

## #1: The Shaping of Modern India

Partition is important to the post-1947 history of India because it caused many deaths, separated significant religious lands into two countries, and it left the land of Kashmir as an unresolved issue between India and Pakistan.

Guha, p.97- "Many of the Hindus and Sikhs fleeing West Punjab were directed by the government of India to a refugee camp in Kurukshetra. A vast city of tents had come up on the plain, to house waves of migrants, sometimes up to 20,000 a day. The camp was initially planned for 100,000 refugees, but it came to accommodate three times that number." The partition of India led to many people migrating away from the land that their ancestors had all lived in. Muslims were leaving East Punjab and Hindus were leaving West Punjab. The camps were very crowded, like this quote says, there were 3 times the number of people that the camp was designed to hold.

Guha, p. 98- "The vast majority came after 15 August 1947, and with little more than the clothes on their backs. These were the farmers who had 'stayed behind till the last moment firmly resolved to remain in Pakistan if they could be assured of an honourable living.' But when, in September and October, the violence escalated in the Punjab they had to abandon that idea. The Hindus and Sikhs who were lucky enough to escape the mobs fled to India by road, rail, and sea, and on foot." The migration of these people also led to much violence.

Guha, p. 48- "The toll of the violence related to partition was estimated at one million dead; some later scholars have suggested that the figure is closer to two million." So many people lost their lives, families, friends, and everything they owned. During all of this, where was the British government who was still in charge? If they had stepped in, then the death toll would have been a fraction of what it was.

Guha, p.100- "The economy could be rebuilt, but the cultural wrongs of partition could never be undone- not in, or by, either side. The Sikhs once more had land to cultivate, but they would never get back much-loved places of worship. These included the gurdwara in Lahore where lay buried their great warrior-chieftain, Ranjit Singh; as well as Nanakana Sahib, the birthplace of the founder of the faith, Guru Nanak." The Sikhs had lost their religious lands in partition. Although they had land to live on and cultivate, they still hadn't gotten the lands that had more significance to them than the land they now lived on.

Guha, p. 90- "[Josef Korbel] dismissed both a plebiscite and independence, arguing that the 'only solution' was the partition of Kashmir. Otherwise, said Abdullah, 'the fighting will continue; India and Pakistan will prolong the quarrel indefinitely, and our people's suffering will go on.'" According to the website [www.cbc.ca/news/background/kashmir](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kashmir) (link from course webpage), "[Kashmir] has been called the world's most dangerous border and the likeliest place for nuclear war to erupt between its two long-standing rivals, India and Pakistan, with each claiming it as their own." The Kashmir border (or the Line of Control) is one of the most conflicting areas in the world, since there has never been an official border drawn. The Kashmir territory was a very controversial area because it was near the borders of both India and Pakistan, and due to partition, both territories wanted the land. Now, 64 years later, the issue of Kashmir is still in play. As the article later states, "In the last ten years, fighting in Kashmir has claimed the lives of between 30,000 and 60,000 people."

I agree with Gandhi on issues such as not wanting partition, and believing in representing all the people of India equally. However, although Gandhi's visions for independent India might have benefitted the country in some ways, I believe that the INC and Constituent Assembly did what was best for India at that particular time. One of the main things Gandhi had envisioned for India was peace throughout the country. India today is at peace for the most part, so Gandhi's vision is happening to some extent.

Guha p.119- B. R. Ambedkar addressed the Gandhian constitution by saying that, "These village republics have been the ruination of India." He was "surprised that those who condemn Provincialism and communalism should come forward as champions of the village. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism." I agree with Ambedkar that a village cannot govern itself. It would be harder to keep thousands of small self-governed villages united and civil than it would be to govern the country as a whole. People in the villages would be so caught up in their own little territory that they would become ignorant of the rest of the country. In theory, it would be great if rules and politics could be set up individually for each village, because each village would be run specific to their needs and more people would be satisfied. However, as Begum Aizaz Rasul said, "the modern tendency is towards the rights of the citizen as against any corporate body and village panchayats can be very autocratic." (p.119) After being colonized by the British for so long, Gandhi's plan would have brought people backwards in development. "In India, where the number of competing interest groups was immeasurably larger, it made even more sense to follow the British model [of government]."

I think that the biggest problem confronting the newly-independent Indian state was the integration of princely states. I think this is such a big issue, mainly because of the issues involving Kashmir that have still not been completely resolved to this day.

Guha, p. 75- "The anomaly of a Hindu ruler with a mostly Muslim population was compounded by an accident of geography: that unlike the other disputed chiefdoms, such as Junagadh and Hyderabad, Kashmir was contiguous with both India and Pakistan." The fact that Kashmir seems to belong to both India and Pakistan is such an issue, because both countries see the state as belonging to their own.

Guha, p. 79- "We intend to keep on friendly relations with both India and Pakistan. Despite constant rumours, we have no intention of joining either India or Pakistan...The only thing that will change our mind is if one side or the other decides to use force against us...The Maharaja has told me that his ambition is to make Kashmir the Switzerland of the East- a State that is completely neutral." (Hari Singh)

Guha, p. 79- "*The only thing that will change our mind is if one side or the other decides to use force against us.* Two weeks after these words were spoken, a force of several thousand armed men invaded the state from the north." Some estimates say there were about 2,000 invaders, while others estimate 13,000 (p. 81). Either way, I think that the attack itself is a big problem that occurred in the area after India had barely been independent for 2 months.

As I mentioned earlier in question one, from one of the links on the course webpage ([www.cbc.ca/news/background/kashmir](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kashmir)), Kashmir is the most likely place for a nuclear war to erupt, even after almost 65 years of conflict. In the past 10 years,

between 30 and 60 *thousand* people have lost their lives due to fighting in the Kashmir area.

Guha, p. 87- "On 1 January 1948, India decided to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations." After the attacks in October 1947, India brought in the United Nations to try and solve the issue of that territory. The United Nations was going to let the people of Kashmir decide if they wanted to be a part of India or Pakistan. The results of this vote were never decided, and instead an "ever-shifting line of control" (p.89) was drawn as an unofficial border between India and Pakistan. I think that if this border would just be made permanent, whether Kashmir went to India or Pakistan, then there would most likely be some issues at first, but eventually I think that the closure would help both of the countries just settle down and there would be some rest in the Princely State of Kashmir.

The film, *Dynasty: The Nehru Gandhi Story* personally helped me to understand the time period a little bit better. The interviews with family members and friends was really good as far as giving the whole history some emotional context that we don't get in the book. The interviews with Lord Mountbatten's daughters, and Nehru's nieces and granddaughters did add some interesting value to the part of India's history that we have learned about so far. However, if I had not already read all of the information in India After Gandhi, I would have been very confused about what was going on because the movie barely touches on issues such as the refugees and Patel. I don't even remember hearing Patel's name mentioned in the movie more than once, which is strange since in the book he is such an important figure of the time. "Patel, who was now home minister in the government of India, was a fellow Gujarati who had joined Gandhi as far back as 1918. He was a superb organizer and strategist who had played a major role in making the Congress a national party." (Guha, p. 38) The movie also said hardly anything about the refugees. I was surprised, since between one and two *million* people were killed in the post-partition migrations that took place. Over all, I think that the film *Dynasty: The Nehru Gandhi Story* isn't a sufficient source by itself to get information of the history of India becoming independent, but it is a good source to have when it is partnered with the book India After Gandhi.