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RESEARCH ARTICLE

"The Very Soul Must Be Held in Bondage!": Alice Victoria Kinloch's Critical Examination of South Africa's Diamond-Mining Compounds*

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Abstract
This article focuses on the intellectual efforts made by a South African activist named Alice Kinloch, one of the first people to openly criticize the violence perpetrated against black mineworkers in Kimberley's compound system, at the end of nineteenth century. In the first section, we focus on Alice Kinloch's early life, her involvement in early Pan-Africanism in Britain, and the beginning of her efforts to denounce the compound system. In section two, we shift our analysis to the interaction between missionaries working in the compounds, and the colonialist discourse on "civilizing the natives". As representatives of the Christian faith, in which Alice Kinloch also was brought up, missionaries play a central role in her critique, which takes aim at their collaboration, as Christians, with a system of racist violence that, in Kinloch's eyes, had nothing to do with the "civilization" it claimed to bring. The conclusions Alice Kinloch drew on observing the compound system were published in Manchester in 1897. In the third section we dive into her pamphlet *Are South African Diamonds Worth Their Cost?*, in which she condemned the hypocrisy inherent in the compound system and laments its effects on the black mineworkers subjected to a horrible regime.

Introduction

"Our one desire is to disclose the state of affairs in South Africa, for which the bloody, brutal, and inconsiderate hands of avarice and might are answerable. For more than a quarter of a century, Kimberley has been the stage for the worst forms of undisguised inhumanity".[1]

*The authors wish to thank Dr Tshepo Mvulane Moloi for his biographical comments on Alice, Prof David Killingray for putting us on the trail of Alice Kinloch and subsequent correspondence, and Bernice Nagel of the Kimberley Africana Library for her help with the photographs, as well as the participants in the seminar of the Research Group Economy and Society of the Institute of Contemporary History (IHC), Universidade Nova de Lisboa, for their comments on an early draft of this article.

[1]A.V. Alexander, *Are South African Diamonds Worth Their Cost?* (Manchester, 1897), reprinted in Tatiana Kontou, Victoria Mills, and Adelene Buckland (eds), *Victorian Material Culture* (London, 2022),

This statement, written by a black South African woman named Alice Victoria Kinloch, found its way to the public in 1897 in a pamphlet denouncing the atrocities committed in Kimberley's diamond mines, exploited by De Beers Consolidated Mines. By the late 1880s, diamond mining relied on a workforce that consisted of unskilled, black migrant labourers who worked in underground galleries. These men, sometimes travelling from thousands of kilometres away, were placed in special encampments named compounds. For long periods of time, black mineworkers had no contact with the outside world.[2] In colonialist discourse, this full control over black bodies was intended to prevent diamond theft and alcohol consumption. Various missionaries considered these compounds the perfect places to "civilize" Africans.[3]

By the end of the nineteenth century, various organizations, many inspired by religion, had come into existence and were criticizing colonial and imperialist projects. Not many of these public criticisms were voiced by black women. When Alice Kinloch arrived in London in 1895, she became acquainted with Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian lawyer. He decided to take her along on his lecture tour, passing through various English cities. When she took the stage, at age thirty-four, to expose the cruelties of the compound system, she might not have realized the significance of her agency. Williams later wrote that "[…] I was indeed pleased to see a woman of our own race coming forward from the centre of Southern Africa telling the people in England things that they knew not, or, at least, professed to know not […]".[4] Alice Kinloch may have been one of the first to offer a profound analysis of the atrocities inherent in Kimberley's compound system, and her investigation was published as an eighteen-page-long pamphlet in 1897, which serves as the centre of our analysis.

She not only took it upon herself to reveal the brutalities of British colonialism to British audiences, but also wanted to promote the interests of African people worldwide. With that in mind, she co-founded, together with Henry Sylvester Williams and Mason Joseph, a reverend from Antigua, the African Association – the first Pan-Africanist organization in the world. The historical narrative on Pan-Africanism has often focused on men, and Alice Kinloch has been largely forgotten by history, until recently – some historians working on

pp. 395–412, 395. All further quotes from the pamphlet come from the reprinted version. She published the pamphlet under her maiden name and made it appear as if it had been written by a man. By the time the pamphlet was published, she had already given lectures under her own name on the same topic. Admittedly, the text of the pamphlet was more explicit than her lectures had been, which might be part of the reason. In that regard, the use of a male authorship could shield the pamphlet from gendered criticism, as the authorized space for women writing in Victorian times were diaries and literature, and their political texts were downplayed due to their gender. Hilda L. Smith, "Women Intellectuals and Intellectual History: Their Paradigmatic Separation", *Women's History Review*, 16:3 (2007), pp. 353–368.

[2]Compounds were later also introduced in the gold mines around Johannesburg. The best-known study of migrant labour in that context is Charles van Onselen, *The Night Trains: Moving Mozambican Miners to and from the Witwatersrand Mines, 1902–1955* (London, 2019).

[3]When we refer to the "civilizing process" throughout this text, we do so with quotation marks, and it should be clear we are referring only to western colonialist interpretations of the term. See Giorgio Shani, "Civilizing Process or Civilizing Mission? Toward a Post-Western Understanding of Human Security", in Olivia Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics* (London, 2018), pp. 375–384.

[4]"Pan-African Association", *Port of Spain Gazette*, 2 June 1901.

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Pan-Africanism have now started to include her name in their narratives.[5] The scholarly recognition she is finally starting to receive is mainly owed to her role in the African Association, and it remains remarkable that there has been no serious analysis of her intellectual work, or a discussion of her contribution to the wider body of black activism against colonialism and segregation. This article is an attempt to remedy that. Firstly, we will look at the context in which Alice Kinloch was brought up. Secondly, we examine the "civilizing mission" that missionaries had taken upon themselves in the compounds and look at the discussion between missionaries and industrialists about the desirability of education for black mineworkers. Thirdly, we analyse the contents of her pamphlet in detail. Lastly, we focus on the ambivalences in colonial practice Kinloch revealed, and on her desire for black people to assume their own responsibilities.

Growing Up in the City of Diamonds

Virtually all information we have on Alice Kinloch is limited to her activities in 1897, a few genealogical details excepted.[6] She was born in Cape Town, on 15 December 1863, as Alice Victoria Alexander, the second of seven children, and baptized in February the next year.[7] Not much is known about her parents. Sarah Richardson and William Alexander had married in April 1860, and neither had learnt to write. Alice's mother, a servant who died in 1913, was described on her death certificate as "mixed race".[8] Alice's father worked as a cook and died in 1880. His death certificate mentions "America" as the place of birth.[9] The Alexander family grew up in the self-governing British Cape Colony, an example of settler colonialism. Whites stood at the top of the social, economic, and political pyramid – even though there were important distinctions to be made between the English and the Boers, descendants of earlier Dutch settlers.[10] Then there was the "coloured" class,

[5]See, for instance, Dawne W. Curry, *Social Justice at Apartheid's Dawn: African Women Intellectuals and the Quest to Save the Nation* (Cham, 2022); Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (London, 2018); Khwezi Mkhize, "African Intellectual History, Black Cosmopolitanism and *Native Life in South Africa*", in Janet Remmington, Brian Willan, and Bhekizizwe Peterson (eds), *Sol Plaatje's Native Life in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 2016), pp. 95–114; André Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa* (Auckland Park, 2012); Marika Sherwood, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams, Africa, and the African Diaspora* (New York, 2011); and, most importantly, several articles by David Killingray mentioned below.

[6]Tshepo Mvulane Moloi, "Book Review: The Pan-African Pantheon: Prophets, Poets and Philosophers Edited by Adekeye Adebajo", *Academia Letters* (2021), pp. 1–5. Available at: https://ipatc.joburg/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/book_review_the_pan_african_pantheon_pro.pdf.

[7]All genealogical data in this part was obtained by using scans of church registers kept in South African Archives, freely available on www.familysearch.org. Her siblings were William John (b. 1862), Sarah Johanna (b. 1865), Henry Frederick (b. 1868), Robert Joseph (b. 1870), Mary Elisabeth (b. 1878), and Andrew Manuel (b. 1880).

[8]"Sarah Richardson", www.familysearch.org.

[9]"William Alexander", www.familysearch.org. Alice never mentioned anything about her father, and no further documents have been found thus far relating to his life in "America", but it seems safe to assume that he was born in the United States, then a nation living with slavery.

[10]A distinction that led to several conflicts over land, particularly after the discoveries of diamonds and gold, and that culminated in the Anglo-Boer wars, which ensured British political hegemony. See, for instance, Martin Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War: The Making of South Africa* (London, 2007).

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a colonialist description used to describe a diverse population, whose main attribute in the eyes of white colonizers was that they were neither white nor "black", in the sense that they belonged to one of the ethnic groups living in the lands that were slowly but surely being taken from them – Zulu, Basuto, Pedi, Tswana, Sotho, and others.[11] "Coloured" in the South African colonial context referred to a racial identity adopted by mixed-race descendants of the formerly enslaved population, and by members of the Khoikhoi and San ethnic groups, who had long been exposed to settler colonialism.[12] This racial classification became commonplace around the time that the Boer migration to the northeast and the discovery of diamonds and gold forced more Africans into the South African hierarchical colonial system.[13] Even though "coloured" as a classification of race was a term thoroughly contaminated with colonialist meaning, there are indications that over the course of time free inhabitants of the Cape Colony came to self-identify as "coloured".[14]

Alice Kinloch was born just a few years before diamonds were discovered in a frontier zone named Griqualand West. The area, with its diamond fields, was annexed by the Cape Colony in 1871 and soon the city of Kimberley developed around four mining pits, of which the "Big Hole" became the most famous.[15] The prospect of finding diamonds attracted tens of thousands of fortune-seekers from Europe, the United States, and Australia, and many families – of all origins – came from the Boer Republics and the Cape, including the Alexanders, who arrived in Kimberley between 1870 and 1878. The baptism of Mary Alexander took place in Kimberley's St. Cyprian's Church in 1878, and the family was registered as living on Bultfontein Road, where Alice's father died in 1880. It is not known whether members of the family were active in the diamond mines, but racism was rampant

[11]South African ethnicities have been simplified by Europeans into a tribal system, but the reality was far more complex than that. Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, CT, 2014 [1990]), p. 25. Black Africans who were not part of this "coloured" class were either named by their ethnicity, or by pejorative terminology. See also note 18 of that study.

[12]For background on the use of the terms Khoikhoi and San, see Shula Marks, "Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", *Journal of African History*, 13:1 (1972), pp. 55–80, 55–60.

[13]Mohamed Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens, OH, 2005), p. 3. In this article, we will use the term "coloured" when it is relevant or concretely related to source material, but always between quotation marks. In other instances, we will refer to the "coloured" population as "black" – colonialism and racism hit them equally, and Alice Kinloch herself did not make the distinction between "coloured" and "black" (see below). For the more general problem of analysing historical efforts at racial classification and the racist treatment that followed it, see A.J. Christopher, "'To Define the Indefinable': Population Classification and the Census in South Africa", *Area*, 34:4 (2002), pp. 401–408. The article contains an overview of the racial categories used in the South African censuses between 1865 and 2001. For a crucial contribution in this debate, see Gabeba Baderoon, "The Provenance of the Term 'Kafir' in South Africa and the Notion of Beginning". Available at: https://humanities.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/humanities_uct_ac_za/1009/files/2004_MS4.pdf. The text successfully connects history with the present-day need to re-think our vocabulary.

[14]See also footnote 38.

[15]For an overview of the early history of South Africa's diamond deposits, see Tijl Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth: The Struggle for Control over the World's Diamonds throughout History* (London, 2021), pp. 139–167. Today, the "Big Hole" is a tourist attraction.

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and black miners were very quickly pushed out as claimholders, most ending up as wage labourers for white miners.[16]

As Kimberley grew bigger, so did the role of Christianity, and it is very likely that Alice received her education at the St. Cyprian's Mission School.[17] The Anglican Mission comprised a church, as well as separated mission schools for boys and girls.[18] St. Cyprian's was accessible to "coloured" people, although this was never fully accepted. In 1876, when Alice was thirteen, a white churchgoer was "astonished to find that mixed with the European ladies and gentlemen, were coloured people of both sexes […] this is going too far".[19] Such comments did not stop Alice Kinloch from building up a life within the context of the church. In June 1885, she married a widower who was five years her senior. Edmund Ndosa Kinloch was born in Natal, one of four sons of a Zulu woman and a Scottish teacher. Edmund worked as an engine driver, possibly at the diamond mines.[20] The couple married at a crucial time for black people in Kimberley. Between 1883 and 1885, when Alice was in her early twenties, Kimberley's Big Hole transformed into an underground mine. The mine had reached such a depth that open-pit mining had evolved from being dangerous to being impossible. Due to the need for capital, this went hand in hand with a growing concentration of mining interests in the hands of a few companies.[21] In 1888, Cecil Rhodes founded De Beers Consolidated Mines, the company that gained control of Kimberley's diamond production before the end of the decade.[22] Underground mining and the amalgamation of mining interests turned diamond miners into wage labourers and, almost immediately, the workforce was separated on the basis of skin colour. Managers, supervisors, and technicians, in positions considered skilled, were white, while the underground mineworkers, considered unskilled, were black. Edmund Kinloch was perhaps a fortunate son as, in 1885, engine drivers in Kimberley earned £6 a week – twice what a labourer made.[23] The underground mineworkers were mostly black African

[16]Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth*, pp. 153–155.

[17]David Killingray, "Significant Black South Africans in Britain before 1912: Pan-African Organisations and the Emergence of South Africa's First Black Lawyers", *South African Historical Journal*, 64:3 (2012), pp. 393–417, 401. This article remains the scholarly work that offers the most complete overview of Alice Kinloch's life.

[18]E.P. Lekhela, "The Origin, Development and Role of Missionary Teacher-Training Institutions for the Africans of the North-Western Cape (An Historical-Critical Survey of the Period 1850–1954)" (Ph.D., University of South Africa, 1970), p. 83.

[19]Paul G. Lawrence, "Class, Colour Consciousness and the Search for Identity: Blacks at the Kimberley Diamond Diggings 1867–1893" (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1994), p. 110.

[20]Edmund's occupation is stated on his second marriage certificate. See also Killingray, "Significant Black South Africans", p. 401.

[21]Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth*, p. 176.

[22]For most of the twentieth century, De Beers was to virtually monopolize all the trade in uncut diamonds. *Ibid*., pp. 182–193.

[23]According to the official statistical yearbook of 1885, both black and white labourers earned the same – 10 shillings per day. *Blue Book for the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope* (Cape Town, 1885), pp. 408–409. Patrick Harries, however, asserted that black migrant labourers made between 20 and 30 shillings a week in the early 1880s. Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860–1910* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 52. Labour segregation created also a poor white class. Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth*, pp. 178–179.

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migrants, from the Cape Colony and beyond.[24] From 1885 onwards, the mining companies had started to force this migrant workforce into closed-off encampments called compounds (Figure 1).[25]

Alice Kinloch went to England to denounce the cruelties she saw as inherent to the compound system, as well as the broader context of racial violence and colonial contradictions that existed in Kimberley. She arrived some time before October 1895, and left in February 1898.[26] She lived on Buckingham Palace Road in London, but it was in Birmingham where she met the two men who would help her to take the stage and speak her mind. The first was Henry Sylvester Williams, a temperance activist who later became the first black barrister in the Cape Colony.[27] Williams said of her that she had never spoken in public, but when he gave her five minutes after a lecture of his, "she took fifteen and could have taken twenty".[28] She continued to talk and impressed Henry Fox Bourne, secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society (APS).[29] In the first days of May 1897, Alice Kinloch spoke at APS meetings in Newcastle, York, and Manchester on the injustices caused by racial segregation and the compound system.[30] *The Guardian* called her "the first 'Kaffir' lady who has undertaken to plead for justice to her race before English audiences".[31] The newspaper, in apparent surprise, described her as "well-educated and remarkably intelligent".[32] She remained very active throughout the year, and by August her pamphlet on the compound system in Kimberley had been published under her maiden name, Alexander, by the Manchester-based Labour Press.[33]

[24]In the early years of diamond mining, the Shangaan, who lived in what is now southern Mozambique and who belonged to the Bantu linguistic family, comprised thirty per cent of the workforce. Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*, p. 48.

[25]Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth*, p. 173. Etymologically, the word is thought to derive from the Malay word "kampong". "Compound", Oxford English Dictionary Online (https://www.oed.com/dictionary/compound_n2?tab=etymology#8599077). For a detailed overview of the Kimberley compounds, see Rob Turrell, "Kimberley's Model Compounds", *Journal of African History*, 25 (1984), pp. 59–75. See also Tilman Dedering, "Compounds, Camps, Colonialism", *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 12 (2012), pp. 29–46.

[26]For an overview, see Killingray, "Significant Black South Africans", pp. 401–404.

[27]For Williams, see Sherwood, *Origins of Pan-Africanism*.

[28]"Pan-African Association", *Port of Spain Gazette*, 2 June 1901.

[29]For the APS and its struggle for black African's rights in African colonies, see Douglas A. Lorimer, *Science, Race Relations and Resistance: Britain, 1870–1914* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 255–314. Alice Kinloch's connections to other activists in England, black or white, remain obscure, and it is not known whether she received any assistance (financial or otherwise) that allowed her to travel to England.

[30]Killingray, "Significant Black South Africans", p. 402. The meetings are confirmed in *The Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society* (London, 1897), p. 7. See also *The Guardian*, 30 April 1897 and 6 May 1897 ("The Protection of Native Races").

[31]*The Guardian*, 30 April 1897. Originally, the term "kafir" was applied from the eighteenth century onwards by white settlers to refer to black Africans speaking Xhosa, later extended to all who spoke Bantu. It has long been a very offensive term, and is used in this article, like other racial slurs, only as part of a direct quote. See Giordano Nanni, *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the British Empire* (Manchester, 2012), p. xvi. See also Baderoon, "The Provenance of the Term 'Kafir' in South Africa".

[32]*The Guardian*, 30 April 1897.

[33]Alexander, "South African Diamonds". The Labour Press published several socialist pamphlets, as well as administrative texts connected to the Independent Labour Party, such as a song book in 1898 and the Party's Directory of Branches in 1899. During his stay in England, Edmund Kinloch became a member

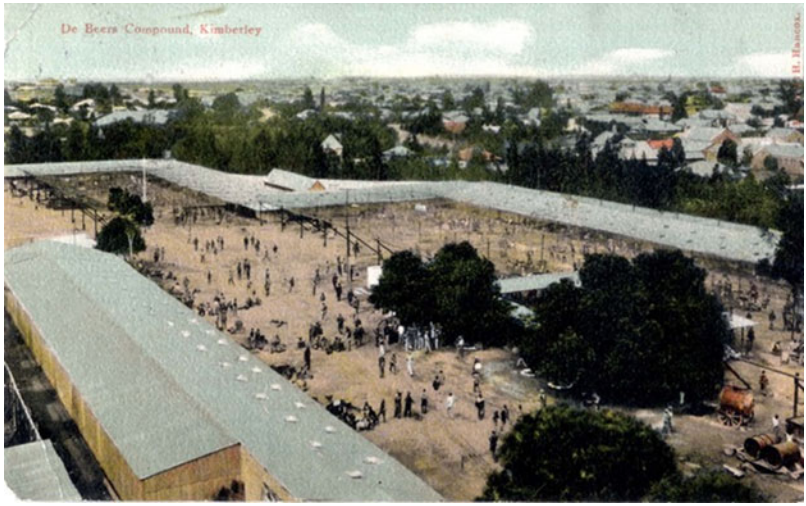

Figure 1. Postcard showing the De Beers Compound, Kimberley, date unknown.
Source: Courtesy of the Kimberley Africana Library.

In September, she founded the African Association, together with Williams and Mason Joseph. For Kinloch, the Association and her intellectual work were part of the same fight: "with some men of my race in this country, I have formed a society for the benefit of our people in Africa by helping them to bring some of the dark side of things in Africa and elsewhere to light. I think the time has come for us to bear some of our responsibilities […]".[34] The connection was confirmed by Williams: "the association is the result of Mrs Kinloch's work in England".[35] Between 23 and 25 July 1900, the African Association, now named the Pan-African Association, organized the first ever Pan-Africanist Conference in London, attended by mostly black delegates from the Americas and Africa. W.E.B. Du Bois gave a talk at the conference, a year after publication of his first academic work. By that time, Alice Kinloch had already returned to Africa, but the situation in South Africa was high on the agenda.[36]

Kinloch's intellectual work on Kimberley was a great inspiration for early Pan-Africanists and should not be underestimated, particularly in consideration of a scholarly tradition that sees Pan-Africanism as an intellectual movement shaped by

of the party. See *Labour Leader*, 6 February 1897. Henry Sylvester Williams wrote to Harriette Colenso that "by the kind act of Mrs A.V. Kinloch I am in possession of the pamphlet sent". Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository [hereafter, PAR], Colenso Papers (A204), Box 32, Henry Sylvester Williams to Miss Harriette Colenso, London, 28 August 1897.

[34]"Oppression in the Kimberley Diamond Mines", *The Friend*, 22 October 1897.

[35]PAR, Colenso Papers (A204), Box 33, Henry Sylvester Williams to Miss Harriette Colenso, London, 9 June 1899.

[36]For a report on the conference by one of the delegates, see Alexander Walters, *My Life and Work* (New York, 1917), pp. 253–264. Unlike the official conference report, Walters failed to mention Alice Kinloch.

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highly educated men.[37] In return, the Caribbean men she worked with made her more aware of a colonial context of oppression of black people worldwide, forcing her to think about her own identity. Pamela Scully remarked that "members of the skilled and educated class […] in the 1880s, began to validate the term coloured, using it as a platform for political action".[38] As a "coloured" woman, Alice Kinloch strongly identified with the black miners who were the subject of her intellectual work. In the same article in which she announced the foundation of the African Association, she wrote of the compound system that "the men of my race are the greatest sufferers" and referred to the black miners as "my people".[39]

"Civilizing" the Black Mineworkers

In Alice Kinloch's lifetime, not many women of colour had access to the public arena to criticize racial injustice, let alone in such explicit terms. And while her education at a missionary school provided her with the intellectual tools to express her ideas clearly and eloquently, it also provided an ethical and moral environment in which these ideas could grow to the point that many of them directly went against the same institutions that had provided for her education earlier on. Alice Kinloch had been schooled at a Christian institution, and when she arrived in England she connected with Christian activists.[40] There is little doubt that she considered herself a Christian woman, and in that sense it is unsurprising that she dedicated an important part of her work to criticizing the contradictions of the "civilizing mission" that white missionaries had taken upon themselves. She decried the unwillingness of both De Beers and the white missionaries to allow for black clergymen to enter the compounds, a restrictive measure she considered to be part of a structural attempt to keep black Africans from "seeing the possibilities of their own race".[41]

It stands beyond doubt that colonialist forces did not want the black workforce to have much imagination on what such possibilities might be, even though De Beers and the missionaries often differed in opinion on the desirability of allowing black mineworkers any form of education. It has been pointed out that "it would be a

[37]Kwaku Ayim Atta-Asiedu, "The Pan-African Movement between 1900 and 1954: The Question of Elitism and Male-Dominance" (SSRN Paper, 2020). Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3626430. See also Hakim Adi, "Women and Pan-Africanism", *Oxford Research Encyclopedias* (2019). Available at: https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-559.

[38]Pamela Scully, "Rape, Race, and Colonial Culture: The Sexual Politics of Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony, South Africa", *American Historical Review*, 100:2 (1995), pp. 335–359, 340. See also Ian Goldin, "The Reconstitution of Coloured Identity in the Western Cape", in Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London, 1987), pp. 156–181. For the diverse origins of the "coloured" community, see also Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 113. For Kinloch's identification as black, see below. For the political fight of Kimberley's educated black community, see Lawrence, "Class, Colour Consciousness".

[39]"Oppression", *The Friend*, 22 October 1897.

[40]Several of them, such as Henry Sylvester Williams, were important voices in the movement. For the early temperance movement, see David M. Fahey, *Temperance Societies in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (Cambridge, 2020). See also footnote 160.

[41]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 406.

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mistake to equate the views of the missionaries, colonial authorities, industrialists and farmers on the labour issue".[42] Both De Beers, labelled by Alice Kinloch as a "despotic company", and the missionaries, were very happy with the compound system, but for different reasons.[43] De Beers, still led by Rhodes, was interested in a cheap labour force whose whereabouts could always be accounted for and which could be disciplined at any time and in any way the company desired. De Beers wanted diamonds, and black unskilled labourers were the means to that end, and for the company, like many other colonial enterprises relaying on black labour, education could stand in the way of work.[44] In 1893, a labour commission came to Kimberley to investigate the conditions in the compounds, and one of the men they interrogated was Gardner Williams, chief engineer for De Beers. Williams stated that the black mineworkers were "generally amenable to discipline" but added that he was not fond of migrants who had come from the eastern coast. He considered them "cheeky" and felt that that "education has made them more so [cheeky] than the other raw native".[45]

Most missionaries had no problem at all with keeping black men under white control. An Anglican missionary who wrote regular dispatches on his work in the compounds described them as "an admirable arrangement".[46] But they wanted something else as well. A missionary wrote in the *South African Pioneer* that "to my mind the natives were far more attractive than diamonds […] I came for their souls, and not for the precious stones that they labour to bring up from the depths of the earth".[47] One of the first ministers to enter the compounds was Mr Mitchell, an Anglican.[48] He recognized the immense "civilizing" potential offered by the compounds, and organized church services, set up schools, and provided books. The men who came to be exposed to Christianity in the compounds eventually returned from

> far away to their heathen homes in the interior of the continent […] In 1894, the Bishop of Lebombo stated that far away among the tribes to the north east of the Transvaal, he had met with natives who had come under Mr. Mitchell's influence in the Kimberley compounds.[49]

Other missionaries equally realized the potential offered by the migratory nature of the compounds' black workforce. Most missions in South Africa were nonconformist

[42]Philippe Denis, "Missionaries, Colonial Government and the Labour Question in South Africa at the Turn of the Twentieth Century", in Jairzinho Lopes Pereira (ed.), *Church-State Relations in Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Mission, Empire, and the Holy See* (Cham, 2022), pp. 37–57, 43.

[43]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 406.

[44]White fear of educated blacks is a recurrent trope in history. See also footnotes 63 and 65 in the present article.

[45]Cape of Good Hope, *Labour Commission. Volume II. Part II. Minutes of Evidence and Minutes of Proceedings. September–December 1893* (Cape Town, 1894), p. 406.

[46]"Cape General Mission News", *South African Pioneer*, 4:1 (January 1890).

[47]"Kimberley Diamonds", *South African Pioneer*, 6:11 (1893).

[48]For an early history of Anglican activities in the Bloemfontein diocese, which included Kimberley for a time, see William Crisp, *Some Account of the Diocese of Bloemfontein in the Province of South Africa, from 1863 to 1894* (Oxford, 1895), pp. 94–95.

[49]*Ibid*., p. 95.

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Protestant. Crafted in the emerging industrial society of nineteenth-century Europe, and with a strong sense of self-endeavour, nonconformists wanted to create an idyllic society of yeomen who invested their work in the field and in small domestic industries. Such a society would participate in the market economy but would remain untouched by individual greed. Such utopian dreams, however, were becoming harder to attain in an industrializing Europe, so the missionaries redirected their dreams to the African continent. For them, Africa was a place that had not yet been touched by God, and its inhabitants, in their "native" innocence, were ready to receive the Gospel.[50] Such thinking was strongly influenced by the colonialist view of Africa as a "dark continent" lagging far behind Europe, with its inhabitants still in their infancy.[51] Black Africans not only needed to be instructed on Christianity, and the "civilization" that came with it, they should equally be sheltered from the temptation that came with western industrial and urban modernity.[52] The compound system served both purposes. Inside, they were sheltered from the "deplorable moral condition" that came with the urbanization of Kimberley as an industrial mining city.[53] Inside, they were "shielded from temptations", not just those that came with industrialization, such as "the unlimited sale of drink", but also those that came with what western minds considered to be African habits, such as "frightful orgies",[54] "old heathen dances", or "cannibalism […] which goes to prove how dense the darkness still is in Africa".[55]

Key was the realization that, if the missionaries were successful, black migrant mineworkers would return as Christians to their homelands, where they could live the yeoman life the missionaries wished for them. As early as 1881, the Congregational Church considered Kimberley as the most important missionary place in southern Africa.[56] In 1886, not long after the introduction of the compound system, a member of the Kimberley Wesleyan Mission described to *The Methodist Times* how "God has given us here in Kimberley the key to the interior of this dark Continent". Why should missionaries risk their lives in the interior, when "here in Kimberley the very pick of those interior tribes, namely their young men, are to be found by tens of thousands fresh from their kraals, and that these same young men go back by thousands, month after month, to their heathen

[50]Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago, 1991), pp. 59–75. See also Nimi Wariboko, "Colonialism, Christianity, and Personhood", in William Worger, Charles Ambler, and Nwando Achebe (eds), *A Companion to African History* (Chichester, 2018), pp. 59–75, and Siyabulela Tonono, "'Let Us Make Men in Our Own Image': The Mission Station as a Site of Black Emasculation in Nineteenth-Century South Africa", *Journal of Asia-Pacific Pop Culture*, 5:2 (2020), pp. 171–190.

[51]Leila Leita Hernandez and Alexandre Almeida Marcussi, *Ideias e práticas em trânsito: poderes e resistências em África (séculos XIX–XX)* (São Paulo, 2020), pp. 9–17.

[52]In the 1904 debate surrounding Chinese indentured labour in the gold mines of Witwatersrand, socialist MP John Burns published a pamphlet in which he referred to Kimberley as a "social pest" and a "moral plague", where "drink-besotted, coloured prostitutes" await the departure of black miners from the compounds. John Burns, *Bondage for Black, Slavery for Yellow Labour* (London, [1904]), p. 16.

[53]"The Kimberley Native Mission", *The Methodist Times*, 26 August 1886.

[54]Crisp, *Some Account of the Diocese of Bloemfontein*, pp. 94–95.

[55]"Cape General Mission News", *South African Pioneer*, 4:3 (May 1890).

[56]Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*, p. 61.

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homes again".[57] Almost ten years later, *The Guardian* quoted Anglican missionaries who felt that "it was most important to Christianize these men during their stay at Kimberley, so they might spread the good news in their own native districts when they returned home".[58]

Missionaries' narratives presented the compounds as harmonious sites of learning through magic lantern lectures, singing, praying, teaching, and bible reading. Places of ethnic harmony, where "Zulus, Mashonas, Basutos" all felt at home, and "many read the Bible, in their own tongue".[59] The Christian vision of the compound and of migrant labour was a vision of evangelization and "civilization", although the latter had to be achieved through a lengthy process: "we have had Gospel Light in Europe for 1,800 years, but these only a few generations were devouring one another up-country".[60] The desirability of "civilizing" the black mineworkers and the role education should play in missionary work were heavily contested. Many missionaries felt that "education is only a means to an end, and that [is] their ultimate salvation".[61] Men like Cecil Rhodes believed education to be harmful to imperial interests. In 1899, the colonial commissioner for Basutoland (future Lesotho), a Crown colony that sent men to Kimberley, was of the opinion that "to educate them above labour would be a mistake".[62] The fact that activists such as Alice Kinloch and Sol Plaatje had received their education in Kimberley at mission schools confirmed the worst fears of those defending colonialist racial hierarchies.[63] Black voices were not supposed to speak, black hands were supposed to work.

There was a growing tendency amongst South Africa's whites to consider the whole of southern Africa as one giant reservoir of "native" manual labour, and the most important question in the colonial context was the "labour question", about how to recruit unskilled labour at the lowest possible cost. In his report on black and Chinese labour, John Burns quoted Hays Hammond, the engineer who supervised all of Cecil Rhodes' mining interests, who complained that

> there are in South Africa millions of Kaffirs, and it does seem preposterous that we are not able to obtain 70,000 to 80,000 Kaffirs to work upon the mines. With good government there should be an abundance of labour, and with abundance of labour, there will be no difficulty in cutting down wages.[64]

This was the central issue for those in power, and education for blacks would only upset the search for manual labour. The debate around education for black Africans in a racially segregated colonial society led to the development of an educational

[57]"The Kimberley Native Mission", *The Methodist Times*, 26 August 1886.

[58]"Bloemfontein Mission", *The Guardian*, 6 February 1895.

[59]"Cape General Mission News", *South African Pioneer*, 4:1 (January 1890).

[60]"Diamond Field's Dust", *South African Pioneer*, 4:5 (September 1890). How long a time was of course considered a question for whites to answer.

[61]"Black Diamonds – Kimberley Compounds", *South African Pioneer*, 4:2 (March 1890).

[62]Colin Murray, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labour in Lesotho* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 24.

[63]The role of missionary education in Plaatje's life is discussed in Brian Willan, *Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist, 1876–1932* (London, 1984).

[64]Burns, *Bondage for Black*, p. 4.

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system in which blacks were taught only what they needed to perform manual labour tasks, leaving them unable to compete in other professional fields against higher educated white people, further cementing South Africa's racial inequality.[65] This educational focus worked well with the missionaries' dream of preparing black Africans to participate in the yeomanry, after finishing work in the mines. Many felt that black Africans would "naturally enjoy working land", whether it was their own, or whether it belonged to white farmers.[66]

But even if the missionaries were foreseeing the creation of a class of African yeomen, the fulfilment of such dreams remained on the distant horizon. Paradoxically, their "civilizing" mission contributed to the industrialists' needs. The missionaries' efforts reflected a western European conception of the "civilizing" nature of work, an idea that can be seen as interconnected with Protestant ideals of the work ethic.[67] One missionary stated that "to work with zeal […] [was] a fruit and blessing of Christianity, an internal civilising".[68] Wage labour also meant an adherence to new, western, notions of time, which were further moulded by Christianity: "prayer meetings and bells structured the day, the Sabbath marked the passage of the week, Christmas and Good Friday outlined the year, and a distinctive eschatology took this linear sense of time beyond the grave".[69] Many clerics thus linked work ethic and discipline to Christianity, but some industrialists scoffed at this notion, and white employees of De Beers felt that "[we] are doing more for civilisation and progress than the missionary and his hymn-book".[70] To a large extent, however, the interests of missionaries and industrialists collided into a shared colonialist project that left little doubt concerning the position of black labourers.

The English press did not question the righteousness of such project, and the main image of the compound system was that of a beneficial environment much needed by black Africans. It was common to read remarks such as "never a very industrious people, they are now, owing to their drunken habits, becoming idle, slothful and unthrifty, and even when they go into service they are of very little use, unless employed at the compounds in Kimberley".[71] Settler colonialism and industrial capitalism thrived on racial hierarchies and exploitation of black bodies, and Christianity was able to provide a spiritual justification for this. If Christianity could be used as such a tool of domination, it could also be used as a tool of resistance, as Alice Kinloch, the first to come up with a detailed analysis of the racial violence inherent in the compound system, showed in a fierce pamphlet written in very explicit language.

[65]Andrew Paterson "'The Gospel of Work Does Not Save Souls': Conceptions of Industrial and Agricultural Education for Africans in the Cape Colony, 1890–1930", *History of Education Quarterly*, 45:3 (2005), pp. 377–404.

[66]*Ibid*., p. 397.

[67]See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, 1930 [1905]).

[68]Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*, p. 62.

[69]*Ibid*., p. 61. See also Nanni, *The Colonisation of Time*.

[70]"The Land of Diamonds", *Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 1897.

[71]"The Demoralisation of Natives by Drink", *Dundee Advertiser*, 8 June 1898.

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A Narrative of Violence: Alice Kinloch's Indictment

Alice Kinloch published her pamphlet *Are South African Diamonds Worth Their Cost?* in the first half of 1897. An article of hers that appeared in *The Friend* later that year clarifies her personal relationship with the subject: "things are revolting under the compound system […] yet we are told that the system is for the *elevation* of the black man. I have spent years in Kimberley, watched the growth of the diamond industry and the consequences resulting therefrom. My people are oppressed in every way".[72] She had come to England to "educate people in this country", and her published pamphlet is the most lasting expression of that ambition.[73]

The text is divided into three parts: "The diamond mines and the natives of South Africa", "The compound system at Kimberley and other diamond mines", and "Corroborations", a shorter part that consists of concrete examples of poor treatment in the compounds she had taken from various South African newspapers such as the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* and *Imvo Zabantsundu*.[74] Within its pages, Kinloch tells her audience a story of violent colonial abuse, with missionary support, in which the idea of a superior white "civilization" was used to justify a racist system, and the false notion of freedom was used as a guise to hide a new form of slavery.[75] In the first part, Kinloch focuses on the hardships of working in the mines, and on the occurrence of "illicit diamond buying" (I.D.B.), the most serious crime one could commit in Kimberley.[76] She explained how whites incited the black mineworkers to steal diamonds "by subtle temptations […] being held out to the poor native labourers, who are usually ignorant men",[77] a change of perspective in a colonial context that considered all black mineworkers as potential thieves, a discourse commonly used to justify the compounds.[78] In her pamphlet,

[72]"Oppression", *The Friend*, 22 October 1897.

[73]*Ibid*.

[74]Alexander, "South African Diamonds". The *Imvo*, published in Xhosa, is South Africa's oldest running newspaper founded by a black African, John Tengo Jabavu. For Jabavu, see "Jabavu, John Tengu", Oxford DNB. Available at: https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-53763?rskey=Kj4TxD&result=2.

[75]When an investigative commission visited Kimberley in 1887, its members interviewed Charles Rudd, a director of De Beers, who always referred to the "free compounds", as opposed to the use of convict labour. Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into and Report upon the Diamond Trade Acts, the Detective or Searching Department, the Compound System, and other Matters connected with the Diamond Mining Industry of Griqualand West. September–November 1887. With Minutes of Proceedings. Minutes of Evidence and Appendices* (Cape Town, 1888), p. 101.

[76]Alice Kinloch refers to the 1882 Diamond Trade Act, which made every raw diamond the property of the British Crown. Possessing or buying a raw diamond without an official licence could result in a £1,000 fine or fifteen years in jail, or both. See Padraig O'Malley, "Racial Legislation 1806–1947". Available at: https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01646/05lv01694.htm.

[77]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 395. Remarks like these reveal her membership of Kimberley's educated "coloured" class, whose members seemed to have hoped that racist legislation aimed at uneducated mineworkers would never affect them. Lawrence, "Class, Colour Consciousness", p. 9. Alice Kinloch's identification with these labourers is a strong argument in favour of her Pan-Africanist ideals.

[78]A visitor to the compounds was told by his guide about the men in the compounds that "of course they are thieves […] they are brought up to it", an observation to which the visitor speedily agreed. *York Herald*, 26 March 1892.

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Alice Kinloch not only deconstructs this discourse, she also contextualizes, and judges, the concrete measures white colonialists took against diamond theft. She was a firm opponent of the "trapping system", which was designed to catch diamond smugglers in the act. An African pretending to be a mineworker (the "trap") offered a diamond to someone who was being suspected as a potential illicit diamond buyer. At the time of transaction, detectives appeared to make the arrest. At times, "trapping" did not work, and the "trap" was "paid in a sound whipping instead of solid gold or silver […]".[79] The use of black men as "traps" revolted her as she was "emphatically opposed to the wholesale demoralisation of the natives for the carrying out of the vicious and nefarious machinations of those in authority who have been, or profess to have been, associated with a superior culture and enlightenment unknown to the primitive African".[80]

Kinloch hereby questions not only the "civilizing mission", but also the stereotypes that sustained the colonial context in Kimberley. In discussing colonial identities, Homi Bhabha argues that Europeans and Africans received fixed stereotypes that dictated their role in colonial society. On the one hand, Europeans were depicted as cultured men who brought the almost-not-human African into "civilization" through colonialist intervention. On the other, African people were constantly compared to animals and depicted as infants who required lessons, taught by their white saviours, be they missionaries instructing them on Christianity, or capitalists teaching them about work.[81] Even though these stereotypes were used as foundations to construct fixed identities for both Africans and Europeans, Bhabha has shown how such categories are unsteady, which opens the possibility of challenging them, something Kinloch does.[82] The colonialist was supposed to be the enlightened one, yet he violently mistreats the "primitive Africans" time and again. In her pamphlet, however, Kinloch did not completely break with the idea of the "primitive African", and at times she describes the mineworkers as "poor native labourers […] usually ignorant men, fresh from their homes in the interior".[83] This also indicates how she inscribes her critique of the system within the boundaries of the "civilizing mission" discourse. It does not make her demonstration of the fundamental contradiction between white discourse and practice, and ambivalences of the "civilizing mission", any less powerful or truthful.

Her argument is perhaps strongest when she describes the uncivilized behaviour whites showed towards black mineworkers subjected to the "searching system", in which the orifices of these men were inspected to verify that they had not stolen any diamonds. The process included the insertion of "instruments into the bowels of black employees in the presence of many witnesses".[84] When interviewed by a commission that visited Kimberley in 1887 to investigate the diamond trade acts,

[79]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 397.

[80]*Ibid.*

[81]Whether such lessons should come in the form of an education, or as a set of concrete rules to obey, would always be up for debate in white colonialist circles. See footnotes 61 and 62.

[82]Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 2004 [1994]), pp. 94–100 and 108–120.

[83]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 395.

[84]*Ibid.*, p. 398. During the 1880s, photographs were taken that show the humiliating and abusive nature of the "strip and search" system, to which white employees were not subjected. See Marcia Pointon, "De Beers's

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the "trap" system and the compounds on the practice, the compound manager for the Central Company confirmed the practice, and also added that a number of mineworkers had held a strike, "because they refused to submit to the insertion of instruments into the rectum".[85] Laconically, he added that "it didn't stop the work".[86] Ten years after that, Kinloch wrote that "the shrieks and groans of the poor men were unspeakable, yet the fiendish process long-continued unabatingly. It surpassed the thumb-screw penalty used in Spain during the Inquisition period, and in England during the reign of some of the Tudors".[87] She continued describing special rooms in the compounds, where "poor, victimised employees" were administered "drugs of a very drastic nature […] in order that they should be properly purged. Strong, stalwart men can be seen shrieking and rolling on the floors from acute pain […]".[88]

Her description is explicit, and very valuable, particularly considering the difference in tone compared with earlier observations made by white travellers published in English newspapers. One witness described how the mineworkers walked through a narrow passage with barbed wired fences on each side, to end up in the "inspector's room". Every man was made to undress, and an inspector examined his "ears and nostrils and mouth, under his tongue, between his toes […] and feels through his woolly hair […] if the inspector suspects him he is compelled to take the emetic in his presence".[89] The same year, the *Illustrated London News* also wrote about "copious doses of emetics" which were "forcibly administered".[90] One could read in the *Western Mail* how the degrading treatment black miners were forced to suffer turned into a source of fun for white visitors: "we happened to be in the search room when the niggers were going to work […] when returning from work they are all searched. The searching is a novel, interesting, and amusing performance". The mineworkers were stripped of their clothes and subjected to a thorough inspection, after which they had to "dance and jig about on a piece of board, and to come down straddle legs".[91] While none of the persons who wrote the articles that described the search system condemned it, some remarked that "no white man would willingly consent to such an ordeal, and so it is that the actual employees in the mines are Kafirs".[92] Indeed, for *The Observer*, black mineworkers were searched "in a manner highly repugnant to the Western sense of individual respect".[93] It seemed commonplace for European minds that a similar respect was not needed when dealing with black men.

Diamond Mine in the 1880s: Robert Harris and the Kimberley Searching System", *History of Photography*, 42:1 (2018), pp. 4–24.

[85]Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 111.

[86]*Ibid.*

[87]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 398.

[88]*Ibid.*

[89]"Searching for Diamonds", *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 1 September 1888.

[90]"Chasing a Diamond Thief", *Illustrated London News*, 25 February 1888.

[91]"The Land of Golden Dreams", *Western Mail*, 4 February 1890.

[92]"Diamond Smuggling. Some South African Pictures", *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 1 August 1891.

[93]"Kimberley Diamond Fields", *The Observer*, 16 August 1891.

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The contrast between European self-identification as a superior "civilization" and their use of degrading practices on Africans, as shown by Kinloch, is not surprising. In the colonial context, both oppression and guidance could coexist in the same actions inflicted by the civilizing "father", which the whites considered themselves to be.[94] In that sense, aggression, or any kind of punishment, served the development of ancient Africa and its "primitive" inhabitants, and so it was the "white man's burden" to inspect the black mineworker, making sure he would not get away with stolen diamonds. The racial segregation in the division of labour, the bodily inspections, the constant vigilance by white men considering any black mineworker as criminal, and the whole compound system were thus justified as part of the "civilizing process". And naturally, this did not apply to white miners. The normality of a difference in treatment between what colonialists perceived as different races, existing in different stages of human development, is very apparent in the report published following the visit of the 1887 commission to Kimberley. For several days, commissioners interviewed men active in the mining apparatus on the success of measures taken against I.D.B. A recurrent question was whether it would be helpful to extend compounding, as well as the bodily search system, to white employees: "would you consider it a greater hardship for the community that so many white workmen should be searched and compounded and undergo this rather degrading operation?"[95] At no moment was the question whether black mineworkers should undergo such treatment raised. The answers demonstrated the same acceptance of a differing racial treatment: "I think white men should have more freedom and access to their friends; they require it more than the natives do".[96] There seemed to be a white consensus on this, but for Alice Kinloch, this was an unacceptable idea, and she pointed out that the existence of compounds as sites defined by an officially authorized racial violence led to wider normalization of white violence on black people: "it must not be forgotten that these very stringent and brutal measures were sanctioned by the Government, and, therefore, gave every claim holder the right to inflict upon his employees whatever punishment he deemed wise, no matter how excruciating".[97] The interaction between colonialism and capitalism created the imagery of the black criminal-proletarian, which had to be kept under constant vigilance and control by all whites.[98] It was an imagery not

[94]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 135–142.

[95]Cape of Good Hope, *Report of the Commissioners*, p. 91.

[96]*Ibid.*

[97]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 398. With claimholders she means every person still holding a stake in one of the alluvial river diggings, the only sites at that time where individual ownership still existed – all of Kimberley's large mines had been amalgamated. The mining report for 1895 mentions that, next to the existing sites, one new alluvial mining site was opened, the Leicester Mine, divided into 1,417 claims. The Leicester Diamond Mining Company controlled 250 of those and had constructed a compound for its black mineworkers there. Cape of Good Hope, Department of Agriculture, *Reports of the Inspector of Mines, Kimberley, Inspector of Claims, Barkly West, and Manager Vooruitzigt Estate, Kimberley, for the Year 1895* (Cape Town, 1896), p. 18.

[98]Lindsay Weiss, "Exceptional Space: Concentration Camps and Labor Compounds in Late Nineteenth-Century South Africa", in Adrian Myers and Gabriel Moshenska (eds), *Archaeologies of Internment* (New York, 2011), pp. 21–32, 22–27.

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far from Christian considerations that could not see black Africans as able to withstand temptation.

Kinloch concludes the first section with a discussion of the pass laws, which had come into existence in Kimberley in the early 1870s. Regulations aimed at curtailing the free movement of black Africans go back to the eighteenth century at least, but it was there and then that the registration of labour led to the establishment of a pass system that culminated in the obligation of virtually all non-whites who moved around to carry a pass from their employer with them at all times.[99] Under the guise of attempting to control diamond smuggling, Kimberley's pass regulations determined that policemen could arrest any black man who was not in the possession of an official pass, signed by a (white) employer.[100] Kinloch could not be any more condemning in her assessment of the contradictory discourse of colonialism when she wrote that the "curtailment of the liberty of the blacks […] will continue to go on till Britons who talk about the sacredness of human freedom really mean what they say".[101] Convictions such as these brought her to Britain, where she talked to a British, mostly white, audience. For her, revealing the contradictions of colonialist discourse surrounding the concepts of "civilization", Christianity, and freedom to a wider public was essential. An incident in which policemen interrupted a tea party organized to raise funds for a new mission chapel is another telling example: "the prejudice which white men entertain against Christian natives is well known to all. Nothing pleases a police officer better than to come across a passless and educated African […] The peace and enjoyment of the evening was not a little marred by the jeers and misconduct of the 'superior race'".[102]

Violence and constraint shaped the lives of all black people who were surrounded by the labour politics of diamond mining. To Kinloch, that contradicted ideas on bringing "civilization" to black Africans. She knew of colonialist discourse that justified the compounds as being good for the black mineworkers, and commented that

> if any are hypocritical enough to dare so assert, then we reply that there are South Africans now reading British books and learning therein that Britons have discovered for themselves, and even for their children, that the only way to teach any how to be free is to give him his freedom, and let him bear all its responsibilities.[103]

Here, Kinloch goes to the heart of the problem. She questions the legitimacy of the violence that comes with the "white man's burden" and argues that Africans should

[99]Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 37, 103, 118, 121 and 144. See also John M. Smalberger, "The Role of the Diamond Mining-Industry in the Development of the Pass-Law System in South Africa", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 9:3 (1976), pp. 419–434.

[100]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 403.

[101]*Ibid.*, p. 402.

[102]This passage is a historical example of the persistent trope of white disdain for black educated people. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

[103]*Ibid.* It was with the idea of taking responsibility in mind that she had co-founded the African Association the same year.

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be free of it. One of the main pillars of colonialism was the idea that African people were incapable of governing themselves, and therefore required the liberal white man to guide them to a more civilized state of being. It was, however, a promise that was blocked by the internal contradictions of the colonial system, which needed black men as cheap labourers and had everything to win by continuing to frame them as "uneducated savages".[104] Kinloch argues that colonial occupation was no longer necessary, as Africans had ventured on a course of education to the point that white assistance was no longer needed. Like other South African intellectuals, Kinloch praised the importance of literacy and liberal values as these had been taught in the missions to them. The most prominent of those intellectuals was Sol Plaatje, thirteen years younger than Alice, a fellow Christian and one of the founders of what would become the ANC. He began his career as a teacher of Dutch and English to the children of a Lutheran Mission in Pniel before moving to Kimberley as an official translator.[105] Like Alice, he became invested in the struggle for rights of fellow Africans.[106] When Alice Kinloch and others started to question settler colonialism, they took the tools they had acquired through education and transformed them into a means of resistance.[107] If violence, punishment, and the limitation of freedom – all inherent to the compound system – were the fruits of the promise of "civilization" brought by whites, that promise had been false, an insight the British public was not ready for. As Cleall stated, British colonialism and the idea of empire in Victorian times were sustained by the self-perception of the British as paternalistic saviours. They were the men bringing the rule of law, and who put a stop to the slave trade.[108]

In the second part of her pamphlet, in which she exposed the inner workings of the compound system in detail, the self-perception of colonialists received a further blow. These were introduced in 1885 by the Central Company, officially to be able to stop I.D.B., but really to be able to exercise full control over black labour.[109] In 1895, ten years after the establishment of the compound system, Kimberley's seven registered diamond mines (excluding the alluvial digging sites) employed a daily average of 1,698 white men, as well as 7,808 black mineworkers, all of them living inside the

[104]See John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago, 1997), p. 396.

[105]Raquel G.A. Gomes, "Letras e missões: A influência da educação em espaço missionário na África do Sul – os casos de Olive Schreiner e Sol Plaatje", *Revista do Arquivo Geral do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro*, 17:12 (2017), pp. 181–200, 191–192.

[106]See Seetsele Modiri Molema, *Lover of his People: A Biography of Sol Plaatje* (Johannesburg, 2012).

[107]Gomes, "Letras e missões", pp. 193–197.

[108]Esme Cleall, "'In Defiance of the Highest Principles of Justice, Principles of Righteousness': The Indenturing of the Bechuana Rebels and the Ideals of Empire, 1897–1900", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40:4 (2012), pp. 601–618, 604–607. Of course, British propaganda on empire at that time had a lot to do with the tension with the Boer Republics. By portraying those as places where slavery still reigned supreme, the British presented themselves as the morally superior alternative, a view explicitly expressed in newspapers. A visitor who visited Kimberley and its compounds wrote that "two or three miles away I can see the land of the Orange Free State. Across that border every discrimination is made against the native". "The Land of Diamonds", *Daily Telegraph*, 28 September 1897.

[109]See Turrell, "Kimberley's Model Compounds".

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Figure 2. Postcard showing the compound of the Wesselton diamond mine in Kimberley, date unknown. *Source: Courtesy of the Kimberley Africana Library.*

compounds (Figure 2).[110] She offers a brief discussion of the architecture, the salaries of the white managers and guards, the recruitment process, and the practice of the mining companies to set up stores inside the compounds. The argument that this took a profitable business away from Kimberley's merchants was the only protest uttered in the white community of Kimberley against the compounds.[111]

Colonial Ambivalences

For Alice Kinloch, the compounds "rival slavery, in horror".[112] Her analysis stands in stark contrast to the accounts given by white observers who, when confronted with the same reality and blinded by racist stereotypes, failed to see black mineworkers as equal human beings. Nakedness, for instance, is looked upon very differently. In white narratives, the nakedness of the black mineworkers is always seen as a natural feature of their being. It is related to an innocent happiness: "I was struck with the apparent happy contentedness of these voluntary prisoners. Some half-naked were enjoying a wash or a sunbath".[113] An earlier white visitor saw men who "sunned

[110]This number includes 1,027 black convicts who were imprisoned. Cape of Good Hope, Department of Agriculture, *Reports of the Inspector of Mines […], for the Year 1895*, pp. 1–9.

[111]Examples of this protest can be found in the pages of the *South African Echo* during the first months of 1894.

[112]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 404. In 1904, Labour MP John Burns compared the high mortality in the mining compounds to the atrocities of the Middle Passage. Burns, *Bondage for Black*, p. 7.

[113]"Down Among the Diamonds", *Evening Telegraph and Post*, 27 March 1914. Many white accounts of the compounds mention "swimming pools". An image of "miners bathing in the Kimberley compound" can be found in William Harding, *War in South Africa and the Dark Continent from Savagery to Civilization: The Strange Story of a Weird World from the Earliest Ages to the Present, Including the War with the Boers* (Chicago, IL, 1899), p. 257. The image is available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:

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themselves in native nakedness".[114] Kinloch's analysis presents nakedness as a colonialist tool, and she deconstructs the image of Africans idly bathing in the sun:

> the natives were made to go stark naked to and from their work, in frost, hail, or storm. The object of this was to facilitate the searching process. To do this vile work the meanest and the most tiger-natured of the white race were chosen. The naked labourers often nearly frozen to death with cold in the winter months […].[115]

For her, the forced nakedness was "disgusting", and she pointed out that it was by "that white race who generally show that they think morality means "covering!".[116]

She had nothing good to say about the white supervisors, who she considered to be "elements of the white race that are capable of nothing but obdurate hatred and prejudice of the worst kind against the African […] they positively beat with sticks, kick with hobnail boots, and administer the fist at will".[117] De Beers as a company was as "colour-hating as its chief", Cecil Rhodes, who, according to Kinloch, once said of the compound inmates that they were "the people whom foolish people pity". To her, this was "precisely the line of argument which has always been held by slaveholders. 'The slaves were so happy!' If they be so, it is the darkest shade of slavery, for the very soul must be held in bondage!"[118] Alice Kinloch's frequent references to slavery were very much on the mark, not only in light of the continuing commodification of black bodies, and the white control exercised over them, but also through the compound's architecture, which was directly inspired on the barracks that English companies used to house enslaved Africans working in mining in Brazil.[119]

Judith Butler argues how wars and conflicts require the dehumanization of the adversary so the combatant or the torturer does not feel that the person he is hurting is a fellow human. Butler also points out how such processes of dehumanization allow for a hierarchization of lives, in which one life can be considered as being less than another. Hierarchization justifies violence, authorized for use on those who are not recognized as fellow human beings, since they do not possess "liveable lives" in the eyes of those perpetrating the violence.[120] That is precisely what happened in chattel slavery, which turned black people into property, whose rights to be recognized as living human beings were forfeited by whites. This is also what occurred within the mining compounds. The dehumanization of black

War_in_South_Africa_and_the_Dark_continent_from_savagery_to_civilization_-_The_strange_story_of_a_weird_world_from_the_earliest_ages_to_the_present,_including_the_war_with_the_Boers_(1899)_(14779227361).jpg.

[114]"The Romance of Diamond Smuggling", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 March 1890.

[115]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 405. Between 1903 and 1912, 7,844 cases of pneumonia were registered at the diamond mines, which was deemed "enormous". In total, 34,160 cases of serious illness were recorded. Union of South Africa, *Report of the Tuberculosis Commission* (Cape Town, 1914), p. 156.

[116]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", pp. 398–399.

[117]*Ibid*., p. 405.

[118]*Ibid*., p. 408.

[119]Vanneste, *Blood, Sweat and Earth*, p. 173.

[120]Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London, 2009), pp. 1–30.

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Figure 3. Stereograph by an anonymous photographer, 1901. The Dutch text reads: "Among the African Employees – rest hour in the De Beers Diamond Mining Compound, Kimberley, S.A.".
Source: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, object number RP-F-F09042, public domain.

lives was the norm within the diamond mining labour system, and Kinloch denounced it: "when an accident is reported to have occurred, the question is asked, 'Any white men hurt?' If the answer comes in the negative they are heard to say, 'Oh, it is only niggers'".[121] Contrary to the white discourse that compounds existed for the elevation of the Africans, Kinloch demonstrates how the compound system, and its wider effects on South African societies through its reliance on migratory labour, were the creation of a colonial state that was fundamentally built on racial hierarchies. Imprisonment inside the mining compounds, bodily inspections, and violent measures of discipline were all part of politics to exercise full control over black bodies, which belonged to men whose lives were always considered to be of lesser value by the colonial society they had been forced into (Figure 3).[122] These politics are confirmed by the practice of mining companies of consciously filling their compounds with an additional number of black men who were not officially registered to work, and who were also not getting paid any wages. This way, they would always have extra men at their disposal in case of need. In 1895, there were reports that the West End Compound of De Beers, which housed 2,500 mineworkers, contained only 1,149 registered men.[123] More than half of the men did not have a pass, so they could not even leave the compound legally. For Kinloch, the result of the introduction of the compounds was clear; they meant the end of freedom.[124] Kinloch's pamphlet is the first published account of the compounds from the point of view of the black mineworkers, and what the colonial

[121]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 402. Reporting on an incident, a British article confirmed that "it is certain that twenty-four white men have been killed, but the number of natives may be anything from 160 to 250". "Terrible Disaster at the De Beers Diamond Mine", *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 18 August 1888.

[122]Weiss, "Exceptional Space", pp. 27–31.

[123]Western Cape Repository, Native Affairs, Vol. 581, Correspondence Files No. B/1364, "Unregistered Natives No. 1 West End Compound, De Beers (1895)".

[124]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 404.

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system did to them. Her efforts can be interpreted as a way of showing the humanity of the mineworkers, who deserved more out of life, even if they passed months living anonymously inside the mining compounds.

By referring to slavery, Kinloch's criticism stressed a certain continuity of the western colonialist project, particularly regarding its labour politics. While motivated by the growing demand for unskilled labour, not just in the diamond mines, but also in the gold mines on the Witwatersrand, white control over black labour was always justified in terms of the "civilizing process" and the need for control over people unable to resist temptation. This type of discourse was equally exposed by Homi Bhabha, who demonstrated how colonial government sustained itself in ambivalent discourse. The democratic and liberal man, who had his rights guaranteed, had to sustain an autocratic government in the colonial territory since the "native" population was incapable of having such rights. A form of despotism, then, was needed to instruct them. As a consequence, the colonial context was at the same time liberal and despotic, an ambivalence used to justify settler colonialism, and expressed through the concept of "civilizing process".[125] Applying Bhabha's ideas to the compounds, the white overseers were authorized "little despots"[126] to the black mineworkers who had control over their lives taken from them, and clothes stripped off them, by those who considered themselves as the "civilized". The profits of black labour went to the De Beers mining company, controlled by the "colour-hating diamond king", the moniker used by Alice Kinloch to refer to Rhodes.[127] Her pamphlet can be seen as an intellectual narrative aimed at demonstrating that white despotism in the diamond mines and mining compounds brought neither "civilization" nor liberal rights to Africans. On the contrary, it brought back the very slavery that the British Empire so proudly claimed it had abolished.[128] Kinloch's critique offers a powerful inversion of this discourse, turning the civilized white man into a violent primitive, and the black African into a civil Christian.[129]

As her involvement in the African Association shows, Alice Kinloch not only worked to lay bare the atrocities suffered by black men, she was equally committed to offering them a way out – and Christianity played an important role therein.[130] But, for Kinloch, there were enormous problems with how the gospel was preached in the colonial context she observed in Kimberley. On various occasions, she exposed the contradiction of Christians subjugating fellow Christians, even if they claimed to do so for the good of those they oppressed: "the colonists have the erroneous idea that my people must be kept under; and lose sight of the fact that there are Christian and educated men amongst the race".[131] Alice Kinloch herself

[125]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 154–161.

[126]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 404.

[127]*Ibid*., p. 408.

[128]British anti-slavery discourse was used in the propaganda in the build-up to second Anglo-Boer war. See footnote 108.

[129]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, pp. 145–154.

[130]One of the African Association's co-founders was a reverend, and various black clergy were present at the 1900 conference.

[131]"Oppression", *The Friend*, 22 October 1897.

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had been raised and educated in a Christian context, although it is not clear to what extent she was a practising Christian. She had married in church, her children had been baptized, and some of her work had been published in religious journals such as *The Friend* and possibly the Christian-inspired socialist *The New Age*.[132] While she did not fundamentally question the role played by Christianity in colonialism and oppression of black Africans, she did express frustration at the activities of white missionaries inside the compounds, and voiced her dismay at De Beers' insistence on forbidding black ministers inside the compounds, according to her a policy meant to "undermine the prestige of our people in holy orders, little as it is, and to prevent the humbler negroes from seeing the possibilities of their own race".[133] For her, white missionary activities were used to keep black people subjugated, by preventing them from developing themselves in the way they wanted to. Black ministers, on the contrary, could be agents of change, further confirming her ideas expressed earlier on the responsibilities of the Africans themselves. With such ideas, particularly in the context of a black Christianity, Alice Kinloch was not alone. Jean and John Comaroff have shown how Christianization amongst Tswana-speakers has led them to negotiate their space and role in the social hierarchies of Southern Tswana communities and in South African colonial society.[134]

Another reason for her plea to admit black ministers was the passive stance taken by white ministers towards what she labelled "the corrupt state of native morals" inside the compounds.[135] It is a contentious point. Stopping I.D.B. and preventing alcohol consumption were the two main colonialist justifications for the existence of the compound system, and both could be explained in a discourse in which black Africans needed to be sheltered from temptation, and white Europeans did not. Newspapers in Kimberley regularly framed drunkenness as a black problem, and there seemed to be a general feeling that "there was very little drunkenness amongst white people".[136] Alice Kinloch, who in England had become acquainted with several important figures in the temperance movement, agreed with the idea that alcohol was a problem.[137] It was a "prince of darkness", brought by whites, holding men in "hopeless bondage".[138] When asked by the labour commission in 1893 about his experiences in the compound, Charlie Lura, a mineworker from Bechuanaland (present-day Botswana), remarked that he drank ordinary brandy in the compound, but that he did not know how much it cost, as "the master gives it".[139] The consumption of alcohol and other drugs, such as the "smoking of dagga

[132]"'Beneficence' of British Rule", *The New Age*, 4 December 1897, contains several elements that seem to confirm Alice Kinloch's authorship, but it also contains extracts from letters sent from Natal at a time Alice was in London.

[133]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 406.

[134]Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*: *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, pp. 372–395.

[135]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 407.

[136]"The Liquor Trade in Kimberley", *South African Echo*, 2 June 1894.

[137]According to Henry Sylvester Williams, a temperance figure himself, Alice Kinloch had been hoping to enter a women writers' club led by Isabella Somerset, one of the most prominent temperance activists of her time. "Pan-African Association", *Port of Spain Gazette*, 2 June 1901.

[138]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 402.

[139]Cape of Good Hope, *Labour Commission*, p. 367.

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weed, which is virtually the opium of Africa", was equally lamented by some of the missionaries, who recognized that the compounds kept black men from "evil influences", but still enabled the "raw heathen" to sin.[140]

For Kinloch, though, the tolerance white missionaries had towards alcohol consumption was not the worst. She was more upset with homosexual relationships, illegal in Britain at the time, inside the compound: "the old sin of 'Sodom' is rampant in the De Beers Compound […] The commission of this foul crime is of deliberate daily occurrence".[141] She also felt that black clergy "would not tolerate this state of things".[142] Scholars who have looked at the sexuality of mineworkers in the compounds, particularly those near the goldmines, have found that homosexuality did occur, and that it was part of existing traditions such as *metsha*, a Xhosa practice in which a man "penetrates" another man's thighs.[143] "Mine marriages" in which traditional gender roles were mimicked were a common practice in the male-only compounds.[144] Henri-Alexandre Junod, a Swiss missionary, described how young newcomers in the compounds might be chosen as "girl-friends".[145] It has been pointed out that missionaries operating in the rural areas from where labour migrated to the mines referred to Kimberley as "Satan's nest" or "the country of Sodom".[146] But it is possible that the missionaries inside the compounds took a more pragmatic stance, allowing the mimicry of a classic male–female marriage with the idea that it could offer a temporary substitute for the dominant gender binary that migrant mineworkers were to return to once their mining career was over. Kinloch, however, saw in the presence of tolerated homosexuality a practice that destroyed family life: "we know of homes, which have been broken up through vicious habits learned in the mining Compound",[147] a quote confirming Kinloch's belief that several immoral practices were not being erased through the white "civilizing mission", but rather introduced. White missionaries were not preaching the gospel as they should, and again, we see in Kinloch's narrative an inversion, leading her to express explicitly the idea that the true values of Christianity would be better practised by black ministers, again turning the African into the civilized party, instead of the colonialist.

[140]"Kimberley Diamonds", *South African Pioneer*, 6:11 (1893). *Dagga* or *Dacha* are words in the Khoikhoi language that refer to endemic South African weeds of the *Leonotis* family. Later, the word was also associated with *cannabis sativa*. Both types of plants had similar effects. Brian M. du Toit, "Dagga: The History and Ethnographic Setting of *Cannabis Sativa* in Southern Africa", in Vera Rubin (ed.), *Cannabis and Culture* (The Hague, 1975), pp. 81–116.

[141]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 407.

[142]*Ibid.*

[143]T. Dunbar Moodie (with Vivien Ndatshe and British Sibuyi), "Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14:2 (1988), pp. 228–256, 231–233.

[144]*Ibid.*

[145]Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (New York, 1962 [1916]), vol. 1, pp. 492–493. For a discussion of the historical importance of Junod's text, and a criticism of Patrick Harries' use of it, see Zackie Achmat, "'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.

[146]Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity*, p. 61.

[147]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 407.

Alice Kinloch's insights on settler colonialism, Christianity, black ministers, black responsibilities, and the need for regulation of vice *within* the black community find an intellectual home in a wider debate taking place in transatlantic activist circles. It is known she had connections to several Caribbean intellectuals in London, most prominently Henry Sylvester Williams, and her discourse can be compared to that of several black American intellectuals thinking about the realities of a post-slavery, heavily racist American South. She was not the first black woman to have travelled at length to expose white atrocities in her country to a British audience, and neither was she the first to have done so with the help of Isabella Fyvie Mayo, a Scottish writer and activist.[148] On two earlier occasions, in 1892 and 1894, American anti-lynch activist Ida B. Wells had come to Britain to talk about the violence inflicted upon black women and men in the American South. Wells was a year and a half older than Alice Kinloch, and part of the last generation of black American activists who had been born into slavery. Like several of her peers, she had initially embraced Victorian bourgeois ideals that centred around self-control and refinement.[149] In the American context, these ideals were most explicitly embodied by the ideology of racial uplift, advocated by Booker T. Washington, six years older than Alice Kinloch, and the most prominent black American intellectual of his time. Washington, like Wells born into slavery, promoted a programme that entailed focus on thrift, industriousness, industrial education, and hard work.[150] His legacy is mixed, and he is often seen as having been too accommodating to whites. Earl Grey, administrator in Rhodesia between 1894 and 1897 and later a director of the British South Africa Company, mentioned Washington's ideas on salvation through work to make the claim that "a well-managed mine is the best school to which the natives can go".[151] Figures such as Ida Wells and W.E.B. Du Bois, who initially looked favourably to Washington's efforts in creating opportunities for black Americans, later judged him, and his seeming acceptance of racial segregation and inequality, more harshly.[152] They also condemned Washington's inability, when he toured Britain, to make his audience there understand American racism. Washington, in turn, did not believe militancy and a focus on political rights was the way forward, and attempted to control public debate.[153]

[148]She had named her daughter after Fyvie Mayo, who introduced her to Harriette Colenso as "a South African woman now in London […] one of our valued correspondents". PAR, Colenso Papers (A204), Box 31, Isabella Fyvie Mayo to Harriette Colenso, Aberdeen, 11 November 1896. It is thought that Kinloch wrote two articles for *Fraternity*, the journal of the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man, founded by Impey, Wells, and Mayo and edited by Dominican activist Samuel Jules Celestine Edwards. See Killingray, "Significant Black South Africans", pp. 401–402. See also Caroline Bressey, "Victorian 'Anti-Racism' and Feminism in Britain", *Women: A Cultural Review*, 21:3 (2010), pp. 279–291.

[149]James West Davidson, *"They Say": Ida B. Wells and the Reconstruction of Race* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 185–192.

[150]David Sehat, "The Civilizing Mission of Booker T. Washington", *Journal of Southern History*, 73:2 (2007), pp. 323–362.

[151]Earl Grey, *Native Labour in South Africa: Speech by Earl Grey, Cannon Street Hotel, 15th July, 1903* (London, 1904), pp. 8–9.

[152]See, for instance, Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (London, 2005 [1986]), pp. 41–51.

[153]See, for instance, Clive Webb, "'A Feeling Which it is Impossible for Englishmen to Understand': Booker T. Washington and Anglo-American Rivalries", *History*, 107:376 (2022), pp. 549–569.

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Washington's ideas on racial uplift were not that different from some of Alice Kinloch's thoughts. She, too, felt education was important. She, too, in certain areas of life, strongly advocated for restraint and self-discipline, particularly when it came to alcohol and homosexuality. And both, like virtually all black leaders fighting for their people, advocated the importance of the black community to be able to rely on itself; Kinloch was convinced that "the only way to teach any how to be free is to give him his freedom, and let him bear all his responsibilities".[154] Her call for freedom is important, in a world in which newspapers would write that "it is obviously absurd to look upon the Kafir as the free citizen of a free state".[155]

But even though Kinloch might have shared some of Washington's ideas on moral restraint, Washington's ideal of manual labour must have sounded very different to Kinloch's ears – as she spent her writing career on defending the rights of men working in the mines, using their hands to dig up riches for a colonial company run by Cecil Rhodes, a man she despised. She was fighting for the freedom of the black men already doing such work, and in this she differed from Washington. For Kinloch, Washington's focus on manual labour might have been uncomfortably close to colonialist ideas on the "internal civilizing" offered by physical work.[156] Whether she could consider the praxis of work itself as one of the blessings that could uplift the black man (and woman?), provided the context is one of black freedom, is unclear, as she never explicitly discussed the merit of work. In the last section of her pamphlet, however, she offers readers various "corroborations" from other sources. One of those was the *Imvo*, and the last quote she gave was by Tengo Jabavu, like Kinloch from Kimberley, who wrote in June 1897 that "the native […] is entitled to justice in his humble capacity of labourer and human being".[157] A quote Washington would have agreed with.

Alice Kinloch found herself ideologically much closer to Wells and W.E.B. Du Bois, who spoke at the first Pan-African Conference, held in London in 1900 and organized by the African Association. Alice Kinloch was not there, but the situation in South African compounds stood high on the agenda.[158] On one occasion Washington publicly expressed strong sentiments that were much like Kinloch's. Perhaps it was no coincidence these were not directed to white Americans, but to the British. In December 1896, when Alice Kinloch was in London, Washington had an article published in which he discussed the second Matabele war: "on the very day […] that the British troops were mowing down those Africans […] hundreds of prayers were being offered up in as many English churches that convert the heathen in Africa and bring them to our way of thinking and acting. What mockery!"[159] The sentiment that no one should speak of civilizing before being able to be civil oneself comes out very strongly in Alice Kinloch's writings, and it echoes Christian

[154]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 403.

[155]*Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 26 January 1883. Alice was nineteen years old at the time.

[156]See also footnote 68.

[157]Alexander, "South African Diamonds", p. 411.

[158]*Report of the Pan-African Conference held on the 23rd, 24th and 25th July, 1900. At Westminster Town Hall, Westminster, S.W.* (London, 1900), pp. 11–12. Washington did not attend either, but he did participate in a preparatory meeting held in London in June 1899. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[159]As quoted in Webb, "'A Feeling'", p. 561.

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ideals – ideals that again suggest an inward-looking ethics of self-responsibility. These fitted well in the Victorian context, and it is hardly surprising that many of the white allies who supported women like Wells and Kinloch were staunchly Victorian in their disgust of alcohol for instance.[160] Who was best equipped to share such Christian ideas with Africans in Africa and with black Americans in the United States, though, was up for debate. For a man like Washington, black ministers were corrupt and not the best vehicles to spread the gospel.[161] For a woman like Kinloch, it was exactly the opposite.

Conclusion

Alice Kinloch returned to South Africa in 1897, only to disappear from the public sphere. In 1899, she wrote to Harriette Colenso that she and her husband had moved to a farm called "Nil Desperandum", near the town of Verulam in Natal, where they were "going in for bee, poultry and pig farming".[162] Life seemed complicated: "the natives resent our living here. The Europeans in the village were most inquisitive and rude to my husband".[163] It is perhaps why she left for British Kenya and later Tanganyika, where she died in 1946.[164] The question remains as to why she ceased her intellectual production as well as her involvement with the African Association. By the time she left South Africa for the second time, it had become an independent republic, which furthered colonial inequalities into the apartheid system, and perhaps the weight of oppression had become too much. Her legacy, however, remains in the seeds she sowed. The African Association was an important milestone in the development of Pan-Africanism. Alice Kinloch did not attend the Pan-African Conference of 1900, but it resulted in a report and a memorial addressed to Queen Victoria, and that had Alice Kinloch's intellectual fingerprints all over it. It contained seven points, the first being "the degrading and illegal compound system of native labour in Kimberley and Rhodesia".[165]

Although criticism of the compound system was still very rare in the early twentieth century, there were more dissenting voices after Alice Kinloch's passage in England. In November 1899, right after the beginning of the second Anglo-Boer war, the *Sevenoaks Chronicle* published a fierce letter exchange between a woman who defended English imperialism and a man who described the compounds as an "English horror". The man cited Alice Kinloch's pamphlet as the source for his description of "English barbarisms perpetrated by our people on the natives at Kimberley".[166] It is not known whether Alice Kinloch ever read these articles, but if she did, the exposure of English colonialism in such fierce terms would have highly pleased her. In the end, her work did not contribute to ending the compound system – South Africa

[160]See Tanya Caroline Anne Bressey, "Forgotten Geographies: Historical Geographies of Black Women in Victorian and Edwardian London" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 2002), pp. 80, 201–209, 215.

[161]Sehat, "The Civilizing Mission", pp. 325–329.

[162]PAR, Colenso Papers (A204), Box 33, Alice Victoria Kinloch to Harriette Colenso, Verulam, 2 August 1899.

[163]*Ibid.*

[164]Personal communication with Tshepo Moloi. For more biographical details, see Killingray, "Significant Black South Africans".

[165]*Report of the Pan-African Conference*, p. 11.

[166]"Mr. Hickmott and the War", *Sevenoaks Chronicle*, 24 November 1899.

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was to continue on the path of racial segregation for a long time to come – but the persistence with which she exposed the contradictions in the "civilizing mission" discourse, and how it was practised, shows how black activists were turning the arguments used to subdue them into a discourse to liberate themselves and those they considered their sisters and brothers. Alice Kinloch was important not only as a black African woman speaking out, but also as an intellectual who fought with words: "if men who profess to belong to a Christian nation force such oppressive measures on a race who have not had the same opportunities you have in this country, how can they expect that race to be truthful and honest, when the colonists lack those qualities themselves".[167]

[167]"Oppression", *The Friend*, 22 October 1897.

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