

**RASTAFARI IN ZION: THE SPREAD OF RASTAFARI
MOVEMENT TO MALAWI, FROM THE EARLY 1970S TO
2018**



Master of Arts (African Social History) Thesis

By

Harold Chanthunya

Bachelor of Education (History)-Solusi University

**Submitted to the Department of History, Faculty of Social
Science, University of Malawi, in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirement for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts
(African Social History), University of Malawi.**

August, 2021

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work, which has not been already submitted to any other institution for an award. Where other people's work has been used, this has been appropriately acknowledged.

HAROLD CHANTHUNYA

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We, the undersigned, certify that this thesis represents the candidate's own work and effort, and has been submitted for examination with our approval.

Signature _____ Date _____

Wiseman Chijere Chirwa, PhD (Professor)

Supervisor

Signature _____ Date _____

George Jawali, PhD (Senior Lecturer)

Second Supervisor

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Frieda and Harold Chanthunya Jr. who have always kept me company and inspired me to work hard both for our survival and as their example.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The endeavour to produce this work started in the second half of 2013, but it did not only demand my energy. As such, it is deeply indebted to many people for the assistance it was rendered. In particular, I must give special thanks to my Supervisor, Professor Wiseman Chijere Chirwa for the guidance he provided regarding research methodology, theoretical framework and knowledge of the subject matter.

I must also extend my unequivocal thanks to Professor Wapulumuka, Mulwafu, Dr. George Jawali, Mr. Gift Kayira, Dr. Grivas Muchineripi Kayange and Dr. Timwa Lipenga for the support they gave during the time this thesis was developing. I also give special thanks to Alistalico Chilanga, Stella Chande, Brenda Zuka, Chifundo Kamba and Ruth Mandala, my fellow students in the History Department, for the encouragement they offered me throughout the period this work had covered.

More importantly, I am highly appreciative of the cooperation I enjoyed from key informants, who often suspended their daily responsibilities in order to help. In this regard, Chief Makata, Batawe Nawanga aka Lion Dread, Ras Nimrod and the late Ras Sydney Chingeni were very crucial in illuminating the history of Rastafari in Malawi as well as providing a wide range of Rastafarian literature. In addition to the Rasta informants, Mr. Jai Banda, Mrs. Vanessa Mwale, and Mr. Paul Njola helped in providing written sources that would otherwise not been found in the Malawi National Archive in Zomba.

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to analyse the spread of the Rastafari Movement from Jamaica to Malawi from the early 1970s to 2018 by tracing the roots of Rastafari ideology in Malawi, analysing how the Rastafari movement was consolidated in Malawi, examining how Rastafari has struggled with the general public, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's regimes and democratic governments that followed and assess the extent to which the Rastafari Movement has been indigenized in Malawi.

The study agrees with orthodox Marxists who view the rise, growth and spread of Rastafari as a result of material problems of producing food, clothing and shelters. Nevertheless, this study aims to lend a fresh perspective to the subject by seeing the rise, growth and spread of Rastafari as a consequence of the movement's articulation of counter-hegemonic ideologies. Therefore, this qualitative research drawn from oral data, primary written sources and secondary written sources, employs Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in this analysis of the spread of Rastafari to Malawi.

The study argues that the spread of Rastafari to Malawi was aided by ideological factors that had been extant in the country since the colonial period; that these ideas were consolidated with the internationalisation of reggae music; that as Rastafari spread it was indigenised by incorporating local cultural elements but that the survival of the movement was punctuated by a struggle for acceptance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	11
1.2 Aim of the Study	12
1.3 Specific Objectives.....	12
1.4 Justification of the Study.....	12
1.5 The Study Area.....	13
1.6. Limitations of the Study	14
1.7 Summary of Chapters.....	16
CHAPTER TWO	20
CONCEPTUALISING RASTAFARI	20
2.0 Introduction	20
2.1 Literature Review	20
2.2 Theoretical Framework	31
2.3 Research Methodology.....	34
2.4 Conclusion.....	38
CHAPTER THREE	40
THE ROOTS OF RASTAFARI IDEOLOGY IN MALAWI.....	40
3.0 Introduction	40
3.1 African Christianity.....	41

3.2 Ethiopianism.....	50
3.3 Garveyism	58
3.4 Cultural Nationalism	67
3.5 Conclusion.....	74
CHAPTER FOUR.....	76
CONSOLIDATION OF RASTAFARI	76
4.0 Introduction	76
4.1 Reggae’s International Breakthrough.....	76
4.2 Propagation of Rastafari in Malawi	86
4.3 Emergence of the Rastafari Movement in Malawi.....	95
4.5 Conclusion.....	102
CHAPTER FIVE	103
STRUGGLES OF THE RASTAFARI IN MALAWI	103
4.0 Introduction	103
4.1 The Early 1970s to 1994	104
4.2 1994 to 2018.....	111
4.3 Rastafari’s Internal Problems	117
4.4 Conclusion.....	121
CHAPTER SIX.....	122
INDIGENISATION OF THE RASTAFARI MOVEMENT IN MALAWI.....	122
6.0 Introduction	122
6.1 The Rise of Local Reggae Bands	122
6.2 Increase in Reggae Music Making.....	125
6.3 Localization of Political Protest	130

6.4 Localization of Religious Teachings.....	136
6.5 Conclusion.....	144
CHAPTER SEVEN	146
CONCLUSION.....	146
7.0 Introduction	146
7.1 The Nature of the Study	146
7.2 Findings.....	147
7.3 Conclusion.....	148
BIBLIOGRAPHY	150
APPENDICES	158

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AME- African Methodist Episcopal Church

AOC-African Orthodox Church

BBC-British Broadcasting Corporation

EABIC-Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress (Bobo Shanti)

EWf-Ethiopian World Federation, Inc.

HIM-His Imperial Majesty

ICU-Industrial and Commercial Workers Union

MBC-Malawi Broadcasting Corporation

MCP-Malawi Congress Party

PIM-Providence Industrial Mission

UCWI-University College of the West Indies

UDF-United Democratic Front

UNIA-Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities'
League

UWI-University of West Indies

ZIM-Zambezi Industrial Mission

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The General Elections that ended Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's dictatorial rule in 1994 ushered in a new era when the citizens of Malawi regained their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This could be evidenced by the surfacing and resurfacing of various religious groups that were outlawed or kept in check by the disciplinarian regime. Among those who took advantage of this new found freedom and religious tolerance were Rastafarians who began congregating in the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu in 1995.¹

This manifestation was the result of over two decades of propagation of the Rastafari movement, not by intense missionary activity, but by Jamaican and Anglo-Jamaican reggae music exported to Malawi by record labels based in Jamaica, the United States of America and Britain that intensified from the early 1970s onwards. The most enigmatic question emanating from this development is: how could music composed in the ghettos of Kingston in Jamaica and manufactured in the metropolises of North America and Britain be responsible for the spread of Rastafari? Did any similarities exist between the history

¹ Oral Testimony (Hereafter OT), Batawe Nawanga (aka Lion Dread), Rastafarian, Blantyre, March 19, 2014

of Jamaica and Malawi that facilitated the acceptance of the Rastafari belief system in Malawi? If so, did those who embraced the precepts of the movement get the freedom to practice their faith? And, since Rastafari meant different things for different people, how did their varied interpretations affect the outlook of the movement? It is these questions which this study would like to deal with as it explores the spread of the Rastafari movement to Malawi.

Rastafari is a “predominantly male-oriented religious-political protest cult”² which stated in Jamaica in the 1930s. Its origin is attributed to the prophecy made by Marcus Garvey in 1927 instructing his followers to “look to Africa, when a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near.”³ When Ras Tafari Makonnen of Ethiopia was crowned King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and became known as Emperor Haile Selassie I on 2 November 1930, Leonard Percival Howell and many other people of the Garveyite persuasion saw the event as a biblical fulfilment. They, then, proclaimed Haile Selassie a Living God, Jesus Christ’s Second Advent in a new name and conspicuously, in a black skin. This interpretation of Selassie’s coronation marked the beginning of a series of polemical reinterpretations of the Bible which sought to show the falsity of the religious doctrine as taught by mainstream Christian churches.

² Sheila Kitzinger, “Protest and Mysticism: The Rastafari Cult of Jamaica.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 8, no. 2. (Autumn 1969): 240, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1384337>.

³ Smith et al., “The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica: Part I,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 13, no. 3, (September 1967): 5., <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40653024>.

Drawing their inspiration from *The Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy* by Rev Fitz Balintine Pettersburgh (1926), *The Holy Piby* by Robert Athlyi Rogers (written between 1924 and 1928) and *The Promised Key* by Leonard Percival Howell, published under his pseudonym, G.G. Maragh (1935), all of which extolled the valour and greatness of Ethiopia and the worth of black people, the early ideologues of Rastafari taught that: black people were exiled to the West Indies because of their moral transgressions; the wicked white man is inferior to black people; the Jamaican situation is hopeless; Ethiopia is Heaven; Haile Selassie is the Living God; the Emperor of Ethiopia will arrange for expatriated persons of African descent to return to their Homeland; and black people will soon get revenge by compelling white people to serve them.⁴ By the early 1970s, however, Rastafari's teachings had both evolved and diversified due to the movement's own speciation into several branches or houses, the death of Haile Selassie in 1975, the practicability of repatriation and the entry of whites into the movement.

When Rastafari began in the early 1930s there was a strong belief that Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, a distant descendant of King Solomon of ancient Israel and Queen of Sheba was unmistakably God (Jah) in flesh embodying all the three personalities of the Nicene Creed. As Jah, Selassie was God the Father, the creator of the universe and everything contained in it. This was proved by his pre-coronation name, Ras Tafari, in which *Ras* means *Prince* or *Head* while *Tafari*, his birth name, means *Owner of Creation* in Amharic, Ethiopia's official language. For Rastafarians, the meanings of these symbols and the person they symbolized were not coincidental. The title and the birth name stood

⁴ George Eaton Simpson, "Religion and Justice: Some Reflections of the Rastafari Movement," *Phylon* (1960-) 46, no. 4 (1985): 287, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/274868>.

for what Selassie was. As God the Son, Selassie was seen as the reincarnation or the Second Advent of Jesus Christ who had come to liberate black people from oppression and all vicissitudes of freedom which had kept Africans in the dark. It was maintained, as it is now, that Jesus first came as a teacher but during this Second Advent he came as king.⁵ And, as God the Holy Spirit, Selassie was the light of the world to help “purify our social standards and our way of living, and rebuild and inspire our character.”⁶ All these attributes were summed up in Ras Tafari’s coronation name, Haile Selassie, which meant *Power of Trinity*.

By the time Joseph Simpson studied the movement in 1973, the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I had been reinterpreted based on the principle of the divinity of man and the humanity of God. It was propounded that God was found in every man but there must be one man in whom he existed most imminently and completely, and that was the supreme man, Rastafari, Haile Selassie.⁷ This idea is reflected in the pronominal phrase, *I and I* used in Rastafari. The brethren and sistren within the movement maintain that in every human being there is the higher I which is God or the higher consciousness and the lower I which is man, hence *I and I*. *I and I* is also used in Rastafari to signify the connectedness and unity among people instead of *you and me* which divides and puts them asunder. But, some members within the movement, led by Mutabaruka, Jamaica’s renowned dub poet, are pushing for a quasi-atheistic argument by contending that the Christian concept of the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent God does not fit Haile

⁵ OT, Bobo Chim Fire, Rastafarian, Blantyre, September 6, 2014..

⁶ G.G. Maragh. *The Promised Key* (Hogarth Blake, 2008), 8. Ebook.

⁷ “Introduction to the Rastafari Phenomenon,” Global Exchange Events, accessed March 22, 2016.
<http://www.globalexchange.org/country/jamaica/rasta>.

Selassie and therefore he is not God. The centrality of the Emperor in Rastafari is found in his signification as a symbol of resistance against slavery and colonialism. This is congruent to the idea that Rastafari is not a religion but *livity*, a term that denotes a design for life.

Having identified Emperor Haile Selassie I as their God, migrating to Ethiopia ka Africa, “thou land of our fathers, thou land where the gods loved to be,”⁸ became a logical imperative. Therefore, the coronation of Haile Selassie was interpreted as the rise of the messiah who would save people of African descent by way of repatriation to Africa. But as events of the early decades of the movement were to show, human agency took precedence over the will and the pace at which Selassie as God and saviour could act to fulfil his plans for his chosen people. It follows then, that some of the prominent Rastafarian elders started a campaign that aimed at forcing the Jamaican government to arrange for repatriation to Africa. For example, as early as 1934, Leonard Howell was arrested and charged with sedition after he was reportedly found selling postcard-size photographs of the Emperor, the purchasers having been informed that these were their passports to Ethiopia. In March 1958, Prince Edward C. Edwards held a convention of Rastafarians in Kingston. Delegates who came from as far as Montego Bay were said to have sold their possessions with a strong belief that they would proceed to Africa at the end of the meeting.⁹ In the following year, the Reverend Claudius Henry agitated for

⁸ “The Universal Ethiopian Anthem,” One World Magazine, accessed October 18, 2016, <http://www.oneworldmagazine.org/focus/etiopia/rasta4.html>.

⁹ M.G. Smith et al., “The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica. Part I,” 15

“Israel’s scattered Children of African origin back home to Africa”¹⁰ and invited Fidel Castro of Cuba to come and take the Island of Jamaica since they were about to leave for Africa. The failure of these grand schemes largely due police heavy handedness in dealing with these events, the practicality of migrating to African countries and the feeling that the Western hemisphere could as well be home the zeal for repatriation began to slow down and assume new interpretations. The doctrine of repatriation, then, was reinterpreted as voluntary migration to Africa, returning to Africa culturally and symbolically, or rejecting Western values and preserving African roots and black pride.¹¹

The early expression of black pride took the form of reverse racism by positing that the white person was inherently evil and inferior to the black person. After being incensed by African backwardness on one hand and European domination on the other, Rastafarians taught that in the near future blacks would rule the world. As the movement began to break into different houses or mansions, the worldviews of their founders determined how the question of race was to be handled. While the Twelve Tribes of Israel tended to be more racially accommodative, the Nyahbinghi Order and the Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress (Bobo Shanti House) promulgated ideas of the supremacy of the black race and advocated for the maintenance of black racial purity. For example, Bob Marley, who was a member of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, always expressed the desire to see all mankind live together¹² while the Black Supremacists of Bobo Shanti appears to be divisive and obsessed with their “black is beautiful” slogan by stating that “I and I the

¹⁰ M.G. Smith, et al, “The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica, Part I,” 15.

¹¹ “Introduction to the Rastafari Phenomenon”

¹² Chris Salewicz, *Bob Marley: The Untold Story* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009), 1.

Royal Black Ethiopian must not mix with any other nation. We must abide within our Royal Black Ethiopian Nation Family. Thou shall not commit adultery, meaning thou shall not go on to another nation, thou shall not give thy seed unto Molech...”¹³

This injunction from Leviticus 20 is just one of the examples of how Rastafarians invoke the Bible in defining their values, beliefs and norms propagated within the movement. Indeed, the laws of the Book of Leviticus and the Nazarite Vow of Numbers 6 determine open asceticism practiced in Rastafari which includes the wearing of dreadlocks; abstention from drinking alcohol, eating meat and smoking cigarettes; and in some extreme cases, one’s exclusion from attending funerals. The practices therein reflect the Rastafarian concept of *ital* (vital) living which follows a vegetarian diet and avoids the consumption of salt and processed foods. Although vegetarianism is a component of *ital* living, the former is distinguished from the latter in that vegetarianism abhors the consumption of meat because of its health hazards and its corresponding reward for a possible long life while *ital* living take a step further by arguing for sentience. Since animals too have the capacity to suffer and experience enjoyment, the use of animal products like leather and tallow is avoided because it still encourages the killing and suffering of animals. It should be pointed out, though, that this definition of *ital* living is not shared by everyone because of what Ras Peter Nyekanyeka called “man’s feeling.” Religious practice is followed according to how members feel about it¹⁴ and, therefore,

¹³ “Rastafari Righteous Kingdom: Holy Emmanuel I Selassie I Jah Rastafari,” accessed June 3, 2014. <https://rastafari-christ.webs.com>.

¹⁴ OT, Ras Peter Nyekanyeka, Rastafarian, Blantyre, June 27, 2015.

liberalism and conservatism go hand in hand even among members of the same mansion or house.

In Rastafarian discourse, the New World where Africans were forcibly transported and subjected to slavery is referred to as Babylon and Africa, where their ancestors were forcibly uprooted is referred to as Zion. As the doctrine developed further, Babylon came to represent everything profane and Zion represented everything that was deemed sacred. As a result, geographical boundaries emphasized at the beginning of the movement would no longer matter as both profanity and sacredness co-existed in the Western world as well as in Africa. According to Rastafarian politico-religious protest tradition, Babylon is represented by the government, the police and the church. During the first thirty years of the existence of the Rastafari, its relationship with the Jamaican Government was that of violent and bloody confrontation. It is true that in their quest to reach their goals, Rastafarians had at times been violent but the problem was that crimes committed by few individuals were used to describe the behavior of them all. When Reynold Henry, son of Rev. Claudius Henry was captured and charged with leading an insurrection in 1960, the then Prime Minister, Norman Manley told the Jamaican nation that “these people-and I am glad that it is only a small number of them-are the wicked enemies of our country. I ask you all to report any unusual movements pertaining to the Rastafarians.”¹⁵ Similarly, when punishments were to be meted on perpetrators of crimes, they were often meted

¹⁵ “They Can’t Kill Rasta Now,” Rasta Livewire, accessed January 8, 2017.
<http://www.africasource.com/rasta/articles/they-cant-kill-rasta-now-mark-wignall/>

indiscriminately as could be evidenced by the dispersal of Leonard Howell's Commune at Pinnacle in 1954, the Coral Garden incident in Montego Bay in 1963 and the destruction of Rasta ramshackle settlement at Back-O-Wall in Kingston in 1966. For the Rastafarian, therefore, the government is a Babylonian system, a "night watchman state," reliant on the army, the police and judiciary to impose a form of social control based on its own definition of morality that is at variance with that of the Rastafarians.

The idea of the church as Babylon comes from Revelation 18 which begins with a declaration that "Babylon the great is fallen...and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." In Protestant tradition the verse had solely referred to the Roman Catholic Church and preachers would urge all true Christians to "come out of her...that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."¹⁶ When Leonard Howell began preaching about Rastafari in the 1930s, he condemned both the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches as Babylonian institutions. They were false and hypocritical organizations embodying commercial, political and ecclesiastical elements.¹⁷ Their acceptance of earthly suffering and humility in favor of heavenly rewards is seen in Rastafari as a pie in the sky preventing people from demanding what is theirs.¹⁸ Salvation, therefore, is terrestrial and can be achieved anytime as long as all people adopt the principles of fairness, equality and justice. Although all ministers were labelled as Antichrists, it was the Papacy that bore the whole weight of ridicule. For Howell, the Pope was the representative of the

¹⁶ R.W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1979), 47.

¹⁷ G.G. Maragh, *Promised*, 7.

¹⁸ Jimmy Cliff. *The Harder they Come*. Cond. Jimmy Cliff. Comp. Jimmy Cliff. 1972.

devil on earth but according to other informants, the Pope was the head of the Ku-Klux-Klan (Smith, et al, 1967) or the head of the Mafia (Chevannes, 1977). Again, except for its modern application to secret societies, Protestants, especially Seventh-day Adventists, have always associated the Pope with evil, the Antichrist probably because he has both temporal powers as the head of the Vatican and spiritual powers as head of the Roman Catholic Church and has in the past, influenced world events more than any other political office on earth.¹⁹

As the doctrine of Rastafari was going through the process of heterogeneity and change, its influence was also spreading from Jamaica to other parts of the Caribbean, North America, the United Kingdom and Africa so that 1998 estimates suggested that there were one million practicing Rastafarians throughout the world.²⁰ The international upsurge of Rastafari had since the 1970s been aided by the migration of Jamaicans to the United States of America (USA) and Britain, repatriation of Rastafarians to Africa and the growing influence of reggae music.

From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, Malawi remained aloof from any physical contact with Jamaican musicians and Rastafarian repatriates because of the authoritarian and disciplinarian government of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda which was wary of the Western influences that were invading the streets of Blantyre, Zomba and Lilongwe.²¹

¹⁹ See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (The Ellen G. White, Inc., 2010), 57.

²⁰ Alemseghed Kebede, "Projective Framing, Cultural Opportunity Milieu, and the Rastafari," *Sociological Focus* 36, no.4 (November 2003): 358, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20832214>.

²¹ K.M..Phiri and K/R. Ross, eds. *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998), 160.

Interestingly, the country was not immune from the propagation of Rastafarian beliefs and practices during that period because of reggae records that came in almost uncensored. Therefore, the appearance of men and women in dreadlocks, chanting down Babylon in the streets of Blantyre and Lilongwe, soon after the democratic dispensation of the early 1990s, was not a sudden and abrupt occurrence but the surfacing of the movement nipped in the bud by the thirty-year dictatorial rule of Dr. Banda and his Malawi Congress Party (MCP).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This research endeavoured to analyse the spread of Rastafari movement to Malawi from 1970 to 2018. The study was undertaken because religious historiography of Malawi is replete with mainstream Christian and Muslim literature but has little or nothing on the rise, growth and spread of recent religious movements such as Rastafari. Similarly, the spread of Rastafari from Jamaica to other parts of the world has been addressed by many scholars but none has seriously considered the subject of the spread of Rastafari to Malawi. For example, Richard Salter pointed out that “Rastas have been demonized as dirty, as ‘low lifes,’ as drug dealers from Malawi to Manhattan, Swaziland to Auckland”²² but in that issue no article has been dedicated to the spread of Rastafari to Malawi. The current study, therefore, would help fill this gap and act as a springboard for further enquiry into this movement. This research intended to deal with this problem by tracing the roots of Rastafari ideology in Malawi, analysing how Rastafari was

²² Ian Boxill, Ian , ed, Idez: *The Globalization of Rastafari* .7 (Kingston: Arawak Publications. 2008),. 10.

consolidated in Malawi, examining the emergence of Rastafarians in Malawi and assessing the struggles of Rastafarians in Malawi.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The main aim of the study is to analyse the spread of the Rastafari movement to and Malawi from 1970 to 2018.

1.3 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- a. Trace the roots of the Rastafari Ideology in Malawi from the pre-colonial period to the early 1970s.
- b. Analyse how Rastafari movement was consolidated in Malawi.
- c. Examine the struggles of Rastafari movement in Malawi.
- d. Assess the extent of indigenisation of Rastafari movement Malawi.

1.4 Justification of the Study

The research is very important because of a number of reasons. First, the current image of the Rastafari has been provided by the media which portrays Rastafarian members as dirty, marijuana-smoking with unkempt hair. By exploring its ideational components behind that image and properly situate them in historical and social context, the study will help to give a balanced image of the Rastafari. Secondly, as already alluded to, the

religious historiography of Malawi is replete with mainstream Christian and Islamic literature but has little on the spread and growth of recent religious movements such as Rastafari. The study, therefore, will help fill this gap and act as a springboard for further inquiry into this movement. Finally, the study will satisfy the quest inherent in social history of studying ordinary people in which the Rastafarians fit very well. Most of the Rastafarian elders, priests and prophets are educationally and economically handicapped to such an extent that had they maintained their membership in mainstream Christian churches such as the Roman Catholic Church or Presbyterianism, they would have occupied positions of insignificant ordinary congregants.

1.5 The Study Area

The research was designed as a case study that used Blantyre to exemplify a broader category of the Rastafari community in Malawi. Named after David Livingstone's birthplace in Lanarkshire, Scotland, Blantyre was founded in 1876 by a party of Established Church of Scotland missionaries led by Henry Henderson. It became a major trading centre in 1878 when John and Frederick Moyer established the headquarters of the African Lakes Company at Mandala and from that time, Blantyre grew steadily becoming a locus of communication, industry, trade, entertainment and the melting pot for different ethnic cultures in the country. The 2008 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report showed that Blantyre had a total of 999,491 people, 661,444 of which

lived in the city.²³ Being the commercial capital of Malawi since the colonial times, Blantyre has also always been the first recipient of international popular culture such as music, fashions and fads.

Blantyre has been chosen as a study area, therefore, because it has the largest population in the Southern Region of Malawi, with the largest proportion of Rastafarians within it. In addition to its well-developed communication network, this has made it easy to find Rasta informants for interviews and locate places of worship such as Ndirande, Nyambadwe, Soche and Chileka for participant observations. It was also observed that private and public institutions such as radio stations and the Board of Censors that would provide necessary materials for the advancement of this research are located in Blantyre, making it easy for this study to progress faster than would have been the case had the study been conducted elsewhere where such facilities are rare.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The conduct of the research was very interesting and revealing in many respects but a number of obstacles hampered its ultimate success. As far as the positive aspects were concerned, most of the Rastas that were interviewed were very cooperative in wishing to give as much information as possible to the extent that it was them who guided and ensured the success of snowballing to locate fellow Rastafarians for further interview. Similarly, non-Rastafarian members of the residing in the study area were helpful in

²³ Malawi Government, *2008 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report* (Zomba: National Statistics Office, September 2008), 3.

giving their attitudes and opinions about the Rastafari phenomenon in Malawi to the extent that without their input, the study would not have been complete. However, there were some people, as pointed out by Rasta informants themselves, who were believed to have valuable information but attempts to meet them proved futile as a result of persistent excuses. In addition, though participant observation and interview provided an insider's view, the liberal smoking of marijuana by some adherents of the Rastafari movement was a source of culture shock and a sense of insecurity as the herb is still proscribed by the law of the land. Moreover, even though participant observation was touted to be a valuable research instrument, it did not wholly yield its intended goal because in some situations, depending on the congregants who were present during Sabbath gatherings, recording of proceedings and taking photographs were forbidden making thorough transcription of sermons and reasoning sessions difficult. Finally, much as one would like to get an equal sample of men and women in the movement for interviews, women had a poor representation during religious functions. Unlike in other Christian churches like Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist or modern Pentecostalism, where the number of women could be proportional or slightly higher to that of men during worship, Rastafari reasoning sessions had the opposite. Rastafari congregations, perhaps for the time being, are dominated by men and this determined the gender biases reflected in the study.

1.7 Summary of Chapters

This study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is the introduction which outlines the background to the study. The background states what the study is all about, the social history of the Rastafari movement in Malawi, from the early 1970s to the present. The chapter also traces the origins and spread of the Rastafari movement from Jamaica to other parts of the world and discusses the teachings and organizational structure of the movement as set up in the Nyahbinghi Order. The research is a case study using Blantyre to represent the entire Rastafarian community in Malawi. The chapter ends with the limitations of the study which, apart from recognizing the contributions of Rasta informants in the success of the research, co-operation from other stake holders, and availability of time and money, posed a challenge.

Chapter two conceptualizes the Rastafari by examining the literature review, stating the theoretical framework and outlining the methodology. Because of the few scholarly works available in Malawi, the body of literature under review has been largely drawn from authors who have written about Rastafari in Jamaica, Britain and West Africa. To avoid the monotony this body of literature has created by analysing the history of Rastafari in traditional Marxism, this study is influenced by the theory of cultural hegemony of Antonio Gramsci which has deemphasized the base and broadening the superstructure as a driving force of history. The last section of the chapter outlines the research methodology that was used to collect and analyse data. The data collected was qualitative drawn from various sources such as oral traditions, the national archive, library and the Internet that was thematically analysed.

Furthermore, chapter three traces the roots of Rastafari ideology in Malawi and is based on the premise that the ideational resources that informed Rastafari belief system in Jamaica also existed in Malawi from as early as the pre-colonial period. These, presented in their chronological order, included Christianity, Ethiopianism, Garveyism and cultural nationalism. The chapter shows that while Rastafari criticizes Christianity, the movement has also relied on the same for its religious concept of God, eschatology, and the Bible. The chapter also shows that like the early leaders of Ethiopian church movement, Rastafari capitalized on biblical references made on Ethiopia, the historical connection that existed between the rulers of Ethiopia and those of ancient Israel, and Ethiopian victory at the 1896 Battle of Adowa which made some to believe that a messiah would come out of Ethiopia to deliver black people socially, religiously and politically. The chapter further observes that the work of Ethiopian church leaders was complemented by Garveyism, the philosophy and opinions of Marcus Garvey, who, through the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) preached black racial pride, back-to-Africa principles, Pan-Africanism and black economic self-reliance. Without ruling out the possibility of discontinuities, Rastafari exhibited traits of cultural nationalism by reviving the reverence of African kings, and maintenance of communal love and responsibility.

Chapter four examines the propagation and consolidation of the Rastafari movement in Malawi. It has established that unlike many other social movements, the primary medium through which Rastafari propagated in Malawi was through reggae music. Described as roots-and-culture reggae, the music carried various subjects such as the divinity of

Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, the back-to-Africa philosophies of Marcus Garvey, the importance of marijuana and many other textures bent on social commentary. The propagation of Rastafari that began in the mid-1970s was consolidated in the early 1990s by the democratic dispensation of the period that saw the opening and expansion of the religious space that accommodated many religious groups including the Rastafari movement, the proliferation of private radio stations that aired Rastafari programs and the arrival of Jamaican radio announcers who served as disc jockeys and missionaries for the teaching of Rastafari. The chapter reveals that the ritual use of marijuana advocated in the movement and the state visit Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia paid to Malawi in September 1965 have been important in the consolidation and growth of Rastafari.

Chapter five discusses the struggles of the Rastafari movement in Malawi. It establishes that the main cause of sour relations between Rastafarians and the government and the society at large is the former's use of marijuana as a religious sacrament and the wearing of dreadlocks which are signs of deviance and moral decadence on the part of the latter. The chapter also cites internal disputes, the rigidity of the rules and language as the challenges facing members of Rastafari.

Chapter six examines the extent to which Rastafari has been indigenized in Malawi. The chapter establishes that Rastafari has been appropriated and localized in a number of ways. Firstly, the similarities that exist between Marcus Garvey and John Chilembwe have led to the identification of the latter as a local prophet of Rastafari. Secondly, since

Rastafarians domiciled in Africa do not require physical migration as a way of heightened religious experience the doctrine of repatriation has been reinterpreted as a form of repentance, a shift from evil to righteousness. Thirdly, while the Western world is viewed as Babylon and Africa as Zion, domiciled Rastafarians map Babylon and Zion in Africa depending on how amiable or abrasive locations may be. The chapter also examined how Malawian artists localized the sound of reggae and Rastafari political protest. It will be found out that out of their experimentation with reggae music, Malawian reggae musicians created three main local reggae genres named after the areas their artists came from. These became known as Balaka, Chileka and Mayaka reggae. It was also discovered that Malawian reggae artists localized Rastafari political protest by addressing local issues such as political oppression, economic inequalities, Malawian positive values and the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

Lastly, chapter seven summarizes all the first six chapters of the research and concludes by stating the place of Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in the study of Rastafari, the contribution of the study to the body religious historiography of Malawi and areas that require attention for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALISING RASTAFARI

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature, theoretical framework and research methodology used in the study of the Rastafari movement in Malawi. Literature review has been done to find out how different scholars have defined and conceptualized Rastafari. The chapter also describes the theory that has influenced this research. Owing to the nature of protest inherent in Rastafari against the civil and political society, the study is influenced by Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. The chapter ends with an outline of the research methodology used in the study of Rastafari in Malawi. The study was solely qualitative drawing its conclusions from oral, archival, library and Internet sources.

2.1 Literature Review

Except for numerous newspaper reports and dissertations written for the Department of Theology at Chancellor College in Zomba, there are few works dealing with the subject of Rastafari in Malawi. As a result, in order to make up for this insufficiency, the body of literature under review has largely been drawn from authors who have written about the Rastafari movement in Jamaica, Britain, West Africa and South Africa. This body of literature shows that since its inception in the 1930s, Rastafari has generated great interest from the general public, journalists and scholars in Jamaica and around the world.

The early image of the Rastafarians presented by journalists in Jamaica, USA, Britain and Africa, which also reflected the attitude of governments and their citizens was stereotypical. Their outward appearance of wearing dreadlocks and their association with marijuana smoking and trafficking, alienated Rastafarians from the general public, who with the aid of media, defined them as social outcasts whose lifestyle contradicted conventional values and norms.²⁴ Such sentiments were frequently expressed in the *Daily Gleaner*, Jamaica's official newspaper. In one of its publications, the *Daily Gleaner* described members of the Rastafari as dirty, lazy, violent, ganja smoking good for nothing rascals using religion as cloak for villainy, having no regard for the law or other people's property, loud mouths and a general nuisance.²⁵ Accusations like these went hand in hand with government suspicions that the Rastafarians were being manipulated by Cuban and Soviet communists, a supposition that seemed to be confirmed when in 1959 one of their initiates, Claudius Henry, agitated for "Israel's scattered Children of African Origin back home to Africa"²⁶ and invited Fidel Castro to come and take the island of Jamaica since they were about to leave for Africa. As Rastafari began to spread to the USA, Britain and Africa in the 1970s, it tended to carry this negative image with it and the Malawian Rasta has not been spared. Indeed criminality and violence have been among some of the characteristics of the Rastafari movement in the formative years. However, to emphasize these is to gloss over the Rastafarian resistance to the European dominant culture of the world.

²⁴ Alemseghed Kebede and J. David Knottnerus, "Beyond the Pales of Babylon: The Ideational Components and Social Psychological Foundations of Rastafari," *Sociological Perspectives* 41, no. 3 (1998): 505. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1389561>.

²⁵ Kebede and Knottnerus, "Beyond the Pales of Babylon," 505.

²⁶ Smith et al., "The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica: Part I," 15.

However, a different image of the Rastafari began to emerge in 1953 when Professor George Eaton Simpson of Oberlin College, Ohio, first studied Rastafarian belief system under the sponsorship of the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University College of the West Indies (UCWI). Simpson's research was a sociological study which placed the members of Rastafari at the lowest socio-economic levels of the society, a conclusion which was maintained by subsequent scholars who followed in his footsteps. For example, when Watson published his study of the movement in 1973, he observed that the Rastas who at the time numbered seventy thousand, comprised a *mélange* of the poor, the landless peasants and the underemployed, who leave the country districts of Jamaica to hover on the margin of existence in the shanty towns on the periphery of the cities.²⁷ Sheila Kitzinger, an anthropologist who studied Rastafarians in one of their encampments, known as the Dungle in Kingston earlier in 1965 gives a vivid description of the squalor conditions in which members of the Rastafari lived. According to her, the word Dungle signified all that was most vicious and ugly in human life. It means dirt, disease, children with swollen bellies and ginger fringes of kwashiorkor, the quick knife-edged machete, ganja smoked long into the night, and sputum on baked mud.²⁸ By implication, therefore, the rise and popularity of Rastafari among the underprivileged must be viewed as profoundly influenced by the material problems of producing food, clothing and shelter. These material problems are conceived to have been created by the capitalist system which had hoarded and concentrated wealth in a few hands.

²⁷ G. Llewellyn Watson, "Social Structure and Social Movements: The Black Muslims in the USA and the Ras-Tafarians in Jamaica," *The British Journal of Sociology* 24, no. 2 (Jan., 1973): 189.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/588377>

²⁸ Kitzinger, "Protest and Mysticism," 241.

After Simpson's study, M.G. Smith, et al (1967) published their work which aimed at presenting a brief account of the growth, doctrines, organization, aspirations, needs and conditions of the Rastafari movement in Jamaica, especially in Kingston, the capital.²⁹ Their publication came out of a survey carried out in 1960 that arose out of letters written to the principal of the UCWI, Professor Arthur Lewis, and the Resident Tutor, Extra-Mural Studies, Mr. Rex Nettleford, by members of the Rastafari brethren living in Kingston. These letters asked the College to assist the Rastafarians in various ways, especially in the educational field, and by publicizing the truth about the brethren and their doctrine. The request was made after the infamous 1959 Claudius Henry Affair which had further hardened the negative attitude middle class Jamaicans had towards Rastafari cult. The publication was a milestone in the history of Rastafari because apart from winning a sympathetic gesture from the government, it became one of the factors that brought the movement into national and international prominence during the 1950s and early 1960s.³⁰

After faculty members carried out their survey in 1960 and published their findings, interest in the study of Rastafari grew. One of the scholars influenced by this study was Sheila Kitzinger, who as we have seen, defined the Rastafari as a predominantly male-oriented politico-religious cult involving the messianic worship of the Emperor Haile Selassie, and anticipating its return to Africa. Kitzinger's description of Rastafari as a political cult refers to the movement's emphasis on its own identity politics. According to Hayes (2012) identity politics signifies a wide range of political activity and theorizing

²⁹ Smith et al., "The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica, Part I," 4.

³⁰ Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, "Introduction to the Rastafari Phenomenon."

founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. Members of that constituency assert or reclaim ways of understanding their distinctiveness that challenge dominant oppressive characterizations, with the goal of greater self-determination.³¹ In the case of the Rastafarians, the attainment of exclusive religious rights, affirmation and defense of their blackness and repatriation to Africa constituted much of their identity politics. During her research among Rastafarians in Kingston, Kitzinger was told by one informant that:

We do not want to kill no body. We are people of God who like to worship in our own way as the Lord had commanded us through his inspiration, and we should be free to do such without any intimidation or force by whether police, soldier or anyone. We are not people who hate white people but we love our race more than other people and we are not preaching race hatred amongst people, but we are preaching race consciousness, because we can take an equal place in creation, as God did create us to do...Our aim is to see the hungry fed, the sick nourished, the health protected, the infant cared for, the shelterless be sheltered, those who desire to go back to Africa go back in love and peace.³²

Rastafarian identity politics is often couched in religious terms by equating the predicament of the black people in the Western hemisphere with the tribulations of the biblical Israelites in Egypt and Babylon and a call for an apocalyptic punishment to the white oppressors and their black allies. The punishment is envisaged to be executed by

³¹ "Identity Politics," Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, accessed April 20, 2016.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/>.

³² Kitzinger, "Protest and Mysticism," 243.

Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. Once Selassie triumphs over the oppressors, a just and righteous government would be established here on earth in which all people enjoy equal rights and privileges. Because Rastafarians believe that Haile Selassie is a returned messiah charged with freeing black people out of the bondage inflicted on them by Western society and that heaven will be achieved here on earth, Leonard E. Barrett described Rastafari as a messianist-millenarian cult.³³ Taking a similar line of thought, Price, et al (2008) perceive Rastafari, along with the Ghost Dance in the United States and the Maya movement of Guatemala, as a grounded utopian movement because of its emersion in visions of an alternative “ideal place” (Mount Zion) and sets to establish alternative ways of living which its members find more just and satisfying than at present.³⁴

The assertion that Rastafari is a religious cult has sparked controversial debates between scholars intent on proving the religiosity of the movement and insiders’ discourse which posits that theirs is not a religion but *livity*, a concept that denotes a design for life. It is a commitment to an earthly, organic, natural lifestyle³⁵ that is marked by the Rastafarians’ appearance, vegetarian diet, use of herbs, process of reflection, modes of production and aesthetic activity. As a cultural entity, Rastafarians are further distinguished from other groups of people, though not exclusively, by their unique hairstyle of dreadlocks and a unique language known as Dread Talk or Iyaric which is based on the alteration of the

³³ Kebede and Kottnerus, “Beyond the Pales of Babylon,” 502.

³⁴ Charles Price et al., “Grounded Utopian Movements: Subjects of Neglect,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (Winter, 2008) 127, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30052742>.

³⁵ Michael Barnet, “Rastafari Dialectism: The Epistemological Individualism and Connectivism of Rastafari,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (December 2002): 57, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40654296>.

lexical, phonological, and syntactical structure of the Jamaican Creole language and Standard English. Apart from being a daily means of communication, Dread Talk is usually expressed in Rastafari dub poetry and reggae music. Additionally, in the Rastafari way of life, marijuana (known as ganja) is used both for sacramental purposes and facilitation of a unique mode of discourse known as “reasoning” during which congregants expound the tenets of their religious doctrine. The notion of livity was elaborated and defended by Lion Dread who explained that as compared to Sunday religion, livity is an all-encompassing life-long unconfined asceticism that is committed to prayer, the desire to know the creator, the quest for education, the study of history and the fight for freedom of which religion is just but a part of a whole.³⁶

The intellectual basis of Rastafarian ideology was partly provided by Marcus Garvey, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) whose activism sought to ameliorate the denigrated conditions of both diasporic and domiciled Africans. Apart from espousing the virtues of self-reliance, hard work, perseverance, and a sense of black pride, Garvey preached a back-to-Africa philosophy which largely appealed to people in dire economic conditions who envisioned a future of prosperity and equality in their motherland. Since the ideologues and the majority of the members of Rastafari were in a similar situation when the movement started in the 1930s, repatriation to Africa became one of the central tenets of Rastafari which was to be achieved by the physical removal from Babylon and an exodus to the Promised Land. Because of this desire to remove themselves from Babylon, instead of seeking reform of Western society, Lanternari

³⁶ OT, Batawe Nawanga (aka Lion Dread), Rastafarian, Blantyre, March 19, 2014.

(1963) has described Rastafari as an escapist movement.³⁷ The impracticality, romanticism and irrationality of this flightiness have been a source of scholarly criticism on Garvey. In *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (1955), E. David Cronon blamed Garvey for selling an unrealistic escapist programme of racial chauvinism to the ignorant black masses. In *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (1986), Judith Stein dismissively views the methods and visions of the UNIA to have been simultaneously shaped by the fatalism of the powerless, the utopias of the hustlers and charlatans, the promises of mass movements, and the ideologies generated by the new social transformations of the World War I and the 1920s.³⁸ Such criticism was elitist and therefore could not be the concern of ordinary people. Having foretold the crowning of Haile Selassie in 1927, the Rastas elevated Garvey to the position of prophet, regarding him as John the Baptist, this time prophesying the Second Advent of Christ. By articulating Garvey's message and adding their voice to African liberation and black racial pride, Rastafarians have designated themselves as pan-Africanists, prompting the BBC to label their movement as a young, Africa cantered religion.³⁹

The study of Rastafari, however, has not been confined to Jamaica. Some scholars have studied and published works about the spread, growth and localization of the movement in other parts of the Caribbean, the Americas, Europe and Africa. For example, Campbell

³⁷ Vittorio Lanternari, *Religions of the Oppressed* (London: McGibbon and Kee, 1963), 137.

³⁸ Adam Ewing, "Garvey or Garveyism?" *Transition*, no. 105 (2011): 137, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/transition.105.130>

³⁹ "Rastafari at a Glance," BBC, accessed October 21, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/rastafari/ata glance/glance.shtml>,

(1980), Hansing (2006), Salter (2005), Savishinsky (1994) and White (2006) have concentrated their energies on studying Rastafari in Britain, Cuba, Dominica and West Africa. Interestingly, all have echoed the views of those who have written about Rastafari in Jamaica by suggesting that poor economic conditions were a catalyst for the spread, growth and localization of the movement in those areas. Such a Marxist analysis of Rastafari is epitomized by Savishinsky (1994) who unequivocally concluded that wherever the movement has spread, it has drawn its largest and most committed following from among those whose indigenous culture has been suppressed, and in certain instances completely supplanted by Western models imposed during centuries of European and American colonial expansion. Savishinsky argues that adherence to Rastafari provides an alternative source of meaning and identity to a life frequently punctuated by hopelessness, alienation and despair in what is often perceived as a hostile, corrupt and hypocritical Eurocentric environment.⁴⁰

But in his evaluation of Rastafari in West Africa, Savishinsky refuses to give it a narrow definition or categorization because as he argues, the movement means a number of things to different people and as such manifests itself in a variety of guises encompassing millennialism, messianism, revivalism, pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, anti-neocolonialism and an appropriation of black transnational popular culture. At the same time, Savishinsky sees West African Rastafari as a fluid, eclectic and multi-vocal movement embodying three main characteristics. Firstly, Rastafari in West Africa fits

⁴⁰ Neil J. Savishinsky, "Rastafari in the Promised Land: The Spread of a Jamaican Socioreligious Movement among the Youth of West Africa," *African Studies Review* 37, no. 3 (December 1994): 19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/524901>.

comfortably within the basic pattern or scheme of a growing number of syncretic, independent Christian-based churches and religious movements that have been flourishing on the continent since the turn of the century. Secondly, West African Rastafari is seen as a category of a New Age Movement, a movement of spirituality, health, politics, education, and business that encompasses countless groups seeking to direct the path of society.⁴¹ Lastly, Savishinsky approaches West African Rastafari as an expression or adaptation of Western or transnational, black pop culture because its adherents identify themselves with the more superficial aspects of the movement such as reggae music, dreadlocks, Dread Talk and Rasta clothing which represents the major extent of their understanding of and commitment to the faith.

Since 1955, when Emperor Haile Selassie I, through the Ethiopian World Federation, Inc. (EWF), granted 500 acres of land to the Black People of the West who aided Ethiopia during her period of distress, Rastafarians from Jamaica had been migrating and settling not just at Shashamane in Ethiopia, but also in many countries in Africa. Considering that the experiences and perspectives of repatriated Rastafarians remained an uncharted area of research in Rastafarian scholarship and studies in the African diaspora,⁴² Camen White carried out a study of Rastafarian repatriates in Ghana, West Africa, in an attempt to find out if the Rastafarians had really found Zion in Africa. While expressing satisfaction over their return to the Promised Land, White noted that all Rastas interviewed saw

⁴¹ Richard Abanes, *Cults, New Religious Movements, and Your Family: A Guide to Ten Non-Christian Groups Out to Convert Your Loved Ones* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1998), 16.

⁴² Camen M. White, "Living in Zion: Rastafarian Repatriates in Ghana, West Africa," *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 5 (May 2007): 677, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40034361>.

themselves as on a mission centered on proselytizing and conscious-raising to educate Africans about a Black God as a corrective to worshipping the White God they had been deceived into worshipping by white Christian missionaries.⁴³ At the same time, the concept of Africa as Mount Zion, a paradise devoid of suffering, had been nothing but a figment of imagination. It was proved that just like in Jamaica where they had come from Africa too, was beset by economic, political and social problems that would as well compel the Rastafarian repatriates to chant down Babylon.⁴⁴

Chanting down Babylon in Zion has not been only confined to Rastafarian repatriates. In response to Rastafarian complaints about the expulsion of their dreadlocked children from public schools, Mtendeweka Mhango (2013) sought to analyze a framework for assessing whether Rastafari qualifies as a religion under Section 33 of the Constitution of Malawi. He argues that Rastafari is a recognized religion and that its sincere adherents should have full protection under the constitution of Malawi, as do members of other religious groups.⁴⁵ Mhango did excellent work in outlining a brief history, beliefs, rituals and practices of the Rastafari but his approach was legal, concerned with minority religious rights, especially the denial of Rastafarian dreadlocked children in public schools and theological because he was concerned with the beliefs, rituals and practices of the Rastafari. Mhango's emphasis, then, is to regard Rastafari as a religion whose members are victims of state repression.

⁴³ White, "Living in Zion," 696.

⁴⁴ White, "Living in Zion," 701.

⁴⁵ Mtendeweka Owen Mhango, "The Constitutional Protection of Minority Religious Rights in Malawi: The Case of Rastafari Students" in *Journal of African Law*, 2008, 52, no. 2 (2013): 218, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27608008>.

One conclusion that can be deduced from this body of works that has been reviewed is that the origin and growth of the Rastafari cult in Jamaica and its subsequent spread to other parts of the world were a result of historical materialism. This was marked by a century-old exploitative economic system of slavery and colonialism that put the African on the periphery of material existence. Matters were made worse by the fact that nationalist and democratic governments that replaced the colonial state maintained the very same colonial structures they had opposed earlier in order to maintain the status quo. Since Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels maintained that man's consciousness changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence,⁴⁶ it can be concluded that poor economic conditions of many diasporic and domiciled Africans had always been dire prompting those articulate among them to propagate alternative belief systems like that of Rastafari.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Owing to the nature of protest inherent in Rastafari against the civil society and political society (the state), this study applies Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony in order to explore the intricacies of its spread to Malawi. Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian communist who broke away from orthodox Marxism by narrowing the economic base and broadening the superstructure as the driving force of history. In Gramscian formulation, cultural hegemony is the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of

⁴⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1968), 37.

the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.⁴⁷ The corollary to this definition is the fact that the ruling class does not govern its subjects by coercion alone, but also by ideas, meanings and practices which, while they purport to be universal truths, are maps of meaning that sustain powerful social groups.

According to Gramsci, cultural hegemony is created and popularized by intellectuals who are divided into two groups by their social function. Firstly, there are traditional intellectuals who as priests, teachers, doctors, artists, journalists, politicians, lawyers, business managers, civil servants and technicians produce national identity and shape popular culture in a manner that validates the dominant political order.⁴⁸ Thus, traditional intellectuals, through their influence in institutions like the state, church and school system, produce, maintain and circulate those ideologies constitutive of hegemony that become naturalized as common-sense. Secondly, there are organic intellectuals, which in Gramscian postulation, are the thinking and organizing element⁴⁹ that develops from within the subordinated class and create counter-hegemonic ideology as a revolutionary activity. They build philosophically subversive institutions that challenge the authority of the ruling elite, and, as politically aware individuals, they invest their intelligence in the consciousness-raising of the masses. Gramsci insists that a revolution can only occur

⁴⁷ T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities." *The American Historical Review* 90, no 3 (January 1985): 568. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1860957>.

⁴⁸ Rupe Simms, "I am a Non-Denominational Christian and a Marxist Socialist: A Gramscian Analysis of the Convention People's Party and Kwame Nkrumah's Use of Religion," *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 4 (Winter, 2003): 465, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3712336>.

⁴⁹ Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Elec Book, 1999), 131.

when the common people have been converted to a counter-hegemonic ideology that inspires them to demand a foundational change in popular philosophy and the role of the state. Therefore, organic intellectuals must create a universal worldview that becomes the basis for a post-revolutionary socialist state dominated by the working class; Gramsci's workers' democracy.⁵⁰

The existence of these dichotomous intellectuals makes cultural hegemony unstable, a terrain of struggle and conflict that should be constantly re-won and re-negotiated. As traditional intellectuals endeavour to succeed in creating hegemony and thus extend the worldview of the rulers to the ruled and thereby secure the free consent of the masses to the law and order of the land, their organic counterparts, in the form of factory councils, seek to subvert and destroy it. In the event that the ability of traditional intellectuals to create and popularize cultural hegemony has been undermined, the ruling class becomes a "night-watchman state" and invokes its coercive apparatus which disciplines those who do not consent. It is envisaged that for counter-hegemonic struggle to succeed, it must seek to gain ascendancy within civil society (war of position) before any attempt on state power (war of maneuver). For this ascendancy to be achieved, organic intellectuals must organize factory councils to serve as learning centres for counter-hegemonic thought and eventually give birth to a socialist state. The factory councils provide a context in which the workers evolve into a politically mature, class-conscious insurrectionary force.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Rupe Simms, "I am a Non-Denominational Christian and a Marxist Socialist," 466.

⁵¹ Rupe Simms, "I am a Non-Denominational Christian and a Marxist Socialist," 466.

The current study, therefore, contributes to this growing body of literature by exploring the spread of Rastafari to Malawi by deemphasizing the importance of the base and focusing on the role of superstructure, that is, culture and ideology in shaping the nature of history, as propounded by Antonio Gramsci. As Lears (1985) has pointed out, by clarifying the political functions of cultural symbols, the concept of cultural hegemony can aid intellectual historians trying to understand how ideas reinforce or undermine existing social structures and social historians seeking to reconcile the apparent contradiction between the power welded by dominant groups and the relative cultural autonomy of subordinate groups whom they victimize.⁵² Considering the intellectual cycles of protest inherent in Rastafari against the hegemonic culture and ideologies of slavery, mainstream Christianity, colonialism, neocolonialism and many other dominant systems, cultural hegemony becomes one of the best theories to analyze the spread of the movement.

2.3 Research Methodology

The research was designed as a case study that used Blantyre to exemplify a broader category of the Rastafarian community in Malawi. Except for Lilongwe and Mzuzu, Blantyre was singled out as a case study because it was assumed to have a larger population of Rastafarians that would represent or typify the Rastafarian community than any other district in Malawi. Beginning in January 2014 and ending in May 2016, the study was a longitudinal research that involved repeated visits to Rastafarian homes and

⁵² T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," 568.

tabernacles in order to capture and understand the details and complexities that informed this study.

Similarly, the study was a qualitative research that emphasized words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data.⁵³ Although the study was guided by Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, it was an inductive or descriptive case study that stressed on the understanding of the social world as interpreted and constructed by Rastafarians and the people surrounding them. To understand this social world, two types of qualitative data, oral and written, were generated.

The first were oral data derived from people's discussion, stories, myths, life histories, songs, chants, prayers and sermons transmitted through the word of mouth. Oral data was emphasized in this research because it is a valuable type of information in studying African history, south of the Sahara, where writing is a recent development. Though many scholars cast doubt on its reliability, oral data is valuable because an oral society recognizes speech not only as a means of everyday communication but also as a means of preserving the wisdom of the ancestors enshrined in oral tradition.⁵⁴ Thus, even though Rastafari is a young African-centred religion whose members are expected to be literate, African tradition has not been able to encourage its people to keep diaries and memoirs for future reference but instead extract everything from memory. This makes oral data to be useful now and for generations to come.

⁵³ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 380

⁵⁴ J. Ki-Zerbo, ed. *General History of Africa, I: Methodology and African Prehistory* (California: UNESCO, 1981), 142.

This corpus of oral data was obtained from members of the Rastafari community through participant observation, an ethnographic technique of learning a people's culture through social participation and personal observation within the community being studied, as well as interviews and discussion with individual members of a group over an extended period of time.⁵⁵ Conducted mostly on Saturdays, the day Rastafarians observe their Sabbath, participant observation was a valuable research tool for it provided access to hymns, choruses, chants, sermons, reasoning sessions and the whole liturgy of Rastafarian worship, most of which guided the set of questions posed during interviews and discussions held with key informants. Participant observation was appropriate for this historical study because the researcher was not familiar enough with Rastafarian beliefs, practices and rituals. It was envisaged at the time that the history of the movement could better be studied if its present state was understood. Furthermore, additional oral data was obtained from listening to songs and dub poetry composed and performed by Rastafarian artists. The advice that was given during one of the interviews was that if people wanted to learn about the teachings of Rastafari, they must listen to reggae music with specific reference Peter Tosh, Bob Marley, Joseph Hill and Fanton Mojah⁵⁶ as authoritative sources.

Since participant observation was given great attention, thirty people, of which twenty were Rastafarians, were sampled to provide life histories, experiences, attitudes and information on how Rastafari spread to and began in Malawi. From this sample, priority

⁵⁵ William A. Haviland, et al. *Anthropology: The Human Challenge* (Belmont: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 2005), 14.

⁵⁶ OT, Yamikani Dzampana, Rastafarian, Blantyre, June 20, 2015.

was given to key informants that comprised of elders, priests and prophets who had lived a Rastafari way of life for a period of over five years as they were believed to have accumulated enough knowledge and experience to speak for the movement. Because the population of Rastafari brethren and sistren is small and sparsely distributed in Blantyre and elsewhere throughout the country, it was difficult to locate them. As a result, the research had to rely on snowball sampling. This entailed the making of initial contact with a small group of people who were relevant to the research topic and then using these to establish contacts with others.

The second type of data that was collected and used in this study was primary and secondary written sources. Primary written sources are documents such as diaries, memoirs, letters, newspapers, government correspondences and memos that come from the time when an historical event actually happened. In the case of the Rastafari, its primary sources came from newspaper reports and Rastafarian personal collections that included the multi-volume *Jahug*, *Members of the New Race*, *Chants from the [D]ivine Order of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I* and *Black Supremacy Rastafari Righteous Kingdom* as well as the *Holy Piby* and the *Promised Key* accessed from the Internet. Additional primary written sources, especially newspaper reports and speeches of Emperor Haile Selassie I were obtained from the Malawi National Archive in Zomba. On the other hand, secondary written sources, mainly books and articles written based on primary sources and long after the event occurred, were sourced from libraries at Chancellor College and Zomba National Library. Even though this was the case, these avenues did not provide sufficient material for the smooth progress of the study and

consequently relied heavily on the Internet where many articles and electronic books were hosted on the subject.

The analysis of this large corpus of oral and written data started at the beginning of the research process. Thematic analysis, a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data,⁵⁷ was adopted because as Braun and Clarke (2006) put it, it offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data.⁵⁸ Specifically, thematic analysis of data started with the familiarization with the data by transcribing oral data and repeated reading and searching for meanings. After the familiarization phase, codes, in form of words and phrases, were generated to serve as labels to sections of data and thus helped to organize data into meaningful groups. The different codes, then, were sorted and collated to identify potential themes that were further defined and named before the actual write-up began.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has conceptualized the Rastafari by examining the current body of literature, stating the theoretical framework that has influenced this study and outlining the research methodology that has helped in the collection of data and its final write up. From the body of available literature, it has been deduced that the Rastafari movement has been defined by different authors variously as a religious movement, cultural movement, an escapist movement, millennial-messianist cult and politico-religious protest cult. The

⁵⁷ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 no. 2 (2006), 6..

⁵⁸ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," 2.

current study, therefore, build up on Sheila Kitzinger's definition of Rastafari as a politico-religious protest cult by shifting the attention from an abstract search for millennialism to a concrete expression of Pan-African social unity and protest. Informed by Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony the study moves away from the Marxist approach of many authors who have reduced the factors of the rise and spread of Rastafari to economic deprivations of its adherents by emphasizing the role of superstructure in creating counter-hegemonic social movements like Rastafari.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROOTS OF RASTAFARI IDEOLOGY IN MALAWI

3.0 Introduction

The majority of works that have been reviewed in the previous chapter maintained that the rise and growth of the Rastafari movement in Jamaica and its subsequent spread to other parts of the world were a result of material problems of producing food, clothing and shelter. The current chapter agrees with this materialist approach but observes that the rise, growth and spread of Rastafari were the result of the shared superstructure that existed between the culture centre where Rastafari developed and the areas where the movement spread. The superstructure, which is the subject of this chapter, comprised of African Christianity, Ethiopianism, Garveyism and cultural nationalism of the African educated elite. Aspects of African Christianity, Ethiopianism, Garveyism and cultural nationalism that have been discussed in this chapter are only those Rastafarians appropriated in their entirety. Their chants, sermons and reasoning sessions are often dominated by philosophies discussed in this chapter. The chapter will cover the period between 1890 and 1980. The chapter will be written by using oral, primary and secondary written sources. It should be noted, however, that this study will only concentrate on how these ideologies aided the spread of Rastafari to Malawi and not how they helped bred the movement in Jamaica.

3.1 African Christianity

The most important impact of European missionary enterprise in the British colonies of North America, West Indies and sub-Saharan Africa was the evangelization of the gospel that provided doctrinal material and created an African following that were to form the basis of Rastafari ideology and a pool from which the movement obtained its potential adherents. This was evidenced by the fact that almost all Rasta informants who were interviewed during the research in Blantyre had a Christian as opposed to a Muslim background.⁵⁹ Mission Christianity was also important because it introduced Western education which in time led to the emergence of African Christian elite, who in turn, established separatist churches that were independent of European missionary control. The development of the African Christian elite was crucial because they constructed and articulated Afrocentric counter-hegemonic ideologies against the dominance of European Christianity that was later to also form part of Rastafari belief system. This belief system comprised of God-is-black thesis, Africanising of the Bible, millennialism and the rejection of predestination.

Although European Christian missionaries were not explicit in defining the colour of the deity they had brought, images produced by them were suggestive of the fact that God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit were of the white race.⁶⁰ As an antithesis to this worldview, African Christian leaders, who broke away from mainstream Christian

⁵⁹ OT, Ras Nimrod, Rastafarian, Blantyre, May 13, 2014.

⁶⁰ Cardinal Aswad Walker, "Princes Shall Come Out of Egypt: A Theological Comparison of Marcus Garvey and Reverend Albert Cleage Jr.," *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 2 (November 2008): 207, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40282558>,

churches because of white racism, held that God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit were black. One of the earliest protagonists of this antithesis was Reverend Richard Allen, who, after leading a splinter group from the Methodist Episcopal Church in response to its segregation policies, formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in 1816 in Philadelphia. During his visit to South Africa to witness the growing AME congregation in 1898, Reverend Allen's successor, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner mesmerized many blacks when he proclaimed that "God was a Negro and that blacks were a Godly people."⁶¹ Some of the first Malawians to be exposed to the "God is black" thesis were Reverend Hannock Msokera Phiri who brought the AME to Malawi in 1924 and Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda who studied at an AME's Wilberforce Institute in 1925 before proceeding to the University of Chicago to study medicine in 1930. However, the divinity of the African peoples was not the doctrinal position of the AME but the stature, charisma and oratory of some of its preachers ostensibly made this form of negritude official and thus influential on the psyche of many Africans on the continent and the Diaspora.

Since the God-is-black thesis was also popularised by African American churches in Jamaica, Rastafarians seized upon it and maintained that God was black. However, Rastafarians differed with their predecessors' idealism by pointing out that the black God was Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. With Selassie, Rastafarians espoused their own

⁶¹ Robert Trent Vinson, "Sea Kaffirs: American Negroes and the Gospel of Garveyism in Early Twentieth Century Cape Town," *The Journal of African History* 47, no. 2 (2006): 287, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4100725>.

principle of the humanity of God and the divinity of man. To them, God was not only black, but an unspiritual and non-transcendental living God who lived among them and within them. As a God Man, he only distinguished himself from his people by his unlimited intelligence and capabilities. The principle was articulated by Prince Edward Charles Edwards, the founder and spiritual head of Ethiopia Africa Black International Congress (EABIC) who states that:

Christ is in flesh, the black God is in flesh. Not dead like the white one who is on the cross. We are the sons and daughters of the black Christ. When you see yourself you see Christ, when you love yourself you love Christ.⁶²

The spread of Rastafari to Malawi in the early 1970s, therefore, was the result of the familiarisation of the God-is-black thesis that was earlier popularised by independent African churches. The deification of Emperor Haile Selassie to conscious-raised groups who saw him as counter-hegemonic to the omnipotence of the Christian God and the power and glory of the British monarch.

Another feature that characterised African Christianity was the Africanising of the Bible that was employed by the appropriation of the history and racial identity of the people of the Bible and shifting the setting of the Bible story from the Mediterranean region to North America and sub-Saharan Africa. From the seventeenth century, when Africans were taken to work as slaves in the New World, they often saw themselves as the

⁶²*Black Supremacy*, EABIC, 9.

Israelites and their servitude as Israelite slavery in Egypt and Babylon. In black literature, poetry and spirituals, the New World is Egypt or Babylon; Africa is Zion or Jerusalem; and the Atlantic Ocean that separates these two geographical entities is the Jordan River. In fact, every black leader who had aroused hopes of freedom in the past two hundred years was a Black Moses who would “tell old Pharaoh” to “let my people go.”⁶³ As the number of independent African churches spread in Malawi, this biblical symbolism permeated Malawian society in both the religious and secular spheres. For example, when Elliot Kamwana started preaching in Nkhata Bay in 1908 he claimed to have “brought a new message” which would “bring many out of Babylon.”⁶⁴ In Watch Tower interpretation, to which Kamwana subscribed, Babylon meant confusion or disorder that was represented by both the European Christian missionaries and the colonial government. Similarly, when Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda led the fight for independence in the country, his followers invoked biblical symbolism by likening him to *Mpulumutsi*, Messiah and Saviour.⁶⁵

This tradition of Africanising Christianity was embraced and perpetuated by Rastafarians whose biblical hermeneutics involved the rewriting of the Bible based on African experience. The story of the Genesis; the deeds of valour played by biblical figures such as Moses, Joshua and David; and the humiliation the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Egyptians and Babylonians were all Africanised. These were Africanised by the claim that the Garden of Eden was in Africa and that the true Israelites were black people

⁶³ Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, *The American Pageant. Vol. I.* (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994), 368.

⁶⁴ *Black Supremacy*, EABIC, 27.

⁶⁵ *The Constitution of the Malawi Congress Party* (Malawi Congress Party, 1969), 2.

whose suffering was continued due to the slave trade and colonialism. The rewriting of the Bible also involved the literal superimposition of Rastafarian deities and creeds on biblical names, words and phrases as this part of Lord's Prayer shows:

Our father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be they name.

Our Father Creator who art in
Zion, Haile Selassie I is thy
name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be
done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be
done on earth, as it is in Zion.⁶⁶

The rise, growth and spread of Rastafari, therefore, was the movement's continuation of Africanising Christianity whose importance was independently appreciated by Canaan Banana who observed that "theologising is place and time specific, the church articulates its theological praxes from concrete contexts."⁶⁷

The application of biblical symbols to the African experience was not only confined to the appropriation of past biblical events but also the adoption of the Christian theory of history that begins with the Book of Genesis and ends with the Book of Revelation. Like the European Christian missionary churches that created them, independent African churches visualised a:

Meta-historical future in which the world will be inhabited by humanity liberated from all the limitations of human existence, redeemed from pain and transience, from fallibility and sin, thus becoming at once perfectly good and perfectly happy.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ "Rastalogical Prayer to His Emperor Haile Selassie I," accessed July 23, 2021. [\(20+\) Hot Worshippers - Posts | Facebook](#).

⁶⁷ Masiwa Ragies Gunda. "The Ingredients of (true) Christianity and Theology: Canaan Sodindo Banana and Biblical Theological Studies in Africa.. 5.

⁶⁸ Josep R. Gusfield. Ed. *Protest Reform and Revolt: A Reader in Social Movements* (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1970), 436.

This ideal futuristic society was better expounded in the millennial dawn messages of Charles Taze Russell of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in the United States. Born in 1852, Russell grew up imbibing the teachings of the Second Adventists whose roots, like the Seventh Day Adventists, could be traced to William Miller's movement that emerged out of the Second Great Awakening, a revivalist religious movement that began in the United States in 1800. The Second Adventists' biblical exegesis combined hellfire gospel and date-setting for Jesus' second coming that were bred in the Millerite movement. But, undaunted by the Great Disappointment the Millerites suffered on 22 October, 1844, the Second Adventists set another date for Christ's return as 1873/1874. When Jesus did not return in 1874, the Second Adventists, rather than admitting that there had been an error in their time calculations, insisted that they had indeed been right about the date of Jesus' return but had been wrong about the manner of it, arguing that he must have returned invisibly.

Charles Taze Russell, who had now created his own formal grouping, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, popularly known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, in 1884, seized upon the idea of the invisible return of Christ and claimed that his arrival in the heavenly realms marked the beginning of humanity's *Time of Trouble*, which would culminate with the *Battle of Armageddon* in 1914 and the end of the world as all know it. Writing in the *Studies in the Scriptures, Volume 2*, Russell elaborated his belief in millennialism:

We present the Bible evidence proving that the full end of the times of the Gentiles, i.e. the full end of their lease of dominion, will be reached in AD 1914 and that that date will be the furthest limit of the rule of imperfect men...At

that date the Kingdom of God, for which our Lord taught us to pray, saying “Thy Kingdom come,” will have obtained full, universal control, and that it will then be “set up,” or firmly established in the earth.⁶⁹

When Joseph Booth was deported from Nyasaland in the period between 1902 and 1904 because of his publication of *Africa for the African*, he relocated to South Africa where he continued contact with the Protectorate through labour migrants. While in South Africa, Booth was converted to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society doctrine and entrusted Elliot Kamwana with the responsibility to spread its gospel in Nyasaland. Kamwana attracted converts by his quick, open air baptisms and the promise of free education and books and no *sonko* to the Church.⁷⁰ By the time his movement reached its peak in 1909, Kamwana is said to have amassed over ten thousand converts. Combining Watch Tower millennial dawn messages and political agitation, Kamwana prophesied in a typical Russellite fashion that Christ would come in October 1914 and all the whites would have to leave the country. He envisioned a perfect post-European society when there would be no oppression from tax gatherers. On several of his sermons, he would point to the European resident and said:

Those people there...you will see no more, for the government will go. There will be no oppression from the tax gatherers...do not let your hearts be troubled, the whiteman present will not only educate you freely; but will also provide money and employment for taxes...we shall

⁶⁹ Richard Abanes, *Cults, New Religious Movements, and Your Family: A Guide to Ten Non-Christian Groups out to Convert Your Loved Ones* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1998), 232.

⁷⁰ Ranger, T.O. ed. *Aspects of Central African History* (London: Heinemann, 1968), 195

build our own ships, make our own powder and make or
import our own guns...⁷¹

Following these public pronouncements, the government moved swiftly to silence Elliott Kamwana. He was deported to Mauritius where he stayed until 1937 when he was allowed to come back.

Like Russell and Kamwana, the ideologues of Rastafari also propagated the doctrine of terrestrial millennialism but differed with them by holding that their perfect ideal society would be attained through repatriation to Ethiopia. During the early years of the movement, Rastafarians strongly believed that the invincible Emperor of Ethiopia was arranging for expatriated persons of African origin to return to Ethiopia. It was believed that once repatriation has been achieved, Selassie would take charge, end all oppression and cast blacks into a joyous re-acquaintance with their homeland. In practice, many modern Rastafarians hold Africa in great admiration but they do not want to live here, and they are quite content living outside Africa.

Except for the Roman Catholics, the majority of European Christian missionaries who came to Malawi were sponsored by reformed and Presbyterian churches in Britain and South Africa. The Reformed and Presbyterian churches subscribed to and carried with them John Calvin's theology of predestination which as postulated in his *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* is:

⁷¹ Wiseman Chijere Chirwa, "Masokwa Elliot Kenan Kamwana Chirwa: His Religious and Political Activities and Impact in Nkhata Bay, 1908-1956" in *Journal of Social Science* 12, no. 3 (1985):30.

The eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created in equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of those ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death.⁷²

The implication of this unconditional election is that social inequalities that exist between people in societies are providential and cannot be altered by human agency. Cecil Frances Alexander's *All Things Bright and Beautiful* (1848) with its famous verse: the rich man at his castle; the poor man at his gate; God made them, high or lowly; and ordered their estate, appears to be an archetype of the doctrine of predestination that blames God for people's predicaments. To the contrary, while Reformed and Presbyterian churches lived with the contradiction of uplifting Africans by introducing Western education, medicine and modern methods of agriculture, African Christianity rejected predestination. Instead, it saw "the entire Bible as a story of a constant revolutionary struggle for God's chosen people to seek an end to their earthly oppression by obtaining a promised land here on earth" and thus putting human agency at the core of their ideology. This spirit was reflected in the letter John Chilembwe wrote about his proposed school work to the local paper of the Shire Highlands at the end of 1900 in which he said:

By giving the children of Africa good training they will be able to possess an indomitable spirits and firm dependence upon God's helping and sustaining hand. And make observations which will be of greatest use of different tribes of African Sons, who only need the quickening and

⁷² George L. Bryson, *The Dark Side of Calvinism* (Santa Ana: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2004), 7.

enlightening influence of the Gospel of Christ to lift them from this state of degradation, and make them suitable members of the Great human family.⁷³

Sentiments like these also mirrored in the visions of other African Christian elite such as Yesaya Zelenji Mwase of *Mpingo wa Afipa wa mu Afrika* who proposed for the establishment of the Nyasaland Blackman's Educational Society that aimed "to improve...the impoverished condition of the Blackman religiously, morally, economically, physically and intellectually by starting a purely native controlled high school or college..."⁷⁴ In sum, the African church recognized the pertinence of heavenly rewards after death, but as Rastafari that followed its footsteps, stressed that life on earth must not be punctuated by ignorance, poverty, exploitation and dependency. Economic self-reliance was of paramount importance.

3.2 Ethiopianism

A major component of African Christianity that influenced the rise and growth of Rastafari in Jamaica and its spread to the black world was Ethiopianism. This was an Afro-Atlantic literary-religious tradition that emerged out of the shared political and religious experiences of Africans from British colonies during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁷⁵ The movement was characterised by the search of the role Africans played in the Bible and African secessionism from European Christian mission

⁷³ George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 2015* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1987), 127.

⁷⁴ T.O. Ranger ed. *Aspects of Central African History* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1968), 201.

⁷⁵ "Ethiopianism," Black Past, accessed June 10, 2016. <http://www.blackpast.org/gah/ethiopianism>.

control. Originating in the USA and West Indies, the movement spread to West Africa and southern Africa in the period between 1872 and 1922.

In the first place, Ethiopianism was a revitalization movement that searched for the glory of the African past and the role Africans played in the Bible as a counter to African enslavement, European racial discrimination and partition of Africa. This was stimulated by the discovery made by African American religious leaders since the days of slavery that the whole of Africa, south of the Sahara, was known as Ethiopia (the land of the scorched ones)⁷⁶ in Greco-Roman and Hebrew classical literature. This convinced them that Africa had a long and glorious history that once flourished before the evils of slavery and colonialism reduced its people into savages and barbarians. As a result, New World Africans had since that time, both in religious and secular sphere, referred to themselves as Ethiopians. The most important African American and West Indian churches that popularized the idea of Africans as Ethiopians were the African Methodist Episcopal Church, National Baptist Convention, Afro-Athlican Constructive Church and the African Orthodox Church, all of which found their way to South Africa. Since some of these churches were associated with Malawian labour migrants such as Hannock Msokera Phiri, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, John Chilembwe and Robert Sambo, the idea of Africans as Ethiopians must have been widespread before the spread of Rastafari to Malawi. It is from this background that when Emperor Haile Selassie I was crowned in

⁷⁶ Robert Jurmain, et al, *Introduction to Physical Anthropology* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997), 133.

November 1930, Marcus Garvey sent a cable that read “Greetings from Ethiopians of the Western world. May your reign be peaceful, prosperous, progressive. Long live your majesty.”⁷⁷

At the same time, black religious leaders, prior to the 1930s, engaged in a rigorous exercise of identifying many references on Ethiopia, the most cited being Psalms 68:31: “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch her hands unto God.” This verse was seen by some as a prophecy that Africa would “soon” experience dramatic political, industrial and economic renaissance. Others interpreted it to mean that someday people of African ancestry would rule the world. It was an African ascendancy which according to Marcus Garvey had been heralded by the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I in Ethiopia:

The Psalmist prophesied that princes would come out of Egypt and Ethiopia would stretch forth her hands unto God. We have no doubt that the time is now come. Ethiopia is now really stretching forth her hands. This great kingdom of the East has been hidden for many centuries, but gradually she is rising to take a leading place in the world and it is for us of the Negro race to assist in every way to hold up to the hand of Emperor Ras Tafari.⁷⁸

Some members of Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, such as Leonard Percival Howell, wrote in 1935 that a golden Sceptre, that had been a symbol of world

⁷⁷ N.S. Murrell et al., eds, *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader* (Temple University Press, 1998), 145.

⁷⁸ N.S. Murrell et al, eds, *Chanting Down Babylon*, 146.

power, was taken from Ethiopia some thousand years ago by Rome and from there by Britain who held world power in succession. The Sceptre was brought back to Ethiopia by the Duke of Gloucester as a present to Emperor Haile Selassie I on his coronation day. On receiving the Sceptre, which was inscribed “Ethiopia shall make her hands reach unto God” on one side and “King of Kings of Ethiopia” on the other, Selassie is said to have recovered world power which the country had lost for centuries. It might been hoped, therefore, that with the coronation of Selassie and all the attention he was given, Ethiopia would become as great as the British empire which as events of the next few years were to show, was an illusion.

The fervency of Ethiopianism also gained momentum when African religious leaders learnt that Ethiopian rulers traced their descent from the union of King Solomon of Israel and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings, Chapter 10). The claim was invigorated during the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I who asserted it and it was strongly believed by his faithful subjects that he was the only true lineal descendant of David and the 225th of a line of Ethiopian kings stretching in unbroken succession from the time of the Queen of Sheba to the present. Deriving their conclusions from the role descendants of David had played in the New Testament, some Ethiopianist religious leaders thought that one day a black messiah would emerge from Ethiopia to redeem the African race religiously, socially and politically. Therefore, while domiciled Africans saw Selassie’s coronation as bringing an era of intense anti-colonial agitation, blacks of the Western world saw him as an instrument that would make their back-to-Africa drive a reality.

This divine providence bestowed on Ethiopian kings was evidenced in 1896 when King Menelik II of Ethiopia defeated an Italian invading army, which after annexing Eritrea in the period between 1887 and 1890, desired to extend their country's control into the Ethiopian heartland. The importance of this victory of an African country over a European imperialist state was noted by S.K.B. Asante in his study of West African Ethiopianism:

After Adowa, Ethiopia became emblematic of African valour and resistance, the bastion of prestige and hope to thousands of Africans who were experiencing the full shock of European conquest, and were beginning to search for an answer to the myth of African inferiority...To articulate West African nationalist intelligentsia of lawyers, merchants, journalists, doctors and clergymen who had since the turn of the century persistently sought to share political power with the colonial ruler, the role of Ethiopia or Ethiopianism in nationalist thought and politics was great and inspiring...In separate African churches, Africans did and could protest imperial rule and built articulate leadership to oppose the domineering and discriminating actions of the colonial officials.⁷⁹

S.K.B. Asante's analysis of the Battle of Adowa brings in another dimension to the concept of Ethiopianism. Here, Ethiopianism was the secession of African Christian elite from European mission control to form their own self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating churches. This secessionism was caused by over-strict disciplining of African converts by European missionaries; the desire to increase personal power and status by administering church property and monies; the creation of tribal church in

⁷⁹ "Ethiopianism," accessed June 11, 2016. <http://www.druglibrary.net/olsen/rastafari/campbell.html>

which due respect was paid to African custom; and a rejection of the colour bar in European-controlled churches.

The development of Ethiopianist churches allowed Africans to control their own churches as well as their own political destiny. Ethiopianist churches provided the early platform on which African nationalism was expressed. Switzer has suggested that it “was probably inevitable that African nationalism would be revealed most militantly in the one institution where Europeans were most vulnerable and Africans had the most opportunity to express themselves relatively free of mission-colonial control.”⁸⁰ Thus, African political assertion, crushed by colonial force, or controlled by legislation, found an outlet in religious independency or Ethiopianism, “a movement of churches founded in Africa, by Africans and primarily for Africans.”⁸¹

African nationalism that demanded for the self-determination of the African peoples in Malawi was launched by Joseph Booth, a British missionary from Australia who came into the country with the Zambezi Industrial Mission (ZIM) in 1892. The slogan that Booth popularised was *Africa for the African*, a phrase derived from his 1897 book that borne the same title. Having its roots in American Black Nationalism, Booth’s *Africa for the African* had two connotations. First, it advocated for African American colonization of Africa, who by providential design had been exposed to the civilizing traits of

⁸⁰ “Mission Christianity, the Colonial Churches and Ethiopianism: 1867-1898,” accessed September 6, 2014. <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/ricsa/projects/sochist/print/c2.1.pdf>.

⁸¹ “Mission Christianity, the Colonial Churches and Ethiopianism”

Christianity, which when time comes, would become vehicles for its transmission to the “dark continent.” In this regard, Joseph Booth instructed the paternalistic European Christian missionaries and exploitative colonial officials to:

Let the African, sympathetically led by his more experienced Afro-American brother, develop his own country, establish his own manufactures, work his own plantations, run his own ships, work his own mines, educate his own people, possess his own mission stations, conserve the wealth accruing from all sources, if possible, for the commonwealth and enlightenment of the people and the glory of God.⁸²

Second, *Africa for the African* proposed an early decolonization of Africa by demanding full political and economic independence.⁸³ Booth saw European colonial administration as an oppressive system that forced Africans out of their lands; used taxation to force Africans to work for Europeans and employed Africans in European wars. As a corrective to these evils, Joseph Booth proposed “the setting of the African...to full political independence as soon as possible, by returning his lands...and by encouraging him to develop his own economic enterprises.”⁸⁴ These polemics set Joseph Booth on the collision course with the British Central African authorities who later accused him of secretly propagating Ethiopian doctrines and pressured him to leave the Protectorate in the period between 1902 and 1904.

⁸² George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*. 111-112.

⁸³ George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*, 110,

⁸⁴ George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*, 110,

Prominent Malawians who were influenced by Joseph Booth's revolutionary political doctrines were Elliot Kamwana and John Chilembwe. Kamwana was a member of the Watchtower who prophesied that a new order of divinely sanctioned African states would begin in 1914. During the interim, Kamwana urged his 10,000 followers to purify themselves and specifically eschewed any violent resistance to British rule. While, there is uncertainty as to Chilembwe's ultimate goal, he also envisioned a divinely inspired African state but, unlike Kamwana, he led his followers in an abortive and perhaps symbolic insurrection in 1915.⁸⁵

The Kamwana and Chilembwe events confirm David Stomont's conclusion that Ethiopianism was not simply a reaction against missionaries, but "a counter-culture aimed at redressing the loss of African independence to colonial regimes."⁸⁶ The spread of Rastafari to Malawi and the rest was due to the movement's identification with the African cause for self-determination. From the beginning, Rastafarians had always provided moral support to Africans fighting against colonial rule and moral sanctions to colonial regimes that were suppressing African independence. For example, the Nyahbinghi Order in Rastafari was named after Queen Nyabinghi, a nineteenth century Ugandan ruler who fought against the British colonialists. Even though the wearing of dreadlocks appears to be a fulfilment of the Nazarite Vow, the hairstyle came into Rastafari in the 1950s after the media published images of the Mau Mau fighters in long

⁸⁵ A. Boahen, ed. *General History of Africa, VII: Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935*. (California: California University Press. 1985), 190.

⁸⁶ "Mission Christianity, the Colonial Churches and Ethiopianism: 1867-1898"

mated hair. Thus, the difference of Ethiopianism in African Christianity and Ethiopianism in Rastafari was that the former was provincial concern with local politics while the latter was pan-African concerned with the whole continent of Africa.

3.3 Garveyism

During the interwar period (1918-1940), the work of the Ethiopian church movement was supplemented and even complemented by the ideas and aspirations of Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940). Born in Jamaica, Garvey began travelling at an early age in search of employment that brought him to Central America and Britain before he moved to the United States of America (USA) in 1916 where he established a chapter of his Universal Negro Improvement Association and the African Communities League (UNIA), an organization he had attempted to set up in his native land in 1914. From its headquarters in Harlem, New York, the UNIA organized parades, published newspapers and arranged Garvey's public addresses from which it promulgated his back-to-Africa philosophy, Pan Africanism, black racial pride, black economic self-sufficiency and prophetic Christianity.

The United States which Marcus Garvey found when he emigrated there in 1916 was not a land of freedom, liberty and opportunity for the majority of African Americans. Their inalienable rights were often punctuated by Jim Crow segregation laws, lynching and racial violence that reached greater proportions after the First World War which African

Americans had fought alongside European Americans ostensibly to defend democracy and self-determination. Combined with his experiences in Central America and Europe and what he had read about European colonial policies in Africa, Marcus Garvey was convinced that the condition of an African, throughout the world, was the same which if summed in one word, was hopeless. Sensing that peaceful racial co-existence could not be achieved, Garvey urged the Negro peoples of the world to concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa, strong enough to lend protection to the members of the race scattered all over the world and to compel the respect of nations and races of the earth. Adopting the slogan "Africa for the Africans, at home and abroad," Garvey promulgated a back-to-Africa philosophy with the aim of stirring the physical repatriation of New World Africans to their motherland, an agitation that threatened the very existence of colonial regimes in Africa. The aim of going back to Africa, however, was not to exercise lordship over the Africans as Europeans had demonstrated, but to establish a brotherly co-operation that would make the interests of the Africans and those of American and West Indian Negroes one and the same, that is, a common partnership to build Africa in the interest of the race.

Even though it is difficult to gauge the sincerity of Garvey's ambitions, his grandiose scheme of back-to-Africa was not without a legacy. Apart from the threat of the imminent arrival of a black king with Negro soldiers to drive the Europeans out of Africa, he managed to secure some few African American families who migrated to Liberia on their own. More importantly, Marcus Garvey's back-to-Africa was seized upon by the

early Rastafarians who envisioned Africa as a paradise or Zion to which all right-minded Negroes would wish to return some day.

In addition, Marcus Garvey's keen observation of the African predicament such as the West African slave trade, New World slavery and racism, colonial occupation of Africa and above all, the absence of an African government, had been the result of disunity among Negroes for the last five hundred years. Launching the Constitution of the UNIA with the motto "One God, One Aim, One Destiny" in 1918, Garvey articulated his brand of Pan Africanism which as he explained in 1921 sought to "unite, into one solid body, the four hundred million Negroes in the world...for the purpose of bettering our industrial, commercial, educational, social and political conditions."⁸⁷ As the unity of the Negro peoples of the world was being sought Garvey was also agitating for the redemption of the African continent, which at that time was under colonial subjugation. As such, the slogan, "Africa for the Africans" did not only refer to New World African colonization of Africa, but diasporic responsibility to work for the emancipation of their less fortunate brothers and sisters on the continent. While all Pan Africanists, like W.E.B. Du Bois, shared all these goals with Garvey, they differed markedly by the approaches with which they intended to achieve them. As Du Bois proposed a conciliatory, passive and compromising solution to the African problem, Garvey's approach was militant and uncompromising, arguing that any sane man, race or nation that desires freedom must

⁸⁷ "If You Believe the Negro Has a Soul," History Matters, accessed July 6, 2016.
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5124>.

first of all think in terms of blood. Responding to his critics, who saw him as a mere adventurer on the American soil, intent on misleading his fellow disenfranchised Negroes, Garvey responded by maintaining that he knew no national boundary where the Negro was concerned. The whole world was his province until Africa was free.⁸⁸

Equally important, the preoccupation of European Americans, after the emancipation of African Americans from slavery, was to condition the latter to continue accepting their inferiority complex in order to exclude them from the economic, social and political benefits that would come with their new found freedom.⁸⁹ To achieve this objective, European Americans presented themselves and their culture as a model of excellence, heroism and humanity while at the same time they tried as much as possible to distort African history, demean African ancestors and despise African culture so as to convince African Americans that they were born in a wrong race of people. In order to reverse this negative outlook on themselves, Marcus Garvey initiated a black pride campaign among African Americans which aimed at deconstructing the negative images they had about themselves and instilling a sense of black pride in them. Through a series of lectures and newspaper publications, Garvey told African Americans that God created all men equal, whether they be white, yellow or black and for any race to admit that it could not do what others had done, was to hurl an insult at the Almighty who created all races equal in the

⁸⁸ Amy Jacques Garvey ed, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (The Journal of Pan African Studies, 2009): 25, <http://www.black-matters.com/books/Marcus-Garvey-Phil-and-Opinions.pdf>

⁸⁹ A.A. Mazrui and C. Wondji, eds. *General History of Africa*, VIII: *Africa Since 1935* (Paris: UNESCO, 1993),. 251.

beginning. In order to dispel white propaganda that presented Africa as a despised place, inhabited by savages and cannibals,⁹⁰ Garvey also informed African Americans that their history did not begin with European contact with Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but preceded it by many millennia. Thus, in one of his public addresses, Garvey advised African Americans to “be as proud of your race today as our fathers were in the days of yore. We have a beautiful history, and we shall create another in the future that will astonish the world.”⁹¹ This message did not only give African Americans a sense of black racial pride and the strength they solely needed in the face of white racism but also provided the basis for the modern Black is Beautiful revival that reached its peak in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States.

Moreover, before Marcus Garvey went to the United States in 1916, he had read Booker T. Washington’s book, *Up from Slavery* (1901), which proposed a bottom-to-top evolutionary scale for the development of African Americans freed from slavery but lacking in formal education to be at par with their white neighbors. African Americans, therefore, were to strive for economic self-reliance and self-help by acquiring skills in agriculture, mechanics and domestic service before aspiring to white collar occupations which would take long to be achieved. Having been impressed by these Washingtonian ideals, Marcus Garvey modeled the UNIA on Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, a black school in Alabama devoted to industrial and moral education for public school teachers by establishing UNIA businesses whose shareholding would be drawn from the

⁹⁰ Amy Jacques Garvey, ed, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, 34.

⁹¹ Amy Jacques Garvey, ed, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, 7.

black world for the benefit of black people. As a tangible manifestation of this desire, Garvey oversaw the establishment of the Black Star Line in May 1919, whose first steamship, the *Yarmouth* (renamed the *Frederick Douglass*) was purchased and launched with much fanfare in September of that year, and the Negro Factories Corporation in January 1920 which operated groceries, laundries, restaurants and other small businesses. Despite their little success and eventual failure, these economic ventures demonstrated the spirit of black economic independence and in the apocalyptic words that sounded like Elliot Kamwana's, Garvey wrote in *The Negro World* of 14 June 1924:

We shall redeem Africa only by unity, diligent research and a resolve to build our own schools, colleges, universities, shops and building our own ships.⁹²

Although Marcus Garvey was secular and temporarily disappointed Robert Athlyi Rogers when he declared that "I have no time to teach religion"⁹³ in 1921, he often couched African political grievances and aspirations in prophetic Christianity that featured a fascinating array of Judeo-Christian biblical texts, rituals, symbolism and metaphor to legitimate his claims for an independent Africa and equal rights in the modern world. In addition to the President-General's religious convictions, UNIA Sunday meetings were half a political rally and half religious revival where delegates sung *From Greenland's Icy Mountains*, *Onward Christian Soldiers*, and *The Universal Ethiopian Anthem* and cited the UNIA universal prayer. It was in this atmosphere that after his release from an American prison after he was convicted of mail fraud, Garvey was deported to Jamaica in

⁹² Robert Trent Vinson, "Sea Kaffirs," 289.

⁹³ Robert Athlyi Rogers, *The Holy Piby* (Hogarth Blake Ltd, 2008), 25.

1927 where he prophesied about the crowning of an African king and its redemptive effect.

In addition, the keen observation that was made at the time was that apart from the Christian God being Caucasian, Allah was an Arab and Buddha was Asian and what was missing on the spectrum was a black God who could be identified with the four hundred million Africans living in the world. Thus, in order to fill the gap and make Christianity and the black church relevant to the black struggle for power and salvation, Garvey contended that:

If the white man has the idea of a white God, let him worship his God as he desires. If the yellow man's God is of his race let him worship his God as he sees fit. We, as Negroes, have found a new ideal. Whilst our God has no color, yet it is human to see everything through one's own spectacles, and since the white people have seen their God through white spectacles, we have only now started out (late though it be) to see our God through our own spectacles...We Negroes believe in the God of Ethiopia, the everlasting God-God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, the one God of all ages. That is the God in whom we believe, but we shall worship him through the spectacles of Ethiopia.⁹⁴

Even though Marcus Garvey was not explicit in revealing the colour of God he was describing, the God to be seen through the spectacles of Ethiopia was Black. Addressing delegates who had attended the Convention of the UNIA in 1924, Garvey described

⁹⁴ Amy Jacques Garvey. ed. *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. 29.

“Jesus as a Black Man of Sorrows and Mary as a Black Madonna.”⁹⁵ At the same time, seeing God through the spectacles of Ethiopia could be akin to Yesaya Zilenji Mwase’s idea “to nationalize and naturalize God”⁹⁶ when he founded the Blackman’s Church of Africa because the concept did not necessarily connote that God had color but that he should be adapted to African situations and experiences.

From its headquarters in Harlem, New York, Garveyism spread throughout the black world and UNIA claimed an unprecedented large number of followers. However, Garvey’s counter-hegemonic ideas made the colonial government to ban UNIA organization in Malawi. Despite the ban, Garveyism still reached the country in two main ways. First, Garveyite literature was smuggled into Malawi through underground cells operating to evade colonial suspicions. For example, Issa M. Lawrence, through his connection with Dr. J.E. East in America and Dr. Daniel Malikebu in Liberia, received and smuggled *The Negro World*, Garvey’s weekly newspaper into the country which he then distributed or read to the remnant members of Chilembwe’s church in Chiradzulu. Second, Garveyism was brought to Malawi by labour migrants deported or returning from South Africa Zimbabwe. For instance, G.C. Kalinda, the president-general of the United Native Improvement Association, Robert Sambo of the Rhodesian ICU and John Mansell Mphamba of the African Orthodox Church were Nyasaland natives who were

⁹⁵ Cardinal Aswad Walker, “Princes Shall Come Out of Egypt,” 194.

⁹⁶ Wiseman C. Chirwa, “Masokwa Elliot Kenan Kamwana Chirwa: His Religious and Political Activities, and Impact in Nkhata Bay, 1908-1956” in *Journal of Social Science* 12. No. 3 (1985): 37.

deported from Southern Rhodesia during the interwar period because of their involvement in the Garvey movement.⁹⁷

By the late 1920s, however, Garveyism began to wane because Marcus Garvey was arrested and convicted of mail fraud in 1923 and pardoned but deported to Jamaica in 1927. In 1935, Marcus Garvey relocated to Britain and died on 10 June 1940. As Marcus Garvey slid into oblivion, his revolutionary message was continued and spread to the four corners of the world by Rastafarians. The role of Rastafari in this regard was appreciated by Marcus Garvey Jr. who stated that the movement:

Held the torch of Africa alight at a trying time when the forces of evil had driven my father from the land...It is they who now make it possible for me to emerge to a much easier task than I would have had if they had not existed.⁹⁸

Marcus Garvey Jr.'s observation was not an exaggeration because although Marcus Garvey did not agree with the early Rastafarians on the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I and the use of marijuana for religious purposes,⁹⁹ the movement came into existence because of the prophesy he made in 1927 about the crowning of an African king. The prophecy, which was seen to be fulfilled with the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930 in Ethiopia, elevated Marcus Garvey to the position of prophet or John

⁹⁷ Michael O. West, "The Seeds are Sown: The Impact of Garveyism in Zimbabwe in the Interwar Years," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2/3 (2002): 335, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3097617>.

⁹⁸ Stephen A. King., *Reggae, Rastafari and the Rhetoric of Social Control*. (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi. 2002), 51.

⁹⁹ N.S. Murrell et al eds, *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader* (Temple University Press, 1998), 145.

the Baptist, this time prophesying the Second Advent of Christ. In Africa Ethiopia International Black Congress (Bobo Shanti) mansion of Rastafari Garvey became part of the Holy Trinity comprised of King (Emperor Haile Selassie), Prophet (Marcus Garvey) and Priest (Prince Charles Edwards). Being a prophet, Marcus Garvey became an authoritative figure whose philosophy and opinions, generated during his activism were taken wholesale to form the doctrinal content for the movement.

3.4 Cultural Nationalism

According to Yoshino (1992), cultural nationalism aims to regenerate the national community by creating, preserving, or strengthening a people's cultural identity when it is felt to be lacking or threatened. Since the fifteenth century, many African cultures have been going through the threat of annihilation due to the processes of cultural homogenization caused by forces of culture contact and change such as the slave trade, the spread of Christianity and Islam as well as colonialism. As a result, African Christian elite, nationalist politicians, historians and literary scholars rose to defend African culture by invoking the African golden age, expressing African pride, praising some aspects of African culture, rewriting African history and decolonizing African literature.

The most important theme of African literature that appeared from the beginning of the twentieth century was the loss of the African golden age. The golden age was a mythical period in history when Africa made great accomplishments in statehood, heroism, art,

science and literature as exemplified by the civilizations of Egypt, Timbuktu and Ethiopia. This era ended with the arrival of Europeans who converted Africans to Christianity and established colonial rule that challenged many aspects of indigenous cultures and African political sovereignty. The setting of the novels written to convey this period of success and its subsequent tragedy often depicted the past as more satisfying than the present. The present was beset by social ills caused by the presence of alien rule and assimilation of foreign ways of life. The characters coming out of these novels sought to revitalize society by leading rebellions against the new establishment with the aim to drive the Europeans away from their land. It was believed that the eradication of foreigners would bring back the society's lost glory, the African golden age.

One of the novels that presented the theme of the African golden age was John Buchan's *Prester John* that was published in 1910. *Prester John* was a novel that was based on the hagiography of Prester John, the legendary Christian patriarch and king of Abyssinia of the fifteenth century. In the novel, Buchan wrote about the great native rising in South Africa that was led by an African clergyman, John Laputa. Laputa had gone to United States of America for education and returned back with a determination to found a great African empire and to drive the hated white intruders into the sea. David Crawford, an assistant storekeeper, who had been spying on the independent African preacher, reports that:

He [Laputa] spoke of the great days of Prester John and a hundred names I had never heard of. He pictured the heroic age of his nation, when every man was a warrior and

hunter, and rich kraals stood in the spots now desecrated by the white man, and cattle wandered on a thousand hills. Then he told tales of white infamy, lands snatched from their rightful possessors, unjust laws which forced the Ethiopian to the bondage of a despised caste, the finger of scorn everywhere, and the mockery word...He concluded, I remember, with a picture of the overthrow of the alien, and the golden age which would dawn for the oppressed. Another Ethiopian empire would arise, so majestic that the white man everywhere would dread its name, so righteous that all men under it would live in ease and peace.¹⁰⁰

Despite the fact that many novelists saw the colonial establishment in this way, it should be pointed out that the writers were educated individuals drawn from many social strata. The golden age they evoked, therefore, was “a time not of primitive simplicity but one in which the nation was a dynamic high culture, harmonizing all dimensions of human experience...in active contact with other great centres, and making a permanent contribution to human civilization.”¹⁰¹

While Ethiopianism was a theme that guided African literature in Anglophone Africa, the main subject of literary works in Francophone Africa was *négritude*. *Négritude* was a literary movement that began among French speaking African and Caribbean writers in Paris as a protest against French colonial rule and the policy of assimilation. The French policy of assimilation entailed the conversion of colonial peoples into cultural Frenchmen by training them in French language and culture. Those who had achieved that status

¹⁰⁰ “Prester John,” Pink Monkey, accessed September 15, 2016,, <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/digi343.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ John Hutchinson, “Re-interpreting Cultural Nationalism.” In *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 45, no 3 (1999), 402.

were given full legal and political rights of a French citizen including the right to send representatives to the French Parliament in Paris. Threatened by the trivialization and ethnocide of African cultures Francophone writers coined the word *nègritude* as a new sense of self-black pride. It was to be seen as “a protest of men largely assimilated into European culture, but for all that unable to escape from the colour of their skins.”¹⁰²

Nègritude was a product of the encounter, in Paris, in the late 1920s, of three black students coming from different French colonies: Aimè Cèsaire (1913-2008) from Martinique, Lèon Gontran Damas from Guiana (1912-1978) and Lèopold Sèdar Senghor (1906-2001) from Senegal. Senghor has written that in his revolt against his teachers at College Libermann high school in Dakar, he had discovered *nègritude* before having the concept by refusing to accept their claim that through their education they were building Christianity and civilization in his soul where there was nothing but paganism and barbarism before. On his part, Cèsaire proclaimed the superiority of African culture despite the fact that its people invented neither powder nor the compass, tamed neither gas nor electricity and explored neither the seas nor the skies.¹⁰³ In this regard, the proponents of *negritude* were asking to be valued precisely because they were unique and so in a position to make a unique contribution to mankind. However, the ideologues of *nègritude* recognized the benefits of Western education and technology thus advocated for the creation of a new African culture that would draw selectively from both European

¹⁰² Bentley Le Baron, “Negritude: A Pan-African Ideal?” *Ethics* 76, no. 4 (July 1966): 268, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2379233>.

¹⁰³ A.A.Mazrui and C. Wondji, eds. *General History of Africa 8: Africa since 1935*. (Paris: UNESCO 1993),. 556.

and traditional cultures. At the time, Senghor was calling for a synthesis of civilizations, retaining the fecund elements of each. His objective was “a dynamic symbiosis...a cultural blending.”¹⁰⁴

The self-affirmation of black peoples articulated by the poets of *nègritude* was also echoed by Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, a nationalist politician who led Malawi to independence in 1964. With the aim to build his newly independent nation culturally and morally, Dr. Banda disagreed with the European view of African culture as backward, heathen and superstitious by praising some of its aspects. In his address to the delegates who attended the Annual Convention of the Malawi Congress Party in Zomba in 1972, Dr. Banda told Europeans and their African admirers that:

We may have had no books, no written Bibles. But Europeans or people of other races from Asia or Europe make a serious mistake if they think that because we had no written language, no written book we had no idea of what was wrong, bad or good, right or wrong, proper or improper, decent or indecent. They make a serious mistake if they think that because we had no written language, no Bible, we had no code of ethics, no code of conduct, no code of personal behaviour. Because we had these things...And our code of ethic was very, very strict, whether in case of law, in case of religion, in case of ordinary social behaviour.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Bentley Le Baron, “Negritude,” 269.

¹⁰⁵ His Excellency the Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda: Speech at the Opening of 1972 Annual Convention of the Malawi Congress Party, Zomba, 10th September, 1972.

It is easy to dismiss Dr. Banda as a political opportunist who manipulated cultural symbols in order to achieve power but he must be considered as a cultural nationalist who believed that a common pride in a nation's history and culture allowed for social solidarity and a powerful cultivation of individuality.

As African literature was developing, issues of effective communication and African identity became matters of great importance. As a result, writers in the language and literature departments in many African universities began the process of decolonizing African literature. According to Chimombo (1988), the main question that lingered at the time was: what was African literature and what was the appropriate response to it?¹⁰⁶ The search for the answers to this question led to the publication of *Black Aesthetics: Papers from a Colloquium Held at the University of Nairobi* (1971) and *Towards Defining African Aesthetics* (1982).¹⁰⁷ The resolution emanating from these works bordered on defining authentic African aesthetics that were to be based on the culture and the language of the people they were supposed to serve. Literature intended for the Malawi audience, therefore, was to draw from the experiences of the people and expressed in their languages such as Chichewa, Chitumbuka or Chiyao for it to be lucid and accessible. The end result of this process would be the curtailment of the domineering effect of imported imagery and English that had continued the colonization of Africa long after the British had gone. This was important because, as the German philosopher,

¹⁰⁶ Steve Chimombo, *Malawi Oral Literature: The Aesthetics of Indigenous Art* (Zomba: Centre for Social Research, 1988), 1.

¹⁰⁷ Steve Chimombo, *Malawi Oral Literature*, 1.

Herder puts it, “language expressed the inner consciousness of the nation; its distinctive ethos, continuous identity in history and its moral unity.”¹⁰⁸

At the time when writers were decolonizing African literature, nationalist historians and Africanists began the systematic study of oral traditions to construct African history to dispel the nineteenth and twentieth century European belief that African societies had no history prior to the arrival of European missionaries and colonial officials. The history produced was intended to prove that the impenetrable north-south divide had never existed, reclaim the artistry of Africa’s ancient monuments and uncover events that were ignored by colonial historians. In their glorification of ancient African history, the nationalist historians equated the civilizations of Greece and Rome to those of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Even in Malawi, primary and secondary school pupils still learn that seventeenth century Maravi state system was an empire that encompassed the greater parts of eastern Zambia, central and southern Malawi and northern Mozambique despite the fact that some scholars have argued that the degree of political unity achieved over this wide area is uncertain.¹⁰⁹

Being a movement that hinged on Marcus Garvey’s philosophy of black pride and later Walter Rodney’s Black Power, Rastafari has always expressed and communicated its cultural nationalism in publications, chants, songs, sermons and prayers. In *The Promised*

¹⁰⁸ John Hutchinson, “Re-Interpreting Cultural Nationalism,” 393.

¹⁰⁹ See Kings M. Phiri, “Early Malawi Kingship and the Dynamics of Pre-Colonial Che.wa Society,” *Journal of Social Science II* (1973), 21.

Key, Leonard Howell wrote that black people of Ethiopia were extraordinarily blended into a refined fashion that cannot be met with in any other part of the world.¹¹⁰ Like Marcus Garvey, Rastafarians only advanced the positive aspects of African history that would show the valour and glory of the African past. The Nyahbinghi chant, *Proud to be Black* echo the sentiments of the poets of negritude and nationalist historians by stating that:

We Afrikans have a glorious history
We built the first University Sankore
Imhotep the father of medicine
He was an African
Proud to be Black I am an Ithiopian¹¹¹

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter traced the roots of Rastafari ideology in Malawi. It has established that the spread of Rastafari was aided by the work of earlier counter-hegemonic ideologies that had been extant since the colonial period. The first of these were European Christianity that provided doctrinal material and created African Christianity that provided Rastafari with antithetical religious doctrine. The second was Ethiopianism, a component of African Christianity that comprised the search for the role Africans played in the Bible and African secession from European mission control. This enabled Rastafarians to find their place in the Bible and identify themselves with many groups fighting for independence. The third was the spread of Garveyism whose pan-Africanism inspired the

¹¹⁰ G.G. Maragh. *The Promised Key*. 5.

¹¹¹ "Chants from the Ivine Order of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I The First," 8.

rise of Rastafari in Jamaica and its spread to other parts of the world including Malawi. Lastly, the chapter has established that the cultural nationalism of the African educated elite sowed the seeds of Rastafari by their advocacy for the glorification the African past, affirmation of being black and rewriting African history. The next chapter analyses how these counter-hegemonic ideologies were consolidated by Jamaican reggae music to yield various Rastafarian groups in Malawi from the early 1970s onwards. As compared to European Christianity, therefore, Rastafari did not start from scratch because it did not bring a totally new religious and political ideology.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSOLIDATION OF RASTAFARI

4.0 Introduction

Chapter three dealt with the ideational sources that laid the foundation for Rastafari from the colonial period to the early 1970s when the movement began to spread from Jamaica. The present chapter is concerned with examining the factors that led to the spread of reggae music and the messages therein that spread the gospel of Rastafari. The chapter establishes that reggae music was the main factor which led to the spread of Rastafari to Malawi and other parts of the world where the music gained currency. The chapter covers the period between the early 1970s to 2018.

4.1 Reggae's International Breakthrough

In his illumination of the place of the music of the Kachamba Brothers and its place in southern Africa, Gerhard Kubik noted that Malawi's cultural geography was that of the border zone, where the influence of two large music areas in the evolution of contemporary music in sub-Saharan Africa was discernible: the South African forms and the Congo guitar styles.¹¹² Here, Kubik was referring to the convergence of South African *kwela*, *jive* and *simanje-manje* and Congolese *rumba* music genres that had been

¹¹² Gerhard Kubik, "The Kachamba Brothers' Band: A Study of Neo-Traditional Music in Malawi," *The Journal of the Institute of African Studies* (Lusaka: University of Zambia, 1974): 12.

spreading to Malawi through records, radio, film and direct contact since the late 1950s. At the time, Malawians were also exposed to the East African guitar music by way of radio from Dar-es-Salaam and records made in Nairobi. But, what Gerhard Kubik omitted in his delineation of Malawi's cultural geography was the inclusion of the United States of America (USA) as a source of African American music genres such as rhythm and blues, soul, jazz and hip hop and Britain as a source of Western music such as rock and punk and a conduit of Jamaican music such as ska, rocksteady, reggae and dance hall. It was this later stream which played a major role in spreading Rastafari and all the fashions and fads associated with Western music.

In the first place, Jamaicans escaping Third World poverty had been migrating to Britain since the late 1940s. By the mid-1960s, the number of people migrating to Britain increased because of the economic recession that hit the Island and the lawlessness that followed as a result of the emergence of the Rude Boy counterculture groups. As soon as ska took off in 1962, those on the journey to Britain carried newly recorded music which was introduced to Jamaicans already established in London. At the same time, many talented musicians who felt that their music careers did not match with the monetary rewards they had hoped for also followed the trail of fellow Jamaicans to Britain. Since the racism of the period barred blacks from clubs and other centers of entertainment, West Indian communities used to organize their own concerts, sound systems and parties known as Blue Nights where Jamaican music was played. These events were important in breaking Jamaican music in the United Kingdom in that by the early 1970s ska and early

reggae became popular among the molds and skinheads, especially after the release of Max Romeo's risqué lyrical song, *Wet Dreams*. The events were also important in that they led to the birth of British reggae bands such as UB 40, Steel Pulse, Aswad, Matumbi, Black Slate, Musical Youth and Misty 'n' Roots whose greatness rivaled the Jamaican music industry.

Furthermore, sensing the large following Jamaican music was enjoying in Britain, British record companies such as Island Records (1959), Trojan Records (1968) and Greensleeves (1975) began recording Jamaican popular music for the Jamaican audience. Jamaican artists and producers signed to these labels were often invited to Britain for auditions and recording sessions but, it was also common that songs recorded on Studio One or Treasure Isle in Jamaica would also appear on Island or Trojan Records in Britain. The British record rebels, then, were important in spreading Jamaican music and Rastafari throughout the globe in two main ways. First, in an attempt to sell the music which they had produced, the British record labels organized concerts not just in Britain but also in other parts of the world in order to break their artists as it was believed that people were more likely to buy music whose artists had seen performing on stage. Second, the record companies had monopoly over the marketing, distribution and exportation of records to other countries. It was through the efforts of British record companies that Jamaican reggae music hit the African market by the early 1970s as Sebastian Clarke points out:

Some of the white record companies motivation for entering the reggae music business is the large market for reggae in Africa...Since the early 1950s Calypso, and later all forms of Jamaican music, sold massively on that continent, so it does not come as a surprise that this market absorbs a greater proportion of sales [in reggae] than that of Europe or America.¹¹³

Meanwhile, testimonies made by Anglo-Jamaicans and music commentators in Britain indicated that during its formative years, the British public and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had prejudice against Jamaican music largely bordered on racialism. It seems, though, that this attitude began to change by the early 1970s so that people began to listen to reggae music on the BBC. For example, The Wailers played on BBC 2's *The Old Grey Whistle Test* in 1973 and later, reggae artists such as Bob Marley, Dennis Brown and UB40 began to be featured on *Top of the Pops* alongside rock greats such as the Beatles, Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton. As the interest of the music grew, the BBC began to dedicate special programs for reggae music such as *Reggae at the BBC* that featured various Jamaican and Anglo-Jamaican reggae artists and *Reggae: The Story of Jamaican Music*, a three-volume documentary that traced the evolution of Jamaican music from ska, rocksteady, reggae to dancehall. Since the BBC had a wider international audience than many of the local radio stations, reggae music acquired the same publicity enjoyed by rock and punk. It is not surprising, therefore, that songs originally sung by Jamaican reggae artists were covered by British rock artists which must aroused further interest in the music.

¹¹³ Neil J. Savishinsky, "Rastafari in the Promised Land," 22.

Another important factor that helped spread reggae music around the world was the production of the Jamaican film, *The Harder They Come* that was released in 1972. The film, that starred the rising reggae singer, Jimmy Cliff, was about the struggle for survival by Ivan Martin who had been lured by the prospects of a better life in the city and left the countryside.¹¹⁴

While the downtrodden masses of the world went on to identify themselves with the struggles of Ivan Martin as Jimmy Cliff is known in the film, *The Harder They Come* helped in spreading reggae music around the globe because it was released together with a soundtrack album whose songs could be heard playing in the background of the film. The album included Jimmy Cliff's songs such as *You Can Get It If You Really Want It*, *Many Rivers to Cross*, *The Harder They Come* and *Sitting in Limbo* as well as other artists' tunes like Scotty's *Draw Your Brakes*, The Melodians' *By the Rivers of Babylon*, The Slickers' *Johnny Too Bad*, Desmond Dekker's *007 (Shanty Town)* and Toots and the Maytals' *Pressure Drop*. *The Harder They Come* therefore, "became, before the success of Bob Marley, the gateway to introduce reggae music to the international audience it now enjoys.

Indeed, reggae reached its greatest heights in the early 1970s with the rise of Bob Marley on the world music scene. His success was largely attained due to his association with

¹¹⁴ Chris Salewicz, *Bob Marley: The Untold Story* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009), 203.

Island Records in Great Britain. Under the auspices of Island Records, Bob Marley toured the world, reaching as far as the United States of America, Africa and Japan, “wailing” the Rasta message. The good reputation of Island Records enabled Bob Marley to sell his records in Britain and beyond. For an artist to be broken into the wider world, therefore, depended on the stature of the record label one was associated with. In addition, as opposed to his militant colleagues in the former Wailers, Bob Marley sought success above anything else and as a result he was favoured more for being patient and cooperative by record label managers. It was for this reason that Chris Blackwell the manager of Island Records did whatever he could in order to separate Bob Marley from Neville Livingston and Peter Tosh soon after the release of their first world acclaim album, *Catch a Fire* in 1973. At the same time, the music of Bob Marley was often sought after by many people because of the subject matter it addressed. In comparison to his contemporaries, Bob Marley was the first to compose and sing songs of revolution, morality and injustice infused with Rastafari doctrine that were to define the character of roots reggae of the 1970s. In flavoring his music this way, Bob Marley reached out to all those people who felt deprived when they compared their own well-being to that of others, thus earning him the position of a redeemer among the Maoris of New Zealand.¹¹⁵ Finally, the circumstances of Bob Marley’s death on 11 May 1981 spurred an extraordinary interest in him as eulogies and tributes began pouring in. In the ensuing months, for example, Culture, a Jamaican vocal trio, released a eulogistic song, *Brother Bob Marley* that expressed the world’s great sense of loss for his passing and another tributary song, *Psalm of Bob Marley* that mentions some of the important songs Bob

¹¹⁵ Chris Salewicz, *Bob Marley*, 410.

Marley recorded, thereby immortalizing him and his music. Given all these attributes it is no exaggeration for his biographer, Chris Salewicz to point out that “without Bob Marley most of the world would never have learned of Jah Rastafari, or entered into any debate whatsoever about the possible divinity of Haile Selassie.”¹¹⁶ Like Apostle Paul in Christianity, then, Bob Marley made an insignificant movement that would have been confined to a small island of Jamaica into a global, universalizing religion.

The most memorable event that helped the spread of reggae, especially in southern Africa, was the performance of Bob Marley as part of Zimbabwe’s national independence celebrations on the nights of 17 and 18 April, 1980. The story has it that as the war of liberation was raging on, Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces had been listening to Bob Marley’s songs and were inspired by the messages in his lyrics. On his part, in *Zimbabwe*, a song he had written during his pilgrimage to Ethiopia in 1978, Bob Marley had also expressed his unswerving support for the country’s freedom movement. Thus, when the imminent Zimbabwean government sent Job Kadengu and Gordon Muchanyuka to Jamaica to ask him to perform during Zimbabwe’s independence celebrations, Bob Marley, who was already on a mission to expand his appeal to the black race immediately accepted their request and volunteered to cover all the costs out of his own pocket. The Marley party arrived in Rhodesia on 16 April and played before “over a hundred thousand people, certainly the largest black audience.”¹¹⁷ This visit was important in that at the time, Bob Marley was in his prime and that alone attracted a lot of

¹¹⁶ Chris Salewicz, *Bob Marley*, 50..

¹¹⁷ Chris Salewicz, *Bob Marley*, 372.

people's attention to Zimbabwe. The performance was also crucial in the spread of reggae because people who had never heard or had no love for it became its ardent fans. It is not surprising, therefore, that the event fired Malawians with envy sparked by news reports about frequent visits by Jamaican and Anglo-Jamaican musicians in neighboring countries that were conspicuously missing in Malawi during the reign of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. As a result, a rumor used to circulate among the youth in the late 1980s that Bob Marley had planned a stop-over concert in Malawi when he came for Zimbabwe's independence celebrations but he was turned away at the border because he had refused to have his long mated hair cut.

Another important factor that led to the spread of reggae was the message embedded in the music. When the music began in 1969, it became fashionable for both old and upcoming musicians to profess Rastafari. Except for Jimmy Cliff who converted to Islam in 1975, almost all prominent Jamaican and Anglo-Jamaican reggae musicians embraced Rastafari and the songs they sung were informed by the teachings of their new religion. Since Rastafari found its fertile ground in the ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica, and deprived West Indian communities in East London, Britain, the reggae musicians also sung of their woes, tragedies and despair and the need for change. It was this message that made people in a similar situation to identify with the music as the Nigerian musician, Tera Kota, observes:

The problem with people in the diaspora is similar if not identical to the situation here in Africa. The colonies are fighting for freedom, the independent states are fighting

against neocolonialism, and the overall effect is perpetual instability, with the common man feeling the blunt of it all. Living in a depressed economic condition where the standard of living is deplorable, there will always be a cry for improvement especially where protest cannot be directly registered. It is inevitable to embrace the messages and philosophies of reggae music as a means of protest against the oppressors and self-aggrandizement.¹¹⁸

It should be noted, however, that the message, what Bob Marley called positive vibration, was not just protest against unbridled capitalism, but also prescribed the means how the oppressed could survive in that cut-throat cultural, economic, political and social milieu. The liberating power of the music was also appreciated by Jamaican musicians themselves as epitomized by the advice Michael Ibo Cooper gave to Denno, one of the upcoming Jamaican artist, in 2011 that:

So Yute [youth], I want you to listen to what an elder is saying about what we did to get the music out there. It wasn't hype. It was the message, without apology. The message that made Nelson Mandela come outta jail and Winnie Mandela tell Mutabaruka seh the ANC [African National Congress] was singing our music. And as Bunny Rags said, the big music from a little island made us a world power without gun nor bomb nor financial impact. That is essentially what it is.¹¹⁹

Beside the importance of the message in the music, some claimed that reggae music was popular in sub-Saharan Africa because reggae, alongside American rhythm and blues, soul, Jazz and hip hop had African roots whose antecedents were brought to the New

¹¹⁸ Tera Kota quoted in Neil J. Savishinsky, "Rastafari in the Promised Land," 23.

¹¹⁹ Basil Walters "Ibo Cooper's Challenge to Artistes," *Jamaica Observer*, April 29, 2011.

World by African slaves in the sixteenth century. They contend that even though the music has changed over time as a result of Western influences, reggae has retained many of the principles of African music such as the emphasis on rhythm, call-and-response, use of drums, participation and the fulfilling of functions that other societies delegate to other institutions such as church, school and hospital.¹²⁰ One of the supporters of this claim is Tera Kota, a Nigerian singer who observes that:

The fact that the original roots of reggae music is Africa facilitates the swiftness in rekindling the flames of the music, especially after its refinement with scientific tools and instruments in the Western world, even though the messages remain very original and unadulterated. Just like cocoa seeds taken away raw and brought back fully refined as cocoa drinks, beverages and body lotions, it will always find a place in the heart of our people all times.¹²¹

It should be pointed out, however, that the African youth who sought to establish an equal claim to the origins of reggae by capitalizing on the similarities the music has with African traditional music, were those too modern to identify with the latter.¹²²

The final factor that led to the spread of reggae to the wider world was that many countries used English as the official language of communication and business. Although reggae was sung in *Patwa*, a form of Jamaican Pidgin English, people in Anglophone countries were in a better position to grasp the messages embedded in the music as

¹²⁰John M. Chernoff, "The Rhythmic Medium in African Music," *New Literary History* 22, no.4 (1991): 1093-1102, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/469080>.

¹²¹Neil J. Savishinsky, "Rastafari in the Promised Land," 23.

¹²²Horace Campbell, "Rastafari as Pan-Africanism in the Caribbean and Africa," *African Journal of Political Economy* 2, no. 1 (1988): 76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23500303>.

compared to people in Francophone and Rusophone countries. Except for Alpha Blondie in Ivory Coast, many of the successful reggae artists such as Evi-Edna Ogholi in Nigeria and Lucky Dube in South Africa benefited from this uniformity of language.

4.2 Propagation of Rastafari in Malawi

The most unique about Rastafari is that it represents the only contemporary social movement whose propagation was directly tied to a medium of popular culture, reggae music. That reggae music could play such a role is not surprising because scholars who have applied the socio-communication model to the study of music have concluded that music is a major tool for propagating group ideologies and identities and as such serves as an important device for reinforcing collective actions and for delineating the lines of inclusion for social groups. Thus, prior to the emergence of Rastafari in Malawi, reggae music conveyed the teachings of Rastafari such as the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, repatriation, pan-Africanism, Afro-Israelism, and the importance of marijuana. Since the music articulated Christian, Ethiopian, Garveyite and nationalist doctrines, Rastafari tended to attract people with a Christian background as opposed to those from other religions.

The most important Rastafarian doctrine brought by roots reggae was the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. While early African Christianity and Garveyism just proclaimed the blackness of God, Rastafarians went a little bit further by espousing their own principle of the humanity of God and the divinity of man by pointing to

Selassie as an unspiritual and non-transcendental living God who lived among them and within them. The artists who worked to prove the divinity of Selassie portrayed him as a punisher of sinners and a redeemer of the downtrodden people. In his 1968 song, *Selassie is a Chapel*, Bob Marley preached to his audience and advised them to “serve the living God and live” and “take your troubles to Selassie.”¹²³ When Haile Selassie died on 28 August 1975, Rastafarians, basing their argument on the principle of the immortality of the gods, refused to accept that he had died and fashioned it as a disappearance or retreat from public, active life. At the time, Burning Spear sang that the news that Selassie had died was a conspiracy spread in order to fool the black population.¹²⁴ Just like all gods do, he would come in his own time, set by him to reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

Another important doctrine that was carried further afield by reggae music was the concept of repatriation advanced by Marcus Garvey at the beginning of the twentieth century. While Garvey only visualized the physical removal of people of African descent from the New World to Africa, the Rastafarian vision of repatriation was both physical and spiritual. As a physical place, Rastafarians, like Garvey before them, believed that Africa was a fatherland where black people must return to just as the Israelites embarked on a migration from Egypt to Canaan, escaping from slavery inflicted on them by a succession of Pharaohs who came after the death of Joseph. Since blacks were emancipated from slavery in 1838, their continued sojourn and suffering in the Western

¹²³ Bob Marley, 1968. *Selassie is the Chapel*. Cond. Bob Marley, Comp. Bob Marley.

¹²⁴ Burning Spear. *Jah Jah No Dead*. Cond. Winston Rodney. Comp. Winston Rodney.

Hemisphere were unnecessary and had to go. Bob Marley's song, *Exodus*, delivers this kind of a sermon:

Yeah-Yeah-Yeah, Well!
Uh! Open your eyes and look within,
Are you satisfied (with the life you're living) Uh!
We know where we're going, uh!
We know where we're from.
We're leaving Babylon,
We're going to our father land.¹²⁵

As a spiritual place, Africa was an idealized place, the kingdom of Zion, a promised land, and the land of milk and honey that was reserved for those diasporic Africans who had distinguished themselves from the rest by their highest level of fitness, not in Darwinian terms, but by leading a pious and righteous lifestyle as prescribed by the teachings of Rastafari. The song which typifies this stance is Barry Brown's *No Wicked Shall Enter the Kingdom of Zion*, which one of its verses says:

So if you are a wicked man you cannot
Enter the kingdom of Zion, oh no
If you are evil woman you cannot
Enter the promised land of Ethiopia, ah
Better call on to Jah Jah, oh yeah
I and I, Father, hmm
Selah, oh yeah
Amlak, ah¹²⁶

It should be borne in mind that this spiritual repatriation is informed by Rastafarian millennialism which sees salvation as terrestrial rather than otherworldly.

¹²⁵ Bob Marley and the Wailers. 1977. *Exodus*. Cond. Bob Marley, Comp. Bob Marley.

¹²⁶ Barry Brown. 1979. *No Wicked Shall Enter the Kingdom of Zion*. Cond. Bunny Lee, Comp. Barry Brown.

A further fundamental Rastafarian teaching that was transmitted by roots reggae was Afro-Israelism. Afro-Israelism was the belief that black people were the true Israelites and those Jews whom Hitler and the Nazis exterminated were merely false Jews of which the scripture has said “woe unto them that call themselves Israel and they are not.”¹²⁷ This belief was unequivocally expressed in Steel Pulse’s anthemic song, *Not King James Version* which stated that:

A dis ya version,
A no King James version.
'Cause out of Africa,
Came the Garden of Eden (Chorus).

Hidden from me I was never told, no way!
Ancient prophets black and gold.
Like Daniel, King David and Abraham;
Israel were all black men.
I don't wanna lose you!
Japhet tried his best to erase,
The godly parts we played.
I says he came and took,
And never mention in his book.. so!¹²⁸

The background to this exegesis was that The King James Version of the Bible, translated out of the original tongues and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesty’s special command, is said to have been distorted and confused at the time when King James I commissioned its translation in 1604 in order “to make God

¹²⁷ Smith et al, “The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica. Part I,” 19.

¹²⁸ Steel Pulse. 1986. *Not King James Version*. Cond. Jimmy “Senyan” Hayes. Comp. David Hinds.

and his prophets Caucasian instead of black.”¹²⁹ In *Not King James Version*, Steel Pulse is trying to give a “true” account of the history of black people as it was written in the original Bible that was believed to have been written in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia and allegedly the original language of mankind.

The additional subject matter that was taught by reggae music was black pride originally put forward by Marcus Garvey and later, the poets of Nègritude. The music that ensued expressed the self-affirmation of black peoples and celebrated the achievements their ancestors accomplished before the slave trade, Christian missionaries and colonialism led them to a dead end. The golden age the musicians evoked portrayed Africans as people who first developed writing and reading; excelled in mathematics and physics; succeeded in building the first University of Sankore as one of their own, Imhotep became the father of medicine. Again, the song that epitomized this glorification of the African past was *Not King James Version* whose verse said:

In Esau's chapter of history,
So little mention of you and me.
We rulers of kingdoms and dynasties,
Explored this Earth for centuries.
I don't wanna lose ya!
Phoenicians, Egyptians and the Moors,
Build civilisation, that's for sure.
Creators of the alphabet,
While the West illiterate.. yeh!¹³⁰

¹²⁹ “The Holy Piby: The Holy Text of the Rastafari,” Acobas, accessed April 14, 2016.
<http://www.acobas.net/teaching/activities/rastafari/rastawebquest/holypiby.html>.

¹³⁰ Steel Pulse. *Not King James Version*. Cond. Jimmy “Senyan” Hayes. Comp. David Hinds. 1986.

However, the most controversial Rastafarian practice that was advertised by reggae music was the use of marijuana for religious sacrament. The main protagonist for the smoking of marijuana was Peter Tosh who saw a danger in smoking cigarettes and a benefit in smoking marijuana. In two of his songs, *Legalize It* (1976) and *Bush Doctor* (1978), Peter Tosh claimed that marijuana was a cure for many diseases such as glaucoma, asthma, flu, tuberculosis and *umara composis*. In these songs, Tosh argued that because marijuana is proscribed by law, its market thrived underground. If the government legalized it, it would be able to exact tax and build its failing economy. His support for the legalization of marijuana was counter-hegemonic because, as he saw it, all the white man's vices, such as tobacco, alcohol and sugar were legal, but one thing that the black man liked everywhere on earth, which was the herb, was declared illegal by the white dominant culture of the planet.

Peter Tosh's defense of marijuana and Big Youth's love of dread locks as expression of the faith did not do much to buy the favour of the public. Continued discrimination against and persecution of Rastafarians dominated the lyrical content of many songs. For example, in *Since I Throw the Comb Away* (1980), Twinkle Brothers sung of the suffering Rastafarians endured at the hands of teachers who were refusing to admit their dreadlocked children in school, parents who were wary of their children becoming Rastafarians and employers who considered them unemployable. Many songs, though, show that Rastafarians appropriated and glorified their psychopathic and derelict labels

because the truthfulness and honesty of a social movement is found in its perseverance in the face of persecution.

He was accorded a special place in the movement because of the prediction he made about the coronation of Selassie and his philosophy that became the source of its inspiration. On their part, the reggae musicians introduced Marcus Garvey to the world as a hero of black people who captivated and raised their spirits by telling them that “up you mighty you can accomplish what you will” The musicians also presented Marcus Garvey to the world as a prophet whose predictions came to pass as it was with the closure of Spanish Town district prison¹³¹ and the first in black history who controlled so much people because of his oration.

One of the cardinal principles which emerged at the period of slavery and colonialism was that “the people of one part of Africa are responsible for the freedom of their brothers in other parts of Africa; and indeed, black people everywhere were to accept this same responsibility.”¹³² The reggae musicians, who seized upon this pan-African ideal adopted Marcus Garvey’s slogan, “Africa for the Africans, at home and abroad” and identified themselves with the cause of all black people around the world. Like Garvey before them, the reggae musicians realized that the great problem of the African for the past five hundred years was disunity. The reggae musicians, therefore, called for the

¹³¹ Culture. 1977. *Two Sevens Clash*. Cond. Joseph Hill, Comp. Joseph Hill.

¹³² Horace Campbell, “Rastafari as Pan-Africanism in the Caribbean and Africa,” 79.

unification of all Africans because it would be good and pleasant before God and man. In addition to African unity, Black Nationalism of the reggae musicians sought to liberate Africans from colonial rule. When reggae music hit the African airwaves in the early 1970s, there were still some countries, such as Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe who were still under colonial occupation. As a result, the reggae artists supported the wars of liberation that were being fought in these countries as was the case with Bob Marley's *Zimbabwe* and joined the United Nations, Organization of African Unity and the Commonwealth in their condemnation of the Apartheid South Africa by imposing their own moral sanctions as it was the case with Peter Tosh's *Apartheid* (1977) and Bunny Wailer's *Botha the Mosquito* (1988).

Lastly, most of the reggae musicians who became world-famous were those who were born and raised in the ghettos of Jamaican cities. These were joined by those who migrated from the countryside who had come to the cities in search of a better life. In addition to singing about the teachings of their Rastafarian doctrines, these musicians sung about the excruciating socio-economic conditions they experienced in the ghettos and how the situation could be mitigated. For example, in *Leaders of Black Countries*, Mighty Diamonds told black leaders to forget who was boss and talk with them because:

People have been suffering
Because of unemployment
People have been suffering
Because of crime and violence
You just can't sit here and relax
You have a lot of spaces, oh yeah
That you fill the gaps¹³³

¹³³ The Mighty Diamonds. 1983. *Leaders of Black Countries*. Cond. Tappa Zukie, Comp. Donald Shaw.

Again, since most of the people took to singing as a means of bailing themselves from poverty, it was discovered that many were not realizing the fruits of their labours. This feeling of exploitation often made musicians to move from one record label to another and sung against their unbridled capitalism. The musicians, then, demanded an equal share of the proceeds by asserting that:

Well they tell me of a pie in the sky,
Waiting for me, when I die.
But between the day you're born and when you die,
They never seem to hear even your cry.
So as sure as the sun, will shine,
I'm gonna get my share now, of what is mine.
And then the harder they come, the harder they'll fall, one
and all.
Ooh, the harder they come, the harder they'll fall, one and
all.¹³⁴

These powerful texts were accompanied by the images of the artists who had made them. Printed on vinyl or cassette covers, the images revealed the identity and the belief system of the artists. For example, most of the covers showed Rastafarian artists in dreadlocks puffing on a spliff thus complementing the messages they were sending out about the wearing of dreadlocks and the smoking of marijuana. In addition, the images that were sent from Jamaica to other parts of the world showed pictures of poverty-stricken, simply-dressed and counter-cultural artists who were in sharp contrast with the seemingly affluent Western pop musicians of the same era. For instance, even though Bob Marley was known throughout the world, he did not match with the likes of Elvis Presley or the Beatles in this regard. It was this sign of humility and rebellion that enabled people to

¹³⁴ Jimmy Cliff. 1972. *The Harder they Come*. Cond. Jimmy Cliff. Comp. Jimmy Cliff.

convert to and sympathize with Rastafari. The communicative power of images was appreciated by Helene Joffe when she asserted that “visuals are not only used to illustrate news and feature genres but also in advertising and campaigns that attempt to persuade their target audiences to change attitudes and behaviours.”¹³⁵

4.3 Emergence of the Rastafari Movement in Malawi

The beginnings of formal Rastafari meetings for worship can be traced back to the early 1990s when a group of few Rastafarians began to congregate in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. The elders who first congregated in these places, such as Lion Dread, Ras Sydney Chingeni and Ras Nimrod, confirmed that their initial exposure to the gospel of Rastafari was through reggae music and agreed that the political atmosphere created by Dr. Banda during his thirty years of rule could not allow them to express their faith. However, the new democratic dispensation of the early 1990s that provided greater religious freedom, coupled with the proliferation of private radio stations, increased awareness of the use of marijuana and the visit of Emperor Haile Selassie I to Malawi in 1965, have been cited as factors that led to the rise and growth of the Rastafari in Malawi which in 2006 was estimated to be three percent of Malawi’s population.¹³⁶

Despite that the MCP and its leader, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda often boasted about the existence of religious freedom in the country, such freedom was limited to mainstream

¹³⁵ Helene Joff. *The Power of Visual Material: Persuasion, Emotion and Identification*. (SAGE, 2008), 1.

¹³⁶ J.C. Chakanza. “Malawi,” *Emcyclopedia.com*, accessed June 13, 2015.

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/malawi>.

religious institutions and cults that were trusted to have no questionable influence on Malawian society. Others, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, referred to as "religious fanatics" and "the devil's witnesses" by Dr. Banda, were deprived of their entire livelihood because of their refusal to pay tax and their declared non-involvement in party politics. Even though Rastafari would have fared better with the MCP government because of their professed stand to work with any government, they would have suffered the same fate because of two main reasons: dreadlocks and marijuana. Judging from the experiences of the Jehovah's Witnesses, those desiring to express Rastafari had to remain underground until the democratic dispensation of 1994 which provided for the right to freedom of conscience, religion, belief and thought. It was this clause and the general atmosphere of freedom that expanded the religious space to accommodate such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Rastafarians.

Prior to the democratic dispensation that expanded the religious space the MBC had already played a major role in disseminating the teachings of Rastafari through the airwaves. However, its work of entertaining the people was in October 1998 expanded when FM 101 Power was established. In addition to playing reggae music, the radio station instated a special program, *Jah Works* that was hosted by Batawe Nawanga aka Lion Dread, designed for the publicizing and teaching of the beliefs and practices of Rastafari. The lectures, which were alternated with various local and international reggae tracks, always attracted a large audience, which if not interested with the lectures about

Rastafari beliefs, values, norms and rituals would still cling to the radio to get the next reggae tune.

The establishment of Rasta-oriented programs on FM 101 was made possible by the arrival of Jamaican radio broadcasters who doubled as disc jockeys and apostles for Rastafari. At the time when FM 101 was being set up, Junior “Ista J” Manning and Michael “Ibo” Cooper came to work at the new radio station and soon became involved in teaching about Rastafari through the radio. At the same time, the Jamaicans brought with them a body of literature which assisted Malawian Rastafarians in understanding the faith better. Lion Dread remembered that before Junior Manning came, Rastas used to convert Psalms into chants and then read the scripture for meditation and reasoning. But when Manning came, he guided by providing them with a proper liturgy for worship and a lot of literature for their use. During their stay at FM 101, Junior Manning and Michael Cooper compiled a booklet which contained speeches of Emperor Haile Selassie I delivered between May 1957 and December 1959 as published by the Ministry of Information in Addis Ababa in 1960. The booklet, titled *Members of the New Race: Teachings of H.I.M. Haile Selassie*, was, according to Michael Cooper, “a part of a mission to let all the peoples of the world, regardless of color, class, race, creed or gender know who Haile Selassie I is and what he stands for.”¹³⁷ Since the literature available and the apostles who brought it were bred in the Nyahbinghi Order, most early Rastafarians in Malawi identified themselves with this mansion of Rastafari.

¹³⁷ Junior Manning and Michael Cooper, *Members of the New Race: Teachings of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I* (Blantyre: A Rastaman Vibration), iii.

Even though the radio is accredited for airing reggae tunes which helped spread the precepts of Rastafari, it was not entirely alone in this business. After all, though not actually stated, its programs were to be balanced to serve the interests of the whole population, alternating between indigenous and exotic, with the indigenous taking the lion's share and the exotic was not just reggae. Much of the reggae records, like their South African, Zairian and American contemporaries, were being purchased in singles, long plays (LPs) and cassettes and played in homes, bars, discos and taxi cabs. The importance of this type of access to music was that records that were censored by the Board of Censors or the intuition of radio disc jockeys found a private listenership in those areas. Another importance was that people who bought these records came face-to-face with the images of artists who produced the music. In the case of reggae records, except for few, LP or cassette covers showed artists in dreadlocks, decorated with red, gold and green, the colours of the Ethiopian flag or a six-pointed star, the Star of David. Since Rastafarians were viewed as propagators of a positive music with a positive message, fashions or fads that accompanied their music like dreadlocks, Rasta colors and Dread Talk were quickly adopted by young people who were often casting about for new ways of expressing themselves and asserting their unique identities.

Out of these attractions, three distinct groups emerged. The first were what Rex Nettleford called "designer dreads." These comprised of middle class youths and yuppies who adopted the dreadlocks hairstyle, carried a ragamuffin appearance and listened to reggae music but had no commitment to the teachings of Rastafari. The second group

was made up of what Rastafarians call “wolves in a sheep’s clothing.” These were unsavory characters who hid behind dreadlocks and Rastafarian appearances in order to commit crime and smoke marijuana. The last group was made up of true Rastafarians who had adopted dreadlocks and smoked marijuana, though not exclusively so, as external symbols for their inner commitment to the fundamental precepts and practices of the faith, that is, the higher consciousness they had achieved as a result of their adherence to Rastafari. In their study of *Cultural Practices and their Impact on the Enjoyment of Human Rights*, the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) found this scenario presenting itself in Nkhata Bay and commented that:

Many people in Nkhata-Bay associate homosexuality, prostitution and substance abuse especially *chamba* [marijuana] to the growing culture of Rastafarianism in the district. However, interviews with Rastas indicated that not all people with dreadlocks and who smoked *chamba* were true Rastafarians. They claimed that they were copycats who behaved like Rastas to taint the image of the true ones. It was indicated that many boys smoked *chamba* and donned dreadlocks to appear like Rastas because the tourists preferred to have relations with Rastas who...were considered friendly and had access to *chamba*, which many tourists sought in the area.¹³⁸

It is not known for sure when people started smoking *chamba* in Malawi, but the plant appears to have been brought into the country by early Indian migrants as its English name, *Indian hemp*, and its Jamaican name, *Ganja* point to India as its place of origin. There is also some indication that Malawians started smoking the herb long back in the

¹³⁸ Malawi Human Rights Commission, “Cultural Practices and their Impact on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Particularly the Rights of Women and Children” (Lilongwe: MHRC), 77.

colonial period as legislation then existed that banned its use. In his study of the *Kachamba Brothers Band*, Gerhard Kubik explains that Daniel and Donald Kachamba inherited their surname from “one of the brothers’ grandfathers or great grandfathers” who “used to smoke hemp.”¹³⁹ By the time reggae music came and stated the advantages of marijuana, therefore, many people were already smoking and even benefitting from its peddling. As a result, Rastafari seems to have yielded a substantial number of “converts” who felt that their affiliation to the movement would provide them with a sanctuary for a safer use and peddling of the herb under the guise of religion. Although not always the case, Rastafari Sabbath gatherings are teamed with youths who give the impression that their primary purpose to congregate in Rastafarian camps is to smoke marijuana rather than as a result of a thorough understanding of the teachings of and commitments to the movement.

While the factors presented above might have just yielded voluntary affiliation to the Rastafari faith, those already conscientised find strength when they hear that the man, whom they revere as God, Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia, paid a state visit to Malawi from 2 to 4 September, 1965. Although the treatment he was accorded would have been given to any head of state visiting the country just a year after independence, it has become a rallying point for the significance of the man who embodies all the qualities of the Holy Trinity. For example, speaking like an Ethiopianist church leader, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda told the crowd that gathered to welcome the Emperor that:

¹³⁹ Gerhard Kubik, “The Kachamba Brothers’ Band, 8.

His Imperial Majesty represents one of the oldest ruling houses not only in our own continent but all over this world (applause). Read your books, your bibles, your history books where do you find any country mentioned in this continent or on the continent of Europe. Go anywhere in the Bible...coming to only Ethiopia, yes I read Ethiopia again in Sunday school. The Queen of Sheba you know and King Solomon. Yes the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, here is the direct descendant of Queen Of Sheba and King Solomon. Ethiopia represents on our continent something that means so much to the people in my position.¹⁴⁰

For a Malawian Rasta, such an illumination is important because it connects the Emperor with the Bible and in particular, the house of David which has been known for providing messiahs such as Jesus Christ. On the political note, Dr, Banda praised Selassie as an able administrator, wise lawgiver, champion of constitutional advancement and government, militant educationist and sympathetic instigator of social reforms.¹⁴¹ Since Rastafarians have always painted Emperor Haile Selassie I as someone with superhuman capabilities as evidence for his divinity, statements like these have served as proof that indeed, Selassie is God. On his part, Selassie also spoke in such a way that future Rastafarians interpreted as prophetically giving them a mission to spread the gospel of Rastafari throughout Africa.

¹⁴⁰ Paliani Goman Chinguwo, "1965 Haile Selassie's Visit to Malawi and the Crown Prince's Subsequent Visit in 1966" (January 2007), 8.

¹⁴¹ "Excerpt from a Speech by Malawian President Dr. Kamuzu Banda on the Occasion of the 1965 State Visit to Malawi of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I," *Jahug* 7 (London: Congo Call Production), 75.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the consolidation of the Rastafari movement in Malawi. It has established that unlike many other social movements, the primary medium through which Rastafari was propagated in Malawi was through reggae music which would not have happened if the music had not reached Britain. The music was able to exert such an impact because it carried various subject matters pertaining to the teachings of Rastafari some of which had been extant since the pre-colonial period. Since the ideologies which the music was preaching had been extant from the pre-colonial period, the argument advanced here is that the work of reggae was that of consolidation rather than mere propagation. It follows, then, that the democratic dispensation of the early 1990s just helped the movement that had been simmering since the early 1970s when conditions did not allow it to appear. The chapter also reveals that the ritual use of marijuana advocated in the movement and the state visit Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia paid to Malawi in September 1965 have been important in the consolidation and growth of Rastafari.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRUGGLES OF THE RASTAFARI IN MALAWI

4.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to identify external and internal struggles Rastafarians in Malawi have been engaged in from the early 1970s to 2018. The study argues that since Rastafari spread to Malawi its adherents have been engaged in the struggle for acceptance from the society which did not value the wearing of dreadlocks and smoking of marijuana. Since the period under study has been covered by two distinct types of governments, authoritarian and democratic, the chapter has also been divided into two main periods: the early 1970s to 1994, and 1994 to 2018. From the outset, it should be noted that all these governments were secular in nature. Therefore, religious doctrines taught by different religious groups did not concern them unless their outward expressions challenged what had been set as common sense in Gramscian terms. As a result, marijuana and dreadlocks embraced by Rastafarians as ways of religious expression have been the main determining factors in the relations between the government and other social institutions on one hand and the Rastafari on the other. On the whole, the relationship between these two entities after 1994 has been oscillating from being confrontational at one time to that of carrot and a stick policy on the other.

4.1 The Early 1970s to 1994

This section aims to demonstrate how the authoritarian government of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda allowed the propagation of Rastafari through reggae music but prevented its physical manifestation in deeds. Since July 1964 when the British Government granted political independence, Malawi had been under Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda's authoritarian rule until May 1994 when the country reverted to multi-party democracy. The then ruling party, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the state were hinged upon four corner-stones, namely, unity, loyalty, obedience and discipline¹⁴² whose strict observance were monotonously pledged at every party function. This domestic policy was partly shaped by the regime's greatest concern to maintain public decency according to Malawian culture as defined by itself and the prevention of political radicalization which would eventually breed political dissidence. Thus, delegates to the fourth Annual Convention of the MCP held in Lilongwe from 16 September to 21 September 1968 recommended that the youth of Malawi be brought up in accordance with the ethics of African tradition. To this effect, the Convention condemned all indecent and rough appearance, disrespectful attitudes towards elders which some youth tend to copy from foreign countries, and called upon the Government to take appropriate measures to remedy the situation.¹⁴³ To remedy the situation, therefore, the Government enlisted the assistance of parents and teachers, scrutinized foreigners coming into Malawi, maintained the 1956 Dangerous Drugs Act and mandated the Board of Censors to screen publications, cinematograph, pictures and records before their contents could be

¹⁴² Malawi Congress Party, *Malawi Congress Party Annual Convention: Resolutions, 1965-1981* (Blantyre: Department of Information, 1982), 3.

¹⁴³ Malawi Congress Party, *Malawi Congress Party Annual Convention*. 6.

consumed by the youth who were perceived to be easily impressed by everything foreign. Thus, the organic intellectuals, of the immediate pre-independence era had jumped on the bandwagon and assumed the role of traditional intellectuals by defining Malawian culture in terms that would sustain their own status quo thus excluding emerging religious and political social movements deemed to have undesirable influences like Rastafari.

The dawn of the decade of the 1970s coincided with the period of rapid social change in Malawi. It was a time of culture lag when the norms, beliefs and values of the elders, represented by Dr. Banda and the MCP were at variance with the material needs of the youth who were now commodifying the etiquettes which the old and the frail had previously enjoyed. It was also a period when deviant behaviour, marked by stealing and pick-pocketing was on the increase especially in the towns of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Zomba and Mzuzu as a result of the growing number of lumpenproletariat in those areas. In his opening address at the opening of the 1972 MCP Annual Convention in Zomba, Dr. Banda squarely blamed parents and teachers who did not impress it upon their children and pupils the importance of good manners, good behaviour and the importance of honesty and integrity for this state of affairs.¹⁴⁴ In its final analysis, the Convention which always endorsed whatever the Life President had said resolved to revive the old traditional institutions and initiation rites whereby young people were taught the tenets of good behaviour and urged teachers to teach children the importance of good manners and

¹⁴⁴ His Excellency the Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda: Speech at Opening of 1972 Annual Convention of the Malawi Congress Party, Zomba, 10th September, 1972.

behaviour besides teaching them the three R's of reading, writing and arithmetic. Teachers were encouraged to set a good example if their teaching was to be effective.¹⁴⁵ Since stories coming from Brixton, South London, New York in the United States or Toronto in Canada in the 1970s linked the Rastafarian cult to trafficking in ganja (marijuana), extortion and murder,¹⁴⁶ its manifested adoption would have been worrisome for the Government.

It was envisaged that merely leaving the duty of creating a responsible youth to parents and teachers was not feasible enough but that the behaviour and conduct of foreigners coming into Malawi was to be thoroughly scrutinized before they were allowed to come and contaminate the innocent youths. Following the incidents of vandalism conducted by students at Kongwe Secondary School in 1970, the MCP Convention of that year resolved that foreign students would be admitted into Malawi's educational institutions only after careful scrutiny of their background and that should these students be involved in incidents of indiscipline after admission they might be deported to their country of origin without delay. In the same vein, expatriate teachers who came through Peace Corps from the United States and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) from Britain were to be forewarned before they took up service in Malawi of what the Government expected of them. They were to be good role models exemplified by well kempt short hair, decent clothing and an exhibition of a well-bred behaviour and character. In his

¹⁴⁵ Malawi Congress Party, Malawi Congress Party Annual Convention, 16.

¹⁴⁶ Horace Campbell, "The Rastafari Movement in Britain by Rastaman," *Caribbean Quarterly*, 26, no. 4 (December 1980): 86, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40795025>.

address at the opening of the 1972 Annual Convention of the Malawi Congress Party, held in Zomba, Dr. Banda informed delegates:

I have told Sir Glyn Jones in London, at our Buying Agency that VSO's must be told bluntly that if they want to come to Malawi, they must come here dressed as ladies and gentlemen, no long hairs [sic] because we do not want hippies here under the guise of teachers...I would rather we had not a single teacher from Europe or North America if we have to have this type of teacher, hippies under the guise of teachers. No. We are not going to have that in this country. We have our own ideas of personal conduct and behaviour in this country. We have our own ideas of decency in this country.¹⁴⁷

In effect, Dr. Banda and the MCP while describing the qualities of a good teacher, constructed codes of conduct and appearance that stigmatized people with uncombed long hair, dirty clothes and drunkards. It follows then that Rastafarians who identify themselves with dreadlocks, simple clothing and “intoxicating” marijuana were not welcome either. Writing for the BBC in 2000, Raphael Tenthani pointed out that during the entire thirty-year period of Dr. Banda, the wearing of dreadlocks was unheard of and even visitors sporting locks were either turned back or forced to have them sheared off.¹⁴⁸ This assertion is substantiated by the rumour that used to circulate among the youth during the late 1980s that Bob Marley had planned to perform a stop-over concert in Malawi when he came for the same during Zimbabwe’s independence celebrations in April 1980 but he was turned away at the border when he refused to cut his dreadlocks. It

¹⁴⁷ His Excellency the Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda: Speech at Opening of 1972 Annual Convention of the Malawi Congress Party, Zomba, 10th September, 1972.

¹⁴⁸ “Malawi Rastas Marijuana Struggle,” *BBC News*, accessed July 10, 2014.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/920052.stm>.

is probable that the rumour of Marley's concert was transmitted out of envy sparked by news reports about frequent visits by numerous Jamaican musicians in neighbouring countries that were conspicuously missing in Malawi during the reign of Dr. Banda.

Since dreadlocks raised such an alarm, the liberal use of Indian hemp, locally known as *chamba*, as a religious sacrament, advocated in Rastafari, would have just been seen as indications of moral and spiritual degradation which authorities were struggling to reverse. Indian hemp, whose importation, exportation, production, possession, sale, distribution and use had been forbidden by the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1 April 1956 was said to bring severe consequences on the smokers and their social environment. First, writing for the *Daily Times* in 1992, Norman Phiri pointed out that the smoking of marijuana has an immediate effect of producing mild happiness and relaxation which when taken in higher doses produces hallucinations, anxiety and panic.¹⁴⁹ Secondly, along with mandrax and cocaine, Indian hemp was believed to be the cause of mental illness. Norman Phiri was informed that most of the patients at Zomba Mental Hospital and Lilongwe Psychiatric Ward were from those districts which were major producers of cannabis.¹⁵⁰ Finally, it was widely held, as it is now, that Indian hemp caused smokers to be violent and commit crimes that would have been avoided if the drug was not accessed. Since the government could not afford to see a certain group of people degenerating into mad people, psychopaths and criminals whether because of mere predilection towards marijuana or religious affiliation, those found in possession of the drug were

¹⁴⁹ Norman Phiri, "Drug Problem Growing in Malawi," *Daily Times*, June 19, 1992. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Norman Phiri, "Drug Problem Growing in Malawi," *Daily Times*, 5.

indiscriminately prosecuted by the law. For the time being, at least during the reign of Dr. Banda, any physical manifestation of Rastafari had been nipped in the bud and if anyone really converted to its beliefs and practices they kept them strictly private for fear of reprisals which were not lacking during this period.

In addition to all these measures, the Government established the Board of Censors (Malawi Censorship Board) in 1967. According to the Censorship and Control of Entertainments Act, it was an offence to import, possess, distribute or exhibit the publications, films and video tapes and records¹⁵¹ listed in the Catalogue of banned publications, Cinematograph, Pictures and Records that were published from time to time to include new releases that were deemed undesirable for public consumption. From the scheme of things, the entire purpose for enacting this law was to prevent a body of pictures that would influence the youth from engaging in acts of public indecency ranging from public nudity to solicitation for prostitution as well as slovenliness. At the same time, the Government was concerned with Malawians being exposed to publications and musical lyrics that would radically revolutionize their thinking into questioning the status quo and even reaching the point of revolt. In view of all this, a number of films, publications and records had been listed as banned including “Machine Gun” a song by an American musical act, the Commodores even though it was instrumental. Surprisingly, Jamaican reggae records, whose lyrics carried rebellious

¹⁵¹ Malawi Government, *Catalogue of Banned Publications, Cinematograph, Pictures and Records: From 1st August to 31 May, 1985* (Zomba: the Government Printer).

overtones against the establishment in support of black consciousness, human rights and Rastafari, were never listed as banned so that the music continued to enjoy a wide listenership in Malawi through the radio, cassettes and long plays. Despite all the restrictions put in place, it was really during the reign of Dr. Banda and the MCP that evangelization and entrenchment of Rastafari took place.

Therefore, due to the discipline demanded by Dr. Banda and the MCP, it was difficult for them to accept members of the Rastafari as a religious group not because they would not cooperate with the Government as the Jehovah's Witnesses had done, but because of their predilection towards the wearing of dreadlocks and the smoking of marijuana which were deemed of bad breeding, bad behaviour and bad character. Even if Rastafari was not explicitly banned during the reign of Dr. Banda, no one dared to profess it because of fear.¹⁵² Surprisingly, the government aided the evangelization of Rastafari by letting reggae records play on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and in homes, taxi cabs, discos and bars without any interference. A possible explanation to that kind of laxity is that while the state continued to hold a firm grip on official cultural production, it was having a harder time controlling the inflow of all cultural trends from abroad as well as people's attractions to them.¹⁵³

¹⁵² OT, Chantal Romarin (aka Sister Fire), Rastafarian, Blantyre, September 14, 2014.

¹⁵³ Katrin Hansing, "Rastafari in a Different Kind of Babylon: The Emergence and Development of the Rastafari in Socialist Cuba," *Caribbean Studies* 34, no. 1 (Jan.-Jun 2006): 66, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25613510>.

4.2 1994 to 2018

In May 1994 the government of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda and the MCP were as defeated in the democratic elections and was replaced by Dr. Bakili Muluzi and the United Democratic Front (UDF) thus ending Dr. Banda's grip on power after nearly thirty years. Unlike the previous regime that trampled upon the religious rights of many groups, the newly elected UDF government pledged to guarantee every person the right to freedom of conscience, religion, belief, thought and academic freedom¹⁵⁴ as provided by Section 33 of the Constitution of Malawi. The practicability of this principle saw the emergence of the outlawed Jehovah's Witnesses and the manifestation, for the first time, of Rastafarians in the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu among the youths. Since that time, Rastafari has been growing until today when its members are now found in almost every district in Malawi. But just like the despotic government of Dr. Banda, the wearing of dreadlocks and the smoking of marijuana determined the nature of relations between the democratic governments and Rastafari. Thus, Rastafarians continued to be prosecuted under the Dangerous Drugs Act and stereotyped because of their dreadlocks which prompted them to engage in a series of demonstrations and petitions against what they perceived as a deliberate infringement on their constitutional right.

According to Rastafarians, Indian hemp is a sacred sacrament whose smoking had been sanctioned by the Bible (Genesis 8, Psalms 18 and Revelations 22). In a 2012 biographical film titled "Marley," Rita Marley told Kelvin MacDonald that "herb was

¹⁵⁴ Malawi Government, *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi* (Malawi Government, 1999), 21.

like sacramental food to us. We take it for reasons not just to get higher. It put us in a holy, peaceful, inspirational mood.” Because of its medicinal properties and many other uses, the hemp has been referred to as the world’s most valuable and versatile natural resource.¹⁵⁵ But even in time of greater religious freedom, such claims and arguments could not be entertained by a largely sceptical public which had been well educated and warned about the dangers of the drug since the colonial times. In addition to causing insanity and inducing criminality to its users, marijuana was also indicted for causing mental retardation resulting into poor and deploring examination results in some cases as evidenced by the disastrous Malawi School Certificate of Education results of 1999 and the academic years 2000 and 2001.¹⁵⁶ In view of this, the democratic governments that succeeded Dr. Banda’s autocratic rule saw it necessary to maintain the Dangerous Drugs Act that criminalized possession and use of cannabis and prosecuted anyone found in breach of the law including Rastas. Thus, despite making reference to religious freedom as enshrined in the Constitution of Malawi, three Rastas were arrested, prosecuted and convicted for smoking the illicit drug in September 2000. The Ombudsman, Enock Chibwana, refused to arbitrate on their behalf arguing that when a practice infringes on democratic principles, although it may be within the constitutional provisions, it has to be put to public test to gauge whether the majority are comfortable with it.¹⁵⁷ The message to the growing Rastafari community was loud and clear: welcome but reform if these encounters are to be kept at a minimum.

¹⁵⁵ *Jahug* 2, Edition 2 (London: Repatriation Productions), 36.

¹⁵⁶ Francis Moto, “Language and Societal Attitudes: A Study of Malawi’s ‘New Language’ 1,” *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 3 (2001): 331.

¹⁵⁷ “Malawi Rastas Marijuana Struggle,” *BBC News*, accessed July 15, 2015.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/920052.stm>

Although some Rastafarians keep their hair and beards trimmed to a size, the majority of them keep dreadlocks as prescribed by Leviticus 21:5 which states:

They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh.

The keeping of unkempt long matted hair is also in line with the Nazarite Vow as stipulated in Numbers 6:5 which read:

All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

In its biblical context, the making of the Nazarite Vow involved the self-asceticism in which members of the community separated themselves from worldly matters in order to be close with the holy realm. The Nazarite abstained themselves from wine or product made from grapes, refrained from cutting hair and prevented themselves from touching corpses or visiting graves. The period of separation was thirty days but the Rastafarian version of the Nazarite Vow is permanent.

But no matter how authoritative its source might be, the society views dreadlocks as an outward sign of lunacy and dereliction which come as a result of excessive smoking of

cannabis. In an effort to bring them into mainstream society, Rastafarians arrested by the police on charges of marijuana possession and smoking or any other offence had their hair cut before being sent to prison to serve their sentences or back to their communities. However, the most controversial aspect that generated a heated debate between Rastas on one hand and scholars and laymen on the other has been the fact that despite an absence of legislation on hair or its appearance in Malawi,¹⁵⁸ Rastafari pupils have been barred from attending public schools unless their dreadlocks were cut off. While the educational authorities maintained that their refusal of dreadlocked children in the classroom was in line with educational policy which aimed at encouraging uniformity among pupils, their Rastafarian parents countered by arguing that the ban violated their children's freedom of education and worship. The argument has been supported by some scholars in Malawi who point out that Rastafari is a recognized religion and that its sincere adherents should have full protection under the constitution of Malawi, as do members of other religious groups.¹⁵⁹ If this happens, Rastafari will be able to be registered with the Registrar General as do other churches and enjoy the same rights and privileges. However, if Section 33 is the source of contention, Rastafarians can also be indicted for imposing a kind of religious belief system on their powerless children who if given the opportunity would perhaps decide otherwise.

¹⁵⁸ "Malawi Rastafarians Push for Dreadlocks in Schools," VOA, accessed July 15, 2015. <http://www.voanews.com/content/malawi-rastafarians-push-for-dreadlocks-in-schools-as-a-right/1751999.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Mtendeweka Owen Mhango, "The Constitutional Protection of Minority Religious Rights in Malawi," 218.

The most contentious issue which drove a wedge into the relationship between the Rastafarians and the government and other members of the society was the death of Evison Matafale in 2001. Matafale, a Rasta elder and a highly acclaimed reggae musician had been taken by police for interrogation over a series of letters he had been writing to President Muluzi accusing him of backing Muslims and Asian traders and exploiting ordinary Malawians.¹⁶⁰ While in police custody, Matafale was attacked by a severe pneumonia and died on 27 November 2001. Even though the arrest on defamation charges and dying in detention did not present any form of peculiarity, the Babylonian conspiracy theory used to explain the cause of death made the event special. Instead of accepting the official version that Matafale had died of pneumonia, Rastafarians and many of his fans maintained that he had died as a result of police torture and brutality and thus held both the police and the government responsible. The animosity that developed between the Rastafarians who threatened revenge and the police made President Muluzi to institute a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the cause of Matafale's death. Matters came to a head when Rastas and musicians protested the inclusion of Lucius Banda, a non-Rastafarian musician, in the commission claiming that his presence would jeopardize the credibility of the findings because of his alleged enmity with the deceased.¹⁶¹ In protest, Rastafarians staged demonstrations demanding the exclusion of Lucius Banda and suggesting that his replacement be appointed from their midst. Interestingly, when it was suggested that one of the Rastafarians must be sworn in to take part in the inquiry, none of them accepted and the matter died down.

¹⁶⁰ "Malawian Farewell to the Prophet," *BBC News*, accessed April 10, 2016.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1682708.stm>.

¹⁶¹ Tamanda Matebule, "Lucius Banda Refuses to Step Down," *Daily Times*, Monday, December 10, 2001.

Because of these experiences and encounters, Rastafarians have not been able to enjoy their right to freedom of conscience, religion, belief and thought as compared to other religious groups and has since its inception in the late 1990s been in a “state of emergency” staging demonstrations, handing in petitions and pressing to meet the executive arm of government to present their grievances. For example, in April 2003, members of the Rastafari community met President Bakili Muluzi at Sanjika Palace. During the meeting, Rastas, among other things, they requested the extension of presidential appointments to Rastafarians who might be equally competent and qualified for such positions, and to intervene and make it possible in his capacity to fasten the registration process of the Rastafari organizations in fulfillment of the Registration Act.¹⁶² Most of the demonstrations had been staged in demand to have marijuana legalized, have dreadlocked children allowed in public schools and open employment opportunities to Rastafarians who were largely discriminated against because of their association with cannabis and dreadlocks. But petitions handed to District Commissioners or mayors had always meant to be directed to the incumbent president which posed a problem if grievances being presented were to be addressed properly. The problem was that democratic presidents do not rule by decree unless the security of the state is seriously threatened and therefore could not just overrule the existing legislation they vowed to protect just to please a certain section of the society. But, despite lack in change of laws, much has changed for the Rastafarians. Their children are allowed in public schools in dreadlocks. Though their employment is affected by their level of

162 “Rastas Visit Malawi’s Head of State,” accessed April 10, 2016.
<http://rastaites.com/news/hearticals/malawi/malawi01.htm>.

education, many employers are taking Rastas on board and although the police are aware that Rastas possess and smoke marijuana in their mountain and riverside tabernacles, they are left undisturbed.

4.3 Rastafari's Internal Problems

Although the government and the society at large have restrained the development of the movement in Malawi, Rastafari itself is not without blemish. From the beginning, language, rules concerning women and internal squabbles have done much to discourage some from being ardent followers of Jah Rastafari. Except for the Bible, all the literature used in the teaching of Rastafari, such as the Jahug, Members of the New Race, Black Supremacy and Chants of the Ivine Order (hymns) are all written in English with a mixture of Jamaican Patois and Rastafarian Dread Talk. Since their late 1990s no effort has been made to translate them into either Chichewa or Chitumbuka, two of the widely spoken vernacular languages in Malawi. Because most of the Rastafarians come from that group of people who did not receive enough education to be fluent in English, some of those charged with expounding the doctrine have always met challenges when it comes to reading the scripture and interpret it to the congregation. Although it may be difficult to speculate why some people visit Rastafarian tabernacles once and never come back afterwards, the use of English and its poor translation and interpretation could be responsible.

Although women enjoy great respect in Rastafari, having been referred to as queens and empresses, their status and roles are largely trivialized. It is recognized that women occupy important leadership positions in the movement, but, just like in mainstream Christian churches and Islam, those roles and responsibilities are accorded to them only when they are to administer women organizations to which men are not a party. A number of reasons are responsible for this kind of treatment. Firstly, Rastafari takes its inspiration from Judeo-Christian tradition which traditionally belittles women. For example, the Siddur, the Jewish prayer book, contains a morning prayer which states: “Worshipful are you O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who did not make me a woman.”¹⁶³ Secondly, in certain instances, women are seen as people who are naturally weak minded who usually need the guidance of men. That weakness is echoed in Gregory Isaacs’ song, *Not a Way*, one of its verse which says:

Beca’ the daughters take a little longer,
To sight up the Father, yeah,
I said the daughters take a little longer,
To do the works of Jah Jah.¹⁶⁴

Lastly, women’s biological nature and their role in reproduction tend to disadvantage them. According to Ancient Nyahbinghi Guidelines, women are not allowed to attend congregations when menstruating for a period of seven days and are expected to be absent from those gatherings for three months when they have a baby boy and four

¹⁶³ Yusef Eliyah and Asher Meza, eds, *Torah Judaism International’s Ways of the Torah Siddur* (Denver: Be Jewish Publishing, 2012), 15.

¹⁶⁴ Gregory Isaacs. *Not a Way*. Cond. Gregory Isaacs. Comp. Gregory Isaacs.

months for a baby girl.¹⁶⁵ Even though it is difficult to ascertain as to why Rastafarian congregation are dominated by men as compared to other religious groups, it is obvious that these doctrinal restrictions are a contributing factor.

In a 2006 publication, J.C. Chakanza projected that three percent of the Malawian population was Rastafarian.¹⁶⁶ This shows that the movement has amassed phenomenal growth as also evidenced by the squabbles that have locked Rastafari in recent times. The earliest Rastafari house in Malawi, as elsewhere, was Nyahbinghi Theocracy Reign. Over the years, the mother body has seen some of its members, especially from the younger generation, affiliating with the Ethiopia Africa International Black Congress (EAIBC) popularly known as Bobo Shante House. This group is distinguished from the Nyahbinghi Order by their wearing of long robes and turbans that cover their dreadlocks. Alarmed by the growing influence of the group, Nyahbinghi elders in Ndirande, Blantyre, barred the Bobos from worshipping together with them arguing that turbans defiled the tabernacle. The arguments and counter-arguments that ensued angered some who covertly burnt the temple in 2013. After further negotiations, the two sides settled their differences and agreed to be conducting their services. Currently the temple is being rebuilt. However, this kind of unity is not being entertained by all Rasta camps because of disagreements about which Rastafarian house was authentic. Nyambabwe and Soche are strictly Nyahbinghi and the growing Bobo Shanti Rastas organize their own activities.

¹⁶⁵ “Ancient Nyahbinghi Guidelines: Excerpts from the Document Prepared by Patriarchs of the Nyahbinghi Order, Jamaica,” *Jahug*, 2, edition 2 (London: Repatriation Productions), 42.

¹⁶⁶ “Malawi,” Encyclopaedia.com.

The *Daily Times* reported in September 2013 the leadership crisis that developed when Jeremiah Phombeya resigned as chairperson of the Nyahbinghi Theocracy Reign in July of that year. His resignation was followed by a succession dispute which resulted into the suspension of some members of the group by the Elders' Council. Instead of serving their period of suspension, the defeated part of the group defected and formed a splinter organization known as the Rastafari Church or the Churchical Order. With the division, doctrinal and practical differences between the two groups have also come to the surface. In trying to distance itself from the activities of the Rastafari Church, Jah Vision, Publicity Secretary of the Nyahbinghi Theocracy Reign told the *Daily Times* that

We want the nation to know that Nyahbinghi Theocracy Reign is the only recognized supreme Rastafarian body. It serves and protects the interests of Rastas and Rastafarianism. We do not involve ourselves in politics and we don't engage in violence. So it must be known to all politicians and citizens of this country that they must not confuse everyone wearing dreadlocks with a Rastafarian.¹⁶⁷

Thus, while the Nyahbinghi Theocracy Reign is professedly apolitical, the radical elders of the Rastafari Church see political engagement as an instrument they can use to protect their rights. Although they do not rule out the possibility of contesting for political offices, the vote is highly valued to them because it can always keep politicians who can chastise them for marijuana and dreadlocks out of government. According to one informant, the role of the Rasta is not to be antagonistic, but to work with the prevailing

¹⁶⁷ Chikondi Juma, "Leadership Wrangle Rocks Malawi's Rasta Community" in the *Daily Times*, September 20, 2013, accessed July 10, 2016. <http://timesmediamw.com/leadership-wrangle-rocks-malawis-rasta-community/>

government for the betterment of the whole society. It is not surprising then that it is the Rastafari Church which is tolerant of the Bobo Shanti Rastas as compared to the Nyahbinghi Theocracy Reign. Thus, while Rastafarians blame the outside world for much of their tribulations, their own contradictions have also driven some people away from Jah instead of bringing them into the fold.

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter has examined the struggles Rastafarians have gone through from the early 1970s when reggae music started spread Rastafari messages to 1918 when a fully-fledged Rastafari movement was established in order to gain acceptance in Malawi. The study has established that Rastafari was welcome to Malawi but the movement's insistence to wear dreadlocks and smoke marijuana for religious purposes were a source of concern to the dictatorial government of Dr. Banda and the democratic governments that succeeded him. In addition to these external obstacles to Rastafarian growth, the study has also established that Rastafarian internal problems, such as use of English, doctrinal disagreements and attitude towards women reduced the pace at which the movement would have growth. The next chapter will assess how Rastafari has been indigenised by to suit the Malawian situation.

CHAPTER SIX

INDIGENISATION OF THE RASTAFARI MOVEMENT IN MALAWI

6.0 Introduction

This chapter assess the extent of indigenisation of the Rastafari movement in Malawi in the period between 1980 and 1918. 1980 is the starting point because the beginning of that decade saw some traits of Rastafarian input into Malawian music making. The chapter argues that the spread of Rastafari, as elsewhere else, was welcomed but some of its traits were indigenised or transformed by its adherents to suit the local Malawian culture. This transformation can be seen in the rise of local reggae bands, increase in reggae music making, the deepening of political protest and the alterations made to Rastafari teachings.

6.1 The Rise of Local Reggae Bands

Steven A. King has written that the popularity of reggae spawned a number of pseudo-Rastafarian groups, who imitated the cultural trappings of Rastafari, that is, the dreadlocks, the marijuana smoking and the lingo without embracing its larger religious and ideological tenets.¹⁶⁸ The notable phenomenon in this regard was the increase in the

¹⁶⁸ Stephen A. King. "International Reggae, Democratic Socialism and the Secularisation of Rastafari," accessed May 20, 2020.

http://thekeep.eiu.edu/commstudies_fac/12?utm_source=thekeep.eiu.edu%2Fcommstudies_fac%2F12&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

number of people who listened to reggae music and these in turn influenced the rise of many reggae bands who experimented with the genre. The first musical group to give reggae a local flavour was Kalimba Band, which, in 1983, released its first reggae album, *Make Friends with the World*. Shortly afterwards, established neo-traditional musicians began to fuse their popular music styles with reggae and this saw Robert Fumulani releasing *Khunju Reggae*, Mulangeni Sounds, *Juju*, and MBC Band, *Karate*. By the beginning of the 1990s, numerous reggae bands, such as Muga Mtaya and the Sinners and Jupiters, had been formed but suffered a short life span. As opposition to Dr. Banda's regime mounted, reggae gained further impetus as a means of protest. Its epitome was the release of Lucius Banda's first reggae album in 1993, *Son of the Poor Man*, whose songs described and rebuked the despotism of the one-party rule. The success of Lucius Banda influenced many people to venture into the music business so that by 2000, there were many artists imitating roots reggae music-making, which in Jamaica, had been relegated to the archives because of the popularity of its own derivative, dance hall.

Prior to and during the period when artists began to compose and play their own reggae music, it was fashionable for them to perform copyrighted songs in concerts in order to mesmerize their audiences by playing sophisticated foreign rhythms. The attendees, too, also went to the shows with high expectations that their entertainers would play popular rumba, soukous, African jazz and reggae songs whose source was largely limited to the radio. This was the situation which Jai Banda, a Zimbabwean born Malawian, found when he came to Malawi in 1987. Thus, in 1989, he founded Mr. Entertainers Promotions

with the aim of encouraging Malawian musicians, who were used to performing copyright songs to play their own local genres.¹⁶⁹ The method that Banda adopted was the organization of live concerts in which different music groups would be invited and hold live performances at the French Cultural Centre in Blantyre or Lilongwe Community Centre ground in Lilongwe. Sensing the great appeal reggae music had on the youth, Banda added a substance to the reggae craze by naming the events “Reggae by Foot” (an adaptation of the 1979 film, *Reggae by Bus*) as a ploy to lure them to come to the shows. But, the inclusion of non-reggae artists on the performance list did not auger well with some fans who had expected the shows to be an all-out reggae affair as suggested by the name of the festivals. During one such event held in 1992 in Lilongwe, Willy Mang’anda spoke for many when he told the *Daily Times* that:

When I heard the name ‘Reggae by Foot,’ I immediately got attracted because I thought there would be more of reggae than anything else, yet there too many non-reggae hits and we have to cry for reggae.¹⁷⁰

Sentiments like these did not escape the attention of Banda who, years later, still remembered the complaints put forward during that time that musicians who did not play reggae should not be allowed to participate in Reggae by Foot Festivals. During an interview with the researcher, Banda observed that the reason why Malawi does not have

¹⁶⁹ OT, Jai Banda, Mr. Entertainers Promotions, Blantyre, April 10, 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Rankin Nyekanyeka, “Reggae by Foot Fails Lilongwe Fans,” *Daily Times*, April 22, 1992.

a music genre of its own up to day is due to the fact that Malawians loved reggae so much more than any other music genre.¹⁷¹

6.2 Increase in Reggae Music Making

The rise of reggae bands in Malawi increased reggae music making which altered the original beat by the incorporation of neo-traditional musical forms. Reggae music is founded upon rhythm that is based on a four-beat pattern. It is characterized by regular chops on the back beat, that is, beat two and four of the measure. The emphasis put on the bass and snare drums divides reggae music into three main sub-genres: one drop, rockers and steppers. In the one drop, the drums emphasize beat three of the bar, leaving beat one, two and four empty. The song, *One Drop*, by Bob Marley and the Wailers describes this beat and what it does, “fighting against isms and schisms.” In the rockers beat, the emphasis is on beat one and three with the bass drum falling on beat one and the bass drum and the ring shot of the snare drum falling on beat three as is heard in Gregory Isaacs’ song, *Night Nurse* or Black Uhuru’s *Sponge Reggae*. In the steppers, the bass drum plays four solid beats giving the beat an insistent drive and a higher tempo as opposed to the one drop and rockers beats. Bob Marley and the Wailers’ song, *Exodus* and Gregory Isaacs’ song, *Substitute*, are its examples. But, whether a song is a one drop, rockers, or steppers, the most defining feature that distinguishes one song from another is the bass that it is common to find people associating songs with their bass lines such as the *Book of Rules* bass line or the *Fatty Fatty* bass line.

¹⁷¹ OT, Jai Banda, interview by Harold Chanthunya.

It was these sub-genres that were collectively referred to as reggae, but although the music continued to enjoy wide listenership, its dominance began to sink down from 1980 with the rise of its own offs such as dancehall and American hip hop and the death of Bob Marley. But, the worldwide popularity of the music attracted fans in many countries and musicians began experimenting with reggae so that by that late 1980s there were American, British, West African and South African variants of reggae music on the Malawian market. This convergence divided the allegiance of Malawian reggae fans into several factions that can be collapsed into pro-Jamaican and pro-South African, as the American, British and the West African reggae genres were closely identified with the former. Except for Kalimba Band, when Malawian musicians began playing reggae, they seem to have faithfully maintained these divisions with some imitating the Jamaican version while others leaned towards the South African genre.

However, whatever their inclinations were, what Malawian musicians began playing was neither Jamaican nor South African reggae. It was Malawian reggae made by fusing Jamaican or South African reggae rhythm with traditional or neo-traditional Malawian music forms. Since many would-be Malawian reggae artists were first exposed to the early recordings of Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Jimmy Cliff, the one drop beat became the most imitated sub-genre as compared to the rockers and steppers beats. Except for the well-recognised one drop drum and skank guitar, the bass line is not well emphasized to define the uniqueness of the song as in its Jamaican counterpart. Therefore, by Jamaican

standards, Malawian reggae can be bandied together with all other variants of reggae music played in other countries which can be regarded as inauthentic. This distinction was captured by Richard Salter when he interviewed Mutabaruka in 2001 who told him that:

If you listen to the reggae music that they make in Jamaica and the music that they don't make in Jamaica, there's something about the Jamaican that says "Jamaica." If you hear a foreigner play reggae and you hear a Jamaican play reggae, you will say, "Well, really, I prefer the Jamaican." This is because of the vibes. So everybody goes to Jamaica just to catch these vibes. It's the vibe more than anything else. You can't really explain it. It's a feeling.¹⁷²

Sentiments like these were also expressed by Jamaican radio announcers who came to work at FM 101 Power in 1998; they stated that there was no reggae music in Malawi but music with a reggae flavour.¹⁷³ But whether the music was authentic reggae or not, Malawian reggae has been popular and has since the 1990s rivalled Malawian local music as the most popular music form.

The reggae music making business led to the evolution of the genre into three main sub-genres, namely, Balaka, Mayaka and Chileka,¹⁷⁴ named after the places where the beats

¹⁷² Ian Boxil, ed, *Ideaz: The Globalization of Rastafari 7* (Kingston: Arawak Publications, 2008), 45.

¹⁷³ OT, Batawe Nawanga (aka Lion Dread), Rastafarian, Blantyre, March 19, 2014.

¹⁷⁴ "Reggae Music Betraying Malawi," accessed December 13, 2016.

<https://www.malawistar.com/2016/04/05/three-types-of-reggae-music-in-malawi/>

developed. According to Wonderful Mkhutche, Balaka reggae originated from Balaka and was first created by Paul Banda through the band he founded in 1977, Alleluyah Band. Banda maintained the signature keyboard reggae tempo sound but added a heavy sound of lead and rhythm guitars and percussions. The genre has a medium tempo as compared to Mayaka and Chileka reggae and appears to have more of South African than Jamaican influence. The music dominated Malawi from the early 1990s to around 2005, producing such big names like Lucius Banda, Billy Kaunda and Mlaka Maliro in the process. The genre carried a social message by calling on people to proper ways of life and a take on politics.

On the other hand, Chileka reggae began in 1999 when Evison Matafale released his first reggae album, *Kuimba One*. The sub-genre faithfully imitates Jamaican reggae probably because its pioneers were roots reggae fans who later converted to Rastafari. Therefore, Jamaica and not South Africa, was a source of inspiration just like Jerusalem is to a Christian. Unlike Balaka reggae, Chileka reggae has a slower tempo and although it is hard to tell, one drop, steppers and rockers rhythms can be detected through its songs if one listens carefully. After the death of Evison Matafale in 2001, the music has continued with his remnant band, the Black Missionaries. Its message is predominantly about social justice exemplified by one of Matafale's song, *Yang'ana Nkhope Yako* which laments the loss of community and love among Africans as a result of the vices introduced by Christian missionaries and colonialists. The first verse of the song is meant to invoke African identity as a tool for unity and equality:

Kodi tidanirananji?	Why do hate one another?
Yang'ana nkhope yako,	Look at your face.
yang'ana nkhope yanga,	Look at my face.
yang'ana nkhope zaena.	Look at the faces of others.
Timangofanana.	We just identical.
Lord!	Lord!
Tifanana ndi Mulungu.	We are identical with God. ¹⁷⁵

The creators of Mayaka reggae came from Mayaka in Zomba. It was started by Joseph Mkasa when he released his first album, *Wayenda Wapenga*, in 2002 that was followed by *Tigwirane Manja* in 2003. His success with this type of reggae attracted a host of other artists such as Thomas Chibade, Moses Makawa and John Malunga who would later build their names using the beat and the message. Alarmed by their successes as well, Mkasa rebuked them in one of his songs, *Pin Code*, in which he sung of other musicians trying to copy his style of music to usurp his dominance. However, what he did not realize was that having a large number of artists imitating his style of playing music was a measure of his influence which had become too great and thus necessary to be proud of. As compared to Balaka and Chileka reggae genres, Mayaka reggae has a faster tempo but that does not render itself to be a steppers rhythm because most songs have a blurred skank guitar sound which cannot be captured first time. As the self-styled title of the founder, Phungu Joseph Mkasa, suggests, the music has taken a guidance and counselling role which as Mkhutche puts it, is realistic in nature and tries to tackle the world as it is. Much as Mkasa is credited for starting Mayaka reggae beat, he is also criticized for its downfall when he subjectively started political hitch-hiking, successively

¹⁷⁵ Evison Matafale. 2001. *Yang'ana Nkhope Yako*. Cond. Sweeney Chimkango.

singing for political parties as long as their win or maintenance of political office appeared promising.

6.3 Localisation of Political Protest

When Horace Campbell studied the impact of Rastafari in Africa in 1985, he observed that African musicians and artists who did not make their living by singing songs of praise to the great leaders of their societies consciously sought to deepen the form of social commentary which was to be found in reggae.¹⁷⁶ Just like their Jamaican mentors who sung in response to worsening local cultural, social, economic and political conditions, Malawian reggae artists composed songs that covered such subjects as recent political struggles, economic hardships, the importance of upholding to Malawian values and the scourge of HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Malawian artists playing neo-traditional pop music began experimenting with reggae from the early 1980s. Even before this date, Malawian music was bent on social commentary but due to Dr. Banda's authoritarian rule the musicians had to be creative enough to select only those subjects that were not to be judged as politically seditious otherwise they would be lucky if they were just reprimanded. Things took a dramatic turn in March 1992 when the Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter opened a Pandora's Box for the Banda regime. The survival of the Bishops, amidst threats of elimination, encouraged

¹⁷⁶ Horace Campbell, "Rastafari as Pan-Africanism in the Caribbean and Africa." 80.

open opposition to Dr. Banda.¹⁷⁷ Soon, Chakufwa Chihana announced his comeback, pressure groups formed, Kamlepo Kalua led a campaign against the MCP regime from Channel Africa and Lucius Banda began gathering material that informed his first reggae album, *Son of the Poor Man*, released in 1993. Just like the Catholic Bishops' letter, the album chronicled the evils that were committed by the one-party state and praised the inevitability of political change. Its Rastafarian influence was discernible by Lucius Banda's coverage of Bob Marley's/Peter Tosh's song, *Get Up, Stand Up* which contains the phrase: "You fool some people sometimes, but you can't fool all the people all the time." In fact Lucius Banda appears to show a great sense of distinction as to what subject matter should accompany a reggae rhythm and what should accompany a neo-traditional pop music genre. If a song requires him to speak out against injustice committed by the government against its own people or address the social ills of the society, the song is produced in reggae while all other subjects are played to a local Malawian tune as is the case with *Takeover* (reggae) and *Tina* (Beni).

Interestingly, the government of Dr. Bakili Elson Muluzi and the United Democratic Front (UDF) that succeeded Dr. Banda's thirty-year rule in the 1994 General Elections was not treated differently by many reggae musicians. According to reggae songs that were released after that date, the government was not a liberal democracy, but a Babylonian system which was not different from the old Banda regime it had replaced. Although it was noticeable that respect for human rights had improved, the much-talked-

¹⁷⁷ Trevor Cullen, *Malawi: A Turning Point* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1994), 53.

about free primary education had been implemented, fertilizer subsidies had started and the Poverty Alleviation Programme was put in place, the emerging reggae musicians charged the new government of corruption, self-aggrandizement, manipulation of opposition parties, and exploitation of the poor.¹⁷⁸ This state of affairs did not improve during the government's second term which started in 1999 so that when Dr. Muluzi and the UDF openly supported the amendment of the Constitution of Malawi from a two-term to a three term presidential limit to allow Dr. Muluzi to stand for the third term in the 2004 General Elections, opposition political parties, the civil society, and musicians trained in Balaka reggae contested against the decision. In a political protest song couched in religious terms, Billy Kaunda sung *Mwataya Chipangano*, in which he listed a number of reasons as to why the incumbent president was not fit to seek for an extension of the mandate to govern the country for another five years. Among the reasons that came out of the song were police brutality in reference to the death of Evison Matafale in 2001, political violence perpetrated by the Young Democrats, interference with the judiciary, neglect of the poor and the need to resist the corrupting influences of power and money.

Being direct and focused on the target, the song was indeed provocative and in his response, President Bakili Muluzi sarcastically advised Kaunda to compose non-provocative songs like Joseph Mkasa and emotionally rewarded the latter with a car.

¹⁷⁸ K.M., Phiri, and K.R Ross, eds, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998), 195

When the much publicized present did not materialize, Mkasa again took to music and sung *Anamva* which was included in his 2003 album, *Tigwirane Manja* in which he complained about the lack on the part of the President to keep his promises. Thus, when members of opposition parties and civil society were voicing their concerns over the third term bid, Balaka reggae was adding to the collective consciousness of the people by highlighting some aspects of the system that constituted their oppression by the dominant classes and the need for a change.

When the new government came to power in 1994, the existing economic inequalities were everybody's concern as evidenced by the campaign rhetoric of the past two years by which all contesting parties outlined identical manifestoes so as to how they would deal with the problem. As soon as Dr. Muluzi and the UDF took over the government, they immediately launched the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) in July 1995 as a key instrument for poverty alleviation. As stated by The Development Communication Unit (DCU), MASAF was designed to finance social and economic activities that would directly benefit poor communities, transfer cash income through safety-net activities and address needs of vulnerable groups of people such as orphans, the elderly and street children.¹⁷⁹ Though the MASAF Project was largely hailed as a success story, it did not translate to the economic uplift of the majority of the poor as the country still registered 52 percent of the people living below the poverty line and 22 percent living in ultra-poverty in 2006. As a result, grueling poverty and economic inequalities prevalent in

¹⁷⁹ The Development Communication Unit, *Fact File: Malawi Social Action Fund* (Lilongwe, 2003), 3.

rural and urban communities informed the formation of lyrical content of many reggae songs leading to the popularization of the expression that came early in the late 1990s that “Malawian musicians always sing songs of sorrow.” Thus, when other musicians were directing their anger on the government for what they saw as half-hearted measures to deal with the problem, others chose to accept it but visualized a millennial future when the Gini Coefficient would be at zero or when the current economic inequalities had been reversed in favor of those who were experiencing economic hardships as in Joseph Mkasa’s 2002 song, *Mtima Mmalo*. At the same time, instead of appealing to the government for assistance, some musicians invoked African spirit of interdependence by composing songs which described the plight of their suffering to and requested for help from relatives sojourning in faraway countries as in Lucius Banda’s *Kuno Zavuta* and Mlaka Maliro’s *Bweraniko*. Even though this style of lyrical formation appears to lessen the amount of criticism on the politicians, it could still create pressure on them because of the metaphorical connotations carried in the messages therein.

During the transition from Dr. Banda’s one party rule to multiparty democracy, in the period between 1992 and 1994, many misconceptions about the new system of government loomed high. The problem was compounded by those determined to dislodge Dr. Banda. Those who were illiterate were misinformed that the new political system would herald an era of unlimited freedom that would be more progressive than that of Dr. Banda. The poor were also told that the succeeding government would bring about an age of economic prosperity that would be ensured by government socialism. Democracy,

therefore, meant an era for people to live on handouts such as money, fertilizers, food and even shoes as these were mentioned during campaign trails of some politicians. When Dr. Muluzi came to power, some believed strongly that the time of unlimited freedoms, individualism and complacency had come with him. Alarmed by the creeping in of these negative values, reggae musicians joined those who were doubtful about the new developments and sung songs which aimed at restoring what they thought were positive Malawian values. Using Malawian proverbs, aphorisms and metaphors, the musicians sung of communalism (Lucius Banda's *M'bale Wanga*), self-reliance, hard work, patience and perseverance (Joseph Mkasa's *Wayendenda Wapenga*.).

The most vexing problem which emerged during this period and continued to trouble many people today was the outbreak of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Since its emergence, it has puzzled natural and social scientists, religious leaders and lay people trying to understand the origins, spread and how it could be checked. But when it was established that the main way in which the disease spread was through sexual intercourse and medical efforts to check it appeared not to be promising, those infected suffered from both the viral disease and the social disease.¹⁸⁰ As the death toll began to rise and figures published, reggae musicians joined hands with the Ministry of Health, members of the civil society and other youth organizations to campaign for behavioral change in order to curb the spread of the disease and change of attitude towards people with HIV/AIDS. Thus, in *Kuno Kwavuta*, Lucius Banda reports on the scale how the disease has ravaged

¹⁸⁰ Alice Desclaux, *A Cultural Approach to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care* (Paris: UNESCO, 2003), 1.

his community while in *Tsoka Sasimba*, Joseph Mkasa counsels on the importance of prevention of the disease as the search for the cure and scapegoats would be futile.

The most important subject that was not featured during this time was that of marijuana probably because most of the musicians who took to reggae music were those influenced by the ethos of the Rastafari but did not become Rastafarians themselves. Even those musicians who embraced the culture of Rastafari never made any reference to the illicit drug but the phrase *wadya mzimbe* became widespread as an expression for someone who was suspected to have smoked marijuana when Sally Nyundo released *Ras Amadya Mzimbe*, describing the Rastafarian vegetarian diet.

6.4 Localisation of Religious Teachings

Since formal Rastafari meetings began in 1995, its doctrine has evolved from a monolithic, homogenous and bounded culture of Jamaica to an appropriated and reinterpreted set of beliefs resulting in new localized expressions of the movement. While the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia appears to remain unchanged, many other doctrinal principles such as those concerning the prophet hood, repatriation and Babylon-Zion dichotomy have gone through significant processes of evolution.

In the first place, the well-known prophet in Rastafari circles is Marcus Mosiah Garvey. Garvey earned this position after a prophecy he made in 1927, about the crowning of an

African king was seen to have been fulfilled when Ras Tafari Makonnen of Ethiopia was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie I on 2 November 1930. As Rastafari was evolving to take its local character, well articulate members of the movement in Malawi began to draw parallels between Marcus Garvey and John Chilembwe and accorded the latter the same status as the former.¹⁸¹ Of course, many Rastafarians would be tantalized if they learned that Garvey “became interested in the condition of the African Negro as a result of discussions with the followers of Chilembwe of Nyasaland and Kimbangu of the Congo.”¹⁸²

A close examination of this insiders’ view shows that even though John Chilembwe and Marcus Garvey were separated by time and space, they had more similarities than differences regarding the back-to-Africa movement, black economic self-reliance, the employment of Africans in European armies and the parts they played in Black Nationalism.¹⁸³ When Joseph Booth took John Chilembwe to the USA in 1897, he entrusted him under the tutelage of the National Negro Baptist Convention, an Ethiopianist church movement which was popularizing the slogan *Africa for the Africans*, which also became the title of Joseph Booth’s book. It follows then that when Marcus Garvey seized upon and used it in his back-to-Africa campaign in the 1920s, Chilembwe was already familiar with it and had even demonstrated its support by allowing Rev. Landon N. Cheek and Emma B. DeLany to work at PIM at the time when African

¹⁸¹ OT, Patson Jeffrey (aka Jah Yut), Rastafarian, Blantyre, September 9, 2014.

¹⁸² Robert Hugh Brisbane, Jr. “Some New Light on the Garvey Movement,” *The Journal of Negro History* 36, no. 1 (Jan. 1951): 56, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2715777>.

¹⁸³ George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1987), 434.

Americans were suspected to be the harbingers of the dreaded Ethiopianism among whites. Like Garvey, Chilembwe had played a part in promulgating back-to-Africa philosophies from which Rastafarians derived their doctrine of repatriation and thus their recognition as prophet of Rastafari.

John Chilembwe has also been recognized as the prophet of Rastafari because, like Marcus Garvey, he attempted to improve the status of black people by preaching as well as practicing economic self-reliance. As Chilembwe was developing his mission, that was based on self-propagating, self-governing and self-help principles of Joseph Booth, he was also establishing vocational and educational enterprises that dotted all the areas under PIM influence so that by 1912, the mission could report to have over nine hundred pupils.¹⁸⁴ On his part, Marcus Garvey, along with numerous references on the subject, demonstrated this spirit by organizing the Black Star Line and the Negro Factories Corporation which drew shareholders from the black world for the benefit of black people. Since Garvey appear to have favoured entrepreneurship over employment, Rastafarians, who have suffered unemployment because of discrimination and lack of adequate education since the 1930s, have taken his word as gospel truth and followed it religiously. Therefore, John Chilembwe, who seems to have experimented on this principle earlier than Garvey himself, must also occupy the same position as that of Marcus Garvey.

¹⁸⁴ George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*, 166.

Similarly, as soon as he established his mission station at Mbombwe in Chiradzulu in 1900, John Chilembwe is said to have began criticism of African involvement in European wars which culminated in 1914 when he published a letter with the *Nyasaland Times* protesting against the employment of Africans in the First World War.¹⁸⁵ Strikingly, Marcus Garvey and many members of the UNIA held similar views and when delegates gathered in Liberty Hall at Harlem, in 1920, to draft the *Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World*, one of its clauses, number 48, stated

We protest against the practice of drafting Negroes and sending them to war with alien forces without proper training, and demand in all cases that Negro soldiers be given the same training as the aliens.¹⁸⁶

Since it is widely held within the Rastafari faith that to protest or fight against the victimization and oppression of the poor Africans who have nothing to own in this present world, who in death leave a long line of widows and orphans in utter want and dire distress, is to demonstrate the possession of a heart of a Rasta, John Chilembwe and Marcus Garvey occupy revered positions within the movement despite the fact that they themselves were exocentric and did not want to associate with it.

In addition, John Chilembwe is well known in southern Africa because of the insurrection he led against British colonialism in 1915. For the nationalists agitating for political

¹⁸⁵ George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African*, 235.

¹⁸⁶ “Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World”: The Principles of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, accessed July 6, 2016. [<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5122>].

independence in Malawi that intensified during the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953-1963), the Chilembwe Rising was a source of their inspiration to succeed and compensate for the defeat he suffered. Marcus Garvey, who did not lead any revolt against any colonial government, but condemned the system in his speeches and writings, also inspired many nationalist movements in Africa.

However, even though similarities can be drawn between John Chilembwe and Marcus Garvey, there is one fundamental difference. While Marcus Garvey always spoke prophetically as was the case with his visions of a great Negro empire in Africa and his 1927 prediction of the crowning of an African king, John Chilembwe seems to be pragmatic and only responded to situations as they arose. Those who used to sit around their radio sets to listen to Chilembwe's play, on those somber Third March days during the reign of Dr. Banda can remember that as the play was going to a close, and his defeat becomes imminent, Chilembwe would speak in a Garveyite fashion prophesying about the coming of a greater political messiah than himself who would stir the nation to independence with a *Kwacha* (Dawn) slogan. If the MCP propaganda, which manipulated John Chilembwe as a tool of political engineering, serves as another evidence for his significance, Chilembwe must have many reasons to be revered as the prophet of Rastafari in Malawi.

Another important doctrine which has gone through the process of evolution as the result of the spread of Rastafari to Malawi is repatriation. When Rastafari began in the 1930s, the elders taught that Jamaica was hell, an open prison surrounded by water while Ethiopia ka Africa was heaven for the black man. Banking on the back-to-Africa philosophies of Marcus Garvey, the ideologues of Rastafari took the idea of migration to Africa as a matter of spiritual fulfilment as well as returning to the land from which their forefathers had been forcibly uprooted. As Rastafari spread to Africa and Malawi in particular, the Rastafarian was already in Zion, the Promised Land that is hoped by his fellow Rastafarian in the Western world and therefore the concept of repatriation had to be reinterpreted for it to fit into the African context for which Malawi is a part. As a result, repatriation has come to signify the person's shift of consciousness in the direction of what is considered good in Rastafari which can be demonstrated in two main ways. Firstly, repatriation stands for the conversion of a person from any other religious faith to Rastafari thus, returning to where one really belongs. In fact, Rastafarians do not talk of people as converting to their faith because they contend that every true black person is born a Rasta but time and circumstances make them realize that they are so. Secondly, repatriation represents the shift of the mind from the predilection to commit acts of evil to that of righteousness. Though the idea is illustrated by a Jamaican who is concerned with both spiritual and physical repatriation, one can still grasp how repatriation is interpreted in Malawi:

The first stage of repatriation is for us to repatriate from wrong and do right. We nuh move yet y'uknow. When you check sickness and all those things, is wrongs breed sickness, wrongs cause deat [death]! But we repatriate from deat first unto life. We are on the road of life, but through we nuh get to the fullness yet we still have lickle [little] affliction. But we remove from evil by she repatriated from lickle foolishness whey we used to carry on...So I am repatriated from dat [that] stage. But the other stage, it name the movements of God people, man a move outa Babylon.¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, in Rastafarian discourse, the whole of the Western world, especially those covered by the British West Indies, the USA, Canada and Britain is referred to as Babylon because this is where the African was subjected to slavery and forced to continue to live there after emancipation came. As time progressed, the term Babylon was expanded to include not just physical places but dominant and oppressive systems of the world such as European colonialism, neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism. On the contrary, Africa, where their ancestors came from is referred to as Zion, the Promised Land where all right-minded black men should seek to mark out their burial spot.¹⁸⁸ But, for the Rastafarian already in Africa, the idea of the continent as Zion does not apply everywhere. The instruments which sustain the hegemony of Western governments in power such as the army, the police, the church and the educational system are also present in Zion maintaining law and order just like their counterparts in the West. The history of the continent since independence has also been characterized by civil wars, bloody military coups, dictatorships and economic depression that have challenged the

¹⁸⁷ Congo Rock, "The Way Forward: Redemption, Reparation, Repatriation," *Jahug* 6 (London: Repatriation Productions), 47.

¹⁸⁸ G. Llewellyn Watson, "Social Structure and Social Movements," 192.

very concept of Zion which seem to co-exist side by side with Babylon. These contradictions have resulted in the reinterpretation of Zion or Babylon depending on the area a certain social space arouses in the people who live it. Thus, some places in Blantyre that are dotted by bars, casinos, roadblocks, curfews and general moral degradation would be labeled Babylon while those peaceful places like plateaus, riverbanks, forests and homes which can allow the Rasta man smoke the herb without retribution or molestation can be referred to Zion. Thus, the idea of Africa as Zion is conditional to Rastafarians who live there and Malawi is not exceptional.

In conclusion, as Rastafari spread from Jamaica to Malawi, its doctrines regarding the prophet, repatriation and Babylon-Zion dichotomy have been reinterpreted or changed to suit the conditions in which it has become part. For Rastafari, this should not be regarded as a unique case because all the major universalizing religions have gone through the same process as soon as they had expanded beyond their place of origin. It is a process of indigenization in which cultural traits which are imposed at first are negotiated to assume the local character. Perhaps, this is why the origin of Rastafari has become a source of contestation in Malawi with others recognizing its beginnings in Jamaica while others dispute this by locating its origins in Africa and arguing that the people who started the movement in Jamaica were of African descent extolling an African king.

6.5 Conclusion

In sum, by listening to Jamaican, British and South African reggae genres for over two decades, which addressed historical, cultural, social, political and religious issues, Malawian reggae artists found their local equivalents to deal with. By focusing on political oppression, economic hardships, declining Malawian values and the scourge of HIV/AIDS, it does not mean that Malawian reggae musicians did not sing about love. In fact, love songs were ubiquitous and as Nad Edwards points out, even forms such as love songs can be read as subversive because to sing about love, in societies that posit human relationships in terms of domination and exploitation is to posit a radical reshaping of human behavior. At the same time, by emphasizing political protest, it does not mean that some reggae musicians did not approve of the very system that they purported to challenge because of their marginalization of those perceived to be deviant others.

The chapter has highlighted the aspects of Rastafari culture that have been indigenized in Malawi. These include the religious doctrine, the music and political protest of Rastafari. In its localization of religious doctrine, John Chilembwe, the founder of the Providence Industrial Mission and Malawi's national hero, is the prophet of Rastafari because of the common similarities that exist between Chilembwe and Marcus Garvey. The chapter has also established that the doctrine of repatriation and the Babylon-Zion dichotomy have also been reinterpreted to fit the Malawian situation. The chapter has also examined the localization of reggae music and identified three main types: Balaka, Chileka and

Mayaka reggae. The chapter has ended with the analysis of the localization of Rastafari political protest in areas such as political oppression, economic inequalities, promotion of Malawian positive values and the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.0 Introduction

The study analysed the spread of Rastafari to Malawi from the early 1970s to 2018. This was achieved by tracing the roots of Rastafari ideology in Malawi, analysing how the Rastafari movement was consolidated in Malawi, examining the struggles of acceptance Rastafarians have been engaging in, and assessing the extent of indigenisation of the Rastafari movement in Malawi.

7.1 The Nature of the Study

The research was a case study that used Blantyre to represent the Rastafari community in Malawi. It was a longitudinal research which began in January 2014 to May 2016 that involved repeated visits to Rastafarian homes and places of worship. The study was a qualitative research that stressed on the understanding of the social world as interpreted and constructed by Rastafarians and the people around them.

The generation of data for the study involved the gathering of oral data obtained through participant observation which was valuable because of the familiarisation of Rastafari customs it offered to the researcher. Data was also generated by gathering primary

written sources and secondary written sources acquired from Rastafarian personal collections, the National Archives in Zomba and libraries. The study was analysed using thematic analysis because it was a useful tool for analysing qualitative data.

The majority of the works that were reviewed in the study used the materialist approach to determine the rise, spread and growth of Rastafari in Jamaica where the movement originate and other parts of the world.¹⁸⁹ The current study agrees with these Marxist scholars that the rise, growth and spread of Rastafari was the result of material problems of producing food, shelter and clothing but it contributed to this growing literature by studying the movement by applying Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony by deemphasising the importance of the base and broadening the superstructure. The current study, therefore, views the spread of Rastafari to Malawi as the result of the movement's articulation of anti-establishment and counter-hegemonic ideologies whose appeal crosses the economic divide.

7.2 Findings

The study established that the spread of Rastafari to Malawi from the early 1970s to 2018 was aided by African Christianity, Ethiopianism, Garveyism and cultural nationalism of the African educated which spread similar doctrinal materials as those of Rastafari since the colonial period. Rastafari, therefore, as compared to mission Christianity did not start

¹⁸⁹ N.J. Savishinsky, "Rastafari in the Promised Land," 19.

from scratch. The study also found that the ideas popularised by these early movements were consolidated by the internationalisation of reggae music that began to hit the Malawian airwaves since the early 1970s. It has been observed that the spread of Rastafari to Malawi was welcome but the movement's use of marijuana for religious purposes and the wearing of dreadlocks as a religious expression were a source of concern for both the dictatorial government of Dr. Banda and the democratic governments that succeeded him. As a result, Rastafarians have been engaged in struggles in order to gain acceptance. Lastly, the study found that the spread of Rastafari affected people in many different ways who appropriated and indigenised many of its aspects.

7.3 Conclusion

This kind of the study has been very important to the historiography of Malawi. By delving into the spread of Rastafari, the study sought to add something to the religious historiography currently dominated by the history of European and American missionary activity and early independent African churches. However, there are many areas that need to be addressed by further studies. First, there is need to establish the importance of the East African slave trade to Rastafari in Malawi because during fieldwork conducted for the research in the period between 2014 and 2016, reference to Swahili-Arabs was made frequently during reasoning sessions and sermons. Secondly, future studies will need to examine the role of women in Rastafari. This occurred because not many women were present during the reasoning sessions and sermons and by the end of the fieldwork, only

one woman was interviewed. Lastly, further studies will need to examine the similarities and differences that exist between Rastafari and other religious movements in Malawi as on face value Rastafari seems to have drawn much from Seventh Day Adventism and Jehovah's Witnesses. The more these facts are illuminated, the more they would enrich research on religion in Malawi in general and Rastafari in particular.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Oral Sources

- Banda, Jai. Mr. Entertainers Promotion, Blantyre, April 10, 2014.
- Bob Marley and the Wailers. *Selassie is the Chapel*. Cond. Mortimo Planno. Comp. Bob Marley, 1968.
- Bob Marley and the Wailers. *Jah Live*. Cond. Bob Marley and Lee Perry. Comp. Bob Marley and Lee Perry, 1975.
- Bob Marley and the Wailers. *Africa Unite*. Cond. Bob Marley. Comp. Bob Marley, 1979.
- Chingeni, Sydney, (aka Baba Madala Tunye). Rastafarian, Blantyre, March 10, 2015.
- Cliff, Jimmy. 1972. *The Harder They Come*. Cond. Jimmy Cliff. Comp. Jimmy Cliff.
- Culture. 1977. *Two Sevens Clash*. Cond. Joseph Hill. Comp. Joseph Hill.
- Dzampana, Yamikani. Rastafarian, Blantyre, June 20, 2015.
- Fire, Bobo Chim. Rastafarian, Blantyre, September 6, 2014.
- Gondwe, Victor. (Cultural Standards Officer, Malawi Censorship Board). Blantyre, January 19, 2014.
- Habackuku. Rastafarian, Blantyre, June 27, 2015.
- Jeffrey, Patson, (aka Jah Yut), Rastafarian, Blantyre, September 9, 2014.
- Kaliati, K.M. Evangelist, PIM, Chiradzulu, March 6, 2015.
- Kalonga, Ester. Rastafarian, Blantyre, February 13, 2014.
- Kalulu, Thackson, Reggae Fan, Blantyre, January 19, 2014.
- Lion, Rastafarian, Blantyre, June 27, 2015.
- Machilika, Samuel (Retired Teacher). Blantyre, January 23, 2014.
- Matafale, Evison. 2001. *Yang'ana Nkhope Yako*. Cond. Sweeney Chimkango.

Nawanga, Batawe, (aka Lion Dread), Rastafarian, Blantyre, March 19, 2014.

Nimrod, Rastafarian, Blantyre, May 13, 2014.

Nkhwazi, Fred King. Retired Banker, Blantyre, January 23, 2014.

Nyekanyeka, Peter. Rastafarian, Blantyre, June 27, 2015.

Romarin, Chantal, (aka Sister Fire). Rastafarian, Blantyre, September 14, 2014.

Sazuze, Noel (aka Lion Soldier). Rastafarian, Blantyre, February 13, 2014

Steel Pulse. *Not King James Version*. Cond. Jimmy “Senyan” Haynes. Comp. David Hinds, 1986.

The Mighty Diamonds. 1983. *Leaders of Black Countries*. Cond. Tappa Zukie and Blackbeard Sinclair. Comp. Donald “Tappy” Shaw.

Tosh, Peter. 1977. *Equal Rights*. Cond. Peter Tosh. Comp. Peter Tosh.

Yohane, Rastafarian, Blantyre, August 30, 2014.

Archival Sources

“If You Believe the Negro Has a Soul.” History Matters, 1981. Accessed July 6, 2016. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5124>.

Annual Convention of the Malawi Congress Party, Zomba, September 10, 1972.

Banda, Hastings Kamuzu. “Building the Nation.” Speech at the Opening of 1972 Malawi Congress Party Convention.

Chants from the Ivine Order of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie I the First.

Cinematograph, Pictures and Records: May 1985-December 1987. Zomba: The Government Printer.

Cooper, M. and Manning, J.I. *Members of a New Race: Teachings of HIM Emperor Haile Selassie*. Rasta Vibration Production.

Garvey, Amy Jacques. *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. The Journal of Pan African Studies 25, no. 1(2009). <http://www.black-matters.com/books/Marcus-Garvey-Phil-and-Opinions.pdf>.

Jahug 2. London: Repatriation Production, 1992.

Jahug 3. London: C. Gayle and Y. Gayle, 1993.

Jahug 5. London: A Congo Call Production.

Jahug 6. London: Repatriation Production.

Jahug 7. London: Congo Call Production.

Malawi Congress Party. *Malawi Congress Party Annual Convention: Resolutions, 1965-1981*. Blantyre: Department of Information, 1982.

Malawi Congress Party. *The Constitution of the Malawi Congress Party and Rules and Regulations Governing the Discipline of the Malawi Congress Party*, 1969.

Malawi Government. *Catalogue of Banned Publications, Cinematograph, Pictures and Records: From 1st August, 1968 to 31st May, 1985*. Zomba: The Government Printer).

Malawi Government. *Supplement Catalogue of Banned Publications, Cinematograph, Pictures and Records: May 1985-December 1987* (Zomba: The Government Printer).

Matebule, Tamandani. "Lucius Banda Refuses to Step Down." *Daily Times*, Monday, December 10, 2001.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. *Living in Malawi*. Blantyre: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1972.

Nyekanyeka, Rankin. "Reggae by Foot Fails Fans." *Daily Times*, April 22, 1992.

Phiri, Norman. "Drug Problem Growing in Malawi." *Daily Times*, June 19, 1992.

Secondary Sources

Adejumobi, Saheed. *Ethiopianism*. BlackPAst, 2007. Accessed June 10, 2016. <http://www.blackpast.org/gah/ethiopianism>.

Adeoti, E.O. "African History and the Tradition of Historical Writing." *Journal of Social sciences* 3, no. 2. (2014): 317-322. [http://www.centreofexcellence.net/J/JSS/JSS Mainpage.htm](http://www.centreofexcellence.net/J/JSS/JSS%20Mainpage.htm)

Bailey, T.A. and Kennedy, D.M. *The American Pageant 1*. Lexington: D.C. Heath

- and Company, 1994.
- Banda, K.N. *A Brief History of Education in Malawi*. Blantyre: Dzuka Publishing Company Ltd, 1982.
- Banda, T. *Old Nyaviyuyi in Performance: Seven Tales from Northern Malawi as Told by a Master Performer of the Oral Narrative*. Luwingu: Mzuni Publications, 2006.
- Barker, C. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd., 2008.
- Barnett, M. "Differences and Similarities between the Rastafari Movement and the Nation of Islam." *Journal of Black Studies* 36, no. 6 (2006): 873-893. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40034350>.
- Barnett, M. "The Many Faces of Rasta: Doctrinal Diversity within the Rastafari Movement" in *Caribbean Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2005): 67-78, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40654506>.
- Barnett, M. "Rastafari Dialectism: The Epistemology Individualism and Connectivism of Rastafari." *Caribbean Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (2002): 54-61. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40654296>.
- Bates, T.R. "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony." *Journal of History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 351-366, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2708933>.
- Boahen, A. ed. *General History of Africa, VII: Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935*. Paris: UNESCO, 1985.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77-101. <http://www.eprints.uwe.ac.uk/11735>.
- Brisbane, R.H. "Some New Light on the Garvey Movement." *The Journal of Negro History* 36, no. 1 (Jan., 1951): 53-62. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2715777>.
- Bryman, A. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Bryson, G.L. *The Dark Side of Calvinism*. Santa Ana: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2004.
- Campbell, Horace, "Rastafari and Pan-Africanism in the Caribbean and Africa,"

- African Journal of Political Economy* 2, no.1 (1988): 75-88.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23500303>.
- Chevannes, B. "The Literature of Rastafari." *Social and Economic Studies* 26, no. 2 (1977): 239-262. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27861657>.
- Chimombo, Steve. *Malawi Oral Literature: The Aesthetics of Indigenous Art*. Zomba: Centre for Social Research, 1988.
- Chirwa, W.C. "Masokwa Elliot Kenan Kamwana Chirwa: His Religious and Political Activities and Impact in Nkhata Bay, 1908-1956." *Journal of Social Science* 12, no. 3 (1985). Zomba: Chancellor College, 1985.
- Ewing, A. "Garvey or Garveyism: Collin Grant's Negro with a Hat (2008) and a Search for a New Synthesis in UNIA Scholarship." *Transition* 1, no. 105, *Blacks, Jews and Black Jews*. (2011): 130-145.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/transition.105.130>.
- Hansing, K. "Rastafari in a Different Kind of Babylon: The Emergence and Development of the Rastafari Movement in Socialist Cuba," *Caribbean Studies*, 34, no. 1 (2006): 61-84. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25613510>.
- Haviland, W.A. et al. *Anthropology: The Human Challenge*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.
- Hayes, C. *Identity Politics*. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/>
- Hoare, Q. and Smith, G.N. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Elec Book, 1999.
- Kebede, A. "Projective Framing, Cultural Opportunity Milieu, and the Rastafari" *Sociological Focus* 36, no. 4 (Taylor and Francis Ltd, November 2003): 353-370, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20832214>.
- Kebede, A. and Knottnerus, J.D. "Beyond the Pales of Babylon: The Ideational Components and Social Psychological Foundations of Rastafari," *Sociological Perspectives*, 41, no. 3 (1998): 499-517
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1389561>.
- Kitzinger, S. "Protest and Mysticism: The Rastafari Cult of Jamaica" in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8, no. 2 (1969): 240-262,
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1384337>.
- Ki-Zerbo, ed. *General History of Africa I: Methodology and Prehistory*. Paris:

- UNESCO, 1981.
- Lanternari, V. *Religions of the Oppressed*. London: McGibbon and Kee, 1963.
- Layder, D. *Understanding Social Theory*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd., 2006.
- Le Baron, B. "Négritude: A Pan-African Ideal?" *Ethics* 76, no. 4 (1966): 267-276. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2379233>.
- Lears, Jackson. "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review* 90, no 3 (1985): 567-593. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1860957>.
- McCracken, J. *A History of Malawi: 1859-1966*. Suffolk: James Currey, 2012.
- Mhango, M.O. "The Constitutional Protection of Minority Religious Rights in Malawi: The Case of Rastafari Students." *Journal of Law* 52, no. 2 (2013): 218-244. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27608008>.
- Mission Christianity. *The Colonial Churches and Ethiopianism: 1867-1898*. Accessed September 6, 2014. <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/ricsa/projects/sochist/print/c2.1.pdf>.
- Moyana, T.T. *Education, Liberation and the Creative Act*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1989.
- Moyer, E. "Street-Corner Justice in the Name of Jah: Imperatives for Peace among Dar es Salam Street Youth." *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (2005): 31-58.
- Msiska, S.K. *Golden Buttons: Christianity and Traditional Religion among the Tumbuka*. Blantyre: CLAIM, 1997.
- Murrell, N.S., Spencer, W.D. and McFarlane, A.A. eds. *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*. Temple University Press, 1998.
- Ofoego, O. "Toward the Decolonization of African Literature: That Now Classic Manifesto of African Cultural Nationalism." Accessed November 27, 2015. <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1027493ar>.
- Phiri, K.M. and Ross, K.R. eds. *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*. Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998.
- Phiri, K.M. "Early Malawi Kingship and the Dynamics of Pre-colonial Chewa

Society.” *Journal of Social Science II*. Zomba: Chancellor College, 1977, 21-30.

Ogot, B.A. ed. *General History of Africa, V: Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Paris: UNESCO, 1992.

Price, C., Nonini, D. and Tree, E.F. “Grounded Utopian Movements: Subjects of Neglect.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 1. (2008): 127-159.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30052742>,

Ranger, T.O. ed. *Aspects of Central African History*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1968.

Salewicz, C. *Bob Marley: The Untold Story*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009.

Savishinsky, N.J. “Rastafari in the Promised Land: The Spread of a Jamaican Socioreligious Movement among the Youth of West Africa.” *African Studies Review* 37, no. 3. (1994), 19-50.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/524901>.

Shepperson, G. and Price, T. *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1987.

Simms, R. “I am a Non-Denominational Christian and a Marxist Socialist: A Gramscian Analysis of the Convention People’s Party and Nkrumah’s Use of Religion.” *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 4 (2003): 463-477.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3712336>.

Smith, M.G., Augier, R., and Nettleford, R. “The Rastafari Movement in Kingston, Jamaica, Part I.” *Caribbean Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1967):3-29.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40653024>.

Sweezy, P.M. and Huberman, L. *The Communist Manifesto after 100 Years*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1949.

Vinson, R.T. “Sea Kaffirs: American Negroes and the Gospel of Garveyism in Early Twentieth Century Cape Town.” *The Journal of African History* 47, no. 2. (2006): 281-303. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4100725>.

Walker, C.A. “Princes Shall Come Out of Egypt: A Theoretical Comparison of Marcus Garvey and Reverend Albert B. Cleage Jr.” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 2 (2008): 194-251. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40282558>.

- Watson, G.L. "Patterns of Black Protest in Jamaica: The Case of the Rastafarians." *Journal of Black Studies* 4, no. 3 (March 1974): 329-343. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2783660>.
- West, M.O. "The Seeds are Sown: The Impact of Garveyism in Zimbabwe in the Interwar Years." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2/3 (2002): 335-362. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3097617>.
- White, C.M. "Living in Zion: Rastafarian Repatriates in Ghana, West Africa." *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 5 (2007): 677-709. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40034361>.
- Ethiopian World Federation. *Our Preamble*. Accessed June 10, 2016. <http://ethiopianworldfederation.com/>
- Drug Library. *Ethiopianism*, n.d. Accessed June 11, 2016, <http://www.druglibrary.net/olsen/rastafari/campbell.html>
- Murrell, Nathaniel Samuel. *Introduction to the Rastafari Phenomenon*. Accessed March 22, 2016. <http://www.globalexchange.org/country/jamaica/rasta>.
- Music of Africa. *New World Encyclopaedia*. Accessed October 8, 2017. <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/musicofafrica>
- Prester John. *John Buchan To Lionel Phillips*. Accessed September 15, 2016. <http://www.pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/digi343.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethiopian Anthem

The Ethiopian Anthem is chanted at the opening and sealing of all ceremonial occasions and gatherings and at the hoisting of the Ethiopian flag. The anthem is an adaptation of *The Universal Ethiopian Anthem*, a poem written by Burrell and Ford and adopted by the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) as the anthem of the Negro race.

Ithiopia the land of our Fathers
The land where our JAH loves to be
As the swift bee to hive sudden gathers
Thy children are gathered to thee
With our Red, Gold and Green floating O'er us
With our Emperor to shield us from wrong
With our JAH and our future before us
We will hail thee with shout and with song.

JAH bless our Negus Negus I
Who keeps Ithiopia free - (to advance)
To advance, with truth and right
To advance, with love and light
With righteousness pleading
We haste to our JAH and King
Humanity' pleading, one JAH for us all.

O eternal though JAH of the ages
Grant unto us sons that lead
Thy wisdom is given to our ages
When Israel was sore in need
Thy voice thro' the dim past has spoken
Ithiopia shall stretch forth her hands
By thee shall all barriers be broken
And Zion bless our dear Motherland.

Ithiopia the tyrants are falling
Who smote thee upon they knees
Thy children are heartically calling
From over the distant seas
Rastafari the great one has heard us
He has noted our sighs and our tears
With the spirit of love he has stirred us
To be one, all through the coming years.

Source: Chants from the Ivine Order of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I the First

Appendix 2: A Rasta's house in Chirimba, Blantyre painted in the colours of the Ethiopian flag.



Source: The Researcher's own photo album

Appendix 3: Ras Ester Kalonga from Chirimba, Blantyre.



Source: The Researcher's own photo album

Appendix 4: Organization of the Nyahbinghi Order of Rastafari

The Priesthood

A priest of the Nyahbinghi Order is ordained by JAH Ras Tafari. The priesthood consists of brethren who are well nurtured in the Ivine livety of Rastafari and have led exemplary lives in the sight of the Congregation and the Almighty. The Priests administrate around the Alter of the Tabernacle, and lead the Congregation in prayer as well as the sanctification of the new born sons and dawtas of the Nyahbinghi Order. The Priesthood is looked upon for wise decision and counsel. The Nyahbinghi Priest must be just and non-partial. He must maintain an “Ital livety” to make sure he does not defile the Temple of the Living JAH with abominable flesh. The signature of the Nyahbinghi Priest must be affixed to all official documents of the Order of the Nyahbinghi.

The Council of Elders

The Council of Elders consists of Elder brethren of the House who have maintained the livety of Rastafari over a number of years.

Their decision is always required, and where there are differences of opinion the Council is called upon to make a ruling. The Council of Elders function as guardians of the Movement and their decisions are treated with great respect.

The Sisters Council

The Sisters Council consist of Sistren of the Nyahbinghi Order of Rastafari. They hold reasoning sessions and discuss issues affecting Rastafari women, family life, education of children, health care, as well as any other issues worthy of being discussed among the family of Rastafari. Their time of meeting must not conflict with the meeting of the General House as their presence is also required.

If the Sisters Council agree upon projects, ventures, etc., they must first bring the matter to the congregation or the Council of Elders for approval.

The Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee consists of at least three brethren of the Order who see to it that the Guidelines are adhered to at all Nyahbinghi gatherings. If any individual(s) fail to maintain harmony and love during the days of the Nyahbinghi then the Committee will approach such individual(s) in a quest for Oneness.

If such individual(s) respond negatively, then the matter is brought before the House which will then make a ruling and such individual(s) dismissed forthwith.

With the full support of the Congregation, the Committee never responds violently but carries out its duties firmly, without partiality.

The Welcoming Committee

This Committee is charged with the duty of assisting brethren and sistren who visit a Nyahbinghi Order for the first time. It comprises brethren and sistren of the Nyahbinghi Order who are well known for tolerance, honesty and politeness. If “strangers” appear then the Committee will investigate their motives and report to the House which will decide on whether such individual(s) stay or leave.

Source: Jahug, Vol. 2, Edition 2 (London: Repatriation Productions, 1992), pp. 42-43.

Appendix 5: Proposal for the Construction of a Rastafarian Tabernacle at Chisombezi

CENTRALIZATION OF RASTAFARI ORGANIZATION

Mitsidi Village, P.O. Box 30925, Chichiri, Blantyre 3.

Cell: 0999939703/0999443971/0995830814/0888567898

Proposal for the Construction of a Rastafarian Tabernacle at Chisombezi

Background Information

For so many years, the Rastafarian Community has not been well identified with their Worship Centre. This has been partly due to lack of political will by previous government or religious discrimination. As such, the Rastafarian has been failing to conduct their prayers at well-established and recognized Centers by their Communities.

With the change of political landscape and the understanding of Rastafarian ideologies by many people, it has been imperative to the Rastafarians to be identified by their place of worship just like other religious group. It is against this background that the Rastafarian Community has embarked on project to construct their Worship Centre at Chisombezi in Chiladzulo.

Action Taken

In the year 2010, the Rastafarian Community mobilized resources amongst themselves and acquired three hectares of land at Chisombezi in Chiladzulo. Chisombezi is about 14 km (or 20 min drive) from Limbe on the Midima road. Currently, the foundation for the structure has been completed with funding from well-wishers as well as Rastafarian themselves.

Request for Fund for the Completion of the Structure

As seen from the Pictures Fig 1-3 attached,* the structure is far from completion hence the request for support from well-wishers like you. The Worship Center's remaining part needs about MK3.8 million to complete (but will need MK4.93 million in phases as shown)* with labor charges. Below is the whole breakdown of the required materials to fully complete the construction of the Worship Centre. The Worship Centre structure is an 18 meters radius, it's in such a shape because it's built in a round shaped, with 12 pillars, representing the 12 Tribes of Israel (or Sons of Jacob)

*Not included in this appendix

Source: Ras Sydney Chingeni, 10 March 2015.