CHAPTER 4

Containing the Rising Tide: Race and Self-Determination, 1940–1960

Who knows how we shall fashion a land of peace where black outnumbers white so greatly? Some say that the earth has bounty enough for all, and that more for one does not mean the decline of another. And others say that this is a danger, for better-paid labor will not only buy more, but will also read more, think more, ask more, and will not be content to be forever voiceless and inferior.

Who knows how we shall fashion such a land? For we fear not only the loss of our possessions, but the loss of our superiority and the loss of our whiteness. We shall be careful, and hedge ourselves about with safety and precautions. . . .

The Cathedral Guild is holding a meeting, and the subject is "The Real Causes of Native Crime." But there will be a gloom over it, for the speaker of the evening, Mr. Arthur Jarvis, has just been shot dead in his house in Parkwold.

Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much.

—ALAN PATON,
Cry, the Beloved Country

THE MOOD is decidedly different from the optimism and self-confidence in the "white man's burden" of Rider Haggard or John Buchan. Paton, who defined South African reality for so many Western readers in the years after World War II, is instead conscience-stricken and fearful. Hardly the representative white South African, indeed almost the ideal type of the isolated liberal minority, Paton nevertheless struck a chord in tune with the times. His themes—South Africa as an international outcast and white fear of engulfment by a rising black tide—quickly gained currency as stock interpretations of the southern African scene.

Paton himself later identified this shift in international image in the contrasting roles of South African leader Smuts at successive United Nations meetings. In 1945 in San Francisco, Smuts basked in world recognition as elder statesman. He provided the draft for the preamble on human

rights to the UN Charter, without noticeable recognition in the gathering that such ideals might have relevance to South Africa. By the following year's General Assembly, Smuts was battling unsuccessfully to avoid UN condemnation of his policies toward South Africa's Indians and to hold off the demand that South West Africa be placed under UN trusteeship. Smuts had become, writes Paton, "only the leader of a small white aristocracy seeking to cling to its privilege in a changing world. In the old days, when mankind went on the march one could imagine Smuts marching at the head of it. Now men were on the march again, but Smuts could no longer march with them."[1]

A reluctant dissenter from the white supremacist ideology, Paton always combined fear of revolution with his advocacy of principled reform. As principal of Diepkloof Reformatory for African boys from 1935 to 1946, Paton experienced the human dimension of the African tide flowing into the cities. From 1941 to 1943, discussions in Anglican Archbishop Clayton's commission on "The Church and the Nation" forced Paton to "reject finally all the arguments for white political supremacy."[2] In 1946 and 1947, writing Cry, the Beloved Country in hotel rooms in Norway, Sweden, England, and San Francisco, he fused in his fiction feelings of apprehension with the new international idealism reflected in the UN Charter.

That Paton got so wide a hearing in the West, and South Africa found its image marred, was in part due to the political victory of the National Party in May 1948, only four months after Cry, the Beloved Country was published to enthusiastic reviews in New York. Just as British suspicions of the South African regime had been heightened when Smuts went down to electoral defeat in 1924, so it was again in 1948 when the Nationalists, headed by men even more fanatic than the earlier generation, triumphed at the polls.

By stressing the shortsightedness of the Afrikaner rulers, and the weakness of English-speaking whites with more enlightened views, Paton placed the principal blame for South Africa's racial plight on the Afrikaners. Figures like Ernest Oppenheimer, the mining magnate, appear in Cry, the Beloved Country as possible sources of hope. Assuming a superiority for Anglo-American values and focusing on Afrikaner guilt made it easy for the outside world to regard South Africa as moral outcast. Indeed, the liberal themes of Paton and company, and their echo in newspaper editorials and UN resolutions overseas, might be seen cynically as part of the English-Afrikaner rivalry.*

* For Paton, who grew up particularly conscious of his heritage as an English South African, preoccupied with the split between the two white "races," the real tragedy in subsequent years was the political impotence of the establishment liberal tradition. His two most substantial books of the sixties and seventies were biographies of Archbishop Clayton and of Smuts's protégé, Jan Hofmeyr. Both were in Paton's eyes admirable but tragic figures,

That is only part of the picture. Paton was not just reacting to Afrikaner challenge; he was also sensing a global shift that not only exposed the crude racism of the Afrikaners, but also undermined the ideological confidence of British imperialism. Before World War II, the "race question" in South Africa referred to the English-Afrikaner split, but in the postwar period the primary racial divide at issue was "European/non-European." The growth of nationalism in Asia and Africa, as well as the rise of the Soviet Union and the United States, signaled the beginning of the end for the European colonial era.

In the new international context, colonial rule as well as South African racism were stripped of legitimacy. The Soviet Union and the United States each preached its own version of democracy and rejection of traditional rationales for colonial empire. Britain accepted an independent India into the Commonwealth. The United Nations served as a forum for egalitarian resolutions.

In practical terms in southern Africa, however, white dominance had not even begun to sound retreat. The result was an ever widening gulf between nominal ideals and the realities of policies toward the southern African region. The United States took up the leadership of the "Free World," little troubling that colonial and white-minority-ruled territories were counted among the free. British framers of decolonization plans still presumed that African rights in east and southern Africa were an issue for a future generation. The African freedom struggle might elicit an occasional twinge of Western conscience, but the old order still promised stability for some time to come. Notwithstanding Paton's vision, Western leaders still assumed the durability of "White Man's Africa."

Defining the "Free World"

The First World War, coming on the heels of the colonial conquest of Africa, had weakened Britain's worldwide position and enhanced the role of the United States and the "white dominions." It had provided the opportunity for the transformation of the Russian Empire into the Soviet Union. But the colonial empires of the Western powers, save that of defeated Germany, survived intact. The Second World War, a generation later, unleashed anticolonial forces of a different order of magnitude.

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in whom hints of liberal commitment occasionally broke through a dominant respect for the existing order. Hofmeyr died in November 1948, after his alleged readiness to accommodate African advances had served as a rallying point against his party in the election. And Clayton died of a heart attack in 1957, the night after he had steeled himself to write a pastoral letter advising defiance of a new law that in effect banned interracial worship services.

The decline of Britain and Western Europe's other colonial powers coincided with the emergence of Britain's wartime allies, the Soviet Union and the United States, as dominant forces on the world scene. The Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the war against Hitler's Germany, suffering over twenty million casualties, consolidated its influence over its vulnerable Eastern European flank in territory occupied during the war. And what the West saw as the Soviet-inspired virus of world revolution sprang up as well beyond the reach of the Red Army—in China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

In reality, the sphere of influence of Soviet armies and Marxist ideologies was limited, particularly in Africa and in the English-speaking colonial world. There the ideological idiom of nationalist resistance was primarily borrowed from the colonial powers. The Soviet Union was a distant ideological bogey for those who feared change. The dominant new actor, a challenger to the symbolism if not to the practice of colonialism, was not the Soviet Union but the United States.

With a worldwide military machine and an economy bolstered rather than devastated by the war, the United States had the capacity and took the opportunity to establish hegemony over most of the world. It was in the context of U.S. dominance that Britain and the other colonial powers were to play out their decolonization dramas.

The United States brought to its new role an ambivalent heritage on racial and colonial issues. It had emerged as a nation in anticolonial revolt against Britain and had fought a civil war to abolish slavery. Yet it had also decimated and displaced the Native American peoples, and in the mid–twentieth century most black Americans were still deprived of political rights. Although its early expansion was largely limited to the North American continent, the country had entered into new imperial adventures in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The Spanish-American war, resulting in the acquisition of Puerto Rico and the Philippines and control over Cuba, preceded by a year the Anglo-Boer war of 1899. In Africa the United States sought no direct possessions, although it did maintain a special relationship with formally independent Liberia. In general, the United States shared the European position that black rule was hardly an option to be taken seriously. But it demanded that the colonial powers leave "open access" for commerce of other nations. This led to support for King Leopold's Congo Free State and, in the case of South Africa, to a preference for the free-trading British over the Boers.*

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* The U.S. debate over the Anglo-Boer war raised explicitly the question of "who should rule." No more in the United States than in Britain or South Africa itself was the alternative of black rule considered a serious option, but there was real tension between traditional anti-British sentiment and the economic incentive for alliance with Britain.

After World War II, as the United States presented itself on the world stage as the champion of freedom, it seemed the European empires might no longer fit into the American vision. In what European imperialists saw as a cynical play for power, the United States combined anticolonial rhetoric with a willingness and indeed eagerness to use power in ways that the more honest acknowledged would be called "imperial" if carried out by others. Studies during the war by the Council on Foreign Relations, an Establishment body which exercised much influence in shaping U.S. postwar policy, stressed the need for policies for the United States "in a world in which it proposes to hold unquestioned power."[5]

At the same time, Council leaders thought a statement of broader war aims was imperative:

> If war aims are stated which seem to be concerned solely with Anglo-American imperialism, they will offer little to people in the rest of the world, and be vulnerable to Nazi counter-promises. [Rather] the interests of other peoples should be stressed, not only those of Europe, but also of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This would have a better propaganda effect.[6]

The Atlantic Charter was the famous statement that emerged a few months later to express these aims. Winning an enthusiastic reception, it was quoted around the world in editorials and political manifestoes. In the third point, the United States and Britain affirmed "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live," and advocated the return of "sovereign rights and self-government to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." Churchill later tried to say that the British Empire was not included in the last clause, but Roosevelt responded that indeed the reference was to all peoples.

While U.S. leaders demanded ritual adherence to the ideal, they looked with tolerance on European failures to implement self-determination. The United States was in many respects in a position comparable to that of Britain a century earlier. Then, too, direct colonial rule was in ideological disfavor. As the dominant economic power, Britain could depend on more informal means of influence, provided other powers did not deny access to British commerce. Britain, theoretically opposed to accepting government

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A typical view was that of mining engineer John Hays Hammond, who moved in influential Republican circles after returning to the United States from South Africa. "Great Britain will inevitably win," he wrote the *New York Times* the day after the war broke out. "The result of British supremacy and a progressive regime in the Transvaal will be a great stimulus to the development of the wonderful resources of that country. . . . America will come in for her share."[3]

Among the dissenters was eight-year-old Allen Dulles, to become CIA director under Eisenhower, who wrote a short book on the war published privately by his Secretary of State grandfather. Dulles noted that the Boers landed at the Cape in 1652, "finding no people but a few Indians," and that "it was not right for the British to come in because the Boers had the first right to the land."[4]

responsibility for new colonies, had in fact used a variety of political control mechanisms overseas, including direct rule. A century later, it was the United States that could most easily rely on the "informal empire" of economic influence without direct colonial control. But the "anti-colonial" United States found little difficulty in accepting the practical need for European colonies (and its own "strategic territories" in the Pacific) within the "free world" system it was constructing.

The point in the Atlantic Charter that the United States most firmly insisted on was point four, requiring that all nations enjoy "access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world." The United States took advantage of the British need for Lend-Lease supplies during the war, and of its economic weakness afterwards, to force it to open up trade barriers keeping others out of the empire. While advocates of the United States position stressed that the "free trade" principles would be in everyone's interest eventually, most British observers saw a crude U.S. bid to take over Britain's leading economic role in its colonies.

United States criticism of colonialism, though resented by defenders of the British empire, was in fact very mild. The range of views within U.S. establishment circles can be seen in two reports written during the war. In *The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint*, a Phelps-Stokes Fund study group noted that "where the ruling Power identifies itself most actively with the interests of the native people without thought of exploitation, and does the most to fit them for self-government, there loyalty to Government is strongest."[7] The panel included missionary and foundation executives, educators, and prominent black Americans; Ralph Bunche and W. E. B. DuBois were members, along with Jesse Jones, head of the Fund, and future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. They suggested that the State Department create a division on Africa, and that there by "a constructive attack on the problem of African poverty . . . with the definite goal of fitting the African in the colonial possessions for self-government."[8]

The committee was anxious to distinguish itself from "an over-critical approach" to the colonial powers. Increase of native representation should be a gradual process, they thought, noting with satisfaction that the British colonial territories (with only a few exceptions) had adopted "the basic and progressive social-welfare ideals" of the League of Nations mandate. While mentioning the danger to native rights of the possible extension of South Africa's segregation policies to the north, the panel saw hope in recent statements by Smuts and Hofmeyr "giving some promise for a more liberal attitude."[9]

Writing on "American Interest in the Colonial Problem" for the Council on Foreign Relations, Jacob Viner also argued that all colonial powers

should look toward "the establishment of self-government for colonial peoples as soon as it is reasonably practical." He noted that "it is difficult in modern times and for the Western peoples effectively to wage wars, even defensive wars, outside their own territory unless such wars can be given the character of moral or humanitarian crusades. Hence, our government cannot afford to show indifference to the plight of dissatisfied colonial people."[10]

Still, Viner concluded that U.S. economic interests could be promoted without insisting on independence, provided the European colonial powers promoted economic development and eliminated the worst of colonial tariff preferences. Since the United States would undoubtedly need some territory following the war for its own air and naval bases, and would need Britain's support on a variety of world issues, he cautioned against offending London. Similarly, it was important "not to antagonize France, Holland, Belgium, etc., by pressing on them demands, with respect to their colonial regimes, which in form or substance are highly objectionable to them."[11]

The Phelps-Stokes panel and the Council study group both affirmed self-determination as a long-range goal and the need for reform in the meantime. They differed in emphasis, on how far to tilt the tone of policy toward emerging nationalism or to appease colonial sensitivities. Until the late 1950s at least, U.S. policy maintained the established tilt toward the colonial powers. "From about 1943," says W. R. Louis in his massive study of the topic, "the general policy of the American government, in pursuit of security, tended to support rather than to break up the British imperial system. It was an awareness of changing times rather than demands from Washington that led the British progressively to decolonize the Empire."[12]

And it was security-related considerations that seemed to determine where United States or British officialdom would concede the "readiness for self-government" of a colonized people. In southeast Asia, for example, the United States gave military support to the reimposition of colonial authority over French, Dutch, and British territories that had been occupied during the war by Japanese troops. But it also insisted that the most effective protection against increasing unrest and Communist insurgency was to establish governments under the leadership of safely noncommunist nationalist leaders. The Philippines, where the United States suppressed the Huk insurgency after the war and maintained an extensive complex of military bases in a formally independent country, was often cited as a positive example for the Europeans.

Africa as such was not prominent in the global conceptions of U.S. interest in the postwar world. But policymakers consistently assumed that the continent must remain under the influence of the Western bloc. Even

in 1940, when it seemed that Nazi Germany might well consolidate its control over the European continent, U.S. planners defined a minimum "Grand Area" within which the United States had to maintain free access to markets and raw materials. The area, which would expand rather than diminish as the war progressed, included not only the Western Hemisphere, but also the Far East and the British Empire, with its vast African holdings.

European colonial officials may have feared the latent anticolonial sentiment that could be stirred in the U.S. public, but the U.S. government was not unhappy with the pace set by the Europeans. "Premature independence" was repeatedly cited as a danger by U.S. officials into the late 1950s. President Eisenhower, looking back, mused that African determination for self-rule "resembled a torrent overrunning everything in its path, including, frequently, the best interests of those concerned."[13] It was the growing strength of African nationalism to which, eventually, both Britain and the United States were forced to respond.

White Man's Country Still

Winston Churchill might bluster, in 1940, that he had not become prime minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. But reality had to be faced up to. When Singapore, Britain's imperial bastion in the east, fell to Japanese troops in 1942, the London *Times* termed it "the greatest blow since the loss of the American colonies." "British dominion in the Far East can never be restored in its former guise," the editorial lamented, calling for "new policies and a new outlook."[14]

In the debate over restoration of Germany's colonies in the 1930s, defenders of continued British control had attacked the immoral and racist views of the Nazis. These they contrasted with what Margery Perham, a leading figure in colonial policy, called "the moral element in the British Empire, the policy of spreading the idea of freedom and leading towards self-government."[15] During the war Britain's need for economic support and even for troops (more than two million from India, for example) required concessions to nationalist sentiment. The war also revealed Britain's sheer incapacity to retain control by its own force alone.

After the war there was no practical way for Britain to hold on to India, and little benefit, other than to nostalgic imperial sentiment. The area was no longer central to Britain's economy as it had been in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, and the British tradition provided models other than direct colonial rule for retaining influence. The precedent set in 1947 and 1948 by India, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Burma encompassed more than

half the population then under colonial rule. For the rest, it was unmistakable proof that freedom was possible.

Convincing the colonial powers themselves was a slow and inconsistent process. Colonial peoples were deemed "ready" for independence, it seemed, only when the threat of "communism" or uncontrollable disorder awakened the need to court a moderate nationalism as an alternative. In practice, the definition of "political maturity" in each national case changed when the nationalist movement showed "the ability to employ force and violence, or at least to manufacture a respectably troublesome agitation."[16] In Africa south of the Sahara, there was as yet no open revolt. Neither Soviet armies nor Marxist ideologies threatened the colonial order. The nationalist challenge seemed distant, and talk of independence highly premature.

Even in British West Africa, generally agreed to be most open to constitutional advance toward self-government, few expected the pace to be other than leisurely. Lord Hailey, who more than any other person synthesized the moderate reformist perspective that came to be accepted, laid stress on the need for economic and social development to precede political advance. The colonial powers should accept international accountability for such progress, he believed, though detailed international supervision, as suggested in some U.S. proposals, would be going too far. Preparations for ultimate self-government, he thought, should begin with the admission of Africans to colonial administration, and build on local government institutions from the colonial "indirect rule" system.[17]

"Readiness for independence" was judged quite differently in the eastern and southern African portions of the British Empire. According to Kenya governor Sir Philip Mitchell, writing in 1947, law and order in that region would depend for generations to come on British authority, for otherwise the initiative would fall to the "Union of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and the ancient and mature Portuguese colonies."[18]

One of the justifications for a distinct pace in that part of Africa was the lower level of education achieved by Africans, as compared with their fellows in West Africa. But behind that admitted fact—and broader in scope—was the reality of implanted communities of white settlers, who might react violently if their interests were threatened by plans for "majority-rule" independence. The best that imperial authority could do, moderate reformers thought, was to preserve "native rights" against *additional* encroachments by white settlers and to promote "social advance," particularly education. This was the premise, for example, of colonial expert Margery Perham, in her 1942–1943 debate with Elspeth Huxley, who defended the Kenyan settlers' demands for greater autonomy.[19] Imperial historian W. K. Hancock argued in 1943 that Kenya could only move

toward independence "when there has been a great levelling-up of economic condition and educational attainment, when a prosperous and literate African population has its due representation in the legislature."[20] Neither Hancock nor Perham raised the possibility that due representation might instead be the prerequisite of any "levelling-up."

The policymakers' agenda did not include an end to colonial or white-minority rule in the region. Indeed, over vehement African objection Britain even projected a Central African Federation, which expanded the influence of Southern Rhodesia's settlers into the neighboring territories of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

This federation was proposed as a way to rationalize economic development and to build up a strong British counterweight to Afrikaner-controlled South Africa. The process began under a Labour government in Britain, and was embellished with promises of "partnership" between white and black. The harsh excesses of Southern Rhodesian racism would presumably be softened by the more pro-African tradition of Colonial Office rule that had prevailed in the two northern territories.

Africans were not considered qualified to have equal representation. The thirty-five-man federal parliament reserved only six seats for Africans. The franchise limited the vote to those owning more than £240 in property or earning more than £200 a year, ensuring a predominantly white electorate. Africans were bitterly and virtually unanimously opposed, though some in Southern Rhodesia thought they might have a better chance than in a single white-settler-ruled territory. When Sir Godfrey Huggins, the first federal prime minister, jested that his idea of partnership was the partnership of "rider and horse," Africans ruefully noted the accuracy of the saying.

Particularly indicative of prevailing attitudes was British policymakers' disregard for African opinion. The Labour Party pledged to gain African consent before finalizing the scheme. But colonial officialdom pressed ahead, working out the essentials of the federal constitution in a January 1951 conference. Churchill's Conservative government, which took power in October that year, then pushed it through, eventually to be approved by a 304 to 260 vote in the House of Commons. In a move reminiscent of the 1922 vote on Southern Rhodesia's change of status, the electorate, consisting of 46,355 voters (only 380 of them African), was given the chance to approve in a referendum. In Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, where no referenda were held, the legislatures voted their assent, with the few African representatives in unanimous but futile opposition.

The experience of ten years of federation, before the experiment was finally abandoned, justified African fears. While the economy did expand, the benefits were unequally distributed among the territories and between

the races. Northern Rhodesia's tax revenues—largely from copper—were about 60 percent of the total for the three territories in the last year before federation; by 1957–58 they had fallen to less than 20 percent. A 1960 analysis of government expenditures concluded that under federation, as before, "the allocation of benefits has been weighed disproportionately in favor of Europeans. . . . even the *absolute* sums expended have been much larger for Europeans than for Africans."[21]

African opposition to federation found an echo in Britain in the Labour Party, in the press, and even among establishment specialists in colonial affairs such as Margery Perham and Sir Keith Hancock. But even many critics accepted the framework of federation as given, arguing that attempts to build partnership should be given a chance.

In U.S. establishment circles, stronger criticisms found little hearing. *Foreign Affairs* opened its pages to Northern Rhodesian settler leader Roy Welensky in 1952, while in 1957 Philip Mason argued in the same journal that steps toward partnership were being implemented and should be continued. Readers of this premier organ of U.S. foreign-policy opinion got little clue as to the force of African arguments. But they did have Welensky's explanation that African distrust was "a result of Communist influences," and that in any case "not for two or three generations will they be able to play a major part in their own government."[22]

The long-standing ties between Britain and the United States made it natural for the United States to give British settlers the benefit of the doubt. After all, London did at least hold out the theoretical hope of self-determination. Both Belgium and Portugal, in contrast, espoused the indefinite continuation of an "Eurafrican" connection and rejection of "democratic dogmas," such as independence or one man, one vote. The United States and Britain regarded the Belgian and Portuguese varieties of colonialism as of varying degrees of inferiority to the British model. But neither was inclined to issue a substantive challenge to their allies' African policies.

Instead, these countries as well fitted comfortably within the postwar Atlantic alliance. In that context, concern about African freedom, if not viewed as a sign of disloyalty to the "Free World," was at least evidence of insufficient attention to strategic priorities. Africa's proper place, it seemed, was as an appendage to Europe.

NATO's Southern Borders

During World War II, the southern Mediterranean military strategy of the Allies delayed opening a second front in Western Europe and enhanced

the strategic value of North Africa. Elsewhere on the continent—Senegal, Liberia, Southern Rhodesia, South Africa, Kenya—access for air and naval bases was a vital asset for the multicontinental war effort. African minerals were also important. In 1942, the U.S. Board of Economic Warfare concluded that loss of copper, asbestos, chrome, and cobalt from the southern African region would have serious implications. The Congo's cobalt was considered particularly important, and though the secret was too closely held to be told even to the Board of Economic Warfare, so was its uranium.

As world war shifted to cold war, the United States continued to include Africa within its global military strategy, subordinated to Europe and the Middle East. United States power was brought to bear in building a non-communist order in Western Europe, incorporating the larger part of a divided Germany, and taking over from Britain the tasks of suppressing revolution in Greece and blocking Soviet influence along the USSR's southern borders.

In 1949, the United States consolidated its dominant role in Western Europe with an anti-Soviet military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The leading role in establishing this alliance was in the hands of Britain, Canada, and the United States, with other countries brought in later. There was an inner group of fifteen men who really worked out the treaty, says Escott Reid, one of the key Canadian officials involved. These men had much in common—British or Irish origin, similar political values, and even university background (ten of the fifteen had attended either Oxford or Yale).[23]

Their primary concern was the threat of communism in Europe. None believed that the Soviets really wanted war or posed a serious military threat to Western Europe. But they did fear peaceful expansion of Communist influence, by elections in such troubled postwar countries as Italy and France. CIA action helped defeat the Communists in the 1948 Italian election, and countered Communist influence among European labor unions. Such covert action was part of a broader plan, which combined military preparedness in NATO and economic reconstruction based on U.S. investment, Marshall Plan aid, and close trading ties across the Atlantic.

Africa, when visible at all to policymakers, appeared through this North Atlantic prism. There was little concern among the NATO founders for the rising aspirations of Asians and Africans, even if some, like Reid, feared embarrassment from colonial conflicts involving France or Portugal. In the treaty negotiation there was initial disagreement before France won the inclusion of "the Algerian departments of France" in the scope of territory to be defended against armed attack. If the debate had been open, Reid notes, "great public opposition would have been evinced to the proposal,

especially in the United States, the Netherlands and Canada. Anti-colonialists would have mounted strong and politically powerful protests."[24] By mutual consent, however, the debate was kept secret.

Such sensitivity to colonialist views was typical of Western leaders in the fifties, even as the Moroccan and Tunisian nationalist movements successfully lobbied for independence from France, and Algeria began its war of independence in 1954. The U.S. sought to avoid full identification with France, while the CIA tried to build future influence by contacts with Tunisian nationalists. But it was still assumed that publicly the allies would stick together. As late as 1957, most policymakers considered it a gross breach of etiquette when Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy mildly criticized France's Algerian policy in a speech.

In 1956, Chester Bowles, U.S. Ambassador to India and a leading advocate of paying attention to the "emerging nations," aptly characterized the prevailing assumptions: "The very suggestion that the day may come when the Atlantic nations may no longer take what they need from the natural resources of Asia and Africa will be dismissed by many as preposterous."[25] In this context, there was little impetus for challenging either Belgian or Portuguese colonial rule.

In the 1950s, Belgian officials were still elaborating theories of administrative paternalism, which mandated economic development, primary education, and talk of equal opportunities for the minuscule number of educated Africans. But they also discouraged higher education, contact with the outside world, or demands for political participation. When Britain opted in 1950 for the first steps toward independence for the Gold Coast (Ghana), Pierre Ryckmans, a former governor of the Belgian Congo, lamented to an American official that such a trend would lead to independence for the Congo by the year 2000—and even then it would be too soon.[26] Ryckmans, writing in *Foreign Affairs* in October 1955, explained that Belgium could not justify giving the vote in the Congo, even with a qualified franchise. Neither white colonists nor "primitive tribesmen" could be trusted to defend the common good, and accordingly "nobody in the Congo has been given the right to vote, neither white nor black."[27]

In general the Belgians got a favorable hearing for their case, although the United States rejected the Belgian view that the UN should only discuss colonial issues if it also took up the case of "aboriginal peoples" in the Americas and elsewhere. An observer such as John Gunther (in his 1955 *Inside Africa*) might comment on the color bar, and opine that some political adjustment would have to come. Missionary executive George Carpenter, of the National Council of Churches, might call for U.S. aid to support economic development, education, and health care.[28] But these were only minor qualifications to the assumptions that Belgian paternalism could

work indefinitely, and that, in any case, it would hardly be wise to offend the controller of such a strategic source of minerals.

Into the early 1950s, the Congo's Shikokobwe mine was the source of all the uranium used in U.S. atomic bombs (later, mines were opened up in Canada, Colorado, and South Africa). Union Minière president Edgar Edouard Sengier had even anticipated the mineral's potential, and shipped a thousand tons of ore to New York secretly in 1940—a year before the official U.S. request. Though substantial direct U.S. investment and political involvement in the Congo was not to come until after independence, access to its resources already outweighed any abstract ideas of self-determination in determining U.S. policy.

Portugal, which during World War II had wavered between its historical links with Britain and its ideological affinity with Nazi Germany, held a strong card with which to bid for membership in the NATO alliance. The Azores Islands, in mid-Atlantic, were deemed vital as a stopover for military aircraft. In 1943 Britain and then the United States successfully negotiated rights to bases from Portuguese dictator Salazar, who by then could see which way the war was going. Salazar, who suspected that the United States might take the Azores by force, demanded assurances of respect for Portuguese sovereignty. George Kennan, then a junior diplomat and later a leading cold-war theorist, delivered the necessary pledge of U.S. respect for "Portuguese sovereignty in all Portuguese colonies."[29] The question of self-determination for Portugal's African or Asian possessions did not arise.

In 1951 the Portuguese government officially termed its colonies "provinces," integral parts of Portugal for which independence was unthinkable. Dissent in the colonies was suppressed even more ruthlessly than in the police state at home, rendering emergent signs of nationalism virtually invisible to outside observers.

Journalistic accounts of forced labor appeared in the West, as in Basil Davidson's *Report from Southern Africa* (1952) and in Gunther's *Inside Africa.* But the alliance with Portugal went virtually unquestioned by policymakers. The lone article on Portugal in *Foreign Affairs* in the period, in 1953, made no mention of any criticisms of colonialism, instead outlining "the strategic value to the West of the defense rampart formed by these far-flung lines."[30] From top U.S. policymakers, such as Secretaries of State Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles, to American diplomatic and military representatives in Portugal, the dominant stance was of uncritical support for Portuguese colonialism. Nor were there perceptible breaks in the Anglo-Portuguese alliance, which dated back almost six centuries to a treaty of 1373.

Military plans reflected the political assumptions of a unified Western

stance. In a supplementary agreed interpretation of the 1949 NATO treaty, kept secret until 1975, the parties pledged "consultation . . . in the event of a threat in any part of the world, including a threat to their overseas territories."[31]

There was no active military threat to those territories in sub-Saharan Africa. The area south of the Sahara was less important strategically than the coasts bordering the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. In a time before supertankers, the Suez Canal was of greater interest to military planners than the Cape route. The United States kept a military presence in Liberia and took advantage of the disposition of Italy's colonies to obtain an intelligence and communications station in Eritrea. The region's subordination to Europe was taken for granted. Western European powers met in Nairobi in 1951 and again in Dakar in 1954 to coordinate African military planning. Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Southern Rhodesia, and South Africa took part in both conferences, which the United States attended as an observer. The level of joint military planning was limited, but because of lack of priority rather than concern about nationalist sentiment.

More significant was Africa's economic contribution to Western military operations. The beginning of the Korean war in 1950 heightened worldwide demand for arms production, giving a decisive boost to Japanese industrialization and lending new importance to Africa's strategic raw materials. United States planners gave particular attention to the mineral-rich south, from the Congo's cobalt, essential for jet engines, to the range of minerals—manganese, chrome, asbestos, copper, platinum, and uranium—supplied from further south. The CIA was instructed to provide covert surveillance and protection for Union Minière in the Congo, as well as for manganese and chrome complexes in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Mozambique.

Public investment from the World Bank and bilateral Western sources went largely to facilitate the extraction of these raw materials, with a resultant heavy concentration in the southern African region. Of forty-one World Bank loans to Africa up to February 1962, twenty (some 52 percent of the $929 million value) went to the Belgian Congo, the Central African Federation, and South Africa. South Africa alone accounted for 23 percent in ten separate loans. United States bilateral loans during the same period concentrated heavily on North Africa, but South Africa still received some $155 million, 30 percent of the sub-Saharan Africa total.

In the first decade after World War II, one can conclude, all the colonial powers in the region worked to reinforce rather than phase out the colonial pattern of white supremacy in southern Africa. As for the United States, colonial views still had a virtual monopoly on the respectable debate. In the record of two prestigious conferences intended to raise U.S. interest in

Africa—Chicago in 1953[32] and Johns Hopkins in 1954[33]—critique was a decidedly minor refrain. Magisterial British colonial specialist Lord Hailey gave the keynote address on each occasion.

United States policy "has tended to opt in virtually all respects for the policies of the metropolitan powers, however modified and qualified in detail," observed political scientist Hans Mongenthau, sounding a critical note. "It has subordinated its long-range interest in the autonomous development of the native population to short-range considerations of strategy and expediency."[34] Morgenthau's views, however, found only a weak echo among policymakers.

Mau Mau and the Kenyan Model

The complacent assumption that "white man's country" could endure virtually forever was first shattered by the revolt known as Mau Mau,* in Kenya. This traumatic experience not only forced Britain to reconsider its policies for the area, but also echoed through the region and indeed the world. In popular myth and in the minds of officials, it became a paradigm of violent conflict and of decolonization in white-settler areas. The revolt itself had lasting effects, as did the distorted and sensationalized version spread around the world by news reports, supposedly factual studies, and even a best-selling novel.

After World War II, with land pressures increasing especially in the densely populated areas where Kikuyu-speaking Kenyans lived, African resentment of European privilege mounted. While blacks who had served in the military gained only minimal benefits, new settlement schemes offered land to British ex-servicemen. The growth of a landless population of "squatters" was accompanied by mushrooming expansion of the African population in the capital, Nairobi. Many were unemployed, others engaged in petty trade or erratic employment.

Africans were still not represented by elected members in government, and the Kenyan African Union, which took up the nationalist banner under veteran leader Jomo Kenyatta, was regarded as extremist and potentially subversive. From about 1950 Kikuyu leaders at local levels began to hold meetings at which people pledged secret oaths of loyalty to each other and to the community, to defend land rights and to fight for political freedom. Younger Kikuyu began to take a second "warrior's" oath, which

* The term Mau Mau was not used by the guerrillas themselves, but later came to be generally accepted.

pledged them to a more active role. Scattered incidents of violence against progovernment chiefs and large landholders began in 1951 and 1952, along with destruction of buildings and cattle on European farms.

Sir Philip Mitchell, governor of Kenya until mid-1952, and his successor, Sir Eveyln Baring, denied even in later years that the violence was based on genuine African grievances. They regarded it as an inexplicable "return to savagery" by Africans disoriented by the transition to modernity, which was taken advantage of by a few unscrupulous nationalist agitators. Mau Mau, Mitchell said in 1954, is one of Africa's "atavistic movements back into the horrors and darkness of the past. . . . [It is] a septic growth in the body of society."[35] In October 1952, Baring declared a state of emergency, called for military aid from London, and arrested Kenyatta and other leaders of the Kenyan African Union. Kenyatta, convicted in early 1953 of being responsible for Mau Mau, was held prisoner in a remote northern Kenyan village up to the eve of independence.

Although Kenyatta was the leading figure of the Kikuyu people and of Kenyan nationalism, to whom the forest fighters looked for leadership, he was not directly involved in the guerrilla effort. The revolt that began in earnest after the October declaration of emergency was sparked by a younger generation, and supported above all by the less privileged. It benefited from widespread passive support among the Kikuyu and sympathy from nationalists of practically every other ethnic group, including some among the Asian population.

The Land Freedom Army, which grew to as many as thirty thousand, carried on a low-level guerrilla campaign for the next two years. More than fifty thousand troops were mobilized to suppress them, including some seven thousand from Britain by 1954 and twenty-two thousand in the "home guard" of loyalist Kikuyu. The revolt was defeated only after the British launched Operation Anvil in 1954, arresting virtually all the one hundred thousand Africans in Nairobi and screening them for Mau Mau adherents or sympathizers. Similar operations in the countryside, with the construction of strategic hamlets and concentration camps for "rehabilitation" of detainees, broke the back of civilian support for the forest fighters, who were eventually reduced to isolated bands struggling against heavy odds just for survival.

Mau Mau had a strong international impact, in part because Kenya was one of the most prominent of African countries for Western publics. In the United States, Africa was often visualized in the image of Kenya, with its game parks and animals, its congenial white population and comfortable capital, Nairobi. It was the reputed home of Tarzan. African people appeared in this scene as backdrop to wildlife or as savages "low in the scale of man."[36] *Tarzan Escapes*, a typical film released in 1936, contained

"scenes in which the 'fiendish Ganeoloni tribe' achieved 'sadistic revenge' by flinging the villain into a cave of giant lizards; another 'good shot' showed these same tribesmen 'ingeniously tearing a captive limb from limb.' "[37]

The Kenyan revolt provided ample opportunity for wider propagation of similar images. Particularly effective was the novel *Something of Value,* by Robert Ruark, which ran for months on the U.S. bestseller list in 1955. Ruark, claiming that his fiction was based on fact, portrayed a revolt involving primitive rituals, savage killings, and even an improbable Russian agitator, although not even the most biased of prosettler historians claimed Russian involvement. In Ruark's story the Russian muses to himself, "How pathetically easy it would be, with the English gone and three hundred different tribes making war on each other, to walk in and bring order out of chaos. . . . All you ever needed was just a little simple nationalism and a few old customs to pervert, when you dealt with simple people, and they would do most of the dirty work themselves."[38]

Ruark denied that the Kikuyu had genuine complaints, though his portrayal of white-settler racism, of which he obviously approved, gave the conscious reader ample evidence that indeed there were grievances. "What the people outside don't know," says the novel's hero to an American couple on safari, "is that the Wogs don't think like us and they don't react like us, because they are too newly introduced to what we call civilization. . . . In the African makeup there is no such thing as love, kindness or gratitude as we know it, because they have lived all their lives, and their ancestors' lives, in an atmosphere of terror and violence."[39]*

The revolt drew heavily on Kikuyu traditions, making it difficult for it to achieve a truly national character. There were brutal killings. The fighters were never well-enough armed to take on mainly military targets, and the majority of incidents involved civilians, often Kikuyu who were considered traitors and occasionally a white family. Most killings were with machetes, as only a minority of the fighters had firearms.

Such incidents were inflated, characterizing the revolt for a wider public. Kenyans might regard the guerrillas in the forest as freedom fighters. But the picture that persisted and was later applied to the southern African guerrilla forces of the 1960s and 1970s was one of "savage terrorists."

During the more than four years of revolt, however, from 1952 to 1956, only 32 white civilians were killed. African loyalists suffered 1,819 dead,

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* Robert Ruark, an enthusiastic big-game hunter with many white Kenyan friends, was also a proud native son of Wilmington, North Carolina, where, only a generation earlier, on the day after elections in 1898, a mob of whites had massacred at least thirty blacks in a campaign against black voting rights.

while 63 whites and 101 Africans among the counterinsurgency forces lost their lives. On the insurgent side, the government recorded 11,503 killed. Eleven rebels were killed for every one wounded, while government forces suffered only one death for each ten wounded, a startling contrast that reveals the government policy of indiscriminate execution of Mau Mau prisoners and suspects. In a typical statement, William Baldwin, in a book subtitled *The Adventures of the Only American Who Has Fought the Terrorists in Kenya,* justified the policy: "More than anything I looked upon them as diseased animals, which, if left alive, were a constant menace to the community. Only in death was a cure possible."[40] The official statistics of Mau Mau deaths, moreover, did not include the 1,015 *legally* executed under Emergency regulations, 432 for unlawful possession of arms and ammunition and 222 for "consorting with terrorists."

In the media view of Mau Mau, government repression barely attracted attention. Foreign journalists or politicians who were sympathetic to African nationalism were barred from Kenya. Educated leaders who might have presented another view were in prison *incommunicado;* the movement had practically no outlets for publicity to the outside world. The death of one white was far more interesting to the Western press than that of hundreds of Africans. Mau Mau atrocities were described in graphic detail, while those carried out by government troops or settler vigilantes were virtually ignored. Unlike the case of Algeria, where a revolt in the same decade eventually provoked bitter controversy in France and an international outcry against French practices of torture, in Kenya the counterinsurgency effort was largely unstained by debate.

The forest fighters lost the war. But they forced Britain to more direct intervention in the colony, an expenditure of some £55 million, and the dawning recognition that some adjustment to African demands was necessary. Gradually, the view grew that there might have been some grievances, after all. General Erskine, who took over command in mid-1953, concluded that no quick military solution was possible, and that attention to economic problems was a prerequisite for winning over the estimated 90 percent of Kikuyu who actively or passively supported the revolt. Michael Blundell, a moderate settler leader, who had commanded a unit of Kenyan African Rifles during World War II, reached similar conclusions. The British government noted the mounting expenses of the operation.

In 1957 a new constitution increased African and Asian seats in the legislative council, though leaving whites a majority of sixteen, and allowed Africans with over £120 annual income (about 5 percent of the population) the right to vote. This constitution and the next, somewhat more liberal, were both based on the principle of "multiracialism," that is,

separate representation for different races instead of majority rule with "one person, one vote."

As Colin Legum observed in his 1954 book, *Must We Lose Africa?*, Mau Mau forced "the shocked awakening, among responsible whites, of a dormant liberalism."[41] In December 1955 Labour MP Barbara Castle, on a visit to Kenya, succeeded in collecting eyewitness accounts of killings and torture, though she was trailed by secret police. Some voices in the Kenyan churches, which had backed the loyalists against Mau Mau, began to speak out against abuses. Tom Mboya, a labor leader and nationalist, spent a year at Oxford in 1955–56, where he argued the need to understand African grievances, to undertake reforms, and to release the imprisoned nationalist leaders.

In 1956, imperial confidence faltered after France and Britain failed to reverse Nasser's nationalization of the Suez canal, or even win the support of the United States. In the changed atmosphere after Suez, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who took office in January 1957, soon became convinced that decolonization for Britain's African territories was the only wise course. Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod, who took up his post in 1959, was even firmer on this point. In that same year, consciousness of Kenya was enhanced by a parliamentary investigation of the death of eleven prisoners at Hola detention camp.

Settler leader Blundell, with support among businessmen and plantation owners, backed such adjustments, which were strongly opposed by whites engaged in smaller-scale mixed-crop farming. The nationalists elected to office—men like Oginga Odinga and Tom Mboya—and others in exile, such as Mbiyu Koinange, lobbied for full majority rule and demanded the release of Kenyatta and his colleagues. By 1960, Macmillan had decided to extricate his country from direct colonial rule; a conference that year set the course irretrievably for the independence that came in 1963.

With British support, Blundell first tried to build an alliance with African politicians of minor ethnic groups, excluding supporters of Jomo Kenyatta. But when it became apparent that the other nationalists would not abandon their historic leader, official policy turned toward winning Kenyatta's confidence and building up a moderate wing within his party, the Kenya African National Union. Kenyatta, released from prison at the last minute, took office, soon to be praised by Western leaders and even most settlers for his pro-Western course and capitalist economic policies. In the years since independence, populist leaders who have attacked the corruption and opulence of the elite have been sidelined and, in a few cases, assassinated.

The success of this political course depended on a parallel economic

strategy. In dealing with the land issue, for example, the policy was to minimize change while admitting selected Africans to land ownership in the White Highlands. Small plots in settlement schemes were arranged where there was the greatest overcrowding in adjacent native areas, while more prosperous Africans were given the option to buy larger farms on a free-enterprise basis. With financing from the British government and the World Bank, loans were granted on commercial criteria. Proposals for cooperative farming were discouraged, and the noncredit-worthy landless were rarely able to take advantage of the opportunities theoretically open to all. More conservative white farmers, who sought fuller financial guarantees so that they could get their capital out and leave, were pacified with concessions. Many were persuaded to stay under the new order, though others left, often making their way south to Rhodesia or South Africa.

A nascent African capitalist class, though hampered by racial restrictions on land holding and by discriminatory legislation, had nevertheless profited by British encouragement of African cash crops after World War II. Trading companies had employed African intermediaries, and some families had begun to accumulate capital. This group was well placed to take advantage of the concession of political power. Political power, in turn, served both to build up their own enterprises and to bargain for joint ventures with foreign and settler companies.

Kenya thus first exemplified for the region the British strategy of preserving economic and class structures built up under colonial rule, while blurring the racial lines of access to political power and cultivating a black elite. Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia soon followed Kenya's example in defecting from "white man's country." Confronted in 1959 with a declared state of emergency in response to demonstrations and threats of violence in the two territories, and with the subsequent Devlin Commission report charging overreaction by the colonial government in suppressing demonstrations, Macmillan and Macleod accepted that the Central African Federation was doomed. The process of extrication was complex, for a strong Conservative Party lobby favored the right-wing settlers. But Macmillan, traveling to Africa in 1960, repeated a message he thought irrefutable: "The growth of national consciousness in Africa is a political fact, and we must accept it as such [and] come to terms with it."[42]

It took more than a decade after World War II, and the violence of Mau Mau, to bring Britain, the most "liberal" of the colonial powers, to accept this fact for its territories that also contained white-settler populations. It should be no surprise, therefore, that South Africa, despite an increasingly bad reputation, experienced neither ostracism nor serious pressure from its Western partners.

The Road to Sharpeville

"There is pretty-well world-wide agreement," wrote the *New York Times* in an August 22, 1952, editorial, "that the apartheid policy as pursued by Malan's Nationalists is about the worst method that could have been devised to solve the problem. A solution that is based on pure racism, on the theory of the perennial and innate superiority of one race over another, is false, immoral and repugnant." Not untypical of Western editorial opinion in the years after 1948, such views helped build the impression of a South Africa isolated against the bar of world opinion.

But even in the area where one might expect "international accountability" to have its widest application—South Africa's direct defiance of the UN in imposing its apartheid policies on South West Africa—the assumption remained virtually unquestioned that in practice cooperation with the existing rulers of white Africa would continue.

A MATTER OF TRUST

South West Africa, an international mandate under the League of Nations system, had been run with minimal international interference on South Africa's own terms. After World War II successive South African governments refused demands to place the territory under the new United Nations trusteeship system, with its stepped-up requirements of international scrutiny. After the National Party victory in 1948, South Africa further defied international opinion by applying new apartheid legislation. The people of the territory, in the first decade or more following the war, were only heard from in desperate petitions reaching the UN by devious routes. Eloquent in tone, their message was summed up in one simple appeal transmitted in 1959: "We beg the United Nations, help, help, HELP."[43] United Nations help would be long in coming.

In 1945 Smuts had already tried to present to the UN South Africa's case for incorporation. When this was ruled out on procedural grounds, the South African government organized a referendum of "Native opinion" in 1946. The UN was presented with a tally of 208,850 in favor of the South African plan, with only 33,520 opposed. The exercise won little credibility, for manipulation of the chiefs who were assumed to represent their people's opinions was all too blatant. The UN General Assembly then pronounced itself unable to agree to incorporation, and again requested that South Africa submit to trusteeship.

Neither Smuts nor his successors were willing to grant UN jurisdiction.

For the next two decades the controversy, as it was fought out in the General Assembly, the Trusteeship Council, a series of special committees, and the World Court, focused on the legal issues of international status and on procedural points governing UN debate.

Probing beyond the legal complexities was a lone voice of conscience, Michael Scott, an Anglican priest and advocate of nonviolence. Scott came to the issue of South West Africa after an arrest in South Africa for joining in an Indian civil-disobedience campaign. Making contact with Herero chiefs through Bechuanaland, Scott took their petition to the UN in 1947. It took two years before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly overcame procedural obstacles and gave him a hearing. Thereafter, Scott appeared year after year, eventually accompanied by a few South West Africans who had managed to slip out of their country.

In 1949 South Africa unilaterally passed legislation tightening the bond between the two countries by including ten white South West African representatives in the South African parliament. The World Court came on the scene in 1950, with an advisory decision that South Africa had no right to such unilateral action, and that the obligations of the mandate remained in force. Again in 1955 and 1956, the Court gave its advice on voting procedures and on the right of UN committees to grant oral hearings.

More than ten years after Scott's first cable to the United Nations on behalf of Chief Frederick Mahereru, South Africa was still defying two-thirds-majority resolutions of the General Assembly. No country had yet appealed to the World Court for a compulsory ruling on the issue, which might theoretically lead to Security Council sanctions. This move was suggested by twelve of the seventy-two countries in the 1957 General Assembly, but it was not to be implemented until 1960. Instead, the United States and Britain came up with the suggestion of a Good Offices Committee. The two coopted Brazil as the third member, but no African or Asian state was chosen to serve.

This committee, chaired by former Governor-General of Ghana Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, was charged with "finding the basis for an agreement" that could retain an international status for South West Africa. Rejecting as irrelevant the concern of so many UN members with apartheid, the panel came up with the suggestion that the territory be divided: the south, with its mineral wealth, to be annexed to South Africa, and the north, with its relatively dense African population, to come under UN trusteeship. The General Assembly rejected this conclusion.

United States and even British votes during the 1950s on this perennial issue indicated some obeisance to the lofty ideals of the UN Charter. The United States generally argued for international accountability and for the UN's right to discuss the issue. Britain also voted occasionally against the

South African position. But measured by impact on South West Africa, the whole debate seemed beside the point. The lack of Western zeal during a period in which the West had little difficulty in dominating the fledgling United Nations, testifies to the priority given to maintaining normal relations with the apartheid regime.

THE PATH OF DIRECT ACTION

This failure to press South Africa on its colonial possession was paralleled by a similar stance toward that government's treatment of its own black population. If the international legal case was less compelling for legally independent South Africa, there was on the other hand the active mobilization of protest within that country, calling for international support. But those voices rarely reached the corridors of power in London or Washington.

In South Africa, as in many places around the world, World War II had stimulated hopes for freedom. In 1943 Africans formulated a set of demands based on the Atlantic Charter, which stated the goal of full equality rather than just asking, as before, for the redress of particular grievances. A new leadership, associated with the Youth League of the African National Congress (ANC), won growing influence away from a more traditional cohort respectful of European authority. Leaders of the ANC withdrew from the Native Representatives Council in August 1946, in reaction to the government's bloody suppression of a strike of some seventy thousand African mineworkers. A number of the approximately fifteen hundred Africans in South Africa's Communist Party (its total membership was estimated at some two thousand), such as mineworkers' leader J. B. Marks, began to play more prominent roles in the ANC. The organization also built strong ties with the South African Indian Congress, where radicals defeated a conservative merchant faction for control.

This new ferment, combined with the blatant assault on African interests by the Malan government, made possible the resurgence of the ANC as an active organization. The "Programme of Action" adopted at its annual conference in December 1949 spoke of "freedom from White domination and the attainment of political independence," rejecting any conception of "segregation, apartheid, trusteeship or white leadership." The program endorsed "immediate and active boycott [of segregated political institutions, as well as economic boycotts], strikes, civil disobedience, noncooperation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations." Specifically, it called for a one-day work stoppage to protest government policies.[44]

Among the results: a May 1, 1950, work boycott in the Transvaal,

affecting as much as half the work force, with police intervention resulting in nineteen dead in townships around Johannesburg; a somewhat less successful stay-at-home on July 26; and, in 1952, a sustained campaign of defiance of racial laws. In that campaign 8,057 volunteers—mainly Africans, some Indians and Coloureds, and on one occasion a few whites—deliberately violated racial legislation such as the pass laws, Group Areas restrictions, and ordinances imposing segregation in public offices and on park benches.

The campaign drew heavily on Gandhian ideas from the Indian nationalist struggle—a pattern of protest used by Gandhi himself in South Africa in 1906 and by Indians in a 1946 campaign against Smuts's Asiatic Land Tenure Bill (the "Ghetto Bill"). The majority of those involved in the campaign were not strict philosophical adherents of nonviolence, but the appeal of mass militant action was one that found an echo throughout the British colonial world. After all, India had won its independence. In some countries militant African nationalists, like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, were to win power by similar tactics. This strategy implied no immediate challenge to the power of the state and no expectation that the protest leaders themselves would be able directly to seize the reins of power. Success, rather, depended on recognition by the governing power that reforms were in its own interest; the mass mobilizations were to drive that lesson home, and to arouse the consciences of those who did have the right to vote.

The direct-action strategy succeeded in mobilizing considerable mass support among blacks for the African National Congress. But it was already apparent in 1952 that reaction from the white power structure would include few, if any, elements of accommodation to the protests. Instead, the National Party government strengthened its arsenal of repressive laws, making civil disobedience an offense punishable by flogging and jail sentences. Though the campaign itself was determinedly nonviolent, in October and November disturbances broke out in Eastern Cape and elsewhere. Six whites and twenty-six or more Africans were killed. Although the ANC reported that the incidents had been sparked by police provocateurs, white opinion branded the ANC protest "terrorist." The opposition United Party strongly condemned the resistance campaign, and many liberal whites urged its suspension so as not further to inflame white sentiment.

The campaign trailed off. But Albert Luthuli, chosen to head the ANC that year, concluded that "among Africans and Indians, the spirit of opposition came alive."[45] The ANC's membership grew from seven thousand to one hundred thousand. In the following years, campaigns against removal of blacks from urban townships, against segregated "Bantu Educa-

tion," and for a "Congress of the People," which in 1955 proclaimed the goal of a democratic South Africa, brought thousands more into the ranks of ANC supporters.

Yet the level of organization and militancy fell far short of what might have shaken the foundations of white power. In December 1956, 156 leaders of the ANC and allied opposition groups were arrested in a police swoop, to be tried for treason and acquitted after almost five years in the dock. The decade ended with much greater consciousness and militance among blacks, but scarcely a crack in the commitment by white government and public to white supremacy.

In the light of subsequent experience, in which more and more Africans adopted the view that only armed struggle could eventually bring down the South African government, one may ask what alternatives there might have been for the ANC and other groups in the 1950s. Why not a war of national liberation, as in Vietnam in the same decade (the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954) or in Algeria, where the nationalist revolt broke out in November 1954?

The answer lies in large part, one may speculate, in the differential impact of World War II on different areas of the colonial world. Southeast Asia and North Africa were battlegrounds—authority shifted hands, the legitimacy of governments was shown to be transitory and fragile, thousands gained war experience, and weapons were available in significant quantities. In South Africa, by contrast, the war did not penetrate the region directly. And though both white and black South Africans served and died in the Allied cause, blacks were not allowed to carry arms.

Another reason is that the leaders of the protests—and large numbers of the recruits—were, in spite of the new postwar militance, still steeped in the traditions of British liberalism. Their potential allies among the whites, and much of the black constituency, would hardly have accepted a literal call to arms, even if it had been objectively conceivable, without indisputable evidence that peaceful means could not work.

The often intense debates over nationalist strategy in this period did not question the policy of mass mobilization as such, or propose alternatives such as active preparation for guerrilla warfare or insurrection. The Africanist current within the movement, which culminated in a 1959 split and formation of the Pan-Africanist Congress, mixed militant sentiment with opposition to ANC's alliance with Indian and white activists. But it would be a mistake to see the group as more "radical" in any simple sense. The 1960 PAC-led antipass campaign was within the same mold of direct action as earlier ANC efforts. And some of the PAC's supporters, laying

stress on its anticommunist themes, clearly saw it as a less radical alternative.

For their part, the Coloured and African radicals associated with the Unity Movement of South Africa attacked the willingness of many ANC leaders to participate in dialogue with the white authorities, and denounced the continued "liberal" hopes that many held for some white responsiveness. But apart from boycott of such political contacts, the Unity Movement seemed to most activists to offer little alternative strategy.

Mass potential for greater resistance probably did exist in both urban and rural areas. The 1946 African mineworkers' strike was only part of a wave of organization of black unions during World War II. In 1941 there were thirty-seven thousand workers registered in the twenty-five unions of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions, a level of organization not reached again until after the upheavals of the early 1970s. In little-reported rural resistance movements such as in the northern Transvaal in 1941, hundreds if not thousands of peasants were involved in violent clashes with authorities trying to impose land restrictions that were seen as a direct attack on their livelihood. Squatters' movements around Johannesburg in the late 1940s organized rent strikes. In 1957, a bus boycott in Johannesburg's Alexandra township won reversal of rate hikes, only one of many occasions on which black workers used this method to fight back against transport price inflation. In the same year, and for several years following, black women organized widespread campaigns against imposition of passes for women, with violent confrontations arising from government suppression of the protest in remote rural areas such as Zeerust.

These separate surges of protest, nevertheless, failed to coalesce to form a more powerful movement. To sustain, build, and integrate these popular forces proved beyond the capacity of the liberation movement at the time. Even if they had succeeded on a larger scale, it is likely that the results would have been largely similar. There is no indication that substantially larger cracks would have opened in the commitment of the white government and public to white supremacy. Nor does it seem plausible that peaceful protest, however dramatic, would have led Western governments to stop taking their cues from white political forces in South Africa.

A NARROW SPECTRUM

The National Party was not the only political force within the white community. But only a tiny minority moved to identify with black aspirations. The Congress of Democrats, with the prominent but not exclusive participation of ex-communists (the Communist Party had been banned in

1950), backed the ANC and became a member of the "Congress Alliance."
A few prominent churchpeople, such as Episcopal priest Trevor Huddleston, also took their stand on the side of African freedom.

Others were more hesitant. Prior to 1953, when the National Party
gained an increased electoral margin, most white liberals argued for support of the United Party in the hope of defeating the government at the
polls, though the United Party's own allegiance to a variant of white
supremacy was unmistakable. Shocked by the 1953 electoral defeat, and
spurred by the 1952 ANC defiance campaign (though most had not approved of it), a small group including Alan Paton formed the Liberal Party.
Only after a year were they shamed into adopting a universal rather than
qualified franchise platform, and even then adherence to "parliamentary"
methods was their adopted tactic. The party attracted government hostility
for its multiracial membership. But even moderate leaders of the ANC,
such as Chief Albert Luthuli, disagreed with Liberal unwillingness to endorse mass protests and their strong antipathy to cooperation with
communists.

More representative of English-speaking white opposition to the government were the Torch Commando and the Black Sash, which emerged
in response to the regime's ultimately successful effort to deprive Coloured
South Africans of their qualified franchise. Ironically, though both groups
spoke passionately of the threat to democracy, they limited their membership to whites and based their arguments on constitutional grounds. They
stressed loyalty to the Union Constitution of 1910, with its pledge of
reserved status for the Coloured vote in the Cape. That same constitution
was regarded by blacks as enshrining white supremacy. In the white political arena, the "constitution" debate far outshadowed the Defiance Campaign and harked back as much to earlier Boer-British rivalries as to concern for black rights as such.

Mining magnate Harry Oppenheimer, a leading backer of the Torch
Commando, once met with a few of the ANC leaders. "He took us to
task," Chief Luthuli recalled, "over what he sees as the excessive nature of
our demands and methods—such things as the demand for votes and the
methods of public demonstration and boycott."[46] These, Oppenheimer
argued, only made it more difficult to win over potentially sympathetic
whites.

Luthuli won considerable international prestige for his principled stand,
receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for 1961. But it was Oppenheimer who
was more in tune with dominant opinion in the Western countries. Groups
emerged in Britain and the United States to give their support to the fight

against apartheid. But policymakers, if they paid attention at all, were likely to dismiss their views contemptuously as idealistic.

South Africa in the "Free World"

The political climate in the West was in general unsympathetic to demands for radical reform, whether in South Africa or elsewhere. Even during the early postwar years of Labour Party government in London, the traditional British–South African ties proved solid. South Africa's High Commissioner in London, Heaton Nicholls, might feel he no longer had the easy access to officials as under Churchill. But Smuts retained his prestige in Britain and, even in the dispute with fellow Commonwealth member India, gained Britain's support in efforts to exclude the matter from UN debate. In December 1946, thirty-two UN members called on Pretoria to conform "with international obligations" on the treatment of Indians resident in South Africa. Fifteen countries, including Britain and the United States, voted against the resolution. In 1948, Britain abstained on a strongly supported resolution that merely requested a round-table conference between India and South Africa to resolve their differences. Throughout the 1950s, Britain backed the South African contention that such discussion was excluded by article 2(7) of the UN Charter, which forbids interference in domestic affairs.

In March 1947 King George VI and the Royal Family visited South Africa amid much pomp and ceremony. In October of the same year, South Africa came to the financial aid of economically distressed Britain with a loan of £80 million in gold. "The Government of the Union," said British Chancellor Hugh Dalton in announcing the loan, "under its great leader Field-Marshal Smuts, stands at the side of the mother country in peace and war."[47]

The image of South Africa shifted in Britain with the National Party victory of 1948, but the Labour government continued sensitive to white South African concerns. In September 1948, Seretse Khama, heir to the chieftainship of the Bamangwato in Bechuanaland, and later to become president of independent Botswana, married a white English woman. A complex controversy arose based partly on traditional ethnic politics—the regent Tshekedi Khama originally opposed the marriage on grounds of custom, in spite of strong popular support for Seretse. Britain exiled Seretse to England and Tshekedi to a remote corner of Bechuanaland. Critics

suspected at the time, and it was confirmed in documents released in 1980, that the Labour government acted largely out of concern not to offend white South African sentiment with a prominent example of interracial marriage on their borders.

Britain saw its ties with South Africa as part of the Commonwealth legacy. For the United States, cooperation with South Africa rested ideologically on the relatively novel concept of an anticommunist "free world."

Both Americans and South Africans assumed that South Africa was a member in good standing of this bloc. Admittedly, the South African image was not good. In 1950, for example, *Time* magazine took the occasions of Smuts's eightieth birthday in June and his death in September to praise his moderate views, which it contrasted with the Nationalist view of Africans as "serfs to be exploited." South Africa's incorporation of South West Africa, Britain's exile of Seretse Khama, and religious protests against the Mixed Marriages Act provided additional opportunities for this mainstream U.S. weekly to talk of "the racist Malan government of South Africa."[48]

But neither *Time* nor any other mainstream voice was likely to suggest in those years that the United States should change policy toward South Africa because of its racial practices. In the United States itself, though Truman had included a civil-rights plank in his 1948 election platform, the segregated racial order remained largely intact. The landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision ruling segregation in the schools unconstitutional turned out to be only the beginning of a struggle for its implementation. It also stimulated the formation of new racist groups such as the White Citizens Councils, which found tolerance from state governments and federal agencies such as the FBI.

It makes sense, then, that the United States opposed a 1950 UN resolution asserting that racial segregation was based on discrimination and calling on South Africa not to implement the Group Areas Act. In January 1950, South African Finance Minister Havenga failed to get the full $70 million loan he sought on a U.S. visit. But after the two countries, together with Britain, agreed in December on terms for development of South African uranium, additional finance was made available from the World Bank and the Export-Import Bank, as well as private sources.

In June 1950 South Africa passed the Suppression of Communism Act, defining communism as any doctrine or scheme "which aims at bringing about any political, industrial, social or economic change by the promotion of disturbance or disorder," or which encourages "feelings of hostility between the European and non-European races." That same year, the United States too was at the height of its anticommunist hysteria. Spurred on by the Truman administration's scare propaganda about the Soviet

menace, the crusade was taken up by Senator Joseph McCarthy, who attacked the State Department itself as communist-infiltrated. In midyear the outbreak of the Korean War reinforced the spirit of global confrontation. In August, black American singer Paul Robeson was deprived of his passport for his criticism of U.S. foreign policy and his communist ties. Robeson headed the Council for African Affairs, at that time practically the only U.S. body calling for active opposition to South Africa and support of African protest there. In September the Mundt-Nixon bill to register and control all U.S. Communists passed the House by a vote of 354 to 20.

In such an atmosphere, serious criticism of an anticommunist U.S. ally was hardly conceivable. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, ironically both an instigator of the anticommunist crusade and a target of its McCarthyite version, was firmly convinced that anticolonial movements such as Ho Chi Minh's in Indochina were little more than extensions of Moscow or Peking. Acheson thought that in North Africa nationalism would eventually be the only possible alternative to communism, but he avoided any public criticism of French policy. As for the rest of the continent, it is indicative that neither "Africa" nor "South Africa" even appear in the index to David McLellan's authoritative biography of Acheson. McLellan notes that "Acheson's attention to Africa, Latin America, and other assorted parts of the globe was perfunctory."[49]

Acheson's views, representative of many others in policy circles, can nevertheless be guessed from a few public statements. In 1950 he denounced to a gathering at the White House those "democratic purists who were repelled by some of the practices reported in Greece, Turkey and North and South Africa," terming such a posture escapism from "building with the materials at hand a strong, safer and more stable position for free communities."[50] Later, as an elder statesman, he threw considerable energy into supporting beleaguered white-minority Rhodesia and opposing U.S. criticism of Portuguese colonialism and of apartheid. In his 1969 autobiography, Acheson denounced the United Nations for becoming "an instrument of interference in the affairs of weak white nations [such as Rhodesia]."[51]

In the 1952 General Assembly, U.S. spokesman Charles A. Sprague declared his government's respect for "the sovereignty of the great Union of South Africa with which it has long been associated in friendly relationship." "My delegation," he added, "is exceedingly reluctant to point an accusing finger at this member state and does not intend to do so."[52]

Later in the 1950s the climate was even less sympathetic to black protest. The Conservatives won back power from Labour in Britain in 1951, while in the United States Eisenhower's 1952 victory confirmed the cold war mindset.

Events in South Africa, from the Defiance Campaign of 1952 to the Treason Trial that began in 1956, stimulated the formation of new groups, such as the Africa Bureau and the Defense and Aid Fund in Britain, and the American Committee on Africa. They published documentation on the injustices of apartheid and organized campaigns for the defense of political prisoners. In 1956, Trevor Huddleston published *Naught for Your Comfort*, a passionate portrait of injustice in South Africa. Huddleston was criticized by white South African churchpeople for taking such a drastic step as openly publishing criticism overseas. He replied that he was compelled to appeal to "the conscience of Christendom itself."[53]

Human Rights Day, December 10, 1957, was the occasion of another international appeal in the form of a Declaration of Conscience against Apartheid, signed by 123 leaders around the world. "The declaration was mild in language," recalls George Houser of the American Committee on Africa. It called on governments and organizations "to persuade the South African government, before it reaches the point of no return, that only in democratic equality is there lasting peace and security."[54] The campaign for signatures was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, and signers included Martin Luther King, Jr., Alan Paton, Walter Reuther, Arnold Toynbee, John Gunther, and Julius Nyerere.

Western policymakers were, however, marching to a different drummer, and saw little basis in idealism to question South Africa's role as a strategic ally.

Summing up the decade, James Barber, of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, concluded that "Britain was probably South Africa's most reliable ally during the 1950s."[55] The United States generally followed Britain's lead. In 1952, in the midst of the Defiance Campaign, Asian and Arab members of the UN urged the formation of a commission to study "the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid." The United States abstained, together with all the other Western countries, on the final vote that established the commission. The measure passed with thirty-five yes votes, all from Third World or Communist-ruled countries. This commission presented three reports before it was abolished in 1955, after the South African delegation walked out of the session in protest. The United States continued to abstain on anti-apartheid resolutions until 1958, on the grounds of UN legal incompetence to express itself on the topic. In that year it opposed including the word "condemn" in the resolution.[56]

John Foster Dulles noted in his January 1953 initial broadcast as Eisenhower's Secretary of State that "throughout Africa the Communists are trying to arouse the native people into revolt against the Western Europeans who still have political control of most of Africa. If there should be

trouble there, that would break the contact between Europe and Africa, Africa being a large source of raw materials for Europe."[57] In 1955, the U.S. delegation to the UN warned against "ringing resolutions to correct overnight situations which have existed for generations." It expressed hope that the General Assembly would not bring the issue up again since South Africa felt "deeply aggrieved," and suggested the international body should instead focus on human rights violations in the Communist countries.[58]

South Africa continued as a military ally of the West during these years, although neither Britain nor the United States acceded to South African proposals for a formal defense pact. South Africa's "Flying Cheetah" squadron, equipped with P51 Mustang jets, arrived in Korea in September 1950, and flew more than twelve thousand sorties, the last two thousand with F86 jets acquired from the United States in 1953. The British retained the naval base at Simonstown, near Cape Town, until 1955, when a new agreement provided for continued cooperation in securing South Africa and the Southern African sea routes "against aggression from without." Britain and her allies retained rights to use the base in wartime. United States ships routinely used South African ports, as in an October 1959 exercise bringing together ships from the United States, Britain, France, Portugal, and South Africa.

The South African military purchased arms as a matter of course from Britain and the United States. An October 1952 deal, for instance, encompassed $112 million of U.S. arms, while the contract explicitly noted that the weapons might be used for internal security.[59] In the strategic area of atomic cooperation, the 1950 agreement for uranium supply from South Africa was followed up with scientific and technical collaboration. Prime Minister Malan, opening the first uranium plant at Krugersdorf in October 1953, noted that "it must give satisfaction to our partners in this enterprise that this valuable source of power is in the safekeeping of South Africa."[60]

There was a vast gap between international ideals of freedom and equality and the substance of Western policy toward South Africa. Within one common liberal perspective, such a gap may appear as simply a cultural or moral lag, in which the force of the ideal itself, and repeated calls to conscience and good will, must eventually lead to change. Referring to the U.S. scene, for example, Gunnar Myrdal's famous and influential treatise on *The American Dilemma* postulated that the contradiction between the "American creed" of equality and the deplorable state of the "Negro problem" would in itself produce an impetus toward greater justice.*

In contrast to Portuguese colonialism or Afrikaner nationalism, the

* Myrdal's study was financed by the Carnegie Corporation, which had also backed Lord Hailey's *African Survey.*

Anglo-Saxon cultural realm did hold up the ideals of freedom for op-
pressed peoples. But whether in the United States or in southern Africa,
those with power and influence seemed to have ample tolerance for per-
sistent contradiction between creed and reality. Only where and when the
oppressed began themselves to move actively, disruptively and at times
violently demanding justice, did the creed begin to take on substance.

In the case of Kenya, the violence of Mau Mau eventually shocked
London authorities into shifting strategies. With Mau Mau in mind, the
threat of violence could induce the application of the same model to
Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In South Africa in the 1950s, in con-
trast, the extent of mass mobilization was insufficient to jolt either South
Africa's rulers or the West into concluding that it was necessary to make
concessions to African demands for equality. In 1960 the shock of
Sharpeville, when police shot down peaceful protestors against the pass
laws, further eroded South Africa's image. But the Western–South African
connection still emerged largely unscathed.