



# Centre for International Development Seminar Series

## **‘Nobody could say our heart was not in the right place’ The Labour Party and overseas development at the end of empire**

This paper forms part of Dr Riley’s larger project on the attitude of the British Labour party to overseas aid and development from the 1920s to the 1970s. The project explores the evolution of overseas development within the context of British imperialism and decolonization. It examines how the Labour Party, but also the wider British government and British public, dealt with the transition from colonial development to overseas aid. This paper argues that, after the empire ended, ideas about ‘civilising missions’ and imperial burdens did not melt away; instead, they were absorbed into a wider dialogue about Britain’s (and Britons’) place in the world. The construction of a British identity within the international community as a giver of aid, within a network of international and transnational humanitarian organisations, has been fundamentally shaped by the on-going legacy of British colonialism and decolonisation. In turn, this international identity has shaped, and been shaped by, domestic British politics.

**Dr Charlotte Riley** is a Lecturer in Twentieth-Century British History at the University of Southampton. She is a historian of twentieth century Britain, especially the Labour Party, aid and development, and decolonization. She is also interested more broadly in the culture of British politics and society, especially issues around gender politics and the British state. She is currently working on a monograph exploring the Labour Party's aid and development policies from the 1920s to the 1970s. The book examines how Labour developed a specific political economy around overseas aid, which both informed and reflected Labour's wider attitudes to foreign policy and the development of its ideas about poverty, inequality and Britain's role in the wider world over this period. The book also explores the role of key actors within the Labour Party in developing these ideas, notably Arthur Creech Jones, Barbara Castle and Judith Hart.

**Venue: Sandyford 303 Time: 23rd January 2019, 4–6pm**

**Please contact Hilary Francis with any queries ([hilary.francis@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:hilary.francis@northumbria.ac.uk))**