

Understanding the Modern World: Essential Questions



Class #2, July 15: **What is the legacy of British Empire?**

- Why did it rise?
- Why did it decline?
- What is its legacy?
- How does the history of British Empire help us understand the modern world?

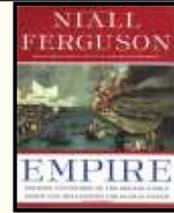
Joe Coffey
joe Coffey@outlook.com
coffeynotes.com



What is the legacy of British Empire?

- Thanks for your interest in this second class in our series on "Understanding the Modern World"
- This class focuses on the world's largest empire and its continuing legacy today
- The British empire rose primarily during a period of rapid global progress during the 19th century- especially after end of Napoleonic Wars and the expansion of the Industrial Revolution
- It declined after the devastating WWI, Great Depression and WW II
- Although the UK has shrunk to 1% from the British Empire's 24% of world population, its legacy is evident in almost every country in the world and it still remains a top 10 world power
- Thus, understanding the history of the British Empire is important to understanding the modern world

Why should we care about the history of the British Empire?



- Largest in history – influenced all continents
- U.S. is heir to Empire - both its offspring in colonial era and its post WW II successor today
- Empire remains issue today- should U.S. shed or shoulder the Imperial load it inherited?
- Every day our life is affected by products & ideas that originated in UK ranging from the sublime (liberty) to the mundane (flush toilet)

" Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. "

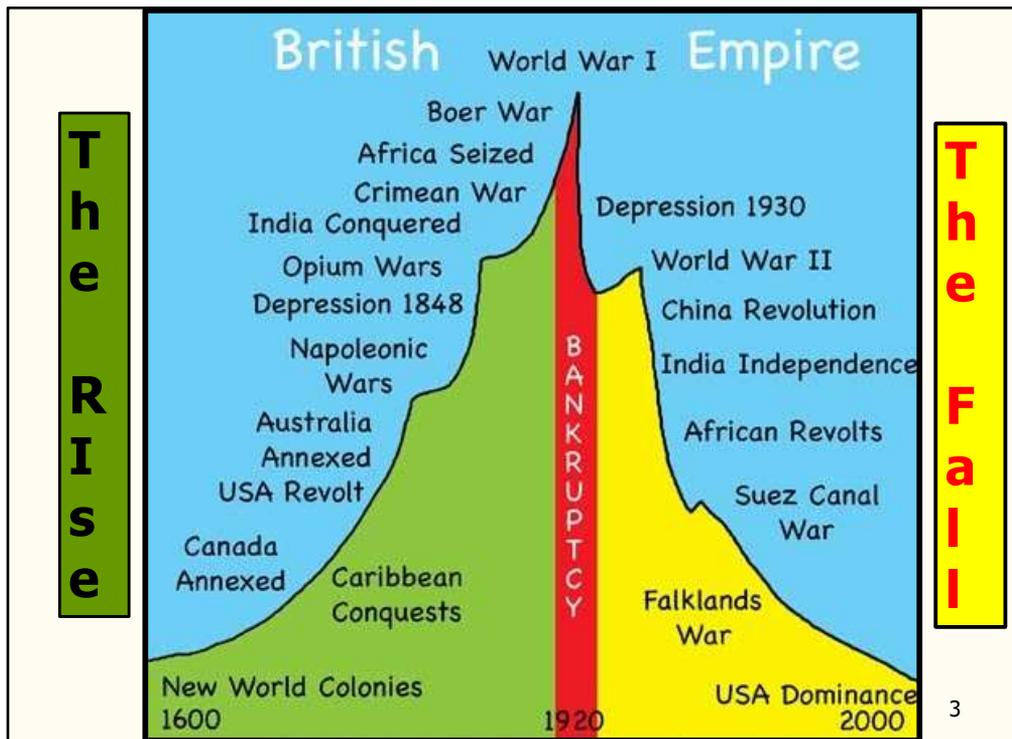
John Maynard Keynes "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" (1936)

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Why should we care about the history of the British Empire?

- U.S. was a product of British empire – 1st successful revolt against British imperial rule
- U.S. today still reflects much of colonial empire -majority of white settlers were from British Isles
- British Empire - the precedent for global power currently wielded by the U.S.
- U.S. is heir to Empire - both its offspring in colonial era and its successor today
- Key question today-should the United States seek to shed or shoulder the Imperial load it is inherited

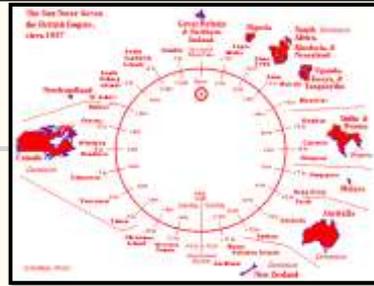
Source: Niall Ferguson, *Empire – The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, p XII



Timeline of British Empire

- 1588: English defeat Spanish Armada proving its sea power
- 1600: East India Company founded
- 1607: First permanent English settlement in Virginia
- 1757: Dominant power in India
- 1805: Nelson victory at Trafalgar secures naval supremacy over France
- 1807: British abolish their trans-Atlantic slave trade
- 1815-1914: Pax Britannica - global hegemon and policeman
- 1833: Slavery abolished in Empire
- 1839-58: Opium Wars force China to allow opium from British India
- 1851: Great Exhibition, British recognized as "workshop of the world"
- 1884-85: Berlin Conference launches scramble for Africa
- 1914-39: Leads WW I & II against Germany
- 1920: Empire peaks at 1/4 world population, but suffering economically
- 1947: India independence and partition into Pakistan
- 1957-68: Decolonization of Sub-Saharan Africa
- 1997: Hong Kong handed back to China - end of British Empire

Sun never set on British Empire



- England's ventures into Indian Ocean followed Portugal
- In 18th century, England and France struggled to seize the other's overseas colonies in America
- Sea superiority over France gave stronger position
- Britain's loss of its American colonies by 1783 was a jarring to their power and prestige but not mortal
- Consolidated power over India and other colonies in 19th century and undertook to modernize and Christianize them



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Sun never set on British Empire

- England's ventures into Indian Ocean followed Portugal for spice trade
- In 18th-century wars, England and France struggled to seize each other's overseas colonies in America.
- Sea superiority over France gave stronger colonial position
- Unforeseen consequence of British conquest of Canada - American colonists felt less need of protection from French
- Britain's loss of its American colonies by 1783 was a jarring reversal to their power and prestige but did not prove to be a mortal wound.
- Consolidated power over India and other colonies in 19th century and undertook to modernize and Christianize them

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

Challenge to Spain in Americas



- English envied Spain and Portugal's empires in Americas and their riches
- Sir Francis Drake (1540-96), with Queen's approval, preyed on Spaniards
- 1588 defeat of Spanish Armada emboldened to seek New World colonies
- 1607 first permanent English settlement in Virginia, but disappointed no precious metals
- By early 1600s, sailing the world, but minimal colonies



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Challenge to Spain in Americas

- English envied Spain and Portugal's empires in Americas and their silver and gold
- Sir Francis Drake (1540-96), with Queen's approval, preyed on Spaniards
- Defeat of Spanish Armada in 1588 demonstrated importance of sea power and emboldened England to seek New World colonies
- In 1607, first permanent English settlement in Virginia
- Settlers disappointed not to discover precious metals, but soon realized growing tobacco for export was almost as lucrative
- By early 1600s, English were sailing the world, even though colonial possessions were still minuscule

Infamous British triangular trade



- British triangular trade in slaves, sugar and tobacco, and finished goods
- By 1650s, built up a merchant navy
- Spanish imperial power declined, Britain challenged and seized Jamaica in 1655
- Slave trading was highly profitable - in 17th century few had any moral qualms
- Sugar trade from West Indies more important than trade from Virginia



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African Slavery and West Indies

- Virginia tobacco planters & West Indian sugar planters began to import slaves
- British developed a triangular trade in slaves, sugar and tobacco, and finished goods
- By 1650s, built up a merchant navy
- Spanish imperial power declined, and Britain challenged and seized Jamaica in 1655
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Conquest of India



- Clive's 1757 triumph at Plassey got British control
- British East India Co. (EIC) at its peak in early 1800s, had an army of 250,000 troops and ruled 1/5th world
- By 1850s, Britain dominated India
- Anglo-French (Seven Years) Wars of 1850s – the 1st world war - sealed British edging out France in India, North America, and Caribbean



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Conquest of India

- Robert Clive's triumph at Battle of Plassey in 1757, was foundation for British control
- Englishmen exploited India often at the expense of the Indians
- Clive's exploits in late 1750s transformed EIC into most powerful political force in India
- By 1850s, Britain dominated India and expanded into Burma
- Anglo-French Wars of 1850s were played out in India as well as Europe, North America, and Caribbean

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

British oust
French and
Canada
becomes
Colony, 1759



- Seven Years' War (1756–63) Britain overpowered French
- In 1759, Canada became British by Treaty of Paris
- To pay off its war debts, however, British imposed Stamp Act - immortalized by Boston Tea Party, Dec 16,1773

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British oust French and Canada becomes Colony, 1759

- During Seven Years' War (or French & Indian War) (1756–1763), Britain overpowered French in India and North America
- In 1759, British defeated French and Canada became British possession by the Treaty of Paris.
- To pay off its heavy war debts, however, British imposed new taxes at home and American colonies
- Stamp Act sparked colonial resentment immortalized by Boston Tea Party Dec 16,1773

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

France avenged British by aiding American Independence



- Once France entered War for Independence, America became secondary - British needed to defend its homeland
- French blockade of Chesapeake isolated Cornwallis and forced his surrender at Yorktown in 1781
- Britain, still at war with France, gave generous terms to new U.S. in a later Treaty of Paris (1783)

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France avenged British in American Revolution

- American colonists in 1776 declared independence
- France sought to embarrass Britain and avenge losses in French and Indian War, joined on side of American revolutionaries
- As soon as France entered war, America became secondary - British needed to defend its homeland
- French blockade of Chesapeake Bay isolated General Cornwallis and forced him to surrender at Yorktown in 1781.
- Britain, still at war with France, gave generous territorial terms to new U.S. in a later Treaty of Paris (Sep 3, 1783)

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

Napoleon challenges but falls to British Empire



- Defeat in America did not destroy or impoverish British
- By 1793 British more concerned with French Revolution and rise of Napoleon
- British domination of sea offset France's domination of Continent, enabling to acquire French, Spanish and Dutch, colonies in Caribbean
- Superiority at sea, banking and commerce led to British victory in 1815 over Napoleon at Waterloo



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Napoleon challenges the Empire

- Defeat in America did not destroy or impoverish British Empire
- By 1793 British were much more concerned with French Revolution and rise of Napoleon
- British domination of sea offset France's domination of Continent, enabling to acquire French, Spanish and Dutch, colonies in Caribbean
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Africa and abolition of slave trade and slavery

- 1833 abolished slavery
- 1842 took Natal for its location on Indian Ocean
- Discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1868 provoked renewed conflict between Brits, Boers, and Zulus
- British endured embarrassing defeat by Boers in 1881

After discovery of gold and diamonds, for a while South Africa had highest GDP/capita in world!



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Africa and abolition of slave trade and slavery

- British abolished slavery in empire in 1833, for a variety of reasons including change in economic interest, resistance of the enslaved, parliamentary reform, and abolition campaigns.
- Although focused on the West, slave trade to the east from East Africa, particularly Zanzibar, over the centuries was 17 million, more than taken to the West
- Then, tensions with Dutch (or Boer) settlers intensified
- Boers took Great Trek into interior
- Britain took control of Natal in 1842 for its strategic significance on Indian Ocean but recognized Boer republics
- Discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1868 provoked renewed conflict between Brits, Boers, and Zulus
- British endured embarrassing defeat by Boers in 1881
- After discovery of gold and diamonds, for a while South Africa had highest GDP/capita in world!

2009

China's aloofness and Opium Wars



- 1793, Lord Macartney rebuffed by Emperor “we have all things”
- 1839 prohibited import of opium
- 1840s, closed China allowed British trade only at Canton
- In Opium Wars, British took Hong Kong, forced open new ports, patrolled and paved the way for others
- Although Britain never ruled China, it dominated Chinese trade until end of 19th century

Opium wars began the “Century of Humiliation” (1839-1949), that explains much of present-day China’s distrust of the West.

China and Opium Wars

- 1793, Lord Macartney rebuffed by Chinese Emperor “we have all things”
- In 1840s, closed China allowed British ships to trade only at Canton
- In 1839 China prohibited British import of opium
- In Opium Wars, British forced China to give Hong Kong to Britain, open new ports to trade, and patrol Chinese waters to suppress piracy
- Although Britain never ruled China, it dominated Chinese trade until end of 19th century
- Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) and decline of emperor’s power made China vulnerable to further exploitation

Opium wars began the “Century of Humiliation” (1839-1949), still sore spot in China today.

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

After Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Britain was most powerful nation



- It was also in midst of world's first industrial revolution
- Pioneered in banking, national finance, and industrialization
- Bank of England's low-interest loans gave advantage in wars against France
- Capital generated in India and West Indies was invested in industry

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After Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Britain was most powerful nation

- It was also in midst of world's first industrial revolution
- Pioneered in banking, national finance, and industrialization, while its political system gradually adapted to new realities.
- Bank of England's low-interest loans gave advantage in wars against France
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Independence of the “White” Colonies

- Canada (1763), Australia (1788) & New Zealand (1840) colonies prospered
- Canada stayed loyal during American Independence
- Eventually, Canadians also disliked being governed without adequate representation
- In 1839, gave greater self-government for Canadians and provinces became united in 1867
- Britain did same in Australia (1901), New Zealand (1907), and South Africa (1934)



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How Canada became a nation

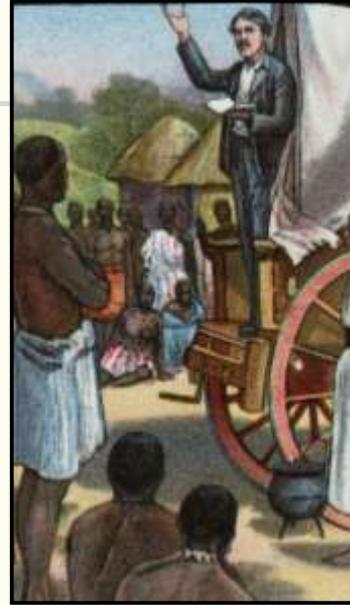
- White settler colonies of Canada (1763), Australia (1788), & New Zealand (1840) prospered from of farm exports and minerals
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Exploration and Settlement of Africa

- In 1850s, British explored Africa, famously by Livingstone
- Despite malaria, Europe scrambled to conquer, especially after discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa
- African rulers who opposed were annihilated by British rifles, machine guns, and artillery

“Whatever happens, we have got, the Maxim, and they have not”



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Exploration and Settlement of Africa

- In 1850s, British explored Africa, famously by Livingstone and Stanley
- Despite tropical Africa's malaria, Europe scrambled to conquer in late 19th century, especially after discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa
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Post WW I British Empire gains and challenges



- Wilson's 14 Points included self-determination, end to colonial empires, and universal democracy
- Britain and France, in contrast, wanted to seize colonies from their vanquished enemies
- Britain took Germany's African colonies and along with France took Ottoman's in Middle East
- British empire larger, but jeopardized by opposition Labour Party at home and U.S. and Russia

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Post WWI British Empire gains and challenges

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- Britain and France, by contrast, wanted to seize colonies from their vanquished enemies
- Britain took Germany's African colonies and along with France took Ottoman's in Middle East
- British empire appeared larger, but WWI threatened
- Rise of Labour Party put future of empire in jeopardy
- After 1917, British Empire opposed by U.S. and Russia

British India between World Wars

Gandhi with Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1944



- After 1919, Gandhi intensified quest for independence (millions of Indian troops served abroad in WWI)
- British tiptoed toward Indian self-government
- India Act of 1935 created a federation of Indian provinces, each with its own parliament
- Predominantly Hindu Congress Party won most of elections, intensifying Muslims' fears
- Muhammad Jinnah, leader of Muslims, resolved Muslims should have a country of their own - Pakistan

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British India between World Wars

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- British tiptoed toward Indian self-government, which had conceded in principle in WW I
- India Act of 1935 created a federation of Indian provinces, each with its own parliament
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- Muhammad Jinnah, leader of Muslims, resolved Muslims should have a country of their own - Pakistan –both West and East Pakistan (Bangladesh)

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

British in WW II



- As Nazism intensified, Churchill determined to prevail and declared war on same day as France, September 3, 1939
- Churchill regarded colonies essential (2.5 mil. India troops, largest volunteer army in history served on 3 continents)
- He urged Roosevelt to become involved
- Roosevelt, while sympathetic, was also determined not to preserve British Empire
- Japan attacked Pearl Harbor & U.S. entered WW II

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World War II- British alone

- As Nazism intensified, Churchill determined to prevail and declared war on Germany the same day as France on September 3, 1939, two days after Germany invaded Poland
- Churchill regarded colonies as essential to Britain
- He also urged Roosevelt to become involved
- Roosevelt, while sympathetic, was also determined not to preserve British Empire
- When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, one day later US declared war on Japan and four days later on Germany
- WW II brought declarations of loyalty from colonies
- But success of Japan in World War II damaged empire's invincible reputation

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

Wars weakened British



- WW I & WW II weakened and forced it to give way to new superpowers – U.S. , Germany & Russia
- Independence - movement leaders like Gandhi in India exploited Britons' troubled consciences
- Roosevelt and Stalin negotiated over Churchill's head the dismantling of British Empire
- By 1945, Britain was clearly weaker with only one half the GDP of the U.S. and no longer world hegemon



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Wars weakened British

- WW I & WW II weakened and forced it to give way to new superpowers – U.S. , Germany & Russia
- After World War I, even before the Great Depression, the British was in serious economic situation due to war expenses and economic recession
- Independence-movement leaders like Gandhi in India exploited Britons' troubled consciences
- Roosevelt and Stalin negotiated over Churchill's head the dismantling of British Empire
- By 1945, Britain was clearly weaker with only one half the GDP of the U.S. and no longer the world hegemon

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By end WW II, Britain exhausted, Churchill ousted, and US ascendant

The Truman Doctrine

The Truman Doctrine stated that the USA would lend aid to any country not wishing to be suppressed by the political ideals (communism) of any other country.



- New British PM Clement Attlee: Britain could no longer accept worldwide responsibilities and would dismantle colonial empire
- Truman, alarmed Britain could no longer maintain world security, took them over, first in Greece – thus Empire's global role passed to U.S.
- **Wasn't internal resistance that ended the empire so much as changing ideas, devastating impact of two world wars, and ascendancy of the US and Russia**

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By end WW II, Britain exhausted, and Churchill ousted

- New PM, Clement Attlee said Britain could no longer accept worldwide responsibilities and would dismantle colonial empire
- Truman, alarmed Britain could no longer maintain world security, took them over, first in Greece and Turkey
- Cold War considerations, even more than fate of empire, dominated British foreign policy
- **It was not internal resistance that ended the empire so much as changing ideas and devastating impact of two world wars**

India's quick independence, mass chaos and partition



- British gave India independence (too) quickly
- Nehru wanted Indian unity, but Ali Jinnah separate Pakistan for Muslims
- On Aug 15, '47, millions were in "wrong" place
 - 10 million fled and sectarian massacres killed 1/2 million
 - *Thus, the lasting bitterness between India and Pakistan*

After two centuries of British rule, India's share global GDP decreased six-fold, British massacred unarmed protesters, entrenched racism, and caused starvation of millions. Every supposed imperial "gift" was designed in Britain's interests alone. Industrial Revolution was founded on India's deindustrialization.— Dr Shashi Tharoor

India's quick independence, mass chaos and partition

- British once decided gave India independence (too) quickly
- Nehru hoped to retain Indian unity, but his Congress Party Hindu character made that unlikely
- Ali Jinnah determined for a separate Pakistan for Muslims
- India's Parliament agreed to partition in May 1947
- Millions were in "wrong" place and became refugees
- Aug 15, 1947, 1st day of independence - chaos & violence
 - 10 million fled and Sectarian massacres killed 1/2 million
 - Creating lasting bitterness between India and Pakistan
- India Independent but retains resentment: "After two centuries of British rule, India's share global GDP decreased six-fold, British massacred unarmed protesters, entrenched racism, and caused starvation of millions. Every supposed imperial "gift" was designed in Britain's interests alone. Industrial Revolution was founded on India's deindustrialization.— Dr Shashi Tharoor

Britain's failure in Israel and Suez – conflict continues

- In 1948, Britain attempted to partition Israel & Palestine under UN plan
- British forces suffered a humiliating defeat in 1947-8 Civil War Jews vs Arabs
- In 1956, Egypt's ruler Nasser seized Suez Canal
- Britain, France, and Israel drew up a secret plan to recapture canal
- But furious Pres. Eisenhower, made British stop – showing it no longer was the world power



Thus the Empire's failure has been followed by long conflict of Arabs vs. Jews

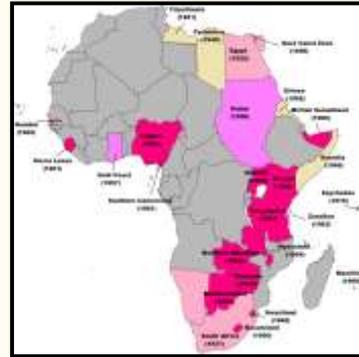
Failure in Israel and Suez showed Britain no longer a world power

- Holocaust created sympathy for Jews
- In 1948, Britain attempted to partition Israel & Palestine
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- In 1956, Egypt's ruler Nasser seized Suez Canal
- Britain, France, and Israel drew up a secret plan to recapture canal
- But President Eisenhower, furious at not being notified, ordered British to stop
- Britain stopped – showing it was no longer world power

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009



Decolonization of Africa



- After WW II, British tried to improve colonies', but few prospered
 - After Suez Crisis of 1956, British departed principal African colonies 1957-68
 - Many weak democracies collapsed to strongmen
 - 1993, in South Africa, Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk transitioned to democracy and Nobelists
- Thus, tragedy in Zimbabwe and triumph in South Africa are linked to the British Empire

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Decolonization of Africa

- After WW II, British tried to strengthen colonies', but few prospered
- After Suez Crisis of 1956, British shifted to offering early independence
- British departed all principal African colonies during 1957-68
- Many of weak democracies collapsed, leaving charismatic strongmen in charge
- Eventually in 1980, Mugabe took power in Rhodesia and renamed it Zimbabwe and evolved into a disastrous dictator
- In South Africa, long imprisoned, Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk made transition to democracy in 1993 and were co-Nobel Peace Prize winners

Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009

Legacies of British Empire



- English language
- English forms of land tenure
- Scottish and English banking system
- Common law
- Protestantism
- Limited or “night watchman” state
- Representative assemblies
- Idea of liberty
- Cultural influences: Shakespeare, Adam Smith, Beatles



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Legacies of British Empire

- English language
- English forms of land tenure
- Scottish and English banking system
- The common law
- Protestantism
- The limited or “night watchman” state
- Representative assemblies
- The idea of liberty
- Cultural influences: Shakespeare, Adam Smith, Beatles

Source: Niall Ferguson, *Empire – The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, p XXV

Epitaph of British Empire



- Historians disagree
 - Condemn for its greed, exploitation, racism, and hypocrisy
 - Commend for advancement of civilization – brought education, medicine, technology, and possibility of political stability to remote parts of world
- Whatever the judgment, its effects were immense
- How does British Empire compare to others?
 - Greater stability & humanity than Napoleon, Hitler, or Stalin
 - Pioneered abolition of slavery
 - Conceded self-government for all colonies

The sun ever sets ..., none wanted to become a colony again!

Walter Russell Meade, *WSJ*, July 7, 2020

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Epitaph of British Empire

- Historians disagree about British Empire
 - Condemn for its greed, exploitation, racism, and hypocrisy
 - Commend for advancement of civilization
 - Middle position - recognize Britain's often unscrupulous and narrowly self-interested, but also brought education, medicine, technology, and possibility of political stability to remote parts of world
- Whatever the judgment, its effects were immense and contributed to Anglicization of world
- How does British Empire compare to others?
 - Like Rome, viewed it as taking civilization to backward peoples
 - Achieved greater stability and humanity than Napoleon, Hitler, or Stalin
 - Pioneered abolition of slavery
 - Conceded self-government for all colonies

So, why history of British Empire helps us understand the modern world?



- Predominance of nation states – not empires
- International capitalism and globalization
- “British Offshoots” - U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong(?)

For better, for worse - fair and foul-the world - we know today is in large measure the product of Britain's age of Empire. The question is not whether British imperialism was without a blemish. It was not. The question is whether there could have been a less bloody path to modernity. Perhaps in theory there could have been. But in practice?

Source: Niall Ferguson, *Empire – The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, p XXVIII



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Legacy of the British Empire

- The triumph of capitalism as the optimal system of economic organization
- Enduring influence of Protestantism
- The survival of parliamentary institutions

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Source: Niall Ferguson, *Empire – The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, p XXVIII

What is legacy of British Empire? Summary & Conclusions



- Largest ever: enabled by sea & industrial superiority plus weakness & backwardness of others
- Pax Britannia (1815-1914) - relative peace and progress
- More enlightened than French, Dutch, German, Belgium, or Russian, plus ceded self-government
- Shrunk under pressure after WW II – by U.S. & Russia and at home by Labor Party and costs of world war
- But lasting legacy – we benefit from daily

Next Class #3, July 22: Why did the Soviet Union collapse?

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Why did British Empire decline?

Summary & Conclusions

- Largest in world history – enabled by sea and industrial superiority plus weakness of competitors and backwardness of colonies
- Pax Britannia (1815-1914) was of relative peace and progress
- More enlightened than French, Dutch, German, Belgium, or Russian empires and ceded self government
- Pressured by changing world order after WW II – by U.S. & Russia and at home by Labor Party and devastating impact of two world wars

Next Class #3, July 22: Why did the Soviet Union collapse?

Recommended books on British Empire and 19th Century

- Patrick Allitt, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, Course Guidebook, Great Courses, 2009 (As the footnotes indicate, I used this book and its audios extensively. It provides a balanced view of the British Empire.)
- C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*, 2004. (This late Cambridge historian died shortly before completing his sequel on the 20th century, and like Osterhammel's book, is not for casual reading, but an authoritative reference.)
- Niall Ferguson, *Empire – The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, 2002, (Ferguson is one of the most engaging and penetrating, albeit conservative commentators, with his books converted into TV series. This book has been criticized for being too pro empire, but is a very lively, insightful, and well-researched. He is truly one of today's prolific geniuses on a broad range of topics from economics, finance, history, international relations, biography ...)
- Jurgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World – A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, 2014. (One of Germany's most distinguished historians authored this magnum opus of 1000 pages. He takes a global, not a Eurocentric view of this period of history.)

Appendix of supplemental information

UK contributions to world Communications, Computing

- **Communications**

- Principles of Radio – James Clerk Maxwell (1831–1879)
- Scotsman Alexander Graham Bell patents telephone in U.S., 1876
- First wireless signal across Atlantic by Italian Marconi, 1901

- **Computing**

- Programming Language – Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace
- Digital audio player (MP3 Player) – Kane Kramer
- Touchscreen invented by E.A. Johnson, 1965
- Tim Berners-Lee proposes what became World Wide Web, 1989

- **Household**

- Jasperware – Josiah Wedgwood
- Corkscrew – Reverend Samuell Henshall
- Modern flushing toilet – John Harington
- Toothbrush – William Edward Addis
- Refrigerator – William Cullen (1748)
- Can Opener – Robert Yeates 1855
- Chocolate bar – J. S. Fry & Sons
- Crossword puzzle – Arthur Wynne
- Carbonated soft drink – Joseph Priestley

Source: Selected from List of British innovations and discoveries, Wikipedia,

Some UK contributions to world Industry, Medicine & Publishing

■ Industry

- Power loom – Edmund Cartwright
- Internal combustion engine – Samuel Brown
- Steel production Bessemer process – Henry Bessemer
- Portland cement – Joseph Aspdin
- Oldest life insurance company
- First practical steam engine by Thomas Newcomen, 1712
- James Watt transformed and improved the steam, 1765
- Electromagnetic induction (transformer) by Michael Faraday, 1831
- Demonstration of incandescent light bulb by Joseph Swan, 1878

■ Medicine

- Circulation of blood – William Harvey
- First typhoid vaccine – Almroth Wright
- Development of ibuprofen
- Penicillin: Sir Alexander Fleming (1881–1955)

■ Publishing

- Adam Smith, 'father of modern economics, Wealth of Nations
- Economist John Maynard Keynes General Theory of Employment, 1936
- Encyclopedia Britannica (1768–81)
- Shakespeare!

Source: Selected from List of British innovations and discoveries, Wikipedia,

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Appendix of supplemental information

Some UK contributions to world Science, Sport & Transport

• Science

- Modern atomic theory – John Dalton
- Calculus – Sir Isaac Newton
- Law of Gravity – Sir Isaac Newton
- Weather map – Francis Galton
- Discovery of Atom – Ernest Rutherford
- Theory of Evolution – Charles Darwin
- Structure of DNA – by Francis Crick and American James Watson
- Discovery of aluminum – Sir Humphry Davy
- Theory of electromagnetism – James Clerk Maxwell (1831–1879)
- MRI – John Mallard and James Huchinson from (1974–1980)

• Sport

- Tennis
- Golf – Modern game invented in Scotland

• Transport

- First commercial jet airliner (de Havilland Comet)
- First railway journey by Richard Trevithick's steam locomotive, 1804
- Jet engine patented by Frank Whittle, 1930

Source: Selected from List of British innovations and discoveries, Wikipedia,