

## Editor's preface

The degree to which the legacies of colonialism have populated the contemporary landscape in all aspects of life have been seismic, and the extent to which the trajectories of world history have been shaped by empires throughout human history, but particularly since 1492, have been underplayed in the mainstream discipline of international relations with its focus upon the state, and its relations with other states. For the most part, those states were empires, within which different principles prevailed for the colonisers than for the colonised. Even the wars in which western states engaged heavily involved peoples from their colonial empires, fighting in support of values such as freedom and democracy which they themselves were denied by their colonizers. It is a familiar refrain that decolonization was in fact a fantasy, and that in reality it was neo-colonialism that simply perpetuated colonial structures of power and western interests, mediated through complicit native elites. This refrain has developed in recent years into a broader recognition of the deep rooted psychological damage that is colonialism's legacy. The old symbols of domination and exploitation cast a long shadow in those countries and nations that were the victims of a system that deprived them of their history, culture and language, portraying them as primitive and almost worthless in comparison with the superior civilizations of the west. The Rhodes must Fall campaign in South Africa and Great Britain, the decolonization of the curriculum world-wide movement, and the calls for the decolonization of the mind, are the recent manifestations of anger at the legacies of colonialism.

This special edition of the *International Journal of Social Economics* emerged from the first and second conferences on colonization at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS). The first conference focused upon the "The Prelude to Colonization," whilst the second took as its theme "After the Prelude: Decolonization, Revolution and Evolution." The conferences were supported by the then Director of JIAS, Peter Vale, who was immensely encouraging in entrusting myself and Ayesha Omar to stage a series of three, the third of which was "Language, Culture and Liberation." The current Director, Bongani Ngqulunga, has extended the series and I am grateful for his enthusiastic support. The Department of Political Science, University of Johannesburg, sponsored the series. I am grateful to Suzy Graham, the Head of Department, for her generosity. The National Research Foundation and the British Academy Chair in Political Theory sponsored the first conference and I am grateful to Lawrence Hamilton for his support. The papers in this special issue were work shopped at a conference in Cardiff in May 2019, and all of the contributors benefitted immensely from the comments, as well as from the financial sponsorship of the School of Law and Politics. In addition, I had the opportunity to present my own paper at Tariq Modood's Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, Bristol University. I am extremely grateful for the comments received on that occasion.

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