Questions about Empire

1)At the start of the first world war where was the first shot fired by a British solider?

A)France

B) Gold coast (Ghana)

C) Kent

**The answer is B**

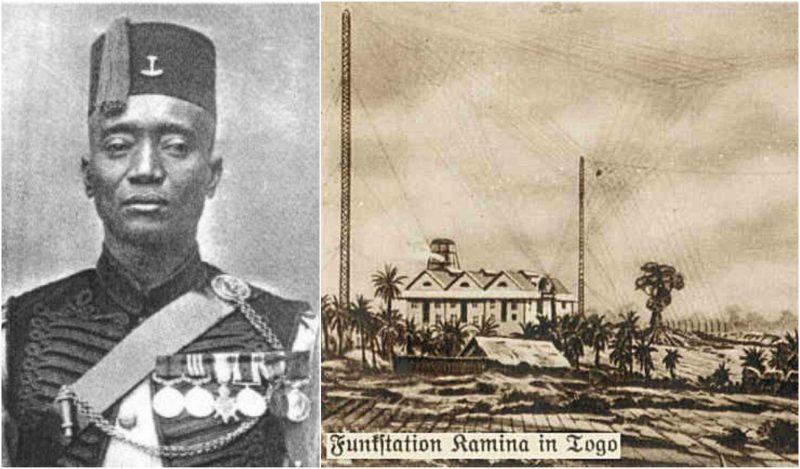
International research by the British Council as part of the 2014 centenary highlighted how the UK publics’ knowledge of both the global nature of the first world wat and its legacies was limited.

[remember-the-world-as-well-as-the-war-report.pdf (britishcouncil.org)](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/remember-the-world-as-well-as-the-war-report.pdf)

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At the start of the First World War Germany's West African colony of Togoland isolated from the rest of the German Empire but of great strategic importance due to powerful Kamina radio transmitters located there. So following the declaration of war, troops of the Gold Coats Regiment entered Togoland from the British Gold Coast (modern day Ghana) and advanced on the capital. An advance patrol of the Gold Coast Regiment encountered the German-led police force on 7 August 1914 near Lomé, and the police force opened fire on the patrol. Alhaji Grunshi returned fire, the first soldier in British service to fire a shot in the war.



2)How did Britain fund its wars against Napoleon?

A)Tea tax

B)Hard work

C)Industrial might

**While B and C might have played a part the answers is A.**



In his book ‘Imperial Twilight’ Stephen Platt show how as the war with Napoleon drew on the importance of the East Indica Companies trade in China increased. “the British government started raising its tax on the company's tea in 1795 during the third year of the war and continued pushing it upwards every year or two. In 1802 the tax on tea imports reached 50% and then in 1806 96 percent.” Some estimates that Chinese tea provided 1/10 of the British government's total revenue -this dependency provides a critical context to understanding the Napoleonic Wars and the importance of opium wars.

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Morse, Hosea Ballou. *The Chronicles of the East India Company, Trading to China 1635-1834, by Hosea Ballou Morse*. Vol. 2. England: Clarendon, 1926-29

3)Who used the tactic of Brandschattingen (burning everything ) to fight a genocidal war?

A)Dutch

B)English Mercenaries

C) Americans

**The answer is B**

The term originates from the 30 years’ war which is raging in the Netherlands from 1618 to 1648. The tactic was the military practise that was feared by farmers of the region consisting of burning peasant villages to the ground. A large number of the soldiers who took part in the 30 years’ war were English mercenaries many of whom went on to fight in America. Amitav Ghosh in his book ‘The nutmeg’s curse’ argues that these soldiers “took the tactic of Brandschattingen with them turning it into a means of eliminating entire tribes.” An example is the Pequot War of 1636-38 that has been described as “the first deliberately genocidal war conducted by the English in North America” (Barry O’Connell, 1992 On our own Ground, pxxv)

4)What is the exact meaning/etymology of the word exterminate?

1. To Kill everything
2. To destroy everything
3. To drive over the border and exclude

**The answer is C.**

Extermino means to ‘drive over the border’ to ‘exile, banish, exclude’. so the exact meaning of the English word exterminate is “to drive over the border to death banish from life.”

Sven Lindqvist explores this etymology is his book (1992) ‘Exterminate all the brutes: One man’s odyssey in the heart of darkness and the origins of European genocide’. The title comes from a sentence that Kurtz, the emblematic colonialist in Joseph Conrad’s heart of darkness, writes about white peoples role in Africa. It draws our attention that the action of extermination is not directed a individuals but groups and territory.

5)In the same century as Columbus’s journey Admiral Zheng of China set off for the African continent when he got there did he

1. Make contact and return?
2. Set about exterminating the indigenous people?
3. Set up embassies?

**The answer is A**

In 1405 Admiral Zheng, a Muslim by birth, set off from China with an Armada of 300 ships. This fleet of ships was impressive both in terms of its scale but also in terms of its technological capabilities. Jeremy Lent in his book the patterning instinct, contrasts Zheng’s Armada with that of Christopher Columbus that set sail from Spain later in the 1400s. He makes the argument that “different cultures construct core metaphors to make meaning out of their world and how these metaphors forged the values that ultimately drive people's actions”. Zheng could have done virtually anything he wanted in the places that he visited but instead set up embassies in China's capital Nanjing with emissaries on the places he visited what Columbus took a different approach. Lent argues that one answer to this discrepancy is that Europeans approached the world with a fundamentally different set of values then the Chinese that the European mindset was “more predispose to use knowledge as a means to gain power over the environment including both the natural world and other human societies.”

6)Whose tea ended up in the harbour during Boston Tea party?

1. King George
2. Chinese Emperor
3. East India Company

**The answer is A**

In the 1770s partly as a result of government attempts to sell stockpiles of East India company Tea in North America, onto which the British government has slapped British taxes, we had the Boston Tea Party. This event which opened the American war of independence started by dumping 90,000 pounds of East India company tea, worth at the time £9659 (but over £1 million worth of tea today) into the Boston harbour. What this illustrates is the global interplay of empire as William Dalrymple points out in his book ‘The anarchy’ dumping in Boston harbour of Indian tea triggered the American war of independence he tells us” one of the principal fears of the American patriots in the run up to the wall was that parliament would unleash the East India company in the Americas to loot there as it had done in India”

7) Sir Cyril Radclifffe, the British civil servant changed with drawing the border between modern day Indian and Pakistan

1. Had only five weeks to do it
2. Had never travelled to India before
3. consulted the outdated Census records and maps because the British could not get a fresh survey done in the June heat

**The answer is all 3**

The partition of India in 1947 promised the people of the subcontinent both political and religious freedom instead the geographical divide brought displacement and death, benefited very few at the expense of very many. As many as 10 to 15 million were forced to leave their homes as refugees in one of the largest forced migration of people. As Yasmin Khan in her book ‘The great partition: the making of India and Pakistan’ points out the border had to be decided against the clock. At the centre of this process was Cyrill Radcliffe a “Respected judge known for his piercing intellect but had none of the requisite technical skills for drawing a border and had infamously never been to India before. The British government considered this an asset lending itself to impartiality rather than the self-evident drawback which it proved”.

8) Who drew up the borders of the Middle East we know them today

1. League of Nations
2. Syria and Iraq
3. Britain and France

**The answer is C**

As the Ottoman Empire collapsed during the First World War a secret Anglo-French agreement was made on the partition of the Ottoman empire after World War I, negotiated by Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot. As Eugene Rogan has pointed out in The Fall of the Ottomans the agreement was quickly superseded not least in the form of the Balfour declaration of 1917. But it does shape perception of the Britain in the Middel East as Palestinian writer George Antonius say “The Sykes-Picot Agreement is a shocking document. It is not only the product of greed at its worst, that is to say, of greed allied to suspicion and so leading to stupidity: it also stands out as a startling piece of double-dealing.” The British council survey in 2014 revealed limited public knowledge in the UK of either Balfour or Sykes-Picot event that were hugely resonant with Turkish and Egyptian respondents. This something that in turn shapes their view of the UK’s role in the first world war conflict as having a broadly negative effect on their views of the UK today

9)Which government authorised a programme to destroy and hide files related to its colonial past called ‘operation legacy’?

1. The Nazi government
2. The Russian government
3. The British government

**The Answer is C**

During a lawsuit brought against the British government in 2011 by victims of torture in colonial Kenya the British government admitted to the existence of secret documents related to the Mau Mau uprising. Many of these so-called ‘migrated archives’ had been secretly stashed at Hanslope park as part of a process called Operation Legacy. However a large number of papers are believed to have been totally destroyed either burnt or sunk at sea hence what we have now is only a tiny fragment or the testimony of survivors. The policy of systematically purging documents originated in Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, and was codified in the Gold Coast. The general idea was to remove documents that were deemed inconvenient, the policy evolved in a largely bottom up fashion but with the colonial office in London performing the role of a hub. Caroline Elkins book ‘Legacy of violence: A history of the British empire’ examines this programme and its impact.

10) **Cecil Rhodes colonialist and politician in southern Africa who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. In what year did 94 Oxford academics write to the University vice chancellor objecting to Rhodes being awarded an honorary doctorate.**

**A) 2015**

**B)1899**

**C)1961**

**The answer is B Cecil Rhodes was a British politician who was born in 1853 and died in 1902. He was sent to South Africa as a teenager for health reasons. It was in South Africa that he became a politician and actually Prime Minister of the Cape colony. He was also a businessman making a fortune with his diamond company De Beers. In 1876 he was admitted to oxford's Oriel college but only stayed one term, in his will he asked to establish the Rhodes scholarship one of the oldest graduate scholarships in the world. He was honoured with a statue at Oriel college. This statue is at the centre of a debate for many reasons including his racist views** in his ‘Confession’ of 1877 wrote ‘I contend that [the British] are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race…’

**In 1899 he was awarded an honorary doctorate of Law by the university something that promoted a number of Oxford academics at the time to object. This is indicative that some of Rhodes contemporaries found him controversial as Robin Cohen outlines here.** [Falling Statues and Morality: Cecil Rhodes can’t be rescued by history | Oxford and Colonialism](about:blank)

Rhodes, ‘Confession of Faith’, 1877, cited in John E. Flint, Cecil Rhodes (Little Brown, 1974), pp. 248-52.

**11) The Statutes of Kilkenny 1366 made it** illegal for any Anglo-Irish person to:-

1. Marry an Irish person
2. Speak the Irish Language
3. Ride a horse in Irish style, that is, without a saddle.

T**he answer is A, B and C.**

The statutes of Kilkenny are a series of 35 acts passed at Kilkenny in 1366. Decades of the 14th century it was deemed that the Hiberno-Norman presence in Ireland was under threat that the English settlers we're taking up Irish customs uneven language. The statutes were intended to reassert English culture amongst the English settlers. Primarily an expression of the concerns of the English state it is an early example of racially motivated thinking in relation to imperial concerns and a reminder highlighted in Phillipa Levine’s ‘The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset’ that as early as the twelfth century, English incursions into these lands offer the earliest examples of British imperial expansion

12) The origin of the word loot comes from

A) the Hindi lūṭ meaning to, ‘rob, plunder’

B) a corruption of the word for lute

C)name given to Clive of India’s castle in Powys

**The answer is A**

But there is a connection to Powys castle, the home of Robert Clive. In William Dalrymple’s ‘The anarchy’, he tells us that one of the very first Indian words to enter the English language was the Hindustani slang for plunder, loot. He also goes on to tell us Powys castle, the home of Robert Clive, is awash from loot from India extracted by the East India company in the 18th century indeed he tells us, There are more Mughal artefacts stacked in this private house in the Welsh countryside than there are on display in anyone place in India even the National Museum in Delhi.’

13) In 1860 following the establishment of direct rule in India Britain implemented an income tax that in terms of revenue raised in taxation as a proportion of national income

A) meant that Britain’s in Indian bore a heavier burden

B) meant that Britain’s back ‘home’ bore a heavier burden

C) Indians bore a heavier burden.

**The answer is C**

By examining the revenue raised in taxation as a proportion of national income, Naoroji ([**1901**](https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2152/doi/full/10.1111/1468-4446.12896#bjos12896-bib-0034)) demonstrated clearly that India bore the heavier burden. As Gurminder Bhambra argues here looking at accounts of taxation across the scope of the empire is crucial to understanding the construction of the idea of the ‘British’ nation and in particular the consolidation of the British welfare state in the mid-twentieth century. “The imperial relations of extraction maintained the standard of living of the national population at the expense not only of the livelihoods of colonial subjects, but often their very lives.”

[Relations of extraction, relations of redistribution: Empire, nation, and the construction of the British welfare state - Bhambra - 2022 - The British Journal of Sociology - Wiley Online Library (ox.ac.uk)](https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2152/doi/full/10.1111/1468-4446.12896)

14) **Which of the following were targeted or hunted by British colonial settlers?**  
A) South African Quagga

B) Tasmanian Tiger

C) Aboriginal Tasmanians

**The answer is all 3.** The Grant Museum exhibition ‘Displays of power’ connected the items in its collections to the wider story of science and empire inviting visitors to think about the ways colonial ways of working and thinking continue to affect the natural world today.

[HPSC0066 - Untold Narratives: Colonialism in Natural History - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8z8zovRTd4)

The Tasmanian Tiger and South African Quagga were both hunted to the point of extinction by colonists what is less well know is that the Tasmanian people themselves were hunted and treated like animals reflecting the prevailing evolutionary scientific theories, at that time, that forwarded ideas of racial hierarchies.

[Displays of Power: A Natural History of Empire | UCL CULTURE - UCL – University College London](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/whats-on/displays-power-natural-history-empire)

Nick Brodie’s book ‘The Vandemonian War’ shows how in the 1820s and 1830s the British deliberately pushed the Aboriginal people out, driving them to the edge of existence. He also shows how aboriginal resistance “was no mere piecemeal response to resource competition, but a coordinated strategy for addressing the wider colonial incursion.”

15) In 1854 how many fur pelts from Canada were auctioned in London?

A) 5,000

B) 50,000

C) 500,000

**The answer is C**

Beinart and Hughes (2007) look to the ways that empire impacted on ecological systems around the world. Huge variation existed between regions so that unlike in other places, the Canadian trade in fur involved (depended) on initial indigenous participation in the trade. Later the increasing demand and competition for fur in Europe impacted both on the natural world with dwindling numbers of beaver but also lead to outbreaks of smallpox in first nations communities as Europeans looked to the interior. The Canadian experience highlights another important dimension of empire, emigration from Britain and its consequences.  "Unlike indigenous people in African and Asian colonies, they (first Nations groups) became a demographically marginal group within a settler nation" (Beinart and Hughes). This ebb and flow (as it involved return migration) of people impacted both on the indigenous groups but also, as  Fedorowich argues (2008 in Stockwell 'The British empire), on British ideas of identity,  "With their families, they helped to construct a wider British identity and culture overseas and were influenced by their experiences, while serving abroad, that created a broader Britishness, some of which was exported back 'home'" (p64)

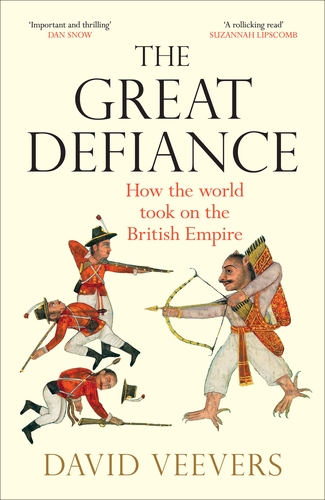
16) ‘All was under the Sword in England…’ refers to

A) the English Civil War

B) the Anglo–Powhatan war

C) the harrying of the north

**The answer is A and B.**

David Veevers makes the point that paramount Chief Opechancanough of the Powhatans decided to strike against the Virginia colony in 1644 once he heard news that ‘All was under the Sword in England…and such divisions in [their] land.’ 500 settlers were killed. The point made is that Resistance to colonialism is a key factor in understand the British Empire it didn’t happen in isolation, and it happened early. Veevers book demonstrates that the cultures and polities that the British encountered were sophisticated and powerful, and often successful in checking the expansion of this nascent empire. He challenges assumptions about a British superpower steamrolling so called ‘primitive’ cultures .

1. **The East India Company and the British Empire extracted vast amounts of resources and wealth from South Asia. If a restitution payment were to be made to compensate, what might it be in today’s money?**  
   A) Under £1,000  
   B) £81,000,000,000  
   C) £3,750,000,000,000

The correct answer is C £3.75 trillion when adjusted for inflation. Prior to colonisation, the region accounted for 20-25% of world GDP; after gaining independence, this fell to 3% of world GDP. Furthermore, the region inherited an unpaid debt of World Wars I and II amounting to £81 billion in today's money, which is not included in the restitution calculation. The origin of the word “loot” derives from the region's word “lut”, which means to swindle and steal. It is not hard to understand why it became a popular word in English. To date, no restitution or reparations of any kind have been made. For more information, see 'Inglorious Empire' by Shashi Tharoor.

1. **In 2019, scientists calculated that European colonisation of the Americas—and the subsequent “Great Dying” of Indigenous peoples through disease and violence—contributed to worldwide climate change. How?**  
   A) Global cooling  
   B) Global warming of 1°C  
   C) Global deforestation

The answer is A Global Cooling. The average temperature drop was 0.15°C in the late 1500s and early 1600s. The global temperature drop is known as the ‘Little Ice Age’.

1. **Which woman of African descent published (via dictation) her life story in London—the first known account by a Black woman formerly enslaved to be published in Britain?**  
   A) Mary Prince  
   B) Mary Seacole  
   C) Dido Belle

The answer is A. The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself was first published in February 1831, at the height of Britain's abolition movement. She was the storyteller of an abolitionist collaborative writing team that brought her story to print. Susanna Strickland was the compiler. She listened to Mary tell her story, and then she wrote it down. Thomas Pringle, the secretary of London’s Anti-Slavery Society, was the editor, as well as the financial backer of the project.