

Decolonisation of British India

Copyright: (c) CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.
Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/decolonisation_of_british_india-en-a160da74-8825-48f1-b494-98eb1b17a427.html



Last updated: 01/03/2017

British decolonisation in Asia

The campaigns of civil disobedience led by Gandhi in India during the interwar years had exasperated Great Britain. India, a poor country but one with a large population, intended to play a role on the world stage by making itself the primary advocate of neutralist anti-colonialism. However, at the end of the Second World War the British Government did not have the means to face a new colonial war. It eventually decided to grant independence to the Indian subcontinent in August 1947, but the period was marked by violent clashes between the Hindu and Muslim communities.

While Gandhi and Nehru, the main leaders of the Congress Party, advocated Indian unity, the Muslim League, directed by Ali Jinnah, called for the creation of an independent Muslim state. The violence between the two sides escalated and degenerated into a civil war. In February 1947, the British decided to evacuate the country, and on 15 August 1947 it was partitioned into two independent states: India, with a Hindu majority, and Pakistan, with a Muslim majority. The Republic of India was proclaimed in January 1950, once the constitution had been drawn up, but it remained a member of the British Commonwealth.

In 1948, two other British possessions, Burma and Ceylon, were granted independence, but Malaya had to wait until 1957 before it achieved the same status.