

INDIAN HISTORY- 20th Century

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Part I : Early 20th Century

Overview

The first half of the twentieth century was dominated by the rising tide of nationalism that culminated in Indian Independence in 1947. In 1900 few people in India had even heard of M.K. Gandhi, who honed his philosophy while studying in London and practicing law in South Africa. 50 years later, his non-violent, mass-movement, village-based politics had transformed a colony into the world's biggest democracy. However, although he was undoubtedly the most influential figure, Gandhi was only one of many people who shaped this extraordinary story. And all of them, in turn, were influenced by events beyond their control.

Events

Partition of Bengal One of those events was the partition of Bengal Province in 1905 into a Hindu west and a Muslim east. The stated reason for this division was administrative—such a large territory, about the size of France, was ungovernable—but the consequences were political. Bengali Hindus in the west feared that they would lose power once they were bundled into a province that included other Hindus from Bihar. On the other hand, Muslims in the east generally welcomed the idea of governing themselves free from the domination of Hindu Calcutta. This ill-considered partition led to a greater political awareness among Muslims and to a widening of the communal divide when Muslims and Hindus voted in separate elections in 1909. The error was recognised, and in 1911 Bengal was reunited, only to be divided again after Independence in 1947.

Muslim League The Muslim League was formed in 1906 but at first failed to gain a foothold among Muslims. Instead, most Muslim elites stayed within Congress and worked to achieve moderate aims. That changed during WWI when Britain joined the fight against the Ottoman Empire, considered the Caliphate by India's Sunni majority. Soon the Muslim League began to call for Indian independence, but only in 1940, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, did the League announce its plan for an independent nation of Pakistan.

Delhi becomes capital In December 1911, King George V came to Delhi to be enthroned as Emperor of India at a durbar, or royal ceremony, redolent of the Mughals. At this royal conclave of rulers, he announced that the capital would be moved from Calcutta to Delhi and that a magnificent 'new' Delhi would be built. The Durbar was a grand celebration of imperialism, with maharajas in sumptuous dress, bedecked elephants and opulent carriages processing by the Emperor and Empress. But the decision to move the capital was motivated by a desire to punish Calcutta as a centre of nationalist agitation and to locate government in a more neutral city.

WWI When Britain entered the war in 1914, it sent more than a million Indian soldiers to Mesopotamia and Europe. About 75,000 died, and many more were wounded, fighting for an empire in which, it was pointed out, they were second-class subjects. Many Muslims opposed the war because it was fought, in part, against the Ottoman Empire and the Caliph, regarded by India's majority Sunnis as the successor to the prophet Muhammad. At home, farmers suffered higher land tax, which was necessary in order to finance the expanded Indian army, now almost two million strong. These experiences, on the front and at home, politicised many Indians and gave them a clearer perspective of India's place in the world.

Gandhi arrives In 1915, a young lawyer named Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, where he had worked for two decades on behalf of Indians seeking greater civil rights. In Africa, he devised his method of non-violent resistance to oppression, which he called *satyagraha* ('truth-force'). Returning to India, he participated in local movements by farmers and textile workers. Slowly he worked his way into Congress circles and, although he held no office, was soon leading a mass movement all across India. His gifts were many. He knew how to pick his

battles and how to project an image. The salt march, the spinning wheel, the loin-cloth, shawl and cap—all these symbolised humility in contrast with the greed of the West. He was truly the 'father of the nation', but he was not without his critics or faults. The most damning criticism was his acceptance of discrimination within the caste system, specifically his failure to condemn practices that excluded Untouchables from entering temples and required them to eat separately.

Amritsar massacre Among the many events that contributed to anti-colonialism, none was more decisive than the massacre at Amritsar in 1919, when at least 400 unarmed Indians were shot dead during a peaceful protest. Anger was simmering all over India when that same year the British extended the Rowlatt Act, introduced during the war to crack down on seditious activities but also used to curb lawful protest. Protestors in Amritsar joined a crowd of about 15,000 gathered in an enclosed space to celebrate a religious festival. Few people knew that martial law had been declared, and when General Dwyer ordered his men to fire, hundreds were killed—we will never know the exact number—an act of barbarity that recruited many thousands to the nationalist cause. The massacre, which came to symbolise the injustice and brutality of colonial rule, was not forgotten. In London, in 1940, an Indian nationalist shot and killed the man believed to have approved General Dwyer's action.

Non-cooperation As a response to the Amritsar massacre, Gandhi launched his non-cooperation movement in 1920, which created a disciplined and non-violent army of protestors. Non-cooperation meant picketing liquor shops, boycotting British goods and shops, and wearing handspun cotton (*khadi*) instead of clothing manufactured in Britain and sent back to India for sale. The idea was to liberate India by refusing to participate in an unjust and immoral economic system, without raising a hand in anger. It was a masterstroke of political strategy, captivating the imagination of the country, catching the British off guard and hurting them where it mattered most. The movement lasted two years and was only halted by Gandhi when a confrontation between police and protestors left two protestors and 22 police dead.

Salt march Gandhi launched his second major campaign in 1930 with the famous salt march. He was responding to the British failure to grant India dominion status (like Canada and New Zealand), despite repeated calls from the Indian National Congress. There was also widespread anger at the Simon Commission appointed in 1928 to study government practices and recommend reforms. The fact that the commission included no Indians led to anti-British demonstrations wherever the commission travelled on its fact-finding tour. Sensing the mood, Gandhi announced a campaign of civil disobedience, an escalation of tactics from the non-cooperation campaign. He chose the unpopular tax on salt making and marched 240 miles from his ashram to the west coast, where he made salt and broke the law by not paying tax. Gandhi's arrest, along with thousands of others, had a profound effect on the general public, and civil disobedience broke out all over India.

Quit India movement Following inconclusive negotiations between Gandhi and the British throughout the 1930s, the Second World War brought things to a head. At first, however, there was confusion. Gandhi seemed to support the war effort, while most Congress leaders (including Nehru) did not. Why, they asked, should we fight for freedom elsewhere when we are not given freedom at home? Then Jinnah and the Muslim League issued their proclamation of a separate nation of Pakistan. Meanwhile, another man, Subhas Chandra Bose had organised an army to fight alongside the Japanese against British imperialism in Asia. The British rejected an offer from Congress to support the war in return for a guarantee of independence after it was over. A high-profile mission was sent from London to find common ground but it failed. The deadlock ended in 1942 when Gandhi reversed his decision and declared that he would not support a war while India remained a colony. He launched his third major campaign, the 'Quit India' movement. Within hours of his speech calling for mass protest, Congress leaders were arrested and put in prison, where they remained until the end of the war. The Quit India movement, however, did not command mass support. The Muslim League, the princely states and many businessmen continued to support the war.

Post-war During the war, if not before, London realised that India was ungovernable by a foreign power and made plans for a hasty retreat. In 1945, the British cobbled together a Delhi government of Congress and Muslim League ministers, with Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister. The Muslim League won overwhelming support in elections of 1946, but Congress refused to accept their demand

for a state of Pakistan. Communal violence erupted across the country, leaving an estimated 12,000-15,000 people dead.

Independence and partition Finally, after decades of protest and debate, thousands of deaths and prolonged upheaval, India became independent on 15 August 1947. The celebrations were marred by the fact that British India had been partitioned, and Pakistan was born on 14 August the same year. The large provinces of Punjab and Bengal had to be cut in two and parcelled out between the two countries. Moreover, Pakistan itself was a nation divided, into east and west. The line dividing India and Pakistan (east and west), drawn on a map by politicians, cut through the social fabric of British India, instigating communal violence on an unseen scale. Some 180,000 people (mostly Muslims) died in Punjab. 6 million Muslims and 4.5 million Hindus became refugees. In 1948, Gandhi was murdered by a right wing Hindu for being 'too soft' on Muslims.

People

Tilak Among the many people who played a major part in India's independence was Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920). Indeed, in some ways he paved the way for Gandhi's movement. In the late 19th century, Tilak began to publish fierce criticisms of British colonialism in two Marathi-language newspapers. He also organised a populist movement focused on Sivaji, the 17th-century Mahratta leader, and the god Ganesh. In 1905, following the partition of Bengal, Tilak experimented with the tactics of boycotting British goods and non-violent protest. In 1914, believing that the Indian National Congress was too moderate, Tilak founded the Home Rule League which campaigned for *swaraj*, or self-rule.

Sri Aurobindo Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghose, 1872-1950) contributed another dimension to the nationalist cause. If Tilak was a political pragmatist, Aurobindo was a mystical patriot. Until 1910, Aurobindo participated in the nationalist movement at the highest level before retreating to the French colony of Pondicherry on the southeast coast to escape another term in a British jail. Even his early political essays reveal a spiritualism not dissimilar to Gandhi's. Indeed, he wrote a series of essays as early as 1907 outlining the philosophical foundations of passive resistance to aggression. In other early prose writings, he argued passionately for the revival of Hinduism in the service of nationalism. Later essays moved away from temporal problems and urged his followers to act for world peace as 'instruments of the Divine Will.'

Jinnah If Gandhi had an alter-ego, it was Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876?-1948), the founder and first Governor-General of Pakistan. Jinnah was born in Karachi, the eldest of seven children of a prosperous merchant. He was educated at a Christian school and Bombay University and was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, London, at age 19. Back in Bombay he built a highly successful practice as a barrister and entered politics in alignment with moderate Congress leaders. When the Muslim League was established in 1906, Jinnah's conservative views kept him within Congress. Only in 1913, when he was convinced that Muslim League was dedicated to Indian independence, did he join that organisation. From that point on, he was the protector Muslim rights in the nationalist cause, gaining the important but divisive concession of separate Muslim constituencies in elections. Although he disagreed with Gandhi's tactics, Jinnah worked hard to main communal unity. At the Muslim League conference in 1940, he supported the resolution to form a separate nation of Pakistan. That vision was realised in 1947, and he died a year later.

B.R. Ambedkar Gandhi spoke for Hindus, Jinnah for Muslims, but what of the low-castes and Untouchables? Their champion was B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) one of the most extraordinary men in this period of remarkable people. Born into an untouchable caste, he went on to gain a PhD from Columbia University, studied law and science in London and returned to India in 1923. He made his mark on the nationalist movement in the 1930s, when he broke ranks with Gandhi and argued the case for the millions of Harijans in India. While others saw Hinduism as the antidote to colonialism,

Ambedkar argued that Hinduism was itself as oppressive as foreign rule. He led a neo-Buddhist movement, encouraging low-castes to convert to a religion without caste. In 1956, he converted to Buddhism and died in the same year.

E.V. Ramaswami Naicker Another remarkable figure of this half-century was the firebrand E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (1879-1973), known to Tamils as Periyar ('The Great One'). Although born a high-caste Hindu, he, like Ambedkar, opposed Gandhi on the question of caste. But Naicker's protest was on behalf of all non-Brahmin Tamils, not just Untouchables. He protested endlessly against what he saw as the historical domination of Sanskrit/Hindi and Brahmins over the language and people of South India. His 'rationalist' movement attacked superstition and idolatry, while his 'self-respect' movement aimed to restore dignity. He also championed women's rights in the form of 'self-respect marriages', which were conducted without a Brahmin priest. He is still the guiding spirit behind every political party that has held power in Tamil Nadu.

Government

Starting point At the beginning of the twentieth century, the government of British India, based in Calcutta, consisted of a Governor-General and his Executive Council of 10-16 members, a few of whom were Indian. In the provinces, a governor held considerable authority, subject to an advisory council. However, none of these office-holders was elected, and real power lay with the government in London, who appointed and recalled the governor-general and governors. In the course of the next fifty years, this structure would be amended again and again, until Indians elected by Indians gained control of their government.

Morley-Minto Reforms Under pressure from growing nationalist sentiment, the government in London passed the Indian Councils Act 1909, which recommended the changes known as the Morley-Minto reforms. These reforms increased 'native' participation in the advisory councils in Calcutta and the provinces. More radical was the fact that some Indians would be elected, rather than appointed as before. Indians were also permitted to discuss budgetary matters for the first time, and other Indian institutions (universities, district committees and landlord groups) were empowered to suggest laws. A controversial element of these reforms was the concession to Muslims for a certain number of seats in provincial legislatures to be reserved for them. This created 'communal' representation, which would bedevil the politics of India until Independence in 1947.

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms The growing clamour for independence and the blow to the empire delivered by WWI softened British resistance to self-government and resulted in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. These reforms, which were announced in the Government of India Act 1919, promised that Britain would promote the 'the gradual development of free institutions in India with a view to ultimate self-government.' In order to achieve this, greater powers were conceded to legislative councils at both the central and provincial levels. The changes for the province were the more fundamental and initiated a system called 'dyarchy,' or 'dual rule.' Each provincial legislative council had two sections. One section consisted of councillors, or ministers, appointed as before by London, who were responsible for 'hard-core' departments, such as finance, army, home affairs and law. The other section consisted of Indian ministers chosen by the Governor from the elected members of the council, and these Indian ministers oversaw the 'nation-building' departments, such as agriculture, education and public works.

Government of India Act 1935 The political change initiated by these reforms culminated in the Government of India Act 1935, which laid down the basis for Indian independence. Now the provincial legislatures were given real autonomy, more seats would be elected and dyarchy was abolished—all ministers would now be chosen from the Indian members who had been elected to the legislature. Provincial governors would still be appointed, but they were to accept recommendations from Indian ministers, except in cases where legislation would threaten civil disturbance or the rights of minorities. At the level of central government, the act called for a 'Federation of India', comprised of British provinces and princely states. It also introduced dyarchy at the federal level, with some departments given to Indian ministers and others to British ministers. The central legislature was

given more seats (including some reserved for women, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians), and the franchise was extended. In addition, Burma was separated from India and given its own colonial government. As a half-way house between colonialism and nationalism, the 1935 act was unwieldy and satisfied neither party. However, this complex machinery was put in place for the provincial elections in 1937, a sort of dress rehearsal for democracy, which resulted in a resounding and unpredicted victory for Congress.

Election of 1945 The 1935 act served as framework for governing India until Independence in 1947. Although that legislation had foreseen a 'federation of India' governed by an expanded central legislature of 372 elected members, the princely states refused to agree to this plan. As a result, the general election in December 1945 (the last before Independence) covered only 102 seats. Congress again won a majority, and Nehru was installed as leader of an interim government in New Delhi. However, the Muslim League won in all the reserved Muslim constituencies and consolidated its political power. Partition became a certainty.

Economy

The Indian economy grew at a rate of about 1% each year during the period, but so did the population, with the result that per capita income remained static. War brought windfall profits to India's emerging capitalist class both in 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. Textile factories supplied uniforms, jute mills provided tents and sandbags, while mechanised workshops won handsome contracts for rifles and field artillery. Many of these companies were British-owned, but Parsi, Gujarati and Marwari, businessmen, such as the Tata Iron and Steel Company, also took a hefty slice of the economic pie. Indian capitalists reaped further profits from the increased demand for locally-produced goods as part of the boycott of foreign goods. This trend was enhanced by the Great Depression, during which Indian-based textile production overtook imports from England, and the same was true for sugar, cement and paper. Employment in many of these industries rose steadily, creating a new managerial middle-class. Among the losers were the artisans, from weavers to carpenters, whose handicrafts could not compete with factory-produced items. The wages of factory workers remained stagnant, and the feeble unions had little success with strikes and boycotts. In the countryside, agricultural prices slid sharply during this period, and poverty, exacerbated by the depression, led to famines. The worst famine struck in 1943 in Bengal, when war-time hoarding and an influx of refugees from Japan-occupied Burma led to food shortages, while cyclones and tidal waves destroyed crops. In the end, it is estimated that three million people perished.

Society

Change and stasis The political upheaval of the period created opportunities that were seized by some sections of Indian society. First, the increased participation by Indians in central and provincial government led to the emergence of a political elite, mainly comprised of high-caste Hindus and high-status Muslims. In South India, Brahmins filled the new administrative jobs from top to bottom. At the same time, the establishment of separate Hindu and Muslim constituencies contributed to the already widening gap between the two groups. Economic opportunities during the two wars produced a class of capitalist captains of industry, again among high-status groups in both Hindu and Muslim communities. Despite mass movements on their behalf, the rural poor, urban labourers and Untouchables drifted further from the prosperity at the top. The mass movements that shook the country galvanised caste identities at all levels, as politics mobilised people on the basis of perceived shared interests. All in all, the reformist agenda of enlightened colonialism, with its aim of producing 'brown Englishmen,' floundered on the hard reality of casteism.

Vaikom temple A telling illustration of this reality is provided by what is known as the Vaikom temple controversy. In a small town of that name in the state of Kerala, a temple continued the old practice of barring Untouchables not only from entering the temple but also from walking on nearby streets. In 1924, the temple became a target for social reformers, including Gandhi and Ramaswami

Naicker. After months of fasting, public protests and speeches, the ban was lifted on the streets but not for entering the temple. It was a compromise that compromised Gandhi's commitment to caste equality.

Culture

Religion The hardening of the communal divide between Hindus and Muslims, enacted in legislation, practiced in separated constituencies and cemented in the creation of Pakistan, fed the politicisation of religious identities. Islam, which had suffered the ignominy of Mughal decline, now felt like a beleaguered minority in India, and it suffered further when many Islamic scholars chose to live in Pakistan.

Hinduism was given a makeover by Gandhi's non-violence, even though that principle was actually developed within Buddhism. Buddhism itself, more or less irrelevant for many centuries, experienced a minor recovery as low-caste political movements (led by Ambedkar and Naicker) drew inspiration from Buddhism's historical critique of the caste system. Christianity, energised by Protestant evangelism, spread rapidly in the northeast, while maintaining a major presence in coastal South India.

Film Amid the political turmoil, Indian cinema blossomed. After it began in Bombay in 1896, money poured in to finance studios, build cinemas and support companies that toured films all across the country. British-owned and run, these touring companies showed mainly sports, news, travel and topical documentaries. The first Indian feature was 'Raja Harischandra' in 1913. Based on a well-known mythological story, it started a genre that has never lost its appeal. By the 1920s, only 15% of the hundred or so films made each year were produced by Indians. The advent of sound in the 1930s brought not just the 'talkies' but also the songs that are central to the success of Indian films. Regional cinema also developed in this decade, especially Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bengali films. By 1950, Indians owned most of the industry and were producing the films that would later become classics.

Literature Fiction in Urdu was raised to a new level by the storytelling art of Sadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955). Unusual among fiction writers in India at this time, he specialised in the short story, and like Chekhov and Maupassant, he told stories with a fine eye for detail and character motivation. Some critics condemned his apparent fascination with violence and sex, but others praised his stories featuring prostitutes and pimps for their unsentimental humanity. Other major writers were heavily influenced by the nationalist cause, although they looked beyond ideologies and slogans and focused on everyday lives of ordinary people. The social realism and reformist agenda of the period are forcefully portrayed in the Hindi fiction of Premchand (1880-1936), who published a dozen novels and more than 300 short stories. His output was uneven, sometimes falling prey to sentimentalism, but he created characters with depth and emotional complexity. His masterpiece was *Godan* ('The Gift of a Cow'), in which the main character is a villager whose purchase of a cow leads to debt, deception and his own death.

Bengali novelists of the period include the Nobel Prize winner Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chatterji (1876-1938) and Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (or Banerjee, 1894-1950). All three wrote complex, psychological novels, often exploring the world of middle-class women, which was a new trend. Perhaps the most famous is Bandyopadhyay's 1936 novel *Pather Panchali* (the first part of *The Apu Trilogy*), which was later adapted into an internationally-acclaimed film by Satyajit Ray. Tamil fiction during this period produced the Manikkodi writers (named after an eponymous literary magazine in the 1930s), including B.S. Ramiah, Chellappa, Mauni and Putumaipittan.

Discussion/questions

1. Analyse three specific events that played a key role in the growth of nationalism. Consider, for instance, the Partition of Bengal in 1905, the Amritsar Massacre in 1919, the Simon Commission of 1928, the Salt March of 1930, the Government of India Act 1935 and the Second World War. After analysing three events, identify their common elements and make an argument for those elements as the fundamental elements of nationalism in India.
2. Although Gandhi is justifiably called the 'Father of the nation,' other figures played a key role in achieving independence. These include Tilak, Ambedkar and Naicker. Assess the contribution of each of these men, who often clashed with Gandhi over principles and tactics.

3. The Great War (1914-1918) had a profound effect on India and its soldiers serving abroad. The soldiers wrote thousands of letters home, and some soldiers later wrote memoirs of their experiences. Some of these writings are archived in the British Library and available online. Those documents, plus photographs and books (see Basu below, for example), offer us a chance to understand this forgotten story.

Reading

- Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jaylal (eds.), *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Routledge, 2011)
- Judith M Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy* (Oxford, 1994)
- Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge, 1996)
- Ainslie T. Embree, *Sources of Indian Tradition, Vol II* (2nd ed.) (Columbia, 1988)
- B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013)
- M.K. Gandhi, *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (ed. by Mahadev Desai) (Dover, 1990)
- Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (Yale, 1991)
- Shrasbasni Basu, *For King and Another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front 1914-18* (Bloomsbury 2015)

Texts

1. Gandhi (1869-1948), on himself, from *Collected Works*:

'I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good—wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach this ideal which I know to be true...It is a painful limb, but the pain of it is a positive pleasure to me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next...'

2. Gandhi, on self-reliance, from *Collected Works*:

'Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or *panchayat* having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world...Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit...'

3. From the writings of B.R. Ambedkar

'In the Hindu religion, one can[not] have freedom of speech. A Hindu must surrender his freedom of speech. He must act according to the Vedas. If the Vedas do not support the actions, instructions must be sought from the Smritis, and if the Smritis fail to provide any such instructions, he must follow in the footsteps of the great men. He is not supposed to reason. Hence, so long as you are in the Hindu religion, you cannot expect to have freedom of thought.'

4. From the speeches of E.V. Ramaswami Naicker

'Decide for yourselves as to what you should think of those who say there is God, that he is the preserver of justice and that he is the protector of all, even after seeing the practice of untouchability in the form of man being banned from human sight and contact, from walking in the streets, from entering the temples and drawing water from a tank, is rampant in the land.'

Part II : Late 20th Century

Overview

Modern India is a nation of contrasts. Once plagued by rural poverty and dependent on foreign aid, it is now an economic powerhouse and a leader in high-tech industrial innovation. Gandhi's vision of a rural republic was bulldozed by Nehru's policy of state-planned industrialisation, a 'green revolution' redressed an imbalance in grain trade, and recent economic reforms have stimulated free-market capitalism. Despite these and other achievements in literacy and health, India's enormous population outstrips its ability to provide basic services. Every year programmes, policies and political parties arise to combat social deprivation, yet poverty remains a dispiriting reality. While a strong central government is enshrined in Constitution, regional political parties hold the trump card, and peripheral regions, such as Kashmir and the northeast, are still not fully integrated into the nation. An increasing proportion of the country is urban, educated and English-speaking, yet caste and religion continue to play a major role in politics and society. The Constitution of 1950 announced that India was a secular nation, but the political landscape is now dominated by Hindu nationalism and Islamic rhetoric. Despite these problems, statistics tell a story of greater prosperity and well-being. Over the period 1950 to 2016, the population grew from 360 million to 1.3 billion, per capita income increased from about \$600 to \$1500 and life expectancy rose from 39 to 67 years.

Events

Kashmir The princely state of Jammu-Kashmir, with a Muslim majority population ruled by a Hindu maharaja, was always going to be a problem in an Independent India. At Independence in August 1947, the Maharaja had not agreed to join India. In October, Pakistani troops and local Muslim militia began military action to secure Kashmir for Pakistan, initiating the first of four wars between Pakistan and India. Facing occupation by Pakistan, the Maharaja called on India, who only responded when the Maharaja committed Kashmir to the Union. The war rumbled on until 1 January 1949, when both sides accepted a UN ceasefire and a disputed Line of Control, which gave India two-thirds of Kashmir and Pakistan one-third. The UN resolution also called for a plebiscite to determine the future of Kashmir, but that has never taken place. A second war was fought in 1965, and the issue remains unresolved, with sporadic military action and fatalities almost every year.

1962 war with China The fledgling Indian state also faced a threat on its northern and northeast frontiers with China. This Himalayan border (the McMahon Line) between India and China had been proposed in 1913 by Henry McMahon at a conference in Simla between British, Tibetan and Chinese officials. The Tibetans accepted the line drawn on a map, but the Chinese did not. The unratified border, lying in distant, unpopulated terrain, did not cause problems until the Tibetan uprising in 1959, when India gave the Dalai Lama refuge and began to extend its military presence up to the Himalayas. China responded to this 'cartographic' aggression by sending troops over the Himalayas and down into what is now Ladakh in the west and Arunachal in the east. Armed conflict was minimal, however, and China unilaterally withdrew after one month. Nevertheless, the border remains unresolved, and although both countries have agreed to a peaceful settlement, there is now 'water war.' North India's major rivers have their source in China, and Beijing is planning a series of dams that would restrict their flow into India.

1971 war with Pakistan India fought another war with Pakistan as part of the Bangladesh war of liberation. When East Pakistan decided to break away from West Pakistan in March 1971, the Pakistani army (from the west) began to attack East Pakistan. As the civilian casualties and reported atrocities mounted, millions of people, including many Hindus, fled East Pakistan and crossed the border into India. India finally entered the war in December, with air, ground and naval attacks in both east and west Pakistan. A short 13 days later, Pakistan surrendered, and Bangladesh became an independent nation. This was a major diplomatic victory for India, and perhaps the high point of Indira Gandhi's premiership.

1975 Emergency Four years later, though, she had sunk to new low with allegations of corruption and politically-motivated repression.

In 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had been found guilty of electoral malpractice, and her 1971 victory had been declared unconstitutional. Facing a wave of popular protests and attacks in the

media, she persuaded the President to declare a state of emergency under the appropriate clause in the Constitution. 'The Emergency' then allowed her to declare Presidents Rule in various states and use repressive laws to stop her opponents.

Nehru dynasty Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), his daughter Indira Gandhi (1917-1984) and her son Rajiv Gandhi (1944-1991) held the position of prime minister from 1947 to 1989 (excluding 1977-1980). This family-led domination of the Congress Party was a direct legacy of the Independence movement, in which Nehru had been a leading figure and for which he served a long prison sentence. Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India and led the Congress Party to four electoral victories. However, he broke decisively with Gandhi's vision of 'handicraft India' and supported heavy industry, manufacturing and infrastructure, including India's nuclear weapons programme. He guided India through the wars with Pakistan, the Chinese invasion of 1962 and the Cold War. Although India leaned toward the Soviet Union (in part because China supported Pakistan), Nehru himself was more pro-western, and in any case became the leader of the non-alignment movement. He was succeeded by his daughter, Indira Gandhi, who continued her father's policies of non-alignment and technological advance. She also led the 'Green revolution' that turned India from an importer into an exporter of food. Her heavy-handed policies, especially during the Emergency and in a programme of population control, earned her enemies. She was assassinated in 1984 by her Sikh bodyguard, in retaliation for the military assault on Sikh separatists taking refuge in a Sikh temple. Her son, Rajiv Gandhi, was then appointed Prime Minister and served for five years until the Congress Party was defeated in the general election of 1989. His term of office was marred by financial scandal and political in-fighting, although he did initiate liberalisation reforms and support the high-tech industry. His most controversial act was to send Indian troops into the Sri Lankan civil war fought between the government and a Tamil separatist organisation. Although the Indian troops were technically 'peace-keeping,' they were perceived by the Tamils as supporting the status quo. As a consequence, in 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a Tamil woman suicide bomber.

Government

1950 Constitution The Constitution of 1950, based largely on the Government of India Act 1935, established a British-style parliamentary system with a strong centre. Nehru's wish that the constitution be drawn up by a popularly elected assembly was thwarted by Vallabhbhai Patel, who argued for a far less representative body chosen by a limited electorate. This explains why major proposed changes to the 1935 scheme were not passed, such as having provincial (later state) governors elected rather than appointed by the centre. Indeed, the constitution reaffirmed that the government in New Delhi was empowered to replace state governments whenever it wished. The 1947-48 war with Pakistan over Kashmir, concurrent with the drafting of the Constitution, undoubtedly influenced these provisions. The 270-page document also guaranteed freedom of speech, religion and association, plus rights to property, education and the preservation of minority cultures. In this civil rights agenda, Nehru was opposed by Patel but supported by B. R. Ambedkar, the champion of Untouchables/Dalits. But even the combined support of Nehru and Ambedkar was unable to prevent Patel and his conservative allies from retaining colonial-era Hindu and Muslim law codes, instead of more generic human rights. Those rights, it was feared, would lead to demands from low castes and women, which would destabilise the country. Ambedkar resigned from the constitutional assembly in protest, while Nehru decided to achieve reforms through legislation rather than the Constitution.

Administration The government of India is divided into executive, legislative and judicial branches. In reality, however, power lies in the legislative branch with parliament and its ministers. The legislative branch has two houses: the Lok Sabha (People's Assembly) and the Rajya Sabha (Royal Assembly). Members of the Lok Sabha, commonly called MPs, are popularly elected from 552 constituencies in the 29 states, plus 20 MPs from Union Territories and 2 MPs from the Anglo-Indian community. As in the UK, the Lok Sabha makes laws, which the Rajya Sabha can amend. The Prime Minister is elected from the Lok Sabha and chooses his or her cabinet of ministers. The President, increasingly a ceremonial role, appoints justices to the Supreme Court and the high courts, as well as state governors. The 245 members of the Rajya Sabha are elected by the state and territorial legislatures, although the President can appoint 12 members, drawn broadly from the arts and business. The Supreme Court in New Delhi has appellate and advisory jurisdictions, as well as

original jurisdiction in any case between states or between a state and the central government. Each state has a high court, and each district within a state has a district court. The administrative structure of each state government resembles that of the central government.

Accession The strong central government built into the Constitution was a mechanism intended to neutralise the threat of fragmentation latent within an independent India. The day after Independence, the government of India only controlled less than half of the territory and about two-thirds of its population; the princely states had the rest. Most of these 562 princely states acceded to the union immediately, but some of the most powerful needed persuasion. Two of these were Kashmir (Muslim-majority population ruled by a Hindu) and Hyderabad (Hindu-majority population ruled by a Muslim). Military threats in 1948 persuaded Hyderabad, while Kashmir joined the same year after Delhi agreed to send troops to repel an invasion from Pakistan. Travancore and Cochin, a large state in the south, acceded in 1949, followed in the same year by the equally important Rajputana princely states. In the end, all the princely states were integrated into the fourteen provinces that comprised the Union. Goa, once a Portuguese colony and then a Union territory, was annexed in 1961.

Regionalism Despite the relative success of accession, the authority of the central government has been undercut by the political regionalism that has fragmented the country. In particular, the 15 or so major language communities (each more than 5 million strong) became the basis for powerful regional parties, who demanded more autonomy and in some cases threatened to secede from the Union. This was the 'balkanisation' the Nehru and his allies had tried to avert with a strong centralised state. Nehru did, however, accept the validity of language defining an administrative unit, and he oversaw a process of dividing the large provinces into small states. In 1956, the province of Madras was cut up into four states: Madras (later Tamil Nadu) for Tamil, Mysore (later Karnataka) for Kannada, Andhra Pradesh (later split into Telangana and Andhra) for Telugu, and Kerala for Malayalam. In 1960, the province of Bombay was split into Maharashtra for Marathi and Gujarat for Gujarati. More recently, several more new states have been carved out of existing ones, this time based more on ethnicity than language. In the northeast, however, several separatist movements and armed insurgencies remain active.

Bharatiya Janata Party The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party ('The People of India Party'), or the BJP, is revelatory of the recent political history of India. Congress, with Gandhi's charisma and Nehru's skill, held the country together during the crucial decades that followed Independence. The post-war consensus, however, broke down in the 1980s (coincidental with the end of the Cold War). The command economy with its Soviet-style five-year plans and state-owned utilities, as well as the colonial-era political system with its opaque bureaucracy and patrician elite, were not fit for purpose. Congress lost its spell, and a new populism filled the vacuum. Rejecting the secularism of the westernised Nehru dynasty, the BJP and its allied organisations tapped into the Hindu nationalism that had been there all along. India was now a 'Hindu nation' that celebrated its ancient history and religion. L.K. Advani, leader of the BJP in 1989 elections, toured the country dressed as the mythic hero Rama riding in a (jeep decorated as a) chariot. It is not coincidental that in the previous year tens of millions of Indians watched 78 hour-long episodes of the TV adaptation of the Ramayana. Nor is it surprising that a few years later, in 1992, BJP supporters destroyed a 16th century mosque that had been built over a Hindu temple. Anti-Muslim riots ensued all over India, leaving thousands dead.

Economy

Industrialisation The economic boost supplied by the Second World War helped Nehru's post-Independence strategy of industrialisation to be a moderate success. With the Gandhian legacy of excluding foreign-made goods, the imposition of high import duties and licensing intended to restrict foreign-owned companies, plus a little aid from the Soviet Union, India's industrial output in iron and steel, mining, chemicals and electricity were impressive. By the 1960s, industrial output was growing by 7% a year and per capita income by 4%, although a population growth of 2% cut into those gains. These trends have continued up until 2016.

Agriculture Agricultural production grew by 25% under the first five - year plan of 1951– 6, and by 20% under second (1956– 61). But in the 1960s, after failed monsoons, droughts and flooding, India

turned hat in hand to the United States for grain imports. At the same time, new high-yield varieties of wheat were planted in north India, followed by similar experiments with rice in south India. The results of this 'Green Revolution' were remarkable, and grain production doubled in two decades. But the gains were unevenly distributed regionally, with the Punjab and Tamil Nadu the big winners, and socially, with landlords benefitting more than cultivators. In the 21st century, grain production has continued to rise, and most economists are now confident that India will remain self-sufficient.

Liberalisation Although protectionist policies and the lack of foreign competition had a beneficial effect on growth in the first decades after Independence, by the 1980s, the lack of innovation and creeping stagnation were all too evident. In the early 1990s, after 50 years of isolation, India accepted an IMF loan of \$1.4 billion, which required it to embrace global capitalism. In return, India enacted a slew of radical reforms, selling off nationalised industries and utilities, removing currency and banking regulations, abolishing import tariffs, encouraging foreign investment and launching an Indian stock market. Almost immediately the annual growth rate rose from around 2% to 7%, a level it has maintained ever since. A redistribution of economic growth also occurred, shifting away from the old centres in north India, such as Calcutta, Bombay and Ahmedabad, to southern cities, such as Bangalore, Hyderabad and Madras, especially in software and other high-tech industries.

Prosperity and poverty The creation of wealth in late 20th-century and early 21st-century India has been truly remarkable. Billionaires are a dime a dozen, and the urban professional class enjoys a standard of living comparable to that in other major world capitals. As ever, though, wealth distribution remains uneven, and today one in six Indians lives in poverty (less than \$2 a day). More than 100 million Indians own a television, but nearly a third of the adult population remain illiterate. Poverty eradication has been a government objective ever since the 1970s, when Indira Gandhi limited the amount of land a person could own and attempted to halt population growth. More recently, various governments have implemented programmes targeting primary education, health, food supply and rural electrification. Whether these measures will overcome endemic patterns of uneven income distribution is not a question anyone can yet answer. Certainly the 'black' economy, payments in cash to avoid taxes, is rampant, and in late 2016 the government withdrew high-denomination notes in order to curb it.

Society

Caste and class Upheavals in the political, economic and technological spheres appear only to have strengthened traditional social relations. Although the link between caste and occupation is not as ironclad as it once was, the fragmentation into language-states and the rise of powerful regional parties has contributed to the consolidation of caste identities. In a rapidly globalising nation, the localised community of a caste offers security and stability. At the same time, caste is a vehicle for mobilising political support and economic cooperation. In the 1950s and 1960s, regionally dominate lower caste groupings succeeded in lobbying the government to grant them entitlements similar to those given to the Untouchables/Dalits. The 'backward classes', as they are known, who are one-third of the population, now enjoy positive discrimination in education and employment. Even among urban, westernised Indians, endogamous, arranged marriages remain the norm, and education and careers are still influenced by caste. In addition to these blood-based loyalties of caste and kin, traditional patron-client relationships also play a major role in social transactions. These reciprocal relations—between landowner and cultivator, householder and washerman, housewife and fruit-seller, businessman and driver, shopkeeper and servant—are the threads that knit together the billion-plus people of India.

Women The status of women also presents a mixed picture. Through the socialist era of the 1950s and 1960s, new legislation granted women the right to divorce and to inherit property, while declaring dowry illegal. It is undeniable that many Indian women today enjoy more freedom and occupy more powerful positions than they would have 50 years ago, but most women still struggle to achieve a good life. While the ratio of 945 females to every 1000 males is an improvement, it underlines the

ongoing reality of female infanticide and poor health conditions. Child marriage and dowry, despite legislation outlawing them, are still common, and female illiteracy (35%) is widespread.

Culture

Literature Indian literature, like its economy, became global toward the end of this period. The international audience for Indian novels written in English is now enormous, a trend begun by the novels of R. K. Narayan (1906-2001). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Narayan was never a political writer, and his fiction is often criticised for its apolitical stance and neglect of colonialism. However, he was too keen an observer of human nature to be indifferent to injustice and most of his novels explore some kind of social problem, though not the spectacular ones favoured by others. A woman writer of equal distinction is Anita Desai (b.1937), who was shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. In recent years, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh and Amit Chaudhuri have all won considerable international reputations. Popular novelists such as Shoba De and Chetan Bhagat write stories that reflect the aspirations of the growing lower-middle class. A noteworthy feature of regional literature is the success of Dalit (untouchable) novelists. The landmark publication in 1978 of Daya Pawar's Marathi-language *Balute* ('Share') was followed by several more novels in Marathi in the 1980s. In Tamil, novels by the Dalit Catholic writer Bama (*Karuku*, 'Blades', and *Sangati*, 'Events') in the 1990s are noteworthy, in part because they use the idiom of the author's community rather than standard Tamil.

Religion The harnessing of religion by political movements, a trend that began during the nationalist era, shows no sign of abating. A revealing example is the Shiv Sena ('Siva's Army'), which grew out of an agitation in the 1950s for a separate Marathi-speaking state to be carved out of Bombay Province. After Maharashtra was duly created in 1960, protests against non-Marathas began: Gujaratis controlled much of the commerce in Bombay, and South Indians held many white-collar professional positions. Soon, a political cartoonist formed a new political party, which he named Shiv Sena. Since the 1990s, the Shiv Sena has allied itself with the Bharatiya Janata Party and stoked anti-Muslim feelings. More broadly, the psychological divide between Hindus and Muslims has been deepened by the ongoing dispute over Kashmir and the threat of jihadism, especially following the attacks in Bombay in 2008. In 2002, Hindu activists clashed with Muslims in rural Gujarat, leaving two thousand Muslims dead and many tortured, with the apparent complicity of Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat and later Prime Minister of India. New wealth has also enabled families and sub-castes to display their prosperity by building temples. However, the great majority of people say their prayers and celebrate their festivals without incident.

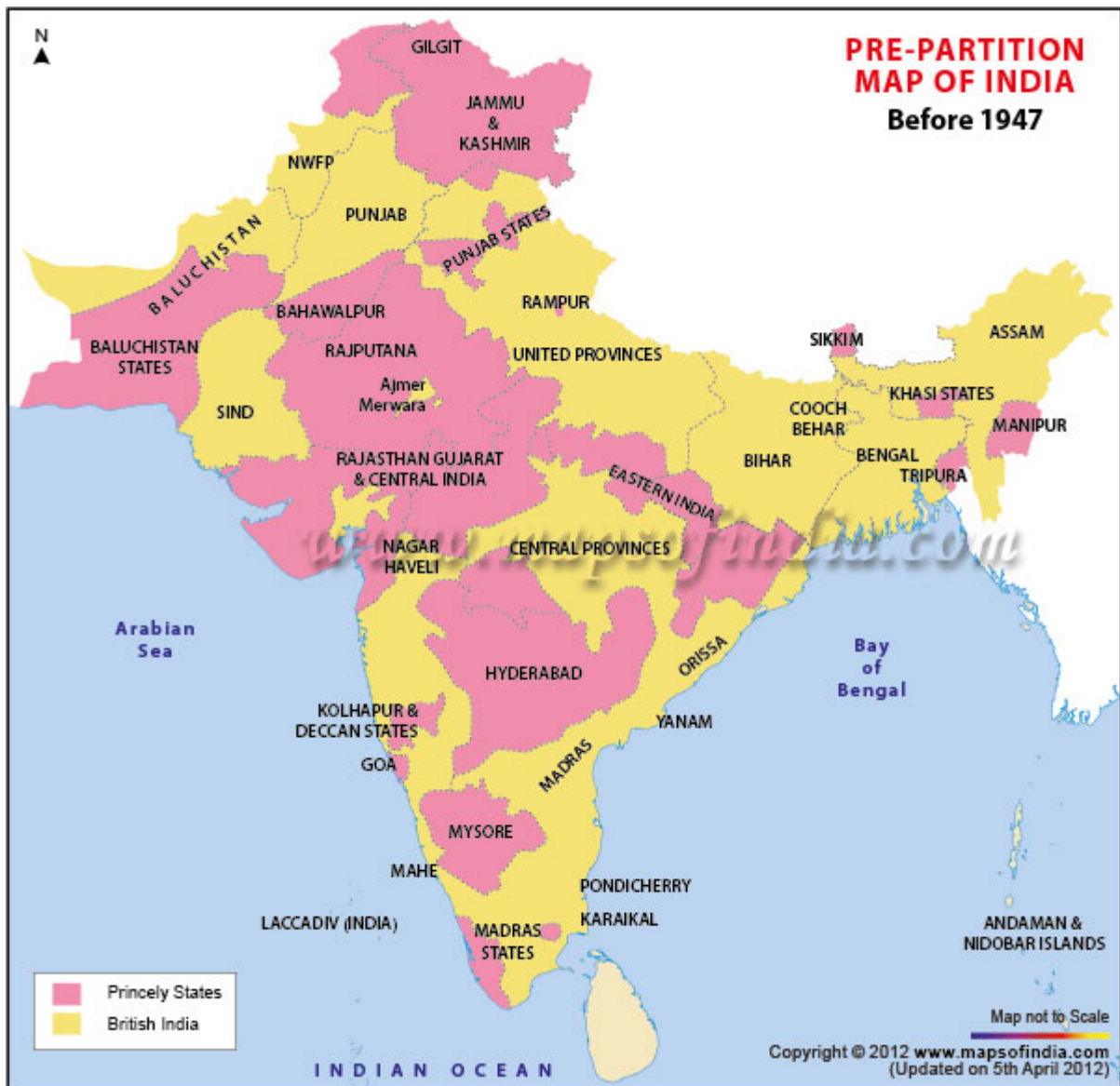
Cinema The 1950s saw the beginning of the 'Golden Age' for Indian cinema, when Indian-made films, including many classics, were produced. Bengali art cinema (directed by Ray, Sen, Roy and Ghatak) emerged and (especially Ray's films) gained an international audience. At the same time, domestic demand rose, and Hindi films were subtitled in three or four regional languages. Fan magazines flourished, and stars, such as Raj Kapoor, Rajesh Khanna and Sharmila Tagore, became celebrities. Almost as popular were the play-back singers, who sang the songs, mainly the Urdu-language *qawwali* and *gazzal* from Muslim court culture. During the 1970s, Hindi cinema began to draw heavily on Hollywood, hence the term 'Bollywood,' and it continues to borrow techniques from American films. As a populist medium, Indian cinema always told stories of romance, of good over evil and of rags to riches. Rickshaw drivers have a heart of gold, corrupt politicians are denounced and poor village girls marry nice doctors. Film has also always been political. Before 1947, the colonial government banned films with a nationalist message, and after Independence the moral character of the nation was visualised in 'Mother India' (1957). The heroine of this classic faces hardships, but she is ideal of the self-sacrificing mother. The path from screen to politics was laid down when the female star of 'Mother India' was elected as a member of parliament in New Delhi. More recently, stars of Tamil cinema (MGR) and Telugu cinema (T.N. Rama Rao) have been elected chief ministers of their states. Today India produces about 1,300 films per year, mostly in Hindi but with substantial numbers in Telugu and Tamil, followed by Kannada and Bengali. Video, TV, DVD and other technologies have changed viewing habits, and in recent years the industry has been dogged by financial and crime scandals, but the magic of the cinema is undiminished.

Reading

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- B. R. Tomlinson, *The Economy of Modern India* (Cambridge, 2013)
- Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence* (Cambridge, 1994)
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Discussion/Questions

4. Independence was only the first step in a still-unfinished process of nation-making. Other steps that followed immediately afterward include Partition, the Constitution of 1950, the accession of the princely states, the creation of new states and the annexation of Goa. The border with Pakistan (Kashmir) and the border with China (Arunachal Pradesh) are a source of ongoing instability. Three new states were created (from existing ones) in 2000, and the latest was created in 2014. At least seven more new states have been proposed. [See the maps below]
5. Analyse the Nehru dynasty both in the context of modern Indian history and world history. First describe its significance for India. Did it provide stability or create undemocratic domination? What precedents exist for this dynasty? Was it a repetition of the father-son succession in the Mughal Empire? Then assess the Nehru dynasty in comparison with family dynasties elsewhere in 20th century world history.
6. Since the 1990s, India has rejected the socialism and state planning of Nehru. A series of regulations and legislation has opened up the economy to foreign investment, eliminated state monopolies and reduced bureaucratic red-tape. Assess the impact of this liberalisation on the lives of ordinary Indians. Be sure to consider urban and rural populations in your assessment, and to place your analysis in the context of global economic developments.





Texts

1. Indian Constitution of 1950:

'We, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic, and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity...'

2. Nehru, on the good life, from *Speeches, 1963-1964*:

'...essentially a good life means certain basic material things that everyone should have, like enough food and clothing, a house to live in, education, health services and work. These are the natural things that everyone should have. How do we do that? We can only do that by producing the wherewithal to provide these good things. We do not go about giving them loans or doles, but by the wealth we produce. We can produce them only by applying modern methods of science, technology, etc. There is no other way of doing it.'

3. From a speech by Uma Bharati, BJP MP and cabinet member, 2000:

'Declare without hesitation that this is a Hindu *rashtra* [nation], a nation of Hindus. We have come to strengthen the immense Hindu *shakti* [power] into a fist. Do not display any love for your enemies ...The Quran teaches them to lie in wait for idol worshippers, to skin them alive, to stuff them in animal skins and torture them until they ask for forgiveness. [We] could not teach them with words, now let us teach them with kicks ... Tie up your religiosity and kindness in a bundle and throw them in the Jamuna. Any non-Hindu who lives here does so at our mercy.'