



FROM THE JOURNAL: SECESSIONISM IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Secessionist movements can be found in many Commonwealth countries including Cameroon, Canada, Pakistan and the UK. In our latest issue, **Daniel J. Feather**, **Paul Anderson** and **Thomas J. Phillips** focus on [the Western Cape independence movement](#).

Profiling the main proponents of independence and their motivations, arguments and tactics, the authors highlight the prominence of political and economic grievances as the driving forces of secessionism, helped by the growth of far-right populism and conspiracy theories. Still, any path to independence is highly uncertain, especially since secession lacks a firm basis in national and international legal frameworks.



ALSO IN THE LATEST ISSUE : FOCUS ON AFRICA



With a focus on Africa, Governance, Citizenship and Taiwan

- **Maureen Lifongo** charts [semi-authoritarian rule in Central Africa](#) under the guise of democratic consolidation, comparing Chad and Gabon.
- **Alexander Stroh** explores ambiguities of rapid enlargement in regional organisations and the [prospects for East African regional integration](#).
- **Enemaku Idachaba** surveys [the evolution of sustainability in Africa](#), from colonial exploitation to contemporary conservation.
- **Dewi Knight, Alex Walker, Michael Kenny, Hannah Ellis** and **Lottie Marsden** look at what Australia and Canada can teach the UK's Council of the Nations and Regions about a [more collaborative way of governing](#).
- **David Erdos** examines the decline and future of that amorphous concept: [Commonwealth citizenship](#).
- **Edwin Laurent** analyses soft power in [Taiwan's relations with its Commonwealth diplomatic allies](#).



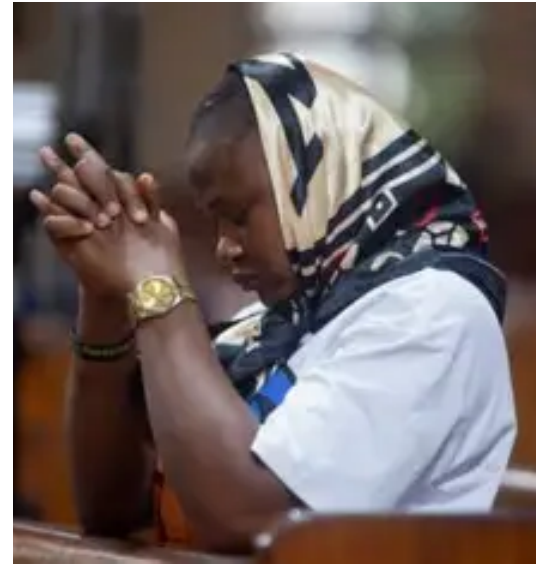
THE ICJ ADVISORY OPINION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In their opinion piece, [Reimagining power: young people and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on climate change](#), **Vishal Prasad** and **Belyndar Rikimani** detail the background to the landmark ICJ Advisory Opinion of 23 July 2025, which declared that climate change is an existential threat and that states have obligations under international law to act. This came as the culmination of a six-year grassroots campaign by 27 law students - of the Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change, from the University of the South Pacific - whose success means the focus is now on implementation.



COMMONWEALTH OPINIONS: NIGERIA, SOUTH ASIA, SPORT

- **Oyinkansola Akinmade** highlights NIGERIA's dilemma in responding to external threats and internal violence against Christians, while **Onyedikachi Madueke** questions Nigeria's Covid-19 palliatives.
- Looking at SOUTH ASIA, **Ejaz Hussain** offers an analysis of contemporary China-Pakistan relations, while **Shuva Das** highlights the role of state and non-state coercion during the Sheikh Hasina regime in Bangladesh.
- **Kadasi Ceres** reflects on contemporary political developments in the Guyana-Venezuela territorial controversy.
- Migration law in South East Asia is explored by **Reddy Anggara** and **Hendry Roris P. Sianturi** while **Sony Kulshrestha** looks at the legal status of climate migrants.



- **Timsy Kakkar** and **Bharti Singh** examine growth, displacement, and the future of work as elements of the AI paradox in Commonwealth nations.
- **Peter Hough** puts the case for the Commonwealth Games.

FROM THE WEBSITE: COMMONWEALTH DAY

Commonwealth Day – **9 March 2026** – was celebrated this year in a somewhat lower key than usual, against the international background of global turmoil, with the Middle East crisis, the widening war over Iran, and the disintegration of rules based trade and international order, while at home the Monarchy faced scrutiny around Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor's behaviour. Even the BBC opted to drop live broadcasting of the Commonwealth Day service.) As **Debbie Ransome** and **Sue Onslow** report for the website, nevertheless Commonwealth leaders remained upbeat and even defiant on continuing partnership across the Commonwealth 'family'.



HARRY HODSON PRIZE: WINNER ANNOUNCED

The Round Table is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2025 Harry Hodson prize is **Beverley Saurombe**, for her essay, *'Digital sovereignty in the Commonwealth: evaluating South Africa's cybersecurity and data infrastructure'*, which will be published in the journal.

Beverley is a postgraduate student in computer science at the University of Johannesburg, and her research interests focus on human-AI collaboration in cyber crisis management. The Harry Hodson prize – named after the journal's editor from 1934 to 1939 – is awarded annually for the best essay on a Commonwealth-related topic by an undergraduate or postgraduate student from a Commonwealth university. For more information about the prize, click [here](#).



PETER LYON PRIZE: WINNER ANNOUNCED



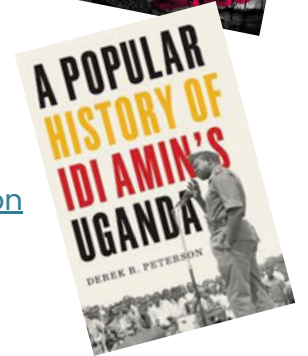
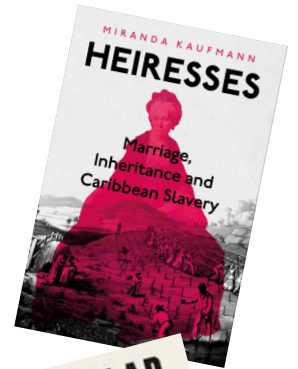
The Round Table is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2025 Peter Lyon prize is **Martin Plaut**, for his article, '[Widening the reparations debate](#)', published in the June 2025 issue of The Round Table.

Martin is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, a former Africa Editor for BBC World Service News, and the author of ten books, including *Understanding Eritrea* (2017), *Understanding South Africa* (2019), and *Unbroken Chains: A 5,000 Year History of African Enslavement* (2025). The Peter Lyon prize – named after the journal's editor from 1983 to 2004 – is awarded annually for the best policy-relevant article published in the previous year. For more information about the prize, click [here](#).

COMMONWEALTH BOOKSHELF

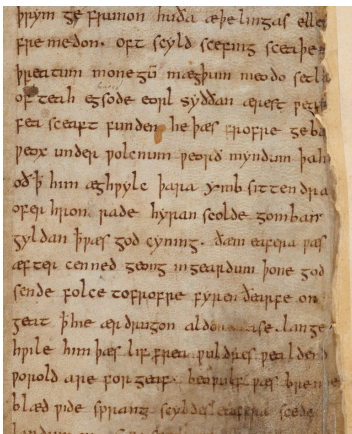
In this issue:

- **Martin Plaut** [reviews two very different books](#), *Reparations: Slavery and the Tyranny of Imaginary Guilt* by Nigel Biggar, and *Heiresses: Marriage, Inheritance and Caribbean Slavery* by Miranda Kaufmann.
- Ryan Walmsley's *Oceans of Feeling: An Emotional History of Caribbean Migrants in Postwar Britain* is [reviewed by Debbie Ransome](#).
- **Anna Adima** [reviews](#) *A Popular History of Idi Amin's Uganda*, by Derek Peterson.
- **Miles Larmer** [reviews](#) *Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Africa: New Perspectives on the Era of Decolonization, 1950s to 1990s*, edited by Chris Saunders, Helder Adegar Fonseca and Lena Dallywater.
- **Hugh Pattenden** [reviews the latest volume in the FCDO series of Documents on British Policy Overseas](#), *The Lancaster House Conference and the Independence of Zimbabwe, 1979*.



See also the Commonwealth Bookshelf on the [Round Table website](#).

FROM THE ARCHIVE – 50 YEARS AGO



“To the author of Beowulf, Anglo-Saxon must have seemed the very perfection of language, and all change a corruption”, observed the New Zealand-born publisher and author **Dan Davin** (1913–1990), in this fascinating essay on '[My language and myself: English as creative power](#)'.

Published 50 years ago as part of a symposium on the future of the English language, Davin's article outlined two possible fates for the English language: either it would fragment into national and regional dialects, much as the Romance languages arose from the disjunct ruins of Latin, or, “because of its flexibility, because of the political power of some of the nations that speak it, and because of the universalising influences of the media and of travel, it might become ‘a single world language’”.

SOCIAL MEDIA



The Round Table's LinkedIn page continues to flourish. To join the conversation, follow the link [here](#).

The Round Table is also on X (formerly Twitter) at [@CWRoundTable](#).