India: The Jewel in the Crown
Transcript

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My intention during my three years as Professor of Rhetoric has been to give an overview of British external relations. During my first year, I concentrated on Anglo-American relations; last year I focused on Anglo-European relations; and for my final year, I want to look at Britain and her Empire, beginning this evening with India. The perception of many Britons of the place of India in the Empire is coloured by the peaceful withdrawal of British authority and by the structures of politics and government left behind: a semi-representative political system, a trained civil service and a university system in which to train an élite to run the country. But the story is darker than such a summary implies. One shorthand might be greed, violence, despotism, adaptation, weakness and scuttle. Alternatively, it might be trade and commerce, defence and expansion, economic development, political development, and gradual withdrawal, leaving a former colony well able to govern itself and to develop successfully. The fact that the story ended more or less successfully can mask the fact that the first century and a half of British involvement in India was dominated by violence and despotism. The Great Mutiny of 1857, or the Great Rebellion, or the First War of Independence - all names by which this event is known - was a watershed, forcing changes in the manner in which the British governed India. The subsequent century saw the development of forces for change in both India and Great Britain which climaxed in 1947 and the independence of India - and Pakistan.

The East India Company was the great overseas trading company which dominated British trade with India until the mid-19th century. From the beginning of the 17th century, it held a monopoly of English trade east of the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa. By the end of the 17th century, its most important settlements were on the coast of India. The 1720s are important for another reason, which is that from that period, the French East India Company was also trading on a considerable scale in Asia. Their headquarters were in Pondicherry, close to Madras. Anglo-French conflict is an important reason for the abrupt change in British activities in the sub-continent from largely peaceful trading in a period of stability to wars and conquests: the need to fight the French increased the size of the Company’s arm, thereby massively increasing the Company’s need for revenue. This would have repercussions in due course. Meanwhile, in 1744, fighting broke out between the British and French at sea, a reflection of the fact that a Franco-Spanish alliance had declared war on Great Britain. The British and French fought out their own rivalries in part as allies of contestants for the succession in both regions of Indian ‘country powers’. War ebbed and flowed across southern India with little break between 1746 and 1761: in 1760, the British won a decisive victory at Wandiwash and the French stronghold of Pondicherry surrendered the following year. Arcot became a client state of Great Britain. Under British protection, a Carnatic state was gradually built up which the Company was formally to annex at the end of the 18th century.

Meanwhile, however, in 1756, relations between the Company and the Nawab of Bengal exploded into violence. This is a picture of the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-daulah. The Nawab, as had rulers in other parts of India,
maintained the outward forms of rule by the Mughal Emperor in Delhi, but he was essentially the independent ruler of Bengal. The British presence was becoming too intrusive for an ambitious ruler to leave unregulated, and Nawab feared that he was losing control of part of his territory. He tried to impose constraints on the Company, which the Company, contemptuous of the fighting qualities of the Bengalis, rejected. As a result, he attacked and on 20 June 1765 took control of the British centre, Calcutta. The British who surrendered the fort were well treated, but later that night, some European soldiers got drunk and assaulted the native guards who, in their turn, sought justice from the Nawab. He ordered the confinement of those soldiers who had misbehaved. They were put in a room of 18 feet by 14 feet 10 inches, with only one window. The morning after that hot night, many were found to have died from suffocation. **PICTURE 6: PUTATIVE PICTURE OF THE BLACK HOLE OF CALCUTTA** - The incident gave rise to a huge outcry in England, primarily due to an exaggerated report by the defender of Calcutta, John Holwell: he claimed that 146 died, but modern historians consider that it was more likely 50 [Marshall], and that the Nawab did not intend it to happen.

**PICTURE 7: ROBERT CLIVE, OR CLIVE OF INDIA** - For the Company, it was vital that Bengal be grabbed from the Nawab. The hero was Robert Clive, known to his later admirers as ‘the conqueror of India’. He first went out to India in 1743 as a civil servant for the Company, but soon transferred to the military service; he returned to England in 1753, where he lived, shall we say, in an ostentatious manner. However, he was summoned to return to India when the troubles in Bengal erupted, and he arrived in Madras in 1756, immediately securing the British forces there. He then moved to Calcutta, and in early 1757 he captured Bengal. On the 23rd of June, at the Battle of Plassey, the forces of the East India Company under Clive defeated the army of Siraj-ud-daulah. The battle lasted only a few hours - indeed, the outcome had been decided long before swords were drawn. There was another Bengali, Mir Jafar, who wanted the Nawab’s throne; he was persuaded to throw in his lot with Clive. In addition, the majority of the Nawab’s soldiers were bribed to throw away their weapons, surrender prematurely, or even to turn their weapons against their own army. In short, the Battle of Plassey was won by bribes rather than by bravery. **PICTURE 8: CLIVE OF INDIA** - Nevertheless, as demonstrated by this rather bad picture, Clive's reputation in Great Britain did not suffer thereby.

The new Nawab, Mir Jafar, refused to make what the Company considered would be an adequate grant of funds, and he was deposed in favour of another ruler. Finally, in 1765, Clive took the decision to demand the **diwani**, the right to rule, from the Mughal Emperor: he had decided that only direct control of the whole resources of Bengal would give the Company the funds it required - maintaining an army was an expensive business. **PICTURE 9: MAP OF INDIA IN 1765** - Therefore, by 1765, the East India Company had become the outright ruler of small areas in the south and of the whole of the great province of Bengal; it held the Nawab of Arcot in a tight grip, which gave it effective control over the Carnatic territories of the south-east; and it had taken the Wazir of Oudh under its protection and was maintaining garrisons in his dominions. In short, the Company had become an Indian territorial power. However, it is probably the case that in 1765, British supremacy over the whole of the sub-continent was envisaged by few.

During the second half of the 18th century, the balance of Great Britain’s imperial interests began to shift from the west to the east, a swing which was greatly encouraged by the loss in 1783 of most of her American colonies. When the stimulus was perceived as commerce, no one objected; however, as the British political class gradually realised the form the Company’s activities were taking beyond trade, there was increasing unease. Conquest disturbed them, for a number of reasons. First of all, the resources devoted to military conquest would be better spent on developing commercial links; secondly, the reports of greed and corruption aroused fears that these forces might eat away at traditional British liberties and virtues; and thirdly, following from that, was the question as to whether the Company was the appropriate vehicle for British commercial and administrative activity in India. What began as limited governmental investigations into Company affairs and activities in India ended in 1813 by the British government assuming some responsibility for the Indian Empire.

It is fair to say that this decision was not taken quickly or lightly. The state hardly had the expertise or indeed the resources to deal with the problems of India. However, once Clive had taken Bengal, large territorial revenues poured into the coffers of the Company; this transformed the London view of India, and acted as a spur to those, such as the Prime Minister William Pitt the Elder, who believed that the state had a ‘right’ to a share of the revenues, not least because the state had provided military and naval assistance to the Company in time of need. It took several years for this to be agreed - many in the Commons believed that the Government was illegitimately stealing private wealth - but by 1767, the government established its entitlement to £400,000 a year from the Company. Unfortunately for the Company, even beyond the loss of a proportion of its revenue, they became subject to parliamentary enquiries into its shortcomings: the collapse of the Company's finances in 1772 threatened the stream of revenue from Bengal to Westminster, and acrid reports about greed and corruption refused to go away. **PICTURE 10: WARREN HASTINGS** - The great set piece of this crisis was the parliamentary impeachment of Warren Hastings,
charged with tyranny, rapacity and corruption while the first Governor-General of India from 1774 to 1785. In Bengal, Hastings did not pretend, as Clive had done, that the Nawab remained sovereign; rather, he stripped him of his powers. He required loans from Indian bankers, whether they would or no: essentially, it was claimed at his trial, he extorted money from them. However, he also created an efficient and economical system for collecting the land revenue, the main source of the Company’s financial stability. **PICTURE 11: POLITICAL CARTOON ATTACKING THE EAST INDIA COMPANY** - What he did not do was what virtually every other official in India did: trade on his own account, and extract what funds he could from the Indians, a habit greatly facilitated by conquest - as one Company official pointed out, it was a question of ‘whether it should go into a blackman’s pocket or mine’. The picture shows the reaction of one cartoonist to the activities of the Company and its servants. The approach of the Company to the payment of its employees was small salary and large perquisites; Hastings, rather, expended much of his princely salary on institutions in Bengal and on purchasing Mughal manuscripts and works of art. When he returned to England, he carried back a modest £80,000 - he later claimed that he was astonished at his own moderation. But he was dogged by implacable enemies from his days in India, and although he was acquitted of all charges, the ten-year ordeal destroyed his financial resources. Fortunately, the Company came to his rescue, and he was able to live out his years in some comfort. But he refused a peerage.

One outcome of the political fighting was the passage of the India Act of 1784, again under William Pitt. One real problem of the Company’s activities in India was the mixing up together of its commercial activities and its revenue-collecting activities. If it was primarily a company, why was it collecting taxes? If it was a government, why was it involved in trade? What this act required was that the government should review and if necessary revise the Company’s despatches sending out instructions to India. Because of the confusion of activities, the government began to interfere in commercial matters, causing a great deal of tension. However, it now had the upper hand, a power made manifest in 1813 with the renewal of the Company’s charter, which underlined the Crown’s ‘undoubted sovereignty’ over all of the East India Company’s territories.

The years after the passage of this act saw a social transformation in India. Under what was called the ‘Permanent Settlement’, tax levels on the land in Bengal were fixed ‘for ever’, but at a very high level, and rights to land were thereby created that could be bought and sold. Many of the old landowners, unable to pay the taxes, sold out, whilst tens of thousands of high-caste Bengali Hindus consolidated their position within the framework of the Permanent Settlement. Thousands of them entered the world of service and trade in what was now the pre-eminent town of Calcutta; many of them were especially keen to have a liberal English education. A new élite was gradually created, one which had perforce to support the British. The members of this élite were vastly more influential with the British than were the Mughal noblemen and former Rajas: the hierarchy was truly turned upside down.

During the period of the late 18th century to the mid-19th century, the imposition of despotism, a terrible economic depression, and the displacement of Indians from leading offices of wealth and power all took place. The first of these stemmed from the change in ideas as to how to govern India. Whilst the earlier imperialists had notions about basing governance on English principles, those now in charge moved to the idea of Oriental despotism: they were primarily military commanders, and preferred to have all law and power centralised in the hands of the Company. Military power was to be used both for external defence and for the consolidation of power. Roughly two million armed men were wandering around the provinces looking for military jobs, and the countryside was also infested with bandits; the Company determined that these threats had to be eliminated. The problem here was that military justice clashed with ideas of the rule of law. As the military frontier made headroads into civil society, army commanders were inclined to suspend civil justice and enforce martial law, executing men on the slightest of pretences. In other words, the rulers considered themselves above the law.

At the same time, changes instituted by the Company stimulated a terrible economic depression which lasted for over twenty years. For one thing, the sweeping away of native courts and soldiers eliminated their purchasing power; unfortunately, the new rulers bought Western, not local, goods, in addition to which wealth became increasingly concentrated in the main colonial centres. As well, much less money flowed into India in payment for Indian exports, which meant less domestic purchasing power. It did not help that the Company no longer used Indian commercial and banking systems, but ran its own. In short, demand contracted, unemployment rose, and millions descended into poverty.

This combination of despotic rule and economic depression was the context within which Indian society was forced into what the British thought of as their traditional way of life. Many of those who had been artisans, soldiers and servants now became peasants tied by heavy taxes to the land; the movement of travellers was restricted; and those who worked for the Company and its governing structures, whilst gaining privileges thereby, were nevertheless prevented from rising above a certain level: the soldier never became an officer, a business employee never a director. These privileged soldiers and servants were
selected according to criteria of caste and race and blood, thereby emphasising their importance in a way never before prescribed, and freezing these attributes as marks of status. Privilege and power amongst the Indians themselves became frozen.

PICTURE 12: LORD DALHOUSIE - It was the British themselves who shook the edifice. This is a picture of Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General from 1846 to 1856. Dalhousie had a strong belief in the superiority of British principles and procedures. It followed that British rule was more beneficial to the Indians than that of their own princes, and he therefore annexed territories whenever he could. He fought the second Sikh War in 1848-49 and annexed the Punjab. He introduced the Doctrine of Lapse: formerly, when the ruling family of a state lacked a direct heir, they adopted one; Dalhousie now forbade the right of adoption, and if a ruling family lacked a natural heir, Dalhousie annexed the state. In this manner, six formerly independent states were added to the Indian Empire.

He made changes to the system. He re-organised the administration; he laid down the main lines of development of the railway system, set up telegraphs and reformed the postal system; public works projects, such as the construction of roads and bridges, were undertaken. He promoted mass education and laid plans for the first universities (the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were opened in 1857 after his departure). But he also encouraged Anglican missionaries, which threatened Hindu and Muslim religious leaders, whose authority had been enhanced by the earlier withdrawal of state authority over them; he attacked native customs, including suttee or the burning of widows; he spurned the new ‘aristocracy’, repudiated caste and threatened their status and economic privileges; and, most dangerous of all, he tried to produce a more disciplined, European-style, Bengal army, thereby threatening the status and privileges of the soldiers, not least that of avoiding flogging. He failed to restrain the blatant greed for land and money which drove the Briton in India, especially those of the lower middle class, which greatly offended Indians of rank, who were still looked up to by most Indians as their natural leaders. The combination of simmering discontent, economic depression and the mutiny of many of the Bengal soldiers sparked off the Great Rebellion of 1857, which threatened to destroy a substantial portion of the Indian Empire.

PICTURE 13: MAP OF THE REBELLION - This map shows the main areas of conflict. On the 10th of May 1857, sepoys or Indian soldiers, drawn mainly from Muslim units from Bengal, mutinied in Meerut. The rebels marched to Delhi and offered their services to the Mughal emperor; for the next year much of north and central India were in revolt against the British. Some of the long- and medium-term causes of the insurrection have already been indicated; the immediate cause was rifle cartridges. There was a very convincing rumour that the cartridges had been greased by a combination of pig and cow fat, offensive to the religious beliefs of both Hindu and Muslim; because the sepoys had to bite off the end of the cartridge, he had either to taste the fat or be flogged. Under threat by their British officers, the soldiers mutinied. The revolt of the Bengal Army neutralised British power in the central Ganges valley and opened the way for widespread attacks by the civilians as well, who attacked Company institutions such as courts and revenue treasuries, which had strengthened the rights of the new landlords against the peasants; they also attacked Europeans, both male and female.

PICTURE 14: THE MUTINY - Here is a contemporary picture of the fighting. One point which emerges is that sepoys fought on both sides - indeed, the majority sided with the British. The Punjab remained loyal, and provided a steady stream of Sikh and Pathan recruits; the Madras and Bombay armies remained loyal; and most of the princely states remained untouched. In the areas of fighting in the north and in central India, it was effectively a civil war. The unprepared British were terrified; however, the prompt arrival of British troops re-directed from duties in China and the Persian Gulf enabled them to neutralise Bengal and most of Bihar. As they regained strength, they attacked the rebels with a savagery which was matched by that of their enemies. For the British both in India and in Great Britain itself, the slaughter at Kanpur was convincing evidence of the essential barbarity of the Indian. The Nana Sahib, with some reluctance, became leader of the rebels in that area and, after a three-week siege, took the surrender of the 400 British in Kanpur, to whom he gave a safe-conduct. As they boarded boats to take them downriver to Allahabad, many were massacred. Passions were running high, because reports had arrived of vicious British reprisals at Varanasi, followed by the news of a line of gibbets along the road to Allahabad. However, the Nana Sahib, far from ordering the massacre, organised the rescue of some British women who had been abducted during the chaos. They, along with other surviving women and children, perhaps 200 in all, were lodged under his protection. With the avenging British advancing rapidly from Allahabad, the idea seems to have been to use them as hostages. But they were not. As the insurgent commanders discussed escape, the order was given to kill them all. The soldiers did not wish to do it, so five men, two of whom were actually butchers, were recruited from the baszaar, and they proceeded to hack them to death. As one historian has noted, ‘for sheer barbarity this “massacre of the innocents” was rivalled only by the disgusting deaths devised for dozens of equally innocent Indians by way of British reprisal.’ [Keay] PICTURE 15: ANOTHER PICTURE OF THE MUTINY - The last major sepoy rebels surrendered on the 21st of June 1858 at Gwalior, one of the principal centres of the revolt, but the fighting
This rebellion or civil war was a turning point. In May 1858, the British exiled the Mughal Emperor to Burma, which they also controlled, thus formally ending the Mughal Empire. **PICTURE 16: CARTOON SHOWING THE DEMISE OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY** - But, as this cartoon showing the blowing-up of the East India Company illustrates, it too was abolished, and the British government established direct rule under the British Crown. Queen Victoria was now Queen of India and, as in Great Britain itself, her position was buttressed by an hierarchy of hereditary nobles and the award of honours. The Star of India, a royal order of Indian knights, was introduced in 1861, and the first tour by a member of the royal family took place in 1869. The position of Secretary of State for India was established, and he would be represented in India by a viceroy with his headquarters in Calcutta, which now replaced Delhi as the capital. A major Indian grievance was eliminated by the renunciation in 1858 of the ‘doctrine of lapse’. About 40% of Indian territory and 20-25% of the population remained under the control of 562 princes of diverse religions and ethnicity. Their love of ceremonial pomp became proverbial, while their domains lagged behind the British-controlled territory in terms of social and political transformation. **PICTURE 17: BENJAMIN DISRAELI** - The Conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli was a strong supporter of the Empire, and he believed it needed a strong symbol which would tie it to the affections of the British people. **PICTURE 18: QUEEN VICTORIA AS EMPRESS OF INDIA** - In 1876, on his advice, the Queen announced to Parliament that, satisfied that her Indian subjects were, as she said, ‘happy under My rule and loyal to My throne,’ it was now appropriate for her to assume a new title. It was later revealed that she was now the Empress of India, and in January 1877, ‘in a vast tented city around the Ridge whence British forces had recaptured Delhi some twenty years earlier, the new imperium was solemnised at an Imperial Assemblage’, with an attendance of 84,000. [Keay]

**PICTURE 19: LORD AND LADY CURZON AT A DURBAR** - Over the following decades, the British relationship with India developed in different ways. The panoply of British power developed. This picture shows the Viceroy Lord Curzon and Lady Curzon in a formal moment, **PICTURE 20: THE TIGER HUNT** - while this one shows them at play - or at least Lord Curzon at play, since Lady Curzon looks less than thrilled with her position. At the same time, the barriers went up against the Indians, even those loyal and educated Indians of rank. British attitudes shifted from relative openness to dislike and distrust, and even racial xenophobia. British families and their servants lived in cantonments at a distance from Indian settlements, and male social clubs became symbols of exclusivity and snobbery. Their children were sent back to Great Britain to be educated. The strict subordination to the British of both Indians and those of mixed race was strongly enforced by the memsahibs. In short, analogies with the relationship of American whites to their former slaves easily come to mind.

More positively, there was a gradual development of opportunities for Indians to take part in government. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 with the object of obtaining a greater share in government for educated Indians, but, it must be said, the Congress was considerably more influential after the First World War than it was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The drive for political change came from the British themselves, in particular from Liberal Party politicians. The first steps towards self-government were taken in the late 19th century with the appointment of Indian counselors to advise the viceroy and the establishment of provincial councils with Indian members; participation in legislative councils was subsequently widened with the Indian Councils Act of 1892. **PICTURE 21: JOHN MORLEY AND LORD MINTO** - These two pictures are of John Morley, Secretary of State for India, and Lord Minto, his Viceroy in India. Their Government of India Act of 1909 gave Indians limited roles in the central and provincial legislatures, or councils. Where once they had been appointed, some were now to be elected. The Government also granted separate electorates and communal representation for Muslims and Hindus, a move welcomed by the Muslim League, which felt threatened by the vast preponderance of Hindus, but opposed by Congress. This particular decision, which entrenched these positions, was perhaps unwise.

However, the Morley-Minto reforms were a milestone, because, step by step, the elective principle was introduced into membership of Indian legislative councils, even though the electorate was limited in the first instance to a small group of upper-class Indians. Communal electorates were later extended to other communities and made group identification through religion a factor in Indian politics. **PICTURE 22: INDIAN SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR I** - The claims of Indians for self-government were strengthened by their participation in the First World War, when 1.5 million Britons and Indians left India to fight. India also contributed over £146 million towards the war, and suffered both inflation and shortages of essentials. [Brown] Their contribution was substantial and crucial. The picture shows the cover of a popular song entitled ‘India Replies’, in this case to the call for the help of the Empire. **PICTURE 23: THE IMPERIAL WAR CABINET** -
Indeed, by 1917 their contribution was such that India had native representation in the Imperial War Cabinet, as demonstrated by the two gentlemen at the left in the second row.

This crucial contribution, and the repeated statements by the Western allies that the war was being fought for democracy and the rights of nations, raised Indian aspirations for greater self-government. In August 1917 the British government formally announced a policy of ‘increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.’ Embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, these reforms were the maximum concessions the British were prepared to make. The franchise was extended and increased authority was given to centre and provincial legislative councils, but the viceroy remained responsible to London, not to an Indian-based legislative body.

PICTURE 24: AMRITSAR - To the surprise of the British, some of whom mumbled about ingratitude, the 1919 reforms did not satisfy Indian political demands. The British repressed opposition, and reimposed restrictions on movement and on the press. Nevertheless, there were mass protests across the subcontinent, instigated by the Indian National Congress. In April 1919 a peaceful demonstration in Amritsar quickly descended into violence. In response to arson attacks on British banks, Government offices and private property, and the general loss of control in the city, the British Governor of the Punjab, Sir Michael O’Dwyer, declared martial law. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer took over control of the city. His instructions stated that ‘No gatherings of persons nor processions of any sort will be allowed. All gatherings will be fired on.’ On 12 April Dyer issued a proclamation declaring ‘all meetings and gatherings’ of more than 5 people forbidden. On 13 April, thousands of Indians were gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh or Park in the heart of Amritsar city; this was the day when Sikhs celebrated the beginning of the harvest by coming together in community fairs. The gathering was in defiance of the proclamation. British and Gurkha troops marched to the Bagh and at the command of General Dyer opened fire, concentrating on the areas where the crowd was thickest. The firing lasted for about 10 minutes. The only way out of the park was manned by the troops, and so people could not escape. When the firing ended, hundreds had been killed, including a 7-week-old baby, and thousands injured. Back in his headquarters, Dyer reported to his superiors that he had been ‘confronted by a revolutionary army;’ and had been obliged ‘to teach a moral lesson to the Punjab.’ He was supported by the Governor. In the storm of outrage which followed, Dyer was promoted to major-general and retired. Although the event was condemned worldwide, he had significant support at home, but it made the army extremely nervous about again policing civil disobedience.

PICTURE 25: MAHATMA GANDHI - Most importantly, the massacre provided very great impetus for the movement for freedom and paved the way for Gandhi’s Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920 and 1921. Gandhi was a member of Congress, and he led it in a general campaign of nonviolent noncooperation during the 1920s and 1930s. At the 10-year review of the 1919 Act, prospects of further reforms encouraged greater agitation and showers of demands from various groups. The Simon Commission, whose duty it was to take evidence and make recommendations, recommended further constitutional change, but it was not until 1935 that a new Government of India Act was passed. What was at issue was whether or not there would be a continuation of separate electorates.

PICTURE 26: JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH - You will probably recognise these two pictures, as you recognised Gandhi. On the left is Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader with Gandhi of the Congress Party. On the right is Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League. The Congress Party insisted on a unified electorate; given the minority status of Muslims, Jinnah not surprisingly insisted on the continuation of separate electorates: his argument was that Muslims and Hindus were two separate nations. The decision of the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald was that the system of separate electorates at both central and provincial levels would continue.

At the outset of the Second World War, Great Britain made India a belligerent without consulting Indian elected councils. This angered Indian officials, and led Congress to declare that India would not support the war effort until it had been granted complete independence. Agreement was therefore reached between them that India would be granted full independence once the Axis powers were defeated, if India gave her full co-operation during the war.

In the winter of 1945-46, the British worked with Congress and the Muslim League to devise a governmental structure for the soon-to-be independent state. However, Congress and the League could not agree, and by mid-August 1946 a frenzy of rioting ensued between Hindus and Muslims. PICTURE 27: VICEROY THE LORD MOUNTBATTEN, LADY MOUNTBATTEN AND GANDHI - In March 1947, Lord Mountbatten was sent to India as Viceroy: this is a picture of him, Lady Mountbatten and Gandhi. Mountbatten feared the forced evacuation of British troops. He suggested the partition of the Punjab and Bengal in the face of raging civil war, but Gandhi and Nehru both refused: Gandhi suggested that Mountbatten offer Jinnah the leadership of a
united India, but Nehru would not agree. In July 1947, Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, which set a deadline of midnight on August 14-15 for ‘demarcation of the dominions of India ’ into India and East and West Pakistan. **MAP OF PARTITION** - This map shows the Partition, as a result of which 10 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fled their homes to seek sanctuary across the line. As you can see, the Punjab was caught in the middle, and Sikhs bore the brunt of the suffering. **PICTURES 29-30: FLIGHT** - These next two pictures show the flight of those caught on the wrong side. **PICTURE 31: DEATH** - This picture shows the fate of those who failed to escape.

**PICTURE 32: INDIA TODAY** - This map of India today reflects the history of British relations with India. Three of the four largest cities, Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, owe their early leap into wealth and power to the East India Company. Lucknow and Kanpur, Allahabad and Amritsar, hold deep memories of terror and slaughter. Pakistan and Bangladesh reflect the early insistence of the British on treating the two religious communities as though a deep crevasse separated them - and by 1947, one did. After 1783, India increasingly became the major imperial concern of the British, who saw parts of the rest of the Empire in geopolitical relation to India - the control of the Suez Canal is one obvious example. Their negotiations with the representatives of Indian political pressure groups were driven not by the desire to one day give India her independence: rather, it was to find some way to keep her within the Empire and under some control - her army was needed, and in general she was the most important part of the Empire. But by the beginning of the Second World War - and certainly by its end - India’s independence was assured. The Labour Government had backed independence from the late 1920s and wished to free India as soon as possible. But it is also true to say that Great Britain no longer had the resources, the strength or the will to restrain India from embarking on the path she wished to take. India now received her independence without embarking on war with the imperial centre - unlike the case with the Dutch and French Empires. Great Britain left behind some appalling historical memories, but she also bequeathed a democratic political system, a trained civil service, an educational system, a transport system of some magnitude - India had the 4th largest railway system in the world - and the English language. All of these still remain. It is not such a contemptible legacy.

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