

**TEXT A - Britain's shameful slavery history matters – that's why a jury acquitted the Colston Four**

David Olusoga, *The Guardian*, Thu 6 Jan 2022

There were cheers from the public gallery of Bristol crown court when the verdicts of not guilty were returned. Eighteen months after Bristol's now infamous statue of the slave trader Edward Colston was sent crashing to the pavement, the four young people who had been charged with criminal damage were acquitted.

The strategy that the prosecution appears to have adopted – in a case that some now argue should never have been brought to trial – seemed to centre on asking that the jury be blind to history. Who the statue venerated, they argued, was irrelevant. This, they claimed, was an open-and-shut case of criminal damage, one in which the defendants did not even deny their role in the toppling of the statue or, in one case, helping to roll it to Bristol harbourside, from where it was cast into the water.

The contention of the prosecution was that the crimes of Edward Colston, shareholder and ultimately deputy governor of the Royal African Company, the most prolific slave-trading entity in British history, should simply be set aside. That the statue depicted a man whose wealth was based on the enslavement of 84,000 men, women and children was immaterial. As was the fact that he was complicit in the deaths of 19,000 of them, who died, squirming in agony, chained to the decks of the Royal African Company's slave ships. That should be of no concern to the jury. Their suffering, their deaths, their very existence was irrelevant to the issue at hand. In adopting such a strategy the prosecution was merely asking the jury to occupy the same stance of wilful, moral blindness that Colston's defenders have occupied for decades.

That strategy failed because the lawyers defending the so-called Colston Four were able, through their own legal arguments and the striking eloquence of the four young defendants, to place history at the centre of this trial. In this I played a small part, appearing as an expert witness for the defence. They successfully demonstrated that the real offenders were not the Colston Four, but the city of Bristol and those who have done everything in their power to burnish the reputation of a mass murderer.

The keepers of Colston's legacy had rendered his historic crimes live and present through the erection of a statue to him. By allowing that edifice to stand for 125 years, even as Bristol became home to thousands of black people whose ancestors had been victims of the trade that the Royal African Company had pioneered, they had, so argued the defence, permitted the statue to become an "indecent display".

Having established these arguments Liam Walker QC, representing Sage Willoughby, the youngest of the defendants, argued that the Colston Four "were on the right side of history". Jurors were invited to join them there.

In the aftermath of this verdict those who now have questions to answer are Colston's defenders. In particular the Society of Merchant Venturers, a grouping that for decades dismissed and discounted appeals for the statue to be removed or contextualised. Its strategy of muddying waters and maintaining the status quo fostered indecision and inaction. Decades of inertia were brought to an end in just under three hours – the time it took for the jury to arrive at its verdict.

The merchant elite of late Victorian Bristol who erected the statue of Colston, many of them members of the Merchant Venturers, did so in the full knowledge that the man they sought to elevate to civic sainthood had been a trader in human flesh. The details of his grim career had been obscured but not obliterated.

Despite what they knew they expanded the bizarre cult of rituals, religious services and exclusive dinners that had been built around him, but their most public triumph was the erection of the statue. To validate the imposition of the cult of Colston on to the wider city they falsely implied that the statue had been paid for through popular, public subscription.

They did all of this confident in the belief that no one would ever question their decisions, as no one would ever come to care about Colston's crimes or his victims. Their confidence sprang from their collective inability to envisage a future moment in which the Africans who had perished in the bellies of the Royal African Company's ships, or on the plantations of Barbados or Jamaica, would matter to anyone in Bristol or beyond. The moment

they were unable to conceive of is now. The generation for whom the lives of Colston's victims matter deeply is the generation from whom the four defendants in this case were drawn.

In the months since the murder of George Floyd millions of people across the world have examined their nations' official histories, and the history lessons they were taught at school. They have discovered missing chapters, half-truths and lost connections between the crimes of then and the inequalities of now. As Rhian Graham, one of the Colston Four, noted in the impromptu speech she made from the pavement outside court, the dethronement of Colston was not a stand-alone event, but part of a global movement.

I am writing this from Covid isolation in a hotel on the southern coast of Barbados. From my window I can see the approaches to the island, the sea lanes along which the ships of the Atlantic slave trade once passed, before docking to unload their human cargoes. To the north of me is a place called Speightstown, its nickname in the 18th century was "Little Bristol", so firmly was it connected to the slave traders and sugar merchants of that English city 4,000 miles away.

The global shift of consciousness that inspired the toppling of Colston was also a factor in the decision made by the people of this island to break decisively away from that history and become a republic. This shift in consciousness, translated into action across the world by the young, will be strengthened by this verdict; and by the very fact that when made aware of long obscured historical and moral truths, an English jury chose to place itself – and the city of Bristol – on the right side of history.

David Olusoga is a historian and broadcaster

### **TEXT A Bis - 'Colston Four' acquittal raises difficult questions**

Letters from readers, Fri 7 Jan 2022

David Olusoga's article (Britain's shameful slavery history matters – that's why a jury acquitted the Colston Four, 6 January) misses an essential question.

There have been instances in recent decades of juries finding defendants not guilty when the facts of an offence appear clear. Examples are Clive Ponting (1984) and Pat Pottle and Michael Randle (1991). In 2004 the prosecution, presumably fearing the same, offered no evidence in Katharine Gun's case.

The parallel factor in each of those cases was that the catalyst had been a shaming decision by our own authorities as immediate background – deceit about the sinking of the Belgrano (Ponting), prosecuting 25 years after the event because initial errors had been exposed (Pottle and Randle) and scrapping standards of probity to be in line with the US (Gun).

In this case there was no parallel. The options for Bristol council on how to deal with Colston's statue were matters for debate. The catalyst was a murder committed by a US policeman. So the question is raised – where does one draw the line? I do not have an answer, but in any democratic society it is important that what citizens can do without being penalised criminally should be predictable.

**Peter Davis**

*Welwyn, Hertfordshire*

The acquittal of the four people in Bristol leaves a somewhat bitter taste in my mouth. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of pulling down the statue of a figure from history who benefited from slavery, taking the law into your own hands is never the right way to proceed. The only way to resolve disputes is through the ballot box. I ask myself where this all might end.

**John Marriott**

*North Hykeham, Lincolnshire*

## TEXT A Ter - Complement - David Olusoga Wants Britain to Face Its Past. All of It.

For more than a decade, the historian and broadcaster's work has focused on bringing his country's uglier histories to light. Recently, more people are paying attention.

By Desiree Ibekwe, *The New York Times*, Feb. 7, 2022

LONDON — In December, when a British court cleared four Black Lives Matter protesters of criminal damages for toppling the statue of Edward Colston, a 17th-century slave trader, in June 2020, it was thanks in part to David Olusoga's expert testimony.

Olusoga, a historian whose work focuses on race, slavery and empire, felt a duty to agree to address the court on behalf of the defense, he said in a recent interview, since "I've been vocal about this history." At the trial in Bristol, the city in southwest England where the Colston statue was toppled, Olusoga, 52, told the jury about Colston's prominent role in the slave trade and the brutalities suffered by the African people Colston sold into slavery.

The closely watched court decision was greeted with concern by some in Britain and relief by others, and Olusoga's role in the defense offers just one recent example of his work's impact on British society.

Olusoga's comments in court are consistent with a frequent focus of his wider work as one of the country's most prominent public historians: that long-forgotten or buried past injustices can be addressed in the present day in public-facing, accessible media.

Olusoga's latest TV work is "One Thousand Years of Slavery," which premieres on the Smithsonian Channel on Monday. The show, which he executive produced alongside Bassett Vance Productions, a production company helmed by Courtney B. Vance and Angela Bassett, takes a wide-ranging, global look at slavery through the familial stories of public figures like Senator Cory Booker and the actor David Harewood.

One of Olusoga's best-known projects is "Black and British: A Forgotten History," which explored — through a BBC television series accompanied by a best-selling book — the long and fraught relationship between Black people and Britain, introducing many people to Black communities here that date back to the Roman times.

"I'm interested in the histories we don't tell. I'm not interested in retelling stories that we've told a thousand times," Olusoga said. (...)

Olusoga, who is half-Nigerian, traces this focus to his mother telling him when he was a child that Nigerian soldiers served in World War II. In that moment, his interest in history overlapped with his attempts to understand his Black and British identity. (...) The historian was born in Lagos to a Nigerian father and a white British mother. He moved to Britain as a child and grew up in northeast England with his mother and siblings. In the book "Black and British," he spoke of the racial tensions of the 1970s and 1980s and a campaign of racist abuse his family experienced, which forced them to leave their home.

Despite having a difficult time in school — Olusoga was diagnosed with dyslexia at age 14 — there he developed a love of history from a favorite teacher and the television he watched. He studied history at university but opted for a career in TV over academia. For Olusoga, "history was naturally public," he said. "I chose very deliberately to leave universities and go into television in order to make history."

After 15 years in TV production, he started appearing in front of the camera. He's now a fixture on British screens presenting shows like "A House Through Time," which each season tells the story of a British house and its inhabitants over the centuries. In 2019, Olusoga was awarded an Order of the British Empire for services to history and community integration (which he struggled to accept because of its association with the violent acts of the empire). (...)

In recent years, Olivette Otele, Britain's first Black female history professor and the author of "African Europeans: An Untold History," has seen a shift in how the Black experience is included in British and European history, which she credits in part to Olusoga. "In academia, we do all we can, but to be able to democratize, to reach wider audiences has made such a huge difference, so much so that it's becoming normal to engage with these topics," Otele said in a recent interview.

For Olusoga, this shift was surprising. "I think what's happened is the world has changed around me and I think people are more interested in listening."

At the same time, since the 2020 murder of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, there have been contentious debates about what gets included in Britain's public history. In late 2020, following the toppling of the Colston statue, the British conservation charity the National Trust released a report exploring links between some of its sites and

colonialism and slavery. The report was dismissed as “woke” by some conservative politicians and many in Britain’s right-wing press.

Yet Olusoga said debates like this show that certain segments of the population reject the uglier elements of British history. The past is sometimes used to make British people feel “that we were magical people from

a magical island that’s always been on the right side of history,” he said. But, “if you only want to tell yourself the positive stories from your past,” he said, “then that necessarily means you cannot have an honest reckoning with your past.”

He added: “And that’s Britain’s issue.”

## TEXT B - ENS 2021 - It's not 'censorship' to question the statues in our public spaces

*Minister Robert Jenrick sees ‘woke’ mobs everywhere ripping down Britain’s heritage. It’s sheer fantasy*

Charlotte Higgins, *The Guardian*, Wed 20 Jan 2021

Charlotte Higgins is the Guardian’s chief culture writer

Few things are certain in these precarious times. But one thing has been easy to predict: that the government would continue with its crusade against an imaginary horde of “woke” iconoclasts intent on desecrating, tearing down, cancelling, censoring and otherwise destroying “our shared British history”.

Even sooner than I had expected – what with the demands of a real, non-imaginary pandemic – there comes from the pen of the communities secretary, Robert Jenrick, an article in the Sunday Telegraph that is either deliberately misleading, stupid, or both.

According to Jenrick, “baying mobs” have been seeking to erase British history by pulling down monuments and statues. A “revisionist purge” even has Nelson’s column in its sights, he claims. The angry throng of “mindless” destroyers includes Labour councillors, who love nothing better, in the communities secretary’s fantasy, than “ripping down heritage”. They are aided and abetted by Keir Starmer, he says. Good luck with substantiating that: the Labour leader seems punctilious about avoiding being drawn into any argument that has a hint of “culture war” about it – to a fault, some might say. (...)

Have you seen any mobs ripping down British monuments or statues lately? Nor I. The only heritage- and democracy-disrespecting mobs I’ve heard tell of recently are those in the US who attacked the Capitol, vandalising its artworks – and they are not really the kind of crowds I believe the Tories have in mind. In the UK, precisely one prominent public sculpture was toppled by a crowd of protestors during last summer’s Black Lives Matter protests. This statue – Bristol’s monument to the slave trader Edward Colston – was always an outlier. It had been the subject of unsatisfactory, unresolved community debate for decades.

The toppling of the statue was, of course, illegal: four people will appear at Bristol magistrates’ court this month on charges of criminal damage. Jenrick, though, writes as if bands of statue-topplers were roaming the lands untouched by the law. “It is absurd and shameful that the statue of Winston Churchill should be questioned,” he writes, too, referring to the sculpture in Parliament Square.

Really? I thought we did questioning, in a democracy. Of course, the statue still stands, determinedly untoppled. The most distressing desecration of a monument last summer came not from BLM activists, but from far-right protesters who, while claiming to protect the Cenotaph from supposed (but actually nonexistent) “woke” attackers, chillingly performed Nazi salutes.

Still, it is to protect monuments against leftwing mobs and radical Labour councillors that the communities secretary is bringing forward new regulations that will oblige anyone seeking to remove or alter a historic plaque or monument to seek planning permission – which is already required, of course, if the monument is listed. The only real effect of this, I suspect, will be to create in planning departments an enormous tangle of red tape of the kind that Tories supposedly dislike so heartily.

What is happening in reality – and to a greater or lesser extent has been happening for years – is a reappraisal of what and who is celebrated in Britain’s public realm, as Britain gradually, painfully, and often inadequately,

examines its colonial and imperial past. This is mostly being undertaken by the opposite of angry mobs – by incredibly worthy, rather dull committees set up by mayors and local authorities.

Doubtless it is annoying to some on the right that London's Labour mayor, Sadiq Khan, has had the temerity to set up a Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm. One of its jobs will indeed be to look at contested heritage. But there is absolutely no suggestion that this will involve ripping down a whole lot of monuments; in fact, the body will be more focused on commissioning new works. Indeed, the creation of "counter-memorials" is precisely what Historic England, the public body that protects England's heritage, suggests as a possible strategy in the case of contested monuments.

What the Conservatives doggedly refuse to acknowledge is that a community deciding – or even a pressure group demanding – that a figure should no longer be revered on a plinth in the public realm has nothing to do with "censoring" history or pretending the events of the past did not happen. They also fail to grasp that the past exists in dialogue with the present, and that our relationship with it is not static, but dynamic and contextual.

The Tories claim to love history and to embrace complexity, but they seem attached to a peculiarly simplistic and moralistic vision of it. History isn't something that you are either (or only) "proud of" or "ashamed of". Nor is it some dead, unchanging object. It is rich, deep, contradictory, and contains multitudes. To do history is to contest history. History is inquiry. That's what the word means, from the ancient Greek verb *historeo*, to learn by inquiry. Anything else is myth.

## **TEXT C - Boris Johnson's government wants more patriotic cultural institutions**

*Grandeess are appalled at ministerial interference*  
*The Economist*, Jun 3rd 2021

Days before he retired at the end of 2015, Neil MacGregor addressed colleagues and friends at the British Museum. As they raised their glasses, he quoted T.S. Eliot: "For last year's words belong to last year's language. And next year's words await another voice." A few years on, however, the commanding voice in museumland is not his successor as director of the British Museum, nor is it another grandee. It is the government.

In February the chairman of the Royal Museums Greenwich, a devoted Tory, resigned after ministers blocked the reappointment of a trustee, an academic who reportedly advocated "decolonising" the history curriculum and had liked Labour Party content on Twitter. In March a trustee of the Science Museum withdrew her application for a second term after she was asked to "explicitly express support" for the government's policy on the removal of contentious historical objects. "Today it is contested heritage. Tomorrow it may be another issue," she wrote.

The interference is part of an effort by ministers to reshape British institutions to the tastes of the new Tory electorate—patriotic and more working-class than before—by shifting power from the country's cultural elite. After a year in which commercial revenue has crashed, museums are vulnerable to being leant on (even before the covid-19 pandemic, they depended on the state for more than half their income). And Boris Johnson is clear about his preferences. He has lambasted Labour for "spending most of their time wondering which public statues to tear down or whether 'Hereward the Wake' should now be known as 'Hereward the Woke'."

This desire to reshape cultural institutions is not entirely new. After David Cameron became prime minister in 2010, the Conservative-led government wanted to root out the "Labour luvvies" it felt to have infiltrated the boards of Britain's cultural institutions under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Most trustees serve two terms of four years, which means that almost all existing ones have been approved by a Tory government. Mr Johnson's government is demonstrating a greater willingness to actually intervene in the process.

Museum leaders have been informed of new expectations. Oliver Dowden, the culture secretary, privately rebuked Mr MacGregor's successor, Hartwig Fischer, for moving a terracotta bust of the British Museum's founder, Sir Hans Sloane, from a pedestal to a nearby cabinet. (As well as being an energetic collector, Sloane

was a slave owner.) Mr Dowden went on to argue that: “The people who run [heritage organisations] need the courage to stand up to the political fads and noisy movements of the moment.”

He has also written to museum leaders to tell them that they should notify the government of any planned changes or public statements regarding controversial bits of history. Failure to comply could put funding at risk, the letter explained. One former museum director called the move “unprecedented”, saying “in terms of direct engagement of a government with the content of a museum, it marked an extraordinary constitutional step”.

Under the British trustee system, national museums are answerable to Parliament, rather than government ministers (as they are in France, for example). Yet at the first meeting of the newly formed government Heritage Advisory Board, in mid-May, Mr Dowden argued that museums should be bound by guidelines the government is drawing up which say to “retain and explain” controversial objects rather than removing them. The board includes Trevor Phillips, a broadcaster, and Robert Tombs, a Cambridge historian, both of whom have written in defence of controversial statues. It does not contain any museum directors.

European museums are heading in a different direction. On May 18th the Dutch king opened an [exhibition at the Rijksmuseum](#) examining how the country benefited from slave labour. Germany has agreed to return hundreds of objects that were stolen during the colonisation of Nigeria. Neither would now happen in Britain, a museum director says. The difference does not reflect public opinion. According to YouGov, a pollster, just one in three Britons believe the empire is something of which to be proud, compared with one in two Dutch.

Museum executives see the government’s moves as a breach of their historic independence, which, in the case of the British Museum, is enshrined in a parliamentary act from 1753. Twenty years ago Labour made free entry to museums a key government policy, but interference on questions of governance and programming is new. Insiders see the government’s moves as a breach of the arms-length relationship between museums and ministers that has lasted for decades. For the government to flex its muscles in this way is, a former director reckons, a “clear sign that this is about controlling and neutralising sources of opposition of all sorts.”

### **TEXT C 1 -Top scholars launch fightback against woke brigade’s ‘blatantly false’ reading of history**

*Leading academics join forces for History Reclaimed campaign aimed at calling out misleading narratives about historical figures*

By Camilla Turner, Education Editor, *The Spectator*, 29 August 2021

In academic circles, there has been growing consternation at the steady march of “woke” ideology which has seen statues pulled down, university degrees “decolonised” and museum exhibits relabelled or removed altogether. Now some of the country’s most eminent professors have decided that enough is enough. No longer content to stay silent, they are mounting a fightback as they say “distortions” and “blatantly false” readings of history have become so widespread that they threaten to undermine Western civilisation.

Robert Tombs, emeritus professor of history at the University of Cambridge, said that there has been increasing “alarm” among his colleagues at the sustained attack that historical figures have come under in recent years. “Pulling down Colston is one thing, but cancelling Gladstone, Robert Peel, Churchill... This is not simply an attack on people connected with slavery. It is an attack on our whole historical tradition,” he said. “I think the wokeness is probably coming from a very active minority, but one which is in fact rather influential in academia and in institutions like museums. But I don’t think it has very much public support.

“The argument has been very one-way. It has been their views imposed on everyone else. This is often based on a very distorted view of history and in a sense it can be seen as a way to undermine the whole of Western civilisation, culture and tradition. “There are plenty of academics of repute who do not go along with this view, which is in fact very partial. I thought, I am sure others think this too, and started contacting other people. And it started there.”

The campaign has enlisted the support of several Oxford academics including regius professor of moral and pastoral theology Nigel Biggar, emeritus professor Lawrence Goldman, senior research fellow Sir Noel Malcolm, Marie Kawthar Daouda, stipendiary lecturer in French, Oriel College, and Cornelia van der Poll, lecturer in Greek at St Benet's Hall. Academics from across the world have also offered support, including Prof Niall Ferguson, a senior fellow at Stanford University, and Prof Simon Haines, who leads the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation in Sydney.

The History Reclaimed site will be co-edited by Prof Tombs and David Abulafia, emeritus professor of Mediterranean history at Cambridge.

Writing in *The Telegraph*, Prof Abulafia explains that the project “aims to recover ways of looking at the past that are being pushed to one side by ideologically-driven distortions about what happened in history”.

## **TEXT C 2 - National Trust members launch campaign against ‘woke agenda’**

*The Evening Standard*, 04 April 2021

National Trust members have launched a campaign against the charity’s “one-sided” view of history following the publication of a controversial slavery report. Restore Trust, which has 300 members, was set up following a backlash over the report detailing the links between a number of the National Trust’s properties and slavery.

In an interim report published last year, the Trust detailed links between 93 of its properties and historic slavery and colonialism. The move prompted a fierce backlash in some quarters, including from some MPs and peers, with the trust facing accusations of “wokeism” and jumping on the Black Lives Matter bandwagon.

Restore Trust bills itself as a group of “critical friends” of the National Trust, who wish to “restore the aesthetic experience of the NT’s properties” so that visitors can enjoy them without “intrusive interpretation”. The group also say that they want to make all of the National Trust’s visitors feel welcome without “demonising anyone’s history or heritage”. On its website Restore Trust has a section hitting out on the slavery report saying it has “serious shortcomings” and is “one-sided”.

The controversial report detailed properties and their links to plantation owners and those who gained their wealth through the slave trade. Properties with connections to people involved in colonial expansion, including Churchill’s home Chartwell, were highlighted. Those with important cultural links to Britain’s colonial history, such as writer Rudyard Kipling’s home in Sussex, Bateman’s, or the home of historian Thomas Carlyle in London were included in the survey.

Following complaints about the report, the Charity Commission opened a case to examine concerns that the National Trust had acted outside its charitable purposes with the report. However, it concluded that the National Trust acted in line with its charitable purposes and there were no grounds for regulatory action against it.

## **TEXT C 3 - David Lammy requests pardon for 1823 slave rebellion convicts**

Haroon Siddique Legal affairs correspondent

*The Observer*, Sun 13 Feb 2022

David Lammy has written to the government asking it to pardon 70 abolitionists convicted for their role in the historic 1823 Demerara rebellion by enslaved people against British colonialists in the Caribbean.

The shadow foreign secretary described the revolt, involving 10,000 enslaved people, as a “seminal moment” in the history of slave resistance. Although unsuccessful at the time, the event contributed to the abolition of slavery 10 years later, in 1833.

Lammy said exercising the royal prerogative of mercy to grant pardons to those involved in the uprising, which was brutally crushed by the colonial militia in part of present-day Guyana, would be “a significant step in Britain’s acknowledgment of its role in the history of slavery”.

The letter names 73 people who were tried, 70 of whom were found guilty, including 21 who were executed, including 10 who were decapitated after being hanged and had their heads put on poles. Hundreds of others were killed during and in the immediate aftermath of the uprising.

Lammy, who has spoken previously about the legacy of slavery and its impact on black Britons, based the letter on research into the Demerara uprising contained in the book *White Debt*. (...)

In a reply from Raab sent to Lammy on Wednesday, the justice secretary said that following Guyana gaining independence in 1966 and the country becoming a republic in 1970, it would be for the president of Guyana to grant such pardons.

Thomas Harding, the author of *White Debt*, described Raab's response as "shocking". He said: "Britain was responsible for this gross miscarriage of justice, not Guyana, and the British government should be the one to pardon those found guilty. The men and women who took part in the Demerara uprising of 1823 were attempting to abolish British slavery. It was a British court martial which found the 70 people guilty, a court established by a British governor in a British colony (later known as 'British Guiana'), on behalf of the British king, under British military code. "Now is the time for the British government to take full responsibility for its legacy of slavery, to pardon the 'Demerara 70' and recognise them for what they were: heroes, for all of us."



### Slaves' shackles put on show alongside sculptures at Liverpool gallery

5 May 2022

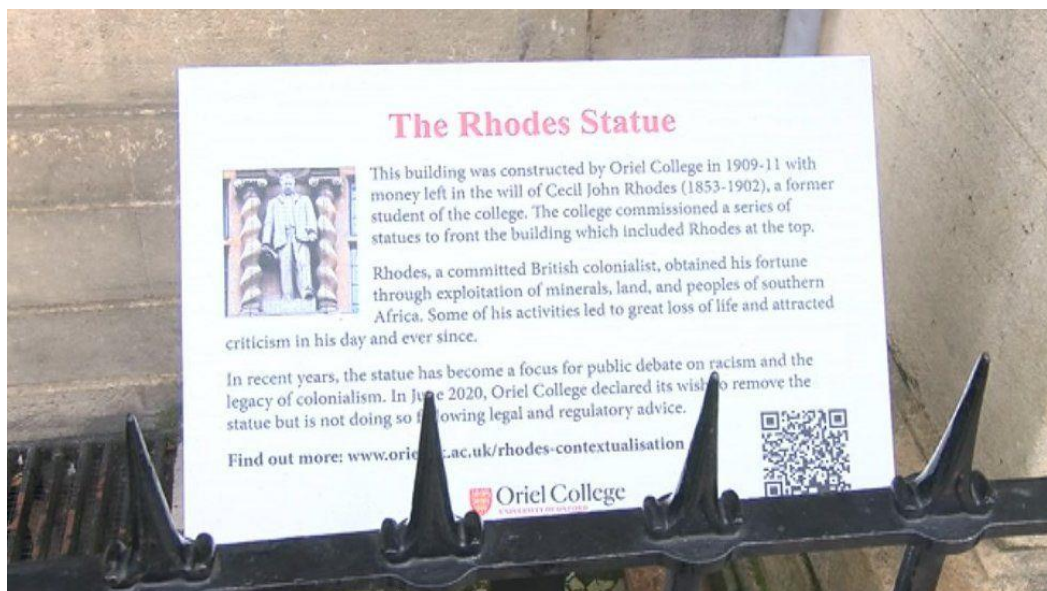


### Bank of England owned 599 slaves in 1770s, new exhibition reveals

15 Apr 2022

## TEXT C 4 Cecil Rhodes statue: Explanatory plaque placed at Oxford college

BBC. Com 12 October 2021



An explanatory plaque "contextualising" the statue of British imperialist Cecil Rhodes has been placed at an Oxford University college.

There have been calls to remove the statue at Oriel College but the college previously said "regulatory and financial challenges" prevented it. The plaque states the building was paid for by the colonialist but that his activities "caused great loss of life".

Campaigners said the sign "trivialises the pain and suffering Rhodes caused".

Rhodes, a 19th Century businessman and politician in southern Africa, had been a student at Oriel and left the college £100,000 - about £12.5m in today's money.

Oriel's governing body said in June last year it wished to remove the statue, a decision it said was "backed" by the independent commission appointed to examine its future and Rhodes' legacy. It later said it would not seek to move the statue due to costs and "complex" planning processes.

The plaque directs readers to the college's website and an article entitled "Contextualisation of the Rhodes Legacy". Under the government's new "retain and explain" policy which aims to protect controversial monuments, planning permission is required before a statue can be removed from its position.

Oxford city councillor Shaista Aziz said the language used was "very ambiguous". "At the very least what should be stated was how much wealth Cecil Rhodes made from his so-called endeavours across Africa, the human impact and the legacy that has on our high street. "This is not about a statue, this is about the denial of history and representation of people of colour in our city and beyond."

The Rhodes Must Fall campaign, which claims Rhodes represented white supremacy and was steeped in colonialism and racism, posted on social media: "This sign trivialises the pain and suffering Rhodes caused.

"It also downplays our demands. Oriel College CAN remove this statue, they choose not to!"

The university said the sign was temporary and part of its efforts to "contextualise its relationship with Rhodes". "The text isn't intended to give a comprehensive account of Rhodes and his actions during his lifetime, as that would be impossible to achieve on a single sign. It is intended to acknowledge the controversy surrounding the statue and to provide a link to other resources where people can find out more for themselves," it said.

## ENS 2021 – TEXT D - Calling on white Americans: Reparations for slavery are due

The legacy of slavery is far from resolved. It persists every day and everywhere.

By David Gardinier and Karen Hilfman, *The Boston Globe*, August 17, 2020

Since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a white police officer, and the resounding anti-racist uprisings around the world, the concept of reparations has picked up momentum in national conversations and has sparked new public curiosity and interest. Among Black people and their ancestors, however, reparations for slavery have been on their hearts and minds for a very long time.

True Black history, which few white people — including us — learned in school, points to numerous calls for reparations for Black Americans, such as efforts centered on the passage of bills in Congress.

In 1989, the late Representative John Conyers of Michigan introduced a bill calling for a commission to study reparations for the first time, and again in every subsequent legislative session until he retired, in 2018. The current bill was introduced in the House by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas and has 143 cosponsors. It would establish a commission to examine slavery and discrimination from colonial times through the present and "recommend appropriate remedies." For the first time, a companion bill was introduced in the Senate, championed by Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey.

In 2014, the call for reparations was brought into wider public circulation when The Atlantic published Ta-Nehisi Coates's seminal article "The Case for Reparations." In this influential piece, Coates deftly and exquisitely lays bare, for a predominantly white, liberal audience, how America's enslavement of Black people resulted in structures intended to create systemic racial disparities in housing, wages, lending, voting, and more. A debt is owed.

Even after all these years and excruciating efforts, our country still has never managed to atone for the brutal devastation that began in 1619, when enslaved Africans were brought to Jamestown, Va.

The legacy of slavery is far from resolved. It persists every day and everywhere, as evidenced by income and wealth inequality, disparate living conditions and health outcomes, police brutality and mass incarceration, and the overall white supremacist system that treats white and Black lives in vastly different ways. The other side of this history, the part that was rarely told, is that the wealth generated from all that “free” enslaved labor, combined with the theft of land from indigenous peoples, is what placed white Americans solidly among the wealthiest people on earth today.

That truth was laid bare in a 2016 book by 16 scholars, “Slavery’s Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development,” which names slavery as the bedrock of the American economic system. Though we whites alive today didn’t do the dirty work it took to create this wealth and privilege based on skin color, we live with the consequences of it. And those consequences go much deeper than we often realize.

What follows next in this American story of theft, murder, and profound mistreatment of Black people, and the ongoing legacy of slavery, is up to all of us. We’ve had 400 years of opportunity to make amends and set things right, and Black people have endured 400 years of waiting for America to do just that.

As Americans who long for a more enlightened narrative on race than the one we’ve had so far, we formed a collective with like-minded white people called the Fund for Reparations NOW!, which works in solidarity with the National African American Reparations Commission.

Following the Black leadership of NAARC, our fund is a nonprofit philanthropic venture seeking to further the racial healing of America through the expedited implementation of NAARC’s 10-point reparations plan. The Fund is designed to model what reparations could look like through the 10-point plan once formal reparations are legislated by the US government.

Our ultimate goal is to see the federal government formally apologize and pay reparations to Black people. It’s time for members of Congress to hear from white people too and urge lawmakers to support reparations. Until legislation passes, we have committed to doing what our white ancestors never did: Acknowledge the deep violations committed and pay reparations for those violations. We have no illusions that apologizing will fully mitigate the offenses this country has committed, or that any amount of money could compensate for the unconscionable loss of human life, rights, opportunity, justice, and freedom Black Americans have experienced. Even still, we believe for the sake of the United States and its ideals, and for people who have suffered far too long, our American story of race must change. Those of us who commit to the reparations movement are taking a clear step to say we will do the work to make that happen, and we are inviting others to join us on this journey for justice, restitution, healing, and reconciliation.

*David Gardinier founded the Fund for Reparations NOW! Karen Hilfman is a founding member of White People for Black Lives and a board member of FFRN!*

• See also [https://twitter.com/\\_saveourstatues](https://twitter.com/_saveourstatues)

## **TEXT E - The Long Read - Right-wing nationalists are marching into the future by rewriting the past**

*Fights over history like those in the U.S. are happening all over the world*

By [Ishaan Tharoor](#), *The Washington Post*, February 11, 2022

Just weeks before losing his bid for reelection, President Donald Trump went to the National Archives to launch his quixotic 1776 Commission to promote “patriotic” education. There, he styled himself as the defender of “centuries of tradition” that culminated in the U.S. Constitution, which was “the fulfillment of a thousand years of Western civilization.” That tradition was under

assault, he said, by an all-pervasive radical left, including corporate boardrooms, statue-smashing “mobs” of protesters on the streets and insidious educators in classrooms who “try to make students ashamed of their own history.”

“We are here today to declare that we will never submit to tyranny,” Trump said. “We will reclaim our history and our country.”

The 1776 Commission, widely derided by American historians, was unceremoniously scrapped the moment Trump left the White House. But Trump’s grandstanding over U.S. history is now a central plank in the GOP strategy to reclaim Congress in this year’s midterm elections. It has already helped Republicans to victories, notably in Virginia, where new Gov. Glenn Youngkin has promised to purge schools of “divisive” attempts to examine the legacies of racial injustice and white supremacy in U.S. history.

And well beyond the United States, nationalists of various stripes are seeking ammunition in the past for their battles in the present. The question of history — or, more precisely, how it should be remembered — courses through global politics. The context varies in each country, but increasing numbers of right-wing parties and nationalist leaders are staking their claims to power as defenders of a glorious past under attack from enemies within.

History gnaws at France’s sense of itself in a volatile election year. It occupies the rhetoric of demagogues in Poland and Turkey, and strongmen in Russia and China. It fans the flames of religious bigotry in India, the world’s largest democracy. And it stretches the widening political divides in the world’s oldest one, where GOP politicians have been bashing critical race theory and passing state laws that restrict how teachers may discuss questions of historical interpretation, race and identity. One proposed law in Texas, for example, would suppress discussion of slavery in school history curriculums about the state’s fight for independence from Mexico.

To those on the right in the United States and elsewhere, the recent focus on shameful, uncomfortable legacies is a sign of an imbalance, an excess of doctrinaire leftist scolding that corrodes the national psyche. And it provides fertile terrain to cultivate a politics of grievance, not least as the old tethers of 20th-century politics further loosen in many societies from traditional moorings such as class or economic interest. Instead, tribal passions and myths of belonging are at center stage, and political forces on the right aim to harness them.

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Last September, Pope Francis wrote to Mexican bishops to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the start of the nation’s struggle for independence from Spain. He urged them to “recognize the painful errors” that were

committed by the Catholic Church alongside the Spanish conquest and colonization of the New World. Back in Spain, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, leader of the Madrid region and a rising star in the mainstream conservative Popular Party, lashed out, countering that Spanish conquistadors five centuries ago brought only “civilization and freedom.”

What does this posturing accomplish? For Ayuso, it helps tap into resurgent nationalist feeling in a country where the more recent history of fascist dictatorship remains a perennial political flash point. She and her allies hope to claw back power from a fragile coalition government led by the center-left Socialists, but they face a mounting challenge on their right flank, with the ultranationalist Vox party surging in opinion polls.

In 2019, the Socialist-led government rebuffed calls from Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to formally apologize for the rampages of the conquistadors, though some leftist lawmakers were sympathetic to the idea. Ayuso grumbled to the New York Times last October about politicians both in Madrid and in the Americas who “have to blame the Spanish for a supposed original sin.”

That sentiment finds an echo in all sorts of political environments. See Russia, where the regime of President Vladimir Putin recently forced the shuttering of Memorial, a pioneering human rights group that, among other achievements, built a database of millions of files documenting the injustices of the Soviet Union’s system of gulag prisons.

Memorial’s expansion through dozens of affiliate organizations was a sign of a new openness in post-Soviet Russia. But for Putin, surfacing the depth of Stalinist atrocities from decades past threatens the unvarnished Russian patriotism he’s trying to cultivate around his autocratic rule. At a December hearing, a state prosecutor asked why, “instead of taking pride for our country, victorious in [World War II] and which liberated the whole world,” does Memorial “suggest that we repent for our ... pitch-dark past?”

Some of the descendants of the losers of World War II have been asking similar questions. The anti-immigrant, ultranationalist Alternative for Germany party emerged from obscurity in part thanks to growing resentment over the country’s entrenched “memory culture” around the horrors of the Holocaust. In 2017, Alexander Gauland, one of the party’s founders, provoked outrage when he suggested that Germans should be proud of their soldiers who fought in World War II, while arguing that no other country in Europe had done more to atone for the sins of its past. Another party member

decried Berlin's Holocaust memorial as a "monument of shame."

The AfD has won seats in Germany's Bundestag in two successive elections and is becoming an entrenched player that now receives taxpayer funding to propagate its ideas. It draws strength particularly in East Germany, where it is backed by a considerable proportion of voters under the age of 30, a generation of disaffected youth post-unification that is less inured to far-right politics than its compatriots to the west. Not surprisingly, the AfD's rise has been accompanied by a surge in reports of antisemitism.

To Germany's east, illiberal ruling parties in Poland and Hungary have taken things further still. In 2018, Poland made it a crime to link the country to Nazi atrocities committed on its soil, appealing to a nationalist voter base even as it earned international opprobrium. In Hungary, long-ruling Prime Minister Viktor Orbán styles himself as the vanguard of the anti-liberal front, the propagator of an exclusionary Christian nationalism that excites conservative intellectuals in the United States but rankles the liberal technocrats of the European Union, which the country joined in 2004. His government has revamped school curriculums to promote pride and patriotism, eliding certain historical defeats and rehabilitating a host of Nazi-era fascist collaborators.

Éric Zemmour, a French nativist firebrand and proponent of the once-fringe notion of the "Great Replacement," which casts native-born Whites as an endangered species in their own societies, emerged in recent months as a serious far-right contender in the upcoming presidential election. He leavens his outright hostility to Islam and immigration — which has already earned him three hate-speech convictions from French courts — with a large dollop of historical revisionism. No matter his Algerian Jewish roots, he has indulged in apologia for the Vichy regime, which collaborated with the Third Reich, and rejects any suggestion that France needs to atone for its colonial sins in countries like Algeria, let alone address the racial inequities currently festering in its banlieues, or working-class suburbs. Zemmour has accused President Emmanuel Macron of "rewriting the history of France, always to its detriment." That's a reaction to the latter's years-long effort to open a more public and transparent conversation about France's bloody actions in its war against Algerian revolutionaries in the 1950s and '60s. Macron laid a wreath last year near the site of a massacre of Algerian protesters in Paris in 1961, described aspects of French colonial rule as a "crime

against humanity" and launched a historical commission that has acknowledged numerous misdeeds carried out by the French state.

The vehement opposition of Zemmour, among others, to that reckoning has had an impact. Last fall, mindful of intensifying nationalist anger to his right, Macron even provoked a diplomatic incident with Algeria after he suggested that the country existed only thanks to French colonial rule. In January, he delivered a speech spotlighting the suffering of the *pieds-noirs*, the nearly 1 million European colonists who fled across the Mediterranean to France after Algerian independence. Many of their descendants vote for candidates on the right.

In the Trumpian mold, Zemmour proclaimed that his (still unlikely) victory over Macron in April's election would herald the "reconquest of the greatest country in the world," cloaking himself in the heroic mantle of legendary French leaders like Napoleon Bonaparte and Charles de Gaulle. His invocation of a reconquest — *Reconquête* is even the name of his new political party — is intentionally loaded: It summons a grand and bloody medieval history, stretching from Frankish battles against Moorish invaders to Spain's decisive victory over the Iberian peninsula's last Muslim kingdoms and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims that followed.

Such gestures are rife in modern politics, especially among right-wing nationalists. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has for years rooted his religiously tinged nationalism in an embrace of his nation's Ottoman imperial past, conjuring the legacy of a fallen caliphate in an implicit repudiation of the rigid secularism that defined the modern Turkish republic for decades. Erdoğan is the country's most consequential leader since the republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. But while the latter engineered a rupture with the Ottoman legacy in his bid to modernize Turkey, Erdoğan taps into it to burnish his own nearly two-decade rule. Critics see in his demagoguery the deliberate affectations of a "new sultan."

In India, since coming to power in 2014, ruling Hindu nationalists have set about chipping away at the country's pluralistic foundations, building a more politicized, chauvinistic Hindu identity in a nation defined by vast linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. They have recast the story of India as fundamentally Hindu and view a millennium of Muslim rule in parts of the country as tantamount to an era of "slavery," as Prime Minister Narendra Modi put it.

Modi loyalists have been dispatched to bring to heel leading state-run universities, while his party's supporters hound prominent historians at home and abroad whose scholarship they deem anti-Hindu. A broader climate of hate flourishes: Rights groups now even raise the specter of genocide stalking India's increasingly marginalized and vilified Muslim minority.

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Why, in the third decade of the 21st century, does the past weigh so heavily on the present? History was supposed to “end,” as political theorist Francis Fukuyama suggested just as the Soviet Union neared its dissolution. Liberal democracy, undergirded by market capitalism, had won out over Soviet state socialism. The future after the Cold War would — or at least should — be shaped by the serene march of a globalizing liberalism, advancing across the world's increasingly meaningless borders.

Things didn't turn out that way. The universalism implicit in Fukuyama's worldview foundered amid ruinous wars and financial crises. Globalization provoked new yawning inequities within societies; emboldened autocracies proved resistant to the winds of change that were supposed to sweep them aside.

Western democracies, meanwhile, slumped into a kind of torpor. Opinion polls show rising apathy and disenchantment and widening fragmentation across the political landscape, with factions on the extremes often generating the most energy. The bland, corporatized cosmopolitanism brought about by globalization lacks the vitality and authenticity of an earlier, more confident era of Western politics. Illiberalism is on the march, and with it come calls to sweep out the prevailing order and make the nation “great again.” The nationalist fixation on the past always carries with it a fantasy of the future, of a world reborn and renewed.

Fukuyama has repeatedly accepted the limitations of his original formulation — that no amount of procedural or technocratic reform could account for the allure of identity politics and the overwhelming, inchoate desire for “recognition,” something sought by individuals as

well as nations. And so history, far from ending, is now itself the field of contest in a febrile global age.

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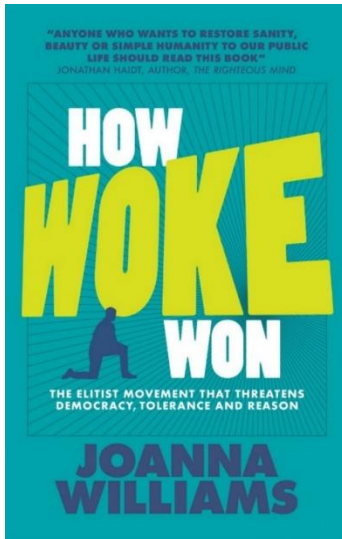
Perhaps no leader knows that more acutely than Chinese President Xi Jinping, whose iron-fisted rule has been accompanied by a major project of historical revisionism. New party guidelines limit from view discussion of the epochal disasters of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, helping further solidify Xi's status as the great inheritor and steward of a now-century-old communist project.

An acknowledgment of “left errors” carried out by Mao and his radical cohort was allowed four decades ago under Deng Xiaoping, who engineered China's transformation into a state capitalist behemoth. But Xi and his loyal cadres have somewhat changed tack in a bid to buttress their own legitimacy as China's economy slows. With much in the balance, Xi promotes a muscular nationalism that can afford little self-doubt. Beijing authorities now target those engaging in acts of “historical nihilism” that are “distorting the history of the party” and “attacking its leadership.”

Beijing has deleted millions of social media posts that it says evince this “nihilism,” while making it a crime to spread false “rumors” about the party's history. This tightening of the official party line comes alongside the ruthless suppression of political freedoms in Hong Kong and repression of ethnic minorities on China's western periphery.

Buffeted by uncertainty, Xi marked the centennial of China's Communist Party last year with steely confidence, donning a Mao-style jacket while declaring that his nation's rise on the world stage was part of “an irreversible historical process.”

It's a conviction that nationalists elsewhere, like Trump, may not accept. But they certainly would understand it. *Ishaan Tharoor is a columnist on the foreign desk of The Washington Post, where he authors the Today's WorldView newsletter and column. He previously was a senior editor and correspondent at Time magazine, based first in Hong Kong and later in New York.*



- Podcast <https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/podcast/how-woke-won/> by Joanna Williams

Woke has conquered the West. Identity politics, cancel culture and trans ideology reign. The values of “inclusivity” and “diversity” dominate politics, academia, the media, the judiciary, big business and the very language we speak. Censorship and public shaming are the price paid for dissent or even staying silent.

In a new podcast for the History Reclaimed website author Joanna Williams elaborates on these themes in her new book – concluding that Woke has won — but at what cost?

Dr Joanna Williams is a columnist for Spiked as well as a regular contributor to The Spectator, The Telegraph and The Times. An academic she is the founder and director of Cieo, which provides a platform for research and debates that universities today dare not touch.

She writes that holding the wrong opinions – or even being unaware of the latest correct language – can lead to the loss of livelihood, being ostracised and even the threat of violence. Teachers in Brighton are told that even the youngest children are ‘not racially innocent’. A Labour MP receives death threats for defending women’s access to single sex spaces. Sensitivity readers remove ‘problematic’ views from books.

Joanna tells us why, in her view, so called woke thinking infringes on every aspect of our lives with sometimes shocking results for ordinary people because beneath the politically correct buzzwords lies a politics that is reactionary and elitist.

Racial divisions are rehabilitated in the name of anti-racism. Women’s rights are destroyed in the name of trans rights. Ordinary people are demonised as bigots, while virtue-signalling (but exploitative) corporations pose as radical. Joanna “pokes the hornets’ nest” of the Woke orthodoxy and elaborates on how we arrived at a woke society, and whose interests it really serves. She believes that woke values are, in reality, the elite revealing their contempt for the rest of us and that this is displayed through a “fast changing vocabulary” that only those in the know can access where terminology is changed. For example, the sex of a baby whether a boy or a girl being referred to as “assigned at birth”. Of note is that she says she “doesn’t trust the Conservative Party” to challenge Woke in any form as it wants to appeal to a younger generation who may hold such views.

Optimistically she goes on to propound that we have much more in common than the woke would have us believe, and it is time to come together to forge a freer, more democratic and truly egalitarian future.

She concludes this podcast with a passionate call for free speech and democracy. Saying: “We need to challenge Woke. We need to have free speech to involve more and more people in our democratic institutions and put far more issues to the public to let them have their say rather than it being a protected realm of a small elite.”

How Woke Won is published by Spiked and John Wilkes publishers on May 19<sup>th</sup> 2022:

## More Links and Resources

- **On the Windrush Scandal**

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/16/windrush-era-citizens-row-timeline-of-key-events>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/31/windrush-home-office-has-failed-to-transform-its-culture-report-says>

- **If you have never heard of Intelligence Squared, maybe it's time to take a look.** Here is one of their debates:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoC2ioaQUQU&ab\\_channel=IntelligenceSquared](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoC2ioaQUQU&ab_channel=IntelligenceSquared)

### **Revere or Remove? The Battle Over Statues, Heritage and History, 2 juil. 2018**

Statues and memorials to famous figures of the past adorn our towns and cities. But what should be done when some of these figures have come to be seen by many people as controversial symbols of oppression and discrimination?

To discuss these emotive questions and examine the broader cultural conflicts which lie behind them, Intelligence Squared are joining forces with Historic England and bringing together a stellar panel including historians David Olusoga and Peter Frankopan, the journalist and author Afua Hirsch and the cultural commentator Tiffany Jenkins.

(more of their debates here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaqcvH8EvUtePORpN03jLMg>)

### **May I invite you to consider these four different examples of how today's researchers and artists are grappling with their country's past as Black British citizens?**

- **A historian – More on David Olusoga**

Conference

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyz9YaF4SVI&ab\\_channel=DarwinCollegeLectureSeries](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyz9YaF4SVI&ab_channel=DarwinCollegeLectureSeries)

His BBC series, Black and British, A Forgotten History (unfortunately, the BBC iplayer tool won't let us watch it from France anymore)

<https://www.facebook.com/ItsBlackRooted/videos/bbc-black-and-british-a-forgotten-history-episode-1-of-4-first-encounters/778116015722059/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ItsBlackRooted/videos/bbc-black-and-british-a-forgotten-history-episode-2-of-4-freedom/778124375721223/>

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6wyl0d>

- A poet - I went for **Jay Bernard** whose collection of poems, *Surge* and their series of live performances *Surge: Side A*, I find rather powerful

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk6phOywu0E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7810gU9pSm4>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/apr/05/speaking-out-jay-bernard-surge-side-a-poet>

<https://jaybernard.co.uk/home.html>

Oh, well, in fact, I could encourage you to discover a second poet! Because here Jay Bernard is joined by a US poet Laureate, **Tracy K Smith**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTZKYeimq2Y>

They both introduce and read from their poetry in this video.

You can jump to 27'10" for example where Smith reads "Unrest in Baton Rouge", a poem she wrote in reaction to an iconic picture of Black Lives Matter movement.

You can read the poem and more about her here:

<https://poets.org/poem/unrest-baton-rouge>

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/01/tracy-k-smiths-poetry-of-desire>

See the **picture** and some analyses of it here:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/2816652/the-woman-in-the-dress-black-lives-matter-protest-photo-hailed-as-iconic/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/18/opinion/a-sundress-in-an-age-of-riot-gear.html>

Being a **Poet Laureate in the US** is no mean feat.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet\\_Laureate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet_Laureate)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Poet\\_Laureate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Poet_Laureate)

Here Tracy K Smith's inaugural address

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HaDoAq0XPI>

#### ● **An artist**

<https://artuk.org/discover/stories/kara-walker-confronting-colonial-history-through-maritime-allegories>

#### ● **A Jazz Band**

Being a **jazz** music fan, I listen to all sorts of different things but recently I have developed a passion for the new wave of British jazz

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/apr/08/british-jazz-invasion-moses-boyd-matthew-halsall-nubya-garcia>

And in particular, anything with the saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings leading

**SONS of KEMET** is one of his many bands. Watch out! It is not cool jazz at all...

They have summed up the spirit of their album "Your Queen is a Reptile" (!) here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEpziXD-SDk>

Royalists not welcome. This is an interesting complement to our course on monarchy. ;-) And a good introduction to the Black American civic rights movement since each song bears the name of a female activist. You can look up who they are!

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/oct/28/sons-of-kemet-review-koko-london>

#### **A concert live!**

<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/19/743431889/watch-u-k-jazz-group-sons-of-kemet-deliver-an-explosive-midnight-set>