

IGNOU Books, IGNOU Result, IGNOU Solved Assignment, IGNOU

Home

Mattimeo

The King of Attolia

Shadow Over Kiriath

Olympos

In the Company of Angels

Bridge of Birds

Warbreaker

Oliver Twist

Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch

The Lost Conspiracy

Fury & Light

Gullstruck Island

The Phantom of the Opera

Where Angels Fall

Mistborn

Coraline

Posted on 09 March 2019 By Shashi Tharoor

#FREE PDF ã An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India ? eBook or E-pub

Communal Riots And Wholesale Slaughter Like The Reprisal Killings After The War Of Independence And The Amritsar Massacre Of Besides The Deaths Of Indians, British Rule Impoverished India In A Manner That Beggars Belief When The East India Company Took Control Of The Country, In The Chaos That Ensued After The Collapse Of The Mughal Empire, India S Share Of World GDP Was Per Cent When The British Left It Was Just Above Per Cent The British Empire In India Began With The East India Company, Incorporated In , By Royal Charter Of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I, To Trade In Silk, Spices And Other Profitable Indian Commodities Within A Century And A Half, The Company Had Become A Power To Reckon With In India In , Under The Command Of Robert Clive, Company Forces Defeated The Ruling Nawab Siraj Ud Daula Of Bengal At Plassey, Through A Combination Of Superior Artillery And Even Superior Chicanery A Few Years Later, The Young And Weakened Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, Was Browbeaten Into Issuing An Edict That Replaced His Own Revenue Officials With The Company S Representatives Over The Next Several Decades, The East India Company, Backed By The British Government, Extended Its Control Over Most Of India, Ruling With A Combination Of Extortion, Double Dealing, And Outright Corruption Backed By Violence And Superior Force This State Of Affairs Continued Until , When Large Numbers Of The Company S Indian Soldiers Spearheaded The First Major Rebellion Against Colonial Rule After The Rebels Were Defeated, The British Crown Took Over Power And Ruled The Country Ostensibly Benignly Until , When India Won Independence In This Explosive Book, Bestselling Author Shashi Tharoor Reveals With Acuity, Impeccable Research, And Trademark Wit, Just How Disastrous British Rule Was For India Besides Examining The Many Ways In Which The Colonizers Exploited India, Ranging From The Drain Of National Resources To Britain, The Destruction Of The Indian Textile, Steel Making And Shipping Industries, And The Negative Transformation Of Agriculture, He Demolishes The Arguments Of Western And Indian Apologists For Empire On The Supposed Benefits Of British Rule, Including Democracy And Political Freedom, The Rule Of Law, And The Railways The Few Unarguable Benefits The English Language, Tea, And Cricket Were Never Actually Intended For The Benefit Of The Colonized But Introduced To Serve The Interests Of The Colonizers Brilliantly Narrated And Passionately Argued, An Era Of Darkness Will Serve To Correct Many Misconceptions About One Of The Most Contested Periods Of Indian History I m generally sympathetic to the argument that colonialism is over and done with and there s no need to keep grievance mongering over past events But a raft of recent nostalgic scholarship by Niall Ferguson and others has unfortunately brought the issue of British colonialism in India up for debate once again Shashi Tharoor gave a well received speech on the impact of the colonial project on India at Oxford a few years back, and this book is an attempt to capture the spirit of that speech in written form Contrary to what some persist in arguing, colonialism was largely a catastrophe for Indians Tharoor documents this well here in with an avalanche of statistics and quotes, of which there are

no shortage, proving the detrimental impact of rapacious colonial administrators on the Indian people. It's hard to pick his most damning argument but his comparison of the British engineered famines to the death tolls of Stalin and Mao during their mass collectivations really seemed to hit the mark. It really was a stark reminder of how much Churchill had in common with his other mid 20th century peers, Hitler included. Other than that there are lots of self incriminating quotes from malicious colonial officials, anecdotes about how life was ordered in pre colonial India and rebuttals to various arguments commonly proffered by apologists for the colonial enterprise. Tharoor writes with generosity of spirit and rarely lapses into polemic. He acknowledges the good that sometimes flowed from colonial power and is not a demagogue in any sense. He also has a broad minded conception of India that is anathema to the chauvinism of Hindu nationalists and others. To be honest though, however much I sympathize with his perspective, I was not thrilled by this book. It was disjointed and did not move according to any particular logic. It also seemed deeply repetitive and didn't always offer a lot to a reader who is already somewhat versed in the subject. It is definitely a textbook rather than a piece of prose, which is perhaps what it was aiming for anyways. Nonetheless I value it for what it is, a contribution to the historical record on this subject and an attempt to prevent the memory of this period from being despoiled by cynical revisionists. It's a pity though that Tharoor is not as effective in writing as he is as an orator. There is a much touted phrase 'Truth lies somewhere in the middle'. Does it always? I was reading Savarkar's famous book on 1857 mutiny and gave it up after reading 50 pages as it felt one sided bitter criticism of the British. Surely, Lawrence James, Niall Ferguson couldn't be that wrong. Surely, the British rule had a lot of benefits. I too believed in the middle 2-3 yrs ago until I read a few stats and Amitav Ghosh's description of Opium farming and trade in India. Shashi Tharoor, building on his famous 2015 Oxford debate speech, thankfully tears apart this British rule was good too notion. I summarise his arguments as under:

A Racism To me the one word case against the British. Usually, people will throw up examples of exceptions, British who loved India and Indians and were fair minded. They will throw up examples of Indians who enjoyed success. How then does one make a racism charge stick on a govt? Simple, read the law. The laws differentiated between the British and Indians and denied the latter equality of opportunity, dignity, justice in every sense of the word. As an example, British almost never got punished or got punished lightly for murders of Indians on racist arguments. Again, look at the law and you see 50 countries following racism and differentiation among their citizens on basis of religion even today.

B Economic drain The British systematically and quite openly drained India's resources and destroyed India's economy. Our GDP growth was 1% for 200 yrs. Even at a modest growth rate of 3%, we would have been 50 times richer, much richer than Britain. As for the Railways, paid in taxes by India, with a 10 times inflated cost extracted by the British.

C Famines An estimated 35 million ppl died because of famines during the British rule. But, famines are a natural phenomena, right? Not if the govt continues exporting food, refuses to organise relief and leaves its ppl to

die Limits of cruelty surpassed. What is history for most of the Indians A subject which they have to mug up till tenth standard to get marks and if in future any person who is preparing for any public service examinations has to memorise certain events of history in order to pass out the general studies paper Nobody gives a damm about studying history we just memorise it and then forget.How do they teach us history I was a student of a state board school Madhya Pradesh Board , we had a book from sixth standard to tenth standard , named as Social Studies The book consisted of three subjects Geography , Civics and History And in these books of Social Studies what we had on the name of history were short notes about certain people and events of history and even these events and people were repeated from sixth standard to tenth standard For instance we studied about struggle of independence in eighth standard , yet again in the tenth standard we have to study about the struggle for independence The books in the CBSE schools are also no good they just have slightlydetailed things and some chapters about World Wars.The teacher simply comes up with prepared questions and answers about the topic which is the most scoring in the exams and we the students just mug those answers up and forget them forever Actually we are the future of this nation who is locked in a room and what our system teaches us is looking at our past through a peephole The fault is not completely of the system we are also not interested in our past We are the generation who are creating a future without having any idea of our past In his latest book Shashi Tharoor dared to divide the grey zone clearly into black and white With great research and the arguments which the author about how a country which was far behind us came to our nation and changed our nation forever I don t think there is another book which clearly separates white and black so clearly No history book never celebrates or even mentions the contribution of India in world wars , the great famines , the full story of Jalliwala Bagh massacre , and how the Britishers turned an already developed country into a developing country , how they confined a liberal thinking of a country that even today some religous frantic fools think that those things are their traditions and they follow it blindly.Mr Tharoor teaches how history should be taught.Just A Must Read 5 Stars. One quote in particular by a member of the British aristocracy sums up what Tharoor speaks eloquently in book length The Marquess of Salisbury, using a colourful metaphor as Secretary of State for India in the 1860s and 1870s, said As India is to be bled, the lancet should be directed to those parts where the blood is congested rather than to those which are already feeble for the want of it As a child growing up in the late 80 s and early 90 s, I was told that the Britishers were the aliens who our national leaders drove out of the country in August of 1947 The little me watched Independence and Republic day parades held with pomp and pride in Delhi on the screen of a little monochrome television and slowly imbibed the message that I was part of something large called India In hindsight there was no notion of nationalism or patriotism in my mind then, it was merely the sights and sounds that created a spectacle In school we were taught about the glory of the Indian independence movement and the sacrifices the men and women of

the nation underwent to create an independent nation Truth be told, a sleepy child learns of the Morley Minto reforms or the Rowlatt act only out of pure coercion, they do not learn it for the purpose of knowledge but only to pass the history examination The barbarous aftermaths of these acts passed by the British were not fully familiar to me and by me I refer again to a big group of children who were told that the British empire was brutal but not in very absolute terms Instead you are told in abstractions that they oppressed us but not how and in what context and that they destroyed us here again the extent of damage is not clear While the heroes of Indian independence are undoubtedly men and women who gave up almost everything in their lives for the nation, I believe it is equally important that everyone learns what kind of odds they were up against in the form of the British empire. To the YouTube viewing public, Shashi Tharoor's speech at Oxford debating on whether Britain owes reparations to her former colonies was a literal eye opener The simple reason behind this was objectivity Tharoor was able to annotate with facts and figures how much of looting the East India Company and later the British empire resorted to across the length and breadth of India As I highlighted in the paragraph above, while most of us knew the British to have robbed us blind the full horror of this was lost on us When the Britishers arrived in India, many an Indian was dressed in the finest clothes, wore good jewellery and was extremely self reliant When they finally left, the same Indian only had his loin cloth left to call his own The acts passed by the empire created a lot of legacies for the Indians a broken textile industry, the landless peasant, sycophantic Indian rulers, an overtaxed populace and the first seeds of a communal divide were only a few of them While seven decades of autonomy has been able to bring about some changes in most of the other areas, the last one of these legacies has grown from a seed to a massive and well branched out tree now As Tharoor himself says, one cannot take revenge upon history for history is its own revenge The contents of the book filled me with disbelief and indignation to a great extent and then again gave me a new perspective of the entire notion of India's struggle for independence Britain perhaps cannot be expected to give India an apology like how Justin Trudeau apologized in the House of Commons for the Komagata Maru incident or a symbolic one reminiscent of Willy Brandt's gesture of penance at the Warsaw ghetto Just one incident that occurred on the 13th of April 1919 at Jalian Wala Bagh in Amritsar and the subsequent way the British protected and made a hero of the infamous Reginald Dyer should be enough for anyone still unwilling to let go of the belief that the British were a loving kind of a ruler Interestingly on October 20, 2017, Virendra Sharma who is an MP in the British Parliament has tabled a motion seeking an apology for the Jalian Wala Bagh massacre It remains to be seen how this will play out in the parliament A point that Tharoor makes that the best form of reparation would be to teach undiluted colonial history to the children of Britain makes a lot of sense in a world which yearns to return to Empire 2.0 To me it would be equally important to teach the children of India what their nation was before the British came and what kind of a mess they left in their wake in 1947 Tharoor is a

member of the Congress party and is a member of parliament from my own home town The debate of whether or not the Congress party could have brought in much advancement to the nation from their years in power is certainly a valid one but is outside the scope of this book's contents Recommended if you are a lover or student of Indian history And here was another magnificent quote from yet another book Alex von Tunzelmann's clever start to her book Indian Summer made a point most tellingly In the beginning, there were two nations One was a vast, mighty and magnificent empire, brilliantly organized and culturally unified, which dominated a massive swath of the earth The other was an undeveloped, semi feudal realm, riven by religious factionalism and barely able to feed its illiterate, diseased and stinking masses The first nation was India The second was England Among other things, this book contains the most passionate defense of the game of cricket I've ever encountered Here Tharoor grants there were some beneficial effects of empire, albeit with a dialectical twist What started out as a pretty straightforward case of western cultural imperialism turned into the negation of the negation as Indians developed their own athletic mastery The great Ukrainian famine of the late twenties and early thirties is usually seen as proof that communism is inherently evil, and Stalin is remembered as maybe worse than Hitler. On the other hand, the Great Bengali famine of the forties is hardly remembered at all in the west, and Churchill is often seen as THE hero of the twentieth century. Both were preventable, state induced catastrophes, and a similar number of people perished in each. Very curious discrepancy, then, in how the perpetrators are remembered. While I was reading this book, I kept thinking that one of the things people on the left could reasonably do is just make up stuff about the extent of murderousness that colonisation has involved The reason being that it is highly unlikely anyone on the left would have the imagination to think up the horrors that were actually inflicted upon the world by the imperial ambitions of Britain or Spain or the costs to indigenous peoples in the US or Australia This book documents horrors upon horrors But infinitely worse is the clear view that is left of the British who were not merely rapacious is thievery from those they pretended to be lifting out of darkness, but who did nothing to alleviate suffering when lifting the smallest finger would have saved many lives from the most horrible of deaths. Winston Churchill does not come out of this at all well As someone born in Ireland, he has never particularly been a hero of mine anyway but in India his name ought to be a curse I'm not going to list the catalogue of crimes against humanity visited upon India by British rule this book provides ample examples and ought to be read for that alone however, I want to focus mostly on something that I believe still holds relevance for us today everywhere on the planet the inhumanity of free market economics when accepted as a moral philosophy. Marx says somewhere that we should consider capitalism as simultaneously the best and the worst system that has ever existed As the author here points out, those in charge of India from Britain were guided by ethical principles that had two great foundations that the market is always right and a vision of Malthus where overpopulation inevitably leads to famine This meant that when

various imposed famines occurred in India those who might otherwise have been expected to do something to reduce the suffering experienced by the people saw any such action as misguided charity that would, in fact, merely make matters worse That the market had spoken and the death of those people counted in millions was ultimately the kindest thing Rather than divert some of the food that was being transported out of these areas where people were starving, the food continued to be moved to Europe and the people dropped like flies The point isn't that such actions were the cynical excesses of a hideous regime content to merely suck the wealth and life out of India and, there is something to this as well, of course but rather that free market economics, with its invisible hands and its dogmatic certainties, allows people to consider their actions or inactions as the height of morality while millions perish This was done to Ireland with the same callous disregard as it was to India That the monsters who committed the crimes remain heroes is difficult to understand other than from the perspective that we still live under the sway of an ideology that still believes the market will provide and any intervention in its free action will ultimately prove counter productive and thus are the greatest of human tragedies visited upon the poor while the wealthy can barely count their riches.

SHASHI THAROOR

AN ERA OF
DARKNESS

THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA



There are still far too many people in Britain who look back fondly on Empire and who have

very little grasp of the real history of Empire Not understanding your own history leads to delusions and in this country xenophobia and racism This is essentially an extended polemical essay based on Tharoor s speech to the Oxford Union in 2015 He essentially looks at the pros and cons of British rule and addresses the alleged benefits of the Raj There aren t any new arguments, it sa condensation of those debated over the years What is disturbing is that although they are not new to me, it certainly not something that I was taught in school I think that at least three quarters of my fellow Brits know virtually nothing about the history of Empire in India, even therecent parts such as Partition This is not an academic text and there is no way that Tharoor can cover over two hundred years of history in detail in a book this size and nor does he attempt to do so He does point the reader to where these sources can be found As can be imagined there were screams of outrage in the British press One hilarious example is an article in History Today which while recognizing famine and massacre, criticizes Tharoor for not mentioning the British contribution to Indian archaeological studies Tharoor runs through the history of the East India Company and the British motives in India, the destruction of local industries and argues the industrial revolution in Britain was part funded by money from India and part from the slave trade He looks at effects on culture, the massacres, and famines and thanks the English for tea, cricket and Wodehouse The British self image involves fair play, standing up to bullies in WW2 and all that sort of thing What they don t teach in school are things like the Bengal famine of 1943, when between three and four million people died There was enough food grain in India to feed them, but this was moved to Europe on the orders of the British government Grain ships from Australia and New Zealand passed throughout the famine There is a direct line of responsibility here and the lives of those who died can be laid directly at the door of Britain It isn t comfortable to contemplate and is not part of the history curriculum and can be laid directly at the door of Churchill, who wasn t a fan of Indians I hate Indians They are a beastly people with a beastly religion Let the Viceroy sit on the back of a giant elephant and trample Gandhi into the dirt The total death toll from famines over the period of the Raj probably tops thirty million Tharoor thinks 35 that rivals Stalin and Mao The book isn t without its flaws, after all it s a polemic Tharoor is a politician, a Congress Party MP and so has an agenda of his own There are a few remarks about Jinnah which speak of today s political situation perhaps However the thrust of the argument is clear and this book should be read by those who go on about Britain s wonderful empire.

New Post

The Pull Out Method
Resurrecting Cybele
The Participants
The Hunted
Holes
Knight of the Purple Ribbon
Cruel Beauty
The Titan's Curse
The Final Reckoning
The Great Hunt
To Darkness Fled
SilverFin
The Oaken Throne
Return of the Guardian-King
Mattimeo

Recent Post

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
The Last Battle
A Tale of Two Cities
The Lord of the Rings
The Last Olympian
The Maze Runner
The Queen of Attolia
The Witch of Blackbird Pond
The Black Cauldron
The Devil Wears Prada
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
If on a Winter's Night a Traveler
Rebecca
The Tale of Despereaux
Fahrenheit 451
The Princess Bride
To Say Nothing of the Dog
Great Expectations
Animal Farm / 1984

Crime and Punishment

The Return of the King

Ender's Game

The Final Empire

Lord Brocktree

The Hero of Ages

The High King

The Pull Out Method

© 2020 - IGNOU Books, IGNOU Result, IGNOU Solved Assignment, IGNOU | Powered by
WordPress.org