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To cite this article: A. G. Hopkins (2017) Globalisation and Decolonisation, The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 45:5, 729-745, DOI: [10.1080/03086534.2017.1370218](https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2017.1370218)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2017.1370218>



Published online: 26 Sep 2017.



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Globalisation and Decolonisation

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a broad reconsideration of the decolonisation of the Western empires. The argument suggests that existing studies are unable to capture the full significance of the process because they remain confined within the established borders of formal empires and concentrate principally on Asia and Africa. A much larger view is needed to relate decolonisation to a historic change in the character of globalisation. The first example, which is drawn from the crisis of the mercantilist empires at the close of the eighteenth century, outlines a case for including states within continental Europe in studies of imperialism, colonial rule and decolonisation. The second example outlines a programme for enlarging the boundaries of the subject after 1945. The material conditions that underpinned territorial empires, and the ideology that justified them, dissolved. With few exceptions, economic integration no longer called for, or allowed, territorial integration. Simultaneously, the moral order that sanctioned imperial dominance gave way to a new era of human rights. These profound shifts knew no frontiers; they applied globally. This interpretation is illustrated by tracing the effective decolonisation of the white dominions, by inserting an equally overlooked account of decolonisation in the informal empire, namely China, and by incorporating an example of internal decolonisation from outside the European empires: the United States. The conclusion suggests that the current historiography needs to be redrawn and that, in doing so, future studies of decolonisation will also compel other standard themes in post-war international history, such as the Cold War, to be rethought.

KEYWORDS

Empire; globalisation; Cold War; decolonisation; Europe; China; dominions; United States

Introduction

There have been two great waves of decolonisation during the period that historians characterise as the modern world. Both began abruptly with revolutions, which then unwound slowly over at least half a century. The first wave broke in the late eighteenth century with revolutions in the New World that resulted in the creation of independent states in the Americas. The second wave followed

World War II and produced a string of new states across Africa and Asia. These global transformations are widely recognised and have long been subjected to detailed scrutiny. Nevertheless, the existing literature is limited conceptually and, in consequence, spatially. The suggestion made here is not that 'more research is needed': that is always the case. It is rather that we need to reconsider the way in which we define decolonisation and allocate it to separate periods of history.

Globalisation and Decolonisation

Globalisation was not a uniform process that simply expanded and accelerated with the passage of time, but a series of unfolding phases or sequences. Each sequence advanced through a dialectical process. Global expansion created countervailing or competing forces; the struggle between them culminated in successive crises; each crisis resolved major incompatibilities and opened a new phase before eventually giving rise to a fresh set of conflicts.

Briefly put, there have been three such phases during the last 300 years.¹ The close of the eighteenth century marked the high point of 'proto-globalisation' and the crisis of its principal emissary, the military-fiscal state. The period culminated in a rash of major revolutions and was followed in the nineteenth century by a sustained and often violent struggle between conservatives, who tried to reverse the radical consequences of revolutionary upheaval, and progressives, who aimed to reaffirm them. The second great crisis, which struck in the late nineteenth century, arose from what can be termed 'modern globalisation', which was the product of two well-known processes: the spread of industrialisation and the creation of nation states. The transition was associated with the transfer of political power from the land to the town and with increasing social conflict. This was also the period of 'new' imperialism, which was a response of policy-makers to these challenges. The third phase, 'post-colonial globalisation', was initiated in the 1950s and remains operative today. An imperial dialectic was again at work: global integration of the kind that had fitted the needs of national-industrial states since 1850 had served its purpose. Imperial policy was obliged to adapt to changing circumstances: shifts in the world economy; the needs of the Cold War; the costs of holding on; the demands for self-determination. By the mid-1970s, territorial empires of the kind that had predominated for 200 years had lost their purpose and their legitimacy.

Self-evidently, these are vast themes that have already attracted libraries of research and cannot be covered in the space of one article. If it is impossible to survey what has been accomplished, however, it is still feasible to draw attention to what has been omitted. The comments that follow identify major gaps in the literature by citing, briefly, one example from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and, at slightly greater length, three examples from the mid-twentieth century.

The First Wave of Decolonisation

In the course of the eighteenth century, Britain's advanced military-fiscal state extended its reach into North America and Asia, and created a thriving relationship with the mainland colonies and the West Indies in particular. The story of this relationship forms the substance of the study of British imperial history during this period. The rise of the mainland colonies, their growing differences with Britain, and the revolution that few wanted have all been thoroughly examined. Similarly, books on imperial history routinely cover Britain's expansion into India through the agency of the East India Company and touch upon the Company's interests in China. Recent studies have also begun to allocate additional space to Ireland and Scotland in 'our island story'.

These established subjects will no doubt stimulate new thinking in future. For the present, however, I would like to suggest a way of widening my theme by including a continent that is omitted from current studies of imperial history: Europe. It is a commonplace for historians of Europe to refer to Napoleon Bonaparte's 'empire', but they do so without assimilating the literature on Europe's overseas empires.² Similarly, historians of overseas empires fail to recognise the commonalities between their specialisation and developments in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is an opportunity waiting to be taken.

At the close of the eighteenth century, Europe's military-fiscal states entered a crisis that resulted in revolution, war, and the political transformation of much of the continent. The French Revolution, the most important of Europe's upheavals, led through the turbulent 1790s to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte and his coronation as emperor in 1804. Napoleon demonstrated, with military decisiveness, how a republic could become an empire. He overran large swathes of Europe and established forms of government that anticipated the imperial regimes that were later established in Africa and Asia. In managing conquered territories, the emperor and his advisors distinguished between incorporated states, satellites, and allies, sought out collaborators, identified and suppressed 'insurgents', applied techniques of direct and indirect rule, and reformed existing legal systems. Napoleon's imperial representatives showed a very modern awareness of the power of symbolism in art, architecture, styles, and public displays, and demonstrated, to their own satisfaction, the matchless superiority of their culture.³ They also dealt with different types of resistance, including 'insurgents', established networks of informers, and created paramilitary units (*gendarmeries*) to control the populace.⁴ Napoleon himself personified Hegel's 'Hero', promoted an imperial cult that elevated martial values, assigned power to himself, and justified authoritarian government as a necessary means of bringing development to backward peoples. All these features of French rule in Europe anticipated much that was to come later in the century, when other Western states acquired or expanded overseas empires and adopted similar policies.

At that moment, the French saw themselves as creating a new Rome that would control and reshape the European order and, beyond that, the world. They wrapped imperial expansion in a civilising mission derived from Enlightenment theories of progress, and validated foreign conquests by asserting that the world needed to be rescued from barbarism, degeneracy, and sin, preferably by making it more French. According to Jules Michelet, the new religion of France was liberty, a cause that was universal, eternal, and morally superior to the grasping commercialism that characterised British expansion.⁵ These ambitions had momentum. Although Napoleon's global aspirations were halted in Egypt in 1798, his plans for a new Europe under French domination were not frustrated until 1815. Similar claims were to appear under other flags in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The United States itself has been called an 'imperial republic'.⁶

The analogy extends beyond 1815, when Napoleon was finally removed from power. The military-fiscal states that carried proto-globalisation to its highest point of development in the late eighteenth century suffered widespread damage from revolutionary movements and extended warfare between 1776 and 1815. The survivors limped into the nineteenth century; fractured remnants began to assemble a future. To representatives of conservative and authoritarian forms of government, the end of the French Wars was an opportunity to re-establish the pre-revolutionary order; to liberal reformers and radicals, it was the moment to carry forward or initiate changes that would transform politics and society.

This was the setting for Europe's principal political struggles during the nineteenth century. The French Revolution offered a new set of governing principles that reverberated throughout the nineteenth century.⁷ In proclaiming liberty, the French Wars set in train a series of convulsions that included the decolonisation of Austrian territories in the Southern Netherlands and parts of Germany, the occupation of Spain and parts of Italy, and the exodus of the Portuguese monarchy to its refuge in Brazil. In imposing autocracy and creating new imperial states, Napoleon provoked the formation of what, in effect, were anti-colonial resistance movements. The German states were first trampled over in the 1790s and then pushed into an unwanted confederation.⁸ The resulting proto-nationalist reaction eventually led to the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership. The effects of the long wars were also felt in the far north and south of the continent. The Nordic countries experienced political upheaval and economic disruption; the Italian states were freed from Austrian rule but placed under French colonial control. Resistance movements made their appearance in both regions. Norway rose against the imposition of Swedish control; *patrioti* in Italy rose against both Austrian and French rule and thereby laid the foundation of the *Risorgimento*; guerrilla activity in Spain helped to defeat the French army and opened the way for a new era of post-colonial politics.

The first half of the nineteenth century also saw the development of romantic national aspirations of the kind personified by Byron and Shelley, who helped to make 'freedom' an international cause. Mazzini and Garibaldi became not just national but international heroes who motivated volunteers from other European countries to join the cause of liberation. Mazzini developed a close relationship with William Lloyd Garrison, one of the most prominent campaigners against slavery in the United States.⁹ Mazzini wanted to free Italy from monarchy and foreign rule; Garrison wanted to free the United States from patriarchy and slavery. Both held that national unity was essential if free institutions were to flourish. Few foreign nationalists, however, matched the popularity of Lajos Kossuth, who led the Hungarian independence movement. When Kossuth arrived in the United States in 1851, he was treated as a public celebrity and received fulsome commendations from, among others, Abraham Lincoln.¹⁰ In death, Lincoln himself became the 'Great Emancipator' who inspired progressives throughout the world.¹¹

The concept of self-determination was formulated and acted upon long before Woodrow Wilson made it, momentarily, part of his programme for a peaceful settlement of World War I. Most of the continental European states that joined the rush into 'new' imperialism at the close of the century were, in one way or another, former French colonies. Viewed from this perspective, many of the nation states that arose in Europe in the course of the nineteenth century were products of decolonisation. The ex-empire struck back in Europe against France before striking out across the wider world in manifestations of 'new' imperialism at the close of the century.

Decolonisation After 1945

The story of decolonisation after 1945 also needs to be enlarged and rethought. The massive literature on this subject that has grown up since the 1960s has focused on the formal empire, British and French, in Asia and Africa. This is both understandable and easily justified. Countries in both continents secured independence during this period, beginning with India in 1947 and finishing with Africa in the 1970s. Moreover, both had been under-studied until that point, when scholars began to redress the balance by recovering what was called 'the indigenous point of view'. The work of subsequent generations of historians has now revealed layers of the pre-colonial past that are truly astonishing; graduates today are completing research that I, for one, could not have imagined, still less have executed.

It is necessary, therefore, to tread carefully in suggesting that this admirable body of literature needs to be recalibrated. To some extent, the problem arises from the need to master the sheer weight of data now available. Specialisation, though essential, has succeeded in dividing us. The result is that research is now anchored 'in one country': continents readily drift out of sight; cross-

continental comparisons, between say Africa and Asia, are too daunting for most of us even to contemplate. Nevertheless, specialisation necessarily confines our thinking. We can see the problem but not the solution because our training makes us, in Charles Darwin's phrasing, splitters rather than lumpers. My argument is not that studies of the formal empire in Africa and Asia need to be, in some way, demoted. It is rather that they can be enhanced by being seen as part of a truly global movement that is shaping the present century, as the revolutions of the eighteenth century shaped the century that followed.

I shall now outline a way of reconceptualising the wider context of decolonisation after World War II by suggesting that future research needs to incorporate three large segments of the world that are currently omitted from the story. One consists of a large part of the formal empire: the old 'white' dominions which, with the exception of South Africa, have no place in current studies of decolonisation. Another refers to a segment of the informal empire, China, which the literature also largely ignores. The third example steps outside formal and informal boundaries to incorporate half a continent, namely the United States.

The Old Dominions

Down to the 1960s, histories of the British Empire traditionally gave prominence to the dominions, the old colonies of white settlement in Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Around 1960, the orthodoxy collapsed and was replaced by a new focus on Africa and Asia. Imperial history suddenly became as dated as last season's fashion; worse still, anyone caught engaging with it was likely to be seen as an imperialist.

It would seem counter-intuitive to suppose that the dominions can be found a place in studies of decolonisation after 1945. After all, dominions were defined by being self-governing in internal affairs. After World War I they began to exert an influence on foreign policy too, and in 1931, following the Statute of Westminster, they acquired almost complete legislative autonomy. Most historians have taken the view that, by 1945, the story of the dominions is best told as one of new nation states rather than of continuing components of empire.¹² Things, however, are not always what they seem. Formal independence does not necessarily confer effective independence, and in 1945 the old dominions had still to make the transition from one state to another. Unlike crown colonies, they could not be directed to serve British interests, but they had a keen self-interest in preserving the ties that bound them to what was still referred to as the 'mother country'.

Ethnic affinities sustained connections that were independent of legislation or imperial command. Bonds of 'kith and kin' remained strong: in 1945, settlers in the dominions were still almost exclusively British in origin (with the partial exception of South Africa). Nationalism in the dominions was combined with

a powerful sense of what, in the language of the day, was known as 'race patriotism'. This much-advertised concept held out the prospect of combining two sets of affiliations that were still thought to be compatible, and remained so even after World War II. Material considerations underpinned these warm sentiments. The range of resources and advanced state of development among members of Britain's Anglo-world provided attractive opportunities for investment. Overseas trade links continued to orient the dominions towards Britain and provide markets for British manufactures, as did their commitment to the Sterling Area (with the exception of Canada). The British connection survived even in matters of defence, which had prompted Australia and New Zealand in particular to turn to the United States during the darkest days of the war. Cultural dependence in literature and the performed arts was well summarised in the notable Australian phrase, coined in the 1950s: 'cultural cringe'.

World War II was fought not to end empires but to restore and revitalise them. After 1945, successive British governments assumed that the dominions would have a leading role in realising this strategy. They were considered to be essential to Britain's plan for creating a harmonious Commonwealth of free nations whose instinct, whether through inheritance or training, would incline them to continue to defer to the home country. They were also assigned an important place in the 'second colonial occupation', a term that is usually confined to colonies in Africa and Asia. British governments nourished the relationship by providing subsidies to boost emigration to the dominions. Trade and investment ties remained strong and were supported by imperial preference and the Sterling Area. With the notable exception of Daniel Malan, political leaders in the dominions were not militant separatists but old-school 'Greater Britons' and empire loyalists. Their attitude reflected the feelings of the majority of their electorates, who were in favour of upholding traditional ties with the 'old country'. Although dissenting voices could be heard, especially in South Africa and French Canada, white nationalists were unable to break free from the British connection. In 1948, South Africa demonstrated its independence in internal affairs by creating the formal structures of apartheid, but remained tied to Britain by its overseas trade, its need for foreign investment, and its membership of the Sterling Area.

These schemes for perpetuating the empire now seem patently unrealistic, but they survived for a decade or so after the war before beginning to unravel in the 1960s. There followed an almost unnoticed decolonisation, as the old dominions began to look to themselves rather to the 'mother country' for directions to their future. The attempt to restock the settler parts of the empire with emigrants from Britain had very limited success. Alternative sources transformed the social structures of the old British world: in 1966 Asians accounted for 9 and 12 per cent of all immigrants entering Australia and Canada, respectively; in 1986 the figures were 43 and 42 per cent.¹³ Commercial ties with Britain weakened; alternative regional connections expanded. Australia and New Zealand

developed new relationships with Japan and South-East Asia;¹⁴ Canada's existing links with the United States strengthened. A further regional development, the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), accelerated these trends. Britain's decision to apply for membership in 1961 gave the dominions an unexpected shock. The application failed, but the fact that it was made at all signalled Britain's intention of casting off from her imperial moorings and confirmed the need for the dominions to do the same.¹⁵ Cuts in Britain's defence budget obliged the dominions to provide their own security, often in association with the United States. Vigorous expressions of cultural assertiveness made their appearance. Today, Australians cringe no more.¹⁶ By the 1960s, too, the last loyalist leaders had given way to a generation whose priorities reflected the new imperatives. Constitutional changes affecting citizenship and the monarchy completed the separation from the 'old country'. Taken together, these developments shook established verities: the dominions could no longer be considered British, and had struck out on their own. That, surely, is a case study in decolonisation.

The Informal Empire after World War II

The concept of informal empire has always been elusive. However, if we avoid the term because of definitional difficulties, we are left with the problem of how to treat countries that retained their formal independence but were clearly subordinated to an external power. These problems have not hindered historians of the nineteenth century who have produced a lengthy and lively literature on the subject. After 1914, however, the notion of informal empire disappears, apart from a few examples drawn mainly from the Middle East. The vanishing act did not mean that informal empire, however determined, had ceased to exist. It is rather that specialists on the nineteenth century, having reached 1914, hand over the baton to a new set of historians, who are preoccupied with different issues, above all the rise of colonial nationalism.

When scholars who begin in 1918 finally arrive at 1945, they encounter two sets of literature. One, mentioned already, deals with the unravelling of formal empires. The other concentrates on the Cold War, which is conceived as an epic contest between two opposed political systems.¹⁷ Questions of empire are generally treated as being derivative rather than primary and are hitched to the juggernaut of Cold War studies only where they appear to be particularly relevant to that theme. Although this formula has many merits, it echoes the earlier story of Rise of the West (and the Fall of the Rest) under a revised title that suits the circumstances of the post-war era: the Recuperation of the West (and the Manipulation of the Rest). There is a case for reversing these priorities. Instead of fitting decolonisation into the Cold War, I suggest that the Cold War needs to be fitted into decolonisation, which in turn needs to be placed

in the even wider context of the global transformation of power, interests, and values in the post-war era.¹⁸

The story of post-war decolonisation usually begins with the independence of India in 1947, but it could also start with the upheaval in East Asia during and after World War II, following China's long struggle to free itself from foreign control. Although never formally colonised, China was subordinated to Western influences from the time of the Opium Wars onwards. The maritime customs duties were placed under foreign management; the treaty ports gave Europeans special privileges; defeat at the hands of Japan in 1894/95 was followed by the creation of spheres of influence and accompanied by railway and mining concessions. The series of humiliations continued in the twentieth century: foreign powers, headed by Britain, influenced the selection of China's leaders after the revolution of 1911 and supported Chiang Kai-shek's successful bid for power in 1929. The lowest points were reached when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and mounted its second invasion of China in 1937. Indeed, there is a case for saying that World War II began in Shanghai in 1937 rather than in Poland in 1939.

The nationalist revolt against colonial and neo-colonial influences triumphed with the defeat of Japan and the success of the Chinese Revolution in 1949. The fateful involvement of the United States in trying to control a related nationalist revolt in Indo-China was a reaction to the fear that Chinese expansion would inject the region with the poison of communism while also damaging France's prospects of becoming an effective ally in Europe.¹⁹ A parallel situation arose in Korea, where the expulsion of the Japanese and the heavy-handed division of the country into two parts both aroused and frustrated nationalist sentiments. Similar considerations drew Washington into first supporting and then supplanting the Dutch in Indonesia, in backing (for a time) Sukarno in Indonesia, in co-operating with Britain in 'holding the line' in Malaya, and in seeking to re-establish informal influence in its own former colony, the Philippines, which had been granted independence in 1946.

In short, it was the effective decolonisation of China that fuelled the Cold War in Asia, drew the superpowers into the region and ultimately pulled the rug from under the colonial order in the Far East.²⁰ Yet, though China features prominently in studies of the Cold War, it rarely features, except as 'background', in the literature on post-war decolonisation.

The United States as a Decolonising Power

The United States provides my final example of the enlarged concept of decolonisation I have sketched. You may well think that, after the dominions and China, this is a bridge, or rather an ocean, too far. The United States, after all, left the British Empire in 1783 and did not become widely referred to as an empire until after 1945, which is when the European empires were being

taken apart. There are, indeed, a few books entitled *The United States and Decolonisation*, but all they refer to Washington's policy towards Britain, France and the other Western empires. There are, however, two good reasons for adding the United States to my story. The first relates to the long-forgotten territorial empire the US controlled in the Pacific and Caribbean. The second is probably the best example of internal decolonisation in the post-war era.²¹ The first topic has been ignored: the last book on the subject was published in 1962 and died of neglect shortly afterwards.²² The second theme has been the subject of some excellent research, but is generally considered to be part of domestic history and rarely joined to wider discussions of decolonisation.

The United States acquired its formal empire in 1898 at the height of the movement known as 'new' imperialism. The emotion and drama that marked the event were matched by the speed with which the new territories were erased from public discussion – by politicians and historians alike. The empire was small, but nevertheless numbered some 23 million subjects in 1940. Its principal constituents were the Philippines and Hawai'i in the Pacific, and Puerto Rico and Cuba in the Caribbean.²³ Moreover, the insular territories, as they were called, were diverse enough to encompass the full range of colonial categories devised for the European empires: colonies of trade, of concession, and of settlement; forms of rule – direct and indirect; and aspirations to civilise colonial subjects – whether by assimilation or association. Constitutionally, the empire was divided into incorporated territories (which had the prospect of attaining statehood, and applied only to Hawai'i) and unincorporated territories, which remained dependencies. The islands also conformed to the stereotype of colonial economies in producing a small range of agricultural exports – headed by cane sugar – in exchange for manufactured goods.

It is an equally unnoticed fact that the United States decolonised its own insular empire at exactly the same time as the major imperial powers did after World War II. The Philippines became independent in 1946; Puerto Rico became a 'commonwealth' in 1952 – an ambiguous status rather similar to that of a dominion; Hawai'i's aspirations were resolved in 1959, when it was admitted to the Union as a full state. Cuba, formally a sovereign state but effectively a protectorate under heavy guard, grasped its future in the revolution of 1959 – and is only now being forgiven in Washington for daring to follow the US precedent in seeking liberation from an oppressive overlord.

The similarities do not end here. Far from being exceptional, the United States also followed the European imperial powers in first trying to strengthen its grip on the insular territories and then ceding ground to moderate nationalists. Washington could not renege on its undertaking, made in 1934, to give the Philippines independence in 1946, but it redoubled its efforts to retain an informal hold over the islands as the geopolitical consequences of the Chinese Revolution became clear. Hawai'i, which had become a huge centre of military operations during the war, was confirmed as the second major fortress in the Pacific.

Troop reductions, scheduled in 1945, were reversed in the 1950s. Puerto Rico, which was considered to be a candidate for independence in 1945, was retained, despite its desperate poverty, because it possessed one of the largest naval complexes in the world. Cuba, though formally independent, was also the site of an important, and now notorious, naval base at Guantanamo Bay, and had to be policed because of the growing fear that the USSR might take over what was, formally, an independent country.

The reaction in the islands to the tightening grip of the United States also paralleled the response in the European empires. A mixture of hardship and rising aspirations strengthened the determination of the islanders to achieve a new, improved deal in the post-war period. The increased visibility of the United States, which brought aid with long strings, was seen as running counter to these hopes, and provoked widespread protests. The Philippines, which had been devastated during the war, was the scene of a series of strikes and protests, which turned into a major civil war that embroiled the United States until 1954. Puerto Rico, known from Spanish times as the Enchanted Isle, was another centre of discontent fuelled by chronic poverty. Protest turned into attempted revolt and culminated in 1954 when four Puerto Rican nationalists sprayed the House of Representatives in Washington with bullets and wounded five Congressmen. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the secret police responded by cracking down on the militants. As for Hawai'i, the supposed island paradise, its experience of military rule during the war produced widespread resentment and helped to create the first inter-racial labour movement there. Protest began in 1946, when a massive strike paralysed the sugar industry, and reached a peak in 1949, when a lengthy dock strike reduced the island to a state of siege. Economic conditions in Cuba, though favourable during and immediately after the war, deteriorated at the start of the 1950s and brought Fulgencio Batista back to power in 1952. As a colonial agent by proxy, Batista's role was to keep the lid on radicals and reformers alike.

From the mid-1950s, however, the United States was obliged to accommodate moderate nationalists to undercut support for radical alternatives. In the Philippines, the United States became trapped by its own neo-colonial strategy into sponsoring a brand of crony capitalism that strengthened the power of nationalist leaders who adroitly manipulated Washington's growing anxiety about the spread of Chinese influence. In Hawai'i, the Democratic Party and its popular base scored a historic victory in the elections held in 1954, when they ousted the Republicans for the first time since 1898. From this point onwards, the progressive, multi-ethnic party pushed for statehood to achieve political parity. In Puerto Rico, the offer of Commonwealth status was made to steer the island away from radicalism, and was accompanied by massive funding to demonstrate that US capitalism and moderate leadership could work successfully in the Third World, and thus outsmart Soviet alternatives. Cuba, however, escaped without permission. The erosion of the sugar market, made worse by Washington's

protectionist policies, led to the overthrow of Batista and the installation of Fidel Castro in 1959. By the close of the year, Eisenhower, urged by the CIA, had decided to remove Castro and reverse the revolution. Various hair-brained schemes for assassinating him followed, as did a trade embargo in 1960. These decisions pushed Castro closer to Moscow and guaranteed the outcome that US policy was supposedly designed to avert.

Internal Decolonisation

The United States, unlike the other Western imperial powers at this time, also had to deal with the challenge of internal decolonisation.²⁴ Protests against discrimination and the denial of human rights increased after 1945 and grew into the civil rights movement, which gathered momentum in the 1950s and achieved a series of victories in the 1960s that are still being worked out today.

Native Americans, though few in number, need to be included in this story, even though conventional accounts deal almost exclusively with the efforts of African-Americans to eliminate the version of apartheid that had long been imposed on them. After 1953, Congress abolished the policy of indirect rule (borrowed directly from Lord Lugard) that had governed the reservations since the 1930s and reverted to a form of assimilation that halted the development of separate communities and opened tribal lands to private enterprise. The attack on sovereignty and cultural pluralism galvanised Native Americans and turned their diverse political organisations into a coherent radical movement. A series of highly publicised demonstrations followed in the 1960s. Washington's initial response was to classify the American Indian Movement as an 'extremist' organisation and apply counter-insurgency measures to suppress radical dissent.²⁵ In the face of adverse publicity, however, repression gave way to conciliation, as it did in the insular empire. In 1968, Congress put an end to assimilation and passed the Indian Civil Rights Act, which was followed in 1975 by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act. These measures marked the end of a long period of colonial tutelage that had striking similarities with the experience of other colonial powers.

The movement among African-Americans for improved human and civil rights, though much larger, followed a broadly similar trajectory. By the mid-1940s, the leading moderate organisation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP), had acquired a mass base and established an international presence.²⁶ In 1947, the Association submitted a petition to the United Nations (UN) on the issue of racial discrimination in the United States, and went on to play an important part in halting South Africa's plan to annex South-West Africa and in supporting movements for self-determination elsewhere in Africa.²⁷ However, its failure to transform the politics of discrimination at home opened the way in 1946 for a more radical organisation, the Civil Rights Congress (CRC), which had communist

sympathies. The CRC challenged the basis of capitalist democracy in the United States and publicised its case internationally with a degree of assertiveness that alarmed the authorities in Washington. As the Red Scare reached obsessive levels in the early 1950s, even modest progress with civil rights came to a halt. Defeating communism became more important than ending racism. The FBI harassed the CRC, hastened its liquidation in 1955, and effectively shut down the NAACP until the McCarthy era came to an end.²⁸

The reform movement revived in 1957, with the notorious crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, over integration. The resulting confrontation captured the attention of the media in the United States and across the world. John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, sent President Eisenhower an urgent and unvarnished message: 'this situation is ruining our foreign policy'. The effect in Asia and Africa, he added, 'will be worse for us than Hungary was for the Russians'.²⁹ The Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first reform of its kind for nearly a century, followed. So, too, did continuing mass demonstrations, which resulted in a more comprehensive Civil Rights Act in 1964. Martin Luther King, the movement's most famous figure, was assassinated four years later.

By the close of the 1960s, the civil rights movement had gained important concessions but had also been detached from its broader agenda of human rights. The reform movement split between the moderates, such as King, and a younger generation of radicals, led by Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and the Black Panthers, who spoke in fiery language and demanded rights to housing, health, and employment. Both groups shared the belief that problems of race and inequality in the United States were common to colonial societies everywhere. Martin Luther King, however, was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of passive resistance; the Black Panthers drew inspiration from Frantz Fanon's doctrine of violent revolution. Once the radicals were put out of business, the civil rights movement narrowed its vision to domestic issues relating to continuing racial discrimination.

Hawai'i's small, distant islands provide a link between the insular empire and developments within the United States. Hawai'i had made several applications for statehood but had been refused, despite meeting all the qualifications. The US Senate blocked all progress, fearing that admitting a state with a mixed Japanese–American population would undermine segregation in the South. In tune with the post-war times, US senators claimed that Hawai'i's demands were the product of unpatriotic, communist sympathisers. These fabricated charges lost credibility in the course of the 1950s. Hawai'i's semi-colonial status was an increasing embarrassment to the United States, which claimed to stand for liberty and democracy. As an incorporated state, on the other hand, the islands would be a propaganda asset in the Cold War. The admission of Hawai'i in 1959 was an act of civil rights that blew an irreparable hole in the wall surrounding segregation on the mainland. The Lilliputians of the Pacific could not overpower Gulliver but they were capable of influencing the direction he took.

An Invitation

I have argued that studies of decolonisation need to be greatly enlarged if the subject is to capture the full range of international developments during the past three centuries. I have outlined a programme that expands the study of decolonisation in two ways. The first extension adds continental Europe to conventional studies of the imperial crises of the late eighteenth century. The second alters the established boundaries of decolonisation after World War II to include such diverse parts of the world as the old dominions, China, and the United States. My best guess is that, in five years or so, texts on the subject will no longer be confined to studies of the formal and dependent empire. If, against form, I happen to be right, there are huge opportunities, especially for young researchers, to consider framing their specialised research accordingly. It is for this reason that my final remarks take the form of an invitation rather than a conclusion.

The justification for these claims lies in the history of globalisation. Admittedly, the term 'globalisation' has been used as a talisman in recent years and is now invoked, often unthinkingly, to validate books, articles, and arguments of all kinds. Here, I have tried to sketch a more precise application that follows from dividing the process into different phases, each with distinctive characteristics. The eventual resolution of the crisis of the military-fiscal state in the course of the nineteenth century establishes a link between the decolonisation of Napoleonic states, the rise of ideas of self-determination and their translation into national entities, and the expression of nationalism in imperial aggrandisement at the close of the century. The period of colonial rule that followed was built on economic complementarities and ideologies of racial supremacy that survived until after World War II, when it was transformed by impulses that marked a further change in the character of globalisation that brought down colonial rule and ushered in the world of today.

If this analysis is correct, post-war decolonisation was not just one more major episode in the long history of Western empires, but an event that marked their final demise. The age of great territorial empires ended in the 1960s. They had ceased to be relevant to the process of post-colonial globalisation that characterises the international order today. They had also become unacceptable ways of trying to integrate and transform the world. That is why the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was an anachronism that provoked such opposition and has proved to be such a predictable and predicted disaster.

Notes

1. Hopkins, *Globalisation in World History*, Chaps 1 and 2. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688–2015*, 706–25 provides a substantial illustration of the British case.
2. This is a generalisation with important exceptions, notably the work of Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*; and the further references in Broers, Hicks, and Guimera, *The*

- Napoleonic Empire*. I have also gained from Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe*; Woolf, "Napoleon and Europe Revisited"; Dwyer, *Napoleon and Europe*; Dwyer and Forest, *Napoleon and His Empire*.
3. Broers, "Cultural Imperialism".
 4. Napoleon's imperial policing system derived from institutions established by the French Revolution. The *Gendarmerie Nationale* was formed in 1791. The term 'insurgent' came into use in Europe from the French 'insurge' in the mid-eighteenth century.
 5. Kippur, *Jules Michelet*, Chap. 12. On different characterisations of British and French expansion, see Rothschild, "Language and Empire".
 6. Aron, *The Imperial Republic*.
 7. Dean, Hunt, and Nelson, *The French Revolution*.
 8. Blanning, *The French Revolution in Germany*.
 9. Dal Lago, *William Lloyd Garrison*.
 10. Eyal, *The Young America Movement*. Kossuth (1802–1894) was lionised during his visit to the United States at the close of 1851 and early 1852. The mania had ebbed by the time Kossuth left the United States and he never received the official support he sought.
 11. Carwardine and Sexton, *The Global Lincoln*.
 12. What follows is drawn from Hopkins, "Rethinking Decolonisation". See also Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, Chaps 21 and 26. The pioneering research should be attributed to Ward, especially *Australia and the British Embrace*; and Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire*. The term 'dominion' fell out of use in the 1950s. I use it here to refer to subsequent periods as a convenient short-hand reference to Commonwealth countries commonly designated as being of 'white settlement' and to exclude new dominions such as India.
 13. The trend has continued. The figures for New Zealand are especially striking: in 2013, Asians (mainly from China and India) accounted for about one-third of the population born overseas or about 12 per cent of the total population.
 14. Hopkins, "Rethinking Decolonisation" summarises the data and provides further references.
 15. Britain did not gain membership until 1973. Benvenuti, *Anglo-Australian Relations*, follows the process to completion.
 16. For an assessment of the history of the term written by its author, see Phillips, *A. A. Phillips*.
 17. This is the case even with such authoritative studies as Gaddis, *The Cold War*, Chap. 4; Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind*.
 18. Westad, "The Cold War and International History" appeals for a global approach.
 19. Rotter, *The Path to Vietnam*. An accessible and up-to-date guide is Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*.
 20. McMahon, *Colonialism and the Cold War*; Cumings, *The Korean War*; Mitter, "China and the Cold War".
 21. Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*.
 22. Perkins, *Denial of Empire*.
 23. Cuba is included here as an example of a protectorate.
 24. Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*.
 25. Mathiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*. Aspects of this book became highly controversial. For a balanced assessment see the review by Alan M. Dershowitz, the noted authority on constitutional law and civil rights, in the *New York Times*, 6 March 1983.
 26. Bates, "A New Crowd"; Anderson, "Rethinking Radicalism," 385–423.
 27. Anderson, "International Conscience".

28. Berg, “Black Rights and Liberal Anti-Communism”.
29. Twenty-four Sept. 1957. Quoted in Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 131; see also the confirmatory comments on 132–36.

Acknowledgements

This is an enlarged version of the keynote lecture given at the Bloemfontein Conference on 9 November 2015. The author is grateful to the organisers for inviting him, and to Prof. Ian Phimister for providing financial support. As the talk was pitched at a high level of generality, the author has kept citations to a minimum. The author has drawn on some material from his forthcoming book, *American Empire*.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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