

COMUNICADO

Gobierno de Gibraltar

La conferencia “Al Borde del Brexit” comenzará el jueves

Gibraltar, 19 de septiembre de 2018

El simposio “Al borde del Brexit: un Reino Unido global y las ascuas del imperio” (Bordering on Brexit: Global Britain and the Embers of Empire) comenzará mañana jueves en la Biblioteca Garrison. El evento ha sido organizado por la Directora, la Dra. Jennifer Ballantine Perera, junto con la Universidad de Copenhague y la Oficina del Viceministro Principal.

Importantes académicos de toda Europa, incluyendo Gibraltar, examinarán el impacto del Brexit desde diferentes ángulos. La conferencia resulta particularmente relevante, dado que nos encontramos en la recta final de las negociaciones entre el Reino Unido y la Unión Europea.

Los ponentes provienen de instituciones de Oxford, Cambridge, Ámsterdam, East Anglia, Dublin, Queen Mary, King’s College London, Trondheim, Nottingham, Bath, Exeter, Gibraltar y Copenhague.

Los temas de discusión incluirán “Sueños hindúes en el Reino Unido del Brexit” (Indian dreams in Brexit Britain), “Nacionalismo inglés y el Brexit: ¿Gran Bretaña liberada o en revolución posindustrial?” (English Nationalism and Brexit: Britannia Unchained or Post-Industrial Revolt) y “La contradicción de Inglaterra” (The contradiction of England) y “Escocia: el Brexit y la persistencia del imperio”, (Scotland: Brexit and the persistence of Empire).

El simposio también contará con un elemento gibraltareño gracias a las intervenciones de Jamie Trinidad, de la Universidad de Cambridge, quien hablará sobre “El Brexit y el status de la frontera de Gibraltar” (Brexit and the status of the Gibraltar border) y la Dra. Jennifer Ballantine, quien analizará el tema “(Bre)salida o (Bre)entrada en el mundo: el espíritu de la ciudadanía y un Reino Unido global con Gibraltar como trasfondo” ((Bre)xit or (Bre)entry into the World: the Spirit of Citizenship and Global Britain against the backdrop of Gibraltar).

El Viceministro Principal, Joseph García, responsable del trabajo relacionado con nuestra salida de la UE, inaugurará la conferencia mañana jueves a las 6 pm en la Biblioteca Garrison.

La entrada será gratuita y los miembros del público están invitados a acudir.

La noticia se acompaña del programa del simposio (en inglés).

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PRESS RELEASE

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Date: 19th September 2018

Bordering on Brexit conference opens on Thursday

A symposium entitled “Bordering on Brexit: Global Britain and the Embers of Empire” will open tomorrow Thursday at the Garrison Library. It has been organised by the Director Dr Jennifer Ballantine Perera together with the University of Copenhagen and the Office of the Deputy Chief Minister.

Leading academics from all over Europe, including Gibraltar, will look at the impact of Brexit from a number of different angles. This is particularly relevant coming as it does in the final straight of the negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

There are speakers from Oxford, Cambridge, Amsterdam, East Anglia, Demos, Queen Mary, Trondheim, Nottingham, Bath, Exeter, Gibraltar and Copenhagen.

The topics under discussion include “Indian dreams in Brexit Britain”, “English Nationalism and Brexit: Britannia Unchained or Post-Industrial Revolt” and “The contradiction of England, Scotland: Brexit and the persistence of Empire”.

There will also be a Gibraltar element with Jamie Trinidad from Cambridge University discussing “Brexit and the status of the Gibraltar border” and Dr Jennifer Ballantine speaking on “(Bre)xit or (Bre)entry into the World: the Spirit of Citizenship and Global Britain against the backdrop of Gibraltar.”

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is responsible for work related to our EU exit, will open the conference at 6pm tomorrow Thursday at the Garrison Library.

Entrance is free of charge and the public is invited to attend.

Bordering on Brexit

Global Britain and the Legacies of Empire

20-22 September 2018
Gibraltar Garrison Library



AT THE CROSSROADS
of knowledge & culture



embers of empire
University of Copenhagen

Thursday, 20 September

18.00-19.30:

Introduction

Jennifer Ballantine

Official Welcome

Deputy Chief Minister, Joseph Garcia

Session 1:

Chair: Stuart Ward (Copenhagen)

Fintan O'Toole:

The Pleasures of Self-Pity

19.30

Reception and Dinner

Friday, 21 September

9.00-11.00 Session 2

Chair: Astrid Rasch (Trondheim)

Yasmin Khan (Oxford):

Indian Dreams in Brexit Britain

Elizabeth Buettner (Amsterdam):

Migration and the Postcolonial EU: Britain and the Netherlands Compared

Camilla Schofield (East Anglia):

'Let us be a warning': Brexit Britain, the American Right and the Fall of Europe

11.00-11.30

Coffee

11.30-13.30 Session 3

Chair: Jennifer Ballantine (Garrison Library)

Sophia Gaston (Henry Jackson Society):

The Currency of the Past – How and Why Nostalgia Consumed our Political Cultures

Michael Kenny (Cambridge):

English Nationalism and Brexit: "Britannia Unchained" or Post-Industrial Revolt?

13.30-14.30

Lunch

14.30-16.30 Session 4

Chair: Richard Toye (Exeter)

Bill Schwarz (Queen Mary):

The Contraction of England

Neal Ascherson:

Scotland, Brexit and the persistence of empire

16.30-17.00

Coffee and break

17.00-19.00 Session 5

Chair: Stuart Ward (Copenhagen)

Jamie Trinidad (Cambridge):

Brexit and the Status of the Gibraltar Border

Jennifer Ballantine (Garrison Library):

(Bre)xit or (Bre)entry into the World: the Spirit of
Citizenship and Global Britain against the backdrop
of Gibraltar

19.00:

Reception and Dinner

Saturday 22 September

9.00-11.00 Session 6

Chair: Kalathmika Natarajan (Copenhagen)

Astrid Rasch (Trondheim):

Complexity made simple: Battles over imperial
memory in contemporary Britain

Katie Donington (London South Bank):

Relics of empire? Slavery, imperialism, and
decolonising the museum

Olivette Otele (Bath):

Memorabilia of the past, Brexit Britain and the re-
writing of colonial history

11.00-11.30

Coffee

11.30-13.30 Session 7

Chair: Christian Damm Pedersen (Southern Denmark)

Richard Drayton (KCL):

Biggar vs. Little Britain: God, War, Union, Brexit
and Empire in Twenty-first century Conservative
ideology

Saul Dubow (Cambridge):

Rhodes Must Fall: Decolonising and the problem of Declension in Circuits of Knowledge

13.30-14.30

Lunch

14.30-16.00 Session 8

Chair: Ezekiel Mercau (Dublin)

R. Toye and D. Thackeray (Exeter):

Imaginng Empire 2.0? Brexit and the historical debate about Britain's economic future

Stuart Ward (Copenhagen):

Global Britain, Greater Britain

16.00-18.00

Cable car to Top of the Rock and nature walk

20.00

Dinner

Abstracts

Fintan O'Toole

The Pleasures of Self-Pity

Brexit is a post-colonial neurosis. There is a long tradition in British imperialism of dealing with the difficulties of colonisation by identifying oneself romantically with the colonised. Brexit is the ultimate twist on this tradition -- it imagines Britain as an oppressed nation and wallows in the joys of victimhood. This requires, of course, an imaginary oppressor: the EU. All of this is linked to the wider history of imaginary victimhood on the far right -- a history that is itself in resurgence.

The delicious irony is that the end result of imaging oneself as a colony is that one ends up with a settlement in which Britain can actually be seen as one -- Boris Johnson used the term in his resignation letter to describe a putative UK under May's soft Brexit.

This is the last resort of the colonial imagination: it ends up by dreaming itself into the condition ("vassal state") it once imposed on others.

Yasmin Khan

Indian Dreams in Brexit Britain

A renewed relationship with India has been prominently advertised as a British government priority since Brexit. How far is the centrality of India to these visions founded on cultural dreams and myths, with roots in imperial connections? And are these dreams shared? British South Asians appear to have voted more for Leave than many commentators expected, and there have been a number of reasons suggested to explain this. How might British Asian histories of migration and settlement relate to memories of empire more generally?

Elizabeth Buettner

Migration and the Postcolonial EU: Britain and the Netherlands Compared

Regardless of their nationally- and locally-specific qualities, Britain and the Netherlands share a long history of attracting inward migration, not least during the era of widescale decolonization and its aftermath. This paper will briefly compare and contrast patterns of migration into Europe with intra-European movements. In the case of the former, peoples came to Britain and the Netherlands not only from colonies and former colonies but also from outside former empires; in the case of the latter, European mobilities increased markedly in tune with the open borders brought by European integration. Migration diversity and the societal 'superdiversity' stemming from it has put some groups under the public spotlight far more than others, making it essential to consider issues such as class and educational status, nationality and ethnicity, and perceptions of permanence and impermanence as key factors shaping wider perceptions of particular migration-origin individuals and groups. The lingering shadows cast by empires past and the impact of freedom of movement within the European Union, in sum, are only two important variables among many that have both entangled histories and present-day implications.

Camilla Schofield

‘Let us be a warning’: Brexit Britain, the American Right and the Fall of Europe

Katie Hopkins, UK media personality turned far-right journalist, made several appearances on US conservative platforms in late 2017 and 2018. She presents herself as someone uniquely able and willing to tell hard political truths about Britain and Europe to American audiences. ‘My message is simple,’ she said in November 2017: ‘Do not let this great country become the United Kingdom. Do not let America fall, as Europe has fallen. Look at us. Let us be a warning. Be better than us.’

In her public talks, Hopkins presents a compelling picture of Europe fallen on multiple fronts, overwhelmed by migration from Africa and the Middle East, by ‘black gangs’, by creeping Islamisation and – even – by Europe’s own anti-hate speech laws. With her vision of a fallen Europe, Hopkins offers American audiences a particular reading of contemporary global history – a story of global whiteness besieged and potentially overrun by non-white migration and racial ‘disorder’. In Britain, this is worldview that has deep roots in the racial politics of the end of the British Empire and black liberation; it is a postcolonial political discourse that entered the political mainstream with the words of Enoch Powell. Islamophobia and the image of Europe ‘falling’ to sharia law is central to this vision, but is not reducible to it. Hopkins’ stories go beyond Europe, too: she draws white widowed female farmers in post-Apartheid South Africa, a Swedish woman in a ‘Muslim no-go area’, the threat of rape at Calais migrant camps, and her own battles to maintain ‘free speech’ as chapters in the same story, of a world turned upside down, of white (often female) victimisation. This paper will situate this global politics of white victimisation within the history of decolonisation.

Sophia Gaston

The Currency of the Past – How and Why Nostalgia Consumed our Political Cultures

An appeal to a glorious past has been a prominent feature of European politics in recent years. While there are common elements to the nostalgic discourses seen across European politics, nostalgic narratives are clearly heavily mediated by a nation’s particular cultural and historical context. How is nostalgia finding such fertile ground in our societies, and what makes the past such a compelling political campaigning device? What does this nostalgic epidemic mean for governance? Has the ‘doctrine of progress’ fundamentally expired, and under what conditions could politicians shift focus once more towards the future?

Mike Kenny

English Nationalism and Brexit: “Britannia Unchained” or Post-Industrial Revolt?

This paper explores the contention that Brexit can in part be explained by a resurgence of a parochial and Europhobic English nationalism. Drawing on polling data from before and after the Referendum, it argues for a significantly qualified characterisation of English national consciousness and gives particular emphasis to the rise of working-class disenchantment with the political system and the growing power and wealth of London and the South East. It explores too how these sentiments were mobilised by various radical Conservatives convinced of the need

for the UK to break away from the sclerotic EU and regain its heritage as a free-trading, small-state, world island. The author asks whether this alliance can be maintained beyond the circumstances of the Referendum held in 2016, and considers signs that tensions between these different interests are now playing out in the political realm.

Bill Schwarz

The Contraction of England

This paper examines England and its continuing contraction signalled by the referendum of 23 June 2016 in which a new psephological nation was born, a nation existing outside London and the major conurbations. It suggests that this new England is driven by the incubation of a revived ethnic populism in which *the English people* (or those who claim themselves to be the English people) positions itself as an enemy of *the British state*. Structurally, this situation rehearses the dynamic which underwrote the end of the global British world (above all in Rhodesia) where various forms of settler populism mobilized ‘the British people’ to bring an end to the depredations of the British state.

The paper questions how valuable it is to explain Brexit as a function of a ‘nostalgia for empire’. Such explanations short-circuit too much, disavowing the complex network of mediations by which memories of empire operate. However, current manifestations of ethnic populism rehearse a powerful dynamic which ran through the break up the wider British world. *After empire*, this dynamic now comes home, resulting in profound new fissures in the continuing story of contraction of England.

Neal Ascherson

Scotland, Brexit and the persistence of empire

Brexit has not transformed Scottish politics. Instead, it has suddenly and violently accelerated a process of objective divergence between Scotland and the UK. The assumptions on which the 1998 devolution ‘settlement’ (and perhaps the 1707 Union itself) were based are collapsing. This institutional breakdown would be happening even if the Scottish government were not committed to independence. English ‘Brexit’ passions are not driven by imperial nostalgia but by its opposite: the turn away from outdated visions of global power to the concentration on Englishness and English interests for which Enoch Powell argued.

Jamie Trinidad

Brexit and the Status of the Gibraltar Border

Nothing has done more to undermine the familial, cultural, economic and linguistic ties between Gibraltar and Spain than the closure of the Spain/Gibraltar border by Spain’s fascist government in 1969. Franco predicted – wrongly – that cutting the territory off from Spain and Europe

would cause it to 'fall like a ripe fruit'. The blockade, which lasted sixteen years, was an episode that still looms large in the Gibraltarian psyche.

Joining the EEC in 1973, under the UK's accession agreement, was a cause for optimism in Gibraltar. It gave Gibraltarians a sense of renewed connection with Europe. The re-opening of the border in 1985 – a pre-condition of Spain's joining the EC in 1986 – was a key factor in enabling Gibraltar to become the thriving country that it is today. Brexit is the biggest challenge Gibraltar has faced since Franco's blockade, and the status and management of the border post-Brexit is the single most important aspect of that challenge.

This paper considers some of the possible political, legal and economic ramifications of Brexit for Gibraltar, focusing in particular on the Gibraltar border. I will argue that while the threat posed to Gibraltar by Brexit is significant, the outlook is less bleak than it was in 1969. This is because modern Spanish governments have come to recognise (and care about) the fact that: a) restrictions at the border are harmful to the Spanish region that surrounds Gibraltar; and b) the use of the border as a political weapon for advancing Spain's sovereignty claim over Gibraltar is at best ineffective and at worst counterproductive.

Jennifer Ballantine Perera

(Bre)xit or (Bre)entry into the World: the Spirit of Citizenship and Global Britain against the backdrop of Gibraltar

By October 2016, at the first Conservative Party conference following the June Brexit Referendum, Theresa May outlined her vision for Britain, one which played into the nationalistic drives that propelled the referendum result with the notion of the 'spirit of citizenship'. Whilst functioning as a cornerstone to her vision, this spirit also served to exclude many global British citizens who, as 'citizens of the world' were rendered by May as 'citizen(s) of nowhere'. By the same token, it is in this very speech that the concept of 'a confident Global Britain' is introduced, one that does not turn its back on globalisation, nor Europe for that matter. Unravelling the significance of this speech is difficult given its contradictory drive as May attempts to meet both referendum demands and those of the large section of remainers; a dilemma that becomes all the more fractious following responses to the Chequers' Brexit White Paper in July 2018. So where does this leave Gibraltar as a British Overseas Territory that is geographically part of mainland Europe, sharing a border with EU member state Spain, yet enters the European jurisdiction through Great Britain? And indeed, as 'global British citizens' what does, or can, a post-Brexit scenario hold for Gibraltar? This paper looks at unpacking the contradictions inherent in the discourse relating to the Brexit exit strategy as a means to address how, if at all, Gibraltar's quite peculiar status as BOT which voted overwhelmingly to remain fits into the equation. Of consideration is Gibraltar's position as a key strategic territory for Great Britain, but the larger question lies in whether the stress lines inherent in May's Brexit vision will generate a resurgence of the red lines separating the British Base at Gibraltar from the rights of self-determination of the people of Gibraltar, as occurred in 1966 and 2002. Should this be the case, Gibraltarians will truly become 'citizens of nowhere'.

Astrid Rasch

Complexity made simple: Battles over imperial memory in contemporary Britain

Decades after decolonisation, the meaning of the imperial past remains contested in Britain. Given the differences between, say, settler colonialism in Australia, plantation colonialism in the Caribbean, the British Raj in India and the informal empire in China, it is more apt to talk, not of *the* British empire, but of a number of British empires. However, this paper argues that contemporary British memory culture is marked by a singularisation of the imperial past. In arguing for a positive or a negative valuation of empire, media pundits, politicians and public intellectuals often reduce past complexities to a simple question of for or against. Historian Niall Ferguson opens his book *Empire* with the question ‘whether the Empire was a good or bad thing’: ‘It is nowadays quite conventional to think that, on balance, it was bad,’ he claims, and suggests that he will not disregard imperial wrongdoing. Nonetheless, Ferguson reaches the conclusion that ‘empire enhanced global welfare – in other words, was a Good Thing’. A controversial celebrant of empire, Ferguson employs a rhetorical strategy found also among its detractors. As they debate the meaning of the imperial past, both sides tend to offer their own position as the necessary nuancing of an otherwise simplified debate. However, those interventions are themselves premised on the carving up of the past in piles of ‘good’ and ‘bad’. In that process, empire is repeatedly established as an entity whose moral meaning may be assessed in the singular.

Katie Donington

Relics of empire? Slavery, imperialism, and decolonising the museum

The relationship between the development of empire and the birth of the museum has created a series of legacies which Britain’s public history institutions are increasingly being forced to confront. Issues of repatriation and demands for different kinds of histories (and historians) have highlighted the complicity of the museum in the structures of imperialism. Attempts to reshape the public narrative of Britain’s imperial past have been met with resistance, or in the case of the 2007 commemorations of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, a counter-narrative of imperial benevolence embodied by the figure of Wilberforce. A lack of diversity within both visitor demographics and amongst museum staff had led to calls for museums to ‘decolonise’ in order to become relevant for the 21st century audiences they serve. The divisions between those who venerate, and those who complicate, Britain’s history of slavery and empire speak to a broader argument over who is included and excluded from the narrative of British history, and indeed from the nation. It remains to be seen who will win the cultural battle for Britain’s imperial past, however, a public reckoning with Britain’s imperial history is central to remaking international relations in the post-Brexit future. This paper will explore the relationship between slavery, imperialism, and the museum in relation to current debates surrounding public history, race, nation, and belonging in Brexit Britain.

Olivette Otele

Memorabilia of the past, Brexit Britain and the re-writing of colonial history

Britain's colonial past has been haunting public debates for decades. Recently in the post Brexit context, the role and place of memorabilia of the past have become a contested terrain of Britain as a global power. The talk will shed further light on that debate through three sites of memory. It will first focus on memory politics related to the transatlantic slave trade and slavery and how the memorialisation of the past in the city of Bristol is an example of 'memoryscape'. It will then turn to the role of archival material in re-writing colonial history. The aim is to interrogate the ramifications of recent re-appearance of so-called 'Migrated Archives' and their impact on post-Brexit Britain's historical memory. Finally, it will delve into the recent controversy about artefacts acquired during colonial conquests. The goal is to examine the links between public perceptions about identity and overarching academic discussions about cultural memory and history writing.

Richard Drayton

Biggar vs. Little Britain: God, War, Union, Brexit and Empire in Twenty-first century Conservative ideology

The strange career of Nigel Biggar as a twenty-first century conservative ideologist offers a useful prism through which to examine some of the afterlives of the British empire. Biggar, born 1955, once an obscure Oxford theologian, has turned from the pulpit to Twitter, newspaper and magazine columns to intervene on a variety of public debates about history and current politics. He first 'came out' as a public intellectual around the Scottish referendum debate (he is a fiercely unionist lowland Scottish tory), but long before this in his public-facing writings has offered ethical defences of war, in particular the Iraq War, for the extrajudicial killing of enemy combatants (under the euphemism "battlefield mercy killing"), while elsewhere arguing that the Easter Rebellion in Ireland was not a "just war". He achieved a recent prominence as the key Oxford voice opposing 'Rhodes Must Fall', in defending the notorious Gilley article in *Third World Quarterly*, in founding an 'Ethics and Empire' programme at his centre. Most recently he has offered an ethical argument for Brexit, while participating in a think tank committed to propagating a new idea of the national past. Biggar's interest as an intellectual does not lie in any depth or subtlety of mind-- he fancies himself a historian, but this amounts to a kind of jailhouse lawyering with secondary sources. But bringing his interventions together, we can examine how a certain view of 'whiteness' and Britain at the end of empire marked the generation of Biggar and Tony Blair.

Saul Dubow

Rhodes Must Fall: Decolonising and the problem of Declension in Circuits of Knowledge

The 'Fallist' movements - beginning with the removal of odious statuary and extending to fees, intersectionality, and transnational activist campaigns such as 'decolonising the curriculum' - raises interesting problems about circuits of knowledge. It is widely assumed that social media has played a key role in creating decentred vortices of outrage which rapidly get taken up and sometimes, almost as quickly, fall into abeyance. My talk will contextualise these discussions in terms of older debates about the global circulation of knowledge. It will ask whether older diffusionist models can tell us anything about the ways in which ideas move, and how their meanings change as they travel. It revisits the idea of the Empire 'striking back', and it asks whether concepts like the 'moving metropolis' or global 'cosmopolitanism' have anything of relevance to teach us as we seek to understand the politics of knowledge production and dissemination.

David Thackeray and Richard Toye

Imagining Empire 2.0? Brexit and the historical debate about Britain's economic future

Writing two days before his appointment as Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union in July 2016, David Davis wrote an article for ConservativeHome outlining a supposedly buoyant future for post-Brexit Britain: 'Trade deals with the US and China alone will give us a trade area almost twice the size of the EU, and of course we will also be seeking deals with Hong Kong, Canada, Australia, India, Japan, the UAE, Indonesia- and many others'. Some Remainers have claimed that British Euroscepticism is closely tied to a post-imperial nostalgia and that Brexiteers have unrealistic expectations about the role that the Commonwealth can play in Britain's future as a trading nation. However, several prominent Brexiteers, such as Davis, instead presented themselves as globalists keen to build on Britain's nineteenth-century legacy as a champion of free trade. This paper considers the similarities and differences between current debates about Britain's economic future and earlier ones. Whereas, undoubtedly, imperial nostalgia does play a part in the vision of many Brexiteers, one must be careful not to assume that the "post-imperial hangover" alone was responsible for the UK being an "awkward partner in Europe", or that the legacy of Empire predetermined the failure of Britain's relationship with the EU. At the same time, we should note the skill with which the Leave campaign(s) deployed a rhetoric of abstract British "greatness" which could appeal to younger audiences as well as older, more nostalgic ones.

Stuart Ward

Global Britain, Greater Britain

Foremost among the UK Government's visions of a world after Brexit is the branding of 'Global Britain'. At once lost vocation and future aspiration, the term was originally coined by Boris Johnson in the aftermath of the 2016 referendum. More recently, it has come under critical scrutiny from the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, raising concerns about its conceptual vacuity and the danger that it might risk 'damaging our reputation overseas'. Johnson's rhetorical flourish, however, cannot be rendered intelligible in terms of concrete policy

prescriptions. Like his similarly Churchillian notion of ‘Empires of the Mind’ it is but one of many subtle references to Britain’s imperial track record as a means of inspiring confidence in a post-Brexit future, beckoning a divided nation back into the world. Stuart Ward examines Global Britain in context of much older strivings for an alternative imperial nomenclature, with its origins in Charles Dilke’s nineteenth century notion of ‘Greater Britain’. It will be shown that Johnson’s term bears more than a passing resemblance to a succession of historical invocations of an empire that dare not speak its name.

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