

A Seminar on “The Secret History of the British Empire”
Will be conducted by ERASMUS guest
Dr Izabella Penier, Associate Professor at the University of Lodz, Poland
Tue 10 May 2016, 4:00-6:00 pm, & Wed 11 May 2016, 4:00-6:00 pm, in New Philosophy bldg, Rm 308
upper level
Open to all students
A certificate of attendance will be issued

Students interested in signing up should contact Professor Tina Krontiris (krontir@enl.auth.gr).
(20 spaces available; a priority list will be kept)

Major Questions to be tackled:

- What is the human cost of the British expansion and fight to hold on to the Empire in the decolonization period?
- What crimes against humanity have been committed by English imperialists in this same period?

Seminar Description: The globalised world as we know it today is, to a large extent, a product of the British Empire. British imperialism contributed to mapping out of new countries, drawing new borders, creating arbitrary states and artificial nations; to forging long-lasting alliances and provoking bloody armed conflicts. It is also responsible for the displacement of millions of people and for great migrations that have radically changed the ethnic make-up of many contemporary societies. Even today all attempts to assess the legacy of the British Empire give rise to many heated debates, but this seminar takes a rather critical view of the Empire focusing on the human cost of the British expansion and fight to hold on to the Empire in the decolonization period. In the seminar, we will discuss crimes against humanity committed by English imperialists¹ These include: The great famines of India and Ireland, the Boer concentration camps, Kenya detention camps and tortures, similar crimes committed in Malaya, Aden and Cyprus during the EOKA uprising. We will also look at how the British today come to terms with the knowledge of the “secret” history of their Empire.

Discussions on the heated debates issuing from the seminar theme will be encouraged!

Prior reading on the subject is NOT required for participation in the seminar. Students will be given all the relevant information for the discussion in class.

¹ The great famines of India and Ireland, the Boer concentration camps, Kenya detention camps and tortures, similar crimes committed in Malaya, Aden and Cyprus during the EOKA uprising

The seminar will draw on the following bibliography regarding the British imperial past:

Anderson, D. *Histories of the Hanged. The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of the Empire*. NY London: 2005; Gott, R. *Britain's Empire. Resistance, Repression, and Revolt*. London, NY: Verso, 2011; Davies, M. *Late Victorian Holocausts*, London, NY: Verso, 2002; Elkins. K. *Imperial Reckoning, The Untold Story of Britain's gulag in Kenya*. NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2005; Robert Holland's *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959*, Canada, Oxford University Press, 1999; and recent press releases on the topic of legal actions from victims of UK security forces from Kenya, Cyprus and Aden.

Note on the seminar instructor:

Dr Izabella Penier is Maria Skłodowska Curie Fellow and Associate Professor at the University of Lodz in Poland. She specializes in Black diasporic literature and culture. Currently her research is focused on Black British and African American scholarship. It particularly concerns the transformations that Black American studies has recently undergone due to critical interventions from global frameworks of analysis such as postcolonialism, British cultural studies, Black Atlantic and diaspora studies. She has lectured on British and American literature, culture, history and multiculturalism.