

# Decolonising Aid

The wave of Black Lives Matter protests around the world have brought into sharp focus the need to confront the ways in which Europe's colonial past shapes our collective present. Calls for decolonisation respond to the long overdue need for honest reflection, acknowledgement and remedy for the legacy of Empire across all facets of modern life, including within the UK aid sector.

This briefing seeks to examine why UK aid must be decolonised and looks at some of the first steps for working towards this. It begins by exploring colonialism and its enduring legacy both on global poverty and the development of racial hierarchies. In moving to alternatives, it set out why localisation is important but - on its own - insufficient and the importance of reimagining aid as reparations. It concludes with suggestions of ways forward for the UK aid sector, with recommendations for both government and INGOs, as part of building a re-imagined aid sector.

## 1. Introduction

The debate on decolonisation has been brought into sharper focus following the murder of George Floyd by the Police in the US in May 2020, which triggered a wave of Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests around the world. It has built on longstanding concerns about the ways in which the bodies of brown and black people are frequently and violently policed the world over, and how such state violence is itself rooted in the histories of colonialism and empire.

Such opposition to racism is, of course, not new. The BLM protests are a continuation of a long history of protest linking anti-racism and anti-colonialism, including in the UK. The 'decolonising' of our public spaces has also become a focal point for activism in recent years. Public archives, art and statues that are recognised as either funded by, or celebrating, former slave traders, plantation owners or empire apologists continue to raise concerns. This is particularly in relation to how their words, deeds or policies may have led to the enslavement or starvation of millions of colonised black and brown people and the resultant harm caused to those in our present who share these oppressed ancestries.

The role of education and associated institutions has also been brought into sharper relief, not only as potential beneficiaries of slave ownership and Empire, but also as central to narrowing the ways in which we understand the world. Universities, think

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tanks and other centres of the 'knowledge system' simultaneously co-opt and then erase the knowledge of indigenous people as part of claims to 'objectivity' and 'academic rigour'.

Recognising decolonisation as an attempt to confront the ways in which Europe's colonial past has indelibly shaped our global, collective present, an honest reflection of the role and function of the UK aid sector is now also long overdue.

This briefing starts by exploring colonialism and its enduring legacy both on global poverty and racial hierarchies. In moving to alternatives, it will set out why localisation is important but - on its own - insufficient and the importance of reimagining aid as reparations. It concludes with suggestions of ways forward for the aid sector. What becomes clear is that decolonising demands an honest reckoning with the continuities that persist between our colonial past and the challenges we face in our present. A reimagined aid sector could and should have a key role to play in embracing a more diversified way of understanding 'development' as the first step in a wider reckoning with these shared colonial legacies. This recognition is crucial if UK aid is to play any meaningful part in tackling global challenges into the future.<sup>1</sup>

## What is 'decolonisation'?

There is no one definition of decolonisation. Whilst its early usage was meant to refer simply to the process of former colonies becoming independent, its wider definition is now about 'recognizing, making visible and working to address the legacies that colonialism, empire, racism, and patriarchy continue to have' in our day-to-day lives.<sup>2</sup> Decolonisation entails acknowledging colonial legacies of harm in order to support efforts to build more equal societies.

## 2. The true legacies of colonialism

### Empire: 'good' or 'bad'?

Was Empire 'good' or 'bad'? There is still plenty of equivocation in our public discourse around this question. The UK's colonial enterprise merits special attention here, since at the height of its Imperial power around 1922, it was the largest empire in world history, controlling more than a quarter of the earth's surface and comprising over 450 million people.<sup>3</sup>

One frequently rehearsed argument is that, without European colonialism, the rest of the world would continue to be 'backward'. Colonialism had a 'civilising' effect, introducing modernity, railways, governance systems and common languages to places that would otherwise have remained 'uncivilised', even if this incorporation into the global order was at times violent.<sup>4</sup> The history of humanity, the argument goes, is full of excessive wealth accumulation that was either built on, or ignorant of, human deprivation. According to this narrative modern empires, including the British Empire, were no worse than what preceded it. What usually follows such commentary is a list of 'good' things achieved by the British colonisers.<sup>5</sup> Yet to equivocate about the harm caused by

colonialism on this basis is to overlook the violent erasure of Indigenous people across the Americas and Australia. It is to celebrate an imperial rule that removed the voice and agency of the vast majority in newly colonised regions, where diverse systems of being and knowing, peopled with a multiplicity of ideas and imaginations, were violently and systematically impoverished, displaced, enslaved or killed.

## Poverty

Simply because the history of humanity is littered with former empires does not prevent us from engaging honestly with the legacies of European empire in how we understand modern development challenges, such as poverty. Poverty eradication is at the heart of so much development-oriented activity. Yet contemporary poverty in former colonies cannot be understood in isolation of Empire. It is tied to exploitation, power imbalances and wealth extraction during and in the aftermath of the colonial period.

Slavery is the obvious place to start. Britain was 'one of the most successful slave-trading countries' transporting 3.1 million Africans to British colonies between 1640 and 1807.<sup>6</sup> The slave trade, when combined with plantation economies and the industries on which these activities in turn depended, together made up around 11 per cent of Britain's Gross Domestic Product in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The enslaved themselves also had 'value' as property, worth £20 million (£18.5 billion in today's money<sup>8</sup>) according to the 10-man Slavery Compensation Commission set up in 1833 to compensate slave **owners** for the loss of that property due to the abolition of slavery.<sup>9</sup>

Wealth was also extracted from the colonies into Britain's coffers. Even defenders of Britain's empire concede that during the time of the British Raj in India '[t]here can be no denial that there was a substantial outflow which lasted for 190 years'.<sup>10</sup> In bringing together what were known as 'Home Charges'<sup>11</sup> – money collected from India into Britain's Treasury – of between £40-£50m/year during the period of direct British rule of India (1858-1947), alongside two war gifts amounting to £150 million that India made to support World War I in 1917, we arrive at a rough estimate of £3.7bn, which in 2020 is the equivalent of over £150 billion from India alone.<sup>12</sup>

Such snapshots do not include private wealth transfers, nor the value of goods extracted, exported or stolen. And if we extrapolate that Britain undertook comparable activities in the rest of its colonial possessions as part of the quarter of the earth it 'owned', we start to see the extent of wealth extraction over more than 200 years; a process which must be acknowledged and then redressed as part of correcting past wrongs and creating a more equitable global future.

It would be disingenuous to reflect honestly on these numbers and suggest that poverty in our present has nothing to do with colonial extraction, unequal power, exploitation and a rigged international trading system. How, then, do we understand this colonial legacy in the context of development aid? 'UK aid', as we know it, is in fact an extension of the colonial system, which was implemented by re-deploying colonial-era officers as professional and/or technical development experts.<sup>13</sup> Many of these re-deployed officers administered Britain's overseas development activities; still others went on to shape the

system as consultants as well as in senior posts at the World Bank, UN specialist agencies and international charities.<sup>14</sup> The more recent establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has only strengthened the reproduction of colonial logics, where so-called developing countries continue to operate in a highly unequal trade and investment system that continues to favour the colonisers.

Yet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), laudable as they are in articulating a hopeful blueprint for the kind of world we might collectively strive to build, still operates on the assumption that it is possible to move towards free but fair, rules-based trade (captured in SDG 17<sup>15</sup>) as a way for ‘developing’ countries to move out of poverty. This proposition sits uneasily for many scholars who argue we need to acknowledge the ‘unequal footing’ on which many countries operate in the global system given these historical legacies.<sup>16</sup>

## Racial hierarchies

As part of acknowledging the legacy of Empire, we must never forget the human cost of ripping people away from their homes and shipping them overseas, many thousands dying en route, of lost livelihood, of famine or starvation, of the psychological scars and collective memories of displacement and occupation. And one such human cost is the embedding of racial hierarchies.

Slavery, indigenous displacement and colonial occupation were all partly justified by the perception of brown and black bodies as somehow less than fully human. Racial hierarchies that became entrenched with European colonial expansion claimed post-hoc justifications for white ‘superiority’. This ‘superiority’ necessitated ‘white saviours’ to govern ‘uncivilised’ brown and black bodies, a role that became both a calling and a necessity.

These justifications could be found firstly in eugenics or ‘the science and practice of improving the human race through the selection of “good” hereditary traits’<sup>17</sup>. Whilst mainly associated with the Nazi Holocaust, eugenics sought to scientifically underpin these increasingly entrenched beliefs in essential race differences. Established by Francis Galton, a British scientist, and inspired by Darwin’s theories of natural selection, in 1864 Galton began to hypothesise about the possibilities of selective breeding to create optimal humans.<sup>18</sup> He believed that the ‘average negroes possess too little intellect, self-reliance, and self-control to make it possible for them to sustain the burden of any respectable form of civilization without a large measure of external guidance and support’.<sup>19</sup>

Political theorists also shaped justifications for racial hierarchies. Hegel, a German Philosopher whose work forms part of the ‘canon’ of political theory, provides one example.<sup>20</sup> Hegel proffers similarly glib articulations of ‘the character of the negroes’ who are ‘capable of no development or culture’.<sup>21</sup> Visible in his writings are also echoes of the arguments justifying Empire, insofar as justifications for enslaving people and European colonial expansion relied upon the perception that these actions represented improvements to pre-colonial societies: ‘Negroes are enslaved by Europeans and sold

to America. Bad as this may be, their lot in their own land is even worse, since there a slavery quite as absolute exists'.<sup>22</sup>

Such theories begin to shed light not only on the origins of the racial hierarchies that persist in our present, but the placement of black bodies at the bottom of that hierarchy. Black bodies as incapable of 'development' or 'culture' are tropes that persist to this day in how 'Africa' is homogenised in our discourse as an 'unsophisticated' place incapable of governing itself, which is at least partly the justification (along with 'accountability' to UK taxpayers) for why aid was, and continues to be, conditional on reforms dictated by donors.

When US President Truman declared a commitment to 'the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas'<sup>23</sup> in his inaugural speech as President in 1949, the language of development continued to reinforce these tropes, becoming inextricably linked with notions of progress tied up with the primacy of the West as 'civilised' or 'advanced' against a 'backward' or 'poor' under-developed world. He opined that for half the world '[t]heir economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas'.<sup>24</sup>

The persistent tendency in our mainstream discourse to both celebrate Empire and indulge in 'white saviour' tropes is exemplified in earlier writing by the now UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. In an article in the Spectator magazine in February 2002 he argued that 'The continent [of Africa] may be a blot, but it is not a blot upon our conscience. The problem is not that we were once in charge, but that we are not in charge any more'.<sup>25</sup> In the launch of his more recent book on former British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, he celebrates the 'legacy of Britain', singling out India's democracy as an achievement that stood in 'stark contrast with other less fortunate places that haven't had the benefit of British rule'.<sup>26</sup>

Taken together, these enduring perceptions of brown and black bodies incapable of self-governance and in need of 'external guidance' turns the colonial enterprise on its head; instead of Imperialism as the story of occupation, violence and displacement, Empire itself is understood as benevolent and emancipatory, supporting 'primitive' black and brown 'others' through Imperial gifts of railways, governance systems and common languages to become 'civilised', the success of which is then measured by the capacity of these now former 'savages' to govern themselves using these 'gifts'. Independence from colonialism and democracy were then 'granted', the story goes, by European colonisers to their former colonies.<sup>27</sup>

This 'white saviour' complex underpins this selective engagement with our colonial history, erasing the stories of freedom struggles in Britain's colonies that provided inspiration for subsequent movements for self-determination and democracy around the world, including in the UK.<sup>28</sup> It leads us to celebrate the role of William Wilberforce in ending slavery whilst simultaneously erasing the voices, activism and agency of black abolitionists such as Olaudah Equiano,<sup>29</sup> or the many slave rebellions that made slavery itself increasingly untenable, the most successful of which was led by Toussaint

Louverture and resulted in the overthrow of the French and the declaration of Haitian independence in 1791.<sup>30</sup>

‘Development’ in Truman’s inaugural speech similarly echoes the presumed ‘emancipatory’ potential of gifts of Western knowledge and civilisation to lift the ‘primitive’ poor out of their misery, the paradigm within which modern development efforts still operates.<sup>31</sup> In reality, what we observed was former colonies, who fought for and then gained independence from European colonialism, being incorporated into global markets on highly unequal terms as a result of this historical subjugation, which then simply reproduced the racialised hierarchies of the colonial enterprise. Continued extraction in the form of cheap labour and resources underpinned by a global system of trade that is lopsided in favour of the Global North is ‘part of a colonial ideology that sees people of colour as cheap’.<sup>32</sup>

The legacies of colonialism are not just about the inequalities experienced by ‘minoritised’ or ‘racialised’ bodies. Colonialism is also about white people and ‘whiteness’ as a social construction. It is about race hierarchies that put whiteness at the top. The privilege that ‘whiteness’ confers is largely invisible, where race is talked about in terms of categories in the UK and US such as BAME or Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC). In short, only ‘darker’ skinned people are ‘raced’. These racial hierarchies, where whiteness or aspirations for lighter skin persist the world over, are a racialised legacy of colonialism.

### 3. Reimagining aid

The post-war language of ‘development’ thus became the language of historical erasure, chiding, cajoling and bullying the ‘underdeveloped’ to become ‘developed like us’, without any reflection on how and why the world came to be divided in this way in the first place. This allowed the colonisers to retain the power to define what development is (as they had presumably achieved it), the problems that led to underdevelopment and how to solve those problems. It is a world view that is deeply divisive along raced and gendered lines, underpinned as it is by a patriarchal white supremacy rooted in European empire. This historical erasure underpins the pervasive disconnect in our mainstream discourse between how our shared colonial past continues to shape ‘development’ in our present. Only with an understanding of these power dynamics can the aid sector start to move forwards.

#### **Localisation: a starting point towards decolonising aid?**

One option often expressed within INGOs is that the answer to the challenge of the colonial logics that underpin aid is to be found in aid strategies geared towards ‘localisation’. There is an intuitive simplicity to the idea of ‘localised aid’, which refers to ‘aid transferred to national rather than international entities’.<sup>33</sup> If the charge is that the North holds all the power – of resources and ideas, thus shaping systems in ways that reproduce colonial logics – then decentralising aid to national and/or local actors might be perceived as a way for Southern-based actors to re-imagine development ideas ‘in a way that is most suitable for the context in which they work’.<sup>34</sup> This sentiment was also

echoed within the Grand Bargain, which came out of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.<sup>35</sup> It saw international humanitarian actors make firm commitments to providing more support and funding to local and national organisations.

Moves to 'localise' represent a recognition that North-South power imbalances need to be redressed and any attempts to 'localise' aid that are part of supporting this shift away from Northern control merit thoughtful consideration. This brief would respectfully suggest, however, that 'localisation' must not be the limit of our ambition. There is a danger that 'localisation', rather than challenging existing power imbalances, merely invisibilises them, leaving colonial logics and power structures largely intact. There are two key concerns worth highlighting here.

Firstly, where **is** the local? If we think about power imbalances in our own Global North contexts, we can immediately see that the 'local' is not a homogenous place, but that our own communities are full of power imbalances, contradictions and tensions that are not always resolvable in ways that would support, for instance, shared voice or equitable resource distribution. Indeed, it is possible that the 'local' to which aid has been decentralised is highly unequal.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, this approach reproduces the colonial logic of a homogenous black and brown 'other' whose ideas, aspirations and lived realities are not only perceived as entirely separate from those in the Global North, but are also indistinguishable from each other. Furthermore, the language of 'global challenges', whilst possibly helpful in establishing shared terminology and perhaps even nurturing common or collective endeavour, nonetheless also has a tendency to erase context and diversity when 'aid' is given to tackle categorical challenges, such as 'harmful gender norms'. It is a language that presumes that these 'norms' exist in comparable forms across the 'developing' Global South and for which aid, and by extension the 'developed' Global North, has universalizable answers.

As a result, attempts to 'localise' then become simply about adapting Northern ideas to the local context and empowering only certain hand-picked 'local' actors, invisibilising and even silencing the diversity of other stakeholder groups and ideas that may exist in that context. Ultimately, power is retained by the donors.

Finally, and most importantly, whilst 'localisation' can and should be part of dismantling North-South power imbalances, this strategy does nothing to address the structural concerns of aid itself, which perpetuates an image of the Global South as underdeveloped and dependent on the Global North. Nor does it acknowledge the way in which aid actually reinforces and underpins economic advantage for the donors, whether through conditionality or tied aid. A more fundamental re-framing of aid is thus necessary.

## **Re-imagining aid as reparations not charity**

Put simply 'there is a process of giving aid, but aid is constructed as charity, is constructed as benevolence'.<sup>37</sup> Aid characterised as goodwill gestures yet again echoes

the emancipatory undertones of colonialism, where the Global North is saving the Global South from itself; where aid conditionalities are reminiscent of, and reinforce, colonial logics of the South as unable to govern itself without external support.

So what if 'aid' was in fact a form of reparation for historical and continuing harms and abuses? In addition to demands for monetary compensation for past and ongoing injustices, reparations movements also seek to reshape our global structures to better meet the needs of people in the Global South. Within the multilateral system, the Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has also adopted a framework for reparations that broadens its definition to one beyond monetary compensation.<sup>38</sup> This re-orientation away from notions of charity or 'benevolence' is key. Aid strategies perceived through the lens of reparation and redistribution for past harm would make tackling global development challenges a collective but also contextually specific challenge, rather than a story of the continuing failure of Global South countries to be more like the Global North.<sup>39</sup>

Aid as reparations – as redress for colonial impoverishment and racialised harm – is not a new argument. It does come up against some familiar criticisms. There is a tendency to suggest, for instance, that it is impractical: how would you work out how much is needed and who got the money?<sup>40</sup> Yet there are plenty of examples of reparations being made on a vast scale, including for colonial-era crimes. In the wake of the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust, a body known as the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany was established in 1952, tasked with systematically seeking reparations for Jewish people affected by the Holocaust, work they continue to undertake to this day.<sup>41</sup> In 2013 the British government settled out of court for reparations with 5000 survivors of the Mau Mau rebellion that took place against colonial authorities in Kenya in 1952, with William Hague, then Foreign Secretary acknowledging that UK-led state crimes had occurred consisting of 'torture and ill-treatment [that] are abhorrent violations of human dignity which we unreservedly condemn'.<sup>42</sup>

Concerns are also often raised that colonialism was a long time ago, so too much time has passed to work out who to compensate, so best to 'move on'.<sup>43</sup> There are two challenges we might make to this critique. The first is that colonialism was not, in fact, something that occurred that long ago. Most colonies gained independence after World War II – having joined Britain's armies in that war – fighting for, and then seceding from Empire between the 1950s and 1970s, with Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) only gaining independence in 1980 and Hong Kong seceding from the UK in 1989. Moreover, there are still outstanding cases of disputed territories, such as the Chagos islands, or British Overseas Territories such as Anguilla, where British colonialism is still a present-day reality.

Reflecting on how slavery was abolished also raises questions about what is considered 'too much time'. The outlawing of first the slave trade in 1807, followed by slavery in 1833, is always cited as a British success story. Yet on the eve of the legislation's passage, abolitionists were forced to reluctantly accept that enslaved people were the legal property of their owners in order to get the legislation through Parliament.<sup>44</sup> In



short, the principal of human ownership as legal had to be conceded in order to end the ownership of humans. To pay the 46,000 slave owners the agreed compensation of £20 million (around £18.5 billion in 2020 money) discussed above, the British government borrowed the money, one of the largest loans in British history.<sup>45</sup> A now-deleted tweet from the Treasury confirmed that this debt to the **owners** of the enslaved was not paid off until 2015.<sup>46</sup> Surely if the debt accrued from the compensation of slave owners can be assiduously paid off until 2015, it is not beyond our collective imaginations to at least consider what form reparations for colonial harm might take? Given that a system already exists to send money to a range of places in the world to support 'development' efforts, it seems implausible to suggest it is beyond the capacity of the UK Government to engage in some critical reflection on how reparations might work in practice.

Some writers suggest that the focus need not be money, but could also include other actions including a 'symbolic apology or memorials'.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps 'highly indebted countries could reasonably trade off reparations for debt-cancellation'.<sup>48</sup> Similar calls have come from the likes of the Caricom Reparations Commission, established by Caribbean Heads of Government in 2013, who set out a 10-point reparations plan for the attention of European governments.<sup>49</sup> Others point to the need for calculations that centre on harms done and debt owed by individual private businesses, notably in the City of London, that benefited from the slave trade as well as colonialism more broadly.<sup>50</sup> It is important to recognise, however, that in isolation, debt cancellation, symbolic apologies and token payments for historic harms are not a substitute for the transformative demands of reparations movements and approaches.

As noted above, many detailed accounts exist of how much wealth was extracted over a roughly 190-year period across the British Empire. Part of the challenge with arguments around reparations is precisely how quickly they are dismissed, prolonging the profound sense of injustice by descendants of Empire, who argue that 'Britain has offered nothing in atonement'.<sup>51</sup>

## 4. Decolonising UK aid for 2021 and beyond

We need to recognise that colonialism is not just the story of black and brown 'others' living in places distant from Europe and North America a long time ago. Colonialism is **our** story, irredeemably shaping how **all of us** live **now**. What is needed then is a frank and honest reckoning with our shared colonial past which will support dialogue to recognise and address the persistence of those same colonial logics that have divided up our world into haves and have-nots, underpinned by toxic and persistent wealth and race inequality. Those of us in the UK aid sector who have benefited from this legacy have a responsibility to hold ourselves, and each other, to account in the recognition and correction of these past wrongs. To do nothing is to be complicit in a sector that perpetuates colonial wrongs.

## Possible next steps

The following are not intended as a set of agreed recommendations, but rather a suggestion of critical next steps or discussion points to demonstrate what a road map towards decolonising aid could entail for the UK Government:

- Progress cannot fully be attained without understanding and acknowledging the extent to which the UK's economic development benefitted, and still benefits from, the damage done to the countries it colonised. The UK Government should establish an independent commission to interrogate the true impact of Britain's colonial legacy and its continuing manifestation – including through the aid sector – and propose recommendations.
- The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) should meanwhile commit to decolonising relations between the UK and the Global South and take the first step towards refocusing the objective of UK aid by rooting it through a justice and equity lens. This requires acknowledging the historical legacy of colonialism, recognising and redressing embedded and ongoing historical power imbalances in both development aid and assistance and international trade and investment rules.
- As part of the commitment to end the perpetuation of unequal power relations created under colonialism, the UK Government should use its influence on the Boards of International Financial Institutions to stop the practice of imposing damaging conditionalities attached to the provision of overseas development assistance and debt relief to developing countries.
- The UK Government should also use its political leverage on the international stage, for example through the Presidency of the G7, to produce a clear statement of commitment to addressing systemic racism, domestically and internationally, and agree to review its progress at the next G7 Summit in 2022.

INGOs and think tanks should work with the UK Government in implementing these recommendations, while also recognising the need to decolonise their own organisations and examining the roles that they play in perpetuating neo-colonial relationships with countries and people in the Global South. A number of next steps may be necessary:

- INGOs should reframe the way in which their work is understood, moving away from the concept of benevolent charity towards an understanding of the need for reparations for the historical damage done to millions of BIPOC, both domestically and internationally, and the material benefit that colonisation brought (and continues to bring) to the UK.
- This recognition would require a move away from a focus on 'saving' those in the Global South whom the UK has previously exploited. Advocacy work would instead centre around the unconditional transfer of resources from the Global

North to the Global South, for example through debt cancellation, fair international tax rules and the reform of trade and investment regimes.

- Progress will also require those in the sector to examine and reflect on their use of language and images, and the damage done by perpetuating images of BIPOC as dependent and incompetent.
- White, Northern actors will also need to recognise, prioritise and mainstream the knowledge and views of the world constructed outside the frame and experience of whiteness, and to stand back to allow others to speak for themselves.

<sup>1</sup> In order to ensure the accessibility of the references included in this brief, itself central to creating a more informative resource and inclusive discussion, wherever possible academic citations and insights have been drawn from verifiable, publicly available, Internet-based resources. Direct quotations cited without a page number reflect this emphasis.

<sup>2</sup> Decolonising LSE Collective, <https://decolonisinglse.wordpress.com/about/what-is-decolonisation/>

<sup>3</sup> Birmingham Museum Trust. 2014. *The Past is Now: Birmingham and the British Empire*. [Online]. [Accessed 30 May 2021]. Available from: [www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/bmag/whats-on/the-past-is-now-birmingham-and-the-british-empire](http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/bmag/whats-on/the-past-is-now-birmingham-and-the-british-empire)

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson has written extensively about the net benefit of Empire:

Ferguson, N. 2003. *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*. London: Allen Lane.;

Ferguson, N. 2011. *Civilization: The West and the Rest*. London: Allen Lane.

<sup>5</sup> Please see Madison, A. 2006 [1971]. *Class Structure and Economic Growth: India and Pakistan Since the Moghuls*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, p. 63.; MacKenzie, J. 2015. Viewpoint: Why Britain does not owe reparations to India. *BBC News*. [Online]. 28 July. [Accessed 30 May 2021]. Available from: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-33647422](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-33647422)

<sup>6</sup> The National Archives. No Date. *Slavery and the British transatlantic slave trade*. [Online]. [Accessed 30 May 2021]. Available from: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-transatlantic-slave-trade-records/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-transatlantic-slave-trade-records/)

<sup>7</sup> Rönnbäck, K. 2018. On the economic importance of the slave plantation complex to the British economy during the eighteenth century: a value-added approach. *Journal of Global History*. **13**(3), pp.309-327. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022818000177>

<sup>8</sup> £18.5 billion is the inflation-adjusted estimated figure in 2020 money.

<sup>9</sup> Center for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery. 2021. *Context*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/context/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/context/)

<sup>10</sup> Maddison, 2006 [1971], p.63. It is worth noting here that Madison's understanding of '190 years' of the British Raj relies on a starting year of 1757, when General Robert Clive led the British East India Company's military efforts to successfully seize Bengal in the Battle of Plassey, after which he was appointed the Governor of Bengal. It was a pivotal battle that also eventually led to the withdrawal of rival French and Dutch colonial powers, consolidating British control over the South Asian region. See National Army Museum. No date. *Seven Years War: Battle of Plassey*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: [www.nam.ac.uk/explore/battle-plassey](http://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/battle-plassey) for details.

<sup>11</sup> Maddison, 2006 [1971], p.64.

<sup>12</sup> These are author calculations adding up Maddison's (2006 [1971], pp.63-64) conservative estimates to arrive at a total figure, adjusted for inflation to arrive at the present-day estimated value.

<sup>13</sup> Hodge, J. 2010. British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careerism and the Early History of International Development. *Journal of Modern European History*. **8**(1), p.25. Available from: [www.jstor.org/stable/26265902](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26265902)

<sup>14</sup> Hodge, 2010, p.25.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). 2021. *SDG Indicators: Metadata repository*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=17&Target=>

<sup>16</sup> Kapoor, I. 2004. Hyper-self-reflexive development? Spivak on representing the Third World 'Other'. *Third World Quarterly*. **25**(4), p.629. Available from: [www.jstor.org/stable/3993737](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993737)

<sup>17</sup> Wester, G. 2020. The eugenics debate isn't over – but we should be wary of people who claim it can fix social problems. 29 April. *The Conversation UK*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: <https://theconversation.com/the-eugenics-debate-isnt-over-but-we-should-be-wary-of-people-who-claim-it-can-fix-social-problems-132055>

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- <sup>19</sup> Galton, F. 1873. Africa For The Chinese. *The Times*, 5 June, p.8.
- <sup>20</sup> Professor Kehinde Andrews suggests that Western thought and the dawn of 'science and rationality' in itself represents a deceit, insofar as many of the ideas that are claimed to underpin European Enlightenment can be traced further back to, for instance, ancient Arab and Egyptian thought. See Book Talk Today. 2021. *The New Age of Empire: Interview with Kehinde Andrews*. [Podcast]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulONYhsGISo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulONYhsGISo)
- <sup>21</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. 2001[1837]. *The Philosophy of History*. Kitchener: Batoche Books, p.116. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/hegel/history.pdf>
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- <sup>23</sup> Truman, H.S. 1949. *Inaugural Address of Harry S. Truman: Thursday, January 20, 1949*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/truman.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/truman.asp)
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- <sup>34</sup> Narayanaswamy, 2017, p.17.
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- <sup>36</sup> See Mohan, G. 2002. The disappointments of civil society: the politics of NGO intervention in northern Ghana. *Political Geography*. **21**, pp.125-154.
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- <sup>38</sup> United Nations General Assembly. 2005. *Resolution 60/147: Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (16 December 2005)*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/remedyandreparation.aspx>
- <sup>39</sup> The need to revisit the motivations for aid was reinforced by the GADN's Women of Colour (WoC) forum, whose statement in response to the BLM protests brought together professionals and advocates from across the UK's development sector, and which highlighted the need to move towards re-imagining aid through the lens of social justice. See GADN WoC Forum. 2020. *Collective Statement on Systemic Racism and White Supremacy in the UK International Aid Sector*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/536c4ee8e4b0b60bc6ca7c74/t/5f493490685d31693f561f4d/1598633125546/GADN+WOC+Forum+Statement>
- <sup>40</sup> MacKenzie, 2015.
- <sup>41</sup> Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. (Claims Conference). No date. *About Us*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: [www.claimscon.org/about/](http://www.claimscon.org/about/)
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- <sup>46</sup> [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/12/treasury-tweet-slavery-compensate-slave-owners](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/12/treasury-tweet-slavery-compensate-slave-owners)
- <sup>47</sup> Paulose and Rogo, 2018, p.379.

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<sup>49</sup> Caricom Reparations Commission. 2021. *10-Point Reparation Plan*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: <https://caricomreparations.org/caricom/caricoms-10-point-reparation-plan/>

<sup>50</sup> Mainstream coverage of this issue has focused in particular on large banks and insurance companies that have existed since, and indeed benefited from, the colonial era. Please see Fowler, 2020 and Guthrie, J. 2020. Lex in depth: Examining the slave trade — 'Britain has a debt to repay'. 28 June. *The Financial Times*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 May 2021]. Available from: [www.ft.com/content/945c6136-0b92-41bf-bd80-a80d944bb0b8](http://www.ft.com/content/945c6136-0b92-41bf-bd80-a80d944bb0b8)

<sup>51</sup> Serumaga, 2016, p. 5.

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The Gender and Development Network (GADN) brings together expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and where all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women's and girls' rights.

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