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The Loyal Jews of the British Empire: Jewish Settlers in Canada, South Africa and Australia, 1917-50

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Introduction

In 1924, the New South Wales Jewish War Memorial Committee wrote to Joseph Hertz, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, with the following questions: 'Are we Jewish a nation? Do we have a national flag? What colour and design is it?'¹ These questions indicate a community that was unsure of its place in modernity.² This uncertainty was expressed not through the major debates within the Jewish community in the early twentieth century, around Zionism, antisemitism, religious reform and liberalism, or mass migration, but from practical decisions about symbolising Jewishness on a war memorial. This struggle locating a diasporic religious identity within a modernity in which the language of nationhood was paramount, was not only a struggle with modernity but with coloniality.³ Coloniality refers to the ways in which the epistemic and cultural production of modern world was structured by the experience of colonisation and the need to maintain colonial power. This simple enquiry about the way to symbolise Judaism on a war memorial travelled to the colonial metropole, showing a community which located itself within the British Empire, and looked to its centre for spiritual, ideological and practical guidance. In real and practical ways Jewish institutions in British dominions responded to being Jewish in the modern world, through forging connections and

¹ Allen (New South Wales Jewish War Memorial) to Joseph Hertz (Chief Rabbi of the British Empire), 29/5/24, , ACC2805/54/39/25. London Metropolitan Archives.

² Enzo Traverso, *The End of Jewish Modernity*, (New York: Pluto Press, 2013); Jean Paul-Sartre, *The Anti-Semite and the Jew: An Eploration of the Etiology of Hate* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948); Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew* (New York: Verso, 2017); are among a large literature that theorises the disconnect between Jewishness and the growth of modern nation states and views this as one of the motors of modern intellectual production.

³ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories, Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Dipesh Chakrabati, *Provincialising Europe: Post-Colonial Thought and Decolonial Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Achille Mbembe, *On the Post-Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) have all made this argument convincingly from different geographical standpoints with a focus on epistemology.

emphasising their loyalty to the British metropole. As much as these communities existed on their own terms, as the Jewish community of Canada, or South Africa or Australia, they viewed themselves as Jews of the British Empire.⁴

Why did Jewish communities in the British Empire and Dominions build these links with the British Metropole, especially during the interwar years, when South Africa, Canada and Australia were self-governing? What was the nature of these links? Many of these communities hailed from the Russian Empire and largely spoke Yiddish, meaning that these connections cannot be explained by the national origin of the community.⁵

Key to understanding Dominion Jewish communities' Britishness is the ambivalent nature of Jewish whiteness.⁶ Within South Africa, Canada and Australia, European origin Jews, were able to gain economic benefits linked with being white settlers in societies in which political and civil rights were largely associated with whiteness.⁷ However, settler colonial societies were 'taxonomic'.⁸ Their social structure depended on a Manichean dichotomy between the indigenous populations. Jews transgressed these boundaries, as they were constructed as racially 'other' when compared to the white settlers, who defined their whiteness in part by adherence to Christianity.⁹ While they retained their Jewishness, their whiteness would always be suspect. In all three countries, restrictions on Jewish migration were introduced on the basis that Jews did not represent desirable migrants.¹⁰ Jewish communities and institutions were painfully conscious of the fragility of their white status and the consequences of non-whiteness. Many Jewish migrants had direct or intergenerational

⁴ Jonathan Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself White', *Journal Of Historical Sociology*, 12 (4), 1999, pp.398-421.

⁵ Gerard Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: MUA University Press, 2014), Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society: The Origins and Activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony* (Cape Town: Historical Publications Society, 1983); Suzanne Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25.

⁶ See Zygmunt Baumann, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp.3 for a theorisation of ambivalence.

⁷ As there was only a very small Jewish community of non-European origin in Australia, South Africa and Canada and non-European Jews were not involved in my institutions of study.

⁸ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) pg.11.

⁹ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pg.129.

¹⁰ Ira Robinson ed. *Canada's Jews: In Time Place and Spirit* (Brighton, MA: 2013); Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants 1788-1988* (Allen and Unwin, 1990); Milton Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994).

experiences of structural antisemitism in Eastern Europe. In Canada and Australia, where genocide against indigenous people was more complete than in South Africa where whiteness was increasingly defined in opposition to non-British migrants. The British Empire's Jewish community's emphasis on their Britishness enabled them to prove their indigeneity to the British Empire, negating Jewish non-whiteness.

For the metropole, links with communities in colonies and dominions spoke to their anxieties about the Jewish place in the British Empire and the fear of Jewish moral decline on the fringes of the Empire. As my archives frequently express, events in one part of the Empire affected the others, and therefore to protect the rights of Jews in the metropole it was necessary to foster close links with Dominion Jewry. These links, and the metropole's role in governing dominion communities, enabled the metropolitan community institutions to assume a colonial role that existed in analogy to the relationship between the metropolitan and dominion states. The forming of a British Imperial Jewish community allowed both the metropolitan and the dominion communities to define themselves through the British Empire. This contravened antisemitic tropes of dual loyalty and located them as part of the dominant colonising community, rather than as a suspect, non-Christian, ambivalently white, community. The debates within the Jewish community during the interwar period were shaped by this dynamic.

Archives

This thesis will be primarily based on the archival records of the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

The Chief Rabbi was the spiritual head of the United Synagogue in the British Empire. This position evolved from the lead Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in the City of London, from about 1830.¹¹ He represented Ashkenazi origin Orthodox Jews, and never had any authority over progressive, or ultra-Orthodox and Charedi Jews. The main responsibilities of the Chief Rabbi were to oversee Rabbinic appointments, issues of marriage and divorce and function as a representative of Orthodox Jews at political and social events, including meetings with

¹¹ Benjamin Elton, *Britain's Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). pg.24. The Great Synagogue was destroyed in the Blitz.

government.¹² The Chief Rabbi does not have theological importance analogous to Catholic clerics but was important in providing representative leadership to the Orthodox Jewish community. Hertz was the only Chief Rabbi to take the title 'Chief Rabbi of the British Empire', with this position being established after his tour of British colonies and dominions 1921-22 and becoming Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth afterwards. Hertz oversaw an expansion of the authority of the Chief Rabbi from an institution which only had clear authority over a handful of West London Synagogues, to an institution recognised by the majority of Orthodox Synagogues in the metropole and the Commonwealth.¹³

During the period under consideration the position was occupied by Rabbi Joseph Hertz, appointed in 1919.¹⁴ Born in Slovakia and educated in New York, Hertz ministered to congregations in America and Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation in Johannesburg, before becoming Chief Rabbi. He had never held a position in England. He was chosen as a compromise between working-class Yiddish speaking communities in London's East End, Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester and wealthier and more assimilated German origin communities in London's West End. He came from a Yiddish speaking background but had developed a close relationship with international British elites during his time in South Africa. Hertz was the first Chief Rabbi to be active within the Zionist movement and has been credited as a key force in its institutionalisation in British Jewish politics.¹⁵ He was known as a harsh critic of religious reform and modernisation, especially Liberal Judaism, which he regarded heretical and Christian. Similarly, Hertz despised socialism. Hertz saw himself as a defender of Orthodoxy against the threats posed by modernity, from political radicalism, religious reform, secularism and antisemitism, and his combative style often led to conflict, especially with more reform orientated lay leaders.¹⁶

The Chief Rabbi's archive mainly includes letters between congregational Rabbis and synagogue presidents and the Chief Rabbi. This includes discussions of world Jewish politics,

¹² Elton, *Britain's Chief Rabbis*, pg.24.

¹³ David Cesarani, 'Communal Authority in Anglo-Jewry 1914-1940' in *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, ed. David Cesarani (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

¹⁴ For biographical information see the somewhat hagiographic Derek Taylor, *Chief Rabbi Hertz: The Wars of The Lord* (Edgware: Valentine Mitchell, 2014); and Benjamin Elton, *Britain's Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Taylor, *The Wars of the Lord*, 88.

¹⁶ Taylor, *The wars of the Lord*, 82.

especially Zionism, religious doctrinal issues, intra-communal politics, including tensions between lay leaders and Rabbis, and fundraising. Hertz's correspondents were a self-selecting group of Rabbis, who mostly shared his political and religious views. Therefore, the prevalence of similar views is exaggerated, compared to the Rabbinate as a whole. Nevertheless, my sources provide reasonable barometer of the views of the most senior Orthodox Rabbis in the British dominions.

My second set of archives is from the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The Board of Deputies was the official political representative of Anglo-Jewry and the temporal leadership of the metropolitan Jewish community. Its main responsibilities were to represent British Jews to the government, but it also assisted with immigration cases, engaged in fundraising programmes principally for Eastern European and then German Jews and ran programmes to tackle antisemitism. This institution was dominated by assimilated Anglo-German Jews, but was representative for all Jews in Britain, rich or poor, Orthodox or reform. In practice, as it was (and still is) a voluntary body, the membership was exclusive to those of independent wealth, from wealthy Synagogues.¹⁷ The membership of the Board of Deputies before the twentieth century was very limited, however the franchise gradually expanded to include more communities in East London and regional centres. The leadership of the Board of Deputies varied during the period, including David Alexander (1903-17), Sir Stuart Samuel (1917-22), Cyril Henriques (1922-25), Walter Rothschild (1925-26), Osmond Goldsmid (1926-33), Neville Laski (1933-40) and Selig Brodetsky (1940-49). Most of these came from a handful of aristocratic families who gained the nickname 'The Cousinhood' due to their tendency to intermarry.¹⁸ With the exception of Brodetsky, all these Board Presidents were publicly critical of Zionism.¹⁹

Unlike the Chief Rabbi, the Board of Deputies never claimed any official leadership of the Jewish communities in the British dominions, instead interacting with them on a superficially equal basis. In practice, dominion communities followed the lead of the metropole and there was close cooperation between the different communities' representative organisations.

¹⁷ Cesarani, 'Communal Authority', pp.117.

¹⁸ Chaim Bermant, *The Cousinhood: The Anglo-Jewish Gentry* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971).

¹⁹ Gideon Shimoni, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo Jewry 1937-1948', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 28 (2), 1986, 89-117.

Dominion representatives sat on the Board of Deputies with increasing numbers during the interwar period.²⁰

The archive mainly contains letters between the British Board of Deputies and its dominion equivalents, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the South African Board of Deputies and the Executive Committee of Australian Jewry (or its regional variants the New South Wales or Victoria Board of Deputies). These letters concern combatting antisemitism and Nazism, Jewish institutional politics, especially in relation to the founding of the World Jewish Congress and fundraising and campaigning.

Archives and Power

All archives relate a transcript of power. This relationship has been considered both by post-modernist scholars, critiquing the ways in which the archive shapes historical reading and understanding, and post-colonial scholars, applying that critique to the archives of the colonial state.²¹ Archival pessimists among this group would suggest this means the practice of history is doomed to recreate the colonial states' narrative, continuing to deprive the colonised of their own stories.²²

In some ways, my archives are different. While all archives are a transcript of power, not all forms of power are the same, as differing forms of power have varying relationships to the coloniser and colonised.²³ My archives are not the archives of colonial or state power. They represent the documentation of a group with a complicated relationship to colonial power. Using the alternative archives of marginal groups has the potential to challenge the narrative of the colonial state, building an alternative history rather than replicating the narrative of the colonial state.

²⁰ For example A. G. Brotman to Rich, 17/10/1945, ACC3121e1681, London Metropolitan Archive.

²¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Archive Fever: A Fruendian Impression (Mal'd Archive)', *Diacritics*, 25 (2), 1995, 9-63; Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxiety and Colonial Commonsense* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2009); Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter Insurgency' in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakrovarti Spivak (Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1988); Gayatri Chakrovarti Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak', in *Selected Subaltern Studies* ed. by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakrovarti Spivak (Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1988).

²² Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency', 47.

²³ Benjamin Zachariah, 'Travellers in Archives, or the Possibility of a Post-Post-Archival History', *Practicas de Historia*, 3, 2016, 11-27.

In other ways, my archives share difficulties with colonial archives. While it is not the archive of colonial power, it is the archive of the Jewish communal power. Only the voices of most powerful men within the community are present. Subaltern voices are still excluded. Yiddish speakers, progressive Jews, radicals, women and the Jewish working class do not have their voices present. There is no acknowledgement of non-European Jews, who represented a small fraction of the communities. While they are not the subjects of the archive, they are frequently the objects. The power represented by the archive was primarily aimed at less powerful Jews. The development of these institutions and hence these archives attests to the fragility of elite control of the community. Early Jewish women's organisation and egalitarian versions of Judaism were threatening Jewish patriarchy.²⁴ New migration from Eastern Europe was threatening the communal dominance of the Anglo-German community, transforming the communal social and class dynamics. Socialism and communism, both in its Bundist and assimilationist forms were prevalent among the Jewish working class, and threatened bourgeois and aristocratic communal leadership.²⁵ Most commonly the men involved in producing these texts saw themselves as the loyal Jews, and their anxieties, especially in relation to Jewish marginality, overlapped with the colonial states' anxieties.

It would be futile and misleading to attempt to read subaltern Jewish histories from an archive written by Jewish communal governors. My approach to the sources will be to read 'along the archival grain'.²⁶ This approach, drawn on Ann Stoler's work, will consider both the content of the sources and the unrecorded assumptions behind them²⁷ These sources are revealing in their content, the assumptions behind their content, and the anxieties surrounding the fragility of their own power and their status as white Britons. While my essay will include consideration of the major issues facing Jewish communities, it will also include 'minor

²⁴ Beth Wenger, 'Jewish Women and Voluntarism: Beyond the Myth of Enablers,' *American Jewish History*, 79, 1989, 24.

²⁵ See for example Alain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: a History of Jewish Radicalism* (London: Verso: 2016); Robin Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals 1870-1914* (London: AK Press, 2005); James Campbell, 'Beyond the Pale: Jewish Immigration and the South African Left' in Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shian ed. *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2002), 100; Gerard Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: MUA University Press, 2014), 250.

²⁶ Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxiety and Colonial Commonsense* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2009)

²⁷ Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxiety and Colonial Commonsense* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2009)

histories' which rarely made it into the pages of the Jewish Chronicle, let alone non-community newspapers, offering a further glimpse at the concerns of these networks and institutions.²⁸

Historiography

Colonial and post-colonial studies have an uncomfortable relationship with Jewish history. Often studies of white settler colonies, such as Canada and Australia, fail to recognise them as colonial, preferring a sanitised language of 'a country of immigrants.'²⁹ Fewer still engage with Jewishness.

Partly, this is the result of the ways in which European-origin Jews were ambivalently constructed within racial discourse, as Jews compared to Christian Europeans and as white people compared to non-European others. This transcends binary models of a colonialism divided between the 'coloniser and the colonised'.³⁰ Albert Memmi identifies the anomalous position of Jews within colonial societies as being 'neither the coloniser nor the colonised'. While I see the merits of this approach I view them as both simultaneously, the beneficiaries of a colonial racial system which assigned European Jews similar rights to Christian Europeans and the objects of a racial discourse specifically targeted against Jews.³¹ This anomalous position of Jewish settlers and post-colonial historians a unique viewpoint for interrogating the 'making and unmaking of colonial boundaries', between the coloniser and the colonised, and between acceptable and problematic colonisers.³² As Ann Stoler observed, the state focused the majority of its regulation not on those who were clearly assigned to the coloniser or the colonised, as their position was clear, but the other subjects of Empire, who did not have a clear position within taxonomies.³³ Stoler focuses mainly on the Dutch 'inlandsche

²⁸ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 44. The Jewish Chronicle was the leading metropolitan British Jewish newspaper.

²⁹ Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants 1788-1988* (Allen and Unwin, 1990), is exemplary in this genre; Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

³⁰ Albert Memmi, *The Coloniser and the Colonised* (London: Orion Press, 1974), 8.

³¹ Memmi, *The Coloniser and the Colonised*, 15.

³² Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 8.

³³ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 11.

kinderen', however in British settler colonies these taxonomic anxieties frequently centred around Jews.

The epistemic potential of Jews as both the coloniser and the colonised is not the only contribution Jewishness can make to scholarship on racism and colonialism. Jews and thinking about Jewishness have always been a key part of colonial and racial ideologies. When Fanon observed 'whenever you hear someone abuse the Jew pay attention because he is talking about you', he observed more than just a semantic coincidence, but a structural relationship between antisemitism and anti-Black racism.³⁴ Work on Orientalism has stressed the continuities between Orientalist discourses aimed at Muslims and Jews.³⁵ Hannah Arendt's work has shed light on the relationship between colonialism and Jewish histories.³⁶ They have never existed apart, as the Spanish Inquisition and the colonisation of Puerto Rico both in 1492, represents the start date for both Jewish modernity and modern coloniality.³⁷ The development of colonial discourse surrounding the colonised other depended on the development of a Jewish 'Orient within', as Jewish degeneracy and power were used as explanation for the failures of Empire.³⁸ Without an understanding of antisemitism and thinking about Jews, and the relationship between antisemitic and colonial racial discourses, an understanding of the creation of racial hierarchies within the colonial project will be incomplete. My project will consider Jewish experiences as the 'Orient within' when transferred to physical location of the Orient without.³⁹

When scholars focused on coloniality have engaged with Jewishness, they have generally followed Sartre's dictum that the 'antisemite creates the Jew'.⁴⁰ This approach can provide useful insights. Work such as the Derek Penslar's and Ivan Kalmar's *Orientalism and the Jews*,

³⁴ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin/White Masks* (New York: Pluto Press, 1986), 92. This comment was aimed at a Black student.

³⁵ Anthony Rohde, 'The Orient Within' in Benjamin Jockish, Ulrike Webstock and Conrad Lawrence, *Fremde Feinde and Kuriosis: Innen and Ausensichten unseres Muslimische Nachbarn* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, Berlin, 2009), 148. Ulrike Bruonotte, Anne Dorethea Ludewig, Axel Stähler, 'Introduction' in *Orientalism, Gender and the Jews: Literary and Artistic Transformations of European National Discourses* ed. by Ulrike Bruonotte, Anne Dorethea Ludewig, Axel Stähler, (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, Berlin, 2014), 8.

³⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1962), 10.

³⁷ Ella Shohat, *On the Arab-Jew, Palestine and Other Displacements* (London, Pluto Press, 2017), 331.

³⁸ George Mosse, 'The Jews, Myth and Counter Myth' in Les Back, John Solomos, *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2012), 265; Albert Lindemann and Richard Levy, *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 8; Anthony Rohde, 'The Orient Within', 148.

³⁹ Anthony Rhode, *The Orient Within*, 150.

⁴⁰ Jean Paul-Sartre, *The Anti-Semite and the Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 58; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin/White Masks* (New York: Pluto Press, 1986), 91.

and Ulrike Bruanotte's *Orientalism, Gender and the Jews* provides a valuable introduction to the ways in which ideas surrounding Jewishness connect with Orientalism, however barely scratch the surface of the impact which colonialism had on Jewish life.⁴¹ This focus on the Jew as a social construction by non-Jews, marginalises Jewish experiences and practice in studies of Judaism, ignoring the extent to which Jews and Jewishness exist as a religious and cultural identity external to antisemitism.⁴² Without a consideration of the lived experience of Jews and Jewishness within the history of the relationship between Jews and coloniality, historians risk replicating the figure of the Jew within antisemitic thought. A consideration of Jewishness based purely on the 'figure of the Jew', also renders Jewish communities without agency, as the passive recipients of their identity rather as actively engaged shaping it, and adapting it to colonial modernity. My project, through the engagement with the politics and religious ideas of Jewish institutional governance will trace Jewish responses to their positions within colonial societies, viewing their relationship with the British metropole as the salient response to this.

While colonial history has struggled to find a place for Jewishness, the inverse could be written of Jewish history. Much Jewish history is written as a contest between Judaism and modernity, a tale of Jewish adaptation to the development of ethno-nationalist states and new technology. This notion of an opposition between Jewishness and modernity has its roots in Frankfurt School critiques of modernity, which frames the holocaust and antisemitism as a continuity with the logic of the development of the European Enlightenment and the project of the nation state.⁴³ Neither Alderman nor Cesarani's works on the British Jewish community consider the relationship between Jews in Britain with the British Empire and Dominions and the ways in which these experiences shaped both communities.⁴⁴ This model of Jewish history as a battle with national modernity has even suffused even the histories of settler colonies, such as South Africa.⁴⁵ These approach can provide useful insights. However, it

⁴¹ Derek Penslar and Ivan Kalmar, *Orientalism and the Jews* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2006); Ulrike Bruanotte, *Orientalism, Gender and the Jews* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenburg, 2014).

⁴² Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, Diaspora Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity, *Critical Inquiry*, 19 (4), 1993, 693-725.

⁴³ For example Zygmunt Baumann, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Elements of Anti-Semitism in Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, ed. by Les Back, John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2012).

⁴⁴ David Cesarani ed. *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Geoffrey Alderman, *New Approaches in Anglo-Jewish History* (Boston: Academic Press, 2010).

⁴⁵ Ira Robinson ed. *Canada's Jews: In Time Place and Spirit* (Brighton, MA: 2013).

ignores the inextricable relationship between the modernity of nation states what Walter Mignolo describes as 'colonial modernity', in which the experience of colonial hegemony informed the development of modern knowledge.⁴⁶ Jews should therefore not be viewed as interacting with nationalism but colonial racism. An approach which focuses on Jewishness as interacting largely with a modern world of nation states exceptionalises the Jewish experiences of racism, as unconnected to colonial racial hierarchies. My work will show that dominion Jews identified as much as citizens of the British Empire, as this enabled them to gain a measure of acceptance by comparison to the colonised other, rather than as citizens of ethnonationalist nation states.⁴⁷

Only recently have Jewish studies begun to engage with coloniality. Often this work uses literary or cultural approach.⁴⁸ Historical approaches are generally limited to the American Jewish community.⁴⁹ Other work has tackled the experiences of Arab-Jewish communities, especially in Israel.⁵⁰ While these provide useful insights, especially in emphasising the fluidity of the relationship between Jewishness and whiteness, these have yet to be fully applied within a historical study of the British Empire.⁵¹ The work on the British Empire tends to be mono-national, which is a flawed paradigm for studying a community deeply embedded in migrant and Imperial networks. When they have engaged with the international nature of the Jewish community it has been through tracing migration routes from Eastern Europe or employing biographical approaches.⁵²

The other tendency within this work is to centre Zionism. Even Katz, Mandel and Leff's volume *Colonialism and the Jews*, which sets out in its introduction to decentre Zionism, devotes two

⁴⁶ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Duke, Durham, 2011) xiv.

⁴⁷ Deborah Posel, 'Race a Common Sense: Racial Classification in 20th Century South Africa', *African Studies Review*, 44 (2), 2001, 87-117.

⁴⁸ Sander Gilman, *The Jews Body* (London: Psychology Press, 1991); Jonathan Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish Constructing Ambivalent Identities* (London: Routledge, 2000)

⁴⁹ Karen Brodtkin, *How the Jews Became White Folks and What that Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

⁵⁰ Aziza Khazzoum, 'The Great Chain of Orientalism: Jewish Identity, Stigma Management and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel', *American Sociological Review*, 68 (4), 2003, 481-510; Ella Shohat, *On the Arab-Jew, Palestine and Other Displacements* (Chicago: Pluto Press, 2017)

⁵¹ Sander Gilman, 'Are Jews White' in Les Back, John Solomos, *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2012), 296.

⁵² Sander Gilman and Milton Shain ed. *Jewries of the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

thirds of its essays to Zionism.⁵³ The tendency of work on Jews to centre Zionism is one which suffuses Jewish history, as part of the use of Jewish history in national mythmaking. This means that histories of diasporic Jewish life often teleologically lead to a Jewish national liberation within the State of Israel.⁵⁴ Consideration of the relationship between Jews and colonialism subverts the conventional Zionist historical narrative in which Jews are perennial victims until they are relieved by liberation in Palestine. Therefore, consideration of this relationship is marginalised within Zionist histories.⁵⁵ When it does happen much debate centres around the relationship between the politics of the State of Israel and settler colonialism. This association between Zionism and colonialism drawn by post-colonial histories often leads Zionist historians to reject most modern studies of colonial history, which they see as dependent on a post-colonial theory which is inseparably linked to Palestinian liberation.⁵⁶ This leads them to argue for studying Jewishness entirely in isolation from studies of colonialism. It is unlikely to be coincidental that many of these Zionist critiques of colonial and post-colonial studies centre around the work of Edward Said, one of the foremost Palestinian academics. For authors for whom Palestinian liberation is the political objective, paying attention to the relationship between Jews and coloniality is an irrelevant distraction to the critique of Israeli settler colonialism.⁵⁷ Zionism was clearly an important part of early 20th Century Jewish experiences. However, Zionism should be understood as an element with a much broader Jewish interaction with colonialism and coloniality which occurred globally rather than needing to be centred in all discussions of the relationship between Jews and colonialism.

In creating a Jewish history which centres experiences of coloniality, a purely national approach is inadequate. Ann Stoler and Fredrick Cooper called for attention to be paid to the

⁵³ Ethan Katz, Lisa Moses Leff and Maud Mandel, 'Introduction: Engaging Colonial and Jewish History' in Ethan Katz, Lisa Moses Leff and Maud Mandel ed. *Colonialism and the Jews* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2017), 4; Eitan Bar Yosef and Nadia Valman, 'Between the East End and East Africa: rethinking images of the Jew in Late Victorian Culture' in Eitan Bar Yosef and Nadia Valman ed. *Between the East End and East Africa: rethinking images of the Jew in Late Victorian Culture* (London: Palgrave, 2009) pg.3.

⁵⁴ Alan Taylor, 'Zionism and Jewish History', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 2 (1), 1972, 36.

⁵⁵ Derek Penslar and Ivan Kalmar, 'Introduction' in *Orientalism and the Jew*, xv.

⁵⁶ See Gideon Shimoni, 'Zionism and Post-Colonial Theory', *Israel Affairs*, 13 (4), 2011, 859-878.

⁵⁷ Sean Jacobs and John Soske, *Israel and Apartheid: The Politics of an Analogy* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2015); Ilan Pappé, *Israel and South Africa: The Many Faces of Apartheid* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

way in which identity is constructed in between the metropole and the colony.⁵⁸ Much work has followed this line, including Catherine Hall's seminal *Civilising Subjects*, which traced the way in which Imperialism effected the missionary networks in Birmingham and Jamaica.⁵⁹ My contention takes this insight a stage further, that rather than simply being in between metropole and colony, these national communities understood themselves as, and are therefore best understood as, a collective community of the British Empire. The ways in which Jews built networks along imperial lines challenges ideas of coloniality which centres state-based networks. Study of the British Jewish community, the way in which their national and imperial histories interacted and the ways in which their Jewishness interacted with their identity as white settlers has the potential to bring new insights into the workings of colonial and British Imperial identity and colonial whiteness. The modernity of nation states, within Europe and within settler societies, which have provided the bulk of studies of Jewish life, is inseparable from these states positionalities as part of Empires.

As my research shows, Jews did not consider themselves to be purely national citizens, as Jews of Australia, South Africa, Canada, or Britain but considered their national citizenship as part of their imperial citizenship. As the career of Rabbi Hertz indicates Jews lived interlinked imperial lives, travelling between the metropole and the colony, and between different colonies. They swore loyalty to the British monarch, and they worked to assimilate themselves with the British community. Politically the Jewish communities of the dominions were as much part of an Imperial Jewish community, analogous to Jonathan Hyslop's idea of an imperial working class.⁶⁰

How can this transformation, from an Eastern European community to a British community, be conceptualised? Walter Mignolo sees economy and 'epistemology' as the salient achievements of the colonial matrix of power.⁶¹ Jewish communities in British dominions were not included among the ranks of the colonised in economic terms. They lived on the

⁵⁸Fredrick Cooper and Ann Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* ed. Fredrick Cooper and Ann Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁵⁹ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁶⁰ Jonathan Hyslop, 'The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself White', *Journal Of Historical Sociology*, 12 (4), 1999, pp.398-421.

⁶¹ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, 5.

stolen land. They were allowed to vote in elections and in general they were afforded similar levels of de jure civil rights as other white citizens of the British Empire. In terms of economy they benefitted from their inclusion within the centre of the colonial matrix of power. However, their status as colonisers in material terms was accompanied by losses in cultural terms, impacting on the elements of the Jewish culture which had been brought from Eastern Europe such as Yiddish language, or theatre. This was the result of the attempts to exist as an ethnic minority in societies which were hostile to Jewishness, especially elements which were irreconcilable with Britishness. When engaging with the wider society, they did this according to the norms of colonial matrix of power based on Christianity and secular European society.⁶² In this way while white Jews were not colonised economically, they can be described on the epistemic 'borderlands'.⁶³ Mignolo's emphasis on the epistemic articulations of colonial control provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between Jewishness and coloniality, as Jews were both forced and materially encouraged to adopt the semiotic articulations of colonial hegemony, in this essay described using the shorthand of whiteness. Within British colonies, loyalty to the British Empire, the English language, the forming of imperial networks was a key part of these semiotic manifestations of colonial hegemony.

Literature on cultural responses to colonisations offers the best guide to understanding Jewish responses to coloniality. Primarily this thesis will be based on the works of two Martinican theorists, Edouard Glissant and Frantz Fanon. These theorists operate in different traditions, with the Fanon operating in the Manichean tradition of post-colonial theory interested in the binary between the coloniser and the colonised, and Glissant operating in the universalistic, emphasising hybridity.⁶⁴ Despite these differences in approach their work can be used to come to complementary conclusions about the relationships between Jewishness and the dominant Christian/Secular culture.

While Glissant does not engage directly with Jewish subjects, his work can be as applied to Jewish experiences. His work focuses on creolisation, the ways in which creole culture developed in response to the dominance of the colonising other. Most usefully, he conceptualises these colonised responses to a position in which the dominance of the 'other

⁶² Mignolo, *The Darker Side*, 37.

⁶³ Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 18.

⁶⁴ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge: New York, 1994), 2.

is concealed', rather than operating as an overt control over a subordinated culture, this cultural repression operating covertly, through cultural hegemony.⁶⁵ This concealed domination means that the nature of popular cultural practice still functions 'as if the other was listening'.⁶⁶ In this way any cultural practice of a dominated population, even those such as religious practice are the partly aimed at the colonising other. This dynamic of concealed domination, while written with the primary example of the Black experience in the Caribbean could as much be applied to the experience of Jews. Edouard Glissant writes of two paradigms of the responses to cultural repression under colonialism: Imitation and Reversion.⁶⁷ Imitation refers to the ways in which colonised people have been forced and materially encouraged to adopt the culture of the colonised, subordinating their own culture. Reversion refers to the ways in which as a response to the cultural loss imposed by dominating cultures, colonised people seek to return to an imagined past of cultural purity, before the political compromises imposed by colonisation. These paradigms of cultural responses to colonisations are largely true of Jewish responses to life within British dominions, as they sought to assimilate to the dominant British culture, while attempting to combat the cultural losses of that assimilatory process.

Another key contribution of Glissant to the theorisation of Creolisation is the emphasis on historical trauma and dislocation as a starting point of the development of creolised cultures.⁶⁸ For Martinicans, this dislocation was the slave trade and the physical removal from an ancestral homeland. They built their culture and their language from a root of domination by their slave masters and therefore much of their culture was built in response to that. The Jews of the dominion communities had their own traumas and dislocations, from the pogroms, the Shoah, and a history of violence and racialisation to which informs large elements of religious and cultural practice. This diasporic experience, of awareness of the threat of violence to some extent affected Jews regardless of their direct experience of violence. To give this generalised traumatic experience a practical example, Yom Kippur opens with the Ladino declaration 'Kol Nidre' which relates to the annulment of vows. This declaration, dating from the Spanish inquisition, refers to the welcoming into the community

⁶⁵ Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse* translated by Michael Dash (Caraf Books: Charlottesville, 1989), 20.

⁶⁶ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 22.

⁶⁷ Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse* translated by Michael Dash (Caraf Books: Charlottesville, 1989), 16.

⁶⁸ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 62.

of those who had been forced to falsely profess Christianity. Cultural memory of traumatic pasts, shared throughout Jewish traditions, is combined with the cultural awareness of the traumatic present, of pogroms and the Shoah. This meant that Jewish diasporic cultures, as with the African diaspora, built their culture on the histories of racialisation and marginality.

Glissant's work points to the benefits of analogous thinking between Jewishness and Blackness. Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks* points to the limits of such analogous thinking and the specificities of Black and Jewish experiences.⁶⁹ In Fanon's writing much of this difference come down to notions of visibility, with Jews able 'to make themselves invisible', whereas Black and Asian people lack that luxury.⁷⁰ In Fanon's thinking anti-Black racism was based upon the body, anti-Jewish racism was based on the lack of the body, on the Jewish ability to make themselves invisible.⁷¹ There is much to criticise within this dichotomy, not least the highly questionable assumption that there are only white Jews. Sander Gilman's work alludes to the ways in which Ashkenazic Jewish bodies were constructed as racially other in comparison to Christian white bodies.⁷² Despite this, Fanon was correct suggest that *some* Jews could make their Jewishness invisible, and that this process led to material benefits under colonisation. The dynamic between Jewish visibility, as a distinct group within white society, and Jewish invisibility as an assimilated group that gained the material benefits of coloniality was an important element within Jewish institutional politics.⁷³ While Fanon conceptualises this invisibility as operating on a primarily individual level, it should instead be seen as being refracted through intra-communal power and class relations. Wealthier, more assimilated Jews involved in communal leadership were heavily invested in the project of Jewish invisibility, while the interests of working class or more recent immigrants was much less obvious. This invisibility, rather than being conceptualised as an innate quality of Jewishness and white Jews, should instead be better conceptualised as an institutional and political project, one which involved adopting the

⁶⁹ Bryan Cheyette, *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Post-Colonial Writing and the Nightmare of History* (Yale University Press, 2013), 64.

⁷⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin: White Masks* (Pluto Press: London, 1986), 113.

⁷¹ Fanon, *Black Skin: White Masks*, 115.

⁷² Sander Gilman, 'Are Jews White?' in Les Beck and John Solomos ed. *Theories of Race and Racialisation* (London: New York, Routledge, 2009).

⁷³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 115.

semiotic components of colonial hegemony and limiting elements of Jewish practice which contravened this hegemony.

Fanon identifies visibility and invisibility as a key dynamic of Jewish racialisation and communal responses. This was not the only pressure shaping Jewish responses to Christian society. Fanon identifies a contradictory pressure on Jewish groups looking to find acceptance with a Christian society, that of 'perfect blackness'.⁷⁴ This 'perfect' blackness, or perfect Jewishness as it would apply to Jews, refers to pressure on minority groups to conform to the racist ideologies associated with that minority group, 'fastening [minority groups] an effigy of themselves'.⁷⁵ This idea refers to the ways in which Jews were expected to perform according to non-Jewish expectations of Jews, and viewed with suspicion if they embodied elements of Jewishness, which ran contrary to the expectation of Jews. This pressure, to embody a perfect Jewishness as a response to Christian cultural hegemony led to Jews' desire to perform a Jewishness that was purified from the compromises of colonial modernity. Institutional Jewish responses to colonial power varied between the desire to assimilate, to imitate, to make their Jewishness invisible, or to revert towards a mythic past before minority status.

Structure

The thesis will begin by introducing the communities in South Africa, Canada and Australia. Rather than taking a comparative approach, I will approach the main issues occurring thematically. This will allow clarity about the ways these communities were dealing with the same issues and formulated similar responses to them. These seemingly diverse issues, varying from: royal visits, to the arrival of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, to religious reform and Zionism were each reflective of different issues arising from colonial modernity and the ways in which Jewish institutions formulated responses to this based on a desire to perform a British whiteness.

My first main section will consider the interaction between dominion communities and the state, and the ways in which Jewish governance responded to insecurity about the Jewish relationship to secular governance. My second chapter will cover responses to religious

⁷⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 49.

⁷⁵ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 35.

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reform, including progressive Judaism and secularist movements. My third section will consider the changing role of British dominion communities within world politics and the formation of international Jewish political organisations. My fourth chapter will consider the development of Zionism and other Jewish settlement movements. I conclude my main section by discussing Jewish institutional responses to antisemitism and Nazism.

Background

South Africa

Jews had been in South Africa since the first white settlement in the Cape Colony. This community was bolstered by Anglo-German migrants during the mid-nineteenth Century. As a small community centred around the Gardens Synagogue in Cape Town, South Africa was very much on the periphery of the Jewish world, with the community largely being composed of wealthy traders assimilated to the imperial elites.⁷⁶ This changed in the 1870s, as the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in the Witwatersrand triggered a wave of new migrants. These migrants were largely fleeing pogroms in Eastern Europe and came largely from the area around Kovno, in what is now Lithuania.⁷⁷ From a community which numbered only around 4000, between 30,000-40,000 arrived between 1880 and 1910, who mostly settled around Johannesburg.⁷⁸ By the Second World War they had grown to 4% of the total white population.⁷⁹

This demographic change affected every element of South African Jewish life and led to the creation of new synagogues and the Board of Deputies. The South African Board of Deputies was created in 1912, following the merger of independent Boards for the Cape Colony and the Transvaal, created in 1904 and 1905 respectively.⁸⁰ Both Boards were created on the model of the British Board and their successor developed along the same lines. The South African Board of Deputies, like its British counterpart was dominated by wealthy and assimilated members of the community, who were largely British, or German in origin. It

⁷⁶ Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society: The Origins and Activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony* (Cape Town: Historical Publications Society, 1983) pg.xv.

⁷⁷ John Simon, 'At the Frontier: The South African Jewish Experience' in Sander Gilman and Gideon Shimoni, *Jewries of the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999) pg.70.

⁷⁸ Gideon Shimoni, 'From one frontier to another: Jewish identity and political orientation in Lithuania and South Africa', in *Jewries of the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict* ed. by Sander Gilman and Gideon Shimoni (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999) pg.136-143.

⁷⁹ Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shain, 'Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience' in *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Experience* ed. by Richard Mendelsohn and Milton Shain (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2002), 8.

⁸⁰ Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society: The Origins and Activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony* (Cape Town: Historical Publications Society, 1983), pg.15.

represents a part of the growth in organised Jewish institutional life, as older immigrants created paternalistic organisations to politically represent, assimilate and care for newer arrivals. Their principle concern was to adjust the new immigrants to becoming white within the heavily racialised South African society. These tensions also informed the development of new synagogues, with the growth of communities in Durban, Pretoria, Kimberley and Johannesburg, causing tension with older communities in the Cape Colony.

South African Jews were much closer to the British white minority than the Afrikaner minority. Over 70% learned to speak English, and they adopted English customs such as the cricket matches in Jewish day schools.⁸¹ Most South African Rabbis were trained in London. Partly, this Britishness was a response to different attitudes towards Jews. Before the union in 1910, there was a much greater level of discrimination against Jews within the Afrikaner ruled Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This included the ban on the Uitlanders such as Jews serving in the military.⁸² Other restrictions included prohibition on trading under the assumed names, which were disproportionately used to restrict Jewish business ownership. In later periods, Nazi and organised antisemitic movements were significantly stronger among Afrikaners than among the British minority.⁸³ Indeed their association with Britain was such that Jews were accused by the Afrikaner right of conspiring with the British Empire.⁸⁴

The new wave of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, not only changed the relations between Jewish institutions, but transformed the White South African relationship with Jews from being a minor political issue, which only garnered the attention of a handful of enthusiasts, to become a major issue in South African politics. Jews were considered white in South African society and allocated political and civil rights as citizens rather than as a racialised subjects. This was not a forgone conclusion. Jews were associated with immorally close relationships with non-Europeans, including the crime of 'selling liquor to the natives.'⁸⁵ This tension surrounding whether Jews could count as fully white was an animating force for restrictions on Jewish migration. Opponents of Jewish migration argued that Yiddish was not

⁸¹ Milton Shain, 'Jewish Cultures, Identities and Contingencies: Reflections from the South African Experience', *European Review of History*, 18 (1), 2011, 89-100.

⁸² Taylor, *The Wars of the Lord*, 82.

⁸³ Patrick Furlong, *Between the Crown and the Swastika: The Afrikaner Racial Right in the Fascist Era* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), pg. 7.

⁸⁴ Milton Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* (Chlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1994), 60.

⁸⁵ Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, 55.

a European language and therefore Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe should not be allowed to migrate to South Africa for fear that it would lead to degeneration of the white race and a collapse in European control.⁸⁶ The first restrictions against Jewish migration occurred in 1913, and restrictions were tightened in 1930, where almost all migrants from Eastern Europe were banned, and 1937 which banned Jewish migration from Germany. The 1937 restrictions were related to a National Party election campaign, based on restricting Jewish rights in South Africa. For South African Jews they were very aware of the fragility with which they achieved whiteness, and the constant threat that they would be included with the category of non-white others- a categorisation that would have removed most political and civil rights.

Of my three primary case studies, the histories of whiteness within South Africa are the most developed as South Africa underwent decolonisation. This process of decolonisation has led to a greater level of reflection over the legacies and actualities of white supremacy. Notable works have been published on the white working class, the apartheid civil service, the Cape Coloured community, and the role of Christian organisations in shaping whiteness.⁸⁷ This work has yet to impact writing on the Jewish community. The current scholarship on the South African Jewish community, led by Milton Shain and Gideon Shimoni, tends to view Jewish whiteness as common sense and does not engage with Jewish racialisation as ambivalently constructed.⁸⁸ When it does discuss Jewish racialisation, it is not linked to white supremacy as a structure.

There are a few comparative works which attempt to place the South African Jewish experience in contrast to the experiences of other Jews. Notable within this is Daniel Eleazar's *Jews in Settler Society* which places Jewish communities in Australia, South Africa and

⁸⁶ Susan Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa's Immigration Policies, 1910-2008* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1999), 65.

⁸⁷ For examples see these; Jeremy Martens, 'Civilisation, Citizenship and the Creation of South Africa's Immorality Act' in *Southern African Historical Journal*, 59 (1), 2007. p. 233; Neil Roos, 'Work Colonies and South African Historiography' in *Social History*, 36 (1), 2011, 223-241; Dubow, Saul, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp.6; Ellen Boucher, 'The Limits of Potential: Race, Welfare and the Extension of Interwar Child Migration to Southern Rhodesia' *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (4), 2009, 914-934. Susan Klausen, 'Reclaiming the White Daughters Purity: Afrikaner Nationalism, Racialised Sexuality and the 1975 Abortion Act' in *Journal of Women's History*, 22 (3), 2010, 39-57, p.41; Marijke du Toit, 'Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeder and the ACVV' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29 (1), 2003, 155-176.

⁸⁸ Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society*; Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience* (New York: London, 1980).

Argentina in a comparative perspective.⁸⁹ However, this work is based on an antiquated notion of 'frontier theory', adopted from America. This theory often leads to the repetition of colonialist tropes, for example the idea of an empty land, and a rewriting of the history of colonialism in which the colonised are invisible. Gilman and Shain's, *Jewries of the Frontier* goes some way towards framing South Africa's Jewish community within international contexts, but traces the context entirely among migration roots, rather than considering the effect that Imperial networks had on the Jewish community.⁹⁰

It is this imperial connection that was most significant in the formation of the politics of the South African Jewish community. Within the South African political community there was no such a thing as whiteness that was neutral in national origins, instead having the option to be either British or Afrikaner whites.⁹¹ The Jewish community chose to be British whites, engaging in campaigns and looking to Britain for political guidance and the British minority for political alliance within South African society. It was this desire to perform Britishness which defined their engagement in Jewish international politics, their engagement with Zionism, their tackling of antisemitism and their engagement with changes in Jewish theology.

Jews in Australia

The Jewish community in Australia, like the South African Jewish community arrived with the earliest European settlement.⁹² This community was limited to a handful of individuals living in Sydney. Migration from Britain continued to during the 18th and 19th centuries, with a number of British Jews being transported to Australia, and a few settling for economic reasons, such as scions of the wealthy Montefiore family.⁹³ Beyond this early wave of migrants, there were three other waves of migrants: during the 1830s as largely German Jews came to work on the mines, during the 1890s Russian migrants fleeing repression and poverty in Russia and from 1918 the Polish migrants arrived fleeing from Pilduski's nationalist

⁸⁹ Daniel Eleazar, *Jewish Communities in Frontier Societies: Argentina, Australia and South Africa* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983), pg.1.

⁹⁰ Gideon Shimoni, 'From one frontier to another: Jewish identity and political orientation in Lithuania and South Africa', in *Jewries of the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict*, ed. Sander Gilman and Gideon Shimoni ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999)

⁹¹ John Lambert, 'South African British or Dominion South Africans: The Evolution of an Identity in the 1910s and 1920s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40 (1), 2000, pp.197-222, 202.

⁹² Susan Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 5.

⁹³ Adam Mendelsohn, 'Not the Retiring Kind: Jewish Colonials in the Mid-19th Century' History' in *Colonialism and the Jews*, ed. Ethan Katz, Lisa Moses Leff and Maud Mandel (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2017)

governments and the accompanying pogroms.⁹⁴ As in South Africa, the earlier waves of migrants felt threatened by the Yiddish and working class nature of the later waves of migrants, who had a markedly different culture to the middle class, more English and assimilated nature of the early waves of migrants. These migrants, and those early migrants who managed to enrich themselves from colonial land made up the majority on Jewish government organisations. Unlike with the South African community, there were largely separate institutions for the Victoria and New South Wales Community owing to the great distance between them. By the 1860s, 60% of Jewish migrants lived in Victoria and about 40% in the New South Wales.⁹⁵ The Victoria community was generally more working class, based around the Gold industry, whereas the community surrounding Sydney was considerably wealthier. Between 1880 and 1910, the community's population more than doubled, from around 9000 to around 25000. This was considerably less than in South Africa, where around 40000 new migrants arrived. By 1910, Jews made up 0.5% of the total Australian population. As in South Africa this changed the relationship between Jewish institutions, such as synagogues and their flock, who had to adjust to serving wider community, and a community with different cultures, social values, and coming from a different class. It was up to these Jewish institutions to guide their community in becoming white.

Owing to water damage in the archive there is considerably less surviving correspondence between Australian Jewish groups, such as the New South Wales Board of Deputies, and the British Board of Deputies, so this account will be more largely dependent on correspondence located within the Chief Rabbi's archive. Another factor that restricted the correspondence between representative organisations in Australia and in the UK, is the late development of the Jewish organisations in Australia largely owing to the intense rivalry for communal leadership between the Sydney and Melbourne communities.

Compared to South Africa, the genocide against the indigenous population of Australia was much more complete by the early 20th Century. The much more limited dependence on indigenous labour to fulfil major economic functions which led to an apartheid system that worked significantly differently to South African system.⁹⁶ Within most literature the

⁹⁴ Rutland, *Jews in Australia*, 20.

⁹⁵ Rutland, *Jews in Australia*, 25.

⁹⁶ Andrew Markus, *Governing Savages: Commonwealth and Aboriginals, 1911-39* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin 1990), 13.

indigenous population of Australia is most conspicuous for its absence. Scholars and contemporary commentators either overtly embrace the White Australia myth, as Daniel Eleazar does, or more tacitly embracing this myth by narrating Australian history as the history of migrants, without noting these 'migrants' interaction with a pre-existing population.⁹⁷ Consequently, Australian whiteness was more defined in a Western European or American mould against immigrants, especially against immigrants from East Asian or South Pacific countries.⁹⁸ Whilst for some 'civilising' the natives was an important pursuit, this was very much a minority activity. Most white people were able to pretend that their wealth and success was not dependent on the displacement of indigenous populations. As Schech and Haggis observed, 'whiteness is cast as the ordinary'.⁹⁹

Despite Australian whiteness being as much predicated on migrant others as indigenous others, there was less established antisemitism within Australia, compared to Canada and South Africa. Establishment Jews had very little problems reaching senior positions within the Australian government. Figures such as Sir John Monash and Isaac Issacs managed to become senior politicians and actively involved in Australian political life. There were few legal disabilities for Australian Jews. However, the White Australia policy, which after 1900 restricted immigration to Australia was also operated against Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁰ This continued to apply to victims of Nazi antisemitism, whom were not allowed to migrate to Australia and applied especially to those from Eastern Europe.¹⁰¹ After the Holocaust, as Australia abandoned its policy of only selecting white migrants from the British Empire, it became significantly easier for Jews to migrate. As Goutmann observes, this comparative lack of established antisemitism didn't mean that antisemitism and the awareness of a Jewish marginality weren't powerful forces in shaping Jewish engagement with whiteness and Britishness within Australia.¹⁰² Citizenship in Australia, like in South Africa was dependent on whiteness and the ways in which debates surrounding Jewish migrants

⁹⁷ Daniel Eleazar, *Jewish Communities in Frontier Societies*, 5;

⁹⁸ James Jupp, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australia's Immigration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10.

⁹⁹ Susanne Schech and Jane Haggis, 'Terrains of Migrancy and Whiteness: How British Migrants Locate Themselves in Australia' in Aileen Moreton Robinson ed. *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004), 176.

¹⁰⁰ Rodney Goutmann, 'Was it Ever So? Antisemitism in Australia' 1860-1940', *Humanities Research Journal*, 2005, 12 (1), 60.

¹⁰¹ Rodney Goutmann, 'Was it Ever So?', 62.

¹⁰² Rodney Goutmann, 'Was it Ever So?', 57.

provided the main impetus for the Australian community to perform their Britishness. As Stratton argues, mirroring Fanon, Jewish acceptability as white people within Australian society was contingent on their invisibility as Jews.¹⁰³ Britishness, for Australian Jews, was a way of adapting to a society in which their race afforded them privilege and making their Jewishness invisible.

Canada

Canada's Jewish population was the largest of the three countries and the most diverse. Its Eastern European and Anglo-German origin population was supplemented by Brazilian Sephardi communities and Argentinean communities. Of the dominions Canada was least connected to the metropole as, mirroring the position of Canada itself, the community located itself in between the political centres of Britain and the US, with much of Jewish life influenced by communities in the US and especially New York.

Canada's Jewish community was split between the two major urban centres; Toronto and Montreal with important satellite communities in Vancouver, Winnipeg, across the great plains and in Eastern coastal urban centres. The interwar period was an era of mass population growth and migration, largely from Eastern Europe. According to census data, the Jewish population increased by 34% between 1921 and 1941 to 168,600 people, building on strong demographic growth during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁴ Canada's Jews were overwhelming in urban settlements. Largely Jews lived in tenement housing in city centre locations, such as St John's Ward in Toronto, however during this period there was significant suburbanisation, especially among the middle class.¹⁰⁵ Also, there was a large minority of rural Jews living in agricultural communities based on a combination of the models of Kibbutzim and Canadian frontier colonialism, who were much more significant force than in the other case studies, where they rarely developed beyond the notional.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Jonathan Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish: Constructing Ambivalent Identities* (London: Routledge, 2000).

¹⁰⁴ Randal Schnoor, 'Jews in Canada: A Demographic Profile', Ira Robinson ed. *Canada's Jews: In Space, Time and Spirit* (Brighton Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2013)

¹⁰⁵ Gerard Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: MUA University Press, 2014), 201.

¹⁰⁶ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 205.

Jews were the largest white ethnic group, other than the British and French, and grew to between 5 and 10% of the population in Toronto and Montreal.¹⁰⁷

The experiences of Canada's Jewish community were in many ways nationally specific. In Australia and South Africa, tensions were mainly constructed between the Eastern European and Western European origin Jews. In Canada, the Eastern European community was large and diverse enough for there to be tension between the different Eastern European communities, such as the Polish or Litvak communities.¹⁰⁸ The employment profile of Canadian Jews was also different to communities in South Africa and Australia, which often developed in ways linked to the mining industries. Canada's Jews were much more linked to the garment and tailoring industries.¹⁰⁹ Another significant trend in the Canadian Jewish community was the relative strength of the reform movement, undoubtedly influenced by its strength in the American community. Much of this specificity also comes from the peculiar history of Canada, as it was largely connected to the first British Empire, gained self-government in 1867, and therefore the political, if not the cultural connection with Britain was lessened somewhat earlier.

As in Australia and South Africa, antisemitism was always an unspoken influence on Jewish politics in Canada. Antisemitism in Canada was a significant force from its foundation, especially among the French speaking community, where the fascist Action Nationale led by Adrian Arcand was particularly influential.¹¹⁰ Jews faced rampant discrimination in employment, education and housing. This included being excluded from major universities, or having to meet higher requirements, and struggled to rent housing in desirable areas or employment in non-Jewish owned factories.¹¹¹ Fascists and committed antisemites were never completely incorporated in to the governing class, as they were in South Africa. They were able to restrict migration to Canada from Eastern Europe which was excluded in 1930, in response to the Great Depression.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Ruth Frager, 'Communities and Conflicts: Eastern European Jewish Migrants in Quebec and Ontario from the Late 1800s through the 1930s', *Canada's Jews: In Time, In Place in Spirit*, ed. Ira Robinson (Brighton Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2013) 53.

¹⁰⁸ Ruth Frager, 'Communities and Conflicts', 54.

¹⁰⁹ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 216.

¹¹⁰ Ruth Frager, 'Communities and Conflicts', 71

¹¹¹ Jack Lipsinski, 'In Search of Unity: Anti-Semitism Zionism and the Canadian Jewish Congress', in *Canada's Jews: In Time in Place in Spirit* ed. Ira Robinson (Brighton, Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 79.

¹¹² Ruth Frager, 'Communities and Conflicts', 72.

Much of the Canadian correspondence, especially from the Board of Deputies archive, is composed of letters between the Canadian Jewish Congress, the largest representative organisation for Canadian Jewry and the British Board of Deputies. Canadian Jewish Congress was founded in 1919, out of the backdrop of migration from Eastern Europe, the formation of the League of Nations, rising antisemitism in Canada and the Zionist movement. It was also a response to the formation of the American Jewish Congress in 1918. Owing to tensions between communal elites in Montreal and Toronto, this congress was not particularly effective, which left the Zionist Federation as one of the few Canadian organisations operating on a national level.¹¹³ It remained moribund until 1933, when the threat of Nazism and the Christie Pits riots in Toronto led to its resuscitation under the leadership of Hananiah Caiserman.¹¹⁴

Like South Africa, Canada had a bifurcated white identity. As Tulchinsky writes 'Canada was a nation of two nations'.¹¹⁵ By this he means the principle white groups, the British and the Quebecois French. This statement is revealing in that there were clearly more than two national groups within the Canada, most obviously its first nations population. Canada had a substantial East Asian migrant population and a population of freed slaves, who largely arrived from the Great Migration from the US South. These other nations of Canada, the largely exterminated and geographically and politically marginalised first nations, and the reviled East Asians for whom immigration restrictions were pioneered, were as large a presence on Canadian Jewish consciousness as the two white nations. Nevertheless, as a group that was included within white society, Canada's Jews in many ways were left in between the two communities. Jews in Montreal's divided school system were included within the Protestant side, however their practice of religion was limited within those schools.¹¹⁶

These three dominions have many common features. They all experienced their Jewishness as contradictory to the muscular Christianity of settler societies. They experienced the privileges of a settler experience, on land appropriated from indigenous people and were active participants in this process. Yet, despite this active participation they were very aware

¹¹³ Jack Lipsinski, 'In Search of Unity', 81.

¹¹⁴ Lipsinski, 'In Search of Unity', 86

¹¹⁵ Gerard Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Ruth Frager, 'Communities and Conflicts, 67

of the fragility of their whiteness and had experience of racialisation. Like the other dominions they maintained a cultural connection to Britain which was important in signifying whiteness. They looked to other methods of 'imitating' Christian whiteness, including settler projects such as Zionism or agricultural settlement. They had to deal with the same issues of modernity, the requirement for theological reform and the rise of class consciousness within the Jewish working class, and the imperative of teaching whiteness to the new migrants.

While these countries have their own similar histories, they also have their differences. Key within these is the role of non-British white groups such as the Afrikaners in South Africa and the French in Canada. The role of non-British whites within these countries changed the relationship between Jews and Britishness, providing an alternative model of inclusion within whiteness. Australia did not have an alternative white group, so there in particular, whiteness and Britishness were conflated. In the other dominions, Britishness signalled the membership of a particular national community, one which was slightly more accepting of Jews than the Afrikaner or French-Canadian community. In the Canadian community, there was a third rival to British or French whiteness: American whiteness. The influence of America, which was a source of Rabbis and migrants to Canada changed the Canadian relationship with the metropole. The ambivalent position of the Canadian community, between the US and Britain, can especially be seen through the interactions between the Canadian community and the World Jewish Congress. Another key difference is the relationship to Black and native communities. In South Africa, the Jewish community had more interaction with the Native Other, due to South Africa's continued dependence on indigenous labour. This continued dependence means that in the South African sources, there is more overt reflection on race in relations to indigenous people than in other countries, where these are more noted for their absence. Of my case studies, South Africa possessed a stronger Nazi movement, which was eventually incorporated in the apartheid government. Canada's Nazi movement was weaker, but still had a significant hold on large sectors of the population, especially its French speaking population. Australia's Nazis were much more a minority.

Another key difference is the level of Jewish organisation. South Africa developed a national Board of Deputies in 1905, significantly than the Canadian Jewish Congress or the Australian Jewish Congress. Hertz, owing to his ministry in Johannesburg before his term as Chief Rabbi.

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This gives South Africa a slightly richer archive than my other case studies. My essay reflects this relative richness in a slight bias towards sources drawn from South Africa.

Jews and Metropolitan Government

The Jewish place within colonial modernity was intrinsically related to government, both religious and secular.¹¹⁷ Loyalty to the British state was not only something that leaders of Jewish institutions believed in but something which they saw as vitally important for them to demonstrate to combat antisemitism.¹¹⁸ The demonstration of Jewish loyalty to Britain and Jewish service in the First World War were a key part of the communal imitative performance of white Britishness. Beneath this much trumpeted loyalty to the British state was the need for Jewish governance to ensure that this loyalty crossed Jewish class and ethnic lines. The elite group were invested in making their Jewishness 'invisible' and assimilating into the wider national communal communities, and that this national loyalty was spread among poorer, recent immigrants whose material interest in the adoption of colonial semiotics was much less obvious.¹¹⁹ This divergence of interest meant that questions relating to Jewish loyalty to secular government became an animating force behind the develop of Jewish governance. Most existing scholars of Jewish government structures view their development as a direct response to antisemitism and this is partly true.¹²⁰ But the development of Jewish government structures was as much a response to a desire for communal control, a control exercised primarily by Jews of Anglo-German or Dutch Sephardi origin over those more recent immigrants of Eastern European origin.

Nothing is more emblematic of the debates surrounding Jewish loyalty to secular government than the establishment of Jewish First World War memorials. The president of the Australian Jewish war memorial group argued that the construction of a war memorial not only allowed Jews to remember their dead, but also symbolised Jewish 'service to the Empire'.¹²¹ To give added importance to this symbol of the Jewish contribution to Imperial society, in South Africa this memorial was to be unveiled by Edward, Prince of Wales. In their proposal to the

¹¹⁷ Allen (New South Wales Jewish War Memorial) to Joseph Hertz (Chief Rabbi of the British Empire), 29/5/24, ACC2805/54/39/25, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹¹⁸ George Mosse, 'The Jews, Myth and Counter Myth', *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, ed. Les Back, John Solomos (London: Routledge, 2012), 265

¹¹⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. 115.

¹²⁰ Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society: The Origins and Activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony* (Cape Town: Historical Publications Society, 1983), 21; Jack Lipsinski, 'In Search of Unity', 78.

¹²¹ Cohen (New South Wales Jewish War Memorial) to Hertz, 7/8/23, ACC280543925, London Metropolitan Archive.

organising committee, to which the Chief Rabbi was an advisor, they described the war memorial as being a national project, rather than merely of sectional interest to Jews.¹²² This event was described by a South African correspondent to Hertz as a 'matter of intense importance for Jews across the Empire'.¹²³ It served as a recognition of Jewish loyalty to the British Empire and the British Royal family in a region where both were intensely controversial entities. Owing to the formation of the British Board of Deputies by writ of the king, the Board of Deputies had a privileged relationship with the British royal family, and sought to leverage this relationship to advocate for the community, both in the UK and in the British Empire.¹²⁴ Dominion Jewish institutions were keen to demonstrate their loyalty to the King, but only within the limits proscribed by the maintenance of whiteness. In Canada, there was some debate as to whether the Jewish community should attempt to present a loyal address to the king on his first visit to Canada, to demonstrate Jewish loyalty to the crown in the face of antisemitism. Hertz, drawing on his experience in South Africa counselled caution, although not because of any squeamishness about overt loyalty to the crown:

'My personal opinion is that such presentation should be given only if other religious denominations are adopting that course....

*Thus, in South Africa, the Blacks and natives from India would invariably give an address to a new governor general on his arrival, but not the Wesleyans or the Anglicans or the Dutch Reformed Church. Jews therefore refrained from presenting address to the governor general. However, in the exceptional times in which we live it is for the present leads of Canadian Jewry to decide whether the public presentation of a Jewish address might not only on this historic occasion be fully justified by its psychological effect within and without the community.'*¹²⁵

Hertz believed that public demonstrations of loyalty to the British Crown were politically expedient, especially in the context of late 1930s antisemitism. He noted its role in building the consciousness of a British identity within a community where for many people the formal links with Britain were limited. But this declaration of loyalty should not position the Jewish

¹²² Goodman to Joseph Hertz, 24/12/24, ACC3121E1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹²³ Goodman to Joseph Hertz, 24/12/24, ACC3121E1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹²⁴ Abramowitz to Neville Laski, 5/1/1938, ACC3121E3764, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹²⁵ Joseph Hertz to Abrahamowitz 12/1/1939, ACC28054317, London Metropolitan Archive.

community as among the non-white communities of the British Empire, and therefore should only be linked to the behaviour of the other white communities.

The creation and prominence of institutions such as the Boards of Deputies and other dominion representative organisations was a practice of organising and wielding communal power. Some scholars, such as Milton Shain suggest that this was an arbitrary development for the sake of power.¹²⁶ Instead, this desire for communal control was a response to intracommunal class and ethnic tensions. For the community to become white and British, a degree of authoritarian regulation by Jewish institutions was necessary, to prevent any form of political embarrassment, which in the minds of these institutions would lead to a creeping Jewish non-whiteness.

The concerns surrounding Jewish relationships with secular government led to an increase in the strictures of Jewish government. One example of this is the South African Board of Deputies' attempts to regulate fundraising. This regulation was purportedly to stop the community being 'inundated' by fundraisers.¹²⁷ When unfavoured campaigning organisations applied to fundraise in the community they were rebuked, 'no such collection or campaign shall be commenced without the written consent of the Board.'¹²⁸ This regulation allowed the Board of Deputies to prevent fundraising for causes that might have run contrary to their place in South African racial capitalism, such as socialist, anti-fascist or revisionist Zionist causes. These decisions were made internationally as fundraising efforts operated in a British imperial context with an international class of fundraisers, such as Rabbi Zlotnick of Montreal, who raised money for Zionist causes across the British Empire.¹²⁹ The South African Board of Deputies sought to strengthen their governance over communal political activities in order to limit activism that it saw as endangering the Jewish positionality as white Britons.

The elite control of fundraising within South African Jewry led to internal tensions within the elite class, over the most effective ways of spending their money. While most Rabbis and members of the Board of Deputies were supportive of Jewish internationalism, others saw Jewish freedom being ensured by loyalty to a nation state, rather than supra-national

¹²⁶ Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society*, 77.

¹²⁷ Gustav Saron to S Rudolph, 18/2/41, ACC3121e1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹²⁸ Resolutions adopted by the South African Board of Deputies in December 1933, 18/2/1941, ACC3121e1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹²⁹ Rai Levy (Minister to Durban) to Joseph Hertz, 13/08/1925, ACC280543574, London Metropolitan Archive.

forces.¹³⁰ A Synagogue president wrote to Hertz, stating ‘my sympathies are far more with those of our on nationality and creed than with foreigners’.¹³¹ This anti-internationalist attitude was a reaction to the mobilisation of international Jewish links by anti-Semites, in order to frame Jews as rootless cosmopolitans without any national loyalty.¹³² This anti-internationalist sentiment is a reminder that even though the majority of Jewish communal leaders were heavily invested in Britishness, this was not universal, with some seeing the path to Jewish assimilation through the adoption of national identities, becoming white South Africans or Canadians rather than white Britons.

The South African Board of Deputies was not the only institution that attempted to control the politics of their communities, although it was the most successful. The Canadian Jewish Congress actively campaigned against communism within the community. Their president H Caisermann announced in a meeting:

‘It is also a fact that in the opinion of the majority of the population Jews are associated with communism. This is a very bad thing and it is our urgent duty to explain the population is mistaken in this association. We must demonstrate that the association is a canard and we must disassociate Jews from communism.’¹³³

This is reminiscent of a similar injunction declared by the World Jewish Congress.¹³⁴ This urge to disassociate Canadian Jews from communist and socialist activities was influenced by the predominance of socialist and trade union politics within the Jewish community at large, but especially in Canada.¹³⁵ Jewish involvement in strikes and union activism led to allegations from the far-right surrounding disloyalty to Canadian and British values. Elements within the Jewish community, especially the largely impoverished Eastern European immigrants were beginning to articulate a vision of Jewishness which was very different to that envisioned by the largely bourgeois leadership of Jewish representative organisations and the Rabbinate. As the temporal leadership was often composed of employers, they had an obvious class interest in opposing the spread of socialist ideas through the communal working class. Jewish

¹³⁰ Lisa Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 4.

¹³¹ Beansted to Joseph Hertz, 6/2/22, ACC280543574, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹³² Furlong, *Between the Crown and Swastika*, 61.

¹³³ Canadian Jewish Congress Minutes, 29/10/1936, ACC3121E3763, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹³⁴ Gerard Tulchinsky, *The Jews in Canada: A People’s Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 240.

¹³⁵ Gerard Tulchinsky, *The Jews in Canada: A People’s Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 245.

communal government developed in opposition to radical critiques of capitalism and imperialism within the Jewish working class, which these elites saw as endangering their location as British Jews.

The Chief Rabbinate, had its own ways of exercising control over the community. The Chief Rabbinate exercised significant influence over ministerial appointments. Frequently ministers would move in between the British dominions, on the basis that experience in one dominion qualified them to minister to congregations in the other dominions. For example, a minister to Hobart requested another community in Australia or South Africa, as the 'renumeration was inadequate' in the current post.¹³⁶ Rabbi Mestel of St Kilda's Congregation in Sydney sought a move to Canada, which was only a few days travel from the British metropole.¹³⁷

The influence of the Chief Rabbi over ministerial appointments among the British dominion congregations meant that the Chief Rabbi was the focus of complaints regarding the nature of these appointments. M Diamond, a minister in Johannesburg wrote:

*'there are barely half a dozen congregation who are in need of preaching. Any vacancy which arises is immediately filled from England. The other communities are contented with a reverend only.'*¹³⁸ *Any newcomer who hails from the province of Kovno and brings with him letters of introduction from friends domiciled with him in the Union is deemed ipso facto efficient and duly authorised to act a reverend with the right of priority.*¹³⁹

While non-Jewish South Africans expressed anxiety about Jews stealing their jobs, the same anxiety was expressed by assimilated Jews. Jews from Eastern Europe, are framed as tribal and ill-educated, unsuited to the leadership of an occidental community. This anxiety surrounding the new migrants was not only an anxiety surrounding migration, but an anxiety surrounding control of the community. As Lithuanian and Russian Jews established their own networks, the pedagogic chain of the Western, assimilated Jews civilising the new migrants was broken. It was Hertz, the representative of the British Empire, to whom they looked to

¹³⁶ Morris (Tasmania) to Joseph Hertz, 26/9/18, ACC2805543925, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹³⁷ Mestel to Joseph Hertz, 22/10/1926, ACC28055432, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹³⁸ The term reverend was given to Jewish spiritual leaders who had not yet undergone the necessary training to be considered a Rabbi.

¹³⁹ M Diamond to Joseph Hertz, 26/4/27, ACC280543574, London Metropolitan Archive.

reassert Western control. Hertz was a believer in the Judaic science, a mixture of Orthodox Rabbinic interpretation with the trappings of modernist scientific enquiry.¹⁴⁰ His priority with Rabbinic recruitment was to transform Judaism into a modern religion, in contrast to the backward religious beliefs of Muslims or Hindus, who were framed in British oriental discourse as pre-modern.¹⁴¹ This concern raised about the poor quality of Rabbinic training in the working class Eastern European communities led him to favour Rabbis trained in Western European, or American traditions, so shutting out the potentially degrading influence of Eastern Europe.¹⁴² The animating force behind the exercise of Jewish institutional power in this case was a class and ethnic tension between the community, and the communal elites' desire for the community to be at the centre of colonial modernity.

Mass migration from Eastern Europe transformed the dominion Jewish community, in terms of its class and ethnic profile, and transformed its relationship to government. Jewish communal elites saw their path to assimilation through affiliation with the British Empire. In terms of their interactions with war memory and the British royal family, communal governors promoted an image of themselves as part of a modern white British community. They saw themselves and designed the communal structures so that they were the bearers of colonial modernity. British citizenship had to be balanced against other identities needed for Jewish assimilation; the need to be participate in Britishness as white citizens of the British Empire and the need to also be considered to play a full part in the individual nations. This discourse was partly aimed internally, to place the British Empire at the centre of Jewish life, but to a large extent was performative, aimed at being acceptable to secular/Christian society.¹⁴³ The governing systems which these communal leaders developed were a response to the perceived threats posed by new migrant groups and the uncertainty that the arrival of these groups placed on the Britishness of the community.

¹⁴⁰ Ben Elton, *Britain's Chief Rabbi's*, 44.

¹⁴¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, Random House, 1979), 7.

¹⁴² See for example Leaman (President Durban Hebrew Congregation) to Joseph Hertz, 1/11/1917, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁴³ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 22.

Theological Reform

As noted above there is a moderately developed literature about the relationship between Jewishness and coloniality. This discusses Jewish writing, Jewish organisations, secular Jewish thought and Jewish experiences of antisemitism. Judaism is often absent from these discussions, when it is included it is posited as an unchanging primordial practice. Obviously, religious practice has never been static. During this period, Judaism, around the world was in a state of change. In England, the founding of the radical, iconoclastic, Liberal Judaism had shaken Orthodox institutions. In Eastern Europe, secularist movements including Bundism, Socialism and Zionism were changing Jewish practice. Even in Orthodox Judaism, which prided itself on being unchanging, modernity and technological change were transforming Judaism and introducing new competitors to Jewish practice such as the cinema, or reading by consistent electric light. These changes were something which all Jewish communities, whether they were Orthodox, Reform or Secular, had to deal with.

These changes and debates were shaped by the Jewish experience of coloniality. Edouard Glissant argues religious practice in the Caribbean 'functioned as if the other was listening'.¹⁴⁴ In this respect, Jewish religious practice was little different. Each side of the theological debates were laying claim to modernity, against their supposedly backwards, Oriental opponents.¹⁴⁵ They saw reforms in the practices of Judaism as creating a community, which could take its place amongst the modern world, and could take their place as white British citizens within that. Debates surrounding reforms to the processes of marriage, conversion and divorce were mechanisms of regulating the boundaries of the community, so that they could maintain the Manichean dichotomy between the coloniser and the colonised.¹⁴⁶ The religious issues encountered in British dominions were reflective of issues within the white settler community. These included issues surrounding inter-marriage, immoral relationships with outsiders, lapsing morals within a colonial context, or surrounding who counted as a proper white. These religious debates conducted between the soft boundaries of metropole

¹⁴⁴ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 22.

¹⁴⁵ Ulrike Bruonotte, Anne Dorethea Ludewig, Axel Stähler, 'Introduction', 7.

¹⁴⁶ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 11.

and colony were as much about finding a place for Judaism within coloniality, as they were about modernity.

Despite their traditionalism, it is evident that Orthodox Jewish practice was changed by colonialism. See this Australian prayer for the health of the British Empire during the First World War, sent to Chief Rabbi Hertz for his approval:

*'Unto thee O Lord we give thanks acknowledgment that oftentimes heretofore thy right hand hath signally supported the British Empire when it stood up to defend the weak against the strong. Even as thou hast been with our country hitherto so be with her still. Shield her sailors and soldiers in the day of battle. May their lives be precious in thy sight. Gird them with victory so that warfare may be speedily ended, and the effect be enduring quiet and confidence. Bless those whose heart moves them to deal tenderly with the wounded and the sick upon the field. Cheer with glad tidings the hearts that tremble for the welfare of absent dear ones. May the comforts soothe the bruised soul of any that weep for the loss of their beloved. Pour forth a spirit of warm compassion upon all the citizens of this Empire that they may bear and forbear with each other in true brotherliness and hasten to the relief and alleviation of all those who experience the misery of war.'*¹⁴⁷

Unlike supposedly reformist tendencies, such as mixed choirs, or a more open approach to religious conversions, a prayer for the health for the British Empire and the British Army fighting abroad was an acceptable addition to the religious service. For Jews of the British Empire, their Britishness and their status as white colonisers played a key part in their religious life, showing them as loyal white citizens. This prayer was not entirely aimed at the non-Jews who might be distrustful of Jewish loyalty to the British Empire, but an injunction from the Rabbis and community leaders against those Jews who may have not been so concerned with the health of the British Empire.

Often reforms were triggered by practical, not ideological considerations. In Canada, Rabbis found it difficult to maintain the tradition of Friday evening services being conducted after sunset, as its latitude meant that this could occur well after ten in the evening, or soon after

¹⁴⁷ Great Synagogue Service to Rabbi Joseph Hertz, ACC20543925, London Metropolitan Archive.

three in the afternoon.¹⁴⁸ This was not an issue they had encountered further South. There were similar issues in Australia, as Rabbis petitioned the Chief Rabbi for leave to shorten the services owing to the difficulties of conducting their religion within a 'subtropical climate'.¹⁴⁹ These common-sense adaptations for Jewish practice outside of Northern Europe were viewed with some opposition, with Rabbi Sandheim worrying that changing the times of the service were the thin end of the wedge towards the dilution of traditional Judaism.¹⁵⁰ This concern surrounding religious degeneration in the colonies' links to wider concerns surrounding moral degeneration in the colonies.

Dominion Rabbis regularly brought issues concerning marriage, divorce and conversion to the Chief Rabbi. This reflects an anxiety surrounding the maintenance of Jewish patriarchy within colonial communities. McLintock describes women as the 'boundary markers' of Empire, as debates and anxieties surrounding racial control and prestige were marked out over the control and regulation of women and especially female sexuality.¹⁵¹ Without such a control of women and female sexuality, a pure Imperial enterprise would degenerate into a form of 'monstrous hybridity', weakening imperial control and prestige.¹⁵² Stoler articulates the ways in which colonialism was dependent on the control of intimate relations, especially those of white women.¹⁵³ The patriarchy by which this control of women was envisioned and articulated was one which had its roots in Western European Christian states, with particularly Eastern European Jews having a different relationship with patriarchy.¹⁵⁴ Through the regulation of issues surrounding divorce and conversion, which often involved marriages outside of the community, the Jewish community could engage in its own boundary work, mirroring that of the wider white community. This boundary work was informed by the unique pressures of Jews in colonies, who had to not only maintain the integrity of their community but their status and prestige as white people within a settler colonial context.

¹⁴⁸ Sandheim to Joseph Hertz, 27/7/15, ACC31214315, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁴⁹ Great Synagogue to Joseph Hertz, 7/12/1922, ACC280543925, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁵⁰ Sandheim to Joseph Hertz, 27/7/15, ACC31214315, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁵¹ Ann McLintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 24.

¹⁵² Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Desire and Race* (London: Routledge, 1994), 4.

¹⁵³ Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁵⁴ Karen Brodwin, *How the Jews Became White Folks and What it Says about Race in America*, 11.

Cases of marriages outside the community were a clear moment when these anxieties came to the fore. Modern Jewish communities have never actively proselytised and are traditionally endogamous. This being noted, there was often a lenient approach to the rules surrounding conversion and marriages outside of the community, as it is impossible for these to be enforced within a diasporic context. As the Rabbi of Salisbury noted 'that in every county proselytes are actually admitted'.¹⁵⁵ The flexibility which was applied to the rules around conversion depended on the relative status within the community.¹⁵⁶ Consider this letter from the Rabbi in Salisbury, included within the South African section of the archive, to the Chief Rabbi asking for advice on difficult conversion cases:

*'I had a letter recently from a girl in Salisbury who desired to become Jewish. Of course, I sought in the strongest possible term to dissuade her from going further in the matter and I have heard nothing more about it.... However, there is another case in the same type of a different character. A Jewish lad is associating that non-Jewish girl and is forced to marry her and she will shortly have a child by him. His people are very decent Jewish folk.'*¹⁵⁷

The first woman, or 'girl', while they desired to become Jewish was persuaded not to become Jewish. A non-Jewish woman who was married to a Jewish man was considered a different case. In Jewish tradition, Jewishness is transferred matrilineally and therefore not allowing the mother to convert would render the child excluded from Judaism. This decision relied on the perceived status of the family of the 'Jewish lad' who were considered moral enough to warrant rabbinic indulgence. This anxiety surrounding conversion was in part reflective of the Orthodox community's desire to differentiate themselves from the reform movement, which took a softer line on conversion, with a greater tendency to prioritise religious faith over background. Rabbi Levy, criticised an opponent in the Sydney congregation as not 'remotely grieved by the spectacle of intermarriage and his remedy for it is free proselytisation, which would remove all barriers'.¹⁵⁸ In Rabbi Levy's view his opponent was similar to Claude Montefiore, the hated founder of Liberal Judaism.¹⁵⁹ Traditionalists within the community,

¹⁵⁵ J Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 3/10/17, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁵⁶ J Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 3/10/17, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁵⁷ J Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 3/10/17, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁵⁸ Rabbi Levy to Joseph Hertz, 10/2/37, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁵⁹ Rabbi Levy to Joseph Hertz, 10/2/37, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

such as Hertz or Rabbi Levy, wanted to be able to effectively control the barriers of the community, maintaining the communal endogamy. This endogamy was a form of 'reversion' to an imagined tradition before the compromises forced on the community by modernity, and as a defence against reform, towards a time of unrivalled purity.¹⁶⁰ It was also a form of imitation, adopting the norms of a secular community obsessed with ideas of racial purity and consumed by a fear of hybridity.¹⁶¹

This case is indicative of many cases which appear through the archives of each of the dominion communities discussed, all of which involve dominion Rabbis expressing their desire to allow conversion on the basis of marriage, and the Chief Rabbi refusing to give it sanction.¹⁶² It is a reasonable presumption that there were many more of such cases which were either resolved more quietly without intervention from the Chief Rabbi, or have not made it in to the archive.

While this decision was based on the challenges of existing within a small community in a colonial society, it was also reflective of anxieties over the position of the community within the Imperial Jewish network. As a community in Northern Rhodesia, it existed as a frontier extension of a colonial community, and therefore was doubly subordinate. The ability to exercise Rabbinic discretion on cases of proselytes was dependent on the influence of the Rabbi and the community, and this cases shows the clear subordination of communities in Rhodesia to the Metropole, with Rabbi Cohen referring to it as a, 'petty country congregation'.¹⁶³ In requesting the right to exercise his Rabbinic authority, he was keen to emphasise that the community in basic terms followed Jewish laws and considered those who married a non-Jew 'outside of the community', and therefore this prevented the community developing immoral habits that might reflect badly on Jews throughout the world or symbolise Jewish moral degeneration in the colonies.¹⁶⁴ A similar attitude was expressed towards maintaining Kashrut in a community outside the metropole:

¹⁶⁰ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 16.

¹⁶¹ Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory and Practice*, 24.

¹⁶² See for Canada Joseph Hertz to Frank, 25/12/1927, ACC28054317, London Metropolitan Archive; For Australia Chondowki (Newtown Hebrew Congregation) to Joseph Hertz, 2/12/19, ACC280543925.

¹⁶³ J Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 3/10/17, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁶⁴ J Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 3/10/17, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

I was shocked and grieved to receive the information that only 12 families in the community of over 200 takes kosher meat. This may be regarded as the lowest % in the British Empire. Many soldiers in France in the trenches in the Great War did not eat Trifah meat throughout the campaign in spite of terrible difficulties and dreadful condition. These boys who upheld the good old mosaic doctrine did not suffer for their loyalty. Their comrades respected them, their commanders and superior officers admired loved and trusted them. They knew they could be trusted.

Disobedience to the laws of our religion gives us no happiness and lowers us immeasurably in the eyes of non-Jews. You may not think it matters but these things are noticed and our friends cease to respect us if we treat lightly and jestingly the commands to keep your house kosher according to religious laws.¹⁶⁵

For Reverend Levine, the success of Jewish assimilation in the British Empire was linked to the ability of Jews to perform Jewishness to non-Jews. Jews were acceptable on the basis they conformed to a Christian model of desirable Jewish behaviour. Fanon writes that the experience of racism forced people ‘to either try to embody a perfect Blackness, or to whiten themselves’.¹⁶⁶ Levine’s idea that Jewish irreverence lowered the status of Jews ‘immeasurably’ in the eyes of non-Jews, is analogous to this, where Jewish acceptability is tied to performing the non-Jewish ‘effigy’ of Jewishness.¹⁶⁷ If Jews did not embody this perfect Jewishness then they would no longer be invited to be part of the secular white community owing to their transgression of colonial taxonomies. The experience of Jews within the World War, with its links to ideas of heroism in this case serves as a model of moral Jewish behaviour, to be emulated within the communities of the metropole.

The Chief Rabbi’s concern that the experience of lax Rabbinic supervision in ‘minor’ colonies was also true of Kenya, also included archivally within the cache of documents on South Africa. White Kenyan settlers were known for hedonism, which was contrary to Orthodox Jewish practice. Hertz writes:

¹⁶⁵ Levine to Joseph Hertz, 29/12/1925, ACC2805432, London Metropolitan Archive. Trifah translates as non-Kosher.

¹⁶⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 47.

¹⁶⁷ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 47.

*'I was distressed to learn that the observance of fundamental principles and practices of our holy faith have been allowed to lapse in your community. I earnestly trust that the remnant of Israel to whom you are ministering will respond to your call for a return to Judaism. Especially in those outposts of the far-flung empire where our brethren were so few in number is vital for every son and daughter of Israel loyally to cling to our faith and all its sacred institutions and observances.'*¹⁶⁸

The particular responsibility of the Jewish community in Kenya to maintain their responsibility above that of the metropolitan Jewish community was from their responsibility as colonial citizens. They were both Jews and settlers and therefore had the responsibility to maintain white Jewish prestige within the far-flung Empire. They were the bearers of a modern occidental religion to a backwards colonial context. This was a combination of Jewish anxieties surrounding the moral and ethical decline under the conditions of diasporic modernity, and Jewish acceptance of wider settler concerns surrounding the need to maintain white settler prestige within settler colonial societies.

The idea that religious adaptations to modernity and the conditions of coloniality were leading to the spiritual and political degeneration was linked to fears about the Eastern-Europeanisation of the community and its effect on the position of Jews in South Africa. Joel Rabinowitz, second Chief Rabbi of South Africa (based in the Federation of Synagogues in Johannesburg) wrote to Hertz:

*'The greatest problem is the strong tendency towards secularisation on the part of the community which has unfortunately invaded the Hebrew School. I used your phrase Hebrew speaking atheist with tremendous effect. The Zionists are partly to blame but in addition to this there is a strong Yiddish Bundist element here. So far, I have gained the complete confidence of all sections. I have captured the heart of the nationalist by my Zionism and above all my Hebrew speaking but I am fully alive to the fact that a breach may occur.'*¹⁶⁹

Secularisation was framed as a problem being introduced by working class Eastern European immigrants, who embraced political Jewish ideologies, such as Zionism or socialist Yiddishism.

¹⁶⁸ Joseph Hertz to Ellis, 29/7/29 ACC280543574, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁶⁹ Louis Rabinowitz to Joseph Hertz, 13/4/44, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive

While Zionism was by the 1940s embraced by most religious institutions, Bundism was less easy to incorporate as it was a socialist ideology hostile to organised religion. In the same letter, Rabinowitz bemoaned the threat of the reform movement in South Africa. Though it had a more affluent class profile, it was also viewed as threatening the religious continuity and the supremacy of Orthodoxy.¹⁷⁰ Secularisation, from the reform movement to the cultural Jewishness, were viewed as a threat to the purity of religious practice. The embrace of Zionism would be able to negate these changes in working class Jews' interaction with Judaism and maintain Orthodox Rabbinic control over the community. This approach, of incorporating Zionism within the canon of acceptable ideologies to be combined with Orthodox religious practice evidently had some success, as Rabinowitz observed that 'I am convinced that there is a genuine spirit of revivalism here and that my work will bear fruit.'¹⁷¹ Within this the loyalty to British government was maintained, with Rabinowitz asserted that despite his reforms he 'still defer[ed] fully to the chief Rabbi of the British Empire'.¹⁷²

In Sydney, during 1937, a different dispute raged surrounding the status of the primary Rabbi of the Great Synagogue. Rabbi Levy was strictly Orthodox and responsible for instituting a much stricter system of Kashrut, which was opposed by the British origin Synagogue Board as a 'Ghetto Measure'.¹⁷³ In turn Rabbi Levy derided the Synagogue board as representing a 'little aristocratic British oligarchy'.¹⁷⁴ The Board's candidate to replace Rabbi Levy, a Rabbi Falk, was a 'dafka' (anti-zionist) and a proponent of religious reform.¹⁷⁵ Both these positions were the product of their colonial context. The reforms to Kashrut, including the mandating of separate pots and pans for milk and meat dishes, were made possible by the greater wealth within the community, as poorer recent migrants would be unable to purchase multiple different sets of crockery. Both groups claimed metropolitan support for their view. The Board side, who opposed the reforms, claimed that the measure represented the degraded and backwards theology of the ghetto, not in keeping with the modern British world.¹⁷⁶ Rabbi Levy, the proponent of the scheme, cast aspersions on Falk's ability to speak English,

¹⁷⁰ Louis Rabinowitz to Joseph Hertz, 13/4/44, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive

¹⁷¹ Louis Rabinowitz to Joseph Hertz, 13/4/44, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁷² Louis Rabinowitz to Joseph Hertz, 13/4/44, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁷³ Rabbi Levy to Joseph Hertz, 10/2/37, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁷⁴ Levy to Joseph Hertz, 31/3/37, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁷⁵ Rabbi Levy to Joseph Hertz, 2/2/1936, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁷⁶ Rabbi Levy to Joseph Hertz, 10/2/37, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

therefore framing himself as the bearer of Britishness, against the backwards Eastern European, ghetto Jew.¹⁷⁷ Both factions saw themselves as the bearers of a colonial modernity, and Britishness, who through a programme of modernisation and reform, could ward against backwardness and the cultural losses of assimilation.

While one threat to the continuity of modern British Orthodox Jewishness came from Eastern European secularists and the backwardness of the 'ghetto', another threat came from the youth. In general, Rabbis in dominion communities, and in Jewish communities around the world, were very concerned that young people within the community were losing interest in Judaism and instead embracing a form of secular moral degeneration. This allegation that young people were losing interest in Judaism and did not follow the laws to a sufficient extent is almost as old as Judaism itself, and has yet to lead to the complete destruction of the faith and culture. These concerns reflect an ambivalence surrounding Jewish whiteness and modernity, with much of the community moving from deeply segregated societies in Eastern Europe, to societies in which Jews could engage with other white people. They were also threatened by the arrival of new modern technologies, such as the cinema which provided competition for Friday night services and new ways of conceptualising Judaism, such as secularist and reformist movements competing with Orthodox Judaism. Dominion Rabbis needed to find new ways of marketing Orthodox Judaism and engaging Jewish youth.

In general, among communal elites there was a split between those who were suspicious of the new opportunities that colonial whiteness offered to the community and sought a form of reversion to a purity before assimilation in settler colonies and those whose response to the pressures of modernity was a form of adaptation. Rabbi Cohen, whose response to supposed moral and spiritual degeneracy amongst Jewish youth was emphasise purity blamed it on 'the cordiality which exists between Jews and their Gentile neighbours.'¹⁷⁸ Others decided the appropriate response was to introduce doctrinal reforms on the model of the reform movement such as shorter services, measures which in general were looked down

¹⁷⁷ Rabbi Levy to Joseph Hertz, 2/2/1936, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁷⁸ Kirsner (Eastern Suburbs Synagogue) to Joseph Hertz, 4/4/1928, ACC2805433. London Metropolitan Archive.

upon by Rabbi Hertz setting Jewish youth 'on a path which leads out from traditional Judaism.'¹⁷⁹

These concerns about the lack of Jewish engagement among youth were often crosshatched with perceptions of moral decline, which particularly fixated on the roles of women and sexuality, a particular concern of colonial societies. Kirsner, Rabbi of the Eastern Suburbs Synagogue in Sydney complains that 'a lack of home encouragement [by women] which is so essential to the welfare of children' was leading to a decline in the Jewish engagement by young people.¹⁸⁰ This was partly based on the Jewish patriarchal convention where women were given responsibility for the practice of Judaism within home life. Charles Cohen, minister for the congregation in Nova Scotia complains that

*'in Montreal young people are little interested in religion: theory or practice. And consequently, they ignore all the moral prohibitions in the Torah and think nothing of deliberately breaking them. Chastity and Kashrus mean little to the younger generation.'*¹⁸¹

For Cohen, young people had fallen victim to a sexual permissiveness that led to religious decline. Both Cohen and Kirsner were interested in protecting patriarchal structure and policing the behaviour of women. These concerns were not dissimilar to wider concerns in colonial societies, surrounding the role of white women, their childrearing and sexuality, as a decline in patriarchy and the standard of childrearing would lead to racial hybridity.¹⁸²

This fear of moral degeneration was not just based on the idea that Jewish mothers and their children were failing to conform to both Jewish and secular patriarchal standards which focused on chastity, and the women's role in the home. This was linked also to anxieties about the changing class dynamics of the community, and the growth of an urban Jewish working class. This was alien to many of the Rabbis who often hailed from a comfortable middle class. Samuel, a Rabbi based in Winnipeg recounts the experience of working class Jewish migrant youth:

¹⁷⁹ Joseph Hertz to Green 5/5/31, ACC28054316, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁸⁰ Kirsner (Eastern Suburbs Synagogue) to Joseph Hertz, 4/4/1928, ACC2805433. London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁸¹ Charles Cohen (Nova Scotia) to Joseph Hertz, 1/9/1941, ACC28054317, London metropolitan Archive.

¹⁸² Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 141.

I came across recently a couple of lads who had been sent to Canada from the Hayes Industrial School. They had a very sad story of very harsh treatment and constant persecution on account of their religion. It was difficult to believe all they told of the meanness practised upon them on account of them being Jews. Sending them to Canada in these conditions is just another name for abandoning these lads to another faith. It appears that there was a regular conspiracy on the sort of the inhabitants to hound these lads to Christianity.¹⁸³

The experience of working class Jewish youth in non-Jewish settings worried the Rabbis, who felt that the combination of poverty and the experience of antisemitism would lead to secularisation. On this occasion, this was eventually resolved through their placement on an agricultural colony, removing them from the un-Jewish and potentially degenerating environment of an industrial school and allowing them to become hardened, masculine frontiersman and fully live out their Jewish identity. This vision of agricultural frontier masculinity was one which was at odds with many traditions of Jewish masculinity, which favoured intellectualism as a masculine ideal, and was closer to the secular/protestant tradition.¹⁸⁴ The loss of Jewishness among Jewish youth can be viewed as analogous to ideologies surrounding the loss of whiteness and Christianity among the secular population, with people from working class backgrounds viewed as the most vulnerable, and this loss being articulated in a failure to enforce patriarchal performance.¹⁸⁵

Other communities tried different tactics. Important within these were networks of youth movement groups, often based on the model of Baden Powell's Boy Scout movement, and youth political organisations attached to Eastern European political parties. Hertz wrote approvingly of the Brisbane communities formation of Judean Scout group 'from time to time I get report of your good work and I can't tell you how happy I am to see that you are strengthening Jewish life in our distant community.'¹⁸⁶ Scouting networks and youth groups were in many ways the perfect fit for Colonial Jewish institutions. Scouting had at its basis a fear of moral decline, as urbanism and industrialisation causing racial and physical

¹⁸³ Joseph Hertz to Samuel, 24/1/1924, ACC28054316, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁸⁴ Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: Heterosexuality and the invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: California, 1997), 7; Daniel Coleman, *White Civility*, 134.

¹⁸⁵ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ Joseph Hertz to Levine 24/5/29, ACC2805433, London Metropolitan Archive.

degeneration, and potentially the loss of white/imperial supremacy.¹⁸⁷ A sense of decline when faced with the pressures of industrial modernity was not only a key element in imperial ideology, in which elite Jewish organisations were ensconced. It was a key element in many Jewish ideologies of the time, whether it is the Zionist idea of moral or cultural degeneration in the diaspora, to be revitalised by the Jewish nationhood and militarism, or the Orthodox idea of a spiritual decline, led by secularisation.¹⁸⁸ In 1938, Habonim, a Jewish youth movement founded in Britain was brought to South Africa. Its founder, Norman Lourie, immigrated from Britain to start the group, with support from the British Board of Deputies.¹⁸⁹

The introduction of Habonim to South Africa was described as 'admirably adapted to communal moods'.¹⁹⁰ It received further sponsorship from Zionist organisations hopeful that the introduction of youth movements would reinvigorate Jewish youth as the *sabra*, the masculine ideal who would be created by the colonisation of Palestine.¹⁹¹ It was felt that the youth organisation also would make a direct contribution to the increasing military recruitment among Jewish South Africans, demonstrating fulfilment of imperial masculinity. This was probably partly informed by an awareness of the growing confrontation with the Nazi regime in Germany was the likely next use of South African troops.¹⁹² However, Laski as leader of the British Board of Deputies wrote that there was 'great disapproval of the approach and manner of approach Mr Lourie to this question of recruitment', fearing that he prioritised the foundation of a Jewish state over the needs of the British Empire.¹⁹³ It was noted by Laski's South African equivalent that 'Lourie is also a member of the exec of ZF' and therefore they could not be fully trusted to prioritise the needs of the Empire.

The other Habonim founder, Weselley Aron travelled to India in order to encourage the migration of impoverished metropolitan Jews to colonies, and to make it a wholly pan-colonial movement. Throughout the Empire Jewish children and teenagers would engage in

¹⁸⁷ Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement in Colonial Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 4.

¹⁸⁸ Leslie Cooper, 'Vitamins for Jewish Living', *Jewish Affairs*, July 1947.

¹⁸⁹ Lourie to Neville Laski, 8/8/1938, ACC3121E1821, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁹⁰ A. G. Brotman to Gustav Saron, 10/11/1938, ACC3121e1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁹¹ A. G. Brotman to Gustav Saron, 10/11/1938, ACC3121e1824, London Metropolitan Archive; Eitan Bar Yosef, 'Fighting Pioneer Youth: Zionist Scouting in Israel and Baden Powell's Legacy', *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movements First Century* ed. by Nelson Block and Tammy Proctor (Cambridge Scholars: Cambridge, 2009), 44.

¹⁹² A. G. Brotman to Gustav Saron, 10/11/1938, ACC3121e1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁹³ Neville Laski to Gustav Saron, 19/11/1938, ACC3121e1824, London Metropolitan Archive.

the same activities, and the same mixture of survival skills, teambuilding and Zionist education, to help disparate communities into a unified British imperial Jewish community. Habonim soon spread to Australia and Canada.

Movement towards religious reforms in British dominions were shaped by their awareness of their status as colonisers, and marginal members of the white community. These debates were conducted on a pan-colonial level.¹⁹⁴ Services were adapted to reflect the communities' loyalty to the Empire, and the metropole was seen as the exemplar to which the dominion communities should aspire. Jewish communities in Australia, South Africa and Canada looked to assimilate, and to become model white British citizens and the bearers of colonial modernity. They saw their status, as white British Jews as under threat from all sides. They were threatened by Eastern European Jewish secularists who rejected rabbinic authority, in favour of political ideologies, that often operated in opposition to the interests of the British Empire and the Bourgeois control of their community. The ways in which British dominions conducted debates surrounding Jewish responses to modernity was shaped by the prevailing concerns of the white settler community. The majority of the Chief Rabbi's correspondents opposed movements for religious reform, as non-Jews could not be expected to trust Jews who did not conform to the non-Jewish effigy of Jewish behaviour. The desire to maintain a strict regulation of the boundaries of the Jewish community, overlapped with the imperial desire to maintain a discretely bounded white community. The emphasis on patriarchal elements of Judaism, on the regulation of marriage and conversion, aligned with the emphasis on the maintenance of patriarchal control in wider white society. This emphasis on patriarchy conformed more to the protestant/secular model of Western European patriarchy than potentially transgressive Jewish models. Each project of spiritual reform was shaped by a modern community, away from the backwardness of their European Jewish roots, as befits the civilised participants in a colonial project, where they had the special responsibility for demonstrating good Judaism in the far-flung corners of the Empire.

¹⁹⁴ Moss Morris (Council of Natal Jewry) to Rabbi Levy, 6/1/35, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

International Jewish Politics

Debates surrounding the establishment of international Jewish government, such as the World Jewish Congress, forced dominion communities to consider their place within the British Empire. Should dominion communities represent themselves as a distinct national community or should they be represented by metropolitan Jewry, as a part of the Jewish community of the British Empire? As Hertz expands:

*'It is therefore natural that I should expect central bodies of Dominion Jewries such as the South African Board of Deputies to maintain the cooperation that has always existed between overseas communities. I fully agree that in international relief matters it is frequently necessary to subordinate our efforts to those of the American Jewish agency. However there remain a number of causes for which the far-flung British communities can and should pool their resources.'*¹⁹⁵

The choice that dominion communities had to make between representation in their own right on the American dominated World Jewish Congress or representation within the British structure, mirrored one made by Western orientated states during at the end of the Second World War: loyalty to the ageing Imperial powers, or the rising American Empire.

There were some strong reasons for siding with the British community. Many of the community viewed their primary affiliation as an 'outpost of the Empire'¹⁹⁶, rather than as a part of their individual national community. Partly this is the result of the dominion communities' demographic and political insignificance compared to the Jews of the US or Germany. This cooperation, or representation by the British metropole continued until the beyond the end of the Second World War, when American hegemony in Jewish politics was firmly established. It was especially pronounced in Australia and South Africa. Despite its formation after the end of the Second World War, when imperial hegemony was significantly weaker, the Executive Australian Jewish Community still demanded to have representation

¹⁹⁵ Joseph Hertz to JM Rich, 7/12/44, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive

¹⁹⁶ Rabbi Jacks to Joseph Hertz, 4/8/1937, ACC280536, London Metropolitan Archive.

on the British Board of Deputies.¹⁹⁷ The founder communities in Cape Town and Sydney had historical already had their separate representation on the British Board.

The Canadian, Australian and South African Boards each adopted their constitution from the British model. The main changes in structure of the Canadian Jewish Congress related to terminology. Its founding president Caiserman expands:

*'Some months ago I had occasion to write to you for the byelaws of the Board of Jewish Deputies as we were in the process of forming a similar organisations for Canada. You were good enough to end me the necessary material and asked that upon completion of our organisational work I should send you a copy of the byelaws.'*¹⁹⁸

*You will notice some changes, mainly terminological one. The term Deputies denotes a political meaning here and it was felt that the term might be construed as a militant one so we adopted the name Canadian Jewish committee and we refer to the individual members as delegates.'*¹⁹⁹

Similar correspondence exists with respect to the formation of the New South Wales Board of Deputies.²⁰⁰

One of the most important developments in international Jewish organisation was the World Jewish Congress, founded in 1936 in response to Nazi antisemitism. It was the first organisation which sought to represent all Jewish communities throughout the world. It was mainly founded by American Jews and based on the model of the American Jewish Congress.²⁰¹ This change in the structure of World Jewish politics was controversial, especially in Britain. It was seen as a sign of growing US hegemony over international Jewish politics, with British Jewry being relegated to the status of a community in a minor nation. Anti-internationalists who believed the introduction of a global organisation to represent Jewish communities would further inflame the antisemitic trope surrounding Jewish organisations as a controlling influence on World politics also objected.

¹⁹⁷ A. G. Brotman to Bloom (sec) ECAJ, 14/10/46, ACC3121e1138. London Metropolitan Archive

¹⁹⁸ Caiserman to Rich, 19/1/1930, ACC3121E3761, London Metropolitan Archive.

¹⁹⁹ Caiserman to Rich, 19/1/1930, ACC3121E3761, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁰⁰ A. G. Brotman to Jona Machover (United Emergency Committee) , 19/3/1945, ACC3121e1138.

²⁰¹ Zohar Segev, *The World Jewish Congress During the Holocaust: Between Activism and Restraint* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 5.

The previous structure of international engagement between Jewish communities has resembled the structure of nineteenth Century diplomacy, with issues and stances of note to world Jewry being resolved through series of meetings between the 'Great Powers' of the Jewish World, which were principally Britain, France and the United States. The secretary of the British Board of Deputies expands:

*'Mr Lyons was informed of the informal gatherings which took place between the Alliance Israelite [Universelle] and the American Jewish committees and ourselves from time to time and also of our close contact, chiefly by correspondence with the Canadian Jewish Congress on lines similar to our liaison with your own body in South Africa. At one time these informal gatherings including the Swiss and Dutch community, but our contacts with them are not so close because of their affiliation to the World Jewish Congress.'*²⁰²

In these situations, the dominions lacked a distinct political voice. They were spoken for by the British Board, as part of the British Empire. While the dominion communities were often informed by letter, issues important to world Jewry were discussed without them. The same could be said for the position of Jews in French Colonies, who were represented in these discussions by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the representative body for the French Jewish community. On occasions minor Imperial, or European powers were invited to attend these meetings. The British, while they were content with an international system of Jewish government which allowed them to represent the British Empire in its entirety were open to dominion representation at these meetings, claiming 'distance as its only obstacle', however in practice this never occurred.²⁰³

The formation of the World Jewish Congress left the dominions with a problem. They could either remain British and continue to be represented in international discussions by the British Board of Deputies, and risk not being able to represent themselves on the world stage, or they could become members of the World Jewish Congress. This would risk antagonising the British Board and losing the connection with Britain that was considered so important to their status as a white community and played an invaluable role in guiding the pan-Imperial

²⁰² A. G. Brotman to Rich, 6/04/1939, ACC3121E1823, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁰³ A. G. Brotman to Rich, 6/04/1939, ACC3121E1823, London Metropolitan Archive.

Jewish governance structures. Australia and South Africa both chose to be represented according to a bilateral structure rather than under the single representation of the World Jewish Congress. The secretary of the South African Board wrote 'I am advising the World Jewish Congress of our refusal to be included in international conferences or united representation under World Jewish Congress signature.'²⁰⁴ However, within this preferred oligarchic structure of World Jewish governance they pushed for a greater South African representation, stating that they 'would also appreciate direct invitations to any assembly or conference planning, co-ordinated Jewish action'.²⁰⁵ The Australian Board of Deputies argued that rather than the World Jewish Congress structure there should be another structure for whereby there was a committee for 'consultation and coordination' bilaterally between Jewish communal bodies.²⁰⁶ Canadian Jewry was the only dominion community which was part of the World Jewish Congress from its very beginnings, probably based on its significantly closer relationship with the American community.²⁰⁷

Even when Canada decided to affiliate to the World Jewish Congress, it did not view this process as contravening their strong relationship with the London Board of Deputies. From its formation the 'newly formed Canadian Jewish Congress [was]s working for closer contact with the Board of Deputies in London.'²⁰⁸ One of the Board of Deputies' correspondents wrote:

I fully realise that you are entitled to say 'let your community join the board' and I know that such would be the right step. But it is practically impossible to induce the community to do so...

*We have here to cope with a community that knows nothing of England and English institutions and that is closer to American ways.*²⁰⁹

This letter implies that the Canadian Jewish Congress forming closer links to America rather than being merely a community of the British Empire was not a step which was entirely welcome to its newly formed committee. Instead they worked to increase the Anglo-Centric

²⁰⁴ Gustav Saron to A. G. Brotman, 17/10/1945, ACC3121E1861, *London Metropolitan Archive*.

²⁰⁵ Gustav Saron to A. G. Brotman, 17/10/1945, ACC3121E1861, *London Metropolitan Archive*.

²⁰⁶ A. G. Brotman to Jona Machover (United Emergency Committee) , 19/3/1945, ACC3121e1138.

²⁰⁷ Gustav Saron to A. G. Brotman, 17/10/1945, ACC3121E1861, *London Metropolitan Archive*.

²⁰⁸ Cohen to Zaiman, 29/3/1934, ACC3121E3761, *London Metropolitan*

²⁰⁹ Abramowitz to Emanuel, 2/2/1924, ACC28054316, *London Metropolitan Archive*.

nature of the community by sending representatives to the British Board of Deputies, while at the same time joining the World Jewish Congress as a method of coping with a community that 'knew nothing of England'. Abramowitz later added that he hoped 'bringing the communities in to a closer relationship is possible'.²¹⁰

The British Board of Deputies only affiliated to the World Jewish Congress in 1974, in an attempt to hold onto a global leadership role amongst the Jewish community. This is evidence of the extent to which coloniality mattered in deciding power relationships within the Jewish community. Dominion Jewry acted as a part of the British Empire. It was represented in international debates by the British Board of Deputies as part of the British Empire. It chose this relationship and the politically convenient relationship with the British Empire that it implied over membership of the American dominated World Jewish Congress. Within international Jewish politics dominion Jewish communities framed themselves not as an independent national Jewish entity, but as part of wider Jewish community of the British Empire.

²¹⁰ Abrahamowitz to Emanuel, 2/2/1924, ACC28054316, London Metropolitan Archive.

Zionism and Territorialism

Debates surrounding Zionism and territorialism were among the most controversial in dominion Jewish politics. Zionism split both the Jewish bourgeoisie and the Jewish proletariat, and the spiritual and the political leaderships of the Jewish community. Hertz was an ardent Zionist, all his life. The British Board of Deputies was officially neutral, but unofficially opposed Zionism until Brodetsky's election in 1940.²¹¹ The growth of Zionism was intimately connected to the communities' sense of Britishness. For Zionists, the hope of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and the accompanying settlement of the land represented Jewish liberation. It would reframe Jewish political positions and vulnerabilities while remaking the Jews themselves into a model of white masculinity or femininity that their Jewishness prevented them from fully achieving.²¹² For its adherents to Zionism marked an end to transgressive rootless cosmopolitanism of the diaspora. However, for its bourgeois critics Zionism signalled the rejection of a British identity, as one could not be British and part of an external Jewish nation. Others steered another path and embraced Jewish territorialism, based on agricultural settlement on 'empty land'. While, it may have become a controversial contention recently, in British Settler societies there was no doubt that Zionism represented a form of colonisation. The fact that settlement in Palestine resembled Imperial settlement was the point of it. Zionists believed that through their own settler ideology, they could become unquestionably included in white British society. Zionism served simultaneously as a form of reversion and imitation.²¹³ The creation of specifically Jewish forms of settler colonialism imitated secular/Christian forms of settler colonialism. They also represented the reversion to a biblical past before the compromises imposed by diasporic modernity.

Zionism

No issue split the Jewish bourgeoisie as much as Zionism. Some such as Rabbi Cohen, the minister to the Great Synagogue of Sydney were openly critical of Zionism. This critique was

²¹¹ Taylor, *The Wars of the Lord*, 105.

²¹² Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: Heterosexuality and the invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: California, 1997), 297.

²¹³ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 15.

articulated on two bases: the idea that Zionism was a secularist movement, threatening to the integrity of the Jewish faith, and that it was a threat to the integrity of the British Empire.

The danger here in Melbourne is the growth of an extra congregational tendency to flout constituted authority and to quote overseas example and support so doing. I confidentially instanced the Zionist, not from any local antipathy (indeed my Synagogue has been consulting Mr D'avingor Goldsmsid whether it might not as the mother congregation initiate Australian representation on the Jewish agency) but because those people have recently ignored that cautions of the actual local leader as to oblige these to withdraw from the organisation, as for instance by electing to their on directorate a Jew who had publicly repudiated the Jewish religion or by avowing one of the aims of their headquarter to be the capture of the local schools as in South Africa (and we still remember here what you told us about the substitution there of the Hatikvah [the Zionist song that went on to become the Israeli national anthem] for the Shema then the smaller congregations have been urged to imitate that at East Melbourne in the segregative spirit you have definitely condemned.²¹⁴

The idea that Zionism was a threat to the religious continuity of Judaism, instead building towards a secular national Jewish identity reflected wider concern surrounding the growth of secular movements. The replacement of the Shema (the oldest daily prayer) with the Hatikvah in some services is a clear example of this reformatting of Judaism away from being a religious identity towards a national identity. This reimagination of Jewishness as a national identity, rather than as a religious one, was viewed by some as antithetical to communal Britishness. If Judaism was solely a religious identify, adherents could be Britons of Jewish faith, whereas if it was reframed as a national community, this could be seen as exclusive of a British identity. Cohen identifies this as a form of 'segregation' in which Jews have failed to fully assimilate into British society.²¹⁵ Zionists were accused of flouting congregational authority, challenging rabbinic communal leadership and serving as an extra-congregational tendency. For Cohen, the Zionist movement was a threat to his authority as a Rabbi, and to his leadership of the community. Also, it was a threat to his identification with Britain and to Judaism itself.

²¹⁴ Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 25/6/1929, ACC2805433. London Metropolitan Archive

²¹⁵ Cohen to Joseph Hertz, 25/6/1929, ACC2805433. London Metropolitan Archive

Far from viewing Zionism as a threat to Australian Jewry's status as a British community, Rabbi Hertz's response to this viewed these two identities as complementary. Hertz believed that Zionism was a key part of British policy within the Middle East and that Jews, as loyal members of the British Empire had a duty to support Zionism. He wrote:

*'Australian Jewry I am assured is loyally and thoroughly British in sentiment. Why then should Australian Jewry take umbrage at a movement like Zionism that has been endorsed by 6 different British governments, a movement that has been placed under the special care of Great Britain by the constituent nations of the League of Nations, which of course the commonwealth of Australia is a member? That indiscreet utterances are made by Zionist supporters and propogandist are certainly regretted; but even assuming that these criticisms have been altogether unprovoked it you would do well to remember that no movement in which human beings take part is foolproof. Similar exaggerations have been indulged in here in the heart of the Empire but it has not prevented patriotic Jews like Lords Reading and Melchett and Sir Herbert Simons and religious Jews like the executive of the Anglo-Jewish association, of the Board of Deputies and of the Reform synagogue unanimously joining the Jewish agency. In consequence of this Zionist criticism you tell me there are signs of Jewish separation in Australian communities. Surely it should not be difficult to bring home to those British Australians that sever the moral ties which bind the Jewry of Australia to the Jewry of England is more than unpatriotic it is almost treasonous. The unity of the British Empire today does not rest on political devices or machinery of government; it largely depends on cultural social and religious ties associations and influences. To all true Australians this moral unity of the Empire should appear a high and holy cause. Anything therefore which destroys the unity of Empire Jewry at the same time permanently cut asunder one of the British strands which bind Australians to the home country. No Australian Jew to whom loyalty to British unity and ideal is more than lip-service will join such separative movement.'*²¹⁶

This reveals Chief Rabbi Hertz's fear that anti-Zionist statements, even fairly mild anti-Zionist statements as made by Rabbi Cohen, would threaten the unity of the Empire, especially when

²¹⁶ Joseph Hertz to Cohen, 25/5/1929, ACC2805433. London Metropolitan Archive.

this was dependent on cultural unity rather than state level governance. It was of vital importance that Australian Jewry should remain a British community under the leadership of the Chief Rabbi. While they believed that religious identities should not be subordinated to secular forms of Jewishness, the communities' British identity, and links to the metropole should be regarded as 'holy'.²¹⁷ Debates surrounding Zionism were not just debates about the meaning of Jewish identity within modern nationhood, but were debates surrounding the best ways in which to maintain the communities' connection with the British metropole. Cohen was Rabbi at the Great Synagogue, considered to be the founding community of Australia and with a dominance of very wealthy and very well assimilated members. His hostility towards Zionism, and sympathy towards a purely religious Jewishness, in which cultural elements were subordinated to British culture, may have been influenced by the special demographic and political status of this community. The Cape Gardens Synagogue, with its similar upperclass British origin demographic was active in opposing Zionism within South Africa.

'In its superior wisdom and the policy of splendid isolation the Garden Schul [A commonly used Yiddish term for Synagogue] watered down the wording so that it could equally have been passed by the women's Christian Temperance Union or the Aborigines Protection Society but no one could have even suspected it Jewish origin....

*Mr Lieberman warned the member against voting for motion framed in Johannesburg, made an awful attack on Zionist and made a great parade of his ultra-upperclass Britishness.'*²¹⁸

The Cape Synagogue was seen as watering down support for Zionism amongst the South African Board of Deputies. This debate within the South African Board of Deputies was occurring contemporaneously with a similar debate in Britain surrounding the appropriate Jewish response to the Balfour declaration.²¹⁹ The more Zionist Johannesburg faction were very keen to establish their communal leadership over the older Cape community, while in Australia the older Sydney community worked to obstruct Zionist politics. The tensions between the different factions jostling for communal leadership were so bitterness that one

²¹⁷ Joseph Hertz to Cohen, 25/5/1929, ACC2805433. London Metropolitan Archive.

²¹⁸ Goodman to Joseph Hertz, 15/4/18, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

²¹⁹ Alderman, *Modern Jewish History*, 204.

of Rabbi Hertz's South African correspondents couldn't 'consider the Garden Synagogue a healthy Jewish influence.'²²⁰

Making a parade of their upper class Britishness was not an unusual pursuit in the South African Jewish community, especially among British origin elites. It was their 'upper class Britishness' that allowed them access to white community. Among the aristocratic elites of the community, remove Jews to their own nation through Zionism made little sense. For these ultra upper class British Jews, an ambivalence towards Zionism was a response to the high levels of success they had under British rule. Owing to their class, they had already achieved Jewish liberation within the British nation. For Zionists, such as Goodman and Hirsch, their response to the conditions of Britishness were somewhat different. Being drawn from a more middle-class background, and often having ancestral roots in Eastern Europe they were less secure within secular nations than those from the upper levels of the Jewish business elites. They were interested in a nation state as a form of security, to reinforce the sense that they belonged to Western colonising force. While the Jewish aristocracy couldn't conceive of a Jewish liberation as necessary, the Zionist bourgeoisie saw it as a necessity, to be achieved through Jewish nationalism and colonialism rather than through anti-racism or class politics. They were not opposed to the performance of an 'ultra upperclass Britishness' but they saw Zionism as deeply compatible with this.

Especially by the 1940s, support for Zionism was widespread in the Jewish communities of the British Empire. But this support among the Jewish communal leadership was very largely limited by the extent to which Zionism could be supported, without compromising loyalty to the British Empire. As the New Zionist Organisations inspired by militant Zionist Revisionist Jabotinsky mobilised across South Africa, the Boards of Deputies in Britain and South Africa mobilised in order to prevent them from gaining dominance over the Zionist movement. Partly their hostility to the New Zionist movements was based on an inability to square their use of militant tactics against the British mandate forces in Palestine with their achievement of a British whiteness. Instead, Jewish institutions favoured the use of tactics such as sending strongly worded letters to British Prime Minister protesting in the name of 'justice and

²²⁰ Goodman to Joseph Hertz, 15/4/18, ACC28054355, London Metropolitan Archive.

humanity', as was the preferred tactic of the Australian Board.²²¹ The South African Board of Deputies looked for the British Board of Deputies support in excluding NZOs from Zionist political events and fundraising, and received a full endorsement of their decision to 'try and stop them'.²²² This opposition to the participation of New Zionist Organisations within the mainstream of the Jewish community was then leaked to Zionist Record in order to give greater weight in the local dispute.²²³ This tension between the more radical Zionist organisations and the more moderate organisations associated with Chaim Weizmann, made fundraising more complicated with the NZOs making plans to stop sending relief money to the Austrian community.²²⁴ The weapon that the South African Jewish Community used in order to fight ideological battles over Zionism, was the intellectual and political weight that their connections with the imperial metropole held. They were encountering the same issues; however, the opinions of the metropolitan community held a different weight within the colony.²²⁵

Ultimately it was Hertz's Zionist faction which gained the ascendancy in the interwar period, symbolised by Selig Brodetsky's election, the first Zionist president of the Board of Deputies in 1940. Debates surrounding Zionism within the British Dominion communities were refracted by concerns surrounding the communities' status within the British Empire, and their duty as loyal members of that community. On the one hand as a model of a settler state and as a specifically Jewish colonial project, Palestine was a 'great source of inspiration for the communities of the British Empire.'²²⁶ Zionism was largely seen as a patriotic move, reinforcing their communities' Britishness, and status as white colonisers, and working in consort with the needs of the British Empire. Zionism could transform Jews, from the degraded rootless cosmopolitan, to masculine white British citizens. Others, especially those from the communal aristocracy rather than bourgeoisie, rejected Zionism as un-British. Support for Zionism, while widespread amongst dominion communities was limited in scope by the need to avoid tactics which might compromise loyalty to the British Empire. Zionism

²²¹ Saul Symonds to PM 17/6/46, ACC3121e1132. London Metropolitan Archive; Caiserman to Bloom (British Colonial Office), ACC3121E376, London Metropolitan Archive.

²²² Neville Laski to Gustav Saron, 14/12/38, ACC3121E1381, London Metropolitan Archive.

²²³ Gustav Saron to Neville Laski, 6/12/1938, ACC3121E1381, London Metropolitan Archive.

²²⁴ Gustav Saron to Neville Laski, 6/12/1938, ACC3121E1381, London Metropolitan Archive.

²²⁵ Fredrick Cooper and Ann Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony',

²²⁶ Levine to Joseph Hertz, 14/10/1927, ACC2805432, London Metropolitan Archive,

recognised the need for a Jewish liberation from modern antisemitism, without resorting to a class politics which was for obvious reasons unattractive to the Jewish bourgeoisie. Zionism allowed Jews to become normal British whites, with their own settler project and nation state, just like the Christian origin white communities in Canada, Australia or South Africa. Unlike class-based models of Jewish liberation, it could be squared with loyalty to the British Empire, and existence as white people within British dominions.

Territorialism

While some embraced Zionism, others called for Jewish colonies within established settler states. Within South Africa, Canada and Australia, there were small Jewish agricultural settlements which were designed to restore Jews' lost sense of masculinity and bring civilisation to empty or uncivilised parts of the world. They shared with Zionism an ideology of liberation unlinked to socialist politics. In this case rather than adopting a position as Jewish colonisers within the mythic homeland, they were solely European colonisers. One of the greatest cheerleaders for Jewish settlement was Rev. Cohen:

The whole continent is opening up and Africa may one day become a home of refuge only secondary to America. People at home should exploit to the utmost this possibility of migration. Very careful enquiries should be made from the home government regarding openings in Nysasaland and Kenia [sic] and all the East Coast. Also Brussels should be sounded out regarding the Congo which is enormously rich and will rapidly develop in the near future. Nairobi is practically the only community on the Coast (of course it is inland from Mombasa). If immigration can be artificially fostered it would do valuable work in Africa. Sidney Goldstein of Cambridge has been telling students to affiliate to the Anglo-Jewish body. I hope something will be done.²²⁷

The commonality between the Jewish experience in Africa and America is that both were settler states built on a white supremacy that was defined by opposition to indigenous communities and Black slaves, allowing Jews to largely assimilate within the white community. This project was not just designed for Jewish safety but was framed as providing

²²⁷ Rev Cohen (Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation), 15/10/1926, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive.

a moral benefit to the people and land which they were colonising. Like non-Jewish colonialism, Jewish colonialism was not only beneficial to Jews but 'doing valuable work in Africa', morally improving the continent in ways that are analogous to imperial civilising missions. This plan for Jewish colonisation of Africa, co-existed happily with Zionist settlement, with Cohen adding towards the end of the letter that he 'was delighted to see your rabbinic appeal for Palestine'.²²⁸ This was viewed as a project that should be conducted with the European powers. These wild plans for a mass exodus from marginality in Europe to the vanguard of white civilisation and supremacy in Africa were not a huge stretch from the project which Rev. Cohen was already completing. As a Rabbi in Bulawayo, he was on the edge of a relatively small settler community, in which fragile nature of the white community, meant that his Jewishness did not negate his inclusion within white supremacy. The plan for Jewish settlement in Africa, to the extent it existed more than notionally, was developed between metropole and colony, with it being informed directly with by the experience of settler life garnered by people such as Reverend Cohen, but funded by Jews across European elites. As an example of this Baron Hirsch of the Jewish Colonisation Authority, offered to 'guarantee £100 per head for immigrants [to Africa] on the grounds that friends and family were unable to make the guarantee'.²²⁹

Similar appeals were made with respect to 'empty land' in Australia. Here the Minister to Adelaide writes:

What is urgently required here is settlement of refugees on the land. Most refugees are flocking to Melbourne and Sydney which are already overcrowded and which will create new problems for the Australian economy. It is definitely true that Australia could support a much larger population by closer settlement of the cultivatable land. Unfortunately Australians are among the most easy-going people in the world and their mental horizon are severely parochial and restricted to the idea of populate or perish is slowly gaining ground and it is likely being realised that the flow of British immigration is drying up at the source due to declining birth rates and the international

²²⁸ Rev Cohen (Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation), 15/10/1926, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive.

²²⁹ Jewish Colonisation Society to H Golsmid (President of the South African Board of Deputies), 9/4/1930, ACC3121E3/23, London Metropolitan Archive.

*crisis. There are places in South Australia and in other parts of the continent that could be very easily developed by close land settlement.*²³⁰

In this iteration of territorialism agricultural settlement was the solution to overcrowded Australian cities. It was viewed as essential the maintenance of the white race, inclusive of Jews, which could either 'populate or perish' at the hands of the non-white racial others that purportedly threatened Australia.²³¹ In this plan for Jewish agricultural settlement Jews could compete on the white side within a racial struggle and allow Jews to perform a protestant frontier masculinity through working the land.

Territorial colonisation was an especially high priority in Canada. The economic committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress had two main concerns, 'colonisation and the activity against discrimination of Jewish labour.'²³² The dream of Jewish agricultural colonies, to guard against urban poverty was realised more in Canada than in any other of the Jewish colonies, with an active rural colonisation movement led by the Jewish millionaire, Baron Hirsch.²³³ These settlements were designed to be on the 'empty', unfarmed land on the Canadian West, and allow Jews to rediscover the pioneering frontier masculinity that their urban and mercantile existence had deprived them of. Most of these farms were connected to the Winnipeg area, and served by the Winnipeg synagogue, whose Rabbi viewed them as the ideal option to resettle Jewish youth.²³⁴ Agricultural settlement allowed the Jewish community to be seen as contributing to the construction and settlement of the Canadian frontier. My archives are silent on whether this land had other owners, and the exact relationship between Jewish farming communities and First Nations Canadians. It is unclear, whether this absence is due to the 'common-sense' nature of the conflict between settlers and the traditional owners of the land, or because their colonisation was sufficiently secure that they did not have to consider this relationship.²³⁵

The practical experience of colonisation, both from a European and African perspective informed plans for specifically Jewish colonial settlement, in Palestine, in Australia, in Canada

²³⁰ Rubin Sachs to Joseph Hertz, 13/9/1938, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

²³¹ Rubin Sachs to Joseph Hertz, 13/9/1938, ACC2805436, London Metropolitan Archive.

²³² Minutes of the Economic Committee, 4/4/1931, ACC3121E3761, London Metropolitan Archive.

²³³ Gerard Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 43.

²³⁴ Samuel to Joseph Hertz, 24/1/1924, ACC28054316, London Metropolitan Archive.

²³⁵ Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 3.

and in Africa. The practicalities of settlement projects, with their intense interaction with non-white others allowed Jews by comparison to become the bearers of white supremacy, rather than the racialised objects of it. Jewish settlement projects, especially Zionism allowed dominion Jews to become a normal white group with its own settler and national projects. Rather than just offering a model for transcending antisemitism, it offered a model for transcending Jewishness itself, with the urban degenerate diaspora Jew emerging to become the Zionist sabra or the secular frontiersman, restoring a supposedly inadequate Jewish masculinity.²³⁶ Jewish colonisation movements fit the Fanonian model of Jewish 'invisibility', in that they allowed Jews not only to assimilate in to the dominant group but place themselves at the vanguard of white supremacy, an ability which was dependent on their largely white bodies.²³⁷ This invisibility was dependent on a conscious rejection of diasporic Jewish culture as this culture ran contrary to their ability to take this role at the vanguard of white settlement.

²³⁶ Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, *Diaspora Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity*, 708.

²³⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 68.

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Antisemitism and Nazism

One of the most important functions of pan-colonial networks was the combatting of antisemitism, both within the British Empire and abroad. The use of imperial networks to tackle antisemitism was partly a response to the ways in which antisemitism followed imperial networks. In general, the elite Jewish groups sought to combat antisemitism by appealing to the better natures of states, and they rejected mass organising methods favoured by socialists. These organisations exceptionalised antisemitism, as a form of racism disconnected to white supremacy and the result of individual failing on the part of antisemites. The other salient response was to regulate the community to ensure that it did not conform to an antisemites caricature of Jewishness. While opposition to antisemitism was permitted and encouraged by Jewish institutions, it was done in ways designed to oppose antisemitism but not other white supremacist ideologies. The Jewish community opposed antisemitism while benefitting from a wider structural white supremacy. Mignolo differentiates between 'internal' and 'external' critiques of the colonial matrix of power.²³⁸ The Jewish institutional critique of antisemitism served as an internal critique, objecting to an element of the system without holding any holistic opposition to the system as a whole.

The institutional response to antisemitism was arguably not the salient Jewish response to antisemitism and Nazism. Many responses did constitute external critiques of colonial power. Jewish socialist and left wing organisers, such as the South African Sam Kahn organised against white supremacy on interracial lines, opposing the growing segregationist tendency of the apartheid government and the Nazism of the National Party.²³⁹ Jewish garment workers and trade unionists took direct strike against antisemitic discrimination in housing and employment.²⁴⁰ Jewish workers in the metropole were actively involved in overt and street based anti-fascist organisations, working with other working-class immigrant groups, such as the Irish.²⁴¹ The Jewish middle class successfully organised a German goods boycott and were actively involved in sponsoring refugee migration from pogroms and Nazism.²⁴² The

²³⁸ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 197

²³⁹ Campbell, 'Migration and the South African Left', 99.

²⁴⁰ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 261.

²⁴¹ Daniel Tilles, *British Fascist Antisemitism and Jewish Responses 1932-40* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 101.

²⁴² Daniel Tilles, *British Fascist Antisemitism*, 105.

institutional Jewish response to antisemitism was largely defined against this more radical and overtly anti-fascist and anti-racist approach, which was often influenced by socialism or communism. It viewed this approach as encouraging antisemitism, not opposing it. Much of this archive represents the fragility of the Board of Deputies and the Chief Rabbi's cautious approach to antisemitism. Their response was an attempt to prevent the adoption of an anti-fascism based in a critique of capital and colonialism.

The Boards of Deputies and the Chief Rabbi did take active roles in opposing antisemitism. This opposition was coordinated through British Empire networks. Leaflets, money and material were sent across borders, with information largely flowing from the metropole and money largely flowing in the opposite direction. The British Board of Deputies combined with the Canadian Jewish Congress and the South African Board to combat the Imperial Fascist League, which served as a mouthpiece for Nazi Germany within the British Empire.²⁴³ The Canadian Jewish Congress did so with such success that their method of opposing antisemitism was cited as a model for the World Jewish Congress.²⁴⁴ They were clear in their advocacy for Jewish refugee settlement against the Nazi regime and very regularly engaged in successful fundraising work to further combat antisemitism. The Boards of Deputies regularly wrote to their own national governments and the metropolitan government in order to tackle antisemitism within the British Empire.²⁴⁵ They aimed to spread pamphlets and information in the hope that a spread of correct knowledge would lead to a better political situation for Jews in the British Empire.²⁴⁶ It is unclear the extent to which antisemites and Nazis, who believed that Jews were part of a secret world controlling conspiracy, were convinced by pamphlets from Jewish organisations denying this. Opposition to antisemitism among institutional Jewish leadership came within very circumscribed bounds, often connected with the interests of national states and the British Empire. Daniel Tilles notes that much of the Board's anti-fascist activity took place privately and involved working directly

²⁴³ A. G. Brotman to Myers Davis 8/10/36, Acc3121e3763, London Metropolitan Archive

²⁴⁴ Canadian Jewish Congress Minutes, 24/9/1936, ACC3121E3763

²⁴⁵ Joseph Hertz to Symonds, 13/6/1927, ACC2805432, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁴⁶ Caiserman to A. G. Brotman, 2/12/1936, ACC3121E3763, London Metropolitan Archive.

with the state, using covert methods, such as investigating the funding sources of fascist organisations.²⁴⁷

The Board of Deputies was fervent in its opposition to People's Council anti-fascist movements. This opposition was based that movements affinity with socialism or anarchism. The Board of Deputies viewed these, not without some justification, as hostile to the bourgeois controlled Jewish institutions and the material dynamics of wider British imperial society which they benefitted from. The Zionist Record, the most widely read Jewish news outlet in South Africa went out of its way to endorse the British Board of Deputies position, writing:

*'Its [the People Councils] stated in its aims to be a fight against fascism and anti-Semitism. The Jewish community, not being a political body as such should not be dragged into the fight against fascism as such. In any event there is fascism in Italy under which 50,000 Jews live in amity and safety.'*²⁴⁸

This line, that the Jewish community was not a political body and therefore should not be dragged in to political fights surrounding fascism, was strikingly reminiscent of the official policies of Jewish institutions surrounding the development of apartheid in South Africa, to which they also maintained a studied apoliticism.²⁴⁹ A similarly reserved attitude was deployed against the German goods boycott, which was viewed as not 'temperate' enough for the taste of the Board of Deputies, both in the UK and in South Africa, at least during the mid-1930s.²⁵⁰ They regarded the attempt to boycott German goods and public agitation against the Nazi government as liable to degenerate in to 'attacks on Germany' and therefore further antisemitic tropes surrounding Jews being the enemy of the German people.²⁵¹ This apoliticism was partly a response to the idea that Jews were using their influence in order to manipulate government, and therefore to negate such criticism they would avoid using their influence in a public manner at all. This phenomenon was particularly important in South

²⁴⁷ Daniel Tilles, 'Some Lesser Known Aspects of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, 1936-40', in *New Directions in Anglo-Jewish History*, ed. Geoffrey Alderman (Boston: Academic Press, 2010) 137.

²⁴⁸ Zionist Record to Neville Laski, 4/12/1936, ACC3121E350, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁴⁹ Gideon Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa* (Hannover: University of New England Press, 2003) 31.

²⁵⁰ Gustav Saron to A. G. Brotman, 23/3/1933, ACC3121E323, London Metropolitan Archive. They became actively involved in the later 1930s.

²⁵¹ Gustav Saron to A. G. Brotman, 23/3/1933, ACC3121E323, London Metropolitan Archive.

Africa, where National Socialist movements were closest to holding political power and therefore responses to antisemitism were more extreme.

The main acceptable public response to antisemitic agitations was the publishing of literature, much of which was also distributed throughout the British dominions, an approach described by the British Board as of 'vital importance'.²⁵² They saw themselves as neutral providers of information about the Jewish community, as they put antisemitism purely down to ignorance. They sought to give the 'true facts of the immigration position' in order to enlighten others, who might not be sympathetic to Jewish migrants.²⁵³ This method of combatting antisemitism through the provision of information allowed the Boards of Deputies to challenge antisemitism without taking a strong political position, thus maintaining their neutrality.

The framing of antisemitism, as resulting from a lack of education, was part of a broader view of antisemitism as resulting from a moral failing of individual antisemites. Max Sonnaberg, a Jewish retail magnate and South African Deputy wrote:

*'The anti-Semites, where they were not directly in the pay of the Nazis, were the poor whites and the rather simple minded and uneducated type of Boer.'*²⁵⁴

The language of the 'poor white' was one which had a particular resonance within the South African context. The white working class in South Africa were often viewed as racially degenerate, and having transgressive relationships with Black, Asian and mixed-race South Africans. Wealthy South Africans were afraid that poor whites were either culturally hybrid, losing the western civilisation that defined their whiteness, or were racial hybrid and involved in interracial relationships. They were viewed as unsanitary, ill-educated, drunken, irreverent and a danger to white prestige, and were therefore viewed as problematic by the state.²⁵⁵

²⁵² Samuel to A. G. Brotman, 4/12/1937, ACC3121E3/23, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁵³ Rich to Gustav Saron, 15/12/1936, ACC3121E1821, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁵⁴ Note of Conversation between Neville Laski and H. Sonnenberg, 12/1/1937 ACC3121e3/23, London Metropolitan Archive

²⁵⁵ Much work has been done on the rise of an urban white working class in early 20th Century South Africa including Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2001); Charles Van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand v.1 New Babylon* (Harlow: Longman, 1982), Maynard Swanson, 'The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909', *Journal of African History*, 13, 3 1977. Jeremy Seekings, 'Not a Single White Person Shall be Allowed to Go Under: Swaartgewaar and the Origins of South Africa's Welfare State' in *Journal of African History*, 48 (3), 2007, 375-394, pp.383; Jeremy Martens, 'Civilisation, Citizenship and the Creation of South Africa's Immorality Act' in *Southern African Historical Journal*,

This consigning of antisemitism as only the product of a degenerate and stupid Afrikaans working class meant that antisemitism was framed as an influence coming from outside colonial modernity, and as a stain on western civilisation.²⁵⁶

Framing antisemitism as an external threat was a common tactic across the British Empire. Caisermann complained that both the fascists and the communists received money from abroad, with fascists entirely dependent on Nazi Germany.²⁵⁷ Antisemitism was viewed an alien force, entirely removed from the conditions which produced it. This was despite the obvious prominence of antisemitism, especially within South Africa and Canada. This view of antisemitism as exceptional allowed the South African Board of Deputies to state 'there was very little anti-Semitism in the responsible quarters of the government; or of men in public life generally'.²⁵⁸ The state and the elite white groups, which Jewish institutional governors identified with, were excused from complicity in antisemitism.²⁵⁹ Similarly, a perception of antisemitism, as an exception to British settler societies, prevented links being drawn between antisemitism and other forms of white supremacy.

Their opposition to antisemitism was based on manipulating the community to avoid giving any credence to antisemitic tropes. This clearly didn't stop antisemitic tropes, as these tropes were not based on a rational assessment of Jewish influence. The institutional authorities desire to oppose antisemitism by discouraging Jewish actions that might attract antisemitism led to a perverse overlap in interest with antisemitic groups. Antisemitic groups sought to limit Jewish immigration and Jewish political action because of an antipathy towards Jews. Jewish institutions sought to limit immigration and Jewish political action on the basis that it might attract antisemitism or threaten their control over the community.

59 (1), 2007. p. 233; Neil Roos, 'Work Colonies and South African Historiography' in *Social History*, 36 (1), 2011, 223-241.

²⁵⁶ The work of Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1962), among others introduces this.

²⁵⁷ Canadian Jewish Congress Minutes, 24/9/1936, ACC3121E3763

²⁵⁸ Note of Conversation between Neville Laski and H. Sonnenberg, 12/1/1937 ACC3121e3/23, London Metropolitan Archive

²⁵⁹ Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, 212.

The Canadian Jewish Congress worried that the labour movement contained 'emissaries of the Soviet government, seeking entry in to Canada for the purpose of aiding the propaganda for the overthrow of the government.'²⁶⁰ They saw it as their job to work to counter Jewish communists and the association of Jews with socialism and anti-nationalism. It was in the class interest of Jewish elite organisations as well as the interest of the state and antisemitic organisations and to combat Jewish socialist organisations.

A Jewish proclivity towards socialism was not the only way in which Jewish elites accepted the allegations made against Jews by antisemites. The Synagogue Minister for Winnipeg expands:

*The Jews here are very clannish and for most part foreign in origin. They themselves avoid joining in with non-Jews in the social amenities. It is the Jews who are holding aloof. They are most reluctant to fraternise socially with the non-Jew. One reason is that society is very based on money here and there is very little culture in non-Jewish circles and so that there is not much inducement for the Jew to get into society. There are some apartment blocs which refuse to rent suites to Jews. I have repeatedly made investigations and I find that it is mostly due to undesirable conduct on the part of Jews.*²⁶¹

Under this analysis antisemitism was not the responsibility of antisemites, but the fault of the 'undesirable conduct' by Jews who were 'foreign in origin' and refused to assimilate within non-Jewish society. What was needed was not a political campaign against antisemites, or action against landlords who refused to rent to Jews, but to reform Jews themselves. Penslar and Kalmar note that while Jews as a group were subject to Orientalist discourses, these discourses also operated at an intra-group level, as divisions were drawn between more assimilated Jews and those considered to be backwards and Oriental.²⁶² This excludes the communal leadership from taking part in the poor Jewish behaviour. In doing this they could reinforce the legitimacy of their communal leadership, as they represented the loyal Jews, gaining responsibility for teaching Jews to be white and British.

²⁶⁰ Samuel to Joseph Hertz, 24/1/14, ACC28054316, London metropolitan Archive.

²⁶¹ Samuel to Joseph Hertz, 25/2/1924, ACC28054316, London Metropolitan Archive

²⁶² Penslar and Kalmar, Orientalism and the Jews, 7.

One of the main outlets for antisemitism within British Dominions was opposition to Jewish immigration. Migration in all three countries became increasingly limited. Migration to South Africa was all but stopped by 1937.²⁶³ In Canada, large scale Jewish migration stopped in 1933.²⁶⁴ In Australia, Jewish migration was increasingly restricted from 1924, before a brief liberalisation between 1937 and 1939.²⁶⁵ Generally the Jewish institutional policy was to oppose the antisemitic elements of these migration restrictions, rather than to challenge racist migration policies as a whole; mirroring their responses to other iterations of antisemitism. The challenging of migration restrictions against Jews was an area in which the collaboration between Jewish institutions in different parts of the British Empire was intense, partly due to the ways in which the antisemitic immigration restrictions were replicated through imperial political networks.

As the Secretary of the South African Board wrote to his British equivalent:

*We have further been informed by high government circles that the British Alien laws have been closely studied and are being used as a precedent upon which the South African Act will be based. It is obvious that the fullest information as to the position in England would be of the greatest value to us and I therefore cabled to you requesting a full memorandum on the operation of the British Alien laws more especially their application and effect upon the immigration of Jews in to Great Britain.*²⁶⁶

Externally the South African Board's response was to lobby politicians, write letters to the press and engage in a campaign largely based on a Jewish ability to uphold white supremacy, and loyalty to the South African nation.²⁶⁷ Internally, their response was somewhat different. Their response was shaped around discouraging potential migrants to South Africa on the basis that this migration would potential damage the status of the pre-existing Jewish community. The South African Board wrote to Hertzog, the South African Prime Minister, that

²⁶³ Susan Peberdy, *Selecting Immigrants: National Identity and South Africa's Immigration Policies, 1910-2008* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1999), 65.

²⁶⁴ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 333.

²⁶⁵ Suzanne Rutland, 'Australian Attitudes to Refugee Migration Before and After World War Two' in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 31 (1), 1985, 30.

²⁶⁶ South African Board of Deputies Public Statement on Immigration, 31/12/1936, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁶⁷ See for example Rich to Joseph Hertzog, 1/7/1936, ACC3121 E3/50/2, London Metropolitan Archive.

they 'had taken positive steps in order to discourage Jewish migration to South Africa' and therefore South African Jewry should not be held responsible for the problems of new immigrants.²⁶⁸ It was again through their links with the more influential British Board that such a policy was applied. Emmanuel (Secretary of the South African Board of Deputies) wrote:

*My Board desires that it should be made known as widely as possible both among relative and friends of would be immigrants that in their own interest they must not come to South Africa unless they are able to read and write Yiddish or any other European language. My Board would be greatly obliged if you would kindly assist in this matter by disseminating this warning as widely as possible among would be immigrants to South Africa.*²⁶⁹

This was not a blanket discouragement of immigrants to South Africa but a discouragement of the most problematic migrants, who were most likely to be refused entry by the South African government, as restrictions during the 1920s were primarily based on speaking a European language. This edict served a practical purpose as it restricted migration which might have fallen foul of state regulation. It also served to ensure that immigrants that it viewed as potentially damaging to the bourgeois leadership of Jewish institutions within South Africa would not come. This echoed the hostile attitude of metropolitan institutions to new immigrants, framed as a threat to Jewish emancipation. The Board of Deputies continued its role in regulating the boundaries of the community through immigration after the Second World War, as the South African Board of Deputies called upon the British Board to assess the Jewish credentials of various potential migrants. The British Board were on multiple occasions called upon to vet potential migrants, to find out 'what kind of person he is and what is his background.'²⁷⁰ This vetting procedure reflected an anxiety about receiving and sending the wrong sort of immigrants to the dominions, for fear that these immigrants would be unable to perform white Britishness.

²⁶⁸ Rich to Joseph Hertzog, 1/7/1936, ACC3121 E3/50/2, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁶⁹ HL Emanuel (Secretary of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies) to JM (Secretary of the British Board, 25/01/28, ACC3121E3/23, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁷⁰ Gustav Saron to A. G. Brotman, 20/09/45, ACC3121E1861, London Metropolitan Archive

Elite assimilated Jewish institutions struggled to believe that new immigrants were capable of whiteness, at least not without Jewish institutions civilise them. This pedagogy was both local and transnational. Brotman, the secretary of the London Board of Deputies, wrote accounting the complaints against new Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, arriving in London:

*'That they arrived here very poor, deficient in cleanliness and not being medically examined on arrival were liable to introduce infectious diseases, that amongst them were criminals, anarchists, prostitutes and persons of bad character, in number beyond the ordinary percentage of the national population; that many of them were receiving poor law relief and became a burden on the local rates; that on their arrival they settled together in certain districts and became a compact non-assimilating community, dispossessed the natives of their house accommodation, occasioned overcrowding, had raised the rents and introduced the abuse known as key money for the taking over houses and rooms; that the aliens were dealing exclusively with those of their own race which caused the native tradesman in the locality loss of trade and were eventually superseded by aliens. Owing to poverty they were working for rate of wages below a standard on which native workmen could fairly live; that they do not assimilate and intermarry with the native race and that their existence in large numbers in certain areas gravely interferes with the observance of the Christian Sunday.'*²⁷¹

Rather than rejecting these ideas, as based on antisemitism and anti-immigrant prejudices, the elite Anglicised Jewish communal groups accepted this as a fundamentally faithful depiction of the Jewish poor. Like the immigration restrictions themselves the colonial Jewish response to the restrictions was created through consultation with the British Jewish community, which described them as not 'causing any undue hardship to Jewish aliens'.²⁷² This is demonstrative of the way in which prejudices against immigrants and anxieties over threats to racial hierarchies permeated through all people whom the British Empire's forms of racialised capitalism benefitted. Despite a certain amount of ethnic, or religious solidarity, it was clear that Jewish institutions and the political and economic elites which dominated

²⁷¹ A. G. Brotman to Gustav Saron, 6/01/39, ACC3121E1822, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁷² A. G. Brotman to Gustav Saron, 6/01/39, ACC3121E1822, London Metropolitan Archive.

them were committed to the maintenance of their white supremacy, and therefore suspicious of new migrants. They worried about new migrants as a threat to their own political and economic power as white people. They were willing to accept antisemitic laws against Jewish immigrants, due to their fear that this discrimination would then otherwise be applied to all Jewish citizens.²⁷³

With the benefit of hindsight and the massive moral and political weight of the Shoah, many of these responses to antisemitism seem to vary between the monstrous and the absurd. Why were these communal elite networks so keen to limit opposition to fascism, even to the point of defending it? Why were they so hostile to migration from Eastern Europe, where we now know that those who didn't make it out by the 1940s were likely to die? Why was their opposition to antisemitism so dependent on working with the state, when it was clear that governments varied from being profoundly unconcerned by antisemitism to being actively sympathetic to Nazism? Allain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg argue that French Jewish institutions failed to organise a resistance to fascism, which Eastern European Jews were experiencing, because they were unable to conceptualise a state that was hostile to their interests.²⁷⁴ The same may well be true of the Jewish institutional governors of the British Empire. They had in their lifetime materially and socially benefitted from inclusion within the European elite, from their links with the British Empire and from a state that was largely tolerant of Jews of their class and social background. While their perceived alliance with the state, owing to their class and social status may have been an issue, the social networks within which they existed may have influenced their responses. They were after all 'British Jews', and while many of the elite British groups with which they socialised viewed fascists as strange and impolite, they accepted their views within belong on the 'marketplace of ideas'. Oswald Mosley and the founders of the Imperial Fascist League were children of this class. To engage in confrontational anti-fascism would have not been common in their social circles. Instead, they saw it as in their interest become 'good Jews', unproblematic for the maintenance of racial structures and to regulate their communities to do the same. The existential threat to their coreligionists posed by racism and fascism was impossible for them

²⁷³ Brotman to Gustav Saron, 6/01/39, ACC3121E1822, London Metropolitan Archive.

²⁷⁴ Alain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: a History of Jewish Radicalism* (London: Verso: 2016), 65.

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to comprehend, and the links between those phenomena and imperial racism were even further from their worldview.

Conclusion: White, British, National Citizens, Settlers and Jews

Jewish settlers within the British Empire had to navigate a multiplicity of identities. We started with a question, asked by Australian Jews, 'are we Jewish a nation?'.²⁷⁵ This is not the only question about Jewish identity found in these texts. They were not just questioning whether they were a nation, but whether they were white, whether they were imperial citizens, whether they were citizens of the nation in which they lived and even whether they were Jews. What did it mean to belong to any of these collectives under the conditions of modernity and coloniality? While there was no unified response to these questions, especially with respect to controversial issues such as Zionism and religious reform, in general developments in Jewish institutional life were shaped by the desire of the Jewish bourgeoisie to be white, British, national citizens, settlers and Jews.

The dominion communities looked to the British for moral, political and spiritual guidance, in many ways paralleling the relationship between dominion governments and their metropolitan counterparts. They chose to be represented by Britain at a transnational Jewish level, expressed loyalty to the Chief Rabbi and deferred to his judgement on religious matters. Their modes of government were based on those developed in Britain. They were often served by the same Rabbis and ministers. This relationship to Britain may well not be unique to the Jewish community, although it was clearly informed by its particular political situation. This highlights the ways in which the British Empire functioned to impose political unity, after self-government, especially among white communities in settler states. The importance of imperial networks in political government and cultural production is not a new idea. This Britishness was a response to Jewish marginality within the colonial matrix of power.

Ann Stoler's work focuses on the colonial state's impulse to regulate the boundaries of the colonial community in order to ensure a clear taxonomy between the coloniser and the colonised.²⁷⁶ Jews transgressed these boundaries, through their origins outside of Britain and through not being Christian, but still being white settler communities. As Albert Memmi noted, Jews fitted neither clearly amongst the coloniser or the colonised.²⁷⁷ This ambiguity

²⁷⁵ Allen (New South Wales Jewish War Memorial) to Joseph Joseph Hertz (Chief Rabbi of the British Empire), 29/5/24, *London Metropolitan Archives*, ACC2805/54/39/25.

²⁷⁶ Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 8.

²⁷⁷ Memmi, *The Coloniser and the Colonised*, 13.

shaped Jewish engagement with Britishness, whiteness and their formation of their own identity. Jews were not just passive recipients of Orientalist and antisemitic discourses, or created by antisemites in a Sartrean sense, but were actively engaged in responding to these categorisations.²⁷⁸ These responses were shaped by their position within the community, their class, gender and ethnic background.

These responses fell in to three paradigms, two drawn from Glissant: imitation and reversion and a third, rejectionist paradigm.²⁷⁹ The imitative paradigm can be seen through intense policing of gender norms and concerns surrounding moral degradation in the colonies. It can further be seen through the invention of Jewish settler projects, including Zionism. Reversion, the seeking of an imagined past of Jewish engagement before the compromises enforced by modernity and coloniality, can be seen through attempts to strengthen Kashrut and to regulate conversions more strictly. Zionism can be seen as one of the most obvious attempts to return to this imagined past, in that it advocated a return to a mythic homeland. Attempts to revert to a past before the compromises of the modernity were limited to the elements of Jewish culture that could be reconciled with the politics of the colonial states in which they lived, such as enforcement of Jewish patriarchal structures or Zionism, while more troubling elements of Jewish culture, such as Yiddish were subordinated.

The third paradigm, rejectionism, is only present as an object rather than the subject within these records. My sources and stories by no means represent a complete account of British Empire Jewish life. They were in general a self-selecting group of wealthy and politically conservative Orthodox Jews. Jewish communists, cultural autonomists, radicals, feminists and secularists, the 'bad Jews', in their own ways rejected the assimilatory norms of their settler societies.²⁸⁰ They were present as the Canadian Jews the Canadian Jewish Congress blamed for housing discrimination.²⁸¹ They were present as the 'strong bundist element' of the Johannesburg community.²⁸² It was this rejectionist element who formed the bulk of the South African Communist Party membership, which went on to engage in the anti-apartheid struggle. It was this group who organised trade union battles based on universalistic claims

²⁷⁸ Sartre, *The Antisemite and the Jew*, 17.

²⁷⁹ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, 15.

²⁸⁰ Winston Churchill, 'Zionism verses Bolshevisms' *Sunday Herald*, February 8th 1920.

²⁸¹ Samuel to Joseph Hertz, 25/2/1924, ACC28054316, London Metropolitan Archive

²⁸² Louis Rabinowitz to Joseph Hertz, 13/4/44, ACC28054359, London Metropolitan Archive

surrounding the rights of workers or engaged in anti-racist activism.²⁸³ These Jews scared the Jewish establishment, and were the objects of their regulative impulse, and not represented in Jewish institutions or by Hertz's correspondents. They were seen as letting down the Jewish community and potentially leading to a wider identification of Jews as non-white.

The shadow of Jewish radicalism, with its conscious rejection of white supremacism, and the fear of Jewish non-whiteness led to an overlap between the interests of the state, to create a discreetly bounded, politically passive Jewish community and Jewish institutions, which aimed for the same things, because of their fear of the state and discrimination. They sought to police the boundaries of the community in order to prevent those who might perform their Jewishness in a way that they didn't approve of, or they thought would be disapproved of by wider secular and Christian society. In various ways, for different reasons, people were ruled outside of the community. The unassimilable Eastern European Jew, who failed to adopt a Western European culture was problematic both for dominion and metropolitan and for the communal leadership, who feared that their religious practice, socialism or Zionism they might challenge bourgeois leadership of the community. Those seeking conversion, or religious reform were ruled as outside the community due to concerns about the community undergoing moral degeneration. Potential new migrants were ruled out of the community due to concerns about the impact of migration. This drawing of communal boundaries created community that was able to perform an 'ultra upper-class Britishness' and excluded those who were not.

Dominion Jewish institutions' politics were located in between the interconnected violence of antisemitism and colonialism. They used their ability to assimilate to become white and British and to gain the political and economic benefits which that entailed, making their peace with colonialism while rejecting antisemitism. This was shaped by their class and ethnic profile, as wealthy white, western European-origin Jews. It was also a response to antisemitic violence. Jews, especially Jews involved in international networks were very aware of rising antisemitism within Europe, especially pogroms in Eastern Europe and the Shoah. Fanon wrote that the main difference between Jewish and Black experience of racism was the ability of Jews to make their difference 'invisible'.²⁸⁴ This invisibility, while to some extent negating

²⁸³ Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 160.

²⁸⁴ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 113.

the material losses of antisemitism, meant an endorsement of the violence of colonialism. It meant a rejection of Jews for whom invisibility was neither an achievable nor desirable ideal. For Jews, 'invisibility' came with its own forms of subordination as the cultural loss, as Jews became subject to the epistemic loss characteristic of colonialism. Zionism was a response to this loss. As in their own way were religious reform movements to Modern Orthodoxy. This compromise, exchanging epistemic loss for material gain was one born out of a failure to comprehend or articulate the ways in which antisemitic, and colonial racism were born from a common root in the colonial matrix of power. Indeed, a combination of ideology and assessment of their class interest led them to identify themselves almost completely with the coloniser, not the colonised.

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