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A FAILED EXPERIMENT IN IMPERIAL GOVERNANCE: THE CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION (1953-1963)

by

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Abstract

A Failed Experiment in Imperial Governance:
The Central African Federation
(1953-1963)

by

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This work foremost attempts to understand why federation failed in British Central Africa. Federations had been implemented throughout the British Empire to great success, for nearly a century. As such, this project frames the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland within the larger relationship of Great Britain and its overseas holdings. Of particular interest is the assignment of power to the colonies and the metropole in determining the institution’s structure and collapse.

This project will argue that contrary to previous histories on the Federation, institutional failures were not the root causes of disintegration. Larger ideological forces were at play on the African continent. The lack of firm support for multiracialism by the British government and the general public left the Federation at the whim of white and black nationalisms. Fundamental to this ideological struggle was a shift away from Great
Britain as the metropole, with the colonies themselves becoming the center. This led to a nascent national identity, particularly among white settlers.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Fig. 1

This project is on the Central African Federation, an imperial institution created by Great Britain, which existed from 1953-1963. The Central African Federation represents Great Britain’s last attempt at large-scale state building. Encompassing the colonies of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it illuminates an essential period in Central Africa, bridging the gap between the historical scholarship on colonialism in Africa and that which deals with the process of de-colonization.

This work primarily attempts to understand why federation failed in British Central Africa. For nearly a century prior to this episode, federations had been implemented throughout the British Empire to great success. Contrasting it with those earlier successes, this project frames the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland within the larger relationship of Great Britain and its overseas holdings. Of particular interest is the balance of power between the colonies and the metropole in determining the institution’s structure and collapse.

This project will argue, contrary to previous histories on the Federation, that institutional failures were not the root causes of disintegration. Larger ideological forces were at play on the African continent. The lack of firm support for multiracialism among both the British government and the general public left the Federation at the mercy of white and black nationalisms. Fundamental to this ideological struggle was a shift away from Great Britain as the metropole, with the colonies themselves becoming the center of their own story. This led to a nascent national identity, particularly among white settlers.

It was this ideological atmosphere, rather than the structural weaknesses of the Federation, that bears the most responsibility for the Federation’s collapse.
The Historical Literature on the Central African Federation

The existing historiography on the Federation has largely been institutional in its focus. Historians have centered their research on the political structures of the Federation itself. The implications of this project for the prevalence of institutional are several. While building upon their research, this project argues for a complete reassessment into the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the causes for its failure.

The historical literature is largely uniform in its evaluation into the cause of the Federation’s breakup. It is argued that the structure of the Central African Federation was such that it was hampered in fulfilling the mandate of partnership of the races and thus collapsed. As historian J.R.T Wood describes this phenomenon, “This was the subject which had to be handled centrally, in whatever direction, if the territories were not to diverge down different paths. The denial of this control made it impossible to implement partnership as a common policy at all levels.”

This portrayal of the Federation as a bureaucratic leviathan unable to function is simply incorrect. Granted the colony was as historian Robert Blake labeled “one of the most elaborately governed countries in the world”.

However, through new sources and a different, broader perspective, this project understands the failure as originating in ideological shifts occurring within the region. As such, this work stands apart from those of Wood and Blake.

Among the historians of the Federation, there is division in the assignment of responsibility for the creations and destruction of the colonial experiment. Historians

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Wood and Henry Franklin⁴ argue Great Britain is ultimately the harbinger of guilt. This historical branch places blame on Britain’s inability to formulate policies which were functional. Countering this are histories by Robert Blake and Colin Leys⁵ which place culpability on the unwillingness of settlers to modify their political aspirations to white rule.

This project argues that the Central African Federation failed due to competition from the three ideologies present during the years 1953-1963 (white nationalism, black nationalism, and multiracialism). With public opinion and the print media evenly split amongst the ideologies, the Federation’s existence was a tenuous one. Eventually the Federation’s political structures could not withstand the pressure from larger ideological forces and collapsed. This ideological competition and its impact on the Central African Federation were due largely to a shifting colony/metropole dynamic.

This project begins by outlining the histories of the three colonies which composed the Central African Federation. This is followed by a brief section of the historiography of British imperial federations. This sets the ground work for an institutional history of the Federation itself, focusing on events critical to its development and destruction. This is followed by an examination into public opinion of the Federation. Through the use of personal testimonies, this chapter attempts to frame the Central African Federation in the context of individual opinions. The research into the public’s opinion is followed by a chapter on the colonial print media. A study of the colonies’ newspapers backs up

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patterns of opinions noticed in the personal testimonies. Finally, this project attempts to speak to larger issues of Empire and their impact on Central Africa.

**Methodology**

This paper’s methodology is influenced largely by New Imperial History. Attention to non-traditional voices and materials have been integral to the crafting of this work. This interpretation will hopefully contribute to a new understanding of the Federation and its larger imperial context. The existing historiography on the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is primarily pure institutional histories. With a new approach, which focuses on non-institutional sources of failure, this project attempts to complement the existing literature, while offering new arguments for the Federation’s destruction.

**Source Material**

This work has accessed several new sources thus far not utilized by the existing scholarship on the Central African Federation. From the University of Essex come the papers of Lord Alport. As British High Commissioner to the Federation from 1960 to 1963, his insight supports this work’s desire to study the Federation within a colony/metropole binary. His personal correspondence provides an opportunity to understand British sentiments both towards the Federation and the Empire in general.

Also from the metropole comes a report published by an Advisory Commission to the British House of Commons in 1961. Through the collection of hundreds of personal testimonies from both within the Federation and abroad, the House of Commons wanted to gauge public support for the continuation of federation. The testimonies provide a unique insight into the public’s opinion. This is part of a concerted effort to include voices thus far not studied in the existing historiography.
From the colonies, this project has accessed five newspapers published from 1953-1964. Printed in Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the papers run the gamut in their attitudes towards the Federation. Of particular interest are newspaper images, both photographic and cartoon. The political messages embedded within them are telling of the differing ideologies present during the period. The methodology for utilizing the colonial print media has been heavily influenced by the works of historians Simon Potter and Mark Hampton. Their work on the imperial press system has provided an invaluable model for placing the colonial newspapers within the larger imperial context.
CHAPTER 2

THE COLONIAL HISTORIES OF NYASALAND
AND THE RHODESIAS

The colonies which composed the Central African Federation, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, were strikingly dissimilar on virtually all levels. The introduction of British imperial rule however, did not introduce uniformity among the colonies politically or culturally. Differing institutions were implemented in all three colonies. These differing colonial histories would have a monumental impact on the later attempt at federating British Central Africa.

Nyasaland (1859-1953)

Nyasaland’s role in the Central African Federation was very much that of a junior partner. The influence exerted by Nyasaland in the Federation was tempered by a political structure which favored the Rhodesias. Yet ironically, Nyasaland would prove to play the deciding role in the destruction of the Federation. This small protectorate would provide the genesis for African nationalism throughout British Central Africa.

The region first came to the attention of Western powers in 1859 via the explorations of David Livingstone.6 Horrified by the Arab slave trade in the area, Livingstone desired that missions be set up which would counter the Arab influence. According to historian Arthur Keppel-Jones, “The life and death of Livingstone had inspired his Scottish

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countrymen to continue his work by sending two missions to the same region.” In 1876, the arrival of these Scottish Presbyterian missionaries led to the first British settlements around Lake Nyasa. The influence of Scottish missionaries would be felt in the region for decades. Their liberal teaching of Presbyterianism and its influence on the African populous would come to stand in stark contrast to the effects of English ideologies which dominated the Rhodesias.

Missionaries were not alone in their interest in Nyasaland. In 1878, Scottish merchants founded the Livingstonia Central Africa Company (later the African Lakes Company). The company held a monopoly on trade in the region, running several steamships up Lake Nyasa. Continued Portuguese interest in the region however, resulted in the Anglo-Portuguese Crisis of 1889. A far flung land had become the center of a European standoff.

Formal negotiations with the Portuguese government began on July 6 1890. Ironically on the same day, the Pioneer Column, composed of British settlers, first entered Southern Rhodesia. Their goal, much like the British negotiating for Nyasaland, was to expand British influence in Central Africa. In any event, the British Government formally gained control of the Lake Nyasa region, creating the British Central Africa Protectorate in 1891. This was the result of British ceding claims to other Portuguese areas east of the lake (namely Portuguese East Africa/Mozambique).

On July 6 1907, the Nyasaland Protectorate was created. Its primary aim consisted of ‘protecting’ native interests. As A.J. Wills describes it, “The tribes had in the main been

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8 Ibid. pg. 193.
9 Ibid. pg. 195.
liberated from slave raiders, and the attitude of the Imperial Government was that of a ‘protecting’ power. The long-term interests of the native population were predominant from the outset’. This mandate is critical to understanding Nyasaland’s uneasy relationship to its Rhodesian neighbors. Its policy of emphasizing the rights of native Africans ran counter to the mandates and the culture of the Rhodesian settler colonies.

The Imperial Protectorate

Nyasaland was part of a larger British policy of creating protectorates throughout the Empire. Protectorates were essentially systems with a dual government. The British, through the Colonial Office, governed all external matters and major policy decisions. The Colonial Office was represented by a Governor-General for each protectorate. Domestic issues, however, were decided by an internally created government, a legislative body. In Nyasaland, the legislative body resided in the then capital of Zomba.

Protectorates were administrative units created with the stated desire to look after ‘native’ interests until that time when majority rule and independence could be created. This concept known as trusteeship was a cornerstone of British Imperial thought. As Kevin Grant describes the principle, “Britain had the right to manage, but to claim sovereignty over, the property of its imperial subjects, just as a trustee would manage the property of a child for the child’s benefit. It placed theoretical limits on the duration of their rule; it allowed these same administrators to decide when their rule should actually end.”

The fact that protectorates theoretically had a finite lifespan created several circumstances central to understanding Nyasaland’s role in the Federation. Protectorate’s

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11 Grant pg. 7.
typically had a small settler population. In the case of Nyasaland, the population in 1945 consisted of 2,300 Europeans and 2,100,000 Africans. Of the former, roughly half were missionaries living in the country temporarily. They would never have a true ‘stake’ in the country, or consider themselves Nyasalanders. The other half consisted of farmers and business owners. Being outnumbered nearly 2,000:1; the white Nyasalanders were constantly in an awkward position. Some considered the country their home, yet understood that the status quo system of privilege would not be sustainable.

There was never any doubt amongst the Africans, whites and Great Britain that Nyasaland would eventually gain independence at the proper time. Until then, the colony was under the direct control of the Colonial Office and its mandate of valuing African interests. Walter Russell Crocker, a Colonial Officer describes it in the following way, “We may be muddled but we see ourselves as Trustees who are to hand over their trust at the earliest practical moment.”

Northern Rhodesia (1851-1953)

While on the same exploration that led him to discover Lake Nyasa, David Livingstone also crossed into the region later known as Northern Rhodesia. In June of 1851, Livingstone reached the Chobe River. Continuing with his desire to spread Christianity, Livingstone had little or no interest in setting up trading posts in the region. His exploration of the area appeared to be of importance only insofar as it allowed him knowledge of what possibly lay in the Congo.

12 Blake pg. 243.

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However, the riches that existed in the region, namely copper, were not unknown to Europeans. Portuguese explorers recorded in their journal, as early as 1616, of massive caravans of copper being transported to the coast.\textsuperscript{15} The knowledge of the material wealth that lay in the area would not go unnoticed by subsequent British Imperialists.

Much as in the case of Nyasaland, Portuguese influence in the region appeared to be a catalyst for British expansion. “In the years 1888-90, Portugal might still have acquired southern Zambia as an extension of Angola. Rhodes well understood the need for quick action, and even before he had been granted a royal charter...he sent an expedition to Lewanika to seek a concession which would establish a right to ‘Northern Zambezia’.”\textsuperscript{16} In 1891 two separate entities, North-Western Rhodesia and North-Eastern Rhodesia, were created. Administration of the two fell to the British South Africa Company. The two were fused in 1911 to form Northern Rhodesia. In 1923, the title of ‘protectorate’ was given after the BSAC deeded control to the British Crown.

**Southern Rhodesia (1889-1953)**

The region known as Southern Rhodesia underwent immense political and social upheaval preceding British occupation. It was inhabited by two tribes, the Ndebele and the Shona, the former having recently settled in the region. Following the Mfecane in South Africa, the Ndebele migrated north of the Limpopo River.\textsuperscript{17} The Mfecane (translated as ‘the scattering’) was a political disturbance in South Africa whereby the Zulu king Shaka consolidated his rule over the Zulu kingdom while many smaller tribes broke away and settled elsewhere. In the case of the Ndebele, their leader, Mzilikazi, led

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pg. 128.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pg. 142.
them to the region they currently inhabit. This led to immense conflict with the Shona. Conflict between the two was a constant when the British arrived in the late 1800’s.

British interest in the region began with the archetype of British imperialism, Cecil Rhodes. For Rhodes, the lands north of the Limpopo River represented economic wealth for his British South Africa Company and imperial prestige for the Empire. As a result Rhodes first sent emissaries to the Ndebele kingdom in an attempt to receive mining concessions. This resulted in the Rudd Concession on October 3 1889. In exchange for guns and a promise of his rule being respected by miners, the Ndebele king Lobengula agreed to grant the British monopoly access to the region.

Cecil Rhodes and the charter members of the British South Africa Company had, even before the start of negotiations with Lobengula, desired to settle Southern Rhodesia with British colonists. The justification for this mirrored those utilized in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. Rhodes and the BSAC wanted a buffer-state against Portuguese imperialism. However, in the case of Southern Rhodesia, British control of the area also meant a buffer against Afrikaner ambitions for satellite states in the region. These satellite states would serve as a hedge against African Nationalism affecting South Africa.

This desire to see British settlement manifested itself in June 1890 when 180 men composed the Pioneer Column. They would later be joined by 200 members of the British South African Police. The column was well publicized and sent off with typical imperial fanfare. As historian Howard Hensman described the scene a decade later, “There is something almost romantic in the thought that that this little band...was to

18 Keppel-Jones, pg. 78.
march into a practically unknown land to found a new colony and plant another jewel in
the diadem of the grandest empire that the world has ever seen."^20

Guided by the famous scout Courtney Selous, the Pioneer Column traveled the length
of the Ndebele kingdom, finally arriving on a small plateau near the Makabusi River. On
September 11 1890, the British flag was hoisted and a ceremony was held dedicating the
land to the British Crown. A capital, Salisbury, named after the current Prime Minister,
was quickly constructed.^21

Subsequent years witnessed several uprisings by the Ndebele population. Most
notable are the First Matabele War (1893) and the Second Matabele War (1896-97).
Tensions between the Ndebele and the increasing number of white settlers led to horrific
causalities on both sides. The British eventually prevailed, due in large part to firepower.
These watershed moments ensured that white rule over the land was absolute and
sounded the political defeat of the Africans for the next nine decades.

The British South Africa Company had received a twenty five year lease from the
British Crown for its land claims. When in 1915 this charter had expired, the Rhodesias
future was very much in limbo. The BSAC was given an extension of two years, however
with the provision that new colonial charters should be created.

In the case of Southern Rhodesia, there had grown a large schism between settlers
and the stock owners of the British South Africa Company. The latter had not seen a
return in their investment in nearly twenty years. Funds were channeled to infrastructure
and projects, rather than being externalized back to Britain. The former were self-
motivated in creating homesteads and panning for gold. As such, the two often conflicted

^20 Hensman pg. 30.
^21 Ibid., pg. 34.
on the future of Southern Rhodesia. "Among the European population, there was general agreement that the Company's rule should come to a close. A chartered company has a divided loyalty, to its shareholders as well as to the settlers within its territories."

Administrating the Rhodesias had led to constant deficits in the financial books of the BSAC. Hence the desire to sever ties was mutual. On Oct. 1st 1923, Southern Rhodesia was annexed by the British Crown and given self-rule. The new Rhodesian constitution called for a Governor-General to represent the British Government. Additionally a parliament composed of thirty members was created.

The events of 1923 would have repercussions for the colony far greater than any other event. For the next six decades the British grant of self-rule would be a matter of contention by Rhodesians and the British alike. For the time being, the colony was granted a unique political situation different from its northern neighbors. Northern Rhodesia was given the title of protectorate in 1923. A Governor-General and parliament were also founded; however the distinction of 'self-rule' was not given. Nyasaland was also a protectorate by 1907.

**British Central Africa (Pre-1953)**

Laying forth the histories of all three colonies is meant to convey the stark differences between the three. In Southern Rhodesia a settler class would forge their own identity and gradually shift away from the British metropole. In Northern Rhodesia, mining interests dominated, leaving much of the country undeveloped and isolated. In Nyasaland, Scottish missionaries would influence generations of their African converts on the universality of rights and dignity. The institutions, cultures and morays of the three colonies developed along different lines prior to 1953. With talk of closer association in British Central

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22 Wills, pg. 242.
Africa, these differences became highlighted. Eventually, pre-1953 histories would come
to play an important role in the collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
CHAPTER 3

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE BRITISH IMPERIAL FEDERATION

Understanding the British Empire as a single political construct is misleading and indeed invalid. The overseas empire created by Great Britain was an amalgamation of multiple political, social and ideological ideas. Through four centuries a patchwork of colonies was cobbled together with the only uniformity being an allegiance to the British crown.

The sheer complexity of the Empire has caused a fracture in the historical study of the British Empire. Scholars have specialized in respective areas both synchronic and diachronic. One area which has thus far received little academic scrutiny is the use of federalism as a political tool in the Empire. From the nineteenth century forward Great Britain increasingly employed federalism as a common colonial policy. No less than a dozen colonies adopted federalism as their guiding political system.

This chapter examines the historiography on federalism throughout the British Empire. Understanding the broader literature on this subject will help to frame the larger project in the context of imperial historical literature. It also helps to frame the Central African Federation in the larger story of British imperial federations.
The American Origins of British Imperial Federation

The American Revolution was a disaster for British imperial ambitions, especially in the New World. In the decades following American independence Great Britain set its sights on the East in hopes of finding more stable and profitable imperial holdings. However, the American colonies would not totally fall out of the British scope with this eastern shift. Ideas adopted in this former British colony would be exported to Europe and eventually to European colonies. Most importantly, the American adoption of a federal system of government would provide the genesis for Britain’s use of federalism. Great Britain would import federalism from its failed American experiment. As almost a political phoenix, federalism would help Great Britain reclaim its Empire from the ashes.

The American colonies were in a terrible state after the Revolution. Isolated both internationally and regionally, the colonies forged closer political ties amongst themselves out of necessity. Creating a system where power is divided between central and provincial authorities seemed a logical solvency mechanism. Earlier failed attempts at confederation, the lack of a central authority, only highlighted the tangible benefits of federalism. Historian William Maddox writes, “We can grasp the federal idea as a response of the mind to political problem of the one and the many- of the need for achieving both unity and diversity, order and liberty, centralization, and autonomy, in the composing of human affairs”.

For Maddox, federalism was a system born out of the American experience. The complex social and political make-up of the colonies was alleviated by a system which balanced the interests of the provincial and the center. The problems experienced in


\[\text{24 Ibid pp. 1121} \]
America, the first colony to leave the Empire, would be mirrored in other colonies as they too attempted to forge nations apart from the Empire. The genesis for federalism was first realized in a colony. However implementation of a federal system would both come from the metropole and the colonies in the case of the British Empire. The power to propose a federal system demonstrates the fluidity of the metropole/colony dynamic. Either side could and did in fact propose federalism in respective colonies.

The pay off for Maddox is the exceptionalism of American federalism. It was held as an end in itself by its proponents. This is juxtaposed to the British strain whereas federalism was merely a means to an end. For the British, federalism was never truly adopted as a creed with intrinsic value. Rather, it was a means of controlling large areas with diverse populations. British federalism lacked the ideological energy so present in American federalism.

Historian Douglas Verney follows Maddox’s argument that the origins of modern federalism lay in the American experience. “Federalism was indeed invented by the framers of the U.S. Constitution in Philadelphia in 1776”. However, for Verney the genesis of the concept is not as important as the means by which it is implemented by the various political actors. Verney provides the link between American and British federalism. Through his case studies of British India and Canada, he demonstrates the difference between these two strains. “There was from the start a commitment that has made Americans view federalism as an end in itself, not simply a convenient means of distributing power as it has tended to be in Canada and India”.

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26 Ibid pp. 86
Federalism was simply a political tool. If the policy failed in a colony, another form of governance would just as easily be enacted (which in fact happened in British Central Africa). This created a scenario whereby allegiance to a system of government was minimized. In several cases, British imperial federations failed due to a lack of commitment by those involved to ensure the government thrived (Central African Federation and West Indies Federation).

The British Metropole

Historian Bruce Knox has written perhaps the seminal work on British imperial use of federalism. Knox lays forth the revolution that underwent British political thought that allowed federalism to be initiated as a colonial policy. For Knox, support for imperial federalism came first from the British metropole during the mid-nineteenth century. While later a concept many colonial politicians advocated, the first advocates were mainland British politicians.

Knox does not give credit to the first generation of American politicians for creating a political system which the British adopted. For Knox, British acceptance of federalism came a century later with the American Civil War. Here was the first true test of a federal system. With the success of the United States in maintaining a union, Knox argues that federalism was finally given credence within mainstream British political thinking. Until this point, federalism was still an American ideal. Post-1865 saw the British adopt it and evolve it to fit their imperial ambitions.

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28 Ibid. pp. 105

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As the Empire expanded during the 19th century, Britain found itself increasingly drawn into expensive military campaigns abroad. As such, many British politicians began to argue for a political solution whereby colonial affairs became less a matter for the metropole. Federalism was seen as a way of decentralizing imperial rule. A prime example of this was the Kaffir Wars in South Africa (1850-53). The cost both militarily and politically led the British to floating the idea of federating the various South African states.

The creation of imperial federal systems was limited to those colonies with a large settler population. A settler based colony ensured power and meaningful political enfranchisement was exercised only by the settlers themselves. This is the most important criteria for a colony to become federalized. The delicate balance between central and provincial interests was hardly a matter the British would entrust to non-British subjects.

The problems arising from settler colonies were often unique. There was the always important issue of land rights, the franchise and the path to eventual independence. These issues created immense turmoil for the British government. Allowing settler colonies a certain degree of political autonomy via a federated government was a solvency mechanism for this British dilemma. Smaller, less economically viable or potentially vulnerable colonies could forge closer ties for the benefit of all involved.

Historian Ronald Hyam writes of “the famous British propensity to look to the ‘federal panacea’ as a solution for the perennial imperial problem of governing big intractable areas, of establishing more viable units, to whom power could be safely transferred.” Hyam argues that this was the guiding principle for much of British

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imperialism throughout the period. The difficulties of ruling multiple areas could be
lessened and eventually cancelled out by federating different colonies.

Beginning in the 1850s this British school of thought led by politicians such as the
third Earl Grey, became extremely influential in political circles. As a paramount
benefit to Britain foremost, federation was implemented in numerous settler colonies
during this period. Canada became federated in 1849, Australia in 1901, and South Africa
in 1910. Having achieved a degree of ‘civilization’ and responsible government, Britain
felt federating these colonies was a natural step to self-rule.

Both Knox and Hyam argue that the British notion of federalism was a tool that was
first and foremost in the interests of the British government. Creating political systems
that would benefit the metropole was of paramount importance. This is a thread between
several works in this historiography. Historian Jesse Proctor continues this argument by
implementing it into the case study of the Federation of the West Indies. Citing
federalism as foremost a British benefit he writes, “Britain seems to have thought of
federation in the past primarily as a measure of economy and efficiency”.

The argument of federalism as a means to transitioning away from metropole rule is
of vital importance to this work. When the Central African Federation is studied in this
context, it demonstrates that Great Britain was indeed attempting to ease direct control.
Federalism provided an optimal policy for power to be handed over to British settlers and
to ensure responsible governance continued.

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30 Hyam pp. 93
31 Jesse Harris Proctor “Britain’s Pro-Federation Policy in the Caribbean: An Inquiry Into Motivation” The
From the Colonial Perspective

The notion that federalism existing only as ‘quick fix’ imposed from the métropole however, is brought into question almost immediately. There are several case studies which demonstrate that ground support in the colonies for federation clearly existed.

Using the case study of the West Indies, historian Jesse Proctor writes about the agency colonials had in this process. For Proctor, it was the colonies themselves which provided the impetus for the Federation of the West Indies. “There had long been some local support for the establishment of a federal government, and the claim had repeatedly been made that it was sufficiently strong to warrant further moves in that direction by the United Kingdom” This perspective shifts the historiography of British imperial federation away from the métropole and demonstrates the influence colonial policy on the ground had in the Empire.\(^\text{32}\)

Writing on the Canadian Federation in 1867, historian Michael Burgess also details federation as a political system often born in the colonial experience, and only later supported in Great Britain. “In particular the creation of a federal Canada owed more to a vigorous and confident Upper Canada...The British role was therefore not one of pressure and command, but ‘rather context and support’.”\(^\text{33}\)

The significance of Proctor’s and Burgess’ work is their application of agency to the colonies. With the impetus for federating originating in the colonies, the power over colonial policies is not held solely by the métropole. The ‘give and take’ of imperial policies is a theme echoed throughout this project. The British Empire never operated from a top down approach. This is very much an important facet of New Imperial history.

\(^\text{32}\) Proctor Pg. 327.
Federation as a Web of Power for the Minority

The creation of a federal system in a colony was never a concept with total support by the colonial populous. The impetus for federating was often led by a minority segment. The access to webs of power that federation would provide was clearly a motivating force. Provinces could attain the same economic, social and political boons as a central authority. As such, federation was an attractive policy for minority factions. The impact is that often times there was not widespread support for a majority of the populous.

Historian Samuel Hurwitz demonstrates this theory in his work on the Federation of the West Indies. He argues that federation and its power structure led to support by only a small minority both in Britain and abroad. A federated West Indies, for Hurwitz, was a political system favored by the planter class and the upper reaches of British civil service looking for an exit. For Hurwitz, this dichotomy between a minority support base and a majority in opposition is vital to the story of the Federation of the West Indies. The Federation of the West Indies eventually collapsed in response to this fracture among the populous. (It existed only from Jan. 1958 - May 1962)

Historian K.W. Robinson, writing on the Australian Federation, continues this thread of a minority support base. Robinson writes, “Attitudes were based on a combination of colonial patriotism, Australian nationalism, and economic expediency. They were the opinions of voluble minorities rather than of the mass of the people.” However where the West Indies failed, Australia did not. Robinson argues that federation eventually

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gained grassroots support which morphed it into a policy supported by a majority of settlers.

The impact of Hurwitz’s and Robinson’s research comes in understanding that the imposition of a federal scheme was often times in danger due to its support emanating from a minority. In the case of the Central African Federation this was precisely the case. A small clique of politicians argued for federation of the three Central African colonies. There was a constant battle for public support. While initially the majority of settlers grudgingly went along, eventually public opinion drifted away from the policy. This led to a minority support base unable to ensure the Federation’s survival.

The Influence of Geography

Many historians of British Imperial Federation have argued that the geography of a particular colony played a pivotal role in federating. Geography appears to have two distinct impacts on a colony; it either creates a sense of isolation or a threat from external states. Either of these two phenomena, many historians write, can lead to the adoption of a federal system. Two colonies, Canada and Australia demonstrate the role geographic isolation can have on a colony’s political makeup. As Burgess writes, “This theme of isolation, which is also present in the Canadian psyche, haunts the literature and became part and parcel of first the colonial political cultures and later the national, political culture of Australia.”

Most British imperial federations with the exception of South Africa had relatively peaceful internal histories. As such, threats from external geographic states motivate many to federate. As Maddox argues, it was a fear of the external threat by ‘others’ which spurned the drive for federation. “Only when isolation comes to be regarded as a greater

36 Burgess Pg. 86.
danger than union, only when it becomes unmistakably evident that comfortable existence cannot be maintained through independence, will the impulse to federation become strong enough to be translated into action”.

Historian Preston King writes of the threat of American hegemony as spurring the West Indies to federate. “A necessary (if not sufficient) condition for federation coming into being (and presumably persisting) is the presence of some threat....In the case of the West Indies, it could have been the ‘Yankee dollar’. In the case of the West Indies, it was fear of American dominance which allowed federation to be enacted.

This is significant for several reasons. British federalism was always used as a means to an end, as Knox and Hyam argue, never held with zeal. Additionally the West Indies case study points to a similar situation in Central Africa. Fear of South Africa, African Nationalism and a failing British Empire forced three small British holdings to align for their continued existence. Federalism was not a beloved principle; it was a weapon against uncertainty. With the West Indies Federation failing, the signs were clear as to federation’s fate in Central Africa.

**Historiography of the Central African Federation**

The five themes presented as commonalities in the historiography on British imperial federations are also present in the literature of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. While the existing literature on the Federation is scant, it does mirror the patterns of the larger imperial field on federation. The themes of geography, minority support, metropole/colony dynamic, and others are all present in the literature of the Central African Federation.

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The Central African Federation was both the final and most complex federated system created by Great Britain. As historian Ronald Hyam describes it, “The Central African Federation was the most controversial large-scale imperial exercise in constructive state-building ever undertaken by the British government.” Its creation followed notable successes such as Australia in 1901 and South Africa in 1910. Both were large-scale settler colonies that had proved their ability for a federated state and dominion status. As such, the Central African Federation was not in theory a controversial undertaking. However, pragmatically there were numerous pitfalls present from its inception. Of particular importance was the fusion of a federal style of government with a mandate of multiracialism. The ability of the federal government to adjudicate between minority and majority rights would prove to be a lynchpin in deciding the Federation’s fate.

British historians, most notably Proctor and Burgess, have argued that creating federal governments in the colonies was an idea whose impetus came from the colonies themselves. Historians of the Central African Federation are almost unanimous in their assertions that this was also the case in British Central Africa. Most notable are J.R.T. Wood and Hyam. Both give virtual total agency to white settlers in forging ahead with plans for federation. As Hyam writes, “For more than 25 years British policy in Central Africa has been to block amalgamation…. The Rhodesians decided to opt for federation (a second-best as far as they were concerned).”

The role of geography has also been apparent to historians of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Federation served two purposes externally: it was a buffer against Afrikaner expansion from the South and African Nationalism from the North. Historian Robert Blake writes, “If a great Central African state based on genuine multiracialism and a genuine partnership between black and white could be created, might it not set a pattern for the archaic colonies of Belgium and Portugal on the one hand and on the other hand perhaps by example soften the racialist policies of the Union?”

Rebutting the Existing Historiography

This project both stands on the shoulders of those academics who have studied the Central African Federation and attempts to confront the inadequacies of their research. Two themes are of particular importance in this projects addition to the historiography: the argument that bureaucracy caused the institution’s failure and the settler class maintaining blame for the collapse.

All previous histories of the Central African Federation have centered on examining the colony as an institution. This has meant a focus on political developments both in Salisbury and London. The actions by political elites (Welensky, Huggins, Macmillan, etc) have been heavily scrutinized by academics. For academics the story of the Federation begins and ends with what happens at the top level of government. The result has been an attention to the bureaucracy of the colony and labeling it as the cause for destruction.

This project rejects this format for several reasons. The story of any country, including the Central African Federation, is immensely complex. There are layers of power and stories at all levels of society. Focusing merely on the top level of government creates a distorted understanding. This project has begun with the exact opposite premise,

42 Blake pg. 252
by beginning with what happens at the grassroots level in the colony. Voices of the average citizens are given immense weight in this project. They demonstrate the sheer complexity of the colony. There was an immense debate at the grassroots level that ultimately invalidated the ability of the federal government to enact the premise of multiracialism.

Focusing on a grassroots history has meant a direct attack against the historiographies of three historians in particular: J.R.T Wood, Robert Blake, and Henry Franklin. All three point to various government policies and structures as the lynchpins for failure. This is both pragmatically incorrect (as addressed in a later chapter), but it also neglects the impact of discontent at the local level.

The second premise this project addresses is the labeling of blame for the Federation’s collapse at the footsteps of the settler class. Two historians, Robert Blake and Colin Leys are both advocates that settler demands caused the collapse. Accessing the papers of Lord Alport has been particularly invaluable in attacking this premise. His writings demonstrate both a lack of compassion by the British government and an unwillingness to formulate a coherent policy for the Central African Federation.

The House of Commons Advisory Commission Report of 1961 has also assisted this project in invalidating settler liability. The testimonies by many British citizens living in Great Britain demonstrate a complete distrust of settler desires and advocate an end to the colonial project. There was simply a lack of commitment by the British government and citizens to fully support the Central African Federation. Countering this are the testimonies by settlers in the colony. While many opposed the Federation, it is clear however they were committed to supporting it for the good of their country. The lack of
commitment to the Federation by settlers pails in comparison to the general attitude of the British.

Conclusion

The historical literature on the use of British imperial federalism speaks to larger issues of empire. The reservation of federalism as a solvency mechanism for settler colonies highlights the disparity and duality of the British Empire. Settler colonies were distinct creatures, with issues of identity, political rights and commitment to the métropole always at the forefront. Federalism served as a means by which many of these issues could, at least temporarily, be adjudicated.

The use of federalism in British Central Africa mirrors the experiences of other settler colonies (most notably the West Indies). Understanding the historical literature on these experiences is critical to placing the Central African Federation in the larger spectrum of colonial federations. It places the Central African Federation within a comparative framework and removes it from the isolated realm of academic scrutiny.

As the literature on British imperial federalism demonstrates the creation of federal states was a process, one which could be enacted from the métropole or the colonial periphery. Power to do so often hinged upon a minority support base, to the detriment of the colony. Until a large enough segment supported the policy, colonial federations would struggle for existence. This is owed largely to the means by which federalism was viewed by people. Never an ideal, it was a means of ruling large areas effectively.
CHAPTER 4

IDEOLOGIES PRESENT IN BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

1953-1963

The twentieth century saw remarkable change undertaken in Africa. European colonialism was defeated and African nationalism surged across the continent. In a span of a few decades the political structures of centuries past were thrown aside and replaced with modern nation-states. The existing social constructs predicated on European racism evolved into an adoption of Western notions of equality and human rights. This drastic revolution was a complex process, which manifested itself differently across the continent.

In Central Africa, Great Britain was undertaking the process of shedding its imperial holdings. This created the opportunity for competing ideologies to vie for political dominance in the post-colonial period. The focus of this chapter is an assessment into the three ideologies present within British Central Africa during the years 1953-1963. Understanding the origins of these ideologies and their impact upon British Central Africa is fundamental to larger questions posed in this project. As an enquiry into the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, this thesis argues that the competition for supremacy in Central Africa led to the collapse of the Federation. This competition and
the failure of federating Central Africa must also be understood in the larger colony/metropole dynamic.

**Minority Rule as an Ideology**

The first ideological strain present in Central Africa during the period 1953-1963 was historically the most dominant doctrine, and the longest lasting. It has been labeled as minority rule advocacy, for it is simply that, government by the few. This ideology has its roots not in Central Africa, but rather in British sensibilities, particularly in relation to their Empire.

A fundamental tenet of Britain’s overseas exploits was the acceptance of Britain as the metropole. Essentially, all roads led to Britain. The creation of an Empire was done for the betterment of Great Britain. All social, economic and political activities had to benefit the metropole. This mandate led to a placement of the British at the center, an ‘elite’ in the global context.

As British settlers spread across the globe they incorporated this concept into their colonial lifestyle. Indigenous people were subjugated and existed on the fringes of the colonial societies. Access to the political and cultural webs of dominance was based primarily on the notion of ‘civilization’. Indigenous people who adopted British attitudes could access the benefits of colonial rule, be it economic or political.

This concept was codified in J.S. Mill’s concept of a ‘Ladder of Civilizations’. Much like steps on a ladder, different societies occupied different levels. A society could be granted the same benefits of the British once they reached this level. In practical terms this became a burden of the minority, to guide lower civilizations up the ladder. “They

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were imbued with the idea of ‘progress’, and viewed man and society as perfectible entities. Africans potentially could become ‘civilized’ in the best British tradition thought both religious and secular institutions. It was ‘good’ that the indigenous population forsook its rustic and ‘pagan’ habits and began to learn the ‘white man’s ways’.

In British Central Africa specifically, the Rhodesias and Nyasaland were founded with the principle of governments by the minority. The practical applications for this worldview were immense boons for the white settlers. “It is clear that colonial racial policies are closely tied to the changing needs of the society’s elite, ranging from the need for unskilled labor, through the effects of industrialization and urbanization, to the contemporary problem of African nationalism”. The marginalization of the African majority benefited the white population on a daily basis in virtually every conceivable way. With the ‘Winds of Change’ sweeping across the African continent after World War Two, this ideology was under threat. The prestige which accompanied the moniker of being white in Central Africa was in direct competition with a new ideology which had already assumed dominance throughout much of Africa.

**Majority Rule as an Ideology**

Diametrically opposed to minority rule was an ideology predicated on completely different concepts. Called majority rule, it advocated universal democracy for all people. Existing power structures which rested on racialized social and political webs simply could not continue under this ideology.

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Much like minority rule, rule by the majority also had its genesis not in Africa, but in Europe. With the institution of colonial rule throughout much of the world, a critique of empire was almost immediate. Within many European circles it was argued that empire was not a project which bettered the métropole. In 1901, J.A. Hobson wrote his luminary work *Imperialism: The Classic Statement*. In it, Hobson argues against imperialism on the grounds of economic viability. His predecessors would expand this critique to the political realm. Both critiques however, centered on how colonialism shaped the métropole, and failed to take into account any effect on the colonies themselves.

It was only after President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points in 1918 that the push for an end to colonialism and white rule shifted away from solely being a metropolitan ideal, it was exported to the colonies. Wilson’s argument for national self-determination created the impetus for decolonization in Africa. As Wilson describes it, “A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.” This idea of power as accessible to the majority was adopted by both European liberals and the African population. Together they were proponents of an ideology bent on destroying minority rule and ushering in modern democracies in Africa.

Events on the world stage, which ran concurrent to the philosophical origins of majority rule, were pivotal in this ideology becoming a reality. The Second Boer War

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47 Foremost was D.K. Fieldhouse.
(1899-1902) and the accusations of genocide by British troops led to a growing anti-imperial campaign in Britain. Joseph Conrad’s 1902 publication *Heart of Darkness* compounded the growing idea of empire as a corrupting force. And the carnage of British soldiers in the trenches in World War One led to the loss of an entire generation, which placed immense manpower strains on running the Empire.

The conflict between the old and new ideologies was immediate from the beginning. Predicated on polar opposite definitions of power and the access to it, it was impossible for both ideologies to prosper simultaneously. This conflict was only intensified in settler colonies. With settler colonies, the minority population considered the colony their homeland; the prospect of power being disseminated placed their worldview in peril.

**Multiracialism as a Middle-Ground Ideology**

As African Nationalism/majority rule swept across the African continent, the colonies in British Central Africa were preparing for the impact. As such, there came about a third ideology meant to bridge the differences between minority and majority rule. It was meant to serve as a buffer against the likelihood that ideological differences would escalate into conflict.

This ideology of multiracialism, unlike its two contemporaries, was conceived in the colonies by white settlers. With Europe escaping from the continent, the white population could no longer count on continued foreign support. Being a small minority (5% in British Central Africa)\(^\text{51}\), most whites knew that minority rule was not an infinite solution. Easing Africans into the political, economic, and social structures of a minority


state was the intended goal of multiracialism. Granting more educational opportunities, a larger franchise and erasing segregation laws were all part of this goal.

From the beginning, the multiracial ideology was fraught with difficulties over how it ought to be manifested. The power accessed by each race was the central dilemma. A compromise had to exist between the willingness of whites to release power and the desires by Africans to gain it. It was this concept which would ultimately doom multiracialism in Central Africa and embolden minority and majority ideologies.

The harmony struck between the partnership of races was constantly in flux. Webs of power were not a static concept in this ideology, as opposed to the other two. Multiracialism was always meant to be an ideology predicated on transition. This became an attractive option ideologically, but not pragmatically. There was a stark difference between giving Africans power in theory versus actualizing this ideal.

**Multiracialism Realized**

The Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland in 1953 represents the first manifestation of multiracialism. A partnership of the races was heralded as a solution to the problem of race and power in Africa. However from the beginning Africans held no meaningful political power in the Federation. Apart from a few representatives for African affairs, voted on by a white electorate, the African voice was silenced.

While the proponents of multiracialism promised a constant increase in African political involvement, this was hampered by a white electorate. Politicians in the Federation were constantly weighing the wishes of their electorate with the overall mandate of the institution.
The result of the experiment of multiracialism in Central Africa was a failure. Public opinion was divided along ideological lines to such a degree that the federal institution was unable to overcome it. Meant as a transitional ideology, multiracialism gave way to a showdown between the power of the minority and the majority.
CHAPTER 5

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION

AND PUBLIC OPINION

"When you go home in the evening, turn your stamp pad upside down. This will enable the ink to drain to the top of the pad. Therefore, the pad will not need replacing or re-inking as frequently, and the Empire will be prolonged."

-Mrs. Townsend, Ministry of Finance, Northern Rhodesia\(^\text{52}\)

For millions of people the Central African Federation was more than a political ideal whose future was being debated in the halls of Whitehall and Salisbury. The political, social and economic structures of the Federation genuinely affected the every day lives of over eight million people (7.8 million Africans and over 307,000 whites).\(^\text{53}\) As such, understanding what motivated public opinion either in favor or against federation is critical to a complete assessment of the Federation.

Great Britain had begun as early as 1957 to distance itself from the continuation of federation. Civil unrest in Nyasaland in 1959 had greatly contributed to British apprehension over the Federation’s future. A 1961 revision of the Federal Constitution was on the horizon. Of importance were the issues of increasing the African franchise and the right of each colony to leave the Federation. It is with this backdrop that the


\(^{53}\) Blake, pg. 243.
British House of Commons formed an advisory commission in 1960 to gauge public opinion on the situation in British Central Africa. Its mandate was to prepare advice “On the constitutional programme and framework best suited to the achievement of the objects contained in the Constitution of 1953, including the Preamble”.

The advisory commission collected both oral and written testimony from any interested parties, both in the colonies and in the métropole. These testimonies come from a cross section of 1960 society, including but not limited to, white farmers, civil servants, and Africans. The testimonies provide immense source material to study the public’s opinion of federation. Through the study of hundreds of testimonies several conclusions can be arrived at regarding public opinion and the future of the Federation in 1960.

Support or distrust of the Federation is not easily dissected along racial, social or political demarcations. Opinions are as unique as the people supporting them. However there does appear to be certain segments of society who generally mirror one another in its assessment of federation. The personal motivations of these groups also appear to trump any larger political or ideological doctrines.

This chapter focuses on five segments of the public: religious communities, the business sector, settler farmers, the African population, and the British gentry. While each differs in their assessment of federation, the uniformity amongst each group shows certain segments of the population tended to agree politically, socially and racially.

**Religious Opinions of Federation**

For missionaries, life under an African sun was a different existence than that of their secular counterparts. Their worldview was centered on a fundamental tenant: spreading the word of God through the conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity. As
such, the missionary lifestyle was centered first and foremost around serving the African population. They had daily interaction with the population, living and working amongst them. This stands in stark contrast to the settler class, who encountered Africans only as hired laborers.

Missionaries have had an active presence in Central Africa dating from the first explorations of the region done by David Livingstone in 1859. From the earliest imperial ventures, religious conversion was a fundamental tenet. As Reverend Griffith Quick, a missionary working in Nyasaland wrote, “We must not forget the paramount importance of early missionaries who provided spiritual, educational and medical ministries to the frightened and destitute remnant of the Arab slave trade.”

The influence of missionaries is particularly significant in the case of Nyasaland. Initially founded by Scottish missionaries, from its earliest days the colony’s political structure was centered on protecting African interests. These interests were primarily to protect the African population from the Portuguese slave trade and to provide for their spiritual enlightenment. The testimonies by Nyasaland missionaries demonstrate the continuance of this ideal as paramount to the Federation’s continued existence.

Opinions by the missionary community of the Central African Federation follow two lines: political and religious. While each utilize different evidence, they both arrive at the same juncture, namely that federation in its current state was incompatible with African interests. This translates into two different conclusions regarding federation: either a

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drastic change in the existing federal structure is necessary or African independence ought to be supported.

The London Missionary Society was the foremost missionary movement in the Rhodesias. Composed of Anglicans and Nonconformists, the society was more conservative in their political goals than their Scottish Presbyterian brethren in Nyasaland. As such, they supported the continuation of federation, albeit with caveats attached. "If the Federation is to continue steps will need to be taken in regard to Federal franchise to secure a massive, and irreversible majority of Africans in the Territories".

The testimony of the London Missionary Society is indicative of two characteristics typical in missionary testimonies on federation. First there is a clear support for federation in some form. The second facet of the testimony is the use of political arguments. The London Missionary Society focuses its attention on the secular, political realm. Never in the testimony is religious rhetoric utilized.

The London Missionary Society is distinct from other missionary groups that testified in two ways. The organization was the only British group working in Southern Rhodesia to testify. All other missionary testimonies come from Nyasaland or Northern Rhodesia based groups. The more rigid race laws encountered by the LMS in Southern Rhodesia are unique in the Federation. The disparity between whites and Africans was most apparent in Southern Rhodesia.

The London Missionary Society is also the only Anglican organization to testify to the Advisory Commission. Yet this religious difference appears to be of minimal

importance. When the actual arguments by the LMS are compared to those of their counterparts in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, they differ little. Attention is focused on the franchise and lowering racial barriers. Doctrinal differences of faith are never present in any of the testimonies by missionaries. Practical matters affecting the African population clearly trump differences of faith. There is a clear indication that local and regional issues are of the highest importance.

The Scottish Council for African Questions echoes the London Missionary Society in calls for a greater African franchise. Yet simply increasing the number of Africans with the vote is not enough. The Scottish Council argues for a total franchise and power to be immediately handed over to the Nyasa population.\(^{58}\) Here too arguments in favor of changing the institution of the Federation are used. The council testifies, “If the British government refuses to allow the issue of secession to be discussed nothing will disguise from world opinion the fact that the British Government claims the right to drive four million people into a federation against their will, and thereafter to hold them there by force”.\(^{59}\)

The Dublin Street Baptist Church Youth Fellowship (in Edinburgh) follows the arguments made in the colonies by also calling for a greater African franchise.\(^{60}\) With minimal difference existing between the religious communities in the colonies and the metropole, the result are testimonies which are quite similar in tone and reason.

\(^{60}\) Testimony by the Dublin Street Baptist Church Youth Fellowship. House of Commons, “Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 5 pg. 679.
The only testimonial which stands apart from the pattern is submitted by the Church of Scotland. Its arguments, focusing on political and institutional reforms, are similar to other testimonials. However, the language employed by the Church differs insofar as it is more clerical. "This Synod appeals to Christians of all races in this land, to strive by every means in their power, to help understanding between races, and to build a peaceful, righteous society."\(^6\)

The religious language utilized by the Church of Scotland differs also in its threat of violence. Citing the fierce religious nature of the Nyasa, the church warns "This awakened spirit can also become, when wrongly used, a force for evil, with tragic results".\(^6\) The threat of violence if Nyasaland is not allowed to secede from the Federation is virtually unique among the testimonies submitted. Few go as far as the Church of Scotland in employing this method.

The commonality among the missionary testimonies demonstrates a clear mandate for the Federation to adopt institutional changes (franchise, etc). However these arguments point to a more subtle nuance as well. Missionary testimonies are centered on the African population, never once do the missionaries refer to themselves or their own interests as an issue of consideration.\(^6\) This speaks to a certain worldview, one which understood the Empire as a force meant to empower indigenous peoples. These testimonies also speak to the issue of identity. Missionaries in Central Africa were transient, rarely forging the

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\(^6\) Ibid pg. 635.
identity of a white African. Their stake was in the metropole, with Central Africa merely an employment stop.

The Business Community and Federation

The business sector of the Central African Federation was composed all races and classes of persons. The makeup of the sector was in many ways reflective of the primary goal of the Federation itself; being a multiracial entity. While racial barriers existed, this segment of the population came closest to creating a partnership among the races.

The testimonials submitted to the House of Commons Advisory Commission are almost totally dominated by the white business community. Asian and African business owners appear absent in the source material. Their voices and concerns over the Federation are not directly available. However, one can conclude that matters relevant to white business owners also affected Asian and African business owners as well. Profit margins crossed racial and social lines.

The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd. was a multinational corporation working in Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The political and economic unions afforded by federation were a direct boon to the company’s profit margins. Testimony attesting to the benefits of federation therefore comes as little surprise. “We strongly believe that the conception of a gradually developing multiracial partnership in the Federation offers the soundest framework- both economically and in terms of labour relations- for our future activities.”

The Imperial Tobacco Company’s representatives testified solely in the vein of economic benefits of federation. The increasing yields of tobacco and the ease by which

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64 Testimony by the Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd. House of Commons, "Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland" Vol. 5 pg. 551.

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the company can cross borders are but a few of the areas of discussion. The company has a clear economic motivation to see the continuation of the Federation.

No corporation had a stronger connection to the Federation than the British South Africa Company. Founded by Cecil Rhodes in 1889, the BSAC founded the countries of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Before falling under the banner of the British crown, the Rhodesias were run by the BSAC for decades. As such, the connection between the British South Africa Company and the Federation is perhaps the most interesting historically.

The testimony by the British South Africa Company follows the typical modus operandi of businesses working in the Federation, namely federation as a sound political model. "The Company welcomes the advancement and progress of the African peoples and fully supports the policy of the Federal Government that the Federation should become a multi-racial state." The company has long had interests in the region and supporting the government is sound business.

Absent from the testimony of the British South Africa Company is a deal struck with the Northern Rhodesian government a decade earlier. As owners of all mineral concessions in the colony, the BSAC was in danger of losing its monopoly of the vast copper deposits in Northern Rhodesia. In 1949 the Northern Rhodesian government allowed the BSAC to maintain its claims until 1986, with 20% of the company's profits being paid back to the government yearly. The contract was drawn up by none other than the future Federal Prime Minister Sir Roy Welensky. This lucrative contract is clear

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66 Welensky, pg. 34.

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enough reason for the British South Africa Company to support the continuation of the Federation.

The British South Africa Company is very much a hold out from the old imperial order. It is the last remaining royal charter company to operate in Africa. Run by Colonel the Lord Robins, BSAC continually fought off African calls for independence. A 1962 Times article writes, “B.S.A. has consistently fought rising Kenneth Kaunda and, by general rumor, still shovels money to rival—and less aggressive—African leaders. As a result, according to Rhodesians, "Kaunda has declared war on B.S.A." It is abundantly clear that BSAC felt threatened by the ramifications of an African government.

However, the British South Africa Company did not blindly support the Federation as it currently existed. The company offers numerous areas in which the Federation ought to focus on revision (most notably increased African education). The company continues with calls for Africans to be incorporated more fully into the federal structure. Granting more educational opportunities for Africans was a gesture that multiracialism was functioning, yet also represented the smallest challenge to the status quo. Educational change would take years to make its impact felt.

Unanimity among white-owned business over their support for federation (in one form or another) was never the case. The testimonies of several business executives detail their unease with the direction of the Federation. To this degree, this section of the business community appeals for drastic reforms which might ease the region out of civil unrest.

As Resident Director of the Rhodesian Selection Trust Group, J.H. Lascelles oversaw the operations of several mines in Northern Rhodesia. His testimony before the advisory

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67 Time June 29th, 1962.
commission details his fears that federation was not a viable solution to the growing problems in the region.\textsuperscript{68} His arguments stem not from an economic stance, as has been noticed in most business owners' testimonies. Lascelles writes almost totally on the political ramifications of a continuation of federation.

As Lascelles writes, the most fundamental dilemma facing the Federation is the gap between white nationalists and African nationalists. “Majority European opinion will not willingly concede political dominance to the African: but the African extremist will not be content with less. Even if constitutional changes acceptable to European liberals and African moderates were effected, there would remain a lack of mutual confidence and a general absence of necessary goodwill between the races.”\textsuperscript{69} This assessment would prove uncannily accurate in the years following 1961.

Lascelles details perfectly the fundamental problem of the Federation. How can a multi-racial state effectively adjudicate the desires of two diametrically opposed forces? As precise as his assessment of the federal problem is, Lascelles' solution is equally lacking. He writes that no evident course of action exists. This assessment would prove immensely accurate during the breakup of the Federation in the subsequent years.

To demonstrate how layered even the business sector's opinion of the Federation was, the testimony of Sir Ronald Prain is necessary. As Chairman for the Rhodesian Selection Trust Group, Prain worked for the same company as Lascelles. Both men worked in the same business environment and encountered the same set of circumstances. Yet Prain's assessment differs greatly than his counterparts. Sir Prain fully supported the continuation


\textsuperscript{69} Ibid pg. 684.
of federation. He testifies to the immense boons for both the white and African populations under federation.\footnote{70}

The concerns voiced by the larger corporations of the Federation are also noticeable in the testimonies of small business owners. Their fears over the Federation’s ability to maintain a stable political structure that would allow for businesses to flourish are clearly evident. While the size of companies may differ, the issues facing them did not.

M.W. Harris owned a small garage in the Southern Rhodesian border town of Umtali. His testimony offers a window in the small white-owned business community. He argues before the Advisory Commission that the lack of a decisive future for the Federation adversely affected the business environment. “As a result of the decrease of confidence indicated in this country towards the Federal Government, a nervous apprehension was growing, which resulted in a cessation of immigration and the sabotaging of confidence amongst the Europeans in the Territory.”\footnote{71}

Harris’ concern was with finding able bodied Europeans to work in his garage. This is a far more immediate concern. Whereas the larger companies cite racial unrest and education, Harris is focused on the present. The loss of faith in the Federation was causing immediate and apparent harm to his business.

Other testimonies echo this sentiment. An assistant underground manager of a small mine wrote, “There is a tremendous amount of uncertainty about. We really do want to feel that it is a county worth staying in and it is a country that has a big future.”\footnote{72} The

\footnote{70 Testimony by Sir Ronald Prain. House of Commons, “Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 5 pg. 573.}
\footnote{71 Testimony by W.M. Harris. House of Commons, “Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 5 pg. 611.}
\footnote{72 Testimony by R. Valentine. House of Commons, “Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 1 pg. 144.}
significance here is of small business owners fearing they may be kicked out or usurped in an African state. Multinational corporations feared dwindling profits whereas smaller business owners feared a total collapse of their businesses. This brings a real face to the entire story of the Federation and its real life impact on people.

Two underlying conclusions can be drawn from business community opinions in the Federation. Motivated by profit margins and future earnings, business owners were immensely fearful of political uncertainty. Most advocate a continuance of the Federation on the grounds of their own economic interests.

Yet on another, deeper level one notices the foundations of a nascent national identity. Those persons who owned businesses in the colonies held a real stake. Their allegiances were not to the metropole or an idealized concept of Empire. The colonies themselves have become ground zero. A business owner named D.W. Winchester-Gould writes, “We have no other home. Our children have been born here. It is our country as much as it is the country of the black African. We will not lightly- in fact under no circumstances- permit our heritage to be sacrificed on the altar of expediency and short-sightedness”. There is more concerned here than profits and economic projections. A homeland and an identity have been forged in Central Africa.

The ramifications of this nascent identity and its ideological basis are startling. T.D. Catchpole, a Northern Rhodesian writes, “Today, many White Africans, like myself, find the peace of our country, our homes, our way of life, indeed our very existence, to be in peril. If need be, we will fight in the streets, in the fields, etc. We will meet force with

force and defend our way of living in the country of our births. We have no other alternative." This is an Africa which has become home, they are defending their birthright, not an imperial right.

It is this question of identity which is so intertwined with a shifting definition of metropole. With Central Africa becoming a home, and not merely a colony, for many whites, the threat posed by African Nationalism and British vacillating becomes apparent. There is simply no adequate means of adjudicating between the competing forces. White Africans had a homeland under attack from different forces. It is this fundamental problem which is present in all settler colonies, throughout the Empire.

Farmers' Opinions on Federation

The issue of identity and its ramifications for the continuation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland become more apparent when the farming sector of the colonies is also taken into consideration. Here again economics and identity are intertwined in the testimonies. Farmers are weary over the future of their livelihoods and their homeland.

The farming community held a unique position in white society and subsequently the federal structure. Their status was very much of ‘an elite within an elite’. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan described Rhodesia as a country “governed by 200,000 whites among whom the planter interest predominates.” From the earliest pioneers onwards, farming had assumed an almost mystical aura.

The actual number of farmers in the Federation however comprises a fraction of the total white population. In 1958, 77% of the white population in Southern Rhodesia were

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urban dwellers. And with most farmers in Southern Rhodesia, the urban percentage would have been higher in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

There always existed a distinction between rural and urban settlers. Different interactions with the African population combined with dissimilar economic needs led to a fracturing of white settlers, along rural and urban lines. This distinction would be negligible when settlers were faced with external threats. Together they rallied around protecting their coveted position of white privilege.

Testifying before the Advisory Commission, a Mrs. G. Howard bluntly demonstrated the dichotomy in settler society between those residing in the cities and those who sought their existence in the hinterlands of Africa. "I found the British Pioneer type, who chiefly live in the country, good employers. This in most cases is because he is a Farmer and fully aware that he is absolutely dependent for his living on Native labour. In the towns, however, it is not the case, and the advantages of low taxation, cheap Gin, cigarettes and servants has attracted the most undesirable type of white settler." Testimony by Mrs. G. Howard. House of Commons, "Advisory Commission on the Review of the Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Appendix VIII. Volume V pg. 681.

While an unfair caricature, Howard’s testimony brings up a subtle point. The process of identity is complicated, even among the relatively small number of whites in the Federation. To view settler identity as a monolithic concept is invalid. The process of forming a national identity is often disrupted by different social and economic positions.

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Among the farming sector in the colonies, the opinion of federation is primarily positive. The vast majority of farmers testifying to the Advisory Commission call for a continuance of federation. The arguments made in favor of this policy focus on economics and a white homeland. This is interesting so far as it demonstrates the priorities for the farming sector. Discussions of changing the racial hierarchy were simply not fathomable. With these two themes monopolizing the discourse, it is evident they were concerned with a political system which primarily benefited themselves. African advancement on any level was an afterthought.

A tea farmer in Cholo, Nyasaland H. Rolf Gardiner personifies the defenses for federation lodged by most farmers. He testifies, “This is our homeland, for us to husband, plan and develop for our children and our children’s children. Let us combine before it is too late. Let us work with Nature to increase substance of common wealth in the wider homeland of Central Africa. Here is a cause into which we can put all our ardour, hope and love.” Gardiner’s use of economic arguments is fused with a genuine emotion over the future of Central Africa. Referring to Central Africa as a homeland with Africa at the

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80 Blake, pg. 275.
center demonstrates the definition of the metropole was clearly adapting. For farmers, their future was not in Britain, it was in Africa.

The replacement of Central Africa as the metropole is noticed in the testimonies of other farmers as well. L. Jacobson, a tobacco farmer in Karoi, Southern Rhodesia testified, “The future of the country is in serious jeopardy if outside influences of supposedly reasoned thinkers champion the cause of agitators and extremists who are seeking self-aggrandizement and power.”82 The subtle attack on Britain demonstrates the growing schism between the colonies and Great Britain. Allegiances had clearly shifted, especially among the farming class of settlers.

Other farmers also voice their distrust of Great Britain and its policies in Central Africa. One farmer testified, “It was impossible to work subject to the whims of an electorate 6,000 miles away. It was quite possible that the United Kingdom might go fascist or communist; was it reasonable to expect the Federation to remain subject to the United Kingdom Parliament in such circumstances?”83 This is yet more evidence that for many owing allegiance to a country which did not understand ‘life on the ground’ was not a rational policy.

While the farmers of the Federation testified to a distrust of Great Britain and more subtly the rise of a nascent identity, practical policies for the future were given equal weight. While missionaries in the colonies argued for the franchise, farmers echoed the business community in calls for increased education first. “Economic advancement to all

the Africans will be of far greater benefit to them than political advancement to a few of
them.”

The difference in priorities lies in the time it would take to witness change. Universal
franchise would result in radical change overnight, whereas education would take a
generation or more to be implemented. White settlers clearly advocated a more gradual
path towards African advancement. Stories of British colonies, which were given power
too soon, were often referenced in the testimonies. “We are having a typical example in
Ghana today where probably the African Government finds that they cannot actually
govern by having African civil servants right through and they have to have the help of
Europeans.”

This led many farmers to attempt to stem the tide of what they saw as a lowering of
standards on the continent. In practical terms the argument meant advancement through
civilization, not race. A Southern Rhodesian farmer from Rusapi testified, “My thought is
that they can only have a claim to a share in the government of the country if and when
they show they are worthy of responsibility. I suggest that this should be the governing
condition in allowing them to have a greater say in the government- and that this should
take place very slowly.”

The personal and professional interests of the farming class, like most other sectors,
are discernable in their testimonials. For farmers in the colonies, the Central African

84 Testimony by the Board of Directors of the Northern Rhodesia Tobacco Co-Operative Society, Limited.
of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 1 pg. 25.
85 Testimony by G.F. Noel. House of Commons, “Advisory Commission on the Review of the
Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 1 pg. 155.
86 Testimony by C.G. Hanmer. House of Commons, “Advisory Commission on the Review of the
Constitution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” Vol. 5 pg. 14.
Federation represented a government rooted in protecting agricultural interests and ensuring stability on an unstable continent.

More nuanced is yet again the issue of identity. Farmers in the colony understood themselves as white Africans, not British settlers. This was their home, one which was worth protecting from African Nationalism and British de-colonization.

In practical terms, farmers were supporters of continued white rule and a gradual easing into partnership with black Africans. This policy would stand in stark contrast to the recommendations of the African population and demonstrate the shaky footing on which the Federation found itself.

African Opinion of the Federation

From the outset the Federation was plagued by one problem above all else, what political role should the African population of the Federation play? The goal of the Federation was after all to foster a multiracial state whereby partnership between the races was a reality. Yet whites were hesitant to create a system whereby their power and protection would be eroded. This led to the Federation institutionalizing the African population to the role of junior partners.

Even before the institution came into existence, the African population was opposed to the concept of a federation. “We can go on showing that Federation for the African is a dangerous thing to plunge into- Chiefs, peasants, artisans, teachers, in fact all sorts and conditions of Africans are unanimous on this total rejection of federation”.87 While antagonism towards federation was universal, the actual arguments put forth by the

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87 Nyasaland African National Congress Memorandum on ‘Closer Association in Central Africa’ addressed to the Secretary of State, the Rt. Hon. James Griffiths, 1953.

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African population varied greatly. There were numerous different veins of thought which dominated the testimonies of Africans.

The foremost cause for African resistance to federation came out of a fear of Southern Rhodesia’s native policies being transported to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The Constitution of the Federation ensured that ‘native affairs’ was a federal matter, not subject to policies of individual colonies. With Southern Rhodesian representatives dominating the Federal Parliament, the argument was therefore that Southern Rhodesia’s relatively harsh native policy would become a federal policy.

The Africa Bureau was a committee formed by the Federal Parliament to ensure any legislation concerning the African population was in the best interests of the Africans themselves. They testified that Southern Rhodesia’s unfettered influence in ‘native affairs’ was a cause for concern. “There has been a gradual whittling away of Britain’s powers of protection over the two northern territories, and the transfer of increasing powers to the Federal government, which is firmly under the control of the local European communities.”

Upon further scrutiny into why Africans testified to fearing an expansion of Southern Rhodesia’s ‘native’ policy, it becomes apparent that South Africa is the root cause. The common perception among Africans was that Southern Rhodesian policy was the same policy of apartheid in South Africa. In a May 1954 memorandum to the Secretary of States for the Colonies, several Nyasaland chiefs write, “Federation is still opposed for

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fear of Southern Rhodesia’s African policies copied from South Africa”. However this fear appears to have been largely unfounded. During the tenure of the Federation, racial legislation liberalized the status of Africans (i.e. access to movies, bars, etc). The Federation was clearly becoming more liberal and moving further away from the Cape Town policy.

Opposition to the institutionalization of a stricter ‘native’ policy was not the sole complaint lodged by the Federation’s African population. The fusing together of two protectorates (Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia) with a self-governing colony (Southern Rhodesia) was understood by whites as a stepping stone towards eventual dominion status. For Africans this meant an erosion of British protection for African interests.

A substantial section of the African population lodged opposition to federation opting for a return to the protectorate status of pre-1953. A 1952 letter to the African Weekly by Chief Mwase of Kasungu claims, “Every nation wants to keep her respect and the place of inheritance for their children in which to exercise power. It is for that reason that Nyasaland does not want federation with S. Rhodesia, but wishes to remain under the Colonial Office.”

Conversely a counterargument is put forth by other Africans testifying that reverting back to protectorate status is intuitive. Instituting a universal franchise ought to be the desired goal of the Federation and Great Britain. K.K. Litonga, a resident of Northern

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90 ‘Nyasaland Chiefs Memorandum to the Secretary of States for the Colonies’, May 3rd, 1954.
Rhodesia testified, “Federation was not required. Democracy was the rule of the majority, but here a minority is in power...the only answer now is one man, one vote.”

This discord between those Africans advocating for protectorate status and those for independence is lessened when together they present a united front against federation. Regardless of the future institutions the colonies may create, federation with Southern Rhodesia was a policy fiercely criticized.

There were larger ramifications both regionally and internationally. The African population of British Central Africa saw majority rule being initiated throughout the continent. Their demands were bolstered by this changing tide. This only intensified the uneasiness of whites in the colony. Both whites and Africans were testifying to two different world views. Adjudication of this discord would prove to be immensely difficult.

Internationally, African opinion on the future direction of their homes placed Great Britain in a difficult position. The British mandate had always been to protect African interests in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. But by fusing them with Southern Rhodesia, it was impossible. Great Britain was left attempting to placate white and African interests.

The Upper-Classes of British Society

The British Empire had long been an institution guided by the upper classes of British society. The top tiers of colonial offices were filled with the aristocracy and gentry. Additionally, many made fortunes on the back of the colonial experience from land grants and mineral claims. As such, this segment of British society holds a unique claim

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to the Empire. The uniformity witnessed in other groups (missionaries, farmers, etc) is not present in the opinions of federation expressed by the upper classes of Britain. This is most likely the result of the changing colony/metropole dynamic and the changing role of Great Britain on the world stage.

Lord Cuthbert James McCall Alport was a career British diplomat. From 1961-1963 he was the British High Commissioner to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. His personal correspondence during this period provides a window in the larger British mindset over federation and Empire. His writings also demonstrate the inconsistency among the British as to the future of their Central African holdings.

In a letter date August 18th 1961, Lord Alport wrote to a member of the British public, Patrick Wall that, “I do not think anybody is thinking much about independence here. Government and public opinion generally know very well that independence can give them nothing that they do not already possess.” This was a public reassurance that the British were committed to the Federation and its goal of partnership between the races.

A confidential letter written to Sir Roy Welensky three weeks later, paints an entirely different portrait of British opinion. “It is clearly the first task to re-establish law and order and no political discussions can be undertaken until this is done effectively....If such a situation were allowed to develop...the British Government would have no option but to introduce direct rule.” The conflict between public reassurances and the private warnings by Alport are startling.

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94 Letter from Lord Alport to Patrick Wall August 18th, 1961.
By 1961 it appears obvious that the British privately committed to ending the Federation. The letters by Alport are of a diplomat who is merely reflecting the mandate passed down from Whitehall. As such, Alport serves as a clear window into the policies of Great Britain and its changing attitudes towards Empire. Even if the letters aren’t examined as two-faced, they represent a split in the British psyche. There is still some attachment to the Empire, even in the fact of the inevitability of decolonization.

Framing Alport’s arguments in the context of the colony/metropole rubric is critical to understanding the British mentality towards their colonies. In a letter to The Daily Telegraph, Lord Alport writes of British persons abroad as a ‘serious liability’. He argues that “the image which Britain may wish to create for herself abroad can be quickly damaged by the attitude of the resident British community.”96 This is the old model of colony and metropole. For Alport, British interests trumped all colonial demands. When this is juxtaposed to the testimonies by whites in the colony, the reality of difference becomes apparent. The bifurcation between British and settler interests is only expanding.

The upper classes of Britain were however not uniform in this thinking. The Rt. Hon. Earl of Selbourne testifies before the advisory commission to the benefits federation has brought to the colonies. “I have repeatedly visited Rhodesia, and have watched the continued increase of prosperity on the part of the Africans”.97 For Selbourne, unlike Alport, Empire was not merely an institution meant to better Britain. Both settlers and Africans saw a marked increase in their lives due to the policies of federation.

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96 The Daily Telegraph “Looking After the British Abroad” February 21st 1964.

The affirmation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is however framed within a larger imperial context. For Selbourne, the Federation is no different than other colonial experiments, all of which are worthwhile endeavors. "Africans, naturally, do not like being governed by Europeans, just as, no doubt, Britons disliked being governed by the Romans, or the Saxons by the Normans, but it was very fortunate for their descendents that neither of them succeeded in obtaining ‘freedom’ ".

The 5th Marquess of Salisbury Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, was Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from March through November 1952. He was an instrumental supporter of the Federation. In his testimony before the House of Commons advisory commission in 1960 he still reaffirms his commitment for federating the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. Salisbury’s defense for federation is reminiscent of traditional imperial justifications, particularly the ‘civilizing mission’. “For some considerable time, the average African will not be mentality the equal, or nearly the equal, of the European. How should he be? A hundred years ago, he was a complete savage. It is indeed wonderful progress he has made. But he remains, in the great majority of cases, a child."98 For Salisbury, continuance of the Federation is a continuance of British paternalism.

The connection between the Marquess of Salisbury and the Federation go merely beyond his work as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. His grandfather, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, was Prime Minister when the first settlers entered Southern Rhodesia. The capital, Salisbury, was named in honor of him. What influence this had

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upon the 5th Marquess of Salisbury is unknown. Carrying the same name as the Federation’s capital was undoubtedly not lost on him.

Alport and Selbourne and Salisbury are all conservative minded. Alport maintains the out-dated concept of Britain as the metropole. Selbourne still advocates for imperialism as a ‘civilizing mission’ worthy of support. Salisbury still harbors the concept of paternalism and trusteeship. While historically these positions worked in tandem to justify British imperialism, by the time of the Federation they did not. The change in where the metropole was led to both ideals being outdated. The British upper-class testimonies speak to a segment of the population which did not understand the changing dynamics outside of Britain.

Conclusion

With three ideologies (minority rule, majority rule and multiracialism) dominating political discourse in Central Africa, the Federation became a microcosm of this debate. The testimonies demonstrate that advocates for all three ideologies were present and vocal in the Federation. Understanding who these advocates were is a difficult historical undertaking. Racial, social, and economic markers are not adequate indicators. However, there does appear to be some uniformity among certain sectors of society.

This synchronic snapshot of public discourse in 1960 Central Africa demonstrates the messiness associated with the establishment of a federation that served the interests of all its citizens. Every testimony is primarily rooted in a personal stake in a certain outcome. People are motivated by their financial, political or ideological mindsets. Advocating what direction the Federation ought to take is merely a reflection of this.
The testimonies are pivotal in understanding the two larger theses of this project. The cause for a failed federation in Central Africa is rooted in the complexity of public opinion. The lack of any consensus on what the colonies ought to look like doomed the Federation to a life of constant bickering and insecurity. The diversity of opinions by people on the ground reverberated to the institution itself, leading to collapse.

The ability to place the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland within a larger colony/metropole dynamic is also assisted by the public testimonies. It is clear that a segment of white society altered their understanding of the metropole from Britain to Africa. This new model necessitated supporting federation and ensuring a stable future. Those who were not as invested in the colonies (missionaries, and British upper-classes), still maintained the older model of Britain at the center. It is this competing notion of colony/metropole which was also at the center of a failed federated state in Central Africa.
CHAPTER 6

IDEOLOGICAL SCHISMS AS REFLECTED IN
THE FEDERATION'S PRINTED MEDIA

Surveying the newspaper industry in the Central African Federation provides for an assessment into how public discourse manifested itself. Larger ideological trends in the Federation were present in the colonial press system. As such, the newspaper industry is a pivotal window into understanding issues such as race and political affiliation as they manifest themselves at the grassroots level. The newspapers also speak to larger issues of national identity and empire.

The newspaper industry in the Central African Federation is best understood through the lens of an imperial dynamic. The colonial newspaper industry was born out of its connections to the British press. Trends in Britain (technological and ideological) filtered throughout the Empire. Of particular importance is the concept of New Journalism. Historians of the post-World War One British press have noted a shift in the industry.\(^99\) Newspapers became markedly more ideological and sensationalist in their reporting. Hampton argues this pattern replicated itself in the colonial newspaper industry. The result is an industry with which ideology is an integral part of its mandate.

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Historian John Mackenzie furthers the work of Hampton by arguing that the issue of Empire was an integral facet of New Journalism. As Mackenzie describes it as “the press offered the medium and the text messaging by which both the motives and the means of imperialism could be transmitted”. This force was applied both in the metropole via most notably *The Times*, and in colonial papers as well. The result was an institution which had a great deal of influence over British imperial policy.

Historians of the British Imperial press have noted that this power of influence also flowed from the colonies to the metropole as well. As Simon Potter writes, “Settler papers were adept at using these connections to urge their views on British readers, in order to stand up for the perceived collective interests of settler communities.” The result is a web of connections where discourse and policy originated in the colonies. The impact is a recontextualization of the British Empire, not as a system with power solely emanating from the center. Rather, influence and power could originate from a multitude of sources, including the colonies themselves.

It becomes apparent that the colonial newspapers were both ideological driven (as Hampton argues) and are a reflection of interests and opinions of the settler class in the colony. The latter is best understood as a market response. Newspapers circulations were dependent upon reader support. The demand for either pro or anti-colonial perspectives is very much a factor in determining a paper’s editorial stance.

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102 See Aled Jones and Bill Jones article on the Welsh Press. “Empire and the Welsh Press”.
This project revises the idea of ‘empire’ as a fundamental tenet of the New Journalism press. MacKenzie fails to flush out how exactly empire was discussed. Research into the newspapers of the Central African Federation makes it quite apparent that very little time is spent on ‘empire’ as a concept in and of itself. Rather empire becomes more of a penumbra term. Imperial issues typically assume a regional or local bend. The Federation’s newspaper industry appears to be far more concerned with geographical developments versus the British Empire. So while issues of empire are always present, ‘empire’ itself is simply not.

This revision of MacKenzie’s assertion, it will be argued, is the result of a shift in the definition of the métropole. With Britain no longer the center, the press in the Federation focused on regional and local colonial matters. The Federation’s newspapers were reflections of a populace distancing themselves from Great Britain. The process appears to have been present in some form from the earliest days of British Central Africa. However, decolonization in the 1960’s spurred the process to its zenith.

This project also disrupts another historical argument, namely the print media serving as the genesis for discourse. Instead, this work portrays the print media as more a ‘middle man’, whereby discourse is ultimately decided by public opinion. Newspapers are merely vehicles for a public to debate and set an agenda. African press historian William Hachten describes this concept in which the print media is “a mirror image of a nation’s political and economic structure.”\textsuperscript{104}

The pay off for this assessment is the placement of the newspaper industry as a window into the larger issue of public opinion. The stories and images of the colonial print demonstrate the priorities and thought processes for the larger public.

**History of the Federation’s Newspaper Industry**

The first paper to print in Central Africa came on June 27 1891 under the name of *The Mashonaland Herald.* Struggling to stay afloat in land recently acquired by the British South Africa Company, the paper was bought by the South African Argus Group. Renamed *The Rhodesian Herald*, the paper began publication on September 8 1892. The paper interestingly claims the distinction of creating the name Rhodesia, coining it several years before the country assumed the same moniker.

The Argus Group is by far the most important player in the newspaper industry during the period of the Federation. Started in 1866, the Argus Printing and Publishing Company became the preeminent newspaper company in South Africa. Owned by Cecil Rhodes and other mining businessmen, the Argus Group soon expanded beyond South Africa. By 1960 the company owned every newspaper in the Central African Federation. At the end of the federation in 1963, the Argus Group published nine newspapers across the continent, controlling one-seventh of the continent’s newspaper circulation.

Fear of Afrikaner influence in British Central Africa had long been present in British political circles. Having a South African company control the print media in the Federation however raised few eyebrows among Federal and British politicians. This

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106 Ibid., pg. 357.
107 Rosalynde, pg. 76.
108 Hachten, pg. 244.
109 See Sir Roy Welensky’s memoirs
unusual exception owes itself to the Argus Group being distinct from the larger pro-
apartheid Afrikaans population in South Africa.

Historically the Argus Group counted among its largest stockholders mine owners.

“Indeed, this special connection with the mining industry still represents the main, and
only important, distinction between the policies of the Argus group, and the other
English-language ‘white’ newspapers in South Africa.”¹¹⁰ Whereas the majority of South
African newspapers were more political in their support of apartheid, the Argus Group
was moderate. This is owing to the mining sector’s controlling interest being British, not
Afrikaners. The support for apartheid was never firm among British South Africans. The
result is a company which had none of the apartheid baggage which British politicians
typically feared. This is noted in the wide spectrum of political and ideological dogmas
present in the Argus papers in the Federation. A paper’s slant was clearly a reflection of
readership and editorship and not from its South African owners.

Regional Newspapers

The papers examined come from all three colonies: Northern Rhodesia, Southern
Rhodesia and Nyasaland. An examination of the papers regionally provides the optimal
venue for understanding the print media. Regional distinctions were a vital factor in the
Federation. Each colony approached Federation from a different vantage point
(economic, social, racial). These distinctions are clearly manifested in the newspapers of
each colony. The harsher racial policies of Southern Rhodesia are reflected in The
Rhodesian Herald whereas the moderate nature of Nyasaland is noticed in The Nyasaland
Times.

¹¹⁰ Rosaylnde pg. 44.
While each colony was distinct due to its colonial past, there are several vital similarities in their print media. The audience for all the papers examined was primarily white. The number of Africans with access to the print media was limited through economic, educational, and temporal barriers. As Hachten describes it, “Newspapers are read by those few interested and literate Africans who are able to buy or borrow a copy and who are fortunate enough to live in a place, usually the capital, where newspapers are available”. With its readership dominated by whites, the industry naturally printed a dominant number of ‘white’ issues and stories.

The stories printed by newspapers in the three colonies are generally similar. Local and regional issues are given priority, with other British colonies dominating the foreign stories. As such, this project focuses on three general areas: the Central African Federation, regional Africa, the colony/metropole relationship. This allows for the diversity of opinions that existed in the Federation to be shown through a balanced forum. To this end the focus will be on these three areas as they are presented in cartoons, photographs and articles.

Northern Rhodesia

Three papers from Northern Rhodesia are examined: The Central African Post, The Northern News, and The Central African Mail. All three advocate a different political future for Northern Rhodesia. The Mail is anti-federation, the Northern News is pro-federation, and the Post is caught in limbo as to its overall ideological stance. The difference in these opinions demonstrates the complex picture in Northern Rhodesia. The result is a colony very much divided upon which future course to adopt.

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111 Hachten Pg. xiv.
The Central African Post

The Central African Post is the first paper printed in the Northern Rhodesia capital, Lusaka. Created by Dr. Alexander Scott in 1947, the paper quickly became a dominant force in Northern Rhodesian politics. Its influence was felt primarily due to its monopoly in Lusaka. Bought by the Argus Group in 1957, The Central African Post saw its circulation peak in 1962 with 3,600 copies published thrice-weekly.\footnote{Hachten, Pg. 223.}

Initially the paper advocated the formation of the Central African Federation. However Scott became disillusioned with the slow progress in African advancement. By 1957 Scott, as editor, had turned the Post into a paper opposing federation. “The Post at first supported the idea of Federation, with Southern Rhodesia, but Scott disliked Welensky, and this rivalry on the one hand, and the rising tide of African opposition to federation on the other, led him more and more to oppose Welensky’s ideas, and in the end federation itself.”\footnote{Ainslie, Pg. 94.} In early 1964 the Argus Group shut down The Central African Post due to competition from its other regional papers.

The cartoons of The Central African Post are indicative of the paper’s desire to see an end to both empire and federation. The November 4\textsuperscript{th} 1963 edition ran a cartoon of two British men playing a game of chess in the shape of Southern Africa \{fig. 1\}. The chess pieces are labeled ‘displaced whites and displaced blacks’. Next to it is a chess timer asking when the rest will be displaced. The idea of empire as a game played by politicians was not radical. The Post is merely restating a long standing criticism of empire, that the project ruins lives and displaces people.
Criticism against foreign involvement in Africa was not limited to the British. A September 11th 1963 edition ran a cartoon of President Kennedy and a police officer holding back an African attempting to climb a large stack of papers. The papers read “American advice to Britain and France about their colonial problems...since 1945”. The criticism by Scott is of a worldview where African affairs are the problems not of Africans themselves, but rather foreign powers. The use of an African in the cartoon demonstrates the opinion that Africans ought to be entrusted with their own affairs.

This is a scathing indictment of Western influence in Africa. Foreign involvement in Africa is not looked upon with admiration. This is the very essence of African Nationalism and its calls for an Africa for Africans.

Photographs in The Central African Post are similar in their message. One of the most moving images in any federal newspaper comes from a December 1963 photograph. The picture shows a slumped over Prime Minister Sir Roy Welensky watching an African military unit marching and playing past him {fig 4}. Welensky is clearly a defeated man. This photograph was taken during the final commencement of the Federation. Welensky’s dream of a multi-racial state is being past by for the newly dominant African nationalism.

The Central African Post is, however, tempered in its criticism of Empire and federation at certain junctures. Almost paradoxically it runs stories of regional Africa which are critical of majority rule. Headlines such as a November 1963 one where “Political Crime Soars” are common. A limited number of stories ran which also detail

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the chaos in former colonies. A September 30th 1963 article writes that ‘Revolution Blows Up in Algeria’. This is coupled with stories of ‘Revolution in Tanganyika’.

The December 18th 1963 edition of *The Central African Post* has a story on the handing over of power in British East Africa (fig. 5). While history proves that the handover was peaceful, this would never have been known if one was to only have read *The Central African Post*. The article asserts that “Only two days ago a terrible band of Mau Mau came down from Mount Kenya where they have lived as hunted terrorists for 11 years.” The article continues by warning of Kenya’s future, a future where farmers “during Uhuru will stay indoors on their lonely farms with dogs on guard.”

Cartoons also demonstrate the uncertainty that accompanies the transition from colony to nation state. A September 30th 1963 cartoon is typical of this (fig. 3). The cartoons shows a car labeled ‘Kenya’ being driven away, following cars labeled ‘Ghana’ and ‘Cyprus’ and other former British colonies. There are two stereotypical white settlers standing by. The caption reads “It’s the back seat driver who worries me.” The driver in mention is an African wearing a shirt titled ‘Mau Mau’. The *Post* is demonstrating the fear held by many settlers as their future.

The dichotomy between the *Post*’s support of African nationalism and its simultaneous negative articles are puzzling. When one examines the dates when these critical articles/images appear (late ’63 and early ’64) a deeper and more nuanced argument can be made. With Federation coming to an end, the future of Northern Rhodesia was very much in doubt. There was a change taking place in the national identity. There would be no more Northern Rhodesians, only Zambians. The identity of

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this state and its people is very much in flux. The Post appears to be a perfect reflection of this in action.

*The Central African Mail*

In terms of circulation, a more influential paper was the Northern Rhodesia newspaper, *The Central African Mail*. Also started by Dr. Alexander Scott, this paper began after his selling of the *Post* to the Argus Group in 1957. At its zenith the paper reached a circulation of 21,000 daily copies. It also held the distinction of being the only federal paper published in both in Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The *Mail* is without the internal contradictions present in the *Post*. The former is a clear advocate of African nationalism. Its articles and images articulate an opinion that portrays this ideology in the most optimal light.

Funded in part by David Astor, editor of the London *Observer*, the paper was unique in several different ways. With Astor as part owner, the influence of the métropole is evident, especially the left wing. His opinions on the role of the newspaper on public opinion would have been a vital component of the *Mail*. Astor was clearly critical of Federation and empire as a whole. His former assistant Anthony Sampson called him 'a champion of African rights'.\textsuperscript{116} Astor had no qualms in his support of anti-colonial newspapers.

*The Central African Mail* had on staff a number of African writers who became extremely influential both in the federal period, and the post-federal period. Of particular note is Titus Mukupo, who later became Secretary of Information in Zambia. This represents the only paper in the Federation to give Africans access to a white audience.

\textsuperscript{116} *The Guardian* 'Observing David Astor' December 9\textsuperscript{th}, 2001.
http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,615606,00.html
The Central African Mail was founded as a direct opposition to minority rule and the Federation’s dream of a multi-racial state. “The Central African Mail was openly against the federation and took a pro-African stance by supporting ‘one man-one vote,’ the motto of Kaunda’s United National Independence Party.” The paper had no qualms of adopting the slogan of a political party, nor of becoming a mouthpiece for its ideologies.

The lack of support for federation is visible in a 1962 cartoon. It shows Federal Prime Minister Sir Roy Welensky being left in mid-air by his African servants (fig. 6). The picture appears to show that the days of whites occupying a lauded position were ending. There is no remorse for Welensky or his white constituency. For the Post, Africa was a continent throwing off its colonial ties and moving forward.

The articles written by Titus Mukupo in “Titus Talking” provide a unique insight into the views of the African population of the federation. As the most prominent African journalist, Titus reflects many of the sentiments written in the testimonies of Africans to the House of Commons Advisory Commission in 1960. His articles warn of African desires for power and the growing lack of patience in the Federation. “Sir Roy has had close on ten years to show these people the benefits of federation. Up to this minute he has failed. People’s resentment of Federation grows every day, every hour, every minute, every second.”

Titus Mukupo also attacks the long standing economic justification for federation. In the July 3 1962 edition he wrote an article titled “How long shall we prop up Federation?” (fig. 7) He cites economic indicators and inflation as clear evidence that federation had not provided the economic boons promised in 1953. This represents a common argument cited in the public opinion against federation. Questions over actual

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117 Ainslie. Pg. 224.
economic benefits were typical. Mukupo’s focus on economics, versus universal franchise and human rights, demonstrates a subtle approach. With Mukupo’s audience composed of white readers, economics is clearly a more compelling argument to be made. Mukupo tackles the issues that (as the testimonies demonstrate) matter most to the whites in the Federation.

While Mukupo is a subtle and indirect affirmative of African advancement, the Mail’s use of images is more obvious in portraying Africans in a positive light. Indeed, these are really the only images of Africans at all in any federal newspaper. Africans are present in both advertisements and news images. The result is an agency and power that these images provide which are unique in the print media in the Federation. In the August 28 1962 edition, there is an advertisement by the First Permanent Building Society in Lusaka {fig. 8}. The image is of a well-dressed African man with his hands full of money. The title states “He Always Has Money Now”. To demonstrate that Africans too could participate and thrive in the economic sphere is a critique of colonial barriers.

A November 4 1963 edition ran a series of cartoons which seem to serve as a direct attack against the racism of minority rule. In one image there are two Africans dressed as golfers. The statement below reads “Me? A racist? Why, some of my best friends are whites!” {Fig. 9}. Both cartoons portray an opinion that Africans are not as dissimilar as many whites believe. Africa is portrayed as a place for Africans and not solely for white settlers.

The advocacy by The Central African Mail of majority rule would have been one of the most vocal mechanisms for this opinion to have been expressed. The paper’s readership was primarily white Northern Rhodesians. As historian William Hachten
argues, the readership among Africans was limited due to literacy rates in Northern Rhodesia, ranging between 15-20%. Of the literate population, most lived in the copper belt and along the rail line. In the hinterlands of Northern Rhodesia the literacy rate would have been dramatically lower.

The Mail thereby served a certain segment of the white Northern Rhodesian community, namely those who supported an end to British imposed interest in Central Africa. The agency given to Africans in the form of “Titus Talking” and the images were means by which whites would have been introduced to African nationalism in a moderate forum.

The Northern News

The Northern News was a Northern Rhodesian newspaper just as influential as the Mail. Founded in 1944 by none other than the Federation’s second Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, the paper quickly became a mouthpiece for Welensky. As historian Rosaylnde Ainslie writes, “Welensky was already ambitious, and shrewd enough to appreciate the power of a newspaper as a political instrument. He used The Northern News primarily to further his campaign for amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia, as a first step towards white independence in Central Africa.”

While under the auspices of Welensky as editor and chief correspondent, The Northern News struggled to stay afloat and remain a viable paper. In 1951 the paper was bought, like so many of its contemporaries, by the Argus Group of South Africa. It quickly turned the paper into a daily publication with a circulation of 20,000 in 1956.

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118 Hachten pg. 220.
119 Ainslie pg. 93.
120 Hachten pg. 223.
The Northern News is different in its political perspective in comparison to other Northern Rhodesian newspapers. In keeping with Sir Roy Welensky’s advocacy of federation, the paper became the preeminent publication for the institution. As such, it was far more moderate in its portrayal of race relations in comparison to the minority and majority rule papers.

The Northern News, like the Federation, was caught in between the nationalisms of whites and Africans. Its articles and images thereby attack both schools-of-thought as extreme and unyielding. This point is demonstrated in the January 11 1964 edition {fig. 10}. While the Central African Federation had ceased to exist the month previous, the paper nonetheless continues with its warning of racialized policies. In an article titled “Two faces of Ghana-and one is bright Red!” the writer is clear in his/her disgust of Ghana (a majority rule state) and the influence communism was having on the nation.

Advocates of the Federation had long held that it was primarily British waffling which doomed the Federation. Attacks on the British by The Northern News are reflections of this larger opinion. The same edition which contained the Ghana article ran a cartoon of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan as an English bulldog. The image shows the English bulldog as lying down and sleeping, wrapped in a British flag. The message is clear; the once proud British nation is falling asleep. The British had simply lost the will to govern and defend the Federation.

In the post-federal period, The Northern News was very much a paper caught in limbo. Many articles detail an exodus of whites from Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). This emigration flight is given a personal touch with the inclusion of letters

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121 Welensky pg. 363.
to the editor. A January 12th 1964 article demonstrates the reality of the situation. Titled “Questions that Europeans Should All Ask Themselves” the letter underscores the uncertainty of the period. “I am living through a very historical era. Evolution has become revolution... Why have I not left Northern Rhodesia like many of my friends?”

Countering this are numerous articles that optimistically support the new Zambian government and its president Kenneth Kaunda. While The Northern News had a clear identity during the federation’s existence, as its mouthpiece, post-1963 it is a paper without a cause. This may have been why on November 12th, 1964 the Argus Group sold The Northern News to the London and Rhodesian Mining and Land Company, at the behest of President Kaunda.

Changing names to the Times of Zambia, the paper soon became the voice of a newly independent Zambia. Writing of the new editor Richard Hall’s stated goal, historian William Hachten writes, “Hall’s policy was to make the Times a paper in tune with independent Zambia.”

The change from The Northern News to the Times of Zambia is indicative of a larger political and social flux. Zambia was not Northern Rhodesia; the old paradigm of white privilege was gone. At the most basic level, this change genuinely affected millions of people. With Africans politically enfranchised, most whites left for Southern Rhodesia. Just as the paper changed its identity in the post-federal period, so too would the inhabitants.

124 Hachten pg. 223.
125 Ibid pg. 225.
The Rhodesian Herald was the foremost paper in Southern Rhodesia. It was the oldest paper in the Federation and in many respects the cornerstone of the print media. It was also the mouthpiece for Southern Rhodesia’s continued goal of ending British influence in its internal affairs.

Articles written in The Rhodesian Herald were representative of the larger colony/metropole dynamic. To this end, most stories early on dealt with British affairs. “Much of the early news was about events occurring in the metropolis, from politics to sports, while events on the African continent were ignored.” However with the erosion of Britain as the metropole, the paper adapted and became more Rhodesian based.

The paper was a reflection of the larger Southern Rhodesian worldview. Fears of South African influence, a collapsing British Empire, and a black Africa all motivated The Rhodesian Herald to support continued white rule. The majority of the stories and images within the paper advocated this widespread opinion in Rhodesian society.

The articles and images present with The Rhodesian Herald are unique in the federal press on several different levels. The paper is far less provincial than its colonial counterparts. The number of regional and international stories covered in the paper is unmatched. Additionally, the paper is also the most vocal advocate for the continuation of minority rule.

The July 5 1956 edition ran a story which symbolizes the process and the motivations behind it. Entitled ‘Racial inter-breeding in Mozambique a Primary Social Problem’, the article claims that racial integration was ushering in social ills in the neighboring

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Portuguese colony (fig. 11). Citing a Dr. Manuel Simoes Alberto, the article attempts to bring scientific legitimacy to the socially constructed argument. The incitement of fear into Rhodesian readers is the motivation of the article. This is done via a study whereby Alberto argues racial integration is of ‘vital interest to South Africa and her neighbors’.

While spreading fear into the hearts and minds of Southern Rhodesian readers appears to have been at least an indirect goal of the paper, *The Rhodesian Herald* countered this with assurances of the status quo remaining so. In the same July 5th 1956 edition which ran the Mozambique article, the paper also ran a story entitled ‘African Nationalism: ‘A Silly Crowing’’.\(^{127}\) The article writes of calls by Africans for political power as ‘a silly cock crowing on its own dunghill’.

The sheer complexity of these two stories running in the same edition cannot be brushed aside. Readers were bombarded by stories of social decay where Africans were involved, yet also reassured that African rule would never occur in Rhodesia. While both shore up the *minority rule* ideology, they do so from differing starting points. Southern Rhodesians were to be guard for the horrors of majority rule and to ensure it never crept into Rhodesian borders.

No single story, besides the day-to-day going ons of the federation itself, received more attention than the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956. For four months straight, July-November 1956, *The Rhodesian Herald* ran daily front page stories of the crisis. While initially quite optimistic over the future of the Suez Canal, over time the mood of the stories dramatically altered. July articles give Britain agency in deciding action and in pressuring the United States to agree to military action (fig. 12). Yet as the crisis

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\(^{127}\) *The Rhodesian Herald* Thursday July 5th, 1956.
continued on, *The Rhodesian Herald* portrayed the story with less zeal for the British and more fear over its ramifications.

The Suez Canal Crisis of 1956 stands in the eyes of many academics as the watershed moment whereby Britain ceased to be *the* world power on the world stage.\textsuperscript{128} American influence in both the Middle East and in the world had trumped British interests. This dramatic change in the global political balance would have been vitally important for Southern Rhodesia.

*The Rhodesian Herald* running daily stories of Britain’s international inadequacies would have served the public opinion which advocated for Rhodesian self-rule. A clear political goal was understood, and the ‘spin’ put on the Suez Canal Crisis was the means by which this was realized. The metropole, for *The Rhodesian Herald*, had clearly shifted from London to Salisbury by 1956.

Besides the Suez Canal Crisis, *The Rhodesian Herald* editors spent a great deal of time on regional stories. The Belgian Congo Crisis (1960-1965) was given particular emphasis. With the withdrawal of Belgian forces from the Congo in June of 1960 chaos quickly followed. Stories of Congolese atrocities against whites in the colony were splashed throughout *The Rhodesian Herald*.

Former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith wrote in his memoirs the effect this had on the federation’s population. “Refugees by the thousand flocked through Rhodesia. Needless to say, the graphic description of the atrocities to which these poor people were subjected, backed up by medical evidence from our doctors and hospitals, left an indelible impression on our people.”\textsuperscript{129} The impression would have been one which


entrenched fears of African Nationalism. As federation failed, Southern Rhodesians would revert inward as a response to this fear.

The use of photographs by The Rhodesian Herald reveals the nature of its advocacy of minority rule. In the period 1953 to 1963 there are countless pictures of atrocities in newly independent African states. Pictures of Africans training with guns in Angola, to pictures of the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya were common. While refraining from printing photographs of dead settlers, the photographs nonetheless got the message across.

In the post-federal period The Rhodesian Herald became less of a mouthpiece for white rule. With the Universal Declaration of Independence on November 11th 1965, a schism between the Rhodesian government and the Herald became apparent. The government censored articles and images which cast the government in a bad light. In response, the Herald would often print black articles where the censored articles would have run. In 1980, the paper fell under the auspices of the Zimbabwean government. The newly renamed Zimbabwe Herald reverted back to a government mouthpiece and has continued this pattern to the present period.

Nyasaland

The Nyasaland Times

The only paper printed in Nyasaland, The Nyasaland Times, demonstrates the second-class status of the colony in the Federation. Its publication and influence was far less than that of its federal neighbors. It does however provide a unique insight into the public discourse taking place in the colony itself.
Founded on September 13th, 1895, the paper originally called the Nyasaland Planter, was meant as a forum for farmers and contained mainly agricultural news. The paper changed its name to The Nyasaland Times in 1908, to correspond with Nyasaland becoming a British protectorate. Published by the Paver brothers, during the period of federation, the paper ran twice weekly. This would owe to the much smaller white population in Nyasaland (5,000 est). As such, the circulation would have correspondingly been much smaller than its federal counterparts.

The Nyasaland Times was meant to serve a certain white population, one quite different than its Rhodesian counterparts in two important ways. The white community in Nyasaland was mainly Scottish, many of whom were missionaries. As such, those who considered the colony their home would have been quite small to those who considered the Rhodesias home. The stake held by many in the colony would have been finite. The political future of the colony was simply not as important an issue due to the transient populous. This is noticed by a lack of articles detailing the plight of whites and regional chaos (as was a common occurrence in Rhodesian papers).

The statistical number of whites would have also meant there was simply not the demand for multiple papers in Nyasaland. As such, the Times became a de-facto monopoly, one which represented all three ideologies, minority rule, majority rule and multiracialism. This reflection of all the ideologies is evident throughout the paper.

Support for a total break from the Federation is evident as early as a 1956 article entitled “Calls for Self-Rule By July 1 1957” (fig. 13). Specifically the paper provides a voice for the Nyasaland African Congress. The political aims and rhetoric of the

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organization are portrayed as moderate. The same NAC manifesto was reported in The Rhodesian Herald, with a totally different slant. Quoting Welensky, the paper wrote of the Africans as 'saboteurs' and lacking goodwill. It continued with support for white rule of some sort with a reassuring quote from Welensky, "When members of the African Congress promised their people universal adult suffrage, they were misleading them. This would not come in the foreseeable future."^132

The same story, covered entirely different by two regional papers reflects the complexity of the situation. While both were members of the Federation, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland had very little in common. These differing identities are reflected in the papers but speak to larger issues. It's subtle, but the stories demonstrate the importance of local and regional issues. While in 1956 these issues could be ignored (as the NAC manifesto was), eventually the Federation simply could not reconcile these distinctions.

Support for the Federation and its goal of partnership was also given ample coverage by the Times. The coverage was also primarily positive, with one article calling Federation 'a very promising youngster' {fig. 14}. Coverage was also given to the Capricorn Society, a civic group desirous to see 'no racial barriers and opportunity is open to all' {fig. 15}. The Times also addresses the issue of uncertainty which plagued the public throughout the Federation's tenure. Quoting Sir Roy Welensky, as saying "Let the African realize now that the future of Nyasaland lies in co-operation with the rest of the Federation and that the future of the black man lies in partnership with the white".133

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132 The Rhodesian Herald Tuesday July 31st, 1956.
133 The Nyasaland Times Tuesday August 14th, 1956.
These articles demonstrate the Times as reflective of all the larger ideological trends. The goodwill towards federation is quite evident in the Times.

This is however counteracted with simultaneous articles articulating various other public opinions. A July 1956 letter to the editor describes Britain as a country run by ‘socialists and the welfare state’. The author argues Britain needs to ‘undergo an operation on its state of mind’. While clearly an advocate of white rule, the author demonstrates an important point about the Times. The diversity of opinion witnessed in the paper is simply unmatched in any other Central African paper.

When the images of The Nyasaland Times are examined, the view of the paper as reflecting all of Nyasaland public opinion, not just a segment, is supported. The vast majority of advertisements utilized white models (fig. 16). News photographs are almost exclusively of whites as well, especially during the early federal period. Noticeably absent are images of Africans in any venue. This is an Africa for whites and composed of whites.

This phenomenon can attest to two possible justifications, the images themselves are reflections of a racialized society which had a segment advocating continued white rule. The less theoretical and more pragmatic come from the paper being so small. The images are most likely borrowed from The Rhodesian Herald. Whether the overwhelming use of whites is a conscious choice or one forced by economic limitations is simply not known.

134 The Nyasaland Times ‘Letter to the Editor by Peter Warwick’. Tuesday July 17th, 1956.
Conclusion

An analysis into the newspapers of the Central African Federation can shed light on several important and larger issues. It is evident by the printed media’s competition that there was a constant battle for ideological and political dominance. Each school of thought had its own newspapers and utilized them to influence public opinion.

When examined in the context of the colony/metropole debate several interesting concepts arise. The argument by historian Mark Hampton that the British colonial press become sensationalist after 1918 is evident when the papers of British Central Africa are studied.

The view of the print media as a vehicle for imperial ideas (MacKenzie and Potter) is also reaffirmed with these new sources from Central Africa. However this project has nuanced MacKenzie’s thesis by articulating the predominance of local and regional colonial issues. The newspapers of the Federation demonstrate the local nature of colonial/settler politics. Concern with the British Empire came only in the context of how it would affect the colony itself. The later Declaration of Independence by Southern Rhodesia is further evidence of the rejection of the British Empire as an authority.

This speaks to several larger issues throughout this project. The focus on local and regional stories demonstrates a shift in the metropole, away from Britain and towards the colonies themselves. This is tied to the issue of identity, which is an underlying tenet of this project. The newspapers provide an insight into a populace in flux. The social and political revolutions were leading to a reexamination into whom people were at their very core.
With the local voices so clearly represented in all three colonies, this project has argued the colonial print media is merely a mirror into public opinion. The historiography which argues newspapers as an end to themselves just does not quite fit when the sources are looked at. Circulation numbers of the sources demonstrate the market segment each paper had through its reflection of a certain ideology.

The newspapers in the Central African Federation also indicate widespread disparity among public opinion. The future direction for each colony and its inhabitants was foremost on the minds of the populous. While the discourse primarily centered on the local (federation), there was a concern over regional and to a lesser degree international stories. All influenced the ways in which people understood their colonies and their individual role in the colonial political process.
Figure 1: *The Central African Post* November 4th 1963. “Imperial Chess Game”
Figure 2: *The Central African Post* September 11th 1963. “American Involvement”
Figure 3: *The Central African Post* September 30th 1963. “Imperial Car Cartoon”
Figure 4: *The Central African Post* December 30th 1963. “End of Federation”
CHOICE OF TWO WORLDS

The essence of the Chinese conflict, by Donald Seaman

/CHOICE OF TWO WORLDS

This is a pivotal moment in Africa. In a speech last week, the President of the United Nations, Mr. K. N. Same, said that the African continent is at a crossroads. The continent is poised to make a decision that will mark a turning point in its history. The decision is whether to remain a part of the Western world or to forge a new path. The choice is not just between wealth and poverty, but between power and freedom.

THE FUTURE

It is in the future I think of. It would take a brave man to say whether the safety and prosperity of Asia has passed to Europe. It would take a brave man to say that the safety and prosperity of Europe has passed to Asia. It is a choice between two worlds, and it is a choice that will affect the course of history.

UHURU! AND A DREAM FADES

By Donald Seaman

His name was Delamare. He came from Cheshire, and he had fiery red hair and startling blue eyes. He was a pioneer. In the green hills of Kenya he had dreamed of another England in Africa. That dream has faded.

The Uhuru of East Africa has been lowered in Nairobi and in the furthest corner of the sun-drenched country tribesmen have danced to the blinding of the drum and shout—Uhuru! Freedom! British rule has ended after 60 years.

This is the end of an era. No longer will the British be seen in the streets of Nairobi. No longer will the British be heard in the choirs of the country. No longer will the British be felt in the hearts of the people. The end of an era brings with it a sense of loss. It is a loss that is felt by all.

The future is uncertain. The path ahead is unclear. But one thing is certain: Uhuru has ended, and the chapter of British rule in East Africa has come to an end.
Born soldier

From a humble beginning, this 44-year-old soldier has built himself into one of the most controversial figures not only in Africa but in the world as a whole.

Gamal Abdel Nasser was born in January, 1918. He went to school in Alexandria and Cairo. Nasser, a born soldier, like also had training from early youth as a soldier, first at the Cairo Military College in 1937. It was the frontier of his country.

Very critical

From his student days, Nasser was very critical of the Egyptian Government then headed by King Farouk. He privately thought that one day he would rule Egypt and introduce reforms that he thought Egypt required. He started little by little preparing the way for that.

About 1949 he started organizing a secret Free Officers Movement which he filed with the help of his good friend from student days, Mr. Adameh. Mr. Adameh was the captain of the CENTRAL AFRICAN MALL, whose duty to the Constitution, He was in Cairo.

If you are not familiar with the map of the CENTRAL AFRICAN Mail, you must refer to the Constitution, P.O. Box 459, London.

ASSIZING: BROKEN

NOTICE is hereby given under the Public Order Act, 1930, that all persons in the Central African Mail required to produce the following regulations within twenty-four hours from the day on which the notice is served, shall be charged in accordance with the regulations.

Place of residence:

Chisamba
Munali
Matero
Munando
Lumangwe
Makanya
Serambo
Broken Hill
Lusaka

EVBRYBODY

should wash after
using the toilet and
before handling food.

Figure 6: The Central African Mail (date) "Left in mid-air"
How long shall we prop Federation?

For nice white teeth

always use . . .

Pepsodent

In the place of bad which gets stuck between your teeth like sugar, brush your teeth twice a day with Pepsodent. For nice white teeth, brush your teeth twice a day with Pepsodent.

Figure 7: The Central African Mail July 3rd 1963. “How Long Shall We...?”
Attitude of Whites is their worry

This attitude of the European...screamed out in the treatment of minority party members, in the snobbery towards Africans. The Central African Mail. August 28th 1962. "First Permanent Building Society"

WILL COUNCIL THINK AGAIN?

HAGENDIEN is a thin, earnest-looking, 39-year old African, a man who could easily have been a candidate for first secretary of the African National Congress. A man who has spent a lifetime in the service of the ANC, working for the betterment of the country. A man who is now in prison, awaiting trial for his activities against the government. A man who is a symbol of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. A man who is a hero to many Africans.

How to win SUCCESS with a better education!

This remarkably simple, yet incredibly effective study guide is a game-changer in the world of education. It's developed by experts and endorsed by top educators, it's designed to help students of all levels to achieve success in their studies. It's filled with useful tips, tricks, and strategies for mastering any subject. And best of all, it's absolutely free!

HE ALWAYS HAS MONEY NOW

"If you have money, you have the power to make things happen. If you don't have money, you have the power to change things."

First Permanent Building Society

[Image of a building with text]

[Image of a man with the words "Titus Talking"]
Two faces of Ghana—and one is bright Red!

There are two images of Ghana today—the real one and the one projected by the Government-controlled Press and radio.

The real one is the one that is known to the people who live there. It is a country of hard work and determination, of rustic simplicity and warm hospitality. It is a country of contrasts, where the poverty of the rural areas is matched by the opulence of the cities.

The projected one is the one that is shown to the outside world. It is a country of progress and development, of modernization and industrialization. It is a country with a bright future, where the rule of law is supreme and justice is served.

Two Africans jailed for two years

NIGERIA

John Brown, 24, and Mary Wilson, 22, were sentenced to two years in jail yesterday for attempting to smuggle cigarettes from Ghana into Nigeria. The two were caught at the border with their contraband goods and were accused of planning to sell them on the black market.

ARREST WARRANT OUT FOR MIKE HAILWOOD

LONDON

Mike Hailwood, the racing driver, has been arrested on charges of speeding and driving without a license. Hailwood is a well-known figure in the world of motor racing and is currently the subject of a police investigation.

DEATH-CAMP MAN SAYS: I DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON

A man who was a prisoner in a Nazi death camp has come forward to claim that he did not know what was going on. The man, who was just 14 years old at the time, said that he had been taken to the camp by his family and that he had no idea what was happening.

‘DID-HE-DO-IT?’ ROW SPLITS OSWALD FAMILY

PORT WORLDS

The question of whether Lee Harvey Oswald was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy is causing divisions in his family. Some members believe he was innocent, while others think he was guilty.

BELGIUM

The man was arrested at the airport after failing to declare a large quantity of gold.

CIA AVERAGES

Two men who stopped at a petrol station were shot dead by men with automatic weapons. The men were killed while they were filling up their car with fuel.

TV circuit at S.R. airport

The new TV circuit at S.R. airport is causing problems for passengers. The signal is so weak that many flights have had to be diverted.

ILL TEST

VICTORIA RECEPTION

about "terrible" wireless reception in area, the Federal Broadcasting Union tests.

Port Victoria does not have a "drum-roll" of its own, and it is not likely that one will be provided for some time. But the wireless signal was received last night from an area—possibly Fort Victoria—inside the deplored radius, and it is not yet clear whether the reception is permanent.

The Council of the Rhodesia National Farmers Union decided to meet in approach to the Federal Broadcasting Union.

Mr. W. E. Arnold, Assistant Director of the Federal Information Service, announced that the F.B.U. was being provided for the local area, and that the Council of the Rhodesia National Farmers Union decided to meet in approach to the Federal Broadcasting Union.

PREVIOUS TESTS

Mr. Arnold said that information tests were carried out a few years ago and the reception in Port Victoria was "satisfactory." A radio engineer told a representative of The Rhodesian Herald that Port Victoria is slightly beyond the range of the medium-wave wireless transmissions in Bulawayo, Gwembe, and Queen Victoria.

Q.C.’s questions about ‘lucky meat parcels’

From Our Correspondent

Mubiru, Wednesday.

Judgment was postponed for a week here today in the case in which four African Congress leaders were charged with "conspiring to import the business of European traders.”

The defendants, Edward Mguni, Solomon Chiwa, Andrew Murenda and Mathew Mapera, were not charged, and the defense, conducted by Mr. R. Banda, District Commissioner, "aborted," complained about "inadequate funds" and "inadequate facilities" at the Mubiru police station.

My invitation to speak to the press was automatically and unnecessarily delayed at the Mubiru police station.

The purpose of the Mubira police station was to prevent the transfer of goods to their African customers, who operate under legal covers, such as Milton Prisons and other similar organizations.

Reasons for the change of plans have not been fully explained. The accused were members of the African Congress and their trade unions are members of that council.

Renounce force, says Russia

New York, Wednesday.

The Soviet Union proposed last night that the United Nations should resolutely renounce force in their international relations and had the use of all atomic and hydrogen weapons.

The proposal was introduced before the United Nations Disarmament Committee by Mr. Andrei Gromyko, Secretary General Foreign Minister.

It was, at the end of an hour-long speech, Mr. Gromyko who sought to prove that the West was responsible for the continued failure of the nuclear powers to reach agreement on disarmament.

BULITISH rings

Earlier, Mr. Anthony Eden, British Minister of the United States, the United States, and Canada, said that the commission for "the support" for a declaration of principles on disarmament.

British leaders described Mr. Gromyko's speech as "unreasonable" and "unequivocally" and "unwarranted." The United Nations Disarmament Committee will meet again tomorrow.—Seyta-West.

Racial inter-breeding in Mozambique a primary social problem

The problem of racial inter-breeding in Mozambique was a primary social problem of Southern Africa, Dr. Manuel Simons Alberti, a leading Portuguese social scientist, stated in an address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in Portugal.

He said the pattern of racial inter-breeding in Mozambique provided a study of vital interest to Africa and its neighbors.

There were 36,300 people of mixed blood in Mozambique, 30 per cent. of whom lived in Lourenco Marques. The mixed races were Euro-Africans, Euro-Portugese, Indo-Africans, and Indo-Africans.

These four groups should be considered roughly as Euro-

AIR FORCE FOR LIBYA

From Our Correspondent

London, Thursday.

Following successful talks in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, Minister of Defence, the Libyans acknowledged that the United Nations Security Council were members of the African Congress and the accused were members of that council.

The purpose of the Mubira police station was to prevent the transfer of goods to their African customers, who operate under legal covers, such as Milton Prisons and other similar organizations.

Reasons for the change of plans have not been fully explained. The accused were members of the African Congress and their trade unions are members of that council.

Figure 11: The Rhodesian Herald July 5th 1956. “Racial Inter-breeding”
Figure 12: The Rhodesian Herald July 30th 1956. “Suez Canal Crisis”
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Figure 14: The Nyasaland Times May 24th 1955. “White Model”
CHAPTER 7

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION

AS AN INSTITUTION

Magni esse Mereamur – “Let us Deserve to be Great”

Etched upon the Central African Federation’s coat of arms, this phrase aptly represents the idealism that was the cornerstone for federating British Central Africa.

With its inauguration on September 3 1953, the Federation was an experiment in colonial governance. Never before had Great Britain created a colonial institution which fused the tested British principle of federation with a new ideology of multi-racialism.

Great Britain had utilized federations throughout its Empire, often to great success. Australia, Canada and most recently South Africa had all been federated under the British crown. Great Britain itself was the product of federating England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. As such, implementing this political system in Central Africa was never a radical concept. Yet the inclusion of an ideology premised on multi-racialism ensured an entirely new paradigm was created.

The formation of this new strain of British imperial federation came about only after years of negotiations between Great Britain and its Central African territories. The motivations and worldviews of the different players ensured the run up to federation was complex and often frustrating. While both sides approached the subject from vastly
differing sides, they managed to cobble together an institution predicated on a single concept, namely partnership between the races.

Partnership between the races was first and foremost the Federation’s end goal. Yet the imposition of such a vague mandate would come to hamper the Central African Federation as an institution. While the institutional structure of the Federation was a convoluted system of overlapping bureaucracies, this in and of itself was not enough to ensure the Federation’s failure. The imposition of an ideology whose premise was not widely supported nor widely understood would serve as the catalyst for the Federation’s ultimate collapse.

Within an Imperial Context

The origins of the Central African Federation lie primarily in Southern Rhodesia. It was here where a commitment for closer association among Britain’s Central African holdings was created. Understanding a union of the Rhodesias as a concept born not in the metropole, but rather in the colonies themselves, is a vital concept for several reasons.

Eventual British support for closer association of its colonies in Central Africa is evidence of imperial policy being crafted in the colonies themselves. The pressure from the colonies directly led to Britain adopting federation as an imperial policy. The division of power between the metropole and colony was constantly in flux as agency in decision making was invested in both sides. The result was an imperial construct with power dispersed, not centrally located in the metropole.

Despite its support from the colonies themselves, the concept of closer association in Central Africa was hampered by pre-existing imperial dynamics. The colonial institutions
of Central Africa were not of a uniform nature. Competing British Imperial departments complicated the prospect for a unified Central Africa.

The British Colonial Office had the mandate to rule the protectorates of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Its goal was first and foremost the protection of native Africans. "The Colonial Office, for almost as long as anyone could remember, had been the Africans' mother and father". Large scale white settlement was never a dominant policy goal in British protectorates. This meant that the institutionalization of white privilege was never as concrete as in Southern Rhodesia.

The Commonwealth Office oversaw the colony of Southern Rhodesia. The Commonwealth was essentially the last tie which connected Britain to a colony. In practice, Southern Rhodesia had been left to govern itself since 1926. Southern Rhodesia had its own Parliament, Prime Minister and bi-annual elections. This political history had led to the entrenchment of white rule and a mentality by settlers that self-government was an entitlement.

Competition between the Colonial and Commonwealth Offices led to a split within the métropole. The offices had different mandates and approached the prospect of a unified British Central Africa from opposing angles. This jurisdictional battle, coupled with pre-existing different colonial histories created a larger, more complicated, imperial context.

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Justifications for Closer Association

Understanding why a unified Central Africa was a colonial, versus a metropole concept, requires a penetration into the Southern Rhodesian mentality. Settlers in Southern Rhodesia were the ideological descendants of Cecil Rhodes. The creation of Southern Rhodesia was the first step toward the realization of Rhodes’ ‘Cape to Cairo’ dream of a single British colony. As such, Southern Rhodesia had long been imbued with the principle of expansion. The first defense for a unified British Central Africa was rooted in this desire for imperial expansion.

The desire to spread past the borders of Southern Rhodesia continued with the twentieth century, yet the motivations evolved. As more settlers were being born and raised in the colony, their worldview changed from that of their predecessors. Britain was no longer at the center. Southern Rhodesia became the epicenter. Settlers were not ‘British’ but increasingly labeled themselves ‘Rhodesians’. This shift in where the metropole was led to a different defense for a unified Central Africa.

Politics in the British metropole also affected this changing relationship. The twentieth century witnessed Britain increasingly turning away from its colonies and towards Europe. The British desire for imperial expansion in Africa was a lust long dead by the mid 1950’s. However, creating a state which fused three colonies into one fit the desire to shed colonial ties.

The actual defenses for a fusion of Central African colonies were organized into two categories: economic and political. While both sides argued the same concept, they approached the theory from differing vantages.
The most dominant argument made in favor of a unified Central Africa was economic based. The economies of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland were on paper quite dissimilar. Northern Rhodesia thrived on its vast mineral wealth, most notably copper. Southern Rhodesia consisted primarily of large-scale commercial agriculture. Nyasaland consisted primarily of subsistence farming. Historian Arthur Hazelwood argues that it was this difference which served as a boon for unification. While not similar, the economies of the three colonies were complimentary. Economic ties between the three were immense. A unified railroad system had been in place for decades. A common currency was also implemented. This was coupled with Great Britain serving as the major trading partner for all three.

Politically, a unified British Central Africa benefited both the métropole and the colonies. Great Britain’s policy of de-colonization would be continued insofar as less imperial oversight would be necessary. The British themselves would be continuing the pattern of re-polarizing the métropole to the colonies themselves.

Greater political control on the colonial level was the desired goal of settlers. Being granted federal status was the first step to eventual self-rule. This also meant that ‘native affairs’ became a policy decided by settlers and not colonial servants in London. The slow progression of African rights would be the target, and not the rapid scale favored by Great Britain.

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The Run-Up to Federation (1948-1952)

While ideologically and pragmatically Southern Rhodesia had long understood the necessity of a unified Rhodesia, world events for a time relegated this concept to the political backburner. Two world wars, combined with a changing British Empire had taken precedence both in the colony and in the metropole as well.

In 1948, events outside Southern Rhodesia would create the impetus for a closer union with Northern Rhodesia. In Great Britain, the Labour Party had been in power for nearly three years. During this time it had shed India from the imperial realm and was clearly on a course of de-colonization. Following this, in October the government held a conference at Lancaster House to decide the fate of its African holdings. This would prove to be the first window of opportunity for those advocates of closer association. Of particular importance are two politicians in attendance, both of whom had harbored the idea for years.

Sir Roy Welensky was the Northern Rhodesian Prime Minister in 1948 {fig. 1}. Born in South Africa to a Jewish father and an Afrikaner mother, Welensky would claim he was “50% Jewish, 50% Afrikaans and 100% British”. Without an ounce of English blood in him, Welensky would come to champion the idea of a new British imperial structure which would ensure closer ties among the Rhodesias. He explained his motivations as such, “Time, I believed, was running out. Africa was being left behind in the rush of economic expansion that was happening in the rest of the Western world. All in all I felt there was every reason for me to continue pressing whatever Government

might be in power to do something to bring these territories into closer political
association".140

To the south, Godfrey Martin Huggins had been Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia
since 1933 {fig. 2}. Born in Britain, Huggins immigrated to Southern Rhodesia in 1911.
His United Party had been the dominant political party in the colony for fifteen years by
the time of the October 1948 conference. As such, Prime Minister Huggins was
politically secure enough to push forward the possibility of closer ties with Northern
Rhodesia.

During the conference Roy Welensky met with the Secretary of State for the
Colonies, the Right Honourable Arthur Creech-Jones. It is here that Welensky first
floated the idea of amalgamating the Rhodesias. The meeting led to Welensky being told
in no uncertain terms that amalgamation was out of the question. "No government,
irrespective of its political hue, would carry out that kind of action today. The world
wouldn’t put up with it".141

Objections to amalgamation were largely born out of a single issue, namely fears of
Southern Rhodesia’s ‘native policy’ becoming a federal policy. "No British government
could contemplate putting the four million Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland
under a Southern Rhodesia type of settler government—which was what amalgamation
really meant".142 For the British amalgamation went against the essence of the
protectorate title given to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland decades earlier.

140 Welensky, Pg. 22.
141 Welensky pg. 23.
142 Blake pg. 248.
For the time being closer association was a non-starter. The Labour Government was clearly on the path to shedding off imperial holdings. Creating a massive colony in Central Africa was simply not an option.

Were it not for the 1948 elections held in South Africa, the possibility of a federation may have never been recessitated. In May, the Nationalist Party won a majority in the South Africa elections. This endorsement of the policy of apartheid greatly alarmed Great Britain. “The case for an English dominated and therefore ‘liberal’ Central African States as a counterpoise to Afrikaner nationalism appealed to a broad political spectrum in Britain”. The May elections in South Africa kept open the door for future discussions on British Central Africa.

The following year, on February 16 1949, Welensky and Huggins convened a conference in Victoria Falls to gauge the possibility of closer ties between the Rhodesias. The Colonial Office was not informed of the conference. This extralegal gathering was justified Welensky argued, because it was non-binding and an ‘all-Africa conference’ anyways. It was during this conference that the concept of amalgamation was dropped in lieu of a federation. Also of relevance was the inclusion of Nyasaland into the equation. As recommended by Arthur Creech-Jones the previous October, Nyasaland was essential to the creation of any Central African state. Great Britain would never sign off on closer association without Nyasaland being included.

In 1950, British elections were held which witnessed the Labour Party’s majority whittled down immensely. Of particular importance was the loss of Arthur Creech-Jones in the election. His position as Secretary of State for the Colonies was filled by James

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143 Blake pg. 247.
144 Welensky pg. 26.
Griffiths, a far more moderate member of the Labour Party. Wasting little time, Prime Minister Huggins petitioned Griffiths for a conference on the possibility of federation.

The conference began on March 5 1951 in London’s Commonwealth Relations Office. Representatives from the Rhodesias followed the principles laid out in the 1949 Victoria Falls conference. Namely this meant amalgamation was the optimal solution but federation would be an acceptable compromise. From the outset of the conference the British remained firm that amalgamation was a non-starter.

Introduced during this conference was Andrew Cohen, leader of the Colonial Office’s delegation. It was Cohen, more than any other, who was able to cobble together a functional plan for federation. Persuaded by the arguments set forth by Prime Minister Huggins, Cohen understood federation as the most logical step in Central Africa.

While politically a polar opposite of Huggins and Welensky, Cohen too advocated for federation, albeit for differing reasons. Being Jewish, Cohen feared the rising influence of South Africa, a recent supporter of Nazi Germany. “There can be no doubt that his principle motive was the fear that the new Nationalist Government in South Africa would pull Southern and possibly Northern Rhodesia too into its economic and ideological orbit.” The creation of a buffer state in Central Africa would serve as a hedge against any potential South African expansionist ideas.

Just as Huggins and Welensky had shifted towards advocating federation as a second best option, so too did Andrew Cohen. Cohen shifted from supporting the continuation of three colonies, to the creation of a single federal colony. While federation was never the

145 Blake pg. 300.
146 Blake pg. 250.
147 Ibid., pg. 251.
foremost attractive option, it served the needs for all sides and was the only possible middle ground.

A report, published following the March 1951 conference, outlined the basic tenets for a federal system in British Central Africa. Immensely complex, the framework consisted of the following:

- A federal government with a Governor-General
- A federal Prime Minister with a cabinet
- A federal parliament with thirty-five members:
  - Seventeen from Southern Rhodesia
  - Eleven from Northern Rhodesia
  - Seven from Nyasaland
  - Three representatives from each colony would be elected to represent African interests
- No universal franchise/franchise based on income level
- Three territorial governments each with governors/Prime Ministers
- ‘Native policies’ would fall under the jurisdiction of each colony\(^{148}\)

On August 24 1951 a delegation of British politicians toured the three colonies to gauge opinion on the prospect of federation\(^{149}\). African opinions were largely filtered through the Minister of Native Affairs. Few, if any, Africans were actually consulted on federation. However the delegation did report that federation was met with virtual universal condemnation by the African populace. The report suggested attempts be made

\(^{148}\) Wood pg. 168.
\(^{149}\) Ibid., pg. 187.
to persuade them to favor the proposal. This appears to have been largely brushed aside by Rhodesian and British politicians.

Great Britain held general elections in October 1951. The Conservatives had narrowly gained a majority in the House of Commons. Welensky, Huggins and other federal advocates were nervous about the change in government. However, the Conservatives appeared to offer the same response to federation. No fundamental difference appears to have developed in the metropole with the shift from Labour to Conservative governments. The most important shift came in the replacement of the Colonial Secretary, now held by Oliver Lyttleton. His support of federation ensured that previous conferences and reports were not totally in vain. Lyttleton was vital to the continuity of the entire process towards federation.¹⁵⁰

On April 23rd, 1952 another conference was held in London, this time under the auspices of a Conservative led British government. Fundamental changes to the Constitutional proposals were minimal. Perhaps most important was the lack of a unified civil service. “The Federation was to suffer throughout its brief life from the existence of four sets of officials whose divergent traditions, opportunities and loyalties constituted a perpetual background of uneasiness and uncertainty.”¹⁵¹ Later as the Federation came under attack from competing sides, the four divergent civil services were incapable or unwilling to defend the institution.

Back in the colonies, debates were held in the Southern and Northern Rhodesian parliaments over the 1952 report on federation. The fundamental issue then, and throughout the federation, was the balance of power between whites and Africans.

¹⁵⁰ Welensky pg. 42.
¹⁵¹ Blake pg. 264.
Historian Robert Blake sums it up, “The arguments which reassured the Europeans alarmed the Africans and the arguments which might persuade the Africans disturbed the Europeans.” Eventually Welensky and Huggins were both able to secure the necessary votes in their respective legislatures to push the measure through Parliament.

In April 1953 referendums were held in the Rhodesias to ensure public support for federation. Nyasaland was exempt as it had never held elections before and had no parliament. Two-thirds majority was required by the 1952 conference before the Constitution could be enacted. In Southern Rhodesia, where federation was born 25,570 voted in favor and 14,729 opposed federating. This is telling of several aspects. Firstly nearly a third of all Southern Rhodesians opposed federation as early as 1953. This is a massive split in an already small white minority. Additionally, few Africans were eligible for the franchise in Southern Rhodesia (a few hundred). The 1953 referendum would surely have killed federation if African enfranchisement had been meaningful.

The previous March the proposal for federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland was put before the British House of Commons. After a lengthy debate it was passed 304-260. The same split witnessed by Southern Rhodesian voters is noticed in the House of Commons vote. Federation was never a political principle with large scale support in either the colony or the métropole. In any event, on July 14th the federation was given royal approval and came into existence.

152 Blake, pg. 266.
154 Blake pg. 269.
The Federation’s Pinnacle (1953-1957)

With the Central African Federation becoming the newest government in the world, elections were first necessary to form a government. Sir Roy Welensky and Sir Godfrey Martin Huggins created a new political party, the United Federal Party, to contest the elections. In December 1953, the first federal elections took place. The results are quite telling:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Number of Voters</th>
<th>Percentage of Voters 155</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Federal Party</td>
<td>25,527</td>
<td>64.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Parties</td>
<td>13,376</td>
<td>35.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The United Federal Party won 24 of the 26 elected federal seats. Analysis of the election returns demonstrates that while the UFP received nearly 2/3rds of all votes, a third of the electorate held anti-federation attitudes.

The 1953 election is a particularly important litmus test for the Federation’s concept of multiracialism. The franchise granted to the African population shows quite clearly the length the Federation had to go to achieve this. In Southern Rhodesia only 441 Africans voted. In Northern Rhodesia 3 Africans voted and none voted in Nyasaland. This was offset with the reservation of nine parliament seats for the African population. Six were Africans themselves, with the remaining three being reserved for white representatives.

155 Letter from Peter Bird Martin to Walter Rogers/Institute of Current World Affairs. ‘Election Results’ Dec. 17th 1953. pg. 7.

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This ensured that the African voice not present at the ballot box was at least present in Parliament.

The formation of a federal parliament, which enlisted the most powerful political figures from each colony created a local power vacuum in the Rhodesias. This allowed for backbench politicians in the provinces to assume control in their respective colonial governments. Of particular importance is the election of Garfield Todd as Southern Rhodesia Prime Minister in 1953. Todd is an anachronism in Rhodesian politics. Elected by a population devoted to ensuring the continuation of white rule, Garfield Todd opposed the principle of minority rule. As a missionary, Todd advocated for the African franchise and liberalizing Rhodesian racial policies. Robert Blake writes, “If Todd had proclaimed anything which went much beyond them {white Rhodesians}, he would never have been elected. The truth is that Todd was a liberal of his times.” Were it not for a dearth of other viable candidates, Todd would never have been elected in 1958.

The election of Garfield Todd demonstrates the precarious and conflicted nature of politics in Southern Rhodesia. With most seasoned politicians assuming federal positions, Todd was elected Prime Minister. White voters elected a progressive who never reflected their values. This is owed in part to a lack of viable candidates and also to the sheer complexity of Rhodesian politics.

156 “Sir Garfield Todd: Liberal Rhodesian Premiere Brought Down Over Black Reforms” The Guardian
157 Blake pg. 287.
The 1953 election held several ominous signs for the Federation’s future, most notably a split electorate and the election of the liberal Garfield Todd. However, for the time being the Federation of the Rhodesia and Nyasaland was secure enough to pursue its goal of advancing Central Africa. Under its first Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Martin Huggins, the institution was able to manifest an amazing track record during the first few years.

From economic indicators the Federation was a monumental success. From 1954 to 1956 the GDP rose from £350.6 million to £448.7 million. This was a result of several different forces, from a rise in copper prices to new credit lines afforded the Federation. While this growth would slow towards the end of the Federation, there was economic growth every year except 1963. The GDP and standard of living also rose in all three colonies for whites and Africans alike. Central Africa was a booming economic sphere during the tenure of the Federation.

The Federal government undertook several projects during this early period which were meant to actualize the economic and racial promises on which the institution was predicated. The first, and most audacious, was the creation of the Kariba dam in 1955 {fig. 4}. As historian Robert Blake writes “Kariba was undoubtedly the most spectacular achievement of the Federation”. However the project was not without its problems, which spoke to larger issues facing the Federation. Central Africa had long needed more power for the expanding economy of the region. Two possible sites were chosen for the construction of a hydro-electric plant, Kariba and Kafue. The latter was located within

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158 Hazelwood pg. 189.  
159 Blake pg 293.
Northern Rhodesia while the former was located primarily in Southern Rhodesia. Initial reports stated that a dam at Kafue would be economically more feasible and yield results sooner. However, Southern Rhodesia flexed its muscles in the Federal parliament and Kariba was chosen. This led to an immense conflict with Northern Rhodesia. “Like the sitting of the capital, it seemed to suspicious northerners another example of Southern Rhodesian ascendancy.” With the project finished in 1959 the Kariba Dam furnished power to the entire region and became a testament to both the potential of federation and to the divisive interests plaguing it.

In 1946, a private airline company, Central African Airlines was founded in Southern Rhodesia. Meant as a regional airline, the company quickly came to dominate flight throughout Central Africa. At its peak, during federation, the airline flew in over half a dozen countries and was an economic marvel for the Federation. The propaganda value was not lost on the Federation as a travel brochure for Central African Airlines points out, “CAA is a symbol of that evolution which has transformed, in a short space of years, the picture of Rhodesia and Nyasaland from a vast bush country to a thriving area of civilization.” Together with the Kariba dam, the Central African Airlines became the economic justifications for the Federation as a successful enterprise.

Besides economic justifications for the continued existence of a federation in Central Africa, there were racial successes as well. In 1955, the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was created. Here, like in the cases of the Kariba dam and the CAA, the

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160 Blake pg. 293.
161 “Aviation in Northern Rhodesia” John Crowle http://www.nrzam.org.uk/Aviation/CAAhistory/CAA.html
162 Ibid., pg. 6.
base for the institution was Southern Rhodesia, much to the dismay of Northern Rhodesia. From the outset, the biggest issue facing the university was the policy of admittance for Africans. Pressure from British universities led to the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland becoming the first multiracial university in the Federation. “The higher education of Africans was a subject of crucial significance and clearly young people of all races would have to be given opportunities to achieve greater understanding if partnership was to acquire any meaning in the new Central African State.”

Stress Fractures in the Federation (1958-1960)

A constant in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was a battle over the franchise. The franchise qualifications were never based on race. There were however literacy and income qualifications. These two qualifications essentially restricted all Africans from political participation. Looking only at Northern Rhodesia, the reality of the situation becomes apparent. In 1957, there were 2,360,000 Africans in the colony with only eleven on the voters roll.

The core principle of partnership between the races was simply not being implemented by the politicians of the Federation. The reason for this schism between theory and its practical application was simple. Federal politicians were elected by a white electorate which did not advocate meaningful African enfranchisement. The result was a system which seemed unable to counter the demand by Africans for the vote, with a white electorate unwilling to concede power.

The most visible example of this battle between the two sides came in the 1958 removal of Garfield Todd from office in Southern Rhodesia. During his five years in

164 Kirkwood pg. 24.
165 Welensky pg. 88.
office, Todd had argued for a greater African franchise. After an internal revolt by his
cabinet, Todd was forced to resign as Prime Minister. This led to the Election of 1958
whereby Sir Edgar Whitehead was elected Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia.¹⁶⁶

This election wherein the United Federal Party barely garnered a majority was a
watershed moment for Southern Rhodesia and the Federation. It was an affirmation that
politicians (i.e. Todd), who implemented sweeping racial changes would not be tolerated.
The stark difference between Southern Rhodesian voters and the Federation’s multiracial
ideal was evident by 1958. It also reaffirmed the unstable majority pro-federal politicians
held.

In the metropole the British government had constantly advocated changes to
franchise qualifications in the Federal constitution. The result was advocates of federation
(Welensky and Huggins) attempting to concede to British demands and to placate a
nervous white electorate in the colonies. The result was trivial changes to the franchise
requirements in 1958.¹⁶⁷

Larger Forces at Work

The Federation as an institution was constantly suffering from a mandate of the
slimmest majority. A myriad of territorial elections and Constitutional referendums
diverted attention away from more pressing issues both internally and abroad. It would be
these larger issues, rather than bureaucratic procedures, which would doom the
Federation in the coming years.

¹⁶⁶ Welensky, pg. 91.
¹⁶⁷ Bull pg. 16.
Nyasaland

In 1959, Dr. Hastings Banda returned to Nyasaland after 33 years abroad {fig. 5}. During this period, Banda traveled the world and understood that meaningful democracy was needed in Central Africa. As such, Banda became the leading voice calling for the destruction of the Federation. In a letter to Lord Alport, Banda codifies this intention, “I have always maintained that the people of Nyasaland would rather starve on their own than have full stomachs under the Federation. Nyasaland must be allowed to leave the Federation and the quicker the better for all concerned.”

With Banda’s arrival, violence across Nyasaland increased dramatically. “The chances of peaceable constitution-making along conventional lines were diminishing rapidly day by day. There was an accumulation of small but disturbing incidents in the principle towns of Nyasaland”. The violence in Nyasaland was simply too much for the small police force (1,707 with only 100 white police in the entire colony). As such, a state of emergency was declared in February 1959.

The Belgian Congo/Katanga Crisis

With African nationalism gaining a firm foothold in Nyasaland, this was only solidified by events in neighboring countries. June 30th 1960 saw the Belgian Congo gain independence and become an independent state. From the beginning this had several ramifications for the Central African Federation. Northern Rhodesia shared a substantial border with the Belgian Congo. With the end of Belgian rule, the buffer that had existed between the Federation and nationalist states was no longer.

170 Welensky pg. 114.
On July 11th 1960, the Southern most province of Katanga seceded from the Congo.\textsuperscript{171} This left the Federation in an awkward position. Katanga was led by Moise Tshombe, a moderate and possible ally for the Federation. However the British government supported the Congolese government. The resulting standoff known as the ‘Katanga Crisis’ demonstrated the clear difference between metropole policies and colonial policies. Lord Alport writes on the serious effects Katanga had on relations, “the issue of control of the Northern Rhodesia/Katanga frontier which at one stage unfortunately became magnified to a point where it put a substantial strain on relations between Her Majesty’s Government and the Federal Government.”\textsuperscript{172}

While the Federal Government acquiesced and did not support Tshombe and his secession, the resulting violence in Katanga did not go unnoticed by whites in the Federation. As Welensky would later write, “I am living next door to the Belgian Congo and the tragedy that occurred there. You just don’t realize the effect on Rhodesians of having had some 10,000 to 13,000 refugees living in their homes and having had to listen to the stories of rape, murder and the atrocities that took place.”\textsuperscript{173} This merely entrenched white fears over African Nationalism and its ramifications in their colonies.

Macmillan’s ‘Wind of Change’ Speech

With Great Britain committed to the process of decolonization, Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan undertook a tour of British Africa in 1960. The pinnacle of his tour was the February 3rd speech to the Parliament of South Africa where he

\textsuperscript{172} Letter from Lord Alport to the Rt. Hon. Duncan Sandys Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. 

January 26\textsuperscript{th} 1962.
\textsuperscript{173} Welensky pg. 206.
famously stated “The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.”^{174}

Before this monumental speech, Macmillan toured the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland {Fig. 6}. His brief tour in late January was unremarkable in most respects, except for one. Macmillan had commented to reporters that “Before the British Government’s ultimate responsibility over Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia is removed, the people of the two territories will be given an opportunity to decide on whether the Federation is beneficial to them.”^{175} The underlying meaning was clear; at some point African political involvement would be implemented as policy. Then all federal citizens could decide the Federation’s future. This caused immense nervousness throughout the colonies. Remarks made by the British Prime Minister were clear; the British advocacy for federation was essentially null at this point. Macmillan’s ‘wind of change’ speech was a watershed moment for the continent, and in the Federation’s case it was affirmation that the end was in sight.

**The Death of the Central African Federation (1960-1963)**

After his arrival back in Great Britain, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan appointed a Royal Commission to examine the prospects on the continuation of federation. Under the leadership of Lord Monckton of Brenchley, the Monckton Commission instantly became a lightening rod of controversy. As Welensky wrote, “We pointed out that a Commission, far from doing any good, might be extremely damaging to us; that it would be dangerous to give the Africans the idea that all they had to do was riot and then a Commission

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http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eraindependence/p/wind_of_change2.htm  
^{175} Welensky pg. 171.
would immediately be sent our from England to decide whether or not they were right."\(^{176}\)

When released in September 1960, the Monckton Commission Report stated what had long been suspected by Welensky, Huggins and other Federation supporters. Wide sweeping constitutional changes were a prerequisite for the continuation of the Federation. Among its recommendations were a universal franchise and the right of each colony to secede.\(^{177}\) The only move available to Federation supporters was to support a Federal Review Conference to debate the prospects of implementing the commission’s recommendations.

The Federal Review Conference in December 1960 was the very essence of the changing face in British Central Africa. Invited were African representatives from all three colonies. Their speeches demonstrate quite clearly the direction of the colonies. “We are not interested in partnership. Nationalism is a force and we meant to rule Africa...We claim every inch from the Cape to Cairo, from Senegal to Mombassa...We mean to rule Nyasaland, we mean to rule Southern Rhodesia, we mean to rule the whole of Africa.”\(^{178}\) This leaves little doubt as to the direction Central Africa was heading.

After months of committee meetings, delay tactics and infighting, the result was a drastic restructuring of the Federal Constitution. Greater African enfranchisement and the ability of each colony to secede were the most visible changes. Changes were also implemented into the constitutions of each colony. Nyasaland would be the first colony to realize these changing dynamics. In August 1961 elections were held wherein due to a larger franchise, the Malawi Congress Party won a majority in the Nyasaland Parliament.

\(^{176}\) Welensky pg. 142.
\(^{177}\) Wood pg. 814.
\(^{178}\) Speech by Orton Chirwa. Welensky pg. 288.
Hastings Banda became the de-facto Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{179} The following year saw Banda push for Nyasaland to secede from the Central African Federation.

A substantial portion of Southern Rhodesia, under Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead, was also growing weary of federation. As Harold Macmillan would later write in his memoirs, “Whitehead...was more concerned about the urgent problem of Southern Rhodesia which had become impatient and restive at the idea of remaining in the Federation if this proved likely to impede the path to independence.”\textsuperscript{180}

Historian Steven Hintz surveyed this changing ideological shift in the white population in Southern Rhodesia from 1958-1965. His study shores up the argument that minority rule was becoming more entrenched in Southern Rhodesian society.

\textsuperscript{179} Welensky pg. 313.
Hintz argues that the United Federal Party’s policy of greater African enfranchisement alienated whites in Southern Rhodesia to the point where they shifted political allegiances. This shift led to Southern Rhodesian opting to leave the Federation in 1963. Hintz writes, “As racial issues became more increasingly important, more voters chose their party mainly on the basis of its racial policies”.

What is evident is that combined, the ideologies of minority and majority rule, were advocating for secession from the Federation. The pressure put upon the institution was simply too much by 1961. With both external and internal factors in play, British Central Africa was forced to drop its experiment in multiracialism.

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The dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland came on December 31st 1963 \{fig. 7\}. The Northern News polled citizens as to how they would spend the last day of federation.\(^{182}\) Most responded with indifference, some responded with bittersweet memories of the experiment, and others were excited over it. The same split witnessed in the populous in 1953 over federation was still very much present in 1963. As to the two men who had spent their political lives on the idea, both spent the final day quietly at their respective homes. Sir Godfrey Martin Huggins enjoyed his nightly ritual of a drink of whiskey. Sir Roy Welensky went to bed early and woke up the next morning a private citizen in a different Central Africa.\(^{183}\)

\(^{182}\) *The Northern News* December 23\(^{rd}\) 1963.
\(^{183}\) Wood pg. 1231.
Figure 1: Sir Roy Welensky (Reprinted from Welensky, Roy. *Welensky's 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland*. Collins Publishing: London, 1964.)
Figure 2: 1st Viscount Malvern, Sir Godfrey Martin Huggins (Reprinted from Godfrey Martin Huggins Viscount Malvern 1883-1971. The Central African Journal of Medicine Publishing: Salisbury.)
Figure 3: P.M. Garfield Todd (center) with Cabinet, January 1958 (reprinted from Wood, J.R.T. The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Graham Publishing: Durban, 1983. This photograph is housed in the National Archives of Zimbabwe)
Figure 4: Kariba Dam (Reprinted from personal collection)

Figure 5: Hastings Banda (Reprinted from Welensky, Roy. Welensky's 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Collins Publishing: London, 1964.)
Figure 6: Prime Minister Harold Macmillan Visiting Central African Federation
(Reprinted from Welensky, Roy. Welensky's 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

“This yearning after the distant and the unseen is a common propensity of our nature; and how much is the force of that 'secret impulse' cherished and strengthened in the minds of us Englishmen, by all the associations in the midst of which we are educated! Masters of every sea, and colonists of every shore, there is scarcely a nook which our industry has not rendered accessible, scarcely a region to which the eye can wander in the map, in which we have not some object of national interest—some factory for our trade, some settlement of our citizens. It is a sort of instinctive feeling to us all, that the destiny of our name and nation is not here in the narrow island which we occupy.”

-Herman Merivale Lectures on Colonization and Colonies

Take up the White Man's burden-
Send forth the best ye breed-
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;

-Rudyard Kipling The White Man's Burden

The Central African Federation is in many respects an aberration of history. It stands as the only attempt on the African continent, save post-apartheid South Africa, to create a multiracial state. Wedged between the dueling forces of white and black nationalism, the Federation led a tenuous decade long existence. Its collapse in 1963 marks the end of a unique experiment in the fading days of colonial rule.

As a subject of historical enquiry, the Central African Federation is yet again caught between larger forces. Historians of the British Empire and Africa have devoted more

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attention to the earlier periods of British involvement in Central Africa and to the period following Rhodesia's independence from Great Britain in 1965. The years 1953-1963 have been given scant academic scrutiny. Both during its existence and in the history books, the Federation exists in limbo.

This project was undertaken with several goals in mind. There was a conscious effort to examine the Central African Federation from a fresh historical perspective. With the last research on the topic dating back over 20 years, recent scholarship was necessary. The work offers a perspective that takes into account voices not previously examined.

The existing research on the Central African Federation never fully answer the most fundamental question, namely why the institution collapsed. This project has argued that contrary to previous histories on the Federation, institutional failures were not the root causes of disintegration. Larger ideological forces were at play on the African continent. The lack of firm support for multiracialism by the British government and the general public left the Federation at the whim of white and black nationalisms. Fundamental to this ideological struggle was a shift away from Great Britain as the métropole, with the colonies themselves becoming the center. For settlers, the British Empire became irrelevant, particularly during the period of federation. This complimented the formation of a nascent national identity, among white settlers.

Guiding Questions for the Project

Several questions guided this project. Why had Great Britain been unable or unwilling to take a firm stance on the future of the Central African Federation? British attitudes towards the colony were at best waffling and at worse sabotage. Contributions from the larger historical research into the British Empire spoke of an imperial project at
its wane. Britain was reverting its attention back to the European continent and away from colonial ventures. Primary research on the Federation back up this assessment in several forms. The writings of Lord Alport, British High Commissioner to the Federation, provide an insight into the mindset of British political circles. There was a clear dislike for the prospect of continued involvement in Central Africa. The newspapers of the Federation also clearly demonstrate Britain's global hand print was minimizing. The portrayal of Great Britain's handling of the Suez Canal Crisis is particularly telling. And finally the testimonies by citizens of the Federation show a populace largely aware that Great Britain was a disinterested partner who was either unwilling or unable to effectively govern.

Understanding how the three ideologies (minority rule, majority rule and multiracialism) manifested themselves in the Federation was another factor guiding this project. In post-modern style, power manifested itself in various formats. Proponents of the three ideologies embraced a multitude of means in getting the political message across. My particular research has led to the role the printed media played in this power equation. This will be expanded upon below.

This project was influenced by the larger issue of federations across the British Empire. For over a century the British federated large and often diverse areas into a political unit. This strategy worked to varying degrees of success. The failure of federating Central Africa is better understood when put in the context of other federal experiments. Many of the same issues facing British Central Africa (identity, issues of race, a collapsing Empire) were present in other federal failures (most notable the West Indies). The historical literature on the field of British imperial federalism has provided
an immense boon to framing this project in a larger context. Conversely this project has contributed to the literature by complementing many of the arguments laid forth by previous historians.

Contentions in the Project

Several arguments have been laid forth in this project. Together they weave a complex narrative of an imperial attempt to rule over a patchwork of colonies with different political, social, economic and geography conditions. The Central African Federation was ground zero for a debate among three ideologies for political hegemony. African nationalism (majority rule), white nationalism (minority rule) and multiracialism all vied for total control over the political makeup of British Central Africa. The significance is the portrayal of the institution as one very much in flux.

Access to the testimonies before the House of Commons in 1961 has provided a window into the complexity of the public’s perceptions of their colony. While demarcating differences along any sort of spatial lines is quite difficult, patterns do exist. Racial and economic markers appear to be the most important markers in determining one’s opinion on the Federation.

The white population in the colony, far from being a monolithic segment, was divided upon the colony’s political future. When whites are broken down into economic categories (farmer, urban, business, etc), the differences become more apparent. Rural whites held more racial and firm political beliefs in white nationalism. Their identification of themselves as ‘white Africans’ indicates a nascent national identity is being formed during these crucial years. British settlers are slowly but surely becoming Rhodesians.
Africans were also divided as to the future of their colony. While universal in their support for greater franchise there is an interesting division with some opting to remain a British protectorate and not a Rhodesian satellite (mostly Nyasalanders). However the majority of Africans, as their testimonies demonstrate supported full independence. Here too a nascent national identity was being formed.

The benefits provided by the public testimonies to the larger project are immense. They reframe the Federation away from being a story only of an imperial project. The testimonies give agency to the people of the Federation. It demonstrates that they had a powerful role in determining their colony’s fate. The historiography of the Federation has largely centered on institutions in London and Salisbury. This project has rejected that format in favor of a cultural angle.

With the peoples of the Federation identifying more with their colony versus Great Britain, a remarkable change resulted. The next nuance to this project is arguing that this meant a shift in the definition of the metropole. With all roads previously leading to Great Britain, a nascent national identity in Central Africa changed this. The colony itself was the center, with Great Britain becoming the periphery. This is just as much the doing of a failing British Empire as the creation of a nascent national identity. The two worked in tandem to force a change in this mental picture. Previous historians of the Federation, most notable J.R.T Wood and Robert Blake, fail to address this subtle change and its impact on the colony’s future.

Early historians of the British Empire wrote of a structure where power flowed only from the metropole outward to the colonies. With the advent of New Imperial histories in the 1980’s, power to determine imperial policies originated both in the metropole and

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185 Of note are Robinson and Gallagher and Bernard Semmel.

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the peripheries.\textsuperscript{185} This project continues with the themes of New Imperial History. Attention to ‘non elite’ voices, the role of culture and alternative sources of power have all guided this project from inception to completion.

These contentions all contribute to understanding the failure of the Central African Federation. The institution was unable to withstand the ideological battle raging within its borders. As federation was essentially a compromise between white and black nationalisms, it left both sides dissatisfied. With internal dissention among a certain percentage of the population, the colony was equally disliked on the continent. It was an experiment which became a pariah. Wedged between white and black states, the colony was never able to garner meaningful support from both within and outside its borders.

\textbf{Contributions to the Historical Literature}

A focus of this work has been the role of the printed media in British Central Africa. The extensive literature on the British press helped frame the role played by Federation’s newspapers in the larger imperial context. The trends present in the British press are evident in the Federation’s press. Of significance is the tendency of papers to align themselves ideologically and to become mechanisms for imperial causes. This is precisely the case in the Federation’s papers. The colony’s printed media has provided a new window into the complexity of public opinion. It is evident that all three ideologies had their respective newspapers which reflected a certain segment on the population. Together they demonstrate just how varied public opinion was when it came to the question of governance.

\textsuperscript{185} This change is noticed in Forging the Raj by Thomas Metcalf (Oxford University Press). It chronicles the change from older histories to New Imperial history.
The role of public opinion in shaping political discourse is a vital element of the project. It has been a source of power and influence thus far not considered. Taking this ‘man on the ground’ perspective to the next level several conclusions can be made. There was a healthy debate taking place by people both in the colony and outside its borders. Political participation was as high as it was because of the stakes involved. On a volatile continent shaping the entire structure of a country has massive implications. Entire ways of life were at stake. Unlike political debates in the West, this was a zero sum game. There could only be one dominant ideology. If African nationalism won out, white prestige would be eradicated. If white nationalism continued its dominance, the African populace would have no meaningful political participation. The two were diametrically opposed to the point where the compromise of a multiracial federation appeased neither.

Implications for the Real World

The latter half of the twentieth century would prove to be the most important period in the history of the African continent. With decolonization sweeping across the land, the political, social and economic makeup of Africa was undergoing rapid change. The years 1953-1963 would prove to be a transition period for British Central Africa. With a substantial white settler population unwilling to yield power and with traditional imperial ties, Great Britain was not yet ready to cut imperial ties with its colonies in the region.

However, a collapsing Empire, a British population unwilling to lead fused with a rising United States forced change upon British Central Africa. 1964 saw two of the three federal colonies become independent African states (Northern Rhodesia became Zambia and Nyasaland became Malawi). For both, the post independent period would be a time of economic and political stagnation. Zambia became embroiled in a proxy war with its
former federal partner Southern Rhodesia. Malawi would suffer from misrule under its long time president Hastings Banda.

Southern Rhodesia, home to the largest segment of white settlers, would diverge from the pattern of becoming an African state. Talks over the political future of the colony after Federation reached a stalemate. The British government was pushing for African independence, with white Rhodesians opting for dominion status. In November 1965, Southern Rhodesia (now Rhodesia) declared it’s independence from Great Britain. The crux argument for Rhodesian independence came from repeated claims that Britain would grant Rhodesia dominion status. Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith described the situation:

"There was within my whole system a very strong desire to preserve my links with the history and tradition and culture that I had been brought up to respect and believe in....Within Britain itself, we were landed with a socialist government, hell-bent on appeasing the cult of Marxism-Leninism, at the expense of the old traditional values of the British Empire.... But most important, and above all else, was the treatment to which we had been subjected: the breaches of agreements, the double standards, the blatant deception and blackmail with which we were confronted. Rhodesians simply wished to be left to lead their own lives."\(^{187}\)

Rhodesians understood themselves as the step-children of the British Empire. They leveled the same charges of misrule that many other non-settler colonies did as well. By 1965 a clear Rhodesian identity had risen from the ashes of the colonial experience. Prime Minister Smith’s comments demonstrate the shift away from Britain and a realigning towards Rhodesia. The Universal Declaration of Independence would lead to an international standoff which would continue until 1980.

In 1980, Rhodesia became the independent African state of Zimbabwe. After a fifteen year standoff between white Rhodesians and the British, an independent Zimbabwe was seen as a beacon of hope in Africa. However, under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe would follow the pattern set by Zambia and Malawi, namely inept leadership and corruption. In 2000, the Mugabe government undertook a seizure of all white commercial farms. Aimed at crushing supposed opposition, it pushed the country into a tailspin. Zimbabwe now claims the world’s shortest life expectancy, highest inflation, and the largest percentage diaspora population in the world. The country today has fewer infrastructures than in 1951. Nearly a century of investment, financially and emotionally by British settlers in the country has been destroyed in less than a generation.

The dismal history of former British Central Africa owes its legacy in part to its imperial ties. The multiracial aim of the Federation to include the African population in meaningful political participation was never actualized. The result for Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe is a lack of a political history for Africans. Politicians with no history of effective governance were handed power with no checks. By not including the African population in the political process sooner, the British government virtually ensured a collapse in Central Africa.

Issues present during the tenure of the Central African Federation are still present in the former colonies. As Prime Minister Roy Welensky described it:

"And with the Federation gone, we in Central Africa are left with our great, challenging problem- easy to define but far from easy to solve. It is this: how do we reconcile, in our plural society, the legitimate interests and apprehensions of the most economically productive element in it, who happen to be in a minority, with the reasonable aspirations of the majority?"

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190 Welensky, pg. 364.
The attempt to reconcile the two competing interests has thus far failed in Southern Africa. The economic and political protection of a minority white population has not been a priority of African leaders. Whites in the former colonies of the Central African Federation have largely fled as a result of these policies.

At the heart of this remains the issue of identity. Both whites and blacks in these former settler colonies consider themselves African. The ramifications are immense when issues of land, economic aid and the franchise are factored into the equation. Just as in the Federation, there is an ongoing debate taking place at the micro level by the public in these countries as to the direction of their country.

The successes and failures of the Central African Federation ought not to be forgotten by the current inhabitants of the former colony. The issues faced by their predecessors are virtually identical. Learning from the lessons of those in the Federation can only help to ease Central Africa out of its colonial legacy and forward in the next century.
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