Decolonization in Africa and Asia: A Resource Guide

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Introduction

European colonization and exploitation from the 1500s to the 20th century have profoundly shaped the cultural, social, and geographic contours of the present world. Under imperial rule, colonized peoples suffered gravely. Colonization decimated vulnerable communities and their cultures in order to harvest valuable resources and exploit indigenous labor for the benefit of European markets. However, for as long as colonialism has gripped the world, there have also been successful indigenous efforts of resistance. These efforts culminated in the 20th century in anti-colonial movements and decolonization.

Following the conclusions of both World War I and World War II, formerly powerful European countries struggled to regain control over colonized areas. Struggling economies and the devastation visited upon Europe by the wars rendered these efforts unlikely to succeed in the face of indigenous resistance. Decolonization efforts were reinvigorated in colonized areas across the globe. These movements successfully agitated for the separation of colonized peoples from imperial rule to be replaced by self-rule of their own design. But decolonization didn’t happen for all colonized areas at the same time or in the same ways. Formerly colonized areas in the Pacific and Asia were especially early to assert full control over themselves. One reason for this is that European colonizers had often been thrown out by Japanese occupiers during World War II. As Japanese forces pulled out of colonized areas, indigenous groups attempted to retake control over their lands and resources. In most cases, Europeans attempted to reassert their colonial influence, but often these efforts were not successful. After these Asian colonies were ‘lost,’ European empires redoubled their efforts to maintain control over colonized peoples in Africa. Decolonization efforts continue across the globe today. The structural inequalities baked into the imperial system are difficult to dismantle and former colonizers continue to try and impede decolonization processes. After centuries of abuse and exploitation, former colonies continue to fight for equal access to their own resources and to find revenue for infrastructural repairs made necessary by centuries of imperial neglect.

This resource guide examines decolonization and anti-colonial efforts in 5 countries and 2 regions across the world. These regions represent colonization efforts perpetrated by a variety of European powers and span several decades. This guide includes documents that demonstrate early anti-colonial and decolonial efforts, as well as those events and efforts that took place during and after self-rule was achieved by indigenous groups. This guide will provide students with a brief overview of what some decolonization efforts looked like after World War II and how indigenous citizens rebuilt their own countries following the retreat of imperial policies. Although it is not possible to provide an exhaustive overview of all the forms and expressions of decolonization, this guide can act as a starting point for students newly interested in the history of decolonization and continuing efforts to decolonize the world.
It is important to note that decolonization efforts are not limited to formerly colonized areas. Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada still struggle with the effects of colonization. As a result, their efforts at decolonization look much different than those mentioned in this guide.

The resources listed below are written in English and thus are often told from the perspective of colonizing countries. It is not possible to tell the whole story of decolonization only through these sources because of their inherent biases. However, they are a useful resource for students with limited language abilities who want to begin their own investigations of decolonization. To that end, the guide also includes sections that detail some helpful ‘keywords’ or alternative search words to use when trying to find additional documentation on decolonization. A large part of colonial efforts to eradicate local indigenous traditions involved renaming events and places. Decolonization efforts often include trying to reclaim those names. This is an important part of anti-colonial recovery, but it does lead to some difficulties when researching these topics. When applicable, the guide notes the differing names so that students can locate as many resources that might be useful to them as possible.

The resources noted in this guide highlight the ways that different regions approached decolonization differently based on their needs. It also demonstrates the ways that colonization and decolonization were global endeavors that relied on international webs of commerce and connection to function. These resources also address the social movements and efforts of women that accompanied and complemented decolonization efforts. Through the analysis of U.S. federal documents and British periodicals, students can learn about the demographics of anti-colonial and decolonization movements in these countries and the ways anti-colonial groups approached decolonization differently. Students can also learn about the priorities of European empires and their allies as they worked against decolonial enterprises. These resources are valuable and require students to remember that many of these documents originate from the perspectives of Empires with clear stakes in the question of decolonial legitimacy. When read this way, these resources highlight the variety and richness of decolonial activities across the world. The documents following decolonization efforts in each of these regions should be read with the understanding that the United States had its own reasons for collecting this information and it was often done with the intention of allowing the U.S. to shape the geopolitical environment to suit its own interests. These interests were often contrary to the interests of the indigenous groups struggling toward decolonization. The term decolonization is used to describe a vast array of particular decolonizing activities and theories. This guide will help acclimate students to decolonization as both historical events and continuing efforts toward greater global equity.

**Topic 1: Nigeria**

The region we now refer to as Nigeria was first exploited by a British corporation called the Royal Niger Company, with the first forays into the area starting in the 1830s. The British government assumed direct control of this area in 1900 and divided it in half giving the area the title of Protectorate. In 1914, the two Protectorates were merged and put under the control of a single governor-general in Lagos. During this time, the governor utilized a system called “indirect rule” wherein traditional regional chiefs were left to govern with European supervision. This two-tier system involved a more powerful central authority overseen by the governor-general in London and a local administration run through “indirect rule.” British agents intentionally fueled regional conflict between indigenous groups to limit resistance to imperial rule as much as possible. This region became embroiled in German and British proxy wars during the First World War which resulted in regional devastation and mass death.
Women in Nigeria have a long history of organizing and participating in anti-colonial revolts. In 1929, the Nigerian Women’s War (known at the time as the Aba women’s riots by British audiences) broke out in Nigeria. This was an anti-colonial movement that targeted “warrant chiefs,” which were an element of the “indirect rule” system. Nigerian women claimed that these warrant chiefs intentionally reduced the role that women were allowed to play in the government. Women had traditionally held government and community leadership roles until the new European “indirect rule” system began, which discouraged women’s participation in government based on Europe’s patriarchal belief that women were inferior and incapable of leading. In 1928, a series of direct taxes were levied against men. The following year, there was some talk that women would now also be asked to pay taxes despite this lack of representation and the fact that these taxes had devastated many families. In response, women gathered at Oloko (estimates say around 10,000 gathered) to demonstrate against this British incursion. These demonstrations spread and eventually targeted and destroyed Native Courts, which were part of the system oppressing Nigerian women. In 1930, the warrant chieftains were abolished, and women were appointed to sit on the Native Court. These kinds of anti-colonial activities continued and became overwhelming until Nigerian independence was achieved in 1960.

Newly independent Nigeria was created by a new constitution that established a federal system with an elected prime minister and a ceremonial head of state. Balewa served as the Prime Minister and Azikiwe Nnamdi served as the president of the senate, which was largely ceremonial. After a 1961 referendum, the Cameroons joined Nigeria and in 1963 Nigeria became a republic. The regional conflicts, which had long been stoked by British agents, continued to cause strife in the new republic resulting in the eventual partitioning of Nigeria into 3 regions which were overseen by the Yoruba, the Igbo, and the Hausa-Fulani. Tensions continued to simmer and eventually Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Irons was installed after a military coup and the assassination of Balewa. This government too was plagued by in-fighting and was eventually overthrown resulting in a civil war beginning in 1967. Ojukwu declared the succession of three states which were then called Biafra. But Biafra collapsed two short years later through military intervention by General Gowon. Gowon held power until 1975 after he postponed a return to civilian rule. In his place, Brig. General Murtala Ramat took office. Ramat ushered in many important changes to address government instability before being assassinated during an unsuccessful coup and replaced by his top aid, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo continued the attempts to return to civilian rule and created a new constitution, which replaced the British parliamentary system with a presidential one. Five political parties emerged to engage in this new republican movement. Power has since oscillated between military and civilian hands. In the most recent election (2019), Buhari was re-elected for a second term with 56% of the vote.
Key Terms:
• “Aba Riots” for Nigerian Women’s War
• Ojukwu or Chukwuemeka Odumegwu “Emeka”
• Try searching Nigerian capital cities such as “Lagos”
• Biafra or Biafra government

Books:
  - This book examines the life and ideologies of an important figure in Decolonial history in Nigeria. It focuses on Chief Awolowo’s interests in democratic socialism and his attempts to aid decolonization and the populace of Nigeria.

  - Decades after independence for most African states, the struggle for decolonization is still incomplete, as demonstrated by the fact that Africa remains associated in many Western minds with chaos, illness, and disorder. As this book shows, Africa’s decolonization is an ongoing process across a range of fronts, and intellectuals—both African and non-African—have significant roles to play in that process.

  - This book seeks to answer an often-asked question about why Nigerian democracy has been so difficult to establish following imperial rule. Falola analyzes the history of colonial violence and instability to explain how Nigeria.

  - Examines the Women’s War and the events and legacies that led up to it. The intriguing thing about this book is that it brings together the perspectives of colonized and colonial participants within a gender studies frame to discuss these events in a new light.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles:
  - This has a good discussion about how the riots started (from the British perspective). I find it interesting that the individuals in question (ministers and parliament members) have no clue which areas in African have ‘always been’ British holding and which were war gains from Germany.
This article predates the Nigerian women’s war, but it does give an impression of what British audiences thought of Nigerian history and its present ‘happy’ existence under British rule.

Women and Social Movements, International

This document discusses Nigerian women’s role in ‘representing’ Nigeria as one nation rather than tribes or groups. This is a stark sign of the role nationalism played in decolonization.

ProQuest History Vault

These documents come from U.S. government memos and intelligence. They discuss the current civil war in Nigeria and the ways that the U.S. is advised to intercede. These include ‘updates’ on both sides of the Nigerian civil war, which might be useful for students interested in a timeline of events and the connections to the greater Cold War context.

These documents discuss the ways that U.S. intelligence were and were not willing to engage with leaders like Ojukwu openly. If read against the grain this information shows what ways decolonization efforts were sabotaged through lack of response and resources.

The two folders identified above from History Vault are part of the collection in History Vault called Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, Biafra-Nigeria: Subject-Numeric Files, Political Affairs, 1967–1969. This collection establishes the political background to the Nigerian Civil War and introduces the individuals and issues covered throughout the collection. In addition to extensive documentation on Gowon, Ojukwu, and other military and government officials on both sides of the conflict, the files detail the involvement of missionaries and mercenaries, European and African diplomats, non-governmental organizations and private citizens, and the oil industry, principally Shell-British Petroleum and the French state company Societe Anonyme Francaise des Recherches et d’Exploitation de Petrole (SAFRAP; now Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited), both with critical interests in their Nigerian operations threatened by the war. This collection also provides day-by-day, month-by-month accounts of military actions, diplomatic maneuverings, and the international reach of the Nigerian Civil War. The United Kingdom and Soviet Union—an unlikely collaboration amidst global Cold War tensions—supplied arms to Gowon’s FMG, Britain only a few years removed from colonial control over Nigeria, the Soviet Union attempting to gain influence on the African continent. Ojukwu relied on France and Portugal for military aid and succeeded in gaining diplomatic recognition from only five small countries—Tanzania, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Zambia, and Haiti. To view this full collection, use the following URL: https://search.proquest.com/histvault?q=73157:101146&accountid=131239
Topic 2: The Congo

Congo was originally known as the Kongo Kingdom and was ruled by a king and a series of local chiefs. This region was greatly disrupted by the incursion of European slavery and the slave trade. Like many other colonial beginnings, Congo was originally ‘opened’ to European power through the creation of stations for markets and commerce along the Congo River. The Committee for Studies of the Upper Congo (later, Association international du Congo) was created to negotiate with local chiefs for these stations. By 1884, they had accumulated enough of these station contracts for King Leopold of Belgium to assert his right to govern the whole territory as one state. During the Berlin West Africa Conference 1884–85, European leaders negotiated the ‘rules’ that each must follow in the colonization of Africa. After that, from 1885–1908, this region was known as the Congo Free State and was overseen by King Leopold under the guide of a humanitarian mission to end slavery. Leopold’s brutality and crimes against humanity are many. Congo is now well-known for its especially cruel imperial period. Congolese citizens and laborers were tortured and murdered indiscriminately for the sake of the economic gain of European countries. Leopold’s private army, the Force Publique, was engineered and administered by Europeans. They were responsible for kidnappings and burning villages to the ground. This brutal occupation is now infamous among African historians and historians of empire.

Belgian rule was inflexible and gave no official or “indirect” forms of self-rule to the Congolese. This paternalistic system was based on the flawed belief that Africans were intellectually and culturally incapable of ruling themselves. This African exclusion from governance continued until 1957 when minor reforms were instituted. These reforms were largely limited to ‘westernized’ Africans and came about because of the neighboring French colonies’ democratic reforms. In 1956, a manifesto from the Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO) was circulated, which called for the immediate emancipation of Congo from Belgium. ABAKO was led by Joseph Kasavubu and became a major anti-colonial force in Congo. Like many other colonies, Congo experienced a wave of nationalist sentiment following the World Wars resulting in the creation of the nationalist party the Congolese National Movement (MNC). MNC is the party that allowed pan-Africanist Patrice Lumumba to rise to fame. After an incident in Leopoldville on January 4th, 1959, which resulted in the deaths of many Africans by security forces, Belgium was forced to reconsider their ultimate goals for the colony. On January 13th, Belgium officially stated that the ultimate goal was the removal of Belgian governance and Congolese independence. Six months later, Congo was able to officially take control of their own governance.

The first months of Congolese independence were challenging. The MNC and the ABAKO were unable to form a Parliamentary coalition and the Prime Minister (Lumumba) and President (Kasavubu) were pitted against one another due to the constitutional impasse this created. Eventually Kasavubu relieved Lumumba of his duties sparking a situation where both groups claimed to be the legal central government. Simultaneously, the richest province, Katanga, declared itself independent of the rest of Congo with support from Belgium. Kasavubu and Lumumba were at odds on how to handle this situation. Kasavubu appealed to the UN to militarily reunite the country while Lumumba sought Soviet aid to quell the crisis. This “Congo Crisis” became entangled in the East-West divide of the Cold War.

After the country was cut into 4 regions, army Chief of Staff Joseph Mobutu (later, Mobutu Sese Seko) led a coup and took control of the country in 1960. In 1964, following the convening of parliament, a civilian government headed by Cyrille Adoul gained power in 1961. However, the Katanga succession continued until 1963, which undermined Adoul’s credibility as a leader. Mobutu carried off a second coup in 1965 and renamed Congo Zaire in 1971. Mobutu and the MPR party continued to lead Zaire until his death in 1997. Currently, the country is known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Martin Fayulu serving as President after a contentious 2019 election.
Key Terms:
- “The Congo Question” for sources referring to Congo’s apparent economic disorder and the resulting economic crises (according to the British/European perspective)
- This region is often called The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo Free State, the Belgian Congo, Zaire, and the Kongo Kingdom in literature depending on the time period you’re researching.
- Joseph Mobutu can also be searched by using Mobutu Sese Seko.

Books:
  ∗ Tells the story of Congo decolonization in the context of the Cold War and the geopolitical climate of the 60s.
  ∗ Traces the life and decolonial activities of Patrice Lumumba.
  ∗ Focuses on the Kuba experiences of colonization using oral interviews and material culture to forefront the indigenous perspective.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles:
  ∗ This is a very early article from the British perspective talking about the Congo as warlike and being distressed that new tariffs were put up despite constant shipping disruptions due to ‘free fighting.’

This document is about the Imperial rule of Congo and that ways that Britain is attempting to change the ways that Belgium rules the Congo, but Belgium is supported by France. This piece uses what is referred to now as “white man’s burden” rhetoric. A good piece for showing how these colonial holdings were tossed around between different nations and were often proxy sites for European squabbles.

Government Records in ProQuest History Vault:


These U.S. documents give a timeline of events during Kasavubu’s coup and the Congolese government response. These includes conversations about the Congo situation with other African Presidents (like President Nkrumah of Ghana). “President [Nkrumah] said word during the day disturbed him greatly because it looked like the cold war was coming to Africa. He had tried to restrain Lumumba, but Lumumba replied he could expect no direct help from Ghana because Ghana was totally committed to UN.” Through these communications, students can get an idea of how communities across Africa struggled together with their own decolonization efforts and the ways they interacted with other such efforts.


These documents can illuminate the growing and changing administrative structures within the Republic of Congo. They also include public statements from Brussels about Congo.

• The two folders described above form part of the collection in History Vault called Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, Congo: Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, 1960–January 1963. This collection, as the folders described here indicate, chronicles in detail the period from 1960–1963 in the Congo, including reporting on the Congolese independence movement; establishment of the Patrice Lumumba government and subsequent political anarchy; the secession of Katanga; and the role of the United Nations, first as a peacekeeping force and ultimately as the chosen instrument for bringing Katanga back into the fold of the central government.


This chronology includes beyond those discussions of the U.S. President seeking an update on the situation—an indication that the "Congo situation" had caught the attention of the U.S. The purpose of this is "to permit a review of the Congo crisis from its inception, to see if there are any patterns that can be discerned and which could point the way to future policy decisions." Students can use this to track what events the U.S. thought were important. They can also see areas where Tunisian and Ghanaian troops and governments attempted to interfere in the crisis.
This combination of migration and war service stoked nationalist sentiments in Algeria. Many Algerians hoped France would extend them more rights or greater liberty for their service.

Algeria contained many different ethnic and racial groups and not all enjoyed the same access to upward mobility and citizenship. Algerians could access French education and vocations. Because this group already had the greatest access to upward mobility, they tended to be less radical and more in favor of reforms. The second group were the Muslims. This group strongly favored Muslim Nationalism and founded the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama (AUMA). The third group was the most radical of all and was primarily comprised of laborers and other marginalized members.

Algeria gained independence in 1962 after a long, bloody war for independence. Following WWII, the French government had promised to extend greater access to self-rule in Algeria because of its services during the war. The Algerian War erupted after these promises went unfulfilled many years later. Algeria had long been home to a diversity of ethnic and religious groups and each had differing levels of access to French citizenship and rights. This caused a great deal of discord in the country—especially between Jews and Muslims. These disparities made political life very challenging in Algeria. France was desperate to hold on to Algeria and waged a brutal battle in Algiers (the Battle of Algiers) which the French ultimately won. The resistance was so great that Charles De Gaulle eventually declared that Algerians had the right to self-determination in 1959. Following this decree there was massive French resistance and terrorism that hoped to derail Algerian attempts at self-rule. Algeria gained independence in 1962.

**Key Terms:**
- Algerian War or Algerian War of Independence
- Young Algerians

**Books:**
  - This book tells the story of the changing French response to Algerian decolonization and anti-colonial attempts. The French Army’s poor treatment of Algerians swayed many French to disavow their support of keeping Algeria through force.
Examines the exclusionary practices against Muslims in France and Algeria and explains the role of colonization in cementing inequality.


This book offers comics as a way to differently understand the experience of the Algerian War and independence.

**Newspaper and Magazine Articles:**


This article is written from the British perspective and it outlines the ways that French and British colonization efforts are different. The article makes the case that British imperialism is superior. This is useful for students because they can better understand the roots of colonization and thus understand the politics around decolonization and why European countries often exacerbated tensions prior to decolonization, which made unification extremely difficult.


This article is written about the fact that France has allowed soldiers from Algeria to fight in the First World War. Many Europeans balked at this idea. They were uncomfortable with France giving soldiers of color permission to kill white men (even if they were Germans and an enemy to France at the time). This service to France was later cited by Algerian nationalists and assimilationists alike for reasons that Algeria has earned self-rule and self-determination. This is a crucial aspect of early anti-colonial sentiments and critical to understanding the racial underpinnings of colonization.

**Government and Organizational Records in ProQuest History Vault:**


This is an excellent series to discuss decolonization because it discusses the aftermath of the 1962 independence and the factions that made that difficult.
Indonesia originally caught the attention of Britain and Dutch imperialists and trading companies in the late 16th century. The Dutch East India Company received a charter in 1602 to control trade by indigenous traders in an effort to establish a commercial monopoly. Despite this, indigenous traders largely continued their traditional trading paths. There was a minor disruption in Dutch hegemony (among European groups) from 1799–1815. Beginning in 1815, the Dutch redoubled their efforts at making the colony self-supporting. To these ends, they created a culture system that required villages to set aside 1/5th of their land for the cultivation of export crops. This was fiscally successful for the Dutch, but burdensome for the Javanese. This economic success led to a greater desire for Dutch territorial expansion. This required greater migration of Dutch civil servants to the islands and with them, a greater degree of colonial oversight. To these ends, they created a culture system that required villages to set aside 1/5th of their land for the cultivation of export crops. This was fiscally successful for the Dutch, but burdensome for the Javanese. This economic success led to a greater desire for Dutch territorial expansion. This required greater migration of Dutch civil servants to the islands and with them, a greater degree of colonial oversight. Unlike some other settlers in the colonial period, the Dutch in Indonesia fully intended to make the land their home. This led to a great deal of Dutch opposition to Indonesian independence following WWII.

Dutch nationalist and prenationalist movements began at the beginning of the 20th century. Budi Utomo, headed by Wahidin Sudirohusodo, was one of the first. This group hoped to merge traditional culture with contemporary Java society. Following WWI, such groups proliferated in Java including the Indies Social Democratic Association and Sarekat Islam attempted to make a name for themselves. In 1942, the Japanese occupation began, and Dutch civil servants were interred. Initially, the Japanese were welcomed as liberators. Unfortunately, Japanese occupation was brutal in Indonesia. But after three years, on August 17, 1945, the Japanese surrendered, and Indonesian leaders Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesian independence. As British forces arrived to oversee Japanese departures, anti-colonial incidents broke out across Indonesia. British forces soon realized that, despite their own desires, Indonesian citizens were serious about their calls for independence. These incidents resulted in the Linggadjati Agreement signed March 25, 1947, which proclaimed the Dutch intent to transfer Indonesian sovereignty to a federal Indonesia. Federalism was not popular amongst Indonesians and opposition mounted. In response, the Dutch retaliated in what they termed a “police action” against the new republic. The UN stepped in and this led to the Renville Agreement in 1948. Despite this agreement, a few months later the Dutch participated in a second “police action.” Growing domestic agitation worried American forces and resulted in them supporting Indonesian independence. This cemented the anti-colonial movement’s legitimacy and allowed for a constitutional democracy to rule Indonesia until 1965. During this time there were a series of governmental successions and later a “guided democracy.” Currently, Joko Widodo serves as President.

Keywords:
- Culture system
- Padri War
- Java War
- Budi Utomo
- Linggadjati Agreement
- Sarekat Islam

Books:
  - This book is a more general account of Indonesian history with a focus on Indonesian diversity and culture.
  - This monograph focuses on the economic policies in Indonesia that were meant to aid in decolonization efforts. This book traces these policies from the late-colonial period through Japanese occupation and into independence.

This book features ethnographic interviews of Karo Batak villagers who experienced the violence and upheaval of the movement for Indonesian independence.

**Government and Organizational Records in ProQuest History Vault:**


  This file of documents is really fascinating. It discusses the U.S. policy of backing Dutch colonialism after Japanese surrender and the groups advocating for Indonesian independence. The U.S. shifted to support Indonesia and this largely settled the issue. It illustrates the ways that decolonization was often ‘decided’ by the U.S./European powers in areas without anti-colonial violence.


  "The United States bears considerable responsibility for continue warfare in Indonesia." This claim is based on the astounding amount of training and funding the U.S. gave to the Netherlands to help 'put down' the revolution. This series of documents details how and why the U.S. was swayed to support Indonesia and the consequences of that on the global level.


  These documents follow the U.S./Indonesian relationship through Indonesia's decolonization efforts. This collection is a mix of documents relating to various Asian and South Asian countries.


  This is useful for decolonization studies in that it allows English-language students an opportunity to see some Indonesian abbreviations that they might come across in their research and be unable to decipher. It also demonstrates the huge variety of kinds of sources and information that one can find about other nations in U.S. government documents from the 20th century.


  This collection will help students understand Japanese occupation in Indonesia. This is a list of changes and programs that the Japanese ordered in Indonesia. It will aid students in understanding how Indonesian decolonization was influenced by the European and Asian occupiers it survived.

**Topic 5: India**

The British Raj was a period of direct rule over the Indian subcontinent from 1858 to Pakistani and Indian independence in 1947. The Raj took over management of the subcontinent from the British East India Company after the Sepoy Mutiny. The Raj was meant to allow for a greater amount of Indian self-governance, but this ended up being a failed promise. The Raj was despotic and unpopular. This resulted in the creation of multiple nationalist groups and a strong nationalist movement in India. The Indian National Congress met for the first time in Bombay in 1885.

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**Social Conditions, Attitudes, and Propaganda in India**

**Suggestions for American Orientation Toward the Indians**

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*This report was originally prepared for the Foreign Information Service, but is now issued as a regular divisional report because of its possible usefulness to others.*
This was an elite gathering of largely Brahmans meant to discuss political agitation for self-rule. These meetings continued and calls for national self-determination only increased as the 20th century dawned. During the first half of the twentieth century these calls became increasingly militant as British authorities refused to relent. These movements were complicated by Hindu-Muslim animosity which had been exacerbated by imperial policies. The Muslim League was founded in 1906 and was meant to serve as a Muslim alternative to the Indian National Congress. During the period following the First World War, Britain attempted to quell anti-colonial sentiment in the subcontinent through minimal periodic reforms. This was also when the Congress was following Gandhian ideals of peaceful protest and launched the noncooperation movement in 1920. However, these rarely went far enough to address systemic inequalities and calls for independence continued to mount.

Complications following the Second World War resulted in the end of British occupation of the subcontinent. During the war, India was hugely important to the allied war effort. Its logistic importance was based both on its access to resources and manufacturing as well as its central location in Asia. Axis powers attempted to exacerbate anti-British sentiment to improve their own chances of winning. This targeted propaganda scheme combined with Britain’s resistance to home-rule and greater representation for India resulted in post-war demands for independence. In June 1945, a conference was held in Simla to discuss issues of governance. However, the Muslim League and the Congress failed to find mutual ground. Meanwhile, in Britain, the conservatives were voted out and the Labour party was voted in. Unlike the Conservatives, the Labour Party saw India as unstable and a burden to British growth and well-being. In 1947, British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act. This act made India and Pakistan independent as of midnight on August 15th, 1947. This meant that they had a month to demarcate the boundaries between Punjab and Bengal. Once these borders were drawn Muslims fled toward Pakistan and Hindus toward India for shelter. Ethnic tensions continued well after this initial migration, known as the Indo-Pakistani conflicts, and can be attributed to tensions created by the British Raj.

Key Terms:
- Indian National Congress
- Muslim League
- Bengal
- Sepoy Mutiny
- Amritsar “riot” or “Amritsar incident” or “Amritsar massacre”
- India-Pakistan War, Indo-Pakistan War

Books:
  - Focuses on the specific growth and changes to nationalist ideas and framing in Bengal.

  > This book dives into an important discussion about the ways the Indian National Congress and their purportedly secularist approaches to nationalism impacted and was impacted by Muslims.


  > This book offers the reader some primary sources and focuses on women in late colonial India.

**Newspaper and Magazine Articles:**


  > This article is from the British perspective. This article discusses the most recent meeting of the Congress and the “numerous expressions of loyalty to British rule.” It is important to note that British colonizers were especially fervent about framing their colonial exploitation as favorable to the colonized individuals. This is valuable for students seeking to understand the relationship of British media to colonizing efforts and the ways that they downplayed decolonizing and anti-colonial efforts and sentiments.


  > This article discusses the passing of limited self-government for India and the general British “apathy” toward the subcontinent. This is a discussion of recent and historical events and a justification of brutal British occupation and colonization policies in India.


  > This article tells the tragic story of the massacre at Amritsar. The article indicates the level of anti-colonial sentiment that existed in the decades preceding decolonization in India. It also makes clear how anti-colonial violence was framed by western media.


  > This is useful for students who are trying to understand the role that British colonization played in stoking ethnic tensions in the Indian subcontinent, which is an issue that plagued decolonization efforts and government structuring.

**Government Records in ProQuest History Vault:**

• India social conditions, attitudes, and propaganda with suggestions for American orientation toward the Indians. Office of Strategic Services (OSS)-State Department Intelligence and Research Reports, Part 03: China and India, 1941–1949 https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=002799-005-0007&accountid=14667

  > This file contains U.S. foreign service reports on India during World War II and the impacts of axis propaganda on Indian desire to continue British rule. This is also a
demographic report that is meant to help guide U.S. policy going forward in India—policies that were pro-British and anti-Indian self-rule.

  • These demographics collected for U.S. use can help students distinguish between regions in India. As a subcontinent, India is and was full of diverse language, ethnic, and religious identities. These documents also lay out the various political parties and governing bodies in India.

  • This document is a printed copy of the Congressional Record describing the ways that U.S. intervention on behalf of Pakistan was understood by U.S. governing bodies. This document helps students understand the ways that the successes or failures of decolonization efforts were often entangled with who did and did not receive global aid or recognition.

### Conclusion

This resource guide is meant to provide information for students interested in decolonization and anti-colonial movements across Africa and Asia. It is especially useful for English-language students hoping to learn more about the ways that the Cold War and geopolitical networks impacted decolonization efforts. It is important to center the voices of indigenous groups when discussing the ways that colonialism and decolonization impacted their lives. But it is possible to read sources “against the grain” to illuminate anti-colonial resistance and the ways that powerful (mostly) western nations interrupted decolonization efforts and why they did so. One of the goals of this resource guide is to give students a peek into the larger context of decolonization so they might begin their own, more specific, journey into the areas that most interest them. Colonization shaped our world in so many ways and cost the lives of countless people. Studying the history of decolonization and anti-colonial resistance allows students to bring new perspectives to the history of imperialism and to uncover the voices of historically marginalized people.

### DATABASES COVERED IN THIS GUIDE

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