

II.G.17

The Other Side of Modernity

Is the Idea of the Commonwealth still going strong? – Den Niedergang des Empire nachvollziehen

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Im Commonwealth werden Stimmen lauter, die Reparationen und eine Loslösung von London fordern. Seit Colstons Statue in Bristol (2020) vom Sockel gerissen wurde, sind die Bilder der Sklavenhändler und die Profiteure des Empire zum Abschuss freigegeben. Mittels der vorliegenden Materialien blicken wir zurück auf geschichtliche Angelpunkte und versuchen den Sinneswandel bis hin zur Gegenwart zu ergreifen.

KOMPETENZPROFIL

Klassenstufe: 10–13

Dauer: 10–12 Unterrichtsstunden

Kompetenzen: 1. Leseverstehen: unterschiedliche Texte verstehen; 2. Hörverstehen; Hörsehverstehen: Videos und Bildmaterial verstehen, einordnen, analysieren; 3. Schreibkompetenz: Aufgaben zu Texten und Bildern bearbeiten und Texte erstellen

Thematische Bereiche: Großbritanniens koloniale Vergangenheit, Postkolonialismus, Monarchie, Gesellschaft

Medien: Texte, Bilder, Videos, interaktive Übungen (LearningApps)

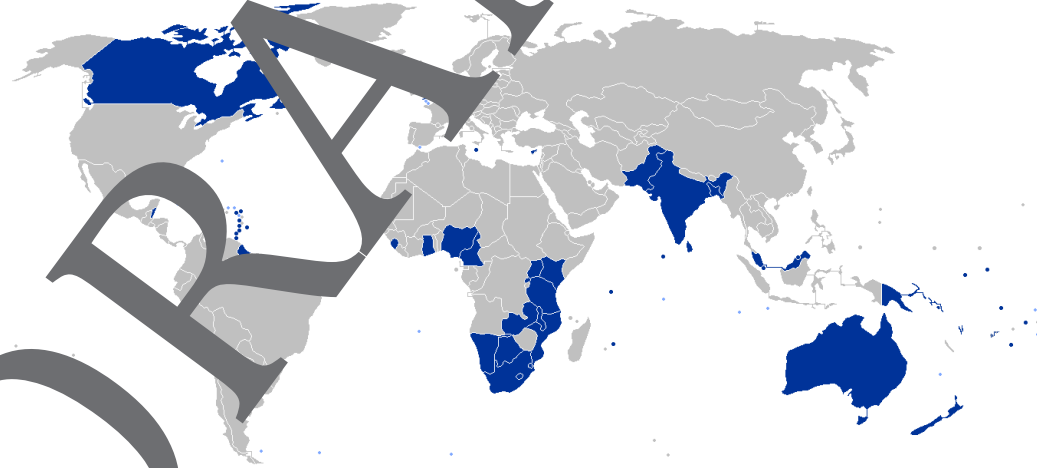
M 1

Picture Stimulus – Das britische Empire und seine Merkmale



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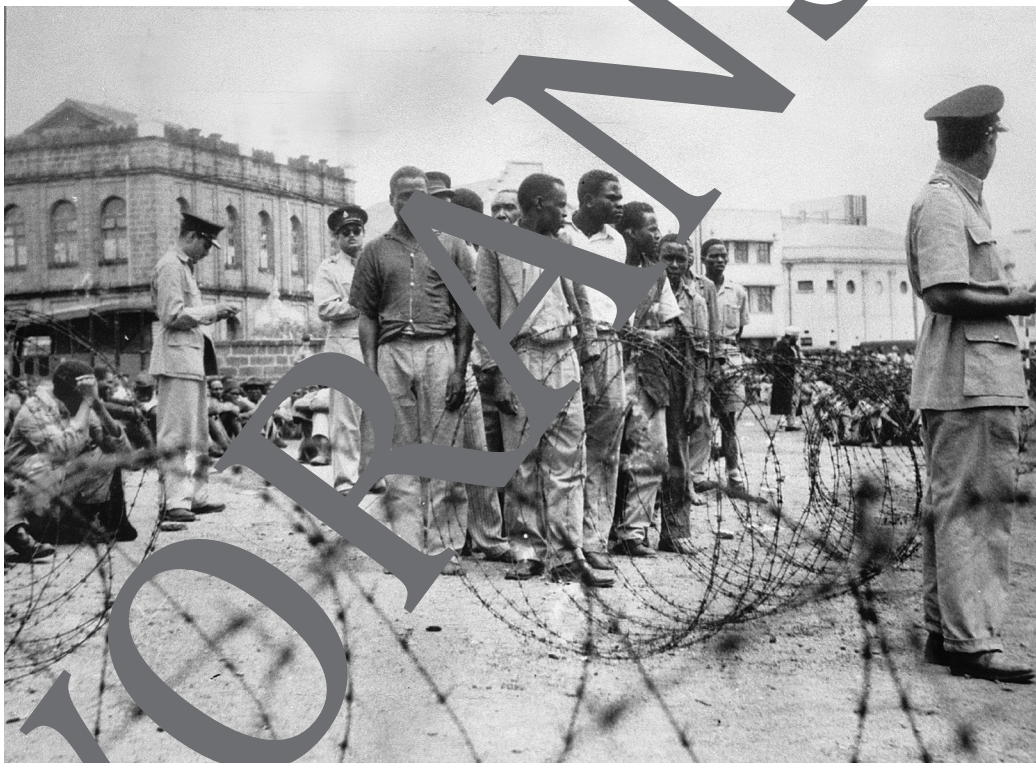
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Tasks

1. Look at the pictures with a partner:
 - a) Discuss the images and guess what they show.
 - b) What are the differences between the first map and second map.
 - c) Go online and find out about the history of the island.
2. Prepare a short statement about your findings to be delivered in class.



Working with a video on the British Empire

M 2

How the British Empire and Commonwealth have changed over the years

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-A8heJvHZQ> (1:42 Min.) CBS News 2022

Info

Queen Elizabeth II, born in 1926, died in 2022, became the longest reigning monarch (1952–2022). Her son ascended the throne and became **Charles III**, born in 1948.

(to) ascend the throne: Thron besteigen – **territory:** area, region – **sovereign:** Herrscher – **empire:** Reich, Imperium – **commonwealth:** Gemeinwesen, Nationengemeinschaft – **overseas territories:** Überseegebiete – **(to) have loyalty:** Loyalität bewahren, treu sein – **inhabited:** bewohnt – **(to) shrink:** (to) be reduced – **(to) consider:** (to) think about – **primarily:** hauptsächlich – **what is made up:** bestehen aus – **without these ties:** ohne diese Verbindungen – **(to) join:** beitreten – **accounting:** here Abrechnung

Tasks

1. Study the vocabulary and information then watch the video.
2. Watch the video again, then do the following LearningApp exercise. You have to match the pairs.

<https://learningapps.org/display?v=ppomxzc1n23>

3. Watch the video again and answer the following questions:

a) Why is Elizabeth called “the longest reigning monarch”?

b) Is King Charles’s empire as big as his mother’s?

c) What happened to the British colonies and territories?

d) Is the Commonwealth of Nations the same as the Commonwealth?

e) What do you know about the Commonwealth of Nations?

f) Why will the number of 28 nations probably shrink?

g) Why does Charles III have to face a difficult job?



4. Watch the video again without subtitles and complete the sentences below:

- Tanya Rovero introduces the spectators _____
- The first map presents _____ with _____
- When Elizabeth ascended to the throne in _____ there were more than _____ colonies.
- Now there are less countries in the Commonwealth and the number _____ because _____
- Now there is the Commonwealth of Nations which is _____
- This association of nations has the aim _____

4. Watch the video again without subtitles and complete the sentences below:

a)	Tanya Rovero introduces the spectators _____
b)	The first map presents _____ with _____
c)	When Elizabeth ascended to the throne in _____ there were more than _____ colonies.
d)	Now there are less countries in the Commonwealth and the number _____ because _____
e)	Now there is the Commonwealth of Nations which is _____
f)	This association of nations has the aim _____

5. Below this video on YouTube you will find a lot of comments. Among them you can read the following one by PD55:

"Where is the "common wealth"? I only see one guy wearing a golden crown."

Together with your partner, discuss this entry and write an answer, in which you explain its meaning and comment on it. (tip: be aware of the spelling)

6. Imagine being on an exchange and staying with your American penfriend's family and watching the evening news. Later your penfriend's younger sister (10 years) asks you to explain to her what the "British Empire" is, which came up in the news. Think up an easy explanation – against the background of the video – and tell her more about it.



‘Not my king’ – Charles III’s coronation draws criticism in former colonies

M 3

The royal event will feature soldiers carrying flags from former British colonies, but for many in the Commonwealth, the occasion highlights¹ the oppression² and colonialism of the past.



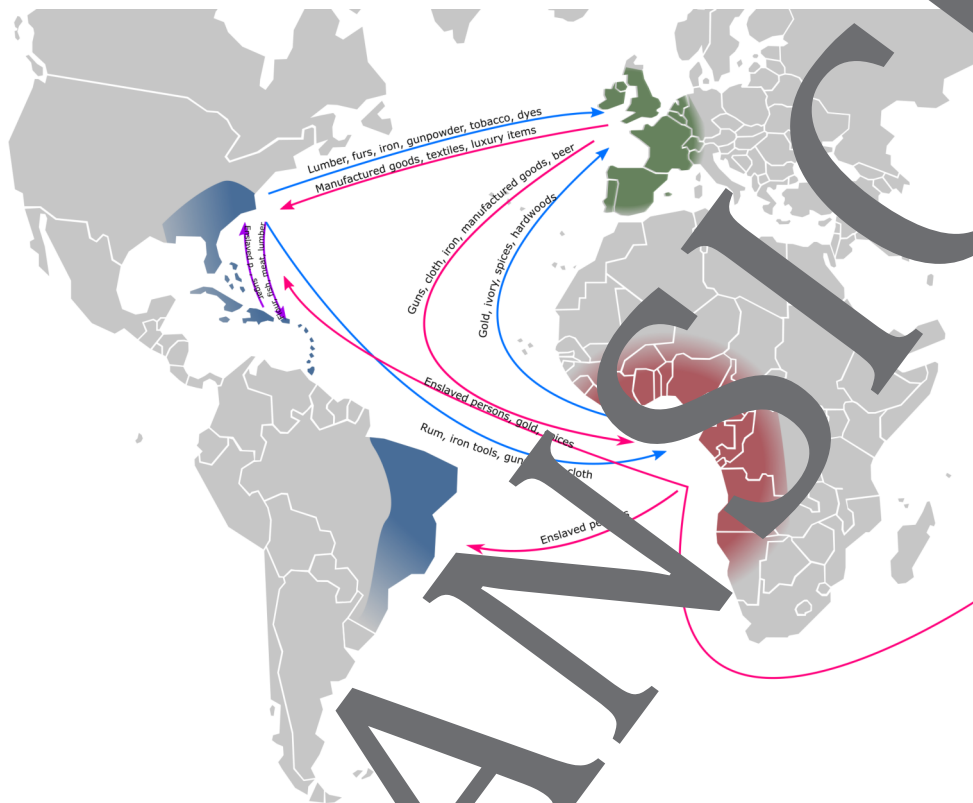
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When King Charles III is crowned on Saturday, soldiers carrying flags from the Bahamas, South Africa, Tuvalu and beyond will march alongside British troops in a spectacular military procession in honour of the monarch. For some, the event will affirm³ the ties that bind Britain and its former colonies. But for many others in the Commonwealth, a group of nations mostly made up of⁴ places once claimed⁵ by the British Empire, Charles’ coronation is seen with apathy⁶ at best. In those countries, the first crowning of a British monarch in 70 years is an occasion to reflect on oppression and colonialism’s bloody past. The displays⁷ of pageantry⁸ in London will jar⁹ especially with growing calls in the Caribbean to sever¹⁰ all ties with the monarchy.

“Interest in royalty has waned¹¹ since more Jamaicans are waking¹² to the reality that the survivors of colonialism and the holocaust¹³ of slavery¹⁴ are yet to receive reparatory¹⁵ justice.” said the Rev. Ian Major-Campbell, an Anglican priest in the Jamaican capital, Kingston. (...) As British sovereign¹⁶, Charles is also head of state of 14 other countries, though the role is largely ceremonial¹⁷. These realms¹⁸, which include Australia, Canada, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, represent a minority of the Commonwealth nations: most of the 56 members are republics, even if some still sport¹⁹ the Union Jack²⁰ on their flags. Barbados was the most recent Commonwealth country to remove the British monarch as head of state, replacing Charles’ mother, Queen Elizabeth II, with an elected president in 2021. The decision spurred²¹ similar Republican movements in neighbouring Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize.

The transatlantic slave trade

Britain's transatlantic slave trade spanned¹ three centuries, reaching its height in the 18th century. Rebellions and resistance by enslaved² Africans, and the abolition³ movement in Britain, led to Acts of Parliament⁴ that abolished⁵ the trade in 1807 and enslaved labour in the colonies from 1833. The Parliamentary Art Collection holds many artworks⁶ and artifacts depicting⁸ this time, and through them we can see how Parliament acted – first supporting slavery and the trade, and later abolishing it.



The height of the slave trade

The British involvement⁹ in the transatlantic slave trade began in 1562, and by the 1730s Britain was the world's biggest slave trading nation. The triangular route from Europe to Africa, to the Americas, and back to Europe was highly lucrative¹⁰. London was the financial heart of the system, and ships from Liverpool, London and Bristol dominated¹¹ the slave routes, supported by Glasgow and Manchester.

On the first leg¹², ships leaving Britain were filled with goods, which were exchanged for enslaved Africans on the African coast. These people were then transported across the Atlantic to be used as slaves to work on plantations. British ships transported more than three million Africans solely to its Caribbean and north American colonies.

The same ships returned to Britain carrying 'slave grown'¹³ produce¹⁴, notably¹⁵ sugar, tobacco and cotton. The products were consumed¹⁶ in huge volumes in Britain. The slave trade benefited¹⁷ many parts of British life and its economy, from the businessmen, financiers and capitalists who ran and profited from the trade, to businesses, workers and consumers. The trade involved thousands of slave ships, tens of thousands of sailors¹⁸, and armies of British workers. The rewards¹⁹ of the transatlantic slave system were everywhere. From the

urban fabric²⁰ of slave ports²¹, to the grand²² homes of those made wealthy, to the jobs created in industrial cities, to the coffee and tobacco shops dotting²³ British cities. At first, few people raised moral or religious doubts about the slave trade and slavery.

Over many years, Parliament, with royal support and backing²⁵, had facilitated²⁶ the development of a large and growing enslaved African population in the British colonies. The slave trade generated immense wealth for plantation owners, financial backers and traders. Parliament passed more than a hundred acts supporting and protecting the slave trade. Many politicians and others had business interests in the plantations, slave-trading companies, and slave-produced commodities²⁷ such as cotton and sugar. These exotic commodities and the riches they created proved irresistible²⁸, and the slave trade continued to make Britain wealthier²⁹.

Source: <https://heritagecollections.parliament.uk/stories/the-transatlantic-slave-trade/>

1 (to) span: (to) stretch across – 2 enslaved: versklavt – 3 abolish: Abschaffung – 4 acts of Parliament: here: laws – 5 (to) abolish: (to) end a law – 6 network: Kundschaft – 7 artifact: product – 8 (to) depict: wiedergeben, beschreiben – 9 involvement: Beteiligung, Mitwirkung – 10 lucrative: profitable – 11 (to) dominate: (to) control – 12 leg: Beckenabschnitt, Kathete (triangle) – 13 slave grown: von Sklaven angepflanzt – 14 produce: here: products – 15 notably: especially – 16 (to) consume: (to) eat, (to) drink – 17 (to) benefit: (to) profit – 18 sailors: Matrosen – 19 rewards: recompense, Belohnung – 20 urban fabric: Stadtgebiet – 21 port: harbour – 22 grand: magnificent, splendid – 23 dotting: here: durchziehen – 24 doubt: Zweifel – 25 backing: Rückendeckung – 26 (to) facilitate: (to) make it easy, (to) allow – 27 commodities: Waren – 28 irresistible: unwiderstehlich – 29 wealthier: reicher

Tasks

1. Study the vocabulary, then read the text.
2. Read the text again, then do the interactive exercise <https://learningapps.org/d411122v=phadfuyqj23>
3. Read the text again, then study the text below, which is a kind of summary. Fill in the right words into the gaps.

This text is about Britain's role in the transatlantic _____, which lasted about 300 years. Because of _____ on the part of the African slaves, British Parliament _____ the slave trade and enslaved labour at the beginning of the _____. Thus it turns out that Parliament first supported slavery and its trade and later _____ it. In _____ Britain took part in the triangular _____ to Africa: Ships filled with goods left Britain. On their arrival in Africa those goods were _____ for African slaves who were taken to the Caribbean and the north _____. They were sold as labourers on the _____. Then the same ships transported produce from those plantations (such as sugar, _____) back to Europe. All the people involved in this triangular trade _____ greatly from it. Parliament passed many laws to _____ the slave trade. And it was only in 1807 that the trade _____ and enslaved labour was officially ended in 1833.





4. Do a “Round Robin” exercise on the Caribbean countries: **Jamaica, Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago** How are they doing nowadays?

You work in a group of four, each on one of the four former colonies. You go online and find out about the country’s present situation by filling in the grid below. Then find out about the question below. Then each of you is going to give a short account about your research (in your group/ in class) and have a discussion in plenary.

Country: Jamaica		
Capital		
Official language		
Main ethnic groups		
Main religion		
Government		
Monarch		
Governor-General		
Prime Minister		
Legislature		
Independence from UK		
Currency		

What struck you most about your country’s success after its independence?

Country: Bahamas		
Capital		
Official language		
Main ethnic groups		
Main religion		
Government		
Monarch		
Governor-General		
Prime Minister		
Legislature		
Independence from UK		
Currency		

What struck you most about your country’s success after its independence?

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