DECOLONIZATION: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories

Valuable primary source material created for local audiences by local actors during a period of enormous global change
Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories brings together material from within former British colonies and Commonwealth nations, alongside some similar content from former French and Portuguese territories, to provide valuable primary source material created for local audiences by local actors during a period of enormous global change. After the Second World War decolonization movements around the world gathered pace as new borders were set and new nations built, from the small port colony of Aden to the vast Indian sub-continent.

This archive allows insight into the variety of systems and modes of national and international political thought that became prominent in the twentieth century, including socialism, communism, anti-imperialism, regional independence movements, trade unionism, student activism, Pan-Africanism and many modes of constitutional democracy.

Scholars can explore the politics of this era of decolonization from a variety of viewpoints in terms of economic and social development, domestic politics and international relations, media and culture, labor history and strikes, civil rights movements and moments of political violence, as well as constitutions and manifestos penned by different parties and groups.

Number of Pages:
250,000

Content Types:
Pamphlets and ephemera including political campaign material such as manifestos, press releases, conference documents, reports, letters, speech transcripts.
THE VALUE OF THIS ARCHIVE

• Brings together key collections that complement each other and allows a broader picture of political processes of and after decolonization, and the myriad ways in which former colonies and Commonwealth nations negotiated their own agency and their own futures.

• Places the changing politics of newly independent areas alongside those of other Commonwealth member states such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, allowing exploration of global trends such as socialism or trade union movements.

• Newly digitised documents enable researchers to analyse and compare different political movements within a country, as well as the many forms of politics and activism engaged in the transition to self-rule across different nations and regions.

• With material from over 70 countries and territories these collections offer scholars and researchers a wide pool of resources from which to study local and regional issues in areas often under-represented in Western curriculums.

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESOURCE

Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories serves scholars in a variety of fields, including history, politics, international relations, transnational studies, area studies, anthropology and sociology.

WHICH COLLECTIONS ARE INCLUDED

Sourced from three UK archives, the collections here represent material from over 70 countries or territories collected in the second half of the twentieth century. Together, these collections represent a wide array of perspectives and ideologies from politicians, activists, trade unionists, and other local actors addressing local and regional issues in a changing world. From independence struggles to environmental pressure groups, major issues of the twentieth century can be found represented here as they played out in different places around the world.

Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies

Source: Held at Senate House Library; items gathered by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies

The collection consists of over 10,000 items of ephemera from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, North and Central America, and Australasia and the Pacific. The material represents either Political Parties (manuscript numbers beginning 'PP'), Pressure Groups (manuscript numbers beginning with 'PG') or Trade Unions (manuscript numbers beginning with 'TU'). Alongside material produced in the regions for local audiences on local and national issues, there are items from international organisations, as well as broader perspectives represented through, for example, pan-African groups and regional trade unions.

The Institute of Commonwealth Studies political parties collection was begun in 1960-1961 but covers the years 1898-2017, with special emphasis being placed on primary material such as party constitutions, policy statements, convention reports and election manifestos. Since then, the main method of gathering material has been to appeal directly to political parties throughout the Commonwealth.

For more information or to request a trial gale.com/explore-decolonization
Marjorie Nicholson (1914-1997) worked in the International Development department of the Trades Union Congress from 1955-1972 as one of the few women working in policy development within the trade union movement. These papers relate to that time in her life, and her work on the book *The TUC Overseas: the Roots of Policy*, after her retirement. Graduating from Oxford University in the 1930s, Marjorie Nicholson became committed to the labour movement in the late 40s. Prior to her work for the TUC she was a secretary at the Fabian Colonial Bureau, and she also stood three times as the Labour candidate for Windsor. Through her work at the Bureau, she met and assisted significant figures such as India’s Jawaharlal Nehru and Krishna Menon, Eric Williams from Trinidad, Hugh Springer from Barbados, Siaka Stevens from Sierra Leone, and other future Commonwealth leaders.

**WHO WAS MARJORIE NICHOLSON?**

Marjorie Nicholson Papers from the Trades Union Congress Library

**Source:** Trades Union Congress Library at London Metropolitan University

This collection represents the subject files from the Marjorie Nicholson papers, mainly comprising research papers and background material documenting the work of the Trades Union Congress International Division in various regions covering the years 1935-1997. Files include material focused on labour law, particularly the 1971 Industrial Relations Act; the Co-Operative movement in the UK and the Commonwealth, 1952-1991; TUC International Committee minutes and papers, 1958-1970; the International Labour Office, 1919-1964; colonial welfare and development, 1929-1946; and forced labour, 1953-1989, and covers areas including India, Africa and the Caribbean.

Papers of African Trade Unions, Nuffield College, Oxford University

**Source:** Nuffield College Library, University of Oxford

This varied collection presents papers and pamphlets from across Africa, reflecting trade union movements across the continent and their development between 1949-1969. The documents vary from constitutions to publications, press cuttings to legislation and manifestos to speeches. The material covers miscellaneous trade unions in various African nations including Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Gambia, Angola, Botswana, Eswatini and Sierra Leone. The main trade unions include the Railway African Union (Kenya), All African Trade Union Federation, Confédération Syndicale Africaine, Ghana T.U.C., Nigerian T.U.C. and Union Nationale des Travailleurs Sénégalais (Senegal).

Image courtesy of TUC Library Collections at London Metropolitan University
SPOTLIGHT ON
V. K. KRISHNA MENON (1896-1974)

A close associate of Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, V. K. Krishna Menon was an Indian politician and diplomat who played a key role in India’s struggle for independence from British colonial rule. Born in 1896 in Kerala, Menon began his career as a lawyer before becoming involved in the independence movement in the 1920s. Menon campaigned strongly for Indian independence, and even set up the India League in London in 1928 to rally support from the British public. Post-independence, Menon served as India’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and later as India’s Defense Minister.

Documents related to individual:

- **The Situation in India.** Menon, Vengalil Krishna. [1943]. TS Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies: India PG.II.IL.11. Senate House Library, University of London.
- **Why Must India Fight? 1940.** TS Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies: India PG.II.IL.2. Senate House Library, University of London.

SPOTLIGHT ON HUGH SPRINGER (1913-1994)

Hugh Springer was a strong advocate for worker’s rights and played a leading role in campaigning for political independence in Barbados. Coming from a background in education, he first became involved in the labour movement in the 1930s and was a founding member of the Barbados Workers’ Union in 1941, where he acted as the first General Secretary. Springer was also the General Secretary of the Barbados Labour Party and was elected to the House of Assembly in 1940. He left his work in Parliament in 1947 for a period to assume the role of Registrar of the University College of West Indies. In 1984, Springer was appointed as Governor-General of Barbados, where he served until 1990. After his death, Springer was named by Parliament as one of the eleven National Heroes of Barbados.

Documents related to individual:

KEY THEMES

A sample of just some of the primary sources available reveals the vast range of research possibilities using material from the archive:

Women's rights, including campaigns for social equality and equal wages

Women Are People Too! [1978].
link.gale.com/apps/doc/3BMY2O09P72T167/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=ada7b90c&pg=1

Movements Socialiste (Canada).
For a Socialist Quebec: Manifesto of the Movement for a Socialist, Independent and Democratic Quebec and for Equality between Men and Women. 1982.
link.gale.com/apps/doc/HPRHM526182009/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=3386b2ff&pg=1

Environmentalism and climate change, charting the increase in interest in environmentalism and conservation at a local and national level, particularly from the 1970s on

New Zealand Labour Party.
link.gale.com/apps/doc/KAJW5389E97512/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=b8647e97&pg=1

The Liberal and National Country Parties, and Liberal Party of Australia.
Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies: Australia PP.AT.LIB.83. Senate House Library, University of London. Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories
link.gale.com/apps/doc/OVBJU113626094/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=9ae6f8da&pg=1

National Union of South African Students.
The Threat and Promise of Alternatives: The Environment and the Quality of Life. n.d.
link.gale.com/apps/doc/AXUPN2L6L4282/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=2aad2ac6&pg=1

Liberals Party of Australia.
Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies: Australia PP.AT.LIB.42. PP.AT.LIB.46. Senate House Library, University of London. Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories
link.gale.com/apps/doc/TOEPEP214136705/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=805b8774&pg=1

The rise of trade unionism and individual labour movements in different regions

Gold Coast Teachers' Union Rules & Regulations. 1943.
Papers of African Trade Unions: Ghana Trade Union Congress Box 4 R1. Nuffield College Library, Oxford University. Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories
link.gale.com/apps/doc/HBRBCB836738252/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=d00dcb1&pg=1

'The Position of the UTGT on African Trade Unionism', Statement Made by Brother Ahmad Tili, General Secretary of the UTGT (Union Générale Tunisienne Du Travail) during His Press Conference. 7 Feb. 1960.
Papers of African Trade Unions: Supplementary Material Box 10 L1. Nuffield College Library, Oxford University. Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories
link.gale.com/apps/doc/HSNPSL405352752/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=10cb9465&pg=1

Australian Trade Union Training Authority.
Trade Union Training and What It Means for You and Your Union. n.d.
link.gale.com/apps/doc/RWASOJ196062249/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=d8d4d5ae&pg=1

Hart, Richard, and National Labour Party (Jamaica).
link.gale.com/apps/doc/OCTXLI637351007/?sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=ac881397&pg=1
**Education policies** of different parties and the right to education for minority groups and women

[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/ZIKBYQ981033702/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=13fb2b7f9&pg=1)

Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies: London. Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/PONKM1952074490/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=91ce7b23&pg=1)

[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/QIVBOI591683187/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=9112f9b7&pg=1)

[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/RCYAKF601791103/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=44045452&pg=1)

Public Health appeals, campaigns, and attitudes to health services

**Socialist Party (India).**
*People’s Health.* 1951.
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/Z0FCMO57107886/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=3c727787&pg=1)

**New Zealand Labour Party.**
Political Pamphlets from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies: New Zealand PP.NZ.LAB.44. Senate House Library, University of London. Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/0RZ5CT25425510/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=b38f1ce1&pg=1)

SWAPO Medical Kits Appeal. n.d.
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/0PZADE587040344/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=694f65e9&pg=1)

**International relations**, particularly those of former colonial territories with the former imperial powers

**African National Congress, and Labour Research Department.**
*South Africa, Apartheid and Britain.* 1970.
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/PRFCWZ425030457/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=da20138a&pg=1)

**Britain-Tanzania Society.**
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CRKYD017757867/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=70dee8d4&pg=1)

**Krishna Menon, Vengalil Krishnan, and India League.**
*India, Britain & Freedom.* (1942?).
[link](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/0WVF5414470264/DPIT?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-DPIT&xid=a0871c3a&pg=1)

**GALE DIGITAL SCHOLAR LAB**

*Decolonization: Politics and Independence in Former Colonial and Commonwealth Territories* is integrated into Gale’s cloud-based Text and Data Mining (TDM) environment, Gale Digital Scholar Lab. Researchers are invited to take their digital humanities scholarship on pathways to new discoveries with powerful analytical tools that enable enhanced storytelling through data. The Lab removes barriers to entry for researchers of all skill levels, with accessible, intuitive workflows that help users analyse content regardless of technical experience.