

Theme: Landmarks in British history

Text: "London Speaker": *Take up the black man's burden!* The Public 5 (1903)

Take up the black man's burden! child of an alien blood,
 Drawer of Albu's water and hewer of Albu's wood,
 From the shores of the blue Zambesi to the foam of the further end
 They need the sweat of the black man's brow for the white man's dividend.
 5 By the dread of the Yellow Peril, by the slang of the Seventh Sea,
 By the godly cant and the royal rant of the race that set you free,
 Wherever the red gold glitters, wherever the diamond shines,
 Go forth, upon compulsion, and labour in the mines.
 The winds of the West have heard it, the stars of the South replied,
 10 When the Lords of the Outer Marches went forth on a fruitless ride,
 That the son of the swarthy Kaffir must wake from an idle sleep
 When the lone grey Mother calls for toil, and the Lord has made it cheap.
 Foster-sons of the Empire, wards of the baked Karoo,
 This is the law the Mother makes and her sword shall prove it true:
 15 "Wherever the red gold glitters, wherever the diamond shines,
 Take up the black man's burden and labour in the mines."

Annotations:

2 Sir George Albu (1857 – 1935) - mining magnate in the diamond & gold industries of South Africa; hew - cut (wood) **3** Zambesifurther end – from the west to the east coast of Africa **4** dividend – share of profits **5** (urged on) by the dread of the Yellow Peril – Chinese immigrants were seen as dangerous competitors; slang of the Seventh Sea – reference to (competitive) Indians living on the African east coast **6** godly cant – reference to the moral teachings of missionaries; royal – reference to the British monarch (Queen Victoria); rant – speech that incites anger and violence **8** upon compulsion – under force **10** Lords of the Outer Marches – (rich) colonial masters or lords (like Albu) in distant parts of the Empire **11** swarthy – (sb.) with dark skin; Kaffir – (taboo word) offensive word for a black person, used by white people in South Africa **12** lone grey Mother – reference to (aging) Queen Victoria, who was the head of the Empire at that time **13** foster – growing up with people that are not your parents; ward – [Person, die unter Vormundschaft steht – Mündel]; Karoo - semidesert plateau regions in southern South Africa

Assignments:

1) Point out the role that "the black" man plays according to the poet's words. In doing so relate the title to Rudyard Kipling's famous prototype. [Contents / Orientation]
2) Work closely on the text to show how the author evaluates the activities of the British Empire in the (African) colonies. [Analysis]
3) In what light should we see the British Empire: in the light of the poem *Rule Britannia* or that of *The Black Man's Burden*? Give reasons in your answer. [Evaluation]

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