

'I will not come'

KS3 History-Lesson 4 of 4

Enquiry: How do we uncover the lived experience of those ruled by Empire in Africa?

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Decolonisation and the Post Colonial Era

After The Second World War, European empires were both driven out of and abandoned Africa. In many African nations this meant internal conflict or white minority rule. Those who lived through the end of empire, continued to experience its impacts. Extract A gives us an insight into just how little respect or interest the British showed in local systems of government or colonised peoples even well into the 20th Century.



Extract A

As a chief...my father was compelled to account to the local (colonial) magistrate. One day one of my father's subjects lodged a complaint against him. The magistrate accordingly sent a message ordering my father to appear before him. My father sent back the following reply 'Andizi, ndisaqula' (I will not come I am still girding for battle). When the magistrate received my father's response, he charged him with insubordination. There was no civil inquiry or investigation; that was reserved for white civil servants. The magistrate simply deposed my father, thus ending the Mandela family chieftainship.

Nelson Mandela, The Long Walk to Freedom, 1994



Writing the history of Empire

Historians derive their own interpretations of history from the kinds of evidence that you have studied during this enquiry. These interpretations themselves can be useful when trying to uncover the experiences of those living under empire. For example, Interpretation B offers us a snapshot of this historian's views regarding the legacy of The British Empire in Nigeria as well as reminding us that diverse Nigerian peoples were forced to form an artificial national identity under empire. Nigeria is growing (it will be the world's 3rd most populous nation this century) and facing the challenge of redefining its identity in the post colonial era.



Interpretation B

*Perhaps no other country in the modern world is more a creature of empire than Nigeria. Even the name 'Nigeria' was a consciously invented one, first appearing in an article of the London Times on 8 January 1897...Flora Shaw, a journalist and commentator on colonial affairs, suggest the name, which she thought would be a good title for the '**agglomeration of pagan and Mohammedan state** which have been brought... within the **confines** of a British protectorate.'*

Ghosts of Empire, Kwasi Kwarteng, 2011



Comprehension Questions

1. Who became the president of South Africa in 1994?
2. Which African nation will have the world's third largest population by end of the 21st Century?
3. Identify one feature of extract A which a historian must be aware of when using it to uncover the experience of colonialism.
4. What can we uncover from extract A about the experience of living under empire?
5. Explain why contemporary interpretations from historians, can be a useful way of reflecting on colonial experiences.

Sentence starter: One experience we can uncover from extract A is...



Return to the Enquiry

How do we uncover the lived experience of those ruled by Empire in Africa?

What you examined:

1. First hand accounts of those exploited.
2. Internal communications of African leaders.
3. Novels by authors with knowledge of the period.
4. Autobiographies and later accounts of the period
5. The work of contemporary historians from relevant communities.



Return to the Enquiry

How do we uncover the lived experience of those ruled by Empire in Africa?

Why is this challenging?

1. People living under empire were often ignored and oppressed, many were illiterate.
2. Colonists often selected which accounts to record and how to do so.
3. Accounts which do exist often tell of atypical stories, such as those of chieftains.
4. Later historical or fictional works are powerful and informative but hard to research precisely.



Return to the Enquiry

How do we uncover the lived experience of those ruled by Empire in Africa?

Why is this important?

1. A historian's role is to capture the breadth and complexity of people's experiences and prevent them from being overlooked or forgotten.
2. If we allow only one narrative of history to be told, we risk repeating the horrors of empire.
3. If share the experiences of colonialism today, its legacies, such as racism, can be explained, exposed and challenged.

