**Final Essay**

**How far was having an Empire beneficial for other countries**

‘Empire’ refers to a group of countries ruled by one single country. The word colony refers to one country under another country’s rule. The British empire colonised all but twenty-two countries in the world! Britain colonised to feel they had more power and to ‘own’ other countries as though they were possessions. Why Britain became a rich country is because of what they took from others. This essay will explain how far having an Empire was beneficial for other countries.

When it comes to ‘benefits’ of British rule, all well-known facts are not actually how the countries were benefitted, but from a British perspective of what these may have been. Britain claims that citizens in the colonised countries were provided with work and ‘saved’ from being poor. An example from the Indian Case study shows that 20% of Britain's total trades abroad went to India. However, it could be argued that these countries would have been able to provide jobs for their own people if their country had not been taken over.

One of the key examples of colonisation’s negative impact on the countries is how Britain asserted its power on them. For example, it tore away culture from countries by preventing people from following their own religions such as Hinduism and Islam by spreading Christianity. Another example of how Britain replaced culture is how it often forced people speak English rather than their own language (asserting cultural superiority and thus making people lose their main form of communication).

Another argument which tries to explain how colonialism was beneficial is the argument that schools were provided and an education given to people. However, this ‘education’ involved pushing the ideological view that Britain was the ‘saviour’ to ‘help’ ‘weaker’ countries which was a way of brainwashing people to prevent uprisings. Education was not provided for the masses either. The ability to speak English is also described as a positive but this is showing once again the belief that English is better than other languages which is not true.

Another reason to show colonialism is wrong is how Britain stole valuable possessions from countries it colonised (Many of which are found in our museums today). An example of this factor is the Benin Massacre in 1897. The kingdom was ransacked. Artefacts were looted with the excuse given that the army was retaliating for a British soldier being killed. What really happened was that a traditional ceremony was being held and the British deliberately disturbed this. When a soldier was killed after offending the kingdom it was an easy excuse to get what they wanted.

Railways being built is often given as a reason why the British Empire ‘helped’ countries to develop, especially in India. What is not mentioned is that this was done entirely out of selfishness (they were designed to transport goods to ports to transport to Britain for their own use in factories). It was Indian taxpayers who funded these railways, yet the British take credit for them. When Indian engineers started to get good at making locomotives the British were worried so made an act of parliament in 1912 forbidding Indian workshops designing and manufacturing them.

One of the most important factors that proves The British Empire was not at all beneficial to countries which it colonised, is the disgusting racism which followed everywhere Britain went. People of colour were treated abominably in how Britain attacked, pillaged and raped. Crimes committed by white people in the colonies were hardly ever punished, in fact, in the entire two centuries of British rule in India, only three cases can be found of Englishmen executed for murdering Indian people. This means thousands of murders and mistreatments went unpunished.

Democracy being ‘gifted’ to countries that were colonised is another weak excuse for a benefit of the Empire in other countries. This is explained extremely well in this quote: *‘It is a bit rich to oppress, torture, imprison, enslave, deport and proscribe a people for 200 years, and then take credit for the fact that they are democratic at the end of it’ (Shashi Tharoor Wednesday March 8th 2017 The Guardian)*

In conclusion, this essay proves that the only benefits of colonialism were to those colonising. Akala explains this well in his book ‘Natives, Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire’. He explains how the British enjoy discussing the brutality of other nations, e.g. Germany and japan, although find it impossible to accept its immoral past. ‘*… So many become blind, deaf, and dumb, unable to see murder as murder.’ (Natives, Akala, p. 149)*