Sir, Nigel Biggar's article “Don't feel guilty about our colonial history” (Nov 30) was refreshing. Nobody wants to be subject to another, especially of different race, and greed and exploitation were part of early imperialism. For my generation, however, empire was a fact of history and, as shown by Dr John Darwin, not the original sin of Britain but the default system of human governance.
Pacific 1970-78), and wanting the best for their new nations. Those engaged in the
dismantling of empire for most of the time and in most colonies did a worthwhile
job that provided huge satisfaction. There was mutual respect and far more
friendship than is usually recognised. In retirement I have received a warm
welcome in the territories I served. We should not triumph in empire and there are
deeds for which we should feel guilty but the men and women of the colonial
service are right to feel satisfaction in a job well done.

*John Smith*

Governor of Gilbert and Ellice Islands 1973-78, Cheltenham, Glos

Sir, Following the campaign against the journal *Third World Quarterly* to force it to
retract Bruce Gilley’s essay “In defence of colonialism”, we are writing to extend
our collective solidarity to the journal and its editor, Shahid Qadir, who was also
subjected to death threats. Whatever one’s views of Gilley's essay, we feel the
withdrawal of this piece under such public pressure sets a dangerous precedent for
academic freedom. We defend the right of editors, journals and presses to publish
any work — however controversial — that, in their view, merits exposure and
debate. We are deeply alarmed by the censorious attitudes embodied in the
campaigns directed against the journal and Mr Qadir. We see this as part of a rising
tide of intolerance on university campuses and within the academic profession,
We need open, frank and vigorous debate more than ever. *Third World Quarterly* has been at the leading edge of debates on the developing world for nearly 40 years. We are determined it will continue to be so.

*Dr Philip Cunliffe (Kent); Dr Lee Jones (Queen Mary University of London); Prof Thomas G. Weiss, (City University of New York and TWQ editorial board member); Prof David S.G. Goodman (Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University and TWQ editorial board member); Prof Peter Uvin (Claremont McKenna College and TWQ editorial board member); Prof Anthony Payne (University of Sheffield and TWQ editorial board member); Prof Arturo Valenzuela, (Georgetown University and TWQ editorial board member); Prof Barry Gills (University of Helsinki and TWQ editorial board member); Prof Christopher Clapham (University of Cambridge and TWQ editorial board member); Prof Michael Klare (Hampshire College and TWQ editorial board member); Dr Nicolas Lemay-Hébert (University of Birmingham and editor, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding); Prof Ami Pedahzur, (University of Texas at Austin and associate editor, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism); Prof M.L.R. Smith (King’s College London and editorial board member, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism); Prof James Dreier (Brown University and associate editor, *Ethics*); Prof Randall Schweller, (Ohio State University and Editor-in-Chief, *Security Studies*); Prof Leigh Jenco (LSE and Associate Editor, American Political Science Review); Prof Anand Menon (Kings College London and Co-Editor, West European
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Politics; Prof Emeritus Eldon J. Eisenach (University of Tulsa and editorial board member, Studies in American Political Development and Consulting Editor, History of Political Thought); Prof Ramesh Thakur (Australian National University and Editor-in-Chief, Global Governance); Prof William J. FitzPatrick (University of Rochester and Associate Editor, Ethics); Prof Jeffrey Haynes (London Metropolitan University and Co-editor, Democratization); Prof Richard Bellamy (European University Institute and Editor, Contemporary Review of International Social and Political Philosophy); Prof Fabio Franchino (Università degli Studi di Milano and Editor, Italian Political Science Review); Prof Emeritus Conal Condren (University of Queensland and consulting editor, History of Political Thought and International Editorial Board member, Parergon); Prof Shaun Breslin, (University of Warwick and Co-Editor, The Pacific Review); Prof Adam Fagan (Queen Mary University of London and co-editor, East European Politics); Prof Petr Kopecky (Leiden University and co-editor, East European Politics); Prof Christopher Kam (University of British Columbia and Co-Editor, Legislative Studies Quarterly); Prof Daniel H. Nexon (Georgetown University); Dr James Heartfield (independent scholar); Prof Erik Voeten (Georgetown University); Prof Dennis Hayes (University of Derby and Director, Academics For Academic Freedom); Dr Richard Heffernan (Open University); Dr Kevin Gray (University of Sussex); Dr Suke Wolton (University of Oxford); Dr. Samuele Dominioni (FIW Bonn); Dr Ruth Mieschbuehler (University of Derby); Dr Joanna Williams (University of Kent); Prof Peter Ramsay
Nottingham); Richard Harris (formerly Director of Teacher Education, University of Hull); Dr Fabio Scarpello (independent scholar); Ralph Leighton (Canterbury Christ Church University); Courtney Hamilton (writer on race and anti-racism); Robin Oberg, (Exeter University); Prof William Bain (National University of Singapore and co-editor, International Relations); Prof Carole Pateman (UCLA and Associate Editor, Journal of Political Philosophy); Dr Shahar Hameiri (University of Queensland); Dr Nikos Sotirakopoulos (Loughborough University); Prof Charles Antaki (Loughborough University); Dr Eleni Tracada (University of Derby); Dr Tom Chodor (Monash University); Emeritus Professor Barry Carr (La Trobe University); Prof Stig Jarle Hansen (NMBU); Dr Enzo Rossi, (University of Amsterdam and co-editor, European Journal of Political Theory); Prof Philip Hammond (London South Bank University); Christopher Lynch (University of Warwick and associate editor, Convocamus); Natalie Dinham (The University of Gothenburg); Dr Christopher Bickerton (Cambridge University); Prof David Richards (University of Manchester); Robert A.E. Wilson (University of Kent); Dr Pak K. Lee (University of Kent); Dr Andrew Calcutt (University of East London); Prof Ismene Gizelis (University of Essex); Prof Kristian Skrede Gleditsch (University of Essex and co-editor, Research and Politics); Prof Matthew Goodwin (University of Kent); Emeritus Professor Chris Brown (LSE); Emeritus Prof Frank Furedi (University of Kent); Prof Patrick James (USC); Dr Maren Thom (Queen Mary University of London); Dr Christine Cheng (King’s College London); Dr David Maher (University of Salford); Prof Andrea
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Tomasi (Brown University); Prof Jeffrey C. Isaac (Indiana University, Bloomington)

Sir, The British empire has plenty to apologise for, committing great crimes such as the Mutiny of 1857 and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 in India, which will never be forgotten or forgiven, but it should not eclipse the many positive elements of British rule in India and the rest of the empire. Without the British, India would not have been the unified and powerful country it has become, and without the financial drain and the contributions of the soldiers from India and the empire in the two world wars Britain would not be the global power that it has become.

As the historian Elie Kedourie said, “a great power is not always and necessarily in the wrong”.

Dr Kusoom Vadgama
London NW11

CAGES FOR HENS Sir, Significant progress has been made for animal welfare in recent years. The majority of UK food businesses have decided to move away from cages for hens, as a result of consumer demand and pressure from animal welfare groups.
potential spread of avian influenza (AI), Mr Gibbens said “cages have a lot going for them”.

Such a brazen endorsement by the UK’s foremost veterinary adviser is extremely disappointing. Overcrowding and severe space restrictions are seriously detrimental to welfare. Hens in cages cannot carry out fundamental species-specific behaviours. AI concerns can be managed without caging hens; options such as winter gardens for free-range flocks offer a potential solution in times of outbreaks.

The signatories to this letter are all vets, and we agree that we should be pushing for alternatives, not promoting dated unethical systems that cause suffering to millions of sentient birds.

We urge Mr Gibbens and the government to take a more progressive position on hen welfare instead of bowing to an industry that is reluctant to change.

Marc Abraham; Ines Ajuda; Vicky Bond; Martin Cooke; Dr Bryony Dixon; Dr Mark Jones; Andrew Knight; Dr Steven P Mcculloch; Dr Richard Saunders; Dr Pete Wedderburn
campaign to spread dis harmony in the West. However, he is too quick to lay the blame at the gangway of “HMS Whitehall”, which is but part of the fleet. Russia is clearly exploiting uncertainty and lack of resolve. The uncertainty arises from the challenge of attribution of a cyber attack. Although the location may be pinpointed with some accuracy, the precise perpetrators cannot. This is a global not national conundrum. The lack of resolve emanates from Nato's inability to identify appropriate retribution in response to a cyber attack, the results of which (as Lucas points out) could be devastating. Until the attribution and retribution issues are resolved the West will continue to be at the mercy of whatever cybertorpedoes Putin chooses to launch.

*Air Marshal Sir Christopher Coville*

Sherborne, Dorset

**PRAY GEORGE IS GAY?**

Sir, In response to your report “Anglican minister: pray George is gay” (Dec 1), there is nothing more toe-curling than a (senior) clergyman clinging desperately to the coat-tails of perceived secular orthodoxy. The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth, the provost of St Mary’s Cathedral in Glasgow, might be well advised to take stock of G K Chesterton's insight that “the man who marries the spirit of the age will soon find himself a widower in the next”.

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/our-colonial-history-and-guilt-over-empire-kct89g775
the furtherance of that adult’s own interests might be actionable. It was no surprise, then, to learn in the same edition of *The Times* that increasingly few people now trust clerics (“People losing their faith in the clergy”).

*The Rev David Branford*
Carnforth, Lancs

Sir, As the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth thinks it is acceptable for us to pray that Prince George will be gay, would it be acceptable for us to pray that the former becomes heterosexual?

*Canon John Heard Williams*
Bristol

**GRAVE DISAPPROVAL**
Sir, It was interesting to read your report that carbon-testing has shown that the grave structure in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre dates from the period of the Emperor Constantine (“Tests on mortar suggest Jesus’s tomb is genuine”, Nov 30). You conclude that this finally dispels doubts that the church sits atop the spot identified 1,700 years ago as Jesus’s “final resting place”. Roughly a third of the world’s population would dispute the last phrase in your report, believing that Jesus rested in his tomb for three days only.
RIGHTS AND GENDER

Sir, Debbie Hayton is to be congratulated on her Thunderer (“We transgender women cannot self-identify our sex”, Nov 29). It is the first article I have read by a transgender woman arguing that one’s history as a boy or girl cannot be wiped out by those who transition from one gender to another — and neither can women’s hard-won rights.

Debate and discussion must not be shut down and this painful territory must be explored. Self-belief, as Debbie Hayton argued, cannot be the new sacred cow.

Bev Gold
Cambridge

PRINCE HARRY’S NEW TITLE

Sir, Further to your report (Nov 28) on a new title for Prince Harry, and the “suspended” dukedom of Albany, in Scotland the 1st Duke of Albany (and Earl of Fife) was Robert Stewart (1339-1419), the younger brother of King Robert III. He was Governor of Scotland and Regent during the imprisonment in London of King James I (of Scotland), 1406 to 1425. This title is thus much older than your article suggests. It should not be ruled out so summarily as a candidate title for a recently engaged Prince.
Isabella, married my clan chief, Sir Walter Buchanan. This placed them very close to the Scottish succession for a few years.

*J Michael Buchanan*

London W6

**LONGLIFE TOMATOES**

Sir, David Shamash (letter, Nov 30) is absolutely right that tomatoes should not be stored in the fridge. Sadly too many supermarkets store them in their vegetable chill rooms so the damage has already been done; we watch them suddenly go soft and implode. On seeking out various supermarket managers, I found only one who said that all their tomatoes went direct on to the shelves.

If supermarkets woke up to a few facts, tomatoes could be sold when turning from just the palest of yellow. That would be brilliant for consumers and the growers.

*Phil Randall*

Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire

**ALL GREEK TO ME**

Sir, Professor Ian Pyle (letter, Nov 29) asserts “the precision needed to write a correct program is . . . way beyond the rules of ancient Greek”. I suspect that his confidence would be severely tested if he had to face the task of converting an
Terry Buckley  
Retired head of classics, Roedean School, Brighton

MODEST DESIGNS  
Sir, Clive Aslet (Thunderer, Nov 30, and letter, Dec 1) is to be congratulated for his anti-establishment view on the Riba “house of the year” award. In place of this era of weird award-winning architectural designs we desperately need modest volume projects providing well-designed spaces in cherished settings. Oh for the days of Eric Lyons and Span Developments.  
Professor John L Taylor  
Bolton Percy, N Yorks

EXTENDING CREDIT  
Sir, Kevin Maher makes an interesting point about not sitting through the end credits of movies (Times2, Nov 30, and letter, Dec 1). However, I hope that he did not miss the greatest end title sequence, that of Miles Forman’s Amadeus. Audiences sat in exquisite silence, entranced by the entire slow movement of the composer’s K.466 Piano Concerto. A truly great few minutes.  
Robert Roy  
Edinburgh
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24 comments

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**Brian Cope** 3 days ago

India was a creditor of Great Britain at the end of WW2. Perhaps Indians should consider how the Japanese Empire would have treated them if India had been conquered and occupied. The experience of other "liberated" Asian peoples was unfavourable in comparison with their treatment by European colonial powers.

3 Recommend Reply

**GX** 3 days ago

Probably 90% of British people had absolutely nothing to do with the British Empire so why should they have collective responsibility or guilt. The same with the slave trade. The benefit of Empire was for a very few people. They are quite easily identifiable today and if they wish to apologise that is up to them but leave me out. Thank you.
Our colonial history and guilt over empire | Comment | The Times & The Sunday Times

Peter Cressall  3 days ago

GRAVE DISAPPROVAL. So two-thirds of the world's population would not dispute it?

Peter Cressall  3 days ago

Our colonial history and guilt over empire. Of course there were regrettable incidents. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. However, by a very large margin, Britain's colonial empire was beneficial to the peoples it governed, providing stability and a civilising influence to areas where in most cases there had existed, anarchy, murder, rape and slavery. It was historically inevitable, I suppose, that each country should become independent, but in most cases the new rulers are very much worse than the old colonial ones.

John Batten  3 days ago

Robert Roy might know that the soloist was Imogen Cooper...

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086879/soundtrack

Chris and Ceri  3 days ago

Do we really need any more royal titles? Surely there are more than enough princes, princesses, dukes, duchesses, counts and countesses already. I am sure that Harry Wales and Meghan Markles are perfectly lovely people and deserve congratulations upon their engagement, but should titles be bestowed upon people who have done nothing more remarkable than being born or married?
however prove who lay there or for how long.

David South Ron  3 days ago

Re Colonial History and threats of violence over publication of academic texts I had not heard about before, my curiosity was of course peaked. For others who are curious, we can, thanks to the wonders of the internet and some of its wonderful denizens, for that fact that the full text in PDF format can be found here - https://goo.gl/GWYI4j .
I have just printed it and will now stop reading my Times and read this instead!

David South Ron  3 days ago

Two corrections: 1) please read ‘For others who are curious, we can thank the wonders...”; 2) at the end add: “…read this instead, so that I can make up my own mind, thank you very much!”

David South Ron  3 days ago

I can't get into my original post to edit it. I also want to remove the spellcheck error and replace peaked with piqued.

Yersinia Pestis  3 days ago

@David South Ron

Delete everything and re post it.
Once more a long list of signatures no one reads. What is the point?

@Yersinia Pestis  The very length and content of the list reassures me that there are still some rational academics who have not yet become petulant single-issue fanatics to whom an opposing view must be silenced, but remain intellectually credible.

@Yersinia Pestis  The point is to show that a great many well-educated, thinking university academics and writers of articles promoting thought and discussion, want to put their names to an important defense of intellectual freedom. What counts is that a long list of so many names creates an immediate visual demonstration of support for the publication of ideas, however controversial, without the publisher being pressured to shut up because someone doesn't agree with the ideas, which is known as censorship and which is not good for the development of reason and the growth of civilised societies. No-one thinks that all the names should be or will be read, it's the length of the list that gives weight to the matter being raised.

@Yersinia Pestis  You are incorrect, and therefore your point falls. I read the signatures in order to understand the range of people expressing such depth of support for an editor who had suffered death threats for doing his job in accordance
Yersinia Pestis 3 days ago

@nickyp

So you read the names. Good for you.

Yersinia Pestis 3 days ago

... You conclude that this finally dispels doubts that the church sits atop the spot identified 1,700 years ago as Jesus's “final resting place”. Roughly a third of the world's population would dispute the last phrase in your report, believing that Jesus rested in his tomb for three days only.

Dr Robert Rowe

A third of the world's population actually believe that someone died for three days and came back to life? I find it ridiculous that one person believes it, let alone a third of the world.

Laura Xanthe 3 days ago

@Yersinia Pestis And you're free to find it ridiculous, just as others are free to believe it. People believe things for all kinds of reasons, not everyone who believes stuff that doesn't make sense to someone else, is a fool, as your tone rather suggests. Both your comments are full of scorn. What happened to make you so angry with people? You might find yourself feeling happier if you turned your dial to interested kindness instead of contempt. An intrusive suggestion, I know, maybe patronising, too. Reject it comprehensively if it enragés you. Or give it a go.
@Yersinia Pestis  Oh, it's you again. Don't you think it is a little bit creepy - indeed, rather revolting - to ridicule people for a faith that they hold dear? You may argue with it philosophically, scientifically, historically and theologically. You may also contend that this faith (and others) have been the cause of much suffering through history, but surely the human thing to do is either to engage intellectually with it or simply say, "This is the path others have chosen. It is not however for me." Simply to sneer at them demeans you.

Is it perhaps that you have in your own past been subject to ridicule that now you seek to do the same to others? If so, that is very unfortunate.

@nickyp @Yersinia Pestis  Bad taste is just that, and is usually in the eye of the beholder. Free speech is one of the basic foundation stones of a free society.

Peter Cressall. Well yes, free speech is a cornerstone of a civilised society, but civility has an important place too.

@Yersinia Pestis  That's OK Yersinia, you believe what you want, and I'll believe what I want.
Yersinia Pestis 3 days ago
@Angela Barratt

Of course. You can believe in celestial teapots and IPUs as well if you wish.

Thesiger 3 days ago
@j michael buchanan
Albany Park is in St Andrews, not St Andrew's.

5 Recommend Reply
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