

## Decolonisation and the “Federal Moment”

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*Post-1945 decolonisation involved the universal acceptance of nation-statehood as the alternative to imperialism. Nationalism vanquished its transnational competitors, notably imperialism and Marxism. Alternatives to imperial rule that avoided sovereign states on national lines, such as federations in the later 1940s and 1950s, have received less attention from historians. Federations involved alternative ways of thinking about sovereignty, territoriality, and political economy. British interest in creating federations, for example the Central African Federation (CAF) in 1953, offers some new perspectives on the strength of imperial ideology and the determination to continue a missionary imperialism after the Second World War. Federal thinking and practice was prominent at this time in other European empires too, notably the French and Dutch ones. The federal idea was also an aspect of the emerging European community. This is suggestive of a wider “federal moment” that points to the importance of linking international, trans-national, imperial, and world historical approaches.*

Post-1945 decolonisation involved the universal acceptance of nation-statehood as the alternative to imperialism.<sup>1</sup> Nationalism vanquished its transnational competitors, notably imperialism and Marxism. Alternatives to imperial rule that resisted the logic of sovereign states on national lines, such as the federations created by the British in the later 1940s and 1950s, as well as post-imperial federations created by decolonising political elites, have arguably received less attention from historians than they might.<sup>2</sup> From a British imperial perspective, the interest in creating federations offers an opportunity to re-examine—within the context of the “decline, revival and fall” of the British Empire—the role of imperial ideology and Britain’s

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determination to continue a missionary imperialism after World War II. But federal thinking and practice was also prominent at this time in other European empires too, notably the French and Dutch ones. Equally, the federal idea was an aspect of the emerging European community. This is suggestive of a wider post-1945 “federal moment” that is linked, in contrast to the longer history of thinking about federations or forms of “closer union” in British imperial circles, to the failures of the inter-war nation-state and the specific challenges posed by decolonisation and the creation of national states after 1945. Federations involved alternative ways of thinking about sovereignty, territoriality and political economy: a re-examination of the rationale for their creation and the reasons for their failure may be of some significance for historians looking back at the successes and failures of the post-colonial nation-state. This article is an early attempt to sketch some of the possible contours of what is a wide area of historical research. The article proceeds on the basis that the intersection between international and imperial history constitutes a key pathway for making sense of some of the most important trans-national and world historical developments in twentieth century history.<sup>3</sup>

Specifically, the paper looks at the British Labour governments of 1945–51, and some of the imperial challenges faced by Britain in southern and central Africa immediately following the South African election in 1948 and up to the creation of the Central African Federation (CAF) under the Conservatives in 1953. These two events were interconnected, with fears of Afrikaner territorial, economic and political expansion influencing British policy making in the region.<sup>4</sup> The CAF—a federal realm of the British crown formed in 1953 by combining northern and southern Rhodesia with Nyasaland—involved a denial of the principle of nationality. It thus ran counter to a broad, if loosely defined acceptance of the emergence of African nationalism by senior Labour figures. The abstract idea of national self-determination gave way to the practical developmentalist imperialism that came naturally to many senior Labour politicians and policy-makers. In addition, acute and multiple problems of race and identity arose in the southern and central African region in the late 1940s, which impacted upon both policy-making and wider, less tangible perceptions of Britain’s imperial and national self. British policy makers redefined the terms of collaboration with both white colonists and black nationalists, allowing them to secure on-going control of political power and resources. Federation was thus ambivalent, a move towards decolonisation as well as a means of securing imperial control. But insofar as federation can be read as a form of the “imperialism of decolonisation,”<sup>5</sup> the politics of Britain’s imperial identity were causal as the British re-articulated justifications for the control of African peoples and resources. It is significant—especially for those who are interested in legacies of empire and decolonisation in the metropole—that this took place at a relatively late stage, within the era of decolonisation itself. The events and

debates leading up to the creation of the CAF in 1953 reveal a conjuncture of problems relating to imperial identity, imperial politics and international pressures. Underlying these is a wider historical space in which the very idea of sovereignty and nation-statehood was being contested.

Variations of the federal idea have a long history in British imperial thinking. The motivations for federal plans were most often a mixture of practical, administrative, and cost-saving schemes, and sometimes sugared with romantic notions of imperial unity. As early as the seventeenth century, a federal model was floated as a solution to reducing the financial burden of defending the West Indian plantations.<sup>6</sup> In the late eighteenth century, figures including Adam Smith and Lord Shelburne met the crisis in the American colonies with calls for federation.<sup>7</sup> But it was the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century that saw the emergence of a more concerted and widespread movement for imperial federation and greater imperial unity.

The "colonial question" had come to the fore increasingly from the 1860s with "empire unity" occasionally demanded, and numerous schemes "for federation, confederation, union, a colonial council, council representatives in Parliament, or occasional colonial conferences" advanced. "Little emerged from the talk," and yet "many of these ideas were to crop up again and again for nearly a century."<sup>8</sup> One notable though short-lived venture was the Imperial Federation League in 1884. Looking to Canada by way of example, the League advocated an imperial parliament for Britain and the self-governing territories gaining support from familiar figures in the "Greater Britain" debate such as J. R. Seeley and J. A. Froude.<sup>9</sup> The British branch of the League was formally dissolved in 1894, undermined by divisions over the necessity of putting forward formal proposals for federation versus the development of a forum for an ongoing conversation about imperial ties and closer association. The increasingly fraught debate over free trade and tariff protection also split enthusiasts for federation at this time.

Even so, the theme was given renewed impetus by the creation of the Round Table Movement in 1909, with the journal of the same name founded in 1910. The Movement initially pressed for organic union, but ultimately for a Commonwealth of independent nation states, ironically the antithesis of such a union. The Round Table Movement consisted largely of acolytes of Lord Milner, his so-called "kindergarten" men such as Lionel Curtis. The union in South Africa prompted thinking about a wider conception of union. In his more lofty and idealistic moments Curtis envisaged "an organic union to be brought about by some establishment of an Imperial government, constitutionally responsible to all the electors of the Empire, and with power to act directly on individual citizens."<sup>10</sup> More concretely, even in light of the recent *Entente* with France and Agreement with Russia, Curtis argued that a "business arrangement for the support and control of Imperial defence and foreign policy of the Empire" was necessary, or the empire "must break up."<sup>11</sup>

The impact of World War I on this kind of thinking was ambiguous. On the one hand, there was a well-documented increase in Dominion assertiveness, nationalism even. On the other, it also led to the development of greater imperial participation in decision making at the centre. When, in December 1916, Lloyd George became Prime Minister, with the Milnerite and founding member of the Round Table Philip Kerr as his Private Secretary, his call for a special imperial war conference in 1917 and the creation of an Imperial War Cabinet “came close to becoming the first executive for the whole empire.”<sup>12</sup>

What is noticeable is that calls for federation or closer union between Britain and its empire, by which its advocates almost always meant the colonies of white settlement, tended to be more vigorous and achieve greater resonance at times of perceived weakness or vulnerability. If the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster constituted shifts towards greater independence for the Dominions, the Great Depression forced a shift in the opposition direction, towards greater economic inter-dependence. Here practical necessity tended to crowd out the loftier rhetoric of an earlier period. Even so, the shift towards a more clearly defined and articulated national identity on the part of the Dominions pointed toward a future Commonwealth rather than any previously imagined imperial federation.

The significance of this for our understanding of post-1945 federal experiments is twofold. The problem of colonial nationalism would inevitably grow beyond the Dominions and India and would thus threaten British control and influence in colonial territories. At the same time, the strength of the association between Britain and its empire clearly remained fundamental to the maintenance of a British world role. Commonwealth would be central to this, and this would shape the British approach to nationalism. Federation would no longer be conceived as an imperial endeavour formally constituting the relations between metropole and colony, but rather as a way of maintaining British influence in particular parts of the empire, a way of reconfiguring the politics of collaboration so as to defy the logic of nationalism with its fetishisation of sovereign territoriality and hence to maintain key British spheres of influence. What is surprising, perhaps, is the enthusiasm with which some key British officials in the later 1940s pursued this objective, for example Sir Andrew Cohen at the Colonial Office.

In this sense, although the formal structure of the relationship may have changed, the central objective of maintaining Britain’s world role and the ideological belief in a liberal civilising mission is suggestive of a longer run connection between the post-war period and the earlier liberal imperialists such as Milner. As Jack Gallagher put it some time ago, “between the wars British statesmen had been fearful for their empire. It had seemed so fragile that another great war might well knock it to pieces. That did not happen. Whatever caused the end of empire, it was not the Second World War, although this conclusion will not please those who think that the world came to an end in 1945, or those who think that the world’s great age began anew

in 1945."<sup>13</sup> Gordon Martel, in his critique of what he saw as Paul Kennedy's economic determinist view of decline, stressed the importance of will and ideas in this process of imperial reconfiguration. This is interesting<sup>14</sup> and pertinent to the federal moment of the 1950s in which will, desire and idea are indeed stressed over and above means. The post war "federal moment" is thus explicitly associated with decolonisation and the challenges of colonial nationalism, and yet the desire and imagination to maintain Britain's world role were arguably of an earlier vintage.

In his work on Sir Andrew Cohen, Ronald Robinson attributed a degree of progressive foresight to the British Colonial Office in terms of its post-1945 attitude towards decolonisation, specifically in Africa.<sup>15</sup> With India liberated, Palestine abandoned, and Malaya under threat, active steps were taken to reorient British imperialism towards the strategically important site of the Middle East, and to re-think the British role in Africa. In fact this process and the ideas that pushed it forward had been underway before the war, partially embodied in the progressive figure of Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies from May 1938 to May 1940, and the personal zeal that he brought to the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. The shift in colonial policy towards Africa should not be seen as a direct consequence of the war and the loss of imperial assets or prestige that the British subsequently endured. Lord Hailey's influential *Africa Survey*, published in 1938, was an important moment in the steady re-evaluation of the Lugardian idea of "trusteeship" that had framed African societies and cultures as static, essentially ahistorical entities, with the British as benevolent guardians, and in this regard at least *primus inter pares* when compared to rival colonial powers.<sup>16</sup>

The flattering and deeply misleading self-image embodied in famous *Together* wartime propaganda poster was indicative of British attempts to portray their diverse "multi-racial" empire as the nemesis of Fascism's attempted racial holocaust. Their efforts were complicated, amongst other things, by the obvious on-going economic exploitation underpinning the empire, the brutal suppression of Gandhi's 1942 "Quit India" campaign and the awkward colour bar between black and white American G.I.s that drew so much attention in wartime London, and in the British West Indies. The Atlantic Charter of 1941, which Churchill had done so much to resist, changed the tone of international public opinion.<sup>17</sup> With the 1945 Charter of the United Nations declaring "the respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" as one of its basic purposes, a second and, from the perspective of nationalists, more promising "Wilsonian moment" was well under-way.<sup>18</sup> Amongst its many foreign policy challenges, the Labour government would have to respond to this new environment.

Colonial Office policy shifts towards Africa certainly accelerated in the later 1940s. It was not only domestic and international public opinion that was changing, but also the politics of collaboration in the colonies

themselves. In the face of rising African nationalism, which would increase in the foreseeable future, the Colonial Office deemed it necessary that the aforementioned “trusteeship model” of indirect rule—whereby the British struck deals with African chiefs in order to maintain control of territory—needed revision. Increasing urbanisation was underway in Britain’s African colonies, and labour unrest was taking on surprisingly violent forms, notably in Accra in 1948.<sup>19</sup> Urgent action was required to improve Britain’s position.

A major component of this was to be the so-called “new approach” to local government in Africa advanced by Arthur Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Andrew Cohen, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, and Creech Jones’ “alter ego.”<sup>20</sup> The purpose was to bring greater African participation into the affairs of government. Robinson, in one of the only significant scholarly works on Cohen, claimed that the May 1947 “Cohen Report” which outlined four stages of constitutional advance to incorporate Africans into local democracy, foresaw most African dependencies being self-governing within a generation. Cohen’s “revolutionary manifesto” was “inspired by the belief that if the dependencies were to be developed economically, their administration would have to be democratised and nationalised.”<sup>21</sup> But the general political radicalism of Labour’s approach and support for nationalism and decolonisation has been grossly overstated.<sup>22</sup> If we are to understand why Labour begins to acquiesce in the creation of the CAF by the late 1940s this misperception needs to be cleared up. In fact, in the 1947 report only the Gold Coast was viewed as being capable of self-government “in a generation.” Elsewhere, internal self-government would take substantially longer. Independence is not even discussed.<sup>23</sup>

Cohen is a key figure here, whom Robinson presents as embodying the spirit of the new policy, labelling him the “proconsul of African nationalism,” rather misleadingly suggesting that his “constitution mongering” was awakening the “slumbering genius” of national politics.<sup>24</sup> Early in his career at the Colonial Office, Cohen had gravitated towards the Fabian wing of the Labour Party. The Fabian Colonial Bureau (FCB), founded in 1940, might be seen as a spiritual home, and along with Creech Jones, Cohen corresponded with, and highly regarded the opinion of, key figures in the FCB such as Rita Hinden and Marjory Perham. In true Fabian spirit, the new approach to Africa was not primarily constitutional but socio-economic and socio-political.<sup>25</sup>

In some senses, Fabians and democratic socialists from the British Labour Party could have their cake and eat it too. They could make efforts at colonial development which sought to increase dollar earning exports and thus benefit the metropole in a period of desperate dollar shortage, whilst simultaneously (and arguably sincerely) believing that in the longer run this new economic development would create the socio-economic underpinnings of “de-tribalised” societies with a functioning civil society: trade unions, political parties, news media. Modernised indigenous elites would make excellent future collaborators—not least for Labour governments—in

a post-imperial world where formal constitutional decolonisation gave way to looser but still substantial economic and political cooperation through Commonwealth.

Rita Hinden, looking back from the perspective of 1959 on the FCB and its role in post-war imperial policy, put Labour's predicament thus:

To this massive legacy, the socialists were heirs; they had the duty to decide on its use. Enjoy it? No, that would have been a violation of socialist principle. Reject it outright, and so remain true to the anti-imperialism which socialists had always preached? Or, better still perhaps, accept the heritage, but with the determination to nurse and develop it for the advantage of its rightful owners till they themselves should have come of age?<sup>26</sup>

Hinden recognised the "poverty and backwardness" of the colonies had been deepened by imperialism, by "extorting the . . . wealth and alienating . . . land from the people, by taxation and forced labour, by the despoliation of the soil." But, she believed that "even before the entry of imperialist powers, the colonial territories were poor and economically backward" and that poverty might "be sooner cured by prolonging imperial rule" than by moving too quickly toward independence.<sup>27</sup> Getting Labour's approach to empire straight is thus crucial in understanding not simply the *acceptance* of federation in central Africa, but ultimately its advocacy. Neither nationalism nor democracy was of paramount importance. What mattered was steady and consistent social and economic development, and *inter alia*, continued British control. British missionary imperialism was in rude health under Labour.

Margaret Joy Tibbets, a sharp-witted political officer at the United States Embassy in London, saw the point early on. In a memorandum on "British Colonial Development and Welfare Programs" she wrote that "it is the opinion of the United States Embassy at London, that [Labour's approach to colonial development] is intended primarily to provide increased foodstuffs and other primary products for the British people."<sup>28</sup> This was undoubtedly true, but the realities of the Cold War, the apparent unpreparedness of African peoples to govern themselves and the predatory threat of Communist infiltration were already softening the United States government's attitude towards the British Empire.<sup>29</sup> The early Cold War made the southern African region a strategic asset first and foremost because of South Africa's rich source of uranium, and instability in the region caused by political and racial tensions offered opportunities to the Soviet Union to foment unrest, threatening this rich and vital source of nuclear material.<sup>30</sup> Hence the extent to which "London retained a good deal of its old determination to shape the terms of collaboration and make things happen on the ground"<sup>31</sup> became increasingly important to the United States, and opened up new opportunities for the Labour government to reinvigorate colonial policy. In fact, Labour's

redeployment of imperial power in Africa after World War II, with hundreds of new bureaucrats and the burgeoning of a technocratic, imperialist developmentalism, has been called a “second colonial occupation”.<sup>32</sup> The United States would not stand in the way of the British if this meant Britain’s empire would remain a bulwark against the encroachments of communism in Africa, and to this end Marshall Aid was allowed to be spent within the empire.<sup>33</sup>

Despite some recent corrections from Cooper and Hyam on the Labour Party and Africa c. 1945–51, Robinson’s triumphalist account of the Colonial Office—particularly his version of Cohen’s role—continues to deflect our attention from an important moment in the decolonisation process in which both trusteeship and a new civilising mission make a return. The creation of the CAF is an important case in point. Some kind of amalgamation or federation of Britain’s central African territories had been mooted for some time, an idea largely pushed forward by the white settler community for its own purposes. Yet in early 1948 Creech Jones had declared to Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia, that the Labour Government, indeed “no government” would “abandon” millions of black Africans in Nyasaland and the Rhodesias to rule by a minority of white settlers.<sup>34</sup> But in September of the same year Cohen’s private meetings with United States diplomats in London led them to surmise that the British government believed the interests of Africans in southern and central would suffer “if Whitehall’s protecting hand were withdrawn.”<sup>35</sup> Federation was looking increasingly likely. By September 1950 American diplomats produced a secret Memorandum of Conversation for Washington’s consumption in which they directly quote Cohen as saying that “it would obviously be advantageous to have a strong federated Rhodesia as a counterweight to the Union [of South Africa].”<sup>36</sup> In the context of this particular federal project, the “race problem” and the South African bogeyman were crucial drivers of British policy, allowing a paternalistic imperialism to side-line black African nationalism (specifically in Nyasaland) in favour of a new British dominion in central Africa. The spectre of a pan-Afrikaner alliance that had prompted Milner and Chamberlain to go to war in 1899 reared its head again.<sup>37</sup> More broadly, the denial of national sentiment in favour of non-national geo-political reform begs the question of whether a more pervasive strategy is underway.

The problems Britain faced on its southern African imperial periphery after 1945 were manifold. Sympathy for newly defeated German fascism in some quarters of the Afrikaner community re-opened and accentuated old divisions between the Afrikaner and Anglo worlds. From London’s perspective, the growing political power of the Nationalist Party under Daniel Malan did not augur well. The South African election of May 1948 brought the (Afrikaner) National Party to power. The Nationalists did not conceal their commitment to the most rigid separation of the races. In July 1949 the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act became law in South Africa,



making a marriage between a "European" and a "non-European" a criminal offence. Further efforts to increase segregation followed. The long-standing discrimination against the South African Indian community, which had equally been a feature of Smuts' United Party rule, was now internationalised via Jawaharlal Nehru's vigorous efforts to censure South Africa through the United Nations and its new status as a Dominion within the British Commonwealth. South Africa's desire to incorporate the British protectorates of Swaziland, Basutoland and Bechuanaland existed since the Union was created and Dominion status conferred in 1910. Under Nationalist Party government from 1948 incorporation was pursued with renewed vigour. In addition, South African ambitions to annex South West Africa (modern day Namibia) and the underlying possibility that Britain's dependent white settler colonies in southern and northern Rhodesia may gravitate—by desire, design, or accident—towards South African-style apartheid was an omnipresent concern in Whitehall. South African sensitivities over all these matters caused chronic anxiety in London about the possibility of South Africa declaring itself a republic and leaving the Commonwealth (as it would eventually do in May 1961).

All these issues, falling as they do under the umbrella of South African expansionism, were further exacerbated by indigenous black political mobilisation. In Nyasaland, a new sense of black African political resistance gained ground. Northern Rhodesia contained a large indigenous population, which suffered exploitation in the copper mines and other extractive industries that dominated its economy. The struggles of indigenous peoples in South West Africa were brought to the attention of international public opinion through the United Nations and the political activism of the English Anglican reverend Michael Scott, considered a "communist" by the United States.<sup>38</sup> Amidst these myriad complications, the event that captured the British domestic mood most strongly, and in turn re-shaped the terrain upon which Labour had to make its southern African policy, is the marriage of Seretse Khama to Ruth Williams.

It was September 1948 when Seretse Khama, a black African man from the Bechuanaland Protectorate, studying law in England, married a white English girl, Ruth Williams, at the Kensington Registry Office in London. Unfortunately for the newly married couple, Seretse was not just any old law student from Africa. He was the grandson of Khama the Great, destined to become the Kgosi (Chief) of the Bangwato, the largest and politically most significant tribe in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Seretse's uncle, Tshekedi, was the current Regent, recognised by the British Administration as the Native Authority pending Seretse's accession, once he was of the right age.

The marriage of Seretse Khama and Ruth Williams caused problems for successive British governments, first under Attlee's Labour Party and then under the Conservatives. Most importantly for our purposes, in the late 1940s these fears fed into the on-going discussions about the CAF. In short, the

“white settler problem” and the advent of Pretoria’s Nationalist apartheid policy were key drivers of British policy towards southern Africa and the CAF. The extent to which the Malan government in Pretoria was dictating British policy in southern Africa reveals the link between race politics and Britain’s self-perception as a benign power still capable of a progressive liberal imperialism. Moreover, the way in which the Seretse affair taps into pre-existing beliefs about the superiority of British civilisation helps us to understand the turn towards federation in central Africa.

Soon after Malan’s election, Seretse Khama and Ruth Williams were declared prohibited immigrants in the Union of South Africa. This may not have come as a surprise to Labour ministers, nor would it, in and of itself, have been particularly destabilising of British policy in the region. The complicating factor was the calls of successive South African governments to have the three High Commission Territories—Seretse’s native Bechuanaland, as well as Swaziland and Basutoland—incorporated into the Union of South Africa.<sup>39</sup> Under these circumstances, Labour ministers were advised that to give the title of “Native Authority” to an African who had married a white woman would be regarded as a deliberate provocation in South Africa. Malan would use the opportunity to renew calls for the transfer of the Territories, and to do so with the cross-party backing of the whites in the Union, as a way of setting his own back yard in order, as Pretoria saw it. He would also have the support of Sir Godfrey Huggins, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, which was made clear in a statement to the all white Legislative Assembly in Salisbury (Harare) on 7 July 1949.<sup>40</sup>

On the same day, after a meeting with Seretse Khama in Mafeking, Evelyn Baring, High Commissioner in Bechuanaland, had, in his own words, “his first opportunity of seeking help” from Douglas Forsyth, the Secretary of South Africa’s Department of External Affairs. A top secret and personal letter was then sent to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO London), Sir Percival Leisching. Baring made it clear to Leisching that Forsyth had been very clear with him. Forsyth, Baring reported, had discussed the whole matter with Malan, who had in turn discussed the question with his ministers and was greatly worried and distressed. Baring told Leisching that two points had emerged, and they warrant quoting in full:

First, official recognition of Seretse as chief, so long as it implies the residence in Serowe [Bechuanaland] of his English wife and the performance by her of the duties of the first wife of a chief is what really matters to the members of the government and probably to most South Africans. The mere residence of Seretse and his wife in Serowe without official recognition is objectionable to them, but in Forsyth’s view of subsidiary importance. He hopes that it might be avoided, but it is the recognition of Seretse as chief which will be the match to set off the gunpowder. Huggins has also written to me taking exactly the same point of view.<sup>41</sup>

Secondly, Baring added:

[t]he political consequences in the Union of recognition would be far more serious than I had realised. . . . The more extreme Nationalists will use the Seretse incident to add fuel to those flames. They will argue that our action demonstrates the folly of allowing the existence side by side in southern Africa of two systems of native administration diametrically opposed to one another. They will go on to say that South Africa should not and cannot remain associated with a country which recognises officially an African chief married to a white woman, and they will make Seretse's recognition the occasion of an appeal of the country for the establishment of a republic, and not only of a republic but a republic outside the Commonwealth. Malan is desperately worried and feels he could not successfully oppose an extremist offensive on these lines.<sup>42</sup>

In a minute to Philip Noel-Baker—the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations—Leisching informed him that in addition to the communication from Baring, he had been separately told by General Byers, Chief of the South African General Staff, that the British government's recognition of Seretse as chief of the Bangwato would "light a fire through all the British colonial territories in Africa which would not soon be quenched." Leisching went on to tell Noel-Baker that "the very existence of white settlement in these territories depended, in light of the numerical inferiority and defencelessness of the white population, upon the principle that the native mind regarded the white woman as inviolable." He himself, he added, had been unable to accept the "ultimate logical consequences of this principle of non-discrimination when it takes practical forms affecting oneself or one's family in terms of miscegenation." He did not "believe that many who hold to their antipathy to the colour bar would, if confronted with this matter in personal terms, view with equanimity, or indeed without revulsion, the prospect of their son or daughter marrying a member of the Negro race."<sup>43</sup> The most senior civil servant at the CRO clearly viewed the problem through the prism of both race and gender. Gordon Walker responded with his support for Baring's proposal: "I would not put out of court the possibility of declaring that a chief cannot have a white wife. There is a lot to be said for this argument, and we should consider facing the uproar that would result. We must all think about this carefully."<sup>44</sup>

Baring's encounter with Forsyth appears to have decisively influenced his thinking, and in turn influenced the position of the British government. Having previously been minded to recognise Seretse as Chief, Baring changed his position, saying the right course was now to "play for time" via a commission of enquiry, which was subsequently set up under the chairmanship of Lord Harrigan, a course of action that Noel-Baker was willing to follow. For political reasons, the Harrigan Report came to the required conclusion that Seretse should not be recognised as Kgosi of the Bangwato. But

it added, uncomfortably for the Labour government, that Seretse's "prospects of success as a Chief are as bright as those of any native in Africa. . . . He is admittedly the lawful and legitimate heir and, save for his unfortunate marriage, would be in our opinion, a fit and proper person to assume the chieftainship."<sup>45</sup> In light of this Noel-Baker warned Attlee that the Harragin Report was "an inflammable document."<sup>46</sup> Attlee was suitably alarmed. "The document is most disturbing," he said. "In effect we are invited to go contrary to the desires of the great majority of the Bangwato tribe, solely because of the attitude of the governments of the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. It is as if we had been obliged to agree to Edward VIII's abdication so as not to annoy the Irish Free State and the United States of America."<sup>47</sup> Attlee decided that the Report should be referred to the Cabinet but then accepted the advice of Gordon Walker that it should not be published. The Harragin Report was suppressed for 30 years.

Following the February 1950 General Election Gordon Walker was promoted to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, replacing Noel-Baker. With Leisching now his Permanent Under-Secretary, Gordon Walker took the matter to the Cabinet with a new set of proposals. Seretse and Ruth would be banished from the Bechuanaland Protectorate. His proposals were accepted and a statement seeking approval was to be made to Parliament.<sup>48</sup> Gordon Walker faced concern about the course of action proposed from all sides of the House of Commons. The integrity of the government was in question. The Seretse affair had become a *cause celebre* amongst the anti-colonial left in Britain, and a propaganda coup for the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> Churchill called the whole affair a "very disreputable transaction."<sup>50</sup>

In our understanding of the extent to which the race issue shaped British government policy, it is important to note that during the House of Commons debate on Seretse, Reginald Sorenson, a Labour member, asked Gordon Walker whether South Africa had had any influence on the government's decision. Gordon Walker replied in unambiguous language: "we have had no communication from the government of the Union nor have we made any communication to them. There have been no representations and no consultation in this matter."<sup>51</sup> Gordon Walker's statement to Parliament was followed by a White Paper which said: "His Majesty's Government were of course aware that a strong body of European opinion in South Africa would be opposed to recognition; but as stated in the House of Commons on the 8 March, no representations on this matter have been received from the government of the Union of South Africa or Southern Rhodesia." Hyam has referred explicitly to this incident and suggested Gordon Walker was "perilously close" to lying.<sup>52</sup> In fact, it is almost certainly clear that this was indeed a lie to the House. On 30 June 1949, prior to Baring being persuaded by Pretoria, Lief Egeland, South African High Commissioner in London, had a meeting with Gordon Walker's predecessor, Noel Baker, in which he made the very same case about the impact of recognising Seretse's marriage on

white opinion in the Union and beyond. He had made clear to the Secretary of State that his visit was on the instructions of his Prime Minister, Malan, and Gordon Walker could not reasonably claim he, or his civil servants, were unaware of this.<sup>53</sup>

Either way, senior Labour ministers were paranoid about the race issue and the impact it could have on Britain's strategic position in Africa. A paper presented by Gordon Walker to Cabinet in September 1950 claimed, fearing South American expansion, that "the policies we detest in the Union," could be "established far to the North, and in the heart of this part of our Colonial Empire." He envisaged "terrible wars . . . between a white ruled East Africa and a black ruled Western Africa," and warned his colleagues that "our whole work in Africa would be undone."<sup>54</sup> Fred Cooper has suggested that after World War II, "[t]he old claims to colonial authority based on superiority of race and civilisation were thoroughly discredited."<sup>55</sup> This, as Cooper expertly shows, required Labour to justify its developmental imperialism in technocratic terms. And yet arguments about race and civilisation do remain of great importance.

The conjuncture of race alongside geo-strategic considerations trumped the idea that amalgamation and federation in Central Africa should be postponed in order to protect the native African from white supremacist ideologies, both from within the Rhodesias and spreading out of the Union. Now, members of the Labour Party took heed of the warnings out of Pretoria, because they fed into pre-existing beliefs about the superiority of British values and the on-going need for Britain to nurture and protect the black African. They therefore acted against Seretse's interests, persuaded that a new dominion north of the Limpopo (the river separating the Union of South Africa from Southern Rhodesia) was a higher goal. The fact that this British bloc was supposed to stand for British "multi-racial" values against the alien impact of the Afrikaner merely adds to the irony of Seretse's treatment. Cohen's conversations with American diplomats in September 1950, in which he reveals the radical shift from the position he held in 1949—now believing that "it would obviously be advantageous" to have a federated central Africa as a counterweight to South Africa—was contemporaneous to Gordon Walker's apocalyptic vision of race war in Africa, the Cabinet discussions about Seretse, the suppression of the Harrigan Report and Gordon Walker's deceitful statement to the House of Commons. By April 1951, in a confidential minute, Cohen warned of the "Afrikaner danger" and Britain's "duty to the welfare of Africans." In the context of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Cohen stated that the native problem was one of bringing them round to a "true realisation of their own interests."<sup>56</sup> In these matters it is difficult to establish a forensic causal link, but the connection here seems to be irresistible.

By the end of 1951 Cohen felt that it was now crucial not to abandon the field to "black nationalists," which would have "disastrous consequences."<sup>57</sup>

Robinson's so-called proconsul of African nationalism was taking a different stance. Cohen is perhaps better understood as a defender of a particular vision of British liberalism, one with a long pedigree, and for historical purposes this may be more interesting than the anodyne picture presented by Robinson. It is important to recognise the ways in which this vision was redeployed after World War II, indicating as it does the on-going vitality of the British imperial mission long after 1945, the scepticism about the nation-state that cut across party lines, and divisions between the civil service and politicians.

In August 1952, Henry Hopkinson, now Minister of State at the Colonial Office under Winston Churchill's Conservative Government, held sixty-eight meetings in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, coming to the conclusion that any further delay would merely encourage "nascent nationalism."<sup>58</sup> By the time the CAF came into being in 1953 it was accepted that Southern Rhodesia would benefit economically from northern raw materials, and that Nyasaland would provide a large pool of black labour. The issue of the colour bar in the northern copper belt was fudged. With this in mind, the suggestion that it was only after the Conservatives came to power in 1951 that we see the return of "old-fashioned imperialism" is surely misleading.<sup>59</sup> There were some cases of consistency. Attlee, for example, stuck to his belief that federation in central Africa ran counter to "the entire premise of Labour's African policy" because it set back the cause of African nationalism.<sup>60</sup> But we have seen how, in this instance, earlier talk in Labour circles about political reform and the advance of black African nationalism came to be superseded by a renewed vision of British imperial mission, a vision that was accompanied by the implementation, eventually under the Conservatives, of a tremendously ambitious, ultimately foolhardy project of imperial state-building, a civilising mission, familiar in content but new in form.

For the black Africans of Nyasaland and northern Rhodesia, talk of socio-economic advancement and preparation for self-government had been replaced by a new trusteeship and the re-mergence of pre-World War II approaches to collaboration on the British imperial periphery, embodied in Hopkinson's *Lugardian* conclusion that the black Africans of the CAF would accept federation "taking their lead from the chiefs."<sup>61</sup> The history of British imperial policy in southern Africa under Labour suggests that the great changes apparently signalled by the Cohen Report of 1947 stalled in the face of Afrikaner nationalism, white settler politics, and the complexities of race relations. The missionary imperialism of key Fabian influences on the Labour Party had always been pronounced. The turn to federation in central Africa, what Hyam has called "the most controversial large-scale imperial exercise in constructive state-building ever undertaken by the British government,"<sup>62</sup> enabled the continuation of British control in central Africa and constituted a late flowering of a deep-rooted, cross-party and inter-governmental belief in

Britain's liberal imperial mission. It is suggestive that will and ambition could still imagine their triumph over a paucity of resources.<sup>63</sup>

The CAF is but one instance of federation, and the story has only been told from the perspective of high politics in the metropole. If there are links between the missionary imperialism of an earlier age, which animated ideas about federation, union, and commonwealth prior to 1945, the post-1945 federal moment is different, being explicitly a problem of decolonisation. The nascent Commonwealth would be a commonwealth of independent nation states. The federal option as deployed by the British meant resisting the logic of nationalism as a response to the challenges of decolonisation, and in the case of the CAF the pressures of white settler politics.

Having acted as bridge between Labour and Conservative administrations in the negotiations over the CAF, Cohen went on to become Governor of Uganda in 1952. His time there is remembered rather well by many Ugandans, especially for his liberal and tolerant views, his focus on social and economic development, and his racial inclusivity. But it was not without controversy. Cohen exiled the Kabaka of Buganda in 1953, essentially because of the Kabaka's attempt to steer the course of Ugandan decolonisation toward a state based on Buganda, rather than the whole protectorate established by the British in 1894. In fact, Cohen was also very interested in an East African Federation to match the Central African one. The idea of an east African federation prompted vigorous political debate, support and opposition, in London and in east Africa itself. It would be picked up by local political leaders and newly independent states as a possible way to realise greater cooperation and put pan-African ideals into practice. As Julius Nyerere put it in 1964, "there is one way in East Africa that the present unity of opposition should become a unity of construction. The unity and freedom movements should be combined, and the East African territories achieve independence as one unit . . . this means Federation of the Territories now administered separately."<sup>64</sup> The story of the failure of east African federation needs to be told, both from the perspective of colonial authorities and, crucially, from the perspective of indigenous political elites.<sup>65</sup> Why did federation seem like a good idea? In asking this question, the possible flaws of the nation-state model itself would be central to the discussion of the failure of the post-colonial state, alongside the neo-colonialism of former imperial powers or the inequities of the world economy.<sup>66</sup>

Answering these kinds of historical questions would take us into a wider field of inquiry, one in which the historical constitution of the nation-state in the post-war period could be re-examined. Whereas the Atlantic Charter and the Charter of the United Nations had envisaged the triumph of national self-determination, the 1950s was also a moment of deep aporia surrounding the viability of the nation-state. As Ernest Gellner articulated so precisely, nationalism as an ideology holds that "the political and the national unit should be

congruent.”<sup>67</sup> The application of that principle had been one of the key drivers of two world wars. Paradoxically, empire explicitly resists nationalist logic. So too does federation. Yet the compression of the historical space between empire and nation-state has arguably prevented us from asking how it was that for the purposes of decolonisation, national states became *the only* alternative to empires.<sup>68</sup> In the post-war period federal questions arose in regard to other European empires.<sup>69</sup> The United States was supportive of the idea of European federation.<sup>70</sup> Questions of federal and “world government” continued to coalesce around debates about the United Nations.<sup>71</sup> These may not be incidental connections, but may point to a historical moment in which decolonisation and the relationships between empire, nation, sovereignty, identity, and political economy were being questioned. This comes at a time when, as Charles Maier has suggested, the territorial basis of nation-statehood was already weakening.<sup>72</sup>

Raising our sights a little we realise that the CAF was not isolated. There were numerous federations or mooted federations across the British Empire during this period, including the Malay Federation, 1948–1963; the East African High Commission, 1948–1961; the previously discussed Central African Federation, 1953–1963; the West Indies Federation, 1958–1962; and the Federation of South Arabia, 1962–1967. These were not always British initiatives, with nationalists and other agents in the colonies themselves thinking through the possibilities of federation for their own ends. But the sheer breadth of federal experiments is suggestive of a deeper historical connection to ideologies of power and structures of identity, the significance of which may be lost if we understand these manoeuvres strictly in terms of a peripheral theory of collaboration and control. The idea of a federated empire has long and deep roots in British imperial ideology. Clearly the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is distinct from the dream of a federated white Empire-Commonwealth imagined by the advocates of Greater Britain in the late nineteenth century, or the protagonists of the Round Table Movement which pushed the idea forward throughout the twentieth century. The British had already imposed a federal constitution on India. But exactly what is the relationship between idea of federation in the late 1940s and 1950s and that previous tradition? How did questions of empire, nationhood, sovereignty, and territoriality play themselves out across the canvas of a decolonising British Empire?

Moreover, that canvas was in fact far bigger than the British Empire. The decolonising federal moment was a genuinely trans-national, world historical one, which deserves deeper, comparative historical analysis.<sup>73</sup> This will hopefully reveal the complex ways in which historical actors at both the core and periphery of empires imagined alternative forms of sovereignty and political organisation, forms which it may yet serve us well to re-examine from our postcolonial present.



## NOTES

1. Versions of this article were presented at the International History Conference in Honour of Kathy Burk, UCL, 14 June 2012 and the Brady-Johnson Colloquium on Grand Strategy, International Security Studies, Yale University, 4 December 2012. I am grateful for the comments I received at both events. I am also incredibly thankful to all participants and convenors at the July 2012 International Seminar on Decolonization, National History Center, Washington DC, for their careful and sharp reading of an earlier draft.

2. For a near-contemporary assessment, see R. L. Watts, *New Federations: Experiments in the Commonwealth* (Oxford, 1966). My thanks to Jason C. Parker at Texas A&M for alerting me to this source.

3. For example, in the context of Anglo-American and imperial histories, see K. Burk, *Old World, New World: The Story of Britain and America* (New York, 2007); B. J. C. McKercher, *Transition of Power: Britain's Loss of Global Preeminence to the United States, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, 1999); or, more broadly, the *Adventures With Britannia* series, beginning with W. R. Louis, ed., *Adventures With Britannia: Personalities, Politics and Culture in Britain* (Austin Texas, 1996).

4. See R. Hyam, "The Political Consequences of Seretse Khama: Britain, the Bangwato and South Africa, 1948-1952," *Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), pp. 921-47; and R. Hyam, "The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1948-1953," *Historical Journal*, 30(1987), pp. 145-72. Both are reprinted in R. Hyam and P. Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa Since the Boer War* (Cambridge, 2003).

5. W.R. Louis & R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22(1994), pp. 462-511.

6. E. Wallace, *The British Caribbean: From the Decline of Colonialism to the End of Federation* (Toronto, 1977), p. 86. This reference is attributable to Jason C. Parker's as-yet-unpublished manuscript on federation in the West Indies.

7. Smith called for a "federal union with America." See E. C. Mossner, I. Simpson Ross, R.H. Campbell, D. D. Raphael, and A. S. Skinner, eds, *The Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1987), p. 383. On Shelburne, see H. M. Scott, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution* (Oxford, 1990), p. 224. I owe both of these references to Stephen Conway, UCL.

8. W.D. McIntyre, *The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and Impact, 1869-1971* (Minneapolis, 1977), p. 30

9. D. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton NJ, 2007), pp. 6-62.

10. J. Kandle, *Round Table Movement and Imperial Union* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 70-71

11. Curtis to Milner, 1908, in *Ibid.*, p. 56.

12. Macintyre, *Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 172.

13. J. Gallagher, *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 141-142.

14. G. Martel, "The Meaning of Power: Rethinking the Decline and Fall of Great Britain," *International History Review*, 13(1991), passim; P. Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy, 1865-1980* (London, 1983); *idem.*, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York, 1987).

15. R.E. Robinson, "Andrew Cohen and the Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa, 1940-1951," in W.H. Morris-Jones & G. Fischer, eds, *Decolonisation and Africa: The British and French Experience* (London, 1980), pp. 50-72. Since Robinson himself was at the Colonial Office in the late 1940s working alongside men such as Andrew Cohen, this raises questions about how the historian is to historicise people and institutions with which he was so intimately involved. For another positive interpretation of the Labour government's approach to Africa see R. Pearce, "The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonisation in Africa," *African Affairs*, 83 (1984), pp. 77-93.

16. J. Flint, "Planned Decolonization and Its Failure in British Africa," *African Affairs*, 82(1983), pp. 389-411; R. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy in Africa, 1938-1948* (London, 1982), p. 43.

17. E. Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge MA, 2007).

18. On the first "Wilsonian moment" see E. Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York, 2009). On the second one, see S.

Moyn, "Imperialism, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Human Rights," in Akira Iriye et al., eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (New York, 2012), pp. 159–78

19. For a comparative and comprehensive approach to labour questions in British and French Africa, see F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996). On British East Africa, see P. Kelemen, "Modernising Colonialism: the British Labour Movement and Africa," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 34(2006), pp. 223–244.

20. R.E. Robinson, "Cohen, Sir Andrew Benjamin (1909–1968)," in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edition, L. Goldman, ed., January 2011, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32478>.

21. Robinson, "Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa," p. 62.

22. Pearce called the 1947 report "a mature and systematic exposition of Colonial Office thinking, a consistent and conscious strategy of decolonisation." R. Pearce, "Planned Decolonisation in Africa," p. 86. Hyam has criticised the "wilder misinterpretations" that have been placed upon the pronouncements of Cohen and others in 1947 but cites D. Williams' *Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. VII: *From c. 1940 to c. 1975* (Cambridge, 1984), 341 as an example, not mentioning Robinson. See R. Hyam, "Africa and the Labour Government, 1945–1951," in R. Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 242.

23. See Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, pp. 202–215; R. Hyam, "Africa and the Labour Government," p. 242.

24. Robinson, "Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa," *passim*.

25. The possible convergence of Fabian thinking about empire and the slightly later American modernisation theory, for example Seymour Martin Lipset's ideas about the socio-economic underpinnings of democracy, is perhaps worth further investigation. See S.M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, 53(1959), pp. 69–105; S.M. Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (New York, 1960).

26. R. Hinden, "Socialism and the Colonial World," in A.C. Jones, ed., *New Fabian Colonial Essays* (London, 1959), p. 9. I owe this quote to Charlotte Riley, UCL History Department.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

28. United States Embassy, London, memorandum on "British Colonial Development and Welfare Programs," p. 9, circulated to Certain American Diplomatic and Consular Officers by the State Department, Washington D.C., 7 July 7 1948, RG 84 (National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD) Classified General Records, Box 158, File 350 Britain-Colonies.

29. Cohen did not miss the opportunity to remind the American Embassy in London that whilst in his view (and he was thought by American diplomats to be "probably the best-informed man in London on the subject") communism had not yet penetrated deeply into Africa, keeping it out would be possible in large part due to the presence of British administration and control. See W. Stratton Anderson, United States Embassy, London, "Communism in Africa: Cohen's Comments," 26 October, 1948, *Ibid.*

30. On United States policy towards South Africa see T. Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (New York, 1993); and A. Thomson, *U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1994* (New York, 2008).

31. J. Darwin, *The End of the British Empire*, p. 104

32. See F. Cooper, "Modernising Bureaucrats, Backward Africans and the Development Concept," in F. Cooper and R.M. Packard, eds, *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Los Angeles, 1997) pp. 64–92.

33. This money has proved difficult to trace but the figure usually used is £98 million. See R. Schreurs, "A Marshall Plan for Africa? The Overseas Territories Committee and the Origin of European Cooperation in Africa," in R.T. Griffiths, ed., *Explorations in OEEC History* (Paris, 1997).

34. R. Welensky, *Welensky's 4000 Days* (London, 1964).

35. United States Embassy, London, "The Proposed Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland," 28 October 1948, RG84, Classified General Records, Box 158, File 350 Britain-Commonwealth.

36. United States Embassy, London, "British Colonial Policies in Africa," 20 September 1950, *Ibid.*

37. As Gallagher puts it with regard to the Second Anglo-Boer War, "indeed a good deal of what is commonly described as imperialist aggression during this period should rather be seen as imperialist counter-punching; or, to put it more demurely, as reactions by British policy-making to developments outside Europe." J. Gallagher, *Decline*, pp. 81–82. The parallels with southern Africa in 1948–1953 are intriguing.

38. C. Anderson, "International Conscience, the Cold War, and Apartheid: The NAACP's Alliance with the Reverend Michael Scott for South West Africa's Liberation, 1946–1952," *Journal of World History*, 19 (2008), pp. 297–326; R. Skinner, "Christian Reconstruction, Secular Politics: Michael Scott and the Campaign for Right and Justice, 1943–45" in S. Dubow and A. Jeeves, eds., *South Africa's 1940s: Worlds of Possibilities* (Cape Town, 2005).

39. These calls found their impetus in the 1909 South Africa Act, which included consideration of the possibility of handing over the three territories to South Africa at some undefined point in the future.

40. "There is no doubt," Huggins told the House, "that the tribesmen's decision [to support Seretse as Kgosi] is a disastrous one. First it shows lack of racial pride in Bechuanaland; secondly, it is disastrous from the effect it will have on neighbouring territories." He told members that he had already written to the High Commissioner, but would write again "informing him of the opinion of this House and how disastrous it would be if this fellow is allowed to become Chief of Khama's people." S. Williams, *Colour Bar: The Triumph of Seretse Khama and His Nation* (London, 2006), pp. 69–70.

41. Baring to Leisching, 11 July 1949, DO (Dominions Office Archives, The National Archives, Kew, London) 119/1283.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Minute by Leisching, 14 July 1949, DO119/1283, Williams, *Colour Bar*, pp. 72–3.

44. Minute by Gordon Walker, 15 July 1949, DO 119/1283, *Ibid.*, p. 73.

45. Harrigan Report, 1 December 1949, PREM (Prime Minister's Office Archives, Archives, The National Archives, Kew, London) 8/1308, Part 1, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

46. Noel Baker to Atlee, 21 December 1949, *Ibid.*; Williams, *Colour Bar*, p. 110.

47. Atlee to Gordon Walker, 22 January 1950, PREM 8/1308, Williams, *Colour Bar*, p. 113.

48. Gordon Walker would lose the Smethwick constituency seat at the General Election of 1964 to a Conservative Party candidate who ran an anti-immigration campaign with the slogan: "If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour."

49. R. Skinner, "The Moral Foundations of British Anti-Apartheid Activism 1946–60," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 (2009), pp. 399–416. Cf. Hyam, "Political Consequences of Seretse Khama."

50. J. Redfern, *Ruth and Seretse: A Very Disreputable Transaction* (London, 1955), p. 7.

51. Hansard, 8 March 1950, House of Commons Debates, Series 5, Vol. 472, p. 288

52. Hyam, "Political Consequences of Seretse Khama," p. 939.

53. Egeland sent a telegram to Malan, copied to the CRO, and then followed up his telegram with a private letter to Malan, telling him that at the very start of his meeting with Noel Baker in June he had made it clear that his visit to the Secretary of State was made "on your [Malan's] instructions." See Egeland to Malan, 24 March 1950, PM (National Archives of South Africa) Vol. 1/4/21, 1/15.

54. R. Hyam, ed., *British Documents on the End of Empire, Vol. 2: The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945–1951* (London, 1992), p. 311.

55. Cooper, *Decolonization*, p. 173.

56. Hyam, "Geopolitical Origins," p. 163.

57. Quoted in R. Hyam, "Containing Afrikanerdom: The Geopolitical Origins of the Central African Federation, 1948–1953," in Hyam & Henshaw, *Lion and the Springbok*, p. 219.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

59. Pearce, "Planned Decolonization," p. 88.

60. Hyam, "The Labour Government and Africa," note 54, pp. 266. Hyam contrasts this with Cohen's "determination to bring federation into being," note 54, pp. 266.

61. Hyam, "Geopolitical Origins," pp. 165.

62. *Ibid.*

63. Cf. Martel, "The Meaning of Power", *passim*.

64. J. Nyerere, "Freedom and Unity," *Transition*, 14 (1964), p. 40.

65. There seems to be relatively little work done in this area, although east African federation did attract the attention of some prominent political scientists in the 1960s. See J.S. Nye, *Pan-Africanism and East African Integration* (Cambridge MA, 1965); C. Leys and P. Robson, eds, *Federation in East Africa* (Oxford, 1965).

66. For an idiosyncratic and stimulating discussion of this problem see B. Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York, 1992).

67. E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1983), p. 1.

68. Partha Chatterjee argued persuasively that anti-colonial nationalism was a "derivative discourse." P. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London, 1986). Critics

of empire who resisted nationalism were few and far between. Rabindranath Tagore had denounced both imperialism and nationalism in the early twentieth century, but his lone voice was drowned out by the rising tide of anti-colonial nationalism, the seductive political power of which not even Gandhi could deny. See M. Collins, *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World: Rabindranath Tagore's Writings on History, Politics and Society* (London, 2012).

69. On the Malay federation see A.J. Stockwell, "Malaysia: The Making of a Neo-Colony?," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26 (1998), pp. 138–156; and M. Jones, *Conflict and Confrontation in South East Asia, 1961–1965: Britain, the United States and the Creation of Malaysia* (Cambridge, 2002). On federal experiments in French West Africa see F. Cooper, "Alternatives to Empire: France and Africa After World War II," in D. Howland and L. White, eds, *The State of Sovereignty: Territories, Laws, Populations* (Bloomington, 2009). On the Dutch East Indies see J. Foray, "A Unified Empire of Equal Parts: The Dutch Commonwealth Schemes of the 1920s–1940s," forthcoming in the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*.

70. P. Winand, Eisenhower, *Kennedy and the United States of Europe* (Basingstoke, 1996).

71. M. Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London, 2012).

72. C. S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," in *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), pp. 807–31. Maier highlights "the spatially anchored structures for politics and economics that were taken for granted from about 1860," and puts in a "plea for historians to envisage a historical era that took shape in the second half of the nineteenth century and, just as important, effectively unraveled in the two or three decades before the [twentieth] century formally ended." Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History," p. 808.

73. Cf. F. Cooper and J. Burbank, *Empires in Word History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 2010), p. 10.