

GCSE Modern World History

End of Empire, c.1919–69

Focus

The British Empire was the largest Empire in the history of the world, and it lasted for over 400 years. It reached its peak in 1920, yet forty years later this Empire was virtually gone. A similar story applies to other European empires. In this chapter you will focus on two case studies of decolonisation:

- 1 India, 1919–49
- 2 Kenya, 1945–63

and see what their stories tell you about the reasons for and the impact of decolonisation.

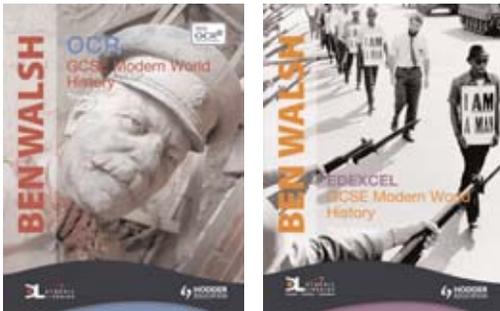
You will investigate:

- ◆ the reasons why Britain's Empire declined in the twentieth Century
- ◆ why demands for independence grew
- ◆ how Britain dealt with the process of decolonisation
- ◆ why the struggles for independence turned bitter.

This chapter covers

- ◆ OCR's *End of Empire c.1919–1969* Paper 1 Depth Study
- ◆ Edexcel's *The Indian subcontinent: The road to independence 1918–47* Unit 4 Controlled Assessment Option CA7.

It is designed for use alongside these two books:

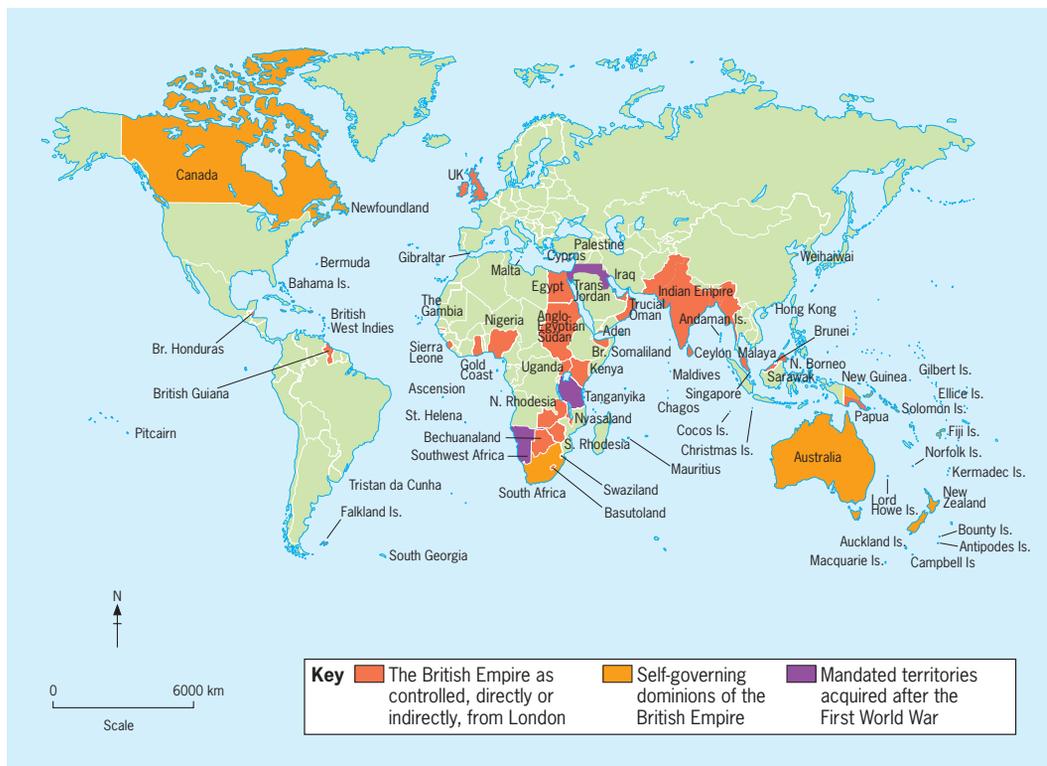


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Introduction: Why did the British Empire decline in the twentieth century?

SOURCE 1



The British Empire at its height in 1920.

The British Empire: for and against!

Source 1 shows the size and scale of the British Empire at its height. Britain emerged victorious from the First World War in 1918. In the peace treaties which followed the war even more territories were added to the Empire, making it the largest ever seen.

Even at its height, the British Empire divided opinions. There were critics:

- Some believed the Empire was a force for greed, exploitation and corruption, and that it held back the development of the colonies which made up the Empire (see Source 2).
- Many British people, including politicians from the new and growing Labour Party, felt that it was wrong to rule other countries against their wishes.

There were also strong supporters of Empire:

- Many claimed that the Empire brought good government and moral leadership to undeveloped parts of the world.
- They pointed to the fact that in India the introduction of the English language helped the many different peoples of India to communicate with each other.
- They also argued that the British Empire was a global market place which benefited Britain and the colonies which sent their goods to Britain (see Source 3).
- There were plenty of politicians in Britain, especially in the Conservative Party, who saw the Empire as essential to Britain. They believed that without the Empire Britain would lose its status as a great power. The leading figure among politicians who thought this way was Winston Churchill.

SOURCE 2

The old century is very nearly out, and leaves the world in a pretty pass, and the British empire is playing the devil in it as never an empire before on so large a scale ... In South Africa our troops are burning farms, and the Queen and the two Houses of Parliament thank God publicly and vote through the money for this work ... So ends the famous nineteenth century in which we were so proud to be born.

Wilfred Blunt, a British diplomat and writer, commenting on the British Empire around 1900.



A poster produced by the Empire Marketing Board in 1925. The Empire Marketing Board was set up to promote trade links within the Empire but also to counter claims that the British Empire exploited its colonies.

SOURCE 4

- 1 Study Source 3 carefully. What is the poster saying about the Empire?
- 2 How does the poster try to get its message across?
- 3 How would:
 - a) a supporter or
 - b) a critic of the British Empire react to Source 3?



British territories in the twenty-first century.

Focus Task

What was the extent of the British Empire?

The two maps show the broad outlines, but do some internet research to find some hard facts.

- 1 On your own copy of Source 1 add boxes and labels to show the approximate population and area of the countries in the Empire. Colour code your map to show: population density; major religions; economic and industrial development; extent of control/freedom from London.
- 2 What was the population and area of the British Empire in 1970?
- 3 From what you already know about empires in history, draw up a list of all the factors that you think might have caused this change.

Factors for change

Virtually all countries in the former British Empire are now independent – i.e. they rule themselves. Through this chapter you will be investigating the different factors that led to these territories becoming independent.

Focus Task

Why did Britain's Empire decline in the twentieth century?

Through the following chapter you will be gathering evidence of how the following factors helped bring about the decline of the British Empire. Make your own copy of this table and fill it in as you work through this chapter. You will be prompted to add to the table every few pages with a reminder like this, but you don't need to limit yourself to that.

Factor	Example	Explanation (how this caused the decline of the British Empire)
Actions by people in Britain		
Actions by politicians in Britain		
Actions by people in the colonies		
Actions by politicians in the colonies		
Events (e.g. the Second World War)		
Actions by other countries (e.g. the USA)		

SOURCE 1

It is because of the divisions between Indian rulers that almost the whole of Hindostan [the northern half of India], have come into the possession of the English . . . Two princes fight for the same country, one of them applies to the English, and informs them how to take control of it. The English help him take control and make some treaty or agreement with the prince for him to rule it until they have a good knowledge of the country. Then they bring in an army and overthrow the prince and put some other ruler in power who will do what they say.

An Indian historian, Gholan Hossein Khan, writing in 1789 about British control of India.

Case Study 1 India: The road to independence

How did British rule in India work?

In 1930 Britain had a population of around 46 million. And yet it ruled India which had a population of around 330 million. It may seem puzzling that this was possible, but a closer look at India and British rule allows us to see how it worked. In simple terms, the population of India was very diverse and included people from many different races, religions and social classes, and cultures who spoke different languages. So in fact the British were ruling over many different groups. These divisions were the foundation of British rule and were the means to achieve and keep power.

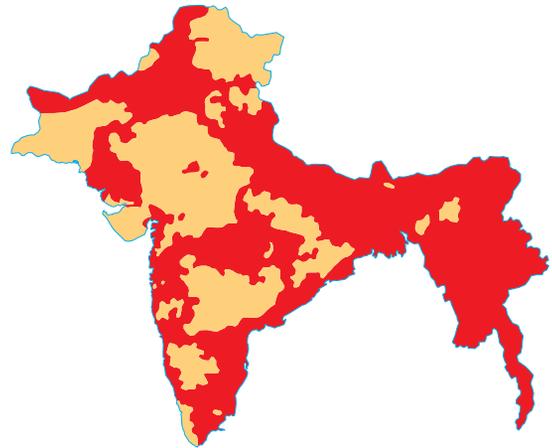
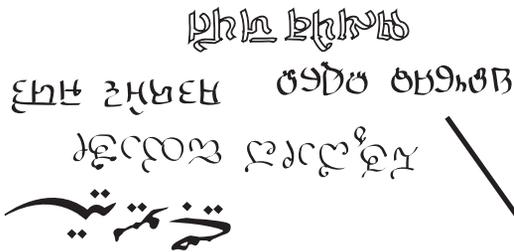
Britain's first involvement in the subcontinent came in the 1700s. In 1756–63 British forces fought with the French for the right to control the valuable trade with India. During that war Britain allied with some Indian princes while the French allied with others. The British won that war, and continued their policy of allying with some Indian princes against others (see Source 1). By the late 1700s India was ruled either directly by Britain or by rulers allied to Britain.

British politicians were able to portray British rule (the Raj) as an honest and fair authority which kept the peace between the many different groups and made sure they were all treated equally and fairly. There was some truth in this view but many historians believe that in reality the British Raj was founded on a policy of 'divide and rule'. By the end of the First World War significant challenges to British rule were on the way. A range of different Nationalist groups were leading the call for greater independence for India.

SOURCE 2

LANGUAGES

- Over 1,000 languages
- Many different writing systems



Key

- British rule through princes
- Direct British rule

DIVISIONS IN INDIA IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

ETHNIC GROUPS

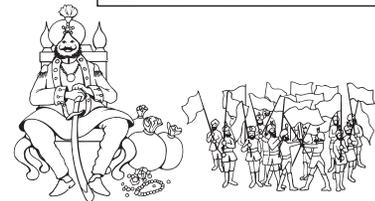
- Turko-Iranian
- Indo-Aryan
- Scytho-Dravidian
- Aro-Dravidian
- Mongolo-Dravidian
- Monogoloid
- Dravidian



RELIGION
(Figures are approx.)



- Hindu (250 million)
- Muslim (8 million)
- Sikhs (5 million)
- Other



OVER 400 INDIVIDUAL STATES RULED BY PRINCES

Divisions in India in the early twentieth century.

Opponents of British rule

The **Indian National Congress** was founded in 1885 by educated middle-class Indians. By the late 1800s there were thousands of such middle-class Indians who spoke English, had had an English education and worked mainly in the civil service – running the country. It was they who made British rule work. They wanted the opportunity to reach the top jobs in the civil service. They also wanted India to have its own government so that men like them would become MPs. They saw the Congress as a path towards this. The Congress was intended as an organisation to debate important issues. However, to start with, the Congress had very little impact on British attitudes.

At first Congress was an organisation for educated, middle-class Indians. As the twentieth century wore on Congress became more of a mass movement. It became the focus of political opposition to British rule – and for Indian nationalism (nationalism is the belief that each nation should rule itself for its own benefit and not be ruled by another nation). Congress was committed to peaceful methods of campaigning but there were radical elements who called for and used violent protests.

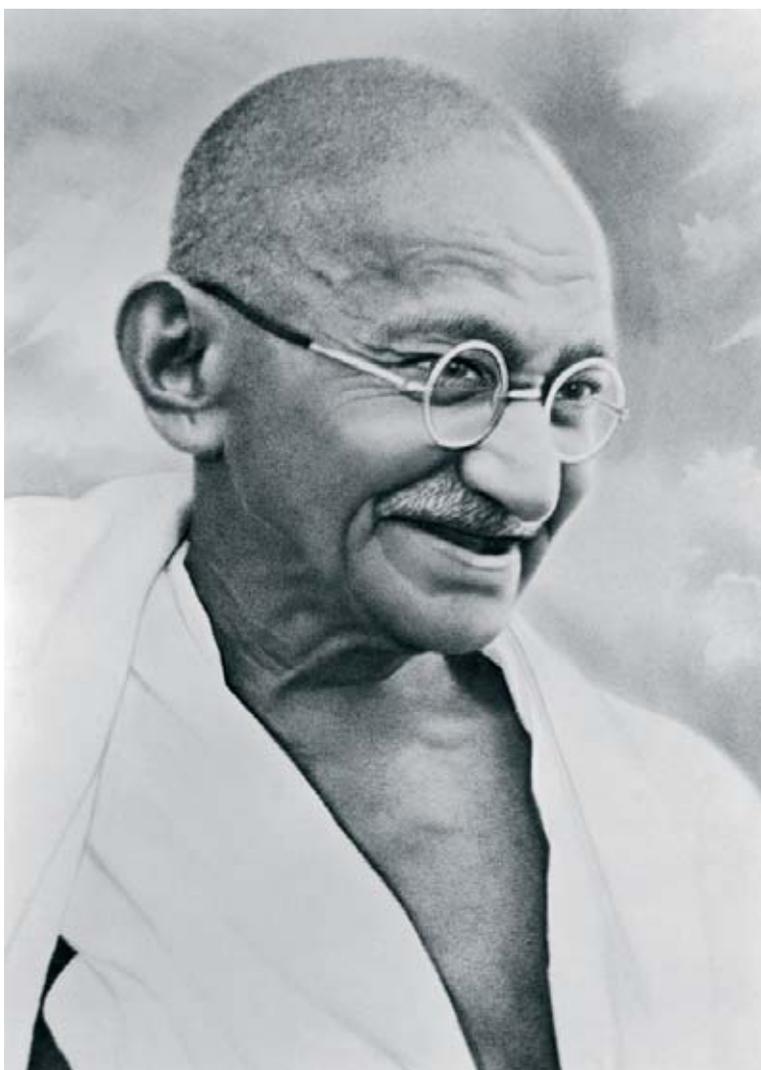
Another important organisation you need to know about is the **Muslim League**. This was founded in 1906, partly because many Muslims believed that the Congress was dominated by Hindus who represented themselves and not Muslims. Like Congress, the Muslim League began as an organisation for the educated middle class but developed into more of a mass movement.

As well as these two important organisations there are three individuals who played a key role in events in India up to 1947.

Profile

Mohandas Gandhi

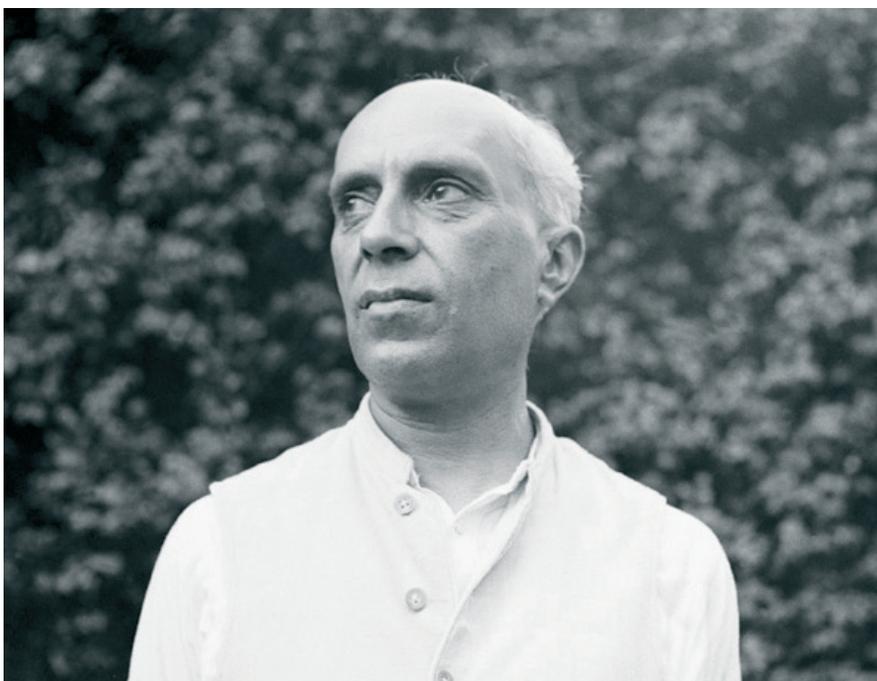
- Usually referred to as Mahatma (Great Soul).
- Born in Gujarat in October 1869 to a middle-class Indian family.
- Educated to university level and trained as a lawyer in London.
- Took a job with an Indian law firm in South Africa and was appalled by the treatment of immigrant Indian workers in South Africa.
- Spent 20 years campaigning for better treatment for immigrants. During this time he developed his ideas on 'satyagraha' ('devotion to truth'). This was a form of protest inspired by his Hindu religion which used a combination of non-violent protest and moral pressure. In 1914, the South African government conceded to many of Gandhi's demands.
- Returned to India in 1919 to lead protests against British rule using the same 'satyagraha' methods.
- Became dominant figure in Indian politics by 1920.
- He transformed the Indian National Congress, using a programme of mass, but peaceful, non-cooperation with the British (see pages 9–10).
- Represented the Indian National Congress at the London Round Table Conference in 1931.
- Resigned as leader of Congress in 1934 but remained a key figure in the campaign for Indian independence.
- Assassinated in 1947 by a Hindu fanatic who claimed Gandhi favoured Muslims too much.



Profile

Jawaharlal Nehru

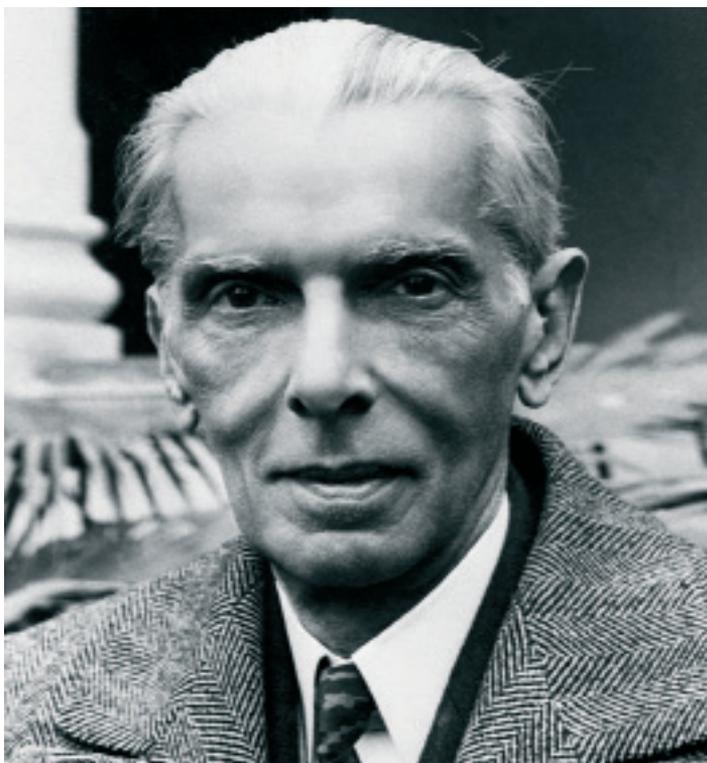
- Born in Allahabad in 1889 to a wealthy Hindu Kashmiri Brahmin family. Educated in England and then returned to India to practise as a lawyer in 1912.
- Joined the Indian National Congress in 1919 and was heavily influenced by Gandhi.
- Imprisoned many times by the British in the 1920s and 1930s for civil disobedience.
- Elected President of Congress in 1928 and generally seen as Gandhi's successor by 1945.
- Negotiated the final stages of Indian independence 1945–47. Unsuccessfully opposed the division of India into Muslim and Hindu states in 1947.
- On 15 August 1947, Nehru became the first prime minister of independent India. He held the post until his death in 1964.



Profile

Mohammed Ali Jinnah

- Born 1876 in Karachi. Father was a prosperous Muslim merchant.
- Educated in England and then became a lawyer in Bombay.
- Joined the Congress and then the Muslim League in 1913. By 1916 he was elected President.
- Opposed Congress campaigns against British rule in 1920s and resigned from the movement. Jinnah feared that an independent India would be dominated by Hindus and would discriminate against Muslims.
- Conflict between the Muslim League and Congress continued throughout the 1930s. Jinnah had always believed that Hindu–Muslim unity was possible, but reluctantly came to the view that partition was necessary to safeguard the rights of Indian Muslims.
- Jinnah's campaigns on behalf of Muslims led the British to partition India and create the state of Pakistan on 14 August 1947.
- Jinnah became the first governor general of Pakistan, but died of tuberculosis on 11 September 1948.



Focus Task

How important were individuals in the Indian independence movement?

Study the three profiles on these two pages. Based on the profiles, hold a class vote to see which of the three figures you think was the most significant. When you finish your study of Indian independence, hold the vote again and see if any views have changed.

Indian independence: the 1920s and 1930s

Inching forward

Between 1900 and 1914 British rule in India remained secure but there were some important developments.

- **1905:** In 1905 the British tried to partition the province of Bengal to make it easier to control. Congress led an effective campaign of protest. This campaign was important because it was the first really effective use of an economic boycott of British goods. It showed that non-violent forms of protest could be very effective. It also made large numbers of ordinary Indians aware of the Congress and its aims.
- **1909:** Soon afterwards, in 1909, the new British viceroy, Lord Minto, passed the Government of India Act. This Act created provincial councils. They had little power but voting and taking part in these councils gave many Indians their first experience of politics. There were separate organisations to represent Muslims, and this development was to prove very significant in India's later history.
- **1914:** In 1914 India went to war as part of the British Empire. Around 1 million soldiers faced the horrors of war and India paid for this contribution itself. At the same time India faced shortages of food and other goods and also a clampdown on political activities.
- **1916:** The war changed public opinion in India decisively. One Nationalist leader believed it put the clock forward fifty years. At Lucknow in 1916 the Muslim League and the different wings of the Congress movement agreed to work together for Indian independence.
- **1918:** Proposals were drawn up for a new Government of India Act. This extended the role of the provincial councils to cover areas such as education, health and agriculture. Indians could also become ministers in these councils. At the same time the British still controlled areas such as taxation and the military. The Act became law in 1919.

The Amritsar Massacre

The 1919 Government of India Act outraged supporters of the Empire at home in Britain. It upset many members of Congress even more. There were widespread protests, many of which resulted in violence. The British passed emergency measures known as the Rowlatt Act in March 1919. Gandhi was extremely critical of these measures and more protests followed (see Source 7 on page 10). One of these demonstrations was in Amritsar in the Punjab on 13 April 1919. The British commander in the area was Brigadier Rex Dyer. He wanted to crush the demonstration and make an example for other protesters. He ordered his troops to open fire on the unarmed crowd. They fired 1,650 bullets and killed around 400 protesters (although some estimates put the numbers much higher). The implications of this event were huge.

SOURCE 3

Nineteen nineteen was a decisive year in Indian history. For those who ran and guarded the Raj, it was the year when another mutiny was averted by strong men and hard measures. They saved the Raj; but they lost it untold numbers of friends and severely damaged its reputation for wisdom and humanity. Indians were alternately stunned and enraged by the terrible events in the Punjab. The old exclusive Congress was reborn as a dynamic mass movement which embraced the peasantry and the growing class of industrial workers . . . The year which marked a turning point in India's history also witnessed a parting of the ways between Britons and Indians.

Extract from *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* by Lawrence James, published in 1997.



A cartoon from December 1916 commenting on British rule in India and Ireland. At this time British forces were also fighting an uprising against British rule in Ireland. The cartoonist, David Low, was a critic of British rule in India and Ireland.

Boycotts

The protests continued for another three years. Gandhi was the key figure and organiser. He organised a boycott of British rule, asking Indians to ignore British schools, courts, taxes and other institutions. He understood that his forms of non-violent, moral protest were especially effective against the British. They claimed to rule India for the good of Indians and because they respected the law. Violent protesters could always be dismissed as extremists, but Gandhi's protests made British rule look like a violent empire clinging on to land against the wishes of its people. Gandhi also revolutionised Congress's membership and organisation. He expanded the movement by recruiting local *kisan* or peasant organisations. He was able to link the cause of Indian independence with the poverty and misery of millions of India's poorest people.

The main disadvantage of this approach was that the movement became harder to control. Gandhi called off the campaign in 1922 because many protests were leading to violence, often between Hindu and Muslim communities. In Malabar, for example, over 2,000 were killed. In truth, however, the campaign had been running out of steam anyway. The British Raj had survived this challenge. Gandhi stepped back from political action and concentrated on social welfare projects for the poor.

The Simon Commission

For the next six years Congress was hampered by internal arguments and the Raj stood firm. The British government, however, was becoming concerned at the increasing number of violent clashes between Muslims and Hindus in different parts of India. A new Viceroy, Lord Irwin, was appointed. He decided that India could be pacified by giving Indians further self-government and he set up a commission under Sir John Simon to investigate how. The Simon Commission published its findings in 1929. Congress rejected the proposals because they did not go far enough. Congress demanded that India be given Dominion status, along the same lines as Canada or Australia. At the same time Muslims were anxious about India becoming an independent state which would be dominated by Hindus. Jinnah (see profile on page 7) put forward the possibility of new, mainly Muslim states in the north-east and north-west of the subcontinent.

Focus Task

How did Britain rule India after the First World War?

Compare Sources 3 and 4.

- 1 What is the cartoonist saying about British rule in Source 4?
- 2 In what ways does Source 4 support the views in Source 3?
- 3 Do you think that Source 4 is a fair summary of British rule? Be prepared to support your answer with evidence from these two pages.

Activity

Source 3 makes it clear that 1919 was a decisive year in Britain's relationship with India. Look at the other years which are mentioned on pages 8–9. Choose five other years and put them in order of importance rather than date. Make sure you can justify your decision. You could use a table like this to help you.

Year (in order of importance)	Main event(s)	Significant because ...
1919		

The 1930s

The British government called a Round Table Conference in London to discuss Simon's measures further. Congress boycotted the Conference and started a new round of non-violent protests. Nehru made a detailed statement in January 1930 in which he condemned British rule (see Source 5) and set out Congress's programme for independence for India.

SOURCE 5

India's debasement

The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but has debased it economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. We believe that India must sever the British connection and attain purna swarajya, or complete independence.

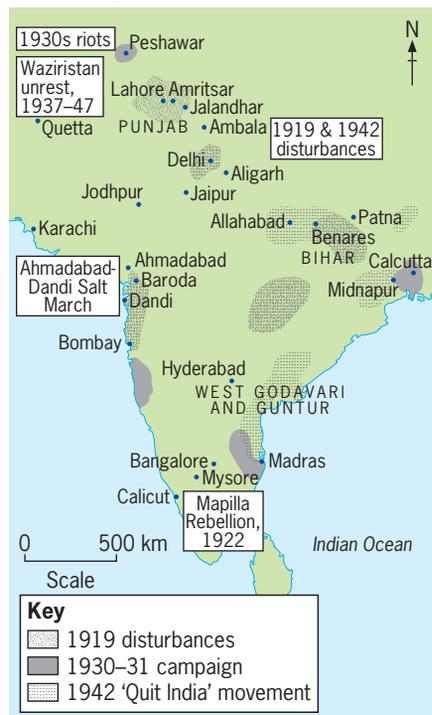
India has been ruined economically. The revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Of the heavy taxes we pay, 20 per cent is raised from the land revenue derived from the peasantry, and 3 per cent from the salt tax, which falls most heavily on the poor. Village industries, such as hand spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts. Nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for crafts thus destroyed.

The Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. The British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. The Customs duties betray a clear partiality for the British manufactures, and the revenue from them is used, not to lessen the burden on the masses, but for sustaining a highly extravagant administration.

Extract from the Indian National Congress Resolution on 30 January 1930. This became known as the Independence Day Resolution.

- 1 Make a list of the main criticisms of British rule in this document.
- 2 How would setting out a statement like this help the Congress?

SOURCE 6



Nationalist protests against British rule 1919–42.

- 3 Gandhi was an extremely well-educated and intelligent politician from a wealthy background. Why do you think he chose to dress as he did in Source 7?

Congress also organised a widespread programme of protest and civil disobedience (see Source 6). The most famous protest was led by Gandhi. He led his followers on a 380-kilometre march to the sea to make salt (see Source 7). This was illegal in India as the government controlled salt making and made large amounts of money from it. There were many other protests as well. By the summer of 1930 Congress had been temporarily banned and around 60,000 Nationalists had been arrested, including Gandhi.

SOURCE 7



A photograph from Gandhi's salt protest, showing Gandhi (fourth from left) and his followers.

In 1931 another new Viceroy was appointed. Lord Willingdon clamped down on protesters again with a further 20,000 arrests and harsh treatment of protesters, including flogging with knotted ropes. At the same time the British also tried to defuse some of the discontent with political concessions. They introduced another Government of India Act in 1935. This gave India a federal system of government with a central government and eleven self-governing provinces.

SOURCE 8

A *At present the Government of India is responsible to the British Parliament, which is the oldest, the least unwise and the most democratic parliament in the world. To transfer that responsibility to this highly artificial and restricted oligarchy of Indian politicians would be a retrograde act. It would be a shameful act. It would be an act of cowardice, desertion and dishonour. It would bring grave material evils, both upon India and Great Britain; but it would bring upon Great Britain a moral shame which would challenge for ever the reputation of the British Empire as a valiant and benignant force in the history of mankind.*

B *Our continued existence as a great power is at stake. The loss of India would mark and consummate the downfall of the British Empire. That great organism would pass at a stroke out of life into history. From such a catastrophe there could be no recovery.*

Two separate comments by Winston Churchill on proposals to give India limited self-government in 1935. At this time Churchill was a Conservative MP but not part of the government.

- 4 What concerns did Churchill have about plans for Indian self-government?
- 5 Churchill had not been to India since Victorian times. Does this affect your view of Source 8?

Activity

Look back at your work in the Activity on page 9. Select two more important years from the events on these two pages and replace two of the years you selected before.

Critics back in Britain were appalled by the new measures (see Source 8). However, Willingdon realised that Churchill's views were out of date. The last time Churchill had been in India was during Queen Victoria's lifetime. Willingdon realised that India was changing and the British rule would not last forever:

- Its population was rising rapidly (306 million in 1921 to 400 million in 1947) and most of this population was in big cities with complex social problems.
- Around 15 per cent of the population were now literate, which meant they could read Nationalist publications.
- The First World War had created a class of Indian army officers, not just ordinary troops. The prestige of English officers was reduced.
- The majority of government posts in India were now held by Indians, including around 90 per cent of judges.
- Indian-owned business and industry was developing rapidly and many of the new business owners supported Congress financially.
- India was becoming less important to Britain economically. For example, most of its textiles were now imported from Japan or made in India, rather than coming from Lancashire and Yorkshire.

In the 1937 elections to the new government Congress won eight of the eleven states and formed coalition governments with the Muslim League in the other three states. It was a great opportunity for Muslims and Hindus to work together, but it was not taken. In the eight states controlled by Congress there were few or no Muslim ministers to represent the millions of Muslims who lived there. Hindu governments were even more harsh on protesters than the British had been. Congress grew in power and popularity among Hindus – membership rose from 0.47 million in 1935 to 4.5 million in 1939. By 1939 Congress looked like a viable alternative to the Raj. Whilst Hindus prospered, however, Muslims voiced their concerns. Jinnah complained that the British looked like they now wanted to abandon India and said that if this was the case then Muslims would need to prepare themselves and be ready to fight. In the event, a greater fight intervened before this could happen. In 1939 the Second World War broke out.

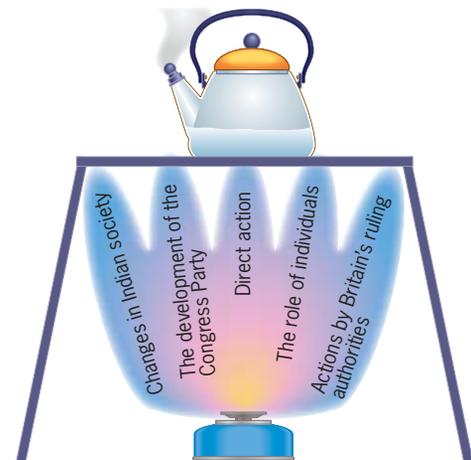
Focus Task A

How and why did pressures for independence grow within India?

The text mentions different reasons why support for and pressures for Indian independence grew in India between 1900 and 1939:

- ◆ changes in Indian society
- ◆ the development of the Congress Party
- ◆ direct action
- ◆ the role of individuals
- ◆ actions by Britain's ruling authorities.

- 1 Find an example in each category.
- 2 This boiling kettle is being heated by a number of different flames. Mark the flames to show how important you think each one was in building the pressure for independence.



Focus Task B

How did Britain react to growing Indian nationalism?

Churchill and Lord Willingdon are planning to meet to discuss the state of affairs in India so they have decided on an exchange of letters beforehand to help prepare.

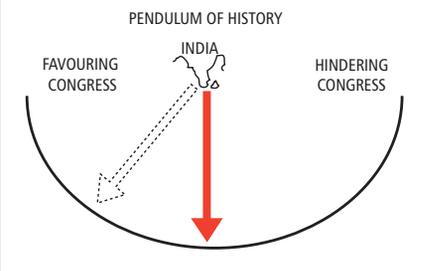
- 1 Choose either Churchill or Willingdon and prepare notes ahead of the meeting about how they think Britain should react to growing Indian nationalism and why.
- 2 Swap notes with someone who has taken the other person and write a reply to their letter explaining how far you agree with the approach they are proposing and why.

Focus Task

How did the war affect Congress?

Throughout the war events swung in favour of the Indian National Congress and then against them. Make your own copy of this diagram and as you read the next six pages add in what you think were the ten key events or developments. Your diagram should show the extent to which each event or development swung in favour of or against Congress.

(NB if you make one new diagram for each development you can later put them together using a MovieMaker programme with commentary to make an animation.)



India and the Second World War

1939–40

The Second World War broke out in September 1939 and lasted until September 1945. It was a period of turmoil in many countries across the world and India was no exception. For the Nationalists it was a period when their fortunes seemed to swing to and fro like a pendulum as different factors within and beyond India affected India in different ways.

At first, the war was a reminder that the British were still in charge. The Viceroy Lord Linlithgow declared India was at war without consulting Congress or anyone else. In March 1940 Winston Churchill became the new British Prime Minister and formed an emergency government with ministers from the Conservative, Liberal and Labour parties. From a British point of view Churchill was undoubtedly a great war leader. On the other hand, Indians saw a Churchill who had a very low opinion of Indians and an obsessive determination to hold on to India.

Other forces also worked against the Nationalists. Many of the princes supported the war. Many ordinary Indians found work in war industries or in the armed forces. It was difficult to carry on campaigning for independence without appearing disloyal, especially when the enemy Britain was fighting was as vicious and barbaric as the Nazis. On top of these concerns, divisions between Congress and Jinnah's Muslim League became more bitter than ever.

In November 1939 Nehru demanded a commitment from Britain to independence after the war. The British would not give a clear commitment and so Nehru ordered all of the Congress-controlled provincial governments to resign. The British quickly set up direct rule from Britain of those provinces. The Muslim League governments did not resign. Jinnah argued that this was evidence that the disputes between Hindus and Muslims were not internal disputes within one nation. They were disputes between two separate nations – Hindus and Muslims (see Source 9).

SOURCE 9

The problem in India is not of an inter-communal character but manifestly of an international one, and it must be treated as such. So long as this basic and fundamental truth is not realised, any constitution that may be built will result in disaster and will prove destructive and harmful not only to the Muslims but to the British and Hindus also. If the British Government are really in earnest and sincere to secure peace and happiness of the people of the sub-continent, the only course open to us all is to allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into 'autonomous national states'. There is no reason why these states should be antagonistic in each other. On the other hand, the rivalry and the natural desire and efforts on the part of one to dominate the social order and establish political supremacy over the other in the government of the country will disappear.

... It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality ... The present artificial unity of India dates back only to the British conquest and is maintained by the British bayonet.

Mohammed Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, speaking in March 1940.

Activity

Imagine you work for BBC Radio News in 1940. Write a script which summarises Jinnah's views in Source 9. You will also have to write some material which puts Jinnah's speech into context as many British listeners will be unfamiliar with the situation in India.

Jinnah's Declaration was a massive blow to Nehru. Congress could no longer claim to represent all Indians. It also meant there were fewer Indians to call on to make their protests work. Nehru started another campaign of civil disobedience in October 1940 after the British made an offer in August to involve more Indians in running the war effort through a War Advisory Council. It was a half-hearted attempt to involve the Nationalist leaders and Nehru rejected it. In wartime conditions the new round of civil disobedience did not have the impact of earlier campaigns. Nehru and 26,000 other campaigners were arrested.

SOURCE 10

The British Empire runs a world tyranny compounded of imperialism, colonialism and power politics which violates all political morals and in particular denies the elementary human rights of all peoples to be independent like the United States.

US President Roosevelt describing the British Empire in 1941.

1941–42

It seemed that the campaign for independence had completely stalled, but new and important developments were unfolding elsewhere in the world. In December 1941 Japan attacked the American fleet in Pearl Harbor and brought the USA into the war. Churchill now had the powerful ally he had always wanted. But this alliance came with strings. Like most Americans, Roosevelt admired the British people but he disliked the idea of empires and colonies (see Source 10). In August 1941 he and Churchill had agreed a set of principles called the Atlantic Charter. He insisted that it included 'the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live'.

Other forces also came into the picture in 1942. Throughout this year Japan's armies swept aside British forces in Asia. They took Borneo and Hong Kong. They captured Malaya, then Singapore in February 1942 and advanced deep into Burma on the borders of India. These disasters for the British undermined British rule in India in three main ways:

- It destroyed the myth that Europeans were superior to Asians and could not be defeated by them.
- The Raj lost another of its main justifications for ruling India – that British rule protected India. As well as the defeats on land, the British suffered disastrous losses at sea. By mid-1942 it was the US Navy which was defending India rather than the Royal Navy.
- Congress and other Nationalist leaders began to see that a Japanese victory over Britain might give them independence (see Source 11).

- 1 What are Sources 12A and 12B trying to say about British rule in India?
- 2 Select three features of each cartoon and explain how each feature helps to get the message of the cartoon across.
- 3 Many poor Indians could not read or write at this time. Would these cartoons have been effective for an audience that was not literate?
- 4 The vast majority of Indian troops did not rebel. Do you think it is possible that they still had some sympathy with the views in these cartoons?

SOURCE 11

The Cabinet will I think agree with me that India and Burma have no natural association with the Empire, from which they are alien by race, history and religion, and for which as such neither of them have any natural affection, and both are in the Empire because they are conquered countries which had been brought there by force, kept there by our controls, and which hitherto it has suited to remain under our protection. I suspect that the moment they think we may lose the war or take a bad knock, their leaders would be much more concerned to make terms with the victor at our expense than to fight for ideals to which so much lip-service is given.

An extract from a telegram sent by the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow in 1942.

The defeats also meant that the Japanese took many thousands of prisoners. Around 60,000 Indian troops in the British forces were captured. Around 25,000 of these formed the Indian National Army (INA) under the radical Indian Nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose – to fight *against* the British. Bose had been a leader member of Congress in the 1930s but was forced to resign in 1938 for being too radical. In 1944 INA troops fought alongside Japanese troops against other Indians serving in the British forces.

SOURCE 12



Indian National Army posters attacking British rule in India.

1942–44

In these difficult times Churchill was forced to bow to pressure from President Roosevelt and also from the Labour ministers in his own government. He reluctantly agreed to a declaration that after the war an elected body would work out a new constitution to put power in Indian hands. Churchill grumbled that 'We have resigned ourselves to fighting our utmost to defend India in order, if successful, to be turned out.' Churchill conveniently missed out the fact that the vast majority of troops fighting to defend India were of course Indians! Sir Stafford Cripps was given the job of turning this declaration into a set of proposals. Cripps consulted with Nehru (now out of prison) and the Muslim League and published a set of proposals on 30 March 1942. Churchill felt they went much too far. After much debate and discussions Congress and the Muslim League rejected the proposals because they did not go far enough. Churchill was delighted. Congress responded with a new campaign called 'Quit India' in August 1942.

The British were well prepared for this. They arrested all the main Congress leaders including Nehru. Congress protesters tried to continue without their leaders but the British used mass arrests and brutal beatings. Riots and violence broke out but they did not break British control. Churchill was pleased with the clampdown. He made several speeches indicating that he had not become Prime Minister to oversee the collapse of the British Empire. But he was out of step with much of the rest of the world:

- Public opinion in Britain favoured a more tolerant approach to India. *The Times* newspaper argued that a promise of independence would make India a willing ally rather than a reluctant one and that would be better for the war effort. An opinion poll found that 77 per cent of ordinary British people favoured Indian independence.
- It was a similar situation in the USA. Roosevelt made public speeches that the USA was fighting to end imperialism. Opinion polls in the USA showed 62 per cent of people in favour of Indian independence. Many American service personnel were also in India on military business and were seeing the inequalities of the Raj for themselves. The American press was so hostile to British rule that American journalists in India had their mail intercepted.

A further nail in the coffin of the Raj came late in 1942. War, weather and crop failures brought about disastrous food shortages in Bengal. At first it was a crisis but not a catastrophe. In the first six months of 1943, however, the British government's actions were completely inadequate. They failed

SOURCE 13



A photograph showing a victim of famine 1943–44.

- 1 Do you think Source 13 would have been censored by the British?
- 2 What impact would this image have had if it had been published in a British newspaper in 1944 or early 1945?

SOURCE 14

There has been a shocking failure of rule in this province. Bengal has, practically speaking, no irrigation or drainage, a medieval system of agriculture, no roads, no education, no cottage industries, completely inadequate hospitals, no effective public health services; consequently there is no attempt to deal with malaria, which is the province's principal killer. There are not even any plans to make good these deficiencies.

Extract from a report by Richard Casey, the new Bengal governor appointed by Viceroy Wavell in 1943. Bengal had been under British rule since the late 1700s.

- 3 Study Source 14. Why would this source be especially useful to an opponent of British rule?
- 4 What arguments could a supporter of British rule put forward to counter Source 14?
- 5 Churchill was extremely annoyed by Gandhi's hunger strike. How does Source 15 help to explain why?

to distribute food or even introduce rationing. The administration also failed to control prices or stop profiteers from buying up food and selling it on the black market. The British even destroyed around 50,000 small boats, which could have been used to ferry food supplies to needy areas, to stop these boats falling into Japanese or INA hands. The press contained horrifying reports as refugees flooded into Calcutta. Many died in the streets from hunger, malaria, smallpox or cholera. The bodies were chewed by rats and dogs. The Viceroy Lord Linlithgow accused the press of exaggerating the situation and censored reports. Throughout the famine he never visited the region. Churchill's reaction was callous and uncaring and he refused to divert shipping to help the situation in Bengal. Gandhi went on hunger strike in sympathy with the victims and to put pressure on the government. Lord Wavell replaced Linlithgow as Viceroy in October 1943. He appointed a new governor in Bengal and he set about a range of relief measures. These measures helped but the damage was done. Once again the British Raj had failed to meet one of its justifications – that it provided good government for the benefit of the Indian people. Between mid-1943 and mid-1944 around 1.5 million died from hunger and disease. The final death toll by the end of 1944 has been estimated at between 3 and 4 million.

SOURCE 15

Gandhi's fast. I have kept Phillips in touch with developments and have given him advance notice of Gandhi's decision to fast, of Government of India's statement, and of resignation of my three colleagues yesterday. This morning he asked to see me, saying that he had a message. I agreed and saw him this afternoon.

On my receiving him he handed me a message. It begins: 'President Roosevelt suggests that you seek an interview with the Viceroy and convey to him an expression of our deep concern over political crisis in India. Please express to His Excellency our hope that a means may be discovered to avoid the deterioration of the situation which would be almost certain to occur if Gandhi dies.'

Secret telegram from Viceroy Linlithgow to the British government in 1943. The man called Phillips was a representative of the US government.

SOURCE 16

A



B



The two wartime Viceroys of India. **A** shows Lord Linlithgow and his wife and attendants. **B** shows Lord Wavell.

Activity

Use the images of the two Viceroys in Source 16 to create profiles of each one. For Lord Wavell you will need to turn over to the next page as well for information.

1945

The year 1945 was the final year of the war and proved to be very important for Indian nationalism. Churchill appointed Viceroy Lord Wavell in 1943 because he thought Wavell shared his views. In fact, Wavell disagreed with Churchill's views and believed India should be given independence. He argued that holding on to a discontented India would drain Britain's resources rather than strengthen Britain's position in the world.

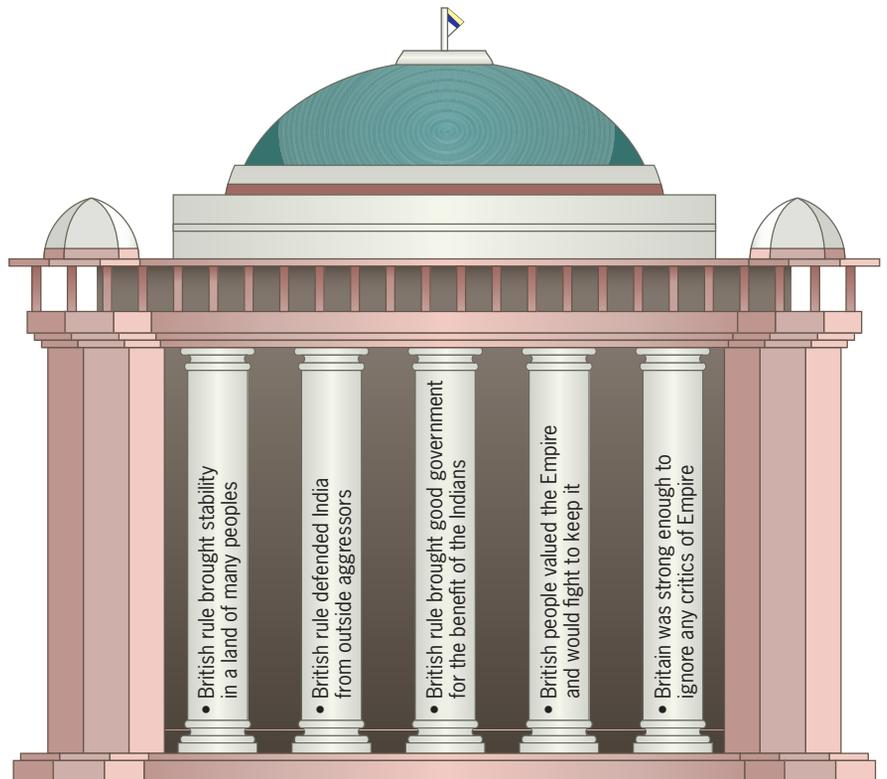
Wavell was a tough old soldier and was quite prepared to stand up to Churchill. In June 1945 he released all the jailed Congress leaders. He then called a meeting of the main Congress and Muslim League leaders at Simla to discuss the handover of power to India. In one sense this was a momentous event – Churchill had resigned himself to giving up India in the long term. On the other hand it proved impossible for the different parties to reach any kind of agreement. The critical issue was whether India would be one state after independence or whether it would be divided into Hindu and Muslim states. It seemed that the last justification of the Raj had gone. British rule could no longer hold together the two largest groups in India.

Another key development took place in July 1945. General Elections held in Britain gave the Labour Party a landslide victory and ousted Churchill from power. Labour, under its leader Clement Atlee, was much more sympathetic towards Indian independence and wanted to see it happen. The new Labour government was also taking over a Britain which had been bankrupted by the war. They needed American aid and the Americans wanted to see Indian independence. So, by the end of the war, it was inevitable that British rule in India would end. But questions remained as to exactly when it would end and what this independence would look like.

Focus Task

How did the war affect the Raj?

In the diagram below the pillars represent the points which were used to justify British rule of India. By 1945 serious cracks were beginning to show in these pillars. On your own copy of the diagram draw cracks in the pillars and label them to show the events and developments they represent.



Independence 1946–47

SOURCE 17



Crows pick at dead bodies after the Calcutta riots of August 1946.

By January 1946 the war was over and new elections had been held in India. These elections confirmed the divisions in India. Everyone knew that independence would soon be granted. The British government was prepared to hand over power but who would they hand it to? Anxiety about this issue was already spreading. Muslims in Hindu-dominated areas wondered fearfully what would happen to them after independence. Hindus in Muslim-dominated areas wondered exactly the same. The situation was made worse as the Indian armed forces were scaled down after the war and the government lacked resources to control large-scale disturbances.

In March 1946 Sir Stafford Cripps led a new Commission to try and hammer out a solution. Long weeks of very tough negotiation produced a scheme. In May a plan was announced. India would remain one state but it would be a federal state. Each of the provinces would be more or less self-ruling. Jinnah agreed reluctantly to these proposals in June. Nehru also agreed at first, but in July he changed his position and insisted that there should also be a central government. Nehru felt that India would need

this central government to be a strong power in the world. Jinnah felt he had been betrayed. He called for a Direct Action Day on 16 August. It was not Jinnah's intention to stir up violence, but tensions were already high and demonstrations in Calcutta soon turned into bloody riots between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Exact casualties are not known, but something like 4,000 people were killed. The violence spread to other cities and provinces. Thousands of Sikhs and Hindus were killed by Muslims in the Punjab but there were outbreaks of violence across India. One of the worst incidents was in Bihar where 7,000 Muslims were killed by Hindu rioters.

Wavell was as honest with Prime Minister Atlee as he had been with Churchill. He made it clear that the British simply did not have enough troops or police to control violence on this scale. Atlee made the decision that Britain would withdraw from India and would do so quickly. In February 1947 Atlee sacked Wavell and appointed Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. Mountbatten was a popular, high profile figure. His exploits had been filmed in a British movie called *In Which We Serve*. He had the right characteristics for the job. He was a member of the British royal family, which helped him to influence the princes and convince them to co-operate with the new India. He was also extremely charming and a good communicator – ideal for trying to work a compromise between Nehru and Jinnah. He was also uninterested in the hard work of hammering out a detailed settlement and was happy to leave this to much more able and intelligent officials.

From February to August Mountbatten and his officials met with Nehru, Jinnah and their teams in long, hard negotiations. Nehru continued to argue for a united India but Jinnah would not budge on his demand for a Muslim state of Pakistan. Meanwhile, India was beginning to tear itself apart in violence between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. In June the formal plans for independence and partition were completed and the Indian Independence Bill was published on 4 July. Prime Minister Atlee's original plan had been for a transfer of power in stages which would be complete by August 1948. Mountbatten said that a speedy transfer of power was now essential to avoid a bloodbath and Atlee accepted this view – he was eager to rid himself of the problem. Mountbatten charmed or bullied the princes to decide which provinces they would belong to. In some cases, like the province of Hyderabad, the Muslim ruler had no choice but to join India as his subjects were mostly Hindu and his province was in the middle of Hindu India. At midnight on 15 August the transfer of power took place. The new state of Pakistan came into existence with Jinnah as its President. The new state of India came into existence with Nehru as its Prime Minister.

Focus Task

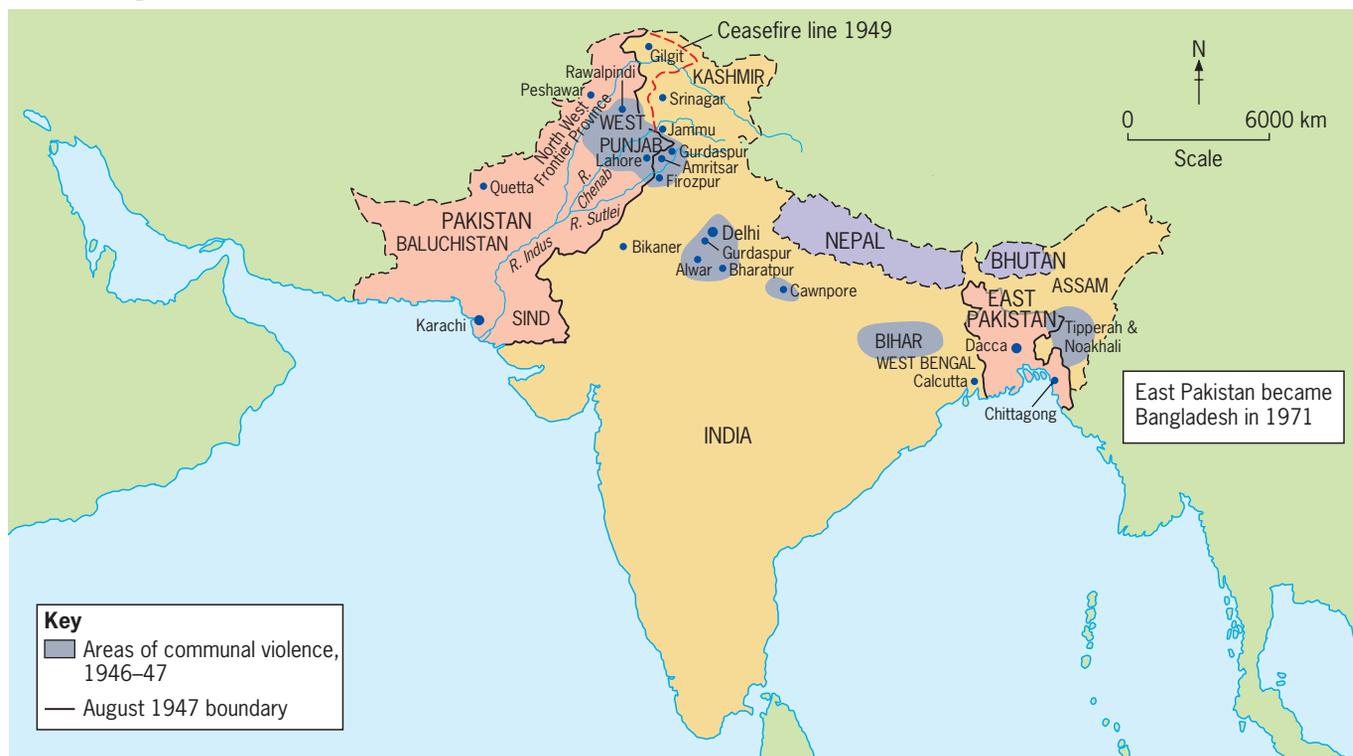
Why was there violence between different religious groups?

You are a journalist working for a British newspaper. You have to write a short article to accompany the picture in Source 17 for your newspaper. It should explain clearly to your readers:

- the reasons for tension between the religious groups in India
- why those tensions erupted in violence in August 1946.

You could also suggest for your readers whether you think the violence is likely to continue or 'the worst is now over', with reasons for your opinion.

SOURCE 18



The partition of India in 1947.

There were relatively simple ceremonies in Pakistan but in New Delhi Mountbatten presided over lavish and elaborate events. These contrasted sharply with what was happening on the ground. The worst violence was in the Punjab where Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs committed terrible atrocities against each other (see Source 19). Mountbatten's Punjab Boundary Force was only 23,000 strong and had to control an area the size of Ireland with a population of 15 million. And much of this population was frightened, suspicious and armed.

SOURCE 19

Few could disagree with the opinion there expressed that the maintenance – or perhaps one should rather say the re-establishment – of law and order is the first and most important task in India to-day. In the Punjab, where the appalling scale of the atrocities of the last three weeks – the full tale of which may never be told – has only lately come to be realised by public opinion from reports of Ministers, press correspondents and the stories of refugees, such action is of immediate urgency, not least because of the danger that the stories put about by the many thousands of refugees from that distressful province may result in the spread of communal trouble to other parts of the two Dominions.

A report on the situation in India to the British government in September 1947.

Focus Task

Why was India partitioned?

'India was partitioned because of Jinnah's stubbornness.' Explain how far you agree with this statement. Think about other factors that contributed to the decision, for example:

- ◆ Nehru's change of mind in June 1946.
- ◆ The violence of 1946.
- ◆ The appointment of Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy.



Refugees from East Pakistan flee to an Indian refugee camp.

Some of the worst atrocities were committed against trains of refugees – either Hindus fleeing to India or Muslims fleeing to Pakistan. Gandhi again went on hunger strike in an attempt to influence the warring factions to put down their weapons. His influence does seem to have had a calming effect in Bengal and East Pakistan although he himself was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic in January 1948. All in all, the death toll and the misery were appalling. There were no official figures but British military observers estimated that between 500,000 and 8 million were killed. Other estimates put the figure at nearer to 1 million. It was certainly higher than Mountbatten's own figure of 200,000. In addition to the deaths there was a massive migration of around 7.2 million Hindus and Sikhs out of Pakistan and a very similar number of Muslims left India for Pakistan. Most of the migrants lost most of their possessions in the migration.

SOURCE 21



Victims of the Punjab riots being removed from the streets.

1 Explain the photograph in Source 21 as though you were talking to someone who does not know anything about this period.

SOURCE 22



Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India with his wife and Nehru in 1947.

Focus Task A

Look back at your work from pages 6–7 when you voted on the relative importance of Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah. Divide into groups and argue the case that one of these three was more significant in India's history (you do not necessarily have to admire the man to argue he was significant). Hold a debate on the three leaders and then vote again on the issue. Look carefully to see if views have changed.

Focus Task B

How successful was Mountbatten in handling the ending of British rule in India?

Plenty of historians have criticised the British for their hasty exit from India in 1947. Source 23 is one example while Source 24 gives an alternate viewpoint. Read the two sources carefully.

Which of Sources 23 and 24 do you most agree with? Support your choice with evidence from the last four pages.

SOURCE 23

It is hard to deny that the end of the Raj heralded the dawn of freedom for the subcontinent. Nor is it easy to escape the conclusion that the British themselves bore a significant share of the responsibility for the disaster of partition. Despite lifelong attempts to justify himself, Mountbatten was much to blame. Had he stuck to Atlee's timetable and taken proper precautions, a well organised army might have kept relative peace in the Punjab ... In the longer term, the fault lay in the character of British imperialism itself. By dividing in order to rule and by favouring the Muslim martial races [the Sikhs and other groups from the north of India who made up most of Britain's Indian Army] they increased the religious antagonism. Far from quitting India with honour and dignity, the British left amid the clamour of homicide and the stench of death.

From *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire* by historian Piers Brendon, published in 2007.

SOURCE 24

When I myself was working on the biography of Mountbatten, I approached the controversy with an open-mind, suspecting that there must have been bungling somewhere. However, I have been convinced by the general agreement of all those who were involved at the time. Civil or military, Indian or British, friend or enemy of Mountbatten, all agree that time was not merely not on Mountbatten's side but was his greatest enemy. The view which most influenced me was that of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the man who was in time to replace Mountbatten and become India's first Indian head of state. He said: 'If the Viceroy had not transferred power when he did there could well have been no power to transfer.' That, in a nutshell, is the case for the way the British handled the transfer of power in India. It would seem as if I seek to acquit the Viceroy and the British government on every charge, was the transfer of power in India then a model operation planned by wise and far-seeing statesmen, carried through with copybook perfection? The question hardly needs an answer. Power was transferred by desperately anxious men, working in the conviction that a disaster of awe-inspiring proportions was only a few months or even weeks away, believing that an imperfect settlement was far better than no settlement at all. In such an atmosphere it was inevitable that there would be grave mistakes made and important decisions left untaken.

Extract from *The Transfer of Power in India*, a lecture by historian Philip Ziegler in 1998.

An ongoing story

The British departure in August 1947 ended one particular phase of Indian history but it started many others. For example:

Who owns Kashmir?

In October 1947 Hari Singh, the maharajah of Kashmir, had still not decided whether his province would join India or Pakistan. He was Hindu but the majority of his subjects were Muslims. In October 1947 thousands of Muslim Pathan tribesmen, probably with help from the Pakistan government, invaded Kashmir and joined up with Muslim fighters from Kashmir. Hari Singh quickly decided that his future lay with India and Nehru sent Indian troops into the province. There was heavy fighting but Indian troops had gained the upper hand by the end of the year. Pakistani forces launched another invasion in the spring of 1948 and fighting continued until the United Nations Organisation arranged a ceasefire in 1949. Tensions rose dangerously high in 1962 and then fighting broke out between India and Pakistan in 1965. Again a ceasefire was agreed.

Today, roughly one-third of the western part of Kashmir is administered by Pakistan. Most of the remainder is under Indian control although an underground movement against Indian rule began in 1989. India has constantly accused Pakistan of training and supplying weapons to separatists but Pakistan insists it only offers them moral support. In 1998 the two sides tested nuclear weapons in a show of strength sparked off by tensions over Kashmir although in relative terms it is a time of peace between India and Pakistan.

One or two Pakistans?

There was another conflict between the two in 1971 over East Pakistan. The Muslims of East Pakistan and West Pakistan were different in many ways. Throughout the 1960s an East Pakistan Home Rule movement developed under Sheik Mujib and won a sweeping victory in elections in 1971. West Pakistan leader President Ayub Khan had Mujib arrested and moved his troops into East Pakistan. The result was an uprising against the West Pakistan troops. Ten million refugees fled to India and in December 1971 Indian troops moved into East Pakistan and defeated the West Pakistan forces. India immediately recognised East Pakistan as a new independent state called Bangladesh. Britain also recognised the new state. Pakistan withdrew from the British Commonwealth in protest.

Superpowers in the making?

Today, the subcontinent of India remains a place of contrasts:

- Bangladesh has developed into a relatively stable democratic state but it is troubled by poverty and has been struck down several times by natural disasters.
- India has great extremes of wealth and poverty but is rapidly developing into a modern economy. It is often compared with China as a potential superpower of the twenty-first century. Its industries, education system and technological development have put India at the forefront of world affairs. The American investment bank Goldman Sachs has estimated that India's economy will be larger than the USA's economy by 2043.
- Pakistan's current position is also one of extremes. Its present leader General Musharraf has angered the world by obstructing the formation of a properly elected civilian government. On the other hand he is a key ally of the USA and Britain in their war against Islamist groups the Taleban and Al-Qaida in neighbouring Afghanistan. At the same time Musharraf has to face the problem that many of his own people and armed forces have sympathy with the USA's enemies.

Activity

You are the editor of a travel website for young people wanting to travel to the Indian subcontinent on a gap year. Write a short article in web page format providing young travellers with the basics. You will need to decide:

- how much history readers need to know
- which religions are followed and where
- what relations are like between the different countries in the subcontinent
- any other information you think is important.

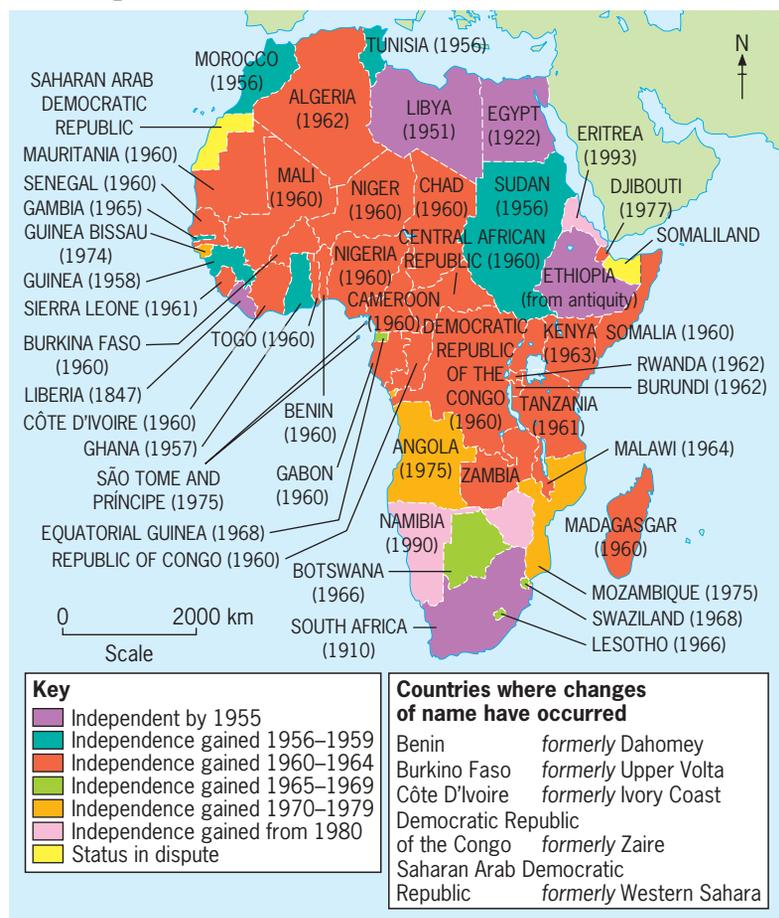
Case study 2 Kenyan independence

Decolonisation in Africa

In 1900 most of Africa was divided into colonies run by various European states. Less than 100 years later Africa was a collection of independent states. In fact most of Africa was independent by the

1960s. There were many important factors at work in this process – some of which you have already studied in the previous case study of Indian independence. Here is a summary of the factors that affected British rule in particular:

SOURCE 1



- **The Second World War** brought many changes to Africa and the rest of the world. One of the most important was the rise of Nationalist movements in many African states. These Nationalists wanted an end to foreign rule.
- **Opposition to Empire in Britain** Many people in Britain supported independence for African countries. This feeling was strengthened by reports of brutal discrimination by settlers against the native Africans. It was strengthened further by examples of poor government such as the riots in Accra in 1948 or the scandal of the Hola prison camp in 1959 (see page 30).
- **Britain's declining resources** By the 1960s Britain did not have the resources to continue ruling its vast African territories. This was especially true after India became independent in 1947.
- **Britain's declining will** As early as the 1930s the British Colonial Office (which ran the colonies) was already looking at plans for self-rule in Africa. One Colonial Office document from 1939 was called 'Where Are We Going?'. In 1943 another document called 'Transfer of Power' was being discussed in the Colonial Office and in Downing Street. This process was accelerated once India became independent. One of the justifications for having African territories was to have military bases to protect the trade routes between Britain and India.

Decolonisation in Africa.

So that's the big picture. In the rest of this section you are going to look at how this happened in one country – Kenya – and how the process affected the country.

The creation of Kenya

The British colony of Kenya was created in 1920 out of a territory which had previously been called the East Africa Protectorate. From the very beginning the colony was divided strictly along racial lines. The power and wealth lay with the white Europeans, most of whom were British. The number of Europeans swelled after the First World War when the British government organised a settlement scheme for army officers. Around 3,000 Europeans controlled 12,000 square miles of the best land in the province. No Africans were allowed to settle or farm in this central upland area which surrounded the capital, Nairobi. It became known as the White Highlands.

Like most of the British Empire Kenya was run by a Governor and a small team of British officials. They answered to the Colonial Secretary, the minister in charge of colonies in Britain. There was also a Legislative Council which represented the views of the different communities and an Executive Council which was a bit like the British Prime Minister's Cabinet. The European settlers dominated the council with 11 seats, despite being by far the smallest group.

- 1 What does Source 2 reveal about the lifestyle of the European settlers?
- 2 What does Source 2 tell us about the relations between the settlers and the Africans?
- 3 What does Source 2 tell us about the relationships between different Africans?
- 4 Can you understand why the author's mother was so anxious about respect?

SOURCE 2

My father got a map from the Land Office with a lot of lines ruled on it, from which the position of our holding could be deduced. Nothing had been properly surveyed. The boundary between the land earmarked for settlement and land reserved for the Kikuyu was about a mile away.

'Any amount of labour,' Roger Stilbeck [a neighbouring settler] had said. 'You've only got to lift your finger and in they come. Friendly enough, if a bit raw. Wonderfully healthy climate, splendid neighbours, magnificent sport, thousands of years of untapped fertility locked up in the soil. I congratulate you, my dear fellow, I really do. You've been lucky to get this opportunity. Buck Ponsonby was bitterly disappointed. Best of luck, and look us up when you come in for the races. Keep in touch, old man.' . . .

We had with us in the cart a cook-cum-houseboy called Juma, lent to us, as a great favour, by Roger Stilbeck to see us in. He was used to grander ways and, the farther we travelled from Nairobi, the more disapproving he became of the local inhabitants, who to me looked as wild and exciting as the gazelles and antelopes.

'They are small like pigeons,' he said loftily. 'They eat chickens, which make them cowardly. Look at their legs! Thin like a bustard. And their women are like donkeys, with heads as smooth as eggs. They are not to be trusted. Why do you wish to live amongst such stupid people? Here your crops will not prosper, your cattle will die . . .' . . .

'No more words,' Mother said snappily. Juma had a patronizing air that she resented, and she doubted if he was showing enough respect. Those were the days when to lack respect was a more serious crime than to neglect a child, bewitch a man or steal a cow, and was generally punishable by beating. Indeed respect was the only protection available to Europeans who lived singly, or in scattered families, among thousands of Africans accustomed to constant warfare and armed with spears and poisoned arrows, but had themselves no barricades, and went about unarmed. This respect preserved them like an invisible coat of mail, or a form of magic, and seldom failed; but it had to be very carefully guarded. The least rent or puncture might, if not immediately checked and repaired, split the whole garment asunder and expose its wearer in all his human vulnerability. Kept intact, it was a thousand times stronger than all the guns and locks and metal in the world; challenged, it could be brushed aside like a spider's web. So Mother was a little sensitive about respect, and Juma was silenced.

An extract from *The Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood* by Elspeth Huxley published in 1959. Huxley grew up in a European settler family in Kenya. In this extract she describes her family's arrival at their new farm.

SOURCE 3

Primarily, Kenya is an African territory and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail . . . In the administration of Kenya His Majesty's Government regard themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the African population, and they are unable to delegate or share this trust, the object of which may be defined as the protection and advancement of the native races.

Statement by the British Colonial Secretary in 1932.

The settlers were aware that they lived a very privileged life. They were also aware that they were outnumbered by Africans and Indians. As early as 1923 some of the settlers wanted to establish their own independent state, free of British rule, but with the white settlers in charge. The British government responded with a clear statement that 'primarily Kenya is African territory' and that ultimately it would be ruled by Africans. The settlers tried again in 1929 to gain self-rule for Kenya but again the British refused. From that point there was an uneasy peace. The British would not accept the settler demands for a white-ruled state but they also did nothing to change the realities of life in Kenya in which the white settlers held the wealth and power.

Another important group in Kenya was the Indian community. Throughout the history of the Empire the British had recruited Indian labourers to work in Africa and the Caribbean, usually in very poor conditions. By the early 1900s there were also many educated Indians in Britain's African colonies doing skilled jobs such as engineering or professional jobs such as banking or law.

By far the largest group, over 90 per cent of the population, were the native Africans. The Africans of Kenya were made up of different nations such as the Masai and Luo. Unlike the settlers they had no direct say in the Legislative Council. Their views were supposed to be represented by British officials on the Council. The most important group in the struggle for Kenya's independence were the Kikuyu. They suffered more than any other group from the land laws in Kenya. They had been the traditional farmers of the land taken over by settlers to become the 'White Highlands'. When Kenya was formed they were dispossessed and forced to live in 'homelands' even though most of them did not come from these homelands. Over 1 million Kikuyu were crammed into 2,000 square miles, although many Kikuyu lived illegally on the White Highlands as squatters.

SOURCE 4

If someone steals your ox it is killed and roasted and eaten. One can forget. When someone steals your land, especially if it is nearby, one can never forget. It is always there, its trees, its streams, its goodness. It is a bitter presence.

The words of a Kikuyu elder to the British Labour MP Fenner Brockway. Brockway was a firm supporter of Kenyan independence.

They paid rent or worked as labourers for the Europeans. There were also restrictions on the crops they were allowed to grow. The result of these policies was poverty and illness. When the Second World War broke out in 1939 many Kikuyu volunteered to serve in the armed forces but 90 per cent of them were rejected because of malnutrition.

Protest and conflict

Throughout the 1920s power shifted slowly.

The Indian community had a good deal of economic power in Kenya. In 1920 they turned down an offer of two seats on the Legislative Council and in 1927 they were given five seats. This satisfied them for the time being. It was an example of British divide and rule policy which they often used around the Empire, in that the concessions given to the Indians meant that they did not ally with African protest movements.

In 1925 Kikuyu leaders set up the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). This organisation lobbied for a number of concessions:

- the right to grow coffee (which was very profitable and currently restricted to white settlers)
- publication of the laws of Kenya in the Kikuyu language (it was only published in English)
- African representation on the Legislative Council.

The settlers put intense pressure on the government but it refused these requests. So, the KCA turned its campaigning to the land question. They tried to get the government to stop settlers using legal technicalities to evict Africans and take control of even more land. In 1929 the KCA sent one of its rising stars, Jomo Kenyatta, to London to raise awareness of the issue and to meet with Labour MPs who were sympathetic to the KCA's cause.

A Labour Government came to power in 1929 and this helped the KCA. It lifted restrictions on KCA fundraising and meetings which the Kenyan government had imposed. It also tried to stop settlers taking more native lands and made clear its long-term plan was to bring in proper government to Kenya which represented the whole population.

Unfortunately for the KCA the Labour Government did not last long and as war loomed in Europe in the 1930s the concerns of the KCA took a back seat in Britain – indeed their campaign for land reform took a backward step. Although the British government rejected settler demands for self-rule the settlers did manage to get a legal ruling passed which allowed only Europeans to own land in the White Highlands.

SOURCE 5

Until the 1880s, the Rift Valley and the Aberdare highlands remained the heartland of the proud warrior tribe, the Masai. By the late 19th century, years of civil war between the Masai's two opposing factions had weakened the tribe. Disease and famine had also taken their toll. This opened the way for the English to negotiate a treaty with the Masai laibon (chief, or spiritual leader) and begin work on the Mombasa–Uganda railway – which cut straight through the Masai grazing lands. The halfway point of this railway is roughly where Nairobi stands today. It was downhill from here for the Masai. As white settlers demanded more fertile land, the Masai were herded into smaller reserves. The Kikuyu, a Bantu agricultural tribe from the highlands west of Mt Kenya, also had vast tracts of land ripped from under their feet.

White settlement in the early 20th century was initially disastrous, but – once they bothered to learn a little about the land – the British succeeded in making their colony viable. Other European settlers soon established coffee plantations and by the 1950s the white settler population had reached about 80,000. With little choice left but to hop on the economic hamster wheel created by the Europeans, tribes like the Kikuyu nonetheless maintained their rage.

Extract from the introduction to the *History and Culture of Kenya* by the Volunteer Mission Movement, a UK-based charity.

Focus Task

How did the British rule Kenya?

Source 5 is clearly an emotive and critical account of colonial rule in Kenya, but is it accurate? In pairs or small groups, discuss these questions and then hold a class vote on question 4.

- 1 Pick out words and phrases which reveal this and suggest reasons for this tone.
- 2 In what ways does Source 5 contradict Source 4?
- 3 How far is Source 5 supported by the information in pages 22–4?
- 4 Is it fair to say that Source 5 is emotive but not inaccurate?

Kenya in the Second World War

As with many other colonies in the British Empire, the Second World War proved to be a significant event. Around 97,000 Kenyans joined up to serve in the armed forces. Many of these servicemen came into contact with new ideas as they mixed with troops from other parts of the Empire and this opened their eyes to new ways of thinking.

SOURCE 6



African Troops operating an anti-aircraft gun in Kenya, 1942.

1 Study Sources 6 and 7. How do these sources help to explain the rise of nationalist feeling in Kenya?

SOURCE 7

The first time I ever thought of myself as a Kenyan was in 1943, in the Kalewa trenches on the Burma Front. I'd spent several evenings talking to a British soldier, and thought we had become friends, but I was rather surprised one evening when, after we had been talking for a while, he said, 'You know, sometimes I don't understand you Africans who are out here fighting. What do you think you are fighting for?'

'I'm fighting for the same thing as you are, of course,' I told him.

'I'm not sure that's such a good idea.' I asked him to explain this.

'Look,' he began, 'I'm fighting for England, to preserve my country, my culture, all those things which we Englishmen have built up over the centuries of our history as a nation . . . including the British Empire . . . But I can't see why you Africans should fight to protect the Empire instead of fighting to free yourselves.'

The memories of Warhiu Itote. He was a Kenyan who fought in the British Army in the Second World War. He then became a leader of the Mau Mau movement which fought against the British to gain independence for Kenya.

Focus Task

How did the Second World War affect Kenya?

Very few settlers or officials thought that their control of Kenya was threatened by developments during the Second World War. Imagine you could go back in time and warn them that in the long term their policies would cause their own downfall. How would you explain this to them? You may find it easier to come back to this task after you have studied pages 26–31.

The war seemed to do little for the prospects of Kenyans who wanted independence. During the war the settlers grew very rich supplying the war effort, paying off their mortgages and other loans. They increased their strength on the Legislative Council. They also took up many of the administrative posts which were normally manned by British officials but were vacant because of manpower shortages caused by the war. As a result they came to dominate the government, and many Africans suffered as a result. Taxes hit the poor Africans much more heavily than the wealthy Europeans. Under a scheme to increase food production, the settlers evicted 11,000 African squatters to a bleak area of the Mau escarpment, leaving them bitter and hostile and storing up trouble for the future. It was not clear at the time, but with hindsight we can see that these settler policies were sowing the seeds of future rebellion and eventual independence for Kenya.

Jomo Kenyatta and the KAU

The end of the war saw little improvement for the Africans. In the years after 1945 many more settlers arrived in Kenya, hungry for land. Between 1946 and 1952 a government scheme to reduce the risk of disease in cattle forced around 100,000 more Africans off the fertile highlands and into reservations. Their cattle were confiscated and kept by the settlers. The city of Nairobi was equally divided, with wealthy settlers living in comfort next to appalling slums. Laws were biased against Africans and so were economic opportunities – Europeans earned five times the wages of Africans doing the same job. At the same time food prices were high. By 1948 very few Africans in Nairobi ate more than one meal a day.

This discrimination and poverty was potentially the greatest asset which the independence movement had. The problem was that it had few other assets. When the war began the government banned the Kikuyu Central Association. It reformed itself as the Kenya African Union (KAU) but it still made little progress. Most of its leading figures were imprisoned, except Jomo Kenyatta, who had been in England when war broke out. When Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946 he received a hero's welcome even though he had not been able to achieve a huge amount. He was put in charge of the Kikuyu college at Githunguri. The college attempted to maintain Kikuyu language and culture and was an important power base for Kenyatta's campaigning. Kenyatta and the KAU tried to maintain a campaign of legal protest. He campaigned against racial discrimination and the forced labour of women. He bitterly attacked *kipande*. This was the system of registration which meant that Africans could be stopped and asked for identity cards at any time. Kipande restricted their freedom to work and travel.

SOURCE 8



The KAU flag.

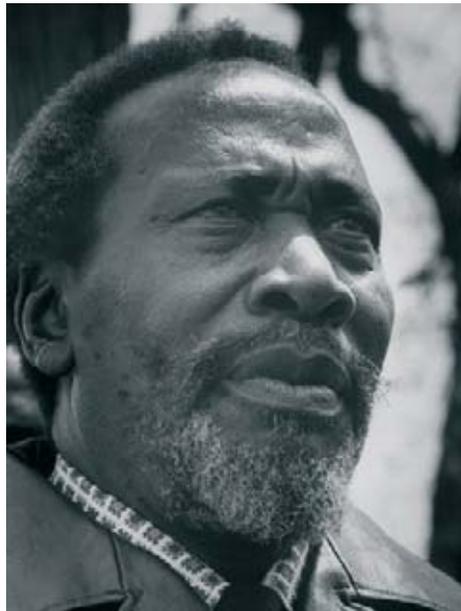
- 1 Study Sources 8 and 9. Does the explanation in Source 9 seem like a plausible interpretation of the flag?
- 2 Is Source 9 what Kenyatta actually said? Explain your answer fully.

SOURCE 9

What he said must mean that our fertile lands (green) could only be regained by the blood (red) of the African (black). That was it!

An observer reporting on Kenyatta's explanation of the KAU flag.

SOURCE 10



Jomo Kenyatta.

SOURCE 11

To fight for equal rights does not mean fighting with fists or with a weapon, but to fight through negotiations and by constitutional means. We do not believe in violence at all, but in discussion and representation.

We feel that the racial barrier is one of the most diabolical things that we have in the Colony, and we see no reason at all why all races in this country cannot work harmoniously together without any discrimination. If people of goodwill can come together, they can eliminate this evil. God put everybody into this world to live happily, and to enjoy the gifts of Nature that God bestowed upon mankind. During my stay in Europe – and especially in England – I lived very happily, and made thousands of good friends. I do not see why people in this country cannot do the same thing. To my mind, colour is irrelevant.

Extract from a speech by Jomo Kenyatta in 1952.

Kenyatta's problem was that he had to appeal to many different audiences. The Kikuyu admired him but they were only a third of Kenya's Africans. He had to appeal to the Masai and the Luo as well. He also had to try and appeal to Kenya's Indian population. In addition to this he had to campaign in such a way that he did not alarm the British government or the European settlers with fear of revolution. In some ways he was a great success. He was able to inspire supporters at rallies with powerful and passionate speeches. Observers from the time talked of his burning personality. Africans regarded him as a messiah figure, despite the fact that he had many personal failings such as greed and vanity, and that he had abandoned a wife and child back in England. On the other hand, the settlers in Kenya regarded him as nothing less than a devil. This was probably more to do with their fear than anything Kenyatta said, because at heart he was a moderate. He did not believe in revolution. In 1952 he even condemned a new movement of Kikuyu militants called the Mau Mau in a speech in front of 30,000 people.

Despite all his efforts with the KAU Kenyatta had made little progress by 1952. He found himself pitted against a formidable British governor, Sir Philip Mitchell. Mitchell was an old style colonial governor. He had no time for Nationalists like Kenyatta. He put tight restrictions on KAU meetings. He also limited press freedom and opposed trade unions trying to get better wages and conditions for workers in the towns. Strikes and protests were suppressed with force. He excluded Africans from the Executive Council until his term as governor ended in 1952. He also refused to appoint Kenyatta to his Legislative Council. By 1952 many younger Kikuyu were frustrated. In the words of British historian Denis Judd they had been driven to the point of open rebellion.

3 Does Source 11 suggest that Source 9 has misinterpreted Kenyatta's views? Explain your answer.

Activity

You are a journalist interviewing some young Kikuyu activists. They have just heard that the Governor has refused to appoint Kenyatta to the Legislative Council. Write a report explaining how these young Kikuyu feel, and what you think they might do next (e.g. give up, carry on peaceful protest, join a more radical movement).

The Mau Mau rebellion

While Jomo Kenyatta and the KAU had been campaigning for independence a more militant faction of the Kikuyu had been preparing for armed rebellion. The roots of the rebellion lay with the forced evictions of Kikuyu to the Mau escarpment in 1944. It was part Kikuyu uprising, part criminal gang and part protest against land shortages. It was a secretive organisation at first. The members of the movement had to swear oaths in secret ceremonies. However, as discontent with life in Kenya grew the Mau Mau attracted frustrated and bitter young Kikuyu like Warhiu Itote (see Source 7 on page 25).

Trial of Jomo Kenyatta

At first Mau Mau operations were small scale. The cattle of European settlers were maimed or stores damaged. Soon conflict began to spread between the Mau Mau and other peoples, especially the Luo, but the worst affected were the other Kikuyu who refused to support the Mau Mau. By October 1952 the new British Governor Sir Evelyn Baring decided to call a state of emergency. Jomo Kenyatta and the KAU leaders were arrested and put on trial. In reality, Kenyatta and the KAU had very little to do with the Mau Mau. Kenyatta had been threatened by them after denouncing them in a speech in 1952, but the British and the settlers did not believe this.

The trial of Jomo Kenyatta did not reflect well on the British government in Kenya. Kenyatta's defence lawyer described the charges against him as 'the most childishly weak case made against any man in any important trial in the history of the British Empire'. It emerged after the trial that the judge in charge had been offered £20,000 (ten times his annual salary) and help to relocate back to Britain if he agreed to stop campaigning for Kenyan independence. The main charge against Kenyatta was that he administered a Mau Mau oath, but the key prosecution witness admitted to lying in court five years later. Despite the flimsy evidence and the dubious charge Kenyatta was convicted. Baring then set about crushing the Mau Mau rising.

Crushing the rebellion

To start with, thousands of Kikuyu and then other Africans were rounded up for questioning and then detained in camps. Some 15,000 men fled into the forests where they swelled the ranks of the Mau Mau and turned it from a minor threat into an underground army. The first white settler was killed in October 1952 and more violence was aimed at settler farms in 1953. In total, 32 European settlers were killed. The Mau Mau also began to turn on the Kikuyu who were loyal to British rule. An estimated 1,800 African civilians were killed by the Mau Mau. The settlers reacted with outrage. They besieged the Governor's office and demanded strong military action. The media back in Britain and around Europe fed on tales of Mau Mau atrocities, dark rituals, terrible oaths and black magic.

SOURCE 12



An illustration by an artist which was published in an Italian newspaper in 1953.

SOURCE 13



Mau Mau suspects being detained in 1952.

- 1 Explain how Sources 12 and 13 present different views of the Mau Mau rising.
- 2 Write more detailed captions to go with each image.

Baring reacted strongly, although he was more concerned about law and order than the views of the settlers. He created a 25,000 strong Home Guard. Settlers joined in the campaign against the Mau Mau. Sometimes this was official, but often they simply rounded up suspects and murdered them. Baring's forces used aircraft and armoured cars against the Mau Mau. By the end of the campaign the official reports said that around 11,000 Africans had been killed. However, new research by Professor Caroline Elkins of Harvard University in the USA suggests that the death toll may have been as high as 50,000 or even 100,000. She has written a book about the Mau Mau called *Britain's Gulag*, comparing what Britain did in Kenya to the death camps of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

As official files are gradually released we know now that many atrocities were committed by ordinary British forces as well as by the rebels and settlers. The British forces also acted against civilians, the vast majority of whom were completely innocent. In April 1954 they arrested almost half the Kikuyu population of Nairobi and placed them in detention camps. By the end of 1954 around 70,000 Africans were in detention camps. At the height of the emergency almost twice that number were held in camps. Although it was never openly admitted, Kenya in the mid-1950s was a police state. Kenyans could be imprisoned without trial. The use of torture and even execution was widespread. These drastic measures did succeed in cutting off supplies of recruits, information and support for the Mau Mau so that by 1956 Britain felt that it had the situation under control. While this might have been true in terms of security, however, it was certainly not true that British rule had been secured. With hindsight we can see that the Mau Mau rebellion was the beginning of the end for British rule.

SOURCE 15

Compensation should be paid to victims now. They are mostly in their 80s and would soon die.

What went on in the Kenya camps and villages was brutal, savage torture. It is time that the mockery of justice that was perpetrated in this country at that time, should be, must be righted. I feel ashamed to have come from a Britain that did what it did here.

John Nottingham, a district colonial officer during the time who stayed on in Kenya after the emergency. He was speaking in 2006.

Activity

Should Britain pay compensation?

Source 15 argues that Britain should pay compensation to the victims of the Mau Mau rebellion. Study the material on pages 28–9 and put together either a case for the prosecution or for the defence. For the prosecution you could look at:

- the justification for British rule was good law and order
- the sheer numbers affected
- how events affected different communities in Kenya.

For the defence you could point to issues such as:

- the fact that the benefit of hindsight was not available
- the length of time between then and now
- the fact that many Kenyan soldiers carried out the atrocities against Mau Mau and civilians.

SOURCE 14



Mau Mau war veterans Generals Kassam Njogu, Njeru Mugo and Ndungu Gicheru, just before they launched a court action in 2006 against the British government over their treatment.

Focus Task

What were the causes of the Mau Mau rebellion?

- 1 Using the text on these two pages list the different factors which helped cause the Mau Mau rebellion.
- 2 Choose two which you think were most important. Explain your choice.
- 3 Now change the question: choose two factors which you think were most important in explaining why the Mau Mau rebellion was so violent. Explain your choice.

Consequences of the Mau Mau rising

Outside Kenya it appeared that the British had handled the rising with great skill. In fact, for 50 years British actions in Kenya were studied around the world as a case study in how to manage an emergency. This was because the true story of what had happened did not emerge. With the support of the Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd, Baring was able to suppress evidence of what had happened in Kenya. He silenced the Red Cross organisation and misled the press and hostile MPs such as the Labour MP Barbara Castle.

Baring was even able to show that progress was being made in Kenya. In 1957 the first Africans were elected to the Legislative Council. Even some settlers were beginning to accept that power sharing might be a wise solution. In 1959 native Africans gained the right to own land in the 'White Highlands'.

It was only a matter of time before the real truth emerged. On 3 March 1959 eleven Mau Mau prisoners at the Hola Camp were beaten to death when they refused to dig an irrigation ditch in a mosquito-infested swamp. The incident was covered up as the camp commander claimed they had died from contaminated drinking water, but an official inquest soon showed that this claim was false. The inquest also showed that many prisoners had been tortured. Despite this no officials were put on trial and the guard commander received an honour! Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell complained that Hola had shocked and dismayed civilised opinion all over the world. The Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan faced even harsher criticism from one of his own ministers, Enoch Powell (Source 16). Powell was not alone. In October 1959 Prime Minister Macmillan appointed a new Colonial Secretary, Iain Macleod, and a new governor of Kenya, Patrick Renison. Macleod immediately investigated the events at Hola and in Kenya generally. What he found out convinced him that a change of policy was necessary and inevitable (see Source 17).

SOURCE 16

All government, all influence of man upon man, rests upon opinion. What we can still do in Africa . . . depends on the opinion people have of the way in which England and Englishmen act. We cannot, we dare not, in Africa of all places, fall below the highest standards in the acceptance of responsibility.

Enoch Powell commenting on the failure of the British government to accept responsibility for the events at Hola Camp.

SOURCE 17

I cross questioned those involved at ruling Kenya in great detail. I observed the pangs of conscience that recent events caused to a significant number of my colleagues. Many of them were now convinced that imperial rule necessarily involved the violation of human rights. They thought it better to accelerate the grant of independence to colonial peoples than to become responsible for such appalling events as the Hola Camp incident. This was the decisive moment when it became clear to me that we could no longer continue with the old methods of government in Africa and that meant inevitably a move towards African independence.

Iain Macleod describing his views on becoming Colonial Secretary in October 1959.

The Wind of Change

Macleod's views were influenced by a range of factors:

- The Mau Mau risings had shown that thousands of Kenyans would no longer tolerate British rule. In fact, terrorist activity was beginning again in 1959 so Macleod ended the state of emergency and released the remaining prisoners.
- Public opinion in Britain was changing with regard to the Empire. Most people were either uninterested in the African colonies or they were positively in favour of African independence.
- This view was shared in the government as well. In February 1960 the British Prime Minister made a famous speech in which he said: 'The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact'. Macmillan was effectively letting people know that Britain intended to free itself of its colonies.
- Public opinion in the USA also favoured independence. The KAU activist Tom Mboya was seen by the US media as a black George Washington.
- The Mau Mau rising had cost £60 million. In addition to this, Britain had now ended National Service so it would be harder to find troops to deal with future disturbances.

In January 1960 Macleod called a conference of Kenya's African, European and Indian leaders (excluding Jomo Kenyatta) in London. In his opening speech he effectively promised independence for Kenya. It was a momentous occasion but the transition from colony to democratic, independent state was not easy. The British proposed a ten-year transitional period. This was completely unacceptable to the Kenyan African National Union (KANU – the former KAU). At the same time the settlers accused Macleod and Governor Renison of betraying them. Macleod feared that militant settlers and militant Kenyans might spark off a full-scale war. He turned to the one figure who might have sufficient influence to bring calm and released Jomo Kenyatta.

Despite his long time in prison, Kenyatta still favoured reconciliation and tried to reassure Kenya's whites they would be secure in the new Kenya. Despite this, around 10 per cent of the white settlers left Kenya. Kenyatta came up with a new slogan *Harambee*, which means 'Pull together'. Even so, many of Kenya's Africans were concerned by the prospect of a Kenya dominated by the Kikuyu KANU party. They argued for Kenya to be divided into regions. Kenyatta accepted this. In June 1963 Kenya held its first elections and Jomo Kenyatta became Prime Minister. Six months later Kenya was granted formal independence.

Kenyatta was not the ideal democratic leader. He monopolised power in his own hands. His picture appeared everywhere – on stamps, banknotes. He dominated the media and he also amassed a personal fortune in property. Nevertheless, Kenya remained a relatively stable and successful state, although as this book was being written in 2008 Kenya was being torn by violence between different groups within Kenya.

SOURCE 18



Jomo Kenyatta celebrating his election victories in June 1963.

Focus Task

Why did Britain grant Kenyan independence in 1963?

- 1 These are all factors in Kenyan independence in 1963. Study each one and make a table like this to indicate the importance of each.

Factors in achieving Kenyan independence.	Significance How significant was this factor in achieving independence? (Express your answer as a percentage.)	Supporting evidence What key events or developments influenced your decision?
Public opinion in Britain		
Attitude of settlers		
Opinions of British government		
International situation		
African opposition to British rule		
Divisions between Africans		

- 2 Use the table as an essay plan to answer the main question: Why did Britain grant Kenyan independence in 1963?

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Acknowledgements

Elspeth Huxley: extract from *The Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood* (1959; Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics, 2000).

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First published in 1996 by
Hodder Education,
An Hachette UK Company
338 Euston Road
London NW1 3BH

Second edition published in 2001
This third edition published in 2009

Impression number 5 4 3 2 1
Year 2013 2012 2011 2010 2009

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