

SHOULD THE BRITS BE ASHAMED OF THEIR EMPIRE?

INFERENCE TABLE TO TEST PROPOSITION:

“BRITS SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF THEIR EMPIRE”

	CLUE	WEIGHT	ODDS
1	2.5M African slaves transported	4	4
2	But victims first enslaved by Africans	$\frac{1}{2}$	2
3	Britain unilaterally enforced the end of the Atlantic slave trade in 1809	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
4	Britons treated locals as inferior	4	2
5	There were some very bad episodes ¹	4	8
6	Most native pops. expanded enormously under British rule	$\frac{1}{4}$	2
7	Better law/health/infrastructure und B. rule	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
8	But things might have improved anyway	2	1
9	Minute force employed ² : Acquiescent pops.	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$
10	Brits usually left peacefully	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{16}$
11	Brits left owning nothing locally	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{64}$
12	Most colonies absorbed funds ³	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{128}$
13	B rarely interfered with local religions	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{256}$
14	Preceding situation usually far worse ⁴	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{1024}$
15	Succeeding situation usually far worse ⁵	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4096}$
16	Most conceivable alternatives much worse ⁶	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{8192}$

Notes on Table:

1 Episodes that come to mind: The ‘Missionary Trick’ practiced on North American Indians by whites who gave them blankets infected with deadly diseases; Amritsar Massacre (1919); Chinese Opium Wars; Boer War....

2 In India tens of thousands of British troops controlled hundreds of millions of Indian citizens: one for every ten thousand.

3 Once a few Mogul baubles had been nicked how was a very rich nation like Britain to squeeze wealth out of a very poor nation like India? Only by enterprise and investment, such

as smuggling tea out China and replanting in India; or taking rubber from Amazonia and cultivating it in Malaya.

4 The Moghuls; Suttee (the burning of widows); Thugee (ritual murder of travellers); Caste system with the rich taking all; Tribal warfare and enslavement in Africa and elsewhere; Chaka, king of the Zulus used to have 5000 people thrown over a precipice one by one for his after-dinner entertainment; regular famines; necromancy; plagues and tropical diseases; Cannibalism in Polynesia and Borneo;No picnic at all.

5. Think only of: Nkrumah (the 'Great Redeemer' in Ghana); Idi Amin (Uganda); Apartheid (South Africa); the Nehru dynasty; Nyerere (Marxism in Tanzania); The Biafran genocide (Nigeria); Bashir (Sudan); Mbeki (AIDS); al Sisi (Egypt); Mugabe (Zimbabwe); Burma (goons); Jamaica (violent gangs); Ayub Khan (Pakistan); Kashmir; Tamil wars (Sri Lanka), Zuma (S Africa).....

6 For instance India might have been colonised by France instead, which has a far more violent colonial record than Britain⁵. Think: Algeria, Indo-China (Vietnam), Madagascar,.....

It seems that the Odds *against* the proposition that the Brits should be ashamed of their Empire are overwhelming. Of course they are my Odds only. But they *are* so overwhelming that it is hard to see how they could be overturned. To get the same Odds, but in *favour* of the proposition, one is going to have to discover no less than 13 *strong* new arguments in its favour. But the main point is that my argument is utterly transparent, uses a wide range of evidence, and employs The Principle of Animal Wisdom (PAW) i.e. very limited individual Weights