

British Colonial Rule in India

Directions: Read the account carefully and answer the questions below.

"England's Account with India" (From the letter of a Native Hindu)â€“ "Great Britainâ€“owe a debt to the Indian peasant, a debt of millions upon millions.' We know that India annually remits to England a sum estimated between 20,000 and 30,000 for home charges, pensions, interest and the like. We know that the people of India are virtually debarred from the highest posts in India, except a very small percentage, and that 15,000,000 are annually paid to European officials employed in India and sending all their savings to Europe. We know that our ancient industries, like weaving and spinning and dyeing, have been killed by European competition, and that the land is so heavily taxed in so many provinces that the peasant cannot save in good years for years of bad harvest. We know that an army is kept in India, and paid for by India, sufficient for England's imperial requirements over the best parts of Africa and Asia. We know that our finances are adjusted by executive councils in India and Great Britain, in which the people of India have no seat and that in the taxation of India we have no voice. These are some of the burdens we bear in India, and these are some of the causes of famine from which we periodically suffer. Will Englishmen add to them the burden of paying for British forts and armies, British establishments, and wars in various parts of Africa and Asia â€“ from the Suez Canal to Mozambique, from the Tigris to the Malay Peninsula? Will the English conscience reconcile itself to thus proceeding in a year when 90,000,000 of people are affected by the worst famine that India has ever known, and 5,000,000 are actually attending relief centers?â€“Is there no statesmen in England at the present day who will give us a new India bill, moderating land tax, reducing expenditure, opening up the higher services to the people of India, and giving them some control over their finances? Is there no Englishman of this generation who will stand up for justice to India?

Article found in the Anti-Imperialism Scrapbook of William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., Garrison Family Papers, Box 287, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA

1. The author mentions several places as being under the control of Great Britain. Locate those places in your atlas and label them on your world map. How extensive was the British Empire? Given the location of other colonies, why do you think the British wanted to retain control of India?
2. According to this account, how did Great Britain exert its control over India? Was having control over India beneficial to Great Britain? Why or why not (cite specific examples).
3. According to this account, what effect did British control have on India? Make a list of the various effects and decide if they were positive or negative for the people of India. Be sure to explain why you think so.
4. Who is the author of this account? Is it important to consider the authorship? Why or why not?
5. Based on what you have read, what do you foresee happening should the British continue to retain control over India?
6. Pretend you are living in India and you agree with the author's statements. Develop a plan of action to achieve your goal - identify five steps that could be taken.