

India - Resource Pack

The documents in this pack will help your group learn about their sides' stance going into the Simla Conference. As your group develops what they see as the best path forward for India they should use these documents to back up and further refine their points.

Document A – Introduction essay

Document B – Distribution of Muslims in South Asia

Document C – Areas under British control

Document D – Timeline of key events

Document E – Cripps Mission, "Quit India," recent negotiations

Document A

The Historical Moment: June 1945

World War II is drawing to a close. Last month Nazi Germany surrendered. Japan's empire in the Pacific has collapsed, and Americans are making plans to invade Okinawa in preparation for the eventual conquest of Japan. The Soviet Union, governed by a communist hierarchy led by the formidable Josef Stalin, has filled the vacuum in Eastern Europe caused by the collapse of Nazi Germany. Many expect that communism will spread through war-ravaged Western Europe. Many, too, expect that in the wake of the inevitable withdrawal of the Japanese army, China will descend into chaos with the resumption of the civil war between the communist forces of Mao Zedong and those of nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek.

There is talk of a new League of Nations, a "United Nations," but few think that any such international organization will be capable of ensuring peace and stability.

Nowhere is the situation more confused than in India. Great Britain is emerging from the war victorious, but its economy has been crippled. Whether it can retain India, the "jewel in the crown" of British imperialism, is doubtful. Now Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who has spoken against granting Indian independence, is seeing his support evaporate in Parliament. Within India, protests against colonial rule have intensified throughout the twentieth century, and the advent of Mohandas Gandhi has energized Indian politics as never before. Gandhi has combined a vision of Indian independence with a new means of attaining it: nonviolent civil disobedience.

In 1942 this point was hammered home to British officials with tremendous force. At the time, the Japanese army had swarmed over Southeast Asia and was advancing through Burma into India. The British proposed to coordinate and control all India for the purposes of defeating the Axis powers. In return for India's wholehearted support for the war, Britain would invite India to join the British Dominion as an equal member afterward. The Congress party, which had spearheaded Indian nationalism since the late nineteenth century, rejected this proposal outright. Gandhi likened it to "a blank cheque on a failing bank." Congress reasoned that Britain could renege on its promise once the war was won; and Congress bitterly resented the provision that a province could choose to separate from India and become an independent nation. Congress thought this clause favored the Muslim League, which proposed to cobble together a separate Muslim nation—"Pakistan"—from those Muslim-majority provinces within British India.

Despite Congress's refusal to contribute to the war effort in 1942, Britain made plans to defend India from the impending Japanese invasion. Gandhi called on Indians to insist on immediate independence from Britain, even if it weakened the British war effort. "I have made up my mind that it would be a good thing if a million people were shot in a brave and nonviolent rebellion against the British rule," he declared. Congress endorsed his call for nonviolent protests against British rule through the "Quit India" movement. Gandhi encouraged his people: "Take a pledge with God and your own conscience as

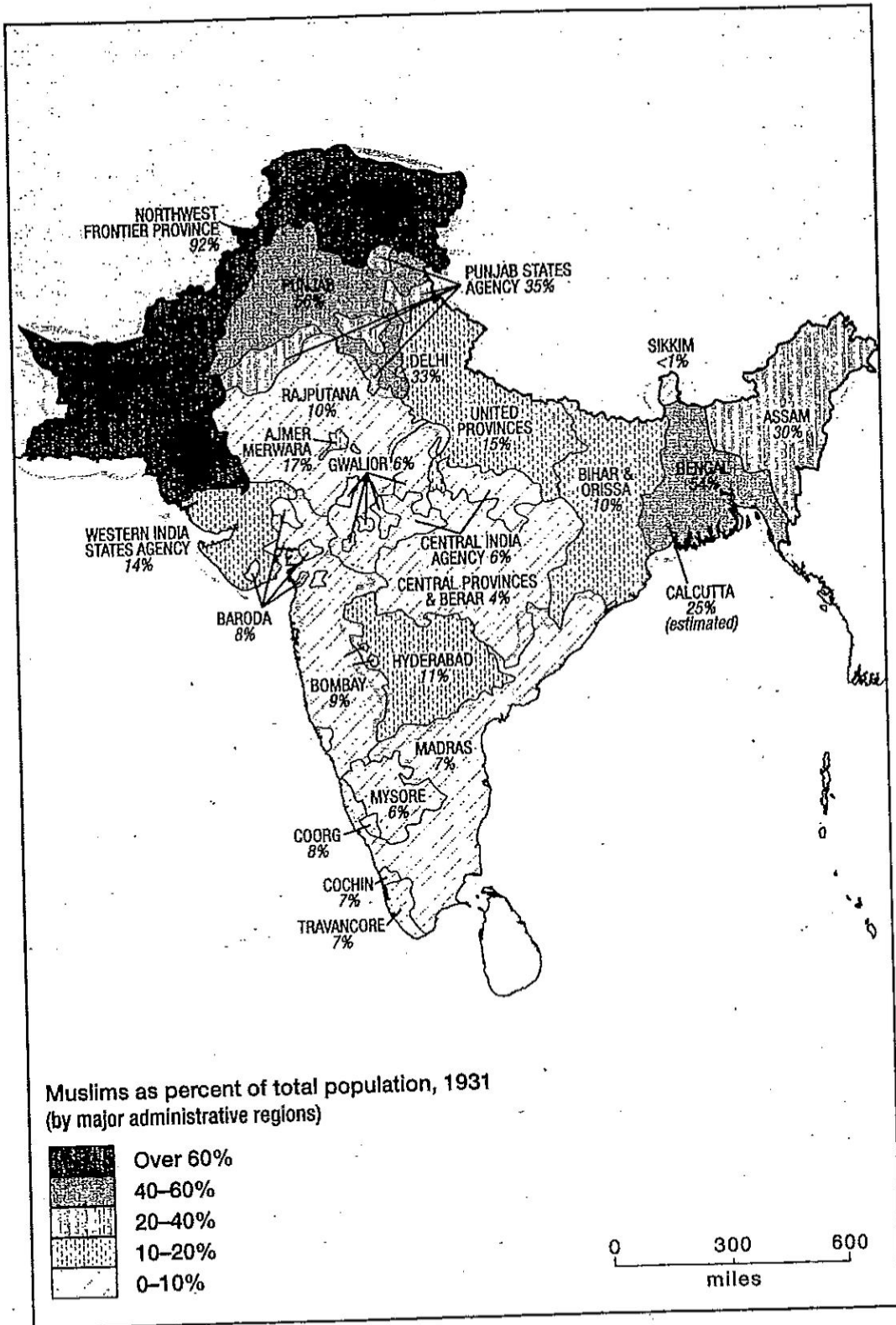
witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it."

Gandhi attempted to enforce nonviolent discipline, but in so vast and populous a nation, some of the protests turned violent. The British Viceroy outlawed the "Quit India" movement and arrested most of the leaders of the nationalist movement, including Gandhi. This ignited more riots and even a spate of attacks on railroad bridges and telegraph depots. (The Muslim League, which feared that the violence might easily shift focus from the British to the Muslim minority, refrained from taking a visible stand on the matter.) Field Marshal Viscount Wavell arrived the next year to spearhead the defense of India from the Japanese. In 1944, Gandhi and Muslim secularist Ali Jinnah met to discuss the future of India: Gandhi insisted that India be a single nation, encompassing all faiths and peoples; Jinnah declared that India contained two separate states, one Hindu, the other Muslim. The talks went nowhere.

Three months ago [March 1945], as the Japanese threat receded, Wavell went to London to confer with the Foreign Ministry and Prime Minister Churchill. He returned several weeks ago. On June 14, he announced in a radio broadcast his plans to convene at Simla an executive council of Indian political leaders to discuss the fate of the subcontinent. The next day, he ordered that imprisoned Congress officials be released.

Churchill, an ardent imperialist, has made noises about retaining some form of British rule or influence over India, but this appears unlikely. During the war, the United States pressured Great Britain to allow colonial peoples the right to self-determination after the war, a principle that was encompassed in the Atlantic Charter. Britain signed the document, as did all the Allies. Whether they would fulfill the provisions of the Charter now that Germany had surrendered remained unclear. Apart from Britain's legal obligation to retreat from colonial domination, there is the painful economic fact that Britain has been nearly bankrupted by the war. It now lacks the resources and perhaps the will to impose its rule on 400 million Indians.

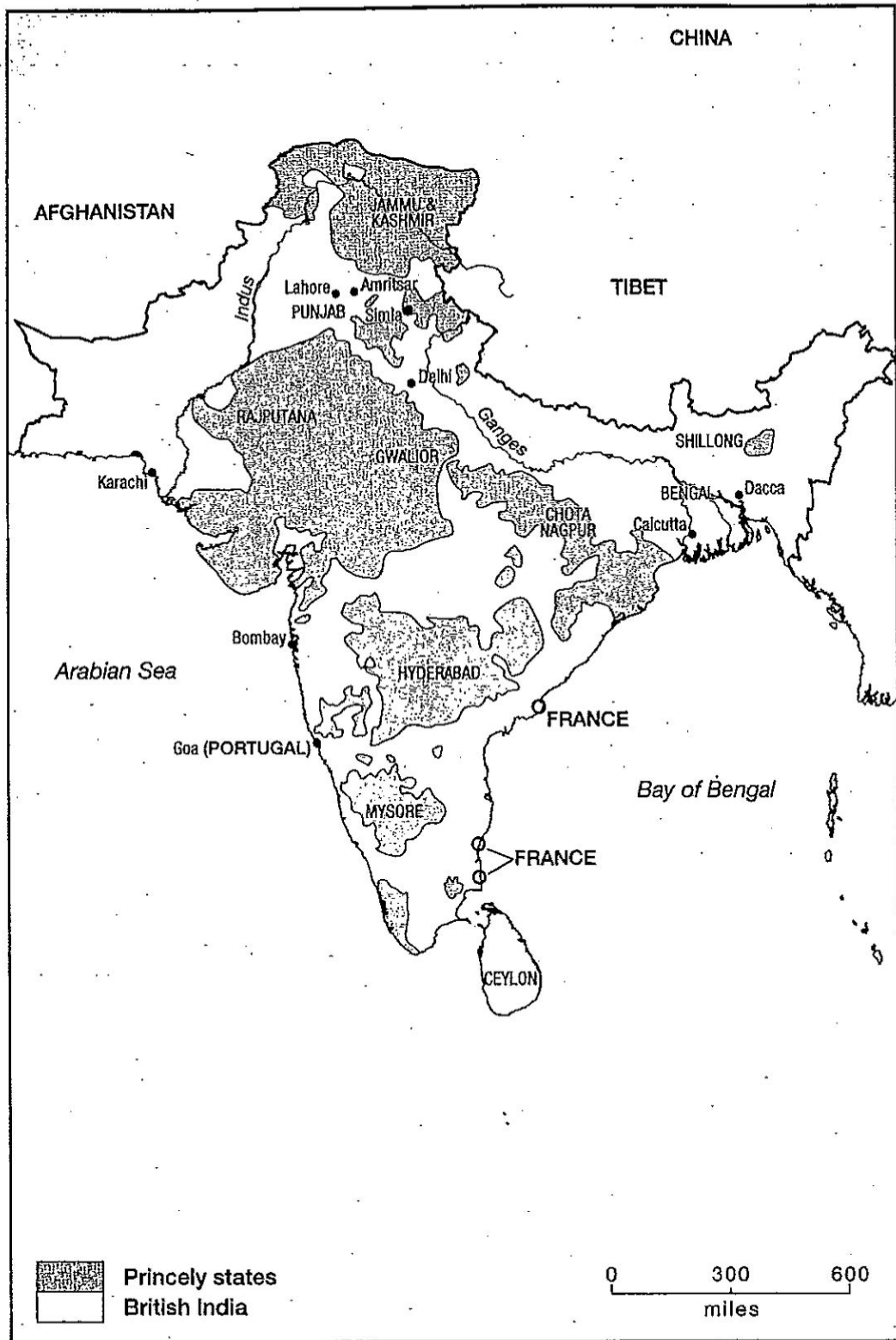
Document B
 Map A. India 1945: Major Cities, Rivers, and Princely States



Map B. Muslims as a Percentage of the Total Population Of India, 1931

Document

C



India: A Chronology *Document D*

INDIA'S POPULATION

100 A.D.	Approximately 100 million
1800	Approximately 125 million
1871	Approximately 250 million: 187 Hindu; 52 Muslim
1940	Approximately 400 million: 300 Hindu, 100 Muslim

PRINCIPLE EVENTS

1400s	Sikhs founded as religious order; sought to reconcile Muslim and Hindu doctrines; opposed caste restrictions; became military zealots.
1526-1761	Mughal Dynasty (Muslim, Akbar greatest leader); Sikhs/Mughal conflict: Sikhs crushed.
1690s	Hindu warrior, Shivaji, inflicts defeats on Mughals.
1700s	British East India Company makes incursions along Indian coastline; forces Mughal trading concessions; erodes Mughal power and suppresses it.
1757	British East India Company army defeats Mughal ruler at battle of Plassey; Company controls all of Bengal and much of India.
1800s	British extend education, railways, economic development throughout India.
1857	Sepoy Mutiny crushed.
1858	Government of India Act: India ruled directly as a British colony.
1885	INC founded.
1905	British Governor General proposes partition of Bengal and creation of a Muslim majoritarian state, East Bengal; Hindu protests.
1906	Muslim League founded in response.
1909	Government of India Act: franchise given to selected groups in India to choose representatives to the Governor's Executive Council.

- 1917 British adopt dyarchy: all branches of provincial administration divided, British/Indian.
- 1919 Gandhian *hartal* (work stoppage); protest to Rowlatt Acts; **Amritsar Massacre** (Gandhi suspends protests).
- 1920 Khilafat Movement (Muslim; Gandhi joins to unify).
- 1921 Peak of Gandhian non-cooperation movement.
- 1930 Gandhi leads **salt march** civil disobedience; Iqbal, Muslim writer, calls for separate Muslim state.
- 1932 British offer representation to **Untouchables**; Ambedkar approves; Gandhi protests.
- 1935 **New Government of India Act** passed by British parliament. End of dyarchy: Now Indians have sole control of provinces, although the British remain in control of the national government and all matters that pertain to it: the military, taxation, and defense. Accorded franchise to 35 million, and granted large measure of autonomy to Indian governments to rule provinces. The British, however, remain in firm control of the central government, controlling defense and the budget.
- 1937 Election: though ostensibly boycotting the election, Congress wins a majority in most provinces (seven) and the elected Congress officials did take office. The Muslim League, alarmed, mobilizes for separate Muslim state.
- 1942 Indian Nationalist leaders refuse to join war effort; call on Britain to "Quit India;" Congress leaders arrested and imprisoned for duration of war. British rule colony directly.
- 1945 Wavell, viceroy: deadlock between Muslim and Hindu leaders on interim government.

India - Resource Pack

Document E

This document provides history leading up to the Simla Conference. All four groups that enter the conference bring their feelings (either positive or negative) with them. Each group is determined to learn from the past and may choose to include elements of past proposals in their presentations at the Simla Conference

Cripps Mission

In 1942 while World War II was still being fought the British sent an official to India with a proposal. The proposal was that as soon as the war was over steps would be taken to give India its freedom. The British version of freedom, that the Cripps Mission offered, said that India would allow Britain to protect the country. The British would also help set up the new government. In exchange Britain would have the right to keep its navy and army in India's towns and cities. The British would also be able to have access to valuable natural resources.

The INC and Gandhi were not happy with the British offer. After years of being ruled they didn't trust that the British would stick by their word. They also didn't like it that the British would be able to have power and influence in the new country.

The Muslim League liked the Cripps Mission. In the offer the British said that if the Muslims or any other minority wanted to they could form their own country and the British would protect them to. The INC didn't like this idea because they thought it would weaken India if it split apart.

The Cripps Mission failed to gather support of all parties so it failed to become accepted in 1942 but the situation in India has changed over the past five years.

"Quit India" Resolution

The INC wanted to show to the British that even though India was so big and the people were so different that they were united against British rule. In order for the INC to accomplish this they turned to Gandhi. Gandhi wanted to start a new series of peaceful protests. Gandhi and the INC thought that since the British were fighting in World War II their protests would be successful. Realizing that the war could end soon Gandhi decided to start immediately without making sure that everyone throughout the country knew that they were not supposed to fight the British during their protests. Gandhi knew that starting a protest so soon was dangerous but he felt that "it would be a good thing if a million people were shot in protests against the British... as long as they were successful."

Gandhi named his movement "Quit India" in the hope that the British would quit and go home. In 1942 Gandhi gave a speech saying that the British must leave immediately, regardless of the war going on.

The British, worried that the Gandhi's movement was going to prevent them from winning the war arrested the leaders, mostly from the INC, that supported the "Quit India" movement.

India - Resource Pack

In response to these arrests students and young adults throughout the country started protesting British actions. They burned cars, destroyed anything they could that the British controlled. After a while the protests started blowing up telephone lines and trains. Large parts of India's countryside were able to completely cut themselves off from British control.

As soon as Gandhi and the INC members were sent to prison the nonviolent protests became bloody. The rising violence made the Muslim League come to the conclusion that the Gandhi couldn't control the people that supported them. India was so big that minorities, like the Muslims, were in danger of being controlled by a large mob of Hindus.

When Gandhi was let out of prison because of his poor health he met with the leaders of the Muslim League and talked with them about possibly forming their country. Gandhi said he understood why the Muslim League wanted their own country but in his heart he didn't want to believe that India could be split up into multiple nations.

Negotiations for Indian Independence

By 1945 World War II was coming to a close. The British government wanted to find a peaceful solution for India's independence so it could concentrate on rebuilding its own country.

In 1945 the British government held elections. The number of Hindus elected outnumbered the Muslims and other minorities. As a result India became further divided into regions controlled by Muslims and those controlled by Hindus.

The British worried that the division of the country could lead to violence tried to get the Muslims and Hindus to work together. During meetings they talked about possible versions of government that all sides could agree upon.

As the sides met to talk and the future of India violence was growing in the country. Hindu-Muslim riots raged in Calcutta during 1946. The riots left 3,000 people dead and left thousands injured. The violence started during a Muslim League protests and as news spread of the incident Hindu's started to take their revenge on their neighbors.

By 1947, the British worried that they couldn't control India much longer called together a conference at Simla to discuss the future of India. The INC, Muslim League, and Gandhi supporters came together with the British to write the future for hundreds of millions of people.

Break down of South Asia's Population

Muslims	21%	Christians, Jews	1%
Caste Hindus	52%	Hyderabad	6%
Untouchables	15%	Kashmir	2%
Sikhs	2%	Communists	1%