

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# Scholars and the debate about colonial rule

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Sir, Colonial apologists have long sought to justify colonial rule by highlighting the supposed benefits of colonialism for the colonised, so it is hardly surprising for an Oxford theologian to urge readers to not “feel guilty for (Britain’s) colonial history” (Nigel Biggar, Comment, Nov 30). In such accounts, the “costs” of genocide and dispossession of lands are absurdly placed on a plane of equivalence with the supposed “benefits” of colonial rule. These ideological rationalisations of imperial domination have been thoroughly debunked by scholars of colonialism.

Yet a recent letter (Dec 2) to *The Times* signed by 82 academics defends the publication of “A Case for Colonialism” in *Third World Quarterly*, suggesting that scholarly journals should “publish any work — however controversial” as long as it “merits exposure and debate”. More than 16,000 people signed petitions highlighting that piece’s historical inaccuracies and lack of scholarly rigour. While authors have a right to make fallacious arguments, editors of scholarly journals have a responsibility to uphold academic

standards and an ethical duty to reject works advocating the violation of human rights, of which colonialism is an egregious example. Promoting the subjugation of peoples and abuses of fundamental freedoms should have no place in academic scholarship.

*Dr Reuben Rose-Redwood (University of Victoria, Canada); Prof Ania Loomba (University of Pennsylvania, USA); Prof Ben Rogaly (University of Sussex, UK); Prof Bill V. Mullen (Purdue University, USA); Prof Cheryl Narumi Naruse (Tulane University, USA); Prof Clayton Plake (Fullerton College, USA); Prof Craig Howes (University of Hawaii, USA); Prof Cristina Bacchilega (University of Hawaii at Mānoa, USA); Prof Cynthia Franklin (University of Hawaii, USA); Prof Des Freedman (University of London, UK); Prof Divya P. Tolia-Kelly (Sussex University, UK); Prof Eleonora Belfiore (Loughborough University, UK); Prof Eliza Noh (California State University at Fullerton, USA); Prof Frann Michel (Willamette University, USA); Prof Hilary Robinson (Loughborough University, UK); Prof Joan D. Peters (University of Hawaii at Mānoa, USA); Prof Lisa Ann Richey (Roskilde University, Denmark, and former Third World Quarterly Editorial Board member); Prof Margaret Satterthwaite (New York University, USA); Prof Mari Yoshihara (University of Hawaii, USA); Prof Nalini Iyer (Seattle University, USA); Prof Nasar Meer (University of Edinburgh, UK); Prof Patricia Wood (York University, Canada); Prof Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt (Linfield College, USA); Prof Richie Howitt (Macquarie University, Australia); Prof Robert Warrior (University of Kansas, USA); Prof S. Charusheela (University of Washington at Bothell, USA); Prof S. Shankar (University of Hawaii at Mānoa, USA); Prof Shazia Rahman (Western Illinois University, USA); Prof Stefano Ponte (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, and former Third World Quarterly Editorial Board member); Prof Valerie Wayne (University of Hawaii at Mānoa, USA); Prof Vanesa Castan Broto (University of Sheffield, UK); Dr Aaron Jaffe (The Juilliard School, USA); Dr Aaron Roussell (Portland State University, USA); Dr Adam Miyashiro (Stockton University, USA); Dr Altha Cravey (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA); Dr Amanda Wooden (Bucknell University, USA); Dr Amiera Sawas (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Sweden); Dr Andrew Baldwin (Durham University, UK); Dr Angela Last (University of Warwick, UK); Dr Anindya Raychaudhuri (University of St Andrews, UK); Dr Anja Kanngieser (University of Wollongong, Australia); Dr Anna Carlile (University of London, UK); Dr Arnab Banerji (Loyola Marymount University, USA); Dr Aurelien Mondon (University of Bath, UK); Dr Ayesha Siddiqi (Royal Holloway University of London, UK); Dr Barry Fruchter (State University of New York, USA); Dr Ben Pitcher (University of Westminster, UK); Dr Bianca Kai Isaki (University of Hawaii at Mānoa, USA); Dr Brian Muzás (Seton Hall University, USA); Dr Carrie Mott (Rutgers University, USA); Dr*

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*Olm (Independent Scholar, UK); Dr Matt Finn (University of Exeter, UK); Dr Nada Elia (Western Washington University, USA); Dr Nadine Shaanta Murshid (State University of New York at Buffalo, USA); Dr Nausheen H. Anwar (Institute of Business Administration, Pakistan); Dr Navine Murshid (Colgate University, USA); Dr Nicole Laliberte (University of Toronto at Mississauga, Canada); Dr Nivi Manchanda (University of London, UK); Dr Patrick L. Gallagher (Kent State University, USA); Dr Petra Boynton (Independent Scholar, UK); Dr Pranav Jani (Ohio State University, USA); Dr Rahul Rao (University of London, UK); Dr Ranu Basu (York University, Canada); Dr Rebecca Martinez (University of Missouri, UK); Dr Renginee G. Pillay (University of Essex, UK); Dr Richard J. White (Sheffield Hallam University, UK); Dr Rita Cano Alcalá (Scripps College, USA); Dr Roderick Galam (Free University of Berlin, Germany); Dr Rohit K Dasgupta (Loughborough University, UK); Dr Rory Rowan (University of Zurich, Switzerland); Dr Sara Smith (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA); Dr Sarah Hickmott (University of Oxford, UK); Dr Sarah Raskin (Virginia Commonwealth University, USA); Dr Shola Adenekan (University of Bremen, Germany); Dr Simon Dawes (Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France); Dr Simon Springer (University of Victoria, Canada); Dr Siobhán McGrath (Durham University, UK); Dr Sneha Krishnan (University of Oxford, UK); Dr Srilata Sircar (Lund University, Sweden); Dr Sunny Singh (London Metropolitan University, UK); Dr Susanne Seymour (University of Nottingham, UK); Dr Tania Saeed (Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan); Dr Tariq Thachil (Vanderbilt University, USA); Dr Tina Burdsall (Portland State University, USA); Dr Tobias Denskus (Malmö University, Sweden); Dr Uli Beisel (Bayreuth University, Germany); Dr Vasna Ramasar (Lund University, Sweden); Dr Yanna Lambrinidou (Virginia Tech University, USA); Alexander Reid Ross (Portland State University, USA); Anabelle Suitor (Brown University, USA); Ayendy Bonifacio (Ohio State University, USA); Barkley Ramsey (University of Washington, USA); Bethany Whitlock (Brown University, USA); Beverley Pickard-Jones (Bangor University, UK); Caitlin Postal (University of Washington, USA); Christopher Miles (Indiana University, USA); Davinia Gregory (University of Warwick, UK); Diljeet Bhachu (University of Edinburgh, UK); Elizabeth Burrows (University of Manchester, UK); Ibidun Francisca Idowu-Eberendu (Queen's University Belfast, UK); Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood (King's College London, UK); Isaac Rivera (University of Colorado, USA); Jennifer Dane (Ohio State University, USA); Jessica Sandelson (University of Oxford, UK); Joey Kim (Ohio State University, USA); Katharine Howell (University of Lancaster, UK); Katrine Scott (Lund University, Sweden); Kay Sidebottom (University of Leeds, UK); Maryam Siddiq (Glasgow School of Art, UK); Maximillian Alvarez (University of Michigan, USA); Meera Karunanathan (University of Ottawa, Canada); Muireann*

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Sir, Lawrence James (Thunderer, Dec 5) is right to point out that “empires were not all driven by the same values”. Several members of my family served the empire, a grandfather as chief engineer of the East India Railway, who also introduced Tata to the possibilities of steel-making, and an uncle who as rector of a college in Ceylon opened up new career opportunities for countless Sri Lankans. Neither had any view of their work as other than helping the people they served. Although I know of numerous other families for whom the same could be said, the more challenging point is that from the outset of the first city states in Mesopotamia, empire has been a corollary of civilisation and the inevitable consequence of the need for confident states to expand, as epitomised by the life of Sargon, the first empire builder, and also in our own time by China’s maritime ambitions in the South China Sea and Russian ambitions in eastern Europe.

*Dominic Kirkham*

Manchester

Sir, Lawrence James argues that empires have done good, and that we must be free to say so. Boudicea would have taken a different view, but many thousands whose homes were outside Italy but within the Roman empire benefited from the Pax Romana, opportunities for greater wealth and education, Roman citizenship (St Paul) and access to public appointments up to and including emperor (Trajan, Septimius Severus).

*Christopher Roberts*

Woldingham, Surrey

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## **BREXIT ASSESSMENTS**

Sir, David Davis, the Brexit secretary, told the House of Commons that the government has made no overall assessment of the effect of Brexit on the UK economy. We know that nearly 60 sectoral appraisals have been concluded, that they are too damaging to publish and yet are asked to believe that no summary exists. The Office for Budget

Responsibility can apparently advise the chancellor to lower growth assumptions with no analysis of the Brexit consequences. The chancellor accepts the advice and lowers growth in his budget without the Treasury attempting to scrutinise the calculations behind the advice. Does the government so fear the conclusions that it has refused to explore them or does the government actually know the conclusions and thus decided to suppress them?

*Lord Heseltine*

House of Lords

Sir, It is irresponsible of the British government not to have undertaken an impact assessment of Brexit on the financial sector, which has provided a record £72 billion of tax revenue over the past year. The financial sector represents over 7 per cent of the UK economy. It does not merely bring benefits to the City but provides over one million jobs across the country and a significant chunk of money for our hard-pressed public services.

Some 18 months on from the EU referendum, it turns out that the UK government has not undertaken the most basic due diligence or even had a cabinet discussion about what kind of Brexit it really wants. Ministers need to urgently undertake a proper impact assessment focusing on the financial sector and options for ensuring that financial services firms can continue to do business across the EU – the simplest of which is for the UK to remain in the single market. If the British government continues to push this work into the long grass, the impact will be felt across the country through fewer jobs, reduced investment and a fall in tax revenue.

*Richard Pym, chairman, Allied Irish Bank, and Andrew Dixon, founder, ARC InterCapital, co-chairman, Liberal Democrat Business and Entrepreneurs Network*

## **BRITISH ISIS FIGHTERS**

Sir, As a former soldier who has had his fair share of deployments, I abhor the defence secretary's statement on British citizens fighting overseas for Isis. I do not support, sympathise with or condone anyone who goes to fight for Isis. However, there are appropriate processes for dealing with those who do so and then seek to return to this country – and they do not include extra-judicial killing.

In the UK we believe in the rule of law, not vigilante justice. If we have enough information on these Britons to assassinate them then we have enough information to

put them on trial when they return home. As Max Hill, QC, the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, has said, although punishment will be necessary for some such citizens, rehabilitation will play a crucial role.

Laws apply to armed conflict for a reason. Adherence to these laws, and to the values of the British Army, is built into our military's DNA. Our service personnel fight for our democratic principles. Rather than making us safer, asking soldiers to deliver a simplistic and unlawful solution to a complex problem will inspire others to join Isis.

Upholding high standards during conflict is not easy but Gavin Williamson's proposal to tear up the rule book would make it even harder.

*Brigadier John Donnelly (ret'd)*

Commandant, Royal Army Physical Training Corps 2012-16

## **TOP READING SCORES**

Sir, Nick Gibb, the schools minister, is presumptuous in claiming that the government's emphasis on synthetic phonics is solely behind the rise in England's international primary reading scores ("Best reading in schools for a generation", Dec 6). While the performance of boys has greatly improved and the gender gap has narrowed, girls' performance is similar to the last cycle of testing in 2011. Further, the PIRLS scores indicate only a correlation to the Year 1 phonics check introduced in 2012, with a similar link to the former Key Stage 1 reading assessments that the phonics check largely replaced.

The improvements in our international standing in reading are to be welcomed but the jury is still out on causation. Future research may well show that the encouragement of parents and hard work of primary teachers lie behind our increase in reading scores, rather than any particular methodology.

*Neil Roskilly*

CEO, Independent Schools Association

## **ROBOTS AND CHESS**

Sir, I am not surprised that a computer can quickly master chess ("Robot becomes world-beating chess grandmaster in four hours" Dec 7). I enjoyed chess as a child but my performance gradually got worse. I found that as well as using their skill, many opponents were memorising games. Once many games are memorised, a chess player can look for positions that come from a known game, with known winning moves. As

memory, rather than skill, plays such a large part of success in chess, a computer will obviously be able to master the memory side of the game very quickly. We should perhaps reassess our view of chess as a game of skill rather than our view of computers.

*Peter West*

London SW20

### **NATIONAL TRUST AND FRACKING**

Sir, I wonder how Mark Harold, director of land and nature at the National Trust (letter, Dec 6), reconciles a refusal to allow shale gas exploration at Clumber Park with the proud boast of accommodating 500,000 annual visitors, given that the vast majority of those visitors will have arrived in vehicles powered by the internal combustion engine. Does the National Trust have plans to install large numbers of electric vehicle recharging points to address this or would Mr Harold prefer a ban on visitors?

*David R Smith*

Southport

### **BITTEN BY THE BUG**

Sir, Norman Sanders observes (letter, Dec 4) that, while a computer program must be perfect to be fit for purpose, a modern schoolchild's poem in ancient Greek may pass muster with a few errors of grammar or scansion. His implication that programming is harder than Greek does not follow. A computer programmer's first shot usually contains errors, more commonly known as "bugs". An entire industry is devoted to eradicating the latter. The "millennium bug" reminded us of this. The child whose ancient Greek poetry contains a few errors will deserve an A-level pass and can look forward to a good future as a computer programmer.

*Philip Roe*

St Albans

### **NIGHT OF THE HUNTER**

Sir, You report (Dec 5) that night herons "were spotted breeding for the first time in Britain this year, after taking up residence on the Somerset Levels". In fact night herons first lived here in the wild in the grounds of Edinburgh zoo in 1938, and have been breeding intermittently in the area and in parts of Norfolk since at least the late 1990s, having been first introduced (from North America and parts of Europe) as long ago as 1887.

*Dr Sir Christopher Lever*

Winkfield, Berks



## **MOVIE MOZART**

Sir, The exquisite slow movement in Mozart's piano concerto No 20, K.466 (letters, Dec 2, 4 & 6) is surpassed only by the even more magical slow movement in his next concerto, No 21, K.467, written four weeks later, which was memorably used in the film *Elvira Madigan*.

*Peter Hutchesson*

London W4

## **EAR TO THE GROUND**

Sir, I was pleased to read your article "Get a right earful in noisy room" (Dec 7) as it may explain a few of my habits that I had thought were merely quirky. I have always held a phone to my right ear and wondered why nothing seemed to go in to my brain if I held it to my left ear — the more logical choice when writing at the same time. In addition, at noisy social gatherings I always turn my right ear towards the person speaking rather than my left, even though I have no hearing deficiency in either ear.

*Amanda Jones*

St Peter Port, Guernsey

## **ULTIMATE MINCE PIE**

Sir, Lis Smith talks of her delight at discovering sherry with Christmas cake and cheese (letter, Dec 6). When I was a child I was taught by my Yorkshire-born father that mince pies were to be eaten with a slice of cheddar placed in between the mince and the lid. If the pie was still hot even better, as the gentle melting of the cheese enhanced the experience. To this day I staunchly follow this tradition, much to my wife's embarrassment.

*Phil Smith*

Hemel Hempstead, Herts

## **SILENCE IS GOLDEN**

Sir, Apropos noisy eating in theatres (letter, Dec 7), when we lived in Australia we became used to the presence of "crying rooms" in cinemas. A part of the auditorium is enclosed and soundproofed with a glass wall through which the screen can be seen; sound is piped inside. Small children may occupy the crying room with their parents, who are spared the embarrassment of any noise disturbing the rest of the audience. Perhaps UK theatres could introduce similarly constructed dining rooms within the auditorium.

*Kate Roberts*



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**David13** 3 minutes ago

*Elvira Madigan* and Mozart: Apart from the wonderful music, the film was self-indulgent twaddle.

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**Peter Hurley** 15 minutes ago

Given that colonisation appears to have been adjudged an egregious violation of human rights of the subjugated nation, I guess that we can all look forward to and applaud the decolonisation of the South and East of the UK by continental Europeans...

★ Recommend    ↩ Reply

**Mrs M Newman** 1 hour ago

Oh, what a surprise. The letter on Saturday was from British academics. {I've just started a

history MA at Kent, and when I saw that the lead signatory was from here, it was the first time I've felt any glimmer of pride in my new institution.} Yet this lot are mostly Americans.

"Promoting the subjugation of peoples and abuses of fundamental freedoms should have no place in academic scholarship."

The whole point is it's not black and white. Most Britons don't know about the Indian famine in 1877-8 when the Tories, under Dizzy, decided that the free market would solve it which led to grain being exported from the famine hit areas.

Dizzy and his Tory mates killed 15m people. 2.5x the holocaust. While when the Moghuls and the Qing Chinese had to deal with El-Niño famines they managed to avoid such suffering.

But the article was saying that we need to compare colonial regimes with what came before and afterwards.

In pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, 3 out of every 4 Africans was a slave, enslaved by their fellow Africans. Due to the climate, sub-Saharan Africa had more land than people. So the economy was pre-feudal. There were only two free wage labour jobs - metal work and leather tanning. Everything else was done by slaves.

So wars were fought not to capture land as in feudal Europe, but to capture PoWs as slaves.

And this had always been the case - long before the Europeans started buying them in the C16th and long before the Arabs started buying them in the C8th.

David Eltis is one of the world's leading experts on slavery. He shows how almost every society in human history considered some humans as "outsiders" who could be enslaved.

Africans for Brits (though only in our colonies after 1772), criminals as galley slaves in much of Europe, certain castes in India, pretty much anyone in Africa etc.

Yet in 1834-40, after the world's first fair trade movement saw Brits (especially middle class Non-Conformists) boycott slave sugar, GB became the first society in history to confer non-enslaveable "insider" status on the whole of humanity.

GB then spent blood and treasure trying to force others to follow suit.

The British Empire in Victorian Africa tried to stamp it out.

During the 1890s, the kingdom of Benin had been left uncolonised because it was so

economically unproductive that not even the Germans after the 1885 Berlin Africa Conference wanted it.

The King owned all his subjects as slaves and used to sell them to Arab traders or nail them up for human sacrificial crucifixion.

GB kept asking him to stop but the King kept renegeing on his promises to do so.

So in 1897 we used a pretext to annex it and put a stop to this behaviour. GB spent blood and treasure to do so.

Yet you say we're "Promoting the subjugation of peoples and abuses of fundamental freedoms"?

Really?

Rather looks to me that we were trying to stop it.

I worry if these American historians have so little understanding of the past that they think pre-colonial Africa was a collection of liberal states with national identities. Most were slaves. 75% of them.

So imagine you were a Benini peasant in 1897. Which would you prefer?

To be a slave, being sold to Arabs and being nailed up to appease the gods?

Or to be under British rule? No, you still can't vote, and the big boss man has a different skin colour now, but you live peacefully, and at liberty, under the rule of law.

If these historians can't see that illiterate African slaves didn't have the political consciousness that came after European colonialism introduced the subjugated to western education and political ideologies then I pity them.

And they certainly shouldn't be teaching students if they are so narrow minded they would rather virtue signal to each other than trying to question academic issues from all sides.

So, again. How is it the British, not the African rulers who kept slaving in the C19th that are "promoting the subjugation of peoples and abuses of fundamental freedoms" in this specific case?

"the "costs" of genocide and dispossession of lands are absurdly placed on a plane of equivalence with the supposed "benefits" of colonial rule"

Now, leaving aside the fact that I can't think of one case of British genocide - though the Germans committed the first of the Herero people in the early 1900s in modern day Namibia - when it comes simply to deliberate killing, human sacrificial crucifixion seems a bit closer.

But what land did these slaves in Africa have before the nasty Brits came and emancipated them (for our own economic benefits as well as the Christian ideology, obviously)?

As I say, pre-colonial Africa was a labour-based slave economy, not a land-based feudal one. During wars, the 25% would take the enslaved 75% and abandon towns and villages and move elsewhere. Because there was more land than labour.

They don't know the basic facts but write in to the Times. You'll find that no slaves had land before colonialism but many did as a result as we stopped the tribal warfare - Rhodes stopped the Matabele murdering the Shona to steal their land for example - and the stability allowed people to settle down and farm.

I'm not some imperial apologist - I spend far too much time in India for that. But the point is that all history is shades of grey, which was the point of the original article. Yes, you say he made loads of errors, and I'm sure he did, and I'd guess he was writing a polemic to try to show the other side of the argument.

But you should have used it as a starting point for intellectual discussion.

Instead you chose a witch-hunt because your white guilt trips prevent you from considering that this subject may not be 100% black and white.

And as such, you are all a disgrace to your profession.

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4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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**Brian Cope** | 1 hour ago

[@Mrs M Newman](#) Excellent. Very interesting and clearly argued with plenty of examples. Many thanks.

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2 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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**Mrs M Newman** | 1 hour ago

[@Brian Cope](#) [@Mrs M Newman](#) Thank you.

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**Mr Gerald McDermott** 58 minutes ago

[@Mrs M Newman](#) Very good, but you managed to miss the Zulus who built a vast empire, but as you say it is such a vast subject.

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[Brian Cope](#) 52 minutes ago

[@Mr Gerald McDermott](#) [@Mrs M Newman](#) Zulus suffer from coming last alphabetically.

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1 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[Mark Thompson](#) 2 hours ago

This is the most extraordinary letter I've ever read in the Times. Are these people really saying colonialism and genocide are synonymous? Is everyone who tries to present a balanced view of the impact of the colonial era considered an 'apologist?' for colonialism? This letter is as far from the values of academic rigour and academic freedom as you can get! Or I am misinterpreting it?

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6 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[Mrs M Newman](#) 1 hour ago

[@Mark Thompson](#) See they are. In their view, yes. And no you're not. See my post above.

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[Edward Reynolds](#) 55 minutes ago

[@Mark Thompson](#) They aren't experts on the subject. I've checked the academic credentials of the professors who signed this letter. Not one is a historian as such. They by and large specialise in 'post-colonial studies', 'feminist theory', sociology, English literature and the like.

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1 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[Mr Gerald McDermott](#) 3 hours ago

I don't think the Romans did anything for us, they did a lot for themselves. Christianity may have done something.

As far As I can see the Western Roman empire collapsed in AD 410 when the Romans left en masse never to return. Because of the migration of Aryan tribes, in turn under pressure from other tribal movements.

Under this pressure the Anglo Saxons had been forced to the edge of Europe and reduced to sea piracy. The Lombards who had once been their neighbours in Germany had moved to

Italy. So none of these tribes had any real control over their movements. Franks and Burgundians finished in France, Vandals in North Africa, Ostrogoths, Visi Goths occupied other areas. Roman rule disappeared, towns left empty, the Celts subjugated.

According to a book I read if you read the laws of the Frankish kings, they lived in green fields full of crops and cattle with laws regarding the ownership and compensation, and also laws protecting the Gauls from intimidation and exploitation. How that worked in Practice?

This was the position at the start of the dark ages as tribes fought and the church tried to exert its influence.

Saxon saints went back to Germany to convert their fellow tribes. Some like St Wilibrord suffered martyrdom.

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**Thesiger** 3 hours ago

And your point is?

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**Mr Gerald McDermott** 2 hours ago

*@Thesiger* Self evident

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**Mr Gerald McDermott** 53 minutes ago

*@Thesiger* These are vast subjects and difficult after all these years to get everything right, besides which we know very little about who the Aryans, or Indo Europeans were and where they came from and who the Celts were because the subjects have become very sensitive, First the Aryans thanks to Hitler, then the Celts because of the Celtic revival of the 1960s.

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**Ian Bignell** 3 hours ago

Without colonialism it is doubtful many millions from those countries would have been able to make their homes here in anything approaching the present number.

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3 [★ Recommend](#) [← Reply](#)

**David Reddin** 4 hours ago

Would e.g. India be a technologically advanced democracy today without British imperialism? Anyone who's being remotely honest about this would have to say: almost

certainly not. This is not to defend the undoubted cruelties inflicted by the British Empire- it's just an honest assessment of reality. To expect history to be a simple morality tale is infantile.

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10 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Amin Smith** | hour ago

*@David Reddin* The history of the Indian textile trade would contradict your suggestion; it was destroyed at the behest of British merchants and never really recovered. If India had been allowed to make its own way it might well have surpassed Britain technologically.

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**Brian Cope** 55 minutes ago

*@Amin Smith @David Reddin* And what were the Indian steam engine developers doing while Newcomen was building his? Why wasn't ukka steel used by them?

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**Mrs Pam Rose** 4 hours ago

How many of the American, Canadian and Australian signatories are Native Americans or Aboriginal Australians? If, as seems likely, the answer is none, then this letter is hypocritical in the extreme, as all those writers are, by definition, enjoying the benefits of colonialism by previous generations.

By their own logic they should be apologising to the original inhabitants of their nations and handing all the best land back to those from whom it was stolen.

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7 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Gordon W** 4 hours ago

'Colonial apologists' and 'supposed benefits'. So refreshing to see that integrity and openness of inquiry live on in the upper reaches of academia.

If only.

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4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Peter Saunders** 6 hours ago

And there, in a letter signed by dozens of fatuous academics, all sharing an unshakable belief in their own moral superiority, is the clearest evidence yet of how universities nowadays have become ideologically narrow, closed communities pushing one, approved line and deeply intolerant of any alternative views or opinions. Students pay 9 grand a year to be taught by people like this, and taxpayers fork out millions more to subsidise them. John Stuart Mill, where are you now?



**Cats Lockhart** 6 hours ago

Most of the signatories come from outside the U.K. We are not paying for them. Those from the U.K. are a tiny proportion of U.K. academics. Your fulmination is out of proportion to the facts.

---

2 ★ Recommend ↩ Reply

**David Thomas** 1 hour ago

*@Peter Saunders* Spot on! See article "The Problem of Identity Politics and Its Solution" by Matthew Continetti, Editor-in-Chief, Washington Free Beacon, in "Imprimis" published by Hillsdale College in Michigan (MI 49242 USA). Volume 46 number 11. Link - email - [imprimis@hillsdale.edu](mailto:imprimis@hillsdale.edu)

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**Mr Gerald McDermott** 6 hours ago

I do not usually look at long lists of names and in the print edition you only thoughtfully give us 6 but those names raise enough questions.

Someone living in Canada on land expropriated from the natives, a man in Denmark with a foreign sounding name, Portuguese?

A professor from Hawaii, once an independent kingdom, protected by the British, they still have the union flag in their state flag. Stolen by the USA.

An Indian colonising the USA a country itself built on the exploitation and expropriation by settlers of the indigenous people settlers. As an Indian Hindu? his ancestors invaded and took over the Sub Continent long before the European powers began their explorations.

If these people all feel so strongly and bitterly why not just quietly give back your shares of your ancestors and your own travels and go back to where they came from.

I am still living where my ancestors have lived for the last 1,000 years, and I object to be crowded out by newcomers with whom I do not have the slightest connection.

Perhaps as well as protesting about events long since past, they would earn more respect protesting about modern immigration, colonisation, not to mention modern trafficking and MODERN SLAVERY.

---

16 ★ Recommend ↩ Reply

[The Right To Arm Bears](#) 6 hours ago

All right, but apart from the sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, the fresh water system and public health, what **have the Romans ever done for us?**

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8 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[littleol'me](#) 5 hours ago

[@The Right To Arm Bears](#) concrete...

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2 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[mama mia](#) 7 hours ago

"The past is another country; they did things differently there."

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5 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[CM](#) 7 hours ago

Academics are so dumb these days. One only has to look at Zimbabwe to see that there must have been some merits in some colonialism. Perhaps we can come back and ask why the great migration is happening, if the third world is so great at governance? Of course. Third world failure is all down to imperialism, natch. No wonder so many academics think socialism is a good idea. I expect they never noticed Stalin, Mao or Chavez. What a bunch of airheads. Away virtue signal somewhere else, stupidies. The rest of us aren't as dumb, blind and closed as you shower. Enjoy you ignorant absolutism for as long as our governments force us to support your unmerited sinecures.

---

15 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[Cats Lockhart](#) 6 hours ago

See my reply to Peter Saunders.

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★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[CM](#) 5 hours ago

Go earn a living that isn't supported by enforced expropriation of taxpayers hard earned money. Enforced expropriation of assets is bad, whether it's done by universities or colonials.

---

2 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

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[Cats Lockhart](#) 4 hours ago

Presumably you prefer no public spending. Those paid a salary, whether from public

funds or private enterprise, pay tax. I'm not sure why you have to be quite so insulting. But these threads are apparently where that is what people do. Goodbye.

---

★ Recommend ↩ Reply

**Robert Holmes** 8 hours ago

Nobody would advocate colonialism now but in the 19th century and before it was what all countries and all nations did not just europeans. Japan and Germany ,however, did try it in the 20th century.

What the British Empire did , with hindsight, should never have happened ,that is the occupation of other countries and the imposition of foreign rule. However,the experience was not all negative as history shows: establishing peace among warring tribes, introducing education, creating better living standards...Having seen what is happening after decolonisation helps make the point and western money still saves much of africa from starvation.

Rather like young German kid today, Brits can get rather fed up being blamed for the sins of our fathers.

The point again is yes ,much or most if you wish of colonisation was bad, but it was not all bad.

---

14 ★ Recommend ↩ Reply

**Mrs M Newman** 51 minutes ago

*@Robert Holmes* "What the British Empire did , with hindsight, should never have happened." Really? Absolutely all of it? Like being the first society in human history to say that all of humanity are non-enslaveable "insiders" {David Eltis} and then spending blood and treasure stamping it out?

You do know that in pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa, 75% were slaves, enslaved as PoWs in wars fought to capture slaves, not land?

I reckon, given I don't have the vote either way, I'd rather be a free African under GB rule of law than a slave owned by an African.

This is no way excuses all the horrors, but as Lawrence James said here on Tuesday, we can't simply reduce it to a balance sheet.

There are some shades of grey - it's not all black and white, which was what the original article was about.

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**jem** 9 hours ago

there is a big difference between promoting colonialism and not feeling guilty about our historical record just because we feel differently about how things should be done now. we are not responsible for the past.

34 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Ann Lyon** 10 hours ago

Crying rooms are a great idea, and surely are not just for cinemas.

4 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**littleol'me** 5 hours ago

[@Ann Lyon](#) university safe rooms?

2 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**gcu\_hello** 10 hours ago

Never trust a letter with copious scare quotes. I note how many of those professors are American, too. Products of the most successful example of recent colonial takeover I can think of!

30 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Charles Borthwick** 15 hours ago

Who knew there were so many doctors?

18 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Albion** 10 hours ago

and Marxist one's at that!

11 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**James Snook** 8 hours ago

More Doctors than the B.M.A. and more Fellow Travellers than B.A.

3 ★ Recommend [← Reply](#)

**Thesiger** 3 hours ago

There's nothing an academic likes more than to add their name to a moaning petition. More's the pity that indulgent letters editors publish these vacuous autograph collections.

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