

Trump, the Afrikaners and Afrikaner Identity: White Racism, Pro-Natalism and Demographic Anxiety in the Settler Colonies

André ZAAIMAN

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Abstract

On 21 May 2026 — a year to the day after Donald TRUMP confronted Cyril RAMAPHOSA with discredited claims of a ‘white genocide’ in the Oval Office — the United States accepted the credentials of Roelf MEYER, a white Afrikaner and former apartheid cabinet minister, as South Africa’s ambassador in Washington. MEYER’s arrival followed the expulsion in March 2025 of his predecessor, Ebrahim RASOOL, a Cape Muslim diplomat who had described the TRUMP movement as a project of white supremacy. This article reads the contrast between the rejected envoy and the accepted one as a window onto a wider phenomenon, and uses it to pose a fivefold question: whether PRETORIA tacitly accepted the white racism of the TRUMP regime by sending MEYER, and whether a rapprochement is even possible with a power that has committed a hostile act against South Africa and its citizens and has neither apologised nor withdrawn it; whether TRUMP is operating a racialised population-selection regime that imports politically useful white ‘victim’ populations while expelling racialised migrants framed as invasion; how the bond between the United States and Israel rests on a shared settler-colonial and demographic project; how this connects to the United States’ and France’s repositioning in Africa against the rise of China and the wider Global South; and whether a second wave of decolonisation is now bearing down on the settler colonies that survived the first. The article argues that the demographic anxieties animating the second TRUMP administration belong to a long lineage of settler-colonial population politics, situating contemporary pro-natalism and ‘great replacement’ discourse within a structure rather than an event. The recruitment of Afrikaners is read as a hostile act of racialised geopolitical poaching and population irredentism that cultivates a sympathetic constituency inside a sovereign state while seeding friction within BRICS and the Global South. Recruitment and pro-natalism are shown to be two techniques of a single demographic project — one imports the favoured population, the other breeds it — and both are modern forms of colonialism. It revives, for the Afrikaner, the question debated since the 1980s — what it means to be an Afrikaner without apartheid — once the Afrikaner is understood, after ANDERSON, CHATTERJEE and CHAKRABARTY, as a creole people that absorbed a misplaced ‘white’ identity at the moment of its invention, a false consciousness out of which it produced not a return to a European metropole, as the Dutch and British colonisers did, but a distinctive internal colonialism of its own: apartheid. The Munich Security Conference speech delivered by Vice-President J.D. VANCE in February 2025 serves as the analytical hinge. The font of this anxiety, the article contends, is the racism of Christian Europe that produced slavery, colonialism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and now anti-Palestinian racism.

Introduction: Two Ambassadors and a Fivefold Question

On Thursday 21 May 2026, Roelf MEYER presented his credentials to President Donald TRUMP at the White House as South Africa's ambassador to the United States. He did so as one of a group of twelve incoming envoys, and described the ceremony to the South African public broadcaster as 'warm'. The date was not without resonance: it fell exactly one year after TRUMP had ambushed President Cyril RAMAPHOSA in the Oval Office with video footage and printed material purporting to document a 'white genocide' against Afrikaner farmers — claims the United Nations human rights office, the South African government, and even leading Afrikaner organisations have rejected as false.

MEYER is an Afrikaner. Born in 1947 in Port Elizabeth, he is seventy-eight years old, and served as a minister under the National Party governments of P.W. BOTHA and F.W. DE KLERK, including a period as Deputy Minister of Law and Order and later Minister of Constitutional Affairs, before becoming the National Party's chief negotiator in the talks that ended apartheid. He later joined the African National Congress in 2006. He is, in the most literal sense, a product of the white minority order that governed South Africa for the better part of a century, and a figure some in the Afrikaner community regard as a 'sellout' — alongside DE KLERK — for his part in dismantling it. RAMAPHOSA appointed him in April 2026, and his appointment was widely read as a calculated gesture of reassurance toward an administration that had spent a year alleging the persecution of white South Africans.

His predecessor offers the instructive contrast. Ebrahim RASOOL, a Cape Muslim and former premier of the Western Cape, had served barely two months as ambassador when, in March 2025, the State Department declared him persona non grata. His offence was to have characterised the TRUMP phenomenon, in a webinar, as a movement mobilising a politics of white supremacy and demographic threat. For more than a year thereafter, South Africa had no ambassador in Washington at all. The replacement of a Muslim envoy who named white supremacy with a white Afrikaner who embodies, for the American right, the very figure of the persecuted white settler, is the point of departure for this article.

This substitution is not merely diplomatic theatre. It raises five connected questions that organise what follows:

1. Did the South African government, in sending MEYER, tacitly accept the white racism of the TRUMP regime — purchasing a reset of relations with a white Afrikaner face acceptable to Washington — and on what basis can a rapprochement rest when the United States has neither apologised for its falsehoods nor rescinded the hostile actions built upon them?
2. Is TRUMP operating a racialised population-selection regime — importing politically useful white 'victim' populations such as the Afrikaners while expelling racialised migrants, above all Mexicans, framed as an invasion — and is the very act of a small group of Afrikaners 'fleeing' to

America itself an expression of racism and of demographic anxiety at the loss of settler dominion, including the conviction among some that they were 'sold out' by MEYER and DE KLERK?

3. How does the close alignment between the United States and Israel rest on a shared commitment to settler colonialism and its demographic engineering — the manufacture and defence of an ethno-religious majority 'from the river to the sea'?
4. How does this connect to the United States' and France's repositioning in Africa as a counter to the rise of China — a power that is not only an economic 'threat' but the symbol of a non-white ascent coinciding with the decline of the Western Christian civilisation VANCE invoked at Munich?
5. Is a second wave of decolonisation now targeting precisely those settler colonies that escaped the first — Israel, the Saharawi territory, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the French-British-American settler holdings on the strategically vital Eastern Rim of Africa in the Indian Ocean?

The argument advanced across these questions is that the demographic anxieties now driving policy in Washington — the campaign to raise the birth rate, the racially selective refugee programme that admitted Afrikaners while the wider refugee system was shuttered, and the mass deportation of non-white migrants — are neither novel nor aberrant. They are the contemporary expression of a structure intrinsic to settler colonialism wherever it has taken root: the coercive attempt to manufacture and preserve a permanent white, Christian, ethno-racial majority. The same structure now reaches outward, recruiting the citizens of another sovereign state on racial grounds. The source of the anxiety, throughout, is the racism of Christian Europe — the same racism that produced the Atlantic slave trade, colonial conquest, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and the anti-Palestinian racism of the present. For the Afrikaner in particular, TRUMP's demographic statecraft raises a deeper question that this article will argue Afrikaners must finally address: how to decolonise Afrikaner identity itself.

Pro-Natalism, Race, Racism and Settler Colonialism: Working Definitions

The concept that organises this article, and to which the others lead, is *pro-natalism*. It has become, within a few years, a central and rising platform of the American right — no longer a fringe preoccupation but an openly stated cause, promoted from the highest offices of the state, amplified by its wealthiest backers, and institutionalised in a growing movement. President TRUMP has called for 'baby bonuses' and declared that he wants 'a baby boom', styling himself the 'fertilization president'. Vice-President J.D. VANCE set the tone at the March for Life in Washington in January 2025, telling the crowd plainly, 'I want more babies in the United States of America.' Elon MUSK, father of at least fourteen children and for a time the administration's most prominent ally, has warned that collapsing birth rates are a greater threat to civilisation than climate change and that, unless the trend reverses, 'civilization will disappear'. The Heritage Foundation, through its Project

2025, has placed the restoration of the 'traditional family' at the centre of its policy programme; and a dedicated movement has acquired its own annual gathering, the Natal Conference in Texas, drawing together religious conservatives, the technology elite and 'new right' anti-feminists around the shared conviction that Americans must have more children. The line VANCE delivered is worth pausing on, because its simplicity is the point: a sitting vice-president declaring, as a goal of state, that a particular kind of birth should increase. The question this article presses is what such a programme is actually for.

By pro-natalism is meant the deliberate use of state power and ideology to raise the birth rate of a favoured population — not as a neutral demographic or welfare measure, but, in the cases examined here, as an instrument for manufacturing and defending a particular ethno-racial majority. So understood, pro-natalism is a technique of white colonial demographics: the settler imperative to secure a permanent white, Christian majority on contested land, pursued through the management of who is born. And it is, in its logic, identical to the racial poaching of Afrikaners by the TRUMP administration. The two differ only in method. Pro-natalism manufactures the favoured population by breeding it; racial recruitment imports it ready-made from abroad. Both are demographic engineering in the service of the same end, and both are modern forms of colonialism. This equivalence — pro-natalism as white colonial demographics, and Afrikaner racial poaching as its twin — is the analytic spine of the argument that follows.

Three further concepts support it and should be fixed at the outset. By *race* is meant not a biological fact but a social and political classification of human beings into ranked groups treated as natural and hereditary. The scholarship is settled on this point: race is constructed rather than discovered, and its categories shift across time and place even as they are made to appear timeless.¹ By *racism* is meant the ordering of social, economic and political life by that classification — the systemic distribution of advantage, dignity and life-chances along racial lines, sustained by institutions rather than merely by individual prejudice. By *settler colonialism* is meant a distinct form of colonial domination in which the coloniser comes not principally to extract labour and return home, but to stay, to take the land, and to build a permanent new society upon it. Patrick WOLFE's formulation that 'invasion is a structure not an event' remains the indispensable starting point: settler colonialism is distinguished by a 'logic of elimination' directed at the native population that stands upon the coveted land.²

These concepts are interlocking. Race supplies the classification; racism operationalises it; settler colonialism is the structure in which, historically, both have done their most consequential work; and pro-natalism — together with its outward-facing twin, racial recruitment — is the demographic instrument by which the settler order seeks to perpetuate itself. A further term, introduced later, names that outward face precisely: *population irredentism*, the claim of a settler power upon co-ethnics resident in another sovereign state, and its attempt to gather them in.

The Invention of Race in Europe

The racism that underwrites the settler order was not a natural response to human difference but a historical invention, elaborated in Europe and exported across the Atlantic. Theodore ALLEN's study of the 'invention of the white race' showed that whiteness was a deliberate construction of social control, fashioned in the colonial Americas to divide labourers who might otherwise have made common cause and to bind poor Europeans to the planter class through a shared claim to racial standing.³ Michael OMI and Howard WINANT's account of 'racial formation' describes the continuous social and political process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed, and through which the state itself becomes the principal arbiter of who counts as what.⁴ The collected scholarship on the scientific and popular fabrication of race traces how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century natural history, anatomy and emerging social science lent the prestige of method to a hierarchy that was political from the first.⁵ The constructivist consensus in contemporary scholarship — that race is a political rather than a natural kind — is now firm across philosophy and sociology alike.¹

The crucial point for what follows is that the hierarchies of human worth that justified the elimination of the native and the enslavement of the African were intellectual artefacts of Christian Europe, carried into the colonies in the holds of the same ships that carried the settlers and the enslaved. The Afrikaner republic at the southern tip of Africa and the settler republic of North America are, in this sense, branches of a single tree.

American Settler Colonialism, Slavery and the Architecture of Race

The United States is the paradigmatic settler colony. Its formation rested on the dispossession and destruction of Indigenous nations across a continent and, simultaneously, on the importation and enslavement of Africans whose labour built the plantation economy. Andrea SMITH has described the resulting structure as a tripartite logic of white supremacy — elimination of the Indigenous, enslavement of the African, and exclusion of the racialised foreigner — three distinct but interlocking columns that together hold up the edifice of a white settler polity.⁶ It is worth holding all three columns in view, because the present argument turns on their simultaneous operation: the contemporary administration eliminates and excludes the racialised migrant at the southern border while it imports and rehabilitates the white settler from the southern tip of Africa.

The logic of elimination was not metaphor but policy. In May 1830 the United States Congress passed an Act to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians, authorising the federal government to uproot and transport some eighty thousand people from their homes east of the Mississippi.⁷ The forced marches that followed — remembered by the Cherokee as the Trail of Tears — were, as Claudio SAUNT has argued, an early instance of mass deportation that was bureaucratically managed

and industrial in scale. The demographic outcome was the point: a people who had been a substantial presence east of the Mississippi were reduced, by the turn of the twentieth century, to roughly half of one per cent of the United States population, a minority rendered politically insignificant in their own land.⁷ The dispossession did not stop at the Mississippi. It was generalised into a national vocation — the doctrine of ‘manifest destiny’ — under which continental expansion to the Pacific was cast as the providential right of a chosen, Christian, and white people. Removal and expansion were two faces of one demographic project: to clear the land of its natives and to fill it with settlers. That the contemporary deportation campaign should be conducted, like the removals of the 1830s, as a bureaucratic and industrial operation against a racialised population is not a coincidence of method but a continuity of structure.

Lorenzo VERACINI has stressed that this structure does not dissolve with formal decolonisation or with the legal abolition of slavery. The settler colonial present, in his phrase, is characterised by a tendency continually to ‘proclaim its passing’ even as it persists; the settler order announces its own completion precisely in order to naturalise the conquest on which it rests.⁸ Evelyn Nakano GLENN has shown how this structure organises not only race but also gender, since the reproduction of the settler population — the literal making of more settlers — is built into the project from the outset.⁹ It is here that demography enters. A polity premised on becoming and remaining a white majority must continually count, monitor, and manage the relative growth of its constituent populations. Demographic anxiety is therefore not incidental to settler colonialism; it is one of its constitutive moods.

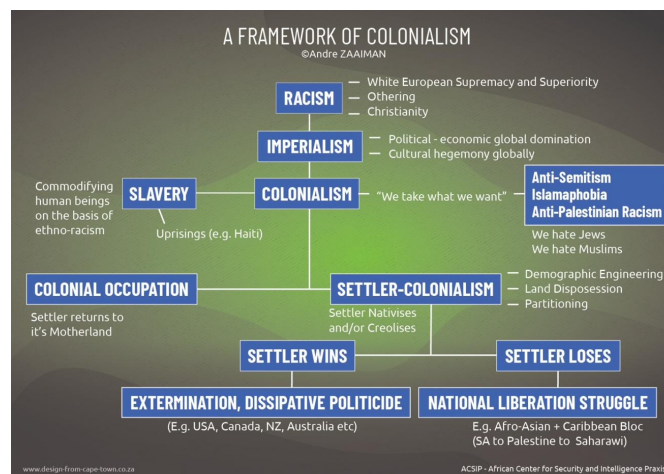


Figure 1. A framework of colonialism. The settler-colonial branch divides into two outcomes: where the settler ‘wins’, through extermination and dissipative politicide (the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia); and where the settler ‘loses’, through national liberation struggle (the Afro-Asian and Caribbean bloc, from South Africa to Palestine to the Saharawi). Source: André ZAAIMAN / ACSIP.

Demography as a Settler Science

The most consequential recent contribution to this field is Musab YOUNIS's argument that the modern panic over the 'great replacement' of white populations cannot be understood apart from the origins of demography itself as a science rooted in the English and French settler-colonial projects.¹⁰ YOUNIS demonstrates that the very subject of 'the population' emerged not in the metropole but on the colonial frontier, as an instrument for controlling and, where convenient, annihilating subject peoples. William PETTY, who developed the 'political arithmetic' that became the foundation of demography, did so in the service of CROMWELL's conquest of Ireland: he led the cadastral Down Survey of 1655–6 to reallocate land confiscated from Irish rebels, became the owner of some 100,000 acres of that land, and conceived his new science with the explicit ambition to 'transmute the Irish into English'.¹⁰ PETTY also proposed the demographic subsumption of Indigenous peoples in England's North American colonies through the kidnapping of Indigenous girls and their forced marriage to English colonists.

The American thread runs directly through this lineage. In 1751 Benjamin FRANKLIN proposed to increase the global white population through both settler expansion and immigration control, observing that 'the Number of purely white People in the World is proportionably very small' but might be made to increase. As YOUNIS notes, the historian Matthew CONNELLY has suggested this may have been the first proposal in history to control world population.¹⁰ Five decades later, Thomas Robert MALTHUS transformed the discipline. YOUNIS shows that the space MALTHUS theorised was never neutral: it was a racially hierarchised globe cleaved between a 'white population' in 'improved' zones and the non-white population of 'the less civilised parts of the world'. MALTHUS could write, in the second Essay of 1803, that the 'Indians' of North America would be 'driven further and further back into the country, till the whole race is ultimately exterminated'.¹⁰ Defenders of slavery in the American South and the British Caribbean drew on him to argue that enslavement usefully limited Black fertility.

What YOUNIS calls the 'Janus-faced' nature of population as a political subject — 'stratospheric growth for some, merciless annihilation for others' — was thus present at the discipline's birth.¹⁰ The same doubleness animated the French tradition, where the science was erected on the censuses of New France and the slave economy of the Caribbean, and where, after the demographic shocks of the Napoleonic and Franco-Prussian wars, nationalists came to warn of 'the imminent disappearance of our country' and founded, in 1896, a National Alliance for the Growth of the French Population. The eruption of pro-natalism during the Vichy years — when contraception and abortion were banned and the teaching of demography in schools made compulsory — completes a circuit that runs, as

YOUNIS puts it, from PETTY to MALTHUS to CAMUS.¹⁰ France, 'competitively imperial, constitutively racial' in its demographic thought, became the intellectual home of the contemporary far right and the source of its governing concepts: great replacement, ethnic substitution, Eurabia, white genocide.

The crucial implication is that 'great replacement' theory is not a fringe deviation from respectable population science but its shadow. Mark SEDGWICK has argued, in a study of the replacement narrative across the West, that it is too often dismissed as a marginal conspiracy theory that somehow went mainstream, when in fact it functions as a flexible plot structure with deep roots in established discourse.¹¹ YOUNIS presses the point further: the power of Renaud CAMUS's arguments derives precisely from their 'enduring proximity to liberal discourse', and an ostensibly sanitised demography remains 'awkwardly close to the vision of racialised populations competing in a war for planetary space'.¹⁰ When an eighteen-year-old white supremacist murdered ten Black shoppers in Buffalo in May 2022, his manifesto reduced his politics to a single proposition: demography. The same logic, articulated more decorously, has migrated to the centre of American power.

Pro-Natalism as Demographic Engineering

If the settler project requires a permanent white majority, then the falling white birth rate presents that project with an existential problem, and pro-natalism with its solution. Pro-natalism, in this setting, is not a family policy but a demographic technology of the settler order — a modern form of colonialism directed at the settler's own reproduction, the breeding of the favoured population to secure the majority that conquest first established. The United States total fertility rate fell to 1.62 births per woman in 2023, well below the replacement level of 2.1, and the number of births reached a record low. Into this statistical fact the contemporary American right has poured a politics of dread. The proposals already noted — the 'baby bonus', the 'National Medal of Motherhood' for women bearing six or more children, the restriction of abortion and the defunding of reproductive-health providers set out in the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 — are its policy expression.

It would be a mistake to read this purely as concern for family welfare. The proposals conspicuously omit the measures — subsidised childcare, paid parental leave — that actually raise birth rates in comparable economies, while embracing the symbolic and disciplinary apparatus of an older tradition. Pro-natalism, historically, has been less about babies than about which babies. Target-driven natalism has repeatedly been an instrument of racial and nationalist statecraft, from Vichy France to the autocracies of contemporary Eastern Europe, where, as Barbara GAWEDA has shown, illiberal demographic policy in Poland and Russia is articulated through a gendered discourse of national survival.¹² The demand to raise the birth rate is, in the settler context, inseparable from the question of whose birth rate is to be raised.

What is distinctive about the present American moment is the convergence of this conservative, often Christian, pro-natalism with a second and superficially different current: the techno-libertarian pro-natalism of the Silicon Valley oligarchy. Susi GEIGER, in a study of the 'fertility obsession' of the tech elite, traces how figures such as Elon MUSK, Peter THIEL and Sam ALTMAN have made the spectre of 'population collapse' central to their public discourse.¹³ MUSK has repeatedly insisted that declining fertility is 'not just a crisis, but the crisis', has warned that humanity may 'die in adult diapers with a whimper', and has fathered a reported fourteen children while donating ten million dollars to a Population Wellbeing Initiative.¹³ GEIGER situates this within the broader ideological bundle that Timnit GEBRU and Émile TORRES have labelled TESCREAL — transhumanism, extropianism, singularitarianism, cosmism, rationalism, effective altruism and longtermism — and argues that the tech oligarchs' pro-natalism functions as an 'ideological smokescreen' deeply entangled with market interests in the fertility industry.¹³

GEIGER's more hopeful observation is that the conservative-Christian and the technoscientific variants of pro-natalism are, in her words, 'light-years apart' and may yet fracture the coalition that currently unites them.¹³ The Christian pro-natalist wants more children born within the heterosexual, married, faithful family; the transhumanist wants more of a particular kind of human produced by whatever technological means, including selection and editing, and is largely indifferent to the moral architecture the religious right holds sacred. Yet for the purposes of this argument the two converge on a single anxiety: that the right sort of people are not reproducing fast enough, and that the demographic balance must be corrected. That anxiety is the settler anxiety in modern dress.

The American Right: A Coalition of Settler Ideologies

The pro-natalism examined above is one strand of a broader coalition, and the coalition is worth naming, because its apparently disparate factions are held together by a common thread. The contemporary American right is an assemblage of currents that on the surface have little in common: avowed white nationalists; the techno-oligarchs of Silicon Valley; the extreme libertarians of the 'exit' and neo-reactionary tendencies; the inheritors of frontier and gun culture; and the Christian Zionists of the evangelical heartland. What binds them is not a shared programme but a shared structure of feeling — a racialised identity politics and a set of settler ideologies that each faction expresses in its own idiom.

The white nationalists supply the explicit demographic anxiety, the fear of replacement in its rawest form. The techno-oligarchs — MUSK, THIEL, ALTMAN and their circle — translate that anxiety into the language of 'population collapse' and longtermist species-survival, while pursuing, through the neo-reactionary and 'exit' tendencies associated with figures such as Curtis YARVIN and the network around THIEL, a vision of sovereignty unbound from democratic accountability: the corporation, the

charter city, the engineered enclave as successor to the state. The extreme libertarians furnish the anti-statist grammar in which this is couched, recasting the dismantling of public obligation as freedom. Frontierism — the romance of the armed settler clearing and holding ground — supplies the foundational American myth in which all of this is rooted, the same myth of manifest destiny examined above, now redirected from the continent to the border, to space, and to the besieged suburb. And Christian Zionism binds the domestic project to the foreign one, sacralising both the white Christian American nation and the Jewish settler state, and reading the defence of Israel as the defence of a shared civilisational frontier.

These are settler ideologies in the precise sense developed in this article: each imagines a chosen population with a providential right to land and dominion, each is haunted by the prospect of being outnumbered and displaced, and each responds with some combination of demographic engineering, territorial defence and the exclusion or elimination of the racialised other. The coalition coheres because the settler structure underlies them all. It is this assemblage, and not any single faction, that VANCE addressed and represented at Munich; and it is this assemblage that recognises in the persecuted Afrikaner, the besieged Israeli settler and the 'invaded' American suburb three images of a single threatened self.

Munich, February 2025: Demographic Anxiety as Foreign Policy

The speech delivered by Vice-President J.D. VANCE to the Munich Security Conference on 14 February 2025 is the moment at which these domestic anxieties were translated into a doctrine for the West. Ostensibly a speech about security, it announced that the gravest threat facing Europe was 'not Russia, it's not China', but rather 'the threat from within' — the retreat of Europe from its 'most fundamental values'.¹⁴ Those values, on inspection, turned out to consist largely of a particular bundle of grievances: the policing of online speech, the prosecution of Christians praying outside abortion clinics, and above all the question of migration. VANCE reserved his climax for the last of these. 'Of all the pressing challenges that the nations represented here face', he told the assembled European leaders, 'I believe there is nothing more urgent than mass migration.'¹⁴

The architecture of the speech is revealing. VANCE moved seamlessly from the defence of 'a humble Christian praying in her own home' to the warning that no democracy could survive 'disregarding your basic electorate on questions like, who gets to be a part of our shared society'.¹⁴ The juxtaposition is the argument. The protection of Christian conscience and the policing of who belongs to 'our shared society' are presented as a single cause. He invoked the previous day's vehicular attack in Munich, attributed it to 'a series of conscious decisions made by politicians' to admit migrants, and observed that 'almost one in five people living in this country moved here from abroad' — 'a similar number, by the way, in the United States, also an all time high'.¹⁴ The demographic figure is offered as self-

evidently alarming. The unstated premise — that a society defined by a particular ethno-religious character is threatened by the arrival of others — is precisely the premise of replacement discourse, delivered from the podium of the Western alliance.

VANCE did not need to invoke CAMUS, or 'great replacement', or white genocide, because the structure of feeling those terms name had already been naturalised. The defence of the 'voice of the people' against 'old entrenched interests', the celebration of Brexit and of European parties 'who promise to put an end to out-of-control migration', and the closing benediction borrowed from a Pope assembled a coherent vision in which the authentic European, like the authentic American, is a settled, Christian native whose home is imperilled by movement.¹⁴ The compiler of the transcript used here, observing the same speech, characterised it aptly as 'right-wing populist-libertarianism rolled into Christian conservative-corporatism', a project to 'secure its racial demographic base that is under threat from mass-migration and the ideological decomposition of White supremacy'.¹⁴

The South African dimension follows directly. The same administration that warned Europe against the dilution of its native stock had, one week before VANCE spoke, issued Executive Order 14204, 'Addressing Egregious Actions of the Republic of South Africa', on 7 February 2025. The order cut assistance to South Africa, condemned its expropriation legislation and its genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, and directed the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security to prioritise the resettlement of Afrikaner 'refugees'. On his first day in office TRUMP had suspended the entire United States refugee programme, under which 125,000 places a year had been available; he then reopened it almost exclusively for white South Africans, slashing the annual ceiling to a record-low 7,500 and reserving the bulk of those places for Afrikaners. The first cohort of fifty-nine arrived at Dulles airport on 12 May 2025, greeted in person by Deputy Secretary of State Christopher LANDAU. By the spring of 2026 the State Department reported that of just over six thousand refugees admitted in the financial year, all but three were South African. The administration was seeking to raise the ceiling further to admit more Afrikaners still, even as it pursued the mass deportation of non-white migrants from the American interior.

Population Selection as Statecraft: The White Refugee and the Deported Mexican

The two faces of the administration's migration policy must be read together, for their meaning lies in their juxtaposition. While the refugee system was opened to a few thousand Afrikaners, it was closed to virtually everyone else, and the interior of the country became the theatre of the largest deportation campaign in modern American history. Through 2025 and into 2026 Immigration and Customs Enforcement quadrupled its arrests; street arrests, away from jails, rose more than elevenfold; and the targets were increasingly people without criminal convictions. The campaign moved from the southern border into American cities — Los Angeles in June 2025, then Chicago,

Portland, New Orleans, Charlotte, and Minneapolis, where the operation styled 'Metro Surge' marked the January 2026 peak. The population subjected to this machinery was overwhelmingly Latino, and Mexicans above all; the Mexican government built reception camps along its northern border to receive the expelled. The contrast is exact and deliberate: the white settler is flown in and met by a Deputy Secretary of State at the airport; the brown migrant is seized in a workplace raid and bussed to the frontier.

This is a racialised population-selection regime, and it is best understood as demographic engineering conducted as statecraft. It operates on two registers at once. On one side stands white kinship protection: the identification, abroad, of a co-racial population cast as persecuted, and its admission as a deserving exception to a refugee system otherwise sealed. On the other stands the securitisation of the racialised migrant: the framing of Latino migration as 'invasion', and its violent reversal through detention and removal. The first register replenishes the favoured stock; the second culls the disfavoured one. Both are expressions of the single settler imperative to manage the demographic balance of the polity, and both reproduce, in twenty-first-century form, SMITH's tripartite logic — the exclusion of the racialised foreigner at the border, conducted in the same breath as the gathering-in of the settler from abroad. The recruitment of Afrikaners is, in this light, continuous with the pro-natalism examined earlier: both are demographic engineering, and both are modern forms of colonialism. Where pro-natalism breeds the favoured population into being, recruitment imports it ready-made; the baby bonus and the racially selective refugee channel are two instruments of one project, the manufacture of a white majority. Pro-natalism is colonialism turned inward upon the settler's own body; recruitment is colonialism reaching outward into another state's population. Neither is a domestic social policy in any ordinary sense; both are the population politics of a settler order extended into the present.

The outward reach of this regime is its most novel feature, and it requires the fourth concept named at the outset. To select a foreign population by race, to declare it persecuted against the explicit denials of its own government and its own community, and to organise its emigration, is an exercise in *population irredentism*: the assertion of a settler power's claim upon co-ethnics resident in another sovereign state. The classical irredentism of the twentieth century claimed territory inhabited by co-nationals; this contemporary variant claims the co-ethnics themselves, detaching them from their state and re-attaching them to the imperial centre.

The effect is twofold. First, it cultivates inside South Africa a sympathetic constituency — a fifth column in the precise sense of a group whose loyalties and grievances are oriented toward a foreign power — and lends that constituency the prestige of international validation. The documented record of the campaign bears this out: in the months before MEYER's appointment, the United States ambassador used a business conference in Hermanus to urge South African executives to speak out

against the government's economic-empowerment laws; a sitting South African cabinet minister was received at the ambassador's residence within days and afterward praised him as a man enjoying the trust of TRUMP; and AfriForum, having spent the prior year lobbying in Washington against South African legislation, met the ambassador at the same conference. Second, the campaign seeds friction within the blocs to which South Africa belongs. South Africa is a member of BRICS and an emblem of the Global South's assertion against the racial hierarchy of the existing order; to brand its government the persecutor of a white minority, and to extract that minority as refugees, is to discipline a recalcitrant member of those blocs and to warn others. The Afrikaner episode is thus not a humanitarian footnote but an instrument of geopolitical pressure.

Israel and America: The Settler Compact and the Demographic Question

The bond between the United States and Israel is conventionally explained by strategic interest, domestic lobbying, or biblical sentiment. Beneath these lies a deeper affinity: both are settler-colonial states for which the maintenance of an ethno-religious majority on contested land is a foundational and unfinished task. The intellectual architecture of this task in the Zionist tradition was supplied early. Ze'ev JABOTINSKY's 'Iron Wall' of 1923 argued that a Jewish majority could be established in Palestine only behind a barrier of force that the native Arab population could not breach, and that no voluntary agreement with the indigenous inhabitants was to be expected so long as they retained any hope of remaining a majority. The logic is recognisably the settler logic of the framework set out above: the land is to be taken and held, and the demographic balance engineered, until the native is eliminated as a political force. It is the lineage of JABOTINSKY, carried through the Revisionist tradition into the politics of Benjamin NETANYAHU, that supplies the Israeli analogue of the 'manifest destiny' on which the American republic was built.

The demographic question has remained the axis of Israeli statecraft. The self-definition of the state as both Jewish and democratic generates a permanent arithmetic problem wherever Jews are not a secure majority, and that problem has driven successive strategies of land acquisition, settlement, partition and population control. Nadera SHALHOUB-KEVORKIAN has documented how, in occupied East Jerusalem, the very intimacies of birth and reproduction become sites of settler governance — the politics of who may be born, and where, conducted as a form of demographic warfare against Palestinian women.¹⁵ This is the settler-colonial 'logic of elimination' operating at the scale of the womb, and it is the precise counterpart, in the register of birth, to the pro-natalism examined above: the same calculus of whose children shall be born, applied with opposite sign to the favoured and the disfavoured population.

What binds Washington and Tel Aviv, on this reading, is not merely a strategic partnership but a shared template. The argument advanced in the compiled documentation drawn on here is that the contemporary Israeli project pursues the 'Americanisation' of the Palestinian question — not the South African apartheid model of separate development with its eventual collapse, but the American model of incremental dispossession, the dismantling of native society, and the reduction of the surviving population into politically insignificant 'reservation enclaves'.¹⁶ The Trail of Tears, on this account, is the precedent and the 'Deal of the Century' its template: a comprehensive settler victory achieved through demographic reduction rather than negotiated partition. Whether or not this end is reached, it clarifies why the two states recognise themselves in one another. The American right's defence of Israel and its embrace of the Afrikaner are expressions of the same commitment — to the survival and expansion of the settler form, and to the white or ethno-religious majority that form exists to protect. South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, condemned by name in Executive Order 14204 and named again among the 'asks' later pressed upon Pretoria, is thus not incidental to the Afrikaner episode but its mirror: the same constitutional democracy that refuses the settler demand at home arraigns the settler project abroad.

The Reset, the Refugee, and the Penetration of the Host Economy

The first question posed at the outset can now be addressed directly. In sending MEYER, did PRETORIA tacitly accept the racism of the TRUMP regime? The most charitable reading is that the South African government made a pragmatic calculation: that a reset of relations required an interlocutor whom Washington would receive, and that a white Afrikaner with impeccable transition-era credentials was the candidate least likely to be turned away. Yet pragmatism of this kind is not neutral. To select an envoy on the implicit criterion of racial acceptability to a foreign power — to grasp, correctly, that a Cape Muslim who named white supremacy would be expelled while a white Afrikaner would be embraced — is to internalise the very racial logic one is accommodating. The Economic Freedom Fighters read the appointment precisely so, as a willingness to appease what they called TRUMP's 'white supremacist whims'. Whether or not PRETORIA intended endorsement, the structure of the exchange ratified TRUMP's racial premise: that the legitimate face of South Africa, for American purposes, is white.

The harder question concerns the basis of the rapprochement itself, and here the argument must be put plainly. What the United States has done is not unfriendly diplomacy to be smoothed over by a well-chosen envoy; it is a hostile act against another government and its citizens. To fabricate a genocide, to brand a sovereign government the persecutor of its own white minority, to cut its aid and tariff its exports, to expel it from the G20, to cultivate domestic allies against it, and then to reach into its population and extract a racially selected group as 'refugees' on the strength of that

fabrication — this is, taken together, an act of aggression against the sovereignty and the legitimacy of a constitutional democracy founded on the express commitment to undo its colonial and apartheid past.

A rapprochement is not possible on such a basis. The ordinary precondition of any reset — that the offending action be acknowledged and withdrawn — has not been met. The United States has not retracted the ‘white genocide’ allegation that the United Nations, the South African government, and prominent Afrikaners alike have rejected as false. It has not rescinded Executive Order 14204. It has not restored the assistance it cut, reopened the refugee system it racially narrowed, or lifted the tariffs.

On the contrary, through 2025 and into 2026 it intensified the pressure. It stayed away from the Johannesburg G20 summit of November 2025, and TRUMP announced that South Africa would be barred from the 2026 summit he would host in Miami. Its ambassador in Pretoria, Leo Brent BOZELL III, used a business platform in Hermanus in March 2026 to declare that Washington was ‘running out of patience’ and to press a list of ‘five asks’: the protection of rural communities from violence, the condemnation of rhetoric said to glorify violence, fair compensation in expropriation policy, the expansion of digital and critical-minerals cooperation, and the end of mandatory black-empowerment ownership requirements — the last bound up with a demand that South Africa abandon its association with Iran and China and ‘become non-aligned once again’. Pretoria formally protested these utterances. To seek normal relations while the hostile act stands, unacknowledged and unreversed, is not to repair the relationship but to ratify the injury.

The asymmetry deepens when one observes what South Africa appears to be offering in return. Rather than extracting movement from Washington, the government has widened the door to American capital. On his arrival, MEYER named the improvement of trade relations as his most pressing task and accepted the ‘five asks’ as the agenda to be worked through. In the weeks around his appointment the economic choreography was conspicuous: the United States ambassador met the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Parks TAU, and spoke of ‘billions upon billions of dollars’ that American business wished to invest, while pressing for the dismantling of the empowerment framework that conditions such investment; and the President and senior ministers appeared at the BlackRock Infrastructure Investment Conference in Cape Town on 13 May 2026, courting the world’s largest asset manager for the country’s energy, transport, water and digital infrastructure. The American envoy described the engagement as productive, citing artificial intelligence and critical minerals as the fields in which ‘American commercial leadership’ could drive South African growth. The sequence is telling. A government subjected to public insult, false accusation and hostile action responds not by exacting a price but by opening its infrastructure and its strategic-minerals sector to the capital of the very power applying the pressure. Whatever short-term

stabilisation this purchases, it enhances American leverage over the domestic economy and, through it, over the country's internal stability — the classic mechanism by which a weaker state is brought within the orbit of a stronger one. The demand to abandon empowerment law and to break with China and Iran makes the political content of that leverage explicit: the price of American capital is realignment away from the Global South.

The second question concerns the Afrikaners who left. The flight of a small number of Afrikaners to the United States is itself a phenomenon worth interpreting. There are approximately 2.7 million Afrikaners in a South African population of some sixty-two million; they remain, as PRETORIA and even Afrikaner bodies such as AfriForum and the Solidarity Movement have insisted, among the country's most economically secure communities, and both organisations declined TRUMP's offer of resettlement. A group of prominent Afrikaners went further, writing to the United States Senate under the title 'Not in Our Name' to reject the genocide narrative outright. Those who accepted resettlement cast themselves as refugees from a 'white genocide' that the United Nations and their own compatriots deny — and some, finding no persecution to flee, have since returned home. The self-description is revealing. To experience the loss of guaranteed political supremacy as persecution is to reveal an attachment to that supremacy; the 'refugee' flees not danger but the disappearance of dominion. For some, this is bound up with a sense of betrayal — the conviction that MEYER and DE KLERK 'sold out' the settler position at the negotiating table in the early 1990s. The flight to America is thus the demographic anxiety of the settler in its purest form: a movement from a society where whiteness no longer rules toward one where, the migrant hopes, it still might.

For TRUMP, the reciprocal gesture — opening the shuttered refugee system to Afrikaners while closing it to the displaced of the global South — is not merely symbolic. The recruitment of the citizens of another sovereign state, on explicitly racial grounds and on the basis of allegations that state has rejected as false, is direct interference in South Africa's internal affairs. Taken together with the economic coercion through aid cuts and tariffs, the staging of diplomatic ambushes, exclusion from the G20, the public branding of an entire government as the persecutor of its white minority, and the open cultivation of domestic allies against it, it constitutes a sustained hostile action against a sovereign state — an act of destabilisation directed at the legitimacy of a constitutional democracy, conducted in what can only be described as a logic of war. This is the decisive point for the question of the reset. One does not normalise relations with a power that is, in the present tense, conducting a campaign of destabilisation against one's own state and poaching one's own citizens. Until the hostile action is acknowledged and reversed — the fabrication retracted, the executive order rescinded, the racial refugee channel closed — a rapprochement built on trade and investment does not end the aggression but rewards it, and binds the injured party more tightly to the aggressor.

China, the Eastern Rim, and the Second Wave

The third and fourth questions situate the South African episode in a wider geopolitical field. VANCE's Munich speech named China only to dismiss it as the principal threat, but China is the unspoken horizon of the entire demographic anxiety he voiced. The rise of China is, for the Western right, not simply an economic challenge but the most visible symbol of a non-white ascent that coincides with — and seems to confirm — the decline of the Western Christian civilisation whose defence VANCE made the burden of his address. The same fear that reads domestic migration as replacement reads the global rebalancing of power as a planetary version of the same threat: the racially elite core overtaken by the multitudes it once ruled. YOUNIS's point that replacement operates 'on the level of global order' — as a restatement of whiteness as a claim to planetary power — is exactly the register in which the China anxiety is felt.¹⁰ The demand pressed upon Pretoria, that it break with China and Iran and 'become non-aligned once again', is the local application of that planetary anxiety: the policing of a Global South state's alignments by a power that experiences any non-Western combination as a threat.

This is the context for the United States' and France's repositioning in Africa. France has been driven from its former Sahelian colonies — Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger — amid a wave of coups and a surge of anti-French sentiment, while the United States evacuated its drone base at Agadez and watched Russian paramilitaries and Chinese capital fill the vacuum. African states have begun repaying Chinese loans in yuan rather than dollars, raising the spectre of de-dollarisation on the continent. Confronted with this retreat, the Western powers have sought to consolidate what footholds remain. The pattern is consistent: where decolonisation can be slowed or reversed, it is. In October 2025 a United States-sponsored Security Council resolution endorsed 'genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty' for Western Sahara — Africa's last colony, whose Saharawi people the African Union still recognises as entitled to self-determination — with France and the United Kingdom aligned behind Morocco, and China, Russia and Pakistan abstaining. Here the Western position is not the advancement of decolonisation but its suppression.

The Indian Ocean tells the same story in a different key. On 22 May 2025 — almost a year to the day before MEYER's credentials were accepted — the United Kingdom signed a treaty ceding sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, long called Britain's last African colony, to Mauritius, while retaining a ninety-nine-year lease over the joint United States–United Kingdom base at Diego Garcia, from which the Chagossian population had been expelled in the late 1960s. In January 2026 TRUMP denounced the handover as 'total weakness' and 'great stupidity', warning that 'China and Russia have noticed'. The episode crystallises the logic of the Eastern Rim: a strategically decisive arc of settler and quasi-

settler holdings — from the Saharawi territory and the Chagos base to the wider French, British and American presence along the geostrategically vital eastern flank of Africa — whose retention the West regards as essential to containing China, and whose decolonisation it therefore resists.

It is in this frame that the article's fifth question takes shape, and with it a warning to the Afrikaners who have chosen resettlement. The first wave of decolonisation, in the decades after 1945, dismantled the formal European empires but left intact both a set of settler colonies and a set of structural legacies that the granting of flags and constitutions did not touch: the racialised distribution of land and capital, the persistence of extractive economic dependence, and the epistemic dominance of European categories over the histories of the colonised. The settler colonies that survived — the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand among the consolidated settler states; Israel as the settler project most actively contested; the Saharawi territory and the Indian Ocean bases as unfinished business — are the most visible of these survivals, but the deeper survival is the structure itself.

A second wave of decolonisation is now under way, and its object is precisely these enduring legacies of the first. It is visible in South Africa's genocide case against Israel, in the African Union's insistence on Saharawi self-determination, in the Chagossian return, in de-dollarisation and the assertion of BRICS, and — in the register of knowledge — in the insurgent historiographies of the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand that this article has described, which are themselves acts of decolonisation, dismantling the settler narrative from within. The drive belongs above all to the Global South, which experiences the first wave's unfinished business — economic, political and epistemological — as a continuing subordination to be undone. VERACINI's settler colonial present, which 'proclaims its passing' while refusing to pass, is being called to account.⁸ The Afrikaner who flees to the United States, Canada, Australia or New Zealand in search of a society where whiteness still rules is not escaping into a secure future but back into a contested past: the destination colonies are themselves the targets of the coming reckoning. The recruitment of Afrikaners and the embrace of MEYER belong to the West's defensive response: the gathering-in of the settler diaspora, and the rehabilitation of the settler as a sympathetic figure, at the very moment the settler order is most widely challenged.

The Afrikaner Question Returns: Identity Without Apartheid

The recruitment of Afrikaners matters for the present argument not as a problem in identity politics — that is not the subject of this article — but because it forces upon the Afrikaner, once again, a question that was first debated in the 1980s and never resolved: what does it mean to be an Afrikaner without apartheid? TRUMP's offer is an answer of a particular kind. It invites the Afrikaner to understand himself as a white settler whose home is elsewhere, whose belonging in Africa was

always provisional, and who may now be gathered back toward the civilisational centre. To accept that invitation is to accept a definition of the Afrikaner as a transplanted European. The question is whether that definition is true.

It is not, and the reason lies in how the identity was made — and in the sequence in which it was made. The first moment is the colonial-creole one. Dutch and then British colonialism, founded on conquest, slavery and the dispossession of the Khoi and the San, produced as their own contradiction a creolised society: in language, in kinship and in culture, the rigid separation the order demanded was continually undone by the proximity, coercion and sexual violence the same order required.¹⁷ Creolisation was thus never a peaceful mingling alongside conquest; it was the contradiction internal to conquest itself, the mixed reality that the system generated and could not acknowledge.

The second moment is specifically British and specifically economic. British colonialism in Southern Africa was organised around commodity extraction and the exploitation of labour — diamonds, gold, and the migrant-labour system that fed the mines — and it was for this reason, and not merely from prejudice, that it built a political-economic and social structure of land dispossession and racial segregation. Segregation was the spatial and legal form that cheap, controllable, racialised labour required. The architecture of separation that apartheid would later inherit was first laid down as the infrastructure of an extractive economy.

The third moment is the invention of Afrikanerdom, and it came later. Afrikaner nationalism is a textbook case of what Benedict ANDERSON called the imagined community: nations are not primordial but constructed, above all through a print-language — a vernacular fixed, standardised and circulated until a scattered population can imagine itself as one.¹⁸ Afrikaans, substantially an Ajami language first written in the Arabic script of the Cape Malay Muslim community, with indigenous Khoi and Malay roots, was standardised in the early twentieth century into a respectable, Europeanised 'Afrikaans-Nederlands', equipped with dictionaries, a Bible translation, newspapers and a literature, and made the carrier of a volk. The creole tongue was whitewashed into the print-language of a white nation.

Forged against the British imperial power that had conquered the Boer republics and herded Afrikaner women and children into concentration camps, this nationalism took the form Partha CHATTERJEE and the subaltern-studies historians described: faced with the material and political domination of empire, it retreated into an inner 'spiritual' domain — the *taal*, the Reformed church, the volksmoeder — which it declared sovereign and inviolate, and from which it launched its eventual claim to the state in 1948.¹⁹ Afrikaner identity is, in this precise sense, invented and entangled: invented as an Andersonian print-nation, entangled because its very materials, the language above all, were creole, African and Islamic before they were claimed as white.

Here lies the tragic core of the matter. The Dutch and the British were external colonisers in the classical sense: metropolitan powers that came, dominated and extracted, and whose settlers could, in principle, return home. The Afrikaner could not, because the Afrikaner had no other 'home'; a creole people of the Cape, forged on the African continent as a result of white settler colonialism, with a creolisation that began almost immediately — albeit frowned upon, denied, prohibited, punished, or displaced to even more remote colonies such as Mauritius — it had nonetheless absorbed a misplaced 'white' identity at the very moment of its invention — a false consciousness that misrecognised an African creole as a European settler-race. It is from this false consciousness, and not from any genuine European belonging, that the rest follows. And the decisive point for the present argument is that this is not merely a fact about origins. Afrikaners *are* a creole people carrying a false identity, and the false consciousness still endures: it was not dissolved by the end of apartheid, and it is not seriously contested within Afrikaner intellectual life today. The white self-understanding outlived the legal order that enforced it, which is why it can still be activated — by AfriForum's lobbying, by ROODT's civilisational lament, by TRUMP's offer of refuge — a generation after the laws were repealed.

What the subaltern-studies tradition adds, and what bears directly on the argument of this article, is Dipesh CHAKRABARTY's injunction to *provincialise Europe*: to refuse the assumption that Europe is the universal origin and measure of modernity, against which all other histories appear belated or incomplete.²⁰ The point is not to dismiss European thought but to displace it from the centre, and to recognise that its categories — the nation, the race, the civilised and the savage, the very secular historicism in which these stories are told — are provincial European inventions universalised by conquest. Afrikaner nationalism was, in CHAKRABARTY's sense, a project that took Europe as its measure: it imagined the Afrikaner as a fragment of European Christendom marooned at the foot of Africa, and read its own history as the defence of that fragment against the continent. To provincialise Europe is to invert this: to see the Afrikaner not as displaced European but as African, and the European pretension itself as the thing requiring explanation. The contemporary Western anxiety this article anatomises — the fear of replacement, the flight to whiteness, the recruitment of co-ethnics — is, at bottom, the refusal to be provincialised: the refusal of a once-imperial centre to accept that it is one province among many in a world it no longer commands.

The fourth moment is the attempt to abolish the contradiction, and it is here that the false consciousness becomes a system. Unlike the Dutch and the British, the Afrikaner did not return to a metropole; staying, and misrecognising itself as a white European race besieged in Africa, this creole group produced a distinctive form of domination — not external colonialism conducted from abroad, but *internal* colonialism, the colonisation of the black majority by a settler minority within the borders of a single state. This is what the South African liberation tradition named the colonialism of a special type, and what apartheid institutionalised. Following the logic of every settler-colonial project, it set

out to undo the creole contradiction by force and to engineer a permanent white majority. Through a doctrine of racial purity and geographic separation — classification, the prohibition of mixing, removal, and the corralling of the black population into ethno-racial bantustans stripped of citizenship — it sought to purify the historiography, to cleanse the language of its creole origins, and to manufacture, by law and by map, the white demographic majority that the actual social history of the country denied. This is the same demographic engineering traced throughout this article, applied at home: the settler imperative to produce and secure a white majority, here pursued through the most systematic spatial and legal apparatus any settler state has devised. Apartheid was, in this precise sense, the internal colonialism that a creole people's false white consciousness made of itself.

The doctrine could not hold, because it was at war with a reality the colonial economy had itself produced, and it was broken by a liberation struggle and by its own internal contradictions. But the manner of its resolution is the crux. The creole contradiction was resolved at the level of law: the racist statutes were repealed, the franchise universalised, the bantustans dissolved. Its deeper legacies were not. They persist in three registers that the racist laws had entrenched and that their repeal did not reach: in *class*, where the racialised distribution of land, capital and life-chances laid down by the extractive economy remains largely intact; in *psychology*, where the inherited fear, the laager-consciousness and the settler structure of feeling outlive the order that produced them; and, most stubbornly, in *epistemology*, where the categories, the historiography and the very frameworks through which Afrikaners know themselves and their world remain those of the purified, Europeanised identity rather than the creole one. The laws of separation were undone; the ways of seeing and knowing they installed were not. It is precisely this unfinished epistemological decolonisation that the debate about Afrikaner identity, examined below, brings to the surface — for that debate is, at bottom, an argument about whether Afrikaners can know themselves differently, and the evidence suggests that, for the most part, they have not yet learned to.

Contested Histories: The Reckoning Elsewhere and Its Absence at Home

The provincialising of Europe is not merely a theoretical proposal; in the other settler colonies it has become an active and public contest over the national narrative. In the United States, a body of work has displaced the triumphal frontier story with an account written from the standpoint of the dispossessed: Roxanne DUNBAR-ORTIZ's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* reframes the national founding as a sustained settler-colonial project of elimination, exploding the myth of a virtuous expansion into empty land.²¹ In Australia, what W.E.H. STANNER named in 1968 as the 'Great Australian Silence' — the structured exclusion of frontier violence and dispossession from the national story — was broken by a generation of historians, and the resulting 'History Wars' over massacre, invasion and the very word 'genocide' became a central public argument, captured in Henry REYNOLDS's pointed question, *Why Weren't We Told?*²² In Canada, the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission concluded in 2015 that the residential-school system had been an instrument of 'cultural genocide', and issued ninety-four Calls to Action that placed the colonial foundation of the state at the centre of national debate.²³ In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Waitangi Tribunal has, over decades, reopened the history of conquest, land confiscation and broken treaty, forcing a sustained public reckoning with the colonial past.²⁴ In each case the foundational national narrative has been challenged, from within, by an insurgent historiography that names the violence the settler story was built to forget.

Against this background a conspicuous absence stands out, and it should be stated without softening. There is no serious debate among Afrikaner intellectuals about what is, on the evidence, the central fact of their condition: that Afrikaners are a creole people carrying a false 'white' identity. There is no comparable movement within Afrikaner historiography or self-narrative to the reckonings elsewhere — no sustained internal contestation that confronts the entanglement of Afrikaner identity itself with racism, colonialism and racial supremacy, or that takes the creole and African origin of the Afrikaner as its starting point rather than as an embarrassment to be managed. There has been ample documentation of apartheid's crimes, much of it by Afrikaners, and there was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the 1990s. But that is not the same thing. The reckonings in the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand interrogate the *founding identity* of the settler nation; the Afrikaner reckoning has largely confronted apartheid as a political system that was wrong, while leaving the underlying conception of the Afrikaner — as a distinct, European-descended Christian volk — substantially intact. The volk is treated as a people who did wrong, not as a category whose very construction was an act of racial misrecognition.

Why? The answer returns to the three unresolved legacies. The class structure laid down by the colonial economy still rewards the inherited identity; the psychology of the laager still supplies its emotional charge; and, decisively, the epistemology has not shifted — the frameworks through which Afrikaners know themselves remain those of the purified, Europeanised identity, so that the entanglement a provincialising history would expose remains, for the most part, literally unthinkable from within. The reckoning has not happened because the categories required to conduct it have not been admitted. This is the unfinished epistemological decolonisation, and it is precisely what the recruitment by TRUMP exploits: it offers the Afrikaner an identity — the persecuted white settler — that requires no reckoning at all.

Afrikaner Identity: Debates and Non-Debates

It is against this background that the positions in the Afrikaner debate may be set out, since they are the menu of answers from which TRUMP's offer selects.²⁵ There are seven, set out here in an order that runs from existential remaking, through the creole and Africanist positions, to defensive

continuity:

- Frederik van Zyl **SLABBERT**, in *Afrikaner Afrikaan*, treated the question as a political, sociological and anthropological problem rather than a matter of self-description: apartheid was not merely policy but an epistemology and a metaphysical guarantee of Afrikaner centrality, and the real question was whether Afrikaner identity could survive the loss of supremacy at all. His answer was existential remaking — a transformation of the Afrikaner's lived orientation toward land, power and black South Africans, so that Africa might become a lived world rather than a symbolic attachment. SLABBERT grasped the seriousness and depth of the problem more fully than any other figure on the spectrum, but he did not name the Afrikaner as a creole people, and the question of the creole false consciousness was not his.
- The **ZAIMAN** position, developed in the long exchange out of which *Afrikaner Afrikaan* itself emerged, is more radical, because it is built on creolisation and Africanisation. It does not merely ask the Afrikaner to remake himself *within* Africa, as SLABBERT did; it begins from the prior fact that the Afrikaner is *already* African — creole at the root, in language, blood and culture — so that the work required is not conversion but the recovery of a genealogy the nationalist project suppressed, and the dissolution of the false 'white' consciousness laid over it. This is the one position that takes the creole and African origin of the Afrikaner as its starting point rather than as an embarrassment to be managed. It was influenced by the author's friend and comrade, the late scholar Vernon FEBRUARY, of the Cape, who wrote on creolisation and on the suppressed origins of Afrikaans.
- Breyten **BREYTENBACH** held a French Africanist position: transcendence through cosmopolitan fluidity, the Afrikaner category dissolved into a poetics of hybridity and métissage shaped by French thought. It shares with the ZAIMAN position the language of creolisation, but it parts from it on the decisive point of the lived rather than the aesthetic — creolisation as a literary and philosophical mood entertained from Europe, where BREYTENBACH chose materially to live, rather than a historical condition to be inhabited in Africa.
- Antjie **KROG** sought moral inhabitation through vulnerability, remaining inside the wound of complicity and asking whether one can inhabit the country truthfully after benefiting from domination.
- Max **DU PREEZ** sought normalisation through demythologising — most recently in *The End of Normal: A Witness to the Unravelling of White Power in South Africa* (2026), which asks why so many Afrikaners now cast themselves as victims of persecution and calls those claims baseless. The title carries an irony that goes to the heart of the matter. Announcing the end of the old 'normal', the work in fact restores a normal: it stabilises the false consciousness rather than undoing it. By affirming African belonging declaratively while leaving the white volk-self

emotionally and socially intact, it launders the inherited identity, making Afrikanerdom respectable and survivable in the post-apartheid order without rupture. This is exactly why the position is popular among white South Africans: it lets them have their cake and eat it — to feel they have reckoned, having read the renegade and condemned apartheid, while surrendering none of the spatial, economic and psychological privilege, and none of the European self-understanding, that the reckoning would actually cost. It offers absolution without rupture; its very popularity is the measure of how little it asks to be given up. It is conservation in the idiom of reckoning.

- Kallie **KRIEL**, through AfriForum, sought institutional survival as a permanent minority, building parallel capacity while framing the post-apartheid state as a danger-space — a modernised, civic-organisational laager.
- Dan **ROODT** sought civilisational preservation of a Western-derived volk, positioning Afrikaners as an outpost of the West and a threatened ethnos — the position closest to the great-replacement structure of feeling, and the one that most readily resonates with the European and American far right.

It is worth being exact about what this spectrum does and does not contain. The creole false-consciousness question — the naming of the Afrikaner identity itself as a misrecognition to be undone — was posed, so far as the record shows, in only one place: the long exchange out of which *Afrikaner Afrikaan* emerged. SLABBERT came closest to the seriousness of the problem but did not take that step; the others do not pose the question at all. It was put once, between two interlocutors, and it never became a field-wide debate. This is the heart of the absence diagnosed above. The spectrum has the *appearance* of a vigorous argument — existential remaking, creolisation, transcendence, moral exposure, normalisation, institutional survival, civilisational defence — but on the one question that would dissolve the false consciousness it is, with the single creole exception, silent; and its most apparently progressive pole, DU PREEZ's normalisation, works actively to stabilise the false consciousness rather than to undo it. The appearance of debate masks the absence of the debate that matters.

The strategic divergence between KRIEL and ROODT maps onto the very geopolitics this article describes. AfriForum's ecosystem has plugged into American conservative and minority-rights networks, lobbying in Washington against South African legislation, while ROODT's has aligned with European civilisational and identitarian currents. Both globalise the Afrikaner grievance; both supply the raw material from which the 'persecuted white settler' of the American imagination is assembled. The Afrikaner who accepts resettlement enacts, in the most literal way, the ROODT pole — the volk as Western outpost, withdrawing toward the civilisational centre — and in doing so chooses the one answer to the 1980s question that the creole history of the Afrikaner most decisively refutes.

Conclusion: The Settler Returns Home

The replacement of Ebrahim RASOOL by Roelf MEYER in Washington is a parable of the larger movement traced in this article. A Muslim diplomat who named white supremacy was sent home; the white Afrikaner who personifies, for TRUMP, the imperilled settler was received with warmth, on the anniversary of the day his country's president was confronted with a fantasy of white extinction. The point is not a reflection on MEYER, who is by all accounts a decent man and served his country through the transition; it is a reflection on the racism of the regime that found his face acceptable and his predecessor's intolerable. The episode condenses the demographic politics of the second TRUMP administration into a single substitution: out with the racialised foreigner, in with the imperilled settler. And it condenses, too, the asymmetry of the rapprochement that followed — a government insulted, accused and coerced, responding not by exacting a price but by opening its economy to the power that had injured it.

The deeper claim is that none of this is new, and that its several parts are one thing. The drive to raise the white birth rate, the racially selective admission of Afrikaners, and the mass deportation of the non-white are not three policies but three faces of a single phenomenon: the modern resurrection of colonialism by a declining United States and West. Pro-natalism breeds the favoured population; Afrikaner poaching imports it; the expulsion of the racialised migrant culls its rival. Each is demographic engineering, and each is colonialism in a contemporary form — the settler imperative to manufacture and defend a white, Christian majority, now pursued at home, at the border, and reaching outward into the population of a sovereign foreign state. The science of demography was built, on the Irish and American and Caribbean frontiers, as an instrument for counting whom to replenish and whom to eliminate; pro-natalism, from Vichy to Silicon Valley, has been the positive pole of that same anxiety; and the 'great replacement' is not an invention of the internet age but the latest restatement of a fear as old as the settler project itself.¹⁰ That fear now operates at the scale of the globe, where the rise of China and the second wave of decolonisation present the settler West with the prospect it has always dreaded.

This is the ground on which the central political question must be answered. On what basis is the South African government attempting to 'reconcile' with a power that is in the grip of precisely this colonial resurrection? The recruitment of Afrikaners, the pro-natal panic and the expulsion of non-white migrants are, as this article has shown, the same project; and the same project reaches into South Africa directly. TRUMPian demographic statecraft is cultivating a domestic fifth column — the constituency around AfriForum, the Solidarity Movement and sympathetic politicians whom the embassy has openly courted — and seeding division within BRICS through its hostility to China and its demand that Pretoria abandon its non-aligned partnerships. To answer that pressure by normalising the entry of an asset manager such as BlackRock, and by opening the country's digital and critical-

minerals infrastructure to American commercial domination, is to hand strategic leverage over a vulnerable, insecure and under-secured economy to the very power conducting the campaign. It creates a national-security exposure of the first order. One cannot reconcile with, collaborate with, or adopt the posture of subservience toward a regime engaged in the resurrection of colonial domination; to do so is not reconciliation but capitulation, and it deepens the dependency it claims to relieve.

TRUMPian politics is hostile in its behaviour and its actions, as its Afrikaner overtures demonstrate beyond argument. The relationship cannot be repaired by trade and investment while the hostile act stands. TRUMP must be given a clear choice: to withdraw the false claims of white genocide, to rescind Executive Order 14204 and the racial refugee channel built upon it, and to deal with South Africa on the principle of sovereign equality — or to forgo a friendly relationship altogether. There is no third path that is not colonial-imperial subservience dressed as pragmatism. A reset purchased by supplying a white face and surrendering strategic ground rewards the aggressor and ratifies the premise of the aggression: that the legitimate South Africa, for American purposes, is white. What that premise attacks is precisely the post-1994 settlement — not a 'multiracial' arrangement that merely tallies races, but a social democracy whose constitution names the colonial and apartheid past and binds all who live in the country to work cooperatively to undo it and to pursue shared development. It is that project, and not any racial faction within it, that TRUMP's recruitment of a white minority is designed to delegitimise.

This does not mean rupture for its own sake. As it de-escalates the hostility, South Africa must hold to a principled basis — equal sovereignty, non-interference, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation — and refuse the alternatives of capitulation, subservience, colonial paternalism and imperial domination. But de-escalation cannot mean dependence. South Africa must simultaneously and incrementally disentangle its economy from the United States and the West, where that dependence has become a vector of coercion, and reorient toward the dynamic economies of Asia and Eurasia, deepening its cooperation with China and the wider BRICS grouping. The object is not to exchange one patron for another but to help build a new order of global governance — one grounded in the Westphalian principles that have underpinned international law since 1648 and that later inspired Bandung: the sovereignty of each state over its own territory and internal affairs; the territorial integrity of states and the inviolability of their borders; non-interference in the internal affairs of other states; and the legal equality of all states, large and small. The Asian-African Conference at Bandung in 1955 carried these principles forward and decolonised them — extending the claim of sovereign equality from the European states that first asserted it to the formerly colonised world, and adding to it mutual non-aggression, the equality of all races, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and

the promotion of mutual interest and cooperation. These are the terms on which a post-colonial South Africa can engage the world as an equal — and they are precisely the terms that the colonial resurrection now under way in Washington is designed to deny.

What unifies the American settler, the Afrikaner recruit, the Zionist demographer, the Vichy natalist and the Silicon Valley longtermist is the racism of Christian Europe — the conviction of a ranked humanity that produced the slave ship, the colonial frontier, the pogrom, the internment of the Muslim, and the besieged Palestinian. The recruitment of Afrikaners by TRUMP, and PRETORIA's acquiescence in supplying a white face to a racist demand, are not aberrations in the story of the West; they are, for the moment, its most candid expression. The Afrikaners who accept this recruitment should understand that they are not escaping into a secure future but back into a contested past, toward colonies that the second wave will reach in their turn. They should understand, too, what they are fleeing.

The Afrikaner is not a transplanted European but a creole African — not because the land was ever peacefully shared, for it was taken through dispossession, slavery and genocide, but because creolisation was the contradiction that the settler order itself produced and could never resolve. The same system that demanded racial purity manufactured, through its own violence and intimacy, the mixed society that gave that purity the lie. Apartheid-Colonialism was the long attempt to suppress that contradiction: to whitewash the historiography, to purify the creole language, and to impose a doctrine of racial purity that the liberation struggle and the system's own contradictions finally broke. The reply to TRUMP's offer lies in that broken doctrine's buried truth — the creole genealogy the settler most fears, and which no fantasy of white genocide or flight to a whiter shore can restore to a purity it never possessed, because purity was the lie and the contradiction was the fact.

This returns the argument, finally, to the Afrikaners who would have their cake and eat it. To belong fully and honestly in a decolonised South Africa, Afrikaner identity itself must be decolonised. That is a work of decomposition and creative destruction, of imaginative rebuilding, of intelligent socio-psychological adaptation and, at bottom, of personal liberation — the dismantling of the false white consciousness and the recovery of the creole and African self it was built to deny. It is precisely this work that SLABBERT began in *Afrikaner Afrikaan*, and that has since stalled. The normalisation offered by DU PREEZ and others — however unintended — helps to prevent it, by allowing the inherited identity to feel reckoned-with while leaving it intact. So the process of creolisation, having been frowned upon, denied, prohibited, punished and displaced across three centuries, is once more interrupted and diverted: now by the comforts of a normalised whiteness at home, and by the open door of a whiter shore abroad. TRUMP's offer is the latest and most seductive of these diversions. To refuse it is not to lose the Afrikaner but to free him — to let the creole contradiction at the heart of Afrikaner identity, and its entanglement with racist apartheid, resolve itself completely at last.

Notes

1. On the constructivist consensus see OMI and WINANT (2014); LUDWIG (2020); ROTH, van STEE and REGLA-VARGAS (2023); and, on the epistemology of racial classification, MÜLLER-WILLE (2014).
2. WOLFE, P. (2006) 'Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), pp. 387–409.
3. ALLEN, T.W. (1994) *The Invention of the White Race, Volume 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control*. London: Verso.
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5. BANCEL, N., DAVID, T. and THOMAS, D. (eds.) (2014) *The Invention of Race: Scientific and Popular Representations*. New York: Routledge.
6. SMITH, A. (2012) 'Indigeneity, settler colonialism, white supremacy', in OMI, M. and WINANT, H. (eds.) *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 66–90.
7. SAUNT, C. (2015) 'Indian removal', *Aeon*, 7 January (compiled by André ZAAIMAN). Figures on Indigenous population share and the 1830 Removal Act draw on SAUNT's account.
8. VERACINI, L. (2015) *The Settler Colonial Present*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
9. GLENN, E.N. (2015) 'Settler colonialism as structure', *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(1), pp. 52–72.
10. YOUNIS, M. (2026) 'Lineages of a conspiracy: the "great replacement" and demography', *Race & Class*, 67(4), pp. 53–75. The quotations and historical detail on PETTY, FRANKLIN, MALTHUS and CAMUS draw on YOUNIS's account.
11. SEDGWICK, M. (2024) 'The great replacement narrative: fear, anxiety and loathing across the West', *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 25(4), pp. 548–562.
12. GAWEDA, B. (2022) 'The gendered discourses of illiberal demographic policy in Poland and in Russia', *Politics and Governance*, 10(4), pp. 176–186. On the contemporary American pro-natalist movement and its public figures — TRUMP's 'baby boom' and 'baby bonus' remarks, VANCE's March for Life address of 24 January 2025 ('I want more babies in the United States of America'), MUSK's statements on 'population collapse', the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, and the Natal Conference in Austin, Texas — see contemporaneous reporting and analysis by the National Catholic Register, Fox News, CNN, NPR, PBS NewsHour, KFF Health News and the Feminist Majority Foundation (2025–2026); US fertility figures are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
13. GEIGER, S. (2026) 'Tech oligarchs' obsession with pronatalism and fertility markets', *Science as Culture*. DOI: 10.1080/09505431.2026.2639478.
14. VANCE, J.D. (2025) Speech to the Munich Security Conference, 14 February. Transcript compiled by André ZAAIMAN (February 2025). Claims regarding Executive Order 14204 and the Afrikaner refugee programme draw on the text of the Order and contemporaneous reporting (Al Jazeera, The Washington Post, Democracy Now!, PassBlue, France 24, 2025–2026); claims regarding the 'five asks' draw on the U.S. Embassy Pretoria text of Ambassador BOZELL's Hermanus remarks (March 2026) and reporting in BusinessTech, TimesLIVE and Moneyweb; claims regarding the BlackRock conference, the MEYER credentialing and the G20 exclusion draw on reporting by The Presidency of South Africa, News24, Netwerk24, The Citizen and EWN (2026); claims regarding Western Sahara (UNSC Res. 2797, 31 October 2025) and the Chagos Archipelago treaty (22 May 2025) draw on UN documents and reporting in the BBC, Al Jazeera and the House of Commons Library; deportation figures draw on the American Immigration Council, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Deportation Data Project (2025–2026).
15. SHALHOUB-KEVORKIAN, N. (2015) 'The politics of birth and the intimacies of violence against Palestinian women in occupied East Jerusalem', *British Journal of Criminology*, 56(1), pp. 39–61.
16. On the 'Americanisation' (Israelification) of the Palestinian question and the Trail of Tears as template, see the compiled commentary in ZAAIMAN's edition of SAUNT (2015), 'Paradigm wars: America/Israel and the template of the Deal of the Century'. The reading of JABOTINSKY's 'Iron Wall' (1923) follows the standard text of that essay.
17. On creolisation at the Cape as the contradiction internal to a slave and settler society, the argument follows the broader scholarship on Cape slavery, manumission and métissage, and on the suppressed creole and Ajami origins of Afrikaans, for which see in particular the work of Vernon FEBRUARY. The author's own family register, reaching to the Khoi and to Mauritius against the official genealogy, is offered not as evidence but as one ordinary instance of a general condition.

18. ANDERSON, B. (2006 [1983]) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. edn. London: Verso. On print-capitalism, vernacular print-languages and 'official nationalism'.
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23. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report*. The Commission characterised the residential-school system as 'cultural genocide' and issued ninety-four Calls to Action.
24. On the Waitangi Tribunal (established 1975) and its reopening of the colonial history of Aotearoa New Zealand, see the Tribunal's reports and the wider literature on Treaty historiography.
25. The debate is traced at length in ZAAIMAN, A. (2026) 'Afrikaner identity after apartheid: six conceptions of belonging, survival and transformation — Slabbert, Breytenbach, Krog, Du Preez, Kriel, Roodt and Zaaïman', working paper. The reading of SLABBERT follows SLABBERT, F. van Zyl (1999) *Afrikaner Afrikaan: Anekdoten en analise*. Cape Town: Tafelberg; see also BREYTENBACH (1984), KROG (1998, 2003), DU PREEZ (2004, 2026) and ROODT (2009) as listed in that paper.

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