

The Colonial Mark and Postcolonial Relations: 'Colonialism Was Nothing but a (Massive) Parenthesis,' An Interview with Achille Mbembe

Achille Mbembe

Abstract

In this deep conversation, Achille Mbembe discusses the nature of the relationships between former African colonies and old colonial powers, especially France and Britain. He highlights how political independence did not necessarily end the logic of colonial domination but reshaped it in new forms. Mbembe emphasizes that Africa is not merely a victim of colonialism, but a vibrant and diverse entity with a long history that predates colonial rule. He argues that essentialist perceptions reduce Africa to a colonial past and stresses the importance of recognizing Africa as a dynamic and evolving project. He also criticizes the European tendency to monopolize universal concepts and calls for a critical engagement with the entire legacy of humanity, without subordination or rupture. He believes that colonialism did not erase the capacities of African societies but redirected them, and that the project of "epistemological liberation" involves creatively reappropriating the tools of global thought. Mbembe also critiques the neglect of Africa's contribution to the making of Western modernity, particularly through slavery, and views "race" as a concept used to justify social and political hierarchies. Finally, he calls for moving beyond a hierarchical humanism to build a "universal commons" that includes all living beings, not just humans.

Keywords: postcolonialism, epistemological liberation, modernity and race, critical universality, transformative Africa

United Nations Resolutions on the Elimination of Colonialism

Abstract

The United Nations resolutions of 1960, 1963, and 1966 focused on the international community's efforts to dismantle colonialism and to strengthen the freedom and independence of non-self-governing peoples. The 1960 resolution articulated the fundamental principles of peoples' right to self-determination, rejecting any political, economic, or social justification for delaying independence. It affirmed respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, and called for the complete transfer of authority to colonized peoples without discrimination. The 1963 resolution emphasized monitoring the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence through the Special Committee, highlighted the persistence of foreign control over certain territories, criticized administering powers for their refusal to cooperate with the Committee, and underscored the need to refrain from actions that might obstruct independence, in line with the principles of the United Nations and human rights. The 1966 resolution stressed the grave threat posed by the continuation of colonialism to international peace and security, condemned all forms of segregation and racial discrimination, and denounced the foreign economic and financial interests that sustained colonial domination. It further expressed strong support for national liberation movements and their legitimate right to struggle, while underscoring the necessity of cooperation among states and international organizations to facilitate full implementation of the Declaration, including the use of visiting missions and concrete measures to guarantee the peoples' right to freedom and independence.

Keywords: decolonization, right to self-determination, Special Committee, racial discrimination, national liberation movements

Development: Is It Colonial?

Joaquin SABAT

Abstract

This article, drawing on the arguments of Walter D. Mignolo and Gilbert Rist, raises the question of the various links that may be established between the concept of “development,” as it took shape during the twentieth century, and the principles that had long been invoked to legitimize colonial practices over past centuries. Emerging from three major historical phases—the “Christian mission,” the “civilizing mission,” and the “age of development”—these universalist projections, rooted in Western thought, aim to shed light on the relationship between the formulation of supposedly universal principles and the configuration of international geopolitics.

Keywords: development, colonialism, modernity, civilizing mission, Christian mission, post-development

A Reading of Culture and Imperialism by Edward Said

Abdelkhaleq Marheb

Abstract

Any reading of a book begins with identifying its foundational ideas, the subsidiary themes that stem from them, the evidence supporting them, and the ultimate goals they pursue. This study follows that path in examining Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* and in surveying its chapters. A close analysis reveals that the work is shaped by several core ideas: overt Orientalism and its derivation of imperialism, the dialectic of formation and influence between culture and imperialism, the exposure of hidden structures in colonial narrative, the challenges posed by imperialism to cultural identity, and the destructive legacies of colonialism on cultural frameworks through historical distortion, mass extermination, economic exploitation, and hegemonic domination. Said's argumentative method rests largely on evidentiary demonstration, drawing on real wars, imperialist political statements, colonial literary narratives, the colonizers' media, and strands of their philosophical theories. The overarching aim of the book is to direct critique toward the models and assumptions of imperial culture, dismantling its internal structures, and affirming cultural resistance through such avenues as counter-literature and emancipatory education.

Keywords: Orientalism, imperialism, culture, Westernization, colonial narrative, indigenous people, emancipatory education, cultural resistance, contrapuntal reading

Missionary Activity and Colonialism in French Orientalism: Louis Massignon and His Political Role in the East, 1916–1917

**Jawad Kazem al-Nasrallah,
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Abstract

This study examines the missionary and colonial motives that underlay early Orientalist endeavors, which were employed as instruments to serve Western interests in the East, to gain close knowledge of the region, and ultimately to dominate it and exploit its resources. Within this framework, the paper highlights the concealed and often overlooked political role played by the French Orientalist Louis Massignon, a role largely neglected in Arab historiography despite its critical significance. To address this subject, the research is divided into three main sections: the first explores French Orientalism and its missionary and colonial drivers; the second outlines the life and intellectual formation of Louis Massignon; and the third analyzes his political involvement in the East during the years 1916–1917. The study concludes with several important findings, foremost among them the extent to which Western powers relied on Orientalists such as Massignon to advance political objectives and to facilitate the partition of the East into dependent colonies.

Keywords: missionary activity, colonialism, Orientalism, France, Louis Massignon.

A Historical (Intellectual and Political) Overview of the Major Syrian Revolutions against French Colonialism: An Inquiry into Causes, Outcomes, and Practical Implications

Nabil Ali Saleh

Abstract

Syria was colonized by France following the League of Nations' partition resolution, with French forces first entering the Syrian coast in 1918 and then advancing into Damascus in 1920 after the famous Battle of Maysalun. From the earliest stages of this occupation—disguised under slogans of modernization and development for a so-called “backward” Syrian society—the true colonial ambitions of France soon became evident: domination and control, the plundering of resources, and the subjugation of Syria's political position within a region contested by several international powers seeking to divide the legacy of the fallen Ottoman Empire. Despite France's heavily armed military presence, revolutions broke out across the Syrian territory, and political struggle alongside armed resistance persisted until freedom was secured and independence achieved in 1946. This study seeks to document and analyze these developments with both historical detail and critical interpretation.

Keywords: Syria, revolution, French occupation, League of Nations

The Demographic Colonialism of Algeria: The Strategy of Algerian Migration to France (1905–1962) and Its Social Consequences

Samira Bouzbouja

Abstract

Migration is a historical and social phenomenon closely tied to the human aspiration for security and stability, whether internal or external. Algerian society has experienced migration throughout different stages of its development, for various reasons and under diverse conditions. Among these, the wave of Algerian migration to France in the early twentieth century constitutes a significant event in modern Algerian history, forming an integral part of any understanding of its impact on Algerian society and culture. Against the backdrop of the people's suffering under continuous wars, France, since its occupation of Algeria in 1830, implemented a settler-colonial policy designed to bring about the ultimate displacement of Algerians. Within this context, migration was perceived by many as a means of escape from harsh living conditions and as an opportunity to improve their standards of life. At the same time, the colonial administration actively encouraged and coerced Algerians to leave their homeland, exploiting their labor at minimal cost in service of political, economic, and military objectives. This study therefore raises key questions: What were the main factors that drove Algerians to migrate to France? Was French colonial policy the principal force behind making France the primary destination? And what were the consequences of Algerian migration, particularly in its social dimensions?

Keywords: demographic colonialism, displacement, colonial administration, French society, Algerian migrants.

The Systematic Colonial Erasure of Islamic Culture in Northern Nigeria

Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Ahmar

Abstract

The British encountered Islam in Northern Nigeria not only as a firmly rooted faith, but also as a ruling power and an established Muslim state. In response, they undertook every possible effort to eradicate its influence: replacing Islamic law with secular legislation, substituting the foreign Latin script for the Arabic script, and leaving indelible marks on the country that stripped the people of their cultural identity. As a result, governance, politics, culture, and social life continued to follow colonial structures even after independence. This study aims to examine the systematic effects of British colonialism on the Islamic reality of Northern Nigeria. It traces the conditions of the region prior to colonization, the entry of European powers into Africa generally and Northern Nigeria in particular, the motives behind colonial intervention, and its economic, cultural, political, and social repercussions. The paper also highlights Britain's pursuit of an African empire, including the 1890 agreement with France regarding Northern Nigeria, and emphasizes how colonialism was tied to the deliberate erasure of the religious and cultural identity of the Nigerian people, with the northern region serving as the primary arena of this civilizational confrontation with Western colonialism.

Keywords: colonialism, Nigeria, culture, Islam, Britain

The Armed Tunisian Revolution against French Colonialism: From Outbreak to Independence, 1952–1956

Faysal Jamil

Abstract

This study examines the armed resistance in Tunisia against French colonialism, which erupted with the revolution of 18 January 1952, after the French authorities had closed off all avenues for reform in the country and the leaders of the national movement concluded that the time had come for armed struggle. The research considers the circumstances that led to the adoption of armed resistance before delving into the different phases of the revolution and the achievements it secured. It then explores the causes and developments of the conflict between Youssefites and Bourguibists, tracing how these divisions ultimately gave rise to renewed armed action and the progression toward full national independence. Overall, the study seeks to clarify the role of armed struggle in achieving Tunisian independence.

Keywords: armed revolution, independence, Habib Bourguiba, Salah Ben Youssef, Political Bureau, General Secretariat

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

Italian Colonialism in Eritrea: A Study of Methods and Constraints (1883–1885)

Dr. Mohamed El-Bashir Razqi

Abstract

This study examines the strategies employed by Italy to secure its colonial venture in the Horn of Africa during the late nineteenth century, a period marked by intense international competition over colonies. Using a significant interpretive model—the case of Italy’s colonization of Eritrea between 1883 and 1885—the research draws on original and important documents from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The analysis demonstrates that Italy’s pursuit of influence in the Horn of Africa cannot be understood in isolation from broader European conflicts, particularly given Italy’s late national unification in 1861, which left it at a disadvantage compared with colonial powers such as France and especially Britain. Moreover, the study highlights the pivotal role of local society in compelling the Italian state to devise diverse strategies of action, ranging from complex internal alliances to responses shaped by the pressures of external rivalries.

Keywords: colonialism, Italy, African colonization, Eritrea, international competition