

A HISTORY OF THE CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA TO 1912

by

KAREN LEIGH HARRIS

submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject of

HISTORY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

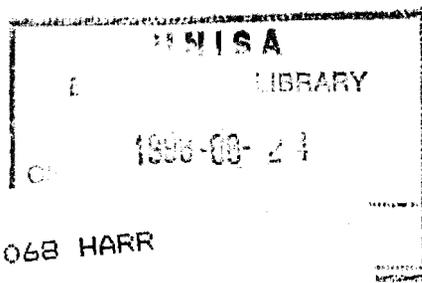
PROMOTERS: PROF S B SPIES

PROF G C CUTHBERTSON

Date: December 1998



0001728912



305.8951068 HARR



0001728942

*To my husband, Heni*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Dedication	ii
Abstract	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Declaration	ix
Abbreviations	x
Preface	xi
<b>Chapter 1            Historiographical Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>

Introduction I: Terminology - China and overseas Chinese citizens - European colonial reports - Orientalism and discrimination - Chinese writing on overseas Chinese (pp. 1-8) II: Post Second World War historiography - Marginal position - Anti-Chinese focus - Stereotypical images - Chinese community focus - Comparative and contextualized studies (pp.9-16) III: Source material - Colonial accounts and "orientalism" - Limited Chinese sources - Oral evidence and archaeological excavations (pp. 16-21) IV: South African sources on overseas Chinese - European travel accounts and legal records - Anti-"Asiatic" legislation augments sources - Documentation on Chinese indentured mine labourers - Post-1910 Chinese invisible (pp. 22-31) V: South African overseas Chinese historiography - Sociological analysis - Overseas studies - Colour, Confusion and Concessions - Transvaal Chinese mine labourers - Peter Richardson - The author and overseas Chinese studies (pp.31-55)

<b>Chapter 2            Early Overseas Chinese in Southern Africa</b>	<b>56</b>
---	-----------

Introduction I: Chinese travel overseas - China's emigration policy - Trade and tributary missions - Chen Ho's travels - Ming isolationist policy - Manchu anti-emigration policy (pp. 57 - 66) II: Western colonization - Unskilled labour demands - Contract system - Natural calamities - South China coastal regions - Philip Kuhn's "school for emigration" - Psychological position - Mid-nineteenth century emigration (pp. 66 -75) III: Early African encounters - Chen Ho's seventh maritime voyage - DEIC and Chinese workers - Chinese as convicts and ex-convicts - Chinese community and life style - DEIC legislation against Chinese (pp. 75-90) IV: First and second British occupation - BEIC and St Helena convicts - Requests for Chinese labour - Contracted Chinese - Diminishing numbers (pp. 90 -99)

**Chapter 3            The Indentured Chinese Labour Experiment            100**

Introduction **I:** Indentured labour historiography - Chinese indentured labour in South African historiography - "Orientalism" (pp. 101 - 107) **II:** Mine labour supply - British Empire and indentured labour - Indian indentured labourers in Natal - Labour crisis and the Bloemfontein Convention, 1903 - Post-war "labour shortage" - Transvaal Labour Commission, 1903 - (pp. 107 - 118) **III:** Draft Labour Importation Ordinance, 1903 - Pro-Chinese campaign - Anti-Chinese lobby - Pro-Chinese lobby - (pp. 118 - 133) **IV:** Labour Importation Ordinance regulations - Foreign Labour Department - Chinese Consulate-General in Transvaal - Labour Importation Ordinance compared (pp. 133 - 137) **V:** Conditions and treatment - Chinese outrages (pp. 137 - 142) **VI:** Party political mileage - Short and long term economic impact (pp. 143 - 147)

**Chapter 4            The Indentured Chinese Labourers            148**

Introduction **I:** Sources and subaltern classes (pp. 148 - 151) **II:** Background of indentured Chinese - Chinese poverty - Chinese labour remuneration - Chinese "letters home" (pp. 151 - 162) **III:** Arrival on Transvaal mines - Chinese compound accommodation - Chinese employment (pp. 162 - 165) **IV:** Chinese tolerance - Chinese social activities (pp. 166 - 172) **V:** Chinese grievances - Chinese crime - Gambling, desertion, robbery, assault and murder - Combined resistance (pp. 172 - 181) **VI:** Chinese wives - Brothels - Homosexuality - Homosexuality on the mines: Chinese and Africans - The Bucknill investigation and recommendations - Homosexuality in China - Chinese indignation - Termination of Chinese indentured system (pp. 181 - 199).

**Chapter 5            Free Chinese at the Cape            200**

Introduction **I:** Sources - "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904" - Cape "liberal tradition" - Indians in the Cape - Indians in Natal, ZAR and OFS - "Immigration Act of 1902" (pp. 201 - 213) **II:** Chinese at the Cape before 1900 - Occupations - Chinese women - South African War (pp. 214 - 220) **III:** Indentured Chinese labourers and Cape politics - Afrikaner Bond and South African Party election campaign - Progressive Party election campaign - African and Coloured vote - Anti-Asiatic League (pp. 220 - 237) **IV:** Post-election anti-Chinese campaign - Chinese Exclusion Bill - Chinese Associations - Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances - Chinese Consul-General - Immigration Legislation 1913 (pp. 237 - 252) **V:** Chinese at the Cape after 1900 - Chinese occupations - Chinese wives - Impact of "Chinese Exclusion Act" (pp. 253 - 259)



**Abstract**

The small Chinese community in South Africa has played an important part in the economic and political life of South Africa. From 1660 to 1912, it reflected the experiences of migrant Chinese who left the mainland during and after centuries of isolation. This thesis therefore examines the Chinese in South Africa in the context of a growing historiography of the overseas Chinese, noting particularly the comparisons with other colonial societies, such as the United States of America and Australia. It is also concerned with tracing the history of the free Chinese at the Cape in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, before engaging in a more detailed discussion of the period of indentured Chinese labour on the Witwatersrand gold mines in the early twentieth century. Although the political economy of indenture has been copiously dealt with in recent historical research, the focus here is more on the social and cultural dimensions of Chinese labour, including aspects such as privacy, sexuality and living conditions in the compound system. This cultural history is interpreted against the background of political and legislative developments in South Africa leading to the formation of the Union in 1910. One of the main arguments of the thesis is that the indentured labour scheme had profound repercussions for the racial status of the free Chinese in the late colonial period. The different experiences of the Chinese in the Cape and the Transvaal are given special attention to illustrate regional patterns of social stratification, and explain the vicissitudes of race relations in South Africa up to 1912. In the Cape it led to subjection under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904, while in the Transvaal it resulted in political involvement in the initial phases of Mahatma Gandhi's "satyagraha". Cultural exclusivity and minority status are at the heart of this analysis and are indices of how the Chinese were brought under the yoke of segregation, which anticipated the oppression of apartheid after 1948.

**Keywords:**

Overseas Chinese studies; Migration; Ethnic minorities; Anti-Sinicism; Orientalism; Indentured labour; Chinese Exclusion Act; Passive resistance; Mahatma Gandhi; Race relations; South Africa.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to numerous people who have assisted me over the past decade in the production of this study. As the subject was not in the mainstream of South African social history when I first began researching it in the late 1980s, I am most appreciative of all the support I received from my supervisors, the staff of various research facilities, friends, family, colleagues at the University of South Africa and other international academics, who encouraged and inspired me.

This thesis was made easier by the dedicated interest and intellectual direction I received from my two supervisors, Professors Burridge Spies and Greg Cuthbertson. Professor Spies's enthusiasm and meticulous reading of the chapters was an inspiration in itself. His interest in this topic and warm encouragement was invaluable. From the outset, Greg revealed a belief in the viability of this field of cultural study, when others did not. Throughout the past decade he carefully read and commented on the numerous papers, articles and chapters I prepared. His support, understanding and hard work on the final product has been indispensable.

My thanks are also due to the staff of the various institutions where I did research. These include the National Archives Repository (Pretoria), the Cape Archives Repository (Cape Town), the Public Record Offices at Kew Gardens in the United Kingdom and in Hong Kong in China, the Unisa Library and Archives (Pretoria), Merensky Library (University of Pretoria), Central Statistical Services (Pretoria), the Academia Sinica (Taipei), the British Library (London), the School of Oriental and African Studies (London), Rhodes House Library (University of Oxford), the Overseas Chinese Archives at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong Library.

In particular, I wish to express special thanks to the following people for their professional assistance and interest: Mary-Lynn Suttie, History subject librarian at Unisa, for her efficiency in finding and obtaining material, as well as her genuine concern; Gerrit Wagener, archivist in the National Archives Repository, for his efforts to trace unused sources and make them available to me; the late Leon Theart of the Cape Archives Repository for the materials he found; Louise Gerber, audio-visual librarian at Unisa, for her kind help with microfilm materials. My thanks also to all other Unisa Library staff in the inter library loans, periodical and photocopying sections for their assistance.

Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the encouragement I received from both local and international academics. The conference organisers who accepted my papers, the journal editors who published my articles and the compilers of specialist studies who included or commissioned my chapters. I am also grateful to the members of the "International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas" for their contribution to my research.

My thanks also to my Mother and Father, brother, Matthew, and sister, Lesley, for their concern. To many friends, but in particular Phil Eidelberg and Jim Armstrong, for taking a sincere interest in the progress of my work and allowing me to discuss it with them. Lastly, I am enormously indebted to my husband, Heni - to whom I dedicate this thesis - for his incredible support, patience and endurance in its making.

The financial assistance of both the Centre for Science and Development (CSD) and the Research and Development Fund of the University of South Africa, towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this thesis, and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the CSD or the University of South Africa.

Karen Leigh Harris

December 1998

**DECLARATION**

I declare that **A HISTORY OF THE CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA TO 1912** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

  
Karen L Harris

17.12.98  
Date

## ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BEIC	British East India Company
BIA	British Indian Association
BL	British Library
BRA	Barlow Rand Archives
CA	Chinese Association
CAR	Cape Archives Repository (Cape Town)
CASA	Chinese Association of South Africa
CBD	Central Business District
CO	Colonial Office
CRU	Chinese Reform Union
CSS	Central Statistical Services
DEIC	Dutch East India Company
FLD	Foreign Labour Department
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ISSCO	International Society for the Study of the Chinese Overseas
NAR	National Archives Repository (Pretoria)
OVS	Oranjevrijstaat [Orange Free State]
OFS	Orange Free State
PRC	Peoples' Republic of China
PRO	Public Record Office (Kew, England)
PROHK	Public Record Office (Hong Kong)
Rand	Witwatersrand
RHL	Rhodes House Library
ROC	Republic of China on Taiwan
SAD	Central Archives Depot (Pretoria)
SAP	South African Party
SOAS	School of African and Oriental Studies
TAD	Transvaal Archives Depot (Pretoria)
ZAR	Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek [South African Republic]

## **Preface**

The Chinese in South Africa have generally been underrepresented in the historical record and unfairly caricatured in popular culture. This study attempts to remedy this by focusing on aspects of the South African past in which the Chinese featured prominently. Contrary to the impression created in South African historiography, their role was not confined to the half dozen years at the turn of the twentieth century when Chinese mine labourers were indentured on the Witwatersrand gold mines. Since Dutch administration at the Cape in the mid-seventeenth century, free, slave and exiled Chinese individuals formed part of a small, but growing, multi-cultural South African society. Their numbers remained insignificant for two centuries, but there was an increase in Chinese immigration until legislation restricted it after 1912. This is not to imply that the role of the Chinese mine labourers was unimportant. Indeed, they remain pivotal in South Africa's economic development. Indeed it is a key argument of this thesis that their importation acted as a catalyst which brought a relatively inconspicuous free Chinese community in the Cape and Transvaal to political consciousness. The historical episodes around indentured labour included in this study situate the Chinese experience within the larger parameters of South Africa's colonial past.

Despite the fact that the Chinese were and have always been one of South Africa's smallest ethnic minorities, at times their presence had ramifications quite disproportionate to their numbers. In a society mainly concerned to explain the past in terms of its ethnic dimensions,<sup>1</sup> and with race affirmed as "having been profoundly formative in the making of modern societies"<sup>2</sup>, the Chinese add a new, yet ambiguous perspective to the persistent paradigm of black-white binarism. As the Asian American historian Gary Okihiro points out, "there is a remarkable and persistent disinterest in thinking about race and race relations in terms other than black and white". He argues that as Asians are neither white nor black "the Asian racial subject [even though only three percent of the American population] is indispensable to both an understanding of race and an intervention into the politics of race".<sup>3</sup> Where possible, attempts have been in this analysis to go beyond the constraints of racism by consciously focusing not only on what was done to the Chinese in South Africa, but also on what they themselves did.

---

<sup>1</sup> S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds), The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa, (London and New York, 1987), p. 1; W. Beinart and S. Dubow (eds), Segregation and apartheid in twentieth century South Africa, (London and New York, 1995) p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> T. Keegan, Colonial South Africa and the origins of the racial order (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1996), p. viii; G.Y. Okihiro, "Teaching Asian American history", Organization of American Historians Magazine of History, 10, 4, Summer 1996, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Okihiro, "Teaching Asian American history", pp. 3-4; R. Daniels, "Chinese and Japanese as urban Americans, 1850-1940", History Teacher,

This study is also written in the context of the development of overseas Chinese studies as a new and independent discipline. Historically, South Africa rates as one of the most important regions on the African continent as a destination for Chinese immigrants. This has aroused interest among overseas Chinese academics since it remains an area which is relatively under-researched. This study therefore affords the opportunity to contribute to the growing historiography of overseas Chinese studies.

The widening contours of overseas Chinese studies increase the possibility of comparison, as there are distinctive parallels and contrasts with Chinese communities in other overseas destinations, especially former European colonies. Countries such as Australia and the United States of America offer useful comparative insights because they share episodes and experiences such as European colonization, the subjugation of indigenous peoples, multi-cultural societies, nineteenth-century gold rushes and varying degrees of anti-Sinicism. The comparative perspective serves as a valuable criterion in assessing local South African experiences and developments.

In this study there is also comparison with the other South African community of Asian descent, the Indian. Where viable, this comparison serves to contextualize the Chinese more effectively within South African history, as well as exemplify the ambivalence of their position. In South Africa the Chinese and Indians were often merged in terms of legal designation and European attitude. This transfer of identity and image-making is not unique. According to American historian Ronald Takaki, a similar phenomenon is apparent in the United States, as "[i]n the minds of many whites the Chinese were also sometimes associated with Indians" and "[p]olicies towards Indians suggested a way to solve the Chinese problem".<sup>4</sup>

Cognisance has also been taken of the colonial cultural construction of the Chinese as the "other" or the "alien". These perceptions have formed part of the Occidental mind since the expansion of Europe and have persisted in the development of colonial ethnic antagonism during the nineteenth century. In terms of the overseas Chinese, the notion of "Chineseness" was forged by host societies on the basis of a perceived homogeneity in physical identity, cultural unity and relations with the

---

<sup>4</sup> R. Takaki, A different mirror: A history of multi-cultural America, (Boston, Toronto and London, 1993), p. 205. Note that in this instance the Indian was the indigenous "red" Indian, as opposed to the "eastern" Indian in South Africa.

ancestral land (China). The latter attribute also gives substance to what American historian John Higham has designated "nativism", defined as "an intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (ie non-American) connections".<sup>5</sup> However, the idea that "Chineseness" continues to be considered "as a bloc keeps the historical pot boiling".<sup>6</sup>

Related to these perceptions is Edward Said's "Orientalism", which essentially argues that Western accounts of "Near Orient" civilizations (Arab and Islam) are distorted as a result of ethnocentric attitudes and "a kind of intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture".<sup>7</sup> Australian historian Colin Mackerras believes the main points of Said's "Orientalism" are "equally applicable to the study of China"<sup>8</sup> and concurs that Western scholarship reveals a "general inability to examine Asian countries in their own terms".<sup>9</sup>

This theory is also of relevance in the context of overseas Chinese studies, both in terms of perceptions and more

---

<sup>5</sup> John Higham as quoted by R. Daniels, Asian Americans: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850, (Seattle, 1988), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> P.A. Kuhn, "The ancestral land: Thinking about the history of Chinese overseas", The Morrison lecture, Australian National University, 1997, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> E.W. Said, Orientalism, (London, 1978), pp. 19, 26-7.

<sup>8</sup> C. Mackerras, Western images of China, (Oxford, 1989), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

particularly, sources. One of the common obstacles experienced by historians in this field is the paucity of research material. For the early period the bulk of sources available are official and legal records of the governments of host societies, which are predominantly Western and colonial in origin. Because the Chinese overseas were not legitimate in the eyes of China until the twentieth century, no official Chinese accounts are available. And since most overseas Chinese communities were either "illiterate or too discrete to record their experiences",<sup>10</sup> vital evidence of their history is lacking. Further implications for this particular study are that while it attempts to present an overview of the Chinese in the South African colonial past, it is not comprehensive.

The thesis focuses on the period 1660 to 1912, a period which coincides with the decline of the last Chinese Empire. It begins in the 1660s when the first Chinese arrived at the Cape, and concludes with the withdrawal of the Transvaal Chinese from political agitation, a year before immigration legislation was finally consolidated by the new Union government formed in 1910. The chapters are not strictly chronological. This is mainly to highlight the pivotal role the Chinese indentured labour system

---

<sup>10</sup> G. Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, (Singapore, 1991), p. 87.

played in the history of the free Chinese community, as well as European perceptions of it.

The first chapter is concerned with overseas Chinese historiography. It begins with a discussion of the international development of overseas Chinese studies and general trends in this field. In addition to a critique of some of the characteristic approaches, the chapter also emphasizes the problems related to source material which are part of any research of overseas Chinese history. This is followed by an analysis of the limited source material available in South Africa. Like most other overseas Chinese communities throughout the world, the South African Chinese have also been neglected historiographically. Apart from the studies on the indentured Chinese mine labourers, the free Chinese community received virtually no systematic coverage. This is not only attributable to a legacy of white historical writing, but also to the minuscule number of Chinese in South Africa, the paucity of research material as well as the community's own desire to maintain a low profile within an acutely racist and divided society.

Chapter 2 begins with a background discussion of the Chinese and their history of emigration. This is meant to contextualize the ambivalent and ambiguous social and psychological position in which the first overseas Chinese found themselves. It briefly considers the interpretations of the marine travels of Cheng Ho and the possible fifteenth-century Chinese encounter with the African subcontinent. This discussion pieces together the history of Chinese individuals at the Cape during both the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) period (1652-1795) and the subsequent British military occupations (1795-1801; 1803-1806). In the early colonial era there was periodic apprehension among members of the white settler population about the presence of a small number of Chinese immigrants. While the Chinese were acclaimed by the colonial world for their work ethic, they were equally despised for their competitiveness. The significance of this early encounter between peoples of the East and West in the Cape was indicative of things to come. Their presence during this early period is also relevant as a component of the emerging multicultural nature of Cape society. It was, however, in the period 1880 to 1912 that important aspects of South African Chinese history took place, which laid the foundation for their future in this country.

Economic development at the end of the 1800s witnessed the introduction of thousands of indentured Asian labourers, first on the sugar plantations and then the gold mines. This is the focus of chapter 3. The Indian scheme increased white racism towards the "Asiatics" as a whole and led to vehement opposition to the importation of the Chinese. The nature of the indenture system and the negative reaction the Chinese elicited is analyzed in order to emphasize that its impact went beyond the economic and political developments of the Transvaal and Britain. Attention is also given to the significant political and economic implications of this short-lived experiment.

The fourth chapter looks at the experiences of the Chinese labourers themselves. As a subaltern class, they generally had no voice. An attempt is therefore made to delve beneath the conventional portrayal of them to fathom their world. Besides discussing their social experiences, the chapter examines the various ways in which they reacted to their confinement in a foreign land with alien regulations. Some of their reactions and activities aroused white hostility towards them, which was also transferred onto their free compatriots. The prevalence of homosexuality among the Chinese on the mines is also dealt with, because it was a factor which contributed to the termination of the indenture system.

Chapters 5 and 6 consider how the introduction of Chinese labourers to the mines resulted in the small free Chinese communities in the Cape and Transvaal becoming more conspicuous, and therefore fell victim to specifically discriminatory legislation. In a period of heightened economic competition there was an increased aversion to Oriental rivalry in the market place. The free Chinese community that had begun to settle in the Cape Colony from the mid nineteenth century is the subject of chapter 5. It presents an overview of their life style and position prior to the proposed importation of the indentured Chinese. This makes it possible to depict clearly how indenture in the Transvaal thrust the free Chinese at the Cape into the political limelight, completely transforming their existence. As a result, the free Chinese at the Cape were subjected to the stringent legislation of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904. This terminated future immigration of other Chinese, while at the same time impeded the life style of those who remained. The chapter also shows how political expediency led to the exploitation of the Chinese issue in the local Cape elections of 1903-4, and adds a new dimension to "liberal" politics of the early twentieth century Cape.

In chapter 6, a similar study is made of the free Chinese community in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) - which later became the Transvaal Colony. However, unlike the Cape, where the Chinese were controlled by specific legislation, the Chinese in the Transvaal were targeted together with other Asians - a categorization which both the Chinese and Indians deeply resented. While the proposed Chinese indenture system gave them more political prominence in Transvaal society, it was not the sole reason for their subjection to restrictive legislation. Rather, they were subjected to stringent regulations together with the Indians because of the latter's large-scale influx into the region particularly as merchants. The free Chinese collectively resisted the plethora of discriminatory acts introduced in the Transvaal, and although they took independent action, they also supported the initiatives of Mahatma Gandhi and the passive resistance campaign until 1912. Their uncelebrated role in this internationally acclaimed affair is closely examined.

This political activity was unprecedented in the history of the South African Chinese. After almost seven years of passive resistance and the conclusion of an agreement with Minister Jan Smuts and the new Union of South African government, the Chinese

withdrew from the political arena. When Gandhi called for a return to passive resistance against proposed legislation in 1913, the Chinese abstained from participation because they were not directly implicated. They reverted to maintaining a low political profile and opted for behind-the-scenes negotiation with the white government. To date, the South African Chinese have never again been as politically active as they were in the first decade of the twentieth century.

The epilogue briefly outlines the subsequent history of the South African Chinese up to the present democratic dispensation. It argues that by 1912 the pattern for the future history of the South African Chinese had been laid: having been excluded they were no longer an influential political factor, but there remained a legacy in the collective memory of the dominant European class which left the Chinese in an ambivalent position. Although they were seldom the object of apartheid's social plans, they were left in the interstices of a system structured by race and colour, in which they were neither white nor black.

## CHAPTER 1

### Historiographical Introduction

Chinese overseas studies, or the study of the Chinese abroad, is concerned with those communities of Chinese descent which have settled either permanently or temporarily in countries outside of Greater China.<sup>1</sup> It is a field of research that has progressed through distinct phases in the twentieth century and is currently gaining international recognition.<sup>2</sup> This chapter focuses on the international development of overseas Chinese studies, as well as the historiography of the overseas Chinese in South Africa.

#### I

The term "Chinese overseas" (*haiwa huaren*) is used here in the neutral and inclusive sense to refer to "anyone Chinese who is outside China" whether they be Chinese nationals or foreign nationals who are ethnic Chinese. The traditional and older term "overseas Chinese" (*huaqiao*) meant "any Chinese residing overseas", but did not take cognisance of the twentieth-century

---

<sup>1</sup> In this context "Greater China" (*dazhonghua*) refers to the People's Republic of China, Republic of China on Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. For details on other meanings see Wang, "Upgrading the migrant", pp. 24, 28; Kuhn, "The ancestral land"; H. Harding, "The concept of 'Greater China': Themes, variations and reservations", The China Quarterly, December, 1993, pp. 660-86; Wang, "Greater China and the Chinese overseas", p. 926.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wang, "Message from the president", ISSCO Bulletin, 1, 1, September 1993, pp. 1, 4; M.H. Fried, "Preface" in M.H. Fried (ed.), Colloquium on overseas Chinese, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1958, p. v.

trend of Chinese descendants adopting foreign nationality. The latter term is avoided for its political and legal connotations. Another term, *huayi*, "denoting descendant of Chinese", has been suggested to accommodate the Chinese foreign national who has become fully assimilated as a political participant in the country of residence.<sup>3</sup>

It is, however, surprising that these identifiable communities, which have been in existence in virtually every country in the world for up to five centuries and total about 30 to 40 million people,<sup>4</sup> are such latecomers to modern academic discourse. The reasons for this are both complex and diverse. Besides factors such as their peripheral position and relatively small numbers within some host societies,<sup>5</sup> as well as the paucity and scattered

---

<sup>3</sup> For discussion of the terminology and its changing nature see G. Wang, "Upgrading the migrant: Neither Huaqiao nor Huaren", in E. Sinn (ed.), The last half century of the Chinese overseas, Hong Kong, 1998, pp. 16-7, 23-9; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, pp. 253-4; G. Wang, "Greater China and the Chinese overseas", The China Quarterly, December 1993, pp. 926-7; G. Wang, "Among non-Chinese", Daedalus, 120, 2, 1991, p. 135; D.L. Poston and M. Yu, "The distribution of the overseas Chinese in the contemporary world", International Migration Review, xxiv, 3, 1990, p. 480; S. Fitzgerald, China and the overseas Chinese, Cambridge, 1972, p. x.

<sup>4</sup> L. Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The story of the overseas Chinese, London, 1991, p. xi; Anon., "Business brief: The Chinese abroad - rich not red", The Economist, 219, 7339, April 1984, p. 82; Wang, "Greater China", p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> The author is aware that the concept "host society" is sometimes regarded as problematic because "of its judgement about the position of the Chinese in these countries" Fitzgerald, China and the overseas Chinese, p. x. However, "adopted", "new" and "receiving" are equally unsatisfactory. All are used with neutral connotations.

nature of source material, constraints of both an international and local nature have also contributed to this marginalization.<sup>6</sup>

Since the beginning of their civilization (c. 2000 B.C.), the Chinese have persisted in travelling abroad, despite the essentially insular nature of the Chinese Empire (Middle Kingdom) and the general prohibition of emigration during most dynasties up to the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Going overseas in a private capacity was treated with particular imperial contempt, and any Chinese citizen who went away was declared an outlaw to be punished by death, according to the law against rebels and enemies.<sup>8</sup> Consequently the Chinese emperors were not interested in the "Chinese [who were] so unfilial as to have left

---

<sup>6</sup> In discussing the early history and development of overseas Chinese studies, the author is predominantly dependent on the work of Wang Gung-wu. He is currently Director of the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University and President of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO). He was formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong. His extensive publications on Far Eastern history include pioneering works on the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

<sup>7</sup> H.M. MacNair, The Chinese abroad: Their position and protection - A study in international law and relations, Shanghai, 1924, p. vii; J. Mirsky (ed.), The great Chinese travellers, London, 1965, p. 257; S. Chang, "The distribution and occupations of overseas Chinese", The Geographical Review, 58, 1, January 1968, pp. 89-90; S.G. Haw, China: A cultural history, London, 1990, pp. 86-90.

<sup>8</sup> Yen, C., Coolies and mandarins: China's protection of overseas Chinese during the Late Ch'ing period, 1851-1911, Singapore, 1985, p. xv; S. Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court toward Chinese emigration", Chinese Culture, 9, 4, 1968, p. 62; Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor, pp. 5-8.

the middle kingdom"<sup>9</sup> - a disposition which by no means favoured historical record. Therefore even the accounts of official Chinese voyages abroad contained little, if any, reference to the overseas Chinese settlements they encountered. As the eminent historian and Chinese overseas specialist, Wang Gung-wu, points out, the Chinese overseas were deemed "unworthy of separate mention as an extension or a part of Chinese history".<sup>10</sup> It was not until the twentieth century that historians within China took a serious interest in them as a topic warranting specific study.

The development of the study of the Chinese overseas by historians on the perimeters of China fared little better. In Southeast Asia (Nanyang), where the first Chinese merchants settled and where they became most populous, none of the recipient countries included them in their early historical writings.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the twentieth century it was mainly European colonists from Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and Britain, who described the Chinese communities in official reports about their respective regions. Although these accounts were purely

---

<sup>9</sup> A. Reid, "Entrepreneurial minorities and the state", in D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds), Essential outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the modern transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe, Washington, 1997, p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> G. Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", Luodi-Shenggen Conference, University of Berkeley, November, 1992, p. 3; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 189; J.K. Fairbank, China: A new history, Cambridge, 1992, p. 193.

<sup>11</sup> Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 23.

pragmatic, in that they were intended to provide the colonial governments with detailed information for policy making, they apparently "compare[d] well with the monographic studies done in more recent years".<sup>12</sup> They included sound information on the social, economic and cultural dynamics of the Chinese communities and were formative in the development of "a genre of minority and ethnographic studies".<sup>13</sup>

Farther afield, in the nineteenth century migrant states of the Americas and Australasia, which attracted both free and indentured Chinese immigrants, the Chinese were mainly portrayed in the politicized context of the "yellow peril". The impression created was of an unwanted invasion of an "alien" people with "alien" habits, who were only relevant as part of the political debate about the "Chinese problem".<sup>14</sup> This colonial writing revealed more about the Western host societies' racist attitudes than it did about the Chinese communities.<sup>15</sup> The nineteenth

---

<sup>12</sup> Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-6.

<sup>14</sup> D. Day, "Aliens in a hostile land: A re-appraisal of Australian history", Journal of Australian history, 33, 1958, p. 13; S. Chan, "The writing of Asian American history", Organization of American Historians: Magazine of History, 10, 4, Summer 1996, pp. 9, 12; Fried (ed.) "Preface", p. v.

<sup>15</sup> Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", pp. 5, 7; A. Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", Meanjin, 42, 1, March 1983, p. 88; J. Cushman, "A 'colonial casualty': The Chinese community in Australian historiography", Asian Studies Association of Australia Review, 7, 3 April 1984, p. 101; J. Wilton, "Chinese whispers from New South Wales", History Today, 47, 11, November 1997, p. 45.

century was also the period in which Western imperialism grew and the negative "Orientalist" approach "to China reached its height, when Europe colonized not only parts of China, but also knowledge about it".<sup>16</sup>

Within this hostile climate it can be assumed that one of the reasons why the Chinese communities overseas did not record their history was that they were reluctant to draw attention to themselves for fear of possible discrimination or victimization within their adopted countries. This situation was compounded by the introduction of discriminatory immigration legislation in many of the Western countries on the one hand, and the often controversial political activities on the Chinese mainland on the other.

A high percentage of the writing on the overseas Chinese settlers continued to be tainted with fear and suspicion into the twentieth century. They were considered a security risk by both Western and Southeast Asian leaders because of their suspected links with China.<sup>17</sup> At first the overseas Chinese were associated

---

<sup>16</sup> Mackerras, Western images of China, pp. 44-5; see also R. Dawson, The Chinese chameleon: An analysis of European conceptions of Chinese civilization, London, 1967, pp. 132-54.

<sup>17</sup> L. Suryadinata, "Ethnic Chinese in South East Asia: Problems and prospects", Journal of International Affairs, 41, 1, 1987, p. 135

with the corrupt and inept Manchu (Qing) dynasty, then they were considered allies of the revolutionary Sun Yat-Sen and his Guomindong party, and later as insurgents of the Chinese Communist Party. As one author aptly put it "[t]he age-old 'yellow peril' had perceptibly turned eventually into a 'red peril'".<sup>18</sup> In a sense this was almost an extension of Edward Said's "orientalism" - which among other things attacked Western scholarship for its "too close relationship between the scholar and the state".<sup>19</sup> As a result, the Chinese overseas were predominantly perceived of and written about in diplomatic, political and defence terms.<sup>20</sup> Sucheng Chang argues that the writings that were produced during this "first historiographical period" serve a useful purpose if they are read "not as works of historical scholarship but, rather, as documents that reveal the temper of the times in which they were produced".<sup>21</sup>

From the turn of the twentieth century, however, an interest in the overseas Chinese gradually emerged within China itself. The Convention of 1866, which was concluded to "regulate the engagement of Chinese emigrants by British and French

---

<sup>18</sup> G. Alexander, Silent invasion: The Chinese in Southeast Asia, London, 1973, p. xi; see also Dawson, The Chinese chameleon, chapter 8.

<sup>19</sup> Mackerras, Western images of China, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", p. 6; Okihiro, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Chan, "The writing of Asian American history", p. 9.

subjects",<sup>22</sup> brought about an inevitable change in the attitude of the Chinese government. With the resultant increase in legal emigration, China could no longer ignore her subjects abroad. Representatives were appointed in foreign countries who then compiled official reports, while Chinese scholars focused on overseas Chinese relations with China, their economic successes and political activities, and they recorded China's changing overseas Chinese policy.<sup>23</sup> Here too the writing was mainly political and elements of suspicion were evident because of the "foreign connections" of Chinese overseas communities.<sup>24</sup> The political dimension intensified after 1949 with the emergence of the "two Chinas",<sup>25</sup> and while there were exceptions, much of the writing "remain[ed] coloured with nationalistic pride in Chinese successes".<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> S. Wang, The organization of Chinese emigration, 1848-1888, San Francisco, 1978, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 32; Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", pp. 5, 7; E. Wickberg, "Anti-sinicism and Chinese identity options in the Philippines", in D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds), Essential outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the modern transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe, Washington, 1997, p. 164.

<sup>24</sup> C.Y. Yang, "Overseas Chinese in China's policy", The China Quarterly, June 1990, pp. 281-2; M.R. Godley, "The sojourners: Returned overseas Chinese in the People's Republic of China", Pacific Affairs, 62, Fall 1989, p. 330; Yen, Coolies and mandarins, p. xiv.

<sup>25</sup> Yang, "Overseas Chinese in China's policy", p. 281.

<sup>26</sup> Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", p. 7.

## II

It was really only in the last five decades that international and Chinese scholarship outside China began to focus on Chinese overseas studies as a discipline in its own right.<sup>27</sup> After the Second World War, some of the local and global constraints mentioned above were no longer that important. For example, China's diplomatic relations with certain foreign countries improved, partly as a result of China's alliance with the West, and so much of the host countries' immigration and discriminatory legislation against the Chinese was abolished. Moreover, the development of minority and ethnographic studies as accredited disciplines also facilitated the emergence of overseas Chinese scholarship. As a result, there was a proliferation of studies dealing specifically with the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, the United States of America and Australia. This particular development was related to the comparatively large percentage of Chinese resident in these parts of the world, and to their often phenomenal economic impact in the respective region. While the histories of the overseas Chinese in these major areas differ, the historiographies have developed in a similar pattern.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> L. Wang, "Opening address: Luodi-Shenggen International Conference on Overseas Chinese", Luodi-Shenggen Conference, University of Berkeley, November 1992, pp. 1-2; K.S. Wong, "The transformation of culture: Three Chinese views of America", American Quarterly, 48, 2, June 1996, p. 201; Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> K.L. Harris, "The South African Chinese: A community record of a neglected minority", South African Historical Journal, 36, May 1997, p.

This is not to say that these more recent histories of overseas Chinese communities are not fraught with problems. Preconceptions about the Chinese immigrants and citizens persisted, and in many national histories and popular culture, they continue to remain marginal. Surveys done at Cornell University on United States history textbooks in 1996 reported that "Asians are largely absent from those texts".<sup>29</sup> In 1988 historian Rodger Daniels wrote in the preface to his book, Asian Americans, that "the Asian element in our history has been more significant than its place in textbooks and general histories would suggest".<sup>30</sup> It appears then that nothing had really changed since the 1940s, when a history of American immigration, which included a short section on the Asians, insisted that their history was but a "brief and strange interlude in the general account of the great migrations to America".<sup>31</sup> Okihiro does however concede that the "newer more textured and nuanced accounts of the Asian experience in America published since 1980 [had] yet to make an impact upon the master narratives of U.S. history"<sup>32</sup> - and one might add, popular consciousness.

---

<sup>29</sup> Okihiro, "Teaching Asian American history", p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Daniels, Asian Americans, p. xv.

<sup>31</sup> C. Wittke, We who built America, New York, 1940, p. 458 as quoted by Daniels, "Westerners from the East", p. 375.

<sup>32</sup> Okihiro, "Teaching Asian American history", p. 3.

Australian historian Jennifer Cushman reiterated the former sentiment in her 1984 assessment of the history of the Chinese in Australia. She claimed that Australian scholars were "evidently still struggling to escape from a historiographical discourse limited by their colonial past" and a "preoccupation with explaining the formation of the White Australian policy".<sup>33</sup> She pointed out that this was not unlike a time in Southeast Asian studies when scholars were "concerned in a similar fashion with essentially colonial issues". They too had focused on colonial "policies towards the Chinese... and sometimes tried to analyze the [colonial] impact on the development of that community".<sup>34</sup>

Commenting in 1996 on the past fifty years of American historical scholarship on the Chinese in the United States, historian Kevin Scott Wong argued that it paid more attention to the "excluders" than the "excluded", since it focused mainly on the anti-Chinese movement.<sup>35</sup> Daniels had made this observation about American history some thirty years earlier, claiming that "[o]ther immigrant groups were celebrated for what they had accomplished

---

<sup>33</sup> Cushman, "A 'colonial casualty'", pp. 100-1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>35</sup> Wong, "The transformation of culture", p. 201; K.S. Wong, "Encountering the other: Chinese immigration and its impact on Chinese and American worldviews, 1875-1905", Ph. D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1992, p. 1.

[while] Orientals were important for what was done to them".<sup>36</sup> He later called this "negative history".<sup>37</sup> Andrew Markus drew similar conclusions about Australia. He believed that many of the histories shared a common characteristic in their orientation to the Chinese in the Australian past: "[the] Chinese are viewed as objects, and the researcher is primarily concerned to examine European reaction".<sup>38</sup>

Another "negative" component of the studies of the Chinese overseas were the numerous stereotypical images which were constructed to buttress notions of the "other". Depending on the political agenda, the Chinese were either portrayed partisanly as "hardworking, diligent and reliable"<sup>39</sup> or adversarially as "villainous, inscrutable and cunning".<sup>40</sup> It has been argued that this "lack of understanding of the Chinese people stemmed from the Chinese clannishness, as well as the discriminatory practices

---

<sup>36</sup> R. Daniels, "Westerners from the East: Oriental immigrants reappraised", Pacific Historical Review, 35, November 1966, p. 375.

<sup>37</sup> Daniels, Asian America, p. xiii.

<sup>38</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 88.

<sup>39</sup> J. Dyer Ball, The Chinese at home or the man of Tong and his land, London, 1911, p. 61; P.C. Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration to countries within the British Empire, New York, 1923, pp. 45, 56; L. Mitchison, Overseas Chinese, London, 1961, p. 21; P. Snow, The star raft: Chinese encounter with Africa, New York, 1987, pp. 45-6; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 190; K.L. Harris, "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance", Contree, 35, June 1994, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> P. Wegars (ed.), Hidden heritage: Historical archaeology of the overseas Chinese, New York, 1993, p. xxiii; Tan, Your Chinese roots, p. 31; G.B. Lee, "Health in the city: Roundtable discussion", History of public health - health in the city conference, Liverpool, September 1997, pp. 1-2.

of the members of the host society".<sup>41</sup> Whatever its rationale, this blanket labelling was unjust as it denied the Chinese any individuality, making them both faceless and nameless accessories to the various national histories.

Another example of the persistent stereotype is revealed in Ronald Takaki's book on Asian Americans, Strangers from a different shore (1989). Here he shows how "the view of Asian immigrants as 'sojourners' and European immigrants as 'settlers' is both a mistaken notion and a widely held myth".<sup>42</sup> Historian Anthony Chan argued along similar lines in his article on the image of the Chinese as a "sojourner" in Canadian history. He claimed that it was an "enduring image" which had attained widespread acceptance in learned circles, citing publications from as late as the 1970s as examples. In this way the Chinese remained a "temporary and transient figure in the history of Canada"<sup>43</sup> - and elsewhere.

---

<sup>41</sup> T. Tan, Your Chinese roots: The overseas Chinese story, Singapore, 1986, p. 31; M.R. Coolidge, Chinese immigration, New York, 1909, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> R. Takaki, Strangers from a different shore: A history of Asian Americans, New York, 1989, p. 10; see also Wegars, Hidden heritage, p. xxiii.

<sup>43</sup> A.B. Chan, "'Orientalism' and image making: The sojourner in Canadian history", The Journal of Ethnic Studies, 9, 3, 1981, pp. 37-8.

The image of the Chinese abroad as "perpetual foreigners"<sup>44</sup>, immigrants or aliens coincided with another longstanding stereotype of their being perceived of as "unassimilable".<sup>45</sup> This portrayal was instrumental in keeping them at the periphery in their host societies as well as in the mainstream histories.<sup>46</sup> In many instances they were provided with little, if any, opportunity or encouragement to assimilate within the new country,<sup>47</sup> even for the growing number of Chinese who were born nationals. This was particularly true in the case of Western countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The peripheral position of the overseas Chinese was probably instrumental in the development of another approach to the writing of their past. First evident in studies by historians and social scientists of Southeast Asian communities, an attempt was made to "establish the characteristics of these societies as individual entities", in other words to "relocate the Chinese experience within the Chinese community itself".<sup>48</sup> Cushman

---

<sup>44</sup> Okihiro, "Teaching Asian American history", p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Suryadinata, "Ethnic Chinese in South East Asia" p. 135; Chan, "The writing of Asian American history", p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> Daniels, "Westerners from the East", p. 375; Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", p. 12; Okihiro, "Teaching Asian American history", p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Reid, "Entrepreneurial minorities and the state", p. 43.

<sup>48</sup> Cushman, "A 'colonial casualty'", pp. 100-1.

commended this trend and urged Australian scholars who had been "less concerned with the community on its own terms, and more with Australian attitudes towards Chinese" to "exploit these wider historiographical possibilities".<sup>49</sup> With hindsight, however, Wang warned against an extreme form of this more recent tendency. He opposed histories that turned "inwards to enhance the special qualities of Chinese cultures" because they "faced the danger of becoming irrelevant to everyone except the specialist and those who wish to bolster national pride". He foresaw that if this persisted, the field was "unlikely to advance beyond a kind of localised minority history, remaining permanently marginal to the history of China as well as to the history of the respective adopted country".<sup>50</sup>

It is therefore clear that despite the progress made in the field of Chinese overseas studies, it was still very much in its infancy in the early 1990s. At that time Wang regarded it as a subject that did "not know whether to shrink or grow".<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, he believed it was a discipline that had considerable future potential as "at least a key part of sinology ... [b]ut... believe[d] it [could] go further as a sub-field of

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", pp. 17-8.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

ethnic and minority studies and even achieve a similar status among other social science disciplines".<sup>52</sup> To achieve this he encouraged scholars to embark on "systematically planned voyages of comparison", comparisons not only between different Chinese communities, but also "with the dominant indigenous and other settled migrant communities". He also suggested that scholars should examine current issues and the "economic and cultural consequences of being Chinese outside China".<sup>53</sup> Takaki made a similar appeal when he wrote that there was a "need to 're-vision' history to include Asians ... and to do so in a broad and comparative way".<sup>54</sup> In sum, scholars had to "recontextualize their work so that it included a broader, more international perspective".<sup>55</sup>

### III

It must be emphasized that although the development and current state of overseas Chinese studies has numerous shortcomings, the critiques of the discipline show that the authors all had one formidable obstacle in common: the unavailability and peculiar nature of the source material. Sources on overseas Chinese

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 17-8.

<sup>53</sup> Wang, "Message from the president", p. 1; Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese", pp. 1, 10, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Takaki, Strangers from a different shore, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Sucheta Muzumdar as quoted by Wong, "The transformation of culture", pp. 201-2.

determine research approaches and research topics, and unlike other fields of research, the primary sources are scattered or simply do not exist.<sup>56</sup> Wong claims that the "paucity of sources in some areas of [the] field has ... shaped the direction of [the] research and how [historians should] ... go about recovering, reconstructing, and interpreting [the] past".<sup>57</sup> Daniels explains that the tendency to concentrate "on the excluders rather than the excluded [was] not a mere eccentricity" but partly attributable to "the great paucity of immigrant materials". This he believed resulted in "works that treat the Oriental immigrants as ... nameless groups, mere economic pawns in the hands of others, or of the blind forces of the economy".<sup>58</sup>

For the history of the Chinese overseas, particularly in the early contact period, historians are largely dependent on the "observations of Europeans".<sup>59</sup> From the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century these sources were mainly "colonial and other official reports about the Chinese",<sup>60</sup> while in the later period they included records of government agencies, federal and

---

<sup>56</sup> K.S. Wong, "Crossing the borders of the personal and the public: Family history and the teaching of Asian American history", Organization of American Historians Magazine of History, 10, 4, Summer 1996, p. 28.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.; Wong, "The transformation of culture", p. 203.

<sup>58</sup> Daniels, "Westerners from the East", p. 375.

<sup>59</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 89; Wang, The organization of Chinese emigration, p. xiv.

<sup>60</sup> Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 18.

state hearings on Chinese immigration, diplomatic reports, missionary recollections, traders' accounts and journalistic impressions.<sup>61</sup> Many of these were written by authors who were either divorced from, and in many cases hostile towards, the Chinese, or at best were written from an "orientalist" perspective.<sup>62</sup> This material therefore had inherent limitations and there were often serious doubts about its reliability.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to the twentieth century, sources written by either Chinese or indigenous inhabitants were very rare and those that existed added very little to what the foreign reports said.<sup>64</sup> During this period, only a small section of the Chinese population received a formal education, and therefore the written sources emanated from an elite minority.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the early Chinese kept few records partly because they tried to be as unobtrusive as possible, and so very few documents survived.<sup>66</sup> Information concerning a whole range of Chinese activities, such as social

---

<sup>61</sup> Mackerras, Western images of China, pp. 46-7; Cushman, "'A colonial casualty'", p. 103; Wong, "The transformation of culture", p. 203.

<sup>62</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 89; Wong, "The transformation of culture", p. 203.

<sup>63</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 89; Cushman, "A 'colonial casualty'", p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel, "Westerners from the East", p. 375; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 18.

<sup>65</sup> Wong, "The transformation of culture", p. 203; Wang, China and Chinese overseas pp. 87, 133.

<sup>66</sup> B.L. Sung, "Archival records of Chinese immigrants", Luodi-Shenggen Conference, University of Berkeley, November 1992, p. 2; Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 89.

and cultural aspects of the merchant and labouring classes, was scarce. These problems were compounded by the "Chinese secretiveness and deliberate deception".<sup>67</sup> Even Chinese sources in China, like the local gazetteers, included limited references to the communities overseas.<sup>68</sup> As Cushman aptly put it, "[t]his lacuna must inevitably fetter the historian".<sup>69</sup>

In the twentieth century, however, Chinese sources became more profuse as "more people were literate and more was written down".<sup>70</sup> There was a general proliferation in Chinese language newspapers and more Chinese club and business records were kept.<sup>71</sup> European documentation also increased as the various state infrastructures evolved and a variety of local newspapers were produced. But again, only certain sections of the Chinese population featured in these accounts. Only the articulate members of the elite wrote or were worthy of being written about in the Chinese sources, while the European court records and newspaper accounts mainly included references to the misdemeanours of criminals. The vast middle class, including the ordinary Chinatown resident, small entrepreneurs and labourers,

---

<sup>67</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 89.

<sup>68</sup> Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 189.

<sup>69</sup> Cushman. "A 'colonial casualty'", p. 105.

<sup>70</sup> Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 18.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.; Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 89.

rarely featured and remained largely anonymous.<sup>72</sup> The large corpus of official census figures, statistics of entries and exits, and anti-Chinese legislation generated by government, did little if anything to alleviate the research material problem. The inconsistent methods of data collection, the practice that Chinese were sometimes included in the category of "others", and the incompleteness of reports meant that as sources they were both unreliable and inadequate.<sup>73</sup>

Added to the problem of sources was the fact that the bulk of the literature written on the Chinese overseas before the Second World War was authored by non-historians, such as scholars trained in sociology, economics, social psychology and political science. This legacy, Sucheng Chan believes, causes more difficulties for historians because, "not only must they excavate widely scattered, fragmentary, 'buried' evidence, but they must also correct biased interpretations and a great deal of misinformation".<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", pp. 89-90; Wong, "The transformation of culture", p. 203; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 18.

<sup>73</sup> M. Ip, Home away from home: Life stories of Chinese women in New Zealand, Auckland, 1990, p. 9; H. Chen. "Chinese immigration into the United States: An analysis of changes in immigration policy", Unpublished Ph. D thesis, The Florence Heller Graduate School, 1980, pp. 29-30.

<sup>74</sup> Chan, "The writing of Asian American history", p. 9.

Some researchers of the more recent period of overseas Chinese history are fortunate in having access to elderly members of the community for oral evidence. This has led to the emergence of a whole genre of "story telling" or "direct testimonies" which are virtually autobiographical.<sup>75</sup> Almost without exception, these publications have been authored by members of a particular Chinese community. The reason given for this is that the "Chinese are suspicious of any probing into their personal affairs" and therefore a person of Chinese descent is in a "better position than an outsider to penetrate the feelings, attitudes and thoughts of the group".<sup>76</sup> Despite this drawback for non-Chinese writers, the oral-testimony publications form another source of research material for historians, as do recent discoveries in the field of archaeology. In areas where relatively large numbers of Chinese lived, archaeological excavations are yielding "structural information, artifacts, food remains and other details" which enhance our knowledge of the Chinese experience and complement the historical record.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> M. Ip, Dragons on the long white cloud: The making of Chinese New Zealanders, Birkenhead, 1996; Ip, Home away from home, p. 9; Chan, "The writing of Asian American history", pp. 13-4.

<sup>76</sup> N.B. Fong, The Chinese in New Zealand: A study in assimilation, Hong Kong, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Wegars, Hidden heritage, p. xxiii.

The paucity of historical sources on the overseas Chinese was without doubt an important factor which shaped the direction of the discipline world-wide and partly explains its chequered historiography. In South Africa, where the study of the Chinese overseas is a comparatively unresearched area, similar problems are encountered, although on a more magnified and complex scale. Despite the fact that the Chinese were integral to South African history from the time of Dutch settlement at the Cape in the seventeenth century, they have generally been ignored. Another reason for this neglect was the minuscule size of the Chinese community and its relatively limited role in the political, social and economic mainstream of the South African past.

As was the case with other Western colonies, the earliest references to the Chinese at the Cape were in sources written or drafted by Europeans. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Chinese were mentioned in some of the travel narratives which documented "subjective and personal encounters with [the] African landscape and people".<sup>78</sup> European travellers, such as Otto Mentzel and Carl Thunberg, briefly described the small-scale trading and other "exotic" activities of the few Chinese they

---

<sup>78</sup> A. Bank, "The great debate and the origins of South African historiography", Journal of African History, 38, 1997, p. 262.

encountered at the Cape.<sup>79</sup> Another source of information for this period are the legal records, correspondence, registers and court proceedings of the Dutch authorities, now found in the archive repositories of The Hague and Cape Town.<sup>80</sup> The legal documents were primarily statutes introduced by the Dutch to restrict and control the commercial activities of the Chinese,<sup>81</sup> as well as death notices, wills and liquidation accounts. The letters despatched and received by the various governors at the Cape and the DEIC authorities in the Netherlands and Batavia, mainly included requests for Chinese labour and references to the deported Chinese convicts. The *opgaafrolle*,<sup>82</sup> which were the official annual registers of the population and their property compiled for the purposes of taxation, sometimes listed the names of Chinese as slave-owners or slaves. While the court records

---

<sup>79</sup> O.F. Mentzel, A geographical and topographical description of the Cape of Good Hope, part I and II, Cape Town, 1921 and 1925; C. Thunberg, Travels at the Cape of Good Hope 1772-1775, Cape Town, 1986.

<sup>80</sup> For example, documents in the Cape Archives Repository (CAR): Court of Justice (CJ), Master of the Orphan Chamber (MOOC) and Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague: DEIC correspondence. Also published archival series such as, A.J. Boëseken and G.C. de Wet (eds), Suid-Afrikaanse argiefstukke: Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1651-1734, i-viii, Cape Town, 1957-1975; K.M. Jeffreys and S.D. Naudé (eds), Kaapse argiefstukke: Kaapse plakkaatboek, 1652-1795, i-iv, Cape Town, 1944-1949.

<sup>81</sup> See for example W.H. Somerset Bell (ed.), South African Law Journal, together with index and annual digest, xxiii, Grahamstown, 1906, pp. 245-6 who claims "the Chinese have quite a code of enactments relating to them in the plakaten".

<sup>82</sup> For comment on the accuracy of the *opgaafrolle* see J. Armstrong and N. Worden, "The slaves, 1652-1834", p. 175, n. 103 and H. Giliomee, "The eastern frontier, 1770-1812", p. 455, in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds.), The shaping of South African society, 1652-1840, Cape Town, 1989.

gave the particulars of crimes and sentences of Chinese offenders.<sup>83</sup>

As James Armstrong, historian and specialist on slavery at the Cape, points out, doing research on the Chinese in the DEIC period (1652-1795) is fraught with difficulties. Not only is the documentary record "very fragmentary", but "the Dutch did not, pardonably, have a firm orthographic grasp of Chinese names and consequently variant spellings are legion".<sup>84</sup> For example, there could be six different spellings for one individual, making identification and accuracy extremely problematic.<sup>85</sup>

Apart from the rather sketchy information found in European sources during the DEIC period, there were virtually no documents from Chinese residents in Cape Town to augment the record. Not unlike other overseas Chinese during this early period, the literacy level was probably relatively low and therefore no Chinese written documents have been located. The few documents authored by Chinese - and often signed in Chinese characters -

---

<sup>83</sup> For a secondary source which includes references to Chinese crimes committed in the eighteenth century see H.F. Heese, Reg en onreg: Kaapse regspraak in die agtiende eeu, Bellville, 1994.

<sup>84</sup> J. Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape in the Dutch East India Company period, 1652-1795", Slave Route Project Conference, 1997, pp. 3-4.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 4. (Example cited, Onka, Onko, Onkonko, Oquanko, Loquanko and Hoquanko).

include singular *remonstranties* (memorandums) to the government from individual Chinese, as well as the testaments of some of the deceased.<sup>86</sup> As was the case in Chinese overseas destinations elsewhere, these sources emanated from a handful of relatively affluent members of the tiny Chinese community, thus leaving the remainder anonymous.

While the documentary record of the Chinese at the Cape under the Dutch was scant, with most individuals leading "archivally unrecorded lives",<sup>87</sup> the situation during the first half of the nineteenth century was even worse. Besides the odd references to the efforts of colonists to import Chinese artisans and labourers, the declining number of Chinese inhabitants failed to register in the records of the British Cape colony. With the establishment of British rule in Natal and the two Boer republics in the interior in the mid-nineteenth century, the record of the minuscule number of Chinese fared little better. Even the sporadic arrival of free Chinese immigrants after the 1860s was poorly documented, because at the time their numbers and presence were apparently regarded as inconsequential.

---

<sup>86</sup> For details on documents on the Chinese for the DEIC period see Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape". Also, archaeologist Antonio Malan's work: A. Malan, "East meets West: Freeblack-Freeburgher households in early 18th century Cape Town", Society of Historical Archaeologists Conference, Washington, D.C., January 1995, pp. 3-5.

<sup>87</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 3.

It was only once the ex-indentured Indians began to move into the ZAR from Natal towards the end of the nineteenth century that officials - and therefore the historical record - took cognisance of the Chinese presence. The escalation in the number of Indians within the ZAR led to a public outcry by the white inhabitants and the concomitant introduction of discriminatory immigration laws. The Chinese were subsumed under the category of "Asiatic" along with the Indians, and were therefore controlled by the same legislation.<sup>88</sup> Although the rationale was intensely negative, it did mean that the Chinese were documented in the official record, press reports or through their own protest correspondence with local government and the colonial office.<sup>89</sup> As Chinese opposition to the discriminatory regulations escalated in the first decade of the twentieth century, so did the amount of source material, giving more voice to the hitherto unrecorded Chinese.

In stark contrast to the records on the free Chinese community, the importation of 63 695 indentured Chinese labourers for the

---

<sup>88</sup> K.L. Harris, "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance", in J. Brown and M. Prozesky (eds), Gandhi and South Africa: Principles and prospects, Pietermaritzburg, 1996, pp. 72-3.

<sup>89</sup> The National Archives Repository (NAR), Pretoria, as well as the Public Record Office (PRO), Kew, contain documents recording both the legislation introduced and the Chinese appeals against it. Newspapers reported generally on the events, but because of the Indian involvement there were detailed accounts in the Indian Opinion, as well as The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, iii-x, Delhi, 1960-85, which also refer to the Chinese.

Witwatersrand gold mines from 1904 led to a plethora of documentation. This record did not only emanate from unwieldy government departments and mining houses, but also from the protagonists, as well as opponents, of imported labour.<sup>90</sup> Owing to its highly politicized and contentious profile, information in the records of the Foreign Labour Department (FLD),<sup>91</sup> which was established to monitor the labour scheme, was extremely detailed. The debate about the Chinese labourers was also meticulously reflected in both British and Transvaal parliamentary proceedings, contemporary journals, pamphlets, newspapers and personal memoirs.<sup>92</sup>

Despite this abundance of source material, the researcher still encounters difficulties. Peter Richardson, historian and specialist on the indentured Chinese labourers, argues that the use of these documents for the elucidation of certain aspects of Chinese labour, is problematical. He notes that

[t]he overwhelming proportion of extant material is in the form of records of either government or the mine owners both of which are obviously likely to give one-sided interpretations of events, particularly of

---

<sup>90</sup> See the Sources: Books and Pamphlets: Contemporary publications (primary), for a list of these.

<sup>91</sup> NAR: Transvaal Archives Depot (TAD): Archives of the Foreign Labour Department (FLD), 1904-10. As part of the strict control system this series also includes photographs of the individual labourers, with finger prints, name and an identification number.

<sup>92</sup> J.A. Reeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa, 1901-1910", M.A. thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1954, preface.

labour disputes. Little or no evidence survives of the impressions which the Chinese themselves formed of these events.<sup>93</sup>

Similar sentiments were also expressed by W.P. Reeves in 1922 in a preface to a book on international Chinese coolie emigration (1923). He declared that

[m]any of the details are dry and loathsome. Of the darker and more tragic side of the tale much has been hidden or lost and can never be known. Where light is thrown upon it, it is usually the very dry light of statutes, blue-books, regulations, political speeches, pamphlets and clippings from newspapers. The research student has to cut through a difficult jungle.<sup>94</sup>

The tumult caused by the indentured Chinese labourers had ramifications that went beyond the mine compounds, the borders of the Transvaal colony and the confines of the British colonial administration and parliament. Country-wide, the free Chinese community became conspicuous in the eyes of the white South African public. Regulations were introduced to monitor the Chinese and ultimately prohibit their continued immigration.<sup>95</sup> Besides an abundance of official documentation and legislation, the resultant delirium particularly in British politics led to

---

<sup>93</sup> P. Richardson: "Coolies and Randlords: The North Randfontein Chinese miners' 'strike' of 1905", Journal of Southern African Studies, ii, 2, April 1976, p. 151, fn.

<sup>94</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. ix.

<sup>95</sup> For example, the introduction of Act no. 37 of 1904, "The Chinese Exclusion Act", in the Cape Colony and the concomitant administrative documentation.

numerous exaggerated accounts and unreliable data.<sup>96</sup> But at least it generated source material that focused on the Chinese *per se*, which could be interpreted and verified.

Once the indentured Chinese were repatriated in 1910 and the Union government had enacted stringent immigration laws in 1913,<sup>97</sup> the furore which had resulted in a wave of contemporary literature on the Chinese, subsided. Their numbers declined and they became untraceable in the historical record as a separate "ethnic group", being categorized as part of "mixed" or "other" with the "coloured" or "non-white" groups of the evolving segregated state.<sup>98</sup> While they disappeared from the historical record, the predominantly negative image created about the indentured Chinese labourers in the first ten years of the twentieth century, did not dissipate. It lingered on as part of popular consciousness and was often transposed onto the free Chinese who remained in the country. They were incorrectly seen

---

<sup>96</sup> See for example comment on official statistics in S. Bhana and J. Brain, Setting down roots: Indian migrants in South Africa, 1860-1911, Johannesburg, 1990, p. 78; Human, The Chinese people of South Africa, p. 34; C.G. Pooley and I.D. Whyte, "Introduction: Approaches to the study of migration and social change", in C.G. Pooley and I.D. Whyte (eds), Migrants, Emigrants and Immigrants: A social history of migration, London, 1991, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Statutes of the Union, Immigrants' Regulation, Act no. 22 of 1913.

<sup>98</sup> Central Statistics Service (CSS), Pretoria: Census records 1891-1991.

as the descendants of the indentured labourers and viewed with similar disdain.<sup>99</sup>

The community became increasingly introverted, operating mainly in a regional capacity and within the bounds of state toleration. Local Chinese clubs and schools continued to function as an integral part of the community, but the records of both were neither vast nor accessible.<sup>100</sup> The Chinese preferred to maintain a low profile and studies of them were hindered by their "unwillingness ... to proffer information and their uncertainty and suspicions about why the research was being undertaken".<sup>101</sup>

The founding of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) and South Africa's initial allegiance to the Republic of China (ROC) in the mid-twentieth century placed further constraints on the South African Chinese community. They were forced into an invidious position, caught between the "two Chinas" which resulted in an

---

<sup>99</sup> L. Callinicos, A people's history of South Africa: Gold and workers, Cape Town, 1980, p. 69; C.J. van Tonder, "Die Sjiniese van die R.S.A.: 'n Sosiologiese ondersoek". M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1972, p. 122.

<sup>100</sup> Private correspondence: Chinese Association of South Africa to K.L. Harris, 9 May 1989 indicated that documentation accumulated by the Chinese History Project would not be available until after publication when an archive would be established. Also, as regards interviewing the elderly members of the Chinese community there would be "a major communication problem that would be difficult to overcome" as the majority only spoke Chinese and "there are also different dialects".

<sup>101</sup> Van Tonder, "Die Sjiniese van die R.S.A." referred to by L. Human, The Chinese in South Africa: Freewheeling on the fringes, Pretoria, 1984, p. 34.

increase in their invisibility. This position was further entrenched during the years of the apartheid struggle and subsequent democratization process, as the Chinese chose to remain inconspicuous to avoid possible detrimental political ramifications. In contrast to the trend among overseas Chinese elsewhere during the twentieth century, the South African Chinese virtually disappeared in terms of the public record.

## V

The use of the term "Chinese overseas historiography" in the South African context is perhaps something of a misnomer. Until the mid 1990s, the history of the Chinese community in South Africa was not an issue mentioned, let alone dealt with, in any of the national histories or historiographical publications.<sup>102</sup> The main reason for this was that the South African Chinese community is, and has almost always been, one of the country's smallest minorities. At present the Chinese community numbers in the region of 20 000 to 25 000, comprising only about 0,04 per

---

<sup>102</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa: A modern history, Bergvlei, 1988; N. Parsons, A new history of South Africa, London, 1993; W. Beinart, Twentieth-century South Africa, New York, 1994; L. Thompson, A history of South Africa, New Haven, 1995; N. Worden, The making of modern South Africa: conquest, segregation and apartheid, Oxford, 1995; Keegan, Colonial South Africa; J. Brown (et al), History from South Africa, Philadelphia, 1991; K. Smith, The changing past, Johannesburg, 1988; C. Saunders, The making of the South African past, Cape Town, 1988.

cent of the total population.<sup>103</sup> Throughout the South African past, the Chinese have generally preferred to maintain a low profile within the racially stratified and complex nature of South African society.<sup>104</sup> This was comparable to their compatriots in other countries who at times also preferred not to draw attention to themselves for fear of victimization.<sup>105</sup>

Not unlike the first accounts of the overseas Chinese in other countries, most of those on the South African Chinese were written by authors who were not trained historians. Because the South African Chinese occupied what has been referred to as a "strange position in a strange society",<sup>106</sup> a "no man's land between White and Black",<sup>107</sup> they became the subject of intense sociological analysis. The first academic study, which focused on the Chinese as a "minority group" within South Africa society, was completed in 1972.<sup>108</sup> Being the first study of its kind locally, it was mainly concerned with aspects such as age, family

---

<sup>103</sup> V. Sussens-Messerer, "Putting down roots in the golden mountain", Sunday Star, 25 October 1992; Interview Taiwanese ambassador, Mr Loh, 2 March 1994; M. Yap and D.L. Man, Colour, confusion and concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa, Hong Kong, 1996, p. xv.

<sup>104</sup> Anon, "Chinese community: no politics please", Financial Mail, 18, 2, 10 July 1981, p. 163; M. Yap, "Portrait of South Africa's Chinese", Rand Daily Mail, 7 February 1977; Human, The Chinese people of South Africa, p. 88.

<sup>105</sup> See p. 6 above.

<sup>106</sup> F. Collins, "Perspective: its status quo for Wong Fung Ho", Personality, 8 October 1970, p. 67.

<sup>107</sup> Human, The Chinese people of South Africa, p. vii.

<sup>108</sup> Van Tonder, "Chinese van die R.S.A".

size, occupation, education, religion and culture. In the mid-1970s three government sanctioned studies considered how the Chinese were perceived by the white community.<sup>109</sup> They were published by the Institute for Sociological, Demographic and Criminological Research of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), apparently to gain "an understanding of inter-group relations".<sup>110</sup> It is interesting to note that this research was undertaken at the time when official diplomatic relations were being established between South Africa and the ROC.<sup>111</sup>

The first academic monograph published on the South African Chinese was also a sociological study.<sup>112</sup> It was concerned with the lifestyle and position of the Chinese and sought to assess "the extent to which ... [they] have moved away from traditional Chinese culture and the extent to which they differ from overseas

---

<sup>109</sup> L.N. Smedley and D.C. Groenewald, The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 1: Background and attitudes of the white population group towards the Chinese minority group, Pretoria, 1976; L.N. Smedley, The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 2; A sociological study, Pretoria, 1978; L.N. Smedley, Multi-purpose survey among whites, 1978: Attitudes of the white population group towards the Chinese minority group: A follow-up study, Pretoria, 1979.

<sup>110</sup> Smedley and Groenewald, The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 1, preface.

<sup>111</sup> For further comment on the impact of South African-ROC relations see K.L. Harris, "The Chinese 'South Africans': An interstitial community", Luodi-shenggen Conference, University of Berkeley, November 1992.

<sup>112</sup> Human, The Chinese people of South Africa based on her doctoral thesis, L.N. Smedley, "A sociological analysis of some aspects of the life of South Africa's Chinese community", D. Phil, University of South Africa, 1980.

Chinese resident elsewhere abroad".<sup>113</sup> The discussion includes a "brief glimpse" of the Chinese in the United States of America and Britain based on fairly broad generalizations, some of which have become outdated. Linda Human concludes that while the South African Chinese are "Westernized in their practices" they retain a Chinese value system. Also, although the comparative dimension is rather undeveloped, she deduces that their position differs markedly from their overseas counterparts: "paradoxically" they have "the least equality (in terms of legal status) with, but the greatest amount of assimilation into, the 'host' society of possibly many of the communities of Chinese people resident abroad".<sup>114</sup>

Such sociological studies include short general introductory notes on the "historical background" of the South African Chinese. They point out that the Chinese were not the descendants of the indentured mine labourers, they indicate that this episode has at times caused negative perceptions of the community, and that the present population's forebears were traders and small business operators who arrived from the end of the nineteenth

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 103, 107-8. See also by the same author L. Smedley [Human], "White attitudes and South Africa's Chinese: A study of marginal status", *Humanitas*, 6, 2, 1980, pp. 135-40.

century.<sup>115</sup> They often include oversimplified generalizations, and none of the studies reveals an awareness of the Chinese presence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

More recent studies in related disciplines focus on the Chinese and their "marginal status" in terms of business,<sup>116</sup> immigration and demography,<sup>117</sup> while others analyze Chinese culture and religion within a local context.<sup>118</sup> In these analyses the history of the community was even less of a priority, mainly because the

---

<sup>115</sup> Van Tonder, "Die Sjinese van die R.S.A.", pp. 22-37; Smedley and Groenewald, The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 1, pp. 8-12; Smedley, The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 2, pp. 1-3; Human, The Chinese people of South Africa, pp. 27-33.

<sup>116</sup> L. Human, K.Y. Fok and N. Chorn, "Marginality and competitive advantage: The implications of the opening up of CBD's [Central Business Districts] for Chinese business", South African Journal of Business Management, 18, 1, March 1987; S.L. Keen, "A study of the political and economic situation of Port Elizabeth Chinese traders and the influence of the 15 July-15 November 1985 consumer boycott", Honours thesis, University of Port Elizabeth, 1985.

<sup>117</sup> H. Tseng, "The adaptation of Taiwanese immigrants in the Republic of South Africa", D. Phil. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1991; A. Song, "The Chinese in South Africa: An examination of their immigration, segregation and integration experiences", World Chinese conference, Mauritius, April 1994; A. Song, "Political transformation and the Chinese in South Africa: An examination of the Chinese response to the changes occurring in South Africa's political arena", Luodi-Shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992; J.G. Nel, "Ruimtelike segregasie en marginaliteit: Die Chinese gemeenskap van Port Elizabeth", South African Geographer, 20, 1/2, 1992/93; E.E. Davis, "Die herkoms na die identiteitsbewussyn van die Chinese bevolking van Port Elizabeth", M.A. thesis, University of Port Elizabeth, 1988; P.P. Jacobs and H.C. Pauw, (eds), Die Sjinese gemeenskap van Port Elizabeth, Occasional publication 17, University of Port Elizabeth, 1988.

<sup>118</sup> G.L. King, "Domestic religious beliefs and practices amongst Chinese in Johannesburg", M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1975; J.M. Cronje, "Die Sjinese in Suid-Afrika en hul godsdiens", Iswen-Kommunikasie, October 1982; A. Song, "Chinese religion: The Chinese community in South Africa", Religion in Southern Africa, 3, 1, January 1982, pp. 19-30; A. Song, "The effects of Protestant Christianity on the Chinese culture of ancestors as practised in Johannesburg", D. Phil., University of Durban-Westville, 1989.

Chinese were being assessed as the object of a particular phenomenon or incident.

It was not until the 1980s that the South African Chinese community showed an interest in the writing of their own history.<sup>119</sup> Apart from the parochial commemorative works of the various Chinese schools,<sup>120</sup> there were two earlier notable exceptions. The first publication to focus exclusively on the subject of the South African Chinese was produced in 1947. It was written by a member of the local Chinese community and was obviously intended for the Chinese community only. It was written and published in Chinese, and then translated "for some Chinese, who have not had the opportunity of a thorough education in Chinese".<sup>121</sup> It did not claim to do more than set out "the historical development of the anti-Asiatic legislative enactments on different subjects".<sup>122</sup> Besides a few explanatory footnotes on legal issues, it provides little or no analysis or interpretation and therefore qualifies as a source, rather than a history. The other work produced by a Chinese South African was a honours essay completed in 1965 by a sociology student at the University

---

<sup>119</sup> M. Yap, "Researching the history of the South African Chinese", Journal of the Johannesburg Historical Foundation, 10, October 1989, pp. 27-30.

<sup>120</sup> See for example Pretoria Chinese School: 50 Anniversary, Pretoria, 1984.

<sup>121</sup> T. Miao, Legal status of the Chinese in the Union of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1947.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

of the Witwatersrand. This also focused on the legal position of the South African Chinese, but was specifically concerned with an analysis of how prejudice and discrimination affected the Chinese in Johannesburg.<sup>123</sup>

The history of the legal position of the Chinese abroad was also the subject of two other publications completed overseas. Both were concerned with the status of the Chinese in regions throughout the world and the laws that influenced their situations. The first was published in 1925 by Harley MacNair and includes a short section on the "Chinese alien in South Africa".<sup>124</sup> In 1954 a similar book was produced by the ROC's China Cultural Service.<sup>125</sup> It was concerned with the legal status of the overseas Chinese in nine different regions, including the Union of South Africa.<sup>126</sup> Unlike the other publications, it includes fairly detailed annotation and has a narrative style.

In line with the trend in overseas Chinese studies, the first historians who paid specific attention to the history of the Chinese in South Africa were from abroad. Historian Huguette Ly-

---

<sup>123</sup> G. Luk Sun, "Some aspects of prejudices and discrimination affecting the Chinese in Johannesburg", Honours thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1965.

<sup>124</sup> H.F. MacNair, The Chinese abroad: Their position and protection, Shanghai, 1925, pp. 158-62.

<sup>125</sup> T. Huang, The legal status of the Chinese abroad, Taipei, 1954.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-53, 140-54, 197-9, 246-54, 271-85.

Tio-Fane Pineo of Mauritius, completed a doctoral study of the history of the "Diaspora Chinoise dans l'océan Indien Occidental" [Chinese diaspora in the western Indian ocean] in 1978.<sup>127</sup> With the encouragement of James Armstrong, then the field director of the Library of Congress in Nairobi, the thesis was translated into English and published.<sup>128</sup> For the first time relatively detailed attention was given to the history of both the indentured and free Chinese community in South Africa, with specific emphasis on the latter.

Pineo's study deals with the overseas Chinese in Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion, Madagascar and South Africa.<sup>129</sup> The various regions are discussed as separate entities with no comparative analysis. Being a pioneering effort, the author was probably mainly concerned to piece the various individual histories together. Chapter four deals with South Africa and presents a general outline of the history from the DEIC period, where the existence of Chinese convicts is indicated, through to the late 1970s when South Africa established diplomatic relations with the ROC. Although not always entirely accurate on aspects of general

---

<sup>127</sup> H. Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, "Diaspora Chinoise dans l'océan Indien Occidental", Thèse de Doctorat d'Université, University of Aix en Provence, 1978.

<sup>128</sup> H. Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, Chinese diaspora in western Indian ocean, Mauritius, 1985.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., Part II chapter 4, pp. 205-57 deals with South Africa.

South African history, the account does correctly highlight the position of the Chinese. By far the best and most accurate contribution to the historiography of the overseas Chinese in South Africa, is the section on the first decade of the twentieth century.

Here the impact of and reaction to the "anti-Asiatic" legislation in the Transvaal is dealt with. This is the only episode in South African history where the Chinese became politically active, along with Mahatma Gandhi and *satyagraha* or the passive resistance movement. With access to research material in Mauritius<sup>130</sup> and having an Indian ocean background, Pineo brings a refreshing dimension to the narrative, particularly in her awareness and discussion of the treatment of the Indians and Chinese in the Transvaal. Using Mauritian "dailies",<sup>131</sup> she has compiled a useful and unique statistical table of arrivals and departures of Chinese passengers between Mauritius and South Africa for the period 1880 to 1930.<sup>132</sup> Although her work did not include extensive research in South African archives, her study remains a valuable contribution to the field of South African

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. viii: National Archives of Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., Table xvii: "Movement of the free Chinese population between Mauritius and the principal ports of South Africa, 1880-1930", p. 257.

overseas Chinese historiography. It is a pity that it did not find its way on to South African library shelves, let alone leave a mark on the content of general South African history texts.

A historian from the United States of America, James Armstrong, has done pathbreaking work on the Chinese during the DEIC period.<sup>133</sup> His extensive work on Cape slavery and the slave trade in this period<sup>134</sup> unearthed fragmentary references and details of the lives of individual Chinese who went to the Cape.<sup>135</sup> According to Armstrong's ongoing research database, some 350 Chinese "names and personalia" have been identified as having been present at the Cape before 1795. He points out, however, that "at any time there were never more than 50 Chinese at the Cape".<sup>136</sup> His work includes interesting vignettes of the lives of those Chinese, both convict and free, who were more prominent in the historical record. His meticulous and painstaking research has added an indispensable element to both the history of the Dutch Cape colony and the South African Chinese.

---

<sup>133</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape" was first written in 1979 as a private project and was reworked until it was presented as a paper at the "Slave Route Project Conference" in October 1997.

<sup>134</sup> Armstrong and Worden, "The slaves, 1652-1834", pp. 109-83.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

In 1990 Chinese author, Lynn Pan, produced an epic tale of the "Chinese diaspora" throughout the world which includes brief references to the South African Chinese.<sup>137</sup> The book is primarily based on "existing literature, both scholarly and journalistic"<sup>138</sup> and therefore does not bring anything new to the history of the Chinese in South Africa in terms of information or sources. However, in covering an extensive period (c.1500 to the 1980s) Pan succeeds in weaving together the story of the "diaspora" throughout the world, presenting interesting comparisons and contrasts. It is a most readable text which reveals vivid insights into the lifestyle and historical experiences of Chinese communities abroad.

The first locally published compendium to focus exclusively on the history of the Chinese in South Africa, from the seventeenth century to the present, was written by two third-generation South African Chinese, Melanie Yap and Diane Leong Man.<sup>139</sup> Although neither of them is a trained historian, their extensive research

---

<sup>137</sup> Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor, pp. 26, 35, 63-7.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. xv.

<sup>139</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions.

and dogged determination produced a very well received and informative publication.<sup>140</sup>

The book was the product of the "South African Chinese History Project" launched initially by the Transvaal Chinese Association in 1982<sup>141</sup> and conducted from 1988 under the auspices of the Chinese Association of South Africa (CASA).<sup>142</sup> It took almost fourteen years to research and write the book which is testimony to the incredibly hard work and effort research in this field demands. The project was apparently criticized by some members of the Chinese community for not having begun earlier, because it meant the loss of the testimony of the first generation of Chinese settlers. But, as Yap and Man point out, "research could probably only have been conducted earlier with grave handicaps".<sup>143</sup> In earlier decades the community wished to maintain a "low-profile" in order not to attract attention, which it

---

<sup>140</sup> H. Mackie, "New history has been well researched", Business Day, 2 December 1996, p. 13; I. Jones, "Instant noodles to the rescue for this author", Sunday Times Metro, 5 January 1997, p.4; U. Ho, "Chinese community in search of an identity", The Star, 23 January, 1997, p.13; M. Robins, "SA's Chinese still proving they are true survivors", Cape Argus, 10 February 1997, p. 8; A. Duggan, "The invisible people: Myths and mysteries of SA's Chinese community", Sunday Times, 16 February 1997; G. Young, "Piecing together the Chinese jigsaw", Cape Times, 23 May 1997, p. 14; R. Rumney, "Not white, not black and ignored by apartheid: The twilight story of the SA Chinese", The Sunday Independent, 6 July 1997, p. 21.

<sup>141</sup> Transvaal Chinese Association, South African Chinese History Project, October 1987.

<sup>142</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, p. xvii.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii.

believed could lead to negative consequences in a racially repressive society. By the late 1980s, the political climate had begun to improve, and the research and publication of the book under the new democratic dispensation after 1994 was timely.<sup>144</sup> This was not unlike the experience of overseas Chinese in other countries who felt more inclined to write their histories once the host countries' immigration and discriminatory legislation against the Chinese had been struck from the statute book.

The intention of the book is "to fill a gap in available histories by producing the first comprehensive record of the Chinese in South Africa to the present" [my emphasis].<sup>145</sup> It has a broad chronological approach within thirteen discrete themes, which are often fastidiously developed in respect of each of the various local communities. Yap and Man indicate that the "detail on regional development may seem superfluous or even repetitious [sic] ... but [was] necessary to serve as a record of the activities of the communities in each area".<sup>146</sup> That the authors felt compelled to write a detailed "record" about all things Chinese is probably the book's greatest flaw, and detracts from the commendable contribution it makes to the history of one of South Africa's most neglected minorities.

---

<sup>144</sup> Harris, "The South African Chinese", p. 323.

<sup>145</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, p. xv.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. xvi.

The fact that "documenting this history [was] ... a community project"<sup>147</sup> greatly enhances the value of this book. With access to regional Chinese associations' records and interviews with, and documentation and photographs from the closely-knit Chinese community, numerous fascinating and new details about their past have been traced. The authors also succeeded in locating a considerable quantity of primary and secondary sources including an impressive, but not exhaustive, amount of archival documentation and numerous newspaper references.

In terms of Cushman's critique of overseas Chinese studies,<sup>148</sup> Colour, confusion and concessions (1996) succeeds in looking at the "community on its own terms"<sup>149</sup>. The attention is undoubtedly directed at the "Chinese and those historical developments that shaped the community".<sup>150</sup> However, according to Wang's appraisal of overseas Chinese studies there are indeed places where the book indulges in regional detail making it partly "irrelevant to everyone except the specialist"<sup>151</sup> or the Chinese community itself. It tends to become a self-reflexive, localized history, marginal to the history of China or South Africa. But given that

---

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

<sup>148</sup> See pp. 14-5 above.

<sup>149</sup> Cushman, "A 'colonial' casualty", p. 101.

<sup>150</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, p. xv.

<sup>151</sup> Wang, "The status of overseas Chinese studies", p. 2.

the book was mainly intended to record "minority group experiences which otherwise might have been lost", and that it is quite clearly the Chinese "community's story",<sup>152</sup> the authors should be commended for their industry in piecing together the puzzle of the South African Chinese past.<sup>153</sup>

There is, however, one facet of the history of the Chinese in South Africa that has consistently received specific and detailed historiographical attention from as far back as the 1920s. This concerns the half dozen years at the turn of the twentieth century when the indentured Chinese labourers were imported to work on the Witwatersrand gold mines. There are a number of reasons which explain this popularity, particularly as a topic for both local and overseas masters and doctoral theses. First, the amount of research material is vast and varied, and therefore a fairly wide range of resources is generally accessible to both the local and overseas scholar. Secondly, the topic comprises a very manageable unit of study:<sup>154</sup> the Chinese were recruited, exploited and repatriated within less than a decade between 1904 and 1910. Thirdly, the Chinese experiment had ramifications in

---

<sup>152</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>153</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this book see review article by Harris, "The South African Chinese" in South African Historical Journal, 36, May 1997, pp. 316-25.

<sup>154</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa", preface.

numerous fields: British imperial policy; British elections; South African politics; the local labour market; international migrant labour systems; and the economic development of the gold industry.

Most international studies on "Chinese coolie labour" include brief discussions of the South African Chinese labour experiment.<sup>155</sup> Reference is usually made to the following issues: the labour crisis which precipitated its introduction; the recruiting mechanisms; restrictions regulating the system; circumstances in the compound; ill-treatment by mine management; atrocities committed by the Chinese; resultant political furore; the economic impact and the regulations to terminate the system. This wide spectrum of aspects forms the basis of most of the works dealing with the subject.

The first study to focus exclusively on the topic in South Africa was a doctoral thesis completed in 1946 by Ignatius Meyer at the University of Pretoria.<sup>156</sup> It considers the issues aforementioned, but in much greater detail, making extensive use of the then

---

<sup>155</sup> See for example Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, chapter iv, pp. 161-216; T. Chen, Chinese migrations, with special reference to labour conditions, Washington, 1923, chapter vii.

<sup>156</sup> I.M. Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk van die Witwatersrandse goudvelde 1903-1910", D. Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1946. [The Chinese labour question of the Witwatersrand goldfields, 1903-1910].

recently opened local government records.<sup>157</sup> Another South African scholar, James Ambrose Reeves, criticizes this aspect of Meyer's study because its "detailed nature makes it sometimes very difficult to see the wood for the trees", and he argues that the "very full material is not always properly utilised".<sup>158</sup> Reeves does concede that the "fullness and conscientiousness" of the Meyer thesis does "render it difficult to say anything new" about the topic, but still claims that there is "sufficient justification for an attempt at a new synthesis".<sup>159</sup>

Reeves's new synthesis, completed in 1954, openly relied on Meyer's archival research.<sup>160</sup> It included a wider variety of source material, such as the surviving records of the Chamber of Mines, and presented a more analytical assessment of the Chinese experiment. The first of numerous overseas theses on the topic was completed a couple of years later, by a Chinese scholar Shee

---

<sup>157</sup> In the 1940s, archival documentation such as the "Foreign Labour Department (FLD), 1904-1910" and "Prime Minister's Office, Transvaal, (PM(T)), 1907-10", would have been opened having reached the thirty year maturation requirement.

<sup>158</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa", preface.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa", preface and bibliography.

Sung<sup>161</sup> at Columbia University.<sup>162</sup> It disappointingly made exclusive use of published "Western sources", and included no documentation from China or of Chinese origin.<sup>163</sup> It is a description of the labour system and adds little innovative to the understanding of the topic, other than to counter strongly "sanguine accounts" of the life of the Chinese labourer on the mines.<sup>164</sup>

These early studies were followed at fairly regular intervals throughout the next three decades by theses, papers and articles that focused on the wider ramifications of the Chinese labour scheme. They considered the controversy caused in British politics and British policy making,<sup>165</sup> the impact on Transvaal

---

<sup>161</sup> S. Sung, "Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal, 1904-07", M.A. thesis, University of Columbia, 1957; he also published an article on the topic entitled "Chinese labour in the Transvaal, 1904-07", Chinese Culture, 2, 2, July 1959 and a publication in Chinese, The contribution of Chinese labour to the Transvaal gold mines during the end of the Ch'ing period, Yang Ming Shan, Taiwan, 1974.

<sup>162</sup> Interview: Professor Shee Sung, Chinese Cultural University, Taipei, 21 May 1992.

<sup>163</sup> The only exception in his work written in English is a single footnote to *Huang-Chao hsn Wen-ksien t'ung-Koo*, Encyclopedia of the historical records of the Ch'ing dynasty, continued vol. 339, p. 10808 in Sung, "Chinese labour in the Transvaal", p. 108, fn. 89.

<sup>164</sup> Sung, "Chinese labour in the Transvaal", pp. 101-8.

<sup>165</sup> J.A. Weeks, "The controversy over Chinese labour in the Transvaal", Ph. D. thesis, Ohio State University, 1968; E.H. Brown, "The Transvaal labour ordinance and its impact on British politics, 1904-06", Ph. D. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1972; J. Lehman, "The case of the Chinese coolies, 1906-7", History Today, 24, 1, 1974, pp. 53-8; S. I. Gordon, "The Chinese labour controversy in British politics and policy-making", Ph. D. thesis, University of Ulster, 1987.

politics<sup>166</sup> and trade unionism<sup>167</sup> and the effects on South African race relations and labour systems.<sup>168</sup>

Besides analyses which focus exclusively on aspects of the Chinese labour experiment, the topic is also an integral part of studies that deal with wider issues of the period, such as the economy of the reconstruction era after the South African war,<sup>169</sup> Milner's anglicization policy,<sup>170</sup> Transvaal responsible

---

<sup>166</sup> H.H. de Villiers, "Generaal Botha en die Sjinese vraagstuk in Transvaal, 1903 tot 1910", M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1968; D. Ticktin, "Political intimidation by Rand mineowners with particular reference to the strange career, 1902-1907, of Thomas Ratcliffe, a miners' spokesman", University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February 1978.

<sup>167</sup> D. Ticktin, "The white labour movement in South Africa, 1902-1910, and working class solidarity", African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, April, 1976; D. Ticktin, "White labour's attitude, 1902-1904, towards the importation of indentured Chinese labourers by the Transvaal Chamber of Mines", Africa Seminar: Collected Papers, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1, 1978.

<sup>168</sup> J.H. Stacey, "Economic, social and labour aspects of the Chinese labour experiment in the Transvaal, 1903-07, in relation to the development of race relations in South Africa", M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1977; J.J. Baker, "The foreign labour contract system in the South African gold mining industry: The importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal, 1904-1907", M.A. thesis, University of Sussex, 1978.

<sup>169</sup> For example S.J. Esterhuizen, "Die ekonomiese en maatskaplike toestande van die gewese Republikeinse burgers in die Transvaal-kolonie, 1900-1910", D. Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1965; P.C. Grey, "The development of the gold mining industry on the Witwatersrand, 1902-1910", D. Litt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa, 1969; J.J. van Helten, "British and European economic investment in the Transvaal, with specific reference to the Witwatersrand goldfields district, 1886-1910", Ph. D. thesis, University of London, 1981.

<sup>170</sup> B. Sacks, South Africa: An imperial dilemma, Albuquerque, 1967, chapters 2 and 3; K. Williams, "The Imperial South African Association, Imperialist London and the South African crisis, 1896-1910", M.A. thesis, University of London, 1979.

government,<sup>171</sup> *Het Volk* politics,<sup>172</sup> trade union development,<sup>173</sup> the establishment of Union in 1910 and so on. It remains an inseparable and decisive factor in the lives of most of the leading figures of the time, whether they were for or against it. This is evident from the biographies of personalities such as Lord Milner,<sup>174</sup> Lord Selborne<sup>175</sup> and General Louis Botha.<sup>176</sup>

There remains but one publication on the topic worthy of special mention, and that is the work by historian Peter Richardson: Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal (1982).<sup>177</sup> It is the first and only monograph dealing exclusively with the subject, but it is essentially concerned with the workings of the international

---

<sup>171</sup> For example W.A. Kleynhans, "Politieke strominge en verantwoordelike bestuur in Transvaal, 1905-1909", M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1952.

<sup>172</sup> For example J.M.H. van Aardt, "Die Botha-bewind in Transvaal, 1907-1910", Ph. D. thesis, University of Potchefstroom, 1958.

<sup>173</sup> For example E.N. Katz, "The origins and early development of trade unionism in the Transvaal", M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1973; D. Ticktin, "The origins of the South African Labour Party, 1888-1910", Ph. D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1973.

<sup>174</sup> A.M. Gollin, Proconsul in politics: A study of Lord Milner in opposition and in power, Hertfordshire, 1964, chapters iii and iv.

<sup>175</sup> D.E. Torrance, The strange death of the Liberal empire: Lord Selborne in South Africa, London, 1996, chapter 3.

<sup>176</sup> J. van der Merwe, "Genl. Louis Bothase rol in die Transvaalse geskiedenis, 1902-1907", M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1988, chapter iii, pp. 42-74.

<sup>177</sup> P. Richardson, Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal, Hong Kong, 1982; Other publications by Richardson include "Coolies and Randlords"; "The recruiting of Chinese indentured labour for the South African gold mines, 1903-1908", Journal of African History, xviii, 1, 1977; "Coolies, peasants, and proletarians: The origins of Chinese indentured labour in South Africa, 1904-1907", in S. Marks and P. Richardson (eds), International labour migration: Historical perspectives, London, 1984, pp. 167-185; "Chinese indentured labour in the Transvaal gold mining industry, 1904-1910", in K. Saunders (ed.), Indentured labour in the British Empire, 1834-1920, London, 1984, pp. 260-90.

indentured labour system, with labour being mainly interpreted "as a commodity which is circulated".<sup>178</sup> Richardson pays particular attention to the complex crisis on the Rand which necessitated the introduction of Chinese labour as well as the

consequences of the interaction of a crisis of accumulation ... and state intervention ... as they affected the organisation of recruiting ... the procedures of embarkation and passage and ... the employment of these men in the mines.<sup>179</sup>

Unlike most studies on the subject, Richardson does not isolate South Africa as a unique example, but "integrates developments ... within the broader context of the global developments of capitalism".<sup>180</sup> Much of the book is devoted to a detailed analysis of the recruitment system, which is rated as "valuable for other migration studies of overseas Chinese".<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 2 quoting Philip Corrigan, "Feudal relics or capitalist monuments? Notes on the sociology of unfree labour", Sociology, xi, 3, September 1977, p. 445.

<sup>179</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 188. According to H. Simpson, Review of Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in Journal of Contemporary Asia, 14, 3, 1984, p. 374, more than 60% of the book is concerned with "analysing and describing the organisation and location of recruitment, embarkation and passage".

<sup>180</sup> P. Harries, Review of The foundations of the South African cheap labour system by N. Levy and Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 14, 1984, p. 737.

<sup>181</sup> C. Newbury, Review of Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in Journal of African History, 24, 3, 1983, p. 401; R. Kubicek, Review of Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in The American Historical Review, 88, October 1983, p. 1041.

His research includes sources not utilised before, such as the records of Barlow Rand Archives and official publications and newspapers written in Chinese.<sup>182</sup> His book was not only historiographically important because it was the first to focus specifically on the Chinese labour experiment, but also because it formed part of the social history which emerged in South Africa during the late 1970s.<sup>183</sup> Here, South Africa's great transformation - the discovery of diamonds and gold - is central, and capital and labour are the key issues. Richardson sees this as a period in which the foundations of the future political and economic system were laid, with all the elements of a racialized class and structure.<sup>184</sup>

Yet despite this book's pioneering and encompassing qualities, as well as the abundance of research on the topic over the past five decades, there are still aspects of the South African Chinese mine labour scheme which remain unexplored. In his conclusion, Richardson refers to a crucial component which has been overlooked: "the more overtly human and individual elements" of this subject.<sup>185</sup> Other aspects which have been neglected in the

---

<sup>182</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 263-6.

<sup>183</sup> J. Lewis, "South African labor history: A historiographical assessment", pp. 166-68 in Brown (et al), History from South Africa.

<sup>184</sup> F. Johnstone, Review in Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 1, October 1984, p. 165.

<sup>185</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 189.

historiography include the impact of the indentured labourers on the "free" or unindentured Chinese who already lived in the different South African colonies, as well as a comparative component within the colonial context.

Both before and after the production of much of the work discussed above, the author became involved in research on the Chinese in South Africa. The author's Master of Arts thesis, which focused on strike action on the Witwatersrand gold mines for the period 1886 to 1907, included a chapter on the Chinese indentured labourers, as well as discussion of their role in the 1907 strike.<sup>186</sup> From that time the author became interested in the Chinese and included them in some work on the multi-cultural nature of the early Reef society,<sup>187</sup> as well as a comparative study on the origin and development of Australian and South African trade unionism.<sup>188</sup>

Aware of the free Chinese community outside the mining compounds, the resistance and strike action of the Chinese mine labourers was re-examined, hoping to find some connection between them and

---

<sup>186</sup> K.L. Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand gold mines (1886-1907), with specific reference to the 1907 strike", M.A. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1986.

<sup>187</sup> K.L. Thorpe, "The origins and early years of a multi-cultural Reef labour society", *Historia*, 31, 2, October 1986.

<sup>188</sup> K.L. Harris, "Early trade unionism on the gold mines of South Africa and Australia: A comparison", *Historia*, 35, 2, November 1990.

the free Chinese community, but to no avail.<sup>189</sup> Research on the history of the free Chinese community was then pursued,<sup>190</sup> which highlighted the crucial role they played in *satyagraha* in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>191</sup> The author then realised the growing field of overseas Chinese studies and the opportunity for collaborative comparative work with other scholars.<sup>192</sup> Other papers and publications completed on the free Chinese community in South Africa include analyses of their historiography,<sup>193</sup> their economic position,<sup>194</sup> and their ambivalent status and relationship within apartheid South Africa.<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Harris, "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance".

<sup>190</sup> K.L. Harris, "The Chinese in South Africa to 1910: A preliminary overview", *Academica Sinica*, Taipei and Institute of Asian Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, June 1992; Harris, "The Chinese 'South Africans'"; Harris, "The Chinese in South Africa".

<sup>191</sup> K.L. Harris "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance", Conference on Gandhi and his significance: Centenary celebrations, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, June 1993 published in Brown and Prozesky, Gandhi and South Africa.

<sup>192</sup> K.L. Harris and F. Pieke, "The status of the overseas Chinese in the Netherlands and South Africa: A comparative perspective"; K.L. Harris and J. Ryan, "Chinese immigration to Australia and South Africa: A comparative analysis of legislative control", Comparative perspectives conference: Last half century of Chinese overseas, University of Hong Kong, December 1994; both published in Sinn, The last half century of Chinese overseas.

<sup>193</sup> K.L. Harris, "Commentary on overseas Chinese studies in South Africa", ISSCO Bulletin, 2, 1, March 1994; Harris, "The South African Chinese".

<sup>194</sup> K.L. Harris, "The South African Chinese: An economic threat", International symposium on ethnic Chinese economy, University of Shantou, Peoples' Republic of China, November 1993 published as "Chinese merchants on the Rand, c. 1850-1910", South African Historical Journal, 33, November 1995, pp. 155-68.

<sup>195</sup> K.L. Harris, "Accepting the group, but not the area: The South African Chinese and the Group Areas Act", Sixteenth Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society, University of Pretoria, July 1997.

Elements of this research, together with aspects which have remained unexplored historiographically, have been selected and expanded - sources permitting - to form the foundation of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### Early Overseas Chinese in South Africa

This chapter traces the early history of the Chinese in colonial South Africa during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In order to understand the position of the small number of Chinese present in the region, the wider history of overseas Chinese travel is explored. In addition to contextualizing the South African Chinese globally, this background serves to explain the nature and life style of the overseas Chinese in South Africa.

#### I

For over fifteen centuries millions of Chinese have travelled to and settled, either temporarily or permanently, in foreign lands throughout the world. They are currently found in almost every country, with the exception of Greenland, Iceland and a few states in north and west Africa<sup>1</sup> - giving substance to the saying: "Where the sun shines, one finds the Chinese".<sup>2</sup> This omnipresence is quite remarkable given that China had traditional

---

<sup>1</sup> Wang, The organization of Chinese emigration, p. xi; Chang, "The distribution and occupations", p. 89; MacNair, The Chinese abroad, pp. xiii, xvii.

<sup>2</sup> F. Tseng, "Ethnicity and circumstance: The Chinese in Surinam and the Netherlands", United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, May 1990, p. 1.

beliefs - and up to the end of the nineteenth century - severe strictures that opposed emigration. The first contact between China and the outside world can be traced back to 230 A.D.,<sup>3</sup> but it was only in the mid-nineteenth century that large-scale or modern emigration of Chinese overseas began. Initially China's restrictive policy on emigration remained unaltered, but as the reasons for the emigration of so many of her people increased, she was forced to change her position. From the end of the nineteenth century, agreements regarding free emigration and contract labour were concluded with various countries and, in some cases, quasi-diplomatic relations were established.

Prior to the substantial importation of Chinese indentured labour to the Transvaal mines in 1904, when the first treaty was made between the Transvaal Colony and China, there was a fleeting presence of Chinese individuals in the southern African region. Both here and elsewhere, the initial perceptions of the Chinese by the Western colonial officials were overwhelmingly favourable. However, this was not always the case among the settlers of the colonies. Their attitudes, which were already prevalent before China's modern emigration, became so entrenched that they later

---

<sup>3</sup> Wang, The organization of Chinese emigration, p. 1; Huang, The legal status of the Chinese abroad, p. xxii refers to 399 A.D. as the first overseas expedition.

found expression in restraining legislation and resolute anti-Sinicism.

During many of China's dynastic periods, emigration, or the leaving of the Middle Kingdom, was either strongly discouraged, or forbidden by imperial decree and accompanied by dire consequences if transgressed.<sup>4</sup> Historically the leaders of the Chinese Empire regarded their country as essentially continental, and the archaic sanction was that it was the centre of the civilized world, self-contained and universal.<sup>5</sup> Since ancient times this attitude was evident in the names the Chinese gave their land: the "Central or Middle Kingdom" (*Chung Kuo*) and "All Under Heaven" (*T'ien Hsia*).<sup>6</sup> The surrounding territories were regarded as inferior and inhabited by "barbarians" and they were therefore not to be associated with.<sup>7</sup> Emigration was regarded as being neither necessary nor desirable. Furthermore, filial bonds,

---

<sup>4</sup> R.L. Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, 1874-1878, Taipei, 1982, p. 389; T. Filesi, China and Africa in the Middle Ages, London, 1972, p. 7; Fairbank, China, p. 191; Chang, "The distribution and occupations", p. 90; S.W. Greif, The overseas Chinese in New Zealand, Singapore, 1972, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> G. Wang, China and the world since 1949: The impact of independence, modernity and revolution, London, 1977, pp. 2-3; M.W. Meyer, China: An introduction, Totowa, 1978, pp. 2-3; Wong, "The transformation of culture", pp. 204-5.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer, China, p. 2; Tan, Your Chinese roots, p. 37; A. Toynbee, "Introduction", in A. Toynbee (ed.), Half the world: The history and culture of China and Japan, London, 1973, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> V. Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, London, 1967, p. 9; M. Banno, China and the West, 1858-1861: The origins of the Tsungli Yamen, Massachusettes, 1964, p. 2; Fairbank, China, pp. xvi, 25, 44-5; Meyer, China, p. 2; Fong, The Chinese in New Zealand, p. 14.

ancestor worship, pride of country and the homogeneity of Chinese civilization served to counter any form of mass Chinese emigration.<sup>8</sup> For example, those who deserted the vicinity of their ancestors' graves leaving them without ritual attention, were regarded as "outcasts and vagabonds".<sup>9</sup> This social prejudice was held to account for the lack of emigration of the upper classes and of women, who it was believed had to remain in the ancestral village.<sup>10</sup> To varying degrees, many Chinese emperors were also of the opinion that emigration was a "disgrace to the mother country"<sup>11</sup> and therefore emigrants were denounced or ignored.

This does not imply that all Chinese conformed and did not venture beyond China's borders. Neither social disrepute nor legal precariousness deterred merchants from attaining a livelihood in other countries.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, they travelled abroad to trade from the beginning of their civilization, at

---

<sup>8</sup> MacNair, The Chinese abroad, p. 28; Coolidge, Chinese immigration, p. 16; Greif, The overseas Chinese in New Zealand, p. 3; Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, p. 390.

<sup>9</sup> Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> M.R. Coolidge, Chinese immigration, Taipei, 1968, p. 16; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 148; For further details see chapter 4.

<sup>11</sup> C.Y. Choi, Chinese migration and settlement in Australia, Sydney, 1975, pp. 14-5; Coolidge, Chinese immigration, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> D.J. Li, The essence of Chinese civilization, Toronto, 1967, p. 313.

first overland and then by sea.<sup>13</sup> There were also "mixed considerations" in the Chinese conception of the importance of trade. While materially it meant prosperity, ideologically it conflicted with both the belief in China's superior self-sufficiency,<sup>14</sup> as well as the anti-commercial Confucian theory, dating back to the first century A.D., which regarded trade as something inferior.<sup>15</sup> Private overseas merchants were thus doubly condemned, first for absenting themselves from the ancestral land, albeit temporarily, and secondly, for indulging in an activity relegated to the lowest position in the traditional Confucian order of society.<sup>16</sup>

Official overseas expeditions, on the other hand, were legitimate and were portrayed as "tributary missions".<sup>17</sup> Maritime commerce in any form was declared a "monopoly of the state" and government-sanctioned envoys were despatched abroad to induce foreign nations to bring tribute to the Chinese emperor and

---

<sup>13</sup> T. Chen, Emigrant communities in South China, Shanghai, 1939, p. 1; Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, p. 237; Haw, China, pp. 86-87; Wang, The organization of Chinese emigration, pp. 1-4.

<sup>14</sup> Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, p. 248; Tan, Your Chinese roots, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> J.J.L. Duyvendak, China's discovery of Africa, London, 1949, p. 26; Li, The essence of Chinese civilization, p. 313.

<sup>16</sup> D. Bodde, Essays on Chinese civilization, Princeton, 1981, p. 41; R.K. Douglas, Society in China, London, 1895, p. 139; A. Cotterell, China: A concise cultural history, London, 1988, p. xvi.

<sup>17</sup> Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 84.

thereby acknowledge his power and China's magnificence.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, the purpose of the official Chinese expeditions was ostensibly diplomatic and prestigious, not exploratory, commercial, colonizing or piratical.<sup>19</sup>

Before the dawn of the global age of sail, China's ship-building capacity for inland waterways and seafaring was well advanced. Archaeological evidence bears testimony to the sophistication of Chinese ship construction, nautical technology and maritime successes.<sup>20</sup> According to sinologist John King Fairbank,

[f]ew classically educated chroniclers, ... ever went to sea. Chinese seafarers did not write memoirs. Because the sea, unlike the steppe, did not harbor rivals for power, it had been given little importance in Chinese history.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, even the most renowned of all Chinese expeditions is only recorded in a most fragmentary way,<sup>22</sup> through second-hand accounts and the discovery of two commemorative stone tablets

---

<sup>18</sup> F.W. Mote, "China in the age of Columbus" in J.A. Levenson (ed.), Circa 1492: Art in the age of exploration, Washington, 1991, p. 343; Duyvendak, China's discovery of Africa, p. 26; Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, p. 247; Tan, Your Chinese roots, p. 37; Filesi, China and Africa, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Fairbank, China, p. 138.

<sup>20</sup> Mote, "China in the age of Columbus", pp. 341-2; Cotterell, China, p. xix; Filesi, China and Africa, p. 14; Fairbank, China, pp. 137-8, 191-2.

<sup>21</sup> Fairbank, China, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup> Duyvendak, China's discovery of Africa, p. 28; Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, pp. 248-9; Fairbank, China, p. 138; Mote, "China in the age of Columbus", p. 341.

bearing inscriptions.<sup>23</sup> These famous voyages were undertaken during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by the Grand Eunuch, Admiral Cheng Ho (Zheng He).<sup>24</sup> Seven excursions were sanctioned by three consecutive emperors between 1405 and 1433.<sup>25</sup> They were carried out to elevate the prestige of the dynasty by displaying China's power through tribute relations.<sup>26</sup> The fleets included on average 60 three-masted ships which were 150 metres in length, and 250 smaller vessels, carrying between 25 000 and 30 000 men.<sup>27</sup> They sailed all over the South China and Arabian seas, Indian ocean and along the coast of east Africa, prompting rulers from a multitude of countries to offer tribute and thereby accept China's suzerainty.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> J.J.L. Duyvendak, "The true dates of the Chinese maritime expeditions in the early fifteenth century", in P. Pelliot and J.J.L. Duyvendak, T'oung Pao archives, Leiden, 1938, pp. 341-412.

<sup>24</sup> F. Michael, China through the ages: History of a civilization, London, 1986, p. 149; E.L. Dreyer, Early Ming China: A political history, 1355-1435, California, 1982, pp. 194-5; L. Levanthes, When China ruled the seas, New York, 1994; Dawson, The Chinese experience, pp. xxiii.

<sup>25</sup> L.C. Goodrich, Dictionary of Ming biography, 1368-1644, New York, 1976, pp. 194-8; Dreyer, Early Ming China, pp. 195-8.

<sup>26</sup> C.P. Fitzgerald, The southern expansion of the Chinese people, London, 1972, p. 93; Meyer, China, p. 154; Mote, "China in the age of Columbus", p. 343.

<sup>27</sup> P.A. Cohen, "Europe goes East: The first impact of the West on China and Japan", in A. Toynbee (ed.), Half the world: The history and culture of China and Japan, London, 1973, p. 266; Time Life (eds), Time Life: Voyages of discovery, Amsterdam, 1989; Goodrich, Dictionary of Ming biography, pp. 195-8; Fitzgerald, The southern expansion, p. 95.

<sup>28</sup> D.C. Twitchett, "Chinese politics and society from the Bronze age to the Manchus", in A. Toynbee, Half the world: The history and culture of China and Japan, London, 1973, p. 71; Goodrich, Dictionary of Ming biography, p. 199; Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, p. 247; Mote, "China in the age of Columbus", p. 343.

After 1433 these great Chinese naval enterprises were brought to an abrupt end by Confucian-trained scholar-bureaucrats who "opposed trade and foreign contact on principle".<sup>29</sup> They declared the expeditions "wasteful and improper" for a "Confucian agrarian-orientated society",<sup>30</sup> and proscribed overseas travel and trade by Chinese ships or nationals.<sup>31</sup> It was decreed that "the building of ships to go to barbarian countries shall everywhere be stopped" and it became an "offence to build craft with two or more masts".<sup>32</sup> It has also been contended that the court officials were jealous of the eunuch's power, so much so that a few decades later Cheng Ho's voyage reports were destroyed by the War Ministry in order to prevent other eunuchs from organizing similar expeditions.<sup>33</sup> Officially this was done to ensure that such "mistaken policies should not be pursued again".<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> P.B. Ebrey (ed.), Chinese civilization and society, New York, 1981, p. 209; C.O. Hucker, China's imperial past: An introduction to Chinese history and culture, Stanford, 1975, p. 291; Fairbank, China, p. 138; Snow, The star raft, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Mote, "China in the age of Columbus", pp. 338, 345.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 345; Ebrey, Chinese civilization, pp. 209-10; Meyer, China, p. 155; Hucker, China's imperial past, p. 291.

<sup>32</sup> Cotterell, China, p. 201; A. Hutchinson, China's Africa revolution, London, 1975, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Duyvendak, "The true dates of the Chinese maritime expeditions", pp. 397-8; Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, p. 248; Fairbank, China, p. 138; Cotterell, China, p. 202; Fitzgerald, The southern expansion, p. 101; Levathes, When China ruled the seas, pp. 179-80.

<sup>34</sup> Hutchinson, China's Africa revolution, p. 9; Cotterell, China, p. 201; Duyvendak, China's discovery of Africa, pp. 27-8; Fairbank, China, p. 138; Mirsky, The great Chinese travelers, pp. 248-9.

From the latter half of fifteenth century, the Ming dynasty reverted to a strongly isolationist policy, described as an "inward-looking defensive fortress mentality"<sup>35</sup> and a "triumph of introversion".<sup>36</sup> Not until the twentieth century, would Chinese ocean-borne travel or trade revive.<sup>37</sup> But while China attempted to "retire from the world scene",<sup>38</sup> and fight the invasions on her northern frontier, indifference to sea power would ironically expose her to the increasingly unchecked depredations of Western naval and commercial penetration.<sup>39</sup> This was particularly evident during the next, and last, imperial dynasty, the Qing (Ch'ing or Manchu).

In 1644, a small northern frontier community, the Manchu, succeeded in taking over China in the midst of internal rebellion from the weakening and corrupt Ming dynasty. With the cooperation of Chinese military and administrative officials, as well as a deep commitment to maintain Chinese life and customs, the Manchu were able to rule the empire for a "longer span of time than any other conquest dynasty".<sup>40</sup> Between 1644 and 1912, the Qing government conserved Chinese tradition, Confucian bureaucracy and

---

<sup>35</sup> Twitchett, "Chinese politics and society", p. 71; Meyer, China, p. 155.

<sup>36</sup> Snow, The star raft, p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> K.S. Latourette, China, New Jersey, 1964, p. 73.

<sup>38</sup> Fairbank, China, p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> Cotterell, China, p. xix; Meyer, China, 155; Fairbank, China, p. 139.

<sup>40</sup> Michael, China, p. 159; Fairbank, China, pp. 144-5; Meyer, China, pp. 163-4; Wang, China and the world, pp. 3-4.

state structures. In line with this, and their fear of insurgents in the south, Ming loyalists and political dissidents, they reinforced the application of Ming emigration laws and introduced stricter controls and more punitive legislation.<sup>41</sup> The death penalty was introduced as a deterrent,<sup>42</sup> and the new legislation explicitly stated that:

All officers of government, soldiers, and private citizens, who clandestinely proceed to sea trade, or who remove to foreign islands for the purpose of inhabiting and cultivating the same, shall be punished according to the law against communicating with rebels and enemies and consequently suffer death by being beheaded.<sup>43</sup>

As the Qing government entrenched their political control over China, the prohibition on emigration was directed more vehemently against those who violated their Confucian moral responsibility to family and ancestors. They were considered "social and economic misfits whose presence within China's borders were not beneficial".<sup>44</sup> In 1712, an edict was issued which requested foreign governments to repatriate all Chinese citizens who were abroad "so that they may be executed", and in 1773 severe

---

<sup>41</sup> Yen, Coolies and mandarins, p. xiv; Fitzgerald, China and the overseas Chinese, p. 5, Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, p. 390; Choi, Chinese migration, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Coolidge, Chinese immigration, p. 16; Fitzgerald, China and the overseas Chinese, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, p. 9; MacNair, The Chinese abroad, pp. 1-2.

<sup>44</sup> Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, p. 390.

punishments, such as the wearing of cangues,<sup>45</sup> were imposed on Chinese headmen who organized illegal emigration.<sup>46</sup> Enforcement of the law was however practically impossible, and throughout the first two centuries of the Qing dynasty emigration increased,<sup>47</sup> as did the penetration of and interaction with the West. Ultimately the Qing were forced to come to terms with this reality.

## II

From the beginning of the nineteenth century the initially insignificant number of overseas Chinese began to grow dramatically. Unauthorised trading communities emerged in Southeast Asia,<sup>48</sup> and the advance of Western colonization and commerce in the region, enticed more Chinese - both free and contracted - to go abroad. The First China War (1840-2)<sup>49</sup> aimed mainly "to force the Chinese government to permit diplomatic contracts and to improve the insupportable conditions under which foreigners were allowed to trade".<sup>50</sup> The peace treaty of Nanking

---

<sup>45</sup> "Cangues" were heavy wooden collars. They had to be worn for six months at the port where they arranged the transportations or were captured.

<sup>46</sup> Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court", pp. 62-4, 75; Pan, Sons of the yellow emperor, pp. 8-9.

<sup>47</sup> Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, p. 390; Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, pp. 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> M.F. Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade, 1845-1875", Journal of Asian and African Studies, 3, 1968, p. 257; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 23; Chen, Chinese migrations, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Also known as the "Opium war" or "Anglo-Chinese war".

<sup>50</sup> Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, p. 10.

(1842) reflected these objectives: five ports were opened for Western trade<sup>51</sup> and so too the flood gates for Chinese emigration to the West.

Under increased pressure from Western powers, such as Britain, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands, the Qing government had to agree to more treaties: some to grant better trade concessions to the West and others to legalize the transportation of Chinese "coolie" labour abroad.<sup>52</sup> In order to disguise their true imperialistic motives, the clauses of these agreements drafted by the West included a "principle of reciprocity" whereby China was accorded the right to protect its subjects overseas.<sup>53</sup> The Qing government was slow to respond. As Wang points out, "Chinese sojourners' communities abroad were not under Chinese official control" and "[g]rowth of the Overseas Chinese settlement was not fostered nor even countenanced by the Chinese imperial government".<sup>54</sup> It only began to exercise this right in the

---

<sup>51</sup> K.S. Latourette, A short history of the Far East, New York, 1947, p. 369; Meyer, China, p. 169.

<sup>52</sup> Chen, Chinese migrations, p. 4; Fitzgerald, China and the overseas Chinese, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Fitzgerald, China and the overseas Chinese, pp. 5-6.

<sup>54</sup> Fairbank, China, p. 193 quoting Wang Gungwu.

1880s,<sup>55</sup> and although it unwillingly recognized the right of its subjects to emigrate under licence from the 1860s, the laws against emigration were only officially repealed in 1894.<sup>56</sup>

The growth of Western colonization and the abolition of slavery in the mid-nineteenth century<sup>57</sup> resulted in an insatiable demand for unskilled or menial labour. When the Indian government temporarily prohibited further recruitment of its subjects in 1839,<sup>58</sup> China became the West's "happy hunting ground" for Asian workforces of the plantations, mines and railways of many developing colonies around the world.<sup>59</sup> Earlier contact and experience with the Chinese in various Eastern colonies had led the imperial powers to believe that "no race in the world would do them better service than the Chinese".<sup>60</sup> Unauthorised

---

<sup>55</sup> See for example Sieh Ta-Jên to the Marquis of Salisbury, 25 September 1890 wherein the Tsung-li Yamen investigates Chinese consular representation in Her Britannic Majesty's dominions in CAR: Government House (GH): 1/451, 7: Papers received from Secretary of State, London. General despatches. The issue of exequaturs to consular officers appointed by the Chinese government, 31 January 1891.

<sup>56</sup> Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, p. 390, 400; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 24; Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya, p. 9; Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court", p. 66; Chang, "The distribution and occupations", p. 90.

<sup>57</sup> Yen, Coolies and mandarins, pp. 32-3; Irick, Ch'ing policy toward the coolie trade, p. 390; Reeves, "Chinese mine labour", p. 2; Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade", p. 257.

<sup>58</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 87.

<sup>59</sup> Marks and Richardson, "Introduction", p. 11; Wang, China and the Chinese overseas, p. 24.

<sup>60</sup> Pan, Sons of the yellow emperor, p. 26; W.H. Helldingen and H. Hoogenberk, (eds), Mission interrupted: The Dutch in the East Indies and their work in the XXth century, Elsevier, 1945, p. 62.

emigration and fraudulent methods of recruitment of Chinese labour were rife both before and after the Qing government instituted regulations.<sup>61</sup> The credit-ticket or brokerage system accounted for much of this traffic: Chinese brokers or touts paid the passage of the emigrant, but had a lien on his services until the debt was paid with interest. The lien could be either on family or property in China, or might be sold to a ship's captain or an employer.<sup>62</sup> The system was subject to extreme abuse. Exorbitant commissions were charged as brokers bribed officials, while the obtaining of emigrants often amounted to kidnapping or the sale of captives.<sup>63</sup>

Another form of emigration which became significant after 1845 was the contract system.<sup>64</sup> According to Persia Campbell, the main difference between it and the credit-ticket system was "one of initiative" or the fact that "the principals in the contract system ... were foreigners".<sup>65</sup> Pan argues that it is difficult to distinguish between the two: although the credit-ticket procedure

---

<sup>61</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 97.

<sup>62</sup> C. Price, "'White' restrictions on 'coloured' immigration", Race, 7, 3, 1966, p. 218; Stacey, "Economic, social and labour aspects", p. 75; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. xvii; Chen, Chinese migrations, pp. 14-6.

<sup>63</sup> Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court", p. 67; Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade", p. 258; Mitchison, The overseas Chinese, p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigrants, pp. 94-5; Wang, China and overseas Chinese, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigrants, pp. xvii-xviii.

dealt with free emigrants, as opposed to the indentured labourer of the contract system, "the bond blurred into the free".<sup>66</sup> The contract system also involved Chinese recruiters or "crimps" who were employed by foreign firms and paid per head for the number of medically acceptable "coolies" they brought to the emigration depots. A small advance was often made to the labourer, whereon he signed a contract and was transported to a colonial destination to undertake menial labour for a fixed period of time before being repatriated.<sup>67</sup> At the end of a term of service the labourers often continued their servitude for "alleged debt, crimes and other fictitious charges".<sup>68</sup> Although the Chinese government had to give nominal approval to these operations,<sup>69</sup> extortion was also rife.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, the common designation given to these two systems was "the buying and selling of pigs" or the "pig trade".<sup>71</sup>

While Western demand for labour and the opportunities in the West's colonies represented a crucial factor in the escalation of Chinese emigration during the late-nineteenth century,

---

<sup>66</sup> Pan, Sons of the yellow emperor, p. 45.

<sup>67</sup> Mitchison, The overseas Chinese, p. 17.

<sup>68</sup> Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade", p. 259.

<sup>69</sup> MacNair, The Chinese abroad, pp. 16-8; Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court", p. 68.

<sup>70</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> D. Northrup, Indentured labour in the age of imperialism, 1834-1922, Cambridge, 1995, p. 5; Mitchison, The overseas Chinese, p. 17; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 95.

circumstances within China played an equally important role in the supply. Many Chinese opted for emigration to seek a new life away from the pressure of extreme want and impoverishment.<sup>72</sup> Natural calamities, such as the famines of 1849, 1876 and 1878,<sup>73</sup> and intermittent droughts and floods, caused severe food shortages.<sup>74</sup> Added to these pressures on the land was the Ch'ing population explosion: figures were estimated to have risen from 150 million in the early 1700s to 450 million in the 1850s.<sup>75</sup> The resultant social dislocation was exacerbated by internal rebellion and strife, such as the Taiping rebellion (1850 -1864), as well as clan wars and local feuds which left famine and disease in their wake.<sup>76</sup> These upheavals, compounded by foreign wars and unrelenting economic pressures heightened by the increased use of steam in navigation, induced thousands of people

---

<sup>72</sup> P. Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians: The origins of Chinese labourers in the South African gold mines, 1904-1907", Collected papers on South African research in progress, iii, 1978; Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court" p. 64.

<sup>73</sup> Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court", p. 64; Fairbank, China, p. 187; Alexander, Silent invasion, p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> Yao, S., "The geographical distribution of floods and droughts in Chinese history, 206 B.C. - A.D. 1911", The Far Eastern Quarterly, ii, 4, 1943, p. 357.

<sup>75</sup> J.D. Spence, The Chinese roundabout: Essays in history and culture, New York, 1992, p. 168; R.J. Smith, China's cultural heritage: The Ch'ing dynasty, 1644-1912, London, 1983, p. 11; Chen, Chinese migrations, p. 5; Dawson, The Chinese experience, p. xxiii.

<sup>76</sup> J.D. Spence, The search for modern China, London, 1990, p. 210; Meyer, China, pp. 171-2, 177; Wang, "The attitude of the Ch'ing court", p. 64; Tan, Your Chinese roots, p. 39.

to seek refuge abroad,<sup>77</sup> and become part of the mid-nineteenth century Chinese "diaspora".<sup>78</sup>

This large-scale emigration emanated mainly from the southern coastal regions, such as the Fukien and Kwangtung provinces.<sup>79</sup> The geographical proximity of these regions to the sea meant a long association with the outside world, which in turn exposed them to the variety of economic opportunities abroad.<sup>80</sup> In 1961, Lois Mitchison pointed out that for southerners it was easier to opt for emigration as a solution to their problems, "because their ancestors had themselves emigrated within historic memory from central and northern China".<sup>81</sup> There had been what Stuart Greif calls a "centuries-old natural Chinese expansion southwards".<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Chang, "The distribution and occupations", p. 92; Tan, Your Chinese roots, p. 43; K.S. Latourette, The Chinese: Their history and culture, New York, 1964, p. 372.

<sup>78</sup> The term "diaspora" is rejected by some overseas Chinese specialists because of its "origin in the Greek Bible, with its Jewish messianic implications that the diaspora would one day be regathered to the motherland" which is "unacceptable in South East Asia". Reid, "Entrepreneurial minorities", p. 36; Wang, "Greater China and Chinese overseas", p. 927.

<sup>79</sup> R.H. Lee, The Chinese in the United States of America, Hong Kong, 1960, p. 69; W.L. Cator, The economic position of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies, Chicago, 1936, p. 25; Fitzgerald, The southern expansion, p. 86; Fong, The Chinese in New Zealand, p. 14.

<sup>80</sup> Yen, Mandarins and coolies p. xiv; Coolidge, Chinese immigration, p. 15; MacNair, The Chinese abroad, p. 31; Chen, Chinese migrations, p. 11; Fong, Chinese immigration, p. 14.

<sup>81</sup> Mitchison, The overseas Chinese, p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> Greif, The overseas Chinese, p. 1.

This ties in with the more recent opinion of historian Philip Kuhn who contends that China, as the ancestral land (*zuguo*), was a "gigantic school for emigration".<sup>83</sup> He argues that China's "long history of internal migration is essential background for understanding overseas emigration" since it "shared certain attributes with migration overseas".<sup>84</sup> These included the export of labour, merchants and their capital from one region to another in order to support the family or to obtain better profit, particularly in regions with increased population pressure on land. The development of institutions, such as brotherhoods (secret societies), banking networks and regional lodges were also common.<sup>85</sup> This latter custom was directly related to the overseas phenomenon known as "chain migration"<sup>86</sup> by which kinsmen and clansmen provided support such as employment, accommodation and contacts in the host country.

Kuhn believes that the common historical experiences in China also prepared and enabled the overseas Chinese "to survive and sometimes to prosper in lands far from home".<sup>87</sup> China, as the "school for emigrants", taught them skills such as how to "do

---

<sup>83</sup> Kuhn, "The ancestral land", pp. 3, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Daniels, Asian American, p. 81; Pan, Sons of the yellow emperor, p. 107; Harris and Pieke, "Integration or segregation", p. 124.

<sup>87</sup> Kuhn, "The ancestral land", p. 3.

business in an environment where political power was held by others".<sup>88</sup> For centuries the provincial officials in China represented the conquest dynasties of, for example, the Mongols (Yuan dynasty, 1279-1368) or Manchu (Qing dynasty, 1644-1912).<sup>89</sup> These circumstances also demonstrated the advantages of maintaining a "low political profile"<sup>90</sup> so as not to antagonize those in immediate control. In sum, Kuhn declares that the overseas Chinese communities came from a "society of uprooted people from all over southern Fujian [Fukien], who had become internal migrants before they became emigrants".<sup>91</sup>

One aspect which Kuhn does not touch on in his discussion of skills developed in the "school of emigrants", is the very ambivalent social and psychological position in which the overseas Chinese emigrants found themselves. Despite the lack of evidence, one can only assume that with a homeland legacy of anti-emigration, and a barrage of anti-immigration and "yellow peril" sentiment in the land of settlement, their's must have been an invidious situation. At one level, the home government regarded them as "deserters", while at another, the host society despised them as "alien intruders". In this sense the overseas

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>89</sup> Michael, China, pp. 145, 159; Meyer, China, pp. 163-4.

<sup>90</sup> Kuhn, "The ancestral land", pp. 6, 11.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

Chinese were, as Ching-hwang Yen wrote, "men and losers of the two worlds. They lived in one but carried the burden of the two".<sup>92</sup>

Whatever the preparation or the consequence, the Chinese persisted in emigrating at an ever increasing rate from the mid-nineteenth century. After the initial attraction to Southeast Asia, both before and after Western colonization in the region, the lure of gold in America, Australia, New Zealand and ultimately South Africa, induced both free and indentured Chinese emigration.<sup>93</sup> As Sir John Bowring, British Consul Plenipotentiary and Governor of Hong Kong from 1847 to 1860, noted

[this] marvellous exodus of the Chinese from their country is one of the most remarkable ethnological circumstances in modern history and is producing and will produce extraordinary and lasting results.<sup>94</sup>

### III

Of all the continents in the world to experience these results, Africa appears to have been the last.<sup>95</sup> The first contact between China and Africa is generally believed to have been made by the

---

<sup>92</sup> Yen, Coolies and Mandarins, p. xiii-xiv.

<sup>93</sup> Tan, Your Chinese roots, pp. 44-5; Coolidge, Chinese immigration, p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> Coolidge, Chinese immigration, p. 15.

<sup>95</sup> Chang, "The distribution and occupations", p. 95.

spectacular maritime voyages of the Ming dynasty.<sup>96</sup> Since the 1920s, however, various claims have been made about Chinese arrivals which predated this period,<sup>97</sup> often with details of extraneous consequences. The evidence cited includes accounts by Arab and European travellers, African oral tradition and customs, medieval maps and Bushman rock art, as well as archaeological discoveries in Africa, such as Chinese pottery, bottles and money. While some scholars merely record the data which infers a Chinese presence without further conjecture<sup>98</sup>, others draw rather fanciful conclusions.<sup>99</sup> For example, in 1927 E.H.L. Schwarz declared that contact between the Chinese sailors and "friendly natives" from 900 A.D. led to the rise of "Chinese-Bantu half-castes", the Bahurutsi, who were a "yellow race, with

---

<sup>96</sup> Duyvendak, China's discovery of Africa, p. 26; Dreyer, Early Ming China, pp. 195-8; P. Wheatley, "The land of Zanzi: exegetical notes on Chinese knowledge of East Africa prior to A.D. 1500", in R.W. Steel and R.M. Prothero (eds), Geographers and the Tropics: Liverpool essays, London, 1964, p. 141.

<sup>97</sup> Snow, The star raft, p. 2; Filesi, China and Africa, pp. 1-3.

<sup>98</sup> R.A. Dart, "The historical succession of cultural impacts upon South Africa", Nature, 21 March, 1925, pp. 425-9; R.A. Dart, "A Chinese character as a wall motive in Rhodesia", South African Journal of Science, xxxvi, December 1939, pp. 474-6; C.E. Fripp, "Chinese medieval trade with Africa", Nada, 17, 1940, p. 18; F.R. Paver, "Far Eastern contacts with southern Africa", South African Journal of Science, xxxix, January 1943, pp. 89-94; R.A. Dart, "The coming of China to Africa", The oriental horizons of Africa, Johannesburg, 1954, pp. 13-5; Filesi, China and Africa, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> E.H.L. Schwarz, "The Chinese in Africa", The South African Nation, 12 February 1927, pp. 7-8; W.L. Speight, "South Africa's Chinese visitors", Africa, January 1938, p. 42; E.H.L. Schwarz, "The Chinese connection with Africa", Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, iv, 1938, pp. 175-93; D. Willers, "The early Chinese mariners, Natal and the future", Natalia, 21, December 1991, pp. 7-16.

high cheek bones, and ... actually wear still the pagoda hat".<sup>100</sup> He also contended that this early interaction led to the creation of the "true yellow Hottentots" of Namaqualand, who had the "oriental eye only found in Mongolians, the guinea-gold colour, and their language shows Chinese influence",<sup>101</sup> such as the sixteen tones common to southern Chinese dialects.<sup>102</sup>

Sinologists, such as J. Duyvendak, Paul Pelliot and Paul Wheatley, refute these hypotheses concluding that the information China had of Africa in pre-Ming times was based on hearsay or was acquired second-hand.<sup>103</sup> Some scholars believe that irrefutable evidence is still wanting for these early encounters,<sup>104</sup> while others debate the possibilities.<sup>105</sup> But until archaeological evidence or "further researches" prove otherwise, these hypotheses remain hypothetical.

There is, however, no doubt about the expeditions of Cheng Ho, who on his seventh voyage (1431-3), ventured into China's south-western seas and along the coasts of the Arabian peninsula and

---

<sup>100</sup> Schwarz, "The Chinese in Africa", p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>102</sup> Schwarz, "The Chinese connection with Africa", p. 191.

<sup>103</sup> Wheatley, "The land of Zanzi", pp. 140-1; Duyvendak, China's discovery of Africa, p. 26; Filesi, China and Africa, pp. 2, 73, fn. 2-3 refers to Pelliot.

<sup>104</sup> Filesi, China and Africa, p. 73, fn. 5; Wheatley, "The land of Zanzi", pp. 140, 157.

<sup>105</sup> Snow, The star raft, pp. 8-13.

eastern Africa.<sup>106</sup> The fleet is held to have sailed as far as Ts'eng-pa, or Zanzibar, while other records indicate that part of it was "carried even further by a strong wind, past the Straits of Mozambique" and even possibly as far as a place called Ha-pe-er which may be identified as Kerguelan island in the Antarctic ocean.<sup>107</sup>

It is quite probable, therefore, that more than a half century before Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, rounded the Cape of Good Hope to discover the sea route to India, the Chinese explorer Cheng Ho had reached the southern tip of Africa.<sup>108</sup> But as indicated earlier, Confucian-style anti-expansionism withdrew China from the overseas realm and hence contact with southern African. The Chinese were not to return until after the DEIC<sup>109</sup> established a refreshment station at the Cape in the mid-seventeenth century, and then they were only present in extremely small numbers. Ironically, even before the decision was taken by

---

<sup>106</sup> Goodrich, Dictionary of Ming biography, p. 198; Filesi, China and Africa, p. 2; Snow, The star raft, p. 25.

<sup>107</sup> Hutchinson, China's Africa revolution, pp. 9-11; Goodrich, Dictionary of Ming biography, p. 199; Snow, The star raft, pp. xiii, 25.

<sup>108</sup> Snow, The star raft, pp. xiii, 26.

<sup>109</sup> The DEIC (Generale Vereenighde Nederlantse G'octtrooijeerde Oostindische Compagnie) or United Chartered East India Company was a consortium of Dutch merchant shipping companies which united to conduct more efficient trading with the East. In 1602 the Netherlands authorities granted the DEIC a charter which gave them a trade monopoly in the East. Van Helsdingen and Hoogenberk, Mission interrupted, pp. 22-3.

the DEIC's governing body, the *Heren XVII*, to found the Cape station, a memorandum advocating the idea suggested that its garden could be cultivated by

... some Chinese ... brought from Batavia; they are industrious people most of them understand gardening, and there are always enough of them in irons.<sup>110</sup>

Within a fortnight of founding the Cape station, another possibility for the arrival of Chinese in southern Africa arose. On 21 April 1652, the Dutch commander, Jan van Riebeeck, made the first of many requests for free Chinese labour.<sup>111</sup> Van Riebeeck had previously been employed by the DEIC in Batavia, Indonesia, Indo-China and Japan,<sup>112</sup> and had been exposed to the contribution the Chinese had made to developing the Dutch colonies in the Far East, particularly as "efficient, industrious gardeners".<sup>113</sup> He expressed a wish for some of the "industrious people who had done so much to develop Java" to help develop the Cape and that it "would not be amiss if some hard-working Chinese were to come here for that purpose".<sup>114</sup> He even considered that "some married

---

<sup>110</sup> "Remonstrance" of 1649 compiled by Leendert Janzsen and Mattijs Proot in D. Moodie (ed.), The record: or, a series of official papers relative to the condition and treatment of the native tribes of South Africa, Cape Town, 1960, pp. 2-3.

<sup>111</sup> H.B. Thom (ed.) Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, Cape Town, 1952, i, p. 33.

<sup>112</sup> M. Boucher, "The Cape under the Dutch East India Company", in T. Cameron and S.B. Spies (eds), An illustrated history of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1986, p. 62.

<sup>113</sup> Thom (ed.) Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, i, p. 33, fn. 5.

<sup>114</sup> M. Robertson, "The economic development of the Cape under van Riebeeck", The South African Journal of Economics, 13, 1, March 1945, pp. 7, 16; Moodie, The record, p. 11.

Chinese and other free Mardijckers<sup>115</sup> or even also Hollanders, ... could be allowed on certain conditions to occupy some plots of land".<sup>116</sup> He stipulated that "any Dutch immigrants should come from the Netherlands rather than from Netherlands India", as "[t]hose who lived in the East Indies ... had lost all idea of working".<sup>117</sup> He also noted in his diary that

not one hundredth part of the suitable land could possibly be cultivated because of their small numbers, so that an immigration of a multitude of Chinese, or other hard-working people, would be of service.<sup>118</sup>

In a letter to his superiors in Batavia, 15 May 1652, he expressed the desire to import "a hundred Chinese or other ambitious free families with a knowledge of cultivating Indian produce".<sup>119</sup> Later, Van Riebeeck pointed out that there were many capable Chinese in prison in Batavia because of debts they owed the DEIC, who would make good workers as they were "by nature industrious and had, as skills useful for the Cape, knowledge of rice- and sugar-planting and the making of arak".<sup>120</sup> However,

---

<sup>115</sup> *Mardijckers* are liberated slaves or East Indians. Robertson, "The economic development of the Cape", p. 7; Thom (ed.) Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, i, p. 35, fn. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Robertson, "The economic development of the Cape", p. 7; Thom (ed.) Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, i, p. 35.

<sup>117</sup> H.C.V. Leibrandt, Cape of Good Hope: Letters despatched, 1696-1708, Cape Town, 1896, pp. 160-3.

<sup>118</sup> Robertson, "The economic development of the Cape", p. 7; Thom (ed.) Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, i, p. 33.

<sup>119</sup> Robertson, "The economic development of the Cape", pp. 8, 16; Thom (ed.) Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, i, p. 33, fn. 5.

<sup>120</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 7.

neither then nor later did the DEIC authorities concede to these requests, nor did they believe that any free Chinese could be enticed to come to "such a distant land and with such uncertain prospects".<sup>121</sup>

Van Riebeeck's successor, Zacharias Wagenaar, also proposed the importation of Chinese as a solution to the labour shortage and ineptitude of the local Dutch farmers at the Cape.<sup>122</sup> In 1662 he asked for "25 or 30 *armeledigde Chineesen* [impoverished Chinese] who understood agriculture and who would be equal to 50 of *ons unwillig liuje boere kinkels* [our obstinate lazy farmer louts]".<sup>123</sup> In 1664 Wagenaar reiterated his plea for "voluntary or imprisoned Chinese" who were skilled in the various trades so desperately needed at the Cape. This sentiment was still held during the rule of governor Simon van der Stel towards the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>124</sup> However, the Council of India in Batavia to whom most of these pleas were addressed, did not oblige. Instead, free Dutch *burghers* [citizens] and slaves continued to arrive and so, as Armstrong puts it, a different

---

<sup>121</sup> H.C.V. Leibrandt (ed.), Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Letters and documents received, 1649-1662, i, Cape Town, 1898, pp. 84-5; I.D. MacCrone, Race attitudes in south Africa: Historical, experimental and psychological studies, Johannesburg, 1965, p. 27.

<sup>122</sup> W.P.C. Galt, "The Rand 'crisis'", Natal University Law Review, 1, 4, 1975, p. 191.

<sup>123</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 7; Moodie, The record, p. 262.

<sup>124</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", pp. 7-8.

course of development for labour and race relations in the Cape, and the future South Africa, was taken.<sup>125</sup>

These repeated requests to import Chinese to the Cape Dutch settlement, and the constant reference to their proficiency, accorded with most other early colonial notions of the Chinese. But, like other destinations, favourable views were not always sustained or generally shared by the settlers of the host countries. Throughout the colonial world Chinese immigrants "were as much welcomed as they [were later] objected to",<sup>126</sup> which often resulted in the enactment of discriminatory legislation. Even during the early period at the Cape this was apparent in the few incidences that took place between the Dutch settlers and the minuscule number of Chinese. This revealed a Western racism as well as a tendency to appeal to the colonial authorities to legally eliminate the perceived competition of the Chinese.

While no Chinese were officially imported and emigration never took place on any large scale during the DEIC period, the Chinese were nevertheless present at the Cape.<sup>127</sup> Armstrong has combed the archives of the Netherlands and the Cape, and other available

---

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> MacNair, The Chinese abroad, p. vii.

<sup>127</sup> Huang, The legal status of the Chinese abroad, p. 47.

sources for traces of the first Chinese. As a result of his exhaustive research and through a "mosaic-building process of accumulating facts about individuals, and where possible generalizing from the broken patterns that emerge", he has created some sense of the lives of these early immigrants.<sup>128</sup> Even so, the record remains partial and we are almost exclusively dependent on one-sided Western accounts, legal records and visual representations for information about the early Chinese in South Africa.

Most of the first Chinese were either convicts or ex-convicts who had been banished to the Cape from Batavia,<sup>129</sup> while free individuals might have come ashore from passing ships or even migrated intentionally.<sup>130</sup> The first Chinese exiles were sent to the Cape in 1654, and arrived with increasing frequency from the 1680s to 1780s.<sup>131</sup> According to Armstrong, they were generally unwanted criminals convicted of theft, assault, murder, counterfeiting, illegal immigration, extortion, rape, and pandering, and also included a few political exiles.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 2; Interview with J. Armstrong, 19 December 1993.

<sup>129</sup> Cator, The economic position of the Chinese, pp. 16-7; Mentzel, A geographical and topographical description, ii, p. 91.

<sup>130</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, p. 210; Huang, The legal status of the Chinese abroad, p. 47.

<sup>131</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", pp. 13-15, figure 1; In 1977 Anna Boëseken referred briefly to a convict who she believed was the only Chinese at the Cape. A.J. Boëseken, Slaves and free blacks at the Cape, 1657-1700, Cape Town, 1977.

<sup>132</sup>

Mentzel notes that "instead of the hard labour to which [the Chinese exiles] have been condemned they [were] permitted to fend for themselves and pay a special tax instead".<sup>133</sup> Armstrong corroborates that fending for themselves was part of the terms of their punishment, but claims that the paying of a special tax is "without any evidence" and might have been Mentzel's subtle way of saying that the Chinese were subject to the extortions of DEIC officials.<sup>134</sup> The Chinese convicts were generally treated as slaves, and on the expiry of their sentences some became part of the "free black community" at the Cape.<sup>135</sup> The term "free blacks" was used during this period to denote all free persons wholly or partially of African or Asian descent.<sup>136</sup>

Throughout the DEIC period, the total number of Chinese remained comparatively small. According to Armstrong's calculations, including both convicts and free Chinese,<sup>137</sup> there were, for example, only 17 Chinese names on a convict list of February 1727<sup>138</sup> and according to the *opgaaf rolle*<sup>139</sup> of 1751, the Chinese

---

<sup>133</sup> Mentzel, A geographical and topographical description, ii, p. 91.

<sup>134</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", pp. 11-2, 21, 38.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 20; R. Elphick and R. Shell, "Intergroup relations: Khokhoi, settlers, slaves and free blacks, 1652-1795" in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds), The shaping of South African society, 1652-1840, Cape Town, 1989, pp. 216-17.

<sup>136</sup> Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations", p. 184.

<sup>137</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>139</sup> An annual register or census which listed both population and property figures.

numbered only 19.<sup>140</sup> These figures were said to have declined as a result of their high rate of return to Asia, a trend which was in marked contrast to other free blacks.<sup>141</sup>

The Chinese who did remain or who had come independently to the Cape, lived apart from the other free blacks, and there is evidence to indicate that they even had their own separate cemetery in Cape Town.<sup>142</sup> That their presence was acknowledged by the authorities is apparent in *plakkaten* (ordinances) issued in 1722, 1727, 1740 and 1792. The first three dealt with the Chinese who were living in Table Valley and declared that they should be formed into a company with other free blacks, to be used in the event of "public catastrophes such as fire or ships stranding in Table Bay".<sup>143</sup> The 1792 ordinance stated that apart from the use of Dutch for public notices, Malay, Javanese and Chinese would also be used in the future.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 32; In Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations", p. 217, the estimate for 1750 is twenty-two.

<sup>141</sup> Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations", p. 217.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.; Thunberg, Travels in the Cape, p. 49, fn. 147; Mentzel, A geographical and topographical description, i, pp. 14, 128; V.S. Forbes, (ed.), Anders Sparrman: A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope towards the Antarctic polar circle round the world and to the country of the Hottentots and the Caffers from the year 1772-1776, i, Cape Town, 1975, p. 49; CAR: Colonial Office (CO): 3941, 36, Memorials received: William Assue, a Chinese, inquiring whether the Malays were authorised to convert for their own use part of the ground formerly used by the Chinese and requesting that a piece of land be granted to the Chinese for a place of internment, 26 March 1829.

<sup>143</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 35; Jeffreys and Naudé, Kaapse argiefstukke, ii, pp. 93-4, 116, 182.

<sup>144</sup> Jeffreys and Naudé, Kaapse argiefstukke, iii, p. 162.

Cape paintings of the period<sup>145</sup> and travellers' journals - such as those of Otto Mentzel and Carl Thunberg - depict the Chinese in a variety of small-scale trades and crafts. Many dealt in commodities such as tea, chinaware and eastern fabrics, while others sold fish or cultivated their own private plots of land.<sup>146</sup> From small boats the Chinese also sold or bartered fresh produce to the crew of ships entering the harbour.<sup>147</sup> Chandeling was another profitable trade in which the Chinese engaged. Although they used mutton-fat, the shapely candles were described "as white and as well-shaped as wax candles" and were in great demand.<sup>148</sup>

Some Chinese made a living in rather less reputable ways. The French traveller, Abbé de la Caille, noted that the Dutch settlers complained about "the Chinese banished from Batavia who only live from the thefts done by slaves; [who] buy the stolen goods and resell them".<sup>149</sup> This allegation was reflected in a petition of 1779 in which the settlers demanded that "no Chinese ... should live among the burgers and trade or keep shops, since they above and beyond all other reason tempt slaves to

---

<sup>145</sup> Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations", p. 223.

<sup>146</sup> Mentzel, A geographic and topographical description, ii, pp. 91-2, 150.

<sup>147</sup> Thunberg, Travels at the Cape, p. 22.

<sup>148</sup> Mentzel, A geographic and topographical description, ii, p. 92.

<sup>149</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 58.

thievery".<sup>150</sup> An analysis of the criminal court records also reveals a propensity for stealing, often in collaboration with slaves.<sup>151</sup> According to Mentzel, the Chinese cheated the "too credulous slaves" or received and sold stolen goods obtained from sailors on passing ships.<sup>152</sup> He did however concede that it was "dangerous to generalise, and condemn ... all [Chinese] as rogues" as

some of [the Chinese] will show more consideration to those who owe them money than Europeans do. He [had] met people to whom Asiatic dealers had given various commodities ... on long credit, even until their return from Holland.<sup>153</sup>

Mentzel also wrote that "[o]n the whole, these Chinese live a humble, quiet and orderly life at the Cape".<sup>154</sup>

That some of the Chinese were reasonably wealthy is evident from the registers that list them as slave owners. They purchased female slaves as wives and wills record their many possessions.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.; C. Beyers, Die Kaapse patriotte gedurende die laaste kwart van die agtiende eeu en die voortlewing van hul denkbeelde, Pretoria, 1967, p. 57.

<sup>151</sup> Heese, Reg en onreg, pp. 19, 48, 50, 85; Moodie, The record, iii, pp. 106, 108.

<sup>152</sup> Mentzel, A geographic and topographical description, ii, pp. 91-2, 150. See R. Ross, Cape of torments: Slavery and resistance in South Africa, London, 1983, p. 22 for an account of a Chinese exploiting a slave woman.

<sup>153</sup> Mentzel, A geographic and topographical description, ii, p. 150.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 149; Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations", p. 209, 217; Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", pp. 3, 33-42.

Mentzel reports favourably on the successful "restaurants" run by Chinese. He describes them as

... expert fisherman as well as good cooks. Fried and pickled fish with boiled rice is well favoured by soldiers, sailors and slaves. When the fierce North-Westerners blow, crayfish, crabs, seaspiders and "granelen" [small crabs] are cast ashore. They are zealously collected by these Orientals, cooked and sold... These Asiatics likewise keep small eating houses where tea and coffee is always to be had; they specialise in the making of kerri-kerri [mutton stew]. One need not be squeamish in patronising their cook-shops since they keep the places scrupulously clean and do not touch the food with their fingers.<sup>156</sup>

Some of the Chinese obviously flourished, so much so that *freeburghers* protested to the authorities about their competition. Many of the Dutch settlers treated the free Chinese with contempt and often they were given a status little better than manumitted slaves. This was clearly depicted in the official Dutch *opgaaf rolle* in which the Chinese were listed last, after the free blacks. As Armstrong points out, this indicates that they were a "kind of unassimilated appendage".<sup>157</sup>

There are numerous records of the Dutch settlers successfully appealing to the DEIC officials to have legislation enacted against the Chinese merchant. In 1727, nine European bakers petitioned that the

---

<sup>156</sup> Mentzel, *A geographical and topographical description*, ii, p. 92.

<sup>157</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 61.

Chinese were in the habit of sending their boys about the streets to sell different sorts of cakes, and [prayed] that this should be forbidden as it [caused] the memorialists great injury.<sup>158</sup>

A *plakkaat* was introduced the same year forbidding the Chinese to continue this practice, their licences were suspended and punishment for disobedience was fixed at a 50 rixdollar fine.<sup>159</sup> In 1740 this *plakkaat* against the Chinese was reissued.<sup>160</sup> Another prohibition with a fine of 25 rixdollars was enforced by the authorities in 1779 against those Chinese who sold fresh fruit, vegetables and meat from small boats to ships in Table Bay.<sup>161</sup>

The reaction that the Chinese elicited from the Dutch settlers is completely disproportionate to their insignificant numbers, and therefore emphasizes the extent to which the Chinese were regarded as a potential economic threat and unwanted outsiders by European colonists.<sup>162</sup> The irony of such xenophobia is underlined in documents which record the consistently favourable accounts of Chinese skills by DEIC officials who wished the

---

<sup>158</sup> G.C. de Wet (ed.), Suid-Afrikaanse argiefstukke: Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, vii, Johannesburg, 1971, pp. 308-9; Translation in Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup relations", p. 223; See also Harris, "The South African Chinese merchant".

<sup>159</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", pp. 36-7; Jeffreys and Naude, Kaapse argiefstukke, (1707-1753), ii, p. 121; De Wet, Suid-Afrikaanse argiefstukke, vii, p. 309.

<sup>160</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 37; Jeffreys and Naude, Kaapse argiefstukke, (1707-1753), ii, p. 172.

<sup>161</sup> Jeffreys and Naude, Kaapse argiefstukke, (1754-1786), iii, p. 101.

<sup>162</sup> This accords with what Higham terms "nativism" - dislike for an internal minority because of its foreign connections. Higham quoted by Daniels, Asian Americans, p. 19.

Chinese to help develop the colony because of the inefficiency of Dutch settlers. While it should be remembered that these conclusions are drawn from limited and biased sources, they reflect a pattern which emerges more strongly in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century South Africa.<sup>163</sup>

## IV

Although the record of the Chinese for most of the first and second British occupation and rule of the Cape Colony (1795-1803; 1806-1910) is extremely scant, there are requests for Chinese skills and labour. Not unlike the Dutch, the British East India Company (BEIC) was involved in the Far East from the 1600s,<sup>164</sup> both for trade and labour purposes and was therefore aware of Chinese expertise. In fact it was the British Empire that was rated as having "above all, ... dispersed Chinese across the world".<sup>165</sup> But it was not until the early twentieth century, after the South African mineral revolution, that the British imported Chinese labourers to South Africa on a large scale.

---

<sup>163</sup> See chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>164</sup> A. Farrington, "Chinese materials in the India Office Library and Records" in F. Wood, British library occasional papers: Chinese studies: Papers presented at a colloquium at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1988, p. 62.

<sup>165</sup> Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor, p. xiii.

In contrast to the Dutch, the requests for imports of Chinese to the Cape Colony during the first century of British occupation did not only emanate from government officials, but individual British settlers. The number of Chinese for most of the British period remained considerably lower than during the DEIC period, however. The reason for this is that the BEIC did not increase the number of Chinese by exiling convicts from their other colonial possessions to the Cape. The only exception were the 44 Chinese who were employed by the Company at St. Helena.<sup>166</sup> After the BEIC relinquished control of the island in 1834,<sup>167</sup> the Chinese were transferred to the Cape in 1836 with a daily maintenance of sixpence until they could be repatriated to China.<sup>168</sup> There had also been a steady decline in the number of Chinese inhabitants at the Cape from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century due to the return of ex-convicts to China.<sup>169</sup> The few Chinese who remained at the Cape probably became

---

<sup>166</sup> CAR: GH 23/15, 88: Papers despatched to Secretary of State, London: General despatches. Maintenance of Chinese labourers from St. Helena, 13 August 1844.

<sup>167</sup> CAR: GH 1/201, 324: Papers received from Secretary of State, London: General despatches. Maintenance of certain Chinese labourers removed from St. Helena to the Cape Colony on the transfer of the island to the British Crown in 1836, 21 May 1849.

<sup>168</sup> CAR: CO 3996, 5: Memorials received: William Assue (a native of China) request for increase in rate of allowance for maintenance of aged Chinese, 26 March 1829, 5 May 1838; CO 3996, 6: Memorials received: William Assue request to be allowed for maintenance of infirm Chinese, 17 April 1838; GH 1/161, 2790: Papers received from Secretary of State, London: General despatches. Advances made to pensioners and Chinese labourers from the island of St. Helena, 8 March 1844.

<sup>169</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 5. See above re high rate of return of Chinese "free blacks".

absorbed into the larger cosmopolitan Malay society, including Javanese, Indians, Singhalese and Arabs.<sup>170</sup>

The first recorded British colonial reference to Chinese was made in 1804 by the British official and traveller, John Barrow, who declared that the most effective way to improve the country "would be the introduction of Chinese". He believed that

[w]ere about ten thousand of this industrious race of men distributed over the Cape district, and those divisions of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein ... the face of the country would exhibit a very different appearance in the course of a few years; the markets would be better supplied, and an abundance of surplus produce acquired for exportation.<sup>171</sup>

He proposed that

all the pieces of ground intervening between the large farms and other waste lands should be granted to the Chinese on payment of a moderate rent after the first seven years.<sup>172</sup>

Moreover, he was of the opinion that

[t]he British Government would find no difficulty in prevailing upon that, or a greater, number of these people to leave China; nor is the Government of that country so very strict or solicitous in preventing its subjects from leaving their native land as is usually supposed.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, pp. 210-2.

<sup>171</sup> J. Barrow, An account of travels into the interior of southern Africa, ii, London, 1804, p. 430; J. Barrow, Travels into the interior of southern Africa, ii, London, 1806, p. 150.

<sup>172</sup> Barrow, An account of travels into the interior of southern Africa, ii, p. 431.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*; Barrow, Travels into the interior, ii, pp. 150-1.

Barrow had recently travelled to China and various colonies in the Far East and therefore had first-hand experience of the abilities of Chinese agriculturalists.<sup>174</sup> Like his Dutch predecessors at the Cape, he berated the Europeans in the colonies for becoming "the most indolent and prodigal of all other nations".<sup>175</sup> He noted that

[i]n Batavia the Dutch are still more indolent ... [and] were it not for the Chinese the Europeans must literally starve. These industrious people exercise all manner of trades and handicraft work, cultivate the ground, supply the market with vegetables, with butcher's meat, and with poultry; raise rice, pepper, coffee, and sugar, for consumption and exportation; carry on the whole commerce of the island both internal and coastways; act as brokers, factors, and interpreters between the Dutch government and the natives; farm, and collect, the taxes and revenues, both for the former and the latter; in a word, they possess among themselves the monopoly of the whole island.<sup>176</sup>

Barrow's enthusiasm for Chinese labour was so great that he claimed that

[t]en thousand Chinese, transported to the Cape of Good Hope, would prove a more valuable gold mine to the colony, than those which are supposed to exist.<sup>177</sup>

In a report on the Cape Colony submitted to the British government in 1809, commissioner Richard Collins, one of the most

---

<sup>174</sup> J. Barrow, Travels in China, London, 1804; J. Barrow, A voyage to Cochinchina in the years 1792 and 1793, London, 1806.

<sup>175</sup> Barrow, An account of travels into the interior, ii, p. 29.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

influential British officials of the first decade of the second British occupation,<sup>178</sup> added his support to the cause. He wrote that "[t]his country should ... be given out to industrious Europeans or Chinese, who might gain a good livelihood by the cultivation of corn and felling of wood".<sup>179</sup> These sentiments were echoed by settlers on the eastern Cape frontier. In a memorial on their behalf, C.B. Smith informed the colonial secretary that to remedy the "labour question on the frontier" they should follow "the examples of other colonies, Queensland, Mauritius and the West Indies, for instance, and import Chinese or Indian coolies".<sup>180</sup> Smith argued in favour of the Chinese workers, because

as a labourer and a general servant the China-man is unsurpassed and he possesses the virtue of sobriety which the coolie does not; he possesses more stamina; he is more cosmopolitan in his habits and adapts himself without murmuring to any condition of life provided he is paid for it.<sup>181</sup>

In the 1820s, the traveller George Thompson made equally positive observations about the advantages of importing Chinese settlers.<sup>182</sup> He had "no doubt [that] these industrious people

---

<sup>178</sup> W.M. Freund, "The Cape under the transitional governments, 1795-1814", in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee, (eds), The shaping of South African society, 1652-1840, Cape Town, 1989, p. 349.

<sup>179</sup> Moodie, The record, v, pp. 16, 28.

<sup>180</sup> CAR: CO 4227, S122: Memorial: C.B. Smith. Recommending Chinese immigration, 9 October 1882.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> G. Thompson, Travels and adventures in southern Africa, i, London, 1827, p. viii.

would be in many situations a great acquisition".<sup>183</sup> He wrote that as "artificers, mechanics, and domestic servants, they would be highly useful in Cape Town, and the smaller towns".<sup>184</sup> He was sceptical about the success of a large-scale emigration of Chinese, as he believed that the Chinese thrived "best on allotments of land tilled for their own emolument; and here ... the best lands are already allotted". He also noted that the British experiment in Trinidad in the West Indies had failed. In this precedent, the British government had imported 194 Chinese as agriculturalists in 1806, and within nine years 162 had returned to China, while the remaining 30 turned to non-agricultural pursuits.<sup>185</sup>

Failed experiments such as this accounted for the British government's reluctance to support similar ventures in the Cape Colony. The authorities responded in different ways to the requests for Chinese. Sometimes they argued that the "introduction of Chinese in any number [would be] a step fatal to the future of this colony destroying as it would any hope of creating an European population other than capitalists and land

---

<sup>183</sup> V.S. Forbes (ed.), Travels and adventures in southern Africa by George Thompson, ii and iii, Cape Town, 1968, p. 168.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 168, fn. 13.

owners".<sup>186</sup> At other times responses indicated that the "extensive emigration from China" was a "matter for serious enquiry" but that "it would appear to be attended with many difficulties and dangers", and therefore it would not be expedient for the Cape Colony.<sup>187</sup>

It was pointed out that it would be difficult to secure Chinese labour, as it had better and more lucrative options in colonies such as Queensland in Australia.<sup>188</sup> It has also been suggested that the authorities believed that the Chinese "did not much relish the idea of working at the Cape, where they were so likely to be confused with Malays and Coloured slaves".<sup>189</sup>

The British authorities were not entirely averse to the idea of Chinese immigration. Towards the end of the nineteenth century they urged the Cape government to respond positively to the Chinese request to establish a consul,

---

<sup>186</sup> CAR: CO 4227, S122: Memorial: Reply from colonial secretary's office, Cape Town, 16 October 1882.

<sup>187</sup> CAR: GH 1/234, 72: Papers received from Secretary of State, London. General despatches discouraging the introduction of Chinese emigrants to the Cape, 11 June 1853.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> R. Lewcock, Early nineteenth century architecture in South Africa: A study of the interaction of two cultures, 1795-1837, Cape Town, 1963, p. 375 quoting CO 68/553.

having regard to the fact that commercial and other considerations render it clearly desirable to maintain good relations with China.<sup>190</sup>

As a result of continued requests throughout the first century of British occupation, Chinese artisans arrived intermittently at the Cape.<sup>191</sup> To alleviate the shortage of labour in the building industry, 24 Chinese signed an agreement in 1815 with the Royal Navy at Canton river, to work for three years at the Cape. The group comprised of two foremen, twelve masons, nine carpenters and a painter.<sup>192</sup> In 1822 half of them were still in fixed employment with government and private individuals in Cape Town and Knysna.<sup>193</sup> They were involved in building the Drostdy at George and the belfry and wooden campanile of the chapel in the naval yard at Simonstown.<sup>194</sup> In 1814, Captain T.T. Harington privately brought 23 Chinese craftsmen to Simonstown to build his house and establish its gardens.<sup>195</sup> In 1849 a British colonist, M.J.O. Smith, recruited a few Chinese to work as gardeners, cooks

---

<sup>190</sup> CAR: GH 1/451, 7: Papers received from Secretary of State, London. General despatches. The issue of exequaturs to consular officers appointed by the Chinese government, 31 January 1891.

<sup>191</sup> For example see CO 4068, 214: Memorials received: H. Cloete. Relative to importation of Chinese labourers, 29 December 1853; CO 4227, S122: Memorial: C.B. Smith. Recommending Chinese immigration, 9 October 1882.

<sup>192</sup> CAR: CO 68/451 Contract agreements, 9 April 1815.

<sup>193</sup> CAR: CO 166/18, Correspondence, 30 March 1822.

<sup>194</sup> Lewcock, Early nineteenth century architecture, pp. 76, 375. This is the same church erroneously referred to by Pineo as being constructed in 1845.

<sup>195</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, pp. 11-2 reference to B.B. Brock and B.G. Brock, Historical Simon's Town, Cape Town, 1976, p. 87.

and carpenters.<sup>196</sup> The Cape administrators also made official requests for Chinese labourers, and resolutions to that effect were passed by the Cape Legislative Assembly in 1874 and 1876.<sup>197</sup> Four hundred Chinese labourers had already been contracted when the British government vetoed the decision.<sup>198</sup> In the early 1880s an agent contracted 126 Chinese to the eastern Cape, to work on the railway line between Cradock and Colesburg and on the wall of the Cradock race course.<sup>199</sup>

These traces of the Chinese in the British Cape Colony are scattered, and like those in the DEIC period, do not reveal much about the people themselves or settler attitudes towards them, other than an official recognition of their work acumen. Up to the end of the nineteenth century there was no record of British colonial legislation relating specifically to the Chinese at the Cape, making it even more difficult to detect the position of these Asians. The reason for this lacuna was arguably due to the small number of Chinese at the Cape and the resultant absence of

---

<sup>196</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, p. 212 quoting The Herald, 20 January 1849.

<sup>197</sup> S.T. van der Horst, Native labour in South Africa, London, 1971, p. 118; Galt, "The Rand 'crisis'", p. 191.

<sup>198</sup> CAR: GH 1/358, 16: Papers received from Secretary of State, London. General despatches. Introduction of 400 Chinese labourers into the Cape Colony, 15 February 1876; GH 23/33, 25: Papers despatched to Secretary of State, London: General despatches. In reply to no. 158 and now stating that no further steps will at present be taken regarding Chinese coolies, 15 December 1875.

<sup>199</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, pp. 18-20 reference Eastern Province Herald, October - November 1882.

direct competition between them and the British settlers. In addition, the latter settlers did not share the same legacy in terms of exposure to the Chinese as the Dutch had done in the Dutch East Indies, with often dire consequences.<sup>200</sup>

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the mass exodus of over two million immigrants from China<sup>201</sup> and the mineral revolution in South Africa, an increasing number of free Chinese began to arrive independently on South African shores. This was followed by the importation of over 50 000 contracted mine labourers. The growing presence of both free and indentured immigrants was to have a profound effect on the life style of the Chinese community and on general attitudes towards it. Much of this is recorded in official sources, presenting a clearer picture of their situation in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century South African society. At the same time, this documentation reflects how the more tentative anti-Sinicism of previous centuries was later entrenched in legislation. The position, treatment and reaction of these Chinese immigrants forms the subject of discussion in the next four chapters.

---

<sup>200</sup> Consider for example the infamous Dutch massacre of thousands of Chinese in Batavia in 1740, known as the "Batavian Fury". L. Blussé, Strange company: Chinese settlers, mestizo women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia, Dordrecht, 1986, pp. 89-96; Mitchison, The overseas Chinese, p. 22; Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor, pp. 34-5.

<sup>201</sup> Chang, "The distribution and occupations", p. 92.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Indentured Chinese Labour Experiment

The discovery of diamonds in the 1860s, and gold in the 1870s and 1880s, was the start of both a mineral and a people revolution in South Africa. It was part of the international era of industrial capitalism which witnessed what Eric Hobsbawm has called "the greatest migration of peoples in history".<sup>1</sup> Following the gold discoveries in California and Australia, southern Africa was seen as the new El Dorado, and immigrants from all over the world, as well as on the African continent, converged on the Witwatersrand (Rand) gold-bearing reef in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (later the Transvaal).<sup>2</sup> Among those comprising the rapidly growing multi-cultural mining community were a small number of free Chinese individuals who came to establish various trade and service businesses in the mining regions. They were specifically prohibited from mining by law.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, their indentured compatriots were

---

<sup>1</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, The age of capital, 1848-1875, London, 1977, p. 228, as quoted by Marks and Richardson, "Introduction", p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Thorpe, "The origins and early years", p. 39; N.A. Etherington, "Labour supply and the genesis of the South African confederation in the 1870s", Journal of South African History, 20, 1979, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> Laws of the Transvaal up to 1899, Law no. 15, The gold law of the South African Republic, 1898, sections 130-1. This law, which was concerned with the digging for and dealing in precious metals, stipulated that no "coloured person", meaning "any African, Asiatic, Native, or coloured American person, Coolie or Chinamen", may be a license-holder or be in any way connected with the workings of the diggings, unless they were employed as workmen in the service of whites.

imported on a large-scale to work as unskilled labourers on the mines. Although there was no connection between the free and labouring Chinese, the arrival of the latter had far-reaching ramifications for the former. While the impact that Chinese contract workers had on South African history in terms of the economy and politics is widely acknowledged,<sup>4</sup> the same cannot be said of the effect they had on the unindentured or free Chinese communities, in either the long or short term. In order to understand this, attention is first focused on the Chinese labour experiment and the broader society in which it was played out, and secondly, to the Chinese labourers themselves. These two aspects form the subject of this and the following chapter.

## I

From the seventeenth century, colonial economies throughout the world, which were specifically dependent on mining, plantation and later railway developments, precipitated population movements of a free, enslaved or indentured nature. It has been argued that "though a part of larger population movements, the indentured laborers of the nineteenth century ... stand as a distinct group who deserve to be studied on their own".<sup>5</sup> Included in this field

---

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 1 pp. 45-53 for bibliographical details of studies dealing with most of these issues.

<sup>5</sup> Northrup, Indentured labor, p. 10.

of migrants were Indians who went to colonies such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Guiana, Mauritius and Natal, Chinese who went to places such as Cuba, Peru, Hawaii, Samoa and later the Transvaal, and Pacific Islanders who went to Queensland in Australia.<sup>6</sup> In recent decades there has been a marked growth in the number of books and articles that focus on this form of labour.<sup>7</sup> Following in the footsteps of early slave studies, most of these publications examine the subject in terms of certain parameters. For example, they concentrate on the motives for enlistment among indentured immigrants, recruitment procedures, conditions of travel, nature of employment, treatment and, where applicable, permanent settlement.<sup>8</sup>

While these studies on indentured labour are generally acclaimed for having ventured into an untraversed field, calls to move beyond the economics of labour have become more frequent. This

---

<sup>6</sup> C. Newbury, "Labour migration in the imperial phase: An essay in interpretation", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, iii, 2, January 1975, p. 234; E. Hu-Dehart, "Chinese coolie labour in Cuba in the nineteenth century: Free labour or neo slavery", Slavery and Abolition, 14, 1, April 1993, p. 67; Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade", p. 257.

<sup>7</sup> For bibliographical detail see for example, P.C. Emmer, (ed.), Colonialism and migration; indentured labour before and after slavery, Dordrecht, 1986; K. Saunders (ed.), Indentured labour in the British Empire 1834-1920, London and Canberra, 1984, p. iii; S. Bhana (ed.), Essays on indentured Indians in Natal, Leeds, 1991, p. 5; Northrup, Indentured labor, p. ix.

<sup>8</sup> Saunders, Indentured labour, pp. ii-iii; Northrup, Indentured labor, pp. ix-x. A key text in this field was H. Tinker, A new system of slavery: The export of Indian labour overseas 1830-1920, London, 1974.

shift to a more social and cultural focus is similar to the move away from political economy in slave historiography.<sup>9</sup> In 1995, David Northrup wrote that "most of the works [on indenture] have examined the subject in terms of ... a single migrant people in a single overseas location" and he intimated that more comparative work was required, as well as greater contextualization.<sup>10</sup> Marina Carter, author of Voices from indenture (1996) and co-editor of a series entitled "New historical perspectives on migration", pointed to the need to look at "new types ... [and] previously neglected sources", and "wherever possible [make] use of articulations of those experiences issuing from the migrants themselves". She also insisted on the need to "describe not only the structure and conditions of these migrations, but the genius of individual migrants".<sup>11</sup>

As indicated in the historiographical overview at the beginning of this thesis,<sup>12</sup> the Chinese indentured mine labour system in the Transvaal is the aspect of the history of the overseas

---

<sup>9</sup> See for example E.D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan roll: The world the slaves made, New York, 1974 and locally R. Shell, Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838, Johannesburg, 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Northrup, Indentured labor, pp. ix-x. In line with this viewpoint Northrup wrote a "global story of the new indentured labor trade".

<sup>11</sup> M. Carter, Voices from indenture: Experiences of Indian migrants in the British Empire, London and New York, 1996, pp. ix-x.

<sup>12</sup> See pp. 45-53.

Chinese in South Africa that has attracted the most historical attention. As early as the 1950s, Reeves stated that the topic had been virtually exhausted by Meyer's detailed doctoral study,<sup>13</sup> and in the 1980s Richardson claimed it had "attracted considerable and varying attention from historians".<sup>14</sup> Yet both authors believed that there were aspects which still required analysis, and even now, certain issues remain unresearched. At first, the Chinese indentured labourers received more local and international academic scrutiny<sup>15</sup> than their indigenous African contract counterparts<sup>16</sup> - this despite the fact that the Africans were a more permanent feature of the mining industry, had preceded the Chinese labourers as the mining workforce, and far exceeded them numerically on the mines. This lower level of attention was initially also true of the 152, 184 Indian indentured labourers who were imported to work on the Natal sugar plantations between 1860 and 1911.<sup>17</sup> In addition, despite the indirect bearing these three South African sources of contract

---

<sup>13</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour", preface.

<sup>14</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants, and proletarians", p. 167.

<sup>15</sup> See chapter 1 for details of work done on the Chinese from the 1940s through to the 1990s by Meyer, Reeves, Sung, Weeks, Gordon, De Villiers, Stacey, Baker, Richardson, Harris and Yap, as well as reasons for its popularity as a topic of research.

<sup>16</sup> P. Harries, "Symbols and sexuality: Culture and identity on the early Witwatersrand gold mines", *Gender and History*, 2, 3, Autumn, 1990, pp. 319-20.

<sup>17</sup> S. Bhana and J. Brain, Setting down roots: Indian migrants in South Africa, 1860-1902, Johannesburg, 1990, p. 15; S. Bhana, Indian indentured emigrants to Natal, 1860-1902: A study based on ships' lists, New Delhi, 1991, p. 1.

labour had on one another historically, they have generally remained distinct historiographically.<sup>18</sup>

In line with indentured labour studies elsewhere, much of the writing on the indentured Chinese in South Africa has tended to follow the conventional pattern. The most outstanding exception in this regard is the work of Richardson.<sup>19</sup> Unlike his academic predecessors, he has contextualized the Chinese indenture system in terms of international capitalism,<sup>20</sup> has focused on their origins and background in China,<sup>21</sup> and offers a case study of their responses to the economic environment in a localized context.<sup>22</sup> Richardson, however, points out that "in an attempt to understand the wider process" he has deliberately minimised the human element of the topic, and hopes this omission will "be a spur to future investigation".<sup>23</sup> This lacuna in the study of the indentured Chinese in South Africa partly accords, in another context, with the case Carter makes for her 1996 book on

---

<sup>18</sup> An exception includes the brief comparative survey done by the author on the Indian and Chinese indentured systems and the impact the former had on the latter. See Harris, "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance", pp. 71-5, as well as discussion in this chapter. Also, Candy Malherbe's paper "Indentured labour: Towards an understanding of its place in the spectrum of unfree labour systems practised in South Africa", Cape slavery - and after Conference, University of Cape Town, August 1989, which provides a historical survey of indenture within both a European and South African context.

<sup>19</sup> See pp. 50-3.

<sup>20</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants, and proletarians", p. 167.

<sup>22</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", p. 152.

<sup>23</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 189.

indentured Indians in Mauritius: the need to focus specifically on the "indenture experience".<sup>24</sup>

This "human" dimension is the substance of this and the next chapter. In keeping with trends in recent scholarship,<sup>25</sup> both chapters seek to take a fresh approach to a subject that has been studied from mainly economic and political perspectives. They delve beneath the political ramifications, legislative strictures and economic results of the Chinese indentured system, to concentrate, where possible, on the attitudes of the host society and the immigrants, and on their social experiences. Both chapters take a closer look at the unofficial and more informal aspects of the "human element", which will, in turn, throw light on the long-term perception of and reaction to the Chinese in South African society.

By concentrating on the more "human dimension" of the Chinese labourers in the next chapter, this chapter first presents a brief overview of the indenture system, and pays attention to the other "human" element: the nature and extent of the "orientalism" of the Westerner. The reason for this is threefold. First, in order to acquire some insight into the circumstances of

---

<sup>24</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, backcover.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

indentured immigrants one is reliant on material that they recorded. It is imperative that one should try to discern a "reality" from the obvious prejudices in these sources. Secondly, the interesting phenomenon is that "orientalism" emanates from quarters as divergent as mine magnates and trade unionists, British and Boer leaders, and Liberals and Unionists. It is therefore an "orientalism" used to suit particular pragmatic predispositions and serves to illustrate just how entrenched this "orientalism" was, even after the turn of the twentieth century, when China's isolationism was drawing to a close as the Manchu dynasty declined. Thirdly, and most importantly, the attitude of the Westerner towards the indentured Chinese led to a heightened awareness of the free Chinese community throughout South Africa, which had far-reaching consequences for their future position.

## II

Unlike many other colonies, the Transvaal mine owners did not adopt indentured labour as a replacement for slave labour.<sup>26</sup> The gold reefs were only discovered after the abolition of slavery, and the emancipated slaves of the Cape were too far away to be coerced into a mining workforce. The Witwatersrand mines mainly

---

<sup>26</sup> Saunders, "Introduction", pp. iv-v; Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade", p. 257; Hu-Dehart, "Chinese coolie labour", p. 68; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 94; Northrup, Indentured labor, p. 5; see also Malherbe, "Indentured labour", p. 13.

made use of African migrant labour from the adjacent regions, such as Portuguese East Africa.<sup>27</sup> From the outset, this cheap, unskilled contract labour supply formed what historian Donald Denoon has described as the "indispensable base of the industrial pyramid",<sup>28</sup> but at the same time it was a crucial element in mining costs because of the enormous legislative and administrative effort its organization demanded.<sup>29</sup> Historian Alan Jeeves has argued that this aspect accounts for the mining industry's dependence on state support throughout its entire history,<sup>30</sup> a dependence that was particularly evident during the Transvaal Chinese indentured experiment.<sup>31</sup>

Given the inordinate problems which the Transvaal gold mines faced in procuring an adequate and constant supply of African labour,<sup>32</sup> it is not surprising that even before the "labour

---

<sup>27</sup> A.H. Jeeves, "The control of migratory labour on South African gold mines in the era of Kruger and Milner", Journal of Southern African Studies, 2, 1, October 1975, p. 9; J. Crush, A. Jeeves and D. Yudelman, South Africa's labor empire: A history of black migrancy to the gold mines, Cape Town, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> D.J.N. Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", Journal of African History, viii, 3, 1967, p. 481.

<sup>29</sup> Jeeves, "The control of migratory labour", p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3, 10, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson emphasizes this point in his case study of the Chinese "strike" at North Randfontein mine, "Coolies and Randlords", pp. 152, 177, and in his paper, "The role of the state in the labour markets for the gold mines: The case of Chinese labour, 1903-1907", Conference on southern African history, University of the Witwatersrand, April 1976.

<sup>32</sup> Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman, South Africa's labor empire, pp. 1, 4-5; A. Cartwright, "South African labour questions", Westminster Review, July 1893, p. 46.

crisis" that followed the South African War of 1899-1902, the mine owners had considered the alternative of importing unskilled labour from beyond Africa.<sup>33</sup> The reason for this was that despite the organization of "monopsonistic recruiting",<sup>34</sup> a labour shortage was more or less endemic in the Transvaal mining industry.<sup>35</sup> One of the main difficulties experienced was to "balance the inflow with the outflow".<sup>36</sup> An obvious advantage of contracting labour from further afield was an indenture period which extended beyond the average eight months of the short-term African mine recruits, making for a more reliable and controllable (exploitable) workforce.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> The matter had for example been raised in 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898 and 1902. N. Levy, The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, London, 1982, pp. 196-7; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 170; Reeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa", pp. 45-7, 65; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 32; Ticktin, "The origins of the South African Labour Party", p. 133; A. Jeeves, "Over-reach: The South African gold mines and the struggle for the labour of Zambesia, 1890-1920", Canadian Journal of African Studies, 17, 3, 1983, p. 393.

<sup>34</sup> F. Johnstone, Class, race and gold, London, 1976, pp. 14, 16; Jeeves, "The control of migratory labour", pp. 3, 9.

<sup>35</sup> P. Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour in the gold mining industry, 1904-1910", in K. Saunders (ed.), Indentured labour in the British Empire 1834-1920, London, 1984, p. 262; Richardson, "The recruiting of Chinese", p. 90.

<sup>36</sup> Jeeves, "The control of migratory labour", p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> Johnstone, Class, race and gold, p. 33; D. Denoon, "The political economy of labour migration to settler societies: Australasia, southern Africa, and southern South America between 1890 and 1914" in S. Marks and P. Richardson (eds), International labour migration: Historical perspectives, London, 1984, pp. 202-3.

Since the British Empire had a legacy of indentured labour,<sup>38</sup> this was a viable and practicable option. Britain's maritime and imperial interests in the East had led to the large-scale engagement of "coolie" labour. As early as 1806, Chinese were taken to Trinidad,<sup>39</sup> and in 1834, Indians were sent to Mauritius.<sup>40</sup> By 1905 indentured labour was found in 18 British colonies.<sup>41</sup> In order to regulate what was again becoming a "vicious traffic in human flesh",<sup>42</sup> the British authorities had aimed to:

secure legislation through treaty to a traffic which could not be effectively stopped but might well be decently controlled and supervised by the loyal and legal cooperation of Chinese and British officers.<sup>43</sup>

The 1855 Chinese Passenger Act was the first of numerous British treaties enacted to monitor British ships carrying Chinese emigrants.<sup>44</sup> In 1860 the fifth article of the Convention of Peking ratified, with some reservations, the "Imperial authorities' consent ... to a system of foreign contract

---

<sup>38</sup> Northrup, Indentured labor, pp. 17, 29; Hu-Dehart, "Chinese coolie labour", p. 67; Malherbe, "Indentured labour", pp. 3, 9-12.

<sup>39</sup> Northrup, Indentured labor, p. 16; Hu-Dehart, "Chinese coolie labour", p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> M.D. North-Coombes, "Indentured labour in the sugar industries of Natal and Mauritius", in S. Bhana, (ed.), Essays on indentured Indians in Natal, Leeds, 1991.

<sup>41</sup> D. Birnbaum, "Chinese labour in the Transvaal", The Independent Review, June 1905, p. 142.

<sup>42</sup> Farley, "The Chinese coolie trade", p. 265.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 114-5; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 35; Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 268.

emigration".<sup>45</sup> It was agreed that whenever indentured emigrants were required for a British Colony or Protectorate, "the British Minister in Peking shall notify the Chinese government of the terms and conditions of the engagement".<sup>46</sup> Subsequent acts stipulated the term of indenture, its voluntary nature, recruitment and transport arrangements.<sup>47</sup> Similar agreements for indentured labour were also concluded between the Colonial Office and the Indian authorities.<sup>48</sup> The legal superstructure which governed the latter regulations was, however, far more extensive,<sup>49</sup> probably because Indians were British subjects while the Chinese government was initially not interested in its subjects abroad.

In addition to Britain's lengthy historical involvement with China, India and the indentured labour system, by the time of the establishment of the Transvaal gold industry it had also had experience of the indenture system in southern Africa. The first indentured labourers to be introduced to these parts were the

---

<sup>45</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 129; Wang, The organization of Chinese, pp. 24-5; Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 268.

<sup>46</sup> H.C. Thompson, "Chinese labour and imperial responsibility", The Contemporary Review, 89, 1906, p. 430.

<sup>47</sup> Wang, The organization of Chinese, pp. 26-9.

<sup>48</sup> H. Tinker, "Into servitude: Indian labour in the sugar industry, 1833-1970" in S. Marks and P. Richardson (eds), International labour migration: Historical perspectives, London, 1984, p. 79; Bhana, Indentured Indian emigrants, p. 9; Carter, Voices from indenture, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Richardson, "Chinese coolie labour", p. 268.

Indian workers on the sugar plantations of Natal in 1860. It is interesting to note that in contemplating the introduction of this kind of labour, both Indians and Chinese were at first considered.<sup>50</sup> Of more importance than the experience afforded by the Natal indentured labour scheme, was the direct influence that the presence of the Indian labourers had on the Transvaal indenture system. Owing to white public insistence it was stipulated that the Chinese were not to enter the Transvaal on the same conditions as Indians had entered Natal.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, there was a stark contrast between the terms of the Natal legislation and those of the later Transvaal ordinance. This was arguably one of the main reasons why the Indian government refused to consider the Transvaal's request for Indian labour for the mines.<sup>52</sup>

The most important difference between the terms regulating Indian and Chinese labour in South Africa related to the termination of

---

<sup>50</sup> Public Record Office (PRO): Colonial Office (CO) 291/65 no. 15307/03, Correspondence re labour from India for the mines; Natal Mercury, 9 November 1855; Indian Opinion, 24 March 1906; Tinker, A new system of slavery, p. 298.

<sup>51</sup> L.V. Praagh (ed.), The Transvaal and its mines: The Encyclopedic history of the Transvaal, Johannesburg, 1906, p. 533; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 171-2.

<sup>52</sup> I. Dobbie, "Chinese labour", Macmillan's Magazine, August 1906, p. 799; Tinker, A new system of slavery, pp. 298-9; Sacks, South Africa, pp. 41-2; Lord Stanmore, "The Chinese labour ordinance", in B. Hirson (ed.), "South Africa: The war of 1899-1902 and the Chinese labour question", Microfilm, Yorkshire, 1983, p. 7.

their contracts. According to Law 14 of 1859, Indian labourers were to serve a five-year term of indenture, at the end of which they could either be re-indentured or live as free people in the country. After ten years' residence in Natal they also had the option, until 1891, of taking a free return passage to India or a grant of land equal in value to a sea passage.<sup>53</sup> The Labour Importation Ordinance of 1904, on the other hand, stipulated that all Chinese labourers had to enter a contract of service not exceeding three years, with the right of renewal for a similar period, after which they were to be returned to their country of origin.<sup>54</sup> As a result of the experience of Indian indentured labour, the indentured Chinese represented a temporary expedient and could never, like the Indians, become ex-indentured and part of South African society.

The decision to import indentured labour from China was also influenced by the Natal indentured labour system, as well as the experiences of other British colonies.<sup>55</sup> After numerous efforts to resolve the labour crises facing the gold industry in the immediate post-War period,<sup>56</sup> the Chamber of Mines decided in

---

<sup>53</sup> L.M. Thompson, "Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872", in Archives Year Book for South African History, Pretoria, ii, 1952, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 166; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 176-7.

<sup>55</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 35.

<sup>56</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", p. 152.

favour of importing indentured Chinese. As a preliminary measure in February 1903, two mining delegates, Ross Skinner and Herbert Noyes, were sent by the Chamber to the Far East and California to investigate the conditions and suitability of Chinese labour.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, the support of the Transvaal government and white population and the British Colonial Office were essential, not only to enact legislation to introduce the Chinese, but also to negotiate with the Chinese authorities.<sup>58</sup>

Already in March 1903, at the Bloemfontein Conference convened mainly to discuss railways and customs, a resolution, which was disdainful of the introduction of Chinese labour, had been accepted by the representatives of the four southern African colonies and Rhodesia. Regarding the matter of a manpower shortage, the conference agreed that:

the permanent settlement in South Africa of Asiatic races would be *injurious* [my emphasis] and should not be permitted; but if industrial development positively requires it, the introduction of unskilled labourers under a system of Government control only, by which provision is made for indenture and repatriation at the termination thereof, should be permissible.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 171; Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 266.

<sup>58</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", pp. 152-3.

<sup>59</sup> Parliamentary Papers, 1903, xlv, Cd. 1640, "Minutes of proceedings of the South African Customs Union Conference, held at Bloemfontein, March 1903".

It is important to note that there is some debate about the extent of this post-War "labour shortage" and the role it played in the crisis which resulted in the decision to import Chinese labour. That the South African War affected the already unreliable flow of African labour cannot be denied. Apart from disrupting the recruiting mechanisms, some African labourers did not return to the mines because they had received relatively good wages as participants in the War, or had found better employment in other industries, while others could not return since they had to re-establish their farms which had been devastated in the conflict.<sup>60</sup> However, many contemporary anti-Chinese lobbyists, as well as scholars such as Sheila van der Horst, Robert Davies and Denoon, claimed that the mine owners "artificially contrived" the labour shortage by depressing African wages and exaggerating future demands for labour.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, Jeeves contends that the decisions on "wage levels and expansion possibilities" owed less to mine owner greed and more to low grade ore than Van der Horst and Denoon admit.<sup>62</sup> Richardson agrees with Jeeves, and

---

<sup>60</sup> P. Warwick, "Black people and the war", in P. Warwick and S.B. Spies, (eds), The South African War, Harlow, 1980, pp. 201-3; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 15-6; F.D. Chaplin, "The labour question in the Transvaal", The National Review, April 1903, p. 288.

<sup>61</sup> Van der Horst, Native labour, pp. 201-2; R. Davies, "Mining capital, the state and unskilled white workers in South Africa, 1901-1913", Journal of Southern African Studies, 3, 1, October 1976, p. 47; D.J.N. Denoon, A grand illusion: The failure of imperial policy during the period of reconstruction, 1900-1905, London, 1973, pp. 127-36.

<sup>62</sup> Jeeves, "The control of migratory labour", p. 9.

takes the point further. He argues that while the labour shortage ultimately led to the decision to import Chinese, it was only part of a more fundamental crisis of accumulation in the industry, "associated with an enforced transition to lower grade deep level mining" as well as a "long term fall in the rate of profit".<sup>63</sup>

Another debatable issue related to the importation of Chinese labour, is the degree to which the post-War British colonial administration was dominated by the Chamber of Mines. While Denoon argues that Alfred Milner, Governor of the Transvaal and British High Commissioner in South Africa, was essentially a tool of the mining industry,<sup>64</sup> Mawby denies that the mine magnates exercised any special degree of influence upon the colonial government during the reconstruction period (1902-1905).<sup>65</sup> More convincingly, Jeeves concedes an alliance between the mines and the state during this time, but declares it was more complex and

---

<sup>63</sup> Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 263; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 167, 180.

<sup>64</sup> D. Denoon, "Capital and capitalists in the Transvaal in the 1890s and 1900s", The Historical Journal, 23, 1, 1980, pp. 120-5; D. Denoon, "'Capitalist influence' and the Transvaal government during the Crown Colony period, 1900-1906", The Historical Journal, xi, 2, 1968, pp. 303-17.

<sup>65</sup> A.A. Mawby, "Capital, government and politics in the Transvaal, 1900-1907: A revision and a reversion", Historical Journal, 17, 1974, pp. 387-415.

variable than simple domination of one over the other.<sup>66</sup> It is, however, significant that the desire of the Chamber of Mines for Chinese labour was indeed an issue which acquired the unequivocal support of Milner.

In July 1903, in the spirit of the Bloemfontein Conference, Milner appointed the Transvaal Labour Commission to investigate the needs of the colony.<sup>67</sup> In October, the Majority Report supported by 10 of the 12 members of the commission, confirmed that the labour supply was insufficient and recommended importation.<sup>68</sup> Although it was regarded by many as a "scam" and a "barefaced put-up job",<sup>69</sup> it resulted in Milner sanctioning a motion to import labour into the Transvaal. A draft ordinance to this effect was introduced in the Transvaal Legislative Council by Sir George Farrar, president of the Chamber of Mines on 28 December 1903. After heated debate, the draft Labour Importation

---

<sup>66</sup> Jeeves, "The control of migratory labour", p. 5; See also A. Jeeves, "Hobson's The War in South Africa: A reassessment", (Rethinking the South African War Conference, University of South Africa, Pretoria, August 1998).

<sup>67</sup> Sacks, South Africa, pp. 30-1.

<sup>68</sup> E. Katz, A trade union aristocracy: A history of white workers in the Transvaal and the general strike of 1913, Johannesburg, 1976, p. 122; Richardson, "The recruiting of Chinese indentured labour", pp. 89-90; Ta Chen, Chinese migrations, p. 128.

<sup>69</sup> E.B. Rose, Uncle Tom's cabin up-to-date or Chinese slavery in South Africa, London, 1904, p. 14; F. Hales, "Transvaal labour difficulties", The Fortnightly Review, July 1904, pp. 116-7; Naylor, Yellow labour, pp. 10-3; Ticktin, "White labours' attitude", p. 72; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 22; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 175.

Ordinance was supported by 22 members to four.<sup>70</sup> The Ordinance was subject to the sanction of the Imperial government which required that the white population in the Transvaal approve the scheme.<sup>71</sup> At the time it was argued that

few Acts [sic] of Colonial legislation have created more sensation. From the first it engaged the steady opposition of the Liberal party in the United Kingdom, and an adjournment of the House of Commons to discuss the principles of the new Law caused the temporary suspension of the Ordinance.<sup>72</sup>

### III

On 10 February 1904, the "Labour Importation Ordinance" was gazetted and became law on 19 May.<sup>73</sup> However, this matter was to remain a contentious political issue in both British and local politics, and in particular during the elections of 1905 and 1906 respectively.

The prerequisite of Transvaal public support had already resulted in an intensive campaign launched by Farrar in March 1903.<sup>74</sup> He

---

<sup>70</sup> Praagh, The Transvaal and its mines, p. 533; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 161.

<sup>71</sup> Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", p. 489; Levy, The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, p. 220.

<sup>72</sup> Praagh, The Transvaal and its mines, p. 534.

<sup>73</sup> Ordinances of the Transvaal, "Labour Importation Ordinance", no. 17 of 1904: To regulate the introduction into the Transvaal of unskilled non-European labourers; O. Letcher, The gold mines of southern Africa, New York, 1974, p. 151.

<sup>74</sup> Sir George Farrar, "The South African labour problem", in B. Hirson (ed.), "South Africa: The war of 1899-1902 and the Chinese labour question", Microfilm, Yorkshire, 1983; F.H.P. Creswell, The Chinese labour question from within, London, 1905, p. 15.

set the tone for the lobby in favour of Chinese labour by declaring their importation "absolutely necessary", and outlined the main principles of what was to become the essence of the Labour Importation Ordinance.<sup>75</sup> Aware of the vehement opposition that could arise mainly from Europeans who might feel economically threatened, however, Farrar gave the assurance that "no immigrant would be imported into this colony otherwise than as an unskilled labourer".<sup>76</sup>

The Chamber of Mines organized an "active and well-financed campaign"<sup>77</sup> to ensure that the Imperial government became convinced of popular support for the scheme. Under its auspices, the Labour Importation Association was created to canvass approval from the white Transvaal public.<sup>78</sup> The media was similarly utilized, as most of it was monopolized by the mining

---

<sup>75</sup> T. Burt, A visit to the Transvaal; Labour: White, black and yellow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1905, pp. 28-9; Hales, "Transvaal labour difficulties", p. 110.

<sup>76</sup> R.K. Cope, Comrade Bill: The life and times of W.H. Andrews, Cape Town, n.d., p. 71; C.K. Cooke, "Why Asiatic labour is necessary for the Rand: The facts and the figures", The Empire Review, 34, November 1903, p. 366.

<sup>77</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 173.

<sup>78</sup> Ticktin, "White labours' attitude", pp. 70-1; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 173; Levy, The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, p. 330, fn. 30; Katz, A trade union aristocracy, p. 122; A.A. Mawby, "The political behaviour of the British population of the Transvaal, 1902-1907", Ph. D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1969, pp. 129-132.

industry.<sup>79</sup> The nature and ramifications of the pro-Chinese campaign and the response it elicited from the opponents were far-reaching, in terms of local, national and overseas political developments, as well as the trade union movement in the Transvaal.<sup>80</sup> Labour historian David Ticktin has made a detailed study of this and the controversy related to the campaign.<sup>81</sup> He points out how opposition to the scheme was ruthlessly crushed by the magnates, and that by the end of 1903 the "swing of public opinion on the Rand towards accepting the importation of Chinese labour was undeniable".<sup>82</sup> In the words of a contemporary, the public's "consent [had] been won rather by appealing to its stomach than to its intelligence".<sup>83</sup> This contributed to a negative attitude even prior to the arrival of the first indentured Chinese.

---

<sup>79</sup> Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 267; Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 83-4; See also Ticktin, "White labours' attitude", p. 74 and E. Katz, A trade union aristocracy, p. 124, for discussion of the resignation of the editor of the Star, W.F. Monypenny.

<sup>80</sup> A. Thompson, "Pressure groups, propoganda and the state: The manipulation of public opinion in Britain during the South African War", (Rethinking the South African War Conference, University of South Africa, August, 1998, pp. 23-4; Levy, The foundations of the cheap labour system, pp. 201, 209-11; Ticktin, "White labours' attitude"; Naylor, Yellow labour, pp. 30-1.

<sup>81</sup> Ticktin, "The origins of the South African Labour Party", pp. 160-77; Ticktin, "White labours' attitude"; Ticktin, "Political intimidation by Rand mineowners".

<sup>82</sup> Ticktin, "White labours' attitude", p. 78; Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 61-82; Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand gold mines", pp. 67-9.

<sup>83</sup> A British Colonist, "British rule in the Transvaal", The Contemporary Review, 459, March 1904, p. 348; F.H.P. Creswell, "The Chinese in South Africa", The Independent Review, February 1904, p. 135.

From early 1903, at the start of the lobby for the importation of Chinese labour, through to imperial sanctioning of the system in 1904, "orientalism" was evident. Regardless of the particular stance on the issue, be it the mine owners' pro-Chinese campaign or the widespread anti-Chinese public reaction to the scheme, perceptions of an "inferior other" predominated. Many of these prejudices were influenced by or originated among colonists who had settled in other colonies, such as Australia, New Zealand, British Columbia or the United States of America, where both free and contracted Chinese had migrated.

Although the "anti-Chinese" lobby emanated from opposing positions, at times the distinction between them blurred in their efforts to advance a common cause. One stance was predominantly "racist" in approach, while the other was "humanitarian". Included among the opponents was a wide-range of people, such as local and overseas trade unionists and politicians, members of the Transvaal commercial sector, clergy, prominent Boer leaders and their followers, as well as white colonists of the other local and overseas British territories. In the Transvaal, organizations such as "The White Labour League", the "African Labour League", the "Anti-Asiatic Importation League", the "National Democratic Federation" and other more informal

platforms, rallied fervently against the proposed scheme, and continued to do so until its termination in 1906.<sup>84</sup> As could be expected of the opposition camp, its attitude was blatantly "orientalist" and anti-Sinitic.

One of the main concerns of the racist dimension was the threat the Chinese posed to "keeping [South Africa] a white man's country"<sup>85</sup> or, put more pragmatically, the possible economic competition the "easterner" would pose to the white worker.<sup>86</sup> The stereotype of the Chinese as "hard-working and diligent"<sup>87</sup> was manipulated to show how they would "take the bread out of the mouths of the white man".<sup>88</sup> The Chinese alleged assiduousness was caricatured, as is apparent in the following quote:

... their narrow, tireless industry, pushed beyond a virtue to the level of a defect, coupled with their excessively low standard of living, render them

---

<sup>84</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 175; Levy, The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, pp. 201-9; Katz, A trade union aristocracy, p. 123; R. Forsyth and H.E.S. Fremantle, Anti-Asiatic Importation League, Cape Town, 1906.

<sup>85</sup> TAD: Secretary of Native Affairs (SNA), 94, 198/03, Secretary East Rand Vigilance Association: Letter to Mr Chamberlain re native labour, 16 January 1903, p. 157; Naylor, Yellow labour, p. 3; A.E. Munro, The Transvaal Chinese labour problem, London, 1906, p. 87; M.A. Stobart, "The Asiatic invasion of the Transvaal", The Fortnightly Review, lxxxii, June 1907, p. 294.

<sup>86</sup> L.E. Neame, "Oriental labor in South Africa", The Annals of the American Academy, xxxiv, 2, September 1909, pp. 175-8; H. Samuel, "The Chinese labour question", Contemporary Review, lxxxv, April 1904, p. 457.

<sup>87</sup> Munro, The Transvaal Chinese, pp. 85-7;

<sup>88</sup> TAD: SNA, 33, 1255/03, Asiatic Affairs, re Indian immigration. R.V. Loveday - T.A. Brassey, p. 33; A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white", Westminster Review, clxi, 5, May 1904, p. 478.

competitors in the labour market specially unwelcome to European peoples who endeavour to maintain the level of comfort ... essential to happiness under conditions of civilisation.<sup>89</sup>

This exaggerated representation is evident in another article also published in a British periodical prior to the arrival of the Chinese:

The natural condition of the white man appears to be a state of rest. Not so the Chinaman; his natural condition is one of ceaseless activity; it requires no effort on his part to commence work, and when once started, he goes on forever like a steam machine ... [they] would go on forever if they were not stopped. ... The American working man pointed out the error of their ways and did all they could to civilise the poor heathen, and to impress upon him the principles and practices of the white workers, but all to no purpose; the misguided heathen still worked on like a machine.<sup>90</sup>

The stereotype of the Chinese as far more energetic, hard working and able than any other source of labour, was also construed as a potential national danger, since they could "ruin" or "overrun the country".<sup>91</sup> This sentiment was regularly drawn into the context of the recently concluded South African War. The rhetoric declared that:

'... the war was, in a certain sense a miners' war - that was to say, it had been undertaken in order that justice might be done to the British miners of the Transvaal', ... [but] now [they found] that ... the yellow man with the pig-tail is a 'foreign workman ...

---

<sup>89</sup> Samuel, "The Chinese labour question", p. 459.

<sup>90</sup> H.S. Maxim, "The Chinese and the South African labour question", Fortnightly Review, March 1903, p. 507.

<sup>91</sup> TAD: SNA, 33, 1255/03, Asiatic Affairs, re Indian immigration. R.V. Loveday - T.A. Brassey, p. 33.

of a very desirable description' and that 'justice to the British miners of the Transvaal' requires that British miners shall be kept out of the Transvaal altogether.<sup>92</sup>

The opponents of Chinese labour contended that "[t]wenty thousand British soldiers died that Beit, Fitzpatrick, Rudd, and the rest might get their work done by Chinese slaves,"<sup>93</sup> while an opposition banner stated: "Slavery abolished in 1833. Restored in 1904 after the sacrifice of 52 000 men, women and children".<sup>94</sup> Others believed that "if the most tangible and visible result of all the labours and sorrows of that prolonged struggle is to be the importation of Chinese labourers ... it had been almost better had there been no war".<sup>95</sup>

The Boer population of the Transvaal also revealed similar signs of resentment in the context of the War.<sup>96</sup> They had been advised by Louis Botha, a leading Boer general, not to become actively involved in the importation debacle, as "... die verantwoordelikheid van die beoogde stap moes uitsluitend op die skouers van diegene, wat die Chinese wou invoer, rus!" [... the responsibility of the proposed step must rest entirely on the

---

<sup>92</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", p. 478.

<sup>93</sup> E.S. Beesly, "Yellow labour", Positivist Review, April 1904, p. 80; Thompson, "Pressure groups, propaganda and the state", p. 24.

<sup>94</sup> De Volkstem, 27 April 1904, as quoted by Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk", pp. 176-7.

<sup>95</sup> New Reform Club, British workmen or Chinese slaves, London, 1904.

<sup>96</sup> For details on Afrikaner reaction see Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 122-4, 148-57.

shoulders of those who want to import the Chinese].<sup>97</sup> It was, however, maintained by Jan Smuts, another prominent Boer general, that their

apathy ought to give Lord Milner even greater pangs than the fiercest opposition. For beneath this apathy there burns in the Boer mind a fierce indignation against the sacrilege of Chinese importation - this spoilation of the heritage for which ... the people have sacrificed their all.<sup>98</sup>

The opponents of the Chinese scheme extended the War sentiment to include other British colonies, which shared similar dissenting views on the Chinese:

But is the rest of the Empire, which shared with the Mother Country in the sacrifices of the war, to have no voice in a controversy which, *prima facie*, affects the objects for which the war was fought?<sup>99</sup>

According to the anti-Chinese campaigners, most of these colonies regarded the importation of Chinese as "retrograde and dangerous",<sup>100</sup> and in many cases it had led to "laws of exclusion ... rather than restriction".<sup>101</sup> References were made to legislation such as the American "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882",

---

<sup>97</sup> Die Volkstem, 6 January 1904, as quoted by Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk", p. 154.

<sup>98</sup> The Times, 15 March 1904, as quoted by Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk", p. 156.

<sup>99</sup> Hales, "Transvaal labour difficulties", p. 111.

<sup>100</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", p. 487.

<sup>101</sup> C.K. Cooke, "Chinese labour: Its moral, economic, and imperial aspects", The Empire Review, January 1904, p. 205.

which was the "culmination of nearly three decades of anti-Chinese agitation".<sup>102</sup> The anti-lobbyists contended that:

It was a sound instinct in the people which, in every temperate country, without exception, to which the Chinese have made their way - in the United States, in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand - has led, after bitter experience and long agitation, to their complete or almost complete exclusion.<sup>103</sup>

They argued that "[h]ad the Johannesburg policy prevailed in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Cape Colony, those territories would by now have become as Chinese as Singapore or Java".<sup>104</sup> They also complained that it was "in vain that protests from all over the Cape, from New Zealand, and from Australia, poured in at the Colonial Office".<sup>105</sup> The latter raised "... objections [about] the contamination and other injury ... [which resulted] to civilised communities from the presence among them of peoples so different in their habits and requirements."<sup>106</sup>

This perception of the Chinese as "alien" and "different" permeated much of the rhetoric. It was held that "the Chinese

---

<sup>102</sup> M. Boyd, "Oriental immigration: The experience of the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino populations in the United States", International Migration Review, 5, 1, 1971, p. 48.

<sup>103</sup> Samuel, "The Chinese labour question", p. 458.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 459.

<sup>105</sup> Hales, "Transvaal labour difficulties", p. 111; An Eyewitness, John Chinaman on the Rand, London, 1905, p. 32; For details of telegrams to the colonial office see T.J. Macnamara, Chinese labour, London, 1904. pp. 14-5.

<sup>106</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, "The Transvaal and Chinese labour", The Aborigines' Friend, February 1904, p. 11.

who, though abnormally civilised in some ways, are yet painfully uncivilised according to our ideas in many others ...".<sup>107</sup> In a rare response from the "Aboriginal Native inhabitants of South Africa and citizens of the Cape Colony", an obviously western "orientalist" opinion was expressed in a petition to King Edward VII in 1903 that

the introduction of a class of labourers with no idea of any rights, and with morals and habits unlike those of the European races, in which your petitioners have been hitherto trained, will be, in the highest degree, prejudicial to the future of their race in its struggle for advancement and civilization.<sup>108</sup>

In another printed record of an African response to the Chinese importation question, a rather more pragmatic view was evident.

Chief Linchwe stated

I am not in a position to help the Rand mines as I am the Chief of the Bakhatla and not the Emperor of China. They want Chinamen and not my people, who, they say, are too expensive. ... it is not within my powers to satisfy the wishes of a company that wants cheap Chinamen.<sup>109</sup>

The anti-Chinese protagonists also made much of what they termed "Celestial vices",<sup>110</sup> a perception which captured the imagination of many throughout the period of the experiment, and led to numerous controversial issues. For example, it was held that

---

<sup>107</sup> Dobbie, "Chinese labour", p. 799.

<sup>108</sup> South African Native Opinion, 8 December 1903, in TAD: SNA 188 na 3138/03, South African Native Opinion: Introduction of Chinese, p. 76.

<sup>109</sup> Mafeking Mail, 6 November 1903, in TAD: SNA 185 na 2991/03, Mafeking Mail: Introduction of Chinese, p. 78.

<sup>110</sup> J. Burns, "Slavery in South Africa", The Independent Review, n.d., p. 601.

... any one who has close acquaintances with Chinese coolies in Malaya, in Australasia or the American continent ... will testify that their uncleanliness, their addiction to gambling, the activities, frequently dangerous, of their secret societies, and, where they live in celibate communities, the peculiarly degrading devices which, unquestionably, they often carry with them, make them a population highly undesirable as immigrants.<sup>111</sup>

They were denounced as "morally pestiferous" and it was averred that "opium-smoking, gambling, and nameless vices [would] be introduced among the sober, steady, pure-minded population of Johannesburg".<sup>112</sup> While denouncing this arrogance of the British to arrogate to themselves a "moral superiority to other peoples", the author of one article concluded in typical "orientalist" style, that the "workmen of the more advanced races must insist upon just treatment not only for themselves, but also for the *backward and helpless* [my emphasis] masses in Asia and Africa".<sup>113</sup>

Apart from bringing economic or "financial ruin", many of the opposition lobbies claimed that the Chinese presence in South Africa would mean "moral ruin".<sup>114</sup> "Asiatic" men were accused of deliberately lay[ing] themselves out for ... seduction".<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Samuel, "The Chinese labour question", p. 458.

<sup>112</sup> Beesly, "Yellow labour", p. 82.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> TAD: SNA 94, 198/03, Secretary East Rand Vigilance Association: Letter to Mr Chamberlain re native labour, 16 January 1903.

<sup>115</sup> TAD: SNA 94, 198/03, Secretary East Rand Vigilance Association: Letter to Mr Chamberlain re native labour, 16 January 1903.

Moreover, the fact that the proposed ordinance did not make allowances for the importation of a proportionate number of women, or the wives of the indentured men - as was the case with Indian contract labour<sup>116</sup> - resulted in the allegation that

in practice the rule would be 'unmarried man preferred'; and one can imagine the moral and other evils that must follow from the herding of tens of thousands of these men in filthy compounds for three long years at a stretch.<sup>117</sup>

This fixation with "moral ruin" led to a public scandal on the mines which the magnates, Transvaal government and British parliament tried desperately to contain. It was also an issue that contributed to the termination of the Chinese labour experiment.<sup>118</sup>

Another dimension of the anti-Chinese campaign was the humanitarian approach. While some protests were genuinely concerned about the conditions of Chinese employment, there were those who adopted these points of view simply to strengthen their political lobby. The opinion expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords was a case in point. Commenting on the Chinese Labour Ordinance, he had said:

---

<sup>116</sup> Tinker, A new system of slavery, p. 293.

<sup>117</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", p. 611.

<sup>118</sup> See chapter 4.

I feel that, if indeed the necessity be real, it is one of the most regrettable necessities that have ever arisen in the history of our colonial government.<sup>119</sup>

The anti-Chinese lobbyists reported that he found "yellow slavery [my emphasis] in South Africa a regrettable necessity"<sup>120</sup> and that "any form of slavery, Chinese or other" could not be tolerated.<sup>121</sup> On an ostensibly more humanitarian note, many focused their opposition on the "unfair" restrictions set out in the draft Labour Importation Ordinance. They stated that it "more than [justified] the description of the Ordinance as a Charter of Slavery",<sup>122</sup> and declared

what difference there was between Chinese contract labour under this Ordinance and Negro chattel slavery as it existed in the Southern States of America, [was] all to the advantage of the negro".<sup>123</sup>

The opposition campaigners also emphasized the negative nature of the Transvaal indenture system by explaining why the magnates had opted for Chinese labour instead of Indian. They argued that the Indian government would not have accepted the proposed contractual conditions,<sup>124</sup> and claimed:

Had they [the magnates] wanted free Asiatic labourers they could have obtained from British India an ample supply of coolies to work in the mines. Such coolies, however, would be British subjects, and as such would

---

<sup>119</sup> Anon., "Yellow slavery in the Transvaal", The Truth on the Congo Free State, 27, 15 December 1905, p. 249.

<sup>120</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", p. 616.

<sup>121</sup> Hales, "Transvaal labour difficulties", p. 115.

<sup>122</sup> Rose, Uncle Tom's cabin, p. 2.

<sup>123</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", pp. 490-1.

<sup>124</sup> Sacks, South Africa, p. 41; Tinker, A new system of slavery, pp. 298-9.

have rights that would conflict with their effective exploitation at the hands of the Randlords.<sup>125</sup>

It was shown that the "Government of India impose[d] the most careful safeguards on all proposals for exporting indentured coolies".<sup>126</sup> But even this argument was often tainted with Western "orientalism", as it was felt that in the end "... the Indian indentured labourer [was] no better in any respect than the Chinese".<sup>127</sup>

The discourse of the anti-Chinese lobby was naturally riddled with negative "orientalist" references. Aspects such as the physical appearance of the Chinese, cultural tradition, political structure and social life style were stereotyped and vilified. Derogatory terminology included terms such as the "yellow peril", "yellow scourge", "almond-eyed", "slit-eyed", "pig-tailed", "turtle-eaters" and "Mongolian filth".

There were also blatant signs of "orientalism" among the advocates who supported the Chinese labour scheme. To begin with, the sanction of the Chamber of Mines to investigate the

---

<sup>125</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", p. 489; Anon., The Chinese labour question: Speeches by H. Campbell-Bannerman and H.H. Asquith, London, 1904, p. 19; Stanmore, The Chinese Labour Ordinance, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> Anon., "Chinese labour for the Rand: Parliamentary Papers", The Anti-Slavery Reporter, March-May 1904, p. 53.

<sup>127</sup> F. Perry, "The Transvaal labour problem", African Monthly, December 1906, p.361.

possibilities of Chinese labour created various versions of the "other". For example, while the Chinese were lauded for their "economic value", it was pointed out that it was a serious undertaking to "bring into a country people of an alien race, whose whole idea of civilization and manner of living [was at] variance with the Transvaal community".<sup>128</sup>

Similar views were expressed in commentaries which were intended to extol the virtues and qualities of Chinese labour:

... every one that has had personal experience of each and all of the different kinds of labour - Somali, Arab, Indian and Chinese - that it has been proposed to import will unhesitatingly affirm that, viewed solely from a commercial point of view, Chinese labour is by far the best. The Chinamen is not turbulent like the Arab, nor is he rebellious under pressure like the [African]; he is thrifty and economical like the Indian, but, unlike him, he is not mean and hoarding, but, on occasion, can and does spend, and even give freely. Doubtless he is more of an animal than either the Indian or Arab coolie, but he is by no means a semi-savage whose prehistoric days were yesterday... he is neat and (compared with other coolies) intelligent in his work, while for patient, steady, persevering work ... he has few equals and no superior. He has, however, his limitations and his peculiarities.<sup>129</sup>

Some opponents of the importation of Chinese labour were astonished that the churches had not protested more vehemently against the Labour Ordinances, "for it cut at the very root of

---

<sup>128</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 175-6.

<sup>129</sup> P. Leys, "Chinese labour for the Rand", The Nineteenth Century and After, 51, January-June 1902, pp. 183-4.

their mission work in China".<sup>130</sup> This was neatly illustrated by a British missionary, the Reverend T.W. Pearce, stationed in China, in reviewing the prospect of Chinese labour. He patronizingly conceded that "the Chinese [are] not so black as they are often painted" and believed that the process of selection would eliminate "the more debased and degraded specimens of Chinese humanity". He did not think "the camps [would] prove a 'dire moral pest'".<sup>131</sup> In an article in the Salvation Army periodical, All the World, which announced the appointment of one of their officers to begin work among the "Celestials on the Rand", it was stated that

[t]hey are naturally very suspicious, secretive, litigious, and easily excited to a pitch of uncontrollable fury. ... It is amongst these queer people - who really believe all Europeans to be barbarians - that Captain Nelson has hopefully entered upon his work.<sup>132</sup>

#### IV

The diverse local and British furore caused by the pending importation of the Chinese, combined with the Anglo-Chinese Labour Convention of May 1904, which stipulated, among other

---

<sup>130</sup> Thompson, Chinese labour and imperial responsibility, p. 437.

<sup>131</sup> T.W. Pearce, "Chinese coolie labour in South Africa", Chronicle of the London Missionary Society, September 1904, p. 228.

<sup>132</sup> Anon., "Chinese on the Rand", All the World, May 1904, pp. 244-5; See also The War Cry, 25 February 1905, p. 10, col. 4; 8 April 1905, p. 4, cols 2-3; 6 May 1905, p. 4, cols 2-3 and B. Tuck, "The history of the Salvation Army in South Africa", M.Th. thesis, University of South Africa, 1982, p. 157.

conditions, the "proper supervision and protection of such immigrants",<sup>133</sup> resulted in the British leaders, the Transvaal government and the Chamber of Mines devising regulations with a dual purpose. On the one hand, they introduced lenient conditions to quell cries of "slavery", while on the other, stringent measures to annul fears of "labour intrusion" were passed.<sup>134</sup> The net result was a heightened prejudice, throughout the country, against the Chinese.

As a result of the elaborate concessions made by the magnates to overcome white artisan opposition, 17 of the 35 sections of the Labour Importation Ordinance were purely restrictive.<sup>135</sup> The labourers were to be employed only on the Witwatersrand as unskilled miners,<sup>136</sup> and they were not to be employed in 55 occupations, except in unskilled positions.<sup>137</sup> The labourers were to be issued with a passport, they were to reside on the premises where they were employed, and they could not leave without a permit which would be granted for periods of less than 48

---

<sup>133</sup> TAD: Cd. 1945, "Correspondence re the introduction of Chinese labour to the Transvaal", February 1904, p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> T. Naylor, Yellow labour: The truth about the Chinese in South Africa, n.p., 1904, p. 6; F.D. Chaplin, "The labour question in the Transvaal", The National Review, February 1905, pp. 999-1000; Hales, "Transvaal labour difficulties", p. 119.

<sup>135</sup> Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crises", p. 489; Birnbaum, "Chinese labour", p. 142; Stanmore, The Chinese Labour Ordinance, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Ordinances of the Transvaal, No. 17 of 1904, Labour Importation Ordinance, section 31, 5, p. 89; section 1, p. 75.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, section 9, a, p. 79; schedule 1, p. 93.

hours.<sup>138</sup> All labourers had to enter into a contract of service not exceeding three years, after which they were to be returned to their country of origin.<sup>139</sup> They could not own landed property or engage in trade.<sup>140</sup> Refusal to take up work on arrival would result in immediate repatriation. Other offences, such as desertion, refusal to work, absenteeism or employment other than that stipulated, was punishable by imprisonment or a fine.<sup>141</sup>

A Foreign Labour Department (FLD) was established with a Superintendent of Labour to organize administration.<sup>142</sup> The ordinance regulated the administrative officers and provided for inspectors who were to monitor the implementation of conditions, general treatment and complaints of the labourers.<sup>143</sup> It also prescribed specific conditions for the system of recruitment, the passage to South Africa, compound and ablution facilities, medical attention as well as dietary requirements.<sup>144</sup> Many of these stipulations had been included at the request of the Chinese authorities, including a prohibition on corporal

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., section 15, p. 81; section 18, p. 82; section 19, pp. 82-3.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., section 9, p. 79.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., section 14, p. 81.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., section 25, p. 86; section 26, p. 86.

<sup>142</sup> TAD: Cd. 2026, vol. 51: "Further correspondence relating to the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance", May 1904.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., section 2, p. 76; section 3, pp. 76-7.

<sup>144</sup> TAD: Cd. 2183, vol. 54: "Further correspondence re labour in the Transvaal mines", August 1904; Naylor, The truth about the Chinese, p. 4.

punishment by the employer.<sup>145</sup> The participation of the Chinese government in the contract regulations marked a change in its policy and revealed an attempt to combat the exploitation of Chinese labour which had taken place over the previous four decades. This was achieved within an increasingly hostile international environment, since countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia had all implemented Chinese exclusion acts.<sup>146</sup>

It was also agreed that the Emperor of China would appoint a Chinese Consul-General to oversee the welfare of the emigrants. In 1905 the Consul-General also acquired jurisdiction over the free or unindentured Chinese in the South African region.<sup>147</sup> This represented the only tangible connection between the free Chinese immigrants and their indentured compatriots.<sup>148</sup>

The Labour Importation Ordinance was described as the "most unpopular of all the unpopular measures", as it satisfied neither

---

<sup>145</sup> TAD: Cd. 1945, "Correspondence re the introduction of Chinese labour to the Transvaal", lxii, February 1904; Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 142-3.

<sup>146</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 35.

<sup>147</sup> PRO: CO 291/89 no. 4902/05, Chinese Consul General, 13 February 1905; SAD (Central Archives Depot): BEP 575 G18/54, Raadpleging en koördinasie met ander instansies: Sjinese organisasies, 7 Desember 1963; BRA (Barlow Rand Archives): HE (Herman Eckstein) 252, file 136, no. 596, Eckstein and Company to Beit and Company, 17 October 1904; Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 91, fn. 42.

<sup>148</sup> Harris, "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance", pp. 72-80.

the pro- nor anti-lobbyists.<sup>149</sup> The workers judged it insufficient to safeguard them against Chinese encroachment, while other opposition decried it as a "Charter of slavery".<sup>150</sup> The advocates of the system argued that the Transvaal Ordinance compared very favourably with other labour ordinances, such as that of British Guiana. That territory had a longer period of indenture, longer working hours, lower wages, no say in transfer and no free repatriation at the termination of indenture.<sup>151</sup> However, the main detrimental distinctions between the Transvaal and other contemporary colonial ordinances - such as British Guiana, Trinidad, Mauritius, Queensland and Natal - which they chose not to highlight, were the limitation on rights to hold property and trade, restrictions on residence and immediate repatriation on the expiration of the contract.<sup>152</sup>

## V

The condition and treatment of the Chinese on the Rand has received much contemporary and historical attention, as have the

---

<sup>149</sup> W.T. Stead, "South Africa and its problems: The Chinese question", Review of Reviews, June 1904, p. 311.

<sup>150</sup> H.T. Bell and C.A. Lane, A guide to the Transvaal, Johannesburg, n.d., p. 222; Rose, Uncle Tom's cabin, p. 2; D.M. Goodfellow, Modern economic history of South Africa, London, 1931, pp. 216-7.

<sup>151</sup> Imperial South African Association, The British Guiana Ordinance 1894 and the Transvaal Chinese Ordinance, London, 1904, pp. 1-2.

<sup>152</sup> Imperial South African Association, Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance contrasted with other colonial immigration ordinances, London, n.d.

various outrages and murders committed by Chinese deserters.<sup>153</sup> This is largely due to the scandalous nature of some of the maltreatment and crime, the extent of the outcry against it, and the abundance of available archival research material on the topic. The focus on this aspect accords with most other conventional studies of overseas indentured migrants where "contemporary observers and historians [concentrate] on the more sensational aspects".<sup>154</sup>

It is, however, fair to concede that while the conditions for Chinese labourers in the Transvaal were reasonable, the same cannot be said of their treatment. This left much to be desired. Although the humanitarians sometimes exaggerated the poor treatment of the Chinese recruits, it can be argued, as British Liberal Party member of parliament, C.P. Trevelyan, did

[that] the allegations ... could not be believed off-hand. But neither could they be denied off-hand by companies against which allegations had been made.<sup>155</sup>

It should also be emphasized that mine management, white miners and Chinese police did indeed abuse the Chinese flagrantly,<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 212-4; Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk", pp. 254-329; Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 206-23; Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand gold mines", pp. 211-26; See also bibliography for details of other studies.

<sup>154</sup> J. Davids (ed.), The coolie trade and Chinese emigration, Delaware, 1973 as quoted by Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 74.

<sup>155</sup> P. Holz, "Yellow men - Yellow gold", The Reef, January 1982, p. 36.

<sup>156</sup> Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crises", pp. 491-2; Campbell, Chinese

which often resulted in disturbances, riots and fatal confrontations.<sup>157</sup> The labourers were also subjected to corporal punishment, while management was known to extend its power to include the "humiliation of the beam and the cruelty of Asiatic torture".<sup>158</sup> Occurrences such as those in the following accounts were not uncommon on the Rand:

A Compound Manager got two police boys, one to hold [the Chinese victim] by the head and the other, by the legs on the ground, [while] the Compound Manager flogged him.<sup>159</sup>

and

Li Kui was in the habit of flogging coolies and in one case tied a coolie up by the thumbs. ... It was difficult to get coolies to give evidence as they were afraid of Li and of Chinese Controller under whose directions believe Li was acting.<sup>160</sup>

The authorities generally dismissed these incidents as being the result of "linguistic incomprehensions" or "misunderstandings".<sup>161</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand", pp. 206-26; Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", pp. 158-9; Harris, "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance", pp. 22-7; Ticktin, "Political intimidation by Rand mineowners", pp. 7-8; Weeks, "The controversy over Chinese", pp. 84-94.

<sup>158</sup> BRA: HE 253 file 148 no. 920, Record Department, Incoming correspondence, Subject correspondence files: Labour, "Chinese labour in the Transvaal", by R.L. Outhwaite; TAD: Cd 2819, vol. 89, "Transvaal, Further correspondence relating to labour in the Transvaal mines", January 1906; Burt, A visit to the Transvaal, p. 60; Anon., "Yellow slavery", p. 253.

<sup>159</sup> T. Burt, A visit to the Transvaal, p. 60.

<sup>160</sup> PRO: CO 291/98, no. 12879/06, Chinese labour: Case of Li Kui, April 1906.

<sup>161</sup> TAD: SNA 527 na 15/06: Correspondence, Confidential: Private Secretary - Lt Governor. Forward copies of despatch on the subject of treatment of natives and Asiatics in Transvaal, 27 February 1906, p. 100.

That there was a serious problem in communicating cannot be denied. Not only could the white mine employees and Chinese labourers not understand each other, but nor could most of the Chinese-speaking Europeans officials and Chinese police controllers and interpreters. The latter men had been mainly recruited from southern China and could not speak the dialects of the northern regions, where all but three per cent of the Chinese had originated.<sup>162</sup> In an effort to address this problem, J.C. Juta & Co. published Chinese vocabulary and phrase book (Northern Chinese) (1905) by Charles Marien and the Central News Agency produced a condensed English-Mandarin dictionary by Eugenio Biachini.<sup>163</sup> Needless to say, neither had any noteworthy effect. In "orientalist" fashion, the authorities attributed these confrontations to the "moral weakness ... [of] the Chinese as a racial type",<sup>164</sup> as well as the "inherent Chinese vice" whose "sleeping passions could be unpleasantly aroused".<sup>165</sup>

Richardson shows how some of the key historical studies on this subject have also tended to attribute blame to a "Chinese phenomenon". Meyer sees Chinese vice as being "willing to strike

---

<sup>162</sup> Ta Chen, Chinese migration, p. 139; Denoon, A grand illusion, p. 151; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 189, 192-3.

<sup>163</sup> C. Marien, Chinese vocabulary and phrase book (Northern Chinese), Johannesburg, 1905; PRO: CO 291/88, no. 649/05, Chinese coolies. Alleged improper treatment, 1905.

<sup>164</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", p. 158.

<sup>165</sup> TAD: SNA 90 na 138/03, Correspondence: Chinese labour report.

at all"; Reeves refers to the Chinese habit of "resorting to violence if anything went wrong"; while Campbell's more sympathetic work reflects the biases of the official documentation of the Transvaal and British governments.<sup>166</sup> But as Richardson argues, the large number of disputes which took place, and the diversity of cause and characteristic, refute entirely such simplistic judgements.<sup>167</sup> They reflect, instead, how much more complex and extreme the Chinese labourers' circumstances were within this harsh environment and "orientalist" mindset.

It is also an oversimplification to perceive of the Chinese as merely the victims of brutal treatment in hostile surroundings. Just as the humanitarians exaggerated the illtreatment of the Chinese, so too other opponents of the indenture scheme magnified the outrages committed by the Chinese claiming, for example, that "the prisons of China had been cleared of ruffians in the search for labour".<sup>168</sup> These allegations can not all be dismissed out of hand. The records reveal a relatively high degree of social crime among the Chinese in this period. For example, the report on Chinese labourers' convictions and sentences for November 1905:

---

<sup>166</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randalords", pp. 158-9, fn. 44.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>168</sup> I.L Walker and B. Weinbren, 2000 casualties, Johannesburg, 1961, p. 17.

Assault	-	48
Crime with intent	-	2
Theft	-	8
Forgery and fraud	-	56
Poss. dangerous weapons	-	4
Refusal to work	-	91
Illegal. poss. opium	-	28
Public violence	-	14
Housebreaking and theft	-	12
Absence without permit	-	205
Unlawful absence	-	111
Desertion	-	<u>399</u>
		<u>978</u> <sup>169</sup>

Throughout the experiment, the overwhelming majority of misdemeanours were petty, resulting in prison sentences which entailed loss of time and wages. The perpetrators of more violent offences, such as murder and physical assault, were hanged or deported in an effort to weed out the "undesirables".<sup>170</sup> Despite this, within a year of the arrival of the Chinese labourers, the Labour Importation Ordinance was amended to expand the number of defined offences, increase the severity of the penalties and empower the FLD inspectors with summary jurisdiction to deal with crimes committed on mine premises.<sup>171</sup> In addition, farmers in outlying districts who were the most vulnerable targets of Chinese deserters were issued with firearms, while rewards were paid for bringing in escapees.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> PRO: CO 291/95, no. 3072/06, Chinese labourers: Convictions and sentences, 4 January 1906.

<sup>170</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 174.

<sup>171</sup> Ordinances of the Transvaal Colony, Ordinance 27 of 1905.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., Sacks, South Africa, p. 69.

## VI

The public outcry against both the illtreatment suffered and outrages committed by the Chinese did not go unnoticed by political parties both in South Africa and abroad. While the politicians in the Cape Colony had grappled with the question of the introduction of the Chinese in the 1903-4 elections,<sup>173</sup> both Britain and the Transvaal were to make political capital from the debate about the continuance or termination of the importation scheme in the elections of 1906 and 1907 respectively. The anti-Chinese slogan became the main plank in the Liberal Party's election manifesto and was regarded as one of the main reasons for its return to power.<sup>174</sup> In their political campaign, the Liberals accused the Conservatives of sanctioning "Chinese slavery" and urged the end of the "yellow peril". When the Liberal Party led by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman came to power, therefore, it was a foregone conclusion that the Chinese had to go.<sup>175</sup>

The granting of responsible government to the Transvaal by the new British government in 1907 led to increased local political

---

<sup>173</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>174</sup> Jacobsson, Fifty golden years, p. 84; Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 239-40.

<sup>175</sup> R. Macnab, Gold their touchstone: Gold Fields of South Africa, 1887-1987, Johannesburg, 1987, p. 92; M. Nathan, South Africa from within, London, n.d., p. 112; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 203-8; Jacobsson, Fifty golden years, p. 84.

agitation. The two main contenders in the Transvaal election campaign held diametrically opposed views on the Chinese labour scheme. The Progressive Party, established in 1904 by leading mine magnates, George Farrar, Percy Fitzpatrick and Drummond Chaplin, maintained a dedicated pro-Chinese stance. *Het Volk* [The People] party, founded by Boer generals Louis Botha, Jan Smuts, Christiaan Beyers and Koos de la Rey, in 1905, was adamantly anti-Chinese.<sup>176</sup> The latter stance won *Het Volk* the support of disgruntled white mine employees and various other Chamber of Mines dissidents in the 1907 elections.<sup>177</sup> Soon after the inauguration of the new Boer government in the Transvaal, steps were taken to discontinue the recruitment of Chinese and by 1910 their repatriation was virtually complete.<sup>178</sup>

In addition to the profound impact that the Chinese experiment had on local and British politics, it also had short and long term effects on the economy and labour relations within South Africa. According to Richardson's analysis, Chinese labour began to reverse trends associated with the gathering crisis in the mining industry.<sup>179</sup> First, the alleviation of the post-War labour

---

<sup>176</sup> Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand", pp. 80-2.

<sup>177</sup> Ticktin, "Origins of the South African Labour Party", p. 239-40.

<sup>178</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 166, 184; Sacks, South Africa, p. 99.

<sup>179</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 175.

shortage was directly attributable to Chinese labour importation. Between 1904 and 1907, the unskilled labour force more than doubled.<sup>180</sup> Secondly, the longer Chinese contracts and concomitant efficiency tended to reduce the fluctuations and turnover rate of the shorter term African labour supply.<sup>181</sup> Thirdly, Chinese importation allowed the mining industry to curtail the rise of unskilled wages. Moreover, throughout this period the Chinese earned less than African labourers - in 1905 the averages were 37s.7d a month for Chinese and 51s.9d for Africans.<sup>182</sup> Other important results of the Chinese scheme included ending the experiment with unskilled white labour and reducing recruitment operations within southern Africa.<sup>183</sup>

It is important to note, as Richardson and others do, that the Chinese did not play an exclusive role in reversing the post-War mining crisis. There were additional strategies and developments, such as the improvement of mining technology, company amalgamations, electrification and structural changes in the African labour market.<sup>184</sup> Of immediate significance was the fact that

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 176; Reeves "Chinese labour", p. 272.

<sup>181</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 167, 176.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 177; C. van Onselen, Studies in the social and economic history of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914: 1 New Babylon, Johannesburg, 1982, p. 26; Denoon, A grand illusion, 156-7; Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", p. 491.

<sup>183</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 177-9.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., pp. 181-2; Letcher, The gold mines, pp. 162-3.

within the first two years of importation the mines were able to recapture their position as the world's largest single producer of gold, surpassing the pre-War record achieved in 1898 in 1906.<sup>185</sup>

Of long-term significance was the impact that Chinese labour had on South African labour relations. Apart from perpetuating the migratory labour pattern, undermining the bargaining position of African labour, widening the ratio of white to coloured labour and therefore fragmenting the working class on the mines,<sup>186</sup> the Chinese experiment virtually served to reinforce the industrial colour bar. While certain categories of skilled employment had been reserved for whites through certification, the prohibitive occupational provisions of the Labour Importation Ordinance had lasting implications. They were ultimately made applicable to the rest of the migrant workforce and in the discriminatory Mines, Works and Machinery Act of 1911.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>185</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 180; Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 103.

<sup>186</sup> Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", p. 492; N. Levy, "Problems of acquisition of labour for the South African gold mining industry: The Asian labour alternative and the defence of wage structure", Southern African research in progress, Collected papers III, University of York, 1978, pp. 68-9; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 177-9; Van Onselen, New Babylon, p. 26.

<sup>187</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 272; Levy, The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, p. 229; Van der Horst, Native labour in South Africa, p. 122; Denoon, The Transvaal labour crisis, p. 492.

Finally, while "black labour" was regarded as the cornerstone of the gold mining industry,<sup>188</sup> "yellow labour" was perceived of as the scaffold<sup>189</sup> - a temporary expedient by means of which the gold industry could be reconstructed. As is evident from the above, however, the Chinese experiment had a more permanent effect on political and economic developments. The Chinese labourers themselves, who will be considered in the next chapter, left an indelible mark on the social milieu of the Rand, dramatically influencing both the position of the free Chinese community and perceptions of it.

---

<sup>188</sup> Johnstone, Class, race and gold, p. 48.

<sup>189</sup> University of Witwatersrand Library (UWL): A 953 - R.K. Cope: Book I - Research material for "Comrade Bill", Early Labour Economic Conditions,

## CHAPTER 4

### The Indentured Chinese Labourers

Given the popular and academic scrutiny which the more conventional aspects of the Transvaal Chinese indentured labour experiment have received, this chapter focuses on the labourers' personal experiences, which have generally been ignored. It therefore attempts to give the labourers a "voice". This is in line with Richardson's call for closer scrutiny of the "human element" of the topic.<sup>1</sup> The discussion includes a brief compilation of the Chinese background of the indentured Chinese, an outline of their living conditions on the mines and a discussion of aspects of the social life of their indenture in which they attempted to "create a world of their own".<sup>2</sup> It deals specifically with the range of the labourers' reactions, both negative and positive, within the context of the compound. It also considers the allegations of homosexual practices levelled against them which contributed to the swift termination of the Transvaal Chinese indenture system.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Genovese, Roll Jordan roll, preface.

<sup>3</sup> Lehmann, "The case of the Chinese coolies", p. 53; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 212.

## I

This chapter is not exclusively based on "new sources",<sup>4</sup> as little new has been unearthed. Instead it uses fairly well-known archival and other contemporary material, but looks at it from a different perspective. This is not an easy task. Any study of "subaltern classes" is hindered by the fact that as a subordinate group of unfree or indentured people, completely lacking in power,<sup>5</sup> their voices are not readily recorded and are therefore not heard. It is thus generally accepted that the details of a "subaltern class" in any society are virtually invisible. In addition to their lower status, they were generally illiterate and did not have easy recourse to careful record keeping. It is mainly for this reason that indentured experiences are neglected in the historical narrative.

To obtain information about the individual indenture experience, the researcher is heavily dependent on "surrogate sources",<sup>6</sup> such as the reports of officials, including commissions of inquiry and court cases, as well as accounts by contemporary observers. In each case, as Carter points out, the "transcribers ... would have

---

<sup>4</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, backcover and p. 1, refers to the use of "letters home".

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. ix-x; K. Sivaramakrishnan, "Situating the subaltern: History and anthropology in the Subaltern Studies project", Journal of Historical Sociology, 8, 4, December 1995, p. 398.

<sup>6</sup> Pooley and Whyte, Migrants, emigrants and immigrants, p. 3.

been distanced from the migrant's situation".<sup>7</sup> Added to this is the political bias of the author,<sup>8</sup> as well as the prevalence of an "orientalist" approach to all things Chinese, which means that the source often says more about the writer than its subject. Hence, the indentured labourer is doubly obscured, first by a lack of direct testimony, and secondly by pejorative "orientalist" perceptions.

As labour historian Patrick Harries has pointed out in his study of African migrant miners, "the picture of life on the mines has depended on the description of whites who attempted to speak for them".<sup>9</sup> The Transvaal Chinese unskilled miners were in a similar situation as they were mainly illiterate, and therefore their "voices" and experiences were also only indirectly heard. Any recorded communication was either written by a second party or recorded by an interpreter. Since "orientalism" was such an inherent part of European reflection, as illustrated in chapter 3, texts and reports were undoubtedly prejudiced, and are therefore of limited value as sources of information on the nature of the indentured experience. Moreover, as in the case of

---

<sup>7</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> In this particular instance, either pro- or anti- the Chinese experiment. For example, Unionist or Liberal party, mine employer or employee.

<sup>9</sup> P. Harries, Work, culture and identity: Marginal labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910, Johannesburg, 1992, p. 194.

recent research on the indentured Indians of Mauritius, this type of research is seriously hampered by the paucity of material on the experiences of individuals.<sup>10</sup> Yet, while Mauritian Indian indentured studies have access to "letters home" which have been found in the National Archives and private collections,<sup>11</sup> the Transvaal investigation has had to rely on fragmentary evidence gleaned from official documentation. Through a painstaking process of sifting the voluminous material, including government records, mine management reports, journalist accounts, political propaganda and the sparse - and unused - information emanating from the indentured labourers themselves,<sup>12</sup> a vague reconstruction of the social milieu of the Transvaal indentured Chinese does, however, emerge.

## II

As a result of an exhaustive analysis of the contracts signed by the Chinese prior to embarkation, and the Surgeon-Superintendent's reports, Richardson has managed to "piece together" an astoundingly clear picture of where the Chinese

---

<sup>10</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> Most of this material is in the TAD Foreign Labour Department (FLD). The few "letters home" were found in FLD 188-189, na 40/ - 40/52: Transmission of labourers' letters. These letters are a rare find because policy stated that letters that did not reach their destination were returned to the sender or destroyed. Also petitions in FLD 240-241, na 76/ - 76/32: Complaints of Chinese labourers.

indentured labourers came from and what their backgrounds were.<sup>13</sup> As a source, the contracts are limited because they were mainly a record of the "financial and legal obligations undertaken by the Chinese and a list of the recompense".<sup>14</sup> They do, however, contain some personal details, and together with historical and geographical information, enable historians to construct a picture of the origins of the labourers and provide reasons for their enlistment. This context is crucial for an understanding of the labourers' ability to cope and endure the oppressive system they experienced.<sup>15</sup>

After the problems encountered with the authorities in the southern provinces of China and the first two shipments of recruits,<sup>16</sup> the remaining 32 shipments, or 62 006 labourers - 97.3 percent of the total - that went to the Transvaal were from the northern territories.<sup>17</sup> The two provinces which predominated, Chihli and Shantung, were mainly rural in character and the overwhelming majority of emigrants came from the lowest stratum of this economy. They included poor peasants, rural wage

---

<sup>13</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 76. The contracts are found in TAD FLD files 343-353 and Surgeon-Superintendent reports in FLD files 122-124.

<sup>14</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 76.

<sup>15</sup> Carter, Voices of indenture, p. 156.

<sup>16</sup> For details see Richardson, Chinese mine labour, chapter 4.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 272.

labourers, migrant urban labourers and the destitute.<sup>18</sup> Richardson contends that the high rate of "medical rejects during the preliminary selection period" attests to a background of "considerable distress".<sup>19</sup> Poverty was endemic in these regions as inhabitants were subjected to floods, droughts and severe famines.<sup>20</sup> In 1900, this critical situation had contributed to the Boxer rebellion, followed by years of oppression. These conditions in the northern provinces were compounded by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and the closure of Manchuria. Traditionally, this region had provided employment for thousands of seasonal Chinese agricultural labourers, but, as a result, they faced starvation and were therefore amenable to recruitment.<sup>21</sup> Richardson believes that the connection between the "poverty", "chronic ecological instability" and "rebellion", as the causes of Chinese migration, have not been sufficiently emphasized.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", pp. 77-9; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 189.

<sup>19</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 80; See also Rhodes House Library (RHL): Nathan Papers, 350a: "Report on tour through Shantung province", E.D. Wolfe, Shantung, 13 July 1905, pp. 19-21.

<sup>20</sup> Ta Chen, Chinese migrations, pp. 5-11.

<sup>21</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 192; Denoon, A grand illusion, p. 151; Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", p. 490; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 59, 72, 107.

<sup>22</sup> Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 82.

That poverty was a key factor in the lives of the Chinese labourers is substantiated by the eagerness of the Chinese authorities for large-scale emigration and the interest they showed in the effective implementation of the allotment system.<sup>23</sup> For example, Governor Yang Sz Shiang emphasized the "advantages [Shantung] province would reap by a properly organized remittance scheme",<sup>24</sup> while the Governor-General of Chihli province, Yuan Shih-K'ai, made allotment an indispensable condition of further recruitment in his region.<sup>25</sup> The concern about remittances was naturally also common among the labourers and their families, as is clear from the numerous enquiries about money which did not reach their destination.<sup>26</sup> In the only two personal Chinese letters found in the Transvaal Archives Depot of the South African National Archives, reference is made almost exclusively to the remittance of money. Due to the scarcity of such documents, they have been translated and reproduced below. The first is from a labourer on the mines to his wife in China, and the second to a labourer on the mines from his brother in China.

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-1; TAD: FLD 83-84, 11/ - 11/55: Remittance of money to China.

<sup>24</sup> RHL: Nathan Papers, 350a: "Report on tour through Shantung province", E.D. Wolfe, Shantung, 13 July 1905, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 191.

<sup>26</sup> TAD: FLD 83-84, 11/ - 11/55: Remittance of money to China. For a discussion of the allotment system and related problems such as fraud, see Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 68-77.

Dear Madam Wu, my wife

I am well and sound since departure last year. Don't worry about me. Only after reading the return letter received from you on February 14, have I known that you haven't got money (amount 20 yuans) which I sent back to Hong Kong Tai Gu Bank last August. I immediately remitted 122 gold coin back through Tai Gu Bank on February 15 and March 15 separately. The receiver address is Yuan Qian St, Xie Jiahe. Please notify me if you still haven't received these two remittances so I can get the refund from Tai Gu Bank. Now they tell me you haven't signed for the reception. I will be back to home after three years pass. Take care and don't worry about me.

Your husband Hu Yulin  
October 20, GuangXu 31.<sup>27</sup>

Dear Brother Liu Tsai Chi

Not hear from you after you leave from Africa. We don't know if you want to bring the family settle money back yourself or ask somebody else to send it back. Now without seeing the money your mother is making a tearful scene with me at home. Hope you write a letter back together with money so as to rescue me from bad situation at present.

No more to write and with best regards.

Your brother Zhu Anran

(Use the envelope enclosed in this letter).<sup>28</sup>

The concern about money and the threat of destitution which was rife in China at this time is corroborated by Western observers.

In a statement made in 1904, missionary Pearce wrote:

[t]he word "poverty" takes on a new meaning when used of the Chinese ... It is not easy to imagine a lower

---

<sup>27</sup> TAD: FLD 188 40/1: Transmission of Chinese letters, East Rand Propriety Mines Limited, loose leaf letter enclosed. Translated by kind favour of Davy Yi, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> TAD: FLD 189, 40/17: Transmission of Chinese letters, Durban Roodepoort Deep, looseleaf letter enclosed. Translated by kind favour of Davy Yi, 1998.

standard of human existence than is met with in the mud villages of the worst districts. In ordinary years there is always a longer or shorter interval between the exhaustion of the old supply and the ingathering of the new crop of rice, when the farming folk subsist for the most part on vegetable refuse. In famine years women and children are sold quite openly, and carried off in large numbers.<sup>29</sup>

Traveller, Constance Gordon-Cumming, also gave a bleak description of Chihli province:

... it is a wide expanse of grey dust, and the villages are all built of mud. They are all exactly alike, and are all hideous; ... In every direction I noticed toilsome methods of irrigation by hand, and only where those are diligently practised has the thirsty earth struggled into greenness.<sup>30</sup>

And recruiting agent, E.D. Wolfe, described the Yellow river floods in Shantung, which carried

all before it and has at times without number depopulated and laid waste enormous tracts of country, thus accounting in great measure for the poverty of the province.<sup>31</sup>

Given this miserable state of affairs, it is quite obvious why thousands of Chinese chose indentured work in the Transvaal mines, renewed their contracts, and induced others to follow them. This was also clear in 1906 when the newly elected Liberal government in Britain began to take steps to terminate the

---

<sup>29</sup> Pearce, "Chinese coolie labour in South Africa", p. 226.

<sup>30</sup> C.F. Gordon-Cumming, Wanderings in China, London, 1896, p. 134 as quoted by Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> RHL: Nathan Papers, 350a: "Report on tour through Shantung province", E.D. Wolfe, Shantung, 13 July 1905, p. 7.

Chinese indentured system. As a result of the voluntary repatriation offered, hundreds of Chinese objected in petitions claiming:

they were satisfied with their lot; that they had come to the Transvaal with the deliberate purpose of earning more money than they could earn in 3 years in China.<sup>32</sup>

Shee Sung confirms this by claiming that almost none of the labourers accepted the offer of a return passage, because according to the historical records of the Qing dynasty, working opportunities were far superior in Africa.<sup>33</sup> So serious was the Chinese reaction that government employee, F. Anderson, warned the British authorities that

an agitation might be revived on the lines of the [American] "Exclusion Act" and "boycott" trouble but directed against England, if 50 000 Chinese [were] deported from South Africa against their will and dumped down at the ports of China to find work as best they can.

Anderson also pointed out that

[t]he situation in China was not very settled..., trade [had] been bad for over a year, the famine had caused great distress and this does not seem to be the moment to run the risk of unnecessarily irritating oriental feeling.<sup>34</sup>

As was the case in countries such as India, indentured migration was undertaken mainly out of necessity.<sup>35</sup> It can therefore be

---

<sup>32</sup> PRO: CO 291/99 19157/06 Chinese coolies. Repatriation, 28 May 1906.

<sup>33</sup> Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> PRO: CO 291/121 no. 23767/07, Chinese coolie repatriation, 5 July 1907.

<sup>35</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, p. 156.

concluded that the wage offered in the Transvaal was the main incentive for volunteering. This was expedited by the effective recruiting methods.<sup>36</sup> The Transvaal government had ensured compliance with the demand by the British government for a minimum wage. This was set at one shilling per day to 1s 6d per day if after six months' work the average monthly pay did not reach 50s per month for each labourer.<sup>37</sup> Although the average monthly wage received by the Chinese was lower than that paid to African recruits,<sup>38</sup> European contemporaries still regarded it as "eight times" or "fifteen times" as much as the Chinese could "earn at home",<sup>39</sup> and believed that at

the end of their three years' term they hope to return to China with enough saved to keep them for the remainder of their lives.<sup>40</sup>

According to a Chinese official at Chinwangtao, there were labourers who were able to save from \$100.00 to \$1000.00 [£10 to £100] as a result of their industry on the Transvaal mines.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 73.

<sup>37</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 183; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 38, 172-3. Piece-work contracts were also introduced but resulted in numerous disputes over minimum payment levels. See Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords".

<sup>38</sup> Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", pp 492-3.

<sup>39</sup> Imperial South African Association, The Chinese labour question, London, 1904, p. 7; British Library, (BL): ADD MSS 41243A Campbell-Bannerman Papers, Financial crisis and Chinese labour, A. Milner to Lyttelton, 21 March, p. 172.)

<sup>40</sup> National Union and Conservative Central Office, Chinese labour on the Rand, London, n.d., p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> TAD: FLD 218 58/-, Secret societies: Translation of a petition to H.E. Viceroy of Chihli.

A recruiter in Shantung, Edgar Silas-Schwabé, actually claimed that

the wage rates were so high, relatively speaking, that they caused very considerable suspicion amongst intending emigrants and deterred many from going to the mines.<sup>42</sup>

Some petitions submitted by the Chinese also prefaced their complaints with references to the importance of the salary. For example:

Your petitioner has a wife and a widowed mother at home, and his object in enlisting for labour here was to better himself pecuniarily.<sup>43</sup>

and

The object of the presence of the Chinese on this mine is two-fold - the first being the desire to earn money, and the second, to maintain their respective families with the money earned here.<sup>44</sup>

A London Missionary Society doctor in Chihili, Arthur Peill, wrote that:

The families of those who have gone [to the Transvaal] are delighted, since they get their allowance regularly, and never had such an experience before.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 73.

<sup>43</sup> TAD: FLD 240 76/11: Complaints by Chinese, Simmer and Jack Mine, Ts'ui Ku-yen, Government passport no. 14704 to Superintendent, 25 July 1906.

<sup>44</sup> TAD: FLD 240 76/5: Complaints by Chinese, Aurora West; Roodepoort United Main Reef; West Rand Mines, The respectful petition of Ts'ui Te-sheng, G. P. no. 46205, West Rand Mines, Limited.

<sup>45</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 67.

In considering the social conditions of the Chinese on the Transvaal mines, it has to be conceded that in the face of the high cost of recruitment and accommodation,<sup>46</sup> as well as political opposition and scrutiny, it was

to the material interests of the Rand magnates that the coolies should be well treated, comfortably housed and fed, and secure of justice. Were the Chinese to find themselves downtrodden and unhappy, they would neither renew their contracts nor advise their friends to come and join them.<sup>47</sup>

This point was made by Sir Matthew Nathan, Governor of Hong Kong:

The good treatment of the labourers in South Africa [is] secured alike by the Convention ... and the interests of the mineowners in that country, who are fully aware that unless the labourers who return to China or on the expiration of their first period of service are completely satisfied with its conditions, it will not be possible whatever arrangements are made by the Government concerned for the mineowners to get again the Chinese labour they value so highly for the development of their properties.<sup>48</sup>

The Chamber of Mines' recruiting agents were so confident about the favourable conditions on the mines that they insisted that every effort be made to facilitate and encourage the Chinese labourers who could write letters to do so, and those who could

---

<sup>46</sup> The cost per recruit was £17/5/2 which included the return passage, railway rates from the coast, subsistence depots en route from China, medical fees, capitation fee for the Chinese government and other incidental expenses. Special accommodation and dietary requirements were additional. Levy, The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, pp. 226-7; Richardson, "Chinese indentured labour", p. 274.

<sup>47</sup> Dobbie, "Chinese labour", p. 800.

<sup>48</sup> RHL: Nathan Papers, 328: M. Nathan, Governor of Hong Kong to F. Scott, 7 March 1905, p. 90.

not write were advised to have letters written for them.<sup>49</sup> It was believed that

[n]o one that knows can deny that the coolies are well cared for. It is essential, however, that this should be made known to their relatives in the remote villages from which the coolies hail. They should be encouraged to send home details of their doings.<sup>50</sup>

The recruiting agents in China assured the Foreign Labour Department that every effort was made to ensure that letters reached their addressees,<sup>51</sup> and it was believed that this correspondence, with feedback from the Transvaal mines, increased recruiting prospects.<sup>52</sup> Despite the alleged level of illiteracy of the Chinese labourers, and the absence of comprehensive and accurate archival records on the amount of correspondence, over 2015 letters were registered as having been transmitted from China to the labourers on the mines.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> TAD: FLD 188, 40: Transmission of labourers' letters, General Manager, Chamber of Mines Labour Importation Agency to Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 16 January 1906.

<sup>50</sup> RHL: Nathan Papers 350a: "Report on tour through Shantung province", E.D. Wolfe, Shantung, 13 July 1905, p. 27.

<sup>51</sup> TAD: FLD 188, 40: Transmission of labourers' letters, General Manager, Chamber of Mines Labour Importation Agency to Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 16 January 1906.

<sup>52</sup> RHL: Nathan Papers 350a: "Report on tour through Shantung province", E.D. Wolfe, Shantung, 13 July 1905, p.23.

<sup>53</sup> TAD: FLD 188-189, 40/ - 40/52, Transmission of labourers letters. This count is made on the basis of pro forma records of letters sent to particular mines. However it is an extremely conservative estimate as the transmission was often recorded merely as "packets of letters" or "bundles of letters" with no indication of numbers.

The Chinese did arrive in adequate numbers and there is evidence indicating that brother followed brother,<sup>54</sup> creating "chain migration" - despite the short duration of the experiment. This suggests that the conditions and treatment on the Rand, however appalling, did not eclipse the benefits of the relatively high remuneration. Coming from a desperately poverty-stricken background, the Chinese generally endured the harsh treatment of the contracted period for the sake of the much-needed money.

## III

Arriving at Durban harbour after the recruitment and embarkation process, as well as an arduous 30 day sea journey,<sup>55</sup> the Chinese must have found their "alien" environs both exciting and frightening. While there is no source material emanating from the Chinese to substantiate this, much of the moment is vividly captured in a school essay written by Joyce Evans, daughter of the first Superintendent of the Foreign Labour Department, William Evans. She described the arrival of the train with the "first batch" of Chinese:

---

<sup>54</sup> TAD: FLD 241, 76/16, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Translation of the attached petition, Nourse Mine Limited, Petitioner Yu Kwang Ping, G.P.no. 36195.

<sup>55</sup> PRO: CO 291/91 no. 2422/05, Chinese labour, newspaper cuttings, The Standard, 25 January 1905; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 157; Holz, "Yellow men", November 1981, p. 54.

... it was such a funny sight. There were about three rows of heads, one on top of the other poking out of each window, all staring, laughing and talking hard. ... none of them would be the first to get out, evidently wandering what was going to happen to them. You see, having had their thumb prints taken and a few other things done to them, I expect they thought something worse was going to happen. ... After some time they all got out and each took their bag of rice and their basket, (their only luggage) and were shown their way to the mine, which was a very large and clean one.<sup>56</sup>

That the accommodation on the mines was reasonable can only be gauged by European opinion, and the cost of and regulations for the construction of the new compounds for the Chinese.<sup>57</sup> Plans of these compounds had to be submitted, approved and inspected before a licence could be granted to a mine to introduce Chinese labour. Compounds had to be "well ventilated and provided with all sanitary conveniences: steam cooking, hot water in the bathrooms, and electric light".<sup>58</sup> The contracts also stipulated a daily allowance of food which included rice, fish or meat, fresh vegetables, salt, sugar, tea.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> RHL: Evans Papers, MSS Afr s 1587: Joyce Evans, essay, 31 March 1907.  
<sup>57</sup> Burt, A visit to the Transvaal, p. 67; Naylor, Yellow labour, p. 4; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 188; Jeeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa", pp. 184-6; New Chinese compounds were constructed at a cost of £7 10/- per head.  
<sup>58</sup> PRO: CO 291/79 no. 39476/04, Chinese labour: Report on by Mr W. Evans, 14 November 1904.  
<sup>59</sup> Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 101.

According to Superintendent Evans, the

arrangements for the accommodation of the Chinese labourers was sufficient and suitable [and that] in every case [it was] much superior to what the labourers are accustomed to in China.<sup>60</sup>

Contemporary journalist, A.G. Boscawen, declared it

a life which unskilled workers in any part of the world may well envy.<sup>61</sup>

This was a view supported by Mine Manager Lane Carter:

Having seen some of the misery of humanity in the near East and in the cities of England, I can only say the Chinese coolies on the Rand are in clover.<sup>62</sup>

Lord Selborne, Governor of the Transvaal, described the conditions under which the Chinese were living as follows:

They do not differ from those of the native of the Witwatersrand, except that everything provided for him (the Chinese) in the way of food and accommodation is, judged by the European standard, much superior to the food and average accommodation for the native.<sup>63</sup>

He also wrote that:

Two coolies were overheard discussing their new land and one said 'We live like mandarins in this country: we eat rice every day'. The position of affluence in which the coolie finds himself in South Africa is best brought home by remembering his wages in China are only two-pence a day, and that he migrates to Korea for the sake of earning the magnificent emolument of fivepence per day.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> PRO: CO 291/73 no. 42672/04, Chinese labourers. Arrangement for reception and accommodation of, p. 586.

<sup>61</sup> A.G. Boscawen, "British policy in the Transvaal", The National Review, June 1907, p. 575.

<sup>62</sup> Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 103.

<sup>63</sup> Cd. 2786, "Further correspondence relating to labour in the Transvaal mines", lxxx, 1906 as quoted by Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 188; See also Munro, The Transvaal (Chinese), pp. xxii-xxiii; Burt, A visit to the Transvaal, pp. 67-8.

<sup>64</sup> L. Phillips, Transvaal problems: Some notes on current politics, London, 1905, pp. 110-11.

These comments generally said more about the poor conditions in China and in the African living quarters, than they did about the actual arrangements for the Chinese labourers.

In terms of the Labour Importation Ordinance, the Chinese labourers were confined to doing unskilled work on the mines.<sup>65</sup> They were mainly employed underground and in the strategically more productive jobs, such as hand-drilling in the stopes.<sup>66</sup> Although the majority of Chinese labourers were "peasants fresh from the plough or petty traders",<sup>67</sup> they displayed a remarkable ability to learn. In the early years of their employment, the Consulting Engineer of Rand Mines, G.E. Webber, stated that the Chinese labourers performed their work better than the Africans, while the Chamber of Mines Importation Agency reckoned that the increase in Chinese proficiency would ultimately make them the "most efficient [labourers] that has ever been known on these fields".<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Ordinances of the Transvaal, no. 17 of 1904, Labour Importation Ordinance.

<sup>66</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 169, 208, Table A.18; Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 99.

<sup>67</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 189; Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", pp. 173, 175.

<sup>68</sup> As quoted by Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 180.

## IV

Numerous contemporary Europeans believed, however, that because the Chinese were confined to the compounds, debarred from social amenities and their movements circumscribed, they had been denied "basic civil rights".<sup>69</sup> While not disputing this judgement, there is evidence which offers a glimpse of a world that was created by the Chinese labourer beyond the hours spent toiling underground or apart from the monotony of compound life. Like African migrants on the mines, the Chinese were not what Harries has termed "unrelenting victims", and he argues that critics who assigned the "cultural expression of the black workers in the cities to the realm of the abnormal or degenerate", obscured whole areas of life in the compounds.<sup>70</sup> He claims that "beneath the surface, behind closed doors, and hidden within the intimacy of the workers' daily life lies another picture".<sup>71</sup> This world was also referred to by missionary and anthropologist, Henri Junod, who wrote that "in the middle of this general ugliness the blacks succeeded in creating a good deal that [was] picturesque".<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS): Addis Papers, PP MS 14/165, Leaves from a diary, 20 January 1906; British Library, (BL): Campbell-Bannerman Papers, ADD MSS 41238, General correspondence, F. MacMarness to Campbell-Bannerman, 28 July 1905, p. 56; See also Thompson, "Pressure groups, propoganda and the state", pp. 24-5.

<sup>70</sup> Harries, Work, culture and identity, p. 195.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid; P. Harries, "Symbols and sexuality: Culture and identity on the early Witwatersrand gold mines", Gender and History, 2, 3, Autumn, 1990, pp. 218-221.

While pro-Chinese propaganda depicted an idyllic version of the "leisure time" in the "garden cities" (compounds!),<sup>73</sup> there are more reliable sources originating from the labourers themselves which describe some of their off-duty activities, and reveal fairly positive attitudes.

The following episodes were more the exception than the rule, but serve to illustrate that at some level there was a degree of tolerance, if not contentment, among the Chinese labourers, albeit from a position of submission and subservience. Indeed, these reactions may be interpreted as a form of what can be called "reciprocal paternalism". This accords with the work on paternalism by historians such as Charles van Onselen, Simon Dagut and Jacklyn Cock.<sup>74</sup> Dagut, for example, shows how the subordinate parties strove to invoke a form of paternalism from the superordinates through the giving of gifts.<sup>75</sup> Although "genuine paternalism" is perceived as primarily a "pre-capitalist

---

<sup>73</sup> National Liberal Federation and Liberal Central Association, The Chinese labour question, London, 1904, p. 12; National Liberal Federation and Liberal Central Association, The spirit of slavery, London, 1904, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup> C. van Onselen, "The social and economic underpinning of paternalism and violence in the maize farms of the south-western Transvaal, 1900-1950", Journal of Historical Sociology, 5, 2, June 1992, pp. 127-60; S. Dagut, "Paternalism and social distance: British settlers racial attitudes, 1850s-1890s", South African Historical Journal, 37, November 1997, pp. 2-20; J. Cock, Madams and maidens: A study of the politics of exploitation, Johannesburg, 1980.

<sup>75</sup> Dagut, "Paternalism and social distance", pp. 3-4.

phenomenon",<sup>76</sup> it can be argued that it was prevalent given the circumstances of the indentured Chinese labourers who were "bonded to the mine compound". For example, when the mine manager of Jumpers Deep mine resigned, the Chinese employed on the mine gave him a plaque with the following inscription:

A Presentation to Honorable Big Man Mine Owner  
 We Chinese have been here nearly two years  
 We are well fed and cared for  
 The work is good and it suits us  
 And the pay is not small  
 The owner treats us as well as heaven and earth treat us  
 We have nothing suitable to present the owner for his  
     kindness  
 We present this souvenir  
 From all the Chinese of the Jumpers Deep  
 27 October 1906.<sup>77</sup>

Similar occasions were also often reported on in the Witwatersrand press. For example, the Transvaal Leader published the following report:

#### CHINESE GIFTS

On Saturday afternoon the Chinese employed at the Rand Collieries made a presentation consisting of screens, flags etc. and an umbrella elaborately worked and inscribed with complimentary phrases in Chinese characters to the acting manager ..., compound manager ..., medical officer ... and shift captain... The presentations were made the occasion of a Chinese procession and various Chinese performances.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Genovese, Roll Jordan roll, p. 662.

<sup>77</sup> Weeks, "The controversy over Chinese labour", p. 84 quoting Cartwright.

<sup>78</sup> Transvaal Leader, 11 September 1906.

Although these actions might not have been indicative of contentment, they do signify an attempt to come to terms with and adapt to the compound environment.

Not unlike their African migrant counterparts, the Chinese indentured labourers also attempted to recreate the world they were accustomed to by invoking customs, traditions and other social positions during their leisure hours.<sup>79</sup> According to their contracts, the Chinese were not to work on certain Chinese festivals,<sup>80</sup> which were occasions for celebration, as is illustrated in the following extract:

During the new year ... about two hundred labourers met together to consider the best means of spending the new year holidays. It was decided to have a feast and with this object in view a subscription was started and \$200 ie = £20 was collected. ... £15 was spent in the purchase of eatables and other viands ...<sup>81</sup>

From various Chinese petitions and official reports it is evident that leisure time also took on other forms. On Sundays and other holidays, on the provision of a pass, the Chinese would "stroll in the woods", "buy fruit", visit "Cantonese eating-house[s]", "brothels", "gambling dens" and other compounds, while some took

---

<sup>79</sup> Harries, Work, culture and identity, p. 209.

<sup>80</sup> Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 103.

<sup>81</sup> TAD: FLD 240, 76/8, Complaints by Chinese labourers: South Nourse Limited, The petition of Chang Chàng-huei to the Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 2 April 1906.

cab rides in the surrounding region.<sup>82</sup> One Chinese petitioner even referred to how he had

incurred a number of debts through his extravagant ways and the amount of his liabilities ... amount[ed] to several tens of pounds sterling.<sup>83</sup>

There were also accounts of the Chinese having picnics, performing in bands, marching in festive processions and sacrificing food to the gods of heaven.<sup>84</sup>

In a few compounds, the Chinese were known to have set up customary secret societies which held regular meetings. In complete contrast to the widespread fear and apprehension about the existence of these clandestine and subversive groups, which were renowned for their hostility to authority,<sup>85</sup> they were never a problem on the Rand. Compound authorities who detected their existence went to great lengths to try to convict and repatriate

---

<sup>82</sup> TAD: FLD 240, 76/7, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Wit Deep Limited, Translation of petition of 7 Wit Deep coolies, 28 May 1906; FLD 240, 76/8, Complaints by Chinese labourers: South Nourse Limited, petition to the Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 2 April 1906; FLD 241, 76/19, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Jumpers Deep Limited, The petition of Chinese controller, 10 April 1908; PRO: CO 291/85 no. 33492/05, Chinese labourers, Maintenance of order among, 28 August 1905; CO 291/100 no. 23988/06, Chinese coolies, executions and trials, week to 17 June 1906.

<sup>83</sup> TAD: FLD 240, 76/11, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Simmer and Jack, The petition of Ts'ui Ku-Yen, G. P. no. 14704, to the Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 25 July 1906.

<sup>84</sup> TAD: FLD 240, 76/19, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Jumpers Deep, A.E. Mawby to Captain Gibson, 7 April 1906; Anon., "Chinese on the Rand", p. 245; Holz, "Yellow men", November 1981, p. 54.

<sup>85</sup> J. Chesneaux, "Secret societies in China's historical evolution", in J. Chesneaux (ed.), Popular movements and secret societies in China, 1840-1950, Stanford, 1972, p. 4.

the club members, but lacking sufficient evidence, they were seldom sentenced.<sup>86</sup> These groups probably operated as "friendly societies" in which members of specific villages or those who spoke similar dialects would gather to socialize. As Pan points out, the secret society was a type of surrogate clan, and was popular among immigrants because it was a substitute for the families who had been left behind.<sup>87</sup>

Another popular and traditional pastime was performing in or watching Chinese theatre.<sup>88</sup> The particular importance and prevalence of theatrical performances is apparent from photographs of the casts with their ornate costumes, as well as accounts, such as the following:

At the Glen Deep [the Chinese] had placed in the hands of the manager £250, to be sent to China for the purchase of scenery and stage properties. As a contribution by about 2 000 men, this was no small tribute to the love of drama.<sup>89</sup>

These sanguine descriptions of the Chinese on the Rand - be they of Chinese or European origin - do indicate that some of the Chinese were able to "create a world of their own", albeit a form

---

<sup>86</sup> PRO: CO 291/81 no. 7589/05, Chinese on Simmer and Jack Mine, Arrests for forming a secret society, March 1905; CO 291/85 no. 33492/05, Chinese labourers, Maintenance of order among, 28 August 1905; TAD: FLD 218 58/4 and 58/11, Secret societies, 1905.

<sup>87</sup> Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor, p. 20.

<sup>88</sup> Anon., "Chinese on the Rand", p. 245; Holz, "Yellow men", November 1981, p. 54.

<sup>89</sup> Phillips, Transvaal problems, p. 113.

of "cultural resilience and adaptation"<sup>90</sup> within an alien and controlled environment. These experiences do not refute the existence of dissatisfaction. Although the resistance can be described as "largely silent and unorganised",<sup>91</sup> it was demonstrated in a wide range of forms. The Chinese labourers' complaints and resistance were not unlike that exhibited by other "workers in bonded labour regimes".<sup>92</sup>

## V

In order to address prevailing grievances and possible resistance, the FLD placed locked petition boxes on each mine that employed Chinese, the contents of which its inspectors collected and investigated. Moreover, there was a procedure whereby the Chinese complained first to the controller of the mine, then to the mine manager, and after that to the inspector in charge of the mine. Following that, the Superintendent of the FLD could be approached.<sup>93</sup> Among the Chinese petitions found in the archival records of the FLD, no grievances were recorded about the accommodation and only one about the actual working

---

<sup>90</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, p. 100.

<sup>91</sup> C. van Onselen, Chibaro: African mine labour in southern Rhodesia, London, 1980, p. 244.

<sup>92</sup> Carter, Voices of indenture, p. 100; Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand gold mines", p. 226; Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", p. 494.

<sup>93</sup> TAD: FLD 240, 76/-: Complaints by Chinese, General policy, November 1906.

conditions could be traced. This particular petition complained of having to work underground - ironically the work that had been assigned to 70% of the Chinese who were contracted.<sup>94</sup> The translation of the petition, dated 7 December 1905, included the following:

The terms of the Contract signed in China are not adhered to. Our Contracts do not mention about 'drilling' underground. .. Working on the surface (above ground) is like receiving the equivalent of a Transvaal blessing. Why do Compound Managers consider 'drilling' the most important work in mining and yet do not pay increased wages, for in working underground we have always to guard against being drowned; water pours down on our heads drenching us and giving us cold. For this reason work is hard and wages not easy to earn.<sup>95</sup>

Apart from this single case, among the limited number of complaints preserved,<sup>96</sup> the general tendency was to complain about physical assault from both white and Chinese mine control staff, bribery and extortion (particularly by Chinese police and "boss boys" as a result of gambling), and matters concerning money, such as incorrect remuneration or the failure of fellow miners or Chinese and white controlling staff to repay loans.<sup>97</sup> Possible reasons for the general lack of complaint by the Chinese

---

<sup>94</sup> Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 99; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 171.

<sup>95</sup> TAD: FLD 240, file 76/-, Complaints by Chinese, 7 December 1905.

<sup>96</sup> TAD: FLD 240-241, 76/ - 76/15 Complaints by Chinese, contains only 33 individual, joint and anonymous petitions.

<sup>97</sup> TAD: FLD 240-241, 76/ - 76/32, Complaints by Chinese labourers; PRO: CO 291/103 no. 37807/06, Case of A. Grant and the Chinese on Lancaster Gold Mine Properties, 24 September 1906.

were language, intimidation and disregard by management. Added to this was the allegation that the Chinese did not have a culture of complaint, being "unaccustomed to the procedure."<sup>98</sup> Moreover, in "many cases where grievances [were] believed to exist the aggrieved person himself [preferred] to maintain silence".<sup>99</sup>

While the Chinese did not generally voice objections to their circumstances in a "conventional fashion" through the channels provided, Richardson argues that the high crime rate was "indicative of a serious crisis of social control".<sup>100</sup> This he declared was "related to the totality of conditions under which the Chinese were forced to live and work."<sup>101</sup>

This observation about Chinese reactions on the mines is congruent with the assessments made by numerous other labour historians, such as Denoon, Van Onselen, Carter and Kathryn Saunders.<sup>102</sup> They demonstrate that there are "several layers of resistance" shown by workers in bonded labour regimes, all of

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> TAD: SNA 527 na 15/06, Correspondence Confidential: Private Secretary - Lt Governor. Forwards copies of Despatches on the subject of the treatment of Natives and Asiatics in Transvaal, 27 February 1906, p. 11; Executive Council (EC) 77 ec 82/06 Governor Selborne - Colonial Office, 29 January 1905.

<sup>100</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 174.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Carter, Voices from indenture, p. 100.

which are directly applicable to indentured labour.<sup>103</sup> In particular labour historian Eddie Webster argued that

industrial conflict is better conceived of as a continuum with organised strikes at the one end and desertion, ... at the other.<sup>104</sup>

While some Indian labour historians have gone as far as assessing every response of workers under indenture as a form of resistance to their work environment, be they positive or negative.<sup>105</sup>

Quite remarkably, a similar conclusion about resistance was drawn by contemporary observers who were trying to present the Chinese scheme in a favourable light. Members from both the FLD and the "Special Committee of Enquiry into the Control of Chinese Labourers of 1906" stated:

the origin of so much unrest was to be sought not in the innate criminality of the Chinese, but in the structural conditions of life within the mine compound.<sup>106</sup>

The Superintendent of the FLD who succeeded Evans in 1905, J.W. Jamieson, confirmed this opinion. Although rather detailed, his report is extremely perceptive and underlines much of the current historiographical opinion about indentured labour resistance. His views were that:

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.; Denoon, "The Transvaal labour crisis", p. 494.

<sup>104</sup> E. Webster, "Background to the supply and control of labour in the gold mines" in E. Webster (ed.), Essays in southern African labour history, Johannesburg, 1978, pp. 7, 13.

<sup>105</sup> For example K. Haraksingh in Carter, Voices of indenture, p. 100.

It is a subject of comment amongst the resident officers conversant with the Chinese in their own country that after a few months on the Rand the coolies become 'de-Chinese-ed', ... a sudden uprooting of ancient landmarks defining the path of duty, a relaxation of time-honoured canons of behaviour, the withdrawal of the collective moral atmospheric pressure, if it may be so called, brought to bear on the individual from the day of his birth, by the family, the village and the community at large can be good for no man, and if after a short sojourn here the coolie finds that he can afford to disregard with impunity prescriptions hitherto considered sacred, it is not surprising that he should develop a tendency towards degeneration.<sup>107</sup>

Jamiesons's appraisal touches on a number of key points which can be applied to most circumstances of indentured or bonded labour. The individual labourers were extracted from their traditional surroundings and transferred to unfamiliar environs which were not only physically, but culturally, alien. The indentured labourer therefore became displaced and socially dislocated, which in turn resulted in unusual reactions.

The very high rate of crime among the Chinese can be interpreted as indicative of deep-rooted resistance and of unfair treatment and harsh conditions. And it was redolent of the rigidity of the indenture system. It should, however, be conceded that although a high percentage of the crime, and particularly petty crime, may

---

<sup>107</sup> TAD: Cd. 3338, "Annual report of the Foreign Labour Department 1905-1906", lvii, 1907, p. 13.

be ascribed to the "bonded" situation, even the supporters of the Transvaal Chinese scheme had to admit that there was a

certain proportion of bad characters [and a] number of members of the Chinese criminal class who [had] come to [the Transvaal] to escape the consequences of the misdeeds committed in their own countries.<sup>108</sup>

Ironically, it was the most popular social activity which was seen as the root cause of most outrages committed by the Chinese. Gambling, which was one of the numerous "oriental vices" frowned upon by the European community, was the most accessible form of recreation within the confines of the mining compound. As a result of debts incurred, however, it was the main source of trouble.<sup>109</sup> Subjected to intolerable collective pressure, and in order to pay their "debts of honour" to save face, or to avoid creditors, the ruined gamblers would escape. The problem arose when more often than not, the deserter engaged in robbery as the easiest method of securing the funds owed. When house-breaking or other forms of theft were interrupted or resisted, it sometimes resulted in murder or attempted murder. In addition, many destitute deserters died of exposure or committed suicide.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> PRO: CO 291/85, 33492/05 Chinese labourers. Maintenance of order among, 28 August 1905.

<sup>109</sup> TAD: FLD 243 78/, Gambling: Gambling and labourers working for gamblers on other mines: General policy; FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime: A. Ross: Report on unnatural vice, 24 August 1906.

<sup>110</sup> TAD: TKP Committee of Enquiry, 1906, p. 14; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 210-12; Praagh, The Transvaal and its mines, p. 540; Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 105.

For example, in the period 1905-1906, 13 532 (or just under 30%) out of about 47 600 employed labourers, were convicted of offences. Of these, 1 700 were for desertion, of which 210 were convicted for house-breaking, seven for attempted murder and 26 for murder.<sup>111</sup> The Special Committee of 1906 estimated that nine-tenths of deserters were the victims of gambling.<sup>112</sup> As a result of the public outcry, it is not surprising that gambling was prohibited by legislation in 1906.<sup>113</sup> Yet despite the preventative regulations, gambling persisted, often aided and abetted by the Chinese police and controllers. Some Chinese who were professional gamblers were known to have their shifts worked by debtors.<sup>114</sup> Numerous cases arose of Chinese on the mines appealing to the Superintendent of the FLD for protection, since they had been threatened with murder or "advised ... [by their creditors] to commit suicide to escape payment".<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Indian Opinion, 28 July, 1906; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 209; Sung, "Chinese labour", p. 106.

<sup>112</sup> TAD: TKP Committee of Enquiry, 1906.

<sup>113</sup> TAD: FLD 243 78/- Gambling: General policy, Government notice no. 958 of 1906: Regulations for prevention of gambling by Chinese labourers. Praagh, The Transvaal and its mines, p. 540.

<sup>115</sup> TAD: FLD 240, 76/8, Complaints by Chinese labourers: South Nourse Limited, The joint petition of ... labourers ... to the Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 2 April 1906; FLD 240, 76/11, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Simmer and Jack, The petition of Ts'ui Ku-yen, G.P. no. 14704, Simmer and Jack to the Superintendent Foreign Labour Department, 25 July 1906; FLD 241, 76/19, Complaints by Chinese labourers: Jumpers Deep, petition of Liu Shou-hsuan, 7 April 1906.

There were, of course, other causes of desertion and more serious crimes. Many were related to the illegal procurement of opium, reaction to brutal treatment by mining staff, or sheer disillusionment. There is also record of one Chinese labourer who sold maps to fellow workers that showed, in great detail, the road from the Rand to Tibet which they could reach in a couple of weeks!<sup>116</sup>

Another form of Chinese reaction and protest which proved to be a source of strength was an ability to work together and to show solidarity with fellow workers.<sup>117</sup> Although there were differences between Chinese from various districts, batches were usually recruited from similar regions, ensuring a certain homogeneity. In addition, their long period of confinement and isolation, both physically and socially, made a united front more possible.<sup>118</sup> They would react collectively to any issue which they considered an infringement of their rights. They refused to work, adopted work-to-rule strategies, destroyed compound property, attacked

---

<sup>116</sup> TAD: TKP 205, Committee of Enquiry 1906, p. 14.

<sup>117</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", p. 171; Harris, "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance", p. 22-3.

<sup>118</sup> TAD: FLD 10, 147/36/8, Lt Governor correspondence: Foreign Labour Department, Disturbances and riots, 5 April 1905.

African labourers, or assaulted mine officials.<sup>119</sup> The Chinese police were regularly targeted. Owing to their disciplinary duties and former service in the Chinese army or British administration in China, the police distanced themselves from their fellow compatriots, and were often guilty of unfairly punishing them.<sup>120</sup>

The FLD records of "Riots and disturbances" among Chinese labourers are by no means comprehensive. In an attempt to assuage accusations of Chinese discontentment, lists were limited to those incidents which required police intervention.<sup>121</sup> An analysis of these records refutes the allegation that disturbances were the result of "misunderstandings".<sup>122</sup> Richardson claims that the directness of action shows that there was "no misconception as to what the [Chinese] grievances were".<sup>123</sup> Pretexts for resistance included illtreatment, fatal accidents as well as wage and leave

---

<sup>119</sup> TAD: Secretary of Mines (MM), 70, 16/05, Correspondence files: Secretary Law Department - Secretary Mines Department, 6 January 1905; FLD 10, 147/36/1, Lt Governor correspondence: Foreign Labour Department, Disturbances and riots, 20 April 1905. See also Thorpe, "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand", pp. 212-25; Harris, "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance", pp. 23-7.

<sup>120</sup> TAD: EC 77, ec 82/06, Governor Selborne - Colonial Office, 24 January 1905.

<sup>121</sup> TAD: EC 78, ec 95/06, Foreign Labour Department, Annual Report 1904-1905.

<sup>122</sup> TAD: SNA 527 no. 15/06, Correspondence: Confidential. Forwards copies of despatches on the subject of the treatment of Natives and Asiatics in the Transvaal, 27 February 1906; TKP 203, Foreign Labour Department, Annual report, 1905-1906, p. 4.

<sup>123</sup> Richardson, "Coolies and Randlords", p. 159.

discrepancies.<sup>124</sup> The outbursts were usually confined to a specific mine, which facilitated immediate suppression and they were therefore of short duration, resulting in fatalities, arrests and imprisonments.

## VI

Apart from the strictures of compound life, another aspect which contributed to the abnormality of the Transvaal Chinese indentured experience and which elicited reaction, was the lack of family life. Numerous labour historians, such as Dunbar Moodie and Harries, have focused on the implications of African labourers who became "increasingly divorced ... from their womenfolk" as they "worked longer and more frequent periods on the mines".<sup>125</sup> Chinese labourers were faced with a similar, but more extended separation often exceeding three years. As was the case with Africans, there is evidence to suggest that the Chinese also adopted various ways of coping with this "all-male environment".<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> See Table 1 in Harris, "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance", p. 25.

<sup>125</sup> D. Moodie, "Migrancy and male sexuality on the South African gold mines", Journal of Southern African Studies, 14, 2, pp. 411-568; Harries, Work, culture and identity, p. 201; Harries, "Symbols and sexuality", p. 326.

<sup>126</sup> Harries, Work, culture and identity, p. 207.

During the debates around the compilation of the Labour Importation Ordinance it was strongly contested that

in the interests of morality it was physically necessary that [the Chinese] should be accompanied by [their wives].<sup>127</sup>

The mine magnates reluctantly conceded to this demand against their better economic judgement. Although the contract regulations made allowances for the introduction of the labourers' wives under the same conditions as their own,<sup>128</sup> there was no prescribed proportional percentage for importation, as was the case in many other indenture systems.<sup>129</sup> During the entire experiment a total of about half a dozen Chinese wives, and a few dozen children, arrived on the Rand.<sup>130</sup> Although this was the smallest figure recorded for colonies receiving both free and indentured Chinese, it was very much in line with the general trend. For example, between 1860 and 1880, 53 242 Chinese men and only 30 Chinese women arrived in Australia, and 5017 men and only 16 women were in New Zealand.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> An Eyewitness, John Chinaman, p. 38.

<sup>128</sup> Ordinances of the Transvaal, Labour Importation Ordinance, no. 17, 1904, section 33.

<sup>129</sup> Tinker, A new system of slavery, p. 293.

<sup>130</sup> PRO: CO 291/79 no. 39476/04, Chinese labour: Report on by Mr W. Evans, 14 November 1904; Sung, "Chinese labour", pp. 103-4; Campbell, Chinese coolie migration, p. 209.

<sup>131</sup> Sacks, South Africa, pp. 66-7; according to Greif, The overseas Chinese, p. 26 in 1896 there were 3700 Chinese men and only 14 women in New Zealand.

The reason for this imbalance in the sex ratio is ascribed to the fact that the Chinese did not usually take their wives away from their homes and ancestral villages.<sup>132</sup> During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was

so strong a sentiment in China against any respectable woman leaving home even with her husband that very few went to America or Australia. The few who went to California were for the most part large-footed women of ... disreputable character.<sup>133</sup>

The reference to the size of feet in the above quotation points to another aspect of the lifestyle of Chinese women - footbinding. This practice had "darkened the lives of most Chinese women for several centuries"<sup>134</sup> and had impaired their capacity for labour, as well as their ability to walk.<sup>135</sup> The peasant classes imitated the upper classes and continued to practise it long after the Qing dynasty had denounced it. It was particularly prevalent in the rural areas of the north Chinese provinces.<sup>136</sup> This severe physical impediment must have played a significant role in the reluctance of women to go abroad. But as sinologist John Fairbank points out, research on this topic is

---

<sup>132</sup> PRO: CO 291/74 no. 44045/04, Chinese labourers: Wives and families arrangements, 12 December 1904; Cooke, "Chinese labour", p. 207; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 90; Cator, The economic position, p. 22; Dyer Ball, The Chinese, pp. 64-6.

<sup>133</sup> Coolidge, Chinese immigration, pp. 18-9.

<sup>134</sup> Fairbank, China, pp. 173-4; Spence, The search for modern China, p. 39.

<sup>135</sup> PRO: CO 291 no. 2422/05, Chinese labour, newspaper cuttings, The Standard, 25 January 1905.

<sup>136</sup> Fairbank, China, pp. 173-5.

virtually non-existent. It is the least studied aspect of Chinese society and both its "social and psychic repercussions ... call for historical reappraisal".<sup>137</sup>

Throughout the indenture period there were reports of Chinese labourers frequenting brothels, while in a few cases some were "known to have intercourse with [African] girls".<sup>138</sup> The latter often led to violent friction between the Chinese and African men,<sup>139</sup> but did not result in any judicial action. On the other hand, Chinese who had "carnal connection" with white women prostitutes, were arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to jail with hard labour.<sup>140</sup> One such case was the arrest of two European men together with a European and coloured woman for contravening the Immorality Ordinance of 1903.<sup>141</sup> They allegedly had a brothel at 8 Fox Street in Johannesburg and when it was raided by the police they found

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., pp. 173, 176.

<sup>138</sup> PRO: CO 291/100 no. 23988/06, Chinese coolies, executions and trials, week to 17 June 1906; FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, A. Ross: Report on unnatural vice, 24 August 1906.

<sup>139</sup> TAD: SNA 248 70/05, Contact of Chinese with [African] women, Private Secretary to Secretary of Native Affairs, 9 January 1905; PRO: CO 291/80 no. 862/05, Chinese labourers and [African] woman, Telegram Milner to Lyttelton, 10 January 1905.

<sup>140</sup> TAD: LD 1436 AG 1594/07, Despatch from Secretary of State on the subject of alleged prosecution of certain persons in Johannesburg for keeping a brothel frequented by Chinese coolies, Attorney General report, May 1907; GOV 1076 PS 37/15/07, Chinese prosecution for keeping a brothel frequented by Chinese coolies, Report of the Attorney General's office, May 1907.

<sup>141</sup> Transvaal Ordinance 46 of 1903.

between two and three hundred Chinese Coolies were waiting in the back yard of the house and were being admitted two at a time by [John Jock] Jacobs and [William John] Matthews to the room occupied by the female accused. When the police entered this room they found the two Chinese accused there, Lu Te Sheng (no. 38,581), fully dressed, sitting on a sofa, and Wee Chang Juen (no. 19,969) with his clothes undone, having just completed or being just about to have connection with the accused Martha Muller.<sup>142</sup>

While Lu Te Sheng and the hundreds of Chinese waiting in the back yard were not prosecuted, Wee Chang Juen was convicted under the Immorality Ordinance "as a native, [defined] as a person manifestly belonging to any of the native or coloured races of Africa, Asia, America or St. Helena" for attempting to have "unlawful carnal connection with a white women in circumstances not amounting to rape".<sup>143</sup> He was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour and ten strokes. The two European men were sentenced to two-and-a-half years' imprisonment, Emma Grovornor (a coloured woman) to twelve months and Muller to six, all with hard labour.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> TAD: LD 1436 AG 1594/07, Despatch from Secretary of State on the subject of alleged prosecution of certain persons in Johannesburg for keeping a brothel frequented by Chinese coolies, Attorney General report, May 1907; PRO: CO 291/117 no. 18568/07, Chinese coolies. Prosecution of certain persons for keeping brothel for, 6 May 1907.

<sup>143</sup> TAD: GOV 1076 PS 37/15/07, Chinese prosecution for keeping a brothel frequented by Chinese coolies, Report of the Attorney General's office, May 1907; Selborne to Elgin, 17 July 1907.

<sup>144</sup> TAD: LD 1436 AG 1594/07, Despatch from Secretary of State on the subject of alleged prosecution of certain persons in Johannesburg for keeping a brothel frequented by Chinese coolies, Attorney General report, May 1907; PRO: CO 291/117 no. 18568/07, Chinese coolies. Prosecution of certain persons for keeping brothel for, 6 May 1907.

Instances such as these gave rise to fears that the Chinese might sexually assault and rape European women. This was indicative of another perception associated with "orientalism", in which the "other" was perceived to have unbridled sexual lusts. However, on request of the British House of Commons, the allegations were investigated and proven completely unfounded.<sup>145</sup>

Although nothing is known of the few Chinese women who arrived on the Transvaal mines, a great deal of public commotion ensued as a result of the general absence of women. The lobbyists against the Chinese labour scheme had speculated negatively about the consequences of a scarcity of Chinese women, claiming that it would result in "moral and other evils".<sup>146</sup> It was also argued that

the herding together of some 45 000 men not of a high type, deprived as they are of the opportunity of any intercourse with their womankind, indeed with any women at all [would] lead to the rise of an unmentionable state of things.<sup>147</sup>

Ironically, it was this factor which later contributed to what the anti-lobbyists wanted. It was believed by many that the

---

<sup>145</sup> TAD: FLD 16, 147/81/12: Correspondence re outrages: Telegram from Governor Pretoria to Secretary of State, London, 8 May 1906; Law Department (LD) 1163 AG 5388/05, Return of Chinese committed for rape, Telegram from Registrar High Court to Legality, 27 October 1905.

<sup>146</sup> A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white!", p. 611.

<sup>147</sup> BL: Campbell-Bannerman Papers, ADD MSS 41238, General correspondence, F. MacMarness to Campbell-Bannerman, 28 July 1905, p. 56;

absence of Chinese women had resulted in heightened homosexual activity - labelled "unnatural vice" - and once it became a political scandal, had ultimately "sealed the fate of Chinese labour".<sup>148</sup>

Despite the fact that the allegations and reports on the homosexuality among the Chinese on the mines are relatively well documented,<sup>149</sup> in contrast to African labour, this remains historiographically underexplored. Campbell refers to it in a paragraph, Meyer traces its political ramifications, Reeves considers it in a page, and Richardson merely alludes to it.<sup>150</sup> There is only a single popular article written in 1974, by the son of a British member of parliament who was in government at the time of the investigation into homosexuality on the mines. It provides a brief account in the context of British parliamentary politics and focuses on the termination of the indenture system.<sup>151</sup> More recently, in Empire and sexuality (1991), Ronald Hyam has discussed very briefly its prevalence among Chinese labourers. He emphasizes that the Chinese were not

---

<sup>148</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 212.

<sup>149</sup> Besides the material resulting from the confidential investigation into the subject in TAD: FLD 236 no 73/ - 73/32, Unnatural crime, as well as a few newspaper references, there are also snippets referring to it in the petitions of the Chinese labourers.

<sup>150</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 212; Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk", pp. 427-36; Jeeves, "Chinese labour in South Africa", p. 196; Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 5, 126.

<sup>151</sup> Lehman, "The case of the Chinese coolies".

responsible for introducing sodomy to the African miners, since it was already practised by them.<sup>152</sup>

As a political issue, the outrage over homosexuality among the Chinese labourers was historically significant. It should, however, be considered as yet another prejudice of the European "orientalists'" construction of the "other".<sup>153</sup> Moreover, it was a reaction heightened by the puritanical ethic of late-Victorian and early-Edwardian England.<sup>154</sup> In the 1890s, the homophobia of British society had reached a zenith and by the start of the twentieth century, "the homosexual act ... became treachery against the state in the minds of many people".<sup>155</sup> The suggestions of homosexual and other "unnatural activity" among the Chinese prior to their arrival on the Rand created fertile ground for exaggerated estimates of its prevalence, and accounted for the disproportionate political reaction to it.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> R. Hyam, Empire and sexuality: The British experience, Manchester, 1991, pp. 99-100.

<sup>153</sup> T. Hastings, "Said's Orientalism and the discourse of (hetero)sexuality", Canadian Review of American Studies, 23, 1, Fall, 1992, p. 130.

<sup>154</sup> C. Spencer, Homosexuality: A history, London, 1995, pp. 253-4; Hyam, Empire and sexuality, pp. 57, 88, 201.

<sup>155</sup> Spencer, Homosexuality, pp. 289, 323-4.

<sup>156</sup> See Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidervraagstuk", pp. 427-36; Lehmann, "The case of the Chinese".

At the time of the investigation into the matter, it was portrayed by many not so much as a result of the depraved compound system and the absence of female partners, but as yet another negative trait of Chinese society. Much of the contemporary rhetoric emanated from a moral high ground, infused with a puritanical obsession to project a particular image on the Chinese.<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, many shared the view of the Prime Minister of the Liberal ministry, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who pronounced in 1906 that "such dangers were certain to arise where the ordinary social conditions were so commonly inverted".<sup>158</sup>

This was a view upheld by numerous historians of indentured and other bonded labour, who, like Van Onselen, maintained that compounds and mining capital themselves were generally responsible for the development of this "undesirable form of sexual expression".<sup>159</sup> As will be shown later, this view has subsequently been questioned and entirely refuted by historians of homosexuality.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Spencer, Homosexuality, pp. 253-4.

<sup>158</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 211.

<sup>159</sup> Quoted by Z. Achmat, "'Apostles of civilised vice': 'Immoral practices' and 'unnatural vice' in South African prisons and compounds, 1890-1920, Social Dynamics, 19, 2, 1993", p. 98.

<sup>160</sup> See below as well as Zackie Achmat's discussion of the work by Charles van Onselen, Dunbar Moodie and Patrick Harries in "'Apostles of civilized vice'", pp. 97-106.

Prior to the reports of "unnatural vice" by the Reverend Alexander Frances and Leopold Luyt,<sup>161</sup> which led to the appointment of a commission of investigation in 1906, there was evidence to suggest that mine management had been aware of homosexuality among the Chinese, but chose to ignore or conceal it.<sup>162</sup> Knowledge of the "crime of sodomy" was widespread in the mine compounds even prior to the introduction of the Chinese.<sup>163</sup> It was practised by the African labourers on mines, and was believed to be most common among those from Portuguese East Africa. In their studies of migrant labour, both Moodie and Harries focus on this aspect.<sup>164</sup> In contrast to Van Onselen, they interpret migrant homosexuality as "functional to rural society".<sup>165</sup> Harries explains that "mine managers turned a blind eye to *bukhontxana* [mine marriages]" and argues that

---

<sup>161</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Lord Selborne to R. Solomon, 2 August 1906; Governor Selborne to the Earl of Elgin, 1 October 1906; PRO: CO 291/114 no. 24548/06, Chinese coolies. Conditions in compounds, 5 July 1906.

<sup>162</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73, Unnatural crime, R. Solomon to Superintendent of labour, 27 February 1906; For sources emanating from the Chinese see for example FLD 240 no 76/6, Complaints by Chinese, Wit Deep, Anonymous petition, n.d., and excerpt from a letter received by the Superintendent, Foreign Labour Department, from W.P. Thomas, Interpreter, 1 April 1907.

<sup>163</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Lord Selborne to R. Solomon, 2 August 1906; FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Memorandum on the prevalence of unnatural crime amongst Chinese indentured labourers on the Witwatersrand, 11 August 1906.

<sup>164</sup> Moodie, "Migrancy and male sexuality", pp. 411-568; Harries, "Sex and sokisi: Interpreting homosexuality in the compounds on the goldmines of the early Witwatersrand", International Mining History Congress, Bochum, September 1989.

<sup>165</sup> Achmat, "'Apostles of civilised vice'", p. 101.

in reality, mine managers had to put up with, if not encourage *bukhontxana*, if they wished to reproduce the labour force at their disposal.<sup>166</sup>

Sex between men was known by contemporaries as "hlobonga",<sup>167</sup> but was, as one inspector put it in 1902,

a point with which [he thought] inadvisable for [them] to interfere. It is a common practise among natives and would be impossible in [his] opinion for an inspector to cope with.<sup>168</sup>

A similarly dismissive sentiment was expressed about the Chinese, but such views did not reflect the attitudes of the majority of puritanical Europeans:

it does exist to a certain extent, as indeed it does in almost every race, including Englishmen in England.<sup>169</sup>

According to Frances and Luyt, homosexual intimacy was widespread among the Chinese in the compounds. They stated that the

sleeping accommodation of the coolies was calculated to produce this result, as they lie side by side, separated only at intervals of three or four by a curtain.<sup>170</sup>

They also contended that

the practice of sodomy took place in the seclusion of the compounds, as well as the open veld, and that

---

<sup>166</sup> Harries, Work, culture and identity, p. 207.

<sup>167</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73, Unnatural crime, Acting Mayor, Roodepoort-Maraisburg to Private Secretary of High Commissioner, 13 August 1906.

<sup>168</sup> Chief Inspector Pritchard in TAD: SNA 12 na 1540/62 as quoted by Achmat, "'Apostles of civilised vice'", p. 107.

<sup>169</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/- Unnatural crime: Confidential, E.T. Campbell to D.O. Malcolm, 13 August 1906.

<sup>170</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Lord Selborne to R. Solomon, 2 August 1906.

their allegations were supported by the prevalence of syphilis in the rectum among Chinese in hospital.<sup>171</sup>

They alleged that the Chinese were "teaching these practices to the natives, and, presumably, communicating the ... diseases to them".<sup>172</sup> After thorough investigation, most of what these two men had claimed was eventually discounted, but the furore persisted.

The outcry which resulted in the British House of Commons taking action was not only concerned with the existence of sexual acts such as "sodomy", the practise of "professional male prostitution", and the outbreak of "venereal disease", but also with the belief that the Transvaal European population had been aware of it, and had condoned it.<sup>173</sup> FLD Superintendent, Jamieson, requested the Governor of the Transvaal, Lord Selborne, to inform the British government that the

greatest indignation prevails amongst his inspectors that insinuations should have been made that they could have been so far forgetful of their birth and traditions as in any way to connive at any suppression of fact relating to this subject.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Lord Selborne to R. Solomon, 2 August 1906.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> PRO: CO 291/106 no. 47318/06 Chinese labourers, vice amongst, 3 December 1906; The Star, 24 November 1906; TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Letter from Private Secretary, D.O. Malcolm, to Mayors, 7 August 1906.

<sup>174</sup> PRO: CO 291/106 no. 662/06 Chinese coolies, Prevalence of vice amongst, 17 December 1906.

The highly confidential investigation, led by Commissioner of Patents, J.A.S. Bucknill, concluded that the main allegations were true, but had been exaggerated.<sup>175</sup> On Bucknill's recommendation, steps were taken to identify suspected "catamites" and to repatriate them as "undesirables".<sup>176</sup> Within weeks of the investigation, applications were made for the repatriation of 131 "coolies" as "undesirable characters".<sup>177</sup> That the procedure ran the risk of committing injustices was readily acknowledged by contemporaries, and is illustrated by the following case:

A certain coolie was suspected, on information laid by the Mine Police, of being a catamite. ... On learning of what had taken place the coolie in question indignantly repudiated the charge, and stated that his being singled out was due to fact of his having refused proposals of an improper nature made to him by a certain other individual on his mine. ... the latter denied the accusation flatly, and there was consequently no means of arriving at the whole truth beyond having the individual originally accused examined by the medical officer... The result of the medical examination was to prove that this individual was innocent of the crime alleged.<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime: Confidential, Lord Selborne to the Earl of Elgin, 1 October 1906; PRO: CO 291/110 no. 40886/06, Chinese coolies. Alleged prevalence of unnatural vice, 5 November 1906.

<sup>176</sup> PRO: CO 291/106 no. 662/07 Chinese coolies, Prevalence of vice amongst, 17 December 1906; Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 196.

<sup>177</sup> PRO: CO 291/106 no. 662/06 Chinese coolies, Prevalence of vice amongst, 17 December 1906; TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime: Governor Selborne to the Earl of Elgin, 17 December 1906.

<sup>178</sup> PRO: CO 291/106 no. 662/06 Chinese coolies, Prevalence of vice amongst, 17 December 1906.

Aware of the danger of false accusation, as well as possible legal action for damages against defamation of character, the Transvaal government declared that it was prepared to risk the consequences of the system suggested by Bucknill, in order that

no stone may be left unturned to expel from the Rand the small minority of coolies who [were] given to the practices referred to.<sup>179</sup>

Another precaution which had been taken earlier against homosexual activity was the prohibition of Chinese theatre. It was believed to be one of the main sources of male prostitution, as the "actor on the Chinese stage and catamite" were regarded as synonymous.<sup>180</sup> The initial rationale for the abandonment of theatre was related to the jealousy which arose among the actors' paramours which had often resulted in murders or suicides.<sup>181</sup>

Regarding the accusation that the Chinese were teaching homosexuality to African labourers, it was concluded that "the Chinese would not stoop to intercourse with blacks, for whom they

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Memorandum on the prevalence of unnatural crime amongst Chinese indentured labourers on the Witwatersrand, 11 August 1906; Suggested draft reply to secret telegram no. 2 of 13 November from Secretary of State to Governor.

<sup>181</sup> CO 537/540 no. 38767/06 Secret. Chinese coolies. Allegations respecting immorality. Memorandum on the prevalence of unnatural crime amongst Chinese indentured labourers on the Witwatersrand, 11 August 1906.

affect the greatest contempt".<sup>182</sup> If this were the case, it reflected a racial hierarchy that was shared with, if not propagated by, the Europeans. This is evident in a European report on the matter which claimed that the

South African natives have little or nothing left to learn in the direction of vice ... [and they did] not believe that our 'black brother' is likely to deteriorate to any further extent either morally or physically merely on account of meeting the Chinese.<sup>183</sup>

Historians of homosexuality, such as Zackie Achmat, have more recently argued that homosexuality among Africans on the mines was not "alien to indigenous cultures", but rather that the compound presented "a new space of desire".<sup>184</sup> In the Chinese case there was also the context beyond the constraints of the capitalists' compounds which sets the whole question of homosexuality in a broader perspective. As in other societies, homosexual practices were not foreign to Chinese culture. Dating back to the Han dynasty (206 B.C.), Chinese history recorded male homosexuality as an accepted part of society.<sup>185</sup> Numerous emperors

---

<sup>182</sup> PRO: CO 537/540 no. 38767/06, Secret. Chinese coolies. Allegations respecting immorality. Memorandum on the prevalence of unnatural crime amongst Chinese indentured labourers on the Witwatersrand, 11 August 1906.

<sup>183</sup> TAD: FLD 236 file 73/-, Unnatural crime, Acting Mayor Roodepoort-Maraisburg to Private Secretary High Commissioner, 13 August 1906.

<sup>184</sup> Achmat, "'Apostles of civilised vice'", pp. 105-6.

<sup>185</sup> N. Miller, Out of the past: Gay and lesbian history from 1869 to the present, New York, 1995, pp. 485-6; A.C. Brackman, The last emperor, New York, 1975, p. 121; W. Eberhard, A history of China, London, 1977, pp. 90-2.

were known for their homosexual relations, one of whom gave the phrase "cut sleeve" to the Chinese language to denote homosexual passion. Apparently, the Emperor cut off the sleeve of his own garment in order not to disturb his lover, who was sleeping on it.<sup>186</sup> In the sixteenth century, western travellers remarked on the pervasiveness of boy prostitutes and male prostitution,<sup>187</sup> and seventeenth century Chinese literature and drama highlighted it.<sup>188</sup> It was believed that although same-sex relations were traditionally accepted within Chinese and other Eastern societies, the advent of Western missionaries and modernizers from the mid-seventeenth century began to stigmatize them.<sup>189</sup>

As far as the Rand Chinese labourers were concerned, it was reported that "the inhabitants of northern China undoubtedly practise[d] pederasty".<sup>190</sup> It was explained that

owing to the extreme cold of the Northern winter, the universal sleeping place is a raised brick platform, heated by a system of flues, and every individual divests himself of all clothing, prior to retiring to rest. As the men lie huddled together, under cotton

---

<sup>186</sup> Spencer, Homosexuality: A history, p. 80; Miller, Out of the past: Gay and lesbian history, pp. 485-6.

<sup>187</sup> Miller, Out of the past: Gay and lesbian history, pp. 485-6; J.D. Spence, God's Chinese son, New York, 1996, pp. 81-2.

<sup>188</sup> V.W. Ng, "Homosexuality and the state in Late Imperial China" in M.B. Duberman, M. Vicinus and G. Chaucery (eds), Hidden from history: Reclaiming the gay and lesbian past, New York, 1989, pp. 76-89.

<sup>189</sup> Miller, Out of the past, p. xxiv; Spencer, Homosexuality, pp. 249-50.

<sup>190</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Memorandum on the prevalence of unnatural crime amongst Chinese indentured labourers on the Witwatersrand, 11 August 1906.

quilts, it would be strange were unnatural passions not inflamed, and in military camps and other aggregations of men in China connection per anum [sic] is extremely common.<sup>191</sup>

In a confidential report to the Earl of Elgin, Governor Selborne made a similar observation. As a result of his private inquiry, he ascertained that the "vice [was] practised to a certain extent here as it is in China". In typical "orientalist" style, he concluded that this was

no doubt due to the different standard of morality which prevails among Western nations from that which prevails among certain Eastern races, of which the Northern Chinese are one.<sup>192</sup>

However, there is another dimension to the homosexuality debate which none of the scholars, from Van Onselen to Achmat, addresses - the indignation shown by many Chinese labourers accused of homosexual practices. In the aftermath of the initial investigations, a large number of Chinese labourers indicated that they

bitterly resent[ed] the indiscriminate charges levelled at them [and some of them made] earnest remonstrances ... to their employers in respect of the aspersions unjustly cast upon their characters.<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>191</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime, Memorandum on the prevalence of unnatural crime amongst labourers on the Witwatersrand, 11 August 1906.

<sup>192</sup> TAD: FLD 236 no 73/-, Unnatural crime: Confidential, Lord Selborne to the Earl of Elgin, 1 October 1906.

<sup>193</sup> PRO: CO 291/106 no. 662/06 Chinese coolies, Prevalence of vice amongst, 17 December 1906.

Prior to and independent of the Bucknill report, some Chinese had petitioned the Superintendent of the FLD to make enquiries and take action against fellow Chinese labourers and Chinese police, who were prone to what the Chinese called "illicit desire", or who had "adopted sons", whom they also referred to as "catamites".<sup>194</sup>

The homosexual activities of some Chinese labourers were used as yet another weapon in the political onslaught against the indentured scheme, as the opponents of Chinese labour portrayed it as both an economic and moral threat to society. This was not unlike the experience of Bishop Edward Twells who lived in the Orange Free State in the late nineteenth century.<sup>195</sup> In his case too, society used homosexuality to suit itself. As Nicholas Southey puts it: "sodomy was used by political opponents in an attempt to rid the region of foreign influence".<sup>196</sup>

That this episode spurred the agitation to terminate the Chinese labour system cannot be denied. It was, however, only one of a number of factors, such as the increasing fear of the Rand

---

<sup>194</sup> TAD: FLD 240 no 76/6 Complaints by Chinese: Wit Deep, Anonymous petition; Excerpt from a letter received by the Superintendent, Foreign Labour Department, from W.P. Thomas, Interpreter, 1 April 1907.

<sup>195</sup> N. Southey, "Uncovering homosexuality in colonial South Africa: The case of Bishop Twells", South African Historical Journal, 36, May 1997, pp. 48-67.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

community as a result of Chinese outrages, as well as humanitarian claims against slave labour, which combined to end indenture. All issues related to Chinese labour were effectively used in the election campaigns of the Progressive Party in the Cape Colony in 1904, the Liberal Party in Britain in 1906, and by *Het Volk* party in the Transvaal in 1907.<sup>197</sup> The fate of the Chinese experiment was sealed, further recruitment was prohibited, and the renewal of contracts disallowed. Repatriation began in mid 1907 and by the end of the decade Chinese indentured labourers had been returned to China.<sup>198</sup>

It was within the context of this highly prejudiced, "orientalist" and anti-Sinitic environment that the various free Chinese communities in South Africa had to survive. The image of the Chinese that had been created both before, during and after the indenture period, was to cloud the public mind about the position and reputation of those Chinese who lived outside the compounds. We turn now to the experiences of the unindentured Chinese in the Cape and Transvaal during the first decade of the twentieth century, a period in which the foundation was laid for the future history of the Chinese in the Union, and later Republic, of South Africa.

---

<sup>197</sup> Jacobsson, Fifty golden years of the Rand, pp. 83-5; A.A. Mawby, "The political behaviour of the British population", pp. 197, 201.

<sup>198</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, pp. 182-3.

## CHAPTER 5

### Free Chinese at the Cape

The sporadic and small influx of free Chinese immigrants to the southern African region from the second half of the nineteenth century formed part of the international emigration of over two million people from China.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese that came to South Africa mainly arrived as individuals to establish or work in privately-run businesses in the urban areas of the country. While no more than 100 settled in Natal,<sup>2</sup> they were mostly found in the Cape and Transvaal, particularly after the commercial growth that followed the respective mineral discoveries. During most of the nineteenth century, the Chinese remained a relatively inconspicuous element within these two regions. However, with the launch of the campaign to introduce Chinese indentured labour to the Witwatersrand mines in 1902, the legal and social position of the free Chinese in the Cape and Transvaal changed dramatically. Although the course of events differed markedly in each colony, both cases revealed the extreme nature of Western prejudice and "orientalism". This chapter will focus on the Chinese in the Cape Colony up to 1912, while the next one will consider their position in the Transvaal during the same period.

---

<sup>1</sup> Chang, "The distributions and occupations", p. 92; Richardson, "Coolies, peasants and proletarians", p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, pp. 42-5.

## I

Research on the Chinese residents in the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century is difficult because of limited source material. Their insignificant numbers, low political, economic and social profile, as well as the apparently more liberal nature of the British colonial Cape administration,<sup>3</sup> rendered them virtually invisible. Apart from the occasional references to gambling offences,<sup>4</sup> the press and court records carried hardly any reports on them. Their generally quiet and unobtrusive existence partly explains their absence from the written history of the nineteenth-century Cape.

However, the Transvaal Chinese labour experiment of the early twentieth century resulted in a widespread political outcry and the introduction of discriminatory legislation against the Chinese in the Cape in 1904.<sup>5</sup> The latter development provided the author with a valuable, though limited, source<sup>6</sup> which has not been used by researchers before. The data required by the

---

<sup>3</sup> P. Lewsen, "The Cape liberal tradition - myth or reality", Race, 13, 1971, pp. 67-70; Davenport, South Africa, pp. 118-9.

<sup>4</sup> For example, in the year 1903 the following four reports about Chinese in the Cape appeared in the Transvaal Leader, 6 February 1903; 17 February 1903; 4 July 1903; 28 October 1903. All but one were concerned with gambling arrests.

<sup>5</sup> Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Act 37 of 1904, The Chinese Exclusion Act.

<sup>6</sup> CAR: The Regional Representative, Department of Home Affairs, Cape Town: Asian Series (IRC), 1-76, files 1c -1415c. (The series has not as yet been inventorized).

official registration documentation of the "Chinese Exclusion Act", as well as the press and parliamentary reports which resulted from the public and political outcry against the Transvaal experiment, gives some insight into the geographical and socio-economic circumstances of the free Chinese at the Cape in both the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of this information has been extricated from the prejudiced and "orientalist" attitudes of the European authors. Other valuable sources include a few petitions and sundry communications emanating from the Chinese Consul-General in Johannesburg, and members of regional Chinese associations.

The "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904" is itself very significant, but before relatively unknown and unresearched, development in Cape colonial history. Following in the wake of the politically constrained legislation of the "Immigration Act of 1902",<sup>7</sup> its restrictive nature revealed the not-so-liberal and racist underside of Cape colonial politics. The 1904 Act is virtually ignored in South African history mainly because it does not accord with the black-white dichotomy of traditional historical analysis. The "Chinese Exclusion Act" is however significant on three counts: first, it is a milestone in the history of the

---

<sup>7</sup> Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Act 47 of 1902, The Immigration Act.

overseas Chinese in this country, secondly it has important international comparative parallels in Australia (1855),<sup>8</sup> New Zealand (1881),<sup>9</sup> the United States (1882)<sup>10</sup> and Canada (1885),<sup>11</sup> and thirdly, it provides revealing comment on Cape liberal politics and the nature of the British Colonial Office's selective protectionism, despite its proclaimed "imperial philosophy of equality".<sup>12</sup>

Cape society of the nineteenth century was ethnically and culturally diverse, both in terms of indigenous and foreign communities. In keeping with the "liberal tradition" of British colonial administration, the Cape's representative government which was established in 1853<sup>13</sup> had not introduced any immigration regulations nor any limitations on foreigners. Unlike the other South African states,<sup>14</sup> there was no legislation which dealt specifically with Asians or the Chinese. This

---

<sup>8</sup> A.J. Koutsoukis, Topics from Australian history, London, 1975, p. 70; Choi, Chinese migration and settlement in Australia, p. 38; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Fong, The Chinese in New Zealand, p. 24; Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, pp. 80-1.

<sup>10</sup> Chen, "Chinese immigration into the United States", p. 85; Takaki, Strangers from a different shore, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> R. A. Huttenback, Race and Empire: White settlers and colored immigrants in the British self-governing colonies, 1830-1910, New York, 1976, pp. 13, 23, 91, 138, 142.

<sup>13</sup> S. Trapido, "The origins of the Cape franchise qualification of 1853", Journal of African history", v, i, 1964, p. 37; J.L. McCracken, The Cape parliament, 1854-1910, Oxford, 1967, pp. 62-70, 138.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 6 for details on this.

"constitutional non-racialism"<sup>15</sup> also accounted for the Cape Colony's qualified franchise provisions which were "colour-blind".<sup>16</sup> Males of any race who earned £50 a year or owned property of £25 were eligible to vote.<sup>17</sup> These voting requirements were regarded as liberal by contemporary standards,<sup>18</sup> and although amended in 1892 to increase the property requirement and include an educational test,<sup>19</sup> they were never seriously challenged as long as the Cape Colony existed.<sup>20</sup> In effect, Chinese residents at the Cape with sufficient wealth could vote, and voters' rolls revealed that some availed themselves of this right.<sup>21</sup> For example, in 1903-4 there were 60 Chinese on the Port Elizabeth voters' lists.<sup>22</sup>

It should, however, be noted that the non-discriminatory form of the nineteenth-century Cape constitution and policy was not simply the outcome of newly imposed humanitarian and missionary

---

<sup>15</sup> Keegan, Colonial South Africa, p. 245.

<sup>16</sup> Lewsen, "The Cape liberal tradition", p. 66.

<sup>17</sup> D.R. Edgecombe, "The non-racial franchise in Cape politics, 1853-1910", Kleio, 10, 1978, pp. 21-2; Davenport, South Africa, p. 101; Sacks, South Africa, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Trapido, "The origins of the Cape franchise", p. 37; Lewis, "The Cape liberal tradition", pp. 65-6; McCracken, The Cape parliament, pp. 65, 138.

<sup>19</sup> Sacks, South Africa, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 65; M.A.S. Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape of Good Hope, with special reference to party politics, 1872 to 1910, Archives year book for South African history, 1969, no. 2, Johannesburg, 1973, p. 222; Lewsen, "Myth or reality", p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> McCracken, The Cape parliament, p. 81.

<sup>22</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 May 1904, p. 395.

impulses from abroad.<sup>23</sup> Historians, such as Stanley Trapido and Tim Keegan, have pointed to the economic processes which underlay these policies and political developments. Trapido emphasizes the material or common class base of Cape liberalism,<sup>24</sup> while Keegan argues that this gradually led to the "narrowing of opportunities for coloured people" within Cape society.<sup>25</sup> These observations were also (unwittingly) poignantly true of the Chinese at the Cape.

Before tracing the position of the free Chinese within Cape society and the dramatic legislative changes which occurred mainly as a result of the introduction of the indentured Chinese to the Transvaal mines, it is informative to consider briefly the impact that the introduction of indentured Indian labour to the Natal sugar plantations had on the free Indians resident in the Cape Colony. The reason for this is to illustrate how unprecedented the Cape reaction to and the treatment of the Chinese was, as well as to provide a point of reference in explaining this development.

---

<sup>23</sup> Davenport, South Africa, pp. 118-20; B. le Cordeur, "The occupations of the Cape, 1795-1854", in Cameron and Spies (eds), An illustrated history, p. 93.

<sup>24</sup> S. Trapido, "The 'Friends of the Natives': Merchants, peasants and the political and ideological structure of liberalism at the Cape, 1845-1910", in S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds), Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa, London, 1980, pp. 249, 268; Trapido, "The origins of the Cape franchise", pp. 40-1.

<sup>25</sup> Keegan, Colonial South Africa, p. 245.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Indian indentured labourers were brought to Natal almost a half a century earlier than the Chinese were recruited to the Transvaal. The free Indian population figures in the Cape Colony were generally between five and six times larger than that of the free Chinese. (See Table 1)

**TABLE 1: CENSUS FIGURES OF CHINESE AND INDIANS IN CAPE COLONY**

	Chinese	Indians
1891	215	1 453
1904	1 308	8 489

26

Yet despite this conspicuous numerical differential, there was a remarkable contrast between the lack of reaction to the Natal Indian indentured system in the Cape Colony, and the furore which resulted in the Cape from the Transvaal Chinese labour scheme.

As was to be the case with Chinese labour for the Transvaal, the introduction of Indian labour to Natal was sanctioned by the British Colonial Office. It was, in fact, the Cape Governor, Sir George Grey, in his capacity as High Commissioner for Natal, that the earliest official appeal for Indian labour for the Natal

---

<sup>26</sup> Only available statistics. CSS: Statisticana, Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, Censuses of 1891 and 1904.

sugar plantations was made in 1855.<sup>27</sup> Some five years later, after protracted negotiations, the first shipload of indentured Indians arrived in Durban.<sup>28</sup> Although the Cape Colony had already been granted representative government, and its first parliament had been constituted, there was no reaction or restrictive agitation against this development. Later, during the Cape parliamentary debates about the Chinese labour issue in 1904, SAP member, Nicolaas de Waal, pointed out that the

Cape Legislature ... [had] never, in all these years, objected to the importation of coolies by the Garden Colony [Natal], though these Indians [had] entered ... into competition with skilled white labour.<sup>29</sup>

In the ensuing decades after their arrival in Natal, a number of indentured Indians escaped to the Cape Colony.<sup>30</sup> Along with both free and passenger Indians, they sought work in urban areas such as Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, East London and Cape Town.<sup>31</sup> There was no colony-wide objection to their presence, despite the fact that they represented the fourth and later the third most populous group of the "Mixed and other coloured races" in the

---

<sup>27</sup> B. Pachai, The South African Indian question, 1860-1971, Cape Town, 1971, p. 4; Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, "Indian immigration into Natal", pp. 9-17.

<sup>29</sup> Cape of Good Hope, Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 May 1904, p. 393.

<sup>30</sup> Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, pp. 99, 108.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 99-127.

Cape Colony.<sup>32</sup> They were permitted to engage in trade, own fixed property, and if they qualified, to vote. In accordance with municipal regulations of 1895, however, a town such as East London introduced minor by-laws to prevent Indian trading in specific areas and their use of certain facilities.<sup>33</sup> But these few Cape restrictions paled when compared to the anti-Indian legislation introduced by the other three states in South Africa.

Before the end of the nineteenth century, the governments of the two Boer republics<sup>34</sup> and Natal had enacted legislation either to curb the rights of the Indians or to prohibit their immigration altogether.<sup>35</sup> This was mainly because European agitation against the influx of free, passenger or ex-indentured Indians. They argued that the Indians were "unfair competitors" and denounced them as an "inferior race".<sup>36</sup> As "Asiatics", the Chinese were also implicated in the encompassing definitions of these various laws.<sup>37</sup> The legislation to control or exclude Asians introduced

---

<sup>32</sup> Statisticana, Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, Censuses of 1891 and 1904.

<sup>33</sup> South African News, 16 January 1904; Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, p. 119-20; Huttenback, Racism and Empire, pp. 206-7; Sacks, South Africa, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek and Oranjevrijstaat.

<sup>35</sup> Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, pp. 129-30; Tinker, A new system of slavery, pp. 272-3.

<sup>36</sup> Tinker, A new system of slavery, p. 273; Sacks, South Africa, p. 14; Huttenback, Racism and Empire, p. 207.

<sup>37</sup> See Harris, "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance", p. 73.

in the ZAR in 1885<sup>38</sup> and Oranjevrijstaat (OFS) in 1885 and 1891<sup>39</sup> was blatantly aimed at the Indians and other Asians. In Natal, on the other hand, the immigration legislation introduced in 1897<sup>40</sup> had similar intentions, but being a British Colony it was framed not to "offend the sensibilities of the imperial authorities in London".<sup>41</sup> The Natal legislation was therefore technically "non-racial",<sup>42</sup> but included the notorious language test which was to be taken "at the discretion of the immigration officer".<sup>43</sup> This became known as the "Natal formula"<sup>44</sup> and later became a model for other British colonies and dominions beyond the boundaries of South Africa.<sup>45</sup>

There are numerous reasons for the stark contrast between the Cape Colony's apparently milder treatment of the Indians in the nineteenth century. While these include factors that obtained in

---

<sup>38</sup> Codex van de locale wetten Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, Wet no. 3, 1885, Omtrent Koelies, Arabieren en ander Aziaten, (Relating to Coolies, Arabs and other Asiatics).

<sup>39</sup> Ordonnansieboek van die Oranje-Vrystaat, Ordonnansie 1 van 1885; Wetboek van den Oranjevrijstaat, Hoofdstuk xxxiii, 1891, Wet tot tegengaan van die instrooming van Aziatische kleurlingen (Law to prohibit the influx of Asians).

<sup>40</sup> Statutes of Natal, Act no. 1 of 1897, The Immigration Restriction Act.

<sup>41</sup> Huttenback, Racism and Empire, pp. 140-1.

<sup>42</sup> R.A. Huttenback, "No strangers within the gates: Attitudes and policies towards the non-white residents of the British Empire of settlement", The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 1, 1972-3, p. 271.

<sup>43</sup> Huttenback, Racism and Empire, p. 141; Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, p. 131; Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Huttenback, Racism and Empire, p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> E. Bradlow, "Immigration into the Union, 1910-1948: Policies and attitudes", Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978, p. 1; Huang, The legal status of the Chinese, p. 52.

each of the other states, such as political status and affiliation, geographical size and position, population, and economic development, the main concern here is with those issues which relate specifically to the Cape Colony. Besides the generalized perception of the Cape as "more liberal" and therefore more socially tolerant,<sup>46</sup> aspects such as the fledgling nature of its responsible government, the predominantly material concerns of its parliament,<sup>47</sup> the absence of sophisticated party politics,<sup>48</sup> the relatively uncontested elections, and the larger number of developed urban centres and ports that influenced Cape demographics and economics fairly positively, partly account for this contrast.

What is of importance to this study, are the changes which the early twentieth century brought to some of these aspects. This goes some way towards explaining the racist reaction of whites at the Cape, both in terms of public opinion and legislation, when the introduction of Chinese labour was considered for implementation in the Transvaal.

---

<sup>46</sup> M. Shain, "The Jewish population and politics in the Cape Colony, 1898-1910", MA thesis, University of South Africa, 1978, p. 8; Huttenback, Racism and Empire, p. 148.

<sup>47</sup> In 1894 Cape politics were reported as "not [being] diversified by any serious or ingenious complications. They ... fall under four heads - bad brandy, cheap bread, sheep scab and railway competition". African Review, August 1894, quoted by McCracken, The Cape parliament, p. 137.

<sup>48</sup> McCracken, The Cape parliament, p. 105.

After the turn of the twentieth century, the Cape Colony followed its neighbours in passing its first immigration legislation. It could obviously not remain the only state in the southern African region with unrestricted access. The "Immigration Act of 1902" included various restrictions on entrance into the colony, as well as measures to remove "prohibited immigrants".<sup>49</sup> The Act was defined on similar lines as the "Natal formula" - since it had the sanction of precedent<sup>50</sup> - and included the renowned and supposedly less offensive "European language test". This was also not unlike the immigration restrictions which had been introduced in countries such as Australia and the United States.<sup>51</sup>

From the late 1850s, the various Australian colonies had passed legislation aimed at preventing "non-European" immigration. In 1901, the newly established Australian federation adopted legislation similar to that of Natal, which declared certain classes of people "prohibited immigrants".<sup>52</sup> Comparable immigration restrictions were introduced in the United States in

---

<sup>49</sup> Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Act no. 47 of 1902, The Immigration Act.

<sup>50</sup> R.A. Huttenback, Gandhi in South Africa: British imperialism and the Indian question, 1860-1914, London, 1971, p. 210.

<sup>51</sup> The Transvaal Leader, 12 February 1903.

<sup>52</sup> A. Markus, Fear and hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901, Sydney, 1979, p. xi; Harris and Ryan, "Chinese immigration to Australia", p. 375.

1882, and were put on a permanent footing in 1901.<sup>53</sup> In both Australia and the United States the main concern of the legislation was to prevent Chinese entry,<sup>54</sup> while Natal, on the other hand, was mainly concerned to curb the "invasion of Indians". The Cape was by no means in a similar "predicament"; by the end of the nineteenth century there were 110 000 Indians resident in Natal,<sup>55</sup> and barely 9 000 in the Cape.

Although the Indians were a contributing factor in the promulgation of the Cape immigration legislation,<sup>56</sup> they were not the sole reason for its introduction. As historian Milton Shain has argued, the curtailment of other immigration was also intended.<sup>57</sup> During the last decade of the nineteenth and at the start of the twentieth century there had been a gradual rise of "anti-alienism" in the Cape Colony which coincided with the enormous increase in immigration.<sup>58</sup> Reasons for this included the arrival of immigrants en route to the Transvaal goldfields, and later, of refugees during and after the South African War. The

---

<sup>53</sup> Chen, "Chinese immigration into the United States", pp. 85-7; Markus, Fear and hatred, p. xi.

<sup>54</sup> Markus, Fear and hatred, p. xi.

<sup>55</sup> Sacks, South Africa, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, p. 139.

<sup>57</sup> Shain, "The Jewish population", p. 32; M. Shain, "Diamonds, pogroms and undesirables - Anti-alienism and legislation in the Cape Colony, 1890-1906", South African Historical Journal, 12, November 1980, pp. 17-8.

<sup>58</sup> Shain, "The Jewish population", pp. 9, 20, 98-100; The Transvaal Leader, 12 February 1903.

Cape Colony's anti-alienism was compounded by intensified economic competition and post-War recession. As Shain points out, the alien or "undesirable immigrant", which included both "Asiatics" and East Europeans, increasingly became the "scapegoat for the ills of Cape society".<sup>59</sup>

In Cape parliamentary debates about the "Immigration Restriction Act", the Chinese language was sometimes mentioned in the context of the education test,<sup>60</sup> but as a "race" the Chinese were at no stage a major issue. Moreover, if the Indians were proportionately insignificant in Cape society, the Chinese were virtually non-existent. That they were by no means a cause for concern is borne out by the fact that their small numbers did not even warrant enumeration in the initial two censuses of the Cape Colony. It is precisely these circumstances which make the assessment of the position and the construction of a history of the Chinese in Cape colonial society so difficult, and it is therefore a painstaking process of piecing together the fragmentary evidence to provide a narrative.

---

<sup>59</sup> Shain, "The Jewish population", pp. 29, 108-9, 150.

<sup>60</sup> Cape of Good Hope, Debates in the Legislative Assembly, 1902, p. 666.

## II

The first census of the Cape Colony, "in the proper acceptation of the term",<sup>61</sup> was taken in 1865. The Chinese were, however, only officially mentioned and enumerated as a separate population group in the third "Cape of Good Hope census of 1891".<sup>62</sup> According to this record, out of a total population of 1 527 224, there were 215 Chinese males and no Chinese females resident at the Cape. Significantly, they were grouped with the "mixed and other colonial races" and categorized more specifically under "Other".<sup>63</sup> Of these 215 Chinese, 208 were registered as having been born in China, implying that seven were born elsewhere, but probably not at the Cape, as there were apparently no Chinese women present.<sup>64</sup>

When comparing the census figures for the Chinese population in the Cape Colony in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the information collected for the "Chinese Exclusion Act", there is room for some conjecture. According to an analysis of the information supplied by the Chinese residents for the 1904 legislation, only 76 of the respondents claimed to be present at

---

<sup>61</sup> Statisticana: Statistical Register: Cape of Good Hope, Census of 1865, pp. ii-iii.

<sup>62</sup> Statisticana, Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, Census of 1891.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 4, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-7. See below for further discussion of gender ratios.

the Cape in or before 1891. (See Table 2).<sup>65</sup> This leaves a discrepancy of 139 individuals (215 - 76 = 139) between the two enumerations. Given that neither source can claim complete accuracy, it can only be assumed that a large percentage of the 139 Chinese who were present in 1891, had, by 1904, either left the Cape Colony for other southern African states or returned to China, while a smaller percentage had probably died. The possible departure of such a high percentage of Chinese between 1891 and 1904 accords with the traditional, yet challenged, perception of the overseas Chinese as "sojourners".<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the outbreak of the South African War, as well as the post-War economic crises and increased hostility against "aliens", were also factors.

The inexact numbers of Chinese present in the Cape Colony in the late nineteenth century are typical of most of the other information available for this period. Details such as the origin, place of birth, age, arrival and occupation, can only be derived from the documentation which was compiled in 1904. Apart from the inherent problems involved in using these particulars

---

<sup>65</sup> Table 2 developed from an analysis of the Chinese Exclusion Form 1 of the "Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904": Application for certificate of exemption. These documents form part of the IRC series in the Cape Archives Repository: IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c.

<sup>66</sup> See Chan , "'Orientalism' and image making", p. 37 as well as chapter 1.

TABLE 2: DATE OF ARRIVAL AND PLACE OF FIRST RESIDENCE OF CHINESE IN THE CAPE COLONY

	Port Elizabeth	Natal	Cape Town	Kimberley	Johannesburg	Mafeking	Grahamstown	Queenstown	Graaff-Reinet	Other	Total/Year
1871	1										1
1876	1	1									2
1878				1							1
1879	4	1	1								6
1880	1										1
1881		1									1
1882	3		2	3							8
1883	1	1									2
1884		1		2	2						5
1885			1								1
1886			1	7							8
1887			1	2	1						4
1888			2	5	1						8
1889			1	5							6
1890	7		2	4	2						15
1891	2	1	1	1	2						7
1892	1	1	1	3	2						8
1893	1			2	3						6
1894	17		4	11	6						38
1895	5		5	9	12						31
1896	29		7	14	20	1					71
1897	36		8	9	14						67
1898	45		16	10	12						83
1899	55		25	9	4						93
1900	110		52	19	1	1	1				184
1901	230		64	48	3					2	347
1902	221		86	21	1		1	1	1		332
1903	14		13	3		1		1			32
1904	7		8	5							20
Total	791	7	301	193	86	3	2	2	1	2	1388

retrospectively, the actual compilation of this information for the 1904 legislation was fraught with problems. These included linguistic obstacles, regional inconsistencies in recording methods, the indifference of the responsible colonial officials and interpreters, and their "orientalist" attitudes. However, given these shortcomings, the material extracted from the records of the "Exclusion Act" remains invaluable in gaining some insight into the position of the Chinese in the Cape Colony during this period.

Most of the Chinese who arrived at the Cape came from the southern provinces of China, including Kuangtung, Fukhien and Hainan Island.<sup>67</sup> They landed at Port Elizabeth, one of the South African harbours closest to China, while others arrived in Cape Town, and still fewer in Durban.<sup>68</sup> Although it is generally assumed that they came to southern Africa because of the two mineral discoveries, many settled in the developing coastal towns of the Cape Colony, focusing their small businesses on the local populations. Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, East London and Kimberley were the main places of residence at the Cape, while a few individual Chinese were found in Uitenhage and Cradock.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Huang, The legal status of the Chinese, p. 50.

<sup>68</sup> Analysis of the IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c. "The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption", point 9, "Personal history as regards previous places of residence, with dates".

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

The most common occupation of the Cape Chinese was general dealer. On arrival in the country, many Chinese indicated that they worked as assistants or clerks in general stores, before beginning their own businesses.<sup>70</sup> This pattern suggests a chain migration which was typical of overseas Chinese communities around the world. New arrivals, presumably relatives or kinspeople from the same village, would be given assistance by established compatriots before moving on to establish their own livelihood. Other popular occupations included small service businesses, such as laundries and market gardens, while there were individuals who were cooks, carpenters, basket weavers, fish sellers and wagon drivers.<sup>71</sup>

As was the case with many other overseas Chinese communities, the number of Chinese women present at the Cape during this early stage of immigration appears to have been negligible.<sup>72</sup> As indicated above, the census of 1891 recorded no Chinese women. An analysis of the data provided for the 1904 "Exclusion Act" also corroborates the general belief that the majority of overseas Chinese men were bachelors. This is, however, not

---

<sup>70</sup> Analysis of IRC 1-76, 1c - 1415c. "The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption", point 6 "Occupation".

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Analysis of CAR: IRC 1-76, files 1c - 1415c. The "Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption", point 10, Married or single?

entirely accurate. The female gender component of the overseas Chinese at the Cape is obscured by the chauvinist nature of the "Chinese Exclusion Act", which was only concerned with Chinese males over the age of 18.<sup>73</sup> Secondly, although the Chinese applicants were required to record their marital status for the exclusion permit,<sup>74</sup> there were, as was the case with much of the data on the form, numerous misunderstandings which make accurate conclusions impossible. (See below for further discussion of women and Chinese wives who cohabited with or married Chinese men at the Cape).

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, there was a distinct increase in the number of Chinese arriving in the Cape Colony. According to the "Exclusion Act" records, entry figures doubled between 1898 and 1899, and then almost doubled again by 1900. (See Table 2). Although the 1904 records do not accurately show an influx of Chinese from the ZAR, it can be assumed that a reasonable percentage of the Chinese arrived at the Cape from Johannesburg and other inland areas as a result of the Jameson Raid of 1895 and the impending outbreak of hostilities.<sup>75</sup> This

---

<sup>73</sup> Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Act 37 of 1904, The Chinese Exclusion Act.

<sup>74</sup> CAR: IRC 1-76, files 1c - 1415c. The "Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption", point 10, Married or single?

<sup>75</sup> Harris, "The Chinese in South Africa", p. 19; The Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

was corroborated by information supplied by Chinese refugees who returned to the Transvaal in 1903.<sup>76</sup> It is also possible that many of the arrivals intended to go to the Transvaal, but because of the hostilities decided to remain in the Cape Colony where they had disembarked. The increase in the number of Chinese at the Cape in 1900 was relatively high, reaching a figure in excess of 1 300 by the end of the South African War. In the context of the entire population of the Cape Colony in 1904, however, the Chinese community remained minuscule, constituting only 0.057%.

### III

After the South African War, the four South African states still remained separate colonies, but were all under the British flag. Under these new circumstances, the factor which was to impinge most dramatically on the Cape Chinese was the expansion of the post-War Transvaal gold mines. As explained in chapter 3, the South African War was barely over when the mining magnates initiated plans to import a Chinese indentured workforce. While the new Transvaal government sought sanction for Chinese labour from the Colonial Office, Cape politicians, who were gearing up for one of the first fully party-political contested elections, used this as an issue to attract popular support. This was not

---

<sup>76</sup> See chapter 6 for details on the Peace Preservation Act of 1903 and the permit system.

an unprecedented tactic. Politicians in countries such as Australia<sup>77</sup>, New Zealand,<sup>78</sup> Canada,<sup>79</sup> and the United States,<sup>80</sup> had effectively used the "Chinese" as a plank in their respective political platforms. Notions of the "other" and the "alien threat" provided powerful and emotive imagery to canvass votes. Once the elections were over, the successful political parties were then obliged to transform their anti-Chinese assurances and promises into legislation. This often had far-reaching and devastating effects on the resident Chinese communities.

The Cape Colony was to prove no exception in this regard. The Chinese question, which was rated as a major political issue in early twentieth century Cape politics,<sup>81</sup> was ultimately transformed into some of the first racist legislation of the Cape Colony: the "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904". Although this legislation had been introduced as a direct result of the introduction of Chinese labour to the Transvaal gold mines, it was to remain on the statute books for more than two decades after the indentured system had been terminated and the labourers

---

<sup>77</sup> Choi, Chinese migration, pp. 24-5.

<sup>78</sup> Price, "White restrictions on colored immigration", p. 223.

<sup>79</sup> Markus, Fear and hatred, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> E.C. Sandmeyer, The anti-Chinese movement in California, Chicago, 1973, p. 41; Chen, "Chinese immigration", p. 47.

<sup>81</sup> Shain, "The Jewish population and politics", pp. 118-20; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 294.

repatriated.<sup>82</sup> It was a classic example of how party politics could create widespread consternation completely disproportionate to the importance of the issue, with extremely dire long-term consequences.

After being prorogued in 1902, the Cape parliament was dissolved in September 1903, making it necessary to hold elections for both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. This marked the first general election at the Cape since 1898,<sup>83</sup> and in the wake of the hostilities of the South African War, it was set to be a fiercely contested campaign. The two main contenders were the Progressive Party and the erstwhile Afrikaner Bond, now known as the South African Party (SAP).<sup>84</sup> The Progressives tended to represent British urban interests, while the SAP embodied Afrikaner rural and agricultural interests.<sup>85</sup> Although the SAP appeared to be the more popular, this advantage was offset by disenfranchisement of the Cape rebels by the military court.<sup>86</sup> In the aftermath of the War, however, both groups faced economic

---

<sup>82</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 19 of 1933, Immigration Amendment Act.

<sup>83</sup> McCracken, The Cape parliament, p. 34; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 293.

<sup>84</sup> T.R.H. Davenport, The Afrikaner Bond: The history of a South African political party, 1880-1911, Cape Town, 1966, pp. 244-5.

<sup>85</sup> Davenport, South Africa, pp. 104-8; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, pp. 293-4; Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 155.

<sup>86</sup> Davenport, South Africa, p. 224; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 293.

trials and social tribulations, and realised that neither would be able to dominate the other.<sup>87</sup> Within the spirit of peace and reconciliation, neither party wished to rekindle racist animosity between the two white ethnic groups, albeit because their success depended on attracting support from the opposing camp. It was in this strained and relatively fractured atmosphere that the Transvaal Chinese issue was seized as an innovative electoral weapon.

Even before the War was over, the rumour of the possible introduction of Chinese labour to the Transvaal mines elicited vehement reaction in political circles in the Cape.<sup>88</sup> John Molteno, representing the Afrikaner Bond, was particularly vociferous in his attack on the idea during the parliamentary session of 1900.<sup>89</sup> This attitude was reiterated by another Bond supporter, John X. Merriman, in 1902. He was responding to an article in a "first-class English paper" which advocated the importation of "100 000 Chinese Coolies". He argued that they should protest in the strongest possible terms against such an idea and use every means to bring the matter to the notice of the home authorities. In typical "orientalist" fashion, he concluded

---

<sup>87</sup> Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 297.

<sup>88</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 156.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

that if they did not prevent the Chinese from working the mines, "they might as well say good-bye to this as a European country".<sup>90</sup> Shortly after the intercolonial customs union conference held in Bloemfontein in March 1903<sup>91</sup> - where "grudging consent"<sup>92</sup> was given to a proposal for the possible importation of Asian labour - the Bond again made its opposition clear in the Cape Legislative Assembly.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, when the election campaign got underway in 1903, opposition to the introduction of Chinese mine labour was already part of SAP policy, and was judged to be "the very greatest question they had got before them at the present time".<sup>94</sup> During the months of the campaign it was an integral and indispensable component of the party's political rhetoric on two main counts. In the first instance, the employment of Chinese labourers was presented as a "threat" to future generations and the ideal of developing South Africa as a "white man's country".<sup>95</sup> The party pledged to resist the introduction of Chinese labourers at all costs, not only into the Transvaal, but in South Africa as a whole.<sup>96</sup> They

---

<sup>90</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, August - November 1902, p. 581.

<sup>91</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>92</sup> Campbell, Chinese coolie emigration, p. 171.

<sup>93</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour", pp. 85, 156.

<sup>94</sup> South African News, 13 January 1904.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1903; Cape Times, 14 September 1903.

<sup>96</sup> South African News, 28 December 1903.

argued that there were no guarantees which ensured that the Chinese would be confined to the Rand mines and that eventually the controls and border vigilance which were introduced, would eventually be relaxed.<sup>97</sup> To substantiate this argument they alluded to the "object lesson" of their "sister-colony", Natal, with another group of "Asiatics", the Indians.<sup>98</sup>

In the second instance, the SAP capitalized on the Chinese importation issue as a means to discredit the Progressive Party. They took the line that the Progressive leaders had financial interests in the Rand mines and as a result supported Milner and the introduction of the Chinese.<sup>99</sup> They therefore dubbed the Progressives as "pro-Chinese", referred to their opposition to importation as a sham and declared that "every vote for the Progressives [was] a vote for Chinese".<sup>100</sup> They launched a combined attack on "mandarin, Milner and the magnates",<sup>101</sup> images of which were vividly portrayed in the cartoons, captions and commentary of the Bond cartoonists, D.C. Boonzaaier and P.C. de

---

<sup>97</sup> South African News, 21 December 1903.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 8 December 1903; Transvaal Leader, 15 September 1903.

<sup>99</sup> South African News, 13 January 1904; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, pp. 294-5.

<sup>100</sup> Transvaal Leader, 15 September 1903, 8 January 1904; South African News, 8 February 1904.

<sup>101</sup> Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 159; Meyer, "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk", p. 183.

Wet,<sup>102</sup> and the editor of the "serio-comic weekly", The Owl, G.H. Kingswell.<sup>103</sup> (See illustrations)

To add insult to injury, the SAP also pointed out that the magnates and their press had admitted that

Asiatics were objectionable. They would not have Asiatics themselves in the country in which they lived; but they think Asiatics good enough for us, and for this country.<sup>104</sup>

This "disloyalty" of the magnates and their Progressive Party supporters was exploited by SAP leaders, such as Merriman, when they addressed mass meetings on the "Asiatic Danger". These widely publicised speeches claimed that

The pro-Asiatics themselves admit the undesirableness of the Asiatics, but say the mines must come first, the interests of South Africa second.<sup>105</sup>

And they also emphasized

the enormity of the treason to South Africa ... which the importation party [was] guilty.<sup>106</sup>

The SAP went beyond merely accusing the Progressives of disloyalty, by appealing to a general patriotism. They found it

---

<sup>102</sup> Davenport, The Afrikaner Bond, p. 252; Shain, "The Jewish population", pp. 162-3, 168; Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 157; See for example South African News, 12, 14 January 1904.

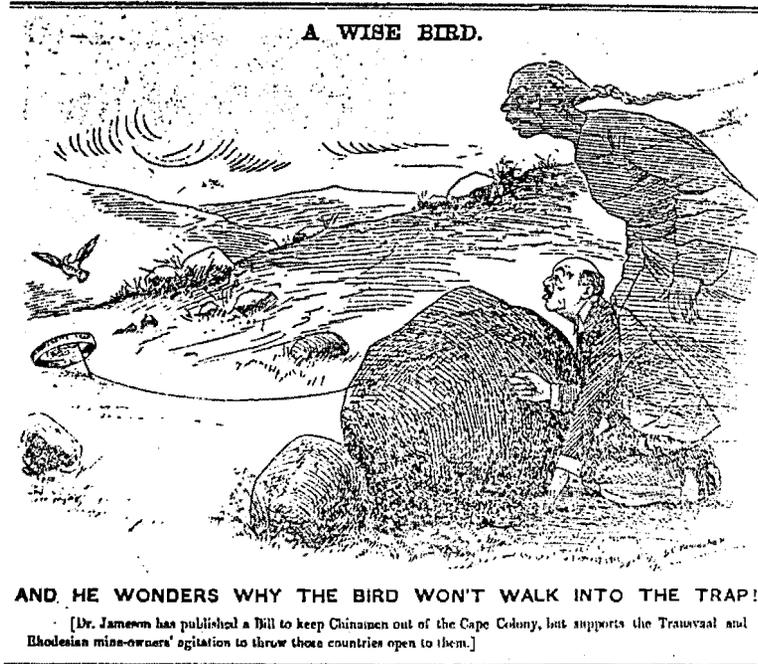
<sup>103</sup> The Owl, 14 November, 22 August 1902; 3 April 1903; Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 157.

<sup>104</sup> South African News, 8 December 1903.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

Examples of cartoons depicting the Chinese issue.



South African News, 12 January 1904.



South African News, 14 January 1904.



The Owl, 14 November 1902.

incomprehensible that any person who truly supported the Vereeniging Peace Agreement at the end of the War (1902) would refrain from warning the British government against the importation scheme.<sup>107</sup> And in the same vein said

[They] must cooperate and must not ask if the man who stands beside [you] is a Progressive or a Bondsman so long as he is working to keep [the] country free of this [Chinese] evil.<sup>108</sup>

Although obviously distorted, the SAP was not entirely wrong about the Progressive Party's position on the Chinese. The Progressives addressed the Chinese issue in their election campaign, but it was in a very different and rather cumbersome way. The importation of Chinese labour was essentially a "very awkward problem" for them to contend with,<sup>109</sup> and their ambivalence was apparent from the outset. In September 1903, the Progressive Party issued its manifesto with a 15-point programme. Point 12 dealt with the Chinese question as follows:

(12) Opposition to the introduction of Asiatics in South Africa, and the adoption of practical measures to exclude them from the Colony.<sup>110</sup>

As historian Mauritz Grundlingh wryly comments, if the Progressives' opposition to "Asiatic labour were genuine it would

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 295.

<sup>110</sup> Cape Times, 14 September, 1903; Transvaal Leader, 15 September, 1903.

not have been necessary to adopt 'practical measures'".<sup>111</sup> They never, as historian Rodney Davenport shows, wholeheartedly professed opposition to Chinese immigration during the elections.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the Progressives' policy of "non-interference"<sup>113</sup> in the affairs of other colonies underlined an equivocal approach to the Transvaal Chinese question. Also, the fact that the Progressives telegraphed the British government about a proposed Bill to "keep Chinamen out of the Colony" in January 1904,<sup>114</sup> also revealed their insincerity in opposing the actual importation of Chinese to the Transvaal. It was later argued that the sending of this draft Bill to the Secretary of State for Colonies was tantamount to saying that it did not matter if the Chinese were admitted to the Transvaal.<sup>115</sup>

Ian Colvin, in his biography of the leader of the Progressive Party, Leander Starr Jameson, emphasizes Chinese labour as "a particular question on which [election] victory depended".<sup>116</sup> He points out that Jameson had to "steer warily" on the importation of Chinese labour in order not to embarrass Milner or hinder the

---

<sup>111</sup> Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 294.

<sup>112</sup> Davenport, The Afrikaner Bond, p. 252.

<sup>113</sup> Transvaal Leader, 19 August, 11 December 1903.

<sup>114</sup> Cape Times, 8 January 1904; South African News, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 January, 1904.

<sup>115</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 May 1904, p. 397.

<sup>116</sup> I. Colvin, The life of Jameson, London, 1922, p. 226.

"salvage of the water-logged mining industry".<sup>117</sup> In Jameson's private letters to his brother, Sam, it is apparent that he found the Chinese question problematic. He writes

this Chinese business the very devil just at the present moment ... [and] ... [w]ould win certain if there were no pigtail question - but that makes it uncertain.<sup>118</sup>

After the Legislative Council elections, in which the Progressives won a marginal victory,<sup>119</sup> and in the run-up to the Legislative assembly elections, Jameson again contended that

[w]ithout this abominable Chinese question we should have swept the floor with them [the South African Party]. Now it is very doubtful. I am sticking to the honest line of keeping [the Chinese] out of Colony [Cape] and non-interference with T.V. [Transvaal]. Difficult to keep my party together on it, and may go under, but still have good hopes - especially if Milner hurries up and gets them sanctioned before February 10.<sup>120</sup>

The Progressive Party's "honest line" was merely a way around taking a stand on the importation of Chinese labour. As the campaign progressed, the Progressives were more and more inclined to emphasize the view that the Cape Colony should

not dictate to the Transvaal in its own affairs; but could make it impossible for the Chinese to enter the Cape Colony.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp. 226-7.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>119</sup> Legislative Council election results: 12 Progressives, 10 South African Party and 1 Independent. Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>120</sup> Colvin, The life of Jameson, p. 230.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

Despite this strategy, the Chinese question remained onerous. In correspondence to his brother, Jameson revealed his private feelings by stating that the Chinese put him in a

beastly difficult position. Of course they must come, and the sooner the better; but I have to continue the egg dance down here until they do arrive... Now I am trying to get Milner to hurry it up so that legislation can be published before our elections. Then I can say , "I told you so," and get my coloured bretheren [sic] to believe that we have been sincere and can help them better than the Bond in keeping them [the Chinese] out of the Colony.<sup>122</sup>

The above-mentioned reference to "coloured brethren" points to another feature of the 1903-4 election campaign: the African and Coloured electorate. Besides trying to attract supporters from each other, both parties realised that the "native vote" could tip the election result in their favour.<sup>123</sup> While the Progressive Party attempted to avoid the actual importation issue and instead advocated local measures to exclude the Chinese from the Cape Colony, the SAP tackled it head on, making a concerted effort to use the Chinese question as a means to win African support. They warned the Coloured electorate that the introduction of the Chinese would deprive them of work on the Rand mines, and that eventually the Chinese would compete with them in other fields of employment.<sup>124</sup> They also argued that the use of the Chinese

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 225; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 295.

<sup>124</sup> South African News, 8 January 1904.

would lead to the diversion of money overseas, which would otherwise have been earned by the Africans and therefore be spent in South Africa.<sup>125</sup> In keeping with this argument, the SAP indicated that the introduction of the Chinese would be a hinderance to the Coloured communities and that it would

seriously injure the aboriginal inhabitants of this part of the Empire by retarding their natural development in the paths of industry and civilization.<sup>126</sup>

At a mass meeting in Paarl, Merriman personally took up the cause of the Africans by claiming that he still felt he was a representative of 70 000 to 80 000 of them.<sup>127</sup> According to him the introduction of Chinese would be tantamount to turning the clock back, as all the work the Europeans were trying to do to "raise the native" would be stopped. He also believed that while the Europeans would suffer, the "natives and coloured people" would suffer even more. He knew that there was a strong feeling among Africans because they felt that "primarily this [was] directed against them" and that it was certain they would "bitterly resent the coming of Chinamen to take the bread out of their mouths".<sup>128</sup> Merriman also contended that no other issue

---

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 21 December 1903.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 8 December 1903.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 8 December 1903, 13 January 1904.

could do more to make a true SAP, "composed of all races and colours", than standing together on this question.<sup>129</sup>

To further advance their cause among the African and Coloured voters of the Cape Colony, the SAP co-opted the support of John Tengo Jabavu,<sup>130</sup> editor of the King William's Town newspaper, Imvo Zabantsundu.<sup>131</sup> He canvassed for the SAP by encouraging the Africans to vote against the Progressives because of their view on Chinese labour.<sup>132</sup> That the SAP had unequivocally won the support of Jabavu, despite its chequered past,<sup>133</sup> was evident in Jabavu's statement that "trusting [Africans] to Jameson was like trusting a goat to a tiger".<sup>134</sup>

Ultimately, Jabavu believed that a large percentage of the small African and Coloured electorate did indeed vote for the SAP, despite its marginal electoral defeat.<sup>135</sup> It is also apparent that there was a general feeling of opposition among the Africans on the question of Chinese labour. The "Bechuanaland native paper" reported that at a local "native meeting" it was resolved:

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 8 December 1903.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 16 January 1904; Colvin, The life of Jameson, p. 231; Davenport, The Afrikaner Bond, pp. 249, 278.

<sup>131</sup> C. Higgs, The ghost of equality: The public lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa, 1885-1959, Cape Town, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> Colvin, The life of Jameson, p. 231; Grundlingh, The parliament of the Cape, p. 295.

<sup>133</sup> South African News, 16 January 1904; Colvin, The life of Jameson, p. 231; Reeves, "Chinese labour", p. 160.

<sup>134</sup> Colvin, The life of Jameson, p. 231.

<sup>135</sup> Davenport. The Afrikaner Bond. p. 249.

That the natives of this colony view with the greatest alarm the introduction of Chinese into the country, and they call upon the ministers of the Gospel to use their influence in preventing the advent of Chinamen into the country as there is a sufficiency of native labour in South Africa.<sup>136</sup>

Speaking at one of the mass meetings held in the Cape peninsula, an invited representative of the "coloured people", Arie Mackriel, claimed that there would be less money for the "natives and coloureds" to earn. In addition, the "Asiatics" would be protected, because they would earn wages which they sent out of the country, but would not pay taxes, while the "natives and coloureds", on the other hand, would still have to pay taxes, even though their access to wages had been taken away from them.<sup>137</sup>

It is interesting to note that the glimpses of the Coloured view of the importation of Chinese, all reveal objections that are economic. They do not, like much of the European rhetoric, include any references to the "good" or "bad" qualities of the Chinese as a "race". This suggests that Western "orientalism" was not shared, or at least had not been imposed on, them. What percentage of the indigenous population concerned itself with the Chinese issue, particularly in the face of greater European colonialism, is difficult to gauge.

---

<sup>136</sup> South African News, 19 January 1904.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 8 December 1903

The Cape press took up the Chinese question with enthusiasm. The two leading newspapers in the Cape Colony, the Cape Times and the South African News, Progressive and SAP organs respectively, carried detailed reports on the Chinese policies of their political parties. Besides acting as the mouthpiece of the SAP, the South African News also ran a public petition against the importation of Chinese:

**THE NATIONAL PETITION AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF CHINESE.**

Have you Signed it? If not, why not?

Forms may be obtained at 35, Church Street, Cape Town.

They will be forwarded to any address on application.<sup>138</sup>

This did much to raise public awareness of the Chinese labour issue. It must, however, also have made members of the free Chinese community much more conspicuous within Cape colonial society.

The high-spirited nature of the political rallying on the Chinese reverberated in widespread popular debate and protest. Speakers at public forums made constant reference to the experience of their fellow "white man" with the "Chinaman" in the United States, Canada and Australia. It was argued that these countries

have only a few Chinamen. [Yet] they would gladly give them to you, and pay expenses for you if you would only take them.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> See for example South African News, 21 January 1904.

<sup>139</sup> South African News, 28 December 1903.

Not unlike their contemporaries in these overseas colonies, an Anti-Asiatic League was established in Cape Town.<sup>140</sup> Here the Chinese were rated as the "greatest peril" that ever threatened the country, and one which would corrupt and demoralize the entire population, ultimately dragging it down.<sup>141</sup> Petitions to the government<sup>142</sup> and letters to the press revealed extreme "orientalism" and a degree of hysteria among members of the white public. Significantly, the fear of economic competition was also an ever-present element in this opposition:

Not content with permitting every undesirable non-Britisher to compete on equal terms, in the business arena, with Britons, these mal-visioned Governments have filled this country with untruthful, dishonest, uncleanly and mal-odorous Indian negroes, and they now desire to scourge, debauch, and pollute our apparently accursed land with the pestiferous, yellow-skinned, almond-eyed sons of the Celestial Beelzebub.<sup>143</sup>

Historian Phyllis Lewsen correctly assessed the Chinese experiment as having obsessed both its champions and its opponents.<sup>144</sup> The reaction it elicited in the Cape Colony was likened only to the anti-convict agitation of 1848 -

---

<sup>140</sup> South African News, 21 December 1903; Transvaal Leader, 30 December 1903.

<sup>141</sup> South African News, 8 December 1903.

<sup>142</sup> CAR: GH 23/75, 411: General despatches. Discussions re Chinese immigration, 1903.

<sup>143</sup> South African News, 16 January 1904.

<sup>144</sup> P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African statesman, Cape Town, 1982, p. 263.

representative, impassioned and determined.<sup>145</sup> As had been the case in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, the unprecedented solidarity which arose in both political and public circles about the Chinese indentured scheme was to have serious social and legislative repercussions for the free Chinese community at the Cape. The high political profile of the Chinese question during the election campaign, the marginal victory of the Progressive Party and the sanctioning of Chinese labour for the Transvaal mines in May 1904, meant that it remained an important issue in the Cape Colony in the immediate post-election period.

## IV

The SAP members of the new Cape parliament made a concerted attempt to reaffirm and reassert the unanimous resolution on Chinese labour which had been adopted in the House of Assembly in July 1903.<sup>146</sup> The motion agreed to had been to inform the British parliament that they strongly opposed the importation of Chinese because they regarded it as "prejudicial to all classes of the people of South Africa".<sup>147</sup> After protracted debates lasting several sessions and spanning three months, the motion

---

<sup>145</sup> South African News, 21 December 1903.

<sup>146</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 July 1903, pp. 205-16.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 8 March, p. 15.

was withdrawn because importation of Chinese labour for the Transvaal was a settled matter.<sup>148</sup> Consequently, the opposition accused the Progressives of insincerity for using the Chinese question for electioneering purposes and challenged them to carry out the election pledge embodied in their manifesto.<sup>149</sup> They pointed out that during the campaign the Progressives had stressed the fact that they had already drawn up a draft Bill to that effect.<sup>150</sup> This Chinese legislation became the focus of much heated debate until it was finally accepted in September 1904.

Both the attempt to reaffirm the opinion on Chinese labour expressed by the House in the last session, and more particularly, the introduction of the Chinese Exclusion Bill in parliament,<sup>151</sup> led to the free Chinese already at the Cape suddenly being thrust into the spotlight. The Chinese needed to be "dealt with" in order to prevent the entry of Chinese deserters from the Transvaal mines and to exclude an influx of any newcomers from China.<sup>152</sup> During the election campaign, the free Chinese in the Cape had not featured to any noticeable degree. Besides the generally derogatory comments about

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 4 May, pp. 430-434.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., March - May 1904, pp. 15-22, 427-34.

<sup>150</sup> South African News, 8, 11, 12 January, 1904.

<sup>151</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 4 March 1904, p. 7.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 2 May 1904, p. 392.

"orientals" which must have heightened public awareness of their presence, there were only occasional indirect references to them. For example, a Graaff-Reinet merchant interjected at a meeting opposing Chinese labour:

[what caused] this sudden agitation seeing that the Chinese have been allowed to get a footing in a multitude of places in the Colony.<sup>153</sup>

In another instance, while proclaiming his party's intention of keeping "Asiatics" out of the Colony, a Progressive Party candidate criticized the Afrikaner Bond, which had been in power for the previous 15 years, for the over 1000 "Chinamen" already trading in the country under licences, and declared that everyone of them was "driving out a white man and his family".<sup>154</sup> During the House of Assembly debates this view persisted as Progressives claimed that

while the Bond had been in power the Colony had been swamped by Chinamen. We had them at our doors, we had them in every kind of business, and he had not heard the voice of one hon. member on the opposite side raised against these Chinamen coming into the Colony.<sup>155</sup>

Apart from emphasizing the political opportunism of the Chinese issue in the Cape elections, this statement reveals the rhetoric of the time which did not augur well for the free Chinese.

---

<sup>153</sup> South African News, 18 January 1904.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 13 January 1904.

<sup>155</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 8 March 1904, p. 19.

In an exceedingly rare communication, a member of the free Chinese community resident in Cradock, W. Manshon,<sup>156</sup> wrote a letter to the press on the subject of the importation of Chinese labour. He was commenting on a resolution taken at a public meeting to oppose the importation of Chinese:

I am proud to think, though a Chinaman by birth, that such a step has been taken, as we also contend that it would be detrimental to the social interests of the Colony as well as the labouring community, the end of which means starvation and crime. Consequently you will allow me, through the columns of your read-all-over paper to join the public of Cradock by entering my protest, together with my brother Chinamen here, against the importation of the lower class of Chinese labourers into South Africa. We also contend that it would be detrimental to our own interests as business men, and reflect [negatively] upon the present social positions we hold.<sup>157</sup>

Although a single letter from one region cannot be construed as representative of the views of the entire free Chinese community, this remains significant testimony, precisely because the same sentiment was expressed at the time by the free Chinese community in the Transvaal.<sup>158</sup> This distancing from their future indentured compatriots was also not unlike the attitude taken by the Indian merchants and traders towards their fellow citizens on the sugar

---

<sup>156</sup> Unfortunately W. Manshon could not be traced in the records of the Certificates of Exemption. He therefore must have left the country between mid 1902 and mid 1904.

<sup>157</sup> South African News, 21 January 1904.

<sup>158</sup> See chapter 6.

plantations in Natal.<sup>159</sup> In any case, the individual opinions expressed by the free Chinese did not alleviate the untenable conditions which they were to subsequently endure.

Throughout the readings of the draft "Chinese Exclusion Bill" there was general consensus and commitment among the members on both sides of the House.<sup>160</sup> Although the opposition criticized the Progressives' draft legislation for not being sufficiently restrictive and complained that the Bill was not receiving sufficient attention in view of its urgency, they were generally all in favour of the spirit of the proposed law. Again, there were calls to stand together as the colonists had stood in 1849 against the dumping of convicts on the shores of South Africa.<sup>161</sup>

The proposers of the Bill declared that they had drafted the legislation in as radical a manner as possible, but welcomed any amendments or provisions that would make it more so.<sup>162</sup> They had followed the example of the United States of America and Australia by dealing with Chinese immigration by itself, rather than "mixing it up" with the Alien Immigration Law. The main

---

<sup>159</sup> M. Swan, Gandhi: The South African experience, Johannesburg, 1985, pp. xvi, 60, 113-4.

<sup>160</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 4 March, 2, 9, 16, 27 May 1904, pp. 7, 391-402, 528-9, 639-44.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 23 March 1904, p. 144.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 2 May 1904, p. 391.

reason for this was that these other countries had found that "the Chinese as a race could be more easily dealt with than any other race that came under the Alien Immigration Laws."<sup>163</sup> Moreover, the latter legislation was in need of considerable alteration which would only be attended to in the recess. Unlike the American legislation which excluded mainly Chinese labourers, the Cape Bill dealt with "all classes" of Chinese and was therefore made applicable to the "whole of the Chinese race".<sup>164</sup> The only exceptions were those persons who could be admitted by permit.

The compilers of the Bill explained that extreme caution had been taken in formulating the requirements for a permit. Although they could have acted more stringently, they did not want to offend the Imperial Government which could then simply have overruled Cape regulations, as had been the case in Australia.<sup>165</sup> For diplomatic reasons it was agreed that permits should be granted to Chinese who were British subjects - those born in British colonies - and important government officials. Following the examples of America and Australia, it was decided also to issue permits to the Chinese population already in the Cape Colony, but

---

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 392.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 2 May 1904, p. 392.

to exclude newcomers.<sup>166</sup> According to the parliamentarians, the number of Chinese present in the Colony was not sizeable: since January 1904, only 400 trading licences had been issued to Chinese traders, and it was estimated that the total population was about 1 000.<sup>167</sup> Although the permit arrangement was regarded as a fair concession, the following quotation reveals the prejudiced rationale of the proposed system:

They had to treat these Chinamen as British subjects. These Chinamen were fully alive to their own interests, and they had a perfect right to be so. It was perfectly right that those Chinamen, who were in the Colony, should be required to carry passes.<sup>168</sup>

The Bill therefore made it illegal for any Chinese to enter or reside in the Cape Colony unless he (women were not included as independent persons) had a valid Certificate of Exemption.<sup>169</sup> Within one month of the publication of the act in the Government Gazette, every Chinese (male) over the age of eighteen years who was resident or present in the Colony at the time of the passing of the Act, had to apply for a certificate. Each Chinese had to be registered with the Magistrate of the district in which he resided, and his certificate had to be renewed once a year. Should he take up residence in another district, he had to notify

---

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 395.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1902-1906, Act 37 of 1904, The Chinese Exclusion Act, section 3.

the Magistrates of both districts, and re-register in the district to which he moved.<sup>170</sup> Contravention of the provisions of the Act could lead to a fine, imprisonment or deportation to China or the country of origin.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, any Chinese who was twice convicted of either assault, gambling or keeping a brothel, would be deported after expiration of the sentence passed on him.<sup>172</sup> The Act also disenfranchised those Chinese who were not British subjects.<sup>173</sup>

To encumber them further, the 1904 legislation declared that all Chinese who were not British subjects and who left the country would not be permitted to re-enter, and their certificates of exemption would lapse from their date of departure.<sup>174</sup> In view of the tendency of nearly all the Chinese to return to China to fulfil filial duties, visit their ancestral villages, acquire wives, conceive children and take sons to be educated according to Chinese tradition,<sup>175</sup> this proved to be an extremely stringent and discriminatory regulation. The authorities eventually

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., sections 6, 12 and 15.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., sections 18 and 19.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., section 34.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., section 35.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., section 33.

<sup>175</sup> Analysis of the IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c. "The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption", point 9, "Personal history as regards previous places of residence, with dates"; point 10, "Married or single"; point 11, "If married or widower, following particulars of children, if any".

conceded this, and in 1906 the "Chinese Exclusion Act" was amended to allow holders of Certificates of Exemption to visit China and return to the Cape Colony within a prescribed period.<sup>176</sup> If they did not adhere to the period granted, they were denied re-entry.<sup>177</sup>

Throughout the promulgation of the Bill, there was barely a dissenting voice about the proposed treatment of the free Chinese. The only precautionary concerns were related to obtaining the sanction of the Imperial Government. The fact of the matter was that the overseas Chinese were not protected by missionary societies, like the indigenous Africans, nor did they capture the imagination of the philanthropic or humanitarian movements in Britain. As was made apparent in chapter 3, even the missionaries within China did not reveal a very paternal attitude to their subjects.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, the Chinese did not share the same status as their Asian counterparts, the Indians, who were an integral part of the British Empire. It appears that, like other aliens, and more particularly the Jews, the Chinese had become the main scapegoats for much of the post-War and post-election

---

<sup>176</sup> CAR: GH 23/95, 228, part 1: General despatches. Bill to amend the Chinese Exclusion Act 1904; Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1902-1906, Act 15 of 1906, Chinese Exclusion Amendment Act.

<sup>177</sup> Analysis of the IRC series, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c.

<sup>178</sup> See chapter 3.

pressures. Their negative treatment accorded with the general prejudices of Western "orientalism".

The "Chinese Exclusion Bill" was accepted for the committee stage with only a single dissenting vote by Francis Oats, the Progressive member from Namaqualand.<sup>179</sup> During the debates he was particularly outraged by Merriman's claim that the Chinese should be kept out, not because of their "vices", but because of their "virtues". He declared that

[t]he exclusion of any nationality, on account of its virtues would not have his support. To his mind the Bill was retrogressive and barbaric, and one which could not have been passed if China had a navy like Japan.<sup>180</sup>

Apart from this lone voice, there was no other defence of the Cape Chinese. Unlike the Indian authorities, the Chinese government took relatively little interest in its overseas subjects. The Chinese Consul-General for the British colonies in South Africa, Liu Yu Ling (Lew Yuk Lin), who later intervened on their behalf, was only appointed in late 1905.<sup>181</sup> Being subject to such blatantly discriminatory regulations together with the

---

<sup>179</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 May 1904, p. 402; C.J. Beyers (ed.), Dictionary of South African biography, iv, Pretoria, 1981, pp. 415-6.

<sup>180</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 May 1904, p. 398.

<sup>181</sup> CAR: GH 23/89, 298: General despatches. Appointment of Mr. Liu Yu Ling to act as Chinese Consul-General for the British colonies in South Africa, 19 October 1905. See chapter 3 for details.

demographically dispersed nature of the Cape Chinese, (see Table 3) the community was itself reluctant to take overt action lest it should lead to further restrictions.

**TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHIC FIGURES OF CHINESE IN CAPE COLONY, 1908**

Port Elizabeth	Kimberley	Cape Town District	East London	Other
351	204	192	59	109

182

There are, however, a few traces of low-key reaction from the Chinese in some regions of the Cape Colony. For example, in 1904 the East London Chinese community appealed to the British Secretary for Colonies and the Chinese Legation in London against certain conditions of the "Chinese Exclusion Act". They declared offensive the requirement that the Chinese be stripped of their clothing in order to discover "marks of identification" for the Certificate of Exemption. After certain administrative enquiries, it was agreed that this regulation be discontinued.<sup>183</sup> According to oral testimony, many of the regional Chinese associations which emerged in the Cape Colony after 1900, were founded as a

<sup>182</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Colonial Secretary's Ministerial Division, Report of the Chief Immigration Officer for the year ending 31st December, 1908, p. 6.

<sup>183</sup> CAR: GH 35/63, 5: Native labour question and Chinese Exclusion Act, 1903-1906; GH 23/84, 2: General despatches. Protest by Chinese residents of East London against certain regulations contained in Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904.

direct result of the "Chinese Exclusion Act".<sup>184</sup> By 1906, it appears that the associations founded in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and East London, affiliated to form the "Cape Colony Chinese Association". Although there are no available records about the early history of these associations, there is a photograph taken in 1906 of the representatives of the "Cape Colony Chinese Association". This bears an inscription which declares the organization's commitment to "fight for the rights of the Chinese".<sup>185</sup>

In 1908, the president of the "Cape Colony Chinese Association", Hing Woo, appeared before the "Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances". This investigation was a response to the separate petitions of Woo (3 July 1908) and members of the South African Indian Association ( 22 & 23 July 1908),<sup>186</sup> and to complaints by European members of the various grocers', merchants' and drapers' associations.<sup>187</sup> Although this Select Committee heard the grievances of both the Chinese and Indians, it also considered the complaints of Europeans against "Asiatics", and looked

---

<sup>184</sup> Yap and Man, Colour, confusion and concessions, pp. 65, 451, fn. 74.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>186</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, Appendix, volume II, "Report of the Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances", September 1908, p. xiii.

<sup>187</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Minutes of the Legislative Council and votes and proceedings of the House of Assembly, First and second sessions, Twelfth Parliament, 1908, p. 230.

specifically at the working of the "Immigration and General Dealers' Act". Of the eight days of the hearings, only two-and-a-half were spent deliberating with the Indians, half a day with the Chinese representative, and the remaining five days was dedicated to evidence from the Europeans, exclusively against the Indians.<sup>188</sup>

During his interview, Woo drew attention to the hardships that the Chinese were suffering regarding immigration, naturalization and the municipal and parliamentary franchise,<sup>189</sup> and requested relief from the disabilities imposed on the Chinese in the Cape Colony.<sup>190</sup> In addition to drawing their attention to the various problems of the "Chinese Exclusion Act", such as disenfranchisement, he complained that it singled the Chinese out among all other aliens. He requested the government to recognize the regional Chinese associations, since they would assist in the control of the community and he believed, as a result, that "the good ones [Chinese] would not suffer because of the bad ones".<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, Appendix, volume II, "Report of the Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances", September 1908, p. xiii.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., Appendix B, p. vi.

<sup>190</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly and Acts of Parliament, First and second sessions, Twelfth Parliament, 1908, pp. 437, 675.

<sup>191</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, Appendix, volume II, "Report of the Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances", September 1908, p. 42.

Although the Select Committee recommended the latter request, they ignored all objections to the "Exclusion Act".<sup>192</sup>

With the arrival of Liu Yu Ling, in late 1905, and his successor Liu Ngai in 1908, some of the Chinese community's objections were channelled more effectively to the authorities concerned - a practice which continued throughout the twentieth century.<sup>193</sup> Responding to deputations and petitions from the various regional communities and associations, the Consul Generals dealt with the numerous "hardships and disabilities" caused by the "Chinese Exclusion Act". These included the above-mentioned permit to visit China, the renewal of licences of Chinese traders who were temporarily absent from the Colony,<sup>194</sup> and intervention on behalf of Chinese wives and children, and deportees.<sup>195</sup> Towards the end of the 1910s, Liu also petitioned the Cape government about the extremism of the Exclusion legislation, particularly in view of the fast decreasing numbers of Chinese labourers on the Transvaal mines and the number of free Chinese in the Cape Colony. He requested that the legislation be amended to

---

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., pp. iii-vi.

<sup>193</sup> SAD: BEP 575 G18/54 Raadpleging en koördinasie met ander instansies: Sjinese organisasies: Vetroulik, 7 Desember 1963; Financial Mail, 17 October 1980.

<sup>194</sup> CAR: PMO 222, 1231/06: Chinese traders - Renewal of general dealers licences, 15 August 1907.

<sup>195</sup> CAR: IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c include letters written on behalf of numerous Chinese by the Consul General.

admit under such reasonable precautions as [the] Government may deem necessary educated Chinese subjects. ... the effect of such legislation would not be to increase the existing Chinese population of [the] Colony, but would be the means of removing the regrettable impression that Chinese subjects of any class are undesirable under any circumstances which has been created by the existing drastic acts of the Exclusion Laws.<sup>196</sup>

Initially, the government replied that it was unable to hold out any hope of an alteration to the law. It merely assured the Consul-General that every effort would be made to avoid unnecessary hardships to Chinese individuals already domiciled in the Colony.<sup>197</sup> In response to later pleas by the Consul-General, the government declared that in view of the forthcoming unification of the country, it was not in a position to make changes to the position of the Chinese.<sup>198</sup> In the parliamentary debates of 1904 on the "Chinese Exclusion Act", it was predicted that

when federated each state would continue to legislate for its own internal affairs, and the same laws which would apply to Cape Colony need not would [sic] apply to the Transvaal. This colony would, when federated, have still a perfect right to keep out Chinese.<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> CAR: PMO 238, 342/08, part 2: Discrimination against Chinese in South Africa, 1, 20 July 1908, 13 June 1909.

<sup>197</sup> CAR: GH 23/117, 186: General despatches. Correspondence re disabilities under which Chinese subjects labour in Cape Colony, 1908.

<sup>198</sup> CAR: PMO 238, 342/08, part 2: Discrimination against Chinese in South Africa, 17, 22 June 1909.

<sup>199</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 20 April 1904, p. 320.

This was indeed the case. The first immigration legislation in the South African Union, passed in 1913, incorporated all the salient features of the provincial measures.<sup>200</sup> The promotion of white immigration and the exclusion of Asians were the main intentions.<sup>201</sup> The "Chinese Exclusion Act" remained on the statute books and was not removed until 1933.<sup>202</sup> Statistics clearly indicate the "restrictive efficiency of the law": of the 1 393 Chinese registrations in 1904, 915 remained in 1908,<sup>203</sup> and in 1917 their numbers dropped to 711.<sup>204</sup> While the experiences of other colonies obviously played an important role in the compilation of the Cape Chinese Act, in many ways it proved more restrictive. Together with other discriminatory legislation introduced after Union, it had a far longer and more detrimental effect on the South African Chinese community, putting an end to their immigration for close on three-quarters of a century.<sup>205</sup>

---

<sup>200</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 22 of 1913, Immigrants Regulation.

<sup>201</sup> Bradlow, "Immigration into the Union", p. 14.

<sup>202</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 19 of 1933, Immigration Amendment Act.

<sup>203</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Colonial Secretary's Ministerial Division, Report of the Chief Immigration Officer for the year ending 31 December 1908, p. 6.

<sup>204</sup> Union of South Africa Year Book, 1910-17, p. 192.

<sup>205</sup> Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 53 of 1986, Matters concerning admission to and residence in the Republic Amendment.

Judging from the records that the "Chinese Exclusion Act" generated, and despite the limitations it imposed, the life style of the resident and newly arrived Chinese in the Cape Colony in the early twentieth century did not differ much from that of the nineteenth century.<sup>206</sup> They settled in similar regions, continued to run small businesses, such as general dealerships and laundries, and once the amended legislation made it possible, they returned to China on regular visits. While most of them came back to the Cape, there was a percentage who did not. This was sometimes due to the fact that they were denied re-entry, having overstayed the stipulated duration of the permit, while in other cases they preferred to remain in China.<sup>207</sup> For example, ten Chinese applied to leave the colony in December 1904, thereby surrendering their rights to return. It was reported that

they gave as their reason that they had amassed sufficient wealth to maintain them in China for life. The lowest sum possessed by them was £400 and the highest £800.<sup>208</sup>

Typical of this scenario is the story of one of the applicants, Kong Chong Tye. He arrived in the Cape Colony from Canton in 1896, at the age of 32. He was unemployed for two years,

---

<sup>206</sup> See above.

<sup>207</sup> Analysis of the IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c. "The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption".

<sup>208</sup> CAR: IRC, 33, file 641c: Kong Chong Tye.

whereupon he opened a general dealership in Alice Street, Port Elizabeth. After six years in this occupation he had made enough money to return to China.<sup>209</sup> Out of the over 200 Chinese storekeepers, it was reported that there had been fewer than six insolvencies.<sup>210</sup> It is not possible to determine the extent to which the "rags-to-riches" tale occurred among the Chinese. That a number of them qualified for the vote, indicates a certain amount of wealth. There were, however, also cases of dire poverty, although these appear to have been the exception rather than the rule. In 1907, for example, a certain How Kee was deported with his wife because he "had no means".<sup>211</sup>

There is no direct evidence to suggest that the Chinese who remained in China did so because of discriminatory legislation at the Cape. In some instances it was definitely a deterrent. However, the fact that many Chinese continued to return suggests that although unfair and inconvenient, the legislation was not an effective hindrance for many of those who had been granted admission rights. Some of the Chinese men who visited China, went to get married or to fetch their wives and families.<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, Appendix, volume II, "Report of the Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances", September 1908, p. 41.

<sup>211</sup> CAR: IRC, 56, file 1063c: Howe Kee.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

Very little is known about the wives of the Chinese men resident in the Cape Colony. Like the early arrivals in other colonies, the majority of Chinese men were single, but not necessarily bachelors. While only a fraction of them indicated that they were married at the time of the completion of their Certificates of Exemption,<sup>213</sup> it seems that they had not understood the question put to them. In later years, many who made applications for permits to allow their wives to join them in South Africa, indicated that they thought the question referred to a wife in the Cape Colony.<sup>214</sup> Only a very small percentage of Chinese women came to South Africa. Most wives remained in ancestral villages in China.<sup>215</sup> They reared the children and cared for the aged parents, and were occupied as dressmakers, silk spinners and farm workers.<sup>216</sup>

The only Chinese women who were allowed into the Cape were those who could prove that they were married to, or were the offspring of, an exempted Chinese man. At the time of the parliamentary debates about the formulation of the Chinese Exclusion

---

<sup>213</sup> Analysis of the IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c. "The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1904: Application for certificate of exemption", point 10, "Married or single?".

<sup>214</sup> For example see CAR: IRC 43, 830c: Ah Pooi; IRC 45, 899c: Hue Naam.

<sup>215</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, Appendix, volume II, "Report of the Select Committee on Asiatic Grievances", September 1908, p. 42.

<sup>216</sup> Analysis of CAR: IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c.

legislation, it was considered preferable to allow the "Chinaman" to bring his wife into the Colony because they

did not think it would be wise to allow him to find his consort among other residents of the country. (Laughter) They should be careful to keep out any cross-breeds.<sup>217</sup>

A few Chinese women did come to the Cape Colony. They arrived with their husbands or accompanied their children who had been conceived during one of the numerous visits of the fathers.<sup>218</sup> Information on them is also limited. Details were merely included in the files of their husbands or fathers, and they were not given an identity number. Most of them were involved in domestic chores and assisted their husbands in their businesses. They also accompanied their children on visits to China.

Although most of the Chinese men married Chinese women in China, or in Mauritius en route back to the Cape Colony, there were instances of Chinese men marrying European, Malay and Coloured women at the Cape. The figures are by no means accurate, but an analysis of the Chinese exemption records reveals that at least 61 Coloured women, 36 European women, 2 Malay women, and one African woman married Chinese men at the Cape.<sup>219</sup> Besides those

---

<sup>217</sup> Cape of Good Hope: Debates in the House of Assembly, 2 May 1904, p. 392.

<sup>218</sup> Analysis of the IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c.

<sup>219</sup> Analysis of the IRC, 1-76, files 1c - 1415c.

local marriages which were not recorded, there were, of course, also many cases of cohabitation.

An unknown aspect of South African Chinese history is that some of the local Cape women who were legally married to Chinese men, went to China to meet their in-laws and see the "ancestral village". There is no information about these visits, other than the travel dates and ship bookings. In some cases, though, it seems that their experiences in China were rather negative, as is evident from the following report from the British Consul in Swatow concerning the undesirability of women of British birth accompanying their husbands into the interior of China. Due to its interest value, and despite its inherent Western bias, the letter is quoted in full:

... typical of many others that have come under my notice during the past 20 years, Chinese marry white wives in Africa, Australia and Canada. So long as they remain in the West they show themselves considerate husbands. So soon, however, as the wife reaches her husband's country home trouble begins. More often than not the wife for the first time learns that the man she has looked upon as her husband was married before he left China. Her position is now that of a concubine. She can claim no conjugal rights. Her position is that of an attendant of her husband's mother and first wife. She is reduced to living as do the country Chinese, including field work, because she is "foreign" the more objectionable tasks are assigned to her. It becomes a choice between slavery and escape. Her husband who has treated her well abroad is not in a position to protect her in his Chinese home (even if he wished to) or even ameliorate her

position. Commonly after a year or so he returns to his business abroad while the white woman, the subject of much jealousy in the family, is detained amidst her unbearable surroundings.<sup>220</sup>

In another instance, the British Consul General in Canton made a request on behalf of a European woman, Ada Spillman, to return to South Africa. She had married James Machow in Kimberley in 1888 at the age of 16 and given birth to a son in 1891. She accompanied her husband to China with their child, but became destitute after he took a younger woman to live with him.<sup>221</sup>

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the Chinese continued to maintain a relatively low profile. Besides the occasional objections to the "Chinese Exclusion Act", they only featured in short press reports on permit transgressions, gambling offences, suicides, assaults and the occasional murder. Keeping very much to themselves, they also continued to participate in a small way in the local communities in which they lived. For example, at the time of the implementation of the "Chinese Exclusion Act" in 1904, the Chinese resident in the Uitenhage district donated £54 to the local hospital.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> CAR: IRC 64, 1199c. Hunson Green married Annie Hiscock. British Consul document included in file.

<sup>221</sup> CAR: IRC 28, 519c: James Machow.

<sup>222</sup> Cape Times, 9 November 1904.

Early twentieth-century Cape politics and the "Chinese Exclusion Act" had an extremely detrimental impact on the Chinese community in the Colony. They were the first people to be singled out and discriminated against in such a blatant manner, mainly because of party political expediency and economic developments in the Transvaal. Moreover, inherent Western "orientalism" made their position in Cape society untenable. As a result, their immigration was terminated and the growth of their community was therefore stunted, not only at the Cape, but also in the Union, and later the Republic of South Africa. This national situation was further compounded by developments which took place in the Transvaal Colony.

## CHAPTER 6

### Free Chinese in the Transvaal

The free Chinese who arrived in the ZAR towards the end of the nineteenth century were not unlike their compatriots who settled in the Cape Colony. They came from the same regions, settled in similar places and had identical occupations. The introduction of indentured Indian and Chinese labour also had a negative impact on their position in Transvaal society. However, as a result of the starkly different circumstances which prevailed in the ZAR - and later Transvaal - the free Chinese became the victims of harsher legislation and greater discrimination than their Cape counterparts. This situation resulted in the unprecedented and uncharacteristic involvement of the free Chinese community in political activity. This episode in South Africa's history is almost exclusively associated with the passive resistance of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian community, known as "satyagraha".

It is relatively unknown that the Transvaal Chinese participated in the passive resistance movement, not merely as accomplices, but also independently on their own terms.<sup>1</sup> This critically

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of this see Harris, "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance".

important aspect of the history of the Chinese in South Africa, along with the position of the free Chinese community in the ZAR and Transvaal from the late nineteenth century to 1912, is the focus of this chapter. The analysis also includes references to the Transvaal Indians, not only in the interests of comparison, but also because the prevailing legislation linked them inextricably to the Chinese.

## I

Despite the more prominent role that the free Chinese played in the Transvaal during the early twentieth century, the source material relevant to them is limited. Although they were subjected to many more laws and registration processes than the Chinese in the Cape Colony, it unfortunately does not follow that the records on them are correspondingly abundant. On the contrary, the South African War and the repeated change of government and political status of the region in the period 1850 to 1912, resulted in imprecise and fragmentary documentation. Moreover, the fact that the Afrikaner [Dutch descendant] government of the ZAR did not initially differentiate between the "Koelies, Arabieren en andere Aziaten"<sup>2</sup> ["Coolies, Arabs and other Asiatics"] - a practice which continued under successive

---

<sup>2</sup> See for example Codex van de Locale Wetten der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, Wet no. 3, 1885.

governments - complicates research. The situation was further compounded by the fraudulent use of certificates,<sup>3</sup> as well as the destruction of documentation by many of the Chinese themselves during the resistance movement.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the study of the Chinese in the ZAR (and later Transvaal) epitomizes the most vexing problems of doing research on the history of the Chinese in South Africa.

Besides the parliamentary debates, official details of the various laws which were enacted during this period, and the occasional newspaper reports on their promulgation, there is only an incomplete and rather haphazard series of archival records on the "Asian" population: Asiatic Affairs (IND).<sup>5</sup> This is housed in the Central Archives Depot of the South African National Archives Repository in Pretoria and is an extensive collection of files emanating from the Department of Home Affairs. It includes the records of Indians, Chinese, Arabs and other "alien" peoples, and has no research finding aid other than a couple of selective, unsystematic and incomplete computer print-outs generated by Home Affairs. Although the series is recorded as extending from 1910

---

<sup>3</sup> See for example TAD: Asiatic Affairs (IND) 260, E 4145 Ng Puchee and IND 276, E 4690 Ho Tauw @ Hum Mow; PRO CO 291 99, 21610, Admission of Asiatics to Transvaal, 28 May 1906.

<sup>4</sup> See for example SAD: South African Police (SAP): 59, conf8/439, Chinese passive resisters - leaders of, 27 April 1910.

<sup>5</sup> Asiatic Affairs (IND) is currently in the process of being inventorized.

to 1974, it contains material from both before and after this period. In order to find the scattered and incidental Chinese individuals from the series, it was necessary to work through 26 000 files which appeared likely to cover the relevant period. This endeavour only retrieved 50 Chinese individuals, representing a fraction of the number of free Chinese present in the region.

The Chinese material found in the IND series has not been used by researchers before. Despite its limitations due to incompleteness and the problems associated with sources emanating from mainly European officials with "orientalist" perspectives, it remains an invaluable source. Apart from the random details which one can deduce from the registration and other official forms and correspondence on the individuals themselves, there are also various informative letters and petitions written by or on behalf of the Chinese. Most of the latter information pertains to the twentieth century, for which documentation and press reports are also more plentiful. For example, the newspaper that Gandhi founded, Indian Opinion, proved to be a very useful source, particularly for the "satyagraha" period. Fortunately he thought it fitting to report on the Chinese and their activities

during the struggle against "Asiatic" legislation.<sup>6</sup> He refers to them occasionally in the letters and accounts found in his Collected Works.<sup>7</sup> These two Indian sources are particularly valuable since they present a view which is not clouded by a Western "orientalist" interpretation, even though they do not emanate from the Chinese themselves. They are also unique, because the Johannesburg-Pretoria Chinese community's locally produced weekly newspaper in the vernacular, which recorded their activities during the height of the resistance campaign, cannot be traced.<sup>8</sup> In addition, there are a number of random sources emanating from Chinese leaders and representatives in other archival series.

Given the dearth of research material, particularly for the earlier period, it follows that it is very difficult to assess with any certainty the exact number or position of the Chinese in the Transvaal during the late nineteenth century. No official census was taken of the ZAR inhabitants in the Republican period, besides that of the Johannesburg Sanitary Department on 15 July 1896.<sup>9</sup> This showed the number of persons living in a "three mile

---

<sup>6</sup> See for example his comments in Indian Opinion, 27 April, 18 May 1907.

<sup>7</sup> The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, iii-ix.

<sup>8</sup> Indian Opinion, 13 July, 17 August 1907.

<sup>9</sup> CSS: Statisticana: Johannesburg Gezondheids Comite, Sanitary Department, 15 July 1896.

radius from Market Square [central Johannesburg], ... classified according to the main races". The "Indians, Coolies and Chinese" numbered 4 807, which was 4,07 per cent of the total Johannesburg population.<sup>10</sup>

The absence of reliable population figures is corroborated by a report on the operations of the Asiatic Department of the Transvaal in 1903 compiled by the Assistant Colonial Secretary in charge, W.H. Moore:

The number of Asiatics resident in the Transvaal prior to the war it is impossible to determine with any accuracy, as no census of them was ever made by the Government of the South African Republic, and the record of the registration passes which all Asiatics were required to take out are most incomplete.<sup>11</sup>

The available pre-War registration certificates and applications for trading licences were also not very informative. Besides registering a name and bearing an official date stamp and record of payment, they do not include any personal details. The lack of government control meant that many Asians went undetected and operated relatively freely. Apparently,

[t]he law was so mildly administered to be virtually inoperative. When the £3 fee was tendered, a receipt was of course given, and 'registration' consisted in recording such payment, but no serious effort was made to enforce it.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-7.

<sup>11</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903; also Indian Opinion, 5 August 1905.

<sup>12</sup> L.W. Ritch, British Indians and the Transvaal. India Office Records, J

Furthermore, the registers kept by the different magistrates were nearly all lost during the South African War.<sup>13</sup> In addition, applications for registration, of which very few remain, were made on "flimsy typing paper with few particulars".<sup>14</sup> According to contemporary officials, the situation was obscured by the fact that

it was common knowledge that many such certificates were bought from their legal possessors ... [and there] was a good deal of traffic in the certificates ... [as well as] the usual custom of Chinese people to have two names.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, any attempt to draw up a statistical analysis of the Chinese who were present in the ZAR would be futile, and thus, as was the case in the DEIC period at the Cape, researchers have to revert to a "mosaic-building process".<sup>16</sup>

Like the Cape Colony, the overseas Chinese who arrived in the ZAR were mainly single men from the southern provinces of China. There are no references to Chinese women entering the ZAR, and very few applications for wives were lodged in the early twentieth century Transvaal. As was the case in the Cape Colony, most of the Chinese men returned to China to marry and conceive

---

<sup>13</sup> Indian Opinion, 13 April 1907.

<sup>14</sup> SAD: IND 276, E 4690, Ho Tauw @ Hum Mow.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.; See also Smuts's comments on fraudulent use of permits, PRO: CO 291/120 41955, Asiatic Law Amendment Act, 11 November 1907.

<sup>16</sup> Armstrong, "The Chinese at the Cape", p. 2.

children.<sup>17</sup> A few of the Chinese were known to cohabit and marry local white and coloured women.<sup>18</sup> Given the paucity of documentation regarding women and the rarity of marriage between Chinese men and white women, one such case is worth mentioning. In 1898, Sam Why, a storekeeper, married a Natal-born white girl of English parentage. Although Victoria Clerk was only 14 or 15 years old at the time, her parents consented to the marriage. Almost immediately after the wedding ceremony, she was taken to China to join her husband's family and remained there for nine years. In 1907 she returned to the Transvaal to join her husband who, since the South African War, had run a store in Fox Street, Johannesburg. He made application with the necessary documentation to prove her marital status, and she was permitted entry. On her arrival in Durban, Victoria Sam Why was described by immigration officials as "dress[ing] like a Chinese woman" and spoke "very little english [sic] and that with a Chinese accent".<sup>19</sup> According to the available documentation, they were divorced in March 1910 on the grounds that Victoria had "not restor[ed] conjugal rights to the plaintiff". Sam Why subsequently returned to China to marry a Chinese woman in

---

<sup>17</sup> CO 291/69, 10822, Asiatics resident in the Transvaal and Johannesburg, 26 March 1904; See for example SAD: IND 276, E 4690, Ho Tauw @ Hum Mow; IND 507 E 9617, Lau Him; IND 518 E 9818, Foo Doyson; IND 935, E 17717, Kim Chang.

<sup>18</sup> See for example SAD: IND 281, E 4953, Kwang Way; IND 306, E 5958 Sam Why; IND 517 E 9783, Li Ching.

<sup>19</sup> SAD: IND 306, E 5958, Sam Why.

Canton, Dong He. In 1915 he requested permission for her to enter South Africa.<sup>20</sup>

Like the Cape Chinese, the Chinese in the ZAR also set up service businesses in the more urbanized regions of the territory, such as the Witwatersrand and Pretoria, while a minority settled in the smaller townships.<sup>21</sup> They were primarily general dealers, grocers and laundrymen. Although there are no specific figures of their income, indications are that many of them, particularly the store owners, developed large and successful enterprises.<sup>22</sup> From remnants of the ZAR certificates, it appears that the Chinese began arriving after 1850. A number of them arrived as storekeeper assistants, earning £4 a month, and later they established their own shops.<sup>23</sup> Initially their numbers must have been fairly insignificant because in the first decades of ZAR government rule there were no references to them. This might have been because they preferred to maintain a low profile.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> PRO: CO 291/69, 10822, Asiatics resident in the Transvaal and Johannesburg, 26 March 1904; Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

<sup>22</sup> References are made to sizeable businesses by the lawyers acting on behalf of Chinese merchants. See for example TAD: IND 142 E 949, Leong Tsung Kingson; IND 305 E 5927, Ming Soo; IND 306, E 5958, Sam Why; Van Onselen, Studies in the social and economic history, 2, pp. 96-7, 106, n. 60, 108, n. 107.

<sup>23</sup> TAD: IND 879, E 16005, Pon Siers; IND 1073, E 20166, Ajang @ Agang.

There appears to have been a gradual increase in their numbers after the discovery of the Witwatersrand gold reef in 1886. This, however, had nothing to do with a direct involvement in gold mining, as had been the case in places such as Australia<sup>24</sup> and California.<sup>25</sup> According to ZAR legislation concerned with the digging for and dealing in precious metals,

no coloured person may be a licence holder, or in any way be connected with the working of diggings, but shall be allowed only as a workmen in the service of whites.<sup>26</sup>

Instead, the increase in the number of Chinese who arrived in the gold mining regions was probably related to the emergence of larger potential markets that developed as a result of the influx of European skilled miners and African unskilled workers. Research by Mauritian historian, Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, suggests that there was a sudden wave of Chinese emigration from Mauritius to South African ports from 1888 to 1898. The Chinese who left Mauritius were not necessarily Mauritian-born Chinese, as many Chinese travelled from south China to the island before proceeding to South Africa.<sup>27</sup> Pineo claims that her statistical table of arrivals and departures "compiled from dailies reflects faithfully the high and low periods of Chinese emigration", the

---

<sup>24</sup> Choi, Chinese migration, pp. 19, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Daniels, Asian Americans, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Laws of the Transvaal up to 1899, Law 15 of 1898, The Gold Law of the South African Republic, section 133.

<sup>27</sup> Analysis of IRC files in CAD and IND files in TAD.

highest point being reached in 1896, with 608 departures.<sup>28</sup> Most of the Chinese emigrants from Mauritius proceeded to Algoa Bay (Port Elizabeth) from where they could reach Johannesburg by train and cart. The increased number of arrivals raised the vigilance of immigration authorities and therefore the Chinese thought it prudent to change their point of entry by using East London and Cape Town, and after 1897, Delagoa Bay, which gave them easy access to Johannesburg by rail.<sup>29</sup> Although not directly referenced, Pineo alludes to an organization of ten Chinese who left South Africa in 1880 to inform the Chinese in Mauritius that there were "good chances for immigrants to make a quick fortune in South Africa".<sup>30</sup>

Unlike the Cape Colony, the ZAR of the nineteenth century did not subscribe to any liberal or humanitarian political principles. From the establishment of this independent republic in the 1850s,<sup>31</sup> it was apparent that it was perceived of as an entity for the Afrikaner people (or Boers as they were commonly known), and restrictions were gradually instituted to establish and protect their rights. As Lewsen points out, from the outset the

---

<sup>28</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, pp. 219, 257 Table XVII: "Movement of the free Chinese population between Mauritius and the principal ports of South Africa".

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. This probably emanates from the Mauritian daily newspapers used by Pineo.

<sup>31</sup> Davenport, South Africa, pp. 80-2.

ZAR had an absolute colour bar - politically, religiously and institutionally - summed up by a clause in the ZAR Grondwet [Constitution] of 1858:

The people desire to permit no equality between coloured people and the white inhabitants, either in Church or State.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, the Boers seemed to have had no qualms about instituting legislation which singled out a particular ethnic group. As an independent white community they had no obligation to any people under colonial rule, such as the British Cape Colony and Natal had to the British Indian. In their efforts to maintain the *status quo*, the ZAR therefore did not hesitate to take preventative and prohibitive action. Thus, once the ex-indentured Indians from the Natal sugar plantations began to enter the ZAR, the first of many restrictive laws was introduced. Due to its close proximity to Natal,<sup>33</sup> and the later mineral revolution, there was a relatively high influx of Indians. The ZAR Boers shared the fear and animosity felt by many whites towards the Indians in Natal, and branded them as "permanent inferiors".<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Lewsen, "The Cape liberal tradition", p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> Sacks, South Africa, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Tinker, A new system of slavery, p. 273.

The policy on the Indians in the ZAR was to exclude all Indian labourers and to admit Indian traders only under the most severe restrictions. The ZAR legislation was extended to include all Asian communities. This practice continued until after Union in 1910, and implicated the Chinese community throughout South Africa with far reaching ramifications.<sup>35</sup> Law 3 of 1885, and its subsequent amendments, applied to all persons belonging to one of the "native races of Asia". It denied them the right to citizenship and ownership of fixed property.<sup>36</sup> The legislation also required them to register with the *landdrost* [magistrate] and insisted that they carry a pass with a stamp to the value of £25.<sup>37</sup> Later the law was amended to allow them to own property in streets, wards and locations which the government, for purposes of sanitation, would assign to them, and the annual payment was reduced to £3.<sup>38</sup> Contravention of the law would result in a fine of £10 to £100 or imprisonment of 14 days to 6 months.<sup>39</sup> Despite their small numbers, and the fact that the scheme to import indentured Chinese mine labourers had not yet even been mentioned, the Chinese residents in the ZAR were included within

---

<sup>35</sup> Harris, "The Chinese 'South Africans'", p. 7; K. Kirkwood, The group areas act, n.d., p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Statute Law of the Transvaal, 1839-1910, Law 3 of 1885, Relating to coolies, Arabs and other Asiatics.

<sup>37</sup> Laws of the Transvaal up to 1899, Law 3 of 1885, Coolies, Arabs and other Asiatics, section c.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.; Volksraad Resolution, Article 1419, August 1886.

<sup>39</sup> Laws of the Transvaal up to 1899, Law 3 of 1885, Coolies, Arabs and other Asiatics, section c.

the parameters of this legislation. This development contrasted starkly with the Cape Colony's Chinese legislation,<sup>40</sup> as the Chinese in the ZAR were not directly the reason for the enactment of the legislation.

In the absence of accessible information, however, it can be assumed that the Chinese general dealers comprised the same relatively privileged stratum of ZAR society as the independent Indian merchant class.<sup>41</sup> It is also estimated that there were a little under 1 000 Chinese living in the ZAR towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Although the ZAR Indian population was estimated at between 10 000 and 15 000 by the outbreak of the South African War,<sup>43</sup> historian Maureen Swan argues that the "non-dependant adult male Indian population" was also around 1 000.<sup>44</sup> Although a large percentage of the free Indian and free Chinese communities held similar economic positions within the ZAR, and were therefore equally affected by the 1885 legislation, they did not, however, take united action.

---

<sup>40</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>41</sup> Indian Opinion, 31 August, 26 October 1907; Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, pp. 96-7; Swan, Gandhi, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> PRO: CO 291/75, 10687, Colonial Secretary Lyttelton in Parliament, 24 March 1904; Indian Opinion, 31 August 1907.

<sup>43</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903; Bhana and Brain, Setting down roots, p. 78; Pachai, The history of the Indian Opinion, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Swan, Gandhi, pp. 1-2.

The Chinese and Indian communities did object to the 1885 legislation separately. In both cases they made it clear that they did not approve of being categorized together. During the draft phase of the legislation in 1884, the Indian merchants had petitioned the Transvaal Volksraad [Parliament] not to introduce the law. They declared that they were "men of substantial standing ... engaged in flourishing businesses"<sup>45</sup> and made a point of forcing a class division between themselves and the "labouring class of Indians and the Chinese".<sup>46</sup>

Despite the paucity of archival material on Chinese activities, there is some evidence of resistance to the 1885 legislation. Once the law had been elaborated by further amendments and an additional resolution passed in 1893, specifically stipulating that the Chinese had to carry passes,<sup>47</sup> reaction was forthcoming. In 1894, a petition was allegedly sent to the British High Commissioner in Cape Town protesting against the proposed removal of Chinese to locations.<sup>48</sup> In 1897 a petition signed by 354 Chinese residents in Johannesburg and surrounding areas, again

---

<sup>45</sup> Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Swan, p. 106.

<sup>47</sup> De Locale Wetten en Volksbesluiten der Zuid-Afr. Republiek, 1890, 1891, 1892 en 1893, Artikel 1353 van 1893, Besluit aangaande wet 3, 1885, Aziaten.

<sup>48</sup> TAD: Staatsekretaris van die ZAR (SS) R7695/94, Gouvernement Kaapstad bericht dat hoogen Commissaris eene petitie ontvang van Chinese, Britsche onderdanen, dat zy voor 1 Augustus moesten naar de locatie, 1894.

appealed against removal from the region where they had established viable businesses, some of them since 1886 and 1887. They declared themselves loyal and law abiding supporters of the state and requested that they should have the same free trade rights that had been accorded to "uitlanders van allen nationaliteiten in China" [foreigners of all nationalities in China].<sup>49</sup>

Another memorandum was sent to the Volksraad in 1898 on behalf of 283 Chinese in Johannesburg, requesting that they "not be placed in one location with other Asians".<sup>50</sup> Their petition reiterated the objection to being removed from areas where they had established viable trading enterprises.<sup>51</sup> These petitions suggest an emergent independent political consciousness on the part of both the Chinese and Indians in what Swan calls the "pre-Gandhian period".<sup>52</sup> It also reveals an economic exclusivity and even elitism which was to characterize both their separate political activities for the next decade.

---

<sup>49</sup> SS 6216 R2473/97, Memorie van Chineezee te Johannesburg. Verzoekende dat vrije recht van handel en woning hun magt toegekond worden, 1897.

<sup>50</sup> Notulen van der Eersten Volksraad der ZAR, 1898, Art. 1599, p. 1056.

<sup>51</sup> Both issues referred to were indicative of future Chinese objections to the 1950 Group Areas Act. See Harris, "Accepting the group, but not the area".

<sup>52</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 38.

Another interesting comparison between the reaction of these two communities to discriminatory legislation, was the difference in the tactics they used when appealing to the British authorities. The Indians demanded certain rights as British subjects, based on the terms of the Proclamation of 1858 made by Queen Victoria at the commencement of British rule in India.<sup>53</sup> This declaration provided Indians with potential political leverage, since the British government had pledged itself to safeguarding the interests of the "natives of [their] Indian territories".<sup>54</sup> This was an important element in the strategy later adopted by Gandhi in the passive resistance movement. He coupled this with what is known as the "common Indo-Aryan origins of the English and Indians", which was apparently a cultural mark of the "naturally superior status of the community" which the Indians represented.<sup>55</sup> He would also allude to the Indians "doing their humble share" in the South African War making them "sons of the Empire".<sup>56</sup>

The majority of the Chinese, on the other hand, made no such claims and had no such "rights", with the exception of those who

---

<sup>53</sup> J.M. Brown, Gandhi: Prisoner of hope, London, 1989, p. 44; Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 5; Transvaal Leader, 12 September 1906.

<sup>54</sup> J.H. Stone II, "Debate: M.K. Gandhi: Some experiments with truth", Journal of Southern African Studies, 16, 4, December 1990, p. 727.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 726-727.

<sup>56</sup> Transvaal Leader, 15 December 1903.

were born in regions such as Hong Kong and Mauritius and could claim to be British subjects.<sup>57</sup> On the subject of British-Indian equality and superiority, the Chinese had no aspirations, since such assent would simply have reinforced British imperial chauvinism, and denied them their own sense of cultural superiority. Ironically, it was not until a treaty concluded in 1858 that the Chinese agreed to relinquish the term "barbarians" when referring to Westerners in official correspondence.<sup>58</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century when the ZAR became a crown colony, the Chinese immediately intimated to the British authorities that

the restrictive legislation affecting the Chinese [had] since annexation become illegal and inconsistent on account of relations subsisting between His Britannic Majesty and the Emperor of China and their subjects.<sup>59</sup>

As mentioned above,<sup>60</sup> the coming of indentured Chinese labour also led to the appointment of a Chinese Consulate-General in Johannesburg under the provisions of the protection granted to contracted emigrants.<sup>61</sup> The Chinese Emperor saw to it that the agreement with the British government extended the Consul's powers to include all the Chinese in South Africa, and so appeals

---

<sup>57</sup> PRO: CO 291/67 20153, Chinese grievances, 25 May 1903; Indian Opinion, 31 August 1907.

<sup>58</sup> Meyer, China, pp. 168, 173.

<sup>59</sup> PRO: CO 291/67, 20153, Chinese grievances, Petition from Chinese community of December 1902, 25 May 1903.

<sup>60</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>61</sup> Richardson, Chinese mine labour, p. 37.

and petitions were often channeled via the local consul to China and to the Chinese diplomatic representatives in Britain.<sup>62</sup>

Although the British were not as constitutionally committed to the Chinese in South Africa as they were to the Indians, the combined impact of the numerous Anglo-Chinese treaties did call for a certain degree of involvement. These treaties included the peace, friendship, commerce and navigation treaty of 1858,<sup>63</sup> the most-favoured-nation concessions, the establishment of the resident Chinese Minister in London in 1877<sup>64</sup> and, later, the British sanctioned Transvaal Chinese mine labour system.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the Chinese made demands not as British subjects, but as members of an Empire which had treaty terms of equality with Britain. On these grounds, they persistently objected to being classified with "Arabs, coolies and others Asiatics ... that [were] not a ruling race".<sup>66</sup> The British dimension would feature prominently in both the Chinese and Indian negotiations during the early twentieth century passive resistance struggle.

---

<sup>62</sup> SAD: Secretary for Planning (BEP) 575 G18/54 Raadpleging en koördinasie met ander instansies: Sjinese organisasies, 7 Desember 1963; PRO: CO 291/89, 6533, Chinese Consul General. Mr Lui Yu-Lin, 27 February 1905; Harris, "The Chinese 'South Africans'", p. 21.

<sup>63</sup> PRO: CO 291/67, 20153, Chinese grievances, Petition from Chinese community of December 1902, 25 May 1903.

<sup>64</sup> Meyer, China, pp. 170-175.

<sup>65</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>66</sup> PRO: CO 291/67, 20153, Chinese grievances, Petition from Chinese community of December 1902, 25 May 1903.

Thus, unlike their situation in the Cape Colony, the Chinese, or more specifically the Asians, in the ZAR, had already become the victims of discriminatory legislation during the nineteenth century. In even starker contrast to their Cape counterparts, the Chinese in the ZAR had also revealed that, like the Indians, they were not entirely apolitical.<sup>67</sup> Their more concerted resistance to the 1885 legislation included tactics such as letters to the press, petitions to both local administrations and overseas British representatives, delegations to the ZAR government and court cases.<sup>68</sup> During this early period there was no indication of any formally organized political structures. There is, however, evidence to suggest that the ZAR Chinese had formed a clandestine organization as early as 1880,<sup>69</sup> and a more open association or club by 1898, if not earlier, in 1893.<sup>70</sup> The Indians, on the other hand, refer to themselves as "committee members" in their petitions, but there is no record of a formal organization.<sup>71</sup> It was only after the South African War that any form of permanent, but separate, political organization was established by these two communities.

---

<sup>67</sup> See Swan, Gandhi, pp. xiv, 270 for criticism of literature which attributes the origin of South African Indian politics to Gandhi.

<sup>68</sup> Indian Opinion, 14 January 1904, 7 April 1906; Swan, Gandhi, pp. 85, 105.

<sup>69</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, p. 129, unfortunately no primary reference is given.

<sup>70</sup> TAD: Registrar of the Supreme Court of South Africa, Witwatersrand Local Division, (WLD) 5/129, 51/1909, Opposed application. Leung Quinn and Foo Kimson, refers with affidavits to a constitution being adopted in 1893; Indian Opinion, 31 August 1907.

Throughout the last two decades of the nineteenth century the ZAR authorities were adamant that they would not accede to the respective requests and petitions of the Chinese and Indians. Their responses merely reiterated the intent and reinforced the regulations of the 1885 legislation. Random notes on certain official file covers also reveal a hostile attitude to the Asians: in one case the Chinese were referred to as "parasieten" [parasites] who were unfair competition for European traders.<sup>72</sup> Despite this, the 1885 legislation does not appear to have been rigidly implemented,<sup>73</sup> and therefore many Chinese continued to trade on their existing premises. It is also noteworthy that although the government claimed to be responding to pressure from the European burghers [citizens],<sup>74</sup> this view was not shared by all of them. There is, for example, record of an 1897 petition submitted to the ZAR State President and Executive Council. Some 71 European "influential" merchants of Johannesburg petitioned the government not to remove Chinese traders from the Johannesburg region and to allow them to trade in their own names. They contended that they provided a valuable service by supplying the Chinese community with their groceries, food and

---

<sup>72</sup> TAD: SS 6216 R2471/97, C French en ander. Johannesburg. Memorie vragende alle Chinese kooplieden toe te laten in Johannesburg om handelslicenties op hun eigen naam te hebben, 1897.

<sup>73</sup> Transvaal Leader, 17 February, 4 August, 22 December 1903.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 4 August 1903.

other wares, but also, through their fair prices, assisted the "arme inwoners van Johannesburg .. om te lewen op hunne geringe middelen van onderhoud" [poor residents of Johannesburg to survive on their limited means of income]. They also pointed out that in China, according to treaty, all ports were open for European traders to hold licences and trade in their own names.<sup>75</sup>

With the impending outbreak of hostilities towards the end of the nineteenth century, most of the Chinese (and Indian) merchants in the ZAR decided to leave the region.<sup>76</sup> Although exact figures are wanting, the available documentation indicates that even though virtually all the Chinese left the ZAR, it was more often than not only a temporary absence.<sup>77</sup> A high percentage went to the Cape Colony - particularly Port Elizabeth and East London - while a smaller number went to the "Portuguese Territory" [Mozambique]. Of these, some found their way back to China, where they remained until after the cessation of hostilities.<sup>78</sup> That

---

<sup>75</sup> TAD: SS 6216 R2471/97, C French en ander. Johannesburg. Memorie vragende alle Chinese kooplieden toe te laten in Johannesburg om handelslicenties op hun eigen naam te hebben, 1897; Lieutenant Governor of the Transvaal Colony (LTG), 111 101/23, Petition from Chinamen, 1902-1903.

<sup>76</sup> PRO: CO 291/67, 20153, Chinese grievances, Petition from Chinese community of December 1902, 25 May 1903; Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

<sup>77</sup> Analysis of E files in IND series. See for example SAD: IND 90, B2022, Martin Easton; IND 276, E 4689, Low Sam @ Lun Sum; IND 281 E 4953, Kwan Way; IND 289 E 5294 Ho Low.

<sup>78</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903; SAD: IND E files.

the Jameson Raid and subsequent tension prior to the outbreak of War in 1899 were the reason for their departure, and the lack of new arrivals is substantiated by Pineo's claim that in 1898 Chinese emigration from Mauritius to South Africa came to a standstill - with only two departures being recorded.<sup>79</sup>

The restrictiveness of the ZAR 1885 legislation does not seem to have been a factor in the exodus of the Chinese. Although the 1885 legislation was still in place, by 1904, 938 Chinese had applied for permission to return<sup>80</sup> - thereby equalling the estimated pre-War figures. It was obviously not an effective deterrent. This trend was very much like the reaction of the Cape Chinese after the introduction of the 1904 exclusion legislation.<sup>81</sup> It would therefore appear that the viable businesses which the Chinese had established in both regions in South Africa outweighed the inconveniences created by the respective laws, and compared more favourably with accessible options elsewhere.

---

<sup>79</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, p. 219.

<sup>80</sup> Transvaal Leader, 13 January 1904; According to PRO: CO 291/69, 10822, Asiatics resident in the Transvaal and Johannesburg, 26 March 1904 there were 981 Chinese resident in the Transvaal in 1904.

<sup>81</sup> See chapter 5.

## II

After the conclusion of the South African War in 1902 and the establishment of the Transvaal as a crown colony, British officials took over the administration of the territory. From the outset, the High Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Alfred Milner, made it clear that he was "reluctant to embark on fresh legislation" regarding the position of the British Indians "in view of many difficulties".<sup>82</sup> In 1905, it was argued that the British government had not altered the legislation

primarily in consequence of the known antagonism to the removal of such restrictions by every old inhabitant of the Colony.<sup>83</sup>

But, reality proved otherwise, as existing laws were reinforced and more restrictive legislation was introduced.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Swan argues that if left to its own devices, the new Transvaal administration would probably have been more hostile to the Asians than republican rule had been.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, with the former government's categorization of the Indians as Asians, and the degree of continuity maintained in much of the legislation, the post-War developments also affected the Chinese.

---

<sup>82</sup> Huttenback, Gandhi in South Africa, pp. 123-48; Brown, Gandhi, p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> Huttenback, Gandhi, p. 156.

<sup>84</sup> See Harris, "Chinese merchants", pp. 162-8.

<sup>85</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 103; See also Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

As a result of the unusual influx of returning refugees, new arrivals, and in particular Indians,<sup>86</sup> after the South African War, one of the first restrictions promulgated by the Transvaal colonial government was the "Indemnity and Peace Preservation Ordinance" of 1902.<sup>87</sup> This provided the machinery to control immigration to the Transvaal and was subsequently amended to require the granting of permits at the discretion of the Governor.<sup>88</sup> Only those who could prove pre-War residence in the region qualified. For political reasons, the ordinance did not specify "Asiatics", but as contemporary Indian commentary and historian Edna Bradlow argue, they were its prime target.<sup>89</sup>

In line with this, the new colonial administration claimed that the former ZAR government had not "enforced in their full strictness" the special laws introduced to deal with "Asiatics" and believed that their failure to do so had "caused great dissatisfaction amongst the white community".<sup>90</sup> Just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the ZAR Executive Council had made a resolution that compelled compliance with the provisions of the

---

<sup>86</sup> Transvaal Leader, 13 January 1904.

<sup>87</sup> Ordinances of the Transvaal 1902, Ordinance 38 of 1902, Indemnity and Peace Preservation.

<sup>88</sup> Indian Opinion, 13 April 1907; Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

<sup>89</sup> Bradlow, "Immigration into the Union", p. 14; Indian Opinion, 15 September 1906.

<sup>90</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903; Huang, The legal status of the Chinese, p. 49.

laws regarding "Asiatics". And after the South African War, the new government declared

[i]n its treatment of Asiatics the present government has carried on the policy of the late Government where that Government left it.<sup>91</sup>

It was hoped that the "Peace Preservation Ordinance" would assist in this regard, by acting as a strong deterrent, if not altogether prevent, future illegal (meaning Asian) immigration.<sup>92</sup>

To curb the rights of Asians further, the colonial administration virtually re-enacted Law 3 of 1885 in government notice 356 of 1903 - known as the "Bazaar Notice".<sup>93</sup> It focused mainly on the question of separate locations for Asians, and immediate steps were taken to ensure that bazaars be set aside in every town in which "Asiatics" resided or traded.<sup>94</sup> In order to stop the illicit entry of Asians into the Transvaal, an additional voluntary re-registration of all Asians was introduced which required more detailed certificates.<sup>95</sup> A separate Department of Asiatic Affairs was created as a sub-department of the Colonial Secretary's Office to administer Asian affairs.<sup>96</sup> The latter two developments institutionalized the republican practice of

---

<sup>91</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid; Swan, Gandhi, p. 101.

<sup>93</sup> Transvaal Leader, 12 December 1903.

<sup>94</sup> Transvaal Leader, 10 April 1903; Indian Opinion, 4 June 1903.

<sup>95</sup> Huttenback,, Gandhi, p. 158.

<sup>96</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903; Swan, Gandhi, p. 102.

treating Indians (and other Asians) separately from other British subjects.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the Receiver of Revenue was ordered not to issue new annual trading licences to Asians unless proof of pre-War trading was submitted.<sup>98</sup> Despite the post-War change of government from Boer to British, therefore, anti-Asian legislation essentially remained in tact or was intensified.

Popular European opinion did not change either. It was reported in 1903 that the people of the Transvaal, in line with the view throughout South Africa, were in favour of restrictive legislation for "Asiatics".<sup>99</sup> Negative attitudes towards Asians, so apparent in official records,<sup>100</sup> were also reflected in the media. Asians were stereotyped as "mean and dirty," with low standards of living, which meant that they were unfairly competitive because they could accept much lower wages than whites.<sup>101</sup> In racist fashion it was stated that

the invincible hostility and repugnance felt towards the indigenous black races had produced so marked a line of cleavage on the basis of colour that the Asiatic races cannot ever be treated on a basis of equality with the white races.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 103.

<sup>98</sup> Indian Opinion, 4 June 1903, 13 April 1907; Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, pp. 220-221, 249 fn. 32; Swan, p. 117.

<sup>99</sup> PRO: CO 291/43, 47408, Legislation re British Indians in Transvaal, 1902; Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903; Huttenback, Gandhi, p. 156.

<sup>100</sup> See letters and informal margin comments included in the E files of SAD: IND.

<sup>101</sup> Transvaal Leader, 17 February; 4 August 1903.

<sup>102</sup> Transvaal Leader, 4 August 1903.

The influx of ex-indentured Indians and importation of Chinese indentured labour for the mines exacerbated these anti-Asian attitudes.<sup>103</sup> European agitation against the free Chinese also increased as Chinese traders obtained licences to trade along the mining area in the neighbourhood of those mines where Chinese labour was employed.<sup>104</sup> Transvaal colonists believed that they were entitled to monopolize this trade. They petitioned the authorities, both locally and abroad, against the Chinese merchants who were causing them a great injury and were a serious menace, which represented "an evil developing and establishing itself". The Indian Opinion sarcastically commented,

if the Chinese shopkeepers [were] allowed to supply the necessities to their countrymen, it would be the height of injustice and deprivation of the rights of the European shopkeepers. They confess their utter inability to compete with the Chinese.<sup>105</sup>

After the South African War there were, however, traces of support for the Chinese from members of the white community. In December 1902, a petition signed by 205 European residents was addressed to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal. It was in support of a petition submitted by 250 Chinese regarding the

---

<sup>103</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>104</sup> PRO: CO 291/82 20020, Asiatic traders, 22 May 1905; TAD: Colonial Treasurer (CT), 66, 1712, Trading licences. Licences issued to Chinese to trade on mining ground, 1905.

<sup>105</sup> Indian Opinion, 23 July 1904.

legislative disabilities and burdens they suffered.<sup>106</sup> The Europeans argued that the laws affecting the Chinese were contrary to the commercial and industrial welfare of the country. They believed that as a body of traders and general dealers, the Chinese were both desirable and necessary, as they acted as the intermediaries between the larger houses of importers and the residents of the poorer localities. As tenants, the Chinese were hard-working, law-abiding and honest, and as landlords, the Europeans would suffer loss if there were any diminution in the number of Chinese.<sup>107</sup> These attitudes were, however, more the exception than the rule.

Probably in reaction to the unexpected enforcement of and increase in discriminatory legislation after the British took over the Transvaal, members of both the Chinese and Indian communities formed community organizations. In 1903, the Chinese Association (CA) came into existence, either as a resuscitated pre-War institution or as a new creation.<sup>108</sup> At the same year, Gandhi founded the Transvaal British Indian Association (BIA).<sup>109</sup> Each organization had an informal structure, but lacked a written

---

<sup>106</sup> PRO: CO 291/67, 20153, Chinese grievances, Petition from Chinese community of December 1902, 25 May 1903.

<sup>107</sup> TAD: LTG 111 101/23, Petition from Chinamen, 1902-1903.

<sup>108</sup> TAD: WLD 5/129 51/1909, Opposed application. Leung Quinn and Foo Kimson; Indian Opinion, 13 February 1909.

<sup>109</sup> Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 33.

constitution and were voluntary unions for joint consultation and protection of their interests.<sup>110</sup> Either as members of these newly founded associations or as individuals, both communities responded to the new and reinforced legislation. However, the initially low-key meetings, petitions, letters and deputations were to no avail,<sup>111</sup> both in terms of government response and community political mobilization.<sup>112</sup> The reason for this was probably the relatively moderate stance of the communities. For example, on behalf of the BIA, Gandhi agreed to the re-registration of Asians in 1903 even though they were under no legal obligation to do so.<sup>113</sup> The general indifference of the community was symptomatic of the Indian response to Gandhi's first call to passive resistance made in January 1904.<sup>114</sup>

It was only in 1906, with the promulgation of the infamous "Black Act", that the first signs of more concerted action by the Chinese and Indians appeared. This legislation inaugurated simultaneous resistance by these two relatively exclusive communities for the first time, as well as Gandhi's involvement

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid; Indian Opinion, 31 August 1907; Swan, Gandhi, pp. 103-4.

<sup>111</sup> PRO: CO 291/57, 20051, Position of Asiatics, 11 May 1903; CO 291/57, 20960, Position of British Indians, 15 May 1903; CO 291/67, 20153, Chinese grievances, 25 May 1903; Transvaal Leader, 28, 30 April, 7, 8, 28 May, 12 December 1903.

<sup>112</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 105.

<sup>113</sup> Indian Opinion, 11 August 1906; M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha in South Africa, Ahmedabad, 1928, as quoted by Huttenback, Gandhi, pp. 158-9.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 105, 117; Collected Works, iv, p. 105.

in Chinese affairs. The legislation in question was introduced by the Transvaal legislature as the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance number 29 of 1906.<sup>115</sup> It demanded the compulsory registration of all Asians over the age of eight with the "Registrar of Asiatics". A new certificate of registration had to be issued and required additional information, including name, residence, age, caste, marks of identification as well as finger and thumb impressions. The issue of trading licences was made subject to the production of such a certificate, and the penalty for failing to comply ranged from a fine to imprisonment and deportation.<sup>116</sup> The implications of this Ordinance were far more restrictive than any previous legislation,<sup>117</sup> and led to a marked increase in protest by both the Chinese and Indian communities, who now numbered 1 200 and 15 000 respectively.<sup>118</sup>

Even before the Draft Ordinance was published in the Government Gazette, the leading article in Indian Opinion harshly criticized the proposed legislation.<sup>119</sup> A telegram was also sent to the Legislative Council pleading for the rejection and suspension of

---

<sup>115</sup> Transvaal Government Gazette, 52, July-December, Ordinance 29 of 1906, Asiatic Law Amendment.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.; Brown, Gandhi, p. 45; Pineo, Chinese diaspora, p. 228; Pachai, "The history of the Indian Opinion", p. 37.

<sup>117</sup> Pachai, The South African Indian Question, p. 33.

<sup>118</sup> Indian Opinion, 9 November 1907.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 11 August 1906.

the draft Ordinance.<sup>120</sup> The main concern was the re-registration of the Asians yet again, which it claimed was tantamount to treating Indians as "criminals".<sup>121</sup> Gandhi also regarded the legislation as the thin end of the wedge, in that it was the first piece of discriminatory legislation from which, if allowed to go unchallenged, more would flow.<sup>122</sup> The principle of differentiating between British Indians and other Asians was also emphasized.<sup>123</sup> On this point, Gandhi<sup>124</sup> argued that the Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal, Patrick Duncan, had "not discriminated between Asiatics and Asiatics", and therefore he wished to know whether or not Duncan was referring to British Indians or Chinese, or other Asians.<sup>125</sup> More letters of protest followed, and Gandhi approached both local and overseas government representatives on the issue.<sup>126</sup> Within three weeks of the publication of the Draft Ordinance, the renowned mass meeting attended by about 3000 Indians - 25 percent of the community - was held in the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg.<sup>127</sup> Here it was declared that the Ordinance rendered the position of British Indians much worse than under the Boer regime. It was agreed to

---

<sup>120</sup> Transvaal Leader, 11 September 1906.

<sup>121</sup> Indian Opinion, 11 August 1908.

<sup>122</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 119.

<sup>123</sup> Indian Opinion, 11 August 1906.

<sup>124</sup> Collected Works, v, pp. 389-92.

<sup>125</sup> Indian Opinion, 11 August 1906.

<sup>126</sup> Transvaal Leader, 11 September 1906.

<sup>127</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 12 September 1906; Indian Opinion, 22 September 1905.

go to jail rather than submit to the indignity of the legislation, and so the first declaration of passive resistance was passed, for which Gandhi took full responsibility.<sup>128</sup> It was also decided on that occasion to send a deputation, comprising Gandhi and Hajee Ojeer Ally, to England to request the British government to disallow the legislation.<sup>129</sup>

At this point, no mention had been made of the Chinese by the British Indians or Gandhi. Nevertheless, the Chinese had also not taken the legislation lightly. Immediately after the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance was enacted by the Legislative Council, various meetings were held, resulting in a petition being sent to the Chinese Consul-General in the Transvaal.<sup>130</sup> The CA and other Chinese residents of Johannesburg, including Leung Quinn of the Cantonese Club<sup>131</sup>, compiled a list of objections to the "new and grave disabilities" which the legislation imposed on them. They stipulated various objections to particular sections of the ordinance, and protested

---

<sup>128</sup> Transvaal Leader, 12 September 1906; Rand Daily Mail, 12 September 1906; Collected Works, v, p. 443; Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 33; Swan, Gandhi, p. 119.

<sup>129</sup> Transvaal Leader, 12 September 1906; Indian Opinion, 6 October 1906; Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 33; Swan, Gandhi, p. 121.

<sup>130</sup> TAD: Secretary of the Governor of the Transvaal (GOV), 202, Gen 1005/06, Petition from Chinese residents in Transvaal protesting against provisions of Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, 1906; PRO: CO 291/103, 39670, Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, 1906.

<sup>131</sup> Leung Quinn is an intriguing figure who remained prominent throughout the passive resistance campaign. In the early 1900s allegations of permit fraud were made against him, but this appear to have been part of a smear campaign. Quinn awaits further biographical research.

that the system of Registration ... inflict[ed] a degrading stigma on the subjects of a civilised nation, practically reducing them to the status of [Africans].<sup>132</sup>

Apart from this attitude of blatant racial superiority, the Chinese lodged their strongest opposition to the requirement that they should affix finger marks to documents for identification, arguing, like the Indians, that this placed them in the same category as criminals. This particular issue would later become of crucial importance in the Chinese campaign and marked a distinct difference with the Indians.<sup>133</sup> Lastly, they pointed out that the ordinance

differentiat[ed] between the subjects of the Chinese Empire and other Nationalities much to the detriment and humiliation of the former.<sup>134</sup>

The Chinese Consul-General forwarded the petition to the Governor's office in Johannesburg, from where it was sent to the Colonial Office in London.<sup>135</sup>

The Chinese also resolved to send a delegation to the British government to address their grievances in South Africa.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> See below.

<sup>134</sup> TAD: Secretary of the Governor of the Transvaal (GOV), 202, Gen 1005/06, Petition from Chinese residents in Transvaal protesting against provisions of Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, 1906.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> The Times, 1 December 1906; Indian Opinion, 6 October 1906.

Contrary to the implications of certain secondary sources,<sup>137</sup> however, the Chinese delegation to London in October 1906 had not been co-ordinated with the Indian deputation, nor was it led or initiated by Gandhi.<sup>138</sup> This is borne out by press reports in Indian Opinion and the London Times, as well as Gandhi's own accounts of the Indian deputation. The Chinese were equally dissatisfied with the Asiatic Ordinance and the general treatment they had received in the Transvaal. As a result, the CA deputed a Cantonese member of the Association, L.M. James, to go to England and present their grievances to the British government. Yuk Lin Lew, the Chinese Consul-General in Johannesburg accompanied him.<sup>139</sup>

The fact that the Chinese and Indian deputations left for England on the same steamer, the "Armadale Castle", is considered a "curious coincidence,"<sup>140</sup> and rightly so, since even Gandhi's comments indicate an unawareness of the Chinese protest. In his first account of the Indian delegation's voyage, Gandhi singled

---

<sup>137</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, pp. 228-9 states Gandhi led the delegation and refers jointly to the "Asiatic delegation"; Pan, Sons of the Yellow Emperor, p. 66 indirectly implies a similarly dominant role; J.D. Hunt, "Gandhi and the black people of South Africa", Gandhi Marg, 11, 1, April-June 1989, p. 12 infers that Gandhi and the Indians play a leading role from the outset.

<sup>138</sup> Indian Opinion, 12 October 1907, Leong Quinn stresses that the Chinese Association agreed with the BIA, "but it had acted quite independently.

<sup>139</sup> Collected Works, vi, p. 14; Indian Opinion, 6 October 1906.

<sup>140</sup> Indian Opinion, 6 October 1906.

out "three well known men", but did not include either the Chinese Consul-General or the representative of the CA.<sup>141</sup> In his next report he recorded that the Indian delegation had very little contact with other passengers, but mentioned the presence of the Chinese. His reference to Yuk Lin Lew was limited to his dress, manner and intellect, as well as the "good English education" of his nine year old daughter.<sup>142</sup>

The first, and only, indication of any meaningful co-operation between the Chinese and Gandhi during their simultaneous but separate overseas deputations, was Gandhi's involvement in helping to draft a letter. While in London, he corresponded with both members of the Chinese deputation regarding this matter, and helped compile the letter sent by the Chinese Ambassador in London to the British Foreign Office.<sup>143</sup> It appears from Gandhi's letters that he did not fully endorse the petition which the Transvaal Chinese community sent to the Chinese Ambassador. Gandhi commented that the petition was not in accordance with the draft he had prepared, which was to accompany the petition to the Ambassador. He declared that "paragraph 6 of the petition [was] open to grave objection".<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately, neither details of

---

<sup>141</sup> Collected Works, v, p. 467.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., pp. 468-9.

<sup>143</sup> Collected Works, vi, pp. 14, 27, 56, 59-60.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

Gandhi's first draft nor of the Chinese petition are available,<sup>145</sup> so the points of disagreement remain obscure. The role that Gandhi played in this brief episode fits the assessment given by Swan in her conclusion: "His legal training, fluency in English ... rendered him particularly suitable for the task".<sup>146</sup>

Aside from this brief encounter between Gandhi and the Chinese, the two deputations continued to operate separately, and it is therefore not entirely appropriate to refer to an "alliance [being] struck" on this occasion, as Swan and others do.<sup>147</sup> Both delegations made representation to the British government and wrote letters to the press to promote their respective causes. The appeals were generally similar - unjust treatment, humiliations and indignities suffered in the Transvaal, the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, and the demand that the British government was obligated to rectify the intolerable situation.<sup>148</sup> The Chinese and Indian claims of "most-favoured-nation" status and "British subject" respectively, were also underscored in

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 27, and on p. 247 in correspondence just prior to his departure for South Africa, Gandhi wrote to a certain Mr C. H. Wang in London, about his synopsis of the Chinese grievances, and points out that " it [was] open to serious objections in one or two cases..."

<sup>146</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 270.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>148</sup> London Times, 1,3,4 December 1906; Indian Opinion, 17 November, 1 December 1906.

their representations.<sup>149</sup> Only on one occasion during the proceedings of an Indian deputation to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, was reference made to the Chinese. After stating that they hoped the grievances of the Chinese deputation had received "utmost sympathy at the hands of the government" it was added that

in so far as this [the Indian] deputation [was] concerned, the Chinese and other alien nations [did] not count [they asked] not for the Chinese, but for [their] own fellow subjects ....<sup>150</sup>

There was no question of an "alliance",<sup>151</sup> even though their efforts had the combined effect of temporarily stalling the implementation of the Ordinance. In November 1906, Lord Elgin informed the Transvaal governor, Lord Selborne, that he rejected the legislation, and it was therefore disallowed.<sup>152</sup>

### III

This legislative victory was short-lived, however, and no sooner had responsible government been granted to the Transvaal with the Boer *Het Volk* party coming to power in early 1907, than the "Black Act" was re-introduced virtually unchanged.<sup>153</sup> The "Asiatic

---

<sup>149</sup> London Times, 1 December 1906; Indian Opinion, 17 November, 15 December, 1906; Collected Works, vi, p. 114.

<sup>150</sup> Collected Works, vi, pp. 115-6.

<sup>151</sup> Hunt, "Gandhi and the black people", p. 11.

<sup>152</sup> Indian Opinion, 8, 15 December 1906; Huttenback, Gandhi, pp. 170-4.

<sup>153</sup> Brown, Gandhi, p. 45.

Law Amendment Act" or Act 2 of 1907 was passed on 22 March to amend Law 3 of 1885, and it took effect on 1 July 1907.<sup>154</sup> This inaugurated a new phase in the resistance movement, one in which the relationship between Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance was forged. Even before the Act had passed its final reading, both the Chinese and Indian communities made their objections known. At the beginning of March 1907 a deputation of Chinese merchants, shopkeepers and laundry workers approached the *Het Volk* government on the question of the "registration of men of their class as Asiatics".<sup>155</sup> Not unlike the earlier disapproval by the Chinese, the Indian lobby objected to finger impressions on the grounds that for all practical purposes a thumb impression, such as is now placed upon the identification papers held by each Indian, would suffice.<sup>156</sup> Other deputations and letters to the press followed, and a mass meeting of Indians was called on 29 March at the Gaiety Theatre in Johannesburg.<sup>157</sup>

At that meeting it was resolved to offer the government a compromise: to submit to voluntary rather than compulsory re-registration as prescribed in the "Asiatic Law Amendment Act",

---

<sup>154</sup> Statutes of the Transvaal, Act 2 of 1907, Asiatic Law Amendment Act; Miao, Legal Status of the Chinese in South Africa, pp. 8-9.

<sup>155</sup> Indian Opinion, 3 March 1907.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 16 March 1907.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 23, 30 March 1907; Rand Daily Mail, 30 March 1907.

thus almost fulfilling the requirements of the Bill, but denying the act its offensive character.<sup>158</sup> It was even contended by the Transvaal press that this voluntary re-registration went "further than the Ordinance" in "satisfying the fears of the European population".<sup>159</sup> If, however, the offer was not accepted, and legislation was implemented, the response would be passive resistance.<sup>160</sup> Although Gandhi did not propose the various resolutions at the meeting, the editors of Collected Works argue that it is likely that he drafted them,<sup>161</sup> since the call for passive resistance was similar to his appeal in September 1906.

Within a fortnight of these decisions, the Chinese community in the Transvaal held its own mass meeting on 14 April 1907, and decided unanimously to support the resolutions taken by the British Indian meeting. The Chairman of the Transvaal CA despatched a telegram to the Transvaal government declaring that the Chinese community endorsed the proposal of the Indians. He added that the Act was "unnecessary and wounded the feelings of the community".<sup>162</sup> The Rand Daily Mail interpreted the Chinese decision as uniting practically the whole of the free Asian

---

<sup>158</sup> Transvaal Leader, 30 March 1907; Indian Opinion, 6 April 1907; Collected Works, vi, p. 387.

<sup>159</sup> Rand Daily Mail as quoted in Indian Opinion, 20 April 1907.

<sup>160</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 142.

<sup>161</sup> Collected Works, vi, p. 381.

<sup>162</sup> Indian Opinion, 20 April 1907; Collected Works, vi, pp. 420, 428.

community as "unanimously against the Act, as, perhaps the white community [were] in favour of it". The united front was described as a "Gordian knot" against the government.<sup>163</sup>

How real or strong this "alliance" really was is difficult to gauge, but what is evident from the record, is Gandhi's increased involvement with the CA as the protagonist of the resistance movement, an engagement which contradicts the claim that Gandhi confined his efforts exclusively to certain sections of the Indian community.<sup>164</sup> In April 1907 the Chinese leaders met Gandhi at his office to discuss their support of "satyagraha", and in May, Gandhi was invited to the first of many large representative meetings held at the hall of the CA to set forth the position and consider the next step to be taken with regard to the new "Anti-Asiatic Law".<sup>165</sup> The Chinese audience agreed to Gandhi's "satyagraha" proposals and took an oath in accordance with their religion (Buddhist or Confucian) to submit themselves to the "extreme penalty of the law, namely liability to imprisonment, and also to boycott the permit office". This decision was ratified by about 900 Chinese who signed a document to this

---

<sup>163</sup> Rand Daily Mail as quoted by the Indian Opinion, 20 April 1907.

<sup>164</sup> Hunt, "Gandhi and the black people", p. 8.

<sup>165</sup> Indian Opinion, 1 June 1907; Collected Works, vi, p. 427; Evidence to support Pineo's claim that Gandhi consulted the Chinese at the Cantonese Club to give a broader basis to the action he contemplated could not be traced.

effect.<sup>166</sup> In addition, Gandhi received an endorsement of his passive resistance strategy from the Chinese Consul-General in the Transvaal.<sup>167</sup>

The decision by the Chinese to support passive resistance was firm and at times showed even more resolve than that of the Indians.<sup>168</sup> Their determination, then and later, was often praised in the columns of Indian Opinion,<sup>169</sup> written mainly by Gandhi. In fact, on numerous occasions he openly admired various attributes of the Chinese, even though this was usually designed to commend their exemplary role to British Indians. In an article published in 1905, he compared the two communities living in the Transvaal, remarking particularly on their respective standards of living. He felt that the Chinese were not economically better off than the Indians because many of them were artisans, but suggested that the Indian way of life was not qualitatively as good.<sup>170</sup> He admitted that the charge of a lack of cleanliness made against the Indians was not completely unfounded, and added that the "rules of cleanliness could also be better observed by them". At the same time, he pointed out that the Chinese lived in "great

---

<sup>166</sup> TAD: WLD 5/129 51/1909, Opposed application. Leung Quinn and Foo Kimson; Indian Opinion, 1 June, 31 August 1907; Collected Works, vii, pp. 12, 46.

<sup>167</sup> Collected Works, vi, p. 427.

<sup>168</sup> Indian Opinion, 18 May, 30 November 1907.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 27 April, 18 May 1907.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 16 September 1905.

cleanliness and [did] not stint themselves in the matter of living space".<sup>171</sup>

In the same article, Gandhi commented favourably on the CA. He referred specifically to its hall, which he described as a strong structure kept clean and tidy, and to the manner in which they organized their finances. He described the Cantonese Club as a "pucca one-storeyed building" which looked like a good European club, and remarked that Indians would do well to imitate this achievement.<sup>172</sup> While in London he was impressed by the Committee of the Chinese League, which had been established by the overseas Chinese to safeguard and promote their interests, and urged Indians to follow its example.<sup>173</sup> On an international level, he spoke highly of the Chinese capacity successfully to boycott powers such as the United States and Japan when they introduced unfavourable legislation, commending this as an aspect of "satyagraha".<sup>174</sup> At home, he praised the Chinese for their political unity and solidarity, an attribute he encouraged among his Transvaal Indian followers.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.; Collected Works, v, p. 65.

<sup>173</sup> Collected Works, vi, p. 86.

<sup>174</sup> Indian Opinion, 1 July, 19 August, 30 September 1905, 15 June, 31 August, 30 November, 15 December 1907; Collected Works viii, p. 212; Times, 4 December 1906.

<sup>175</sup> Swan, Gandhi, p. 111.

The above allusion by Gandhi to the successful boycotting of American merchandise refers to the 1905 Chinese reaction to disagreeable aspects of United States immigration regulations.<sup>176</sup> This was the first modern boycott against American discriminatory treatment of the Chinese. According to sinologist John Fairbank, it involved the old tradition of cessation of business by merchant guilds which spread to all treaty ports in China. It also involved students in mass meetings and media agitation. The result was that American trade was damaged for several months.<sup>177</sup> Associating the Chinese with "satyagraha" was closer to reality than Gandhi realized.

While passive resistance is universally identified with Gandhi and the Indians in early twentieth century South Africa, it is relatively unknown that the Chinese in Australia had adopted a similar strategy some fifty years earlier. The government of Victoria in Australia introduced a special Chinese tax to discourage residence and raise revenue. When this tax was increased from £1 to £6 in 1857, the Chinese responded by organizing a short campaign of non-co-operation. In addition to demonstrations and petitions to parliament, Queen Victoria and

---

<sup>176</sup> Indian Opinion, 1 July 1905.

<sup>177</sup> Fairbank, China, p. 245; See also PRO: CO 291/121, 23767, Chinese coolies repatriation, 5 July 1907.

the Chinese Emperor, 3 000 Chinese marched to the Castlemaine jail and demanded to be arrested. During 1857 some 2 000 Chinese were imprisoned and over 4 000 were fined for tax evasion.<sup>178</sup>

Australian historian Kathryn Cronin comments that this was the most determined, sustained diggers' resistance campaign, but a campaign which ... has received scant attention in Australian history books.<sup>179</sup>

Intriguingly, this critique is applicable to South African history texts and the Chinese passive resistance campaign in the Transvaal.

Gandhi's relatively favourable opinions on the Chinese probably go some way towards explaining why he became involved in the Chinese passive resistance movement. During December 1907, he appeared to be grappling with this issue, probably aware of its importance in strengthening opposition to government. In a speech at a meeting of the CA, he admitted that he had always tried "to draw a line between British-subjects and non British subjects", but that this had been rejected by the British government which persisted in classifying Indians and other Asians together.<sup>180</sup> He said that in spite of this, British Indians still clung to their

---

<sup>178</sup> Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 86; Markus, Fear and hatred, p. 19.

<sup>179</sup> K. Cronin, Colonial casualties: Chinese in early Victoria, Melbourne, 1982, as quoted by Markus, "Chinese in Australian history", p. 86.

<sup>180</sup> Collected Works, vii, pp. 396-7.



As was to be expected, the new Transvaal government under Louis Botha, did not accept the voluntary compromise proposed by the Indians and supported by the Chinese, nor did the British government intervene on their behalf. In addition, the Immigration Restriction Bill<sup>184</sup> was tabled (and received Royal sanction) in an attempt further to exclude foreigners, particularly Asians, from the Transvaal. By this legislation, non-registered Asians in effect became prohibited immigrants.<sup>185</sup> The Indian and Chinese resolution to resist the Act was thus set in motion. Meetings to reaffirm commitments followed, and despite the government's extension of the deadline for registration until the end of November 1907, only 8 per cent of the Asian population complied.<sup>186</sup>

While the two communities continued to defy the Transvaal legislation separately, they encouraged concerted action. Gandhi and other BIA representatives often addressed Chinese meetings, and Chinese representatives were also found attending and addressing Indian meetings.<sup>187</sup> Indians and Chinese were jointly involved in picketing the registration points to persuade their Asian compatriots not to submit to the legislation. Moreover, the

---

<sup>184</sup> Statutes of the Transvaal, Act 15 of 1907, Immigrants Restriction.

<sup>185</sup> Indian Opinion, 13 July 1907; Swan, Gandhi, pp. 142-3.

<sup>186</sup> Indian Opinion, 13 July, 9 November 1907.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 24 August, 5, 12 October, 7 December 1907.

role of the Chinese in passive resistance featured more prominently in the columns of Indian Opinion, and in one issue a special supplement on the Chinese leader, Leung Quinn, was also published.<sup>188</sup>

The readership of Indian Opinion was kept informed of the CA's activities, which reflected a determined but independent commitment to the passive resistance movement. The regulations of the Registration Act, were translated and printed in pamphlet form, and a Chinese newspaper, circulated free of charge, gave weekly reports in order to inform the community of the latest developments.<sup>189</sup> The CA also canvassed subscriptions to a fund for the purpose of promoting Chinese passive resistance. In May 1908, these funds amounted to £936.<sup>190</sup> Appeals were made to Chinese government representatives in London and Peking, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Boycott Association and the Chinese Students' Association in Europe, all of which considered the law completely unacceptable and therefore offered their support.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 31 August 1907.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 13 July, 17 August 1907.

<sup>190</sup> TAD: WLD 5/129 51/1909, Opposed application. Leung Quinn and Foo Kimson; WLD 3/97, 38/1909, Illiquid case payment, 1909.

<sup>191</sup> Indian Opinion, 31 August, 19 October 1907; 18 January 1908.

Despite the common interests of the two communities and the temptation to construe an alliance, differences nevertheless persisted. For example, in his capacity as chairman of the Transvaal CA, Quinn sent a petition to the Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in London in October 1907. Although the petition reiterated many of the former grievances made by both communities, it also included other issues, which illustrate the continued divergence between the two communities. The longest resolution objected to the finger-print requirements of the legislation, on the grounds that in China these were only taken from illiterates and criminals.<sup>192</sup> The Chinese preoccupation with this aspect was also reflected in numerous petitions from individuals,<sup>193</sup> and represented a deviation from the more pliable attitude of the Indians who, despite initial objection, gradually came to regard this as unimportant. Gandhi repeatedly emphasized that the question of "finger prints per se [was] not a serious matter", but rather "the compulsion and flavour of criminals behind it".<sup>194</sup> Later on in the campaign, Gandhi chided the Chinese on this matter, writing that the more the Chinese persisted "in such childish obstinacy, the more they would loose their good name".<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> PRO: CO 291/122 40668, Asiatic Law Amendment Act, 18 November; Indian Opinion, 26 October 1907.

<sup>193</sup> SAD: IND 305, E 5927 Ming Soo; IND 306 E 5958, Sam Why; IND 355 E 6848, Lunstan Howe.

<sup>194</sup> Indian Opinion, 14 September 1907.

<sup>195</sup> Collected Works viii p. 107

One of the many reasons given by the Chinese for this objection was, however, not unlike a sentiment Gandhi himself upheld, namely "racial superiority".<sup>196</sup> In the Chinese petition of 1907, they declared that this humiliating legal stipulation reduced them "to a level lower than that of the natives of South Africa and other coloured people".<sup>197</sup> Letters from Chinese individuals revealed a similar sentiment.<sup>198</sup> This racial superiority also extended to class differentiation. In correspondence with the government, some Chinese merchants declared that they were well known men of business and that the legislation made them ashamed to be treated like Africans, while another pointed out that

it would be very hard for a person educated and a big merchant to go and mix themselves with a man that carries a basket and going [sic] around hawking in the streets and uneducated.<sup>199</sup>

Another important point which reflects a different stance from that of the Indians, was the request by the Chinese in the 1907 petition and in individual appeals, that if the Transvaal government continued to refuse to accept the voluntary offer of re-registration, and if no substantial relief was granted, then

---

<sup>196</sup> For a discussion of Gandhi's view see Stone II, "Debate: M.K. Gandhi", pp. 723-5; Hunt, "Gandhi and the black people", referring to Surendra Bhana, p. 20.

<sup>197</sup> PRO: CO 291/122 40668, Asiatic Law Amendment Act, 18 November; Indian Opinion, 26 October 1907.

<sup>198</sup> SAD: IND 306, E 5958, Sam Why.

<sup>199</sup> SAD: IND 90, B 2022, Martin Easton.

strong representations should be made to the British government that every Chinaman should be sent back to China subject to full compensation being paid to him for deprivation of vested interests to trade, residence etc.<sup>200</sup>

At no time did Gandhi or the Indian community's demands converge with those of the Chinese on this issue. Moreover, responding to an inaccurate statement in the Star, Quinn categorically stated that:

My Association has cordially agreed all through with the attitude adopted by the Transvaal British Indian Association, but it has acted from the commencement quite independently, and will continue to do so.<sup>201</sup>

Despite their differences and independence, Chinese steadfastness to oppose the law and Gandhi's admiration of their tactics never wavered. The nature of their commitment to united political action was evident in the way "traitors" were treated and how they responded. Chinese who registered - and there were no more than a few dozen - were boycotted by the community and were often known to recant. In one such case the "offender" publicly declared that the only penance he could do for having taken out the "badge of slavery" was to leave the country voluntarily. In his letter to the press he declared that

---

<sup>200</sup> Ibid; This view was reiterated by the Chinese Minister in London, PRO: CO 291/121, 43156, Asiatic Law Amendment Act, 10 December 1907. PRO: CO 291/122 40668, Asiatic Law Amendment Act, 18 November; Indian Opinion, 26 October 1907; SAD: IND 305, E 5927, Ming Soo.

<sup>201</sup> Indian Opinion, 12 October 1907.

before the war [he] considered himself quite a fortunate man in that I could trade and move about without molestation ... Since the British occupation, [he had], laboured under humiliation. The Asiatic Registration Act fills the cup of humiliation and degradation for an Asiatic.<sup>202</sup>

In another more tragic instance, the "offender" took his own life. This suicide victim, Quei Waei (Chow Kwai For), claimed he had been ordered by his employer to re-register, and only afterwards had he been made aware of his mistake by a compatriot.<sup>203</sup>

Apart from the widespread sympathy and attention which the suicide evoked, political expediency was a powerful incentive. Quinn accused the Transvaal government of the murder of an innocent man and stated that the Act had spilt blood,<sup>204</sup> while Gandhi declared that an Act which

had exacted this heavy price would never be submitted to, [and that they should] keep before their eyes the spirit of the dead man and remember in this struggle that virtue was its own reward.<sup>205</sup>

Meetings and memorial services followed, and at Quei Waei's funeral Gandhi made an eloquent appeal to all to nerve themselves for the coming struggle, declaring that the tragedy had produced a "feeling of revulsion everywhere which strengthened and

---

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 9 November 1907.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 16 November 1907.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 16 November 1907.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.; Collected Works, vii, p. 397.

consolidated the case of the Asiatics".<sup>206</sup> Once again he commented on the Chinese community's "unity, neatness and courage ... things [which] deserve to be emulated by [the Indians]".<sup>207</sup>

During November and December 1907, and again in January 1908, increasing numbers of unregistered Asians were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment or deportation under the stringent clauses of the "Registration Act" and the "Immigration Act".<sup>208</sup> Among the 2 000 Asians charged and convicted for not having registration permits, were prominent leaders including Gandhi, Quinn and two other Chinese, John Fortoen and Martin Easton. They all pleaded guilty and were ordered to leave the Transvaal within 48 hours to 14 days.<sup>209</sup> Like the Indians, the Chinese stressed the crucial importance for the struggle to continue regardless of the leaders' pending imprisonment or deportation. The Chinese also publicly thanked Gandhi for the "advice given and services rendered to them in the crisis through which the Asiatic communities were passing".<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>206</sup> Collected Works, vii, p. 396-7; Indian Opinion, 7 December 1907.

<sup>207</sup> Collected Works, vii, pp. 395-6.

<sup>208</sup> Pachai, The South African Indian question, p. 39; Swan, Gandhi, pp. 142-3.

<sup>209</sup> Indian Opinion, 4 January 1908.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

After disobeying orders to leave the Transvaal, many of the leaders, including Gandhi and Quinn, were imprisoned.<sup>211</sup> This ushered in another period of closer co-operation between Gandhi and the Chinese and revealed the importance of the former's role. Within a fortnight of their confinement in the Johannesburg Fort, mediation with the government was again set on course in order to reach a compromise. With the help of the white community, and in particular of the Editor of the Transvaal Leader, Albert Cartwright, Minister Jan Smuts was persuaded to consider some kind of rapprochement.<sup>212</sup>

The substance of this compromise was voluntary registration under certain conditions, which would effectively have made Act 2 of 1907 redundant. The document was drafted by Cartwright and Smuts, amended by Gandhi and then signed by Gandhi, Thambi Naidoo, a prominent Indian supporter, and Quinn in the Johannesburg jail.<sup>213</sup> According to Collected Works, the initial draft of the proposed agreement, known as the Cartwright draft, referred only to the Indian community in the introduction, and Gandhi was responsible for adding the Chinese community, thereby acknowledging the role

---

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 18 January 1908.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.; Collected Works, vii, p. 409, viii, pp. 40-1, 65-6, 142.

<sup>213</sup> PRO: CO 291/127, 28881, Position of Asiatics in the Transvaal, 20 July 1908; Indian Opinion, 1,7 February 1908; Collected Works, viii, pp. 40-2, 161; Swan, Gandhi, p. 143.

that they had played.<sup>214</sup> Gandhi was released to negotiate a provisional settlement with Smuts, and the other prisoners were released soon after.<sup>215</sup>

In the following weeks, various banquets were held by the Chinese and Indian communities to celebrate those who had assisted their cause.<sup>216</sup> In his column, "Johannesburg Letter" in Indian Opinion, Gandhi wrote:

The Chinese have done something remarkable. They have surpassed us in unity, cleanliness, culture and generosity.<sup>217</sup>

This sentiment was echoed by the chairman of the BIA, Essop Mia, who stated that

The Chinese have outdone the Indians. In many respects they have excelled them. It was a good thing that the Indians and Chinese presented a united front during the campaign.<sup>218</sup>

The initial stages of voluntary registration proceeded smoothly, except that some members of the Chinese community persisted in objecting on religious grounds to finger impressions on registration certificates. Despite Gandhi's irritation on this issue, he nevertheless intervened on their behalf so that they

---

<sup>214</sup> Collected Works, vii, pp. 40, 283-4.

<sup>215</sup> Indian Opinion, 1 February 1908.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 7 February 1908.

<sup>217</sup> Collected Works, vii, p. 162.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

were only required to give their thumb prints.<sup>219</sup> The Chinese then registered enthusiastically, and by early March 1908 over 1 000 were reported to have made application, and the whole of the trading community had received licences. Despite their reservations about the finger print, Chinese solidarity was once again held up to the Indian community as worthy of emulation.<sup>220</sup>

## IV

Just as the defeat of the 1906 Draft Asiatic Amendment Ordinance had been short-lived, so the success of the 1908 compromise also proved a passing feast. The real problem arose when it became clear that Smuts had no intention of repealing Act 2 of 1907.<sup>221</sup> The compromise had been little more than a temporary expedient, and it placed Gandhi in an invidious position since he now not only had to continue the battle with the government, but also had to convince Indians of Smuts's breach of faith and campaign for continued resistance. In his explanations of the "foul play", he explained that Smuts had promised to repeal the Act on the successful completion of voluntary registration.<sup>222</sup> He also

---

<sup>219</sup> Collected Works, viii, pp. 107, 115, 184; Indian Opinion, 15, 22 February 1908.

<sup>220</sup> Indian Opinion, 29 February, 7, 21 March 1908.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 30 May 1908; PRO: CO 291/127, 28881, Position of Asiatics in the Transvaal, 20 July 1908.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 30 May, 4 July 1908.

referred to the Chinese leader's signing of the proposal, on the basis of his belief that the Act would be scrapped.<sup>223</sup>

Both communities resumed their former tactics of letter writing, petitions and deputations. Gandhi wrote to the "Registrar of Asiatics" requesting the return of his registration application. He also drafted a similar letter for Quinn and the other co-signatories of the proposal to forward to the government. Smuts refused to accept Gandhi's demands, and so a renewed phase of passive resistance ensued.<sup>224</sup> Mass meetings were held to oppose the Asiatic Voluntary Registration Validation Bill which the Transvaal government was processing. On 16 August 1908 a meeting held at the Hamidia Mosque, Fordsburg, was attended by over 3 000 people including the Chinese leaders and supporters. Here over 1 000 registration certificates and 500 trading licences were publicly burnt. Quinn was the first Chinese to burn his certificate.<sup>225</sup>

The government responded by withdrawing the Validation Bill, and instead passed Act 36 of 1908, the "Asiatics Registration

---

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 4, 11 July 1908.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 27 June, 4 July 1908.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 22 August 1908, 27 February 1909; Transvaal Leader, 17 August 1908.

Amendment Act".<sup>226</sup> Although the Act endorsed the voluntary registration of "Asiatics" who had failed to comply with Act 2 of 1907, it made further provisions which members of both the Indian and Chinese communities rejected.<sup>227</sup> As a result, the government commenced with a stringent application of the law.<sup>228</sup> During the ensuing months passive resistance continued with mass meetings, arrests, trials, imprisonments and deportations being the order of the day, as the communities continued to defy the law.<sup>229</sup>

As was the case among the Indians, however, the Chinese community was not united in this renewed phase of opposition. Some felt that the government had offered them a fair compromise and they wished to return to their businesses. This led to internal disagreements.<sup>230</sup> The first public exposure of Chinese dissension was when Quinn and the passive resisters of the CA went to court to obtain an interdict against the "non-passive resisters", known as the "party of compliance". They accused them of using funds specifically contributed to passive resistance for other

---

<sup>226</sup> Statutes of the Transvaal 1908, Act 36 of 1908, Asiatics Registration Amendment Act.

<sup>227</sup> Collected Works, ix, pp. 292-301 sets out these issues.

<sup>228</sup> Indian Opinion, 26 December 1908.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 13 February, 25 September 1909; Rand Daily Mail, 10 December 1909.

<sup>230</sup> PRO: CO 291/128, 35076, Asiatic Registration Amendment Act, 7 September 1908.

purposes.<sup>231</sup> Throughout the various stages of the campaign, the CA used these funds to make contributions to both Chinese and Indian court cases and deputations.<sup>232</sup> Quinn and the passive resistance section of the Chinese community broke away and formed the Chinese Reform Union (CRU) to continue the campaign.<sup>233</sup> Intermittent fights continued between the two factions, but they were united at a later stage of the resistance movement.<sup>234</sup>

On 20 February 1909, Quinn was arrested and sentenced to three months with hard labour for failing to produce a registration certificate and refusing to give means of identification.<sup>235</sup> In his absence, C.F.J. Frank took over the leadership of the Chinese passive resisters and continued to organize.<sup>236</sup> On 21 February, Quinn was joined in jail by Gandhi who was similarly arrested and convicted. Having completed their sentences, Gandhi and Quinn were released in May and June 1909 respectively. Both were given a hero's welcome, and calls to continue resistance were endorsed.<sup>237</sup> During this time Gandhi again commented positively on both the Chinese;

---

<sup>231</sup> Indian Opinion, 30 January, 24 April, 24 July 1909.

<sup>232</sup> Collected Works, ix, p. 68.

<sup>233</sup> Indian Opinion, 17 April 1909; TAD: WLD 5/129 51/1909, Opposed application. Leung Quinn and Foo Kimson.

<sup>234</sup> Indian Opinion, 24 April, 22 May, 25 September, 16 October 1909; Collected Works, xi, p. 49.

<sup>235</sup> Indian Opinion, 27 February, 13 March 1909.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 13 March, 1 May 1909.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 29 May, 5 June 1909.

I am very happy that these two groups - the Chinese and the Indians - who took part in this struggle, have been brought to-gether.<sup>238</sup>

and his Chinese counterpart:

Truly Mr. Quinn is a pillar of Satyagraha. ... I feel proud when I come across a man of his type during my experience of our struggle.<sup>239</sup>

In the latter half of 1909, the resistance campaign acquired a new urgency, with a growing awareness that the four South African colonies were preparing for Union. The Indian and Chinese leaders feared that the Transvaal regulations might be entrenched throughout the country in a new constitution.<sup>240</sup> In order to avert this, Gandhi led a deputation to England to request the British government to intervene on their behalf.<sup>241</sup> While in London, passive resistance particularly among the Chinese escalated, and Gandhi received cablegrams from both the CA and BIA indicating that the Transvaal government arrests had increased. The former read:

Johannesburg, 16 September 1909

Eighty Chinese arrested, including Chairman. Increasingly determined passively resist [sic] utmost. Chinese Association.<sup>242</sup>

---

<sup>238</sup> Collected Works, ix, p. 236.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Pineo, Chinese diaspora, p. 237; Indian Opinion, 25 September 1909.

<sup>241</sup> Indian Opinion, 26 June 1909.

<sup>242</sup> PRO: CO 291/142, 31220, Treatment of Asiatics, 18 September, 1909; Indian Opinion, 18 September 1909 records the arrest of Quinn, 2 Chinese storekeepers and 74 more Chinese; 25 September 1909 records arrest of 100.

Gandhi was astounded by these developments as is evident in his letter to the Secretary of State, Earl Crewe:

... it is for the first time that the Government have seen fit to arrest such a large number of the Chinese. In the course of the campaign, I cannot recall even in the Indian community, so many as eighty Indians arrested in a single place at the same time. The cablegrams make it clear, that the measures adopted by the Government, instead of weakening Asiatics have nerved them.<sup>243</sup>

While the British government indicated that it could not intervene on the Asians behalf, the Transvaal government stepped up its vigilance against the passive resisters. For example, Transvaal police Superintendent John G. Vernon became renowned for his actions which endorsed his public declaration that it was the "duty of white men to hound Asiatics out of the country".<sup>244</sup> This resulted in the coining of the term "Vernonism" as an expression of the "bitterest Anti-Asiatic feeling".<sup>245</sup> This action did not, however, discourage the passive resisters. At a meeting held at the Cantonese Club in September 1909, which was attended by Chinese and Indians, resolutions were made to reaffirm their commitment to the movement. It was pointed out that since the arrests, over 100 more Chinese (probably from the party of compliance) had joined the ranks of the passive resisters.

---

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., Indian Opinion, 25 September 1909.

<sup>245</sup> Indian Opinion, 9 October 1909.

Besides pledging support to those nobly suffering imprisonment, they also vouchsafed to preserve their self-respect and the honour of that "great Empire" to which they belonged. In addition, an appeal was made to

the members of the Chinese Students Association in Europe to espouse [their] cause, and to do their utmost to help their bretheren in South Africa in this hour of need.<sup>246</sup>

Arrests continued unabated, with Quinn, Frank and other Chinese continually being convicted to three months' hard labour.<sup>247</sup> On Gandhi's return from England in December 1909, the liaison between him and the Chinese community strengthened. He addressed their meetings, joined their welcome parties for discharged prisoners and attended receptions to honour supporters of the movement, such as that for the Reverend J.J. Doke.<sup>248</sup> In March 1910 Gandhi reported:

The Chinese friends are "going strong". [He understood] that nearly 150 [found] themselves in that haven of liberty at Diepkloof. The enthusiasm our Chinese friends are showing is simply wonderful.<sup>249</sup>

The increased resilience of the passive resisters led to the Transvaal government's decision to remove offenders from the Colony. In April 1910, Quinn was arrested for the fourth time,

---

<sup>246</sup> Indian Opinion, 25 September 1909.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.; 15, 22 January 1910.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 4, 11 December 1909, 29 January, 19 February 1910.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 5 March 1910.

and was jailed, pending deportation.<sup>250</sup> He was reduced from being one of the wealthiest Chinese merchants in the Transvaal to the state of a pauper. He was poverty stricken because of the Chinese struggle. He had sold all his belongings since he felt that he "could not very well retain his possessions and his self-respect in a country like this".<sup>251</sup> In May 1910, Quinn addressed a petition to the Chinese Ambassador in London complaining that the Transvaal legislation was degrading, insulting and derogatory to the Chinese national honour. He requested the Ambassador to obtain a repeal of the Act so that Chinese could enter the Colony on the same terms as Europeans, and prevent what he regarded as illegal deportation.<sup>252</sup> In addition, in a supreme court hearing, Quinn contested the right of the government to detain him pending deportation.<sup>253</sup>

The latter reservation referred to the Transvaal government's arrangement with the Portuguese authorities to use Delagoa Bay (Lourenco Marques) as a port of embarkation for direct deportation to China and India. A resolution was taken by the Transvaal Chinese residents in the Transvaal to oppose this, on the grounds that it was contrary to the spirit of treaty

---

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 9, 16 April 1910.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 23 April, 7 May 1910.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 7 May 1910.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 14 May 1910.

rights.<sup>254</sup> On their behalf, the Acting Chinese Consul-General in the Transvaal, Liu Ngai, took the matter up with his Portuguese counterpart in Mozambique, J.M. Valdez. Liu claimed that it was a breach of international law, because by immediately deporting the Chinese through Portuguese territory, or detaining them, the Portuguese would be favouring one party above another. Although Valdez replied that the matter went beyond consular jurisdiction, his true feelings were shown when he confidentially sent copies of this protracted correspondence to Smuts for comment. The deportations continued through Lourenco Marques, and Quinn was included among them, leaving on the "S.S. Umfuli" for Colombo, Ceylon, on 18 May 1910.<sup>255</sup>

Some three hours prior to Quinn's departure, the Indian Opinion reported that he had had a personal interview with Smuts at the General's request.<sup>256</sup> Unfortunately there are no other records regarding the meeting or to give substance to its discussions. Given the persistence of passive resistance, and the dire action that government was engaged in, Smuts was probably trying to strike a deal or offer a compromise to avert the political furore that the movement was causing, both locally and in the British parliament.

---

<sup>254</sup> TAD: GOV 1193, PS 15/1/25/09 From P.T.J. Frank date 11 March 1909.

<sup>255</sup> SAD: IND E361, 6883, Chinese deportations etc., 1910; Indian Opinion, 28 May 1910.

<sup>256</sup> Indian Opinion. 14 January 1911.

Before his departure, Quinn had made an appeal to the Supreme Court, contesting the right of the Transvaal government to detain him for over a month pending deportation.<sup>257</sup> The case was dismissed, as it was believed the detention was not unreasonable given the availability of steamer transport to China.<sup>258</sup> The significance of the above two appeals - against deportation through foreign territory and illegal custody - lies in the difference between the approaches of Indian and Chinese passive resisters. While standing firm, the Chinese persisted in defending their legal rights. The Indians, on the other hand, believed that

as passive resisters, theirs is not to complain. Their duty [was] simply to go where they [were] forced to go, and at the earliest possible moment to retrace their steps as soon as they become free again, and once more challenge the might of the Transvaal government.<sup>259</sup>

Quinn retraced his steps and mounted another attack on the Transvaal legislation. Once in Ceylon, he went to Rangoon to collect funds from the overseas Chinese communities. After that he attended the Kurnool Provincial Conference with Henry Polak, Secretary of the British Indian Association. Here the continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa was deplored and an

---

<sup>257</sup> TAD: ZTPD 8/914, 345/1910, Leung Quinn versus Attorney General; Indian Opinion, 14 May 1910.

<sup>258</sup> Indian Opinion, 14 May 1910.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 7 May 1910.

appeal was made for further subscriptions to support their cause.<sup>260</sup> In a letter to the Hindu press in Madras, Quinn thanked the Indian Presidency for its support and vowed to

return to the Transvaal ... in order that [they] may take part in the struggle again. ... [They would] fight so long as there [was] breath in [their] bodies if the need arose.<sup>261</sup>

On 30 August 1910, Quinn arrived back in South Africa, in the company of Polak.<sup>262</sup> They were immediately detained on a hulk in Durban harbour and then transferred to Salisbury Bay. Although Gandhi interceded on their behalf, and Polak was allowed entry, the three Chinese deportees were denied re-entry on the grounds of being "prohibited immigrants", and they were returned to India.<sup>263</sup> In Quinn's absence, Chinese passive resistance continued as both Chinese and Indians courted arrest. A reception was held at the Chinese Club to welcome and thank Polak for his support, and calls were made to continue the struggle on for principle.<sup>264</sup> This dedication was reflected in the fact that, according to Gandhi, there were apparently more Chinese in prison than Indians during 1910 and early 1911.<sup>265</sup> Although this assesment is probably accurate, it is important to note that between 1904 and 1909

---

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 23 July, 13 August 1910.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 13 August 1910.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 3 September 1910.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 15 October, 10 December 1910.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 12 November 1910.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 27 May 1911; Collected Works, xi, p. 49.

there were always more Chinese in jail than Indians, because of the indentured Chinese labourers.<sup>266</sup>

TABLE 4: AVERAGE NUMBER OF INDIANS AND CHINESE CONFINED IN TRANSVAAL JAILS, 1904-8.

	Indians (males)	Indians (females)	Chinese (males)
1904-5	40.2	-	202.3
1905-6	41.1	0.5	1089.0
1906-7	54.3	1.5	1206.5
1907-8	54.9	0.8	885.5

267

In January 1911, Quinn returned from Colombo and landed in Durban. After passing the education test he was permitted entry. He was given a warm welcome by members of the Durban Indian community and by Transvaal Chinese and Indians. On this occasion he was featured on the front page of Indian Opinion, with a photograph entitled "Chinese courage".<sup>268</sup> When he crossed the border into the Transvaal, however, he was again arrested and later sentenced to three months' hard labour.<sup>269</sup> Prior to his court appearance, he visited Tolstoy Farm outside Johannesburg, and praised the leading men in India for the hospitality he

<sup>266</sup> SAD: Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs (CIA), 27, M3, Asiatic prisoners - Treatment of.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., Director of Prisons, C.J. Hanrette to Secretary to the Law Department, October 1908.

<sup>268</sup> Indian Opinion, 7, 14, 21 January 1911.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 21 January 1911.

received. For this, he humorously remarked, he owed thanks to Smuts for deporting him. In typical Gandhian style, when addressing the Tolstoy Farm workers, he also contended, on a more serious note that:

after the struggle is closed, [he would] not be able to return to the complex life of commerce and that of ease and luxury of which he had more than his share.<sup>270</sup>

Not long after his release from detention, Quinn resigned as Chairman of the CA. The long imprisonments had ultimately destroyed his health. He remained a close friend of Gandhi and often visited Tolstoy Farm.<sup>271</sup> The Transvaal Chinese community also supported the nature and work on Tolstoy Farm by making substantial donations of food and other essential materials.<sup>272</sup> These reciprocal relations indicate that throughout the campaign there was mutual respect between the two communities in their separate but similar struggle for justice.

## V

In 1910, the South African colonies became a Union. Not unlike the federation process in Australia, the newly formed Union government was anxious to draft an Immigration Bill to accommodate the various inherited legislations.<sup>273</sup> This appeared

---

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Pineo, Chinese Diaspora, p. 239.

<sup>272</sup> Indian Opinion, 4 February 1911.

<sup>273</sup> Harris and Ryan, "Chinese immigration to Australia", pp. 374-5.

to be an earnest attempt on the part of the government, and in particular Smuts, to settle the "Asiatic" question.<sup>274</sup> After protracted negotiations between Smuts, Gandhi and other stakeholders, the Immigrants' Restriction Bill of 1911 was drawn up. While it tried to concede some of the demands of the Asians, it also had to accommodate the salient features of the legislation of the four former colonies.<sup>275</sup> As a result, the Bill that was finally gazetted fell short of satisfying the Asian community. The Indians immediately petitioned the government with certain amendments. Martin Easton, who had succeeded Quinn as Acting Chairman of the CA, sent a telegram endorsing the Indians' requests. He also stated that he trusted

that the Government [would] provide in administration of Bill [sic] for entry of limited number of cultured Chinese within Union and that such Chinese will not be liable to Chinese Exclusion Act Cape [sic].<sup>276</sup>

In the spirit of conciliation after Union, Smuts released a large number of Indian passive resisters from prison. Claiming that there were more Chinese in jail than Indians, Gandhi intervened on their behalf, declaring he was

quite sure that General Smuts [would not] expect Indian passive resisters to desert their Chinese fellow sufferers. They naturally ask for the same

---

<sup>274</sup> Pineo, Chinese Diaspora, p. 238.

<sup>275</sup> Swan, Gandhi, pp. 206-7; Pineo, Chinese diaspora, pp. 238-9.

<sup>276</sup> M. Easton telegram to Minister of Interior, 18 March 1911, Sabarmati Sangrahalaya Library 5231, as quoted by Pineo, Chinese diaspora, pp. 254-5.

protection for the Chinese passive resisters as for themselves.<sup>277</sup>

In 1911, a provisional settlement was reached between the Union government and the Asians on various outstanding issues. For example, some of the objections to Act 36 of 1908 were acceded to: Peace Preservation Ordinance permits were recognized, educated persons were exempted and signatures were accepted instead of finger prints.<sup>278</sup> The Immigration Bill continued to pass through various phases of amendment before eventually being enacted in 1913.<sup>279</sup> As a result of these developments, the divided Chinese community became united as it set about reconstructing its businesses and resuming a low political profile.<sup>280</sup> While there were various individual arrests in the following few years,<sup>281</sup> 1912 marked the end of the passive resistance movement for the Chinese. This was also the year in which the CA "ceased to exist".<sup>282</sup> In a letter to the Governor General, 354 Chinese residents of the Transvaal referred to

the welcome settlement of the Asiatic question which [they were] now able to look forward to with feelings of deep and unmingled thankfulness ...

---

<sup>277</sup> Indian Opinion, 27 May 1911.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 18 March, 27 May 1911; Swan, Gandhi, p. 229-30.

<sup>279</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa 1913, Act 22 of 1913, Immigrants Regulation.

<sup>280</sup> SAD: Governor General (GG) 1594, 51/926: Sentences. Petition for remission from members of Chinese Community in Johannesburg, 1911.

<sup>281</sup> SAD: CIA 34, M74, Chinese traders. Registrar of Asiatics, 6 September 1913; Indian Opinion, 1, 22 April 1911.

<sup>282</sup> TAD: WLD5/259. 580/1914. Illicuid case. 1914.

declaring that

at the present moment in the history of the Union of South Africa, an earnest endeavour [was] being made to bring the "Passive Resistance Movement" among the Asiatic Community to an honourable and peaceful termination by means of wise and temperate legislation.<sup>283</sup>

When Gandhi called for a return to passive resistance in 1913, the Chinese did not respond because the issues objected to only concerned the Indian community. These included Union laws which did not recognize non-Christian marriages and the amended Immigrants' Restriction Bill of 1913.<sup>284</sup>

The Chinese participation in the first phases of passive resistance was, however, meaningful in terms of Gandhian historiography. In this context, they provided a different perspective to his relations with non-Indian communities and therefore repudiated the conventional revisionist view of Gandhi as "politically exclusive".<sup>285</sup> Gandhi was not the leader of the Chinese passive resistance movement, but in many ways he did encourage and approve of their participation in the widespread political campaign against racist legislation. Although the Indians never concluded a firm alliance with their fellow Asians,

---

<sup>283</sup> SAD: GG 1594, 51/926: Sentences. Petition for remission from members of Chinese Community in Johannesburg, 1911.

<sup>284</sup> Swan, Gandhi, pp. 236-38; Pineo, Chinese Diaspora, pp. 237-8.

<sup>285</sup> See Harris, "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance", pp. 69-71.

the Chinese, this was not because it was unexpedient, but rather because of their cultural ethnocentrism. Cultural exclusivity seemed to cut across class lines in the organization of passive resistance. The Indians and Chinese fought a similar battle, against similar laws and similar governments,<sup>286</sup> yet their respective cultural chauvinisms kept them apart. Looked at from the perspective of Chinese passive resistance in the early 1900s, therefore, Gandhi's alleged complicity in "segregationist policies", "racialism" and "proto-apartheid" seem unduly harsh.<sup>287</sup>

The political activity of the Transvaal Chinese in the first decade of the twentieth century was a singular phenomenon which was never repeated in the history of the community in South Africa. For the remainder of the century they maintained a low profile in order not to draw attention to their invidious position in a racially segregated South Africa. Their actions in the early 1900s were significant in that they placed the Chinese at the centre of an internationally important political movement, Gandhi's "satyagraha". Their participation in passive resistance is of further significance in that it represented a deviation

---

<sup>286</sup> Hunt uses a similar analogy with reference to the "Indians, Coloureds and Africans", p. 20.

<sup>287</sup> Stone II, "Debate: M.K.Gandhi", pp. 726-35; Swan, Gandhi, pp. 112-4; P. Power, "Gandhi in South Africa", Journal of Modern African Studies, 7, 3, 1969, pp. 445-6.

from the "non-political" stereotype of overseas Chinese communities throughout the world. In the final analysis, the experiences of the South African Chinese at the beginning of the twentieth century, in both the Transvaal and Cape colonies, presaged the political rigours which they would confront in the remainder of the century under South African segregationist and apartheid governments.

## EPILOGUE

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the foundation for the future position of the Chinese community in South Africa had been laid. On the one hand, the Chinese had become numerically insignificant and therefore politically less important, while on the other, there remained a lingering legacy of "orientalism" in the white South African collective memory, which was increasingly directed at the Indian population. Throughout the subsequent phases of constitutional and political change, as South Africa altered in status from a Union to a Republic, these factors resulted in the South African Chinese finding themselves in a more and more invidious position. Not only were they prohibited from adding to their numbers after 1912, but were left in between in a system predicated upon race and colour, in which they were neither "white" nor "black". This concluding epilogue offers a brief overview of their interstitial and ambiguous position in the segregationist and apartheid eras. It tries to show how the developments of the colonial period were transposed onto racial relations in the twentieth century and to indicate continuities and disjunctures.

It is important to note that anti-Sinitic and racially intolerant developments were by no means unique to post-colonial South

Africa. Western countries, such as the United States of America, Canada and Australia, also introduced similar legislation. The Chinese were generally denied admission to these societies, either through complete exclusion or by means of proscribed regulations, and they were often subjected to very restrictive legislation. The situation was compounded by the growth of the Occident's "orientalism", which regarded all things Eastern as inferior. During the latter half of the twentieth century, however, much of the overtly discriminatory legislation against the Chinese in these countries was repealed. It should, however, be conceded that as an identifiable minority, the Chinese continued to be the victims of discrimination in parts of the post-colonial West. But no other country was as dominated for so long by such a race-based political system as South Africa under segregation and apartheid. In political systems mainly concerned with black-white binarism, in which European rights were upheld at the expense of those classified as "non-Europeans", the position of the small Chinese community was extremely complex.

After the founding of the Union in 1910, the Chinese were no longer a major factor within South African society. The ethnically defined legislation of the four South African colonies had put an end to their immigration, and their numbers were

therefore completely reliant on natural increase. The 1913 "Immigrants' Regulation Act" endorsed this position. It was framed to perpetuate the salient features of the former colonial legislation.<sup>1</sup> Although the Act did not specifically stipulate the exclusion of Asians, restriction was included in a "less formal manner",<sup>2</sup> in order not to offend the British authorities. Consequently, Asians were designated as "prohibited immigrants".<sup>3</sup> Statistics in the first Union Year Book clearly indicated the efficiency of the various laws. For example, of the Chinese registered at the Cape in 1904, by 1917, only half remained.<sup>4</sup>

That the Chinese were no longer the target of South African immigration legislation was reflected in their gradual disappearance from the historical record. Later laws, such as the "Indian Relief Act of 1914" and the "Immigration and Indian Relief (further provision) Act of 1927",<sup>5</sup> also omitted to mention them, or referred only to the Indians. The exclusionary nature of the immigration acts was so effective that the Union government confidently repealed the "Chinese Exclusion Act" in

---

<sup>1</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 21 of 1913, Immigrants' Regulation.

<sup>2</sup> Bradlow, "Immigration into the Union", p. 68

<sup>3</sup> SAD: GG 900 15/706 Asiatics: Chinese forwards note by Chinese Minister in London, 28 April 1914.

<sup>4</sup> Union of South Africa Year Book, 1910-1917, Pretoria, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 8 of 1930, Immigration Quota; Act 1 of 1937, Aliens Act.

1933.<sup>6</sup> Cape magistrates were henceforth instructed "to deal with Chinese in the same manner as the Indians".<sup>7</sup>

The decision to repeal the "Exclusion Act" was precipitated by material or pragmatic considerations. In an effort to find trading partners outside the British Empire, the Union government reached an agreement with China in 1931, which promised "temporary annually renewable entry permits to bona fide tourists, students, wholesale merchants or buyers of South African produce and their families".<sup>8</sup> The object of this arrangement was to further the Union's export trade with China, which was made easier by the token nullification of the Cape legislation against the Chinese under the security of the remaining immigration legislation.

These developments did not mean that the Chinese were no longer the subject of discriminatory legislation. Rather, they continued to be implicated in the racial policies of the segregationist years even though their numbers rose to only 4 000 by the 1940s.<sup>9</sup> Sharing a common geographical origin with the Indians, usually

---

<sup>6</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 19 of 1933, Immigration (Amendment).

<sup>7</sup> SAD: GG 919 15/1427 Chinese: General immigration, 12 October 1933.

<sup>8</sup> Cape Times, 18 December 1980.

<sup>9</sup> CSS: Population Census, 7 May 1946, Pretoria, 1946-1954.

meant that the legislation introduced for them was also made applicable to the Chinese. Moreover, they were included with other "non-Europeans" in broad racial categories for the purposes of specific legislation.<sup>10</sup> As had been the case in the pre-Union period, the Chinese voiced objections to classification with other "non-Europeans", and persisted in alluding to "China" and their "cultural heritage" as justification for separate classification.<sup>11</sup> By focusing on their culture they were insinuating that they were closer to the whites than any other "non-European" group, which in their view justified different treatment.

Union legislation which governed residential areas was more specifically directed at restricting property rights for Indian communities.<sup>12</sup> More often than not, the Chinese were indirectly included in these delimitations, which included the "Asiatics (Land and Trading) Amendment Act of 1919", the "Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act of 1932", and the "Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Act of 1936". These laws prevented the acquisition of land by Asians by any means. In 1946, these prohibitions were further

---

<sup>10</sup> M. Horrell, Legislation and race relations, Johannesburg, 1963, pp. 10-1.

<sup>11</sup> SAD: Secretary for Planning (BEP) 333 G7/302/14, Rekord van onderhoud: Sjinese gemeenskap, 23 July 1959.

<sup>12</sup> Kirkwood, The Group Areas Act, p. 4; Huang, The legal status of the Chinese abroad, pp. 52-3.

entrenched, so that no Asian could buy or occupy property in the "unexempted" areas, without a permit.<sup>13</sup>

Municipalities and regional councils also persisted in passing and enforcing proclamations and ordinances which denied certain rights to all communities except whites. These ranged from curfews to restrictions on the use of side walks, parks, and beaches, and travel in carriages, vehicles, buses or trains reserved for Europeans.<sup>14</sup> Because the Chinese were not classified as "white", they were subjected to these forms of segregation. That the Chinese objected to this treatment and were inconvenienced, is evident in the opinions voiced by the Chinese Consul-Generals in interviews and memorandums to the government.<sup>15</sup>

The Consul-General's office had been an important part of the armoury of protest since 1903. From then on, the community depended very heavily on this source of power to intervene on their behalf, and continued to do so throughout the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> As the Chinese did not identify with the other

---

<sup>13</sup> F.P. Rousseau, Handbook of the Group Areas Act, Cape Town, 1960, pp.4-5; Kirkwood, The Group Areas Act, p.4.

<sup>14</sup> Horrell, Legislation and race relations, p. 30; Huang, The legal status of the Chinese abroad, pp. 281-2.

<sup>15</sup> SAD: BEP 575 G18/54 Raadpleging en koördinasie met ander instansies: Sjinese organisasies, 1963.

<sup>16</sup> See chapter 3.

oppressed groups, in order to avoid similar repressive treatment, the Consul-General represented the only recourse in the struggle for their rights. This relationship also points to their precarious position in South Africa. Although they were second generation citizens by the 1920s, they had no vote and no voice, and therefore remained on the periphery of South African society.

As far as the franchise, or any official representation, was concerned, the South African Chinese occupied a political no-man's land. From the introduction of representative bodies, franchise qualifications had been generally exclusive, and the Chinese were ignored. The "South African Act of 1909", made allowances for the differing franchise qualifications of the four provinces of the Union.<sup>17</sup> From 1936, however, these were gradually streamlined to exclude all Africans, Asians and ultimately Coloureds by establishing separate, racially defined, representative bodies, councils and voters' rolls.<sup>18</sup> At no stage was there any mention of the Chinese as a separate ethnic group, or any indication of which category they were likely to be a part.

---

<sup>17</sup> Horrell, Legislation and race relations, pp. 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-6.

After almost half a century in the political wilderness under segregationist policies, the assumed "non-European" status of the Chinese was eventually entrenched in racist apartheid legislation. The policy of apartheid, introduced by the National Party government in 1948, was based on the concept of vertical separation of the races.<sup>19</sup> It was an ideology which tried to establish and enforce an infrastructure which would facilitate the "separate development" of ethnic groups in all spheres of life. The key to this system was the classification of the entire population into distinct racial categories by the "Population Registration Act" of 1950.<sup>20</sup> In effect, this Act was intended to put an end to the more fluid system in which people, such as the Chinese, could "pass" from one group into a more privileged one along class lines.<sup>21</sup>

Initially, the 1950 classification made room only for "a white person, a coloured person or a native" as the main racial categories.<sup>22</sup> In view of the Act's lack of precision, it was amended eight times before it was eventually repealed in 1991.<sup>23</sup> One such amendment in 1959, divided the "coloured category" into

---

<sup>19</sup> Davenport, South Africa, p. 356.

<sup>20</sup> Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 30 of 1950, Population Registration.

<sup>21</sup> Horrell, Legislation and race relations, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 114 of 1991, Population Registration Repeal.

"Cape coloured, Cape Malay, Griqua, Indian, Chinese and other Asiatic and other coloured"<sup>24</sup> in order to give greater definition. In a sense, the apartheid government's acknowledgment of the Chinese as a separate group provided them with the means to differentiate themselves from the other "non-European" groups. However, although they were classified as a separate category, it did not necessarily follow that they would be dealt with on their own in terms of the various apartheid regulations. In the first instance, their numbers were not large enough to warrant the establishment of separate facilities and administrations. Although the authorities were aware of this, they persisted in trying to devise some form of segregation, but ultimately to no avail.

The "Group Areas Act", introduced in 1950, was the cornerstone of the apartheid system, and one which was to prove no less unwieldy than the classification system on which it was based. In Bill form it was presented as a "major measure towards the realisation of one of the main objects of the policy of apartheid"<sup>25</sup> - separate development. It was also the regulation under which the South African Chinese were most inconsistently treated.

---

<sup>24</sup> Proclamation 46 of 1959.

<sup>25</sup> Debates of the House of Assembly, May 1950, col. 7452.

With the proclamation of the draft legislation, the Chinese agreed to be classified as a separate group under the "Group Areas Act," partly because they did not want to be classified with Indians or other Asians.<sup>26</sup> As the implications of the Act became more apparent, however, the Consul-General and regional representatives argued that the Chinese community was too small to be a viable economic entity, particularly since a large percentage were dependent on trade for their livelihood.<sup>27</sup> They claimed that their small numbers and advanced culture did not constitute a threat to "white civilization", and pointed out that the privileges envisaged in the amended sections of the "Group Areas Act" of 1966, namely forms of consultative and local government, were not practicable.<sup>28</sup> They stated that they "should be a separate group, but not allocated a definite area".<sup>29</sup>

Over the next two decades, a multitude of areas were proposed, considered and ultimately rejected in the search for Chinese

---

<sup>26</sup> SAD: Secretary, Group Areas Board, (GGR) 69 26/3 Gesamentlike komitees en ander liggame: Verhoë insake Groepsgebiede, D.G. Conradie, LV - Dr T. Dönges; BEP 575 Q18/54 Raadpleging en koördinerings met ander instansies: Sjinese organisasies: Meeting between Chinese deputation and Prime Minister, 29 March 1954.

<sup>27</sup> SAD: GGR 155 81/3/6 Rasseaangeleentehede; Behuising: Sjinese: Consul-General Liu - J.J. Marais 18 May 1959; Die Transvaler, 18 March 1955; Rand Daily Mail, 12 September 1958.

<sup>28</sup> SAD: Private Secretary, Minister of Environmental Planning and Energy (MOE) 124 13/3/5 Sjinese 1970: Memorandum, South African Chinese community, July 1970.

<sup>29</sup> SAD: GGR 69 26/2 Informal discussion held at Pretoria, 15 October 1952.

group areas.<sup>30</sup> Seven centres were identified as having "high" concentrations of Chinese, but only one was finally established in Port Elizabeth.<sup>31</sup> In view of their fruitless efforts, the Cabinet decided in 1969 that no further effort should be made to proclaim group areas for Chinese.<sup>32</sup> Instead, the Chinese were subjected to a permit system, allowing them to live in an area (usually white) after obtaining permission from the Department of Community Development, as well as a "no objection" agreement from the immediate neighbours.<sup>33</sup> Although the Chinese acceded to this arrangement,<sup>34</sup> it nevertheless remained a humiliating provision. In addition to the resultant destitution and displacement experienced by some Chinese who were removed in accordance with the proclamation of exclusive areas for other "groups", the impact of the Act was evident in the dramatic increase in the emigration of Chinese-born South Africans to Canada, the United States of America and Australia.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> SAD: MOE 124 MB13/3/5 Sjinese 1970; BEP 333 G7/302/14 Instelling van 'n Groepsgebied Kaapstad: Sjinese gebied, 1955-1963; 139 G7/137/18 Aansoek om 'n groepsgebied in distrik Pretoria vir Sjinese, 1962-1969.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> SAD: MOE 124 MB13/3/5 Sjinese: 1970: Minister van Beplanning - Minister 20 April 1970.

<sup>33</sup> SAD: Private Secretary of the Department of Minister of Planning (ABE) 8 ADJ 13/5 Skeiding tussen rasse-groepe: Sjinese: Sek. van Beplanning - Adj. Minister, 28 May 1969.

<sup>34</sup> SAD: MOE 124 MB 13/3/5 Chinese: 1970: Dr N. Yenson, Confidential Memorandum, 15 March 1967.

<sup>35</sup> Die Transvaler, 2 December 1980; Sunday Express, 13 February 1983.

Another cornerstone of the apartheid system which had an immediate effect on the South African Chinese community, was the legislation which was formulated to enforce separation among the racial groups in all public places, in the use of amenities, and on a social level. In 1953, the National Party enacted its "Separate Amenities Bill" in an attempt to consolidate former restrictions, and thereby enforce separation.<sup>36</sup> In practice, however, the small Chinese community increasingly shared the same public facilities as whites.<sup>37</sup> They went to restaurants, theatres, hotels, clubs, race-courses, cinemas, public lavatories and hospitals used by whites, and they travelled on the same buses, trains and aeroplanes.<sup>38</sup> Many proprietors felt obliged to obtain permits to admit Chinese patrons,<sup>39</sup> and they were also required for Chinese attending white state schools, technical colleges and universities.<sup>40</sup> They were, however, usually issued as a matter of course.

Although there were unpleasant experiences associated with the implementation of apartheid regulations, the Chinese accepted the

---

<sup>36</sup> Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 49 of 1953, Reservation of Separate Amenities.

<sup>37</sup> Eastern Province Herald, 25 June 1984; Die Vaderland, 1 July 1981.

<sup>38</sup> SAD: MOE 124 MB13/3/5 Sjiniese 1970: Die Wet op Groepsgebiede, 1966; The Natal Mercury, 19 March 1980; Citizen, 30 October 1980.

<sup>39</sup> SAD: MOE 124 MB13/3/5 Sjiniese: 1970: Sek. Beplanning - Sek. Buitelandse Sake: Sjiniese in die RSA, 5 October 1966; Sunday Times, 29 August 1965.

<sup>40</sup> Evening Post, 18 March 1980; Argus, 19 March 1980; Sunday Express, 1 October 1982.

status quo, realizing that their admission and tolerance was very much dependent on the discretion of whites. They therefore avoided situations that could lead to problems.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, racial harassment remained a cause of anxiety and humiliation, and served to highlight repression under apartheid.

Apartheid officials were aware that double standards were being applied; according to the law the Chinese were "non-white", but in society they were treated as "white".<sup>42</sup> They admitted that the Chinese had a more "highly developed civilisation than any of the other non-white groups in the Republic", which was why they were treated differently.<sup>43</sup> But they were not willing to re-classify the Chinese as "white", because of the reaction that would emanate from the other "non-European" communities to such privilege.<sup>44</sup>

From the 1970s there was a marked change in the position and status of the South African Chinese. International pressure on

---

<sup>41</sup> SAB: MOE 124 MB13/3/5 Sjinese 1970: Confidential: Representations re South Africans of Chinese descent, March 1967; MNO 67 28/3 1a: Min. of the Interior: Kabinetmemorandum oor die status van die Sjinese in die Republiek, 2 April 1971.

<sup>42</sup> SAD: MNO 67 28/3 1a: Ministry of the Interior; Kabinetsmemorandum oor die status van die Sjinese in die Republiek: 2 April 1971; The Star, 19 February 1986.

<sup>43</sup> SAD: MOE 124 MB13/3/5 Sjinese 1970: Sek. van Gemeenskapsbou: 10 April 1967.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

South Africa and the ROC, the two "pariah states", drew them closer together, especially economically.<sup>45</sup> With increased contact at commercial and diplomatic levels, the apartheid government was obliged to reconsider the position of its Chinese residents.<sup>46</sup> In 1979, a commission was appointed to look into the political rights of the Chinese.<sup>47</sup> In its interim report, it proposed the establishment of a new President's Council of 60 nominated members appointed from the "white, Coloured, Indian and Chinese population groups". This consultative body was to advise the government. Africans were excluded from representation on the President's Council.<sup>48</sup>

This resulted in unprecedented media focus on the political status of the Chinese, who since 1912 had nurtured a rather cautious and inconspicuous political profile.<sup>49</sup> They did not want to become a political issue, claiming that despite their ambiguous legal position, they "preferred to remain invisible".<sup>50</sup> The various Chinese associations eventually decided that the majority opposed participation in the Council, and they therefore

---

<sup>45</sup> Sunday Tribune, 27 August 1978; Rand Daily Mail, 20 October 1980.

<sup>46</sup> Evening Post, 6 February 1978; The Argus, 14 April 1978; The Star, 28 July 1978; Sunday Tribune, 27 August 1978; Die Burger, 18 March 1980.

<sup>47</sup> Die Burger, 18 March 1980; Beeld, 19 March 1980.

<sup>48</sup> Weekend Post, 10 May 1980; Rapport, 18 June 1980.

<sup>49</sup> Die Oosterlig, 25 May 1980; Weekend Post, 10 May 1980; Daily News, 20 June 1980.

<sup>50</sup> Financial Mail, 10 July 1981; Star, 19 June 1980.

asked to be "excused the honour".<sup>51</sup> This heightened the political profile of the Chinese by weakening the representativeness of the President's Council.

In another development, the stipulation that permission had to be obtained from white neighbours before Chinese could move into a white suburb was repealed in 1982,<sup>52</sup> and in 1984, the Port Elizabeth Chinese group area was deproclaimed.<sup>53</sup> Finally, the burden was lifted with the passing of Act 101 of 1984, the "Group Areas Amendment Act", in terms of which the provisions of the Act ceased to apply to the Chinese community.<sup>54</sup> Effectively, this meant that the Chinese had the right to live, socialize and trade in white areas without permits.<sup>55</sup> Right by permission thus fell away and the Chinese became the first "non-white" group to breach the racial divide of the apartheid system.

Despite these developments which granted the South African Chinese a new legal and political status in the apartheid state, they still had to negotiate the permit system and unofficial exemption. They were often more inconvenienced by the insecurity

---

<sup>51</sup> Financial Mail, 17 October 1980.

<sup>52</sup> Rand Daily Mail, 11 May 1982.

<sup>53</sup> Evening Post, 28 June 1984; Citizen, 3 July 1984.

<sup>54</sup> Statutes of Republic of South Africa, Act 101 of 1984, Group Areas Amendment; Rand Daily Mail, 23 June 1984.

<sup>55</sup> Die Burger, 23 June 1984; Rand Daily Mail, 23 June 1984.

relating to the bureaucracy of the laws, because being dependent on the privilege of government decree, permits, concessions, white forbearance and the official blind-eye, they were in a constant state of limbo. They lived at the behest of others, not confined to an ethnic residential area, but without being acknowledged as fully "white". This interstitial identity imposed a "separatism" which labelled them as different.

This brief outline of the position of the Chinese in South Africa in the last 80 years reflects the legacy of inequality and inconsistency which was part of their colonial experience as discussed in this thesis. They were forced to lead a precarious existence in the interstitial spaces between a ruling white elite and a large, oppressed black majority. As apartheid legislation was eroded and gradually abandoned in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the South African Chinese became more integrated in South African society. By 1994, they were part of the transformation to a new democratic South Africa. Their present position and future status within a developing multi-cultural South Africa remains an open question. True to form, they have remained relatively inconspicuous politically throughout the various processes. Even when the new African National Congress (ANC) government switched diplomatic allegiance from the ROC to the PRC

in 1996, the Chinese community remained remarkably silent.

The experiences of the Chinese in South Africa reflect the difficulty of finding a social space in a society ruled by a white minority intent upon excluding other minorities from a position of power. The Chinese therefore tried to live as invisibly as possible in order not to attract the political attention of segregationists. Their identity was threatened by the possibility of assimilation into larger minorities, on the one hand, or by the impoverishment bequeathed by racial separation applied to the majority of Africans, on the other. They lived out a separate existence in the ill-defined economic and social spaces which colonial and segregationist South Africa left open to them.

## SOURCES

### I. MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

1. National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR):  
Transvaal Archives Depot (TAD)

CS - Colonial Secretary, 1901-1910  
EC - Clerk of the Executive Council, 1901-1907  
FLD - Foreign Labour Department of the Transvaal, 1904-1910  
GNLB - Government Native Labour Bureau 1904-1950  
GOV - Secretary of the Governor of the Transvaal, 1901-1910  
LA - Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, 1907-1910  
LC - Clerk to the Legislative Council, 1901-1907  
LD - Law Department, 1900-1925  
LEG.CO - Clerk of the Legislative Council, 1907-1910  
LTG - Lieutenant Governor of the Transvaal, 1902-1907  
MM - Secretary of Mines, 1901-1910  
MOH - Medical Officer of Health for the Transvaal, 1902-1910  
PA - Protector of Asiatics, 1901-1904  
PM(T) - Prime Ministers, Transvaal, 1907-1910  
SNA - Secretary of Native Affairs, 1900-1911  
TKP - Transvaal Colonial Publications, 1902-1910  
TPD - Registrar of the Supreme Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division, 1910-1986  
TTP - Commissioner, Transvaal Town Police, 1902-1909  
WLD - Registrar of the Supreme Court of South Africa, Witwatersrand Local Division, 1902-1975  
ZTPD - Supreme Court of the SAR and the Supreme Court of the Transvaal Colony, 1877-1910

2. National Archives Repository, Pretoria (NAR):  
Central Archives Depot (SAD)

ABE - Private Secretary of the Deputy Minister of Planning, 1968-1970  
ARG - Secretary to the Land Tenure Advisory Board, 1932-1959  
BEP - Secretary for Planning, 1903-1970  
BNS - Interior Affairs, 1899-1989  
CIA - Commissioner of Immigration and Asiatic Affairs, 1900-1963  
GG - Governor General, 1905-1974  
GGR - Secretary, Group Areas Board, 1947-1962  
IND - Department of Asiatic Affairs, 1910-1974  
JUS - Secretary of Justice, 1885-1979  
MOE - Private Secretary, Minister of Environmental Planning and Energy, 1959-1980  
MNO - Private Secretary, Minister of National Education, 1961-1985  
MNW - Mines, 1902-1950  
SAP - Commissioner of the South African Police, 1901-1975

3. Cape Town Archives Repository, Cape Town (CAR)
  - AG - Attorney General, 1661-1923
  - C - Council of Policy, 1649-1795
  - CO - Colonial Office, 1806-1912
  - CJ - Court of Justice, 1652-1843
  - GH - Government House, 1806-1911
  - IRC - The Regional Representative, Department of Home Affairs, Cape Town: Asian series, 1904
  - MOH - Medical Officer of Health, 1892-1914
  - MOOC - Master of the Orphan Chamber, 1673-1940
  - PMO - Prime Ministers Office, 1872-1910
  - PWD - Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, 1848-1911
  
4. Barlow Rand Archives, Sandton, (BRA)
  - HE - Hermann Eckstein and Co. 1887-1910
  
5. Public Record Office, Kew, (PRO)
  - CO - Colonial Office
  - FO - Foreign Office
  
6. British Library, London, (BL)
  - Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman Papers
  
7. Rhodes House Library, Oxford, (RHL)
  - William Evans Papers
  - Matthew Nathan Papers
  
8. School of African and Oriental Studies, London, (SOAS)
  - Addis Papers
  
9. Central Statistical Services, Pretoria, (CSS)
  - Statistical registers, 1891-1997
  
10. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, (UW)
  - R.K. Cope collection

## II. PUBLISHED ARCHIVAL RECORDS

- Boëseken, A.J. and De Wet, G.C. (eds), Suid-Afrikaanse argiefstukke: Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 1651-1734, i-viii, Cape Town, 1957-1975.
- Clark, C.M.H. (ed.), Select documents in Australian history, 1851-1900, Sydney, 1955.
- De Wet, G.C. (ed.), Suid-Afrikaanse argiefstukke: Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, vii, Johannesburg, 1971.

- Duminy, A.H. and Guest, W.R. (eds), Fitzpatrick, South African politician: Selected papers 1888-1906, Johannesburg, 1976.
- Fraser, M. and Jeeves, A. (eds), All that glittered: Selected correspondence of Lionel Phillips, 1890-1924, Cape Town, 1977.
- Headlam, C.G. (ed.), Milner papers (South Africa) 1899-1905, 2 vols, London, 1933.
- Houghton, D.H. and Dagut, J., (eds), Source material on the South African economy, 1899-1919, vol. 2, Cape Town, 1972.
- Jeffreys, K.M. and Naudé, S.D. (eds), Kaapse argiefstukke: Kaapse plakkaatboek, 1652-1795, i-iv, Cape Town, 1944-49.
- Leibrandt, H.C.V. (ed.), Cape of Good Hope: Letters despatched, 1696-1708, Cape Town, 1896.
- Leibrandt, H.C.V. (ed.), Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Letters and documents received, 1649-1662, i, Cape Town, 1898.
- Leibrandt, H.C.V. (ed.), Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Requesten (Memorials), 1715-1806, i, Cape Town, 1905.
- MacMurray, J.V.A. (ed.), Treaties and agreements with and concerning China, 1894-1919, New York, 1973.
- Moodie, D. (ed.), The record: or, a series of official papers relative to the condition and treatment of the native tribes of South Africa, i, iii, v, Cape Town, 1960.
- The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, iii-x, Delhi, 1960-1985.
- Thom, H.B. (ed.), Journal of Jan van Riebeeck, Cape Town, 1952.

### III. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

#### Ordinances, Statutes and Acts

##### 1. Cape Colony

- Statisticana, Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, Censuses of 1891, 1904.
- Cape of Good Hope Debates in the House of Assembly, 1899-1909.
- Cape of Good Hope Debates in the Legislative Assembly, 1899-1909.
- Cape of Good Hope: Colonial Secretary's Ministerial Division, Report of the Chief Immigration Officer for the year ending 31 December 1908.
- Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly and Acts of Parliament, First and second sessions, Twelfth parliament, 1908.
- Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, Appendix, ii, "Report of the select committee on Asiatic grievances", September 1908.
- Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Act 47 of 1902, The Immigration Act.
- Statutes of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Act 37 of 1904, The Chinese Exclusion Act.

2. Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek and Transvaal Colony

Codex van de locale wetten Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, Wet. no. 3, 1885, omtrent Koelies, Arabieren en ander Aziaten.  
Laws of the Transvaal up to 1899, Law no. 15, The gold law of the South African Republic, 1898.  
Ordinances of the Transvaal, 1904, Labour Importation Ordinance.

3. Oranje-Vrijstaat and Orange River Colony

Wetboek van die Oranje-Vrijstaat, Hoofdstuk xxxiii, 1891, Wet tot tegengaan van die instrooming van Aziatische kleurlingen.

4. Colony of Natal

Statutes of Natal, Act 1 of 1897, The Immigration Restriction Act.

5. Union and Republic of South Africa

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 21 of 1913, Immigrants Regulation. ✓

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 5 of 1927, Immorality.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 8 of 1930, Immigration Quota.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 19 of 1933, Immigration (Amendment). ✓

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 1 of 1937, Aliens.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 55 of 1949, Prohibition of Mixed Marriages.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 21 of 1950, Immorality Amendment.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 30 of 1950, Population Registration.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 41 of 1950, Group Areas.

Statutes of the Union of South Africa, Act 46 of 1951, Separate Representation of Voters. ✓

Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 49 of 1953, Reservation of Separate Amenities. ✓

Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 101 of 1984, Group Areas Amendment.

Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 72 of 1985, Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Amendment.

Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 53 of 1986, Matters concerning Admission to and Residence in the Republic Amendment.

Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 100 of 1990, Discontinuing Legislation regarding Public Amenities.

Statutes of the Republic of South Africa, Act 114 of 1991, Population Registration Repeal.

Union of South Africa Year Book, 1910-17.

6. British Parliamentary Papers

- Cd. 1640, "Minutes of proceedings of the South African Customs Union Conference, held at Bloemfontein", xlv, March 1903.  
 Cd. 1945, "Correspondence re the introduction of Chinese labour to the Transvaal", lxii, February 1904.  
 Cd. 2026, "Further correspondence relating to the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance", lxi, May 1904.  
 Cd. 2183, "Further correspondence relating to Transvaal Labour in the mines", lxii, 1904.  
 Cd. 2786, "Further correspondence relating to labour in the Transvaal mines", lxxx, 1906.  
 Cd. 2819, "Transvaal, Further correspondence relating to labour in the Transvaal mines", lxxx, January 1906.

## IV. INTERVIEWS

- Armstrong, J., Field Director, Library of Congress, 1993.  
 Home Affairs Official, 1992.  
 Loh, H., Taiwanese Ambassador to South Africa, 1994.  
 Sung, S., Professor, Chinese Cultural University, Taipei, 1992.

## V. NEWSPAPERS

Beeld  
Cape Times  
Cape Times Weekly Edition  
Citizen  
Daily Despatch  
Daily News  
De Zuid Afrikaan Verenigd met Ons Land  
Die Burger  
Die Oosterlig  
Die Transvaler  
Die Vaderland  
East Rand Express  
Eastern Province Herald  
Evening Post  
Financial Mail  
Indian Opinion  
Natal Mercury  
North China Herald  
Pretoria News  
Rand Daily Mail  
Rapport  
South African News  
Sowetan  
Sunday Express  
Sunday Tribune  
The Argus  
The Owl  
The Reef  
The Star  
The Times (London)  
Transvaal Leader  
Weekend Post

## VI. ARTICLES

1. Contemporary publications

- Aborigines Protection Society, "The Transvaal and Chinese labour", The Aborigines', Friend, February 1904, pp. 1-6.
- A British colonist, "British rule in the Transvaal", The Contemporary Review, 459, March 1904, pp. 329-51.
- Anon., "Chinese labour on the Rand", All the World, May 1904, pp. 243-5.
- Anon., "Chinese labour for the Rand: Parliamentary Papers", The Anti-slavery Reporter, March-May 1904, pp. 51-4.
- Anon., "Greater Britain", The National Review, January 1904, pp. 832-36.
- Anon., "Greater Britain", The National Review, January 1905, pp. 934-36.
- Anon., "The South African strike", The Round Table, 14, March 1914, pp. 231-54.
- Anon., "White men employed on Transvaal mines", The African Monthly, 1, 2, January 1902, pp. 244-51.
- Anon., "Yellow slavery in the Transvaal", The Truth on the Congo Free State, 27, 15 December 1905, pp. 249-54.
- A.W., "Yellow slavery - and white", Westminster Review, clxi, 5 May 1904, pp. 477-491.
- Beesly, E.S., "Yellow labour", Positivist Review, April 1904, pp. 79-82.
- Birnbaum, D., "Chinese labour in the Transvaal", The Independent Review, June 1905, pp. 142-53.
- Boscawen, A.G., "British policy in the Transvaal", The National Review, June 1907, pp. 571-82.
- Burns, J., "Slavery in South Africa", The Independent Review, May 1904, pp. 594-611.
- Cantlie, J., "Importation of Chinese into South Africa", The Journal of Tropical Medicine, 15 March 1904, pp. 91-2.
- Cartwright, A., "South African labour questions", Westminster Review, July 1893, pp. 46-9.
- Chaplin, F.D., "The labour question in the Transvaal", The National Review, April 1903, pp. 284-99.
- Chaplin, F.D., "The labour conditions in the Transvaal", The National Review, February 1905, pp. 929-1008.
- Chaplin, F.D., "The labour question in the Transvaal", The National Review, January 1906, pp. 835-49.
- Cooke, C.K., "Why Asiatic labour is necessary for the Rand: The facts and figures", The Empire Review, November 1903, pp. 361-69.
- Cooke, C.K., "Chinese labour: Its moral, economic and imperial aspects", The Empire Review, January 1904, pp. 204-35.
- Cooke, C.K., "Chinese labour in the Transvaal", Empire Review, February 1906, pp. 13-44.
- Cooke, C.K., "Chinese labour and after the Transvaal constitution", The Empire Review, March 1906, pp. 103-12.
- Creswell, F.H.P., "The Transvaal labour problem", The National Review, November 1902, pp. 443-56.
- Creswell, F.H.P., "The Chinese in South Africa", The Independent Review, February 1904, pp. 124-36.

- Des Voeux, W., "Chinese labour in the Transvaal: A justification", The Nineteenth Century and After, xix-xx, 350, April 1906, pp. 581-94.
- Dobbie, I., "Chinese labour", Macmillan's Magazine, August 1906, pp.787-800.
- Dyer, E.J., "The South African labour question", The Contemporary Review, March 1903, pp. 439-45.
- Goldman, C.S., "The labour problem in South Africa", The Empire Review, 5, April 1903, pp. 233-9.
- Goldman, C.S., "South Africa and her labour problem", The Nineteenth Century, 55, May 1904, pp. 848-62.
- Hales, F., "Transvaal labour difficulties", The Fortnightly Review, July 1904, pp. 110-123.
- Leys, P., "South Africa: Chinese labour for the Rand", The Nineteenth Century and After, 51, Jan-June 1902, pp. 181-6.
- Maitland, W., "The Chinaman in California and South Africa", The Contemporary Review, 480, December 1905, pp. 818-28.
- Maxim, H.S., "The Chinese and the South African labour question", Fortnightly Review, March 1903, pp. 506-11.
- Mills, J.S., "Chinese labour and the government", Fortnightly Review, lxxix, 1906, pp. 648-59.
- Neame, L.E., "Oriental labour in South Africa", The Annals of the American Academy, xxxiv, 2, September 1909, pp.176-82.
- Pearce, T.W., "Chinese coolie labour in South Africa: A statement from the Chinese missionary standpoint", Chronicle of the London Missionary Society, September 1904, pp. 226-8.
- Perry, F., "The Transvaal labour problem", African Monthly, 1 December 1906, pp. 348-61.
- Samuel, H., "The Chinese labour question", The Contemporary Review, lxxxv, April 1904, pp. 457-67.
- Stead, W.T., "South Africa and its problems: The Chinese question", Review of Reviews, June 1904, pp. 37-46.
- Stobart, M.A., "The Asiatic invasion of the Transvaal", Fortnightly Review, lxxxi, June 1907, pp. 292-300.
- Thompson, H.C., "Chinese labour and imperial responsibility", The Contemporary Review, March 1906, pp. 430-7.
- Wybergh, W., "The Transvaal and the new government", The Contemporary Review, January-June 1906, pp. 313-23.

## 2. Later publications

- Achmat, Z., "'Apostles of civilised vice': 'Immoral practices' and 'Unnatural vice' in South African prisons and compounds, 1890-1920", Social Dynamics, 19, 2, 1993, pp. 92-110.
- Anon., "Business brief: The Chinese abroad - rich not red", The Economist, 219, 7339, April 1984, pp. 82-3.
- Anon., "Chinese community: Rising star", Financial Mail, 78, 17 October, 1980, pp. 266-8.
- Anon., "Chinese community: No politics please", Financial Mail, 81, 2, 10 July 1981, p. 163.
- Anon., "Chinese want to be accepted", Pretoria News, 11 October 1971.
- Anon., "City banquet for Chinese premier", Pretoria News, 11 March 1980.
- Anon., "More Chinese seek white status", Sunday Times, 11 March 1962.

- Anon., "PW may act on colour bar love", Sunday Times, 25 November 1979.
- Anon., "Stop the brain drain of South Africa's Chinese", Pretoria News, 12 October 1971.
- Atmore A. and Marks, S., "The imperial factor in South Africa in the nineteenth century: Towards a reassessment", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies, iii, 1, October 1974, pp. 105-39.
- Bank, A., "The great debate and the origins of South African historiography", Journal of African History, 38, 1997, pp. 261-81.
- Botha, W., "Chinese puzzle: political status in South Africa", Fair Lady, 19, 25, 28 November 1984, pp. 90-1.
- Boyd, M., "Oriental immigration: The experience of the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino population in the United States", International Review, 58, 1, 1971, pp.48-61.
- Bradlow, E., "The 'great fear' at the Cape of Good Hope, 1851-1852", The International Journal of African Historical Studies, 22, 3, 1989, pp. 401-21.
- Chan, A.B., "'Orientalism' and image making: The sojourners in Canadian history", Journal of Ethnic Studies, 9, 3, 1981, pp. 37-46.
- Chan, S., "The writing of Asian American history", Organization of American historians: Magazine of History, 10, 4, Summer 1996, pp. 8-17.
- Chang, C.Y., "Overseas Chinese in China's policy", China Quarterly, June 1980, pp. 281-90.
- Chang, S., "The distribution and occupations of overseas Chinese", Geographical Review, 58, 1, 1971, pp. 48-61.
- Collins, F., "Perspective: It's status quo for Wang Fung Ho", Personality, 8 October 1970, pp. 67-9.
- Crissman, L.W., "The segmentary structure of urban overseas Chinese communities", Man, 2, June 1967, pp. 185-204.
- Cronje, J.M., "Die Sjiniese in Suid-Afrika en hul godsdiens", Iswen-Kommunikasie, October 1982, pp. 1-40.
- Cushman, J.W., "A 'colonial casualty': The Chinese community in Australian historiography", Asian Studies Association of Australian Review, 7, April, 1984, pp.100-13.
- Dagut, S., "Paternalism and social distance: British settlers' racial attitudes, 1850s-1890s", South African Historical Journal, 37, November 1997, pp. 3-20.
- Daniels, R., "Chinese and Japanese as urban Americans, 1850-1940", History Teacher, 25, 4, 1992, pp. 427-41.
- Daniels, R., "Westerners from the East: Oriental immigrants reappraised", Pacific Historical Review, 35, November 1966, pp. 373-83.
- Davies, R., "Mining capital, the state and unskilled white workers in South Africa, 1901-1913", Journal of Southern African Studies, 3, 1, October 1976, pp. 46-69.
- Dart, R.A., "The historical succession of cultural impacts upon South Africa", Nature, 21 March 1975, pp. 425-9.
- Day, D., "Aliens in a hostile land: A re-appraisal of Australian history", Journal of Australian History, 38, 1958, pp. 3-15.
- Denoon, D.J.N., "The Transvaal labour crises, 1901-1906", Journal of African History, viii, 3, 1967, pp. 481-94.
- Denoon, D.J.N., "'Capitalist influence' and the Transvaal government during the Crown Colony period, 1900-1906", The Historical Journal, xi, 2, 1968, pp. 301-31.

- Denoon, D.J.N., "Capital and capitalists in the Transvaal in the 1890s and 1900s", The Historical Journal, 23, 1, 1980, pp. 111-32.
- Duggan, A., "The invisible people: Myths and mysteries of SA's Chinese community", Sunday Times, 16 February 1997.
- Edgecombe, D.R., "The non-racial franchise in Cape politics, 1853-1910", Kleio, 10, 1978, pp. 65-80.
- Etherington, N.A., "Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation in the 1870s", Journal of African History, 20, 1979, pp. 235-53.
- Farley, M. F., "The Chinese coolie trade, 1845-1875", Journal of Asian and African Studies, iii, 1968, pp. 257-70.
- Fouche, J.H., "Die Asiaate-vraagstuk in die dae van die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek", Historical Studies, 7, 2-3, 1946, pp. 49-122.
- Fried, M.H., "Preface" in M.H. Fried (ed.), Colloquium of overseas Chinese, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1958.
- Fripp, C.E., "Chinese medieval trade with Africa", Nada, 17, 1940, pp. 18-25.
- Galt, W.P.C., "The Rand 'crisis'", Natal University Law Review, 1, 4, 1975, pp. 191-9.
- Garson, N.G., "'Het Volk': The Botha-Smuts party in the Transvaal, 1904-1911", The Historical Journal, ix, 1, 1966, pp. 101-32.
- Godley, M.R., "The sojourners: Returned overseas Chinese in the People's Republic of China", Pacific Affairs, 62, Fall 1989, pp. 330-52.
- Groenewald, C., "South Africa's Chinese", South African Panorama, 25, 10, 1980, pp. 6-9.
- Ha, M., "Cultural identities in the Chinese diaspora", Mots Pluriels, 7, 1998, 1-7.
- Harding, H., "The concept of 'Greater China': Themes, variations and reservations", The China Quarterly, December 1993, pp. 660-86.
- Harries, P., "Symbols and sexuality: Culture and identity on the early Witwatersrand gold mines", Gender and History, 2, 3, Autumn 1990, pp. 318-36.
- Harris, K.L., "Chinese merchants on the Rand, c. 1850-1910", South African Historical Journal, 33, November 1995, pp. 155-68.
- Harris, K.L., "Commentary on overseas Chinese studies in South Africa", ISSCO Bulletin, 2, 1, March 1994, p. 5.
- Harris, K.L., "Early trade unionism on the gold mines of South Africa and Australia", Historia, 35, 2, November 1990, pp. 76-97.
- Harris, K.L., "Rand capitalists and Chinese resistance", Contree, 35, June 1994, pp. 19-31.
- Harris, K.L., "The Chinese in South Africa: A preliminary overview to 1910", Kleio, xxvi, 1994, pp. 9-26.
- Harris, K.L., "The South African Chinese: A community record of a neglected minority", South African Historical Journal, 36 May 1997, pp. 316-25.
- Hastings, T., "Said's 'Orientalism' and the discourse of (hetero)sexuality", Canadian Review of American Studies, 23, 1, Fall, 1992, pp. 127-47.
- Ho, U., "Chinese community in search of an identity", The Star, 23 January 1997, p. 13.
- Holz, P., "Yellow men - Yellow gold", The Reef, October 1981 - February 1982.
- Huck, A., "Australian attitudes to China and the Chinese", Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, 11, 1984, pp. 157-68.

- Hu-Dehart, E., "Chinese coolie labour in Cuba in the nineteenth century: Free labour or neo-slavery", Slavery and Abolition, 14, 1, April 1993, pp. 67-86.
- Human, L., Fok, K.Y. and Chorn, N., "Marginality and competitive advantage: The implications of the opening of CBDs for Chinese businesses", South African Journal of Business Management, 18, 1, March 1987, pp. 133-44.
- Hunt, J.D., "Gandhi and the black people of South Africa", Gandhi Marg, 11, 1, April-June 1989, pp. 7-24.
- Huttenback, R.A., "No strangers within the gates: Attitudes and policies towards the non-white residents of the British Empire of settlement", The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 1, 1972-73, pp. 271-302.
- Ingils, C., "Chinese in Australia", International Migration Review, 6, 3, Fall 1972, pp. 266-81.
- Jeeves, A.H., "The control of migratory labour on South African gold mines in the era of Kruger and Milner", Journal of Southern African Studies, 2, 1, October 1975, pp. 3-29.
- Jeeves, A.H., "Over-reach: The South African gold mines and the struggle for labour of Zambesia, 1890-1920", Canadian Journal of African Studies, 17, 3, pp. 393-412.
- Jones, I., "Instant noodles to the rescue for this author", Sunday Times Metro, 5 January 1997, p. 4.
- Katz, E., "White workers' grievances and the industrial colour bar, 1902-1913", The South African Journal of Economics, 42, 1974, pp. 127-56.
- Kennedy, B., "Missionaries, black converts, and separatists on the Rand, 1886-1910: From accommodation to resistance", The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies, 20, 2, May 1992, pp. 196-222.
- Kubicek, R., "Finance capital and South African gold mining 1886-1914", The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies, iii, 3, 1975, pp. 386-95.
- Lee, S.M., "Female immigrants and labor in colonial Malaya: 1860-1947", International Migration Review, 23, Summer, 1989, pp. 301-31.
- Lehmann, J., "The case of the Chinese coolies", History Today, 24, 1, 1974, pp. 53-8.
- Legassick, M., "South Africa: capital accumulation and violence", Economy and Society, iii, 1974, pp. 253-91.
- Levy, N., "Problems of acquisition of labour for the South African gold mining industry: The Asian labour alternative and the defence of the wage structure", Southern African research in progress, Collected papers, iii, University of York, 1978.
- Lewin, G., "Chinesische arbeiter in den goldbergwerken des Transvaal 1904 bis 1910", (Chinese workers in the goldmines of the Transvaal 1904 to 1910) Jahrbuch fur Wirtschafts-geschichte, 1, 1981, pp. 87-106.
- Lewsen, P., "The Cape liberal tradition - myth or reality", Race, 13, 1971, pp. 65-80.
- Lian, K. F., "The socio-political process of identity formation in an ethnic community: The Chinese in New Zealand", Ethnic and Racial Studies, 11, 4, November 1988, pp. 506-32.
- Mackie, H., "New history has been well researched", Business Day, 2 December 1996, p. 13.

- Markus, A., "Chinese in Australian history", Meanjin, 42, 1, March 1983, pp. 85-93.
- Markus, A., "Explaining the treatment of non-European immigrants in nineteenth century Australia", Labour History, 48, 1985, pp. 47-56.
- Mawby A.A., "Capital, government and politics in the Transvaal 1900-1907: A revision and a reversion", Historical Journal, xvii, 2, 1974, pp. 387-415.
- Moodie, D., "Migrancy and male sexuality on the South African gold mines", Journal of Southern African Studies, 14, 2, 1988, pp. 228-56.
- Moroney, S., "Mine workers protest on the Witwatersrand, 1901-1912", South African Labour Bulletin, 3, 5, 1977, pp. 5-24.
- Moses, J.A., "The Coolie labour question and German colonial policy in Samoa, 1900-1914", Journal of Pacific History, viii, 1973, pp. 101-24.
- Nel, J.G., "Ruimtelike segregasie en marginaliteit: Die Chinese gemeenskap van Port Elizabeth", South African Geographer, 20, 1/2, 1992/1993, pp. 100-15.
- Newbury, C., "Labour migration in the imperial phase: An essay in interpretation", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, iii, 2, January 1975, pp. 234-56.
- Oddie, G., "The lower class Chinese and the merchant elite in Victoria, 1870-1890", Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand, 10, 37, November 1961, pp. 65-70.
- Okihiro, G.Y., "Teaching Asian American history", Organization of American historians: Magazine of History, 10, 4, Summer 1996, pp. 3-7.
- Paver, F.R., "Far Eastern contacts with southern Africa", South African Journal of Science, xxxix, January 1943, pp. 89-94.
- Poston, D.L. and Yu, M., "The distribution of the overseas Chinese in the contemporary world", International Migration Review, xxiv, 3, Fall 1990, pp. 480-508.
- Power, P., "Gandhi in South Africa", Journal of Modern African Studies, 7, 3, 1969, pp. 441-55.
- Price, C., "'White' restrictions on 'coloured' immigration", Race, vii, 3, 1966, pp. 217-34.
- Rebello, D.J.S., "The Chinese extraction group in Mozambique", Boletim da Sociedade de Estudos de Mocambique, 39, 1970, pp. 133-42.
- Richardson, P., "Coolies and Randlords: The North Randfontein Chinese miners' 'strike' of 1905", Journal of Southern African Studies, ii, 2, April 1976, pp. 151-77. ✓
- Richardson, P., "Coolies, Peasants and Proletarians: The origins of Chinese labourers in the South African gold mines, 1904-1907", Southern African research in progress, Collected papers, iii, University of York, 1978.
- Richardson, P., "The recruiting of Chinese indentured labour for the South African gold mines, 1903-1908", Journal of African History, xviii, 1, 1977, pp. 85-108.
- Robertson, H.M., "The economic development of the Cape under van Riebeeck, Part I", The South African Journal of Economics, 13, 1, March 1945, pp. 1-17.
- Robins, M., "SA's Chinese still proving they are true survivors", Cape Argus, 10 February 1997, p. 8.

- Rumney, R., "Not white, not black and ignored by apartheid: The twilight story of the SA Chinese", The Sunday Independent, 6 July 1997, p. 21.
- Schwarz, E.H.L., "The Chinese connection with Africa", Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, iv, 1938, pp. 175-93.
- Schwarz, E.H.L., "The Chinese in Africa", The South African Nation, 12, February 1927, pp. 7-8.
- Shain, M., "Diamonds, pogroms and undesirables - Anti-alienism and legislation in the Cape Colony, 1890-1906", South African Historical Journal, 12, November 1980, pp. 13-28.
- Sivaramakrishnan, K., "Situating the subaltern: history and anthropology in the subaltern studies project", Journal of Historical Sociology, 8, 4, December 1995, pp. 395-427.
- Smedley, L., "White attitudes and South Africa's Chinese: A study of marginal status", Humanitas, 6, 2, 1980, pp. 135-40.
- Song, A., "Chinese religion: The Chinese community in South Africa", Religion in Southern Africa, 3, 1, January 1982, pp. 19-30.
- Southey, N., "Uncovering homosexuality in colonial South Africa: The case of Bishop Twells", South African Historical Journal, 36, November 1997, pp. 48-67.
- Stone II, J.H., "Debate: M.K. Gandhi: Some experiments with truth", Journal of Southern African Studies, 16, 4, December 1990, pp. 721-50.
- Sung, S., "Chinese labour in the Transvaal, 1904-1907", Chinese Culture, 2, 2, 1959, pp. 71-117.
- Suryadinata, L., "Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia: Problems and prospects", Journal of International Affairs, 41, 1, 1987, pp. 135-51.
- Sussens-Messerer, V., "Putting down roots in the golden mountain", Sunday Star, 25 October 1992.
- Swart, M.J., "Chinese mynarbeiders", Taalgenoot, December 1965, pp. 10-7.
- Thorpe, K.L., "The origins and early years of a multi-cultural Reef labour society", Historia, 31, 2, October 1986, pp. 39-51.
- Ticktin, D., "White labour's attitude, 1902-1904, towards the importation of indentured Chinese labourers by the Transvaal Chamber of Mines", Africa Seminar: Collected Papers, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1, 1978.
- Trapido, S., "South Africa in a comparative study of industrialization", Journal of Developmental Studies, vii, 1970-1971, pp. 309-20.
- Trapido, S., "The origins of the Cape franchise qualification of 1853", Journal of African History, v, i, 1964, pp. 37-54.
- Van Heek, F., "Die ontwikkeling van het Chineesche immigranten-probleem in Nederland", Mens en maatschappij, 13, 1937, pp. 409-30.
- Van Onselen, C., "Randlords and rotgut 1886-1903", History Workshop Journal, 2, 1976, pp. 33-89.
- Van Onselen, C., "The social and economic underpinning of paternalism and violence in the maize farms of the south-western Transvaal, 1900-1950", Journal of Historical Sociology, 5, 2, June 1992, pp. 127-60.
- Wang, G., "Among non-Chinese", Daedalus, 120, 2, 1991, pp. 135-57.
- Wang, G., "Greater China and the Chinese overseas", China Quarterly, December 1993, pp. 926-48.

- Wang, G., "Message from the president", ISSCO Bulletin, 1,1, September 1993, pp. 1, 4.
- Wang, G., "The Nanhai trade: A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China seas", Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, xxxi, 182, 1958, pp. 2-135.
- Wang, S., "The attitude of the Ch'ing court toward Chinese Emigration", Chinese Culture, 9, 4, 1968, pp. 62-76.
- Wilton, J., "Chinese whispers from New South Wales", History Today, 47, 11, November 1997, pp. 45-51.
- Willers, D., "The early Chinese mariners, Natal and the future", Natalia, 21, December 1991, pp. 7-16.
- Witz, L., "History of the people, for the people and by the people", South African International, 19, 1, July 1988, pp. 90-5.
- Wood, F. (ed.), "British library occasional papers", Chinese studies: Papers presented at a colloquium at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1988.
- Wong, K.S., "Crossing the borders of the personal and the public: Family history and the teaching of Asian American history", Organization of American Historians: Magazine of History, 10, 4, Summer 1996, pp. 28-34.
- Wong, K.S., "The transformation of culture: Three Chinese views of America", Australian Quarterly, 48, 2, June 1996, pp. 201-12.
- Yang, C.Y., "Overseas Chinese in China's policy", The China Quarterly, June 1980, pp. 281-303.
- Yao, S., "The geographical distribution of floods and droughts in Chinese history, 206 B.C. - A.D. 1911", The Far Eastern Quarterly, ii, 4, 1943, pp. 357-80.
- Yap, M., "Portrait of South Africa's Chinese", Inside Mail Rand Daily Mail, 7 February 1977, p. 9.
- Yap, M., "Researching the history of the South African Chinese", Journal of the Johannesburg Historical Foundation, 10, October 1989, pp. 27-30.
- Yong, C.F., "Patterns and traditions of loyalty in the Chinese community of Singapore, 1900-1941", The New Zealand Journal of History, 4, 1, 1970, pp. 77-87.
- Young, G., "Piecing together the Chinese jigsaw", Cape Times, 23 May 1997, p. 14.
- Yu, G.T., "China's role in Africa", Annales of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 432, July 1977, pp. 96-109.

### 3. Book reviews

- Harries, P., Review of The foundations of the South African cheap labour system by N. Levy and Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in International Journal of African Historical Studies, 17, 14, 1984, pp. 735-7.
- Johnstone, F., Review of A people's history of South Africa, Vol.1: Gold and workers by L. Callinicos; The highest stage of white supremacy: The origins of segregation in South Africa and the American South by J. Cell; Working for Boroko: The origins of coercive labour in South Africa by M. Lacey and The foundations of the South African cheap labour system by N. Levy in Journal of Southern African Studies, 11, 1, October 1984, pp. 164-8.

- Kubicek, R., Review of Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in The American Historical Review, 88, October 1983, p. 1041.
- Newbury, C., Review of Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in Journal of African History, 24, 3, 1983, pp. 400-1.
- Simpson, H., Review of Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal by P. Richardson in Journal of Contemporary Asia, 14, 3, 1984, pp. 374-5.

#### VII. UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

- Armstrong, J., "The Chinese at the Cape in the DEIC period, 1652-1795". (Slave Route Project Conference, Cape Town, October 1997). (First written in 1979).
- Harries, P., "Sex and sokisi: Interpreting homosexuality in the compounds on the goldmines of the early Witwatersrand". (International Mining History Congress, German Mining Museum, Bochum, September 1989).
- Harris, K.L., "Gandhi, the Chinese and passive resistance". (Conference on Gandhi and his Significance: Centenary Celebrations, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, June 1993).
- Harris, K.L., "The Chinese in South Africa to 1910: A preliminary overview". (Academica Sinica, Taipei and Institute of Asian Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, June 1992).
- Harris, K.L., "The Chinese 'South Africans': An interstitial community". (Luodi-shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992).
- Harris, K.L., "The South African Chinese: An economic threat". (International Symposium on Ethnic Chinese Economy, University of Shantou, People's Republic of China, November 1993).
- Jeeves, A.H., "Het Volk and the gold mines: The debate on labour policy 1905-1910". (African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, June 1980).
- Jeeves, A.H., "Hobson's The war in south Africa: A reassessment". (Rethinking the South African War Conference, University of South Africa, Pretoria, August 1998).
- Kuhn, P.A., "The ancestral land: Thinking about the history of Chinese overseas". (The Morrison lecture, Australian National University, 1997).
- Lee, G.B., "Health in the city: Roundtable discussion". (History of Public Health - Health in the City Conference, Liverpool, September 1997).
- Malan, A., "East meets West: Freeblack-Freeburgher households in early 18th century Cape Town". (Society of Historical Archaeologists Conference, Washington D.C., January 1995).
- Malherbe, C.M., "Indentured labour: Towards an understanding of its place in the spectrum of unfree labour systems practised in South Africa". (Cape Slavery and After Conference, University of Cape Town, August 1989).
- McNamara, J.K., "The development of a recruitment infrastructure: Labour migration routes to Witwatersrand gold mines and compound accommodation, 1899-1912". (University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February 1978).

- Moroney, S., "The development of the compound as a mechanism of worker control, 1900-1912". (University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February 1978).
- Richardson, P., "The role of the state in the labour market for the gold mines: The case of Chinese labour, 1903-1907". (Conference on Southern African History, University of the Witwatersrand, April 1976).
- Song, A., "Political transformation and the Chinese in South Africa: An examination of the Chinese response to the changes occurring in South Africa's political arena". (Luodi-Shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992).
- Song, A., "The Chinese in South Africa: An examination of their immigration, segregation and integration experiences". (World Chinese Conference, Mauritius, April 1992).
- Sung, B.L., "Archival records of Chinese immigrants". (Luodi-Shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992).
- Tayal, M., "Indian passive resistance in the Transvaal: 1906-1908". (University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February 1981).
- Thompson, A., "Pressure groups, propaganda and the state: The manipulation of public opinion in Britain during the South African War". (Rethinking the South African War Conference, University of South Africa, August 1998).
- Ticktin, D., "Political intimidation by Rand mineowners with particular reference to the strange political career, 1902-1907, of Thomas Ratcliff, a miners' spokesman". (University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February 1978).
- Ticktin, D., "The white labour movement in South Africa, 1902-1910, and working class solidarity". (African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, April 1976).
- Tseng, F., "Ethnicity and circumstance: The Chinese in Surinam and the Netherlands". (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, May 1990).
- Wang, G., "The status of overseas Chinese studies". (Luodi-Shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992).
- Wang, L., "Opening address: Luodi-Shenggen International Conference on Overseas Chinese". (Luodi-Shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992).
- Yap, M. and Man, D.L., "A community in transition: A Perspective on the South African Chinese". (Luodi-Shenggen, University of Berkeley, November 1992).

#### VIII. THESES

- Baker, J.J., "The foreign labour contract system in the South African gold mining industry: The importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal, 1904-1907". (M.A. thesis, University of Sussex, 1978).
- Bhatt, P.M., "A History of Asians in Kenya, 1900-1970". (D.Phil. thesis, Howard University, 1976).
- Bradlow, E., "Immigration into the Union, 1910-1948: Policies and attitudes". (Ph. D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978).
- Brown, E.H., "The Transvaal labour ordinance and its impact on British politics, 1904-1906". (Ph.D. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1972).

- Chen, H., "Chinese immigration into the United States: An analysis of changes in immigration policy". (Ph. D. thesis, The Florence Heller Graduate School, 1980).
- Davis, E.E., "Die herkoms na die identiteitsbewussyn van die Sjinese bevolking van Port Elizabeth". (M.A. thesis, University of Port Elizabeth, 1988).
- De Villiers, H.H., "Generaal Botha en die Sjinese vraagstuk in Transvaal, 1903 tot 1910". (M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1968).
- Esterhuizen, S.J., "Die ekonomiese en maatskaplike toestande van die gewese Republikeinse burgers in die Transvaal-kolonie, 1900-1910". (D. Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1965).
- Fine, H.B., "The administration of justice at the Cape of Good Hope, 1795-1828". (Ph. D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991).
- Gordon, S.I., "The Chinese labour controversy in British politics and policy-making". (Ph.D thesis, University of Ulster, 1987).
- Grey, P.C., "The development of the gold mining industry on the Witwatersrand, 1902-1910". (D. Litt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa, 1969).
- Grobler, F.J., "Die invloed van geskoolde blanke arbeid op die Suid-Afrikaanse politiek van 1886-1924". (Ph. D thesis, University of Potchefstroom, 1968).
- Katz, E. N., "The origins and early development of trade unionism in the Transvaal, 1902-1913". (M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1973).
- Keen, S.L., "A study of the political and economic situation of Port Elizabeth Chinese traders and the influence of the 15 July - 15 November 1985 consumer boycott". (Honours thesis, University of Port Elizabeth, 1985).
- King, G.L., "Domestic religious beliefs and practices amongst Chinese in Johannesburg". (M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1975).
- Kleynhans, W.A., "Politieke strominge en verantwoordelike bestuur in Transvaal, 1905-1909". (M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1952).
- Luk Sun, G., "Some aspects of prejudices and discrimination affecting the Chinese in Johannesburg". (Honours thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1965).
- Mawby, A.A., "The political behaviour of the British population of the Transvaal, 1902-1907". (Ph.D thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1969).
- Meyer, I.M., "Die Chinese arbeidsvraagstuk van die Witwatersrandse goudvelde, 1903-1910". (D. Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1946).
- Moroney, S., "Industrial conflict in a labour repressive economy: Black labour in the Transvaal gold mines, 1901-1912". (Honours thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1976).
- Pineo, H., "Diaspora Chinoise dans l'océan Indien occidental". (Ph. D. thesis, University of Aix en Provence, 1978).
- Reeves, J.A., "Chinese labour in South Africa, 1903-1910". (M.A. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1954).
- Shain, M., "The Jewish population and politics in the Cape Colony". (M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1978).

- Smedley, L.N., "A sociological analysis of some aspects of the life of South Africa's Chinese community". (D. Litt et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, 1980).
- Stacey, J.H., "Economic, social and labour aspects of the Chinese labour experiment in the Transvaal, 1903-1907, in relation to the development of race relations in South Africa". (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1977).
- Sung, S., "Chinese labour in the Transvaal, 1904-1907". (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1957).
- Thorpe, K.L., "Early strikes on the Witwatersrand gold mines (1886-1907), with specific reference to the 1907 strike". (M.A. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1986).
- Ticktin, D., "The origins of the South African Labour Party, 1888-1910". (Ph. D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1973).
- Ts'ai S.H., "Reaction to Exclusion: Ch'ing Attitudes towards Overseas Chinese in the United States, 1848-1906". (Ph.D. thesis, University of Oregon, 1970).
- Tseng, H., "The adaptation of Taiwanese immigrants in the Republic of South Africa". (D. Phil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1991).
- Tuck, B., "The history of the Salvation Army in South Africa". (M. Th, thesis, University of South Africa, 1982).
- Van Aardt, J.M.H., "Die Botha-bewind in Transvaal, 1907- 1910". (Ph. D. thesis, University of Potchefstroom, 1958).
- Van der Merwe, J., "Genl. Louis Bothase rol in die Transvaalse geskiedenis, 1902-1907". (M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1988).
- Van Helten, J.J., "British and European economic investment in the Transvaal with specific reference to the Witwatersrand gold fields and district, 1886-1910". (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1981).
- Van Tonder, C.J., "Chinese van die R.S.A.: 'n Sosiologiese ondersoek". (M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria, 1972).
- Weeks, J.A., "The Controversy over Chinese labour in the Transvaal". (Ph.D. thesis, Ohio State University, 1968).
- Wong, K.S., "Encountering the other: Chinese immigration and its impact on Chinese and American worldviews, 1875-1905". (Ph. D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1992).
- Wong, T.T., "The Chinese response to the American environment, 1849-1902". (Ph. D. thesis, Columbia University, 1992).
- Williams, K., "The Imperial South African Association, Imperialist London and the South African crisis, 1896-1910". (M.A. thesis, University of London, 1979).

## IX. BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

### 1. Contemporary publications

- Anon., The Witwatersrand Gold Mines and Responsible Government, n.p., n.d.
- Anon., Chinese for the Chamber of Mines, Poverty for the people, n.p., n.d.
- Anon., The Chinese labour question: Speeches by H. Campbell-Bannerman and H.H. Asquith, London, 1904.
- Anon., The Transvaal, unskilled labour, Westminster, 1906.
- An Eyewitness, John Chinaman on the Rand, London, 1905.

- Barrow, J., An account of travels into the interior of southern Africa, ii, London, 1804.
- Barrow, J., A voyage to Cochinchina in the years 1792 and 1793, London, 1806.
- Barrow, J., Travels in China, London, 1804.
- Barrow, J., Travels into the interior of southern Africa, London, 1804.
- Brothers, O.F., The first Transvaal parliament, Johannesburg, 1907.
- Bell, H.T. and C.A. Lane (eds), A guide to the Transvaal, Johannesburg, n.d.
- Bellairs, K.F., The Witwatersrand gold fields: A trip to Johannesburg and back, London, 1889.
- Burt, T., A visit to the Transvaal: Labour - white, black and yellow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1905.
- Cooke, C.K., Chinese labour in the Transvaal, London, 1904.
- Coolidge, M.R., Chinese immigration, New York, 1909.
- Creswell, F.H.P., The Chinese labour question from within, London, 1905.
- Creswell, F.H.P., The Witwatersrand gold mines and responsible government: Causes of the depression, Cape Town, 1906.
- Douglas, R.K., China, New York, 1899.
- Douglas, R.K., Society in China, London, 1895.
- Dyer Ball, J., The Chinese at home and abroad or the man of Tong and his land, London, 1911.
- Evans, M.S., The Chinese curse. What it means to Africa, Durban, 1906.
- Farrar, G., The South African labour problem, Johannesburg, 1903.
- Forbes, V.S. (ed.), Anders Sparrman: A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope towards the Antarctic polar circle round the world and the country of the Hottentots and the Caffers from the year 1772-1776, i, Cape Town, 1975.
- Forbes, V.S. (ed.), Travels and adventures in southern Africa by George Thompson, ii and iii, Cape Town, 1968.
- Forsyth, R. and Fremantle, H.E.S., Anti-Asiatic Importation League, Cape Town, 1906.
- Giles, H.A., The civilization of China, London, 1911.
- Gluckstein, S.M. (ed.), The South African year book, 1903-1904, London, 1905.
- Gluckstein, S.M., and Saxby, W.C.H., Black, white or yellow: The South African labour problem: the case for and against the introduction of Chinese coolies, London, 1904.
- Imperial South African Association, The British Guiana Ordinance 1894 and the Transvaal Chinese Ordinance, London, 1904.
- Imperial South African Association, The Chinese labour question, London, 1904.
- Imperial South African Association, The Chinese labour question: Handy notes, London, 1905.
- Imperial South African Association, Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance contrasted with other colonial immigration, London, n.d.
- Indicus, Labour and other questions in South Africa, London, 1903.
- Jennings, H., Chinese labour on the Rand, London, 1904.
- Kinloch-Cooke, Sir C., Chinese labour (in the Transvaal): A study of its moral, economic and imperial aspects, London, 1906.
- MacDonald, J.R., What I saw in the South Africa, September and October 1902, London, n.d.
- MacNamara, T.J., Chinese labour, London, 1904.

- Marien, C., Chinese vocabulary and phrase book (Northern Chinese), Johannesburg, 1905.
- Mather, W., Chinese workers on the Witwatersrand mines, Johannesburg, 1904.
- Markham, V.R., The new era in South Africa with an examination of the Chinese labour question, London, 1904.
- Mentzel, O.F., A geographical and topographical description of the Cape of Good Hope, Part I, Cape Town, 1921.
- Mentzel, O.F., A geographical and topographical description of the Cape of Good Hope, Part II, Cape Town, 1925.
- Munro, A.E., The Transvaal Chinese labour problem, London, 1905.
- Nathan, M., South Africa from within, London, n.d.
- National Liberal Federation and Liberal Central Association, The Chinese labour question, London, 1904.
- National Liberal Federation and Liberal Central Association, The spirit of slavery, London, 1904.
- National Union and Conservative Central Office, Chinese labour on the Rand, London, n.d.
- Naylor, T., Yellow labour: The truth about the Chinese in the Transvaal, n.p., 1904.
- New Reform Club, British workmen or Chinese slaves, London, 1904.
- Phillips, L., Transvaal problems: some notes on current politics, London, 1905.
- Praagh, L.V. (ed.), The Transvaal and its mines: The Encyclopedic history of the Transvaal, Johannesburg, 1906.
- Root, J.W., The South African labour question, Liverpool, 1903.
- Rose, E.B., Uncle Tom's Cabin up to date, or Chinese mine labour in South Africa, London, 1904.
- Russell, B., The problem of China, London, n.d.
- Schumacher, R.W., A Transvaal view of the Chinese labour question, London, 1906.
- Thompson, G., Travels and adventures in southern Africa, I, London, 1827.
- Thunberg, C., Travels in the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town, 1986.

## 2. Recent publications

- Alexander, G., Silent invasion: The Chinese in South East Asia, London, 1973.
- Anon., Pretoria Chinese School: 50 Anniversary, Pretoria, 1984.
- Anwar, M., Between two cultures, London, 1976.
- Banno, A., China and the West, 1858-1861: The origins of the Tsunqli Yamen, Massachusetts, 1964.
- Beinart, W., Twentieth century South Africa, New York, 1994.
- Beinart, W. and Dubow, S. (eds), Segregation and apartheid in twentieth century South Africa, London and New York, 1995.
- Benton, G. and Pieke, F. (eds), The Chinese in Europe, London, 1998.
- Beyers, C., Die Kaapse Patriotte gedurende die laaste kwart van die agtiende eeu, Pretoria, 1967.
- Beyers, C.J. (ed.), Dictionary of South African biography, iv, Pretoria, 1981.
- Bhana, S. (ed.), Essays on indentured Indians in Natal, Yorkshire, 1991.
- Bhana, S., Indentured Indian emigrants to Natal 1860-1902: A study based on ships' lists, New Delhi, 1991.

- Bhana, S. and Brain, J., Setting down roots: Indian migrants in South Africa, 1860-1911, Johannesburg, 1990.
- Bhana, S. and Pachai, B. (eds), The documentary history of Indian South Africans, Cape Town, 1984.
- Blunden, C. and Elvin, M., Cultural atlas of China, Oxford, 1983.
- Blussé, L., Strange company: Chinese settlers, mestizo women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia, Dordrecht, 1986.
- Bodde, D., Essays on Chinese civilization, Princeton, 1981.
- Boëseken, A.J., Slaves and free blacks at the Cape, 1658-1700, Cape Town, 1977.
- Brackman, A.C., The last emperor, New York, 1975.
- Brown, J. (et al), History from South Africa, Philadelphia, 1991.
- Brown, J.M., Gandhi: Prisoner of hope, London, 1989.
- Brown J.M. and Prozesky, M. (eds), Gandhi and South Africa: Principles and politics, Pietermaritzburg and New York, 1996.
- Callinicos, L., A people's history of South Africa, volume 1: Gold and workers, Cape Town, 1980.
- Cameron, T. and Spies, S.B. (eds), An illustrated history of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1986.
- Campbell, P.C., Chinese coolie emigration to countries within the British Empire, London, 1923.
- Carter, M., Voices from indenture: Experiences of Indian migrants in the British Empire, London, 1996.
- Cartwright, A.P., The gold miners, Cape Town, 1962.
- Cator, W.L., The economic position of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies, Chicago, 1936.
- Ch'en, J., China and the West: Society and culture, 1815-1937, London, 1979.
- Chen, T., Chinese migrations, with special reference to labour conditions, Washington, 1923.
- Chen, T., Emigrant communities in South China, Shanghai, 1939.
- Chesneau, J., Popular movements and secret societies in China, 1840-1950, Stanford, 1972.
- Chilvers, H.A., Out of the crucible, Johannesburg, 1948.
- Chilvers, H.A., The yellow man looks on, London, 1933.
- Chirot, D. and Reid, A. (eds), Essential outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the modern transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe, Washington, 1997.
- Choi, C.Y., Chinese migration and settlement in Australia, Sydney, 1975.
- Chu, D., Passage to the golden gate: A history of the Chinese in America to 1910, New York, 1967.
- C'hü, T., Local government in China under the C'ing, Stanford, 1969.
- Cock, J., Maids and madams: A study of the politics of exploitation, Johannesburg, 1980.
- Colvin, I., The life of Jamieson, New York, 1922.
- Comber, L.F., Chinese secret societies in Malaya: A survey of the Triad society from 1800 to 1900, New York, 1959.
- Constantine, S. (ed.), Emigrants and empire: British settlement in the dominions between the wars, Manchester, 1990.
- Coolidge, M.R., Chinese immigration, Taipei, 1968.
- Cope, R.K., Comrade Bill: The life and times of W.H. Andrews, Cape Town, n.d.
- Cotterell, A., China: A concise cultural history, London, 1988.

- Cronin, K., Colonial casualties: Chinese in early Victoria, Melbourne, 1982.
- Daniels, R., Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850, Seattle, 1988.
- Dart, R.A., The oriental horizons of Africa, Johannesburg, 1954.
- Davenport, T.R.H., The Afrikaner Bond: The history of a South African party, 1880-1911, Cape Town, 1966.
- Davenport, T.R.H., South Africa: A modern history, Bergvlei, 1988.
- Davies, R.H., Capital, state and white labour in South Africa, 1900-1960, Sussex, 1979.
- Dawson, R., The Chinese chameleon: An analysis of European conceptions of Chinese civilization, London, 1967.
- Dawson, R., The Chinese experience, London, 1978.
- De Crespigny, R., China this century, Oxford, 1992.
- Denoon, D.J.N., A grand illusion: The failure of Imperial policy during the period of reconstruction, 1900-1905, London, 1973.
- Doxey, G.V., The industrial colour bar in South Africa, Cape Town, 1961.
- Dreyer, E.L., Early Ming China: A political history 1355-1435, California, 1982.
- Duberman, M.B., Vicinus, M., and Chaucery, G (eds), Hidden from history: Reclaiming the gay and lesbian past, New York, 1989.
- Duyvendak, J.J.L., China's discovery of Africa, London, 1949.
- Eberhard, W., A history of China, London, 1948.
- Ebrey, P.B. (ed.), Chinese civilization and society, New York, 1981.
- Elphick R. and Giliomee, H. (eds), The shaping of South African society, 1652-1840, Cape Town, 1989.
- Elvin, M., The pattern of the Chinese past, London, 1973.
- Emmer, P.C. (ed.), Colonialism and immigration: Indentured labour before and after slavery, Dordrecht, 1986.
- Fairbank, J.K., China: A new history, Cambridge, 1992.
- Filesi, T., China and Africa in the Middle Ages, London, 1972.
- Fitzgerald, C.P., The southern expansion of the Chinese people, London, 1972.
- Fitzgerald, S., China and the overseas Chinese, Cambridge, 1972.
- Fong, N.B., The Chinese in New Zealand, Hong Kong, 1959.
- Genovese, E.D., Roll, Jordan, roll: The world the slaves made, New York, 1974.
- Godley, M.R., The Manderin-capitalists from Nanyang: Overseas Chinese enterprise in the modernization of China, 1893-1911, Cambridge, 1981.
- Gollin, A.M., Proconsul in politics: A study of Lord Milner in opposition and in power, Hertfordshire, 1964.
- Goodfellow, D.M., Modern economic history of South Africa, London, 1931.
- Goodman, D.S. (ed.), China and the West: Ideas and activists, Manchester, 1990.
- Goodrich, L.C., (ed.), Dictionary of Ming biography, 1368-1644, New York, 1976.
- Greif, S.W., The overseas Chinese in New Zealand, Singapore, 1974.
- Grundlingh, M.A.S., The parliament of the Cape of Good Hope, with special reference to party politics, 1872-1910, Archives Year Book for South Africa, 1969, 2, Johannesburg, 1973.
- Harries, P., Work, culture and identity: Migrant laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c.1860-1910, Johannesburg, 1992.

- Haw, S.G., China: A cultural history, London, 1990.
- Heese, H.F., Reg en onreg: Kaapse regspraak in die agtiende eeu, Bellville, 1994.
- Higgs, C., The ghost of equality: The public lives of DDT Jabavu of South Africa, 1885-1959, Cape Town, 1997.
- Horrell, M., Legislation and race relations, Johannesburg, 1963.
- Huang, T., The legal status of the Chinese abroad, Taipei, 1954.
- Huck, A., The assimilation of the Chinese in Australia, Canberra, 1970.
- Huck, A., The Chinese in Australia, Melbourne, 1968.
- Hucker, C.O., China's imperial past: An introduction to Chinese history and culture, Stanford, 1975.
- Human, L., The Chinese people of South Africa: Freewheeling on the fringes, Pretoria, 1984.
- Hunt, J.D., Gandhi and the nonconformists: Encounters in South Africa, New Delhi, 1986.
- Hutchinson, A., China's African revolution, London, 1975.
- Huttenback, R.A., Gandhi in South Africa: British imperialism and the Indian question, 1860-1914, London, 1971.
- Huttenback, R.A., Racism and Empire: White settlers and coloured immigrants in the British self-governing colonies, 1830-1910, New York, 1976.
- Hyam, R., Empire and sexuality: The British experience, Manchester, 1991.
- Hsu, F.L.K., The challenge of the American dream: The Chinese in the United states, California, 1971.
- Inglis, C., Gunasekaran, S., Sullivan, G. and Wu, C. (eds), Asians in Australia: The dynamics of migration and settlement, Singapore, 1992.
- Ip, M., Dragons on the long white cloud: The making of the Chinese New Zealanders, Birkenhead, 1996.
- Ip, M., Home away from home: Life stories of Chinese women in New Zealand, Auckland, 1990.
- Irick, R.L., Ch'ing policy towards the coolie trade, 1874-1878, Taipei, 1982.
- Jacobs, P.P. and Pauw, H. C. (eds), Die Sjinese gemeenskap van Port Elizabeth, Occasional publication 17, University of Port Elizabeth, 1988.
- Jacobsson, D., Fifty golden years of the Rand, 1886-1936, London, 1937.
- Jeeves, A.H., Migrant labour in South Africa's mining economy, Johannesburg, 1985.
- Johnstone, F., Class, race and gold, London, 1976.
- Katz, E.N., A trade union aristocracy: A history of white workers in the Transvaal and the general strike of 1913, Johannesburg, 1976.
- Keegan, T., Colonial South Africa and the origins of the racial order, Cape Town, 1996.
- Kennedy, B., A tale of two mining cities, Cape Town, 1984.
- Kirkwood, K., The Group Areas Act, n.p., n.d.
- Koutsoukis, A.J., Topics from Australian history, London, 1975.
- Latourette, K.S., A short history of the Far East, New York, 1947.
- Latourette, K.S., China, New Jersey, 1964.
- Latourette, K.S., The Chinese: Their history and culture, New York, 1964.
- Lee, R.H., The Chinese in the United State of America, Hong Kong, 1960.
- Letcher, O., The gold mines of southern Africa, London, 1936.

- Levathes, L., When China ruled the seas, New York, 1994.
- Levenson, J.A. (ed.), Circa 1492: Art in the age of exploration, Washington, 1991.
- Levy, N., The foundations of the South African cheap labour system, London, 1982.
- Lewcock, R., Early nineteenth century architecture in South Africa: A study of the interaction of two cultures, 1795-1837, Cape Town, 1963.
- Lewsen, P., John X. Merriman: Paradoxical South African statesman, Cape Town, 1982.
- Li, D.J., The essence of Chinese civilization, Toronto, 1967.
- Ling, H., Surviving on the gold mountain: A history of Chinese American women and their lives, New York, 1998.
- Loewen, J.W., The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and white, Illinois, 1971.
- Mac Crone, I.D., Race attitudes in South Africa: Historical, experimental and psychological studies, Johannesburg, 1965.
- MacKerras, C., Western images of China, Oxford, 1989.
- MacNair, H.F., The Chinese abroad: Their position and protection: A study in international law and relations, Shanghai, 1924.
- Macnab, R., Gold their touchstone: Goldfields of South Africa, 1887-1987, Johannesburg, 1987.
- Marks, S. and Richardson, P. (eds), International labour migration: Historical perspectives, London, 1984.
- Marks, S. and Trapido, S. (eds), The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth century South Africa, London and New York, 1987.
- Markus, A., Fear and hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901, Sydney, 1979.
- McCracken, J.L., The Cape parliament, 1854-1910, Oxford, 1967.
- Meng, S.M., The Tsunqli Yamen: Its organization and functions, Harvard, 1962.
- Meyer, W.M., China: An introduction, Totowa, 1978.
- Miao, T., Legal status of Chinese in the Union of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1948.
- Michael, F., China through the ages: History of the civilization, London, 1986.
- Miller, S.C., Out of the past: Gay and lesbian history from 1869 to the present, New York, 1995.
- Miller, S.C., The unwelcome immigrant: The American image of the Chinese, 1785-1882, Berkeley, 1969.
- Mirsky, J. (ed.), The great Chinese travellers, London, 1965.
- Mitchison, L., The overseas Chinese, London, 1961.
- Northrup, D., Indentured labor in the age of imperialism, 1834-1922, Cambridge, 1995.
- Pachai, B., The history of the "Indian Opinion", 1903-1914, Archives Year Book for South African History, Pretoria, 1963.
- Pachai, B., The South African Indian Question, 1860-1971, Cape Town, 1971.
- Pan, L., Sons of the Yellow Emperor, London, 1991.
- Parsons, N., A new history of South Africa, London, 1993.
- Pelliot, P. and Duyvendak, J.L.L., T'oung Pao archives, Leiden, 1938.
- Pineo, Ly-Tio-Fane H., Chinese diaspora in western Indian ocean, Mauritius, 1985.

- Pooley, C.G. and Wyle, I.D. (eds), Migrants, emigrants and immigrants, London, 1991.
- Purcell, V., The Chinese in Malaya, Oxford, 1967.
- Purcell, V., The Chinese in South East Asia, London, 1951.
- Richardson, P., Chinese mine labour in the Transvaal, Hong Kong, 1982.
- Rosenthal, E., Gold, bricks and mortar: Sixty years of Johannesburg, 1946.
- Ross, R., Cape of torments: Slavery and resistance in South Africa, London, 1983.
- Rousseau, F.P., handbook of the Group Areas Act, Cape Town, 1960.
- Ryan, J., Ancestors: Chinese in colonial Australia, South Freemantle, 1995.
- Ryan, J. (ed.), Chinese in Australia and New Zealand: A multi-disciplinary approach, New Delhi, 1995.
- Sacks, B., South Africa: An imperial dilemma, New Mexico, 1967.
- Said, E.W., Orientalism, London, 1978.
- Sandmeyer, E.C., The anti-Chinese movement in California, Illinois, 1973.
- Saunders, C., The making of the South African past: Major historians on race and class, Cape Town, 1988.
- Saunders, K. (ed.), Indentured labour in the British Empire, 1834-1920, London, 1984.
- Shell, R.C., Children of bondage: A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838, Johannesburg, 1994.
- Sinn, E. (ed.), The last half century of the Chinese overseas, Hong Kong, 1998.
- Smedley, L.N. and Groenewald, D.C., The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 1: Background and attitudes of the white population group towards the Chinese minority group, Pretoria, HSRC, 1976.
- Smedley, L.N., The Chinese community in South Africa: Phase 2: A sociological study, Pretoria, HSRC, 1978.
- Smedley, L.N., Multi-purpose survey among whites, 1978: Attitudes among the white population group towards the Chinese minority group: A follow up study, Pretoria, HSRC, 1979.
- Smith, K., The changing past: Trends in South African historical writing, Johannesburg, 1988.
- Smith, R.J., China's cultural heritage: The Ch'ing dynasty, 1644-1912, London, 1983.
- Snow, P., The star raft: China's encounter with Africa, New York, 1987.
- Spence, J.D., God's Chinese son, New York, 1996.
- Spence, J.D., The Chinese roundabout: Essays in history and culture, New York, 1992.
- Spence, J.D., The search for modern China, London, 1990.
- Spencer, C., Homosexuality: A history, London, 1995.
- Spoelstra, B., Die bewindsaanvaarding van die Botha-regering oor Transvaal as selfregerende Britse kolonie in 1907, Archives year book for South African history, II, 1953.
- Steel R.W. and Prothera, R.M. (eds), Geographers and the tropics: Liverpool essays, Liverpool, 1964.
- Sung, S., The contribution of Chinese labour to the Transvaal gold mines during the end of the Ch'ing dynasty, Yang Ming Shan, Taiwan, 1974.
- Suryadinata, L. (ed.), The ethnic Chinese in the ASEAN states: Bibliographical essays, Singapore, 1989.

- Suzman, A., Race classification and definition in the legislation of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1960: A survey and an analysis, Johannesburg, 1960.
- Swan, M., Gandhi: The South African experience, Johannesburg, 1985.
- Takaki, R., A different mirror: A history of multicultural America, Boston, 1993.
- Takaki, R. (ed.), From different shores: Perspectives on race and ethnicity in America, New York, 1987.
- Takaki, R., Iron cages: Race and culture in 19<sup>th</sup>-century America, Oxford, 1990.
- Takaki, R., Strangers from a different shore: A history of Asian Americans, Boston, 1989.
- Tan, T.T., Your Chinese roots: The overseas Chinese story, Singapore, 1986.
- Thompson, L., A history of South Africa, New Haven, 1995.
- Thompson, L.M., Indian immigration into Natal, 1860-1872, Archives Year Book for South African History, Pretoria, II, 1952.
- Time Life, Time Life: Voyages of discovery, Amsterdam, 1989.
- Tinker, H., A new system of slavery: The export of Indian labour overseas, 1830-1920, London, 1974.
- Torrance, D.E., The strange death of the Liberal empire: Lord Selborne in South Africa, London, 1996.
- Toynbee, A. (ed.), Half the world: The history and culture of China and Japan, London, 1973.
- Van der Horst, S.T., Native labour in South Africa, London, 1971.
- Van Helldingen, W.H. and Hoogenberk, H. (eds), Mission interrupted: The Dutch in the East Indies and their work in the XXth century, Elsevier, 1945.
- Van Onselen, C., Chibaro: African mine labour in southern Rhodesia, London, 1980.
- Van Onselen, C., Studies in the social and economic history of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914, 1 and 2, Johannesburg, 1982.
- Van Sandick, L.H.W., Chineezen buiten China, n.p., 1909.
- Walker I.L., and Weinbren, B., 2000 casualties, Johannesburg, 1961.
- Wang, G., China and the Chinese overseas, Singapore, 1991.
- Wang, G., China and the world since 1949: The impact of independence, modernity and revolution, London, 1977.
- Wang, S., The organization of Chinese emigration, 1848-1888, San Francisco, 1978.
- Warwick, P. and Spies, S.B. (eds), The South African War, Harlow, 1980.
- Webster, E. (ed.), Essays in southern African labour history, Johannesburg, 1978.
- Wegars, P. (ed.), Hidden heritage: Historical archaeology of the overseas Chinese, New York, 1993.
- Williams, L.E., Overseas Chinese nationalism: The genesis of the Pan-Chinese movement in Indonesia, Massachusetts, 1960.
- Worden, N., Slavery in Dutch South Africa, Cambridge, 1985.
- Worden, N., The making of modern South Africa: Conquest, segregation and apartheid, Oxford, 1995.
- Yap, M. and Man, D.L., Colour, confusion and concessions: The history of the Chinese in South Africa, Hong Kong, 1996.
- Yee, P., Saltwater city: An illustrated history of the Chinese in Vancouver, Vancouver, 1988.
- Yen, C., Coolies and mandarins: China's protection of overseas Chinese during the late Ch'ing period, 1851-1911, Singapore, 1985.
- Yudelman, D., The emergence of modern South Africa, London, 1983.

X. ELECTRONIC SOURCES

1. Networks

DIASPORA community network: "diaspora@anu.edu.au"

ISSCO community network: "isscocommunity@uclink2.berkeley.edu"

2. Other

Institute for the Study of Contemporary History (INECH),  
Bloemfontein, 1978-1998.