

Joseph Conrad Society (UK): Black Lives Matter

The Committee of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter campaign. We condemn the recent killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and all acts of violence against the Black community in the US and UK from micro-aggressions to physical violence and systemic, structural racism. We express our profound sympathy with the families, friends and communities who have suffered the irreplaceable loss of loved ones to racist violence.

Conrad was born and brought up in a colonised country. He experienced life as an immigrant to Britain. His first two novels, *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands*, gave voice to the peoples of the Malay archipelago in the face of British Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonialism, while one of his best-known works, 'Heart of Darkness', (alongside the lesser-known 'An Outpost of Progress') revealed what was happening in the Congo in 1900, before E.D. Morel set up his Congo Reform Society to expose and challenge King Leopold's exploitation of the Congo and the enslavement and slaughter of its peoples.

In his Author's Note to his first novel, Conrad asserted his credo: 'there is a bond between us and that humanity so far away ...I am content to sympathise with common mortals, no matter where they live; in houses or in tents, in the streets under a fog, or in the forests behind the dark line of dismal mangroves that fringe the vast solitude of the sea.'

As part of a global community of Conrad scholars, we are committed to the inclusion of Black and other global voices engaged with Conrad's works and to the illumination and challenging of racism and imperialism as they are presented and resisted in Conrad's texts.