



Language

The Central African Federation, embracing Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, was created in 1953, and its chief architect, Roy Welensky, was Prime Minister until 1963. Africans feared that this move was intended to cement the permanent dominance of the 250,000 white settlers in Southern Rhodesia (Africans were to be allotted only one third of the seats in the new Federal Assembly) and bitterly opposed federation from the outset. Further concessions to the white settlers by the British, such as the promise in 1957 not to amend Federal Acts, and the 1958 Electoral Act ensuring white supremacy, together with rumours that the Federation would be granted Dominion status, prompted major unrest in Nyasaland. But British governments became increasingly uneasy after 1959 about imposing white rule in the face of African resistance and settler repression. Malawi and Zambia gained their right to secede and become independent African states in 1964.

In Southern Rhodesia there was also an upsurge of mass politics in the 1940s-50s, intensified in 1960-61, including strikes, marches and rural resistance to destocking policies. See:

- Ranger, Terence O., [African politics in twentieth-century Southern Rhodesia](#) [1] In Ranger, Terence O., [Aspects of Central African History](#) [2] London, Heinemann, , 1968 1968, pp. 210-245 pp. 210-45.

However, Zimbabwean leaders looked to British government intervention and tried compromise policies until the banning of the African National Congress in 1959. Its successors, the National Democratic Party, and subsequently the Zimbabwe African People's Union, both led by Joshua Nkomo, were banned in 1961 and 1962 respectively. A more militant breakaway party, the Zimbabwe African National Union was formed in 1963 under Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe. After the intransigent white government of Ian Smith declared unilateral independence from Britain in November 1965, and the British Labour government failed to quell the rebellion, both ZAPU and ZANU resorted to bitter guerrilla warfare (ZAPU assisted by independent Zambia). The two parties came together as the Patriotic Front, under pressure from the Frontline states, to negotiate with Ian Smith's regime in 1979, but split up again before the national elections in 1980, when Robert Mugabe became the first President.

Alport, Baron Charles Ja, [The Sudden Assignment](#) [3], London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1965, pp. 255

Alport was appointed High Commissioner to the Federation from 1961-63, and gives an official British perspective on these contentious years.

Rotberg, Robert I, [The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia: 1873-1964](#) [4], Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1967, pp. 360

Chapter 8 'Discovering their voice: the formation of national political movements' (pp. 179-213) goes up to 1948; chapter 10 'The Federal dream and African reality' (pp. 253-302) charts growing resistance from 1953; and chapter 11 traces 'The triumph of nationalism' (pp. 303-16). Gives some detail on protests and indexes 'non-violent resistance'. Includes detailed bibliography.

Wood, J.R.T., [The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland](#) [5], Durban, Graham Publishing, 1983, pp. 1329

Account based on Welensky's perspective, stressing top level negotiations and relations with successive British colonial secretaries.



B. 1. Central Africa to 1964

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