Colonisers to Colonialists:
European Jews and the workings of race as a political identity in the settler colony of South Africa

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Plagiarism Declaration

I, Mitchel Joffe Hunter, hereby declare that *Colonisers to Colonialists: European Jews and the workings of race as a political identity in the settler colony of South Africa* is my own work, that it has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that the sources I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the shifting racial identification and politics of the emerging Jewish community in Southern Africa between the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 and the Union of South Africa in 1910. Through an investigation of their actions and thoughts on the cultural, economic, linguistic and political aspects of their lives, I show how the emerging Jewish community formed itself through the political subjectivity of White settlers. Understanding how racial categories were being amalgamated and partitioned in that period of state formation, I argue that the mainstream Jewish community colluded with the colonial state to join into the 'unity of the White races'.

I use Memmi's (1967 [1957], pp. 19,45) analytic distinction between 'coloniser' – a European on African land - and 'colonialist' – a coloniser who supports colonialism and believes in its legitimacy - to examine how the process of subject formation is articulated through the political economy of racial capitalism and settler colonialism.

When Jews from Eastern Europe (Yidn) began arriving in South Africa in the 1880s, they faced a settler population which simultaneously treated them as members of an undifferentiated European settler population, as candidates for assimilation into colonial Whiteness, and as dirty subjects under threat of colonial state violence. Though there were other possible responses to the colonial relationship that Yidn could have taken, such as linking the fight against antisemitism with other anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles, the community went through a process of colonialist refashioning.

To understand this transformation, I focus on four aspects of life. Culturally, Yidn were classed as dirty subjects and Jewish communal institutions worked with the state to 'clean', i.e. 'Whiten' them up. Economically, Jews of all class positions learnt the exploitative practices of settlers in racial capitalism. Linguistically, Yiddish became classified as a European language by utilising racial hierarchies. And politically, Yidn became citizens by embracing the ideology of a White-only franchise. Focussing in on these processes of assimilation into power, I argue that the primary Jewish communal institutions embraced and internally enforced a colonialist political subjectivity.

This thesis is based on archival research conducted in three archives in Cape Town carried out between February and May 2019, and extensive reading of previous historical studies to write a new narrative from previously known sources.

Key Words

Settler Colonialism

Racial Capitalism

Political subjectivity

Race

Union of South Africa

Dirt

Yiddish

Immigration

Citizenship

Whiteness

1) Introduction

Thus spoke the prophet Roque Dalton:

All together they have more death than we,

but all together, we have more life than they.

There is more bloody death in their hands

than we could ever wield, unless

we lay down our souls to become them,

and then we will lose everything

Aurora Levins Morales, 2016

Cry with full throat, without restraint; Raise your voice like a ram's horn! Declare to My people their transgression, To the House of Jacob their sin.

Isaiah 58:1

In 2016, following student and workers protests, FeesMustFall (FMF) and Biko's call for 'White liberals' to work in our communities, I was presenting a session with a good friend of mine at a Jewish conference in Johannesburg about White privilege and Jews – making the argument that White Jews in South Africa are equally complicit in and benefiting from White privilege as other White people. One comment from the floor stuck with me. This person accused us of forgetting that we, Ashkenazi Jews, had arrived in South Africa as refugees from the Russian pogroms and Nazi Holocaust and that there had been extensive antisemitism in South Africa. They argued that because White Jews in SA had arrived as refugees and faced racism, we thus were never complicit in colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. I've heard versions of this argument many times, sometimes focusing on the conditions of our arrival, sometimes on the antisemitism. Other times people have tried to lead with a diversion, 'Jews were over-represented in the struggle against Apartheid or in the union movement'.

We argued relentlessly against these positions which we saw as abdicating responsibility and being infused with an implicit acceptance of ongoing White supremacy in South Africa, but I felt a distinct inability to challenge these claims. I just didn't know the specifics of our history enough to counter their claims of a weak Jewish community that was never comfortable enough to be considered complicit in the development of White supremacy in South Africa.

Another incident occurred a few months later that clarified this inability. In late 2016, during the second major FeeMustFall protests against increasing neoliberalism and continuing colonialism in higher education, there was a counter-protest by a group of students called Take Back Wits. It was mostly supported by White students and opposed to the shutdown. A group of White FMF students organized to disrupt their march. In the course of the confrontation, someone I had known from school shouted at me (I was doing lots of shouting myself), "Mitchel, you know me, I'm Portuguese, we didn't colonise here". I was stunned speechless. Flabbergasted. How could anyone be so clueless as to assume, one that the Portuguese weren't colonial powers right here in Southern Africa, and second that his family was still complicit in racism in South African history?

Of course, I am writing from memory here, and its possible I have misquoted these arguments. But I include these recollections here to show that for many White people in South Africa relying on historical narratives is one of the key defence mechanisms that we use to avoid taking responsibility for ongoing White supremacy in ourselves, families, and institutions.

Historical narratives, however, have two meanings. One the one hand it's a story about what happened and on the other, it's the story we tell ourselves about what happened. Haitian anthropologist and historian, Trouillot argued that history is understood as "both 'what happened' and 'that which is said to have happened'" (1995, p. 2). My sense was these narratives that we've told ourselves, like all historical narratives, had a distinct political purpose. Historical narratives are used by White South Africans to obfuscate and silence collusion with White supremacy and justify continued inaction towards and even support of White supremacy in the present. But on a deeper level, the stories that we tell about our pasts also constitute how we understand ourselves. They shape, and are shaped by, our subjectivity.

The content of these narratives differ from community to community but a key similarity is that silences are used strategically, in a way that will be expanded on in a later section, in the narrative to obscure and justify. The Jewish community narrative is one of antisemitism, community welfare and entrepreneurial ingenuity - seasoned, only after 1994, with the achievements of disproportionate involvement in struggles against Apartheid.

Initially, my thesis was going to be about how this communal narrative is used in the present. But as I worked with that, I felt a growing sense of those silences. I wanted to know what was in those silences, what had been obfuscated. What I found wasn't only that certain programs and techniques of collusion with White supremacy and settler colonialism had been obfuscated, but that Jewish political subjectivity had been refashioned in the early 1900s.

For my project I haven't been interested in those who were silenced by history – the anti-colonialists, the anarchists, queer Jews, Black Jews – but rather how the White supremacy and colonial racism of our communal institutions and founders have been silenced. Because these affect how we understand ourselves in the settler-colonial context, our political subjectivity, we haven't yet reckoned with this history and it is still influencing the construction and makeup of the Jewish community today.

This thesis is, therefore, a study of what has been silenced, that like all White settler communities in South Africa, Jews were not only colonisers – settlers on dispossessed land – but also colonialists – colonisers who believe in and support colonialism. These are analytic categories developed by Albert Memmi which will be used throughout the thesis to understand the difference between being in a structural position (colonisers) and the political subjectivity of the coloniser who provides political support to that structure (colonialists).

The Subject: Colonisers and Colonialists

The framework that Memmi provides to understand the subjectivity of colonisers will be used throughout this thesis as a way to grasp how the Jewish community in southern Africa behaved, thought, and understood themselves and their place in the settler-colonial context. This subsection will expand on this theoretical framework and link Memmi's formulation to a theorization of race developed and used in South Africa by Gqola, Garuba, and Erasmus which shows how racial categories are contingent historical constructions that not only shape identity but prescribe certain forms of behaviour.

The coloniser and the colonialist

Memmi's formulation of the coloniser and the colonialist speak to these two aspects of race as they play out in a settler-colonial context. A Tunisian revolutionary and theorist, Albert Memmi, proudly understood himself, until the 1980s, as an 'incurable barbarian' – a term he used positively to indicate his refusal of western civilisational ideals (Memmi, 1992 [1966], p. 165). He further described himself as "a native in a colonial country, a Jew in an anti-Semitic universe, an African in a world dominated by Europe" (Memmi, 1992 [1966], p. 96).

I draw heavily from Memmi's 1957 book, *the Colonised and the Colonizer*, which he wrote because he realised that, before embarking on another novel, he "first had to understand the colonizer and the colonized, perhaps the entire colonial relationship and situation" (Memmi, 2003 [1965], p. 6). Though writing from the perspective of a Tunisian, he recognised, mostly through the comments of readers from around the world, that what he "was describing was the fate of a vast multitude across the world" (Memmi, 2003 [1965], pp. 4-5). The book is structured into two sections. The latter is titled 'Portrait of the Colonised' in which he analyses the mythical portrait of the colonised made by

colonisers, the actual situation, and evaluates two responses to colonialism. I don't spend much time with this section but rather his first section titled 'Portrait of the coloniser'. In this section, Memmi makes the argument that all Europeans in the colonies are privileged (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 10). He then goes on to discuss the subjectivity and phycological process of the 'coloniser who refuses' and the 'coloniser who accepts'.

What Memmi is getting to in this section is two-fold, which are developed simultaneously and in relation to each other. First, its an examination about how the material colonial situation, the colonial relationship, "will transform the colonial candidate [ie an immigrant or European born in the colony] into a coloniser or colonialist" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 10).

The transformation into a coloniser is instantaneous, given that it describes a structural relation of power in which "the individual's choices are irrelevant" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 130). The 'coloniser' is a European living in Africa, a usurper on dispossessed land, an exploiter of the exploited, the privileged beneficiaries of colonial oppression (Memmi, 1967 [1957], pp. 16, 21).

Memmi explains how the "the colonial situation thrusts economic, political, and affective facts upon every colonizer against which he may rebel, but which he can never abandon" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 51). Speaking about 'colonisers' then is a way to understand the structure of settler colonialism and its demands on colonisers.

Memmi holds open the possibility that colonisers might rebel against colonialism. And so he provides the term colonialist to speak to the subjectivity of the individual. A colonialist is a coloniser who believes that colonialism is good and supports its actions (Memmi, 1967 [1957], pp. 21, 45). This is an ideological position, in the sense that it requires the adoption of the set of ideals, principles, myths and methods that make up colonialist thinking. Not only living as a coloniser, but the colonialist's conscious is also developed based on "profit, privilege, and usurpation" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], pp. 9-10).

The concept of the colonialist speaks to the agency of the individual. More than that, however, it also allows for a discussion of subject formation. This is especially important at the turn of the 19th century when, as Ugandan political theorist Mamdani explains, British indirect rule was shifting to a form of colonial rule that "claimed not just to acknowledge difference but also to shape it" (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 1-2).

Understanding the development of the political subjectivity of Jews in southern Africa, rather than just change in behaviour or ideology, is vital because, as will be shown towards the end of this introduction and discussed throughout the thesis, there was not a category of 'Jew' in any meaningful

sense that could change. A coherent, as much as a heterogeneous collective can be considered coherent, Jewish identity only developed in South Africa with the establishment of national communal institutions, and more importantly with a recognition and enforcement of a common political identity.

French theorist Foucault, in his series of lectures '*Society Must Be Defended*', explains that rather than staring with a pre-existing subject, "we begin with the power relation itself … and see how that relationship determines the elements to which it is applied … [and] how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 45).

Hence, rather than starting with Jews, and trying to understand their relationship to colonialism. I start with colonialism, with the particular pressures of the political economy of the early 20th century, and try to understand how it mobilised 'race' to manufacture the political subjectivity of Jews.

Racial Categories and Racial Identities

Using the concepts of the coloniser and colonialist allows me to bypass some limitations with research questions, often asked in the USA, centred on 'how Jews became White'.[1] Asking that question, though it strikes against essentialist notions of race and provides an answer which is historically and socially situated, appears to give too much weight to the structural positions occupied by Jews – roughly but not exactly analogous to the coloniser aspect.

What it means to be 'White' is historically situated. In South Africa, Zimitri Erasmus (2017, p. 35) demonstrates that "to 'look White' is not sufficient; a person has to 'look and live White' in order to be considered White". What does it mean to 'live White' though? One approach might be to base this on economic, legal, or cultural questions. Can Jews own property? Are they members of the middle class? Can they vote? Can they immigrate like other Europeans? Is there antisemitism? The answers to these questions don't always align in historical time – with the result that Jews could be considered White in America as soon as they step off the boat in the 1880s (Clarke & Garner, 2010) or only after WWII (Brodkin, 1998), depending on the definition of Whiteness used.

This, however, doesn't quite capture how racial categories are the products of racism. Racial categories are social constructions which are intrinsically unstable that were, and are, continuously remade in the global and local levels to extend or resist dispossession, exploitation and genocide. Race is neither biological fact, cultural inheritance, nor benign social construction but a historically contingent reflection of power that reflects "the racism of the past and the present" (Gqola, 2017, p.

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[1] Such as Brodkin (1998) and Jacobson (1998)

16). As a tool for discrimination, race operates as a political identity that is formed through a relationship with state institutions (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 662-663) (Wolfe, 2013, p. 272).

Race also gathers personal and collective meanings as racial subjects are formed. Echoing the subject formation of the colonialist, race is used not only to make and remake the world but also to make "individual subjects in the world" (Garuba, 2008, p. 1642). Race influences, is influenced by, and through the "disciplinary and normalizing technologies of modern power" (Garuba, 2008, p. 1642).

This is where Memmi's analytic concept of the colonialist interacts with the actually used racial categories. Garuba's analysis of how race makes individual subjects as a disciplinary technology of modern power is theoretically drawn from Foucault who argues that "we should be trying to discover how multiple bodies, forces, energies, matters, desires, thoughts, and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 28)

So answering a question of how Jews become White, could focus on this element in which Whiteness is more than the lived reality, legal categorisation, or economic roles of 'White' people, but rather their formation into a political identity that is centred on the expression of White supremacy.

Lionel Goldsmid, in an editorial of the *South African Jewish Chronicle* (SAJC) in 1905, grasps how 'leading a White man's life', might be interrelated to 'maintaining the superiority of the White man'

> *"What the Jews of this country want, in order to maintain their self-respect, to justify their existence, and to make them worthy of their past, is simply to lead a White man's life, and their whole duty may be summed up in this expression. How to carry this out is the problem; and, as a sort of preliminary to its proper consideration, we may here venture a few remarks on the relation of the phrase 'leading a White man's life' to the other catchphrase so similar, and so much in vogue just now, 'maintaining the superiority of the White man,' which may or may not be the same thing, according as it is understood."[2]*

The linking of the two 'in vogue' statements, demonstrates how the meaning of 'living White' is realised in White supremacy, how the structural is expressed in the subjective. The concept of the colonialist – the coloniser in their structural position of privilege whose subjectivity is shaped by legitimising, supporting and expanding colonialism – allows for an analytic framework to examine this process of subject formation.

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[2] *SAJC* 02/06/1905

My interest, therefore, is in how Jews in southern Africa were shaped as colonialists through their interactions with the structural relationships of settler colonialism and racial capitalism

This is a field of study that's receiving increasing attention within Jewish Studies. Katz, Leff and Mandel, in a 2017 edited collected called *Colonialism and the Jews* argue that Jewish historiography has been resistant to analysing the role of imperialism and colonialism but that this has started to change as Jewish scholars have realized that "In European colonies from the british antipodes to French north Africa, Jewish economic, religious, and social life was transformed in important wats by the encounter with empire" (Katz, et al., 2017, p. 2)

The answer to this question will take different forms at different points and spaces in history. As Stuart Hall notes, we need to be able to adress "the specific conditions which make this form of distinction socially pertinent, historically active" (Hall, 2002 [1980], p. 58). I have chosen to answer this question for the period 1902 – 1910 in the four settler colonies that join to become the Union of South Africa.

The Scope: Between War and Union
Historical Conjuncture

My choice to locate my thesis at that point in history is motivated by the particular efficacy of that historical conjuncture. In terms of South African history, the period 1902-1910 reflects a moment of intense colonial state formation.

While the Eastern European Jews, who I refer to as Yidn, were arriving in South Africa, fleeing intense overcrowding and poverty, violent and deadly racial discrimination, forced removals and massacres, but arriving as settlers, they arrived in a South Africa in which the British were usurping more land through wars against the Pedi, Tswana and Zulu polities (Rassool, 2019, p. 349). They were finishing up the wars of dispossession against the Xhosa polity. The Boer Republics were dispossessing the Venda. When the most important Jewish institutions were formed in South Africa, the British Empire was brutally squashing the Zulu Bambatha uprising in the Natal Colony against the introduction of multiple taxes, and disastrously reformatting the political economy and governance of the entire country.

After 250 years of the wars of dispossession, the end of the Anglo-Boer war[3] solidified the British Empire's control over the region and allowed them to fashion society in such a way to ensure their

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[3] Since the 1999 centenary commemoration of the war in the newly post-Apartheid state, the war has sometimes been reframed as the South African War as a part of a rainbow nation project and inscribed as a lesson of racial unification (Witz, et al., 2017, pp. 165-166). This obscures the imperial objectives of the two opposing sides and the role of the war in the creation of a White supremacist settler colonial state. I therefore stick to calling it the Anglo-Boer War

supremacy, and increase their profits. The alliance of the 'two White races' – British and Boers[4] – was based on an extension of 'the supremacy of the White man' and was reflected in political debates, and legal plans that resulted in the 1910 Union of South Africa – with its White men only franchise, the 1911 Native Labour Regulations Act, 1912 Mines and Works Regulations Act, and the 1913 Land Act – a few examples of the legal apparatuses that were codified to consolidate White supremacy by entrenching exploitative labour practices and land dispossession. In establishing, for the first time, a single state from the Cape to the Limpopo structured on the desires of mining capitalists and the settler population, this period of history is one of most foundational in the historical narrative of South Africa. This period is ripe for taking up Mahmood Mamdani's 'scholarly challenge' to "locate the development of political identities in a historical understanding of the process of state formation" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 100).

In terms of South African Jewish history, this period is similarly foundational. After a hundred years of a minimal presence of Anglo-German Jewish settlers and 20 years of Eastern European (Yidn[5]) Jewish refugees cum settlers, the Jewish community reached a threshold that was large enough to form communal institutions that could represent the Jews as a group and last until the present day. The two regional forerunners of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) were formed in this period. The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) formed a few years earlier in 1898, reached a level of national significance and had its first Conference in this period. Indeed, it is not until this period, when 'Jew' is used as a political category in relation to the colonial state, that it can be comfortably said that there was a Jewish community at all, given the classed, cultural, linguistic and religious differences between the two immigrant populations.

Comprehensiveness

This period is one of the most studied in Jewish historiography. When I described some of the Jewish content of my thesis, especially the decision to class Yiddish as a European language, to Veronica Belling, she remarked that it was the 'bread and butter of Jewish history'.

Given the messiness of life as it happens, the multiple lines of inheritances at work, I make no claims of comprehensiveness. Even with such a short period in historical time, expanded a bit so I can track the antecedents and effects, there are still so many aspects of life that I have had to neglect or only

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[4] 'Boers' – a term which means farmers, came to refer to the amalgamation of people who drew linguistic, cultural and political heritage from the Dutch and French settler in the 1600s-1806 and the Boer republics from the 1850s. Only in the 1920s, when Afrikaans was re-inscribed from a creole with a slave history to an independent language linked to settler claims of indiginancy, did 'Boer' fall out of use and was replaced by 'Afrikaner' (meaning African) (Baderoon, 2014, p. 167)

[5] Yidn means Jews in Yiddish, the majority language of the Jews of Eastern Europe. I use the term throughout the thesis to refer to Eastern European Jews

tangentially remark upon. And certainly, there are equally important topics, events, and historical processes that occurred before and certainly after that I haven't had the scope to investigate.

I have had to remind myself throughout the process that my intention was not been to write a social history but to present a historically grounded reflection on colonialists. My anxiety levels increased dramatically when I had to decide what to focus on and what to leave out and what my motivations were for making those choices. Often, it was because of my inadequacies that topics were left out. I could not figure out, for example how to include a substantial reflection on the Vhalemba's Jewish identity[6] vis-à-vis the colonial state and the nascent European Jewish community. Nor could I place the making and reification of dichotomous gender categories – the construction of Jewish manliness and womanliness - in relation to the transformation from colonisers to colonialists – something which could be the topic of further research.

As Cedric Robinson remarked in his seminal book 'Black Marxism', "as a scholar it was never my purpose to exhaust the subject, only to suggest that it was there" (Robinson, 2000, p. xxxvii). Hopefully others, or me in a later project, will figure out what other inheritances we've accepted living as colonialists and how to refashion ourselves to address them.

Historical Methodology

My approach to historical study is informed by the belief that its goal is not only to understand what happened in the past but to change the future. I share this sentiment with Nigerian historian Yusufu Bala Usman. For him, "the purpose of historical study is to grasp the historical process for the purpose of influencing it" (Usman, 2006, p. 23). Given how the historical narratives that collectives adopt are central to their sense of the future, I've found it useful to be able to critique how current power dynamics have influenced our sense of the past. So to 'grasp the historical process' is also to grasp the interrelation of effect from past to present and from present to past.

Thinking through this, I've been immensely aided by Trouillot's 1995 examination into historical production, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* which will form the theoretical basis of my methodology. Influenced by a personal and family passion in Haitian history, the dictatorship of Duvalier, and his exile to the USA, Trouillot uses this book to show how historical 'truth' is established.

Though focused on the history of Haiti in particular and the Americas more generally, his theoretical reflections on the production of history are globally relevant. This section draws heavily from the types

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[6] See Noah Tamarkin's book *Genetic Afterlives: Black Jewish Indigeneity in South Africa* (forthcoming 2020), Shimoni (2003, pp. 178-180), or Chitando's article *VaJudha (African Jews) in Harare (2005)*

of silences he characterised, to use them as starting points to discuss the role of power in the production of Jewish history in South Africa.

Reconstituting History?

Creating a meaningful and coherent understanding of the past is not a call for a 'better history' in the positivist sense. Simply having more facts to analyse does not directly lead to understanding. Trouillot argues convincingly that "if the account was indeed fully comprehensive of all facts it would be incomprehensible" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 50). The goal rather is to establish a basic understanding of what happened in that historical conjuncture and then figuring out "the inner connection of events, their movement and existence on a historical process" (Usman, 2006, p. 14).

For my study, this has meant understanding how such superficially disparate events from Jewish life in South Africa were meaningful parts of a historical process in which Jewish refugees and immigrants were considered colonisers in South African and became colonialists.

This is not to say that the 'recovery' of historical facts is meaningless. It is, however, a solution to only one type of historical silence. Trouillot developed a conceptual schema of four 'silences' in the process of historical production which has been useful in locating my project (Trouillot, 1995, p. 26).

The first silence occurs at the moment of fact creation when sources are made. Because it is simply not possible to record every aspect of each fact (Trouillot, 1995, p. 49), what does get recorded is shaped by power dynamics at the time. In the story of Jewish history in South Africa, the colonial context, patriarchy, and the concerns of the anglicised, middle-class Anglo-German Jews shaped what was regarded as important and recorded by the press, put into minutes and so forth. Facts which were seen unimportant by those scribes, and especially facts that would have been considered shameful, are much less present.

The second silence occurs in the moment of fact assembly when archives are made. Archives do not passively soak up all source material but select for their sense of meaningfulness. They are the first step in creating a historical narrative (Trouillot, 1995, p. 52). The Jewish archives have the full records of the *SAJC* but only a scattered collection from the Yiddish press. They have the pamphlets David Goldblatt handed out to members of parliament but not the pamphlets ZD Fox, an anarchist carpenter, handed out every Shabbos on Commissioner and West Street in Johannesburg. They are light on emotional details, the political views of women, artworks, and countless other parts of life. "What we are observing here is archival power at its strongest, the power to define what is and what is not a serious object of research and, therefore, of mention" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 99). Because of this archival

power, my silences will be similar to the silences of other Jewish historians, despite significant political and contextual differences.

The third silence occurs in the moment of fact retrieval when narratives are made (Trouillot, 1995, p. 26). Power plays a role here in terms of unequal access to the archives – the relatively easy to understand limits to institutional access and funding as well as, in the case of Yiddish, linguistic ability. I was limited by not speaking Yiddish and am grateful for all the translations produced by the Kaplan centre. At the same time, it meant that I have to rely on their translations and choices of what was worthy of translation. Further, as a publicly known activist for Palestinian liberation, I did not expect to have access to the archives of the SAZF or, more frustratingly, to the general communal archives that are housed in the same building as the SAZF and the Israel Centre behind their hyper securitised walls.

The fourth silence occurs at the moment of retrospective significance when history itself is made. Trouillot shows that historical significance does not flow directly from the historical event itself but rather from its use-value to people in the present for the construction of their narratives and furthering of political agendas (Trouillot, 1995, p. 19). The determination of certain processes as significant and others insignificant has been shaped in Jewish historiography by how communal institutions and historians, many of whom have been executive members of those institutions, were attempting to construct a homogenous community which was friendly to the colonial state. The nature of such representation changed as the historical conjuncture changed, just as my representation comes out of increasing calls deal with the ongoing legacy of colonialism.

My approach to the silences

Given that we are aware of the type of silences that may be in operation, I should state how I will approach them. As mentioned before, the reconstruction of history is essential work and important projects could be made in writing the subjectivities of women, or anarchists, or Black Jews[7]. This kind of work is vital to undercutting some of the assumptions that have been made about Jews which are still used to exclude and harm those who break the communal mould of a 'good Jew' - but it is only one approach.

Trouillot argues that the turn to hitherto neglected sources responds to the first two 'silences' (Trouillot, 1995, p. 49). There is also work to be done against the third and fourth silence – those of

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[7] The *Censuses of the Cape Colony* record 2 Black Jews in 1891 and 18 in 1904

narrative and significance. Therefore, unlike other historical projects of writing the unwritten, my project has been to relook that that which is already regarded as historical.

In preliminary presentations of my research, many have told, or asked me, about those Jews who challenged White supremacy – those like Ruth Schechter, Solly Sachs and Ray Simons.[8] Of course, I draw inspiration from their examples, but I have resisted the temptation to focus on them because a focus on their lives now feels complicit. Post-1994, Jewish historiography suddenly tried to reclaim all the examples of Jewish resistance which had until then been expelled and excluded from the community.

Why did it do this? One reason was that now the National Party would no longer use the existence of radical Jews to threaten the safety of the Jewish community. Another was to develop a new historical narrative that obscured the history of active and tacit racism in the community. Sara Ahmed explains that "the desire for signs of resistance can also be a form for resistance to hearing about racism. If we want to know how things can be different too quickly, then we might not hear anything at all. ...[it] can involve defence against hearing about racism as an ongoing and unfinished history that we have yet to describe fully" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 165).

I am looking at the lives of the people and institutions who have dominated the historical narrative through a different lens. Their narratives have been written as pioneers, investors, leaders, philanthropists, politicians. But they were also dispossessors, exploiters, racists. They have granted us a legacy, or better said, we've adopted a legacy from them that is underwritten and filled with the ghosts of colonial racism.

So to understand the present, and to chart a new course for the future, my project is to figure out how Jews adopted and colluded with colonial racism – not specifically in their individual lives, but in their communal lives.

Historical agents, actors and subjects

Though focussed on historical processes, the communal leaders will be my primary research participants. Unlike most sociologists I am unable to interview my participants, nor can I immerse myself in their lives. But, informed by South African social scientist, Bernard Magubane's approach to his historical informants, I have aimed to quote the communal leaders at length in their own words to

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[8] They were all active about a generation after the period I chose to focus on, though Schechter did move to South Africa towards the end of it. Tellingly, no one suggested any of the radical examples from before 1910 – Israelstam, Fox, Gillitz and others

present their views of the world in a way that is sufficiently detailed and fair, just as one might present the views of a contemporary research participant (Magubane, 2007, p. 3).

The communal leaders that I spend the most time with are Morris Alexander, Samuel Goldreich, and Lionel Goldsmid, but many others make an appearance. These middle-class men were all ensconced in the British cultural milieu and the colonial economy as well as leaders of communal institutions such as the precursors to the SAJBD, the SAZF, and the most widely circulated Jewish newspaper at the time, the SAJC.

Trouillot notes that people are involved in the historical process in three capacities. As agents in structural positions, as actors concerning their context, and as subjects aware of their role (Trouillot, 1995, p. 23). I thus analyse the actions and ideas of the institutions, and these men as personifications and bearers of colonial interests, but also as thinking subjects who've chosen to construct a Jewish community on a bedrock of White supremacy.

Ideas and their material basis

Like Foucault, I am interested in analysing the "real and effective practices," where power "relates directly and immediately" to produce "real effects" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 28). How the practices of the colonial state, capitalist companies, and, importantly, the disciplinary power of the Jewish communal institutions constitute colonialist subjects.

However, unlike Foucault, whose "goal was not to analyses power at the level of intentions or decisions" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 28), I do also care to analyse the thinking and choices of my research participants. This is because I understand ideology, and decisions not only as an insight into their political subjectivity but also as based on material reality. Magubane (2007, p. 4) argues that "all human actions, beliefs and ideologies are purposeful and have some material basis." My interest, therefore, is not just in what communal institutions and representatives did, but also what they thought about what was happening, what they thought about being colonisers.

This combination between the real effects of power on subject formation, alongside the ideological reflections of my research participants, will produce a nuanced and rich evaluation of how the transformation from colonisers to colonialists occurs.

I think decisions are important because though the transformation from colonisers to colonialists, was structurally predictable it was not historically inevitable. A significant ethic behind my project is that the Jewish community did not have to choose this path. I am not focussing on those who tried to build alternative lifestyles and political projects but I do make sure to flag periodically that these choices were exactly that, choices. Although it must be remembered that we make our choices in

circumstances which enable and forclose, reward and punish our actions. The subjectivity of my research participants is more important than in figuring out why they made the choices they did. Understanding them as research participants, rather than historical figures, assists in this process as a reminder that they functioned as agents, actors and subjects in the makings of their own lives.

Engaging in the archives

Trying to get a sense of the subjectivity of the Jews in South Africa requires both a reworking of the historical narrative and a re-evaluation of archival material. Rather than explore new archives, I focussed on those archives that have been used by scholars of Jewish history. Indeed, many of the archival sources used have been found in the work of other historians and I am indebted to scholars like historians Mendal Kaplan, Milton Shain, Richard Mendelsohn, and librarian and translator Veronica Belling, from the University of Cape Town and central to the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies; Joseph Sherman, English professor at the University of the Witwatersrand and member of the SAJBD. The works I've used from them were produced from the 1980s through to the mid-2000s and reflect the political context they were writing in. Also writing in the early moments of that period, though not writing from within the 'corridors' of Jewish historical production, and highly under cited is a single thesis from Riva Krut. Leibl Feldman, who wrote in the 1950s in Yiddish, also operated outside and was highly critical of the Jewish mainstream narratives.

Following the footnotes and source material referenced in these texts allowed me to verify and make my interpretations from the original documents. Much like Trouillot's work on the Haitian revolution "This unearthing … required extra labour not so much in the production of new facts but their transformation into a new narrative" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 58)

Regardless, for this project I spent countless hours in archives, smelling the dusty newsprint, struggling to discern scratchy handwriting, and wondering why I was allowed, without even a lesson or gloves, too touch fragile one hundred and twenty year-old pieces of paper. 'Recovering' these fragments from the archives was inspiring but also tedious. Sometimes moving through boxes with nothing noteworthy and other times spent solely on a single page, archival work was unpredictable and surprising. It awakened a desire to spend more time in archives.

I spent most of my time in the Jacob Gitlin Library in the Gardens Jewish Community Centre in Cape Town. Walking through the airport-style security entrance I felt out of place, precarious, and horrified at the reification of the combination of manufactured fear and colonial privilege. In the library, I sat for 3 months at a desk opposite the librarians' table, right next to the volumes of the *SAJC*. Each time I arrived I carefully took out my laptop, with its 'Free Palestine' stickers, and placed it so the stickers

were hidden behind a pillar. Over time my sense of precarity fell away. The horror at what the hyper-securitised campus of Cape Town's Jewish institutions represents – colonial presents justified through particular retellings of the past - remains.

The first time I opened the SAJC I struck gold. I had thought that it would take longer to find explicit support for colonial racism but the editor, Lionel Goldsmid, was clear that

> *"The Jews of the Transvaal, if they wish to act up to their name, are pledged to maintain the superiority of the White man in this country. As Jews, they object to being put on the same level as the Coloured races."[9]*

Initially published in Cape Town from 1902, the SAJC transferred to Johannesburg in 1905 and maintained a weekly circulation of 6000 readers.[10] The SAJC said that it was "published in the interests of the Jewish communities of South Africa" and was the "Official Organ of the Transvaal Government for Advertisements of universal interest, or which particularly affect the Jewish Community."[11]

The SAJC reflected the interests of the anglicized and middle-class Jews of the Transvaal and was modelled after the London Jewish Chronicle. Its regular columns included 'mining and financial', international news, and 'social and fashionable' as well as many adverts. Though it is sometimes referred to as antizionist, due to its pro-British leanings, each edition contained numerous adverts of Zionist meetings and fundraising activities, displayed Zionist debates in their pages, and reported extensively on Zionist meetings.

I also spent a further two months in supplementary archives. The UCT Special Collections archives house the early SAJBD collection and the Morris Alexander collection which provided me with a lot of insight into the working of the Board, the status of Yiddish as a European language, and, surprisingly, some previously unknown family information. I also spent significant time in the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (hereafter 'the Cape Archives') reading official reports to the Cape Colony's parliament as well as the massive and fascinating report of the 1893 'Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope'.

All these archives have been used before by those writing Jewish history as have many of the 'facts', some of them extensively. My task was to take these well-known facts from well-used archives, combined them with lesser-known, and dare I say it, purposively silenced facts from those very same archives, and transformed them into a new narrative. My particular assemblage and the narrative I

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[9] *SAJC 05/05/1905*

[10] This is striking as the national Jewish population in 1904 was around 38000 (Cohen, 1984, p. 2) and about 10 000 in Johannesburg (Gitlin, 1950, p. 119) and the SAJC was a distinctly Transvaal based newspaper

[11] *SAJC* tagline in any issue between 1905 – 1910

have constructed are premised on a rejection of the ongoing White supremacy and settler colonialism present in myself, and the institutions and communities I am a part of.

Positionality and Purpose

My personal and political motivation behind this thesis is to develop the historical knowledge and arguments that I could use to excise of White supremacist ideology and practices from myself and the Jewish community as my small contribution to anti-racist work in South Africa. I firmly hold the belief that if we know how we arrived where we are today, we will be better placed in working out how to dismantle the old, and when combined with a vision of the future, to rebuild something new.

I am doing this from a very complicit social position. Though raised in a liberal family and school environment with anti-Apartheid backgrounds, I was still raised as a White cis man in South Africa – the continued settler colony. I have adopted many forms of explicit and implicit forms of sexism and racism that I have to constantly become aware of and remove. Bouteldja, though speaking about France and racism, clearly articulates how power dynamics infiltrate everyone living in a society.

> *"Indeed, since I belong to a racist society, and I am part of this whole, the racism that structures it infiltrates me. In fact, in my view, anyone who lives in a racist society, but maintains that they are exempt of racism, is at best fooling themselves, or at worst lying. Racism is what we were fed since childhood, regardless of where we stand in the hierarchical scale of human dignity. If we stand at the high end of this hierarchy, we experience a more or less swollen sense of self. Our only ambition, often unavowed, is to preserve this dominant position"* (Bouteldja, 2016).

Knowledge of how I am implicated in this position led to involvement in organisations and movements which aimed to disrupt and dismantle racial capitalism and colonialism. I was specifically radicalised through the student-worker struggles at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2015-2017[12] and their aftermath. Both then and since, I have focussed some of that energy into the academic realm against colonial epistemologies in the discipline of Sociology, and into the Jewish community – a community I feel both a part of and isolated from. In this thesis, those two aspects have merged.

My academic motivation is to contribute to the study of the formation of racial identities, and how race functions as a political identity. In this aim, I am taking up the scholarly projects of many disparate academics on the African continent such as Mamdani's 'scholarly challenge' to "locate the

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[12] For a sense of the political expression of the student uprising see http://witsvuvuzela.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Hallucinations_RUTHFIRST_August2016_FINAL.pdf [accessed 06/03/2020] and for the content of EndOutsourcing and the student-worker alliance see https://brooklynrail.org/2016/03/field-notes/outsourcing-must-fall [accessed 06/03/2020]

development of political identities in a historical understanding of the process of state formation" (2012, p. 100), Erasmus' project to understand racialization as a method which answers the question of "why and how do we learn to become Black, White, Coloured, or Indian in South Africa?" (Erasmus, 2017, pp. 53-55) and beyond, for instance, Roediger's question in respect of North America "of why and how Whites reach the conclusion that their Whiteness is meaningful" (Roediger, 1991, p. 6). This thesis will also be an attempt to place Jewish history within anti-racist historiography and theoretical production.

Intellectually, I consciously attempted, and I think succeeded, in developing a theoretical framework and approach, as well as knowledge of the historical context primarily through the theorising and historical production of scholars who come from histories of being colonised as African, Black, and/or Indian. My understandings of racism, race, colonialism, capitalism, the franchise, immigration, have all drawn from theorists and historians such as Magubane, Memmi, Mamdani, Erasmus, Fanon, Gqola, Trouillot, and Robinson, though scholars from histories of being colonisers such as McClintock and Roediger have also been influential. The Jewish scholars I have relied on theoretically come from both of these histories and include Memmi, already mentioned, Slabodsky, who maybe exhibits the malleability of Jewish racial categorisation in his move from Argentina to the USA, and Krut a White South African.

However, in terms of the content of my research, and the historical subjects whom I focus on, I have fallen prey to the warning that "to exclusively focus on the settler-colonial without any meaningful engagement with the indigenous … can (re)produce another form of "elimination of the native" (Kauanui, 2016). Not presenting Black agency while relying on Black theory is a complicated and complicit position to be in as a White writer, in some ways analogous and other ways contradicting the historical practice of White social studies academics. I have used Black and Global South theorists to study a White and settler-colonial subjectivity, an academic structure that's flipped from the historical norm of using White and Global North theorists to study Black and indigenous subjectivities. One the one hand this feels like a powerful move away from epistemic racism of my disciplinary background and Jewish historiography, on the other hand, it also worries me that it feels like a continuation of a narcissistic White gaze and location of historical agency in White subjects.

I also had to consistently struggle with my epistemic sexism and difficulty researching and writing through a gendered lens. This was particularly noticeable in the sections on 'dirty sex' and on 'becoming citizens' though in vastly different ways which are reflected on in those sections.

Writing this thesis from my position within and without the Jewish community has also brought up conflicting emotional and epistemic challenges. Though Jewish, I have always had a difficult

relationship to the community and have a few times been excluded from Jewish institutional life for refusing to assimilate my body or my political support for Palestinian liberation into the boxes it prescribes. Luckily, many others have walked these paths before and created Jewish cultural, political and religious spaces which I can live in with both comfort and discomfort. However, having gone through a multiracial, multireligious Catholic school, coming from an interfaith family, and a Jewish community that had already assimilated into the power of Whiteness means that I would be unknowable as Jewish to the Yidn I feel a connection with, just as they are in many ways unknowable to me. This has given me both an emic and etic perspective on the community and its history, as well on the legacies of British colonial racism, which have shaped my historical analysis.

These complexities and complicities of my position constantly emerged in my emotional reactions to reading and writing for this project. On the 1st of December 2019, soon after writing the chapter on Dirty Subjects, and writing the chapter on Immigration Restrictions, I wrote:

> *The combined feeling of intense sadness, loss, the anger of when going through the archives and reading.*
>
> *The intensity of antisemitism. How did my ancestors experience this? How were they affected? The loss for what cultural knowledge was lost because of it. The psychic effects of having to hide their Yiddishkeit. In grade 8, on Heritage Day I went to school with a yarmi, tallis and tefillin on. [13] As I was leaving the door my grandpa was startled and asked if I was sure. I couldn't understand what he was worried about. Everyone was going to be wearing full religious/cultural garb and, as one of the few Jews, I had often spoken publicly at school about the Jewish religion. He then told me that if he had ever worn a tallis or even a yarmi to school that he would have been beaten up. I reassured him that it would be ok and my mom, who had been called in the late 1960s " 'n fokende juud"[14] at a school in which the principle encouraged students to boycott the local Jewish businesses, reminded him that times have changed.*
>
> *Sometimes I feel the pain of what they had experienced. Other times a loss of what I've been denied. How our Yiddishkeit was systematically buried. A full cultural genocide. And so often at the hands of other Jews. Anglo Jews shut down the Yiddish theatres. They stole the children of Yidn families who they saw unfit and put them in the celebrated Jewish*

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[13] Jewish ritual clothing
[14] Afrikaans for "a fucking Jew"

Orphanages. The Zionists erased Yiddish names. They were almost the worst perpetrators of antisemitism.[15]

Then comes reading all the horrible racist things that these self-same ancestors did to others. Or ignored and walked past. They supported segregation and oppression. They threw Indians under the bus, they exploited Black workers. They called for a White-only vote, expulsion of the Chinese, a banning of Indian business. They were politicians and mayors at a time of entrenched racism. They were reading about, empathizing with, and organizing solidarity against massacres, forced removals, racialized state violence, and anti-immigration policies in Russia and Roumania at the exact time that they were ignoring, benefitting, and supporting the exact same actions in South Africa. It fills me with anger and sometimes a burning fury.

How does one hold these two feelings to together? Vacillating sometimes in a single writing session, sometimes in the same source, between both extremes.

Its also not a pain I fully appreciate, or a wave of anger I can easily sit in. Both are complicated by the present and by the past. And so so ongoing. It's a pain for my assimilation, my unreadableness as a Jew. Its an anger at my complicity in colonialism and my inactions. All so tied up. Feeling so connected and yet so distant.[16]

Overview of Settler Colonialism

The period between the 1890s and 1910s, and specifically between 1902 and 1910 can be seen as a fundamental period of South African history in which the imperial aims of the British Empire shifted from conquest to consolidation, a process of state formation which defined the racial and gendered hierarchies and the character of the state that persisted largely unchanged until 1994 and still plagues us today.

This section and most of the underlying historical context of South Africa is drawn from South African sociologist, anthropologist and historian Bernard Magubane's comprehensive book, *The Making of a Racist State.* Written while Magubane was in exile in the USA, published in 1996, and dedicated to the ANC, it shows how British Imperialism, and not Boer Nationalism – which had been blamed for Apartheid, was responsible for constructing South Africa into the White supremacist state that defined

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[15] These examples will come up and be discussed during the thesis. Else see Belling (2003), Krut (1985), and Feldman (2007 [1955]).

[16] This reflection has been slightly edited for grammar and a few additions have been inserted.

its existence from 1910 – the formal start of the Union of South Africa – until 1994 – the formal end of Apartheid.

This period of state formation has its precursors in the invasion by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1652. As a company with a colonial charter, the VOC usurped the land upon which they forced enslaved people to build Cape Town. Over the following centuries, the VOC expanded into the interior from the Cape and established a society based on slavery and dispossession. As they expanded they used force and treachery to dispossess land from the various African groups, and in addition engaged in wars of extermination against San and Khoe collectives. Magubane puts this brilliantly: "Their defeat and land dispossession marked their reduction into labour-power for the invaders, their subjugation as inferior races, and their subsequent disintegration. This laid the foundation of a racially-based class structure of conqueror and conquered" (Magubane, 2007, p. 202). At this point, all adults were integrated into the colonial economy as agricultural and domestic labour (Cock, 1980, p. 197).

However, constricted by African resistance to being included in the colonial economy from the San and Khoe in the west to the Zulu in the East, the VOC and British adopted this logic to import slaves and indentured workers for household and agricultural labour.

British colonialists had been concerned since the end of slavery with finding ways to coerce a Black labour force that was reliable and cheap. Both farming and mining in South Africa were only financially viable when paying the lowest possible wages and as such there was a confluence of interests among the South African capitalist class to use the state to ensure that such a labour force existed. For example, during the Anglo-Xhosa wars in the 1800s, Colonel Graham's total aggression against the Xhosa in 1811-1812 resulted in 20 000 Xhosa people being expelled across the Fish River. 4000 acres of usurped land was then given to White settlers to act as a border. However, this wasn't only an expulsion. Many Xhosa were forced to remain or return into service "as squatters of their erstwhile conquerors" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 44-46).

In 1854, Sir George Grey was appointed by the British Empire as the Governor of the Cape Colony. One of his goals was that the Xhosa men "will be marched into the colony under their European superintendents, unarmed and provided only with implements of labour" (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, p. 15). Xhosa chiefs were arrested and sent to Robben Island and "not only were the Xhosa turned into wage-labourers, but their land was placed under the control of the British government" (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, p. 19). Theft of land, destruction of government, and coercement into wage labour are all integral parts of the history of South Africa. Magubane argues that "the incorporation of the African population as cheap labour, segregated by political rightlessness and severe social discrimination, is thus the

simple but most important key to an understanding of all subsequent social and capitalist development in the country" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 237-238).

For the colonial state, land, labour, the franchise and the racial and gendered hierarchies were directly intertwined. Land dispossession was linked to labour but this also had franchise effects in Natal and the Cape Colony. In those two territories, the franchise was by law a non-racial franchise that depended on assigned gender, literacy and property qualifications.

The relation between the franchise and labour can be shown in this example from Kimberly in the 1870s. To incentivise more African workers to work in the mines, the diamond capitalists significantly increased the wage for African miners. This wage increase meant that, for the first time in a major city, there were 12 000 eligible African voters compared to 7 500 White voters (Magubane, 1996, p. 238). This shocked the settler population and the mining capitalists who quickly organised to raise the property qualification and lower wages to ensure a White enfranchised majority (Magubane, 1996, p. 238). The mining capitalists and settler politicians decided then that African labour had to be coerced through taxes, land dispossession, laws, and prison labour rather than incentivised with wages.

In an 1887 speech to the Cape Parliament, Cecil John Rhodes presented his view that "the native is to be treated as a child and denied the franchise" (Magubane, 1996, p. 108). Jan Smuts echoed this language. In 1895 he stated that the "mission of [South Africa] is a grand racial aristocracy" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 279-280) and then in 1906 in a letter to the Cape Liberal politician, and Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, John X Merriman, he wrote:

> *"I sympathise profoundly with the native races of South Africa whose land it was long before we came here to force a policy of dispossession on them... But I don't believe in a politics for them. I would therefore not give them the franchise, which in any case would not affect more than a negligible number of them at present" (Magubane, 1996, p. 292)*

Even those who desired and fought for some form of non-racial franchise, such as Merriman, argued for a property qualification and literacy tests which would not be "be so high as to exclude the decent European or the superior class of natives but would minimize the coolie and the barbarian" (Magubane, 1996, p. 237). Merriman's position, which we'll see a similar version of later, comes from his wish "that we had no Black men in South Africa," fears that the increasing African population would "burst forth in a destroying flood" and that the qualified franchise "though it makes some noise and a nasty smell, … is the most reasonable guarantee against an explosion" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 291-292)

The discovery of deep mineral deposits rapidly increased the pace of the still ongoing invasions. Realising the potential profits of the mines, the British Empire "launched a wave of aggressive wars

that would decide once and for all that Britain and its Cape Colony were the ultimate owner of these newly found riches of South Africa" (Magubane, 1996, p. 53). With the conclusion of the Wars of Dispossession and the consolidation the White settler colonies through the Anglo-Boer war, an imperial war *par excellence*, "Britain then began the systematic re-organisation of South Africa to suit its imperial needs" (Magubane, 2007, p. 202).

Though expansion and consolidation of colonial rule are always simultaneously and mutually occurring, the emphasis shifted after the Anglo-Boer war to consolidation which was realised through the formation of a unitary White supremacist state covering the four settler colonies that had been present in the region. Buchan, personal secretary to Governor Milner in South Africa and later a Governor himself in Canada described British settler colonies as imperial outposts in which White settlers were in "a racial aristocracy considered in their relation to subject peoples, a democracy in their relation to each other" (Buchan, 1906, pp. 34-35).

This process drew from old, constructed new and entrenched racial and gendered hierarchies in a process which Mamdani describes as the colonial project of not only 'divide and rule' but of "define and rule" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 42). Mamdani, based on an extensive career researching the colonial practice and effects of 'how Europe ruled Africa' (Pillay, 2015, p. 189), gave a series of lectures that became organised into his 2012 book *Define and Rule*. In it, motivated to destabilise the categories of 'native' and 'settler,' Mamdani describes the theoretical and practical genealogy of the modern colonial state formed under indirect British rule which "claimed not just to acknowledge difference but also to shape it" (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 1-2).

Racial Categories

Its well accepted today that race and racial categories are social constructs but the racial and ethnic constructions used in South Africa "have been so powerful that they came to be perceived as natural and innate, with South Africa seen as a society of many races and tribes, whose major challenge is to find a way to coexist" (Rassool, 2019, p. 343). What is explored and imagined less however is that they are also historically contingent and threaded through with relations of power.

Understanding historical categories requires unfixing present-day categories. "If you take identities existing in the present period as given, then generalise them across historical time, how would it then be possible to understand the process of identity formation over time and relate it to the larger process of cultural change, economic development, and political transformation?" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 97). Some racial categories have come and gone, others have transformed – either describing a new amalgamation of people or, and less frequently, with different relations to contemporary racisms.

'Race' itself also now means something different to what it once did, referring then to what we might now call nationalities, ethnicities, religions and even linguistic groups.

However, since the terminology needs to be understood by contemporary readers, and for the sake of simplicity, I shall adopt common conventions in this thesis. Except where it is historically relevant to make distinctions, I shall use the term 'Black' to refer to people classified by Apartheid as 'African', 'Coloured', and 'Indian'. All terms of racial categorisation, including 'White' will be capitalised as a reminder to the readers of the historical construction of these categories – none of which existed before 1910 in the way that we use them today. However, I won't edit quotations so the reader will be required to come to grips with the shifting racial classifications, something I hope to have facilitated where necessary.

While working through history, especially of collectives, the collective subjects who remember this past – for my purposes, Jewish South Africans[17] - did not exist in the times that we claim to remember. This was the case, not only bodily but also conceptually. For the collective with whom I am concerned within this thesis, Trouillot's important statement certainly applies, namely, that our "constitution as subjects goes hand in hand with the continuous creation of the past" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 16).

This is true of all present-day collective subjects, and the particular identity markers that one chooses is shaped by the particular historical conjuncture a group is operating within. Referring the late 1800s claiming of the name Native American, Trouillot argues that "while self-naming may indicate a willingness to enter history as subjects, the concrete pool from which to choose both names and subjectivities is not immeasurable" (Trouillot, 1995, pp. 139-140).

In South Africa, collective identities are similarly shaped by the historical moment. Rassool indicates that "South African people have experienced long histories of racialisation,"[18] through what he terms "enracement, deracement, and retracement – as well as processes of entribement and retribement" (Rassool, 2019, p. 343).[19] Though my focus is on what Jewish communities did as settlers, and what

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[17] The order of these terms makes an important distinction that was still, up to at least the early 2010s, debated in Zionist youth movements. Shain and Mendelsohn use the phrase 'South African Jews' to describe a primary Jewish identity shaped by being in South Africa, and 'Jewish South Africans' to indicate the opposite, an integrated South African identity which shaped by also being Jewish. In their four part periodisation of Jewish history in South Africa, 'South African Jews' covers 1930s-1970, and 'Jewish South Africans' covers the period from 1970 till the present (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. x)

[18] For further reading see Rassool (2019), Erasmus (2017), Gqola (2015), and Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2009), though there is a huge body of literature, both comprehensive and specific, on this topic

[19] For example, the in the same moment that that various 'European races' were being amalgamated into a single racial identity for the 1891 Census – under the cover that it ""would have been altogether incommensurate with the real value of the information elicited" - other racial identities were being split up. The 1891 census of the Cape Colony instructed enumerators that for "Race" they should "insert 'E' for European or White, and 'Mixed' for colored persons of mixed Race. For others specify whether Chinese, Hindu,

they supported as colonialists, how they identified as White is certainly an important backdrop. The racialisation of Yidn into the 'White race' carried with it ideological and actionable consequences beyond being simply a socially imposed, or collectively adopted identity.

The implications of being White come from the context in which the category was formed. After a 19th century in which the concepts of the 'English', or sometimes 'Anglo-Saxon' race and the 'Dutch', or sometimes 'Boer' race was seen to be at odds, the post-Anglo-Boer war alliance enshrined White racial equality.

Peregrino, a Ghanaian lawyer living in Cape Town and early supporter of Pan-Africanism (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, p. 54), made the following observation in 1911:

> *"The phrase the "Two White Races", is now become of daily use. The legislator in the form, the candidate on the stump, the political agitator and irresponsible babbler out of doors, to all these it has become a sheboleth, a sweet morsel to roll in their mouths, yea! And in the contemptuous disregard of the presence in this country of any other race. The best interest and the welfare of the two White races, this must be subserved at all hazards."[20]*

This was done in the context of White, not just 'Anglo-Saxon', supremacy and the unity of the 'White races' was a political manoeuvre to secure a stable ruling alliance of settler-colonial interests. Conceptually, the effect of this was to open up the alliance to any other 'race' which could be recognised as White – Jews amongst them.

Overview of Jewish History

As mentioned above, the collective subjects grouped as 'South African Jews' did not exist at the turn of the century. Even referring to 'Jews' at that time would be a misnomer. There was nothing necessarily linking the Jewish experience across southern Africa as a single Jewish experience. This section will give a very brief history of the two main Jewish backgrounds in South Africa from the end

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Mozambique, Malay, Hottentot, Bushman, Bechuana (including Basuto), Fingo or Darama. If K****, insert 'K,' and add whether Xosa, Tembu, Pondomise, Baca, Xesibe, or Bomvana."

The person in charge of the Census, Henry De Smidt, explained his technical and political reasons for subdividing the racial category 'K*****' into 'tribal' units. "In 1875, for good and sufficient reasons no doubt, all members of the K*** and Bechuana Races were classified under one head and no tribal distinctions were attempted. In arranging for the Census of 1891 I felt that the annexation to the Colony of the Transkeian Territories with their hordes of Natives, politically and geographically subdivided with well-defined lines of demarcation, rendered it of the utmost importance that an attempt should be made to show the numbers belonging to each of the principal Tribes" in *Cape Colony Census of 1891* pg xvi – xx

Far from being an individual decision as portrayed by De Smidt in the 1891 Census, the distinction between race and tribe was a part of a larger shift in British colonial policy. See Mamdani (1996) and Mamdani (2012) for the distinction between race and tribe

[20] FZS Peregrino in *Imvo Zabanstundu 05/12/1911* in W.P. Schreiner Papers. BC112, box 17

of the 19th century. It will then show how the differences and tensions played out between them and the formation of a few of the communal institutions that I'll refer to throughout the thesis

Anglo-Jews

There isn't an unbroken thread of Jewish presence in the Cape Colony until the British took over from the VOC in 1806. Until then, only European Protestants were allowed to be settlers, and the few Jews who did come under VOC rule quickly converted to Christianity. From 1806 until the 1850s there was a slow trickle, and an only slightly faster one from then on, of Jewish settlers from western Europe who were undifferentiated from other settlers. Their Jewishness was framed as merely another subcategory of Christianity.

Sophie Leviseur, suffraget and the daughter of wealthy Jewish merchants Isaac and Caroline Bauman who lived in Bloemfontein in the second half of the 19th century, commented that "we were brought up with great pride of race and taught to be proud of being Jews …[but] no one thought of us as Jews." Her mother and aunts/uncles

> *"all grew up to think of themselves as being of just another variety of faith, like Wesleyans or English or Dutch Reformed. She never differentiated between herself and the Christians, nor did others… they considered themselves, and were accepted by others, as full citizens" (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 19).*

These Jews were English, middle or upper class, and fully ensconced within British colonial culture (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 27). Any feeling of distinctiveness and any presence of antisemitism was dealt with in the mode of what's come to be known as the 'Emancipation Pact'. This was a deal struck by British Jewry in the 1850s in which they gained full British citizenship in exchange for assimilating their Jewish difference into English culture. This pact greatly influenced Anglo-Jewry's political approach (Kaplan, 2008, p. 110). They were expected to adopt the dictum 'to be a man in public' and a 'Jew at home' (Krut, 1985, p. 95) (Shain, 1994, p. 160 n.11).

This group of Jews have been referred to as Anglo-German Jews in much of the secondary literature to highlight the main locations from which they immigrated. I will use the term Anglo-Jews for brevity and to reflect the increasing political and cultural English dominance in this group as the years go on. Though the next period is dominated by the immigration of Eastern European Jews, Anglo-Jews keep immigrating, some of them the children of Eastern European Jews who had spent a generation in London.

Yidn (Eastern European Jews)

In the 1880s a few unconnected historical processes aligned into a particular historical conjuncture which meant that a wave of Yidn, mostly from the Kovno protectorate in what is now Lithuania but was then under the Russian Empire, began to immigrate and then settle in South Africa. The start of pogroms in the Russian empire, overcrowding and poverty in *shetls* and cities, the economic opportunities in South Africa after the mineral revolution, and the existing networks of passenger transit in search for new clients all coalesced into a wave of immigration between 1880 and 1911. In those years the Jewish population increased 1250% from 4 000 to 50 000[21] (Cohen, 1984, p. 2), or from 0.23% of the White population in 1875 to 3.68% in 1911 (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, pp. 26, 71).

"During the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, the Russian government introduced a series of administrative reforms that weakened the status of corporative entities at large and gradually obliterated jewish autonomy (which pauses mid course for special legislation pertaining to the Jew's status in 1791, 1804, and 1835)" (Bartal, 2017, p. 118). Jews in the Russian Empire had been restricted to live in the Pale of Settlement[22] from 1791, and after the start of pogroms in 1881, the 1882 'May Laws' set even harsher restrictions on Jewish life.

Jews were not allowed to own property, to move freely, were subject to quota's limiting their participation in everything from schools to government posts, and denied the franchise – laws which were only overturned with the communist revolution in 1917. Extensive poverty and overcrowding meant that most Jews were involved in artisanal rather than agricultural professions and developed strong mutual aid welfare organisations that almost a third of Yidn relied on.

The Russian Empire, influenced by French prerevolutionary economic policy, strove to "to correct the perceived moral failings and improve the economic conduct of the Jews in the territories that it had annexed from Poland (Bartal, 2017, p. 118). These pressures, and the spread of Enlightenment ideologies prompted a number of Jewish responses – both religious and political.

In the 19th century, mystical Chasidism[23], Socialism, and Zionism developed in the Pale as various responses to the spread of the Enlightenment. However, most Yidn immigrants to South Africa came from the area around the city of Kovno in Lithuania which was the centre of opposition to the Chasidic movement (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 32). Socialism also didn't have a strong presence in the Kovno protectorate, being strongest in the Polish regions. Zionism, however, was extensively supported by Lithuanian Jews – many of whom were already members of Zionist societies before they

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[21] Specifically, to 38101 in 1904 and 49926 in 1911 (Cohen, 1984, p. 2)
[22] An area with shifting boundaries but which is now made up of the countries of Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, and parts of Ukraine, Latvia, Poland and Russia. 'Pale' means an area enclosed by a fence or boundary
[23] A religious movement characterized by piety, religious zeal, and Jewish mysticism

arrived in South Africa (Shimoni, 1980, pp. 18-19). The South African Jewish community wasn't as homogenous as many historians have made it out to be but these trends were still greatly influential.

These Jews experienced a rapid shift in structural positions. In Russia, Jews were amongst the persecuted underclass – subject to attacks on their dignity, segregation, forced removals and massacres. In South Africa, Jews were among those who could own land dispossessed through conquest and forced removals, and benefit from the labour of a segregated and exploited underclass. Of course, many of these Yidn could not access all of these colonial benefits straight away, but economic mobility was basically guaranteed within a generation.

Geoff Sifrin recounts a story his grandfather told of arriving in Cape Town which highlights the moment an immigrant realised that they had been, as Memmi notes for working-class French immigrants to Tunisia, "suddenly provided with a wonderful title, [and] see[n] their obscurity illuminated by a prestige which surprises even them" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 47).

> *"As the train clattered along on its three-day journey into the interior of the country, he wondered about the Black people that he saw everywhere – the "shwartzes", as the man at the docks had called them. He'd never seen Black people in Russia. It was clear to him that they were second class citizens here – the Whites spoke to them always with a tone of command in their voices, and they did all the physical work … They had an attitude of deference towards White people. When Berel had walked along the sidewalk towards the train station, there had been some shwartzes there who had quickly stepped aside to make way for him, averting their eyes. He was astonished. In Russia, nobody would have stepped aside for a Jew!" (Leveson, 2010, pp. 267-268).*

These Jews who came from Eastern Europe will be referred to as Yidn in my thesis which simply means 'Jews' in their common language, Yiddish. It was used as a self-descriptor in Yiddish writing throughout the world, though the singular 'Yid' was turned into an antisemitic slur in English and will be avoided.

A Jewish community?

Differentiating between Anglo-Jews and Yidn is important as they occupied vastly different social positions within the settler community. Leibl Feldman, a socialist and Yiddishist[24] wrote in his 1955 history of *The Jews in Johannesburg* hints how these hierarchies manifested

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[24] An advocate for the use of the Yiddish language, often they also write, either fiction, non-fiction, or news, in Yiddish

"the English, German, other western European, and the more prosperous anglicised Russian Jews, lived on Hospital Hill in Doornfontein – an attractive suburb with trees and green cultivated areas, with more expensive free-standing homes. Ferreira was regarded as a ghetto, and the Russian Jews who lived there – as "peruvnikes[25]" – poorly dressed, frugal people, who saved every penny and who were not fastidious in matters of hygiene" (p. 55)

Many Anglo-Jews were property developers, stockbrokers, in professional trades, commercial dealers and house managers. A few Anglo-Jews were also mine owners and politicians. Yidn, on the other hand, were mostly traders, artisans, and housekeepers. Religiously, Anglo-Jews built large synagogues representing their social aspiration, called their Rabbis 'Reverends', and worshipped in the British style – with decorum, top hats, and saying prayers for the British Royal family. Yidn prayed expressively rather than formulaically, and built *shuls* that were small, functional, and served as community centres.

Yidn regarded the Anglo Jews as "heathenish and ignorant". The Anglo Jews, in turn, found their co-religionists "crude and unmannerly" (Hellig, 1984, pp. 99-100). Differences in location, urbanity, language, class, gender, religion, culture, and politics all created divisions between Jews and stronger connections with other groups in the colonial context.

A letter in an Orthodox and Zionist Yiddish newspaper, *Ha-Kochav* (The Star), gives a hyperbolic sense of the feeling in Johannesburg in 1904,

"Johannesburg is on fire! The Jewish quarter is in flames! Everyone is fighting with each other. Each person is against the other. Only quarrels wherever you go! The [Zionits] Federation against the Board of Deputies. The rabbis with each other. The old and the new synagogues against each other. The Orthodox Besmedresh with the Talmudic Besmedresh. The Ponevezher Besmedresh with the Ponevezher Lines Tsedek, etc. Everyone is fighting for their own interests, not for their own benefit, God forbid, all quarrels are for the sake of heaven!" "It is the same in all the communities. Jewish groups are divided."[26]

'Jews' was neither a coherent national, racial, nor religious category in South Africa circa 1900.

Becoming Jews

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[25] A racialised slur for Yidn which will be discussed in depth in the next chapter
[26] *Ha-Kochav* 13/05/1904 (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 146)

With the rapidly increasing number of Jews in South Africa and a rise in antisemitism against the Yidn, there was a developing sense that the presents and futures of Anglo-Jews and Yidn were intertwined. They first found common cause in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) [27] in the Transvaal, when organising to gain the franchise in 1899. At a mixed mass meeting, Anglo-Jew, Harry Solomon said with much applause that "whether we be Russian or English, we are all Jews."[28]

In that process, that will be discussed in a later chapter, they established 'Jew' as a political category that transcended the religious, classed, linguistic, and cultural divisions. However, these divisions manifested themselves as hierarchies of power within Jewish community politics in which an Anglo-Jewish leadership would collude with the colonial state and transform Yidn into colonialists.

Between the 1880s and 1912, the major Jewish communal institutions were established along these hierarchies such as the Chevra Kadisha[29], the SAZF[30], and the SAJBD[31], with Anglo-Jews, dominating the leadership even as Yidn dominated the membership. Riva Krut gives a sense of the divisions at the time. She argues that "the development of the more prominent South African Jewish community structures was marked by conflict rather than co-operation" (Krut, 1985, p. 230).

However, my thesis will argue that it was the colonial experience and reactions to it which formed a common Jewish identity. Throughout this thesis, I will be analysing how a Jewish political subjectivity came to be constructed based on a political adherence to White supremacy.

While both Anglo-Jews and Yidn occupied the structural position of colonisers, Anglo-Jews occupied it comfortably and unquestionably. Yidn, however, were treated in complex and contradictory ways. On the one hand, the law treated them as White settlers when they were in the country – allowing them to buy property, vote, and not to be subject to legal racial discrimination. In the settler imagination, but also by state bureaucrats, there were increasing understandings of Yidn as Peruvians – racially degraded, barbaric, and requiring expulsion, something which carried into immigration law to almost class Yidn as Asiatic. Economically, Yidn occupied positions similar to immigrant Indians but

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[27] Dutch for 'South African Republic'. After the Anglo-Boer War it was renamed the Transvaal Colony (1902-1910). It consisted of the are now covered by the provinces of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and parts of the North-West

[28] *Standard and Diggers' Press* 29/06/1899 also see (Krut, 1985, p. 121)

[29] The Jewish Burial and Helping Hand Society which was amalgamated in 1888

[30] The SAZF was formed in 1898 from about 12 existing Zionist associations, though this number increased to almost 70 organisations by the time of its first conference in 1905

[31] The Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal in June 1903, and the Cape Board of Deputies was founded a few months later in December 1903. They both drew together most existing synagogue, shuls and some Zionist associations. They merged in 1912 to form the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

with the freedom from discrimination and so-called 'unskilled' labour, and opportunities of being legally regarded as White.

The intersection between the multiple Jewish histories that amalgamated into the history of South Africa and the economic, cultural and political concerns that dominated the period of state formation between 1902-1910 influenced and informed the process of how the South African Jewish community responded to this semi-racial ambiguity of the Yidn – choosing a path of becoming colonialists to show adherence to the colonial state and refashion the barbaric Peruvian into a 'proper' colonialist.

Though put under pressure from their structural position, from White settlers, and from within, the emerging collective that would become known as South African Jews did not have to become colonialists but they did. Embracing a 'White' identity in a White supremacist country, behaving as settlers in a settler colony, and believing, as colonialists do, that colonialism was justified and that they deserved to benefit from it – the South African Jewish community underwent a process of subject formation into a new colonialist political subjectivity.

This was not a straightforward process and so this thesis seeks to understand the multitude of ways in which this transformation occurred. Though the overarching focus, and context, is on how race operates in the formation of political subjectivities, I've addressed this transformation in the cultural, economic, linguistic and political spheres. The structure of this thesis, organized thematically rather than chronologically, aims to give the reader a sound grasp of the intertwining threads at work.

Chapter Outline

How Peruvians were associated with dirt and the racial implications of this will be explored in Chapter 2 – Dirty Subjects. This chapter will examine how Dirt functions as a tool of social control and the methods of internal patronage and policing undertaken used by the Anglo-Jews to transform Yidn from colonisers into colonialists. This chapter will argue that this process was two-fold. The first aspect was the close collusion of the Jewish communal institutions with the colonial state – sometimes acting almost as an extension of the state itself. The second aspect of this process was the internal enforcing of the social habits of Whiteness. Yidn were visually White but this chapter gives some clues as to how and what it meant to 'live White'

A more material investigation into the practical implications of 'living White' and supporting the colonial economy will be carried out in Chapter 3 – the Pedagogy of Racial Capitalism. This will analyse the positions of both Anglo-Jews and Yidn in the context of racial capitalism. Specifically looking at relationships of to the land and the racial labour hierarchy this chapter will argue that involvement in the colonial economy taught Yidn that the "profit, privilege, [and] usurpation" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], pp. 9-10) of settler life was legitimate.

Chapter 4 - Immigration Restrictions and the Politics of Language looks at how the politics of language shaped racial and ideological positions in South Africa. When the 1902 Immigration Act restricted immigration to those who could write in a European language, Yidn were temporariliy banned as Yiddish was argued to be a Asiatic language. Though quickly overturned in practice, a legal reclassification of Yiddish as European was undertaken by the newly formed, and central Jewish communal institution – the Cape forerunner of the SAJBD. This political project reveals a conscious alignment with 'Europeanness' – a category defined by superiority and racial violence. It also picks up the arguments from Chapter 2 as Yiddish became seen as a 'dirty language' and the Anglo and Zionist community attempted to eradicate it as a part of shaping Jews as colonialists.

Chapter 5 – Becoming Citizens' examines the next step in the lives of Yidn immigrants, naturalization and citizenship. This chapter argues that the organizational and ideological moves taken by the SAJBD and the SAZF to naturalize Jews and ensure their citizenship required more than just living as colonisers but also colluding with the colonial state and the ideological support for colonial racism. Similarly, as in Chapter 4, the category of European is examined as Anglo-Jews argue that Yidn, despite being a bit barbaric, are more worthy of citizenship in a White settler colony than the Indians who are recognized as more civilized.

The combination of these arguments will allow me to conclude that Jews, and especially Yidn, underwent a refashioning from colonisers into colonialists. Under the pressures of the political economy of global and local racial capitalism, a Jewish political subjectivity was moulded along colonial lines. The primary Jewish communal institutions colluded with the colonials state and lead this internal process by embracing the fundamental elements of settler colonialism – the dispossession, expulsion, and exploitation of the African population.

2) Dirty Subjects: bodies, sex and money in the construction of racial categories

They have made me into a trash heap, as they are pouring dirty water on me.

Rabbi Yirmeya, Talmud Yoma 87a, 450-550 CE

As Jews, they object to being put on the same level as the Coloured races. And those of their brethren who do not assist them in this endeavour, and who are willing to be classed with the Coloured races, they stigmatise as 'Peruvians'; and treat with scant courtesy[1]

Lionel Goldsmid 1905

Peruvians made the name of the White man stink in the nostrils of all men, and were moral pariahs.[2]

Revered Fagan 1899

Introduction

When reading through archive material and secondary history texts, dirt kept showing up. And it wasn't just the allergy-inducing dust of long untouched paper. Whether the source material was about illicit trading, bachelor life, speech patterns, immigration, living conditions, or bodily hygiene – direct or indirect allusions were made to dirt and 'dirty' as an adjective. I noted these but at first, I couldn't figure out why the reference to dirt kept jumping out. That was until I reread feminist, postcolonial English literature scholar Anne McClintock's seminal book *Imperial Leather*. In one of my favourite examples of theoretical analysis, she explains that "Nothing is inherently dirty; dirt expresses a relation to social value and social disorder… In Victorian culture, the iconography of dirt became deeply integrated in the policing and transgression of social boundaries" (McClintock, 1995, p. 153). After quickly reminding myself that I was working at the tail end of the Victorian period, all the dirt references started to make sense. 'Dirt' was a social category used by the Victorian middle classes to denote a lack of value, and to relegate certain practices and people as transgressive, undesirable, or disposable.

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[1] *SAJC* 05/05/1905
[2] *Transvaal Leader* 15/05/1899 cited in Shain (1994, p. 30)

Mary Douglass, who can be credited with founding the cultural analysis of dirt and taboos, argued that dirt, as 'matter out of place' implies the existence of a system which is being transgressed. "Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements" (Douglas, 2001 [1966], p. 36). Dirt, therefore, serves as a metaphor "making possible the formation of value judgements and facilitating the articulation of political positions as well as public opinion" (Green & Newell, 2018, p. 1).

In her book on how race, class and gender shape and are shaped by British Imperialism from the metropole to South Africa, McClintock saw how these value judgements functioned to racialize bodies and showed the theoretical links between 'dirty' work, 'dirty' money, and 'dirty' sex. For McClintock, "money, work, and sexuality were seen to relate to each other by negative analogy to the realm of racial difference and empire. … As the nineteenth century drew on, the iconography of dirt became a poetics of surveillance, deployed increasingly to police the boundaries between 'normal' sexuality and 'dirty' sexuality, 'normal' work' and 'dirty' work and 'normal' money and 'dirty' money" (McClintock, 1995, p. 154). In all three realms, the 'dirty' category transgresses or is degenerated within the control of male-dominated, heterosexual settler capitalist economies. Queer sex, 'interracial' sex, Sex work, illegal trading, thieves, domestic work, and mining, amongst other people and practices all became "figured increasingly in the iconography of 'pollution,' 'disorder,' 'plagues,' 'moral contagion,' and racial 'degeneration" (McClintock, 1995, p. 154).

This is important because as Foucault describes, the 19th century heralded a shift in the technologies of power. Not just interested in disciplining the individual as a body, the new technology of power, described by Foucault as 'biopower' was concerned with regulating the population as a whole social unit. The population became understood as a "political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], pp. 244-245). Treating the population as a biological problem, lead to an interest in regulating the public health of the population. This, in turn, leads to recasting enemies not as political adversaries but as threats to the health and purity of the population (Foucault, 2004 [1976], pp. 244, 256).

The political function of 'dirt', why it acts as a tool of racialisation, is because the State would justify its violence based on turning collectives of people into biological threats, into contagions, to the whole social body. This was done by employing racism to "justify the murderous function of the state" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 256). Though Foucault, was theorising based on the modern European state, this logic carries over into the settler colony.

When the colonial state, capitalist companies, or political groups implemented programs in the name of 'cleaning' ('disinfecting', 'purifying' etc) these usually resulted in acts of racial terror and violence.

Dirt and cleanliness can be seen in the language around forced removals in 1902 and 1910 and beyond, in racial segregation, strip showers, rape, exploitation, xenophobia and general physical violence. 'Dirt' is the label that "renders this violence palpable" and "makes colonialism's victims responsible for its effects" argues Baderoon (2018, pp. 258,264) in an article on dirt and the production of disposability in South Africa since slavery. She uses the lens of dirt to make visible the scale and impact of how certain people were deemed surplus and expendable and subjected to naturalised violence. In South Africa, these 'cleanliness' and 'dirt' analogies were one of the methods used to establish racial categories and hierarchies both socially and administratively.

The dirt narrative is applied to Jews

Jews in Christian Europe were often figured and were racialised by analogy to the category of dirty money. The Shylock figure of Jews as greedy people who make their money through extortion and usury was common at this time and the 'justification' of lots of antisemitism. Jews were also often called by the moniker 'dirty Jew', something so naturalised through time and space that being called a 'dirty Jew' is one of the only direct experiences of antisemitism I've personally encountered. In discussing the Dreyfus affair[3] in late 19th century France, Slabodsky explains that "[Dreyfus] was a sacrificial 'victim' of a persuasive and pervasive 'obsession' of the society for the 'dirty Jew' who was allegedly polluting the social fabric and threatening the purity of the nation" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 97).

The Yidn in South Africa were also framed as 'dirty Jews' and the metaphor extended to all these categories – sex, money and work. In this chapter, I will be examining how 'dirt' metaphors were used to racialise Yidn and how the attempts to avoid the violence that comes with being classed as dirty lead to an adoption of colonial subjectivities. Yidn were faced with the social condemnation and threat of violence but many of its harsher results, which were enacted on other groups, weren't enacted on them. Why is this? This chapter will argue that the combination of the project of 'White unity' and idea of racial assimilation, meant that Yidn were seen, sometimes not the immigrants themselves but their children, as cleanable, assimilable members of the 'White race'. Yidn were 'curable barbarians' whereas those categorised as Asiatic, Cape Malay/Coloured and Black were not.

The racialisation through dirt, and the potential assimilability of the Yidn, wasn't just imposed from the outside. Jews were not, to use Mamdani's terms, "objects or recipients in a one-way process" but

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[3] Dreyfuss was an assimilated Jewish officer in the French army in the late nineteenth century who was accused and convicted of treason with popular and presidential support despite the investigations finding him not guilty. It's a central moment of Jewish history in France and Europe which reveals how despite emancipation (being recognised citizens only a hundred years earlier) and assimilation, Jews were still considered seditious and deceptive foreigners. Poet Emile Zola lead the intellectual defence with a poem J'accuse, which Slabodsky draws from

were "human actors with not only knowledge and ability, but volition" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 82). It took a large amount of cultural exchange by Yidn, and political organising by the Jewish institutions and organisations to rid themselves of the dirt and avoid the racialised state violence that comes with it. I say avoid, because they didn't work to end racialised violence but rather to temporarily avoid its effects on themselves by accepting White supremacist ideology, by becoming colonialists.

These forms of antisemitism was avoided by proving themselves valued members of White society.[4] The Jewish communal institutions adopted the practices of the modern colonial state which utilised "internal racism of permanent purification" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 62). Through various campaigns and processes of policing and patronage, they worked tirelessly to 'Whiten' Jews in general and Yidn in particular. As Mamdani points out in his discussion on the practice of 'Nativism' and the problems with terms like Romanisation or Arabisation, "because the final product partakes of both, no matter how unequally, and does not quite resemble either, the process is also identity-transforming of both sides" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 82). In the process of Yidn adopting White colonial subjectivities process, Whiteness is changed as well, from an Anglo-Boer alliance to a multi-ethnic White racial identity that allowed President Smuts to say in 1919 that South Africa "will be of composite character, including Dutch, English, German and Jews and whatever White nationality seeks refuge. All are welcome" (Magubane, 1996, p. 62).

In this chapter, I will show how the iconography of dirt was applied to Yidn and the responses by the Jewish community to either sweep the dirt under the carpet or wash it off. This will provide a contextual backdrop for the rest of the thesis and some of the conceptual tools that will be useful in other sectionsI'll begin with the image of the 'Peruvian', a racialised slur for 'dirty Jews' and use it to provide both a contextual framework for the rest of the chapter and the basis for a theoretical discussion on assimilation both as a possibility for Jews and a threat to racist communities. I will then examine how the bodies and living conditions of Yidn were constructed as dirty and subjected to repeated calls for state violence – mostly deportation, humiliation, ghettoization and forced removals, and I will posit some reasons as to why none of these were carried out on Yidn. In the discourse around dirty living conditions, references were made to promiscuity and sex work, and so I will move to discuss how monogamy and marital relations were constituent parts of the patriarchal colonial ideology that were adopted by Jewish institutions.

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[4] There were other manifestations of antisemitism that did not relate to dirt narratives but rather to conspiracies of secretive global Jewish networks, tropes of Jewish greed, Jewish sedition, and a few others. See the works of Milton Shain for an analysis of how these functioned in South Africa

Most of this section focuses on sex work and what was called the 'White slave trade'. The image of Jews as pimps and traffickers functioned as a tool of racializing Jews as threats to White society and the response by the Jewish organisations to Jewish women who were sex workers or victims of trafficking introduces the dual-pronged approach of policing and patronage that were used by elite Jews disassociate themselves from threats to their racial position in the colonial context. This approach is also clearly seen in the response to accusations that Yidn led the liquor trade. My discussions on dirty money, the prime example of where the dirt iconography lead to state violence for Yidn, will highlight how this response bolstered the institutional alliance and ideological similarity between Jewish institutions and the colonial state. Looking through the lense of dirt, the negation of value, this chapter will provide an in-depth assessment of how antisemitism and the response to antisemitism functioned in the context of a racialised project of state formation, the consolidation of racial categories and hierarchies and the adoption of colonial ideology and practice. I will conclude with a reflection on the failures of assimilation and, for the sake of humanity, a call to "to break with any aspirational alliance with the civilised West" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 138).

Peruvians and assimilation

Concerning Yidn, the iconography of dirt was tied up in the designation of undesirable Yidn as 'Peruvians', *'peruvniks'* in Yiddish. A term of uncertain origin, it seems to have come from an acronym of the Polish and Russian Union[5], a Jewish landsmanshaftn[6] in Kimberly in the early 1880s. Another possibility is that it comes from an association of poor Jews with Baron de Hirshe's immigration settlement scheme of Yidn in Argentina who later moved to South Africa (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 45). Either way, Peruvian Jews were consciously linked to Russian and Polish Jews in the public imagination and the term was loaded with negative connotations.

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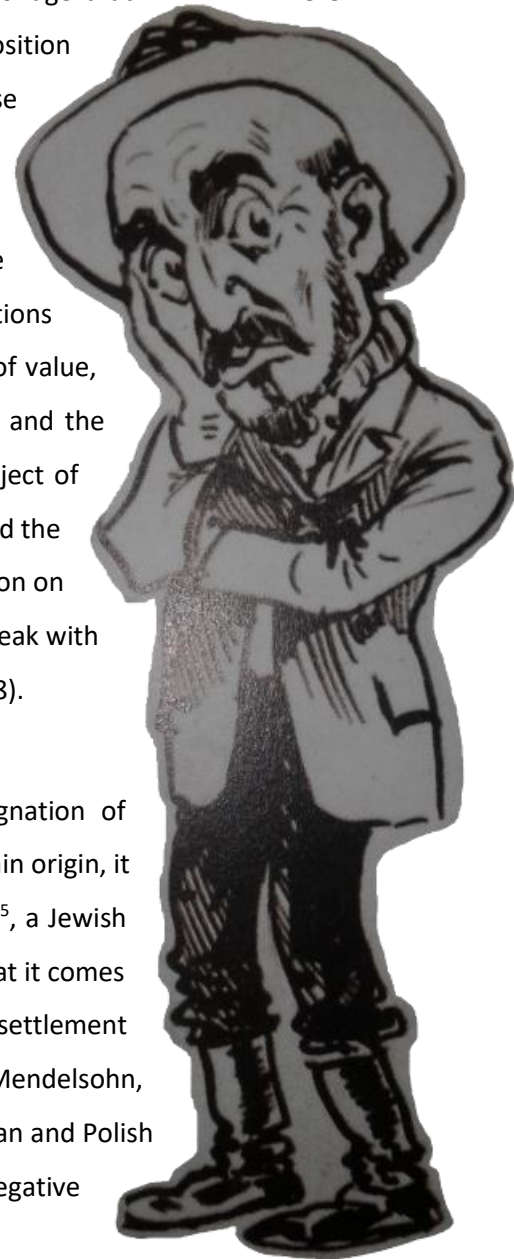
[5] This is more clear through the Yiddish version of the word which would have been written, though in Yiddish characters which doesn't include vowels, P-R-niks. The Polish and Russian union would have also have started P-R-_. The suffix -niks indicates membership. So *PeRuvNiks* could have easily meant the members of the Polish and Russian Union. Why a word whose origin is in Yiddish became anglicised and used by English Christians is unknown

[6] mutual aid society

Peruvians are often not only spoken about but described in great if pejorative, detail and an accompanied by a distinct visual language (see Figure 1).[7] The first known description of 'Peruvians', is from the Johannesburg Times in 1896. Peruvians are referred to as a

> "slovenly, unkempt and generally unwashed edition of the wandering Jew. … He is a pariah among his own people and among the gentiles. If some restraint is not imposed upon the operation of these unwashed peregrinators it might be necessary to consider some legislative means for the isolation of the species."[8]

Figure 1: A sketch of a 'Peruvian', illustrator unknown, 1909. Source: Shain, 1991, pp. 160-163

The Star followed on in 1897 saying that

> "There is in our midst a community of some four or five thousand Peruvians. They execrate law and order … and as for cleanliness, well, that is an unknown quantity among them. The sooner they are sent out of the town the better for all concerned."[9]

A 1903 article in the South African Review highlights an often-included physical dimension to the slur:

> "Look at the hang-dog faces, the bowed shoulders, and the shambling walk of specimens of the race who are landing here, and ask whether they are 'men'. Of course, they are not. … to make self-respecting citizens out of the great bulk of them … is impossible …."[10]

Similar descriptions are picked up and used across the country throughout the rest of the decade and into the 1900s by other newspapers, politicians and state officials in which these tropes of dirty, deformed, unlawful, immoral, and a threat to society become intimately intertwined with the undesirable alien Yidn.[11]

To be classed as a Peruvian was not only to be classed as undesirable but also to be unassimilable. To borrow from Memmi, Peruvians were seen as 'incurable barbarians', an affront to civilization, and in the settler-colonial context, an affront to Whiteness. The barbarian, in Foucault's terms "appears only when civilization already exists, and only when he is in conflict with it. He does not make his entrance

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[7] This image of a Peruvian is from a the poster of a theatre production by London playwright Stephen Black in which a Peruvian goes through a metamorphosis into an 'opulent Parktown financier' through dishonest financial dealings. It was shown in Johannesburg for 65 consecutive nights in 1909 despite protest from local Yidn (Shain, 1991, pp. 160-163). The illustrator is unknown.

[8] *Johannesburg Times* 01/04/1896 cited in Shain (1994, p. 27)

[9] *The Star* 10/07/1897 cited in Shain (1994, pp. 30-31)

[10] *The South African Review* 06/02/1903 cited in Shain (1994, p. 50)

[11] See the chapter "Peddlers, Peruvians, and Plutocrats, 1886-1902" in Shain (1994)

into history by founding a society, but by penetrating a civilization, setting it ablaze and destroying it" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 195).

The Peruvian is the image of the Jewish barbarian in South Africa. Foucault, when referring to 'penetrating a civilisation' and 'destroying it' refers to his analysis of the modern mode of biopolitics that seeks to regulate the social body. The descriptions of the Peruvian above draw on the imagery of infiltration and threats to the social body – in terms of health, law and order, citizenship. Later quotes will draw on more examples of the Peruvian as a barbaric threat to civilisation.

In an era of shifting racial classifications, having pale skin, was not sufficient to be classed as 'White', one had also to be 'civilized'. "Race was said to be about a hierarchy of civilization" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 74). Although Mamdani meant this term of how discrimination based on race was carried out on civilizational grounds, it also holds for how civilizational criteria were the conditions of being classed into a racial category. And in the colonial context 'cleanliness' was a constituent part of that criteria (Jackson & Robins, 2018, p. 79).

Santiago Slabodsky, Argentinian decolonial Jewish scholar working in the USA, shows in the global context, Jews have been one amongst the many barbaric people in the eyes of civilized Europe. For example, Voltaire, echoing both English and French liberals, referred to Jews as "ritual murderers, parasitic vagabonds, anarchical agitators, and sexually depraved" and said to Jews that

> *"you seem to me to be the maddest of the lot, the K******, the Hottentots, and the N****** of Guinea are much more reasonable and more honest people than you…. You have surpassed all nations in impertinent fables, in bad conduct and in barbarism. You deserve to be punished for this is your destiny."[12]*

Slabodsky develops an analysis of the European history of the construction of the barbarian. Sometimes the barbarian was classed as incorrigible and was to be candidates of annihilation through expulsion or genocide. However, others were thought of as 'primitive' and, under threat of annihilation, forced to assimilate through conversion, civilization, or development. Assimilation, however, is never complete, and the 'barbaric' difference gets used for political control, surveillance and to maintain an exploited population (Slabodsky, 2014, pp. 25-26).

Slabodsky gives a sense of this historical process within Europe which gets spread throughout European colonial empires. "The project of modernity from the Renaissance to Colonialism to Enlightenment to Fascism is responsible of the categorization of the portrayal of Jews as barbarians.

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[12] Cited in Slabodsky (2014, p. 60)

Many times, they were dismissed as extreme barbarians leading subversions to defeat imperial designs; in others counted occasions this barbarism was presupposed as the Jewish starting-point when offered short-lived candidacies to assimilation in interchange for their collaboration in the execution of the imperial designs. Between the two poles, the narrative of Jewish barbarism became central in the construction of the modern narrative" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 60).

With the emancipation of Jews starting from the 1791[13] in Western Europe, Jewish groups latched onto the possibility of assimilation. This was never complete and afterwards, antisemitism kept appearing – attacking western European assimilated Jews for their infiltrating similarity and Yidn for their foreign difference.[14]

This logic had a huge effect on Western European Jews. Avoiding racism by adopting the public culture of the host nation meant different things in different countries, but it highlights one of the key differences between anti-Jewish and anti-Black racism. The 'European' Jew is noticed only by actions and words, not from a glace. The Nazi party would not have required our ancestors to wear yellow stars if we were easy to differentiate. Some might think but the nose! Racism between groups with pale skins often attempts to construct a visual difference but fails.

Fanon reflects on this as well in Black Skins, White Masks, "the Jew can be unknown in his Jewishness. He is not 'wholly what he is. One hopes, one waits. His actions, his behaviour are the final determinant. He is a White man, and, apart from some rather debatable characteristics, he can sometimes go unnoticed . . . One has only not to be a nigger. Granted, the Jews are harassed-what am I thinking of? They are hunted down, exterminated, cremated. The Jew is disliked from the moment he is tracked down. But in my case, everything takes on a new guise. I am given no chance" (Fanon, 2008 [1952], p. 87).

This difference is only compounded in South Africa. Within Europe, racism against those who 'looked' alike was central to its functioning – Jews, Irish, the Roma. But in African settler colonies, the structuring racial hierarchy was constructed between the European settler and African native. A combination of this fundamental difference and the different context of public culture meant that the Anglo Jewish elite in South Africa continued their emancipation pact inspired politics – moulding

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[13] 1791 refers to the date of emancipation in France which occurred simultaneously as the emancipation of Africans, and both come with socio-political limitations. Germany hadn't been formed as a country, but most of the states which became Germany emancipated Jews between 1808-1828. The UK followed suit in 1858

[14] Despite emancipation, Jewish barbarism remains active in the political imagination and is revealed in moments such as the Dreyffus affair, the immigration restrictions in the early 1900s and the 1930s and, most notably, in the Holocaust and the general European indifference to Jewish suffering. In the present these same tropes are being raised again in much of Europe and the USA – targeting both Jewish difference and Jewish infiltration.

actions and thoughts in public to fit within the framework of White supremacy. Many Yidn as well, uncomfortable with being called dirty, and a continued threat of persecution in a country meant to be "liberation both for herself and for her children" (Slovo, 1989, p. 12), also made a concerted effort to assimilate into Whiteness in the public sphere.

As Foucault says, the barbarian only appears "when he is in conflict with it [civilization]" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 195). Conscious of this and that "the Jew can be unknown in his Jewishness" (Fanon, 2008 [1952], p. 87). but also proudly Jewish, elite Jews lead a process of assimilation into colonial subjectivities – creating and convincing the White elite that Jews could be a constituent part of the White race and not a subject race. And though the elite, assimilated Anglo Jews were equally disgusted with the 'Peruvians' and made liberal use of the slur as well, they were concerned that the 'stench' of the Peruvians would land on them as well. As the newspaper, *Transvaal Leader*, pointed out in 1899 "low-class Jews" were spoiling the name of "clean-minded and honourable Jews."[15] They bought into the late 19th and 20th-century colonial project which was the management of difference, a project "to shape the subjectivities of the colonized population and not simply of their elites" (Mamdani, 2012, p. 8).

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[15] *Transvaal Leader* 02/05/1899 cited in (Shain, 1994, p. 29)

Bodies

The visual language used to describe 'Peruvians', and to class, all Yidn as 'Peruvian' found great purchase in The Owl, an English speaking, Cape Town based newspaper with a circulation of 16 000 (Shain, 1994, p. 165 n.47). The first comic I analyse was published with the title '*Pauper Peruvians or the Whitening of South Africa'* in 1903 (see Figure 2). In six frames it depicts the immigration of Yidn. Male Yidn are shown running from forced removals in Russia and Roumania and getting financial

THE OWL.

PAUPER "PERUVIANS" OR THE WHITENING OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Roumanians & Russians turn out the poor Jews wholesale.

They are shipped by philanthropic societies to London, where passes are given them to South Africa.

On the steamers they are anything but popular.

One enterprising "Schnorrer" utilised the sheets supplied him by the C.U.S.S. to make himself a suit of clothes

At Capetown they are dumped on shore with the greatest expedition.

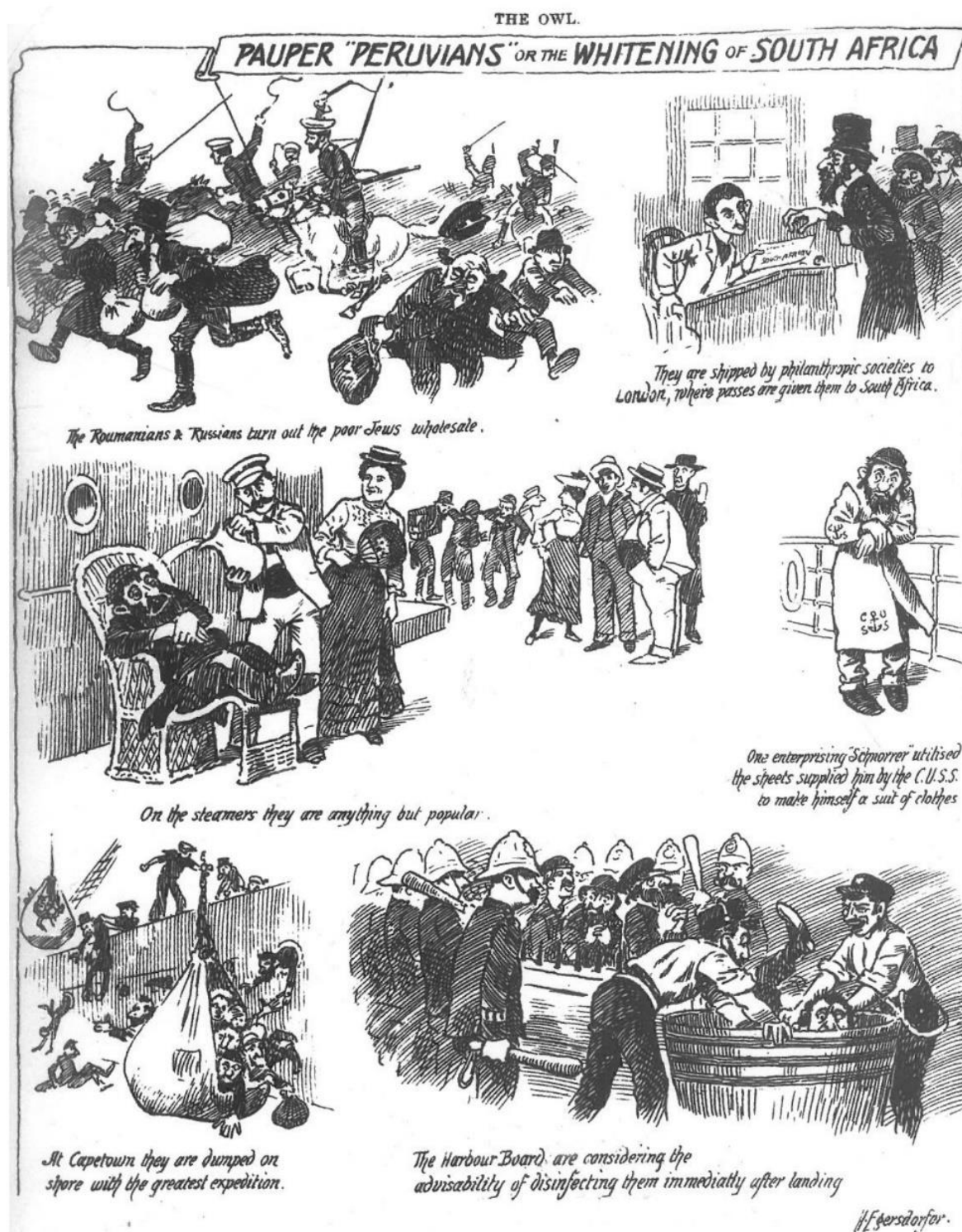The Harbour Board are considering the advisability of disinfecting them immediatly after landing

Figure 2: "Pauper 'Peruvians' or the Whitening of South Africa". Comic in *The Owl* 13/02/1903 Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 47)

assistance in London. Then aboard the ship, they are depicted and described as paupers, unkempt, enterprising, schnorrer (parasitic), suspicious, and unpopular. In the next panel, they are shown being thrown off board like goods. In the final image, the cartoon suggests that "the Harbour Board are considering the advisability of disinfecting them immediately after landing" and shows armed guards and laughing dock workers forcefully washing a line of scared Yidn.

In the second cartoon, the Yidn are depicted in the same antisemitic manner. Besides their appearance, they are all shown as either scratching or surreptitiously handing over money. This 1904 cartoon is titled '*The Coming of the Scum*' (see Figure 3) and derisively comments that so many Yidn are immigrating that *The Owl* will soon have to be published in Yiddish (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 63).

These comics both try to stick the accusation of 'dirt' to these immigrant Jews in a variety of ways with the clear intention of stemming their immigration. Published in 1902 and 1903, they are in direct conversation with the debates surrounding the 1902 Immigration Act. Deeply concerned with the management of racial difference the Immigration Act and these comics use the iconography of dirt to class Yidn as beings without social value.

Figure 3: 'The Coming of the Scum'. Comic in The Owl *06/05/1904. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 63*

These links are made in a few ways. First is through the body itself. In the visual imagery of 'The Coming of the Scum,' the eye is drawn to the arm contortions and hand motions meant to indicate scratching and dirty bodies. This is also dramatically picked up in the climax of the 'Pauper Peruvians' through the forced 'cleaning' of immigrant Yidn. This cleaning line, with the strict, violently threatening posture and amusement of the guards, is reminiscent of so many experiences of forcing people into lines to undergo a humiliating and ultimately dehumanising experience. Importantly, no such practice was ever carried out on Jews in South Africa but it was forced onto thousands of Black migrant mine workers in the Transvaal who had to undergo 'cleaning' processes on arrival to Johannesburg under threat of expulsion and violence. The accusation of 'dirty bodies'

and its accompanying violent, humiliating 'cleaning', was a fact of life for many Africans in colonial cities and mines. But for Yidn it was a symbolic threat without any actions. Ultimately, it wasn't in the interests of racial capitalism to act this out on Jews. The potential of Yidn assimilation and the role of colonialist Jews saved poor, racialised immigrant Jews from these futures. But the threat wasn't forgotten. The Jewish community would structure its actions to prevent these threats from becoming reality.

Living spaces

There is another similar 'dirt' related case in which a Yidn were 'merely' threatened with violence that was carried out on other people. As the caption to the final panel in the 'Pauper Peruvians' explains, symbolic dirt isn't just cleaned but disinfected. 'Dirt' and 'disease' ridden are close symbolisms. Those classed as dirty were also seen not only as a demographic and genetic threat but also a moral contagion. This was based on a miasma theory of disease from the 1800s "premised on the reciprocity of moral and bodily decay with environmental contamination" (Jackson & Robins, 2018, p. 77).

Yidn neighbourhoods in Cape Town and Johannesburg were frequently described as disease-ridden and risks to the national health. An editorial in *The Star* (1897) links dirt and disease directly and called for forced removals of Yidn neighbourhoods,

> *"There is an evil in Johannesburg … which … every citizen should aid in representing to the responsible authorities, with a view to its eradication, or at any rate amelioration. There is in our midst a community of some four or five thousand Peruvians. They execrate law and order … and as for cleanliness, well, that is an unknown quantity among them. The sooner they are sent out of the town the better for all concerned. Failing this … the town may be visited with an epidemic."[16]*

Similar language is used to talk about District 6, but there Jews were only one of many 'dirtified' people. A social 'racial mixing' that will be discussed in the next chapter. The District Surgeon Dr Claude-Wright reported in the Public Health and Sanitation Reports to the Cape Parliament of 1901 (with similar views expressed in 1897 and 1902):

> *"Dwellings of the Jewish community are much overcrowded and ill-ventilated. These people herd together and overcrowd to an alarming extent. They are exceedingly afraid of fresh air and ventilation and close every aperture in their rooms, notably when they have any illness. Their mode of living is objectionable and dirty in the extreme. They seldom or ever bath and their bodies are covered with vermin. They, therefore, remain a sickly crowd, entirely*

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[16] *The Star* 10/07/1897 cited in Shain & Mendelsohn (2008, p. 46)

oblivious to decency and sanitation. Many of their habitations are unfit to be used as such, and as they are large vendors of food, some serious notice should be taken of their mode of life and preparation and storage of articles of food. … I cannot too strongly denounce the state of affairs, and express my emphatic opinion that strict supervision should be given this very undesirable class, look at from any point of political or sanitary economy you like."[17]

These quotes reveal an intense fascination with describing dirt and using it as evidence to lead to an argument, whether for forced removals or 'strict supervision'. There is also an obvious point in which the District Surgeon is not saying that *this location* is a health risk but that *these people* are a health risk. Speaking about these exact types of report, Otter concludes that "their reports reinforced the notion that only degenerates could possibly inhabit such areas in comfort" (Otter, 2002, p. 7). And being classed as dirty, excessive, risky and degenerate meant that any state violence against you was not excessive or against liberal principles but was your fault.

However, there are no records of any state or popular action to enact a South African pogrom on Yidn. But, similar to the forced 'cleaning', these exact arguments were presented and then mobilised in the same era to forcefully remove Africans from urban towns to 'native locations' on the town's peripheries. During an epidemic, seven thousand Africans were removed from Cape Town to former sewage farm Uitvlugt (later renamed Ndabeni) in 1901, a few thousand from Port Elizabeth in 1901-1902 and a further few thousand from Johannesburg to Klipspruit in 1906, which was also formally a sewage farm (Swanson, 1977, pp. 388,393,400). The Indian location in Braamfontein was also purposively burnt down in 1904 (Kallaway & Pearson, 1986, pp. 32-33). Despite the facts that fewer Africans were getting sick than any other racial group, and that the disease infection points were tracked to White-owned workplaces rather than any residential areas, the history of 'dirt' discourse focused public and state attention on Africans in particular (Swanson, 1977, pp. 394,402).

These forced removals were done under the ambit of Public Health legislation which, in the emergency moment of the Bubonic Plague scare, allowed the Liberal Cape government officials and politicians to enact a policy of racial segregation that they had been preparing for but hadn't figured out how to enact (Swanson, 1977, p. 393). The discourse of filthy bodies and epidemic threats have had a well-documented history throughout the Apartheid period. And the same discourse is used in gentrification projects today. Of course, besides being a powerful symbolic metaphor it is only one of the justifications for forced removals. There are distinct reasons of political economy for why certain racialised groups in specific places had violence enacted on them and others did not. The interests of urban and farm capitalists, urban property developers and 'slum lords', the state's financial interest

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[17] *Cape of Good Hope, Report on Public Health for the Year 1902* cited in Shain (2004, pp. 240-241)

and middle-class sensibilities all had different and competing interests but soon after the Public Health legislation was used to enact forced removals, these interests coalesced into policies of urban segregation based on racial groups. Colonial ideology was deeming some people as 'clean' and valuable and others as 'dirty' and 'disposable.'

Looking again at how this discourse affected Yidn, an article in The Star (1897) title "Awful Hovels: Peruvian Uncleanliness" detailed the squalid conditions of Diagonal street in Johannesburg and called for its eradication. Perhaps to avoid claims of antisemitism, the author tells readers that the Peruvians "are despised by the better class of Jews almost as much as they are by the rest of mankind."[18] Lionel Goldsmid, the editor of the South African Jewish Chronicle (SAJC) was one of these 'better class of Jew'. In an editorial a few years later he extolled the virtues of cleanliness. Referring to debates about immigration tests, Goldsmid agrees with a London based writer that he would make

> *"test of admission not wealth, for that would admit the anarchist and forger; but cleanliness.' … According to modern notions, dirt and epidemic disease are closely connected, and the man who lives in a state of habitual uncleanliness may become a danger to his neighbours."* [19]

Goldsmid, an active opponent of antisemitism and member of various Zionist organisations, was surely aware of the antisemitism in The Owl and by the District Surgeon. Did he agree with them? Was he making a rhetorical point? Did he perhaps believe that the state would not act on such stereotypes? Either way, he attempted a defence of the 'dirty Yidn', arguing that though they cannot be justified, they can be excused because cleanliness is expensive to maintain and argued that

> *"Poor and clean is a combination not often found even among the English and French peoples … That it is also far from common among the Jews is a great pity, but hardly to be wondered at. If only they would become clean when they grow rich!"[20]*

Seeking to excuse any claims of the 'dirty Jew' trope, and make an equivalence with other 'civilised' nations whilst also upholding the ideology of cleanliness, Goldsmid reveals his underlying bias against Yidn. As an established member of the South African Jewry, he is making a strange claim against Yidn assimilability. That perhaps even despite upwardly class mobility, Yidn were in their nature not fit for the virtues of Whiteness.

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[18] *The Star* 10/07/1897 cited in (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 46)
[19] *SAJC* 21/07/1905
[20] *SAJC* 21/07/1905

How cleanliness and Whiteness are theoretically linked is demonstrated by McClintock who showcases an 1899 advert by Pear's Soap in McClure's Magazine. It advertised that "the first step to lightening THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN is through teaching the virtue of cleanliness. PEARS' SOAP is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances." McClintock theorised that "Domestic hygiene, the ad implies, purifies and preserves the White male body from contamination in the threshold zone of empire. At the same time, the domestic commodity guarantees White male power, the genuflection of Africans and rule of the world" (McClintock, 1995, p. 32).

This purification, whether enforced violently or imposed ideologically is what we have seen in the preceding chapter. Yidn immigrants were seen as failing the 'Whiteness test' both on their bodies and in the domestic sphere. However, bodily cleanliness and disease were only one axis of how the dirt metaphor functioned.

Sex

In the Public Health and Sanitation Reports.The District Surgeon described how Yidn "cohabit promiscuously."[21] Through statements like this 'Dirty' Sex is brought directly into conversation with 'dirty' bodies and living conditions. In the male-dominated, heterosexual economy, only monogamous marital relations were seen as 'clean' sex that had value (McClintock, 1995, p. 154). Promiscuous sex and promiscuous living were seen as dirty. Its also worth remembering that before 1906/7, when these reports are written, the Yidn population in South Africa was still vastly majority men[22], and it is possible to read that 'promiscuous' living as hinting towards at gay relationships – another form of sexually seen as 'dirty' and socially transgressive.

Claiming that Yidn men weren't monogamous, besides playing into the 'dirty' sex trope, was also a highly racialized claim. Similar to soap and cleanliness, the virtues of Whiteness extended into the domestic sphere through sex. Colonial ideology naturalized promiscuity, 'prostitution' and homosexuality as central to colonized societies. These were then used to define colonized societies as "ripe for colonial governance, unworthy of self-rule, and inferior to their colonial masters" (Levine, 2003, p. 325).

As both a disclaimer and personal reflection, I found this section particularly powerful and fraught with difficulties. It was written not even a month after the urgent and radical mobilisations against rape culture that were ignited by the rape and murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana. Writing this section as

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[21] *Cape of Good Hope, Report on Public Health for the Year 1897* cited in (Shain, et al., 2004, p. 238)
[22] Of course, Yidn women had been immigrating to South Africa as long as Yidn men had been. But it was only from 1904/5 that women started immigrating in significant numbers. Adopting cisnormative statistics, in 1906 there was a 59/41 men/women split in immigration – much more equal than any other immigrating group

a White cis man in a culture deeply inscribed with rape culture, but also writing as an asexual for whom sexual desire is in many ways' unknowable, has shaped my relationship to the subject. I think, through immense support by feminist scholars and friends I think I managed to do justice to the arguments within but my analysis will reflect resulting limitations.

The *SAJC*, in a long-running series of debates about whether Yidn should qualify for the franchise in the new (Union) South Africa which will be analyzed in more depth in a section in the Becoming Citizens chapter, argued that "the [Russian] Jew, however Oriental they may be in other respects, shares with the Western races that characteristic which forms the real distinctions between them and Oriental races – they are monogamous, while all Eastern races … are polygamous."[23] This editorial was challenged by a letter under the pseudonym "a disgusted Jew" who raised the point that not all Eastern nations are polygamous but also that "there is no prohibition against polygamy even amongst the Chosen People … It is only within comparatively recent times that we have become 'civilised' in this direction, and, in point of fact, we have merely adopted a Western convention."[24]

This attempt by the 'disgusted Jew' to blur the lines between 'European' and 'Oriental' also recognized that indeed a part of being seen as 'civilized' was the practice of monogamy. All other sexual and marital relations were treated as signs of uncivilized society. 'Sexual perversions' were one of the central aspects of barbarism that was defined in direct opposition to civilization (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 25). The classification of 'dirty sex' – in this case, polygamy, promiscuousness, and queer sex – was thus used to police the boundaries of heterosexual marital procreative sex, but it was also used as a racial marker. The threat of what would have been seen as a 'racial devaluation' was used to control sexual desire. And the control of sexual desire was used to cement racial categories. This is no-where more evident in the settler attempts to prevent sex and desire across racial lines, something which in their minds "threatened the Eurocentric order of racial hierarchy (Sherman & Steyn, 2009, p. 56).

Sexual racial mixing

Sherman and Steyn (2009, p. 62) demonstrate that anti-miscegenation rhetoric from colonialists is not only about 'preserving the purity of the White race' but was also "strategically used to foster the underlying political desire to establish race and gender hierarchies in law". This comes from a long history in the Cape stretching from the beginning of slavery in which "the idea of race … draws extensively on the creation of sexual difference and sexual violence" (Gqola, 2015, p. 37). From the VOC era Slave Lodge, in which slave women were 'rented out' by the guards in what has been called Cape Town's first brothel, to the late Apartheid period in which no White man was ever charged for

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[23] *SAJC* 11/05/1906
[24] *SAJC* 01/06/1906

the rape of a Black women, White men colonisers were granted sexual license to Black women's bodies. On the other hand, the imperial construction of White women as victims, and Black men as sexual predators, meant that Black men were frequently charged, both socially and legally, with the rape of White women while White women's sexual practices were strictly controlled by White men. No one was charged with the rape of Black women (Baderoon, 2014, pp. 85-87, 95) (Gqola, 2015, pp. 4, 42-43, 52). This colonial "control over sex was fundamental to imperial definition of race" and the maintenance of racial boundaries (Baderoon, 2014, pp. 85-86).

At the turn of the 20th century in the Cape, Orange Free State and the Transvaal, legal restrictions on mixed-race relationships, written with the assumption of heterosexual sex, only applied to cases when the woman was European. The particular restriction on 'European' women comes from the biological reductionist associated between 'women', childbirth and racial population growth. Devereux explains that "if the honour of a White woman was sacred, it was because what was at stake was not only the White women as a 'civilizer', but the womb of the imperial mother as the site for regeneration" (Devereux, 2000, p. 17). Furthermore, in the Cape and Orange Free State, the law also only applied to cases when the union was 'for the purposes of gain' – an indication of sex work. This is seen clearly in the 1902 'Betting Houses, Gaming Houses and Brothels Suppression Act' in the Cape Colony which made it an offence for a "Black man to have sexual intercourse with a White [sex worker]" (Van Onselen, 2000, p. 119) reflecting White men's patriarchal and racist anxieties about the "the loss of control over the bodies of White women" (Gqola, 2015, pp. 44-45).

Dirty Sex, Dirty Work

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, sex workers were seen by the colonial elite as a threat to White male domination of both the family and the state. Women were classed as the property of men but sex workers, who sold sexual services that men expected to receive for free, claimed their bodies as their own and thus were seen as transgressive to patriarchal domination. Anti sex work laws and rhetoric have often stemmed not only from the 'threat' to monogamy and the family but also from the ability of sex workers to independently accumulate money (McClintock, 1992, pp. 78-79). The ability of single women to have sex, earn a wage, buy property, and move around the city independently of men disturbed patriarchal control over the family and the economy.

This was doubly true in British colonies concerning Black sex workers. Using research done by Louise White on sex workers in colonial Kenya, McClintock shows that sex workers were some of the first Black urban residents and property owners, who created community mutual aid networks, and passed their wealth to other women rather than their male relatives. Transgressing not only gendered but also racialized distributions of money, sexual power and property, the colonial state objected less to

sex work in itself, and more to the independence that Black sex workers could achieve. Thus sex workers became associated within a "discourse on racial degeneration" and threatening to the "fiscal and libidinal economy of the imperial state" (McClintock, 1992, pp. 81,84).

These combined forms of 'dirty sex', mixed-race and linked to sex work were used, similarly to the charge of 'promiscuous living' as a tool to indicate social value and condemnation. When making claims about the 'dirtiness' of Yidn living spaces in Johannesburg and calling for their eradication, the above-cited article, 'Awful Hovels: Peruvian Uncleanliness', reports that "The lowest class of Hottentot and K*** woman are to be seen going in and out of these paces with an air of ownership."[25]

Playing into tropes and euphemisms of sex work, what seems to be in focus is the independence and confidence displayed by these women. In the mind of the colonial elite, the thought that Black women, especially what they regarded as the 'lowest class' of women, could exist in the city with 'an air of ownership' was an affront to their view on power hierarchies and fits neatly into McClintock's analysis of the objections to sex work. However, this sentence is extracted from an article whose purpose was to degrade Yidn, implying that only a group with weak racially degenerate men could 'allow' women to move around with 'an air of ownership.' Baderoon, drawing from Stoler's work on colonial archives explains that "sexual relations with enslaved and indigenous people posed an intolerable threat not only to the class but also the racial status of Whites" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 86). Much like the earlier example of promiscuous living, this article makes interchangeable claims. The threat of racial devaluation and eradication are used against sex workers and Black women's independence in general. And demonising their independence is used to solidify racial hierarchies and, in this case, to discursively indicate that Yidn are racially degenerate. Tropes of dirty sex were used to police racial and gendered boundaries.

The White slave trade

Cognisant of how these tropes were used as tools of racial degradation and the threat that this posed to the Jewish community at large, institutions such as the Jewish Board of Deputies were extremely concerned to avoid any claims that Jews were involved in 'dirty sex'. In particular, Jewish involvement in the 'White slave trade' was quietly but effectively covered up.

In the late 1800s, the term 'White slave trade' indicated the coercion of White women into trafficking in the sex industry.[26] This was facilitated through international networks stretching from inland Europe throughout the Atlantic world. However, some feminist scholars which are cited below have argued

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[25] *The Star* 10/07/1897 cited in (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 46)
[26] The term 'trafficking in the sex industry' should be used rather than 'sex trafficking' as an recognition of sex work as work and on request from sex worker alliances (Gerasimov, 2020)

that the widespread attention to the 'White slave trade' was more sensationalist than accurate. They argue that though there were criminal networks of forced sex work, the public discourse and moniker were invented constructs which acted as an "indicative of deeper fears and uncertainties concerning national identity, women's increasing desire for autonomy, foreigners, immigrants and colonial peoples [sic]" (Doezema, 1999, p. 24). The specific racial focus reveals the construction of White women as the vulnerable property of White men for the sake of the 'race'. The hyper-focus on White women's sexual practices and the imagined threat of race-mixing was used to police the sexuality of White women. But simultaneously, Black women were being constructed as hypersexual and unrapable "rendering invisible the systematic sexual violence to which they were subjected" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 87). According to research by Valverde and Devereux, the 'White slave trade' "which was never proved to exist on a large scale" was invented "because it gave shape to fears about the future of 'the race' in the context of rapid expansion" (Devereux, 2000, p. 18).

Keeping this in mind, there were actual networks of pimps and 'White' sex workers. Because of the lack of solid research, and reports exaggerated with anti-sex work moralising, it is unclear to what extent the women involved were the abducted victims this narrative provides, or if they were migrant labourers travelling, much like the miners and traders, to where economic opportunities, the possibility of autonomy from family structure and new life could be built in the rapidly expanding colonial cities in the late 1800s.

Research into trafficking in the sex industry since the 1990s confirms that the prevalence of trafficking is often greatly exaggerated and that "the majority of 'trafficking' cases involve women who know they are going to work in the sex industry but are lied to about the conditions they will work under, such as the amount of money they will receive, or the amount of debt they have to repay" (Doezema, 1999, pp. 32,41). This cannot be simplistically taken to apply 100 – 140 years ago, but in the absence of clear research and especially without the voices of women who were said to be victims of trafficking in the sex industry it is important to keep in mind.

In the Atlantic world, dominated by Catholic and Protestant leadership, while the 'victims' of the 'White slave trade' were seen as young innocent White women, the 'villain' was cast as a foreign element (Doezema, 1999, p. 28). Tying into the existing discourse about undesirable foreign Jews, officials and the public constructed the pimp as an 'alien Jew' (Van Onselen, 2000, p. 109). One example of this is seen in the Mafeking press which reported on the arrest and sentencing of Isaac Goldberg and described him as "an American Peruvian."[27] Seen as responsible for 'stealing' White

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[27] *Mafeking Mail and Protectorate Guardian* 06-01-1903 pg 3

women and threatening White racial strength and purity Jews were categorised outside of the category of 'White' and as racially degenerate. [28]

Partially to safeguard and construct an image of the Jewish community as an unthreatening part of colonial society the Jewish Boards of Deputies in South Africa[29] set up internal community watchdog committees and employed a combination of patronage and policing strategies. 'Suspicious' Jews were put under surveillance – a category that was limited to new Yidn immigrants. Sharing photographs, creating case files and working closely with the South African Police and international anti-trafficking networks the Jewish communal representatives, almost entirely made up of Anglo Jews surveilled, tracked, arrested and deported Yidn (Krut, 1985, pp. 164-165). Of course, I am not disputing that any men they found to be guilty of trafficking or other related crimes should have been harshly and decisively dealt with. Isaac Goldberg's six months hard labour seems a very light sentence. But in the context of 'White slave trade' rhetoric, the construction of the villain as a Yidn, and a concern with the racial positioning of Jews in South Africa, the ideological function of these community watchdog committees was to carefully disassociate themselves from threats to their racial position in the colonial context. They were proving their civilisational credential to the colonial state.

This is also true of the Jewish organisations' assistance to the Jewish women who were involved in the sex industry. Similar to the global rhetoric, they were cast as victims to be rescued. Working with the London based Jewish Society for the Protection of Girls and Women, The Boards sent 'rescued' Jewish women back to London for "rehabilitation" (Krut, 1985, pp. 165-166). Their work should be lauded for every woman who was assisted to escape from being forced into sex work, and/or who wanted out of vulnerable and abusive conditions. But as Krut (1985, p. 166) notes, "the intervention of the well-intentioned was not always appreciated. There was a subtle distinction between interfering for the benefit of a women, and just being plain nosy and interfering." Because sex work, as a consensual economic practice, was seen as 'dirty' sex and racially degenerate, the Board's combination of patronage and policing functioned to control the sexual practices of Jewish women thus casting them as White women within the framework that Baderoon and Gqola provide, inscribed racial categories, and constructcontributed to the position of South African Jews as a constituent part of the Colonial State apparatus and within the boundaries of Whiteness. These attitudes and functions were carried out in other spheres as well.

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[28] This is similar to antisemitic rhetoric today. The Pittsburgh shooter (USA 2018) and the Halle shooter (Germany 2019) both said that one of their reasons for hating Jews was due to Jewish support for immigration – cast as a racial threat to White America/Europe. This reaffirms the long history of Jewish barbarism being cast as a "polluting the social fabric and threatening the purity of the nation" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 97)

[29] From 1903/4 until 1914 there were two Boards – the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies and the Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal

Trading

Sex work, of course, is not just about sex, it's about work. Because sex work subverted the male-controlled libidinal and fiscal economies, it was characterised as "idleness and a refusal to earn a living by honest labour" (Levine, 2003, p. 195). Sex workers "stood on the dangerous threshold of 'normal' work, 'normal' money and 'normal' sexuality" (McClintock, 1995, p. 154).

In the high moments of British Imperial Capitalism, dirt is the stubborn and unsightly reminder to the capitalists and middle classes that wealth is not created through abstract economic processes and market exchange but instead through the manual labour of "the working class, women and the colonised" (McClintock, 1995, p. 154). At the same moment that capitalists were trying to incentivise and coerce more people into labour positions in their mines, on their farms, and in their homes, and were extolling the value of honest labour, a strict hierarchy was being developed in which those who laboured, who had the "surplus evidence of manual work … smeared on trousers, faces, hands and aprons" (McClintock, 1995, pp. 153-154), were to be exploited, corralled out of sight, kept out of power, and socially ostracised.

Anyone who did a form of work or exchange that was not in the interests – economically, socially, or politically – of the capitalist class was seen as a threat, ostracised as dirty, dishonest, valueless, and the subjected to state violence through the police, courts and administration. Within this framework, Yidn were often described as crafty, shifty or swindlers, and given that many made their livings as traders these slurs had great reach. This had a greater effect when it came to illegal trading. Besides links to the White slave trade, Yidn were often closely associated by the press and politicians to gambling, illicit diamond trade, the illicit liquor trade and in the 'White slave trade' (Krut, 1985, p. 123).

Anglo Jews also adopted this association and used it as a form of social policing, pulling up all the pejorative connotations of a 'Peruvian' and linking it to 'dirty trade'. In April 1901 during the Anglo-Boer War, Jacob Horvitz, an Anglo-Jew, wrote a diary entry about the failure of the synagogue to procure matzes.

> "We haven't yet received any matzes[30], even though the Jewish congregation took our money, ensuring us that the matzes would arrive on time. There has never been such a dirty swindle. Only a committee of Peruvians could do such a thing in the name of the Jewish religion" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 73).

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[30] religious food required for Pesach/Passover

Newspapers such as the *Land en Volk,* the *Transvaal Critic, Star,* and the *Transvaal Leader* made these links frequently accusing Yidn, as Peruvians of being immoral, degraded and the "unwashed peregrinators of things evil and illegal" (Krut, 1985, p. 111) which continued the long European tradition of scapegoating Jews for economic problems (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 44).

These discursive slurs could have real effects – especially when adopted by petty bureaucrats such as Dr Porter, the Johannesburg Medical Officer for Health, who reported in an official document that "low-class Eastern Europeans … have absolutely no idea of the meaning of the word 'cleanliness' as applied to milk production, nor, in some cases, as applied to their persons and dwellings" (Krut, 1985, pp. 134-135). The proliferation of this view amongst bureaucrats meant that Yidn who needed approval from the Sanitary Inspectors to start and continue running workshops, butchers, and the like were at risk of denial – and the resulted loss of income.

Figure 4: Image of police breaking up the sale of liquor between Yidn and Africans. Publication unknown. circa 1907. Source: Kallaway & Pearson, 1986, p. 54

Powerful state officials also held these views. In a letter the Secretary of State Joseph Chamberlain from High Commissioner Alfred Milner during the Anglo-Boer War, Milner describes the refugees from the Transvaal as including "the loafers and hangers-on of society, and those who made a precarious living by means and in some cases illegal trades – such as buying of stolen goods and the sale of liquor to natives. A great number of them are the low class of Jews known as Peruvians" (Krut, 1985, p. 66). As seen in this comic (see Figure 4) borrowing the visual depictions of 'Peruvians', Yidn were especially accused of being behind the illicit liquor trade. The assumed Yidn involvement in 'dirty' money, unlike the other 'dirty' tropes, actually came with police violence.

Liquor trade

Convinced that all illicit liquor dealers were 'Peruvians', the state police instituted a trapping system in which African agents would buy, or pretend to buy, alcohol from Yidn traders who would then be caught and charged by the White policemen. Due to the stereotype, many Jews who weren't liquor traders were 'trapped' through setups organised by the police.

Illicit liquor trading had become closely associated with Yidn and seen as part of the 'Peruvian problem'. As we have seen, the 'Peruvian Problem' was spoken about through tropes of dirt as transgressive, undesirable and potentially disposable. This stereotype had been widely used before the Anglo-Boer War. After the War, all refugees had to apply for permission to return to the Transvaal. The new administration, lead by Milner, didn't want to let in anyone who had 'bad character.' Being allowed back into the Transvaal would affect the possibilities of Yidn being naturalised and eventually how the franchise debates, which were just starting, would apply to them.

Citizenship, race, and class were intertwined in the Transvaal, and so it should be no surprise that being classed as 'dirty traders' was also a racial claim. The *Standard and Diggers' Press* (1894), edited by pro-Boer German Jew Emmanuel Mendelsohn, published a statement of the government inspector of the mines. The inspector lambasted Jews involved in thie liquor trade, he said that the "Polish Jews who look after them are the most Blackguardly race of men in existence. These Polish Jews have not the slightest sense of decency or modesty in them, and a more depraved race never existed."[31] Though interplay between being 'dirty traders' and colonial racism will be further analysed in the next chapter, the link between being 'dirty' traders and potential White citizens directly informed the response of the elite Jewish institutions.

Attempting to turn back these associations and construct Jews as White colonizers, elite Jews made it their mission to delink Yidn from 'dirty' deals – both in the public image and in practice – through a process of propaganda, patronage and policing. No-one wants to be thought of as dirty, and the inferiority complex that developed amongst Yidn because of this led many Yidn, who saw it as in their interests to assimilate into Whiteness, to adopt this process of the colonial subject. The first editorial of *Die Afrikanshe Gazatten*, a Johannesburg Yiddish newspaper, in 1897 makes this clear by linking 'dirt' on the body directly to 'dirty' trade. It "stressed the values of cleanliness, sobriety and self-control" and "exhorted its membership to wash more frequently, [and to] refrain from participating in the illicit liquor traffic" (Krut, 1985, p. 109).

One of the first responses to the 'trappings' was for Manfred Nathan, Board of Deputies member and lawyer,r to represent the anyone caught out by it. Through his legal representation, the courts found many of the Yidn not guilty of illicit liquor trading. However, the individual approach was not enough and soon, his legal representation was worked into an organisational strategy lead by Nathan, Max Langerman, Richard Rosenthal and Harry Solomon – a team of elite Jews if there ever was one. Langerman was a mine owner, property developer, member of the Transvaal Legislative Authority, and executive member of the Board, various Zionist organisations, the Jewish day school, and the Old

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[31] *Standard and Diggers' Press* 5/11/1894 cited in (Shain, 1994, p. 28)

Hebrew Congregation. Solomon owned land and mines, was the four times elected chair of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, ex-Mayor of Port Elizabeth, later member of the Transvaal Legislative Authority and executive member of the Board and the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF). Manfred Nathan, besides being a lawyer was also an executive member of both the Board and SAZF and held political offices in the Transvaal (Krut, 1985, pp. 104,146-147) (Robertson, 1991, pp. 36, 47-48) (Cohen, 1991, pp. 205-209) (Mendelow & Robertson, 1991, p. 217).

The economic, social, and political interests of these men are obvious. As an example Harry Solomon in 1904 "had introduced a law in parliament to prevent Blacks from travelling on the train together with Whites."[32] Their actions as colonialists within South Africa were occurring simultaneously to their actions as colonialists within the Jewish community.

Far from representing all Yidn caught up in the legal system, Nathan would only represent those he was sure would be found as not guilty. The Board then widely published news of the false trappings. Anyone guilty, or if they couldn't prove their innocence, was left to fend for themselves. The Jewish Board was more concerned with becoming a constituent part of colonial society than representing the interests of individual Jews[33]. Instead of working against the existence of racial bias of the trapping committee, or against the liquor legislation – the official Jewish institutions chose to rather engage in this process on internal subject formation. I agree with Riva Krut's assessment that the Board was "determined that they would only serve the 'community' they were trying to mould" (1985, p. 170). The message was clear to Yidn – assimilate into colonial ideology and we will have your back, transgress in any way and we'll leave you out to dry.

This is illustrated in the story of Hannah Woolf. She had a largely absent but otherwise physically abusive husband and had applied for aid from Jewish welfare organisations to help raise her children and a loan to get her grocery store financially viable. She couldn't get a loan and the aid package was not sufficient, so to help make ends meet she sold methylated spirits. In 1908 she was caught by the police and represented by Nathan but was found guilty. Nathan was furious that his reputation and that of the Board of Deputies was tarnished and they wrote a letter to her in which they told her:

> *"Your statement and that of most of your witnesses were untrue. … You had been trying to mislead the gentlemen who so kindly took an interest in your welfare and everybody else*

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[32] *Ha-kokhav* 15/04/1904. This Yiddish paper was disapproving of his actions. Cited in (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 130)

[33] An approach to Jewish assimilation and safety that Jewish institutions have picked up on throughout the colonial world (metropoles and peripheries) and by the Zionist movement and Israel who are all very happy to throw individual Jews, left wing Jews, Black Jews, and groups of non-conformist Jews to the wolves, for the sake of empire and assimilation

concerned. I hope this will be a warning to you to keep out of trouble in future. We exist for the purpose of helping in deserving cases, not to assist offenders against the Law and will certainly not be imposed upon by you again."[34]

The Board's statement demonstrates their willingness to alternate between patronage and policing to shape Yidn into colonial subjects. Patronage was conditional on behaving within the bounds of colonial ideology and policing used to exclude anyone who would tarnish their image. Krut further notes that patronage was extended not when the need was greatest but rather only when the elite 'representatives' felt the position of Jews was most vulnerable (Krut, 1985, p. 173).

Conclusion

The approach that was taken to avoid being classed as 'racially degenerate', was to think of these discourses and practices as antisemitic – i.e. specifically an anti-Jewish phenomenon – and fight to be accepted into the White settler state. Being accepted as colonialists was a twofold project. On the one hand, it meant convincing and working with the patriarchal colonial elite – to display a willingness to collaborate in what Slabodsky calls "the execution of the imperial designs" in exchange for "short-lived candidacies to assimilation (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 60). This necessitated adopting and extending colonial projects to create and maintain racial hierarchies through the segregation and control of living conditions, labour and sex. In the historical moment in which Anglo-Boer unity was being developed as a White alliance, this project broadened the definition of 'White' as a racial category in South Africa to cover other proximate White identities including Jews but also Christian Lebanese and Syrians, Italians and Irish.

On the other hand, this was an internal project of removing the stain of racial degeneracy, from the Yidn, a project undertaken both by Anglo Jews and by Yidn themselves. Sometimes via policing and exclusion of those deemed undesirable 'Peruvians' and other times via patronage and welfare, the response to the threat of dirt was the transformation from colonizers, settlers in a colonial context, to colonialists – not only inhabiting the structural position of a settler population but also the ideological and practical allegiance to White supremacy.

This new political subjectivity was formed through a project of internal purification, shaping a new political subjectivity that was inline with the image of a good colonial subject. The purification occurred both through the disciplining of individual lives, through a system of policing and patronage, and of the Jewish collective writ large by obfuscating the 'dirty practices' or expelling Pervuvians who could not, or perhaps would not, allow themselves to be refashioned into colonialists.

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[34] *Letter from the Jewish Board of Deputies to Hannah Woolf, 30 March 1908* citted in (Krut, 1985, p. 172)

In-text this is nowhere more evident in the first editorial of the 1905 Transvaal relaunched *South African Jewish Report* in which, after stating that there is no particular 'Jewish politics' and that Jews can get behind any political party or program, it commits Jews to support White supremacy under threat of exclusion and boycott:

> *"But there is one much deeper than any of those at issue between these parties; political principle, to which the name 'Jew' commits them. Perhaps without theirs knowing it, and which they cannot well abjure without separating themselves to a sort of a boycott at their hands. The Jews of the Transvaal, if they wish to act up to their name, are pledged to maintain the superiority of the White man in this country. As Jews, they object to being put on the same level as the Coloured races. And those of their brethren who do not assist them in this endeavour, and who are willing to be classed with the Coloured races, they stigmatise as 'Peruvians; and treat with scant courtesy."[35]*

The project of subject formation and making and pledging allegiance to the colonial project was largely successful. Yidn weren't banned from immigration, Yidn living areas were not eradicated, the links between Jews and illegal trades were quietened, and perhaps most importantly, Yidn were included in the franchise without reservation.

They had made it. But, not even 20 years later the Ossewabrandwag and grey-shirts recast Jews as aliens and undesirables and Jews as a group were subject to racialised violence. There are similar experiences from around the world, most especially from the USA and parts of Europe. Descendants of the survivors and victims of the pogroms and Holocaust, and most painfully, even some Holocaust survivors themselves are again under threat from European nationalism and White supremacy. Fighting racialised violence as a specifically Jewish phenomenon leads to the adoption of White supremacy and complicity in racialised violence rather than its overthrow, and never succeeds.

Against narratives of finding liberation within the colonial society, Slabodsky, influenced by Memmi, argues that "the only solution for Jews is to break fundamentally with the narrative by self-acceptation. This cannot be achieved by a self-rejecting assimilation to Western society … nor apolitical self-acceptance. The answer, rather, resides in a self-acceptance of the positive potential of the incurable barbarian changing the system through total revolt" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 138).

This chapter has argued that in response to a narrative which associated Yidn with dirt the nascent Jewish community colluded with the colonial state to shape the lifestyles and image of Yidn into appropriate White behaviours and believes. By relying on arguments that Yidn are assimilable into

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[35] *SAJC* 05/05/1905

Western civilisation, and using the combination of policing and patronage to 'clean' up Yidn, the Jewish community was explicitly creating a colonial subjectivity amongst Yidn.

In the next chapter, the iconography of dirt is brought to the fore again but in the economic realm of racial capitalism, unlike what is seen in this chapter, Yidn were regarded as White from the get-go. It will argue that beyond the communal policing and patronage explored in this chapter, the personal interaction with the processes of land dispossession and the racial labour hierarchy taught Jews of all class positions that to behave like settlers brought increased economic success.

3) The Pedagogy of Racial Capitalism: Land, Labour, and Zionism in the shaping of colonialists

For two days he wandered around. They took him on nowhere. The one person who showed any interest in him gave him to understand that it was quite out of the question for a White to do the work of a Black. The prestige of the White race had to be maintained. So great a degradation as that of a European taking the place of a Black could not be allowed

Richard Feldman, 1987 [1935], pp. 75-76

All his tricks had eaten their way into his soul, like filth into a dirty body

Mendel Tabatznik, 1987 [1971], p. 161

Introduction

The South African economy from the end of the 1800s was dominated by the desires of the mining capitalists. Building huge financial empires, they shaped the making of the South African state into institutions that would guarantee them the highest profits. Of course, they were not building a state out of thin air but in a settler-colonial context in which the political, legal and social distinction between colonised, (indentured) immigrant and coloniser was already exploited for financial and political gain.

This existing relationship was the basis upon which they saw fit to fill their coffers through the hyper-exploitation of an emerging Black working class. Unsatisfied with African resistance to joining the capitalist labour pool, the mining capitalists with their supporters in the state sought to coerce, incentivise and create social conditions which would force Africans into exploitable labour conditions – and create a disciplined labour force.

This isn't only an economic phenomenon but a distinctly political and social one. Economic institutions also produce social and political subjects. Kathy Weeks argues that "the wage relation generates not just income and capital, but disciplined individuals, governable subjects, worthy citizens, and responsible family members" (2011, pp. 2-3, 8).

This process of subject formation was not restricted to African labourers. Just as both the 'native' and the 'settler' are reproduced together as creations of the colonial state (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 2-4), so

are capitalists and workers reproduced together as creations of the capitalist state. The disastrous construction of South Africa as a racialised, capitalist, and colonial state required not only the subject formation of those who it would exploit, but also of those who would do the exploiting, both the propertied and the dispossessed – and those who would carry out the daily enforcing of the fundamental hierarchies.

This interplay between capitalism and colonialism can be referred to as racial capitalism, a term developed by Cedric Robinson in his seminal text *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Racial Capitalism refers to the way that capitalism, rather than being a break in historical trends, developed out of, and used existing racist social structures to create a world system based on imperialism, slavery, and exploitation.

This development did not only affect the material structures of society but also the ideological. Robinson explains that as "the development, organization, and expansion of capitalism pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term 'racial capitalism' to refer to this development and the subsequent structure as a historical agency" (Robinson, 2000, p. 2).

Subject formation under racial capitalism is interpellated through classed, raced and gendered positions (Robinson, 2000, p. 314). Subject formation, however much it is influenced by social structures, is not simplistically determined. The specific behaviours, roles and ideologies have to be learnt and developed both through acquiescence and resistance.

In asking questions of how something is learnt, its useful to question how it is taught. When referring to the pedagogy of racial capitalism, I am drawing on Giroux's conceptualisation of public pedagogy as how behaviours and knowledge are taught through the educational force of the social structure. Giroux developed the term to attend to a shift under neoliberalism in which corporate power and market-driven discourse dominated public pedagogy. "Public pedagogy in this sense refers to a powerful ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their material and ideological gain" (Giroux, 2004, p. 497).

For my purposes, I will use public pedagogy to understand how Jews, regardless of their position in the class hierarchy, came to learn the roles, behaviours and ideology of colonialists. Rather than self-interested individuals, public pedagogy under racial capitalism at the turn of the century in South Africa, aimed at the production of racial subjects which adhered to and upheld the constructed racial hierarchy of privilege and oppression that is maintained through segregation and colonial racism.

I seek to give a partial answer to Roediger's question – which he posed in respect of the United States - of "why and how Whites reach the conclusion that their Whiteness is meaningful" (Roediger, 1991, p. 6) by understanding the material basis and pedagogic process of how Jews in South Africa interacted with and responded to the system of racial capitalism.

To do this, this chapter will focus on two central themes relevant to all economic analyses of South Africa – land ownership, and the racial labour hierarchy. In the section on land ownership, I will analyse the position of Anglo-Jewsish mine owners and property developers concerning both settler-colonial usurpation and their roles in the Jewish community. The importance of property ownership for the recent Yidn immigrant will also be explored, as will the Jewish community's relationship to the enforcement of urban areas as the domain of White men. This section will conclude with a reflection on how South African Jewish engagements with racial capitalism and political Zionism were mutually interprellated.

I will then look at the racial labour hierarchy and the creation of a racial distinction between skilled and unskilled work, employers and employees. Focussing mostly on the lives of Yidn involved with trading, artisanal professions, domestic and community labour, this section will show how work taught Yidn that there were material and social benefits to adopting the racist behaviours of the colonialist. Though new immigrants and partisans fought against racial capitalism, the daily use of exploitative practices allowed those practices to eat "their way into his soul" (Tabatznik, 1971 [1987 trans.], p. 161).

Racial Capitalism in South Africa

The interrelation of land and labour as the seminal political axis of exploitation have been linked in South Africa for centuries and was well recognised by colonial powers. One of the post-Anglo-Boer war commissions, with a role in Britain's systematic re-organisation of the territory, was the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) under commissioner Lagden. SANAC operated between 1903 and 1905 with the mandate of increasing the labour supply for the mines or, to get at the heart of the matter, the "conversion of Africans into labour units in the colonial economy" (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, p. 26). The commission concluded that the labour shortage was due to how Africans had "access to the land on terms which have enabled them to regard work for wages as a mere supplement to their means and not as the urgent condition under which the majority of mankind earn their daily bread," and the "inexpensiveness of their living, the limited nature of their wants, and the comparative absence of incentives to labour" (Lagden, 1905, p. 80). Their recommendations included increased taxation and rents, preventing squatting and vagrancy, and an education system designed to increase

"efficiency and wants" (Lagden, 1905, pp. 82-83), all of which were implemented in the following decade with the Poll, Hut and Dog Taxes, and the Native Lands Act.

While the colonial state was building on its history of constructing a labouring subject, there was also an equally long history of constructing the exploiting subject. As Magubane notes, "in a slave-owning society, freedom is defined by slavery. Every settler in the colonies wants to own slaves and thus avoid manual work" (Magubane, 2007, p. 181). By the period under study, slavery had officially been over for some decades but the same relationship persisted. In 1903, Milner, along with his contemporaries, expressed that they did "not want a White proletariat in this country" (Milner, 1933, p. 459). This was a sentiment expressed also by White workers. Notably, on the diamond mines in the 1880s, Cornish miners initially worked alongside Africans. But when a regulation subjected all miners to strip searchers, the White miners protested vigorously arguing "that they did not want to be 'brought down to', 'reduced to' or 'placed in the same category as the k*****'" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 93-94). Their strike was successful and is the moment in which the mines decided that it was in their interests to enforce a racial labour hierarchy (Magubane, 1996, p. 94).

The 1893 *Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope* provides many such examples of employers (both urban and rural) reporting that White labourers would never consent to stay in 'unskilled' positions for too long, work alongside Africans, and especially work under African supervisors. One such example was the testimony of a dock manager in Cape Town who employed 1600 people.

> *Andrew McKenzie:* "White juveniles will run away, even if got out under contract. They will not stay long with you… A White juvenile, if he is worth anything, will not work with the native. His ambition will lead him to drive them. We see it even *with our Cape boys [ie Coloured men]; if we did not have a good man to look after them, we should find them driving two or three k****** to do their work for them. …*
>
> *Commissioner: Every White man here is a master?*
>
> *McKenzie: Yes, precisely. And from a small boy he wants to learn to be master, and if he has not the ambition, you are better without him"* (Loch, et al., 1893, pp. 266-272)

Consider the educational power of this history and these practices. Everyone was taught that there were material and social consequences for their ability to fit into the roles required under racial capitalism. For Black people both acquiescing and resisting came with costs that shaped the direction of political movements such as Bambatha's rebellion, the establishment of the African People's Organisation and the South African Native National Congress. For White people, however, accepting

their roles either as capitalists or in the labour aristocracy came with benefits, and resisting or refusing these came with material loss and social exclusion.

Land ownership

In the aftermath of the colonial land dispossession, the ownership of land is a powerful indicator of power and the continuing colonial relationship. Settler colonialism is, as Wolfe reminds us, a structure not an event (Wolfe, 2006, p. 402). Recognising this, responsibility for land dispossession rests not only on the soldiers who conquered it but also with the successive generations that used the land, benefited from it, and claimed their rights to it. The educational force of this theft also does not stop with the first wave of colonizers. They learn that might makes right, and 'civilised' man deserved ownership of land in 'primitive' areas. Successive generations learn this too, always aware that Europeans were not always on this land but became able to stay through the barrel of a gun. The continuity of the settler-colonial state, of its cities, of its farms and its cities relies on the same attitudes of the first generation – the perpetual occupation of dispossessed land. We are reminded that settler colonisers come to stay" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388).

Mine owners

Mining capitalists were the most influential men in the at the turn of the century owning vast tracts of land and employing thousands of workers. The migrant labour system and the hyper exploitability of the coerced African working class were designed to suit the interests of the mines.

The mining capitalists were all originally from Western Europe - primarily Britain, Germany and France – and many returned to their home countries to retire. Some amongst their number were Jewish – men like Barnato, Beit, Albu, Joel and Phillips. They were no more, nor no less complicit than any other mine owners in the coerced labour system, and in the abuse and exploitation suffered by African workers in the mines. The Jews who were involved in mining were incredibly anglicised and had come from Western Europe. Behaving in the mould of Anglo Jewry, most preferred to keep their Jewishness private.

However, their Jewishness was often brought to the fore by English writers[1] indicating an uncomfortableness with the presence of Jews in an English town and specifying a Jewish difference when there wasn't one. Writers, from both the right and the left, have picked up on the Jewishness of

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[1] Writers in the mid-1890s would refer to Johannesburg as 'Jewhannesburg' (Krut, 1985, p. 7), or as an 'Anglo-Semitic town' even though only 6% of the White population of the city was Jewish (Shain, 1994, p. 19). Even historians such as Bernard Magubane do this when he writes "English and Jewish capital" (Magubane, 1996, p. xxii). What is the 'Jewish'/'Semitic' part of these phrases meant to indicate? The Jews in reference were also Englishmen. It removes Jews from England, obfuscates the role of Christianity, and contributes to the trope of Jewish capital power.

some of the 'randlords'[2] to either blame Anglo-Jews financing the Anglo-Boer war and its resultant violence against the Boers, for undercutting White and Black mining wages during the importation of indentured Chinese labourers, or conversely for threatening White social dominance in Johannesburg – also by importing Chinese labourers.

The historical trend of claims of Jewish political plotting and sedition stretches back to the early modern period in Europe but rises rapidly in the early 20th century when the claims of a powerful Jewish elite controlling the world – whether for the sake of capitalism or socialism depends on the politics of the conspiracy theorist – gain traction in antisemitic movements around the world (Slabodsky, 2014, pp. 61-62).

Because of this, I was, and continue to be, weary of analysing the role of the Jewish randlords in any detail. On reflection, a lot of my weariness is because of how it might inadvertently buy into and maybe perpetuate one of the most frequent types of antisemitism. An aspect of untangling Whiteness is exposing how White people carry illegitimate and disproportionate power over everyone else. On the other hand, a common version of antisemitism is claiming that Jews hold more power than anyone else, and hold it behind the scenes. So, analysing how White Jews potentially hold that kind of power can act as an accelerant of antisemitism instead of as a disruption to White supremacy (Schraub, 2019, p. 15). [3]

Concerning the Jewish randlords as randlords – the capitalist class of virulent colonial racism and violence – their Jewishness is irrelevant. As Jews, their position as randlords is only relevant insofar as they were involved in the Jewish community.

Some, like Beit and Philips, had ambiguous relationships with the community. In the 1880s and 1890s, they played no role but after the Anglo-Boer war they became slightly more involved as funders and figureheads, though their presence was resented by Yidn and seen as opportunistic (Krut, 1985, p. 81). After 1910 they did not maintain this partial interest in the community. Others, such as the Barnatos and Joels didn't even have this passing interest.

Of all the mining capitalists, it was George Albu and David Harris which were the most prominent in the Jewish community. The Albu brothers gained wealth through the Meyer and Charlton mines in Johannesburg which were chosen by virulent racist Lord Kitchener as the site to reopen the mines after the Anglo-Boer war. Similarly, to Beit and Philips, they were involved in the community only between the war and union. George Albu was a member of the Building Committee of the new

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[2] A South African term used to refer to the mining capitalists of the Witwatersrand
[3] For an interesting analysis of how this functions see Schraub (2019)

orphanage, and the main figurehead at its opening. Gertrude Albu, his wife, was a founder member of the Jewish Ladies Communal League and served a short stint on their executive (Krut, 1985, p. 81).

David Harris was the cousin of Barney Barnto. From the 1870s until the 1890s he served the British army in multiple colonial wars in Gcalekaland, Griqualand West and Bechuanaland. After the merger between Barnato and Rhode's diamond companies, Harris became director of De Beers in 1897 and then the chairman until his retirement in 1931. He succeeded Barnato as the Kimberly member of the parliament of the Cape Colony and was elected to successive parliaments until the 1930s. He would have brought all his baggage from this illustrious colonial career – soldier, mining capitalist and politician – into his roles in the Jewish community. He was the lifelong trustee and warden of the Kimberly synagogue – which itself was built on land donated by De Beers. While in Parliament he supported the amendment to recognise Yiddish as a European Language (Anon., 1931) (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 24).

The status of Yidn as European for immigration and small business purposes, which both relied on Yiddish being recognised as European, owes itself partially to the colonial activities of men like David Harris[4] – histories which shouldn't be separated as if they do not influence each other. Harris' standing and respect within the Cape Colony Parliament were precisely due to his role in the wars of dispossession and as the chairman of the single largest diamond company.

Property developers

The status of Jews as Europeans and citizens also owes itself also to the property developers who bought out and developed large parts of Johannesburg and served in executive positions in Jewish communal institutions. Though the property developers were Anglo Jews, Yidn also bought property on a smaller scale – houses and shops to use and sometimes to rent.

The Jewish relationship to property is particularly powerful in South Africa, and particularly in Johannesburg. Yidn were not allowed to own land in the Pale of Settlement, and in almost all cities to which Yidn emigrated to, there were already expansive urban areas without space for new property developers.

There were a few more options in rural South Africa. Steven Robins, while exploring his family history explains how the 1865 Land Beacons Act established freehold title and property laws in the Northern Cape. This stripped the Baster's of access to grazing land and they were forced to move north, selling

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[4] This was recognized at the time in a Cape Times article: "Their thanks were especially due to the Hon Colonel Crewe, MLA, for introducing the amendment, and to Mr L Abrahamson, MLA, **Colonel Harris**, MLA, Mr adv Burton, MLA, and Mr adv Molteno, MLA, for speaking favourably with regard to it in the House." *Cape Times* 26/06/1906 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 54

what property they did own. "Their departure created business opportunities for Jewish merchants such as Eugen Robinski, who bought up a number of Baster town and farm properties in the wake of the Baster's dispossession" (Robins, 2016, pp. 67, 70, 73-75). While this is a telling insight, Jews like Eugen Robinski weren't foundational to the Jewish community as a whole.

However, in Johannesburg, a city that was as new as the Yidn immigration, there were plenty of opportunities. Urban land, much like rural land, was central to the settler-colonial projects of land dispossession and consolidation under White rule. The development of urban racial segregation, much like segregation on the country level, was guided by the desire to exploit African labourers, to maintain White supremacy and driven by the same tropes of civilisation, dirt and criminality.

As a new city, Johannesburg still had a lot of open lands available for development. It had been usurped from Tswana and Pedi polities decades earlier and was being rapidly sold off as Johannesburg expanded (Mason, 1986). Only White people were allowed to buy land in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) and the Transvaal Colony. Jews were unquestionably included in this provision. Early on, the first Jewish synagogue in Johannesburg was built on land given to Jews by President Kruger[5] and many Jews bought plots as private houses, stores or offices.

Coming from the Pale of Settlement, the ability to own property had powerful implications. Ignoring the colonial context, Marian Robertson explains the psychological value of owning land as a recent Yidn immigrant in South Africa. "To become a property owner was a new experience for many Jews. ... they would have found security, status and a sense of freedom in property development. It required little capital because money could be obtained on a mortgage. The well-known Jewish interest in the property goes back to the first generation of immigrants who seized so eagerly the opportunities they had not enjoyed or had been denied in the countries from which they had come" (Robertson, 1991, p. 53).

From the settler colonies to Palestine, building a sense of Jewish freedom and security on top of land dispossession and expulsion/exploitation is a key motivator for the support of colonialism. For the colonizer, "the more freely he breathes, the more the colonised are choked" (Memmi, [1957] 1967, p. 8).

Buying into the new ability to own land, and the city-wide rush to develop, the South African Jewish Chronicle (SAJC) frequently published large adverts for new land plots to its readers, such as the

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[5] Christian churches received 4 plots, but the synagogue was only given 2. Folklore says that when Kruger was asked about this he responded that it was because Jews only believed in half the bible (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 40).

following examples for plots in Regents Park and Engelbrechton (see Figures 5 & 6). Most of the plots were agricultural but it's unclear how many of the SAJC readers bought any as there isn't much evidence of a Jews involved in South African agriculture. Never-the-less, the land plot advertisements were a consistent weekly feature in that period.

Figure 5: Stands for Sale in Regents Park. SAJC 05/05/1905

Figure 6: Stands for Sale in Engelbrechton. SAJC 02/06/1905

Urban racial segregation had already constructed Cape Town and Johannesburg and was increasing in intensity in the 1900s. What did the Jewish home and store owners make of their ability to own property in places where others could not? Some of the areas that Jews owned property weren't White only, but restricted African ownership, others were White only. How did adaption to these colonial property laws affect the political mindset of the Jewish community in South Africa?

Some of these homeowners became landlords and amassed several properties to rent out such as Yehuda Leib and Gela Schrire. Like many landlords at the time they went through times of success and bankruptcy. Property, though a sign of wealth and a privilege mostly restricted to Whites, didn't give quite the security that was expected of it (Schrire, 2016 [1910], pp. 118,128,133-135).

It did, however, especially for the large-scale property developers, give an enormous investment in the colonial structure and influence in the city. Men like Hyman Morris[6], Leo Rosettenstein[7], Jacques Klisser[8], Emmanuel Mendelssohn[9] and Harry Solomon[10] all had major investments in property through which some were elected to public office as well. They also were all in the leadership of some of the central Jewish organisations of the day such as the Board of Deputies, the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and the Chevra Kadisha, as well as the big synagogues. Of this group of influential property developers, I will highlight two – Max Langermann and Samuel Goldreich who were amongst the most influential leaders of the Jewish community.

Max Langermann (see Figure 7) owned Kensington in Johannesburg, which he laid out in 1902-1903, and was elected as a Member of the Transvaal Legislative Council in 1907. He was also the president of the Jewish School in Kerk Street. More notably, he was a founding member and first president of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal, elected at a meeting of 2500 people. After his presidential term, he retained various executive positions on the board and was eventually the Vice President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) for Natal in 1912. He was also an executive member of the Transvaal Zionist Association (TZA), the SAZF and the Old Hebrew Congregation (one of the two main synagogues in Johannesburg) (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 84, 130) (Robertson, 1991, pp. 48-49) (Cohen, 1991, pp. 205-209).

Figure 5: Picture of Max Langerman. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 60

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[6] Hyman Morris' only income was from investing in property, mostly in buildings in the CBD and a part of a single unnamed township. He was the President of the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation, the Vice President of the JBDTN and the acting president of SAZF in 1907. *SAJC 15/02/1907* (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 51) (Robertson, 1991, pp. 48-49) (Mendelsohn, 1991, p. 74).

[7] Leo Rosettenstein bought and developed Rosettenville in 1899. He was on the executive of the first synagogue in Johannesburg

[8] Rosettenstein's son-in-law, Jacques Klisser was a stockbroker and on the early death of Nora Rosettenstein, he inherited a third of the Rosettenville. Klisser was a Vice President of the Chevra Kadisha and served multiple terms on the executive of the United Hebrew Congregation (after the 1909 joining of the Old and Johannesburg Hebrew Congregations) (Robertson, 1991, pp. 48-49,51) (Mendelsohn, 1991, p. 74).

[9] Emmanuel Mendelssohn, along with the Goldreich brothers, owned and developed Hillbrow (1895), Regents Park (1895) and Wanders View (1894). He was also the editor and owner of the *Standard and Diggers' Press*. He was a founder and president of the first synagogue in the Johannesburg and involved in the Jewish Working Men's Club (an Anglicisation organisation). (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 67, 97)

[10] Harry Solomon was the elected chair of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange four times between 1894 and 1905, the only person to be elected more than twice until 1911. He was also the Mayor of Port Elizabeth 1873-1875 and a member of the Transvaal Legislative Authority 1907-1910. He was also the Vice President of the Jewish Board of Deputies of the Transvaal and Natal in 1904, one of 7 members who drew up its provisional constitution, and the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) representative to the Board (Mendelow & Robertson, 1991, p. 217) (Robertson, 1991, p. 36).

Samuel (see Figure 8) and James Goldreich, and Emmanuel Mendelssohn owned and developed Hillbrow (1895), Regents Park (1895) and Wanders View (1894) in Johannesburg. Samuel Goldreich was also the largest shareholder in the Rand Provident Building Society, one of three permanent building societies in Johannesburg. He was also president of the Old Hebrew Congregation on multiple occasions and the first president and later committee member of the Jewish Ladies Communal League and its successor, the Education Committee. Through it, he was central to setting up the Jewish Orphanage with Alice Langermann. He was also a founding member and later Vice President of the TZA and the second president of the SAZF. When he was re-elected in 1905 and awarded the position as Honourary Life President in 1906 he travelled extensively around the country on speaking tours to set up a Jewish Colonial Trust for the colonisation of Palestine (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 98) (Robertson, 1991, pp. 48-49) (Cohen, 1991, pp. 199-204).

Figure 6: Picture of Samuel Goldreich. Source: Gitlin, 1950, p. 50

The three main Jewish communal institutions of the time - the SAJBD (and its predecessors), the SAZF, and the Chevra Kadisha - still exist and are still central to the community today. These property developers were key leaders of those organisations and as well as of the two biggest synagogues in Johannesburg, the Jewish school and the Orphanage. This is an extensive list of the political bodies and socialisation institutions that were led by people who primarily engaged in a deeply complicit colonial practice. What does their constant re-election indicate about the role models of the Jewish community at the time? How much of their ideology transferred into their organisations? What effect did this have on the Jewish views of the South African colonial context? How did this work to exclude the working class Yidn from visions of the Jewish future? These aren't questions that are easily answered by archival evidence. The actions and discussion of ideological transfer and socialisation are not usually recorded in minutes or the press. Imagine their Shabbos dinner table discussions, their chats over a shot of schnapps after a meeting, their demands to their domestic workers and builders while planning the next communal gathering. How did their day-to-day positions filter into the communal Jewish life?

It is self-evident that their, and other communal leaders, positions within the highly racialised, classed and gendered colonial context cannot be separated from their role as shapers and leaders of the official Jewish community. And yet, no historical text has linked these aspects of their life. All the information of which properties they owned, their work, or business positions I found from one set of articles, the information about their role as communal leaders I found in another set of articles and

chapters. Sometimes their role in South African politics was included along with their communal biographies. Sometimes this information was known by a single person, such as Robertson, who chose to write these histories up separately. This obfuscation of the colonialist mentalities of the community's founders is an example of the accommodationist trend in history and doesn't allow for an honest reflection on the role of these structures today.

A White Man's Town

It is not only the ownership of the land that needs to be interrogated but also what it is used for. In many cases, the land is desired for the value that can be extracted from it as in agriculture and mining. Manufacturing and government land are owned for the economic value that is produced on it, both directly and indirectly. However, the social use of urban land is also vital. Just like the domestic realm is vital to racial capitalism for the social reproduction of labour, so is the public realm.

Racial capitalism in South Africa, constructed as it is on the exploitation of Black labourers, developed an urban policy of segregation to support this exploitation. The SANAC report, for example, advised municipalities to create 'Native Urban Locations' in "easy access to the places where the Natives go work" and in which "the charges necessary to be borne by the Natives" (Lagden, 1905, pp. 47-48). The goal of this was to maintain a nearby and stable workforce that was reliant on earning a wage to pay costs of living, while also constructing and enforcing a racial hierarchy in terms of access to the city, and oppressive living conditions. Forced removals in Cape Town and Johannesburg occur in this decade as a form of urban land dispossession which also maintains an urban coerced cheap labour force. Pass Laws were also developed and maintained to keep control of access to the city. In 1901 High Commissioner Milner, for example, justified the continuation of the ZAR pass laws by arguing that there would be 'pandemonium' if there wasn't a system to regulate the movement and living of Black people "in the midst of a White community."[11]

The formation of White subjects in the urban areas rested on the construction of a 'White mans' town' in which White men ruled its governance, the use of the land, and access to the public. The position of Jews in this milieu, however, was not always clear.

As we saw in the chapter on Dirty Subjects, neighbourhoods which were predominantly lived in by Yidn were seen as dirty, threats to national health and potential targets for eradication through forced removals. One such example relates not only to the 'dirtiness' of Yidn but of the 'dirtiness' of social racial mixing. Linked to the construction of the White man's town, and an extension of the concept of miscegenation – non-racial urban environments were seen as a threat to White supremacy.

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[11] *Letter from Milner to Chamberlain* 1901 cited in (Milner, 1933, p. 308)

Reverend Fagan described District Six in 1909 with obvious disdain

> *The impression that will prevail in my mind is rows of shabby and unclean shops whose walls and signboard are sprinkled with Yiddish characters, sloping streets crowded with coloured people, Indians, Russians and Poles; narrow lanes where little Black and brown babies tumble amidst the discarded rags and the empty canisters flung out of the houses. … I remember the shuffling gait, the hunted crafty look and the greasy dress of the Jewish refugee. I recall the glimpse of indescribable dirt and squalor that I had through open doors and windows. I recollect the dark and heavy smelling shops of the Indians at the corners of the lanes and streets' the group of men that stand around the counters of the tailors and the jewellers holding debates in Yiddish, the lean and ragged little children that rush from miserable and secret lanes into the crowded streets, or crawl out of the doors of the mean house to stretch their bare brown limbs in the dry gutters, and the hard White faces of the wives and the daughters of the hunted Russians, sitting on shabby balconies or lounging against the shop doors."[12]*

Evoking all the senses through the metaphor of dirt to denigrate the racially mixed, lower-class urban environment, Fagan displays the ideological position of White supremacy and its increasing desire to enforce the urban environment as a 'White only' space. Though District 6 managed to survive another 50 years of this kind of threat before being forcefully dispossessed, Yidn by then had mostly moved out. In Fagan's description, much like others at the time, Yidn's racial position was distinctly amongst 'the coloured races', though, as shown in the chapter on Dirty Subjects, this did not translate into the actualisation of state violence in the same way, nor did it hinder Yidn's access to legal and political institutions reserved for Whites.

The repeated placement of Yidn amongst the 'coloured races' in the public press, caused other Jews, who were more firmly ensconced in White society, to 'prove' their Whiteness in various ways. One was by directly implementing internal communal policies and involvement in White political agitation which enforced racial segregation and hierarchies. The other was by ideologically supporting racial segregation and White rule in the urban environs.

In terms of supporting White political agitation, some Jewish traders joined the Asiatic Trading Agitation against the granting of licenses to Indian traders. LP Hirsh, a frequent reader and letter writer to the SAJC, penned an article called 'Our Own Yellow Peril'. In it, he bought into the dirt metaphor and argued that "The Asiatics have made a rush for the Rand" and that "like all epidemics originating

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[12] *The Cape* 03/01/1909 cited in (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 78)

from the Orient, which, if unchecked, invariably increases, the hold of Asiatics on our trade is constantly increasing and expanding."[13] Hirsh, also a trader, would invariably have economically benefited from such a program – learning and teaching that becoming a White subject, adopting colonial racism, could have positive material consequences.

Internal programs which supported racial segregation focussed predominantly on children. Maurice Abrahams, a member of the Johannesburg Board of Deputies, for example, argued in 1902 that the need for Jewish educational institutions was "a thousand times more acute" in South Africa because "here the children had as their playmates little K*****s and H********s" (cited in (Krut, 1985, p. 246). The implication of this will be discussed at the end of this chapter by using the example of the South African Jewish Orphanage

In terms of ideological support, reflecting on the Chinese indentured labourers present in Johannesburg from 1903 and eventually expelled in 1907 due to rising opposition to their presence as a threat to White supremacy, an editorial in the SAJC commented that:

> "If Chinese coolies are introduced into the mines lying alongside the town, and if they are allowed as much freedom as those on the outlying parts of the reef, we may look forward to seeing the streets swarming with Chinamen almost to the extent that they are at present taken up by K****. Now the presence of the K**** does not materially affect the White man, because there is a tacit understanding between the two that the city belongs to the White man, and that the K**** is in it as a stranger, and on sufferance. But we cannot yet say whether the same will be the case with the Chinaman; in fact, there is much reason to fear that he will regard himself as the White man's equal, and aspire, in one way or other, to play a part in the life of the town."[14]

Another editorial which focused on the franchise in urban areas commented that

> "In Cape Colony, the race question is complicated by the presence of a large half-caste population, which is native to the towns and possesses at least a smattering of English education. In the Transvaal, the half-caste population is still a negligible quantity. The Blacks we have here are strangers in the White man's town, and have political organization of their own in their own kraals, where they can find much better scope for their political aspirations than they could as British citizens."[15]

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[13] *SAJC* 12/05/1905
[14] *SAJC* 29/12/1905, see also *SAJC* 04/05/1906
[15] *SAJC* 20/04/1906

Both these editorials uphold the idea of South Africa as a 'White man's country' - a phrase interpreted by the 1903 municipal council of Johannesburg, Milner, and others, as requiring, at the very least, "that the White man should rule" (Milner, 1933, p. 467). The SAJC regarded Africans as strangers in the urban environment, unfit for representation, property ownership, or economic equality. It also feared those, who might consider themselves equal to White men and called for restrictions on their urban lives.

The lessons of racial capitalism, enforced on and by the Jewish community writ large, is that the owners of title deeds are legitimated to shape the social world of the city, that racial groups and hierarchies are constructed through the construction of physical segregation, that identities are given based on where one lives, who one lives with, and that maintaining access to the economic privilege of being White required the ideological support of White supremacy – it was not enough to simply be colonizers, they needed to become colonialists.

Zionism + 'Lamma Lo Uganda?'[16]

Though in South Africa most Jews transformed from colonizers to colonialists, with Zionism, the transformation occurred in reverse, the colonialist subjectivity preceded the coloniser reality. This section will examine some of the Zionist rhetoric and debates in the period to understand how Zionist and colonialist ideologies were mutually reinforcing in South Africa.

Amongst South African Jews, Zionism was probably the most popular political movement. In 1905 there were 74 active Zionist societies south of the Zambesi River.[17] The big cities had multiple competing societies and women's and youth branches.

Zionism, whatever else it may mean to Jews, is also a form of settler colonialism of the land and people of Palestine. Though there were many competing Zionist ideologies most required settler colonialism, and it was political Zionism which captured the imagination of Jews in South Africa early on. The Zionists at the turn of the century were well aware of this. Some of the first organisations that were founded at an international level included the Jewish Colonial Trust (1898) and the Colonisation Society (1898). Zionism was born in Europe in the late 1800s at the high moment of European nationalism, and amongst the fervour of the 'Scramble for Africa'. "By imitating the colonial ventures … the 'Jewish nation' could send its own colonists into a piece of Afro-Asian territory, establish a

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[16] 'Lamma Lo Uganda?' Is a Hebrew question meaning 'why not Uganda?'. At the Zionist youth movement I was a part of we used to sing this as a liberal expression of wanting to tie our Jewishness and Africanness closer together. A couple of years later, while still in the movement, I once argued that it would have been better if Israel had been established in Uganda, because then it would have been dismantled already in the waves of African decolonization. I obviously no longer hold either position.

[17] *SAJC* 14/07/1905

settler-community, and, in due course, set up its own state – not, indeed, as an imperial outpost of a metropolitan home-base, but as a home-base in its own right" (Sayegh, 2012 [1965], p. 207).

Zionist leaders such as Theodore Herzl were steeped in the colonial mindset - overwriting the presence of the local population, claiming a right to rule the land, and buying into the civilised-primitive/barbaric dichotomy. Herzl prophesied that the new Jewish State would be a "rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism" (Herzl, 1946 [1896]) and, in a novel imagining life in the new state, he reflected that "the Jewish settlers who streamed into the country had brought with them the experience of the whole civilized world" (Herzl, 1916 [1902]).

In South Africa, most English Jews opposed Zionism as they saw it as a break from their emancipation pact and loyalty to the British Empire, though several Anglo-Zionist societies formed after the war when having a one's "own race traditions, its own loyalty"[18] was no longer in conflict with the project of settler White supremacy. Settler ideology had shifted to allow internal difference amongst Whiteness so as to amalgamate both British and Boers.

This was also helped by the affinity that many British leaders, such as High Commissioner Alfred Milner expressed for Zionism. Though the reasons and backgrounds to their affinity are varied, there were also attempts by local Zionists to improve this link. SAZF president Goldreich wrote to Wolffsohn, Herzl's successor, saying that "I did my best to convince Lord Milner that that which he calls imperialism is identical with Zionism" (Gitlin, 1950, p. 74).

Most Yidn in South Africa came from the regions of the Pale of Settlement in which Zionism, rather than socialism or Hasidism, had the most influence. Though there were very active Jewish socialist groups, and Jewish involvement in trade unions, in pure numbers and also in terms of positions of influence the Jewish socialists could not compete with the Zionist societies.

The popularity of Zionism and its similarities to the ideology of colonialism in South Africa is likely to have played an important role in the acceptance of colonialism by Yidn. Unlike Jews from Western Europe who had been brought up in the heart of colonial ideology, Yidn wouldn't have been exposed to colonialism in the same way – though they were cognisant of Russia's imperial expansion and land grabs (Bartal, 2017, p. 116). Stepping into South Africa and having the colonial common sense forced on them would have been a shocking if ambiguously welcomed, experience. However, as they learned the motives and language it would have struck a chord with those involved in Zionist activities.

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[18] Speech by Milner to the founding of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal (a precussor to the SAJBD). *SAJC* 07/08/1903 cited in (Shain, 1994, p. 69)

When the program and ideology of Zionism are compared to settler colonialism in South Africa, it's not hard to see the similarities. The settler-colonial analogies, especially with regards to land, and the bringing of civilisation that are so prevalent in South African colonial discourse and practice can be seen in the following extracts of Zionist statements and debates that were occurring in South Africa between 1902-1910.

In a 1906 article in the SAJC titled 'What is to be done with the Russian Jew' two writers debated the merits of colonising central Asia or Palestine. A Mr Prag, aptly uses the language of colonialism to remind the readers that

> *"The colonisation of Palestine by Jews only commenced about sixteen years ago. Up to that time, there was hardly a Jewish agriculturist in the whole of Palestine and Syria. Since the year 1882 twenty-five agricultural colonies have been established in Palestine and Syria, and societies for the furtherance of colonisation have sprung up all over the world."[19]*

At a Zionist Demonstration in Johannesburg in July 1907, Lennox Louwe made a long speech against the 'petty colonisation' schemes of buying parcels of land in Palestine, described by Prag above. Rather than that, he argued, the Zionist associations should get behind Herzls 'grand scheme'. Appealing to an extension of the European civilisational project, he concluded:

> *"Our days of mourning will be turned into days of joy in a land of our own, a Palestine which can yet become a land of milk and honey, and where modern civilization is bringing its blessing to bear in a way undreamt of."[20]*

One of the main Zionist debates occurring at the time was about the Uganda Proposal, also known as the East Africa Plan. In 1903 the British Empire had offered Herzl a large stretch of land in what was then Uganda but soon incorporated into British East Africa (modern-day Kenya) for a Jewish autonomous settler colony under the British Empire. They were motivated by an attempt to fill the country with White settlers and recoup the infrastructure investments they had made there. At the time that the offer was made to Herzl, competing offers were also being discussed with a group of Finns, some private companies from the UK, and some investors from South Africa (Feldman, 2007, pp. 16-17).

Herzl brought this proposal to the International Congress and sparked massive debates. It was eventually rejected in favour of holding out for Palestine itself. Many also found the timing of the

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[19] *SAJC* 22/06/1906
[20] *SAJC* 07/06/1907

proposal suspicious given that it was offered following the implementation of the Immigration Restriction Policies in England which restricted Yidn immigration and was seen as antisemitic.[21]

However, in South Africa, this had increased relevance due to its symbolic proximity on the African continent. Most Zionist societies, especially ones dominated by Yidn, and the Yiddish press rejected the proposal, but the more Anglo dominated societies found the idea congruent with their loyalty to the British Empire (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 72).

About 20 Jewish families quickly moved from the Transvaal to Nairobi.[22] They, along with various exploratory expeditions, sent back glowing reports of the suitability of the land for Jewish colonisation –especially government assisted land purchases and cheap labour (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 90). One such visitor to Uganda reported back to the SAJC that "he found the climate salubrious, the land fertile, and the natives friendly." The SAJC reporter continued:

> *"It has been pointed out that the development of Africa is an event of the near future, and when the Cape-to-Cairo Railroad is completed civilization will spread itself quickly through the heart of the Black Continent." Further pointing out the benefits of being connected to the British Empire, the reporter praised "England's capacity for colonisation and administration [which] guarantees the future of her African possessions, and a Jewish colony would reap the benefits of her experience and capacity."[23]*

Though the Uganda proposal was defeated by 44 votes to 20 at the 1905 South African Zionist Conference, the discussions held around it, and the general Zionist speeches such as those of Loewe display a perspective towards the ownership of land in a colonial context analogous to South African colonialism. Land was something that could be the central pillar of political ideology, taken from those who had lived on it for generations, and the rights of the new owners guaranteed by a powerful state. This territorial aim was affirmed at the 1905 conference resolution on the Uganda plan:

> *"That this conference of South African delegates reaffirms the continued and unalterable adhesion of Zionists to their one territorial aim – the establishment of a publicly recognised, legally secured home for the Jewish people in Palestine."[24]*

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[21] *SAJC* 26/05/1905

[22] The actual plot of land on offer to the Zionist Organisation changed throughout the negotiations but settled on Uasin Gishu which is now in western Kenya, but had been in eastern Uganda until 1902, and was accesable along the Ugandan railway from Mombasa which had been the capital city until it was shifted to Nairobi in 1905. Until the 1890s both modern Kenya and Uganda where under the rule of the Imperial British East Africa Company

[23] *SAJC* 30/06/1905

[24] *SAJC* 14/07/1905

The main international proponent of the East Africa plan, Israel Zangwill, using language that would be duplicated for Palestine, said that " we need a land [and] East Africa needs a population" (Feldman, 2007, p. 19). Completely ignoring the Masai, or Palestinians, this kind of statement mirrored the growing settler ideological move, seen in South Africa as well, to cast themselves as legitimate by epistemically expelling those who had and did live there – both from the land and from the category of human.

The mutual intelligibility of these two colonial outlooks indicates not just that being Zionist 'helped' Yidn come to terms with settler colonialism in South Africa but also that exposure to the pedagogy of racial capitalism in South Africa convinced more Jews to become Zionist. The South African Jewish community is recognised as being one of the strongest, per capita, bastions of Zionism and also one of the most right-wing (Goldberg, 1984, p. 50) (Polakow-Suransky, 2010, p. 4). A big reason for this can be attributed to the application of colonial racism in South Africa into the ideology of colonialism in Palestine.

Racial Labour Hierarchy

One distinction between Zionism and Southern African settler colonialism was its relationship to labour. In the other British settler colonies of Australia and New Zealand, as well in the Zionist vision – labour was done by White/Jewish people respectively. The latter are structured on an ongoing logic of elimination – aiming to appropriate land, expel those who lived on the land and establish in it a society of only themselves (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). South Africa, and most settler colonies in Africa, are, in addition to the logic of elimination, also structured on a logic of exploitation – which aims to exploit labour (Wolfe, 2013, p. 264). The combination of these logic results in a colonialist ideology which aims for a society in which, as Milner argued, even the "lowest ranks [of Whites] should be able to maintain a standard of living far above that of the poorest section of the population of a purely White country."[25]

This necessitated the establishment of a strict racial hierarchy in which the capitalist class was White, skilled and supervisory labour was White, and unskilled labour was Black. This was reproduced, though at different rates, in all industries, from mining and agriculture to manufacturing and domestic work. Trading, especially small scale, was a more difficult sector to regulate.

However, the racial labour hierarchy did not impose itself over totally pre-existing racial categories. It also played a role in constructing them. People do not arrive at work as fully formed subjects ready to exploit or be exploited, nor ready to perform race and gender as required. "Exploitable subjects are

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[25] *Milner to a deputation of the White League 02/06/1903* cited in (Milner, 1933, p. 459)

not just found; they are made at the point of production" (Weeks, 2011, p. 10). The public pedagogy of racial capitalism teaches the roles, behaviours, attitudes and ideology required for their position in the labour hierarchy.

There was resistance to these lessons. Despite all this pressure to become a disciplined member of the White colonial society, most Yidn involved in artisanal trades resisted and organised in non-racial trade unions.[26] Though their British (including some Anglo-Jews) employers tried to ferment racial distrust Yidn workers in these industries were at the forefront of non-racial union organising between 1904 to 1910. Bundist[27] organiser J Gillitz was an early leader of the nonracial union, the Social Democratic Federation – which was formed by Yidn cabinet makers and carpenters. Gillitz, for example, "called for class solidarity across ethnic and colour lines. He repeatedly appealed to Jewish workers to ally themselves with the British and their 'coloured brothers' in the fight against exploitation" (Mantzaris, 1987, pp. 258-259).

Examples of resistance like these remind us that the processes of history are not deterministic. There were other possible routes for the Jewish communal institutions to take, other lessons to be learnt. This section, however, is concerned with those that adopted the lessons of racial capitalism.

This section of the chapter will seek to understand the making of colonial consciousness in Yidn and its implications by first reflecting on the impact of encountering the racial labour hierarchy on the immigrant Yidn. I will then look at trading, a racial grey area in which many Yidn were involved. Faced with antisemitism, and racial degradation, but also the first exposure to exploitative practices and the chance to not only be, but also to act, White – commercial and service trading was a school for White subjectivity. Moving from the productive to the reproductive, this section will then evaluate the Jewish relationship to domestic work – as an increasingly gendered and racialised profession. As employers of domestic labour, Jews adopted both the exploitative roles and the material benefits of settler colonialism. This will lead to the labour of community building and welfare, roles predominantly filled by Jewish women in the free time gained from domestic workers. As domestic feminists who saw the work of building the nation as analogous to building the home, the implications of the lessons of racial capitalism are revealed in the application of colonial racism in welfare institutions such as the South African Jewish Orphanage.

The first contact with the lessons of racial capitalism are seen in the story of a new Yidn immigrant to South Africa written in Yiddish by Richard Feldman in 1935. Titled *Gold and Diamonds* the story

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[26] For a fascinating and largely unique history of Jewish union activity prior to 1910 see Mantzaris (1987)
[27] The Jewish General Workers Union which organised on socialist principles in Eastern Europe and spread with the Lithuanian diaspora. The Bund was fundamentally anti-capitalist, anti-tzarist, and anti-zionist.

depicted how a Yidn immigrant became enmeshed in anti-Black racism. After arriving in South Africa, the immigrant went to Johannesburg.

> *"The most terrifying week of his life had been the first week, alone in a new land, without a language, without friends, without a trade. He did not know where or to whom one applied. What did one do? When he had paid his rent for the room in advance for the second week, he decided to go from door to door seeking work: it made no difference what sort of work. Surely, they would accept him for work done by Blacks – he was no worse than a Black.*
>
> *For two days he wandered around. They took him on nowhere. The one person who showed any interest in him gave him to understand that it was quite out of the question for a White to do the work of a Black. The prestige of the White race had to be maintained. So great a degradation as that of a European taking the place of a Black could not be allowed (Feldman, 1987 [1935], pp. 75-76).*

These are the first lessons, there is a racial hierarchy, and that the new immigrant should be ashamed to be willing to work 'below his racial position'. Though there was a distinct labour shortage of 129 000 workers in the mines in 1903 (Lagden, 1905, p. 76), Jewish immigrants were not considered as potential employees. Though many would have been willing to do the work, the racial labour hierarchy was too valuable to the mining capitalists. It is the same with why they imported temporary Chines labour rather than employ the many poor and unemployed Afrikaners just following the war – employing Whites meant paying a higher wage and degrading the position of Whites.

This is also seen in the following anecdote from just before the importation of 60 000 Chinese indentured workers. In it, the links between race, civilisation and labour are further highlighted. It is said that a wealthy Berlin Jew, W.W. Levison, heard of the labour shortage in the Transvaal and approached some mining magnates with an offer to bring out 100 000 young Jews from Russia and Galicia to work for two pounds a month. Though the scheme was later shown to be a farce the local press and the magnates rejected the offer. Pitying the potential workers, the *Transvaal Leader* explained that "for the poor persecuted immigrants to accept a starvation wage would be worse than for the Coloureds or the African's. The Africans would look down on them."[28] The mining magnates corporation "opposed bringing out unqualified European labourers for a wage that would not allow them to live as civilized members of society" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 80-81).

For the Yidn immigrants, this wasn't necessarily a relief. Many did not have trade skills, or the networks and certificates to get jobs with the trade skills that they did have. They couldn't take 'Black jobs' and

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[28] *The Transvaal Leader* 30/11/1903 cited in (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 81)

struggled to get 'White jobs' and so lived with the combination of precarity, and a weird mix of inferiority and superiority. Yidn men mostly became involved as artisans such as "tailors, shoemakers, builders, cabinet makers, watchmakers, Blacksmiths, mechanics, tobacconists, and so forth" (Mantzaris, 1987, p. 252) or trading common household goods, food, clothes, and cigarettes (Polsky, 1987 [1910], pp. 24-25). Both men and women could find extra money selling liquor illegally but it was at high risk. Yidn women were also involved in unwaged domestic labour in their own homes, selling baked goods, "washing, cleaning, sewing," and sex work (Krut, 1985, pp. 165, 236). Many children at the time also had to work as apprentices, assistants, or by trading small goods.

Overall, despite their difficulties, "the political and economic conditions which created the White labour aristocracy served to ensure that Jewish workers, or 'petty capitalists'…. Would escape the position of their fellows in Eastern Europe. Thus Jews were able to take advantage of the industrialisation of South Africa to escape from the shtetl in one generation, faster perhaps than any similar Jewish immigrant community elsewhere in the world" (Adler, 1973, p. 29).

Feldman's character did not remain out of work for long. Realising that many new immigrants found work serving or selling to African migrant labourers, he went to the gold reef and found work in a *k*****eater*s, also known as *Shisa Nyamas*[29]. These were horrendous places at the time which by law only served food to Africans and, again by law, could only be owned and staffed by White men (Sherman, 2000, p. 506).[30] Though only about one hundred Jews ever worked in a *Shisa Nyamas* at any one time, they retain a powerful position in cultural memory (Robertson, 1991, p. 125). I will use these *Shisa Nyamas*, and the *eatniks* – people who worked in a *Shisa Nyamas* – as a starting point to discuss the pedagogy of trading

Trading

These *Shisa Nyamas* operated through government concession and thereby had a monopoly on meat provision on the mines. Hence, they bought the cheapest, often bad quality, meat to cook and maintained awful hygiene standards.

The new immigrant in Feldman's story is shocked at the condition of the place:

> *"k*****eater – this was a Yiddish word created in the Transvaal. It was a restaurant for*
> *Black labourers. It was the very ugliest place in which people could eat. It was dark and dirty,*
> *and the foul stench unbearable, nauseating to the point of fainting. He asked his friend why*

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[29] barbequed meat

[30] Until a 1908 court case allowed Chinese men to qualify for the permit. Many Chinese men then became involved in the trade as either owners, managers, or as the *de facto* illegal owners. White women were specifically restricted from the trade (Sherman, 2000, p. 513)

they waited until the meat began to stink before they brought it into the k*****eater. The answer was simple: when the meat was more or less fresh, it had a price; when it was old and the smell strong, one got it almost for nothing. And according to the understanding of the eatniks, nothing was too bad for the Blacks. One did not regard them as people, they did not receive even the consideration which every owner showed his horse" (Feldman, 1987 [1935], pp. 75-76).

But as he has no options, he begins to work there and over time he reflects that "one grows accustomed to everything" (Feldman, 1987 [1935], pp. 75-76). The lessons learnt here are obvious. Prevented from getting a job as a manual labourer, the immigrant is already taught that he is 'better' than Africans. Now in a position of power, in which the company's profits increase as the quality of the meat decreases, and surrounded by those already steeped in colonial racism, the *eatnik* is faced with the immense educational force of racial capitalism.

Still, however, he is not well regarded amongst White society. The Johannesburg Evening Chronicle made it clear that "a man who is content to serve food to k****** cannot expect to rank any higher than a k*****, for what self-respecting White man would wait on a native at a table?"[31] Yidn thus learn that doing anything which makes it seem that they are subservient to Africans, will cost them monetarily or socially. Memmi reflected that "to observe the life of the coloniser and the colonised is to discover rapidly that the daily humiliation of the colonised, his objective subjugation, are not merely economic. Even the poorest coloniser thought himself to be – and actually was – superior to the colonised. This too was part of colonial privilege" (Memmi, 2003 [1965], p. 8).

Yidn were operating in the grey zones of this colonial privilege. Colonisers in fact and law but not quite accepted into colonial society, Yidn who worked as *eatniks* or other traders sometimes were victims of antisemitism through the trope of dirty trading and were referred to as crafty, shifty, swindling parasites. A particularly vulgar example is this description of fishermen in Kalk Bay. Highlighting dirty bodies, trading and language the 1902 C*ape Times* article describes how the Peruvian "soon pockets his profit"

"a disreputable-looking coterie of the parasites of the social fabric, standing a little apart, conversing in a gibberish of mid-Europe, barelegged, frowzy-headed, shifty-eyed, and nervously sharp, ready to pounce upon the rough handed sons of the seas as they come to land ... The keen-witted specimen of the lower species of the immigrant Hebrew race in unvarnished guise and unreserved demeanour... Rapacious foreign Hebrew who never risks

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[31] *Johannesburg Evening Chronicle* December 1916 cited in (Sherman, 2000, p. 507)

his own life or safety ... indignantly asks in pig-English 'Call that a fish? Vy, I will haf to give it

away.' ... The Peruvian soon pockets his profit, and so he prospers from day to day."[32]

The unknown author of this passage was drawing from a commonly accepted opinion amongst White settlers - displayed in the press, the statements of politicians and in labour and immigration reports - that Yidn swindled money rather than earned it.

At this point, most Jewish men were small-time traders or craftsmen (Robertson, 1991, p. 125). Though the age of the rural travelling smouse[33] was diminishing, many had become shopkeepers in the cities or if they were new immigrants without much money, they were walking traders – often called tokhers, or tryers.

The prevalence of Yidn in trading and craftwork, in the context of a discourse of dirty trading, such as the above quote, and its implications of a lack of value, meant that Yidn had to try extra hard to separate themselves from the association with degradation and reframe themselves as 'proper' and 'respectable' members of White society. Goldsmid summed up the sentiment well,

> *"what the Jews of this country want, in order to maintain their self-respect, to justify their existence, and to make them worthy of their past, is simply to lead a White man's life, and their whole duty may be summed up in this expression."[34]*

A 'White man's life' in the colonial context implicitly requires a sense of superiority, casual racism, and exploitation.

Yidn tried to achieve this status through the policing and patronage of community structures, and through political recognition as citizens and European immigrants but they were also formed as White through racial capitalism. I agree with Sherman's (2000, pp. 510-511) analysis of the pedagogic process at play:

> *"Skilful exploitation of South Africa's socio-economic system could raise the White working-class Jew above the despised Black labourer and enable him to compete for power with the governing Gentile. However, to rise by virtue of 'race' above the lot that for most Jews had been inescapable in Eastern Europe meant siding unequivocally with the exploiters. It meant first learning, through daily racist interaction, to despise - as they themselves had once been despised - the majority of the population who were defined a priori as inferior. Then it meant*

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[32] *Cape Times* 20/03/1902 cited in (Shain, 1994, p. 46)
[33] A South African Yiddish word for a pedlar
[34] *SAJC* 02/06/1905

learning to master an entire range of dishonest practices in hopes of eventually escaping the

bondage of being an exploitee for the freedom of becoming an exploiter oneself".

Domestic Labour

Anglo Jews, in their comfortable positions in the racial and class hierarchies, but also Yidn who were quickly moving into the middle-class adopted this role of being an 'exploiter oneself' in their own homes, learning the range of daily humiliation and dishonest practices inscribed into the historical role of the employers of domestic labour.

Domestic labour, which plays a central role in the maintenance and reproduction of the working class, and thus in the reproduction of capital, is carried out primarily in South Africa today "by wives and mothers as unwaged workers in the home, and by Black domestic servants as wage workers" (Cock, 1980, p. 13).

The hierarchical power relationship in the employment of Black domestic workers by White families is so indicative of the South African colonial context, that Gideon Shimoni used a photo of a White Jewish women employer and a Black domestic women worker around a Shabbos dinner table as the cover of his pivotal work about the Jews in South Africa, *Community and Conscience* (Shimoni, 2003)(see Figure 9). Many older Jews, even in my memory, still use the term "*shwartzes"* as a derogatory racial slur, or 'girl' and 'boy' as a racial infantilization, to refer to Black domestic workers.

But domestic work was not always Black women's work, nor was it always women's work. This section will briefly some of the history of domestic work in South Africa, how Yidn families began to employ domestic workers and what this form of employment – intimate and degrading – taught Yidn about living as colonialists.
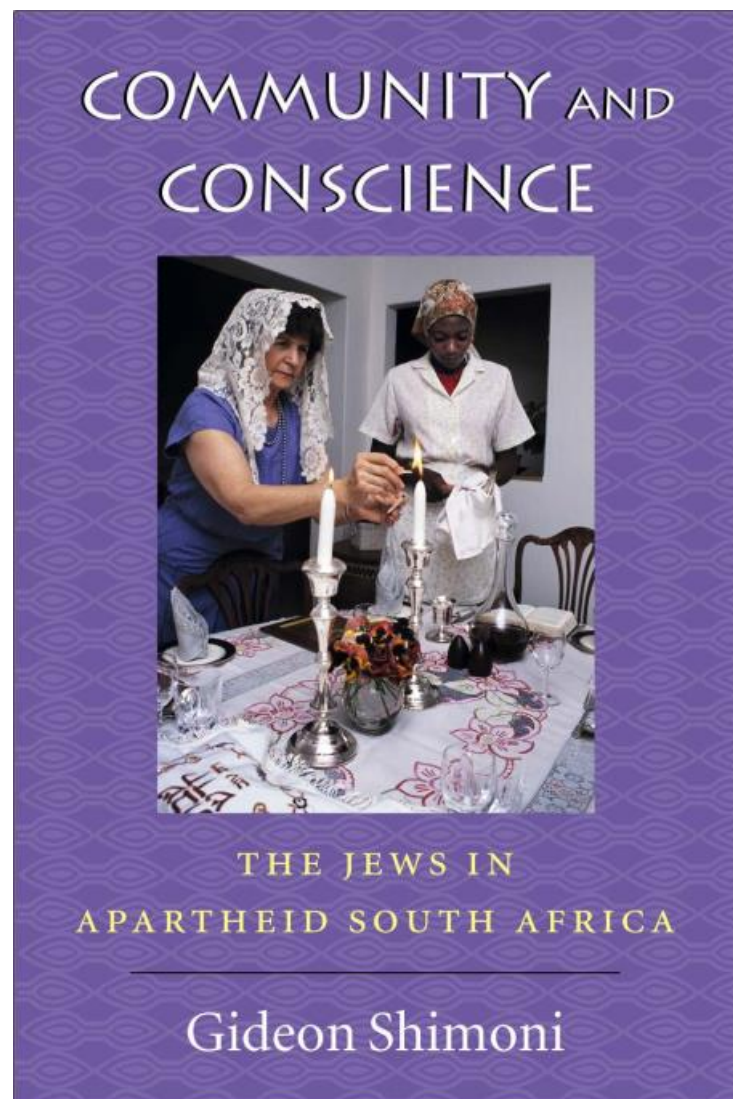

Figure 7: Cover page of the Gideon Shimoni's book 'Community and Conscience', 2003

Until 1834 most domestic workers were slaves, but after emancipation, wealthy British settlers often brought White domestic workers with them. The highly classist attitudes of the British settlers moulded with the racial labour hierarchy (Cock, 1980, pp. 178, 182). As the colonial aversion to manual labour increased, as did the growing association of domestic labour with dirty work (McClintock, 1995, p. 154), fewer and fewer Europeans were willing to do the work (Cock, 1980, p. 180).

This contributed to the shaping of racial subjectivities. For the immigrant Yidn, the lessons become clear that to employ others to work in your home is a sign of successful settler behaviour. To work in your own home is ok, not ideal and a bit shameful, but necessary. To work in another's home, however, is a sign of racial degradation and bad settler practice. White domestic workers coming to the Transvaal from the UK for example took "no time at all to realise that in South Africa hard physical labour at low wages was first and foremost the province of the Black man" (Van Onselen, 1982, p. 219).

Of course, this was and is highly gendered work. Though domestic work in Britain had long been restricted to women, in South Africa both men and women, as slaves and workers, did domestic labour in other people's homes. However, throughout the 1800s it was increasingly understood as Black women's work such that by 1891 Black women made up 61.4% of all domestic workers (Cock, 1980, pp. 222, 225-226). In the Transvaal however, most domestic workers were Black men at least until 1912 (Van Onselen, 1982, pp. 223,257). In the labour shortage of the early 1900s, the government of the Cape Colony attempted to entice and coerce more Black women into domestic service so that men could be freed up to work in the mines (Lagden, 1905, p. 83).

While paid domestic labour was slowly being gendered, unpaid domestic labour in the Jewish household was also being re-inscribed as gendered. For two decades most Yidn immigrants had been men who lived either as lone bachelors or in homosocial communes. In Hyman Polsky's story, *The New Merchant*, a recent immigrant who was put up by Yidn traders made himself useful by cooking them all dinner. "The greenhorn [newcomer] had realized that in Africa a man must do the cooking, wash the dishes and set the table" (Polsky, 1987 [1910], p. 23). Similarly, Sherman argues that the work done by an *eatnik* "reconstruct[ed] his gendering to fulfil what Orthodox Jewish tradition customarily defines as the female role of providing food" (Sherman, 2000, p. 513). However, as Jewish women began immigrating in greater numbers, this temporary subversion was reversed as men re-imposed patriarchal gender roles.

Employing Domestic workers
This also coincided with the increased move by Yidn families into family houses and the employment of paid domestic workers. Being able to afford a domestic worker was seen as a sign of success and

ratification of their belonging in colonial society. I will examine how a colonial subjectivity develops through the role of petty oppressor and exploiter.

Yaakov Azriel Davidson, a satirical Yiddish writer, wrote a few *tekhines* to highlight social issues between 1911-1912. A *tekhines* is an old form of prayer written by a rabbi to be given to those who could not read Hebrew, though it was constructed as if it was only for women (Belling, 2008, p. 16). Usually concerned with domestic life, it is a particularly patriarchal form of prayer that reveals only what the author thinks the reader should be concerned about. Davidson was not a Rabbi but used the form for social commentary. In a *tekhines* titled "*A Prayer for Jewish Wives who've already been in Africa for several years*" he has a woman praying as follows:

> *"Listen to my prayers, so that my husband's heart should not be as hard as stone when I ask him to rent a bigger house or to employ a couple more k******, or a couple of White servants."*

And further that some 'old country' neighbours

> *"…here live in big houses with large rooms and employ two k****** and a White servant. Gevaldt, Lord of the Universe, how long must I suffer thy servant [her husband], the shlimazel, for whom I have sacrificed my youth, must I further darken the end of my days cooking and baking for him in such a small house with only one k*****?" (Davidson, 2008 [1911-1912], p. 42).*

In another "*Prayer for a Bride,*" Davidson writes

> *I beseech thee again, merciful God, that thy deeds be merciful, send him [her husband] down sense so that he should not eat his words, and that immediately after the wedding he should rent a six-room house in Yeoville, not in Ferreira where all the Peruvenikes live, and should immediately employ two White servants" (Davidson, 2008 [1911-1912], p. 27).*

Ensuring to account for exaggerations generally used in satire, these do give a clear indication, supported by other historical research, that the employment of African domestic workers was commonplace by Jewish homeowners (Krut, 1985, pp. 217-220). But more importantly, it also shows the adoption of colonial subjectivity. The pedagogy of racial capitalism teaches that success is defined by owning more stolen land and exploiting more domestic workers.

The use of racial slurs indicates the adoption of White settler practices and worldviews, and distinct personal gain from the coercive labour conditions. The different language to refer to 'White servants' instead of 'k******' shows both the adoption of colonial language and its ideology. 'k*****' gets

mobilised in the colonial period to characterise Africans as savage and subhuman (Mbowa, 2019, p. 5). Viewed through a colonial gaze, African's were seen as in terms of labour units, not as humans (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, p. 26). Therefore, a phrase such as 'African servants', though linguistically equivalent to 'White servants', becomes redundant and fully captured in the term k*****.

For Yidn to adopt this colonial framework, also indicated in the social value attached to employing White domestic workers, over Black domestic workers, indicates that the broader racial hierarchies of exploitation and oppression were being brought directly into Jewish homes. Dismissing this a simply a 'fact' of life in racially segregated South Africa, as some Jewish historians have done, ignores the impact that this has to have had to the political and ideological position of Jews over the next century. In the intimacy of the home, Jews learned the roles of petty oppressor and exploiter.

Community Labour

One of the social habits of Whiteness can be seen in the development of community structures. Besides the high-level political manoeuvres of the community structures that my thesis has focussed on, the daily lives of the organisations and the countless welfare, landsmanshaftn[35] and Zionist societies were constructed off the back of unrecognised women's work. Jewish women did the majority of the groundwork and fundraising that made the South African Jewish community structures some of the strongest in the world (Gitlin, 1950, pp. 258-259) (Krut, 1985, pp. 180-182,206-207).

This was done at a time in which the Victorian image of the middle-class women in the colonies was being reshaped into the homemaker of empire. For example, The Star's 'Lady Correspondent' wrote in 1905 that the

> *"woman is settling into her own groove, and is recognising that the building of homes is almost as great a work as the building of Empires - indeed, it must follow and supplement that work."*[36]

 Krut explains that domestic feminists "emphasised that, as moral and spiritual housekeepers, they were also keepers of the state and nation. As they swept outside their homes and into the public world, they drew their skirts after them" (Krut, 1985, p. 224).

Fundraising efforts, such as dances, by women consistently raised more funds than those done by men and paid for not only the work of their organisations but were donated to the 'men's' organisations,

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[35] mutual aid society

[36] *The Star* 25/08/1906 in an article titled 'Politics and Women Power and the Passive Sex. A Feminine View' by 'Our Lady Correspondent' cited in (Krut, 1985, p. 194).

synagogue, relief efforts in Russia, and international Zionist organisations to keep them going as well (Krut, 1985, p. 215).

Dances made sense as fundraising activities because they relied primarily on the volunteer labour of the women involved rather than a capital outlay. Though middle class, few women would have had access to their husband's funds, they did, however, have the skills, experience, time and resources (kitchens etc) to put together big social events (Krut, 1985, pp. 216-217).

Unlike working-class women who were equally involved in finding an income as their husbands, alongside their carrying out domestic labour, middle-class women had the time for leisure[37] or community labour due to the exploitation of domestic workers. As Krut explains, "The public prominence of the middle-class Jewish woman in Johannesburg no doubt owed a great deal to her position as a White woman in Africa, whose domestic tasks were by this time largely undertaken by servants" (Krut, 1985, pp. 217-218).

Cock notes that the leisured lifestyle of White South Africa "rests on the specific exploitation of the Black domestic workers" (Cock, 1980, p. 180). That some used this leisure time to engage in unpaid community labour is commendable, but it doesn't detract from its fundamental requirement of the hidden contribution of exploited workers – both in the home and at the fundraising events (Krut, 1985, pp. 217-218, 226). The Jewish community, much like other White communities, can be said to be built upon not only the monetary gains of exploitation but also the time such exploitation grants to build community. The time which is taken from the Black women who do the domestic labour in White homes.

One of the welfare activities undertaken with this extra time was in the South African Jewish Orphanage.[38] Many Orphanages were opened after the Anglo-Boer war and likewise, the Jewish community also opened one in 1902. The orphanage had not only a welfare purpose but also an ideological one. Much like the Jewish organisations in Britain, the Jewish community was expected to socialise Yidn immigrants into Whiteness while appearing not to support the immigration of undesirables. Therefore the Orphanage did not accept the children of recently arrived immigrants but

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[37] McClintock argues that the association of the typical Victorian housewife with leisure is false as only a few would have had enough servants to truly be freed from housework and that the work of appearing at leisure required a labourious and time consuming character role (McClintock, 1995, p. 161). However, drawing from Memmi's analysis of the settler colony, and Krut's historical research into Jewish women's lives in Johanensburg, the middle class settler women might have actually have had leisure time through the hyper exploitation of colonised workers

[38] Though named as an orphanage it functioned more like a temporary boarding house. Of the 162 children who lived in the orphanage between 1903-1911, only 1 was a full orphan. Widowed single parents, iterant traders and others living in poverty would apply for their children to be cared for between the ages of 3-12 when they were a drain on unavailable household resources (Krut, 1985, pp. 254-260, 263-264)

only of those who had been in South Africa for a while and were seen as the 'deserving poor' (Krut, 1985, pp. 4, 257).

The orphanage also enforced racial constructions and economic roles. Though they employed Black women as domestic workers in the orphanage to look after the children, this was only viewed as appropriate when under the supervision of White women. This is seen most dramatically when working-class parents, refusing the unsolicited intervention of middle-class welfare workers, chose to leave their children, not in the orphanage but the direct care of Black childminders.

An example of this is the story of the children of a Mrs Goldstein. Her children had been in and out of the orphanage for a few years and her application for their readmission was denied. She decided to, therefore, employ a Black women childminder who worked out of her own home to care for her child. When the Orphanage inspectors went around to her house to see how she was coping and tracked down the children "they were horrified that the children were in the home of a Black woman" and within two days the children were readmitted into the orphanage. Mrs Goldstein was then treated more harshly than other parents and put under increased scrutiny when she wanted to visit or take out her children again (Krut, 1985, pp. 260-262).

Children left in the orphanage or informal arrangements with Jewish, or even non-Jewish White families, were seen as being taken care of and as a responsible decision by the single parents who could otherwise not care for their children. However, "where the informal child-care arrangements involved Black childminders, the philanthropists were most likely to claim that the child had been 'deserted' and needed to be 'rescued' by institutional welfare" (Krut, 1985, p. 273).

What violence does this do to the child that was ripped from their caregivers? Teaching them in no uncertain terms that Black families are lesser than White ones. What violence does this do to the childminders? Enforcing their oppression and sense of inferiority as well as removing their wages. And to the parents, almost all poor Yidn? That they are incapable, deserving of surveillance, and that they have to adhere to White supremacy if they wanted access to their children.

A look at the role of community labour in the Jewish community reveals two lessons of racial capitalism. Community labour, though unpaid, is similarly shaped by the functioning of racial capitalism. The construction of White women as the homemakers of empire and the Jewish community's reliance on the exploited labour of Black domestic workers indicates both the drawing of distinct racial roles and hierarchies and the exploitation of those for the benefit of the Jewish community. This distinctly colonial relation is also then manifested in the ideological production of the community structures – not only of the political ones which collude with the colonial state to

transform Jews into colonialists, or support colonialism in Palestine – but also the welfare organisations and socialisation institutions which shaped and enforced a colonial mentality in everyday life.

Conclusion

Despite the antisemitism from many in the White community which classed the Yidn as dirty, disease-ridden, parasitic, 'scum of the earth', for the sake of property ownership and the racial labour hierarchy, Yidn were unquestionably White in the legal and economic realm.

This chapter has shown how the pedagogic role of racial capitalism created disciplined and governable subjects through the construction of distinct racial categories which were defined by their participation in the economy. Land ownership, employers, and skilled labourers were roles defined by, and which defined being White. Being Black was defined by, and defined landlessness and manual labour. Though there were grey areas around small-time trading and artisanal professions, Jews were taught that there was a material benefit to being classified as White. From access to professions, rights to title deeds, and exploitation of Black workers in the home, Jews of all class positions came to adopt the behaviours of an exploitative class.

Yidn thus learned the lesson of racial capitalism. They internalised the racial constructions, learnt the habits of racial denigration and exploitation, and come to see their privileged position as justified. Through this, the social, cultural, and economic settler actions and ideology were established and enforced in Yidn. As a kind of threatening spectre hovering over each new Yidn, colonialism demanded: 'You shall behave like a settler or you shall be expelled and exploited!'

Though the refusal of colonial racism by early Jewish trade unions and labour organisers reminds us that the lessons of racial capitalism could be rejected and resisted, the majority of the community internalised the lessons. Far from simply benefitting from a pre-existing racial categorisation, they solidified their identity as White and enforced Whiteness amongst those Yidn who were not living under its precepts. Finding material and social meaning in their economic roles, their ideological positions were shaped, transforming many in the community from colonizers – structured around "profit, privilege, usurpation" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], pp. 9-10) – to colonialists who believed this position to be legitimate.

The Jewish community structures were then formed by theses colonialists, the men and women who benefited most from colonial exploitation. Far from a separation of their roles in the economy and their roles in the community institutions, the community institutions – political, Zionist, religious and welfare orientated – would be organised on similar principles of White supremacy, colluding with the colonial state to maintain and extend White supremacy.

This chapter has argued that involvement in racial capitalism taught Jews the roles of usurpers of land and exploiters of labour which defined the construction and hierarchisation of racial categories. The next chapter will return to the cultural realm and introduce language as a field in which racial categories were constructed and hierarchised. It will argue that in relation to the Immigration Restriction Acts, the Jewish community explicitly constituted itself as exhibiting 'Europeanness' rather than 'Asiaticness'.

4) Immigration Restrictions and the Politics of Language

Apparently, the Government, when it suits them, can Europeaise a language for enforcing one law and de-Europeanise it for enforcing another [1]

Indian Opinion 1905

For these Jews, the dominant strategy for negotiating personhood is to insist, against antisemitic slanders imputing to them an alien nature, on their Europeanness, their rightful membership in the West, with either no awareness of or indifference to the way in which Europeanness has come to be tied up with claims to White supremacy

Charles W Mills, 1998, p. 89

Introduction

As Du Bois analysed in his essay *The Souls of White Folks* (1910 [1920], p. 42)*,* White communities around the world were increasingly rallying around White supremacy in the 1890s. The transnational networks of White settler colonies shared similar desires and the notion of what that meant – a push for a European based 'civilisation' rather than 'barbarism'. One of the forms that this took in the settler colonies was as a reaction to the increased mobility of people seen as a threat to the construction of 'White men's countries'.

This reflects the 19th century practice, defined by Foucault as, biopower in which the social body needs to be maintained against threats to the purity of the population. "Hence the idea that foreigners have infiltrated this society" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 81). In the schema of social purity, foreigners were "introducing harmful elements into its body, and which therefore had to be driven out for both political and biological reasons" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 89). Hence, Immigration restrictions applied almost exclusively to those deemed to belong to 'barbaric' racial groups and became a tool not only of racial exclusion but also of racial constructions – constructing the boundaries of racial groups and categorising people as they arrived.

There were a variety of tools of exclusion used to apply these restrictions. Some were class-based, excluding destitute or non-working immigrants. There were also exclusions for involvement in sex work or criminal acts. And many had a eugenicist bent and excluded those with mental or physical disabilities. A few were forthright about their terms of racial exclusion – especially concerning Chinese

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[1] *Indian Opinion* 18/03/1905 – A newspaper published in the Natal Colony catering to the immigrant Indian population

Exclusion Acts – but due to a particular blend of British liberalism and late 19th-century geopolitics, most found different ways to define and exclude the racial Other. In this chapter, I will be focussing on the literacy test as a tool of racial violence.

Tracing the transnational development of literacy tests takes on a journey from Mississippi, USA through New South Wales, Australia to the Colony of Natal where their use in immigration restrictions was pioneered in the 1890s as a means to define and exclude 'Asiatics' without officially mentioning the exclusion by name. The Natal Colony innovation was to require literacy in a 'European Language'. After tracing this development, I will shift my focus to the Cape Colony in the following decade. I make the case that Yidn were sometimes one of the targets for restricted immigration through the literacy test, defining them as non-European whilst on the ship even while the law treated them as European once on land.

With language operating as a racial marker, the Europeanness of Yiddish was in contention. Yiddish was seen by some in the British and Anglo-Jewish press as a nothing more than gibberish, a dirty language. Using concepts of dirt developed earlier in the thesis – as a social accusation of disposability and racial degradation, I examine how Yiddish was used as a marker of 'racial degeneracy' both in the Anglophone Cape colony but also amongst Jews.

I will show how Yiddish quickly became legally recognised as a European language throughout South Africa. This section will touch on the political economy of this decision – an example of the capitalist underpinnings of racial constructions - but focus on how the nascent Jewish community came together for the first time to argue for their inclusion into White South Africa by agreeing with its desire to exclude those deemed to be "undesirable" or "yellow" (ie Asiatic). This process leads to the formation of the two forerunners to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) and shaped its concern for the years to come – to work with the colonial state to shape Jews into White subjects.

Despite its official Europeanisation, Yiddish was still a marker of social and racial degeneracy. The elite Jews, both Anglo-Jews and assimilated Yidn, saw it as an undesirable sign of barbarism. The eradication of the Yiddish language became an internal civilisational project both by Anglo-Jews who wanted Yidn to assimilate into settler-colonial Whiteness and by Zionists who wanted Jews to assimilate into the idea of European nationhood by establishing a Jewish colony. They therefore refused to officially use Yiddish in communal institutions. There is evidence that a distinct inferiority complex developed amongst Yiddish speakers. This resulted in most community leadership positions being given to those Jews, mostly property owners, who most demonstrated their fluency in English, and thus their affinity with the colonial ruling class.

The development of literacy tests as a technology of racial exclusion

The confluence of racial and class concerns in settler colonies in the late 19th century required allowing the immigration of indentured and enslaved workers from outside of Europe. Africans, Indians and Chinese workers were the most often affected by these practices. Politicians and capitalists often supported the bringing in of such labour while settler populations worried at the reduction of their wages and the bringing in of an 'alien' culture. Largely, however, temporary indentured labourers who later returned home were accepted because the practice maintained the racial hierarchies and racial demographics of the colony. Independent immigrants, however, as artisans and merchants, were seen as a threat to settler society and responded to with political mobilisations and threats of violence.

One such example of this is the mobilisation by two settler organisations in Natal in the 1890s, the European Protection Association and the Colonial Patriotic Union. In the early 1890s, the Natal government took legal and bureaucratic measures to encourage formally indentured labourers to return to India, and restrict indenture to 'unskilled' workers. The organising by these two groups, however, kept pushing the government further, including petitions to restrict 'Asiatic' immigration and a demonstration of over 5000 people at the docks when two ships, the S.S. Courland and S.S. Naderi, were about to land in Durban. The ships had come from Bombay and were carrying 600 Indian passengers including Gandhi, who was already hated by the White settler community. The demonstrators had declared themselves willing to use violence to prevent the landing of the two ships. Though the government managed a negotiation allowing the passengers to disembark, they were under intense pressure to put forward a law to restrict immigration from India (Martens, 2006, pp. 326-331).

The settler mobilisations pressured the legislature to adopt laws that had passed in New South Wales, Australia which had "as their object the total exclusion of Asiatics, " in the words of a petition signed by 5000 White settlers (Martens, 2006, p. 332). However, the British Crown refused to ratify any legislation that specifically mentioned race or nationality. At the time, the British Government had geopolitical reasons not to ratify any 'racial' legislation, especially concerning India (their biggest and hardest colony to govern) and Japan (a rising world power) (Martens, 2006, p. 331).

The Natal government had to look elsewhere for inspiration. What they found were a series of laws in the United States of America (USA) that utilised education tests as a tool of racial exclusion. In 1890, Mississippi, faced with a similar restriction to Natal, had included a comprehension test into its franchise bill with the express purpose to disenfranchise Black voters. This was markedly successful – in one county, which had more potential Black voters than White voters, it disenfranchised 11670 out of 11700 Black voters – reducing the Black voting population to 30 people (Lake, 2005, pp. 215-216).

Its success was shared throughout White settler societies and education tests, as a tool of racial disenfranchisement, were adopted in many other states of the USA as well as in the Cape Colony in 1892.

In 1894, in the north-east USA, an Immigration Restriction League was formed amongst political elites. One of the members, Henry Cabot Lodge, had argued in 1891 that America was made up of people from Western and Northern Europe who shared "community of race or language" but that increased immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe was "making its greatest relative increase from races most alien to the body of American people and from the lowest and most illiterate classes among those races" (1891, pp. 30,32). Lodge's recommendations were to insist on a consular recommendation of good character, a medical certificate of good health, and that they should "make a further definitive test which will discriminate against illiteracy" as it would "in all probability shut out a large part of the undesirable portion of the present immigration" (1891, p. 36).

Literacy as a tool of racial discrimination was central to the League's strategy and they successfully had an Immigration Restriction Bill drafted (1895) and passed (1896) (Lake, 2005, pp. 218-219). This was picked up by the politicians in Natal as a potential way to achieve the exclusion of 'Asiatics' without explicitly mentioning them. On the Immigration Restriction Bill's second reading in March 1897, the Premier of Natal, Harry Escombe, explained to the Legislative Assembly "that the Bill that I now have the honour to submit to this Assembly is founded on the American Act. But it goes one step further. The American Act prohibits the immigration of ... 'persons who cannot read and write in their own language or in some other language' (these are the words of the statute) 'being of the age of sixteen and upwards' (Lake, 2005, p. 221)

In America at that time, the politics of immigration were centred on poor and mostly illiterate Chinese, Japanese and Eastern/Southern European immigrants. But in the Colony of Natal, the politics were focused on 'Asiatics' who were mostly literate in their languages – Gujurati, Urdu, Hindi, and Tamil amongst others (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2009, p. 115). The Natal legislature took the American Bill but added that the immigrant should be literate in a European language. Specifically, the act read that a person "who when asked to do so by an officer appointed under this Act shall fail to himself write out and sign in the characters of any language of Europe an application to the Colonial Secretary" would be restricted from access (Martens, 2006, pp. 334-335).

It is important to note three aspects of the language of the bill. First, it is written in the masculine. The Immigration Restriction Act elsewhere provided for the immigration of the wife and children of male immigrants, and single women immigrating as domestic workers. Second, though it was ostensibly colour-blind, like most other cases in the Natal Colony and Cape Colony, the law was only applied to

those deemed not to be European. In Natal, unlike America, they weren't concerned with European immigrants, so these laws were never intended to exclude illiterate Europeans. In the Natal legislature, Escombe pointed out that this law should never apply to White settlers (Martens, 2006, p. 340). To achieve this, separate permit was designed for Europeans immigrants who were illiterate and/or destitute but who already had work contracts (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2016, p. 471).

This discriminatory application of the law, that went unwritten, combined with the ambiguity about what it meant to 'fail' to write out the characters of a European language highlights the particular success of the literacy tool. It created an avenue for colonial immigration officers to exclude those they personally thought were undesirable beyond the scope of the law.

Stephenson, speaking about American laws highlights how officers used this avenue:

> *"Registration officers may give a difficult passage of the Constitution to a Negro, and a very easy passage to a White person, or vice versa. He may permit a halting reading by one and require fluent reading by the other. He may let illegible scratching on paper suffice for the signature of one and require of the other a legible handwriting" (Stephenson, 1910, p. 225).*

With literacy tests functioning both legally and administratively as a tool of racial, classed and gendered violence. This law became the exemplar of Immigration Restriction laws throughout the Anglophone White settler colonies. Explicitly endorsed by British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, at a meeting of the premiers of Britain's 11 settler colonies[2], the 'Natal Act', as it came to be known, was quickly adopted throughout Australia, New Zealand and eventually also the Cape Colony (1902) and Transvaal (1907). At that meeting Chamberlain emphasised that the British Government agreed that there should "not be an influx of people alien in civilisation, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influx, moreover, would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population." But reminding them that legislation which specifically mentions race would not be tolerated, he suggested that it was "not because a man is a different colour from ourselves that he is necessarily an undesirable immigrant, but it is because he is dirty, or he is a pauper, or he has some other objection which can be defined." This law, Chamberlain argued, would allow a law to prohibit entry to 'all those whom you really desire to exclude" (Martens, 2006, pp. 337-338). Future drafts of the law would also amplify the amount of flexibility granted to immigration officers, to better implement what Chamberlain recognised was their actual purpose (Lake, 2005, p. 226).

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[2] Canada, Newfoundland, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Cape Colony, and Natal – Neither South Africa nor Australia existed as single states at that point

The introduction of the anti-Asiatic laws in Natal, and the end of the Anglo-Boer War, meant that many Indians who had been denied entry into Natal tried again at Cape Town, which had a more liberal entry policy (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2013, p. 185). This increase in Indian immigration, the ever-growing Yidn immigration, and combined with the post-war economic depression and health epidemics in the Cape Colony lead to fears amongst the White population that they were going to be swamped by 'racial others' who would change the culture of the city and compete for jobs with White workers.

These fears were expressed in the familiar language of overwhelming dirt, which consigned racial 'Others' as unwanted, disease-ridden, and candidates for expulsion. An editorial in the *Cape Times* commented that Cape Town might become a "dumping ground" for "the scum of the Far East."[3] The editor called for legislation that would prevent "the undesirable elements from the East and European ports."[4]

An Immigration Restriction Act was drawn up that would only allow in those people who would bolster the desirable White population and aid in its economic revival. This was the 1902 Immigration Restriction Act which was then replaced by the 1906 Immigration Restriction Act which further emphasized that these laws were applied discriminatorily – requiring biometric data (thumbprints, photographs and descriptions of the body) and the issuing of permits[5] only to Indian immigrants (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2009, pp. 119-120).

Indian immigrants were likened to an infestation and a disease. Clarence William Cousins, the Chief Immigration Officer for Cape Town between 1905-1911 believed that

> *"it is not possible to deal with the Asiatic as with the European; the whole nature of the man is oriental, his habits are different from those of the European, and legislation that would apply easily to the European is not applicable to the Asiatic; and that is one of our difficulties with the Asiatics and Europeans – they are both dealt with under the same law, and so a great deal of discrimination is necessary in administering the law" (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2016, pp. 477-478).*

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[3] This kind of phraseology seems to have been a particular trope at the time. Compare it to the reference to Yidn as 'The Scum of Europe' in the *South African Review* 04/03/1904 and 25/03/1904 cited in (Shain, 1980, p. 20) or 'The coming of the scum" in *The Owl* 06/05/1904 cited in (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 63)

[4] *Cape Times* 9-10-1901 cited in (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2009, p. 117)

[5] These permits functioned similarly to the pass system for Africans. Chinese immigrants had been surveilled by the Cape Colony for many years under this system which was in 1906 extended to Indians in the colony.

He implemented and managed the stricter tests for Indians, the requirements of biometric data for re-entry permits, and the special entry and re-entry permits only granted to (some) Europeans to allow them to bypass the Immigration act.

Cousins was reflecting a tendency in British colonies that had been developing since Henry Maine - the British legal theorist whose book *Ancient Laws* became compulsory reading for Colonial officers. Focussing on colonial India, Maine argued that the idea that 'natives' from the East can be civilised and assimilated into western culture had failed, and was fundamentally incorrect. It wasn't, he argued, just that 'natives' were behind in the process of social evolution but were wholly different beings who were static, unchanging and governed by custom and geography rather than progress and history. The system of government, therefore, could not be based on the assimilation of local elites but to create a duel legal system and manage the constructed difference.

One to govern settlers and another for natives (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 6-13). In British-colonised Africa this was translated into the widely adopted systems of indirect rule in which 'races' (ie those designated non-native) were governed by a single, though discriminatory, civil law and 'tribes' (ie those designated natives) by many customary laws (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 44,47). Cousins seemingly agreed with Maine's fundamental argument but struggled with its translation into practice. He displayed the belief that Asiatics were wholly different beings to Europeans and laments that Asiatics and Europeans were to be governed under a single legal system. Not in a position to change the legal system, Cousins used the flexibility granted to him to create and implement separate systems for Asiatics and Europeans.

Dhupelia-Mesthrie's research on Cousins' life highlights how much latitude these officials had under the law. Cousins drew up the various applications and judged whether a person had successfully filled them in or not, admitting that he held a stricter writing standard for those he thought were detrimental to colonial society. His principles were based on a desire to keep Cape Town "clean", committing to and implementing the whole host of exclusions that the dirt metaphors implied (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2016, p. 474).

Cousins had many prejudices and used the literacy test to exclude those from Italy, Madeira and Greece who didn't meet his standard of 'civilisation' – a combination of 'race', profession, and appearance. The embassies of those countries would often appeal to the Immigration Office on behalf of their citizens (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2016, p. 475). Neither Indians nor Yidn had a state to advocate on their behalf but Yidn did have the newly established Board of Deputies.

Dhupelia-Mesthrie described an anecdote of the experience of Benjamin and Wigdor Jalwesky, which seems to be representative of many such experiences, we see how internal pressure and dirt narratives played a role in Cousins decisions that were ostensibly and legally captured in the application of the literacy test.

They had arrived at Port Elizabeth in 1913 and though they were noted as dirty, they were prohibited due to illiteracy. They took a boat out to Maputo and returned, this time to Cape Town. While they were gone, the SAJBD had put pressure onto the Minister of Interior. When they returned, Cousins maintained that their writing was still 'of the lowest standard' but admitted them due to their cleanliness. He noted in his diary that

> *"[t]hey have returned from Delagoa Bay – transformed in costume – and redolent of soap and water. Had they appeared originally in this form … one would have overlooked other disqualifications" (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2016, p. 475)*

A part of what this shows is that the 'civilising mission' – to assimilate difference, worked alongside the management of difference. In Cousins, we see how these processes are not just two colonial logics that operated in tandem with different periods of ascendancy (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 44-45), but that they are mutually operational. To create and then manage a bifurcated difference between the 'civilised' European and the 'barbaric' Asiatic, Cousins had to believe in the assimilation of 'barbaric' eastern and southern Europeans into 'civilised' Europeans. Without that civilising mission, granted with a very different object than usually referred to, the separation between European and Asiatic would have been impossible to maintain. Possibly the most successful colonial project of assimilation was this one – pushing the boundaries of Whiteness and shaping the Jewish socio-political psyche such that the barbaric Jew was eradicated and transformed into the White Jew.

Restricting access to Yidn

Yidn in practice were subject to the whims of colonial officers in a way that's most reminiscent of the treatment of other European groups such as Greeks, Italians, and Madeirans (McEvoy, 2019, p. 28). There is no indication that their biometric data was collected, or that they required specific re-entry permits. However this is perhaps more a reflection of the frequency of travel in and out of the colony. Yidn, who came to settle did not leave often and so re-entry permits were a moot point. All illiterate people who were leaving the colony with intention to return, including Europeans and Madeirans, required re-entry permits (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2014, p. 106). And they had a local state recognised group to advocate on their behalf. However, this wasn't necessarily the case. In 1902/3 Yidn were temporarily banned under the blanket exclusion of those who couldn't write in a European language as Yiddish was considered to be non-European or Asiatic.

South African Jewish historians in the mid-20th century claimed that Yidn were restricted by mistake. But, led by Milton Shain, since the 1980s, Jewish historiography has agreed that it was an intentional exclusion in the context of 'anti-alienism' and that the law was 'corrected' due to the internal organising efforts of the Jewish community organisations and members of parliament. Though I agree and am indebted for Shain's work showing that Yidn were intentionally excluded, I disagree with their other conclusions. The conceptual category of anti-alienism ignores the framework that constituted who was an 'alien'.[6]

In the legal sense of the time, 'alien' referred to a person who was not a British citizen – constructed as White. However, many aliens were welcomed – other White or European settlers specifically. Other aliens, racialised as Indian, Chinese or Black, were purposively brought into the colony as indentured labour until at least 1911, and even de facto slaves as late as 1901.[7] The 'anti-alienism' that Shain refers to was only directed at immigrants who were racialised as non-European, seen as too independent, and therefore as 'barbaric' threats to White supremacy. This focus highlights the effects of racial capitalism and racial othering on immigration sentiments and policy.

Though it's no longer debated whether Yidn were intended targets of the immigration restriction, I want to examine the form that the arguments against them took. The history of European antisemitism and the debates in Parliament, statements of politicians and general society in South Africa make it clear that Yidn were considered to be non-European. Sometimes mentioned distinctly as Asiatic and other times alongside 'Asiatics' – Yidn and Indians were to be subjected to many of the same laws that revolved around language.

Gordon Sprigg, Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner – Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, British Colonial Secretary and Governor of the Cape Colony and then the Transvaal respectively – all intended that the Immigration Restriction Act would restrict the access of Yidn from the colonies. Sprigg, in a 1901 letter to the Milner "strongly objected to Polish Jews and Asiatics" (Shain, 1980, p. 15).

Alfred Milner had a post-war policy of anglicisation and neither Yidn nor Indians fit into this policy. Milner was consistently against Yidn immigration and in the early stages of the war he had deported 600 undesirable refugees amongst whom were 350 Yidn, ostensibly illicit liquor traders (Krut, 1985, p. 66). In an 1899 letter to Chamberlain, Milner echos many of the tropes examined in the earlier chapter

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[6] This is very similar to the use of xenophobia today to describe the structural and actual violence against low class African (and sometimes South Asian) migrants. In contrast, European and East Asian migrants, and upper-class migrants in general are generally unaffected and sometimes specifically welcomed

[7] These were captured soldiers that the British brought into South Africa after they won the Matabele War. They were 'marched down to Cape Town and handed out to farmers at ten shillings a month' (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, p. 45)

on "Dirty Subjects' when he stated that refugees, of whom "a great number … are the low class of Jews known as 'Peruvians' … [are] an additional burden which threatens to break us down altogether, and involves danger to the health, as well as to the resources and the good order of British South Africa."[8]

The Medical Officer of Health for Cape Colony, Dr John Gregory was distinctly opposed to the immigration of Yidn. Dr Gregory held a lot of influence in this regard as he was tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Immigration Act and other matters related to immigration. While the Act was still in its planning stages, Dr Gregory clarified that "when all is said and done, what is really aimed at? Neither more nor less than the exclusion of Asiatics and, perhaps, Russian Jews ..." (Shain, 1980, p. 16).

These views were not unique to the English colonial class in South Africa. Within the framework of European civilisation, Jews have long been framed as non-European and alien. Since the dawn of modernity in 1492[9], there is an extensive history of Jewish expulsions from European areas due to being classed as 'alien'. Slabodsky argues that "during periods of intense Orientalism, key Western luminaries reproduced the same association of Renaissance intellectuals. Voltaire, Kant, Herder, and Hegel, to name a few examples … categorized European Jews as having an "Oriental Spirit" or being "Asiatic refugees," "A Palestinian race," or "an Arab tribe" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 65). This classification was actualised in the Immigration Restriction Acts in the UK, Canada, Australia and the USA which restricted access to Yidn from eastern Europe.

This history of Jewish non-Europeanness, expulsions and immigration restrictions culminated in non-Jewish antisemitic support for Zionism as seen in the figure of Lord Balfour in the UK, but also groups such as DF Malan's Greyshirts in South Africa.[10] Balfour, the British statesman who held the position of Prime Minister (1902-1905) and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1916-1919), was one of the promulgators of restrictions imposed on 'alien Jews' from the UK in 1905. His desire to limit Jewish immigration to the UK is also partly responsible for his drafting of what became known as the Balfour

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[8] *Letter from Milner to Chamberlain*, 15 October 1899 cited in (Krut, 1985, p. 66)

[9] 1492 is the date of the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Al-Andalus, modern day Spain, which, along with Columbus's landing in the Americas, is recognised as a starting point for modernity/coloniality. For example see Grosfoguel (2013)

[10] D F Malan was the Minister of the Interior in 1930 when they passed the Immigration Quota Act to restrict Jewish immigration to South Africa and used the language of assimilability, and the defense of 'western civilization' (Shimoni, 1980, pp. 97, 100) In 1937 Malan address a crowd which included a number of vocal Greyshirts - an organization dedicated to expelling and disenfranchising Jews in South Africa - and when he said that his party feels that "there are already too many Jews in South Africa", the crowd answered "why not send them to Palestine?" (Shimoni, 1980, p. 116). In Parliament Malan reaffirmed his view and added that "what else is Zionism … other than an admission that they are unassimilable" (Shimoni, 1980, p. 121). As Prime Minister he became the first head of Government to visit Israel in 1953, with much applause from the SAJBD

Declaration in 1917 which precipitated the Nakba by promising to create "in Palestine, a national home for the Jewish people". In his introduction to *The History of Zionism* by Nathan Solokow, Balfour stated that if Zionism succeeds,

> *"it will do a great spiritual and material work for the Jews, but not for them alone. For as I read its meaning it is, among other things, a serious endeavour to mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilisation by the presence in its midst of a body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb. Surely, for this, if for no other reason, it should receive support" (Balfour, 1919, p. xxiv).*

Europe has a long history of understanding Jewish difference as incorrigible. And its solution is always the same - isolate, expel and exterminate (Slabodsky, 2014, pp. 42,56). However, post the era of Jewish Emancipation in Western Europe[11] and, for Yidn, especially in the colonies, Jews come to be seen as candidates for assimilation (Slabodsky, 2014, pp. 26,73). The goals of assimilation projects are similar to those of eradication projects – the target, however, is shifted from the body to the spirit. Instead of expelling and murdering the barbarian Jew[12], its goal was to murder the barbaric parts of the Jew, to expel the Peruvian from the Jew.

The assimilationist project was, and still is, a trap because it does not change the fundamental power dynamics but merely includes a few more within the powerful group. Even this inclusion is only temporary, the incorrigible difference is always remembered. This is seen in the post-emancipation holocaust in Europe, the Greyshirt and nationalist attempts to disenfranchise Jews in the 1930s in South Africa, and the recent antisemitic reinvigoration in the USA and Europe after the post Holocaust/State of Israel Judeo-Christian alliances.

Milner, for example, seems to have been convinced that Yidn, rather than subjects to be expelled, could be assimilated. One example of this, related to this chapters' interest in language can be seen in Milner's speech at the founding of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal in 1903 through which Jews, and Yidn in particular, are were coerced into the assimilationist trap. Rabbi Hertz, one of the founders and most prominent figures in the community, patriotic defender of the British empire,

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[11] Jews in Eastern Europe weren't emancipated until the communist revolutions or later. And Jews in North Africa and the Middle East and central Asia didn't require emancipation, having always been seen as equal subjects and a protected minority (albeit with extra tax requirements)
[12] 'Jew' could be replaced with almost any racial or religious category besides from White/European/Christian. Though even then, there were other axes on which assimilation projects occured

and later, partly on Milner's recommendation, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire (Feldman, 2007, p. 4), defensively exclaimed

> *"Eight million people speak Yiddish. It is not an uncivilized language.' … In his speech, the Governor-General [Milner] …assured them that the Jews in South Africa would not suffer any discrimination and recommended that the eastern European Jews become better acquainted with English language and culture" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 130).*

Yiddish as a dirty language

Milner's recommendation to become better acquainted with English reads as a victim-blaming, racist threat to Yidn immigrants. It also highlights how language and power are intertwined. Neville Alexander explains that there are material reasons behind the promotion of any particular language policy which is rooted in the role of language in the production process and cultural transmission (Alexander, 2013, pp. 95,98). In the case of immigration restrictions, the language criteria functioned primarily to prevent economic competition for White workers, and secure a White polity (preventing cultural competition).

In his chapter on the 'Negro and Language', Fanon also shows that the language of the colonising country stands in for its culture and values. "To speak a language, is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be White will be Whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (Fanon, 2008 [1952], p. 25).

Fanon and Alexander explain that the colonial language operates as a tool to degrade and disempower those who don't speak it, elevates those amongst the colonised who attain some mastery of it, and destroys and replaces local languages and knowledge systems (Fanon, 2008 [1952], pp. 8-9) (Alexander, 2013, p. 93). Language is a powerful marker of social control and the maintenance of hierarchies "every colonized people finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation" (Fanon, 2008 [1952], p. 14). Though Yidn weren't colonised, there is some similarity in how Yiddish, the home language of Yidn, was treated in South Africa – seen as a dirty gibberish and bastard jargon more indicative of barbarism than civilisation.

When writing this section, I was incredibly cognizant of how little Yiddish I know – just a few words, nothing that could be strung together into even a sentence. I've felt the sense of this loss of Yiddish, an expression of intergenerational assimilation. But also, simultaneously, I've been aware of the violence that my monolingual reliance on English has committed in the spaces that I move in. Relying on English is a form of embodied colonial violence, and while my attempts at undoing my role in it have been unsuccessful, mourning the loss of Yiddish will always remain a distant concern.

Linguistically, Yiddish is a language originating in the 9th century from Bavaria and Mainz (in what would become Germany) with shared roots to Medieval High German and some loan words borrowed from Latin, Hebrew and Aramaic. It is written in Hebrew script, not Latin – a point which is often used to locate the language outside of Europe. Yiddish thus becomes a battlefield of racial categorisation and seen by most White settlers, and many Jews as an indicator of racial inferiority.

As we have seen from an earlier chapter on Dirty Subjects, when words, metaphors and associations related to dirt are used to describe people or behaviours, a process of social control and stratification is occurs. "Dirt", McClintock says "expresses a relation to social value and social disorder (1995, p. 152). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Yidn were frequently described as dirty in their bodies, their living conditions, their sexual behaviours and their trades. In the context of immigration, these are all things that the state wanted to directly or indirectly exclude. Racial Capitalism in the Cape Colony didn't want sex workers, or traders of any kind but especially those engaged in illicit trading. And they were still concerned with the outbreak of epidemics. All these narratives are brought together to define Yidn as alien, undesirable, less than White, and not European.

Looking again at a particularly vulgar source, cited before in the chapter on Racial Capitalism, the 'Peruvian' fisherman in Kalk Bay is described in a way that intertwines dirty trading, imperfect bodies, being alien, and dirty language. The article describes Yiddish as gibberish and then provides a rendition of the Yiddish influenced 'pig-English'.

> *"a disreputable-looking coterie of the parasites of the social fabric, standing a little apart, conversing in a gibberish of mid-Europe, …*
>
> *[the] Rapacious foreign Hebrew who never risks his own life or safety … indignantly asks in pig-English 'Call that a fish? Vy, I will haf to give it away.' … The Peruvian soon pockets his profit, and so he prospers from day to day."*[13]

The interest in language links this form of antisemitism to other forms of racism which construct racial difference between pale-skinned people within Europe. McClintock notes that this happened in English anti-Irish racism. Though it took great efforts to describe the Irish as apes, it "concentrated primarily on the 'barbarism' of the Irish accent" (McClintock, 1995, pp. 52-53).

In Reverend Fagan's 1909 description of District Six, which was also analysed in the chapter on Racial Capitalism, Yiddish is brought up twice in his litany of sins centred on dirt, squalor and stench committed by the neighbourhood which was an emblem of progressive non-racialism

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[13] *Cape Times* 20/03/1902 cited in (Shain, 1994, p. 46)

The impression that will prevail in my mind is rows of shabby and unclean shops whose walls and signboard are sprinkled with Yiddish characters, sloping streets crowded with coloured people, Indians, Russians and Poles;

… I recollect the dark and heavy smelling shops of the Indians at the corners of the lanes and streets' the group of men that stand around the counters of the tailors and the jewellers holding debates in Yiddish."[14]

In an official report to the Cape Parliament, Dr Gregory lamented that the Immigration Restriction Act wasn't doing enough to limit the immigration of Yidn. Playing into all the tropes of dirtiness and barbarism, he described "these Immigrants being unsatisfactory in most important respects; being ill-provided; indifferently educated; unable to speak or understand any language but Yiddish; of inferior physique; often dirty in their habits; persons and clothing, and most unreliable in their statements."[15] This report was made in 1904 on the workings of the Immigration Act. In it, and every report that followed Dr Gregory tried to push his view that Yidn were undesirable immigrants who should be banned from entry.

Leibl Feldman, a radical ametuer historian who wrote in Yiddish as an act of cultural defiance against Hebrew and English, and to avoid Apartheid censorship (Belling, 2007, p. 5), summarised that

"On account of its non-European Hebrew alphabet, Yiddish could be considered to be an Asiatic language, which meant that even though Jews were pale-skinned, they could be regarded as Asiatic, who were treated as third rate citizens in South Africa. Therefore, the proposed legislation about the Yiddish language became a very serious matter for all Jews and especially for the Russian Jews" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 85).

Making Yidn European before arrival

These characterisations of Yiddish and Yidn prompted a response by a younger generation of Jewish leaders. Lead by Morris Alexander, 23 Jewish congregations and organisations in the Cape Colony banded together to hand over a list of demands to the Attorney-General of the Sprigg Ministry, chiefly asking that Yiddish be considered as a European language.

Yiddish was "Europeanised" by the government but probably not because of the efforts of Alexander's representation. There were financial interests in the shipping lines and political interests from London which also put pressure on the Cape Colony's government. First, I will summarise the political

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[14] *The Cape* 03/01/1909 cited in (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 78)
[15] *Report of the Working of 'The Immigration Act, 1902', for the year 1903* G.63-1904

economy of this process in minor detail, for its not the political negotiations[16] that interests me but what organising to be considered European meant in a settler colony. Then, by referring to the writing and speeches made by local Jewish organisations I will show how they bought into the racial hierarchy of Europeanness, aligning Yidn with Europeans as superior and favoured over people from Asia

The political economy

Yidn got transit to Cape Town on the newly merged Union-Castle line and via the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter in London. In the excellent historical work of Riva Krut on these links, she examines the role of international banks, shipping line cartels, travel agents and Jewish philanthropic organisations in the movement of Yidn from Russia to the 'new world' (Krut, 1985, pp. 41-70). There was big money involved in the 'migration business' run both by non-Jews from England and Germany and by Anglo-Jews. The Anglo-Jewish institutions in England established 'welfare' programs such as the much-vaunted Poor Jews Temporary Shelter to ensure that Yidn wouldn't settle in England. Motivated by similar concerns to the South African Jewish elite but with much more power, their programs were designed to remove the alien threat from public view, limit Yidn settlement in the UK, socialise them into a civilised English way of life, prove to English society that they had the 'Jewish problem' under control, and they made a bit of a profit through their operations (Krut, 1985, pp. 55-57). To this extent, the Board of Deputies of British Jews (the 'British Board') made representation to the Cape government that Yiddish should count as a European language (Feldman, 2007, p. 4) The Anglo-Jewish establishment did not want Yidn to be 'stranded' in England and the Immigration Restriction Act in South Africa put a roadblock on their attempts to move Yidn quickly out of London.

There were also specific commercial interests such as David Currie's newly merged Union and Castle Shipping Lines whose main source of income was in the passenger traffic. And a large source of that income was the line from Kovno to Cape Town via London. Currie, who had previously focussed on Cornish immigrants to South Africa, specialised in passenger transit between London and Cape Town, as well in mail contracts, freight charges and coal transport (Krut, 1985, pp. 63-64).

When the Immigration Restriction Act was passed, Currie had just bought out his competition, the Union line to secure a monopoly. Facing a loss of profit and the intrusion of another rival shipping line who was willing to risk transporting passengers who might not pass the entrance requirements, Currie mobilised his financial influence, partners in De Beers, and connections with politicians such as Molteno to reopen the country to Yidn immigration (Krut, 1985, p. 69). The pressure brought by Currie

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[16] This has been the subject of much research. See Shain (1983) and (1980) and Krut (1985) for two examples

and his contacts, along with the Anglo-Jewish Association and the British Board resulted in the informal relaxation of the Act and the eventual acceptance of Yiddish as a European Language.

I am grateful for Krut's work on the political economy of these migrations, which is often not picked up on in other retellings of this history. That this key moment in the expansion of Whiteness to include Yidn was largely due to external political and financial concerns is a great example of the role of international racial capitalism in defining the boundaries between racial groups. Making Yiddish European, it could be argued, had little to do with the racism or even balance of political power or social classes with the Cape Colony but more to do with the pressure that external capitalists could bring to bear to suit their financial and social interests.

On the other hand, an argument has to be made about why the shipping lines from Indian ports to the Natal and Cape ports, such as the Deutsch Ost-Afrika Linie (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2016, p. 467), did not bring similar financial and political weight to bear. So far, I haven't found research on their role in terms of the Immigration Acts. The difference could be the national networks. The English financial and political networks in Britain and South Africa mobilised by Currie might have been unavailable for the Deutsch Ost-Afrika Linie. More likely is that the Yidn's already existing legal status as White within South Africa, merged with the Currie's, and the British Board's interests made possible something that wasn't just wasn't possible for Indians in the racial dynamics of the British Empire.

Regardless, this section has shown how the global pressures of racial capitalism can shape the political subjectivity of a collective that is not necessarily even aware of what power is circulating from multiple, uncoordinated directions.

As Foucault argues, "if we concentrate on the techniques of power and show the economic profit or political utility that can be derived from them, in a certain context and for certain reasons, then we can understand how these mechanisms actually and eventually became part of the whole" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], pp. 32-33). It is not as if there was a single mastermind who planned a strategy of making Yidn European enough to immigrant to South Africa. Each player had their motivations, and were following the technologies they had established in their organisation.

The local response

Though the local response was probably only a minor reasons Government recategorized Yiddish as European, it's vital in understanding the shifting ideological agreement with colonialism within the Jewish community. This section will show how appeals to Europeanness require embracing a racial hierarchy, and demeaning, in this case, people from Asia.

This is not unforeseen. 'Europe', as a concept in the colonial period, was intimately linked with White supremacy (Mills, 1998, p. 89). Lewis Gordon, working from Husserl, shows that 'Europe' was used in the 19th and 20th centuries to refer not to a geographic location but the "unity of spiritual life" stretching from the continent of Europe to its reaches in the settler colonies. Demanding inclusion into 'Europeanness' is to claim alignment and loyalty to "all its ends, interests, cares, and endeavours, with its products of purposeful activity, institutions, [and] organisations" (Gordon, 1995, p. 6).

The local effort to join European personhood was led by Morris Alexander who had become frustrated with the behind doors personal negotiations done by Reverend Bender[17] of the Gardens Synagogue. Bender was the stalwart of Cape Town's Anglo-Jewish community and, in Feldman's characterisation, "an English Jew who hated Yiddish and was unsympathetic to Russian Jews" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 85).

Alexander went around the colony getting support from 13 congregations and 9 communal and Zionist organisations and on the 28th of March 1903, lead the delegation which appeared before Mr Justice Graham, the Attorney-General of the Cape Colony, to present him a letter of demands. The meeting was reported in depth in the Cape Times, a report that was later endorsed by the Attorney-General.[18]

A large section of the letter included an extract from a pamphlet written by David Goldblatt, a member of the Jewish Philanthropic Society[19] and later of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies. This pamphlet was also reproduced in the Cape Times and the South African Jewish Chronicle (SAJC)[20], and a few years later was printed en masse and delivered to each member of the Cape Parliament to convince them to accept an amendment to declare Yiddish a European language for the General Dealers' Licence Bill in 1905[21]. Titled "Yiddish: Is it a European Language", it spends most of its time showing the extent of Yiddish literature published in Europe and translated to and from recognised European languages. Besides demonstrating the 'Europeanness' of Yiddish, the article aimed to prove it was also an intellectual language – and that Yiddish speakers were by implication capable of participation in western civilisation - and to excuse the use of Hebrew characters as merely circumstantial.

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[17] The Anglo-Jewish synagogues referred to their Rabbis as Reverends

[18] Letter from John Graham, *Immigration Act 1902: Applications Written in Yiddish* 09/08/1904 in Government House, General Dispatches 1904 Mar – April

[19] A philanthropic society which gave loans to poor immigrant Yidn for them to start a trade or business, or paid for their passage back home if they couldn't succeed here. Motivated by a desire to help their poor brethren but also similar to the London Philanthropic organizations which were also motivated by a desire keep a lid on Jewish poverty for the sake of their image in English/settler society.

[20] Cape Times 29/05/1903 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1 and SAJC 12/05/1905

[21] *Minutes of general meeting held on Tuesday, 05/04/1905* – South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archive. BC792, Box 18

Goldblatt also demonstrates an obvious desire to define Yidn as European by marking a separation between 'European Jews' and 'Asiatic Jews' – using terms that he knew carried distinct and powerful racial implications in South Africa.

> *"A German, a European Jew, and an Asiatic Jew could not converse together, the German and the European Jew would understand each other, whereas the Asiatic Jew would understand neither."[22]*

While linguistically he is probably correct, the context of the rest of the pamphlet and its political purpose gives much greater meaning to this sentence. He positioned the 'European Jew' alongside the civilized German, partaking in intellectual discussion, 'understanding' each other not only linguistically but also culturally, while the 'Asiatic Jew' looks on ignorantly. The creation of a distinction between Jews and 'Asiatics' was picked up in the rest of Alexander's letter.

Their letter was a carefully worded example of political speech, designed to achieve a specific goal by stroking the ego, excusing behaviours and appealing to the interests of the government. As such, from this one speech, it is not clear whether this represents the viewpoints of these organisations or if it was just what they were willing to say to reopen the doors to Yidn who were fleeing racial violence and poverty in Russia. But these views were agreed to by 22 organisations at the outset, widely reported in the public and Jewish press, and achieved a sort of mythos in the community and historiography for decades to come. It still occupies a place of prominence under a glass sheet in the South African Jewish Museum. The later actions and statements by the Board, the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and other communal leaders also make it clear that this report wasn't an aberration from, but a significant part of the journey that was taken in transforming Yidn from colonizers to colonialists, believing in and colluding with White supremacy.

The Cape Times reported that "A deputation of Jewish Colonists waited upon the Attorney General yesterday in

Figure 8: A picture of the deputation to the Attorney-General of the Cape Colony in 1903. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 65

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[22] Goldblatt, D., '*Yiddish: Is it a European Language*'. SAJC 12/05/1905

order to ask for an amendation of the immigration Act in respect of its application to a large number of their fellow Jews" (see Figure 10). [23]

Each organisation that Alexander approached held a special meeting in which they resolved that,

> "This special meeting heartily endorses the proposal that a deputation consisting of representatives of the various Jewish Congregations and organisations throughout the Cape Colony, should wait upon the Cape Government and while thanking them for their liberal interpretation[24] of the Immigration Act, should urge them so to amend the act as to render it impossible for any future government to exclude any Jews from this Colony under the heading of 'prohibited immigrants', merely on the ground that they may know no other European language than Yiddish" and that "They were are also grateful to the government for the appointment of a Jewish officer[25] at the Docks." [26]

Further clarifying the matter, Alexander got into the legal implications and threw their support for the government's immigration restrictions in general but just not when it related to Yiddish speaking Jews:

> "' Section 2 referred to the various classes of prohibited immigrants – paupers, criminals, lunatics, persons who lived on the proceeds of prostitution and persons 'officially ascertained to be undesirable.' The Jewish community were even more anxious than the Government or the general public to exclude those classes from this country. They did not for one moment wish to plead on behalf of undesirables; they had come there on behalf of those affected by subsection (a) viz. 'any person who when asked to do so shall be able to read out and sign in the characters of any European language.'" [27]

They continued by specifically defining Yidn as White and endorsing the racial categorizations and separation between 'White' and 'yellow':

> "Any perusal of Hansard would make it clear that it was the yellow man who was intended to be excluded and not the educated White man." [28]

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[23] Cape Times 29/05/1903 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1. The picture is of the Deputation to the Attorney-General (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 65)

[24] This refers to the Cape Colony's decision to allow Yidn to begin to immigrate again whilst making a more formal decision

[25] The role of the Jewish Officer was to act as an immigration official for immigrants who only spoke Yiddish.

[26] *Cape Times* 29/05/1903 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1

[27] *Cape Times* 29/05/1903 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1

[28] *Cape Times* 29/05/1903 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1

The racial outlook, of these "Jewish Colonists" is clear. They wanted or at least were publicly willing to throw their support behind immigration restrictions in general, restrict the poor and illiterate, endorse the language of undesirability, and prevent further Indian and Chinese immigration.

Attorney General Graham arrived at two telling conclusions – that the immigration act should never have affected Jews and that Yiddish counted as a European language. That he should feel comfortable speaking these conclusions in public just on receiving the letter of demands indicates that the government had already been convinced to re-open the doors to Yidn immigration. The three most powerful politicians in the Cape Colony, along with many others, were too obviously against Yidn immigration for the Attorney-General to have gone ahead without consulting them. The role of this deputation had a greater effect on how Yidn in particular and Jews, in general, orientated themselves to the Government of the day.[29]

Graham

> *"came to the conclusion also that a language which had its home, and which had its origin in Europe, and which was spoken by several millions of people, could hardly be treated as other than a European language. And the result was that the government decided to accept the necessary declaration in Yiddish as a declaration in a European language."*

He also "had arrived at the conclusion that it was never the intention of Parliament to exclude the educated Jew, who was in every respect qualified."[30] This last statement is demonstrably false but the new deputies weren't going to call him out on it.

Though my focus throughout this thesis has been on the Jews who chose to collude with White supremacy and lead, convince and coerce other Jews to follow suit, it is useful to contrast their approach with Jews who refused to become agents of White supremacy and maintained an ideological and political anti-colonial position.

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[29] It did also become an election issue in certain areas of Johannesburg such as Ferreira for the 1907 Transvaal elections but I think this is a much more transient and uninteresting effect than the shifting racial and political position of Jews in South Africa

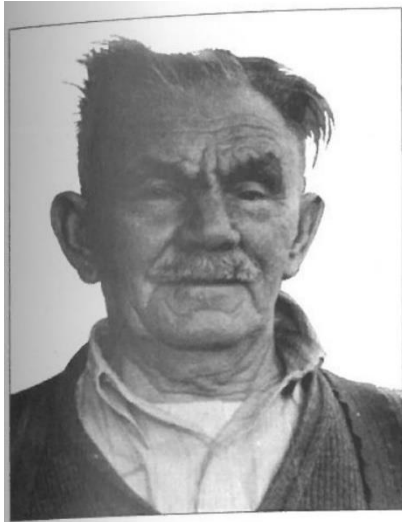[30] *Cape Times* 29/05/1903 in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1

Figure 9: Picture of Yeshua Israelstam. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 83

Yeshua Israelstam (see Figure 11), born in Lithuania in 1870, worked as a coal miner in the USA and joined labour and socialist movements. He moved to Cape Town in 1900 where he attended meetings of the African Political Organisation and publicly demonised White racist agitators. He moved to Johannesburg in 1903 and formed the Social Democratic Workers' Party, which at its first meeting resolved to protest against the government's use of weapons to force people to work against their will – something it had done recently against 300 Black workers. A committed and active socialist and anti-racist, Israelstam helped organise May Day celebrations, activities to assist Jews in Russia against the pogroms, spoke at the founding of the South African Native National Congress (the forrunner of the ANC) and founded the Yiddish Speaking Branch of the International Socialist League.

In 1904, Israelstam published his analysis of the Transvaal anti-Indian agitation in *The Star*. He stated that

> *"It is rather disgusting to find persons in the present so-called civilized 20th century, who are so ignorant, so unthinking, and so intolerant, as to come together at a Convention, and pass resolutions restricting certain people from trading and residing amongst the rest of the population, because they happen to be a shade darker, or because they belong to a different religion than themselves; and I cannot find enough words to condemn the action of some of the delegates[31], themselves belonging to a persecuted race, who are even now restricted and excluded from many countries with the same restrictions and accusations as are used here against the Asiatics. The agitation against the Asiatics, like Anti-Semitism, is the outcome of the competitive system. The competition and jealousy for trade, and the race for wealth, produced by the sweat of the working class, create race and national hatred."[32]*

Had the Jewish community organised itself on lines similar to those expressed by Israelstam, history might have played out quite differently. But of course, historical processes were against that happening – the state, the socio-economic conditions, the elite Anglo-Jews, the predominance of Zionism, the settler-colonial conjuncture etc.

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[31] Referring to fellow Jews

[32] *The Star* 15/11/1904 cited in Feldman (2007 [1955], p. 112)

Formation of the Board of Deputies in the Cape

Rather than the example set by Israelstam, the organising efforts, and political power of men like Morris Alexander resulted in the formation of the South African Board of Deputies. The following paragraphs will give some background into the politics of the Cape Board's longtime president, and its founding concerns.

The difficulties that Alexander had in getting the 22 congregations and organisation together led to about 18 months of political organising to create a communal body. The form was soon agreed to and a resolution was sent out to each organisation asking them to elect a representative to sit on the board which would "watch and take action with reference to all matters affecting the welfare of the Jewish community as a whole."[33] In September 1904 a mass meeting elected Morris Alexander as the president of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony.[34]

Figure 10: Picture of Morris Alexander. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 70

Morris Alexander (see Figure 12) was a central figure in Jewish and Cape life in the early 1900s and deserves a short biography of his life in the first half of that decade – he will be revisited in the next chapter on his Franchise views. Alexander worked as an advocate and Crown Prosecutor and owned three properties in Cape Town and the surrounds. He was one of the few Jewish appointments as Justice of Peace for the District of the Cape in 1901, a position whose purpose was "to grant Warrants for the apprehension for detaining in Prison of all Felons, Rioters, Vagrants, Disturbers of the Public Peace, and Offenders of what kind and nature what so ever, to be dealt with according to Law."[35]

Alexander was a staunch defender of the Cape Liberal tradition and he became known as a 'defender of Coloured rights' in his later life and even supported some campaigns launched by Indian organisations through his relationship with Gandhi. Alexander, in a letter to his future mother in law, wrote that "I would rather devote the time I have to suffering humanity" (Alexander, 1953, p. 46). His election manifesto in 1910 included points such as "equal rights for all civilised men", and "working men's legislation" (Alexander, 1953, p. 62). In 1923, displaying remarkable consistency, he further defended Coloured voting rights and in the same breath reminded the more conservative politicians that "it was not the intention of the supporters of the motion to secure the vote for barbarians" "

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[33] *Blank Resolution on the formation of a Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 51

[34] *Report presented at meeting of Board held on Tuesday 2nd April 1907* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 51

[35] *Letter from Sir Walter Fancis Hely-Hutchinson, Governor and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Colony of the Cape of Good hope, to Morris Alexander 23/01/1901* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1

(Alexander, 1953, p. 129). The form of racism expressed through the Cape Liberal Tradition will be discussed in the next chapter with regard to the franchise. What is pertinent here is Alexander's adherence to the supremacy of British civilizational value, his alligance to the colonial state, and his believe that all people can benefit from being its loyal subjects and thus to "give every man a chance to who that he is a man, and if he is a man [to] treat him him like a man, and do not worry about the colour of his skin" (Alexander, 1953, p. 121)

Regardless, there was no indication of support from the Cape Board, nor Alexander in the early years of the 1900s (Hirson, 2001, pp. 40-45) (Alexander, 1953, p. 48). In fact, alongside his assistance to improve the status of Indians in the Transvaal in the later half of the first decade, he said in 1910 that "I support the first resolution … to improve the social conditions of the people by opposing the introduction of Asiatics into South Africa, while securing fair treatment for those now lawfully settled in the country" (Alexander, 1953, p. 62).

Alexander was elected to the Cape Town 'Town Council' for 8 years on a liberal ticket as well as the parliament of the Cape Colony. As Town Councillor he voted in 1905 that the city of Cape Town should grant money to the South African College - a motion which Dr Abdurahman[36] argued shouldn't pass because though the College was technically non-racial, its feeder school was White-only and that taxpayer money shouldn't go to de facto White-only institutions.

It doesn't take much to imagine how his roles as an agent for the colonial state and his investment in South Africa's politics and economy could have affected his approach to Jewish organising. Alexander was the autocratic president of the Cape Board of Deputies, the Secretary of the Jewish Philanthropic Society and Vice President of the New Cape Town Hebrew Congregation. He was elected in 1905 to the SAZF national committee and spoke at many Zionist meetings.

There were two Boards at this point, one in the Transvaal and Natal, and the other in the Cape Colony. They would later merge in 1912 to form the current South African Jewish Board of Deputies. In the first 10 months, the Cape Board met often, but they then started meeting sometimes only twice a year and it is fair to say that their impact was minimal between 1906 to 1912.

The main work they did was in naturalisation, and in getting Yiddish recognised as a European language by the Cape Parliament. The initial acceptance by the Sprigg ministry had been in the form of an official notice to the immigration board but it had never become law. This continued until the

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[36] The founder and leader of the African People's Organisation (APO) and medical doctor. The grandson of slaves, he was the first Black person elected to the Cape Town City Council in 1905 which he retained until 1940. Abduraham held to a brand of Cape Liberalism that didn't wish to overhaul the political system but to rather just include colour-blind principles.

1906 General Dealers License Bill, which required storekeepers to keep their records in the characters of a 'European Language.' In the debates for this law, the Cape Board, recirculated Goldblatt's pamphlet and approached members of parliament to propose and support an amendment which was eventually passed and accepted that "provided that for the purpose of this act YIDDISH shall be accepted as a European Language."[37] This legislation was well-publicized and got attention in the Transvaal and Natal which passed similar amendments to their laws, recognizing Yiddish as a European language across the country.

A *mamzer shprakh*[38]- anti-Yiddish sentiment amongst Jews

Despite the political mobilisation to get Yiddish recognised as a European language, it was still seen by elite Jews as an undesirable sign of barbarism. This was a both a civilizational and class issue. Yiddish was the language of the Jewish working class and traders, English the language of the capitalists, professionals, politicians, and trade unions.

Victoria Belling, who has translated many Yiddish texts into English and done extensive research into Yiddish culture in South Africa, comments that "of all Eastern Europe's diasporas the South African Jewish community is unique in its consistently negative to indifferent attitude to Yiddish, and in the rapidity with which it discarded its use" (Belling, 2003, p. 1). This is attributable to two main factors, one is the opposition to using Yiddish by the Zionist movement (Geffen, 1955, p. 56). The second, and more interesting for our purposes, is the association of Yiddish as a signifier of 'dirty' undesirable Yidn.

This developed a deep dismissal of the language by the Anglo-Jewish establishment who considered it a 'nuisance' and an embarrassment (Geffen, 1955, p. 56). They particularly opposed the Yiddish language and made every effort to teach the immigrants English as soon as possible (Belling, 2003, p. 23).

The Anglo-Jewish distaste for Yiddish was a by-product of colonial culture. The SAJC, while it was still located in Cape Town, said that "anything which cultivates the art of practice of Yiddish speaking in a European colony is actually detrimental to the Jewish people and their cause."[39]

As Fanon notes, "to speak means … above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (2008 [1952], p. 8). The Anglo-Jewish establishment worked with White society in South Africa to try to prevent the speaking of Yiddish, and the development of Yiddish cultural bodies such as the press, literature and theatre (Belling, 2003, pp. 23, 42).[40] Yidn were supposed to start speaking

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[37] *Report presented at meeting of Board held on Tuesday 2nd April 1907* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 51
[38] 'bastard language'
[39] *SAJC* 03/06/1903
[40] Of course, they did not succeed totally succeed. Yiddish cultural bodies in South Africa existed into the Apartheid era but this was despite the efforts of the central Jewish communal bodies who refused to support,

English, assume White culture, and to support the weight of colonial civilisation. Yiddish culture was seen as detrimental to the Jewish people because it created too much distance between Jews and the rest of White society. It was seen as too degraded and unable to assist in elevating Yidn into 'proper colonial Jews'.

This is something that Lionel Goldsmid reflected in this 1906 editorial on Yiddish theatre in Johannesburg

> *"It is not a very gratifying fact that one of the principal happenings among the Johannesburg Jewish community of late is the production of a Yiddish theatrical performance at the Empire every Sunday night, in addition to the one which has for some time been established at the Gaiety Theatre. There is nothing objectionable in these performances, but neither can it be said that … there is anything elevating about them. … It is not pleasant to see the Yiddish-speaking element of the community growing so much faster than the others."*[41]

This view of what should happen to Yidn, to be 'elevated' from the depths of barbarism to civilisation is also reflected in a later editorial. When the Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal put out adverts in Yiddish to encourage Yidn to naturalise, the SAJC commented that the "foreign Jew" who has "improved his moral and material position" by living in the colony for a few years shouldn't be made to revert to reading in Yiddish:

> *Gradually emerging from the chrysalis stage, he is anxious to improve his intellectual and political condition, and it would appear as a somewhat retrogressive step upon the part of the Board, to place him in the invidious position of being forced to revert to that language – or shall we not rather call it a jargon? – from the clutches of which he is endeavouring by every means in his power to emancipate himself."*[42]

The effect of the denigration of Yiddish as mere jargon, as linked to the dirty 'Peruvian', and as an impediment to integration into civilisation also developed an inferiority complex amongst Yidn. Even in Yiddish speaking circles, the language became seen as a symbol of Jewish poverty and the language

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marginalized and sometimes even tried to stop Yiddish theatre companies, Yiddish folk schools, Yiddish press etc. The development of working class, socialist and anti-Zionist Yiddish cultural clubs and political organization in the 1920s, based off new waves of Jewish immigration from places with more engagement in Yiddish culture and left-wing organizing, is largely responsible for this growth and sustainability. Prior to this, the Yiddish cultural organisations were very transient. See Belling (2003) and Adler (1973) for an in-depth analysis of this history

[41] *SAJC* 09/06/1905
[42] *SAJC* 08/09/1905

itself as a *mamzer shprakh* – bastard language (Belling, 2003, p. 45). As Yidn became assimilated they became embarrassed by the language (Feldman, 1960, p. 66).

In a settler colony, with the primary contradiction between White settlers and Black natives and immigrants, this was a nuanced inferiority complex. Unlike the inferiority complex studied by Fanon in Black Skins, White Masks, it does not come from an abyssal zone of dehumanisation due to the colonial condition. And so, it's a directed inferiority complex in relation to the White settler that is mitigated, and solved for the individuals by grasping onto the superiority complex generated in all European settlers vis-à-vis the colonised population (Memmi, 2003 [1965], p. 8).

However, in the act of emulating the 'European' culture, there is a similarity in how the inferiority complex is solved for Yidn, and colonised people. As Fanon noted "speaking or writing a European language … contribute[s] to a feeling of equality with the European and his achievements" (2008 [1952], p. 14).

The Anglo Jewish elite refused to officially use or recognise Yiddish, rejecting proposals to make it one of the official languages of the SAJBD, and only half-heartedly and temporarily backing a proposal to publish a Yiddish version of the official Zionist newsletter (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 53, 159). Leibl Feldman, who Belling argues wrote in Yiddish as an act of cultural defiance (Belling, 2007, p. 5), explained that

> *"The elite – the English and German Jewish Leadership – did not publicly acknowledge or deny Yiddish – the language of the majority of the Jews of Johannesburg. Some of the Russian Jews began to 'bow and scrape' to the English Jews and the Englishmen, because they wanted to become anglicised" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 53, 159).*

This lead to a widespread practice of electing men to positions of power in Jewish organisations simply of the basis of their ability to speak English, or even, more drastically, their inability to speak Yiddish. I have come across numerous anecdotes[43] that could fill a chapter on their own but I have chosen one which indicates the how colonial notions of language and culture functioned amongst Jews. The impact of this is that the types of Jews who were leaders and role models within many of the community organisations – including ostensibly non-political ones - were those Jews who most demonstrated their affinity to the colonial ruling class in South Africa.

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[43] Leibl Felmdan's book 'The Jews of Johannesburg' (2007 [1955], pp. 180-205) contains many examples extracted from the Yiddish press, especially *Ha-Kochav* and *Der Afrikaner*, as does the writings of Yakov Azriel Davidson (1912-1913 [2008])

The following extract is written by Davidson, who wrote satirical articles in Yiddish in the *Der Afrikaner* between 1912-1913. Many of his writings reflect the troubles of Yidn in a Jewish world dominated by Anglo norms. In this article, he laments about the recent election of the president of a Talmud Torah[44].

> *"However, at such a meeting, there are also such Jews, as don't give a hoot whether to establish a Talmud Torah or not … Only one thing concerns them: to be elected a president or a committee member…. They boast, to show the audience how important they are, and they begin to speak in … English, in order to demonstrate to the simple Jews that there are no flies on them, they are not just anybody… And our Kosher Jews are such, that they only have to hear that somebody is not speaking mame loshn [mother language] and in their eyes that person is superior, and they feel themselves to be all the more lowly and unimportant. They are so impressed by their ability to speak English, that they totally defer to these so-called superior beings… [These English committee Jews] know as much about a Talmud Torah as a cow knows about Sunday, your work is an insult to the community" (Davidson, 1912-1913 [2008], pp. 70-71).*

Conclusion

Regardless of Davidson's anguish that yet another English committee Jew was elected to a position he knew little about, Anglo Jews, and eventually, the more anglicized Yidn were the primary leaders and role models of the Jewish community structures in South Africa. This is true especially in the Boards of Deputies and the Zionist Organisations. In the style of the English Emancipation Pact, these leaders were seen to act as representatives of their organisations to the rest of society and to perhaps bring some prestige.

The political impact, however, was severe. In a colonial society organizing itself based on White supremacy, the Jews with the highest social standing, and access to capital, were those who were most in collusion with the colonial state. Any anticolonial/antiracist sentiment among the Yidn were therefore left with little spaces to express itself except in the few specific political organisations or outside the Jewish community. The religious and cultural spaces were either captured or faced attempts to shut them down – such as the Yiddish theatres in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Left with no way to be anticolonial within the community, the trend that the community takes as a whole is towards an affinity and collusion with colonial ideology.

This is also seen in the response to the position of Yiddish in the racially excluding immigration acts – utilising and inscribing a divide between the 'European' and the 'Asiatic'. Instead of challenging the

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[44] An elementary religious day school for boys

racist basis of the act, such as done by Yeshua Israelstam and by Indian activists and representatives, the community mobilised to be reclassified on the side of power by getting Yiddish defined as a European language. This is not, as historians of this process have made it out to be, a politically neutral correction of the linguistic fact. Rather, is a highly political act of self-redefinition into a racial category of 'European' that was defined by superiority and racial violence. An act which affects the political subjectivity of Jews, but also reifies the act itself by buying into its racist logic. The language of those pushing the racial recategorization is evidence of this – having no qualms about pointing the Immigration Act at 'Asiatics' and other so-called 'undesirables' in the same breath as pointing it away from themselves.

These two examples of the how the Jewish community in South Africa became colonialists by the fact of choosing to adopt colonial and White supremacist ideology also show the central role that the politics of language has in racial logics, state lead discrimination and the fermentation of inferiority and superiority complexes. This is also an indication of how languages are shaped by the state, and people's reactions towards and against it, for political purposes of defining, dividing, and ruling over its subjects.

In this chapter recategorizing Yidn as 'European' was done in through language and immigration. The next chapter will follow on from the process of immigration through naturalisation and citizenship to show how the Jewish community argued for their inclusion as White colonial subjects through their admittance to a franchise that was increasingly restricted to those 'of European descent'.

5) Becoming Citizens

'It's not our fault,' Haim replied. 'We Jews don't make the running in this country'

Gillian Slovo, 1989, pp.8-9

The Board is "always ready to assist the Government in sifting the undesirable from the desirable"[1]
South African Jewish Board of Deputies 1914

Be careful of governments, they only befriend you when they want something from you …

Pirkei Avot 2:3

Introduction

When immigrant Yidn families, like the Cyn family in Gillian Slovo's intergenerational epic, arrived in South Africa they did not "make the running' of this country. Depending on when they arrived, they would have faced political disabilities around immigration, naturalisation or the franchise. Under the Transvaal Republic, amongst others, Jews did not have the franchise and when it was being extended in 1899 Yidn were going to be excluded. In 1902-05 Yidn were at risk of being turned away from the borders in the Cape, Natal, and the Transvaal. Yidn who could only speak Yiddish weren't seen as European enough to be granted rights to the country before Yiddish was redefined as European. And Yet in 1910, within only 12 years, when the new Union of South Africa act was passed that limited the franchise to men "of European descent", Yidn men were comfortably ensconced in that category.

This chapter is going to follow some of the key moments that were made in the transformation of Yidn from disenfranchised White settlers to White citizens. The removal of political disabilities and the granting of citizenship to Yidn marks a fundamental shift in the political identity that they occupied and enacted in the world. The fictional Haim was only partially correct in 1906 but after 1910 Yidn were not able to claim[2] that they were not, by having full citizenship rights, implicated in the running of South Africa as a White supremacist settler colony.

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[1] *The Report of the Executive Council by the SAJBD August 7th, 1912 to April 14th, 1914* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 53

[2] Though the point of my whole thesis project is that we are still claiming this

In the comprehensive account on how South Africa was established, '*Making of a Racist State'*, Magubane argues that "the franchise is important not only for the right it conveys but as an indication of the way in which a man or a class or a race is regarded. The denial of the vote to African men and women and to White women seemed to impress firmly on all their inequality vis-à-vis the White male" (Magubane, 1996, p. 243). Because the franchise was exclusively the domain of White men, the function of patriarchal power in the archives, and the lack of scope to analyse the mutually entangled roles of both gender and race vis-a-vis citizenship – this chapter focusses on the processes and effect of Yidn men gaining the franchise.

Accepting this right did not simply indicate a transformation from immigrant settlers to White citizens as a racial or political reclassification. As Memmi shows, "a colonialist is, after all, only a colonizer who agrees to be a colonizer. By making his position explicit, he seeks to legitimize colonization" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 45). This transformation is therefore also about how the securing of political rights shaped the dominant ideological positions of the Jewish community organisations and the community at large. And more so, how itrefashioned the political subjectivity of Jews in South Africa. Becoming citizens, i.e. agreeing to fulfil the role of a colonizer, meant adopting some of the basic premises of colonial rule – the European theft of African land, the position of Africans and Indians as labourers under White coercion and supervision, and the right of White men to govern over everybody else.

Drawing from the analysis of the role of the franchise and citizenships in a settler-colonial context, this chapter will start with a summary of the role and makeup of the franchise in the four colonies that later made up South Africa. I will then start exploring this process of becoming citizens in the Transvaal Republic. The removal of 'Jewish disabilities' in the Transvaal culminated in a mass meeting at which the identity 'Jew' was formed as a political identity that first cut across the division between Anglo-Jews and Yidn.

I will then move to analyse the ideological impact of the decisions by the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies and the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) to work to naturalise all Yidn as citizens. This starts with the repatriation efforts of the SAZF after the Anglo-Boer war who fashion themselves as the Jewish Consulate in South Africa. Working to construct Jews as citizens of a European nation, equivalent to other European groups was a key part of the Zionist project. The repatriation and naturalisation efforts set up the official Jewish organs as subcontractors to the state in the powerful role of gatekeepers.

This chapter will conclude with a close examination of the franchise debates at the end of the first decade of the 1900s in which civilizational status of 'Russian Jews' was debated and compared to Indians in the South African Jewish Chronicle (SAJC). This debate showcases the tension in White

supremacy between a civilizational project and 'biological' determinism and how this debate was playing out in the Anglo-Jewish world. For the civilizational project, the assimilability of Yidn into White supremacy is held up as their saving grace over all their other Oriental characteristics. From the perspective of biological determinism, their skin colour saves them despite their general barbarism. But as we'll see the debate is not nearly so clear cut.

The reification of Yidn as an undesirable class through the mobilisation of dirt metaphors was a racial claim that Yidn were not White or European. Yidn were seen as failing to live in line with the values of civilisation and being a threat to White society. However, much of the physical violence that often follows such accusations did not follow the Yidn, who for various reasons, were seen as able to assimilate into the expanding 'White race'. The Jewish community worked to further this possibility as it saw that the way out of racial violence was to join the group that perpetrated the violence rather than the groups which were subjected to it. This is also true with their political rights.

The Franchise and citizenship

Since the end of slavery, the fundamental direction taken by all four of the colonies was to limit the rights of the African population. Where, when, how, and how quickly this was achieved was dependant on the different balances of power, which are too nuanced to explore here but its certain that that's the direction that they all took. The denial of political rights was fundamentally linked to the settler's attempts, especially after the discovery of diamonds in 1867, to bring African's into the labour force as cheap, replaceable and exploitable workers. Without legal or political rights, resistance to exploitation and oppression was that much more difficult.

In Magubane's comprehensive analysis, "the incorporation of the African population as cheap labour, segregated by political rightlessness and severe social discrimination, is thus the simple but most important key to an understanding of all subsequent social and capitalist development in the country" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 237-238). If Africans were subjugated through rightlessness and discrimination, European and White settlers were enfranchised and privileged.

The structure of South Africa was, for settlers, "a racial aristocracy in considered in their relation to the subject peoples, a democracy in their relation to each other" (Buchan, 1906, p. 29). This line appears in the highly successful 1906 novel Lodge in the Wilderness.[3] In it, John Buchan, the personal

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[3] This novel was very successful with reprints in 1907, 1917, 1918, 1922, 1927, 1930, and 1933. Buchan was Milner's private secretary when he was the High Commissioner in the Cape and later in the Transvaal. He was a long-time member of Milner's kindergarten and in the 1930s, the Governor General of Canada. He is also the author of the novel Prestor John (1910) which is set in South Africa.

secretary of Lord Milner in South Africa, uses a meeting of 18 members of British high society to discuss the functioning of empire, imperialism, and democracy. For Buchan,

> *"The only justification of democracy is that it clears the way for superiority ... Remember, our democracy [in South Africa] is a White man's democracy" (Buchan, 1906, p. 116).*

Buchan's view of the role of democracy reflects many those of other leading British and Afrikaner politicians including Alfred Milner, Cecil Rhodes, Jan Smuts and John Merriman. In a settler-colonial context in which Africans are disenfranchised and discriminated against, and White men are privileged as colonizers, the grey areas within the 'racial aristocracy' are an interesting place to understand how political identities are formed and their effects on political orientation.

For Jews, having political rights was either totally new or very recent. Specific political disabilities against Jews were active in England until 1858 and in the Pale of Settlement, where most Yidn were from until the Russian Revolution in 1917. Santiago Slabodsky, in his book '*Decolonial Judaism',* sums up the preceding four hundred years as a period in which Jews were forced to remain 'barbarians' or to follow the single path to civilisation, a process which amounted to a cultural genocide and which never guaranteed equality or safety. Initially, the route to civilisation was conversion to Christianity but in the 19th century, "Jews were converted into citizens of the state" (Slabodsky, 2014, p. 59).

The creation of a Jewish political identity is what I will be investigating in this chapter. In South Africa, strongly influenced by the question of the extension of political rights, but also by the settler-colonial racial hierarchy, the Jewish politicians, the Boards of Deputies, the Zionist movement and Jewish society in general, came to understand the Jewish community as a political body. In the words of Lionel Goldsmid, the editor of the Anglo-Jewish, middle-class newspaper, "the Jewish community is not merely a religious body, by also a political body, pledged by its very nature to the political principle of maintaining the status of the White man in this country."[4]

In the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek

In the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR)[5], rapidly transforming due to the expansion of the gold mining industry, the primary structural hierarchy was between settlers and natives. Most laws drastically restricted the rights of Africans to own land, to open shops, to move freely around the cities and sanctioned exploitative labour relations, and corporeal punishment. However, the foremost political tension was between burghers and uitlanders – comparable to citizens and (White)

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[4] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[5] Dutch for South African Republic. After the Anglo-Boer War it was renamed the Transvaal Colony (1902-1910). It consisted of the are now covered by the provinces of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and parts of the North-West

immigrants. At the time the law required a residence of 14 years for an uitlander to become a burgher but with the mass immigration to the mining towns, the population of uitlander men came close to equal that of the burgher men (only men had political rights). This issue dominated the 1890s and was one of the impetuses of the Anglo-Boer War.

At this moment, Jews (and Catholics) were considered White for all legal and economic matters expect that they were denied the franchise and the ability to hold any office, political or bureaucratic, in the government, nor did they receive government funding for the schools. The citizen was constructed as a White protestant Christian.

There is a short anecdote about a conversation between Paul Kruger, president of the ZAR, and Sammy Marks, a major industrialist in the Transvaal, the only Yidn born millionaire at the time and a close friend and financier of Kruger. They often got together to debate the Bible and to talk business. As retold by Marks, in 1899 he

> *"went down to see the Old Man[Kruger] … and he refused to discuss anything but politics. When I touched upon business, he told me that was all I cared for. I retorted that business was all I could talk about seeing that I was debarred by the laws of the land from taking part in politics. At this point, he nearly jumped down my throat and said that I ought to know that Jewish disabilities[6] would be removed" (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, pp. 54-55).*

Kruger was referring to the ongoing political negotiations around Jewish disabilities. In 1897, two of Kruger's close Jewish associates received word that he would be open to a petition about the removal of their disabilities. Emmanuel Mendelssohn, editor of the pro-Boer *Standard and Diggers' Press*, and Max Goldreich, property developer and brother to SAZF president Samuel Goldreich, called a meeting of prominent Jews to discuss their approach. They were split into two factions, characterised by the Reverend Harris[7] as Jew-Burghers and Jew-Uitlanders. The burgher group trusted Kruger's intentions and wished to keep this a religious issue. The uitlander group wanted to frame it as a political issue linked to their general disabilities as uitlanders. Though the meeting decided to refrain from the political framing, over the next two years it became increasingly difficult to do so while the pro-uitlander press kept bringing the issues together and Kruger kept stalling (Krut, 1985, pp. 113-116). Emancipation for Jews had been granted in England 50 years prior and was granted in the Cape Colony, and so many Jews began looking to England for their political emancipation in the Transvaal (Krut, 1985, p. 117).

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[6] 'disabilities' was the term used at the end of the 1800s to refer to political discrimination. In the case of Jews in the ZAR it referred to their exclusion from the franchise, government employment, and school funding.
[7] The Anglo-Jewish synagogues referred to their rabbis as Reverends

In negotiations between the British Empire and the ZAR before the Anglo-Boer war, the ZAR conceded new franchise rights for the uitlanders, but it included a clause which unintentionally affected Yidn by requiring potential citizens to provide proof of their citizenship in their country of origin. For Yidn this was an impossible condition as they weren't considered citizens in the Russian Empire, or had fled as political refugees and could not access the required legal documents. The Russian administration in Russia refused to even give out any authorised leaving permits.[8] This move by the ZAR pushed even the most pro-Kruger Jews, such as Sammy Marks against him. Responding to this slip-up, Kruger stated that his "object in framing and working that part of the franchise was to prevent criminals, vagabonds, highwaymen, anarchists, and such men" and that it was not intended to hurt "Russian and other foreign Jews" (Krut, 1985, pp. 118-120).

This didn't allay the fears and anger of the Jewish community and a mass meeting was called in the clubroom of the Jewish Working Men's Club and Friendly Association in the Rand Hotel. It attracted 2000 people in what was the largest meeting of Jews in the Transvaal up until that time. Most of the audience were Yidn who spoke no English and were generally amenable to Kruger.[9] All of the Anglo-Jewish elites were also present and shared the stage. Many of the names include men who would in later years be elected to the executives of the Board of Deputies and the SAZF such as Rabbi Hertz, Harry Solomon and Manfred Nathan, and future Johannesburg mayor Harry Grauman (Krut, 1985, pp. 120-121). Solomon and Nathan should be remembered from previous chapters as deeply involved in the colonial state through political positions and economic investments, as well as their role in assimilating Yidn into a colonialist lifestyle and mindset.

As Leibl Feldman recalls, "even though the English and the German Jews objected to being included with the Russian Jews, they realised that this was unavoidable" (2007 [1955], p. 205). The importance of this meeting was the construction of a political Jewish identity that transcended the religious, classed, linguistic and cultural divides between Anglo-Jews and Yidn. And while doing so also set the stage for how those differences would play out hierarchically in all Jewish communal institutions to come.

Harry Solomon's speech at that meeting, which received cheers throughout, resonated with both the Anglo-Jews and the Yidn. When he said that "you will further agree with me that what affects the

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[8] My grandfather's grandfather Shmuel-Leib was not allowed to leave Russia as he was to be conscripted into the Russian army the following year. To get out he stole the 'passport' of another Jew who had already served his time in the army and was allowed to leave the country. We got our surname Joffe from that stolen passport. All we know about what it was before is that it started with 'Gra…'

[9] The first 15 years of Yidn immigrants were much closer to Boer residents than English. Due to the high numbers of Yidn who lived and worked in rural South Africa as smousse and general dealers, similar investment into religious family life, and more similar languages

Russian Jew affects all Jews, for whether we be Russian or English, we are all Jews. This is why we stand up for you"[10] he was confirming that religious disabilities were a political issue that had to be taken up with the state. The hierarchy that was established, was of an Anglo-Jewish leadership that colluded with the colonial state to 'protect' the Yidn by acculturating them into an Anglo mould. "They exploited their power, and strove to 'civilise' the Russian Jew, so that at least outwardly he should resemble them. They exploited their influence over the Russian Jews in every way" (Feldman, 2007 [1955], p. 205).

The category 'Jew' is thus formed as a political category. The two vastly different groups of people had not overcome their differences in religious, cultural, linguistic or other categoriess. But they had, for the first time in South Africa, found common cause in politics – a trend that we'll see continuing through this chapter.

Repatriation, Naturalisation

This section will examine the role that the SAZF and the Board of deputies played in convincing Yidn to naturalise as citizens of the colonial state. They both embarked on naturalization programs that were predicated on showcasing that Yidn were capable to take part in 'civilised' government, implicitly arguing that they were not barbaric or primitive subject races. But further than that, this section will show that both organisations acted as the subcontractors for the colonial state in vetting naturalization applications.

Involvement by both the Board and the SAZF in 'sifting the desirable from the undesirable'[11] shows an ideological agreement with the colonial state's construction of desirability – something shaped by its concern with regulating the social body and the state's role as "the protectors of the integrity, the superiority, and the purity of the race" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 81).

But its also more than that. It indicates the adoption of the "technologies of power" of the modern state. The technologies of power of the modern state are to 'kill' threats to the population – by which Foucault means not only murder but "the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 256). In the context of this chapter, it means to reject, expel, and disenfranchisement. Technologies of power go beyond ideology and persist through time. As Sara Ahmed explains, institutions are shaped by those that inhabit them "as an effect of the repetition of decisions made over time" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 157).

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[10] *Standard and Diggers' Press* 29/06/1899 also see (Krut, 1985, p. 121)
[11] *The Report of the Executive Council by the SAJBD August 7th, 1912 to April 14th, 1914* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 53

Repatriation to the Transvaal Colony

The rapid development of the diamond and especially the gold mining industries gave impetus for Britains imperial greed to conquer the whole of South Africa. The scale of the mining industries, to be fully exploited, required a unified state that could implement a "coherent native policy on the franchise, land ownership, and labour" (Magubane, 2007, pp. 204-205). These interests lead to the Anglo-Boer war breaking out in 1899. While the war was undergoing the Boer states required that all British citizens and other uitlanders leave the ZAR. Though some Jews stayed in Johannesburg and others joined the Boer commandoes, most left to Cape Town like most of the White war refugees.

After the Anglo-Boer War ended in 1902, refugees from the ZAR were allowed to return to the newly renamed Transvaal Colony. However, the British administration, similarly to the ZAR before them, required that all returnees had a letter signed by their consulate stipulating that they weren't undesireable. This was a policy that was quite widely used at the time when many European citizens moved between colonies fairly frequently rather than settling down.

Much like the restrictions placed on uitlanders in the ZAR only a few years earlier, this did not impact on most people from Europe but did affect Yidn. Jews from England, Germany, as well as the rest of western Europe had no issues. However, the Russian consulate in South Africa, guided by the Russian Empire, said that the Yidn, by leaving Russia, had forfeited their citizenship (Gitlin, 1950, p. 73) (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 82-83).

Similar issues had faced Yidn in 1897 in the Transvaal, in 1907 and 1910 when various adjustments to the Immigration Acts required a document from the country the immigrant departed from. For example, the proposed changes in 1910 stated that "the immigrant must be in possession and be able to produce a passport issued to him in his country of origin."[12] The later instances were dealt with through the Board of Deputies and Jewish participation in the legislature.

However, on the issue of repatriation after the Anglo-Boer war, an interesting development occurred that changed the nature of Jewish representative organizations in South Africa. Concerned that Yidn wouldn't be able to return to the Transvaal for the lack of a willing consulate, Samuel Goldreich approached his friend, the High Commissioner Alfred Milner (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 82-83).

Goldreich was one of the most prominent South African Jews at the turn of the century both amongst Jews and White society. "Samuel Goldreich was the key figure in the South African Zionist movement between 1900-1911. A Prussian born but English raised Jew, he was a devoted follower of Herzl and

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[12] *Letter to M. Alexander from Benzion Hersch 18/11/1910* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 51

believed Zionism must assist Jews wherever they are in the world" (Mazabow, 2008, pp. 56-57). As discussed earlier Goldreich was a prominent property developer[13] in Johannesburg, and a member of multiple Jewish and Zionist organsations. In Goldreich, we can see some of the key themes of colonialism in a single individual – land ownership, allegiance to the colonial state, cultural indoctrination, and furthering colonisation in Palestine.[14]

Milner offered Goldreich the responsibility for vetting returning Yidn in an honorary capacity. Goldreich, obviously a shrewd negotiator asked that the responsibility be given to the SAZF. Milner agreed to this, a decision which Goldreich widely celebrated, calling the SAZF the 'the 'Jewish Consulate to South Africa' (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 82-83). This recognition was a world landmark and received extensive praise at the World Zionist Congress in 1905. In South Africa, it extended the influence and prestige of the SAZF, who had previously not organised on local issues. But more importantly, it established the pattern whereby Jewish organisations represented an extension of the colonial administration.

The role of the SAZF in the repatriation context was to process applications of returning Yidn and to recommend to the British Administration which Yidn were desirable and which were undesirable, a task they received praise for from Milner. He congratulated the SAZF's "exceptional assistance" and their help in "distinguishing between the immense crowd of applications to enter this country, and in picking out those who from old residence and high character were entitled to the first consideration" (Gitlin, 1950, p. 77).

Both conservative and radical historians agree that they were very active and mostly gave positive recommendations for about 13 000 Jews (Mazabow, 2008, pp. 56-57) (Feldman, 2007 [1955], pp. 82-83). Shain and Mendelsohn comment that "this formed part of the ongoing efforts to domesticate and embourgeois the Eastern European newcomers and to eradicate deviant behaviour" (Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 44). The work of repatriation was also linked to the policing and patronage discussed in the earlier chapter on Dirty Subjects.

So it should not be a surprise that between 1903 and 1905, hundreds of Jews entered the Transvaal illegally each year and were deported by the authorities with the "tacit approval of the Jewish establishment" (Krut, 1985, p. 137). Krut argues that Goldreich neither endorsed, nor agreed with the deportations but rather was constrained by the delicate balance elite Jews had to maintain to retain

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[13] Although he was wealthy in this period, he later moved to the UK to continue Zionist work and fell on hard times. He passed away in the 1920s in debt (Cohen, 1991, p. 204).
[14] Goldreich was the South African representative on the Zionist Great Actions Committee and later, when he had moved to England, he was appointed as a member of the committee to pressure the British cabinet to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine (Krut, 1985, pp. 101-102).

a position within English colonial society (Krut, 1985, pp. 137-138). But it seems likely, given Goldreich's politics and alliances, that he would have supported the deportation of a few hundred 'undesireable' Yidn out of the thousands that applied.

Naturalisation in the Cape

Within a couple of years, the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies (hereafter the 'Cape Board') would play the same role in vetting naturalisation applications on behalf of the British administration in the Cape Colony. Overwhelmed with naturalisation applications, especially from Yidn[15], the Cape administration could not keep up with the investigations into applicants. Further, the state's investigators struggled to find out much about the applicants, not knowing the social and commercial circles that the Yidn moved in nor being able to speak Yiddish. In 1904 the Cape Board began acting, in their own words, "as investigator regarding naturalisation of Jewish Aliens."[16] Jews could drop off their applications at the office of the Cape Board, rather than at the State office and in every meeting the delegates would arrive and submit the investigations they had carried out since the last meeting. They would then receive a new list of names to investigate. In the first few meetings, each name was recorded in the minutes but as the lists grew longer the minutes started summarising this ritual process: "The delegates handed in their reports of naturalisation which were adopted, and further lists were handed to them."[17]

Despite the other political aim of the Cape Board – to maintain Jews' legal status as White immigrants by getting Yiddish recognised as a European Language – when it came to naturalisation they rejected applications written in Yiddish. Morris Alexander, the celebrated defender of Yiddish,

> *"did not consider those desirable to become British Subjects. It was decided that in all such cases [when an application was written in Yiddish] the applicants must be able to write their name in the English Language before the Board would recommend them."[18]*

In this case, similarly to the support the Cape Board gave to the Colonial Administration on issues of illegal liquor trading and the 'White slave trade', we can see the representative body of Jews acting more like an extension of the colonial state into Jewish lives than as the defenders of Jewish interests. This wasn't a decision imposed by the colonial state, but one they decided on themselves. The official

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[15] Of all 'alien', ie not British, immigrants it was primarily Yidn that were moving to settle in South Africa. Others were moving for temporary work. *Report on Immigration and Labour for the year ending 31st December. 1906 G. 21 -1907*

[16] *Minutes of Special General Meeting of Delegates. 26/09/1904* in South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archive. BC792, Box 18

[17] *Minutes of general meeting 27/11/1904* in South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archive. BC792, Box 18

[18] *Minutes of Special General Meeting of Delegates 30/10/1904* in South African Jewish Board of Deputies Archive. BC792, Box 18

Jewish organisations were not simply defenders of Jewish lives and ethics, nor were they simply anti-Yidn. They believed that the rightful position of 'the Jew' was to be an equal member of White society. Thus, the anti-Yidn views and actions by the British was a detestable and to be defended against. But just as importantly, the public expression of Yiddish culture was seen as demeaning and obstinate. Both of these broke the pact. The Anglo-Jews saw their future racial standing wrapped up with the Yidn and did all they could to transform Yidn, from a 'Blackguardly' people into White colonialists. And they helped the government expel or deny entry to those who couldn't or wouldn't be refashioned into colonial subjects.

After the two Boards of Deputies merged in 1912, they reported that they both had the policy

> *"to maintain the right of admission to South Africa of every immigrant who complies with the requirement of the law. The Board is as much **opposed to the admission of undesirables** as the Government, and had undertaken this most important work **solely in the interests of the desirable Jewish immigrant**; it is always ready to assist the Government in sifting the undesirable from the desirable."[19]*

Naturalisation was seen as an important goal by many in positions of influence in the South African Jewish community. For them, it achieved three aims. First, was to ensure that Jews had a claim on equal treatment under the law as British subjects, the second was to demonstrate the ability of government– something thought to be an indication of civilisation, and lastly, it was a secure way to formally join the White political body.

Naturalisation, Civilisation and Race

By 1905/6 both of the Boards and the SAZF, who represented contrasting political programs, were invested in the naturalisation of Yidn. This aligned with the passing of the new Naturalisation law in 1905 and the shortening of the residential period required to qualify for naturalisation. With White South Africa expressing ever more alarmist concerns with the proportional decrease of White citizens in the urban areas, and the 'upward mobility' of Indian and Chinese immigrants, the relaxation of the residential period for naturalisation indicates a political desire to increase the demographics of White settlers. The political recognition of Yidn as British citizens (rather than British subjects) and therefore White people helped increase the White population.

When the criteria for naturalisation were brought before parliament in 1904, the Attorney General of the Cape Colony, Victor Sampson, wrote a report on the "*Interpretation and Administration for the*

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[19] *The Report of the Executive Council by the SAJBD August 7th, 1912 to April 14th, 1914* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 53 (emphasis added)

Acts Relating to Naturalisation." In it, a major concern is the 'racial character' of the applicants. In reviewing the potential impact of including the term 'of European descent'[20] in the naturalisation laws, Sampson promoted a policy "against the indiscriminate naturalising of coloured persons." Specifically, he felt that the naturalisation of Indian and Chinese immigrants should be discouraged as "the number of Asiatic British subjects is already sufficiently overwhelming." [21]

Though there where periodic difficulties with Yidn immigration and social discrimination was present, the naturalisation laws – which are the expression of the economic and political interests of the state – regarded the Yidn, as a group, to be potential citizens while 'coloured persons' were not. Memmi's analysis describes the structural nature of this. The Yidn immigrant seeking to become a settler "whether he expressly wishes it or not, he is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 16).

Reflecting of the position of European immigrants in colonial society, Memmi reflects that he has "seen many immigrants [to Algeria] who, having recently arrived, timid and modest, suddenly provided with a wonderful title, … Should they not be convinced of the excellence of a system which makes them what they are? Henceforth they will defend it aggressively; they will end up believing it to be right. In other words, the immigrant has been transformed into a colonialist" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 47). As mentioned earlier, holding citizenship and having the right to own property were both new experiences for Yidn fleeing the Pale of Settlement. Though Memmi is reflecting on French working-class immigrants who gain a measure of official and economic success in Algeria that they never would have received in France, the difference is arguably more distinct for Yidn arriving in South Africa.

Arriving as political and economic refugees, the Yidn, like Memmi's working-class French immigrant to Algeria, "finds himself in a factual position which is common to all Europeans living in a colony, a position which turns him into a colonizer" " (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 16), there is a particular valence to specifically working to be accepted into that position which goes beyond simply the factual position. One the one hand, it's a transformation that has to be undergone due to discrimination on racial, religious, and national grounds with the accompanying sense of insecurity and weathering threats of violence. On the other hand, more than being transformed by structural conditions – having the "economic, political, and affective facts" of colonialism thrust upon them" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 51), there was a conscious acceptance of the new political subjectivity of the colonialist. In Memmi's

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[20] The exact term that is later used in the South African Act to limit the franchise
[21] *Interpretation and Administration for the Acts Relating to Naturalisation* in Government House, General Dispatches 1904 Mar – April

analysis "accepting the realist of being a colonizer means agreeing to be a nonlegitimate privileged person, that is, a usurper" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 52).

The naturalisation programs undertaken by the Boards and the SAZF indicate how the Jewish community came "to think of itself and its interests as White", to borrow a phrase from Roediger's (1991, p. 12) study of the White working class in the USA. To secure these interests, the Jewish establishment felt that they had to create a further distinction between Yidn and those designated as 'coloured people'.

There were concerns amongst White society that too many Yidn were being naturalised. In 1906, a list of names of the 553 aliens who were naturalised in the Cape Colony over the prior 6 months was published. Of them, at least 380 (68%) were Yidn from Russia or Poland. This was picked up by the public, some of whom expressed dismay that "comparatively few of the immigrants are of a class which is wanted in the country."[22]

When naturalisation was being denied on racial grounds especially to 'Asiatics', the Anglo-Jewish leaders were concerned not to give the impression that Jews were also amongst the many 'Asiatic' work seekers and contract labourers. L.P Hirsch, a frequent commenter in the SAJC who often expressed anti-Indian views, noted that

> *"it is, however, not a fact to be lost sight of, that when a section of the people is separated from the rest by a divergent sentiment, such as the racial and the religious, if it does not take an active part in the political life of the country it lays itself open to the danger of being regarded … as an inferior unit."[23]*

The editor of the SAJC, Lionel Goldsmid, was a bit more explicit. While he thought the decision of Yidn to abandon their citizenship in their own countries was wise, he thought it unwise that so many hadn't yet tried to naturalise in South Africa. For him, Yidn men needed to accept the privilege and responsibility that is conferred on them as a White men.

> *"The Jew living in the Transvaal, and accepting the privileges which, together with all other White men he receives, accepts a duty to the country of his adoption. If he possesses the ability, it is his duty to offer that ability to the State."[24]*

For colonialists such as Goldsmid, who have explicitly agreed to support and legitimise colonialism, and are aware of their privileged position in the colonial relationship vis-à-vis the colonised

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[22] Unidentified newspaper in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 54
[23] *SAJC* 07/07/1905
[24] *SAJC* 07/06/1905

population, Memmi (1967 [1957], p. 18) asks a few questions. "will he agree to be a privileged man, and to underscore the distress of the colonized? will he be a usurper and affirm the oppression and injustice to the true inhabitants of the colony? Will he accept being a colonizer under the growing habit of privilege and illegitimacy, under the constant gaze of the usurped?" Attempting to convince others to accept the offer of citizenship in South Africa, i.e. membership into a White racial elite, meant implicitly answering yes to each of these questions.

Goldsmid, who wasn't an avid Zionist at the time, also argued that the "use of our political ability and power now, will but serve as an excellent training for the time when we shall govern ourselves" and that naturalising would "serve to demonstrate to our rulers in England the opinion which we as Colonials would give expression to, upon the all-important subject of self-government."[25] Goldsmid was commenting on one of the major themes at the first South African Zionist Conference in 1905.

Samuel Goldreich, in his presidential address to the conference, had argued that "it was the duty of every man in South Africa not to be an alien." And that all Jewish men should naturalise and "use that privilege for the benefit of the land he lived in."[26] The majority of the delegates, representing Zionist associations from 43 different cities and town from around Southern Africa agreed[27], and the SAZF Conference passed motion that they shall assist Jews to naturalise as British citizens. The Jewish Board of Deputies for the Transvaal and Natal, the main competition for the SAZF at the time, had also made a similar resolution that year[28] – though they had nothing near the amount of ground support, and active organisers as the SAZF did.

The desire of the Zionist movement to demonstrate to Britain their ability to take part in 'civilised' government can also be read in explicitly racial terms. For at least 400 years, being governable and partaking in a political system recognised by Western Europe, had been read an indication of a groups' civilisational status, and therefore their level of humanity. In the 1550 Valladolid debate on whether American Indians poses souls, Juan Gines de Sepulveda, who argued against, used the following as 'evidence':

> *"They submit completely to their kings' capricious will without being coerced and forfeit their own liberty voluntarily and spontaneously. This abasement signals the servile, abject spirit of these barbarians … the barbarous, uneducated, and inhuman character and customs of these half-men pre-existed the arrival of the Spaniards" (Dussel, 1995 [1992], p. 65).*

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[25] *SAJC* 07/06/1905
[26] *SAJC* 14/07/1905
[27] *SAJC* 07/07/1905
[28] *SAJC* 08/09/1905

Sir George Grey, Cape Colonial Governor from 1854 whose 'native policy' consisted of brutal civilising missions, land theft, expulsion and the destruction of institutions "regarded their [Xhosa] tribal governments as little more than 'organised pillage' by tyrannical chiefs" (Magubane, 2007, p. 200) (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, pp. 14-15). Smuts as well thought that western forms of government were beyond the abilities of Africans. He argued that

> "The theory of democracy as currently understood and practised in Europe and America is inapplicable to the coloured races of South Africa. You cannot safely apply to the barbarous and semi-barbarous natives the advanced political principles of the foremost peoples of civilisation" (Magubane, 2007, p. 205).

Memmi, abstracting from the colonial situation, provides the thought process of the colonizer: "They [the colonized] are not capable of governing themselves,' says the colonizer. 'That is why,' he explains, 'I don't let them and will never let them, enter the government'" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 95). In this context, the desire of the Zionist movement to enter government and to demonstrate the applicability of western-style government to Jewish interests and ability is incredibly linked to being considered amongst the 'foremost peoples of civilisation'. The ability of Yidn to join civilisation in the settler colonies comes off the back of centuries of wars of dispossession, usurpation of land, and the consolidation of a 'White man's country' that ran off the backs of exploited colonised and indentured people.

The 1910 Franchise

In the lead up to the drafting of the South Africa Act in 1909, the political and economic interests of White South Africa found expression in the restricting the franchise to "British subject[s] of European descent."[29] This was by no means unusual in the British settler colonies. Only nine years before, the five settler colonies in Australia were joined into a single Commonwealth. Their franchise act stipulated that "No aboriginal native of Australia, Asia, Africa, or the Islands of the Pacific except New Zealand shall be entitled to have his name placed on an Electoral Roll."[30]

In South Africa, the impetus for restricting the franchise – which includes voting and running in an election – came from both the colonial racism of settler populations and the desires of mining capitalists to transform Africans into a hyper exploitable class of labour. For the Boer Republics, the ZAR and the Orange Free State, this was a continuation of their existing laws. For the Colony of Natal, though this technically represented a shift in wording, in practice they had excluded Africans from

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[29] '*The South Africa Act*' of 1909, pp.6, 11
[30] *Commonwealth Electoral Act* 1902 of Australia https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/scan-sid-164.html [accessed 25/02/2020]

voting. Magubane reminds us that "British immigrants in Natal had disenfranchised Africans in 1865 and developed, with the connivance of British authorities, a White supremacist state no more tolerant to African and Asian claims to equality than were the Boer republics" (Magubane, 1996, p. 207).

The Cape Colony had a non-racial franchise that has become known as the Cape Qualified Franchise. Though a lot of emphases has been placed on this by its supporters, it was ineffectual as a non-racial franchise. Because race and class are so intertwined in colonial situations, the property and literacy qualifications, which were periodically raised every time that more Africans started qualifying, made the voters roll have a White supermajority. The Cape franchise was "colour blind only in form" (Magubane, 1996, pp. 178-179) – for examples in 1905 of 1.5 million Africans, only 5 455 were registered voters compared to 115 000 White voters. The South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) regard this as "the merest fringe of the impending mass" and thus recommended a White only vote (Lagden, 1905, p. 94).

Even so, it's worth noting that some constituencies and politicians registered their dissent with the de jure change in the law. Twenty-two of the 95 (23%) members of the Cape Colony Parliament wrote a letter to the British government to ask them to strike the sentence "of European descent" from the South Africa Act before ratifying it. One of the members who signed the letter was Morris Alexander, who was the founder of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies discussed in the previous chapter on Immigration Rights.

They laid out their understanding of the Cape Franchise:

> *"The Cape Policy and the Imperial policy have hitherto been to raise those who are slowly emerging from the darkness of barbarism into the light of civilization, to teach the more advanced amongst them those responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship which come with civilization, and to show them that their highest welfare is dependent on a constant and unceasing endeavour to realise the great ideals of citizenship."*[31]

This approach represents a continuation of the civilisational project that was favoured by British colonialists from the 19th century. The later parts of the 1800s, political theorists such as Maine, and followers of scientific racism focussed on structuring an explicit and definitive boundary between the constructed 'racial groups'. The Cape liberal tradition was no less racist or colonial. It still maintained a distinct hierarchy of groups and cultures, ranging from barbarism to civilisation. It aimed to maintain colonial control through the assimilation of local elites. A project of assimilation shouldn't be

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[31] *South African Union, The Coloured and Native Question: An Appeal to the Parliament and Government of Great Britain and Ireland. 1909* in Alexander Papers. BC160, Box 1

interpreted as benign – its nothing less than an attempted cultural genocide (encompassing spiritual, linguistic and epistemic realms). And it comes with war, destruction, land theft and coerced labour.

The authors of this appeal were well aware of this. For them, the inclusion of 'of European descent' did not only represent an ideological difference, but it was dangerous. The explained that the lessons of citizenship and civilisation are lost "if the door of citizenship is shut against them", and more so "to deny men the opportunity to rise … [is] also an error in policy which must eventually react with evil effect upon the South African population of European descent."[32]

While it is worth noting that this is a political appeal to the British colonial government, and so would be worded in such a way as to be the most convincing to that audience, it is in line with other statements and actions taken by followers of this ideological position in the Cape. They supported the idea of a non-racial franchise but could not be classified as opponents of colonial racism, a position not unlike liberals a century prior who were racist and against slavery (Trouillot, 1995, p. 87).

The South African Act made special provision for the Cape Qualified franchise to continue to operate in the Cape. This meant that qualifying African and Coloured men living in the Cape would retain the right to vote in national elections, but could not stand for national elections. Notwithstanding the pre-existing restrictions, these were eventually stripped in the 1930s soon after the size of the White electorate was increased by dropping all property qualifications for White men, and then by granting White women the vote.

The Act calculated the proportion of provincial representation based on the recognised European population of the provinces as counted in the 1904 census[33]. However, as stated by the authors of the appeal to the British government, the phrase 'of European descent' "bears a number of inconsistent interpretations."[34]

This initially did not raise any fear by the Jewish community that Yidn would be counted as a non-European population and would be disenfranchised so soon after pushing for a naturalisation effort. There was widespread praise of the draft act when it was released from the National Convention in 1909.[35] The SAJC commented that

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[32] *South African Union, The Coloured and Native Question: An Appeal to the Parliament and Government of Great Britain and Ireland. 1909 in Alexander Papers*. BC160, Box 1
[33] *The South Africa Act*' of 1909, pp.7-8
[34] *South African Union, The Coloured and Native Question: An Appeal to the Parliament and Government of Great Britain and Ireland. 1909 in Alexander Papers*. BC160, Box 1
[35] *SAJC* 12/02/1909 and *SAJC* 12/03/1909

> *"There is no specifically Jewish aspect to the Constitution, we are included as are the rest of the White population. What applies to them applies to us equally."[36]*

However, a widely circulated letter by a Dutch Reformed Minister, Reverend Faure, created some concern. He worried that since Jews, who he viewed through a biblical lens as "White-skinned Israelites", were of Asiatic origin, they would be disenfranchised and placed "on a level with the Natal Zulu and the Transvaal k*****."[37] This lead to the SAJC writing to General Smuts for clarification. Smut's secretary quickly responded that

> *"Mr Smuts is unable to agree with the Revered Faure's contention. The term 'European' has been used from time immemorial in South Africa to distinguish White persons from natives or coloured persons, and was used in the Constitution in this sense."[38]*

This statement is in line with previous statements by White political leaders such as Alfred Milner, who, when questioned about the repatriation laws discussed earlier in this chapter, said in 1902 that

> *"It is quite certain that they will not contain any discrimination against Jews, whether of Russian or other origin. It is equally certain that in any Franchise Law which may be passed, no distinction, based upon race or creed, will be made between one White man and another."[39]*

That Yidn were seen as European was not a surprise, Yidn had been counted as European by the previous national censuses without question - a racial classification system that the South African Act adopted[40]. The Act's structure of racial political segregation stemmed from the conclusions of the SANAC report. That report had also adopted the census' definition and statistics and in its 140 pages did not mention Jews even once.

This is an effect of intensification of racial capitalism and White supremacy in South Africa which aimed to construct an exploitable African labour force, governed and managed by a unified White race. The legal, political and administrative system minimised differences amongst the European/White

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[36] *SAJC* 12/02/1909

[37] *SAJC* 12/03/1909. Originally printed in the *Cape Times* a week prior and reprinted in the *Transvaal Leader* the following week*.*

[38] *SAJC* 18/03/1909

[39] *Letter from Milner to Goldreich* 11/07/1902 (Milner, 1933, pp. 378-379)

[40] *Cape Colony Census of 1904.* Commenting on the general increase in European immigration since the previous censuses, the census report did note that with respect to the Russian Empire, "the increase in comparison with other countries is very conspicuous." Nothing else was said on the matter, and the link between Russian immigrants and Jews was not indicated.

population while enforcing a racial hierarchy between White, Coloured and Black – to refer to the three categories used in the 1904 Census.[41]

'The Russian Jew vs the Civilised Indian'

Despite this, the history of anti-Jewish persecution in both their countries of origin and in South Africa made Jewish groups hyper-vigilant of their racial status. The Anglo-Jewish community, concerned that they would be dragged down with the Yidn, were especially concerned about where the line of European would fall in the franchise debates. This prompted a series of debates within the South African Jewish Chronicle between 1906-1907 about whether, and what it would take, for the 'Russian Jew' to qualify. Interestingly, the debate amongst Anglo-Jewish circles came down to comparisons between the Yidn and Indians, specifically, as one editorial title called it, "the Russian Jew versus the Civilised Indian."[42]

This comparison is not unexpected. In South African history, Yidn and Indian immigrants[43] have been in similar social roles – traders, non-Christian, and aiming for entire families to settle in South Africa. Both were also classed at various times as dirty, threats to national and racial health, and placed somewhere in the middle of the racial hierarchy. And, as we have seen, both groups were subject to the Immigration Restriction Act, though Yidn were spared its effects. This made comparisons between the two groups fairly expected and often used. The Natal based *Indian Opinion* used these comparisons to argue for more rights on behalf of Indians – if a non-British immigrant population could be granted rights then surely Indians who were British subjects should be granted the same.

Referring to the classification of Yiddish as a European language for the Immigration Restriction Act, many letters and articles were supportive of the success that South African Jewry had achieved in getting Yiddish classified as a European Language but expressed disdain that a similar ruling wasn't extended to commonly spoken Indian languages which, as was often mentioned in many different forums, had a greater and longer civilizational claim than Yiddish did. One writer, who appears to be an exception, bought into the categorisation of Yiddish as a "bastard tongue of European Jewry" and linked it to the low standard of "culture and civilization" of the "'Peruvian" or Jewish, cabmen of Johannesburg."[44]

The debates within the SAJC are of quite a different sort, arguing often that Yidn qualify because of specific differences with Indians that would make Indians unqualified. What develops within these

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[41] *Cape Colony Census of 1904*
[42] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[43] I.e. not indentured workers
[44] *Indian Opinion 29-02-1908. pg 15*

debates is the tension between the changing modes of White supremacy – a shift in emphasis from the civilizational project and assimilation to 'biological' determinism and the management of difference. These two aspects have always both been present in the work of White supremacy but are emphasised differently in different eras and contexts (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 44-45).

In the decades around the turn of the century, a shift can be seen occurring away from a focus of the civilizational status of racial groups – with the goals of assimilation, securing the allegiance of elites, property and education tests etc – to the creation and management of immutable differences. Though it should be noted that the 'civilised Indian' hardly had any rights or preferential treatment in the Natal Colony, nor the Transvaal and were subjected to many discriminatory laws. Regardless, as contrasting racial caricatures, the tension between the 'uncivilised Yidn' and the 'civilised Indian' in the SAJC displays this shift in emphasis and the Anglo-Jewish communities' collusion with it.

This debate in the SAJC[45] started with the editorial 'The Russian Jew versus the Civilised Indian'[46] after a royal commission came from England to assess the franchise question in the Transvaal in 1906. One of the reviewers expressed the opinion that "it is monstrous that the Russian Jews should be admitted to the franchise while British Indians are excluded."[47] This statement comes off the back of two considerations. First, the 1858 decision by the British crown to accept British Indians as equal to any other British citizen in all British colonies. Though it is obvious that this law was ignored, it set a precedent to argue from. The second consideration was the equal anti-Yidn sentiment within England and especially London where antisemitism wasn't tempered by a more fundamental settler-colonial hierarchy as in South Africa.

The question arising from this reviewer is whether the Transvaal would accept Cecil Rhode's dictum of 'Equal rights for all civilised men'. Though knowing that for Rhodes, civilised directly referred to White/European[48], this dictum does get used as a contrasting opinion to the colour line. Lionel Goldsmid responded to this by saying that

> "Rhodes's dictum is in theory admirable, and no class could be more ready to welcome it
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> than the Jews… Yet, in the Transvaal, the circumstances are so peculiar that it is these same
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> Jews who must insist most strongly on such an extraneous thing as colour being taken into

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[45] This debate was occurred mainly in 1906-1907 on the pages of the SAJC with editorials and letters to the editor being the main platform

[46] *SAJC* 20/04/1906

[47] *SAJC* 20/04/1906

[48] And even if it was to be extended to a few civilised 'natives' the gold standard for Rhodes, and people using this interpretation, was still that of European civilisation not Asiatic and definitely not African. A standard that forced the equivalent of a cultural genocide, not dissimilar to forced conversion. See for example the chapter titled 'Cecil Rhodes: The Symbol of Empire' in Magubane's (1996) '*The Making of a Racist State*

account. For, in the Transvaal at the present day, skin-colour is a test of civilisation - not a perfect test, it is true, but one of easy application, and for practical purposes much superior to any other that could be devised."[49]

Making a dangerous argument for the ease of bureaucratic violence, Goldsmid is reflecting a confluence of traditions. The Cape liberal tradition gave preference to a man's civilisational status. It defined this by judging literacy and property ownership. Goldsmid recognises the civilisational goal but rather than literacy and property, for the sake of ease and context, he argues that 'biology' – ie skin colour – should be the test. The civilizational project generally allows for a degree of cultural and economic assimilation by everyone (though functioning very differently based on gender) and attempts to obscure or justify why Europeans always maintain the superior positions of power on both a structural and institutional level. Race science perspectives maintain that different racial groups shall always be hierarchically organised and based on an unchanging biological state of being.

Goldsmid concluded this editorial with the assertion that "the colour line is roughly speaking the line of civilisation, and affords the best working basis for classifying the population politically."[50] The merger being offered here is that the aspirations of the civilisational project are being upheld but people are not being split on how well they meet the European criteria of civilisation but rather on their skin colour. A race science gatekeeper into civilisation. This was not unusual. Deep into the Apartheid era, where skin colour and other visual cue were even more inscribed into law, racial reclassifications were still occurring. Erasmus (2017, pp. 89-90) notes that between 1983 and 1990, 7000 people were reclassified, showing that the State's racial classification was "situationally dependent on routine judgements of class, social standing and culture, and on the changing political needs of the Apartheid state".

This promotion on skin-colour wasn't tempered by Goldsmid's understanding of how invalid race science was. Earlier in the editorial, he reminded readers that "theorists may laugh at the idea of difference in colour constituting a difference in nature and faculties between men." By this time, race science already had a 60-year history and a growing influence around the world. Goldsmid's view that theorists are mostly against its application is confusing especially in light of Dubow's historical research into the South African development of scientific racism. Developing from being the purview of casually interested scholars into in the 1870s, "It was in the decade following the end of the South Africa War in 1902 that efforts to systematize ethnological and anthropological knowledge were given proper institutional backing" (Dubow, 1995, pp. 11-12). In the first few years following the war,

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[49] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[50] *SAJC* 20/04/1906

associations, journals, and societies were formed that had a marked influence on the general understanding of 'racial groups' and influenced the thinking of important policy platforms such as the SANAC report in 1905.

Of course, this intellectual history is completely intertwined with the political and economic project of that decade. The wars of dispossession that characterised the 19th century culminated with the amalgamation of the four colonial reams under British rule. Thereafter the colonial project shifted track, as mentioned by Mamdani (2012, p. 43) theoretically and Magubane specifically, to the construction and management of racial difference, and the establishment of a colonial state to "suit its imperial needs" (Magubane, 2007, p. 204).

The field's rapid growth in influence, including widely circulated books[51] by authors such as Stow and Theal, meant that the so-called 'Stow-Theal racial paradigm' was so entrenched "by the early years of the century, [that] it was almost routine[52] for writers on South Africa to begin or include in their studies a physico-historical description of South Africa's indigenous racial groups" (Dubow, 1995, p. 74). A great deal of effort went into creating racial classifications that linked biology to culture and economics – with a preeminent concern to 'prove' that 'Bantu' groups had origins outside of South Africa. The field justified a 'natural' racial hierarchy and claimed to account for "physical appearance, technology, mode of subsistence, government, way of life, and language" (Dubow, 1995, pp. 69-70).

Concerning Yidn in South Africa, the contemporary bedrock of scientific racism – origins and physical appearance – is complicated. Goldsmid frames a question by asking of the Yidn "whether it is their White skin or their Oriental descent which is to be decisive as to their classification."[53] In the context of the debate on having 'European descent,' this is quite a powerful reflection on what exactly this means in the South African context. Judging retrospectively, 'of European descent', was never interpreted as having at least one European ancestor – otherwise many people who were at the time classified into the new racial category of 'Coloured' might have been granted the full franchise. It was more about judgements based on the interaction of descent, 'the look', class, social standing,

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[51] These include George Theal's *Yellow and Dark-skinned People of Africa South of the Zambesi* (1910), George Stow's *The Native Races of South Africa* (1905)*, ,* A H Keane's *The Boer States* (1900), and James Brycec's *Impressions of South Africa* (1899) amongst others.

[52] This is also true of the first book published in Yiddish in South Africa, *Sefer Hazichrones,* written by Necchemia Dov Ber Hoffman in 1916. It includes physico-historical account which doesn't mention external origins but does focus on anatomy, dress, habits, economy and combines these to conclude that "the native Black man['s]… natural disposition is one of slavery, requiring the strong hand of the master" (Hoffman, 1916 [1996], pp. 9-11)

[53] *SAJC* 11/05/1906

language, and culture (Erasmus, 2017, pp. 52,89,93). At the time however it there was a strong sense that Yidn, though European, were of Oriental descent.

A letter to the editor of Izindaba Zabantu, a Zulu language paper-based in Natal, which was questioning whether a person's 'cultural' affiliation was based on their parents or the culture they lived in used Yidn as one test example. He said

> "I have travelled to the big towns. I have seen many many times that it is written 'Europeans only' on certain buildings or rooms, and as I watch I see that now in comes a Jew. Woah, White folks, don't leave us behind with such speed. … For what reason does a Jew enter a building marked 'Europeans only'? Does a Jew come from Europe, or do they come from Asia? They are not prevented, and no one says "No way, don't enter here, get out of here, you, this building is not for Asians, it's for Europeans."[54]

The racial classificatory question of 'Orientals with White skin' doesn't just apply to Yidn. Syrians and Lebanese immigrants were also classified as White in South Africa but only if they were Christian.[55] And there are anecdotal stories of light-skinned Indians who could get classified as White in this period if they converted, or pretended to convert, to Christianity and adopted western attire and language. At this time, religion and race were still very tightly wound up categories. Black Christians and White Jews obviously complicate this, but in other cases, African Muslims would be classified as Malay[56] and then Coloured. We must always remember not only that racial categories are highly unstable and change based on the shifts in power but also that 'race' itself isn't distinct from categories such as religion and class.

This does highlight that the process of race making is very contextual to the historical conjuncture but also the foundational power relationships. Goldsmid later slightly complicated his earlier formulation

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[54] Letter to the editor in *Izindaba Zabantu* 1/12/1911. Translation from isiZulu by Cullen Mackenzie
[55] This was also true in Australia. Interestingly, the legal proceedings that reclassified Christian Syrians and Lebanese as White made reference to Jew's Oriental origins, highlighted the intersections between race and religion at the turn of the century, and were promted by the desire of that community to own land. The lawyer for the reclassification argued that: "... The Syrians are an ancient Semitic race in whose land Christianity arose and flourished and who were the first disciples to Christianity, fighting with great loss and sacrifice against the Turks during the Crusades and remaining staunch defenders of the faith to the present day, and the members of Legislature that passed the said Law [Transvaal Law No. 3 of 1885] renowned for their zeal for Christianity would not subject another White Christian race to the differentiations and restrictions imposed by the said Law" (Judgment 1913: 4) … It has never been suggested that the Jews (who are also a Semitic race and come from the same country) are subject to the said Law. Yet if Law 3 of 1885 applies to Syrians it must be necessarily applied to the Jews and members of both these communities would be required by the Law to carry permits and to be subject to the Asiatic Acts of 1907 and 1908 and would have to live in locations (Judgment 1913: 4)" (Hourani, 2013).
[56] Malay in particular was a racial category defined by religion. The *Cape Colony Census of 1904* defined 'Malay' as owing "its distinctive existence rather to the bond of a common and uniform faith than to any feeling of race" – a definition that had been kept intact at least since 1875

and also highlighted that he understood this difference. He admitted that "large masses of the population of Europe are not properly civilised and are incapable of realising the duties and responsibilities of citizenship" – throwing open what has seemed to be a definitional confluence between European and civilisation - "but … members of this class do not reach the Transvaal and that every White man who manages to exist here proves 'ipso facto' that he has qualities which entitle him to rank as civilised."[57]

What's arising here is how the colonial condition shapes racial identification. Whether or not one is civilised within Europe, if one can survive 'here' in 'deep dark Africa', on the frontier, as a settler and usurper, he proves himself as White. To be White is to be a usurper. All other questions of civilisation, though important to social acceptance amongst other Whites, pale in comparison to the ability to fill the position of a colonizer. Archival evidence supports this claim. In the Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope, the discussions of importing more White workers revolved showed a deep concern with whether they would adopt the role of the coloniser or if they would "mix with the coloured people."[58] The deportation of Europeans involved in 'racially degrading' activities, and the Jewish Philanthropic Society's funding the return Yidn who weren't succeeding here, all make sense when viewed through this lens.

Goldsmid flips his logic for Indians.

> "We know that large numbers of Orientals, especially Indians, are highly civilised, and would be a real acquisition to the citizen-roll of any country. But we believe that the circumstances of the Transvaal are such as to offer no inducement to such men to settle here … and the class of Indians which does find it worthwhile to come here is not such as could reasonably claim to exercise the franchise."[59]

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[57] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[58] *Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope*, 1893. CCP 4/19/18. Question 3342
[59] *SAJC* 20/04/1906. This logic is what the allowed the SAJC to change their position on the Indian Registration Act without changing their position on whether Indians should get the franchise. They eventually spoke out on Act which prevented Indian's moving to the Transvaal. An Act that Gandhi mobalised the Satyagraha campaign against. The Indian Opinion reflected that "We had always understood that the history and traditions of the great Jewish race forbade it to countenance anything in the shape of oppression. We must confess that we have looked in vain, for the last three years, for any outward manifestation of the truth of our belief. The apathy of the Jewish community on the subject of the underlying principle of the Registration Act was the more incomprehensible in view of current happenings in Russia and Roumania. One would have thought that the bitter lessons taught thereby to our fellow colonists would have borne abundant fruit. It is only now, with this somewhat tardy utterance of the South African Jewish Chronicle, that we are able to realise that our belief was not ill founded, and that modern Judaism is still worthy of a foremost place in the van of civilizing influences." *Indian Opinion 20/12/1907*

What has emerged from this debate so far is that one, pale skin was more important than place of origin, and two, that being able to act in the position of a coloniser was the basis on which the 'conditional White' would be classified. We've also already seen in previous chapters the importance of being socially accepted as White based on cultural performance. It is this last point which I want to return to on the possibility of assimilation – something that was becoming restricted to groups of people rather than individuals.

Many times, both by the editorials and by the critiques of them, offered mostly by someone who went by the pseudonym, 'A Disgusted Jew', Yidn are positioned as standing on a "borderland". Goldsmid states that the Russian Jews are "as Oriental as the Indians, that in character and morality there is nothing to choose between them and the Indians."[60] They are "of all Europeans, the one who has the least of the European and the most of the Oriental about him" and they "stand on the borderland between White and coloured."[61] The 'Disgusted Jew' agrees that "the Jew, as a semi-Oriental, stands midway between East and West" and that Russian Jews and British Indians are in the same class and professions.[62]

While 'A Disgusted Jew' argues that a comparison between the two would be in favour of the British Indian, Goldsmid follows up these points by asserting that regardless of this borderland location, there are two defining features which separate the two colour-castes and which should determine whether they should be excluded or included from the franchise together[63] - that is, one, that Yidn are Western.

Goldsmid clarifies this in a few ways. In a passage that's already been analysed elsewhere as an example of the interaction between White supremacy, patriarchy and the heteronormative marital economy, the focus is on the supposed monogamy of Yidn compared to the supposed pol ygamy of Indians. Something which "is the internal counterpart of their difference in skin-colour" and "the real distinction"[64] between the Oriental and the Western 'races'.

Besides these, however, what seems more important for the SAJC, and their second reason to distinguish between otherwise comparable groups is the potential for Jews to assimilate. This point was brought up a few times and resonates with broader Anglo-Jewish approaches to politics at the time. A Yidn man "assimilates better with his surroundings and is better material for the making of

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[60] *SAJC* 11/05/1906
[61] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[62] *SAJC* 27/04/1906
[63] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[64] *SAJC* 11/05/1906

British citizens."[65] This was qualified in an interesting way that manages to hold both the Anglo-Jewish distaste of Yidn as dirty, uncultured 'Peruvians' but also their assimilatory potential.

Goldsmid argued that

> *"whatever the Russian Jew may be himself, his children possess a marvellous power of assimilation, and are capable of becoming an integral part of whatever country they are born in. … Hence, granting that the Russo-Jewish immigrant is in himself not more desirable as a settler in this country than the Indian immigrant, it is worth the while of the Government to offer him extra inducements to stay in the country for the sake of the next generation."[66]*

The sense of the Yidn as assimilable, at least intergenerationally, is wrapped up in their acceptance of civilisation through becoming citizens. The Peruvian, the barbaric image of the Jew, was seen as unassimilable. In a quote partially seen at the beginning of the Dirt chapter, a writer in the *South African Review* of 1903 argued that

> *"The Russian Jew, small blame to him, has been debased by centuries of tyranny to such and extent that it will take generations to work off the brand of slave … to make self respecting citizens out of the great bulk of them … is impossible … the iron [of oppression] has ground out of his soul all his manliness and every quality which goes to make a good citizen."[67]*

But once the Peruvian stops existing in "in conflict with [civilisation]" and, by becoming citizens, no longer "exist outside of [civilisation]" (Foucault, 2004 [1976], p. 195), the Yidn is transformed from barbaric internal threat to the social body to an assimilable subject. Through the assimilation of the Yidn into colonialists by way of citizenship, the Peruvian disappears.

These passages evoke both a deep sense of loss of what my ancestors were forced to sacrifice on the altar of White supremacy and a painful and burning anger at the role they ended up fulfilling by colluding with power in some of the worst forms of racial violence. Today we remember pieces of der haim[68], and shetl life, with romanticised nostalgia, clinging to ever-shrinking and meaningless expressions of Yiddishkeit[69] while our cultural, and religious practices have been mobilised to occlude continued injustices, promote indifference, and drum up active support for continued racialised violence in South Africa and Palestine.

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[65] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[66] *SAJC* 20/04/1906
[67] *South African Review* 06/02/1903 cited in (Shain, 1994, p. 50)
[68] The old country
[69] Jewish culture

Conclusion

Citizenship is struck through with power. Who is granted, and who is refused, or is even stripped of citizenship is a reflection of the power dynamics present in the construction of the state itself. And once citizens are defined, state resources and violence are differentially applied to privilege those with citizenship at the cost of those who are subject to its theft, exploitation, expulsion and murder.

Understanding the construction of the citizen is, therefore, a good indication of how power is distributed in a given society. As was expressed often at the turn of the century, the goal was to make South Africa into a 'White man's country'. Citizenship is thus intimately tied up with race and gender constructions and exclusions. Those who refused, broke with, demeaned by, and threatened by those constructions were seen as uncivilised and undeserving of the rights of citizenship. Their lives were to be lived under the ultimate control of those constructed as civilised. As Mamdani explains "citizenship would be a privilege of the civilised; the uncivilised would be subject to an all-round tutelage" (Mamdani, 1996, p. 17).

Concerning race, becoming citizens meant being inscribed in the book of Whiteness. Throughout this chapter, we've seen examples of how Jewish communities fought for and were granted access to this position. Whether through the attempts to overturn Jewish disabilities in the ZAR, repatriation to the Transvaal, naturalisation efforts by both the Boards of Deputies and the SAZF, and the eventual acceptance as meeting the criteria 'of European descent' in the Union of South Africa.

Being a citizen meant being White. And being a White man meant being a citizen. But we've also seen the inherent instability of racial categories. Because the category White cannot be determined by 'the Look', or descent alone, Yidn who wanted to be White had to undergo a process of assimilation. Echoing the assimilation arguments made in the chapter on Dirty Subjects, the possibility of Yidn assimilating was even seen by some as the reasons why they were even worthy of being treated as White.

But, and this is of central importance, assimilation is not just acculturation. It's not only the transformation of culture, language, social habits, economic positions etc. Becoming White is not acculturating into an English cultural milieu - Yidn fitting into or rejectingan Anglo-Jewish mould. It is assimilation into power. In the colonial context, it is accepting the role of a usurper and the practices and beliefs that go along with that role – economically exploitative, political oppressive, and colonially racist (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 130).

In the lives of individual Yidn, and of great importance to the communal psyche, it is vital to note that for the most part, they would not have intended to pick up these roles. Citizenship, like property rights, was denied to Yidn living in the Pale of Settlement. For almost all Yidn, getting citizenship rights in

South Africa would be the first time in their lives, in their known family history, that a state was willing to accept them as full citizens. The novel sense of security that such recognition must have granted is impossible for me to appreciate given that my family have been citizens since they arrived here before WWI at the latest.

However, this is one of the benefits of a colonial situation for the poor and oppressed of Europe. From the French Huguenots, the destitute Cornish miners, to the Yidn, the colonial situation offered a chance to remake oneself. An opportunity for wealth, political freedom, protection from religious discrimination, a secure location to raise a family – these are reasons why South Africa was one of the destinations for Europe's refugees. But these are distinctly colonial benefits, granted only to those from Europe, and secured only through the subjugation and exploitation of the colonized. "The immigrant who is prepared to accept anything," argues Memmi, "having come for the express purpose of enjoying colonial benefits, will become a colonialist by vocation" (1967 [1957]).

This is why conscious of their communal choice or not, the assimilation into Whiteness, into citizenship, requires accepting the fundamental structural role of the coloniser. "The distinction between deed and intent," argues Memmi, "has no great significance in the colonial situation. In the eyes of the colonized, all Europeans in the colonies are *de facto* colonizers, and whether they want to be or not, they are colonizers in some ways" (1967 [1957], p. 130).

Though Jews have never "made the running of this country", the processes to become citizens in a White supremacist settler colony required a transformation from *de facto* colonizers to ideological collusion with colonial racism and its stolen benefits. It required the fashioning of a new colonialist political subjectivity. Jews in South Africa have long been a part of the White population who did make the running of this country.

6) Remembering from Past to Present

You are losing your historical friends. You are still in the ghetto. Why don't we get out of there together?

Houria Bouteldja 2016, p. 72

People who shut their eyes to reality simply invite their own destruction, and anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns himself into a monster.

James Baldwin 2012, p. 143

To conclude this thesis, I will summarise the arguments that I've made so far about how Yidn, colonisers in a settler colony, come to behave like settlers, identify as White, and believe like colonialists. After I go through some of the key moments in the transformation into colonialists, I will share two arguments that I haven't made which I think could be used to extend this research project further. This section will then shift in tone to reflect on the family histories that I unexpectedly encountered during research and writing. This will provide a bookend to the positionality and purpose section in my introduction and serve as a minor reflection on the operation of power in colonial archives. My ancestors' experiences will lead to the present. Not able to draw a narrative link over the past one hundred and twenty years I will provide two personal vignettes that show the continuation of colonial behaviour and colonialist mentality and end with a call to action.

Becoming Colonialists Then

Depending on how I split things I have three sets of ancestors from 1900. On my father's side, there are a few western Europeans. They came to South Africa as a part of the colonial administration, with a significant plot of land already bought. There are also a few western Europeans who came out as members of the colonial working-class – miners and domestic workers amongst them. On my mother's side, there are eastern Europeans who came out as traders, artisans and homemakers. They all left vastly different situations in their homes and arrived to quite different lifestyles. For the most part, their lives wouldn't have crossed paths, belonging to different class, cultural and religious backgrounds.

However, they all came for the same reason: to improve their lives. Whether fleeing discrimination, poverty, or abusive home environments. Whether looking for economic opportunities, the best deal on land amongst the settler colonies, or the next step in a career. They all came for the benefits that the colonial relationship can only offer to Europeans – a life far improved from their lives at home.

"Leaving for a colony", explains Memmi, "is simply a voyage to an easier life" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 3). This is because the colonial situation, especially the settler-colonial situation, is geared towards supporting, in the language of the time, 'the supremacy of the White man'. Memmi further analyses the colonial relationship which no coloniser can avoid.

"[the coloniser] must constantly live in relation to [the colonised], for it is this very alliance which enables him to lead the life which he decided to look for in the colonies; it is this relationship which is lucrative, which creates privilege. If his living standards are high, it is because those of the colonised are low; if he can benefit from plentiful and undemanding servants, it is because the colonised can be exploited at will, and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him and the colonized are excluded from them; the more freely he breathes, the more the colonised are choked" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 8).

What is the difference between my Yidn ancestors and my British and French Christian ancestors? In this sense, nothing. The individual immigrant has no choice in the matter. Once they have arrived, they are a settler, a coloniser. To arrive in a colony is to step into a colonial relationship that is beyond their choosing. Yidn in the country were White by all legal, political and economic considerations. That they were discriminated against for being Jews, is analogues to patriarchal oppression against colonial women, the class oppression against the White working class, or even the cultural discrimination amongst western Europeans. Regardless of the hierarchies of oppression and discrimination amongst the colonial class, they were all structurally colonisers.

However, there was a choice to be made in how to react to colonialism. Being a coloniser came with great benefits, but being a 'good' coloniser came with even more. Yidn could choose on an individual basis whether to buy into the colonial mandate and become colonialists or to reject colonialism, White supremacy, and capitalism and try to work organise against its extension. Because of antisemitism, Yidn were judged on a group basis however, and an individual's own choices would not make much difference in how the rest of White society treated them. So Yidn had a choice to make on a group basis as well.

Given what we've seen in this thesis about the formation of a single socio-political entity called 'Jews' from 1899, the anxieties of the Anglo-Jews desperate to keep the emancipation pact alive, and the

power wielded by Jews who had already integrated themselves into the British colonial machinery, this meant that Yidn and Anglo-Jews were tied up into making the same collective decisions.

Many networks and organisations of Yidn, such as the trade unionists, socialists, and Yiddish workers clubs, made other choices which they sustained until the 1940s, at which point resistance to colonial racism became separated from Yidn identity. After that point, Jewish activism took place predominantly in White only, nonracial or multi-racial organisations. But most Jews, and the Jewish communal institutions which are still central today, but were born, and recognised, at the turn of the century, chose to become colonialists – colonisers who seek to legitimize, defend, collude, and further colonialism. This is not unexpected; most colonisers make the choice to improve their own lives. Memmi reminds us that "it is not easy to escape mentally from a concrete situation, to refuse its ideology while continuing to live with its actual relationships" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], pp. 19-20).

The move from being colonisers to being colonialists occurs in many overlapping areas. My thesis has focussed on four of them. It occurred in the cultural area in which Yidn were classed as dirty subjects and communal institutions worked with the state to 'clean', i.e. 'Whiten' them up. It occurred in the economy of racial capitalism, in which Jews of all class positions learnt the exploitative practices of settler colonialism. It occurred linguistically through both the classification of Yiddish as a European language, and efforts to never-the-less eradicate its use. And lastly, it occurred in the political realm through becoming citizens by embracing the ideology of a White-only franchise. I'll spend a paragraph on each chapter before moving on to a reflection of the methodology of this thesis.

When Yidn first started arriving in this country in the 1880s, 'dirt' was widely used in the iconography of social value (McClintock, 1995, p. 153). Yidn, unwanted by the settler population, became marked with dirt. Their bodies, living spaces, sexual practices and trading were all understood within the conceptual world of dirt – undesirable, unhygienic, taboo, illegal. Many other groups of people were also marked as dirty, and they faced the physical and state violence of the accusation. Yidn, through proximity to Whiteness, escaped most of that violence. But the anxieties of the Anglo-Jews, and the desires to be seen a clean lead the community down a path of intracommunity policing and patronage in which those Yidn who could assimilate into the settler lifestyle were assisted and vigorously defended by the communal institutions. On the other hand, those that who couldn't, or wouldn't assimilate – the poor, the sex workers, the anti-racists, the lawbreakers – were excluded from the community and sometimes even deported or imprisoned by the state with the communal institutions' support.

In the economy of racial capitalism, productive subjects were being made to suit early 20th century financial interests. This meant the construction and placement of racial subjects in a strict hierarchy.

For the settler capitalist class, Black subjects were useful when dispossessed and exploitable, White subjects were useful when owning land and exploiting their workers. As colonisers, Yidn were forced into the role of the White land-owning, and exploiting class. The Anglo-Jewish elite used their class positions, and proximity to economic and political power to secure positions of authority within the Jewish community. Yidn, though often operating on the edges of White economic subjectivity, learnt the actions and developed the consciousness of exploitation both in their shops and in their homes – came to behave like colonialists and legitimised racial hierarchies. Widespread support for Zionism, and the debates about the East Africa plan, also shaped, and was shaped, by the settler relationship to the land in South Africa – spreading a colonialist agreement with usurpation.

In line with a global shift of immigration restrictions, non-European immigrants were banned from entry to the Anglophone White settler colonies through the proxy of language. Though colonisers in South Africa, Yidn were often seen as undesirable additions to the settler population, and Yiddish was initially included as a non-European language. This was quickly overturned but sparked a local movement of Jewish organisations to get Yiddish, and by extension, Yidn classified as European. Coalescing into the Jewish Board of Deputies, these Jews argued for inclusion into a category of racial superiority by explicitly marking differences between them and 'Asiatics' – the class of people directly affected by the new laws. Though Yiddish was legally classified as a European language, it still carried the social markers of dirt and undesirability and the organised Jewish community tried to eradicate its use to better assimilate into power.

After the Anglo-Boer War, the racial restrictions on the franchise was a point of contention amongst the settler population. The negotiations settled in the 1909 South Africa Act with a franchise that was restricted to those of European descent. Citizenship in South Africa was to be guided by principles of White supremacy. In this context, both the Boards of Deputies and the Zionist organisations, lead naturalisation campaigns to get Yidn to become citizens of the settler colony. This move relied on understanding settler-colonial rule as legitimate and the position of Jews as amongst the settler class. Adopting a colonialist response to citizenship, the Jewish communal institutions acted as extensions of the colonial state. They motivated or rejected naturalisation applications on behalf of the state, using and legitimising the State's conception of 'undesirability', and convincing Yidn that their best security was to be found in allegiance with colonialism. They adopted the technologies of power of the modern colonial state. This lead to a flirtation with the changing modes of White supremacy. Changing from a civilisational concern with the adoption of western civilisation rather than barbarism to a biological concern with White skin and European descent, the Anglo-Jewish press argued that the otherwise barbaric Yidn was superior to the civilised Indian due to White skin and assimilability into settler colonialism.

The investigation into these four realms has provided the backdrop, evidence, and arguments about how Jews, Yidn in particular, became colonialists in the early 20th century. If a person, or a group of people, is on the privileged side of an oppressive structure – they can't be neutral or indifferent. The group either works against the system, operating in Memmi's framework as the 'coloniser who refuses'. Or they accept the system, the 'coloniser who accepts'. Accepting the colonial system is enough to be colonialists.

However, the Jewish community – the parts of it the coalesced into the communal institutions that have survived until the present at any rate – did far more than merely accept the colonial system. Instead, they fought for a place at the table of colonisers, they argued that they deserved to immigrate and get the franchise more than Indians, they refashioned themselves into good colonial subjects and colluded with the colonial state to enforce its laws. The organized Jewish community was, in the words of SAJC editor, Lionel Goldsmid, "pledged to maintain the superiority of the White man in this country"[1]. Arguing that colonialism was legitimate, and working to defend and extend its powers means that the South African Jewish community were not simply refugees in a colonial country, nor immigrants, nor just colonisers, but had transformed into colonialists.

More broadly this thesis has shown how the pressures of global and local, early 20th-century settler colonialism, racial capitalism and White supremacy shaped the construction of racial categories and political subjectivities. These made up the actual colonial relations of subjugation that do more than just change the alliances of existing subjects but manufacture new colonial subjects.

Where this research could be extended

Besides the arguments that I've present here, I could have chosen a few more arguments to make which would have also supported my main claim. There was enough material and necessary background discussion for these topics to be an entire chapter or even the subject of a thesis in their own rights. Given limitations of scope, and the centrality of the arguments that I've presented in the rest of the thesis, they were left out as possible avenues for further research

A whole chapter could have been devoted to Zionism. The SAZF's role in the repatriation of Jews to the Transvaal, its decision to promote naturalisation, and the debates over the East Africa plan are just three elements of the interrelation between Zionist organising, and colonialism in South Africa. The deeply gendered establishment of the organising structures, debates between the Yidn and Anglo elements of the movement, the relationship to British imperialism, and Boer nationalism in South Africa, and the role of the Jewish National Fund and Jewish Colonial Trusts could have made for a

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[1] *SAJC* 05/05/1905

fascinating chapter. And that is not even including an in-depth assessment of the similarities between the *terra nullis* of Africa and Palestine in the Zionist imagination, how the prominence of Zionism in South African Jewry created an affinity of Jewish political organisation rather than cultural or religious affiliation, and how the different strands of Zionism relied on and reinforced different aspects of colonial ideology.

Another whole chapter, or, more appropriately a central argument running throughout the thesis could also have examined the interrelation of the construction of gender categories and the making of race. There was a wealth of information about how both Jewish masculinity and Jewish femininity had to be reconstructed to fit into the gender roles of colonial society. Yidn Jewish masculinity was seen as weak and feeble, something that antisemitic immigration arguments used to support their claims that Yidn wouldn't make good colonisers. Yidn masculinity, from both a Zionist and a colonial perspective, had to be reshaped into, if not strong and powerful, at least pioneering and entrepreneurial. The role and arguments about Jewish men in the Anglo-Boer war, as well as working in the *Shisa Nyamas*, and as the chairmen of women's associations could be analysed. Similarly, Jewish femininity was reshaped. Coming under constant attack by Jewish men, different manifestations of Jewish femininity were valorised at different times - homemakers, socialites, communal activists – depending on what was seen as the most important for fitting into to colonial society. SAJC editorials on 'the ideal woman', or 'womanliness', as well as the 'social and fashionable' column, could have been analysed. As well as the role of Jewish women in the Women's Enfranchisement League, in Zionist organisations, and, as Krut brilliantly develops, debates between Suffragettes and Domestic Feminists, and their ideological agreement on White supremacy.

Another possible extension to this research, though it would be personal rather than academic, concerns my family history. This is a project I've taken up, in far more normative ways, before, and surprised me with how it emerged throughout the research and writing of this thesis. The next section will explore the nuances of finding my family history within the archives, the work of remembering, and the construction of White Settler subjects.

Remembering

Before I began this project, I had long maintained an interest in my family's past. My bar mitzvah[2] theme was family trees. I had done a lot of work the preceding year collating and digitizing many familial relationships both back in time up to 7 generations but also broadly to 3rd and 4th cousins whose names I'd never heard before, nor since. But much like Trouillot reflected before a monument

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[2] A Jewish coming of age ceremony that occurs at age 13

of a long-dead civilization, "as much as I was touched by the magnificence of the structure, I never came to feel that I was touching history" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 142).

A distance always remained between me and the lives of the people I was recording the names and dates of birth of. This project wasn't an attempt to learn more about my family's past, rather intervene in the Jewish community today. But it ended up connecting me with my family's past. Not only my Yidn family, whose experiences are probably captured within the stories reflected here though I know little about them, but also my British and French family, who I know a little bit more about, and surprisingly found peppered through my thesis.

Reading through archives and literature about South African history, and bringing it all together in writing I felt, much like Trouillot again, that "I had touched the ghosts suddenly real; I had engaged people far remote in time and in space" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 142). What does it mean to remember these ancestors as individuals? Not just as abstract ideas, I have felt like I have connected to them in ways that I had never before. This was never comfortable. As I reflected in the introduction, my feeling about the lives and choices my ancestors made vacillated between and simultaneously contained, both pain and fury.

Which ghosts did I touch? When in the Morris Alexander archives, I came across new information about my great-great uncle, Sir David Hunter. Originally from Scotland, we knew that he was knighted for his contribution to building the Natal Railways on behalf of British colonial expansion. He was a proud Scotsman and only employed fellow Scots in management positions. He was also the director the same Railways that Gandhi was thrown off, though he joined it a few years later. When writing the section on the establishment of the immigration restrictions in Natal and Gandhi's near escape of the S.S. Courland and S.S. Naderi, I couldn't help but think about the links through to Sir David. We didn't know that he was the chairperson of an organisation trying to ban alcohol – something which would have contributed to the targeting of Yidn accused of selling liquor, nor that he was a minister in parliament just after in the first Union government. I came across him again in Sol Plaaitje's book *Native Life in South Africa*. He apparently voted against the 1913 Land Act. Plaatje reports that he said that

> *"Anything affecting the native people is required to be done gradually and should be placed before them a long time before the change took place. He hoped there would yet be some steps taken to give them a greater sense of security" (Plaatjie, 1998 [1916], p. 55).*

Another ancestor, Albert Armand, also came to mind when writing about land. Born in Alsace, France and schooled in Jersey, we recently uncovered letters that he wrote to British Columbia (Canada), the

British South Africa Company (in Zimbabwe), and the Secretary of Lands in South Africa. He was looking for a plot of land in the colonies. Eventually, he got a cheap plot in Eshowe, present-day KwaZulu Natal in 1914, a year after the Land Act when into operation. The plot was a part of a series of border plots which the state entrusted the to settlers to prevent Africans from moving across the internal border. For that reason, "applicants for land are required to appear before the Land Board"[3]. He passed inspection and my father's mom grew up on that farm.

When writing about British domestic workers who came out to South Africa, I had to reflect on my granny's grandmother, Sarah Grace Wakeham, who worked as a child domestic worker in England in the 1870s to supplement her farming family's income. Though from Devon, her younger brothers were also all sent to work in the Cornish Tin mines. When those mines closed in throughout the 1870s, the whole family came to settle in South Africa. Were her brothers a part of the Cornish miners' strike on the gold reef which resulted in the first alliance of White labour with White capitalists and the establishment of the racial labour aristocracy in the mines? Imagine my surprise also when I read that the passenger transit company, Union and Castle, which brought most Yidn to South Africa had previously brought most Cornish immigrants. A global shipping conglomerate connected family histories from opposite sides of Europe. Sarah Grace was married off to Richard Brown before she was 18 and had four children by the time she was 21.

Richard worked as a ganger on the Railways in the Cape Colony in the early 1880s. Something that struck my attention when reading the liberal politician, J.X. Merriman's response to the Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope in 1893. As Treasurer of the Colony and Commissioner of Lands, Mines and Agriculture he said that he "would try and get White men [to work on the railways]. I should like to see not a Black man employed on our railways in any capacity"[4]. Though the railways did employ Black labourers, my great great grandfather was one of the White settlers to benefit from the racial labour aristocracy.

Though coming at different moments, and from different circumstances, these ancestors of mine all benefited from the disaster wrought by colonialism. Some from western European were already well off and slotted easily into the colonial elite. Others from western Europe and eastern Europe came from poverty. Moving as working-class families, and though exploited through capitalism, they were equally invested in colonialism, benefiting from the usurpation of land, and the privileging of the settler class.

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[3] *Letter from the Secretary for Lands to Lucian Oberle on behalf of Armand Oberle* 16/01/1914. Family collection
[4] *Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope*, 1893 1/03/1893 pg 143

Seeing these histories expressed in colonial and family archives comes with a particular position within the power dynamics of history. Not all families are recorded into the archives. Not all experiences, even of those who've made it into the archives, are recorded into the archive either. As historical archives in South Africa are shaped by colonial interests – with the related raced, classed, and gendered expressions – seeing myself in the archives reflects not only on the past but also on the present constitution of historical production.

Sarah Grace, according to my gran, insisted that if Richard had been born in Cornwall, only 15kms away, she would never have married him. A generation later, her daughter married someone with a French background, her daughter someone from Scottish (whose granduncle would only employ Scotsmen) and Irish backgrounds, and her son married my mom with an eastern European background. This is a microcosm of how the colonial context collapsed European difference to create a White race unified on adherence to colonial ideology.

James Baldwin, though reflecting on the USA, made a compelling point that is reflected in South African history as well. "No one was White before [they] came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this became a White country." He points out that becoming White, was and is a moral choice which has justified and perpetuated a 'genocidal history', a decision made "opting for safety instead of life" (Baldwin, 2010 [1984], p. 2).

This decision for 'safety over life' reflects Memmi's reflection that colonialism, while it oppresses the colonised, also rots the coloniser. Making decisions which kill, oppress and exploit other people for your benefit is a sign of this rot. In the next section, I will conclude this thesis by rapidly bringing the question to the present

Being Colonialists Today

Though I didn't intend to study my family history, Yusuf Bala Usman reminds us that "the person with a perception of history who is studying history has been produced and moulded by history. The very concepts he uses are historically determined and produced. And he is involved in looking at what has produced and is moulding him. … The phenomenological fact that you are studying yourself cannot be removed" (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 90-91).

The world in the late 2010s is different from the world in the 1900s, the battle lines have shifted, alliances have been made and broken, new ideological justifications have been found for the same actions, and old justifications are being used for different actions. I can't hope to do justice to a section bringing my arguments through one hundred and twenty years of history. And so, I didn't attempt to in this thesis, and won't even try in these final sentences - except to share two annecdotes.

The first comes from an experience with the same Jewish conference that I opened my thesis with. On the 29th of July 2018, myself and three others were formally disinvited to speak at the conference because of our visible activism in support of Palestinian liberation. Though I had been involved in planning the conference, when the pressure became too high, the conference organisers did what most Jewish organisations have done to those who've refused to toe the political line – whatever the line was at that point – they removed them from the communal structures. There are plenty of examples of this from the Apartheid period but I resonated with two examples from the first decade of the 1900s. SAJC editor, Goldsmid encouraged his readers to boycott, and 'treat with scant curtesy" those Jews who don't support White supremacy.[5] Similarly, after Israelstam, the Jewish socialist organiser gave a speech at the first May Day demonstration, the editor of Ha-Kokhav called for a public declaration that Israelstam and "Jewish socialists do not belong to the Jewish nation."[6]

The second is that I'm still, much like my ancestors, living on stolen land. And not just land that was stolen in the initial wars of dispossession but in gentrifying neighbourhoods, in which generations of families are being forcefully removed through racial capitalism. My presence here is only possible because another family was coerced out of the house that I was staying in.

What may I ask has changed? As a community we continue to benefit from these hsitories of exploitation and dispossession. We also continue to benefit from their presents. The nakba is ongoing, settler colonialism is ongoing, racial capitalism is ongoing – not just the effects but also the daily violence. These are ongoing structures of violence and oppression rather than just events in the past. What is our communal response this history? Adopting the excuse of being silent bystanders during Apartheid - White Jews, much like all White South Africans – haven't yet experienced a reckoning that would shake us out of our coloialist subjectivity. But, much like one hundred and twenty years ago, we can choose how we respond colonialism. The Peruvian has been killed, who will we give birth to?

One hundred and twenty years ago, Yidn refugees arrived in a settler colony into a position of colonisers. Though regarded as dirty by other White settlers, they worked with the colonial state to coerce and incentivise the behaviour and habits of White settler lifestyles into the immigrant Yidn. Involved in the colonial economy from mining magnates to *Shisa Nyama* chefs and sex workers, racial capitalism taught Yidn how skilful exploitation of the racial labour hierarchy and usurped land could benefit them. They elected their communal leaders from the class of property developers who moved amongst the British settler elite. When their immigration into the country was put at risk, they did not reject the 'European only' Act but accepted the ideological distinction between and superiority of

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[5] *SAJC* 05/05/1905
[6] *Ha-Kokhav* 06/05/1904 cited in Feldman (2007 [1955], p. 133)

Europeans over Asians, and argued vigorously that they were the former rather than the latter. This came up again when faced with a citizenship crisis that was entrenching a White only franchise that lasted for another 90 years, working with the state to turn Yidn into good colonial subjects, willing to support, defend, and entrench colonialism and White supremacy.

Some battles are similar, others are different. Memmi concludes that for the coloniser, "to refuse means either withdrawing physically from those conditions or remaining to fight and change them" (Memmi, 1967 [1957], p. 19).

All I can do is remind fellow Jews, and fellow colonisers, of the Talmudic injunction to protest

> *"anyone who is able to protest against wrongs in their own house and does not do so is responsible for the transgressions in their house. If they are able to protest against the wrongs committed in their city and they do not protest, they are responsible for the transgressions of their city. If they are able to protest against the wrongs committed in the world and they do not protest, they are responsible for the transgressions of the world"*[7]

We have transgressed. We are responsible. We are able. We must protest.

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[7] *Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 54b* https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.54b.20?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en [accessed 25/02/2020]

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    g. Labour Commission of the Cape of Good Hope of 1893, CCP 4/19/18
2. Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1905. Available at: https://archive.org/details/southafricannati00sout/page/n2/mode/2up [Accessed 10 March 2020].
3. The South Africa Act, 1909 Available at: https://archive.org/details/jstor-2212266/mode/2up [accessed 25/02/2020]

List of Archival Images

1. A sketch of a Peruvian, illustrator unknown, 1909. Source: Shain, 1991, pp. 160-163

2. "Pauper 'Peruvians' or the Whitening of South Africa". Comic in The Owl 13/02/1903 Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 47)
3. 'The Coming of the Scum'. Comic in The Owl 06/05/1904. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 63
4. Image of police breaking up the sale of liquor between Yidn and Africans. Publication unknown. circa 1907. Source: Kallaway & Pearson, 1986, p. 54
5. Stands for Sale in Regents Park, SAJC 05/05/1905
6. Stands for Sale in Engelbrechton, SAJC 02/06/1905
7. Picture of Max Langerman. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 60
8. Picture of Samuel Goldreich. Source: Gitlin, 1950, p. 50
9. Cover page of the Gideon Shimoni's book 'Community and Conscience', 2003
10. A picture of the deputation to the Attorney-General of the Cape Colony in 1903. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 65
11. Picture of Yeshua Israelstam. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 83
12. Picture of Morris Alexander. Source: Shain & Mendelsohn, 2008, p. 70

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