

The Role of the Church Missionary Society in the Abolition of Slavery at the Kenya Coast

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Abstract: *The article focuses on the role played by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the abolitionism. There were some of the CMS missionaries who supported immediate while others were in favour of the gradual abolition of slavery and the slave trade. The debate on abolitionism went beyond the confines of the CMS as the colonial administration was involved in the process. The abolitionist debate took place in an environment that was intricately influenced by several factors including the plural legal environment at the Kenya coast at the time because of Islamic laws and the British common law. There was the influence of slave masters who were not willing to give up the trade because of the economic gain. These factors among other as discussed in the article shaped the role and outcome of the CMS position on abolitionism*

Keywords: abolitionism, immediate, gradual, sanctuaries

1. Introduction

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) bore its historical roots to the 1799 evangelical and inspirational ideals of John Wesley who by then was a member of the Church of England in London. Later Wesley was to vacate the Church of England and formed the Methodist Church but the formative stages of the CMS continued to grow out of the Eclectic Society and Clapham sect named after John Venn of Clapham, London. Other members of the Clapham sect who were also instrumental in the founding of the CMS were Charles Simeon, Basil Woodd, Henry Thornton, Thomas Babington and William Wilberforce. The religious societies were established in London in 1780 to cater to the missionary needs. In 1792 the Eclectic Society and Clapham Movement gave rise to two religious movements namely, the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 and the London Missionary Society in 1795. To cater for the overseas missions John Venn of the Clapham movement was instrumental in initiating the Society for Missions to Africa in March of 1799 to propagate the gospel in what was described as the "heathen Africa" and also address the "infamy of slavery." In 1812, the Society for Mission in Africa was renamed the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East.

2. The CMS Entry into Africa and East Africa

The entry of the CMS into Africa was Freetown in 1816 in Sierra Leone. The Free town was a sanctuary for the freed slaves that was established in 1786 in Sierra Leone. Other CMS missions were established in Egypt in 1825, Abyssinia in 1827, South Africa in 1837 and Nigeria in 1844 (The CMS 2005: 20-24:7-14). The founding of the East African Mission begun with the Kenya mission in 1844. Thereafter its activities extended to Uganda in 1876 and Tanganyika in 1878. Later CMS Missions centres were established in Rwanda between 1916 and 1919 and Burundi in 1934 (The CMS 2005: 20-24:7-14).

The establishment of CMS stations in Kisulutini (Rabai) Mombasa was pioneered by Krapf in 1844 who was later

joined by Johannes Rebmann in 1846. Krapf after the failure of Abyssinia mission that he established from 1837 to 1842 due to the disagreement with Ethiopian Orthodox Christian moved to Mombasa. The focus of Krapf was not primarily on the question of slavery but devoted more attention to evangelization, language studies such as Kiswahili, Kirabai and exploration into the interior among the Akamba and the sighting of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Krapf was to leave for Germany due to poor health in 1855 leaving the station in the hands of Rebmann, who was also to depart in 1875. It is noteworthy to say that the success of CMS activities during these formative years was indeed slow (The CMS Intelligencer 1881: 27).

The change of strategy with a focus on evangelization and slavery abolition, begun with Reverent Walter Salter Price in 1874, and Bartle Frere in 1875. The change of strategy was motivated by the desire to attract public funding and protection from the local colonial administration against the Arab local sultanate and his agents along the East African coast. The establishment of the sanctuaries for freed slaves did not begin with CMS along the East African Coast. Indeed the Holy Ghost Fathers and UMCA had established such centres in Zanzibar and Pemba much early and with support of the British Consul –General based in Zanzibar (The CMS Intelligencer 1881).

For the CMS to succeed in its double mission of evangelization and offering protection to the runaway slaves, it required to establish a settlement and that meant acquisition of land. Ideally, the CMS central board sent missionaries to the field stations. Once in the field such as the Freetown and Rabai, they were to report to the authority of British Consul –General by then stationed in Zanzibar. Technically the activities of the missionaries including the acquiring of mission stations and purchase of land were under the nominal authority of the sultanate of Zanzibar by then Said Barghash. The Rabai mission station land that was established by Krapf and Rebmann was purchased in what is described in the mission documents as "gift from the elders" while the access road to the landing by sea was paid by Rebmann at cost of thirty pounds to the elders. This was

because it was an outflank mission from the nominal control of the sultanate of Zanzibar. The original mission station was known as Kisulutini (The CMS, Z59/314: 10-20).

3. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society: A Precursor to CMS

The British and Foreign Anti-Slave Society was a precursor to the CMS anti-slavery campaigns in the dominions of the sultan of Zanzibar. The society was formed in England in 1838 and drew membership from politicians, clergymen, explorers and philanthropists. The members of the CMS for Africa and the East were; Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton who had served as the secretary-general of the CMS in the 1840s and Rev. Hollace Weller of the Anglican Church were members of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The society's anti-slavery campaign was through petitions to the British parliament and media including its publication known as the anti-slavery reporter which described the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar "as the chief seat of the slave-trade on the east coast with an open market for slaves" and urged the British government to take steps to abolish the illegal trade. As the Society took up the cause in British parliament, members of the anti-slavery Society's Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton demanded to know the steps taken to suppress the trade. In 1867 the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society Conference held in Paris condemned slavery in the dominions of the sultan. The Anti-Slavery Reporter of March 1870, urged Her Majesty's cruisers to seize vessels carrying slaves in the territorial waters of the Sultan (The Anti-Slavery Reporter Vol. 17, No. 1, March 31, 1870: 17).

In 1870 the House of Commons; the Anti-Slavery Society's Charles Gilpin, as the Member for Northampton, argued that between 1862 and 1867, 97,000 slaves were exported from the dominions of the sultan of Zanzibar. Consequently at the instigation of the British and Foreign Anti-Slave Society; a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into the Zanzibar slave trade' with the Anti-Slavery Society's supporters making up most of its membership (The Anti-Slavery Reporter Vol. 17, No. 6, 1 July 1871: 166-7, 143; Hansard Motion for an Address, HC Deb 30 June 1871, Vol 207:952-7; The Anti-Slavery Reporter Vol. 17, No. 7, October 2, 1871: 200). One critical factor in the Society's campaign was the intervention of Sir Henry Bartle Frere (1815-84) who had served as Chief Commissioner in Sindh 1850 and then Governor in Bombay. Bartle Frere took up the Anti-Slavery Society's to campaign to Zanzibar; arriving in January 1873. The outcome of his mission was inconclusive as sultan Barghash 'declined distinctly to sign the proposed treaty to end the slave trade and close the slave market and further announced his intention of holding on to the provision of the old treaty of 1845. But due to pressure from the British and foreign anti-slavery campaign society and persuasion from John Kirk the political agent at Zanzibar the Sultan signed the new treaty and closed the slave-market in June 1873 (the Anti-Slavery Reporter Vol. 18 No. 2, 1 July 1872: 46; The Anti-Slavery Reporter Vol. 18, No. 6, 1 July 1873: 160).

4. The Pioneer Missionaries and Establishment of Freed Slaves Sanctuaries along the Kenya Coast

When Sir Bartle Frere; the former governor of British India came to Mombasa in 1873, he was ambivalent to the establishment of a sanctuary for the freed slaves. Though he made a diplomatic mission to the sultanate of Zanzibar intending to persuade Said Barghash to put to an end the domestic slavery at the coast; his efforts did not bore much fruit (The Anti-Slavery Reporter, March/April, 1886:36). Given the circumstances and Frere himself finding the Kisulutini (Rabai) mission at its lowest ebb with the departure of Krapf and Rebmann in a poor state of health; he wanted to dispose of the few freed slaves and transfer them to another settlement and most likely to those established by the Holy Ghost Fathers and UMCA in Pemba and Zanzibar (Frankl 1993:1; The British Parliamentary Papers, 1873:ixi).

The British consulate in Zanzibar by then under John Kirk also did not appear enthusiastic to a settlement for the freed slaves at Mombasa. More so Kirk was not supportive of the establishment of another sanctuary for freed slaves in Mombasa (Kirk to CMS G3/A5/01, The CMS Archives Cadbury Library, Birmingham). It was William Salter Price who by then was the secretary and director of the East African Mission from 1874 to 1876 who was instrumental in the founding of the Freretown. In 1875, Price after identified a suitable location in Mombasa, he wrote to John Kirk by then Consul General based in Zanzibar to request the sultan of Zanzibar Said Barghash to sanction the sale of land to the mission from Hamis bin Said and Abdallah Bin Said the local Arab landowners belonging to the Mazrui family. Price in his correspondence to Kirk indicated that the two expressed willingness to sale their parcels of land to CMS but were fearful of reprisal from fellow Arab community and Wali of Mombasa Ali bin Nassi for selling land to the Europeans and Christians (The CMS Archives, CA5/023/25 Price to Kirk, Mombasa 23.ii.1875). In his reply to Price; Kirk based in Zanzibar advised him to be cautious because the Arab local landowners were fearful of the European taking control of the area. (The CMS Archives, CA5/023/34, Kirk to Price, Mombasa, March 22, 1875). The process of acquiring the land appeared to have faced opposition from the local Wali of Mombasa in correspondence between Price and Kirk. It arose out of the fact that the Muslim community were opposed to the establishment of sanctuaries for slaves and possible loss of slave labour (CMS Archives CA5/023/25, Price to Kirk, Mombasa 23.ii: 1875; CMS Archives CA5/023/34, Kirk to Price, Zanzibar 22.iii:1875). It was through the direct intervention of Said Barghash that enabled Price to purchase the property (The CMS archives, CA5/023/48, Price to Kirk, 7.iv:1875; The CMS archives, CA5/023/49, Barghash b. Sa'id to 'All b. Nasir al-wall, 20.iii:1292/ 26.iv:1875).

The land was therefore purchased from Hamisi Bin Said at the cost of 1000 pound; while the second parcel was also purchased from Abdallah Bin Said at cost of 550 pounds both members of the Mazrui family. The total acreage of land was 2000 acres. The estate was named 'Freretown' after Sir Bartle Frere (The CMS, Cadbury Archives, Z59/314,

Diary of Rev. Binns). The analysis of the dispatch from the British Consul General Euan Smith to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in London the Earl of Derby in June of 1875 indicates the strategic importance of Frere town settlement in the geopolitics of slavery along the Mombasa coast. It had fresh water wells and stood at the centre of the northern slave caravan route (Euan- Smith to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Earl of Derby, FOCP No 2915, P196 para.4; Mombasa and Zanzibar 26: vii:1875). Upon receiving the necessary approval Price together with his associates T.H. Sparshot and J Williams began the process of erecting necessarily building for the liberated slaves with the assistance of the Bombay Africans. The Walter Jones fund of 20,000 pounds was donated in 1873 to mission activities in India, East Africa and Mauritius. Freretown settlement received 218 pounds for the construction of native settlement (CMS Intelligencer 1881:27). It could, therefore, appear from the records that upon the guarantee of the safety of liberated slaves the settlement received its first batch of liberated African slaves. In September of 1875, The Freretown settlement received its first lot of 271 freed slaves rescued by the British cruise named "Thetis" off the Indian Ocean coast. This was followed by the 25 more liberated slaves from the acting British Consul-General Ewan Smith in Zanzibar. There was also 150 liberated Africans from Bombay and 135 transferred from the old settlement of Kisulutini. The total number of liberated African slaves in Freretown in 1875 was 450 (CMS Annual Report, 1875:50-51). Price to appease his Arab neighbours and protect the newly acquired liberated slaves employed the diplomacy of providing medical treatment to the surrounding Arab community (The CMS Annual Report 1875:51).

The settlement for slaves from the inception was not without challenges. The settlement in Freretown may have created a social classificatory system based on tribe and other markers of social identity. Apart from that, the Bombay Africans had their marked separate quarters and due to their enhanced skills; they abhorred manual work and this became a source of conflict between themselves and missionaries. The settlement programme was indebted up to 3500 pounds as indicated in the CMS annual report of 1876. The maintenance cost was in 11500 pounds. The mission centre in that year made an appeal to the colonial office for a subsidy of about 2000 pounds and further indicated the inability to receive more slaves unless there was financial support. Early Clement Hill of the CMS had also unsuccessfully made an appeal to the British Consulate in Zanzibar for a subsidy of 5s pound for every slave handed to the mission. It could appear that support was not forthcoming from the British colonial government (The CMS Annual Report 1876:41-42).

In the year 1877, the mission reported that it had exhausted its financial reserves with only 30 pounds remaining in its local fund to cater for a population of about 450 liberated slaves in Freretown and 250 in Kisulutini. (The CMS Annual Report: 49). The Mission centres had also to contend with runaway slaves seeking refugee from their brutal masters. By 1881 there was a considerable distaste of the Rabai and Freretown mission centres for harbouring fugitive slaves from the Arab and Swahili owners who were

demanding their immediate ejection (The CMS Annual Report 1881-1883:30; The CMS Intelligencer 1881-1883:29-30). The imminent attack on the mission centres was averted by Kirk the Consul- General Zanzibar who was compelled to make a trip to Mombasa to resolve the dispute by asking the mission to forcefully send the fugitive slaves to their owners (The CMS Annual Report 1881-1883:30).

In the later years of the 1880s, there was fundamental development in the CMS efforts of providing a sanctuary to the liberated slaves. In 1885 the British colonial government agreed to make a grant of 5pounds for all slaves received by the mission since July of 1884. This did not very alter the financial precariousness of the mission centres. To ameliorate this condition, the mission centres very much so strived to ensure that the settled slaves had their gardens for food supply. More often than not crop failures due to scarcity of rain exacerbated the food situation (The CMS Annual Report, 1884/85:41). In 1887 the colonial government established the office of vice-consul general in Mombasa to monitor the activities of the slave trade. Barley was posted as the vice-consul general and in that year he handed about 25 liberated slaves mostly children to the Freretown settlement (The CMS Annual Report, 1884/85:44).

5. The Imperial British East Company and the CMS on the Abolition of Slave Trade and Slavery

In 1888 the Imperial British East Africa Company was given a royal charter with administrative responsibility stretching North and West of Freretown to Lake Victoria. The Company operations were housed in the CMS building in Mombasa. The entry of IBEAC was at a time when there was increased ferment against the CMS activities in Mombasa especially for harbouring the fugitive slaves. According to Price, who again returned to Freretown in 1887; it was difficult to keep away runaway slaves from the mission land because it was an open wooded area. Price estimated there were about 2000 inhabitants at Freetown and noted that it was difficult to determine the fugitive slaves from the liberated ones. The imminent attack on the Mission centres was averted when the IBEAC bought the freedom of about 950 fugitive slaves by compensating their Swahili and Arab owners. The words of Price attest to this as recorded in the CMS annual report of 1888/89: *Yesterday was a day such as Rabai has never been before. Mackenzie and I and two others were engaged in giving out papers of freedom to 950 runaway slaves who had been ransomed by the new company* (The CMS Annual Report 1888/89:40). Further documentary evidence indicates that at the end of 1888; the compensation paid by the IBEAC to Arab slave owners was £3,000 for 1,400 fugitive slaves. Sir Fowell Buxton by then the treasurer of CMS and his associates contributed £1200 to reimburse the Company expenses (The CMS Annual Report 1888/89:36). The liberated slaves were to work as porters and reimburse the Company the money spent to buy their freedom. The compensation to the slave owners ranged from 15 to 25 dollars. The slaves were registered and upon receipt of payment; the slave owners were to sign the register to acknowledge the redemption and slaves were issued with the

certificate of freedom. They lived under the protection of the mission. Those who were contracted by the IBEAC as porters were paid 5 dollars a month and for the first three months their pay was reimbursed to the company for the purchase of their freedom (The Anti-Slavery Society Reporter 1890, Vol.10. No. 4 July: 179-180). Bishop Alfred Tucker was to protest that freed slaves working as porters were subject to very harsh conditions similar to those when they were slaves. He noted that some were left to die on the caravan between the coast and interior.

There was at times a controversy between the CMS and the Company about the liberation of slaves. George Mackenzie the director of IBEAC in January 1889 wrote to Sir Charles Euan Smith the acting Consul-General based in Zanzibar concerning the CMS harbouring fugitive slaves in Freetown, Rabai and Kilindini. He noted that *Runaway slaves should be arrested and sent to the Wali... if the missionaries continue to receive runaway slaves all that has been done will be lost* (The CMS Arthur Hardinge to HK Bins, 1899, MS/z49/1: 40-41).

The Arab Sheikhs at the mainland were also not willing to submit to the authority of the company rule particularly on the issue of slavery. For example, Hamis bin Kombo of Takaungu fanatically opposed the company rule and the missionaries at Freretown and Rabai for their protection of runaway slaves. With his army of about 300 slave soldiers in 1895 resisted any attempts to enforce the British anti-slavery legislation in Takaungu and Gonjoro. However the IBEAC was in most cases was unable to impose the British anti-legislation policies because it did not possess the visible force and many of the local Arabs had raised the local population anti company sentiments that were introducing new form of domination (The CMS Arthur Hardinge to HK Bins, 1899, MS/z49/1: 40-41).

The Arab rebellion of 1895 was resentment to the company attempt to enforce the British anti-slavery legislation and mission centres of Rabai and Frere town harbouring runaway slaves. The rebellion was led by Salim Bin Hamis of Takaungu, Mubarak Bin Rashid of Gasi and Hamis bin Kombo of Mtwapa. The attack targeted and partially destroyed the wall and a few structures of the Frere town mission centre prompting the British to call in a reinforcement of 300 soldiers from India to quell the rebellion (Hardinge, 1890:170). By the time the company rule was transferring its authority to Her Majesty government in July of 1895, the institution of slavery was still by the local Islamic law (Hardinge, 1890:171). The Arab rebellion of November 1896 targeted the Rabai mission station destroying 50 structures housing freed slaves, killing five men and also captured women. The attack was followed by the temporary vacation of missionaries and women and children to Frere town. Though the rebellion was quelled it demonstrates the growing resistance towards the CMS role in abolitionism (The CMS Annual Report 1895/1896:105-106).

6. The CMS and the Legal Process for Abolitionism

On the subject of the immediate and gradual abolition of slavery in British East Africa, the CMS missionaries who were also members of British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society had the following views. Bishop Alfred R Tucker the CMS Bishop of Equatorial East Africa and overseeing the mission satiation of Rabai and Freretown. Tucker supported the gradual abolition of slavery in British East Africa. This was based on the view that immediate abolition was likely to increase the breach of peace owing to the large number of slaves to be freed without contingent measures in place about their subsistence. Tucker also pointed out that measures had to be put in place for fair compensation to the slave owners (The Anti-Slavery Reporter 1896:126-127).

The CMS became vocal on the subject of abolitionism. Sir Arthur Hardinge in his dispatch to the colonial office in 1897 noted the role of the CMS missionaries on the subject of abolitionism. For example in July 1895 JRW Pigott, the acting Administrator of Mombasa wrote to several missionaries asking their views on the subject of abolitionism. The CMS missionaries were Rev. H.K. Bins of Freretown, Rev W. E. Taylor of Mombasa, Rev A.G. Smith of Rabai and Miss A.I Grieve and M.J. Lockhart of Mombasa. Of these missionaries, Binns had served his station from 1875 while Taylor since 1880. Binns expressed his view that sudden abolition would be followed by the rising of the whole slave population against the government or was likely to render majority of slaves destitute. He remarked that abolishing slavery at that moment would be nothing short of a calamity. Taylor's views were that given the Arab uprising against the missions in 1895 immediate abolition of slavery would be certainly dangerous.

Smith also wrote and said that "if the Government have sovereign rights in this territory" (the ten Miles coastal strip) then it was the duty of the government to abolish slavery, compensate the owners, provide protection to slaves and a means of livelihood. Hardinge in his dispatch to the colonial office forwarded the views of the missionaries remarking that they held a very important position in offering refuge to liberated slaves (The CMS Intelligencer, 1897:92). But it would appear that the missionaries of the CMS did not take a uniform stand on abolitionism. Some favoured gradual while other advocated for a gradual process. Smith favoured immediate abolition while Taylor and Binns supported a gradual process. These views were crucial to the extent they informed the colonial official view in London on the steps taken with regard the slavery abolition in British East Africa. Mr Curzon of the Under-Secretary of State for foreign affairs in 1896 was to intimate the CMS missionaries in the East coast of Africa were in support of the gradual abolition of slavery (The CMS Intelligencer 1897:98). However, Bishop Alfred Tucker the head of the CMS mission Equatorial East Africa took a very uncompromising stand and urged for the immediate abolition of slavery. He argued that slavery at the East coast was fueling slave trading in the interior (CMS intelligencer 1897:93).

The CMS also instituted a legal proceeding against slave owners to secure their freedom. One case in point was that

of Fugitive slave named HeriKaribu sold into slavery from Jomvu to Sheikh Uwe of Mombasa for 8 dollars and eventually ran away from her master on 23 December 1897 to the mission station in Freretown on account of mistreatment. The girl was housed by MW Parker of Freretown mission and her case was before the provincial court of Mombasa for determination. Bishop Tucker of the CMS based in Uganda compiled the evidence for the Complainant. The details of the case were as follows. The girl was supposed to work outside the home of her master and pay four rupees a month. The girl had fallen back in payment and had been flogged by her master. On this account, she ran to the mission station seeking protection. Bishop Tucker in his submission said that the British law forbade the British subjects in the course of their duties to take part in restoring to their master or depriving liberty any person on account that they were fugitive slaves (Dispatch Marquis of Salisbury to her Majesty Commissioner for East Africa dated June 27 of 1897 quoted in CMS Intelligencer, Sept 1898:679). Bishop Tucker also based his submission on the IBEAC proclamations of May 1st 1890 that stated the tribes of Giriama, Duruma, Kamba, Shimba, Kauma, Digo, Taita, and Pokomo who were to be held as slaves and upon appealing to the company were to be liberated and that no compensation effected to their masters. His third submission was also based on the treaty of 1873 that forbade the movement of slaves from the coast of the mainland to the Sultan dominions and 1876 that forbade the entry of raw slaves from the interior to the coast. The determination of the provincial court under Judge Clifford H. Crawford was that the defendant was guilty of suckling raw slaves into coast contrary to the treaty of 1876 and held the complainant illegally and was subsequently freed. Another case that was bought to the provincial court of Mombasa by Rev WG Hoewe from Ribe (Rabai) on behalf of the Christian girl named only Kombo was caught by former master Salehe Bin Hussein in Mombasa. Her parents went for her release but the ruling of the court was that the three of them were ordered into slavery. The CMS noted that such activities were inconsistent with the treaty of 1897 that stated that it was illegal for the British subject to return former slaves to their master. The CMS missionaries including Bishop Tucker sent a protest note the House of Commons indicating the extent to which the CMS had taken up the issue of slavery abolition (The CMS intelligencer 1899:676).

The CMS also protested the passage of the 1897 treaty that abolished the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba to the exclusion of another coastal area such as Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu. The treaty was only applicable in Zanzibar and Pemba to the exclusion of Mombasa, Lamu, Malindi and other northern coastal towns. The CMS in Mombasa spiritedly opposed the treaty and urged for its enforcement in the entire of the sultan dominion. The CMS also opposed the repealing of the proclamation of 1890 an important clause stating that the "slaves had the liberty to seek for freedom or buying their freedom from their masters" and instead inserted the clause stating that "if a slave goes to the master with money to buy his freedom the master has the right to refuse the money" (The CMS Annual Report October 1898: 722; CMS Intelligencer 1897:86). The CMS further opposed the article on concubinage and called for its repeal (CMS Intelligencer, 1897: 86). In 1897 Bishop

Tucker argued that the decree did not provide for a great mass of women slaves. In his letter date of April 22 of 1897 to the House of Common on concubinage and exclusion clause on mainland territory of the sultanate prompted a parliamentary conference on May 21, 1897, in London. Among those present were the members of the House of Commons Sir John Kennaway, Sir CW Dilke; Sir Joseph Pease and members of the British and Foreign Anti- Slavery Society such as Wright Brooks and Special Commissioner for East Africa, Chass Allen. Bishop Tucker was also invited to give his submission (The CMS Intelligencer 1899).

The Tucker submission called for the extension of the abolition law of 1897 to Mombasa and other mainland territories because in his view the area was a gateway to the northern slavery route to the Arab world. On the subject of the concubine, he noted that two-thirds of the women slaves in Zanzibar were concubines who were forced to earn money for their master through prostitution, carrying construction stones and hence pacing them outside the pale of freedom. After deliberations the House of Commons Parliamentary conference committee led by Sir. Charles Dilke opted to have the matter debated in the House of Commons. The debate in the House of Commons was to reveal further the ambiguity of the British abolition laws. It was to be revealed that the East African territory was a protectorate and hence not subjected to Mohammedan law that superseded the British law and hence constituted the ground upon which the slavery was maintained (The CMS Intelligencer, 1897:697).

7. Conclusion

From the above discussion, the CMS did not have a uniform stand on abolitionism. Various locally stationed European missionaries had different viewpoints that were influenced by the local environment in which they operated. It was also important to note that some of the freed slaves became an active abolitionist. It is also important to note that the CMS position influenced local colonial government on the abolitionism even though there was opposition at times. The CMS also played a very instrumental role in the setting of the sanctuaries for the freed slaves. As noted this was not an easy task. There was opposition from the local Arab landowners who feared to sell land to the European missionaries on grounds that it will lead to competition with Christianity and even conflict. The Arab landowners were very sceptical and apprehensive of the European missionaries. The sanctuaries established in Rabai and Freretown turned out to be centres of acrimony as both the Europeans and freed slaves clashed on matters related to roles, duties, salaries, discrimination and strict upbringing.

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