Introduction

100 years of empire and decolonization

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Britain was imperial before it was even British; that is to say that England's early modern colonial ventures preceded the political unification of the British Isles. Indeed, it was a colonial misadventure of the Scottish Parliament—the Darien Expedition—that accelerated the Act of the Union in 1707 by losing an estimated 25 per cent of Scottish liquid assets.[1] By this point, the English East India Company had been chartered for over a hundred years—trading, negotiating and warring with various parties in Asia—and the Royal African Company had already been selling enslaved Africans in the Caribbean for over four decades.[2] Jumping forward two centuries, when Chatham House was founded in 1920, the British Empire was more or less at its height, governing about a quarter of humanity.[3] The founders of Chatham House, such as Lionel Curtis, had been imperial officials and thinkers, in an era where international affairs were constantly entangled with the imperial question.[4] Alongside publications such as *The Round Table*, this journal now known as *International Affairs* soon became established as one of the 'in-house' journals of the British Empire, where a range of intellectuals, officials and politicians would come to discuss matters of concern.

Although the British imperial context of its origins is surprisingly invisible in Chatham House's public historical sketch,[5] from its inception the Institute hosted important discussions concerning the nature, conduct, ethics, strategy and consequences of the Empire. The proceedings of these earliest meetings include deliberations on the question of self-determination after Versailles, and who might demand it,[6] what to do with restive populations in the Middle East,[7] how to define the status

* This is an introduction to a collection of articles from the *International Affairs* archives, available at academic.oup.com/ia in October 2022. These archive collections bring together voices from across the past century to explore issues that continue to impact our lives.

1 Douglas Watt, *The price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the wealth of the nations* (Edinburgh: Luath Press Ltd, 2007).

2 It was in this period that Edward Colston served as one of its senior officers: Saima Nasar, 'Remembering Edward Colston: histories of slavery, memory, and black globality', *Women's History Review* 29: 7, 2020, pp. 1218–25, https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2020.1812815.

3 Christopher Alan Bayly, *Imperial meridian: the British Empire and the world, 1780–1830* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1989), p. 3.

4 David Long and Brian C. Schmidt, *Imperialism and internationalism in the discipline of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

5 Royal Institute for International Affairs, 'Our history', Chatham House website, https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/our-history, accessed 2 Oct. 2022.

6 Gilbert Murray, 'Self-determination of nationalities', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 1: 1, 1922, pp. 6–13, https://doi.org/10.2307/3014717.

7 Valentine Chirol, 'The Egyptian question', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 1: 2, 1922, pp.

of peoples in the Dominions,[8] how to maintain British rule in India,[9] the problems of racial governance in Africa,[10] and so on. It was widely agreed that the answers to these problems required serious research and knowledge. The Institute commissioned and published a series of relevant monographs, for example on the 'Problems of imperial trusteeship' as well as the famous 'Africa survey' by Lord Hailey.[11] It maintained an interest in empire, resistance and independence processes throughout the entire century, although for obvious reasons this waned after the 1960s.

From the beginning, although discussions in *International Affairs* were dominated by a combination of elite white[12] colonial administrators, scholars, historians and businessmen; elite representatives of colonized peoples were also occasionally invited to address the institute, and had their remarks published in *International Affairs*. While some were part of colonial indirect rule and on good terms with the British, such as the Maharaja Sir Bhupinder Singh of Patiala[13], others were considered more radical and ruffled establishment feathers: famously, Mahatma Gandhi in 1931 in the midst of the *satyagraha* mobilization, and Habib Bourguiba in 1961.[14] Following the dissolution of formal empire, *International Affairs* continued to publish articles on the affairs of former British colonies, post-colonial wars, the Commonwealth, development assistance, apartheid, inequality and racism.[15] In a wider sense, the journal, in line with the political establishment to which it is closest, has been perennially concerned with the question of Britain's place in the world, a space which was in its early years filled by the reassuringly clear form of the British Empire.[16]

55–71, https://doi.org/10.2307/3014631.

[8] J. Fischer Williams, 'Nationality in relation to the British Commonwealth of Nations', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 1: 3, 1922, pp. 90–93, https://doi.org/10.2307/3014568.

[9] George Lloyd, 'British foreign policy in Asia and its relation to India', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 4: 3, 1925, pp. 109–17, https://doi.org/10.2307/3014498.

[10] H. A. Wyndham, 'The colour problem in Africa', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 4: 4 ,1925, pp. 174–90, https://doi.org/10.2307/3014475.

[11] H. A. Wyndham, *Native education: Ceylon, Java, Formosa, the Philippines, French Indo-China, and British Malaya* (A report in the Study Group Series of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Problems of imperial trusteeship*) (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). H. A. Wyndham, *The Atlantic and slavery* (A report in the Study Group Series of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Problems of imperial trusteeship*) (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 310; H. A. Wyndham, *The Atlantic and emancipation* (A report in the Study Group Series of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Problems of imperial trusteeship*) (London: Oxford University Press,1937); William Malcolm Hailey, *An African survey: a study of problems arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

[12] Not all were straightforwardly 'British' in the sense that some had been born and worked in the colonies themselves, and sometimes choosing to be identified as e.g. 'Malayan' or 'Indian', etc. Many might have attended boarding schools and universities in England, but this was not necessarilythe case for everyone.

[13] Maharaja Sir Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, 'The problem of Indian states', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 7: 6, 1928, pp. 389–406.

[14] M. K. Gandhi, 'The future of India', *International Affairs* 10: 6, 1931, pp. 721–39, https://doi.org/10.2307/3015844. See discussion in Habib Bourguiba, 'The outlook for Africa', *International Affairs* 37: 4, 1961, pp. 425–31, https://doi.org/10.2307/2611066.

[15] See Jasmine K. Gani and Jenna Marshall, 'The impact of colonialism on policy and knowledge production in International Relations', *International Affairs* 98: 1, 2022, pp. 5–22, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab226; R. J. Vincent, 'Race in International Relations', *International Affairs* 58: 4, 1982, pp. 658–70, https://doi.org/10.2307/2618476.

[16] See Ben Horton, 'Introduction: 100 years of UK foreign policy', *International Affairs* archive collection, Feb. 2022, pp. 1–11, https://academic.oup.com/ia/pages/archive-collection-100-years-of-uk-foreign-policy; Randolph B. Persaud, 'Ideology, socialization and hegemony in disciplinary International Relations', *International Affairs* 98: 1, 2022, pp. 105–23, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab200.

It is therefore unsurprising that the number of articles from *International Affairs* which might come into the purview of an archive collection on 'Empire and decolonization' should be around 450, with contributions from figures as wide-ranging as Lord Lugard and Che Guevara.[17] The process of selecting twenty proved challenging, and the results may be somewhat surprising. I have deliberately avoided the large number of articles concerning India, the very centrepiece of the British Empire and one of its most researched and discussed parts, if only to provide an opportunity for a future issue entirely devoted to it. I have also limited my engagement with work by anti-colonial nationalist elites (with the exception of Nyerere), since they are not really representative of the broader discussions and tone within the journal, although I will engage with them from time to time. I have also focused on the period before the mid-1960s, with the exception of relevant discussions about the international economic system and attempts by formerly colonized countries to reform it.

Instead, this archive collection showcases how the intelligentsia of the British Empire attempted to deal with the surging contradictions within imperial practice in a milieu presumed to be liberal, internationalist and committed to human dignity. This introduction sketches four tensions present in *International Affairs* which evolve over the century: between settler colonialism and trusteeship; imperial peace and imperial conflict; anti-communism and self-determination; and between capitalism and sovereignty. While these are not exhaustive of the many themes covered under discussions of empire and decolonization, they point to various issues that continue to animate political struggle and international disorder into the present day.

Settler colonialism and trusteeship

The journal's discussions in the early twentieth century clearly displayed the tensions between different ideas and purposes for empire. There were at least four distinctive types of imperial governance at work within the British Empire in the 1920s: segregated, newly 'independent' white settler states (e.g. South Africa),[18] direct rule (e.g. the Raj in India), indirect rule (e.g. Northern Nigeria), and the mandate/trusteeship model under the auspices of the League of Nations (e.g. Palestine). These models parsed the overarching political frameworks of white supremacy and civilizational hierarchy in different ways, producing a variety of outcomes and internal tensions, especially between settler colonialism and trusteeship as modes of governance. They were also contending with the emerging norm of national self-determination, which Gilbert Murray elaborated in the opening article of the journal's first issue.[19] Here we look briefly at the debates that unfolded about Africa and Palestine in *International Affairs* in the early twentieth

[17] I am enormously grateful to Jo Hills of Chatham House for their excellent and extensive research on the archive, and the production of a thoughtful and judicious longlist of recommendations.

[18] Note that Ireland was of course by 1922 a Dominion with Home Rule, with a longer-established community of Protestant settlers.

[19] Murray, 'Self-determination of nationalities', pp. 6–13.

century, to illustrate that these situations shared key dynamics emerging from the contradictions of imperial practice.

Within Africanist circles, while there was a widely shared view that the peoples were essentially 'primitive' in political, cultural, economic and psychological dimensions,[20] there were different opinions on what to do as a result. Proponents of indirect, closely stewarded, but effectively permanent trusteeship, such as Lugard and Wyndham, considered African populations either incapable of, or culturally unsuited to, European social systems, arguing that they should be insulated from European education and the over-exploitation of capitalists.[21] Indeed, both were wary of extending white settlement in Africa on the grounds that this would disturb 'the natives''[22] own development and create a native proletariat for a white capital-owning class. They were particularly wary of 'educated natives'[23] in this regard, as able to mobilize populations in effectively alien traditions.

On the other hand, many liberal South Africans, such as Smuts and Curtis, saw in the South African model of white settlement an enormous hope for human progress through friendly relations between whites across the empire.[24] This approach was dependent on the maintenance of racial segregation resolved through the maintenance of different areas, rights and rules for whites and natives. Indeed, at this time, the South African, essentially segregationist, model was often seen as a progressive solution to the problem of race relations, although its later formalization in apartheid would be described by contemporaries within the Institute as 'deplorable'.[25] With passing decades, the biological racism underpinning both positions on Africa became less acceptable, as reflected in the journal's output. Nonetheless the influence of these ideas still linger through ideas around political maturity and readiness for self-government that pervade discourse.[26]

By the middle of the century, the question in the metropole was more 'when' rather than 'if' Africans could rule themselves. As such, the last few years of the Empire might be characterized as governed by a 'trusteeship' sensibility. This discourse was negotiated by African advocates for self-rule, who had diverse views of what that might entail: e.g. for Khama, a renewed tribal administration; for Nyerere, multi-racial democracy.[27] Yet, Nyerere was keen to point out that the

[20] But see, for example Norman Leys' objection to Wyndham's paper that rejects the biological basis of race: Wyndham, 'The colour problem in Africa', p. 189.

[21] Frederick Lugard, 'Problems of Equatorial Africa', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 6: 4, 1927, pp. 214–32, https://doi.org/10.2307/3015042; Wyndham, 'The colour problem in Africa'.

[22] Lugard, 'Problems of Equatorial Africa', pp. 214–32.

[23] Wyndham, 'The colour problem in Africa', p. 178.

[24] Jeanne Morefield, '"An education to Greece": the Round Table, imperial theory and the uses of history', *History of Political Thought* 28: 2, 2007, pp. 328–61; Jacob Kripp, 'The creative advance must be defended: miscegenation, metaphysics, and race war in Jan Smuts's vision of the League of Nations', *American Political Science Review* 116: 3, 2022, pp. 940–53, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421001362.

[25] C. E. Carrington, 'Decolonization: the last stages', *International Affairs* 38: 1, 1962, pp. 29–40, 33 https://doi.org/10.2307/2611378.

[26] Carrington, 'Decolonization', pp. 29–40. For more recent debates on political maturity, see Jonathan Hill, 'Beyond the Other? A postcolonial critique of the failed state thesis', *African Identities* 3: 2, 2005, pp. 139–54, https://doi.org/10.1080/14725840500235381.

[27] Tshekedi Khama, 'The principles of African tribal administration', *International Affairs* 27: 4, 1951, pp. 451–56, https://doi.org/10.2307/2608569; C. C. Harris and Julius Nyerere, 'Tanganyika today', *International Affairs* 36: 1, 1960, pp. 35–47, https://doi.org/10.2307/2609308.

presence of settlers should not obstruct the pathway for self-determination: 'We cannot accept that because we have white men settling within our communities we must wait two thousand years before we have the right to vote.'[28]

In the wider Middle East, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, racial and civilizational hierarchies were also invoked as rationales for the mandate system. The Swiss diplomat William Rappard, one of the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission, addressed Chatham House in 1925, emphasizing, in the language of the League of Nations, that the well-being of people 'who are not able to stand by themselves' was a 'sacred trust of civilisation', and the expected uplift for those people via contact with a 'civilised state'.[29] However, the attitude towards the Arabs among the imperial elite, in contrast to prevailing views about Africans, was that they were in principle amenable to self-government, particularly under the leadership of an able statesman.[30] Nonetheless, in Palestine, Britain had also made a commitment in the 1917 Balfour Declaration to support a Jewish national home. In practice, during the following decades it enabled increased Jewish immigration and self-administration through the recognition of an agency to manage Jewish affairs, whereas Palestinian Arabs increasingly experienced dispossession and a lack of political representation, leading to riots in the late 1930s.[31]

That Britain was pursuing a self-evidently contradictory imperial policy in Palestine was not lost on the participants in discussions at Chatham House, where representatives of both the Zionist organization and the Palestinian Arab delegation were invited to speak in the summer of 1936.[32] While both delegates purported to envisage a form of co-habitation in the territory, by 1939 the Report of the Palestine Partition Commission had been published in the journal, organizing the populations into different territorial boundaries with some retained mandatory power over territories which could not be allocated to only one side.[33] After stepping down from thirty years in the post of Director of Research at the Institute, Arnold Toynbee would describe Britain's policy in Palestine from 1917 to 1948 as a series of 'moral errors and political blunders'.[34]

In both contexts, tension between the political and economic formations of settlers, facilitated by the imperial government, and the framework for anticipated indigenous self-determination in the same territory was central. This played out in violent and disorderly ways during the century of change, particularly in South

[28] Nyerere, 'Tanganyika today', p. 45.

[29] Rappard, 'The practical working of the mandates system', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 4: 5, 1925, pp. 205–26.

[30] Arnold J. Toynbee, 'A problem of Arabian statesmanship', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8: 4, 1929, pp. 367–75, https://doi.org/10.2307/3014805.

[31] Emile Ghory, 'An Arab view of the situation in Palestine', *International Affairs* 15: 5, 1936, pp. 684–99, https://doi.org/10.2307/2602415; Matthew Hughes, *Britain's pacification of Palestine: the British Army, the colonial state, and the Arab revolt, 1936–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[32] Chaim Weizmann, 'Palestine to-day', *International Affairs* 15: 5, 1936, pp. 671–83, https://doi.org/10.2307/2602414; Ghory, 'An Arab view of the situation in Palestine'.

[33] John Woodhead, 'The report of the Palestine Partition Commission', *International Affairs* 18: 2, 1939, pp. 171–93, https://doi.org/10.2307/3019878.

[34] Arnold Toynbee, 'Britain and the Arabs: the need for a new start', *International Affairs* 40: 4, 1964, pp. 638–46, https://doi.org/10.2307/2611729.

Africa, Kenya and Rhodesia, and it may be argued well into the present in the space of what was Mandatory Palestine, as well as in other spaces around the world.

Imperial peace and imperial conflict

A second tension in discussions of Empire in the journal centred around whether it was ultimately a force for peace or war in the international system. For obvious reasons, the stability of the inter-imperial order had been thrown into some question by the explosion of the Great War in Europe, following a period which had been labelled by Karl Polanyi as the 'Hundred years' peace'[35], and by historian Keith Hancock as the 'Pax Britannica'.[36] Indeed, many saw and feared in the War a body-blow to the character of Western civilization itself.[37]

Yet, with the establishment of the League of Nations came a period of ascendancy for liberal imperial optimists, who saw in the Paris Peace Conference opportunities to promote their brand of internationalism, and it was in this context that Lionel Curtis set up the Institute. Part of a clique of South African officials known as 'Milner's kindergarten', Curtis's own internationalism was located in a belief in the advantages of Federation and Commonwealth as a way for (white/Anglo-Saxon) peoples of the world to live peaceably.[38] The often-international intellectual circle cultivated around the Institute was also well populated by those who saw themselves on the side of peace and progress, gathering to discuss which instruments or policies might best achieve this. South African statesman Jan Smuts, so instrumental to the founding of the League of Nations and United Nations, argued vigorously in 1930 that the British Empire itself (particularly the relationship between Britain and the white Dominions) presented the best model for how humanity might peacefully live together.[39] After observing the rising tensions in Europe over the decades since the War, in 1939 Curtis himself argued vigorously that nothing short of world government itself could secure peace.[40] While the latter was never contemplated or achieved, the idea of greater integration between 'like-minded' or 'culturally similar' political–economic entities as a means for promoting peace attained some traction in the twentieth century in the international system and persists as a political option in the present.[41]

This conviction that empire was a force for peace was, however, not universally shared. Indeed, it was clear in the debates in the 1920s and 1930s that Italian and German want for colonies were driven by a desire for equal polit-

[35] Karl Polanyi, *The great transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).
[36] Wm Roger Louis, 'Sir Keith Hancock and the British Empire: the Pax Britannica and the Pax Americana', *The English Historical Review* 120: 488, 2005, pp. 937–62.
[37] E.g. Guglielmo Ferrero, 'The crisis of western civilization', *The Atlantic*, 1 May 1920, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1920/05/the-crisis-of-western-civilization/567356/.
[38] Lionel Curtis, *The problem of the Commonwealth* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, Limited, 1916).
[39] J. C. Smuts, 'The British Empire and World peace', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9: 2, 1930, pp. 141–53, https://doi.org/10.2307/3015208; see also Jeanne Morefield, *Empires without imperialism: Anglo-American decline and the politics of deflection* (Oxford and New York: OUP USA, 2014).
[40] Lionel Curtis, 'World order', *International Affairs* 18: 3, 1939, pp. 301–20, https://doi.org/10.2307/3019676.
[41] See Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: a genealogy of a racialized identity in International Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

ical status as well as access to natural resources for economic advancement. While figures such as Lugard regarded the former as irrational or romantic, the latter was seen as perfectly legitimate.[42] In the same period, Toynbee, too, argued that colonial possessions were central to the grievances of the 'have-not' powers, who had not only an economic but also a demographic interest in acquiring space to expand.[43] The case linking the imperial world order and violent competition among imperial powers had in fact already been made forcefully by W.E.B. Du Bois some twenty years earlier, in his writings about the Great War and its origins in the quest for imperial and racial supremacy.[44]

The other destabilizing feature of colonial world order was of course the resistance to that order itself, which many British observers were slow to recognize and understand. Perhaps shielded from reports of imperial scandals, except where they concerned the practices of others, such as Belgium,[45] speakers at the Institute shared a sense that Britain had a better imperial record than other colonists, and that they had a duty to continue in that role.[46] Others were more circumspect. German economist Moritz Bonn in 1934 argued that although the modern world had been made by colonization, it was now undergoing a period of what he called 'counter-colonisation' or 'de-colonisation' as resistance to that order grew from the masses.[47] The socialist journalist H. N. Brailsford in 1939 was clear about the strength of nationalist feeling in Tunisia, but could not resist some admiration for the apparently pacifying effects of Italian fascism in Libya.[48] The editor of the *Straits Times*, G. W. Seabridge, felt it necessary to remind his fellow imperial citizens in 1945 that the Japanese occupation of south-east Asia had forever changed the perception of the white man there and that things would not, in fact, revert to how they were before the war.[49]

The tension between the belief in the general rightfulness of British imperial claims and the dubious symmetry of those of *arriviste* imperial powers is threaded through these debates. While most participants avoided a more pointed critique of empire, they nonetheless struggled to resolve the contradictions between the conviction that imperial states had legitimate aspirations to control the territories and resources of others, and the reality that this produced conflict between them. Further, both tendencies conflicted with the aspirations for democracy and self-government that they had newly come to see as irrepressible. At any rate,

[42] Lord Lugard, 'The basis of the claim for colonies', *International Affairs* 15: 1, 1936, pp. 3–25, https://doi.org/10.2307/2602028.

[43] Arnold J. Toynbee, 'Peaceful change or war? The next stage in the international crisis', *International Affairs* 15: 1, 1936, pp. 26–56, https://doi.org/10.2307/2602029.

[44] W. E. B. Du Bois, 'The African roots of war', *The Atlantic*, May 1915, pp. 707–14.

[45] A. Wauters, 'Belgian policy in the Congo', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 9: 1, 1930, pp. 51–62, https://doi.org/10.2307/3015623.

[46] See ensuing discussion in Lugard, 'The basis of the claim for colonies', p. 19.

[47] Moritz Bonn, 'The age of counter-colonisation', *International Affairs* 13: 6, 1934, pp. 845–47, https://doi.org/10.2307/2603330.

[48] H. N. Brailsford, 'Impressions of Tunis and Libya', *International Affairs* 18: 3, 1939, pp. 361–79, https://doi.org/10.2307/3019679.

[49] G. W. Seabridge, 'Some problems of the white man's return to south-east Asia', *International Affairs* 21: 2, 1945, pp. 196–205, https://doi.org/10.2307/3016364.

these contradictions would be resolved for them by the rapid spread of political independence in most of the colonized world in the coming decades.

Anti-communism and self-determination

A further twist in the tale surfaced in the tension between Britain and the western alliance's anti-communist geopolitical strategy, and the management of the end of empire. For manifested here was a tension between the image that they had assembled of the masses in the global South and political reality. Populations previously framed as bound by tradition, obeisant to vertically organized social bonds and ignorant of modernity, were adopting a highly modernist, egalitarian and anti-traditional ideological system, in ways which directly threatened western political dominance.

It was in east and south-east Asia where this tension became most acute and visible. The spectacle of the West's erstwhile ally Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi declaring Vietnamese independence from a war-battered France in September 1945, citing the American Declaration of Independence, precipitated a western response that lasted three decades, cost millions of lives and ended in two defeats. The French defeat in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu became a rallying event for anti-colonial struggles elsewhere; the American withdrawal marked the ignominious end of a bloody and, at home increasingly unpopular, war.[50]

For Britain, these tensions played out in Malaya in the same period, although resulting in anti-communist victory rather than defeat. Prior to and during the war, Malaya (including not only the Malayan Peninsula, but the strategically critical entrepôt of Singapore) was understood as vital to the functioning of the Empire/Commonwealth. Economist T. H. Silcock noted in 1952 that Malaya's large production of rubber and tin, which was exported to the United States, was central to the dollar–sterling relationship, and that Malaya was the most important dollar-earning territory in the sterling area.[51] Without this colony, Silcock predicted the disintegration of the sterling area, which in fact came to pass from 1964 onwards.

The Malayan 'emergency', thus, was not only a 'hot front in a cold war', in Silcock's term,[52] but emblematic of a rearguard action determined to retain the alliances and economic relationships of Empire. Over a decade between 1948 and 1960, British and Malay forces suppressed a Communist insurgency (with which it had co-operated against the Japanese) using methods which had been in other colonial contexts for pacification—a suspension of civil liberties, population-centric warfare and villagization, surveillance, espionage, interrogation and so on.[53] The result was indeed the prevention of Communists coming to power within

[50] Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p. 70.
[51] T. H. Silcock, 'Policy for Malaya 1952', *International Affairs* 28: 4, 1952, pp. 445–51, https://doi.org/10.2307/2604174.
[52] Silcock, 'Policy for Malaya 1952', p. 445.
[53] Laleh Khalili, *Time in the shadows: confinement in counterinsurgencies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 176–80.

Malaya, and the retention of the anti-Communist nationalist party in power, a fact widely celebrated by the British and anti-Communist Malays themselves.

Yet, the counterinsurgency campaign itself was profoundly violent and authoritarian, as would be so many campaigns and regimes installed during the Cold War to defeat Communists globally. [54] In Malaya, the British were accused of atrocities such as the Batang Kali massacre in 1948, and unclassified papers have recently confirmed secret British encouragement of anti-communist massacres in Indonesia.[55] Techniques developed in Malaya travelled to Kenya in the 'Kenya emergency', where public hangings became a common method of deterrence and punishment for rebel activity or association.[56] Not all British observers were, however, happy with these strategies, considering them a degradation of moral standing and a poor lesson for colonies coming to self-rule. In 1959, for example, a Parliamentary debate about the deaths of eleven prisoners in a camp in Kenya saw Conservative politician Enoch Powell speak against the lack of accountability for these crimes, and the political effect this would have:

> We cannot say, "We will have African standards in Africa, Asian standards in Asia and perhaps British standards here at home." We have not that choice to make. We must be consistent with ourselves everywhere. All Government, all influence of man upon man, rests upon opinion. What we can do in Africa, where we still govern and where we no longer govern, depends upon the opinion which is entertained of the way in which this country acts and the way in which Englishmen act.[57]

Although more concerned with the wider question of war and world order, there was a sense that the West might be losing its identity in the pursuit of anti-communism. In his address to the Institute in 1949 on 'The heritage of western civilization', historian E. L. Woodward gestures at this point, arguing that the true heritage of western civilization is the spiritual quest for freedom, and not material defeat of Communist institutions.[58] While the wider Cold War alliance nonetheless configured itself according to the latter objective, there remained unease in the political establishment about what it was sacrificing in the process.

Capitalism and sovereignty

The final tension to note, prominent during the end of empire and decolonization as discussed in the pages of *International Affairs*, was over the position of newly independent countries in the global economy. The transition processes after 1945 had been focused on national political arrangements and statuses—the shape of executive power, demographic representation, elections and citizenship,

[54] Phillip Deery, 'Malaya, 1948: Britain's Asian Cold War?', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9: 1, 2007, pp. 29–54.
[55] Paul Lashmar, Nicholas Gilby and James Oliver, 'UK's propaganda leaflets inspired 1960s massacre of Indonesian Communists', *The Observer*, 23 Jan. 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/23/uks-propaganda-leaflets-inspired-1960s-massacre-of-indonesian-communists.
[56] David Anderson, *Histories of the hanged: Britain's dirty war in Kenya and the end of empire* (London: W&N, 2006).
[57] *Hansard, HC Deb 27 July 1959 vol 610 cc181–262* [online], available at https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1959/jul/27/hola-camp-kenya-report.
[58] E. L. Woodward, 'The heritage of western civilization', *International Affairs* 25: 2, 1949, pp. 137–48.

negotiated in some cases between colonial governors and national independence movements. Yet, simultaneously the US was also re-shaping the international economic order—opening markets for access by US firms, establishing new forms of credit through the Bretton Woods institutions, breaking down imperial monopolies and establishing the dollar as the world's hegemonic currency.[59]

The terms of global economic engagement had been central to the critique of colonialism and empire prior to decolonization, and this carried through into what 'developing' countries discussed and sought in spaces like the Bandung Conference (1955) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). What many southern governments sought following independence was national control and regulation of economic policy, protection for industrial growth, currency stability, commodity price stability and funds for investment in basic productive capacity.[60] As Susan Strange argued in 1967, wealthy countries offering credit instead of aid, and continuously extending and restructuring this debt, made developing countries profoundly indebted, in ways which ultimately threatened both their financial health, as well as that of the international system.[61] Eventually, those countries were made to accept administrative supervision from creditors and donors in their state institutions to ensure debt repayment—a situation which Mkandawire understood as 'choiceless democracy',[62] and which Gathii described as a colonial relation.[63]

What the 'Third World' governments and economists had attempted instead, with the call for the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO), was a significant transformation of the global economic system, which would end the economic legacies of colonialism. By re-asserting national ownership of resources and industries, facilitating technological transfer, supervising transnational corporations effectively, ensuring price stability, as well as politically affirming an end to colonial domination and apartheid they hoped to build a just alternative to the existing international economic system.[64] As Gamani Corea, Sri Lankan economist and UNCTAD Secretary-General, put it in *International Affairs* in 1977, this was about more than economics—it reflected 'the insistence of the countries of the third world on belonging to, and being treated as, an integral part of the global order'.[65] Within these aspirations was a demand for a transformed

[59] Armand Van Dormael, *Bretton Woods: birth of a monetary system* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

[60] Craig N. Murphy, 'What the Third World wants: an interpretation of the development and meaning of the new international economic order ideology', *International Studies Quarterly* 27: 1, 1983, pp. 55–76, https://doi.org/10.2307/2600619.

[61] Susan Strange, 'Debts, defaulters and development', *International Affairs* 43: 3, 1967, pp. 516–29, https://doi.org/10.2307/2613731.

[62] Graham Harrison, *The World Bank and Africa: the construction of governance states*, first edn (London: Routledge, 2007); Thandika Mkandawire, 'Crisis management and the making of "choiceless democracies" in Africa', in R. Joseph, ed., *The state, conflict and democracy in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

[63] James Thuo Gathii, 'Sovereign debt as a mode of colonial governance: past, present and future possibilities', Just Money, 13 May 2022, https://justmoney.org/james-thuo-gathii-sovereign-debt-as-a-mode-of-colonial-governance-past-present-and-future-possibilities/.

[64] United Nations, 'Declaration on the establishment of a New International Economic Order', 1974, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/218450.

[65] Gamani Corea, 'UNCTAD and the New International Economic Order', *International Affairs* 53: 2, 1977, pp. 177–87, https://doi.org/10.2307/2616999.

international system, with rules that favoured the equity of sovereign nations and the promotion of global prosperity. Notwithstanding its adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1974, the NIEO never came to pass and was finally, according to Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, 'killed [off] with a smile' by Ronald Reagan at the North–South summit in Cancún in 1981.[66] Yet, the ideas that drove it continue to re-emerge in the wake of ongoing global economic turbulence, and increasing South–South co-operation in the present.

Conclusions

Over the last century, the debates on empire and decolonization that played out, *inter alia*, at Chatham House and within the pages of *International Affairs* have shaped the modern world profoundly. From the long impact of settler colonialism on rights to self-determination, the nature and causes of violent inter-imperial competition, the relationship between economic choices and political interventions, and broader questions of how the global economic order conditions sovereignty, the tensions that we have explored here, remain salient. Students of the international order must continue to reflect on and understand the constitutive elements of empire and colonialism in the modern order, so as to have analytic purchase on the tensions, pressures and ongoing calls for global transformation in the future.

[66] Michael Manley, cited in Gary B. Madison, *The political economy of civil society and human rights* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 186.