India 1857-1890

**East India Company**

By 1857 the East India Company ruled huge swathes of India:

- Had an Indian army of 275,000 mostly of sepoys (Indian soldiers serving under British) orders.
- Helped by the fact that India was divided and many Indians collaborated with the Company/Britain.

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**The Indian Mutiny**

In 1857, sepoys angered at the introduction of cartridges coated in meat based grease (which offended Muslims and Hindus), mutinied.

- Britain lost control of much of north-central India.
- The mutiny was complemented by civil rebellions against earlier British reforms banning (what Indians viewed them as) ancient traditions such as Sati and the withholding of further education from women.

**British Victory**

It failed because:

- Most Indians remained loyal.
- Rebel leaders failed to collaborate.

British and loyal sepoys troops savagely put down the revolt mid-1858, fourteen months after the start of the savage conflict. Terrible atrocities committed both sides, also polarised Indian population creating friction.

**New Government**

In 1858, the government of India was taken from the East India Company and put directly under the British Crown.

- A Secretary of State and a council of 15 ministers were appointed to manage Indian affairs.
- A Viceroy replaced the Governor-General as the new ruler.

**Indian army reform**

- Military reinvigorated and artillery put in British control (suspicion remained).
- Post India Mutiny, British officers treated sepoys with greater respect.
- No more large-scale mutinies, The Indian Army was used to defend India and protect Britain’s other territories around the Indian Ocean.
British Rule after 1858

Post Indian Mutiny, Britain shifted from trying to train a new Indian Western-educated elite, to working with India’s traditional rulers.

- This was in the hope that this would encourage loyalty.
- Princes and other traditional rulers thus became an important collaborating class.
- Social, religious and cultural matter were left in their hands.

Economic improvement

British administrators focused on economic policies to improve Indian’s material welfare;

- 15,000 miles of railway track built between 1860-1890.
- Irrigation projects, road building, and the extension of telegraphic and postal services.
- These improvements eased the chronic famine in India as well as strengthen Britain’s military hold on India.

British administration

Indians, who paid for the Raj’s administration and for the Indian army through their taxes, had no say in how India should be run. By 1890, 1500 British administrators ruled 250 million Indians. Most administrators;

- Had been educated in private schools, that placed importance on a character being courageous, self-assured, honest and self-sacrificing.
- Worked to prevent famine, build railways and secure law and order.
- Lived apart from Indians: all-white clubs were common.
European Threat

- Germany, now a united nation, dominated central Europe.
- Italy also sought to emulate Britain’s great power status through empire.
- France, defeated by Germany in 1870-71, determined to recover its prestige by expanding its empire in Africa and South-east Asia.

The economic challenge

Britain dominated world trade and production until early 1870’s.

- By 1880, clear that other countries (notably Germany the USA) were growing in industrial strength- challenging Britain.
- Britain had long supported free-trade, however these expanding states imposed high duties designed to protect their own economic interests.
- If Britain’s competitors acquire colonies, Britain might be unable to trade with large areas of the world.
- Even worse, Britain suffered economic depression in 1870’s and 1880’s. This enhanced fears of scarcity of markets.
- Many Britons believed that they needed to secure export outlets by expanding their Empire.

British Policy

Whilst many British politicians still believed the Britain’s future lay in Imperial expansion, not all were convinced:

- Many liberals remained ‘Little Englanders’ (opposing Imperial expansion).
- Those who made colonial policy after the economic depressions, whether Liberal or Conservative, were cautious and concerned about the cost of the Empire.

Nevertheless, established British interests seemed increasingly vulnerable to other powers, fuelling a boost in territorial gains in 1880 such as Rhodesia in South Africa.
Consolidation and expansion of the British Empire in N./W. Africa during 1990’s

**Egypt and the Sudan (Context)**

By 1890, the British accepted that Egypt was their permanent responsibility given the Suez Canal’s importance. However, Sudan and the Great Lakes in the north bordered the Upper Nile, which fed into Egypt—making it very much their concern. Many countries posed a threat to these areas;

**German and Italian threat**

- Germany expressed interest in Uganda and the Upper Nile in 1890, however later recognised Britain’s claim. Uganda made a British protectorate in 1894.
- Italian army defeated by Ethiopian forces in 1896, withdraw after.

**French Threat**

**North Africa**

- France ruled a lot of N. Africa and wanted to bully Britain out of the Sudan;
  - A French military expedition led my Captain Marchand was sent to capture the Sudan.
  - In response, Britain sent Kitchener’s Anglo-Egyptian forces into Sudan in 1896.

These two forces met two years later in Fashoda (1898), competing over control of the Upper Nile and Sudan. Kitchener’s larger forces along with the indisputable British claim to the land justified by a history of conquest in the area, triumphed over the French so Marchand retreated. Britain now controlled the Upper Nile region.

**West Africa**

- Britain at this point owned Sierra Leone, Gambia, the Gold Coast and the Niger in W. Africa. These colonies were only commercial, as the ‘hinterlands’ offered no tactical advantage. France however controlled a far greater area within W. Africa;
  - They had armies ready to defend their lands, and Britain was no prepared to challenge them.
  - Britain conceded on boundaries of Sierra Leone, Gambia and the Gold Coast.

In the Niger however, it was different. The British ‘Goldie’s Royal Niger Company’ had a firm claim to this part of the hinterland, and forces to defend it.

- Lord Salisbury declared that the interests of the Company, were the interests of Britain, thus France in 1898 were forced to abandon their interests in the Niger.

Although this was good for the Company and the British, by 1990 the hinterlands had expanded too far and came into financial difficulties.

- In 1990, the British government bought the Company, revoked its charter and turned its territories into a Crown Colony.

*Thus by 1990, Britain’s West African boundary problems had been fixed. This was a satisfactory end from Britain’s perspective.*
The Jameson Raid

In the same year, 1895, Rhodes sent 600 men led by Dr. Jameson (a Chartered Company administrator) into the Transvaal to spark a revolt and overthrow the Boers. The plan failed and Jameson soon surrendered.

Consequences of the raid

- Instead of weakening the Kruger’s (Transvaal) government, it made them more confident and resistant to compromise.
- Humiliating for Salisbury’s government - Rhodes forced to resign as Cape PM.
- Caused a shift of British policy in S. Africa away from imperial expansionism.
- In 1897, Transvaal and Orange Free State sign military pact and arm themselves with the latest weaponry, expecting an imminent conflict with Britain.
Possibility of Reform

In the face of continued passive/violent resistance, in 1929 Viceroy Irwin suggested India be made a Dominion:

- The first Round Table Conference in 1930 (where India’s Dominion status would be discussed) failed.
- Meanwhile, Gandhi’s salt march in protest of unfair taxation in 1930 attracted great attention.
- In 1931, Gandhi met with Irwin and agreed to try and end civil disobedience and attend the next Round Table Conference.
- The Second Round Table Conference (in the same year) also failed largely.
- Gandhi returned to civil disobedience campaign but it was soon crushed by firm government action.

The 1935 Government of India Act

Later in 1935, Britain passed another Government of India Act making India a dominion:

- Unified India in a federation.
- National laws would come into effect once more than half the Indian princes joined the federation.
- Britain would still control defence and foreign affairs.
- Election provincial governments would have considerable power.

The Act was attacked by Conservatives at home for going too far, and in India for not going far enough. Congress took advantage of the new Dominion status, created ministries in most provinces however not enough princes joined for national legislature to be made.

By 1939, Britain still did not want to give India independence as they saw British control of India as necessary to fend of the German and Japanese threat.
Shifts in Trade and Commerce

Context

Before 1914 (WWI), the British Empire traded more with the outside world than its possessions. Post 1919 (after WWI) external trading became difficult thus Britain economy internalised, relying on Empire for trade.

The 1920's

- Conservative MP’s hoped to realise Chamberlain’s dream of enforcing imperial tariff protection, encouraging inter-imperial trade making Britain self-sufficient.
- Empire Marketing Board set up in mid-1920’s to encourage inter-imperial trade.
- However, this notion hard to sell as most of Britain’s trade was still external.

Actual Imperial preference

Worldwide depression of early 1930s catalysed Britain abandoning free trade:

- Import Duties Act made in 1932, taxing imports.
- This was the beginning of Britain’s imperial preference.

Whilst many industry leaders disagreed with abandoning free trade, it has some positives for Britain:

- By 1940, 40-50% of British imports and exports from Empire.
- Trade agreements created imperial unity.
- Increased bulk trade- in 1940 Britain bought the entire coco crop of W. Africa.

However;

- Dependence on inter-imperial trade made British markets less competitive.
- Britain certainly paid more for goods within empire than cheaper sources outside.

Impact of Imperial preference

- Protectionist policies and preferential trade with Dominions certainly helped Britain survive through the 1930’s worldwide economic crisis.
- However, in the late 1930’s Britain began to have a deficit of goods, caused by antiquated industry and the selling of overseas economic material assets.

British military weakness

Economic difficulties meant Britain couldn’t spread its military across the entire empire, this leaving the Empire vulnerable to growing German, Italian and Japanese ambitions.
Withdrawal from India

Situation in India by end of WW2 (1945)

- Attlee’s government was keen to grant Indian independence, however Churchill (having just left government), still saw India as a vital economic and military asset.
- Elections in India (1945) were a success with Hindu-backed Congress and the Muslim League- Attlee hoped that an independent India would remain united and within the Commonwealth.
- However, relations between the Congress and Muslim League worsened, civil war seemed imminent.

Final British withdrawal from India

Talks held in the same year to come to an agreement between Muslim League and Congress but it failed:

- In 1946, Britain proposed grouping Indian provinces into groups, creating a Muslim cluster (Pakistan). An all-Indian federal government would manage foreign/defence policy but provinces would handle more delicate matters. Muslim League rejects this.
- Muslim League calls for direct action and violent clashes in Calcutta kill 1000’s.

Attlee viewed a massive civil war as being imminent, so Britain sped up its dealings:

- He declared Britain would leave India no later than 1948.
- He was replaced by Mountbatten in 1947.

In the same year as Mountbatten’s arrival, Britain suggests that India be partitioned to stop a war- Muslim League and Congress agree:

- Two sections would become Dominions.
- Formal ‘India Independence Bill’ passed in 1947.
  The Raj was over.

Conclusion

- Many view Britain’s withdrawal from India as inevitable with there being no alternative. Staying would have perhaps sped up a civil war, which would have been a huge strain on Britain. This would have also damage British relations with the USA and Muslim world.
- However, some criticise Attlee for leaving without honour, Britain’s sudden withdrawal contributing to the inter-communal violence killing 500,000.
Decolonisation of Africa

W. Africa
During the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, all of Britain’s colonies were given independence. (Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroons etc.).

E. Africa
Tanganyika
- 'The Tanganyikan African National Union’ had huge support, and threatened boycotts and strikes were it not given independence.
- Given independence in 1961.

Uganda
- Fearing that it would soon become ungovernable because of inter-tribal conflict, given independence in 1962.

Kenya
- Multi-racial party formed and Africans given self-government.
- This led to independence in 1963.

Central Africa
Britain controlled 300,000 whites and 8 million Africans in Central Africa, but the Central African Federation (to which N.+S. Rhodesia and Nyasaland belonged) was dominated by S. Rhodesian whites;
- Growing support for African leaders in Nyasaland and N. Rhodesia by 1960 worried the white minorities- danger of breakdown was close.
- Britain suggested first the African and white representation should be made fair, however discussions between white/black politicians failed.
- Continued tension resulted in Nyasaland and N. Rhodesia being given independence in 1964.

Conclusion
By 1966, Britain had abandoned all its colonies in Africa except S. Rhodesia (see next page). Britain’s rapid withdrawal from Africa left some countries ill-prepared for self-rule, but Britain had avoided the burden of unwilling states (unlike France with Algeria).