

Spezialgebiet in Englisch

Thema:

Australia and New Zealand under the influence of the British Empire

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1. European explorations

The Dutchman Willem Janszoon was the first who discovered Australia in 1606, and then Luis Váez de Torres (who sailed for the Spanish crown) passed through the strait between the northern part of Australia and New Guinea, nowadays called the “Torres Strait”. So he was able to sight Australia's northern coast. But the most important discoverer was Abel Tasman (also a Dutchman). He made important maps of Australia and he also discovered other islands like Tasmania (which is named after him). But then it happened that there was coming nobody to Australia for a long time because the Europeans lost interest in it. In 1769 the Brits got interested in the so called “southern continent”, so they sent James Cook into this area. First he travelled to Tahiti to observe the transit of the Venus. He also got the order to locate the southern continent, which he successfully did on the 19 April 1770. Their first landing was at Botany Bay, which is the place where Sidney has been built later on. Nowadays scientists think that Willem Janszoon wasn't the first who discovered Australia, they think that before him there were already people from China and Portugal. As a result of their explorations The Dutchmen found out that Australia wasn't useful for them because there were no cities to trade with and no materials which could be useful for them. King Gustav III (Sweden) wanted to build a colony at the Swan River (Western Australia). But Sweden had not the ability to build a colony, only the Brits were able to build a colony called New South Wales (in the southeast of A.). Eleven ships with more than one thousand people were sent to Australia in the 1780s. New Zealand's history is similar to Australia's, but one difference is that the native people of New Zealand were the Maori (from Polynesia). The Dutch were also there the first Europeans who arrived (1624). Some Dutchmen have been killed by the Maori, because of this nobody was coming to New Zealand for a long time. James Cook was the first who dared to explore New Zealand a second time in the year 1769. More and more Europeans came to the Island, and trading got more important. Vegetables like the potato revolutionised agriculture and firearms got more important.

2. First Settlements

At all there came over 1300 people at the first period of Australia's colonialisation. First they landed in Botany Bay, and then they moved over to Sydney Cove in Port Jackson because they thought that it would be better to settle there. The day when they moved to this place was the 26 January 1788, which became the national day of Australia. The colony included the islands of New Zealand and some small islands in front of Australia. In New Zealand one of the first places where the Brits settled was the Bay of Islands (an area on the northern Island). That government as a whole was really huge, it was even the biggest in the world. In the year 1817 the Brits decided to punish murderers more effective, so they were sent to Australia. Now they also found some interesting resources they could use. The giant Norfolk Island pine trees and wild flax plants should be the basis for a local industry. Australia had no safe harbour, which made them moving to Tasmania in 1807. The colony was resettled in 1824 as a penal settlement (this is a place where you send murderers to). The Brits wanted to build a second colony at the other side of the pacific coast. They wanted this colony to improve the fur trade (Pelz- bzw. Fellhandel) with China and Japan. But the Spanish opposition made this impossible. The first export cargos of New South Wales were seal skins. Tasmania has first been settled in 1803. The Brits tried to build more colonies around Australia, but a lot of them were unsuccessful. New Zealand on the other hand was a successful colony from the beginning. First Okiato was the capital of the colony, later on it was Auckland. In 1841 new Zealand became a separate colony. The Brits also tried to build colonies at certain islands, but most of them were given up later on. The Dutchman never lost interest in building their own colonies in that area. The Brits prevented them building a colony on the Australian country. Over the years more and more convicts were sent to New South Wales. These convicts were very important because they built the base for the development of an improved society and industry. The Brits needed every help they could get, so also free settlers have been welcome. After a while the Sidney penal settlement was too small for all the convicts. So they had to build new penal settlements. These new founded settlements were only there to host the convicts, Sidney had

broader purposes. In 1787 Arthur Philip (Governor of New South Wales) achieved that the inhabitants of his Government got full civil rights and their own judicial system. New South Wales got bigger and bigger, and it got more and more attractive for Europe. Because of this it's logical that more scientists came to Australia. They expected Australia to become as powerful as Rome was. They saw a lot of similarities between Rome and Australia. Rome also was founded by robbers, thieves and murderers.

3. Colonists and the structure of the society

Estimated 161,700 convicts have been brought to New South Wales and the other penal settlements between 1788 and 1868. About two thirds of them were thieves from working class towns, most of them came from the midland and the north of England. Some of them were able to improve their situation. You could get a "ticket to leave" for good behaviour. Other ones could work for wages or some of them lived as successful emancipists or they even got pardoned at the end of their sentence. The settlers who came as a volunteer were taking as much land as they wanted. In 1835 the British Colonial Office issued a Proclamation against illegal land occupiers. Without the authority of the government you would be an illegal trespasser, so you have no chance to occupy land as you want. Later on new settlements grew and New South Wales has been separated into several parts. A lot of people worked as farmers especially in the first century of the settlement. When the first settlers came to Australia they had nothing to eat and so they had to import food from the closest other colonies. After a while agriculture grew and Australia got autonomous. They even could export materials like wool. The indigenous people, the Aborigines, disliked the Brits and their behaviour and so the fights started. The Brits forced them to leave their native areas. They also took their resources with the effect that 20,000 indigenous people died.

4. Local politics and the discovery of gold in Australia

The first who officially found gold in Australia was Edward Hammond Hargraves. He found gold in New South Wales in the year 1851. But it's realistic that gold was already found in 1823. All minerals that were found belonged to the crown, so it's logical that nobody wants to search it. And I think it was more important for them to survive than

search after gold which anyways belongs later on to the crown. And there also was the Californian Gold rush at the same time that got more attraction than the gold in Australia. Just since the gold shipment from Mount Alexander (Mountain in Victoria) the gold rush started. Six ships with eight tons of gold were immediately brought to Great Britain. As a reaction of this fantastic news a lot of people from Europe immigrated to Australia. The biggest rate of immigrants have been counted in Victoria. In nine years there came more than 454,000 people to search gold. The diggers disliked the gold license system which was made by the government. So a lot of them had no license, and as a reaction of this the police attacked a stockade which was built by the diggers. 30 miners have been killed and a lot of them have been wounded. But the Commissioner who ordered this attack said that it was absolutely necessary. It's clear that this behaviour is a warning for all illegal miners, but the final resolution from the Royal Commission was a change of the administration of the goldfields. The License got abolished and the miners got own rights. The Mount Alexander gold rush was not the only one, but slowly Australia runs out of gold. So the disturbances vanished and the local politic could develop. New South Wales was the first government who got independent, later the other governments followed. But they didn't become full independent, some matters were still controlled by London (important foreign affairs, defence and global shipping). The time of the gold rush brought prosperity. The Australians invested in agriculture and mining Industries, and also the way of transportation got improved. So they built a rail network and they improved the transport by rivers. Since the 1850s the gold production declined, and at the other side the population of sheep was estimated to 100 million. The biggest depression was in Victoria. At the late 10th century the population (without aborigines) was about 3.7 million. The majority of the population lived in the big cities like Melbourne and Sidney. Only one third of the people were not living in big cities in the southeast of Australia.

5. Australia's independence

At the end of the 19th century, a majority of the inhabitants were born in Australia, and over 90% were of British origin. The improved intercolonial transport and a telegraph connection between Perth and Cities in the southeast made it easier for the separate colonies to unite. There were some powerful politicians who supported unification. Also a growing nationalism and a development of national identity supported these desire, and also military aspects were important. The citizens advocated a united military defence. The Australians didn't want to separate from Britain, they only wanted to unite to a Federation. A politician from New South Wales said at a conference banquet in 1890:

"The crimson thread of kinship runs through us all. Even the native born Australians are Britons as much as those born in London or Newcastle. We all know the value of that British origin. We know that we represent a race for which the purpose of settling new countries has never had its equal on the face of the earth... A united Australia means to me no separation from the Empire"

In 1899 there was a voting for or against a Federation. In five from the six colonies the result was for a Federation. Queen Victoria permitted a formation of the "Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act" on the 5 July 1900. The separation was finished on the 1st January 1901.

In New Zealand the Situation was different. In 1854 they had their own Parliament, which was the biggest step to become independent. Because the first parliament met in Wellington, this place was appointed to the new capital. An interesting fact is that New Zealand was the first country in the world which allowed women to vote. A problem of the new independence was that they got more dependent in things like economy.

6. The end of the special relationship between GBR and AUS

The relationship was still good between the two states, the Australians are proud of their British history. The Australians supported GBR in several wars:

- The Boer Wars (in South Africa; I: 1880 – 81; II: 1899 – 1902)

- WWI and WWII

Since the Second World War the connections between Australia and the USA got better and better. The USA defeated the Japanese Air force which was attacking Australia from the north. Now Australia was following the USA in several wars:

- Korea War (1950)
- Vietnam War (1959 – 1975)

Nowadays Australia is still in a good relationship with the USA, but Australia wouldn't be the same state without the British colonialisation.

7. The end of the special relationship between GBR and AUS

Relations between Australia and New Zealand, also sometimes referred to as Trans-Tasman relations due to the countries being on opposite sides of the Tasman Sea, are fairly close, with both sharing British colonial heritage and being part of the Anglosphere. Historically, New Zealand sent representatives to the constitutional conventions which led to the uniting of the six Australian colonies, but opted not to join; in the Boer War and in World War I and World War II, soldiers from New Zealand fought alongside Australians in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. In recent years, the Closer Economic Relations free trade agreement and its predecessors have established strong economic ties between the two countries. The two countries do differ culturally, and there are sometimes differences of opinion, which some have classed as a form of sibling rivalry. This often centres upon sports such as rugby union or cricket, or in commercial tensions such as the failure of Ansett Australia or the long-standing Australian ban on New Zealand apple imports.