

“SOME ARE MORE WHITE THAN OTHERS”: RACIAL CHAUVINISM AS  
A FACTOR IN RHODESIAN IMMIGRATION POLICY, 1890 TO 1963

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**Abstract**

*This article analyses the role of ethnic chauvinism in determining the patterns and trends of white immigration into Rhodesia from the country's occupation in 1890 to the Second World War. It argues that, while scholars have rightly emphasised white settler racism and discrimination against the African majority, and have tended to treat settler white society as a homogenous entity which shared a common identity, a closer examination of the racial dynamics within white colonial society reveals that strong currents of ethnic chauvinism maintained sharp divisions within the white settler society, even though settlers presented a united front when protecting their collective interests in the face of the perceived African threat. This article focuses specifically on racial and cultural chauvinism emanating from settlers of British stock which, among other things, determined the pace, volume and nature of white immigration into the country and contributed, together with other factors, to the fact that fewer white immigrants entered the country than had originally been envisaged by Cecil John Rhodes. Thus, while Rhodes had dreamt of creating Rhodesia as a white man's country, this dream remained unfulfilled because of the dominant British settler community's reluctance to admit whites of non-British stock. It is argued, therefore, that, throughout the period under study, British colonial settlers continued to regard themselves as "more white than others" with respect to other non-British races.*

INTRODUCTION

Studies of Rhodesian colonial society have often emphasised the prevalence of white settler racism and discrimination against Africans and how this attitude shaped the development of the country, culminating in the growth and development of African protest and resistance. With a few notable exceptions, the settler community, known generically in colonial language as "Europeans", were erroneously perceived as a united entity which shared a common identity deriving from its whiteness". As Richard Hodder Williams notes, scholars tended to base their analyses on "the simple, but all too simple, hypothesis about Rhodesia [that] suggests overwhelming pressures to ensure the unity of the white-skinned immigrant minority against the black skinned majority". He maintains,

however, that, while Rhodesian white groups lived together and were not violently antagonistic, they lived prejudiced lives and were suspicious of each other, although they remained united “in their defence of property and political advantage”.<sup>1</sup>

It is equally the contention of this article that, despite the outward semblance of unity, the white Rhodesian community was deeply divided by, among other factors, racism and cultural chauvinism which emanated, mostly, from the settlers of British stock, evoking equally strong reactions from other white groups in the country such as Afrikaners. The racist attitudes of the politically, economically and numerically dominant British settlers were clearly evident in Rhodesia’s immigration policy up to the Federation which frustrated the efforts of thousands of would-be non-British white settlers to enter and settle in the country. As a result, the Rhodesian white population remained small throughout the period under review.<sup>2</sup>

As shown in my recent publication,<sup>3</sup> while the original colonisers and their governments cherished the dream of building Rhodesia as a white man’s country, the dream was never fulfilled because of Rhodesia’s failure to attract large numbers of white settlers. A full 50 years after the British occupied Zimbabwe, there were only 68 954 whites in the colony! In another study, I have argued that, contributing to the lack of growth in the numbers of white Rhodesian settlers were several factors, including the general ignorance of the country in Britain, the prevalence of negative perceptions of the country abroad which saw Rhodesia as a small dangerous country somewhere in the heart of darkest Africa whose savages and wild beasts roamed the countryside and where strange and terrible diseases prevailed, the country’s land-locked position, the cost of travel to the country, the high capital requirements imposed by the Rhodesian authorities on would-be immigrants and the Rhodesian authorities’ reluctance to admit large numbers of people of non-British stock.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Hodder-Williams, “Afrikaners in Rhodesia: A partial portrait”, in *African Social Research*, 18 (December 1974). Notable exceptions to this simplistic approach include, among others, Frank Clements, *Rhodesia: The Course to Collision* (London, Pall Mall Press, 1969); Barry M. Schutz, “European population patterns, cultural persistence and political change in Rhodesia”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, (i) (1973), 3-26; and Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Social Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> Although the focus of this article is on the racism of the British settlers in Rhodesia, it is recognised that the British were not a homogenous group as it included immigrants from England, Ireland, Scotland and various British possessions worldwide. It is acknowledged that class and cultural tensions existed within the British settler community. This subject will, however, not be tackled here but will be the subject of a separate article.

<sup>3</sup> A. S. Mlambo, “Building a white man’s country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II”, *Zambezia*, (1998), XXV (ii), 123-146.

<sup>4</sup> A. S. Mlambo, “Whitening Rhodesia, 1890-1940: The Dream and the Reality”, Paper presented to the Southern African History and Politics Seminar at Oxford University, England, January 25, 1999.

The reluctance stemmed from the Rhodesian authorities' obsession with maintaining what were referred to as "European standards" by admitting only the "right type" of immigrant.<sup>5</sup> This class of immigrant was conceived of as possessing a stipulated amount of capital<sup>6</sup> and, more importantly, being of British stock. Evidence shows that the latter, rather than the former, was the more important criterion, for as will be shown, several financially well-endowed individuals and groups were denied entry into the country, mainly because they were non-British. Therefore, all official pronouncements about the need for more white immigration notwithstanding, what mattered most in deciding whether an applicant would be admitted into the country or not was where his father was born rather than the individual's skills or current station in life.

The British cultural chauvinism and exclusiveness can, perhaps, best be understood within the "fragment" concept pioneered by Louis Hartz in *The Founding of New Societies*, published in 1964. Hartz argued that societies founded abroad by European emigrants displayed certain peculiar characteristics which suggested the operation of a certain dynamic which was consistent with what he called fragment type of society. Such fragment societies were derived from parent or home societies and retained some of the parent/home societies' cultural attributes but were not exact replicas of such societies. The citizens of the fragment society brought some "cultural baggage" with them from the home country. This "cultural baggage" was then gradually adapted to and reshaped by the new social context in which they found themselves, producing a society which still shared some of the cultural characteristics of the old but which was no longer directly compatible with the parent society.<sup>7</sup>

In the specific context of Rhodesia, it has been argued that the situation was made more complex by the fact that the Colony was, in fact,

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<sup>5</sup> This often used term "standards" was never defined. As Clements put it, "Never at any stage of . . . Rhodesia's continuing history was anyone able to define satisfactorily what European standards were: though it was always assumed that all who could pass for white automatically had them and that anyone black must somehow prove that he had". Clements, *Course to Collision*, 114. Equally, the term "European" was also never defined. Again, according to Clements, whether individuals were considered to be European or not "depended on what they asserted themselves to be and the habits they chose to adopt, provided of course that skin colour passed the swift arbitrary, but normally quite generous, scrutiny of a lavatory attendant, barman or headmaster". Clements, *Course to Collision*, 72.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, in a memo dated 1/1925, a government official listed the type of settler preferred as follows: "(1) Without money — not specially desired; (2) With £500 - £1 000, knowledgeable men, farmers, artisans, workers — Most desirable; (3) With £2 000 and upwards — Very desirable. They require but little government aid." See National Archives of Zimbabwe (Hereafter called NAZ), S2371/1/1, Land Settlement Policy, 1902-1903; 1925-1936, Memo, 1/1925.

<sup>7</sup> Louis Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964).

“a fragment of a fragment” in that, most of the British settlers did not come directly from Britain but via a prolonged sojourn in South Africa and thus “carried the attitudes and expectations of British South Africans rather than those of residential British nationals into their new settlement”.<sup>8</sup> Thus, to the racial and cultural chauvinist baggage originally carried from Britain was added racist attitudes and world views adopted in South Africa and shaped by South African conditions and experiences. It was this “baggage” which predisposed them to be disdainful of and hostile to non-British peoples, White and Black. Rhodesia’s fragment-of-a-fragment society thus became acutely, indeed obsessively, conscious of its Britishness and remained determined to preserve its corporate identity than those who had remained in the homeland. This is partly what Gann and Duignan meant when they wrote: “White Rhodesian society in some ways retained a curiously archaic quality: the values of Edwardian England survived as in a kind of sociological museum”.<sup>9</sup>

Such an interpretation is consistent with several scholarly explanations of the Rhodesian settlers’ racism or cultural chauvinism which have emphasised the importance of the Rhodesians’ perception that Rhodesia was established by the British for the British and in the face of opposition from foreigners. In Kosmin’s view, the guiding principle for Rhodesian settlers was that Rhodesia had been “won by British arms in 1893 and 1896-7 and run by the British for the benefit of the British living and unborn”. Furthermore, it had been “acquired against the designs of ‘foreigners’, the Boers and the Portuguese”. In addition, the British settlers saw themselves as a frontier line of defence against “the forces of foreign (Afrikaner) nationalism which they fought in 1899-1902 and feared from then on”. Their “first line of defence . . . was the Immigration laws”.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike in other British fragment societies such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada where local conditions and distance from the home country gradually shaped an independent consciousness in which the original migrants grew to see themselves as separate societies with different identities from those who remained behind in Britain, in

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<sup>8</sup> Schutz, “European Population Patterns”, 9.

<sup>9</sup> L. H. Gann and P. Duignan, (eds.), *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: Volume Two: The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1914-1960* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1970).

<sup>10</sup> B. A. Kosmin, “Ethnic groups and the qualified franchise in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1922”, in *Rhodesian History*, (1977), VIII, 33-70. An interesting aspect of Rhodesian discrimination against non-British immigration is the fact that Rhodesian immigration law never, at any time during this period, specifically barred non-British immigrants by race. Exclusion was effected mainly by Government administrators who simply declined applications from groups they regarded as undesirable even though, by Rhodesian immigration law requirements, they qualified for admission into the country.

Rhodesia, distance from the mother country tended to strengthen rather than loosen the sense of Britishness. As Frank Clements points out, Rhodesian consciousness was born “not from a weakening of attachment to Britain but from a desire to assert and strengthen it. It was not a creation against ‘Home’ or the kith and kin of the British Isles but a defence against the strangers and foreign ways of the expansionist South”. Rhodesian nationalism was, thus, partially a result of “xenophobia generally directed against the Dutch-speaking South Africans”.<sup>11</sup> In the words of Shutz, “Rhodesian-ness” tended, generally, “to express itself negatively” as “reactions to Africans, Afrikaners and Non-British Europeans”.<sup>12</sup>

Given the above, this article seeks to trace and analyse the nature and role of white-upon-white racism in the development and implementation of Rhodesian immigration policy up to the Federation, particularly as it affected select non-British white groups such as Poles, Afrikaners, Jews, Greeks<sup>13</sup> and others. It will attempt to demonstrate that the dominant British-born settlers, who retained economic, political and social control throughout the period under study, developed a knee-jerk reaction against any entry into the country by white people of non-British stock. This attitude to the so-called aliens differed remarkably from that of the colony’s founder, Cecil John Rhodes.

According to Kosmin, although Cecil Rhodes believed implicitly in the superiority of British culture and civilisation, he never stereotyped other white individuals on the basis of their origins or nationality and clearly appreciated talent wherever it existed regardless of the individual’s origins. Testimony to this is the fact that he worked closely and was friends with people of Jewish extraction such as Barney Barnato and Alfred Beit. Kosmin recounts how, on his first visit to Salisbury in 1891, Cecil Rhodes was visibly disappointed by the backwater that was Salisbury then until he saw a synagogue, upon which he is reported to have exclaimed: “My country is all right if the Jews come. My country is all

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<sup>11</sup> Clements, *Course to Collision*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Schutz, “European Population Patterns”, 9.

<sup>13</sup> This article has benefited a great deal from various authoritative studies by Barry A. Kosmin who has written extensively on the history of Jews and Greeks in Rhodesia. Among his writings are the following: Barry A. Kosmin, “A Comparative Historical Population Study: The Development of Southern Rhodesian Jewry, 1890-1936”, Henderson Seminar Paper, No. 17, University of Zimbabwe, November, 1971; Barry A. Kosmin, “The immigration factor in the post-war demography of Rhodesian Jewry”, in U. O. Schemes *et al* (eds.), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1973* (Jerusalem, The Hebrew University, 1977); Barry A. Kosmin, “Ethnic groups and the qualified franchise in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1922”, in *Rhodesian History*, (1977), VIII, 35-70; Barry A. Kosmin, *Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community in Zimbabwe* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1980). Use has also been made of the excellent study of Afrikaners in Rhodesia in Richard Hodder-Williams, “Afrikaners in Rhodesia: A partial portrait”, in *African Social Research*, XVIII (December 1974).

right!"<sup>14</sup> Rhodes further demonstrated his willingness to work with other non-British whites when he deliberately included Afrikaners and Jews in his Pioneer Column which occupied Rhodesia in 1890. This was in accordance with his motto of "equal rights for all civilised men".<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately for Rhodes' dream that his colony would be densely occupied by "homes, more homes" for whites so that it developed as a truly white man's country, the country's administrators, from the early days of colonialism to the end of Federation, did not share his liberal attitude to non-British whites but believed, instead, in special privileges for whites of British stock and in keeping Rhodesia British at whatever cost.

### RHODESIA FOR THE BRITISH

The discriminatory nature of Rhodesian immigration policy was revealed clearly as early as 1903 when the Rhodesian Surveyor General wrote that he was opposed to Rhodesian land being made available indiscriminately to anyone who could afford paying for it as this might attract "a number of undesirables like the 'bywoner' class, who would form a compact, bigoted and non-progressive class". He argued that, in the best interests of the Empire and of Rhodesia and the Chartered Company, the Rhodesian Government should enlist the assistance of the Imperial Government to ensure that only people of "a good class" from the British Isles and the colonies entered the country. Only such type of immigrants, he maintained, could best develop the country and ensure the "defence of South Africa as a whole and . . . prevent the British element being eventually voted out of this country."<sup>16</sup>

The determination to keep Rhodesia as British a colony as possible was repeatedly stated by both official spokesmen and ordinary Rhodesian settlers throughout the period under review as the following statements from different periods of the half century under review reveal. For instance, writing in the 1920s, E. Tawse Jollie, the only female member of the Southern Rhodesia Legislative Council, noted that the "average-born Rhodesian feels that this is essentially a British country, pioneered, bought and developed by British people, and he wants to keep it so".<sup>17</sup> On his part, C. Harding of the Department of Internal Affairs gave the official government position on immigration in 1939 as follows:

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<sup>14</sup> Kosmin, "A Comparative Population Study".

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> NAZ, S2371/1/1, Land Settlement Policy, 1902-1903; 1925-1936; Surveyor General, "Attracting Bona Fide Settlers", 22 January, 1903.

<sup>17</sup> E. Tawse Jollie, "Southern Rhodesia", in *South African Quarterly* (1921), III, 10-12.

The policy of the government in regard to immigrants is to maintain a preponderance of British subjects in about the same proportions as last year when the total number of immigrants was about 3 500, of whom 3 000 were British subjects and 500 aliens i.e. 6 to 1.<sup>18</sup>

Even more outspoken was a contributor to the Rhodesian journal *The New Rhodesia* in 1946 whose views are quoted extensively as they capture the thinking among settlers of British origin at the time. Signing himself “Gardenia”, the writer noted that a great deal had been written lately about the need to absorb aliens into Rhodesian society, especially since these aliens would make “desirable permanent Rhodesian residents”. While he conceded that Rhodesia needed “a very much greater white population”, he argued, however, that “many Rhodesians feel that they want this immigration to come from the United Kingdom”. He added:

First and foremost, we want Britishers in Rhodesia, and not until every British man, woman and child who wants to come out here and settle has arrived, do we feel like considering the question of permanent settlement for aliens, however desirable they may be, or however much they may desire to acquire British nationality.

In the common manner of most racists who punctuate their racist diatribes with the words “some of my best friends are Blacks/Jews etc.”, the writer felt it necessary to declare: “I am not biased against aliens” but,

as regards the immigration into and settlement of white people in Rhodesia, the inhabitants of the United Kingdom and the British Empire must come first . . . Until (those who would like to emigrate from Britain) have been given priority and a chance to emigrate out here . . . many Rhodesians feel that it is too early to discuss absorbing aliens, however desirable, into this country.<sup>19</sup>

Lastly, the 1957 Report on Immigration Policy by an Economic Advisory Council appointed by the Federal authorities in the 1950s noted that the current policy was highly selective of immigrants and gave priority to persons from the United Kingdom “because of the importance of preserving the British way of life”. The Council endorsed this selective policy, stating: “We agree that the present emphasis on immigration from the United Kingdom is proper, in the interests of maintaining the British way of life and of building up a stable European population”.<sup>20</sup> As Gann

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<sup>18</sup> NAZ S1801/5450 Immigration, 1935-1939. C. H. Harding, Acting Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs to Chief Immigration Officer, Bulawayo, 6th April, 1939. The result of such a discriminatory immigration policy was that, between 1930 and 1950, for instance, no less than 95.3% of all immigrants into the country were of British nationality.

<sup>19</sup> “The fascination of the thriller: Our alien problem”, by ‘Gardenia’, in *The New Rhodesia*, August 16, 1946.

<sup>20</sup> NAZ F170/18, Report on Immigration Policy by the Economic Advisory Council, 1957.

and Gelfand correctly noted, in the post-Second World War period, as indeed was true in the earlier years, "After dinner speakers would extol 'white Rhodesia' but agreed that white aliens should not be allowed to overrun the country but must only be assimilated in penny packets".<sup>21</sup> The obsession with preserving the British way of life and the determination to exclude, or, at least, limit the numbers of alien whites was evident in Rhodesia's immigration policies towards a number of would-be non-British immigrant groups as shown below.

### AFRIKANERS

As noted earlier, Afrikaners were members of the Pioneer Column that entered Rhodesia in 1890. Thereafter, there were a number of Afrikaner Trek parties that entered and settled in Rhodesia, the most well-known of which was the Moodie Trek which settled in the Melssetter District in the eastern part of the country in 1892. According to one source, relations between the British and Afrikaner settlers "began on a consciously amicable footing" and remained amicable in the early years of the country's existence.<sup>22</sup> However, relations between them suffered a heavy and lasting blow from which it did not recover for a long time with the Jameson Raid and the Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the century. These two conflicts directly pitted Afrikaner against Briton and sowed seeds of hostility and mutual suspicion that were to influence Rhodesian authorities' attitudes for decades to come. Not surprisingly, therefore, the attitude of British South African Company administrators towards Afrikaners in Rhodesia, in general, and Afrikaners applying to enter the country, in particular, became and remained decidedly and consistently hostile.<sup>23</sup>

Hodder-Williams argues that the anti-Afrikaner attitude was shaped by political, cultural and class considerations. Politically, Rhodesian settlers feared possible domination by Afrikaners if they were allowed to enter the country in large numbers. Having recently emerged from the Anglo-Boer War, which they saw as a conflict fought to prevent Afrikaner domination of Britons in South Africa, they were suspicious that Afrikaner applicants for entry into Rhodesia were being spurred on by Afrikaner leaders in South Africa so that Afrikaners would eventually dominate the country. Culturally, Rhodesian authorities saw Afrikaners as an inferior

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<sup>21</sup> L. H. Gann and M. Gelfand, *Huggins of Rhodesia: The Man and His Country* (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964), 181.

<sup>22</sup> Hodder-Williams, "Afrikaners in Rhodesia".

<sup>23</sup> The controversy surrounding the Amalgamation issue prior to the 1923 Referendum which led to Rhodesia being granted self-government status may also have re-inforced British settlers' suspicions about Afrikaners, many of whom openly supported Rhodesia's incorporation into South Africa.



breed whose culture was way beneath their own. In Hodder-Williams' words, "few English speakers in the high noon of imperial confidence were prepared to acknowledge the parity, let alone the superiority, of another culture".

Lastly, there was the widespread belief that Afrikaners were of a low class who could not fulfil "the obligations to uphold and extend those standards of European civilisation which confident Victorians held so sacred". Hence a leading Company official R. C. Simmons could say with confidence that "Dutchmen have no code of honour such as is understood by Britishers" and that the only way to handle them was to "concede them nothing".<sup>24</sup> Similarly, a Rhodesian newspaper in 1922 discouraged Afrikaner immigration into the country because "such an influx would bring to the country persons of a poor and shiftless type, physical degenerates, sick and diseased".<sup>25</sup>

More evidence of the British contempt for the "low class" Afrikaners is a report by one J. F. Renard in February 1925 that Afrikaners in the Charter District of Southern Rhodesia were upset by the Prime Minister's alleged statement when he had purportedly referred to Afrikaners as "low Dutch" people. He added:

May I be permitted sir, to say that many Dutch and English "Britishers" emphatically endorse Sir Charles' description of the type found in this part of Rhodesia. They are low in mentality and mode of existence, in fact little removed from the native . . . The ordinary Afrikaner settler . . . erects a very temporary dwelling often of a primitive nature, rarely erects a latrine and utterly lacks ambition.<sup>26</sup>

The Rhodesian authorities' dislike of the Afrikaners was compounded by their distrust of the loyalty of this particular group of aliens whom they suspected to be anti-British and prone to ally with the enemies of England. During the Anglo-Boer War, for instance, the authorities kept a very close watch on the local Afrikaner community for fear they might link up with their compatriots in South Africa against British forces. In fact, there were even suggestions that the Afrikaner community in Rhodesia should be disarmed as a precautionary measure. Also during the First World War, Rhodesian officialdom remained anxious about possible Afrikaner disloyalty and equally kept a close watch of the

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<sup>24</sup> Simmons' views were cited in Hodder-Williams from NAZ LB2/1/8/3, R. C. Simmons to P. Inskipp, 23 June, 1909.

<sup>25</sup> *The Independent*, August 11, 1922.

<sup>26</sup> NAZ S482/249/39/1/1, Destitution, 1924-1936, J. F. Renard to J. W. Downie, 15 February, 1925. The reference to "many Dutch" in the above quotation should be taken with a degree of scepticism since there is no evidence throughout this time that there were any Dutch groups that were likely to side with the Rhodesian authorities on this and other matters.

Afrikaner population in the country. The very evident reluctance of the Rhodesian-based Afrikaners to enlist in the army for the defence of the country and the British Empire further antagonised the Rhodesian administrators. For instance, in February 1917, an Assistant Native Commissioner reported how the Afrikaner community in Melsetter spurned his efforts to recruit them into the Rhodesian army.

He reported that the Afrikaners there told him that “the Government could not expect the same enthusiasm [for military service] among the Dutch population of this district as had been displayed by more British populations in other districts of Southern Rhodesia”. In a bid to persuade them, the Assistant Native Commissioner pointed out that the war “was not one of race but a world war”. All his pleas fell on deaf ears, for as he stated:

I regret to have to report that no one of the Dutch present spoke in favour of the young men joining the forces. Asked [about whether Government was likely to resort to conscription], I replied that there is no reason to believe that this will be introduced into Southern Rhodesia. This was the only remark that raised any enthusiasm during the meeting.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the Afrikaners were resented and despised by the majority British settlers for being rather clannish and exclusive, refusing to assimilate to the British way of life, being concentrated in particular geographical areas and predominating in certain, normally “humbler and less skilled” occupations.<sup>28</sup> Anti-Afrikaner sentiments were further stirred by the Nationalist Party victory in South Africa in 1948 which was followed by a large exodus of English-speaking South Africans who emigrated to Rhodesia. When the new South African government under Dr. Malan proceeded to champion the cause of Rhodesian Afrikaners, especially with respect to the language issue, Rhodesian settlers were incensed and all their suspicions, fears and resentments were re-kindled.<sup>29</sup>

The British settlers’ hostility to the Afrikaners was most evident in the Afrikaner language issue which peaked during the First World War years and demonstrated clearly that the Afrikaner community in Rhodesia felt discriminated against and unwanted. Essentially, Afrikaners were demanding that Afrikaans be taught in schools and that it be taught by Afrikaans speakers. This was in protest against the decision by the Rhodesian authorities that English should be the medium of instruction

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<sup>27</sup> NAZ A3/9/7, E. C. Lenthall, Assistant Native Commissioner, Confidential Memo, February 28, 1917.

<sup>28</sup> Clements, *Course to Collision*, 69.

<sup>29</sup> This interpretation is based on Hodder-Williams, “Afrikaners in Rhodesia”.

in schools, even though a substantial minority of the white population was Afrikaans-speaking.

In June 1918, a South African newspaper published an article which reported that a leading Afrikaner Predikant based in the Melsetter area, Mr. Badenhorst, had visited South Africa with a view to raising funds for the establishment of a boarding school for Afrikaner children in Chipinga in order to cater for their interests which were being neglected in Government schools in the country. It pointed out that, despite the Afrikaner peoples' immense contribution to the prosperity of Rhodesia, "everything is being done to make them feel they are unwelcome". Badenhorst was further reported as saying that, although Afrikaners had been promised equal rights (presumably by Rhodes), "still today Rhodesia is being considered by the Chartered Company and the English speaking population as a British Reserve where Dutch speaking Afrianders are considered as foreign interlopers". He complained bitterly that "the children of Dutch speaking parents must only learn English or, better expressed, they must be made into Englishmen. The words 'Dutch speaking Afriander' must not be known in Rhodesia".<sup>30</sup>

The Afrikaners in Rhodesia mobilised support for their cause among their friends in South Africa, resulting in a group known as the Ministers of the Federal Dutch Reformed Churches in the Union of South Africa sending a petition to the Southern Rhodesia British South Africa Company Administrator on June 21, 1917 lamenting the fact that "the language of the Dutch-speaking Afrianders is not officially recognised" and requesting that the Government of Rhodesia alter "the Code of Instruction . . . in order to provide for the needs and meet the wishes of the Dutch-speaking section of the population".<sup>31</sup>

The official response on this issue was very uncompromising. It was pointed out that Rhodesia was a British colony and any Afrikaners who came into the country had to accept that fact. For instance, one official wrote:

We have never pretended that this is or ought to be a bilingual country, and if the Dutch people come up to live here, they come up well knowing what the system is. The agitation of late has been conducted chiefly by the predikant at Melsetter whose name is Badenhorst. This man is a rabid Nationalist and racist. I believe that not so long ago he went so far as to preach a sermon at Melsetter in which he said it was a disgraceful thing that any Dutchman should marry an English woman or any Dutch woman an English man.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> NAZ A3/9/7, Extract from *The Friend of the People*, Bloemfontein, June 3, 1918.

<sup>31</sup> NAZ A3/9/7, Petition to the Administrator, June 21, 1917.

<sup>32</sup> NAZ CH8/2/2/12, Agitation Against Unilingual Education, 1917, Letter to Sir Lewis Mitchell, February 19, 1917.

In a confidential memo, the Director of Education expressed his opposition to Afrikaans-language teaching, stating:

I am convinced that if the concession of mother-tongue instruction were allowed in the schools of Rhodesia, it would result at once in Dutch districts in the teaching to the children of the characteristic anti-British and anti-Imperial principles of the Nationalist Party.<sup>33</sup>

In a rather uncompromising reply to one Rev. P. S. van Heerden of the Orange Free State who had written complaining about the Rhodesian policy against the teaching of Afrikaans in schools, the Secretary to the Administrator wrote that “the official language of Southern Rhodesia has ever since the occupation of the country been English and . . . no provision exists in the legislation of the territory for the recognition of a second official language”.<sup>34</sup>

In the light of the above, it is not surprising that Rhodesian authorities were not keen to encourage Afrikaner immigration and deliberately kept the inflow to a minimum. Wherever possible, impediments were put in the way of would-be Afrikaner immigrants, including harassment by immigration officials at the Beit Bridge border, prompting an organisation known as the “Internal Mission Commission” of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Province to protest in 1918 at the

humiliating treatment of Dutch-speaking Afrikaners by the Immigration Officer when entering Rhodesia — residents as well as visitors — and desires the government to give an explanation, also why respectable Afrikaners are kept out of the country.<sup>35</sup>

Because of the deliberate Rhodesian policy of limiting Afrikaner immigration, Afrikaners never accounted for more than 15% of the country’s white population throughout the period under study. This is telling given the proximity of South Africa to Rhodesia and the ease with which Afrikaner emigrants could have relocated to Rhodesia had the doors been opened widely to them.

## JEWS

The story of Jewish immigration has been ably told by B. Kosmin in his numerous writings and need not detain us here. What is important for the purposes of this study are the attitudes of the Rhodesian officials to Jewish immigration, particularly in the 1930s when thousands of Jews fleeing Nazism in Europe were anxious to find a home in Rhodesia and how those attitudes constrained the flow of Jewish immigrants and, arguably, retarded the growth of the Rhodesian White population in the

<sup>33</sup> NAZ A3/9/7, Director of Education to Administrator, May 11, 1917.

<sup>34</sup> NAZ A3/9/7, J. Robertson, Secretary to the Administrator, to Rev. P. S. van Heerden, May 1918.

<sup>35</sup> NAZ A3/9/7, Drummond Chaplin, Administrator to the Secretary, BSAC, 27 August, 1918.

period under study. According to Kosmin and others, there existed no clear-cut discriminatory legislation against Jewish immigration into Rhodesia, but, from the very beginning, their entry was carefully regulated by the Administration in which the “virus of anti-Semitism seemed to have found a niche”.<sup>36</sup>

While anti-Jewish sentiments may have been muted in the early years of settler colonialism, they were increasingly more evident in the 1930s as the problems associated with the rise of Nazism in Europe forced many Jews to seek asylum abroad, including Rhodesia. According to Gann and Gelfand, Rhodesia under Huggins in the 1930s,

suffered from a silent undercurrent of anti-Semitism which . . . would have made large-scale Jewish immigration politically impossible . . . Huggins . . . shared the prevailing belief that the colony should concentrate on men of British stock whose numbers should be no more than supplemented by a “carefully regulated flow” of “assimilable aliens”.<sup>37</sup>

Evidence of the Rhodesians’ opposition to immigration by the Jews in the 1930s abounds. For instance, in November 1938, the Amalgamated Engineering Union of Rhodesia wrote to the Minister of the Interior, Percy Flynn, conveying a resolution passed by one of its branches on the issue of Jewish immigration which protested, in particular, against the influx of German Jews who were accused of having a dampening effect on white wages. The resolution charged that these immigrants were taking jobs away from local whites by “offering their services at a very low wage”.<sup>38</sup>

Rhodesian hostility to Jewish immigration manifested itself through the continued official determination to turn down any request for resettling Jews in Rhodesia, regardless of how financially well-endowed and skilful such Jewish groups were. For instance, in 1936, one M. Wischnitzer requested permission to organise Jewish emigration to Rhodesia, offering to deposit £2 000 to be used to finance the Jewish immigrants and guaranteeing to finance the removal from Rhodesia of any immigrant subsequently found unsuitable. The response from the Department of Internal Affairs was uncompromising: “no prior approval can be given in respect of any immigrant and his entry to this Colony will depend upon his fulfilment of the requirements” of the country’s immigration regulations.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> B. A. Kosmin, *Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community in Zimbabwe* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1980), 20.

<sup>37</sup> L. Gann and M. Gelfand, *Huggins of Rhodesia*, 126-127.

<sup>38</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Refugees, 1936-1946, Secretary, Amalgamated Engineering Union to Percy Flynn, Minister of the Interior, November 28, 1938.

<sup>39</sup> NAZ S1801/5493, Immigration: Jewish Immigration from Germany, M. Wischnitzer to Department of Internal Affairs, 13/11/36.

Concerned about the plight of Jews under areas of German control, white residents of Marandellas District sent a petition to the Government imploring it to assist in averting the potential human tragedy in Europe. Writing to the Prime Minister, one Fred B. Rea stated that a large meeting of residents of Marandellas had expressed its “profound distress” at the plight of the “Non-Aryan Refugees of Germany” and resolved to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that,

At such a time, our country cannot be deaf to the call of humanity. The nature and extent of the help which Southern Rhodesia is able to give we do not presume to suggest, but we would respectfully urge the Government to give its immediate consideration to the matter and to indicate to the British Government its willingness to share in the settlement of the refugees.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the fact that there were, at that time, literally millions of German Jews in danger from Nazi attacks and desperately in need of refuge, and despite the fact that Rhodesia was then clamouring for more white immigrants, the Rhodesian Prime Minister would not be swayed by the petition. Indeed, barely two days after receiving the submission from the Marandellas residents, he was informing the Governor H. Stanley that the best the Rhodesian government could do was to allow only 20 families to enter. He added,

the number of Jews whom we can absorb without creating a strong anti-Semitic opinion is distinctly limited . . . We are probably more interested in this question than most countries because of the very large number of Jewish refugees who are now trying to enter the colony and with whom we are finding it extremely difficult to deal.<sup>41</sup>

Huggins and his government were finding Jewish refugees difficult to deal with not because there was not enough space in the country to accommodate them or that there were not enough resources for them to exploit but because, as Sir Percy Flynn, the Minister of Internal Affairs, admitted, the many applications received from refugees were turned down because “the government was keeping a watchful eye to ensure that the entry is not excessive and that the right type was admitted”. Moreover, the government “wished to maintain a proportion of at least 80% British subjects” in the Colony.<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, in January 1939, the well-known author, Thomas Mann, wrote to the Secretary of State for Colonies informing him that he was the

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<sup>40</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Refugees, 1936-1946, Fred B. Rea to the Prime Minister, December 18, 1938.

<sup>41</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Refugees, 1936-1946, Martin Huggins to Governor Stanley, 20 December, 1938.

<sup>42</sup> NAZ MS698/5, Southern Rhodesia Government Immigration Committee, 1938-1939.

head of a Czechoslovakian Organisation called the Thomas Mann *Gesellschaft* which sought to resettle a number of German and Austrian refugees in Southern Rhodesia. He requested the authorities of the Rhodesian government to allow such refugees into their country and emphasised the urgency of the matter since,

the Nazi penetration of Czechoslovakia is proceeding with fearful rapidity, and already the lives of people of Jewish extraction . . . are in jeopardy and the prospects of the German and Austrian refugees [are] tragic and desperate.<sup>43</sup>

Also in 1939, a group of 500 Czech Jews under the leadership of Richard Feder applied for permission to settle in Rhodesia. In a letter to the Rhodesian High Commissioner in London, the group proposed to set up an agricultural settlement which would enable them to be self-sufficient as well as to produce surplus agricultural commodities for sale. The request made it clear that, among the proposed immigrants, were “workmen, engineers of all branches, experienced farmers, architects, millers, physicians, veterinary surgeons, nurses, teachers as well as merchants” and the group would “take along as much money and as many machines, tools, linen and clothes” as they needed and would be loyal citizens to Rhodesia. To support their case, the group solicited and included in their application, five letters of recommendation from the Consistory of the Prince-Archbishop in Prague, the Czechoslovakian Unitarian Headquarters, the Evangelical Church Brethren, the Central YMCA Committee and the Boy and Girl Scouts of Czechoslovakia. All the recommendations were highly complimentary, with the Prince-Archbishop describing the would-be emigrants as “diligent, prudent, economical, unpretending, good natured, honest people, mindful of their honour”.<sup>44</sup> This group was, by any standards, one that most countries would have been more than happy to welcome as immigrants. Yet the Rhodesian authorities turned them down.

Yet another application was submitted by one George Bacher who wrote to the Rhodesian Prime Minister in 1939 conveying the message that he had been approached by the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs to help his government resettle thousands of refugees displaced by the German annexation of Czechoslovakian territory that Hitler referred to as the Sudetenland. Quoting the Czech official, Bacher pointed out that, as a result of recent events, Czechoslovakia had lost approximately 30% of its territory. As a result, the country was flooded with thousands of refugees from the annexed territories and was anxious to find homes for these abroad as the country could no longer cope

<sup>43</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Refugees, 1936-1946, Thomas Mann to Macdonald, 10 January, 1939.

<sup>44</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Refugees, 1936-1946, Richard Feder to High Commissioner for Southern Rhodesia, May 10, 1939.

with the needs of this additional population. The group which needed a home abroad included highly qualified individuals such as miners, mechanics, physicians, engineers and large-scale farmers. Bacher enquired whether the Rhodesian authorities would be willing to accept some of these people as immigrants.<sup>45</sup>

Here then were potential immigrants who would have brought in many needed skills and who were the very type of immigrants Rhodesian authorities had always claimed to be looking for. Yet, rather than jump at the chance of increasing both the size of the white population and widening its skills and production base, the Rhodesian authorities responded somewhat rudely: "In the present state of the development of this colony, the number of alien immigrants who could be absorbed here is definitely limited . . . mass immigration is out of the question".<sup>46</sup>

A similarly dismissive response was given to one O. D. Phillips of the Rhodesia Travel Bureau in London who, in January 1939, drew the Rhodesian authorities' attention to the growing interest in emigrating to Rhodesia by a large number of "Germans, Hungarians, Czechs and Austrians (not necessarily all Jews) . . . all people of means (with) funds varying between £1 000 and £8 000 per person . . . Between them, it would be possible for them to raise as much as £200 000". Despite the fact that this group's capital assets were much higher than the minimum required under Rhodesian immigration law and therefore should have easily qualified on that score for admittance to the country, the response was, predictably, "mass immigration is out of the question".<sup>47</sup> So anxious were the Rhodesian authorities to forestall any further efforts to send European refugees to settle in Rhodesia that the Department of Internal Affairs sent an urgent message to the Rhodesian High Commissioner in London to request the British Foreign Office to "circularise Consul in Yugo Slavia (sic), Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Roumania, Latvia, Lithuania, Holland and Italy . . . that group refugee immigration cannot be entertained".<sup>48</sup>

All claims that Rhodesia needed more white immigrants notwithstanding, the country's authorities were determined to keep the Jews out as much as possible. As Gelfand pointed out,

<sup>45</sup> NAZ S246/4401, Immigration, 1933-1940, Letter from George Bacher to PM, Southern Rhodesia, 14/2/39.

<sup>46</sup> NAZ S246/4401, Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs to George Bacher, 24/2/1939.

<sup>47</sup> NAZ S246/4401, Immigration 1933-1940, O. D. Philips, Rhodesia Travel Bureau, London to E. C. Anderson, Director of Publicity, Salisbury, 27/1/1939; and NAZ S246/4401, Minister of Internal Affairs to R. D. Gilchrist, 28/3/39. Cited in A. S. Mlambo, "Building a white man's country: Aspects of white immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II", *Zambezia* (1998), XXV (ii), 123-146.

<sup>48</sup> NAZ A1801/5450, Immigration, 1935-1940, J. Blackwell, Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Salisbury to High Commissioner, London, 8/2/39. Cited in A. S. Mlambo, "Building a white man's country".



In the thirties, immigrants had trickled in. Malvern had been satisfied to take those with capital and a British background. Jews from Europe . . . were, on the whole, kept out. They would have altered the social structure and weakened the British character of the country.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, Clements noted that new settlers were welcomed as long as they were British. Only a handful of refugees from Nazi Germany were allowed in “after careful scrutiny”. This “reflected the anti-Semitism which prevailed, but it also derived from a fear of losing Rhodesia’s essentially British character”.<sup>50</sup>

Without belabouring the point, it is telling that, at a time when thousands of Jews were fleeing Nazi Germany and seeking refuge in any country that would take them, Rhodesia accepted only 480 immigrants from Germany and 292 from Lithuania, Poland, Latvia and other places between 1933 and the outbreak of the war. Explaining why Rhodesia was not admitting larger numbers of European refugees, Huggins stated that Rhodesia was allowing in a certain number of foreigners provided they had sufficient capital, “but we are not increasing our normal ratio as we wish to preserve the character of the Colony”. He added, rather shamelessly: “there might be some excuse for relaxing this *if we could do anything which was likely to help in the solution of the major problem, which of course we cannot. We can only allow in a few as a gesture of good will*”<sup>51</sup> [emphasis added]. The fact that literally thousands of Jews were facing the gas chambers in Europe and that granting asylum to the Jews would have saved them from death and concentration camps was, apparently, not, in Huggins’ view “likely to help in the solution to the major problem” facing Jews in Nazi Europe!

Lastly, the Rhodesian authorities remained unmoved by the plight of 16 Jews who were seeking asylum in Rhodesia and whose desperate plight was clearly spelt out to the Rhodesian authorities by the British Consul General of Alexandria who pleaded with the Rhodesian government to take them in as immigrants. The Consul General pointed out that these 16 “respectable German Jews” had sailed from Hamburg but had been denied permission to land in Syria and Palestine. The Governor of Cyprus had offered them temporary asylum pending their finding a country to take them in. These refugees desperately needed asylum because “return to Germany means concentration camp at best”. He further pointed out that the local Jewish Committee, which included several influential British

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<sup>49</sup> M. Gelfand (ed.), *Godfrey Huggins, Viscount Malvern, 1883-1971: His Life and Work* (Salisbury, Central African Journal of Medicine, n. d.), 39.

<sup>50</sup> Clements, *Course to Collision*, 77.

<sup>51</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Refugees, 1936-1946, Governor, Salisbury to Secretary of State, London, 22/3/43, and M. Huggins to Colonel Bartley, 27/03/39.

subjects, would “provide finance if your Government will permit immigration to Rhodesia . . . Committee entreat your assistance in this plight”.<sup>52</sup> The predictable response from Rhodesia was a terse telegram message which read: “Government regret unable to accede to request for permission to migrate to Colony of sixteen Jews. Capacity to absorb aliens definitely limited.”<sup>53</sup>

What is evident from the above, therefore, is that, had the Rhodesian authorities opened their doors wide for all Jewish emigrants who wanted to enter the country, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, there would have been such an influx that the white population could easily have grown rapidly. As was shown, however, Jewish immigrants remained anathema in Rhodesian official and civilian circles. The cause was Rhodesian anti-Semitism which was “as much part of the Rhodesian mental background as corrugated iron was of the physical”. As one scholar has put it, “whatever else a man might be, if he was a Jew, that was the most meaningful thing about him and the quality of which the ‘British’ Rhodesians would be most aware”.<sup>54</sup>

#### OTHER ALIENS

The hostility shown to the Jews and the Afrikaners was equally extended to other “aliens” such as Poles, Greeks, Italians and Spaniards who sought admittance into Rhodesia during this period. There was a very heated debate in 1946, for instance, over the question of admitting Poles to settle in the country. In a bid to persuade the authorities to accept Poles already in the country as citizens, one Major F. J. Bagshawe reminded the Rhodesian people in *The New Rhodesia* of December 13, 1946 that, when war broke out between Russia and Germany, many Poles had been allowed to escape and became scattered all over the world. One thousand five hundred Polish refugees had been given temporary asylum in Rhodesia, while 15 000 had settled elsewhere in Africa. Bagshawe suggested that Rhodesia should consider accepting 400 of those already in the country as citizens. He concluded, “no one but a fool would claim that we have no room for them and many of us who know the Poles are convinced that they would make good settlers”. Bagshawe further expressed his dismay at the fact that “Southern Rhodesia, though clamouring for more European population, and apparently willing to admit a great many of very doubtful origins, seems determined to have nothing to do with the Poles”.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Consul General, Alexandria to Governor, Southern Rhodesia, 4/3/39.

<sup>53</sup> NAZ S482/314/39, Department of Internal Affairs, “German Refugees”, 8/3/39.

<sup>54</sup> Clements, *Course to Collision*, 71.

<sup>55</sup> NAZ S826/145/46, Settlement of Poles on Land in Southern Rhodesia, Major F. J. Bagshawe, “God help the Poles” in *The New Rhodesia*, 13/12/46.

Bagshawe's views were obviously not shared by his contemporaries as shown by the fact that, in the same issue of the journal appeared a rabidly racist letter casting all manner of aspersions on Poles and demanding that they all be deported from the country. The writer, C. Olley of Salisbury, challenged the argument put forward by those who were sympathetic to the Polish cause that they would make good citizens, maintaining that the Poles were, in fact, a menace that would ruin the country. Evidence of this, he argued, was the fact that, after the First World War, aliens had poured into Britain and had undermined the local population by "working for less money, charging less for goods, undercutting the smaller British industries and, above all, resorting to Communistic propaganda". Olley claimed that the foreigners were also responsible then for the "bulk of the major crimes in England".

Consequently, Olley unapologetically endorsed an earlier Government decision to refuse entry to Polish workers recruited by the Rhodesian-based Bata Shoe Company, asserting strongly that "when this firm was allowed to commence operations in Rhodesia, it was on the understanding that it should be a Rhodesian factory for Britishers. It was never intended that it would constitute an international settlement." He concluded: "I say: send the Poles back to Poland."<sup>56</sup> Similarly, in August of the same year, a writer calling himself "Gardenia", in the already quoted letter to *The New Rhodesia*, expressed a view which was consistent with the official Rhodesian position that, while Rhodesia clearly needed more white immigrants, "many Rhodesians feel that they want this immigration to come from the United Kingdom".<sup>57</sup>

As with the Poles, the Rhodesian authorities were unenthusiastic about Greek immigration, especially since Greeks were seen as being incapable of upholding the desired "European standards". In an inter-governmental memo dated June 23, 1959 which encouraged the continuation of a policy adopted in 1956 of not accepting any more Greek immigrants, it was stated that "our established Greek community is engaged largely in commerce, many of them in the Kaffir-truck and native eating-house lines, and we do not particularly wish to open the door too readily to this type of immigrant". The Minister of Home Affairs shared these sentiments as evidenced by his memo to the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Home affairs in which he observed that, not only had Greeks and Cypriots shown themselves in the past to be anti-British and violent, but,

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<sup>56</sup> NAZ S826/145/46, Settlement of Poles on Land in Southern Rhodesia, C. Olley, "Another view of Poles", in *The New Rhodesia*, 13/12/46.

<sup>57</sup> Gardenia, "The fascination of the thriller: Our alien problem", *The New Rhodesia*, August 16, 1946.

they are Southern Europeans, an influx of whom is not desirable. Generally, they are not a high standard of immigrant, since both countries are poor and industrially backward, and they engage in the distributive trades; in particular they tend to specialise in native trading and, to that extent, limit a field of African advancement.<sup>58</sup>

The anti-Greek sentiments of the Rhodesian officials were shared by other government officials in the Federation Administration as demonstrated by the following reports sent to the Rhodesian authorities by immigration officers in Northern Rhodesia.

*Mufulira*: "Greeks, like Jews, do not normally work with their hands but manage to live by their wits until they can open a squalid little business somewhere". *Luanshya*: "The Greeks are by far the largest alien community and are very clannish . . . They mainly work as shop assistants at very low salaries and appear to be a very low class. I do not see the reason for permitting people to enter the Federation for the sole purpose of serving in African tea rooms or shops . . . It must be noted here also that there are quite a lot of assaults between Greeks and Africans, as the Greek shop assistants are not, I am afraid, strictly honest in some of their transactions."<sup>59</sup>

Even more racist was the letter from one P. M. Johnston to the *Central African Post* in January 1956 which protested against the importation of the Southern Mediterranean peoples who were described as, "about the most decadent morally and physically in Europe".<sup>60</sup>

Equally unacceptable as immigrants into the Federation were people of Spanish origin. Evidence is the fact that, on being informed that the Spanish Government had recently created a National Institute of Migration for the purposes of encouraging, assisting and protecting Spanish emigrants and that the Spanish authorities were enquiring about the possibilities of sending some of their emigrants to the Federation, the Federal Secretary for Home Affairs replied: "I suggest our reply should be politely discouraging. We can point to quota difficulties, to the fact that conditions in this country do not lend themselves to mass immigration. At the moment, we are getting all we need — and more — from traditional sources." Providing a useful clue to the thinking behind the Secretary for Home Affairs' reluctance to encourage Spanish immigration into the Federation is the fact that he ended his message with the words: "you might be interested in the derogatory remarks on Spanish migrants in the

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<sup>58</sup> NAZ F119/712/IMM2/5, Cypriot Immigrants — Policy, 1956-1963; Marsh to Minister, "Immigration Policy: Greeks and Cypriots", 23/6/59; and Minister of Home Affairs to E. G. Marsh, 19/6/59.

<sup>59</sup> NAZ F119/712/IMM2/5, "Greeks", 25/7/56.

<sup>60</sup> *The Central African Post*, January 10, 1956, Letter to the Editor by P. M. Johnston of Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia.

attached letter . . . from Marks, Head of the Sydney Immigration Office in Australia”.<sup>61</sup>

The letter referred to by the Secretary of Home Affairs contained perhaps some of the most racist views ever committed to paper by officials of the British Empire. It read:

Italians and Greeks are still in unlimited supply. The Ities are all from the poor provinces in the South and would not be any better than your native labour. My experience is that they are about 90% illiterate and about 0% skilled . . . We have not been getting the number of British to keep the balance of British which has always been our policy . . . (Meanwhile, two Australian officials) have recruited 500 Spaniards for the cane fields in North Queensland. Fat lot of use they will be to anyone. We may as well have a bunch of “Gypos” . . . Blow me if then they didn’t bring out 5 to 6 hundred Maltese for the sugar industry. Besides being the biggest liars on earth, they are dirty and lazy.<sup>62</sup>

It was such racist attitudes that accounted for the consistent reluctance by Rhodesian authorities to allow the entry of non-British white immigrants even though, officially, they claimed that the future of Rhodesia lay in the steady influx of white people in order to prevent African domination. As Clements correctly argued, “Anti-Nazi and Fascist, Jew and Pole and Czech, all had only one essential disability in common — they were foreigners just as Afrikaners were” and, therefore, were unacceptable as immigrants.<sup>63</sup>

The hostility to aliens, which had always been part of the Rhodesian way of life, undoubtedly influenced the attitude of Federation officials during the entire period 1953 to 1963. Evidence of this has already been provided with respect to Federal authorities’ reaction to the proposed Spanish immigration as well as their views on Greek immigration. Federal authorities kept alien immigration in check by operating a quota system which allowed in only a small percentage of the total British immigrants in any given period. So effectively applied was the quota system that, in 1958, officials were congratulating themselves for having managed “consistently to keep alien immigration to only 12%” of total immigration since the Federation came into being.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> NAZ F119/IMM/3, Immigration: Aliens Policy, Secretary for External Affairs to Secretary for Home Affairs, 12/7/57 and Secretary for Home Affairs’ pencilled in response, 18/7/57.

<sup>62</sup> NAZ F119/IMM/3, Letter from Marks, Sydney, to Bennie Goldberg, 1/7/57.

<sup>63</sup> Clements, *Course to Collision*, 77.

<sup>64</sup> NAZ F119/IMM/3, Immigration: Aliens Policy: Alien Immigration, 15 September, 1958. Federation Immigrant quotas were first introduced in 1954 as a measure to assist in the selection of immigrants and to encourage immigration from the United Kingdom. The total immigrant quota was pegged at 2 200 per month, 1 900 of whom were British and only 300 alien immigrants. For more on this policy, see NAZ F170/18, Report on Immigration Policy by the Economic Advisory Council, December, 1957. Scholarly evidence exists,

## CONCLUSION

This article has argued that, while white racism towards Africans was, undoubtedly, salient and crucial in shaping the trajectory of the country's history in the colonial years, racism and cultural chauvinism also prevailed within the white community itself and deeply affected how white society interacted within its own circles. The majority British settlers were consistently discriminatory against other whites who were looked down upon and generally treated with hostility and contempt. It was this racism which shaped Rhodesia's white immigration policy and which helps account for the smallness of the Rhodesian white population in the period under examination, despite public pronouncements concerning the need to make Rhodesia a white man's country. While white people rallied together in the face of the greater threat of a possible future African domination, they remained divided along ethnic, racial and cultural lines in a system in which some were, clearly, more white than others.

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however, to show that, while anti-alien sentiments were still strong influences in the determination of Federation immigration policy, barriers were breaking down between the British settlers and those aliens who had earlier been admitted into the territory as the non-British settlers became economically more powerful and socially and politically more acceptable. It is of great interest to note, for instance, that Roy Wellensky, the Federal Prime Minister, was of Jewish extraction, while, by 1960, five of the Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly's 30 members were Jews, while, at the Federal level sat four Jewish MPs. For the gradual change in attitude among the Rhodesian and Federal communities to resident aliens, see, B. A. Kosmin, "The Immigration Factor" and R. Hodder-Williams, "Afrikaners in Rhodesia".