in 1936 with thirty six apprentices.

Administrative reform took place in 1935 when the number of Provinces was reduced to five with each divided into districts under a District Commissioner. This was increased to six in 1938. More especially, in the same year, the administrative capital shifted from Livingstone, more or less centrally placed in the far south, to Lusaka in the heartland of economic activity. The new capital was inaugurated on 3 June to coincide with the birthday of King George V.

Out of his depth, Yeta was for historian Gerald Caplan, a child of an earlier and far different generation. His mentality was close to his father and missionaries for whom he had respect, as he did to some extent for colonial officials. Yeta admired their protocol, dignity, style and the British ways of getting things done, or not as the case may be, and adapted quite easily to the world of Empire with its imperial connotations. He preferred to dress like Europeans and adopted some of their habits and mannerisms. Caplan cut to the chase saying Yeta was “in short an anachronism,” more suited to the late Victorian era and a fading Empire.

The Pim-Milligan Commission in 1937 confirmed the Province was in stagnation but it did not “wish to see this fine example of native civilization come to an end.” Civil servants wrung their hands in helpless frustration, unable to generate any inward investment and lacking the skills to administer effectively. Required above all else was imagination and entrepreneurial

drive that could only come from someone with energy, flair and dynamism and a philanthropic as well as commercial imperative to improve the quality of life of all. It was a vain hope.

Finally, approval was given for Yeta to visit England as a reward for accepting greater control and oversight though timing had much to do with George VI coming to the throne. A grant of £300 was made towards the cost of the trip. Yeta was again 'squared,' much like his father. In his absence, some Indunas organised an attempted coup. The finger of suspicion pointed to the spendthrift Kalue, second son of Yeta. That Yeta had survived for over two decades was remarkable, even allowing for protection. He shared that in common with Lewanika.

Amalgamation of North and South Rhodesia was proposed much to the disgust of the Barotse. Whilst sympathetic, the Commission was shocked how backward education was and medical services. In early 1939 Yeta suffered a severe stroke. He lost his powers of speech, never regained in the final six years of his life. The British Government and Colonial Administration now had much more pressing priorities with war looming again. The 'Living Museum' would struggle on as it had done for decades.