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nations and as such the head of the Commonwealth. This new definition enabled numerous states to continue as members of the Commonwealth without any strict uniformity of internal constitutions.

During the 1960s, membership in the Commonwealth increased tremendously as practically all the countries of Africa became independent and those which had been colonies of Britain decided to remain within the association. This development was crucial to the evolution of the Commonwealth, as it confirmed the non-racial character of the association. This point was perhaps most significantly registered at the prime ministers' meeting in London in March 1961, when Commonwealth representatives discussed, with the assent of the South African leader, racial policies within that country. Such a great number of representatives expressed their disapproval of the principles of *apartheid* contained in the new constitution of South Africa that the South African Prime Minister decided to reassess his Government's desire to remain within the Commonwealth and later withdrew from the association.

The issue of Rhodesia, with its racial overtones, has also been prominent within the association. The Commonwealth Sanctions Committee was established by heads of government at their meeting in Lagos in January 1966, *inter alia*, to review regularly the effect of sanctions and also the special needs which might from time to time arise in honouring the Commonwealth's undertaking to come to the support of Zambia as required. It met most recently February 19, 1973, following the closure of the border between Rhodesia and Zambia. The principle of racial equality was reaffirmed in numerous communiqués from the prime ministers' conferences and it assumes a conspicuous place in the Commonwealth Declaration issued by heads of government at Singapore in January 1971.

Throughout this metamorphosis of the Commonwealth, a number of countries have either withdrawn from the association or have chosen not to assume a place within it. The most recent member of the Commonwealth to have withdrawn is Pakistan, which severed its connection on January 30, 1972, over the impending recognition of Bangladesh by a number of Commonwealth countries. South Africa withdrew on May 31, 1961, after choosing to disassociate itself from the Commonwealth as it was then emerging. The Republic of Ireland left the association on April 18, 1949, owing to the strained relations between Britain and Ireland during the previous two decades. The Japanese conquest of Burma during the Second World War acted as a catalyst to accelerate the growing desire within that country to attain complete independence from Britain. Unwilling to remain within the Commonwealth association under the terms of the Balfour

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