

Interrogating the Rationale behind the Deportation of Missionaries from Rhodesia: A Case of Colonial Paranoia (1964–1979)

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Abstract

The study focuses on the complex interplay between colonial powers, religious actors, and the struggle for social justice and racial equality in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) under the government of Ian Douglas Smith (1964–79). The study uses a postcolonial lens to explore the influence, motivation, and responses of colonial administrators towards missionary actors towards African nationalism and African political struggles. This historical narrative shapes church interactions in politics and economics in view of missionary advocacy and the legacy of African nationalism and its transition beyond that time. This fulfils the study objective, which is to investigate the contribution and impact of the targeted missionaries in creating a just, multi-racial and democratic Zimbabwe. The study examines five prominent missionaries who were targeted by the colonial government and deported out of Rhodesia. They include Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge (1907–2008) and Arthur Guy Clutton-Brock (1906–1995). Fr Michael Traber (SMB) (1929–2006), Sr. Janice McLaughlin (1941–2020), and Bishop Donal Raymond Lamont (O. Carm) (1911–2003). This study showcases the impact of missionaries on Zimbabwe's ecclesiastical historiography.

Keywords: missionaries; Smith regime; colonial paranoia; racial equality; social justice



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Introduction

The banning and deportation of missionaries during the Rhodesian era presents a scenario of colonial paranoia caused by fear and suspicion associated with the liberation of the African populace. Deriding the idea of Africanizing the church and the state through a viable partnership between European (white) and African (black) has not been adequately interrogated in the vision of concerned missionaries who eventually were banned or deported to protect Ian Douglas Smith's¹ politics of identity in Rhodesia. It needs to be noted that some missionaries helped to impose white supremacy while a few liberals defied it. Colluding missionaries emphasised obedience to colonial masters, while defying missionaries emphasised independent thinking. This study explores five different missionaries [herein Bishop Ralph Dodge², Guy Clutton-Brock³, Fr Michael Traber⁴, Sr. Janice MacLaughlin⁵, and Bishop Raymond Donal Lamont⁶]. The study has deliberately left out missionaries who were deported without clear circumstances or those who were actively involved in the Smith regime. This study could not include having their histories better elaborated by clergy from their denominations, but this is far from being comprehensive, resulting in some abuses of the positions and actions of those missionaries in contemporary society (ZCBC, 2020). The deported missionaries could be seen as the prism through which the real and imagined postcolonial government would succeed as their actions embraced, wholesale, the actions of the independent state. The Smith regime was delayed in realising that the African elites were being disillusioned by fake partnerships entered through multiracial tea parties without adequate racial equality that respected the African human person, resulting in the undermining of those missionaries who had pro-African policies (Mlambo 2009, 106).

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- 1 Ian Douglas Smith was a politician, farmer, and fighter pilot who served as the Prime Minister (1964 - 1979) of Rhodesia. His father came from Scotland, and hence he was a Presbyterian elder who led a predominantly white government (though military means) after declaring independent from the United Kingdom in 1965.
 - 2 Bishop Ralph Dodge (25 January 1907 – 8 August 2008) belonged to the American Methodist also now known as the United Methodist Church. He was elected bishop of the Africa Central Conference from 1956 to 1964.
 - 3 Guy Clutton-Brock (5 April 1906 – 29 January 1995) was an Anglican missionary working at St. Faith's Mission, in Rusape, Zimbabwe.
 - 4 Father Michael Traber (1929 – 25 March 2006) was a Roman Catholic priest, who was the managing editor of a Catholic magazine called Moto.
 - 5 Sister Janice MacLaughlin (13 February 1942 – 7 March 2021) was a Roman Catholic nun and a member of the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic from the USA.
 - 6 Bishop Raymond Donal Lamont (27 July 1911 – 14 August 2003) was an Irish-Rhodesian Roman Catholic bishop and missionary.

This study is concerned with the practice of prophetic political theology in the lives of selected missionaries⁷ in relation to the unwinnable racial endgame and authoritarian regime during Zimbabwe's struggle for independence. The study further examines how a pseudo-government masqueraded as a nation without giving attention to the clamouring winds of change. This study attends to the events of colonial history that were dynamic to the narratives of unpopular missionaries during the Smith Regime (1964-1979) in the history of Rhodesia.

Study Justification

The actions of white missionaries against racism perpetrated by the minority government of Ian Smith remain key for the study of church history in postcolonial Zimbabwe. The preservation of the memory of these courageous missionaries is a contribution to the heritage and tradition of resistance to racial discrimination and forms a solid foundation upon which an enduring edifice of non-racialism and justice is founded and cherished. Excavating and curating such memories of resistance will rescue this historical narrative from abuse and manipulation by contemporary regimes.

Further, this study has selected a few missionaries from a list of many deported missionaries that include Bishop Skelton, and Stanley Moore, Father Dieter Scholz, among others. These deported missionaries and others have not been included in this study because they do not have a traceable long history of activism as well as persistence in diaspora activism for the liberation of the country.

Problem Statement

The first white missionaries came to Zimbabwe in 1890, accompanying Cecil John Rhodes⁸ (5 July 1853 – 26 March 1902) and the “Pioneer column” to colonise and subjugate the African population. From this alliance was born mutual respect between colonial and missionary agents founded on the Caucasian kith and kin principle (Linde, 1079). While most missionaries decided to ‘see no evil and hear no evil’ perpetrated against African subalterns, only a few, such as the ones covered in this study, advocated the cause of the oppressed Africans in word and deed. The colonial government was not happy with white missionaries joining forces with the black majority. It took tough

7 All missionaries selected in this study used their faith to oppose an unjust system, and served as a catalyst for social change in light of Gustav Gutiérrez's seminal book: *A Theology of Liberation* (1971), which emphasises the importance of “a church incarnated in the poor and their struggles for life” (p. 91). Missionaries' active engagement in social justice issues solidified the link between religious faith and political activism, hence need to concurrently address both religious and political dissent in the bid to use spiritual formulas to solve political problems of poverty, racism, sexism and (neo-) colonialism.

8 Cecil John Rhodes (5 July 1853 - 26 March 1902) was a British businessman, politician, and imperialist who established the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and gave it the Royal Charter (in 1889) to actively colonise Southern Africa and pursue the economic and political interests of the British Empire during the late 19th century us.

measures against them, such as declaring them ‘Prohibited immigrants’, imprisoning them and or revoking their citizenship, followed by deportation. The question is: Why were colonial authorities afraid of these missionaries? What potential did their actions carry?

Theoretical Approach

The study uses the post-colonial lens of missionary historiography in Zimbabwe and views the targeted missionaries as the defenders and voice of the African subalterns. Postcolonial theory assumes that the historical reading of the missionary narrative is done in view of the contemporary experiences of the reader of that history. In fact, certain things happening today can be understood with the view of the past. Missionary actions are analysed by scholars of formerly colonised states (Sawant, 2012). In fact, Rai (2005, 2) contends that post-colonialism “is an enterprise which seeks emancipation from all types of subjugation ... [but] ... does not introduce a new world which is free from ills of colonialism; it rather suggests both continuity and change” (Rai 2005, 2). This study is an attempt to reread the complexities of colonial state power, which not only went rogue but went to the extent of playing God by arrogating upon itself the right to shape the identity of the church.

The Application of the Postcolonial Approach

This study employs the Post-Colonial Approach to scrutinise the colonial dynamics and their implications in the post-colonial context, positing that contemporary phenomena must be viewed through the lens of historical legacies. For instance, the deportation of missionaries prior to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 11 November 1965 was intended to actuate the 1961 constitution, but this was radicalised in the UDI, which promoted separate development for whites and blacks. The Rhodesia Front Party's (RFP) ideology advanced apartheid to safeguarded white interests, with the UDI as the Magna Carta of racial separation. Smith declared, “That the people of Rhodesia witnessed a process which is destructive of those very precepts upon which civilisation in a primitive country has been built,” asserting that with the UDI, whites had struck a blow for “Christianity and civilisation” (UDI Proclamation, 1965). Thus, while the Rhodesian Parliament comprised 64 members (58 white and 16 black), where whites only were citizens and black subjects, the gradual inclusion of blacks was foreseen as a long-term aspiration, relegating them to the status of “the Whiteman’s burden.”

The UDI's overt focus on civilisation and Christianity paralleled the Church’s role. Each deported missionary symbolised the disenfranchised black populace, deprived of parliamentary representation, voice, and rights. For instance, Bishop Dodge was deported in 1964 for empowering blacks to gain education abroad and subsequently fill positions traditionally held by whites in the Methodist Church (Dodge, 1986). He envisioned a skilled black government, a perspective dismissed by Smith’s proclamation of “Not in a thousand years.” Also, Mike Traber (SMB), through his 1970

cartoon, questioned the civilisation espoused by the UDI, depicting a white hand squeezing blood out of a Blackman's hand as a critique of social injustice and lack of human rights. This visual commentary highlighted the divergence in values between Smith and the missionaries. Similarly, Lamont's "*Speech from the Dock*" (The Telegraph, 2003) argued that the true terrorists were not the Africans resisting oppression but the whites oppressing the Africans. The following discussions on the memoirs of the deported missionaries will present why each of the deported missionaries was justifiably included in this study.

Memoirs of Deported Missionaries in Rhodesia

Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge (1907–2008)

The first missionary to be discussed in this section is Bishop Ralph Edward Dodge (25 January 1907 – 8 August 2008), whose life and contributions underscore their commitment to dislodging oppressive systems. He advocated for social justice and racial equality when "other missions maintained that they were unqualified to speak on political matters because they were aliens" (Peaden 1979, 196; Skelley 2007). "Dodge was a noted proponent of racial equality, African leadership in the church, and a gospel that combines personal salvation and the social gospel" (Scott 2021; Dodge 1986, 19).

As an elected bishop of the American Methodist Church's Africa Central Conference (1956 – 1964), he played a crucial role in transitioning the church from colonial control to African leadership (Dodge 1986). He Africanised the American Church in Africa by sending "promising young members to America for higher education so that they could come back to Southern Rhodesia and take over the leadership of the church" (Chinyadza 2020, 92). In 1962, he organised 37 scholarships and sent off "42 students to US universities [to study] under very punishing political circumstances, a feat that could have cost him his life" (Mutsago 2004). Young Africans who were sent to study as part of his "educating the masses" (Chinyadza 2020, 93) did "teaching, journalism, law and medicine and also for Christian ministry" (Dodge 1986, 138). "Bishop Dodge was an exceptional church leader in his own right, who devoted his time to help Africans" (Lazarus Mandizha quoted in Mutsago, 2004). This was interpreted as sabotage that trained Africans to be disloyal to the state (Peaden 1979, 196).

He also promoted Africans to administrative posts in the church (Chinyadza 2020, 93). He appointed Matthew Wakatama to be the first African principal for Old Umtali Teacher Training College (Chinyadza 2020, 93). He questioned the African education curriculum, which sought to make Africans remain "obedient to their white masters" (Maenzanise 2008, 75; Chinyadza 2020, 92). His actions could instigate rebellion and subversion; hence, he was banned and deported. Bishop Ralph Dodge's efforts demonstrate the potential for religious figures to influence broader societal change and to challenge oppressive systems for the betterment of marginalised populations. In fact, the "democratic political dispensation of 1980 resulted from illustrious figures [like Bishop Ralph Dodge] without whom the history of the nation

would be incomplete” (Mutsago 2004). With this outspoken stance, Dodge was banned and deported to Zambia (as far as he allowed his religion to overlap with politics), where he remained a vocal critic of the government (Dodge 1986, 19).

Bishop Ralph Dodge's efforts demonstrate the potential for religious figures to influence broader societal change and to challenge oppressive systems for the betterment of marginalised populations.

Arthur Guy Clutton-Brock (1906–1995)

The second is Arthur Guy Clutton-Brock (5 April 1906 – 29 January 1995), who was a devoted Anglican missionary (Todd 1995) who served Africans as a social worker at St Faith Mission near Rusape. He was committed to social justice and community service. He advocated for racial freedom (identified with the black struggle) and regeneration for the African communities in which he was deeply immersed (Raphael 1986; Wayback Machine Peace News 2006). He helped Joshua Nkomo, James Chikerema and George Nyandoro to craft the constitution of the Rhodesia African National Congress in 1957. At the banning of the RANC in 1959, Guy was arrested and detained. The Herald of 15 March 1995 describes him as one of the “tiny minority of whites who identified with the struggle, putting moral precepts into practice, [who] were regarded as traitors. At worst, they were stripped of citizenship and banished; at best, they were isolated, arrested frequently and restricted” (Herald Reporter 1995).

Upon release, Clutton-Brock co-founded the Cold Comfort Farm (CCF), a non-racial or all-inclusive cooperative outside Salisbury (now Harare), with the help of his wife Molly, Didymus Mutasa, George Nyandoro, and Michael and Eileen Haddon (Ranger 2004; Herald Reporter 2009). CCF became a halfway house for released nationalists such as Cephas Msipa and others. His work went beyond religion by providing schools to educate people and clinics for healthcare. His approach to holistic development empowered local communities. He openly criticised the discriminatory policies of the Smith regime. He freely mixed with blacks, an action that was interpreted as a “harmful and odious influence” (Herald Reporter 2009), hence the need to curb his “unpleasant factors” by detention (Herald Reporter 2009). His progressive views on racial equality and advocacy for the rights of the African people are emblematic of the complex interactions between missionaries, colonial powers, and political dynamics during that era.

Clutton-Brock's activism and support for social justice made him a target of the colonial authorities, who perceived him as a threat to their control and authority. He used his influential global networks and interactions to promote racial equality and social justice (Lipscomb 1981). As a conscientious objector to racial oppression, Clutton Brock was banned and deported from Rhodesia in 1964. He was accused of undermining the state. He continued to support the struggle in Zimbabwe while in exile and made the international community aware of the injustices in Rhodesia (Mataire 2014). Because of his unflinching support for African nationalist movements, Clutton Brock became

the first European missionary to receive recognition (in 1995) as a National Hero of Zimbabwe (Mataire 2014). He later returned in 1980 and continued working in the healing and reconciliation process. Herbert Murerwa was quoted at Clutton-Brock's birthday saying: "His struggle for justice, peace and equality will always endure in our minds" (Raphael 1986).

His story serves as a testament to the complexities of missionary work within the context of political and social change, shedding light on the intricate relationship between religious actors, colonial authorities, and grassroots movements.

Sister Janice McLaughlin (1942–2021).

Sister Janice McLaughlin (13 February 1942 – 7 March 2021) of the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, USA, was a missionary to Zimbabwe who exposed racial abuse of African people by white authorities (McLaughlin 2021). She accepted a position as Director of Communications for the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) in 1977. In her advocacy, she published reports that documented systemic torture, forced resettlement, and other injustices and atrocities by the Smith government (Baxter 2014). She supported the second *Chimurenga* against African discrimination and oppression. She believed that a revolution was necessary to 'redress the injustices' of the Smith regime. She openly criticised the oppressive policies of the white minority government and supported the liberation struggle, stating: "I think it's come to the point where it's impossible to bring about change without the war, and I support change" (Seelye 2021).

She was imprisoned for being a Communist and a terrorist sympathiser (McLaughlin 2021; Dzimbahete 2017). Rhodesian authorities found in her diary an incriminating line stating, "If I had black skin, I would join the boys" (Zaba 1991). In her book *On the Frontline*, MacLaughlin asks the question: "Did these missionaries do it under the fear of death or did they believe in the boys and girls themselves (guerrillas), if not the struggle itself?" (McLaughlin 2000, 11).

She was held in solitary confinement at Chikurubi prison for 18 days before being deported to the USA. The Vatican and the US government intervened, and she was deported back to the United States. In exile, she remained an advocate for social justice, human rights, and education reform. In the past, she had established schools and educational programmes to provide better opportunities for disadvantaged children (Zaba 1991). She returned to Zimbabwe after it transitioned to independence, at the request of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, to help create an educational system and contribute to the country's development. In fact, she authored a book that was used in transforming Zimbabwe's public education *Education with Production in Zimbabwe, The Story of ZIMFEP [Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production]* (McLaughlin 2002).

Finally, President Mnangagwa rewarded her with the “national heroine” status for giving the liberation struggle “an enhanced international voice and reach” (Matibiri 2021). She argues: “The Rhodesian regime was trying to silence my work. But the international attention surrounding my arrest created a lot of interest in my reports” (The Independent, 2021).

Her advocacy for social justice and equality remains significant for the larger contemporary Zimbabwean political context.

Bishop Donal Raymond Lamont (1911–2003).

Bishop Donal Raymond Lamont, *O’Carm* (27 July 1911 – 14 August 2003), was an Irish Carmelite Catholic missionary who supported the formation of a federal colony under Britain (The Telegraph, 2003). He came to then Southern Rhodesia in 1946 at the Carmelite Mission in then Umtali. The mission was given diocesan status in 1957, and Lamont became its first bishop (The Telegraph 2003). In his pastoral letter, *Purchased People*, Lamont condemned policies of discrimination and segregation based on the dignity of the African person using the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church (STCC). He argued in *Purchased People*: “the desire of a national group to be free from subjection to a foreign ruler is a most legitimate one, provided that it can be achieved without any violation of justice” (Nowell 2003). He questioned the legitimacy of the white regime, saying, “any violent seizure of territory which was at the time inhabited and cultivated by a native tribe and subject to the authority of its rulers constitutes unjust aggression” (Nowell 2003). He contended against government policies on education and land.

When Rhodesia adopted the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, Bishop Lamont was dismayed (Millán Romeral 2014; Nowell 2003). He accused Smith’s regime of racism in its “constitution and land apportionment laws” (The Telegraph 2003). He warned Ian Smith in an open letter, *Speech from the Dock*, saying: “Far from your policies defending Christianity and Western civilisation, as you claim, they mock the law of Christ and make communism attractive to the African people” (The Telegraph 2003). He had the charm to support black leaders and the freedom fighters and the venom to condemn white racist leaders because their policies were “a direct contradiction of the New Testament’s teaching” (The Telegraph 2003).

He was also “accused of assisting black guerrillas and was eventually deported to Ireland” (The Telegraph, 2003), including his permission to his nuns to treat freedom fighters without reporting them to the government (Nowell 2003). He pleaded guilty in a trial and was incarcerated in prison for ten years with hard labour, but reduced on appeal to four years (Nowell 2003). He lost his Rhodesian citizenship in 1977 and was deported back to Ireland (Nowell 2003). Lamont continued to be a vocal critic of the Rhodesian government’s policies, speaking out against segregationist measures and human rights abuses. After the fall of the Smith government in 1978, he returned to his diocese and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He eventually retired to a

Carmelite community in Ireland, where he returned to community life until his eventual death on 14 August 2003 (Nowell 2003).

His efforts demonstrate the transformative power of individual activism within a larger political context.

Father Michael Traber (1929–2006).

Father Michael Traber (1929 – 25 March 2006) was a Swiss journalist and Catholic of the Bethlehem Order in Immensee, Switzerland. He was best known for his contributions to media development in Africa through the training of journalists and the writing of numerous journalism books. He joined the Catholic Mission Press in Gweru, Zimbabwe, as the managing director, which he later changed to Mambo Press (1962–1970) when he was “deported for subversive activities” (Herald Reporter 1995).

Traber landed “his experienced voice to the discussions about the individual and collective aspects of human rights” (Herald Reporter 1995). In his nine years (1962–1970) at Mambo Press, Traber focused on the “concept of communication as a right and the questions of control and responsibility which attach to that right” (Herald Reporter 1995).

His publications in the Moto Magazine, a Catholic Monthly Newspaper, “strongly advocated for social justice and offered the country’s two main liberation movements a platform [democratic public communication] to air their grievances” (Sabeta 2006). Ambassador Simbi Mubako was quoted describing “him as a man who was committed to a cause – that of seeing the liberation of the black majority” (Tikiwa 2006). Through the Moto, he “advocated for complete media coverage encompassing the remote and marginalized rural areas. He spoke strongly about the need for democratic public communication and that it was everyone’s right to receive and disseminate information freely regardless of one’s race, colour or creed” (Sabeta 2006). For this reason, Ezekiel Makunike said he was a true freedom fighter because everything he said and wrote resembled that of a ‘pro-Christ’ person. In fact, Makunike says “his work was a stimulating challenge to the ministry of Christian communication, adding that he was a Christian communication prophetic giant in the country” (Tikiwa 2006). His dedication to work has landed him the description of a “workaholic” and “non-racialist” (Tikiwa 2006).

Traber was seen as a threat by the right-wing Rhodesians, who eventually deported him for his support of black liberation and nationalism “that was sweeping across the region at the time” (Sabeta 2006; Ziana 1986).

Traber also held regional and international responsibilities, such as being a coordinator of the Pan-African Programme of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) and a professor of Mass Media Communication at the London-based WACC of the United Theological Seminary (Sabeta 2006; Herald Reporter 1995). He was

awarded an Honorary Life Membership by the WACC for exceptional contributions to the ministry of Christian communication worldwide (Sabeta 2006). Despite his several responsibilities, Traber remained a dedicated and passionate advocate for social justice and freedom of the press in Africa particularly. He became a victim of harassment by the Rhodesian regime due to his advocacy for freedom of the press and human rights. His deportation was instigated in 1970 for causing a “design and publication of a cartoon that made a mockery of the colonial government’s racist policies. The cartoon showed white hands squeezing out blood from the hand of a black-man” (Tikiwa 2006). He was eventually deported, with a hero’s farewell “at the then Salisbury Airport by thousands of blacks and whites who believed the prophetic dream of freedom and equality [an inevitable African majority rule] (Sabeta 2006; Tikiwa 2006) was on the corner.

His contributions to the field of Christian communication and media development continue to be celebrated and remembered to this day. This continues to inspire religious communities to actively voice out their displeasure with oppressive regimes.

Ian Douglas Smith and Dissenting Voices

Colonial Paranoia

In Rhodesia, I think white missionaries shaped colonial paranoia as their control over basic education and efforts to inform the international community about the abuses of the Smith Regime became an arsenal for the liberation struggle (Ruzivo 2017).

On basic education, missionaries shaped the minds of the young people they taught in their schools to both perpetuate colonialism and also to dismantle it. On perpetuating colonial subjugation, missionaries depicted the white regime as justified and benevolent to downplay the negativities associated with the regime. This reduced opposition from the local population. On the other hand, some missionaries directly criticised poor government policies that subjugated local people as clashing against their Christian values. This led the colonial regime to associate missionaries with influencing public dissent (like inciting rebellion) against the government of Ian Smith (Haliburton 2013; Chidester 2014; Larsson 2017). Thus, in various mission stations, missionaries trained young people to love their languages and cultures, which gave them a sense of power and identity rather than promoting European norms and values. Some missionaries advocated for better living conditions, better healthcare and equal pay for indigenous populations, which was feared to increase awareness, discontent and resistance because of racial disparities (Smith 1995).

Furthermore, in raising awareness of the abuses of the Smith Regime with the international community, Smith’s leadership and human rights violations, acts of discrimination, and oppressive policies brought global attention to the plight of the oppressed black people in then Rhodesia because of missionary reports, testimonies, and lobbying efforts. Missionaries had both the knowledge of the local people and the opinions of the international society and hence had access to both societies. This

awareness of local people and the international society raised fear and suspicion in the regime, which intensified its control and surveillance to reduce the potential of missionaries passing on concrete evidence of the government's activities to the international society. Smith feared that increased publicity to the international society could lead to condemnation and potential intervention to dislodge the regime. Due to increased paranoia, the regime multiplied its surveillance, censorship, and repression against missionaries as witnesses to these injustices.

Finally, missionaries in Rhodesia contributed to colonial paranoia through their control of basic education and efforts to inform the international society of the regime's abuses. Missionaries shaped the narrative of colonisation and exposed the regime's abuses, which heightened surveillance and repression. Colonial paranoia was some sort of fear and suspicion for the deepening division between the colonial powers and the locals (Adeleye-Fayemi and Orogun 2017).

Ideology of White supremacy

The ideology of white supremacy was centred on a version of apartheid that separated whites from blacks, which promoted the idea of a superior white to a subordinate black Rhodesian. Smith arrogated upon himself the power to determine how Africans should be Christian and civilised (Gelfand 1970). They believed that white Rhodesians had superior knowledge and expertise in these areas and that Africans needed to be taught by whites.

In his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) announcement on 11 November 1965 at 11 AM, Armistice Day, Smith argued that declaring independence from imperial Britain was a victory for Christianity and Civilisation. The statement has been reiterated by British politician Enoch Powell in his speech entitled: *European Identity* on 24 November 1976, which reads: "The great significance of our act of association as Europeans lies not only in our Declaration of Independence (UDI) but in our rediscovery of our identity as a Christian and Western civilised people". The statement captures the European desire to impose the will of the white people upon Africans with regard to how they can be Christians and civilised in Africa (Nkomazana and Setume 2016).

The belief in the intrinsic link between being Western (and therefore civilised) and Christian, and Rhodesian Front's project of parallel development, was part of a broader effort to civilise Africans by making them more like white Westerners (Adebanwi and Obadare 2011). The apartheid system, however, has been criticised for being fundamentally unjust and disrespectful to African values, cultures, and traditions (Nkomazana and Setume 2016). The imposition of Western traditions and values was seen as a form of cultural imperialism, and many Africans resisted these efforts (and continue) to force them to conform to white Rhodesian norms (Gelfand 1970; Ranger 2008).

Nobility of the Mind Myth

For decades, since the 1890 take-over of Zimbabwe, White Rhodesians operated under the false belief that they were inherently superior to black Africans, not only socially, politically, and economically, but also morally and spiritually (Palmer 1977). The myth was that white Europeans possessed a unique intelligence, wisdom, and virtue that made them inherently better suited to govern and lead than their black African counterparts (Palmer 1977).

The myth was reinforced by several factors, such as the history of European imperialism and colonialism in Africa, the influence of racial theories like Social Darwinism, and the Christian missionary movement that accompanied European expansion (Mudimbe, 1988). Missionaries were seen as representing the religious and moral values of the dominant white Europeans. Hence, those who taught a contrary gospel to the assumptions of white superiority were supposed to be silenced (Ranger 1993).

This assumption can be seen in how the Smith Regime treated missionaries who advocated for racial equality and social justice, that is, harassment, imprisonment, and expulsion from Rhodesia (Palmer 1977). As presented in the biographies above, several missionaries were accused of fomenting unrest and inciting rebellion before they were arrested, detained, and deported.

The nobility of the mind was a myth they advanced to

- 1) justify and reinforce the system of racial inequality and oppression that existed in Rhodesia for decades and contributed to
- 2) the resistance against calls for change and reform (Mudimbe 1988).

Since independence in Zimbabwe, the myth of white supremacy and paternalism has begun to lose its hold on the collective consciousness in Zimbabwe (White 2011).

Conclusion

The deported missionaries were people who attempted to assist the government in responding to the wind of change blowing across Africa (Macmillan 1960). The Smith regime failed to realise that African elites, according to Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins in his 1953 speech, had seen through the so-called enlightened partnership “of a horse and rider” (Gann 1985) and were now gunning for majority rule.

Analysis and Conclusion

This study is an analysis of a state governed by a white settler regime that prioritises white interests while juxtaposed against the church with missionaries dedicated to social justice, human rights, and non-discrimination. The deportees, aligned with a liberal, pro-

African church trajectory, exemplify the subaltern—marginalised groups—through the frameworks of power dynamics articulated by Antonio Gramsci (1971), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988 [2023]), Edward Said (1978), and Homi Bhabha (1994 [2012]). These theorists highlight the suppression of agency and voice among the marginalised; Spivak’s publication, “Can the subaltern speak?” (1988 [2023]), is a crucial question, reflecting the limited representation that perennially denies these groups the capacity to assert their own narratives. Said expands on Gramsci’s groundwork with his concept of *Orientalism*, illustrating how Western discourses construct hegemonic representations that silence indigenous voices (Said, 1978). Meanwhile, Bhabha emphasises the complexities of cultural hybridity and ambivalence in post-colonial contexts, wherein subaltern groups navigate colonial legacies to articulate nuanced resistance (Bhabha, 1994 [2012]). Collectively, these scholars employ subalternity to interrogate the intersections of power, identity, and resistance, challenging dominant narratives that marginalise and misrepresent the experiences of subordinate groups in both colonial and post-colonial frameworks.

Missionaries emerge as critical interlocutors, amplifying subaltern voices against a white government that confines justice and equality to its own constituents and criminalises advocates for Black rights through charges of “Afrophilia.” Subalternity, thus, results from resource deprivation, power exclusion, and inadequate representation, leading to cultural erasure and internalised oppression. The controversies surrounding Traber’s cartoon in *Moto*, Dodge’s empowerment of Black elites, and the legal defences for liberated Black activists demonstrate the white government’s attempts to stifle and delegitimise pro-subaltern voices. These actions reinforce a narrative, as Smith contends that obscures the true complexities of racial relations by asserting a fraudulent harmony between whites and Blacks while displacing the conflict onto an alleged problem by “communist guerrilla fighters”. Thus, subalternity serves as a critical lens through which to scrutinise racial oppression, colonialism, and imperialism.

Consequently, this study seeks to amplify marginalised voices through the testimonies of deportees, challenging entrenched colonial narratives that continue to afflict formerly colonised nations. Additionally, it illuminates the role of missionary work in fostering values of justice, human rights, and equity, as articulated in the Bill of Rights of the Lancaster House Constitution (LHC, 1979). Ultimately, the missionaries upheld principles of human dignity, equality, and justice, foundational to the ideals enshrined in constitutionalism, democracy and the Bill of Rights.

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