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CASE STUDY 1: LIVING IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE - THE BRITISH VIEW

Here are just a few of the views expressed about British rule in the 1800s:

'There has never been anything so great in the world's history as the British empire, so great an instrument for the good of humanity.' (Lord Curzon, British Viceroy of India, 1898-1905)

'English supremacy should last until the end of time, because it means universal freedom, universal liberty, emancipation from everything degrading.' (Alexander Mackenzie, Prime Minister of Canada, 1873-78)

'Without the empire we would be victims of world politics, pushed and bullied. Being part of the empire is both our sword and our shield.' (William Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, 1915-23)

The sources in this case study contain examples of the British viewpoint. Study them closely and see what impression they give you of life in the British empire.

[Background](#) | [Online Exhibition](#)

Create your own [Online Exhibition](#) about 'Living in the British empire', using the sources and [worksheet](#) provided. The [Background](#) will help with an introduction to the British view of empire.

Sources



[1. Newsreel film of British empire leaders, 1926](#)



[2. Poster: 'Empire Builders', 1927](#)



[3. Poster: 'Highways of Empire', 1927](#)



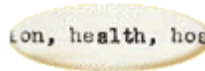
[4. Poster: 'Jungles Today are Gold Mines Tomorrow'](#)



[5. Poster: 'The Empire Shop, 1927](#)



[6. Poster: 'The Empire is Still in Building'](#)



[7. Comments on the British empire, 1938](#)

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SOURCE ONE

[Useful notes](#)

Newsreel clip (silent) showing leaders from all parts of the British empire gathered in London in 1926
(British Pathe: 646.10)

Modem

ISDN

Broadband

How to use this source

file size: 529KB

file size: 1.4MB

file size: 3.4MB



Running time: 1min 51secs

[help?](#) [get plugin](#)

Study this source carefully.

1 What impression does this source give of life in the British empire in terms of the following issues:

- the treatment of native peoples in the British empire?
- whether native people were involved in running their own countries?
- the benefits of economic development in the empire?
- the British giving independence to some countries in the empire?

2 Explain whether you think this source gives a positive or negative view of the empire.

3 Are you going to use this source in your own online exhibition?

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SOURCE TWO

[Useful notes](#)

A British poster from 1927 called 'Empire Builders'
(PRO ref: CO 956/529)



R.L.S. Issued by The Empire Marketing Board

Empire Builders.

Issued by W.M. Thompson & Co. Ltd. for The Empire M.B. - 1927

How to use this source

Study this source carefully.

1 What impression does this source give of life in the British empire in terms of the following issues:

- the benefits of economic development in the empire?
- the economic benefits of the empire to Britain?
- the migration of British people to different parts of the empire?

2 Explain whether you think this source gives a positive or negative view of the empire.

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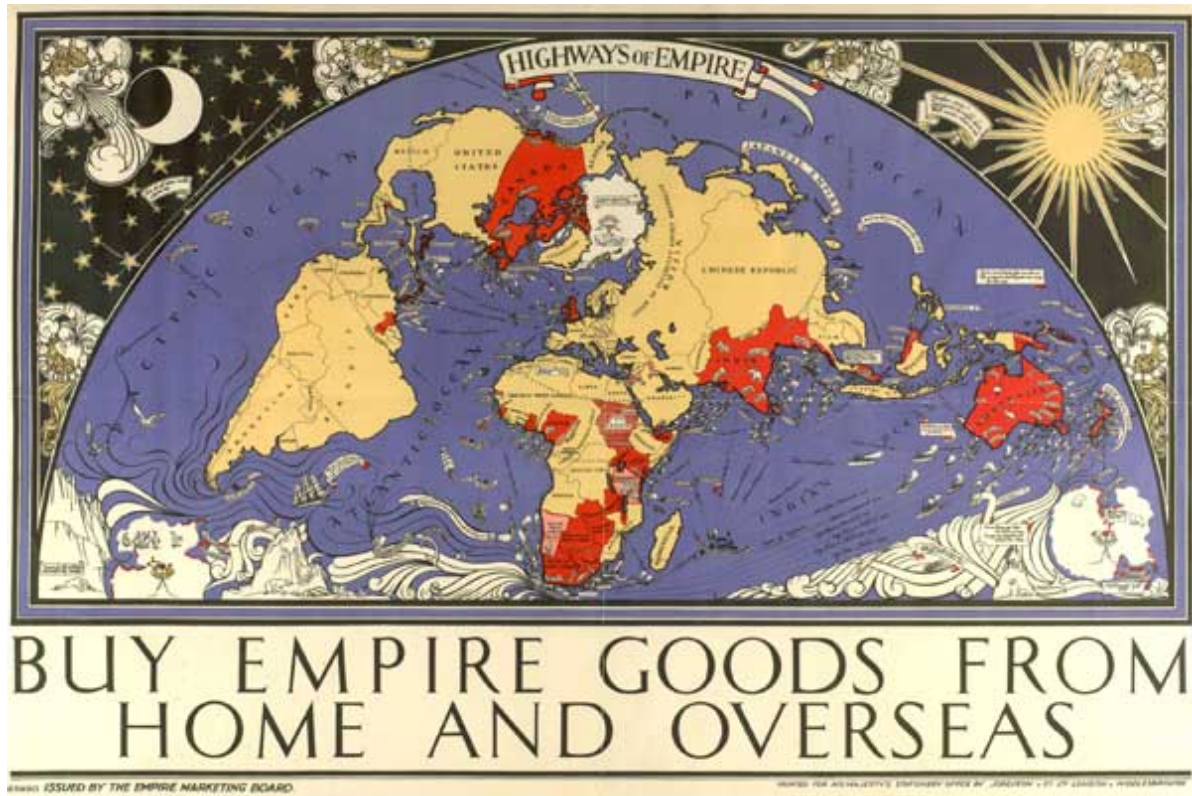
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SOURCE THREE

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

A British poster from 1927 called 'Highways of Empire'
(PRO ref: CO 956/537)



How to use this source

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1 What impression does this source give of life in the British empire in terms of the following issues:

- the benefits of economic development in the empire?
- the economic benefits of the empire to Britain?
- the migration of British people to different parts of the empire?

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SOURCE FOUR

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

A British poster from 1927 called 'Jungles Today Are Gold Mines Tomorrow'
(PRO ref: CO 956/501)



How to use this source

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1 What impression does this source give of life in the British empire in terms of the following issues:

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- whether native people were involved in running their own countries?
- the benefits of economic development in the empire?
- the economic benefits of the empire to Britain?

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SOURCE FIVE

[Useful notes](#)

A British poster from 1927 called 'The Empire Shop'
(PRO ref: CO 956/426)



How to use this source

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1 What impression does this source give of life in the British empire in terms of the following issues:

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- the economic benefits of the empire to Britain?

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SOURCE SIX

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)

A British poster from 1930 called 'The Empire is Still in Building'
(CO 956/223, CO 956/227)



6a



6b



How to use this source

Study this source carefully.

1 What impression does this source give of life in the British empire in terms of the following issues:

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- whether native people were involved in running their own countries?
- the British giving independence to some countries in the empire?
- the migration of British people to different parts of the empire?

2 Explain whether you think this source gives a positive or negative view of the empire.

3 Are you going to use this source in your own [online exhibition](#)?

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Source 6a

A British poster from 1930 called 'The Empire is Still in Building'
(CO 956/223, CO 956/227)





Source 6b

A British poster from 1930 called 'The Empire is Still in Building'
(CO 956/223, CO 956/227)



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SOURCE SEVEN

[Transcript](#) | [Useful notes](#)Letter written in 1938 commenting on the work of the British empire
(PRO ref: CO 852/188/5)

on, health, hos

propaganda

7a

[7b](#)

2nd November 1938.

My dear Malcolm MacDonald,

I know how fearfully busy you are with Palestine and Pirow, but there is just one point to which I wish you would give your attention immediately. Everybody tells me that the Colonial exhibit at Glasgow Exhibition was lamentable, being a purely commercial display. It is vital that the equivalent exhibit at the New York World Fair next year should in the main be an exhibit of the humanitarian and social services aspect of our Colonial Empire. It is all the more vital in view of the fact that the Colonial question may well be uppermost by then, that there is a constant prejudice in the American mind against British "Imperialism" and ^{that exhibition} this affords a marvellous opportunity of bringing home to the Americans that Britain is doing in Africa the kind of work on which they pride themselves on having done in the Philippines, etc., e.g. education, health, hospitals, self-government - all the things, in fact, which they will take for granted that Hitler won't do.

I understand there is a Committee dealing with this whose Chairman is Sir Harry Lindsay. The exhibit as planned so far, so I am informed, is going to be a purely commercial exhibit with no reference to the aspect of Colonial administration to which I have referred. I know that you have not time to look

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- the treatment of native peoples in the British empire?
- whether native people were involved in running their own countries?
- the British giving independence to some countries in the empire?
- the migration of British people to different parts of the empire?
- the attitudes of Americans towards the British empire?

2 Explain whether you think this source gives a positive or negative view of the empire.

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Source 7a

Letter written in 1938 commenting on the work of the British empire
(PRO ref: CO 852/188/5)

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Source 7b

Letter written in 1938 commenting on the work of the British empire
(PRO ref: CO 852/188/5)

into this matter yourself, but could you not give instructions that before any final decisions are reached Lord Hailey should be consulted^y or added to the Committee? The African Survey appears next Tuesday. He is full of the subject from the right point of view and if, under your authority, the Committee is instructed to consult him, it may still be possible to make the Colonial Exhibit at New York a really valuable piece of propaganda for the British Empire at a very critical moment.

Lord Hailey will be back from Geneva towards the end of next week.

Yours sincerely,