Partition and Independence of India: 1924
Chair: Usama Bin Shafqat
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Chair’s Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to one of the most uniquely exciting committees at PMUNC 2015! My name is Usama Bin Shafqat and I will be your chair as we engage in a throwback to the events that continue to define lives for more than a billion people today. I am from Islamabad, Pakistan and will be a sophomore this year—tentatively majoring in Operations Research and Financial Engineering. Model UN has always been my IR indulgence in an otherwise scientific education as I culminated my high school career by serving as the Secretary-General for the largest conference in Islamabad—the Millennial Model UN 2013. I’ve continued Model UN here at Princeton by helping out with both PMUNC and PICSIM last year—in Operations and Crisis, respectively. Outside of Model UN, I’m a major foodie and love cricket.

This will be a historical crisis committee where we chart our own path through a subcontinent where the British are fast losing grip over their largest colony. We shall convene in the 1920s as political parties within India begin engaging with the masses and stand up more forcefully against the British Empire. Our emphasis will be on the interplay between the major parties in the discussions—the British, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. Since subcontinental politics in the era were dominated by charismatic leaders with huge personal followings, there will be an emphasis on personal powers (and the possible internal conflicts within the parties that may ensue) that might be slightly uncommon for most committees. We will trace through the major meetings of the 20s, 30s and 40s as the three parties, along with many other interest groups, debate the future of the subcontinent. The level of formality of the debate will change according to the context of the meeting. Party leaders, when they meet with each other, will have the power to issue important press releases concerning their meeting.

Please consider this background guide as a springboard for your research into the events and people that shaped one of the world’s most colorful regions during the twentieth century. The profiles of the committee members also include their achievements at the time around which our committee is supposed to end but that’s only for your information; remember that what our characters end up doing is totally up to our happenings in Princeton this November. Make sure you research your particular character’s persona and
thoughts (perhaps read a biography) in far greater detail; there are many points to be earned for an accurate portrayal. Feel free to reach out to me at ushafqat@princeton.edu before the conference for any clarifications.

I wish you the very best of luck with your preparation and hope that we make the most out of the historical crisis committee experience.

Sincerely,
Usama Bin Shafqat
A Short History

The rule of the Mughal Emperors, starting in 1526, marked a period of legendary prosperity for the Indian subcontinent. Even though the ruling Mughal family was Muslim, communal relations between the Muslims, the majority Hindu populace and other minorities including the Sikhs were mostly cordial. The Empire was humongous in its expanse (see map) and governed with a local body system still renowned for its remarkable efficiency. The Mughal Army was a formidable unit that guarded the vast territory from Kabul to Kolkata and annexed bordering regions with ease while architects engineered marvels such as the Taj Mahal, the Badshahi Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens.

The British first landed in India as traders looking to profit from the wealth that they had heard much about, and the East India Company was ultimately granted a charter by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600. The charter granted permission to the EIC to trade with the Mughal Emperor, and they established a meek trading setup on one of the coastal cities. However, as their trading profits grew and they recognized an ailing Empire which was past its peak and disintegrating rapidly following the reign of Aurangzeb, the East India Company slowly began taking over territories in India with a small but deadly force. With quick successes and many tales of torture and treason, the Company managed to gain control over a sizeable chunk of Indian territory and the foundations were laid for a long rule over Her Majesty's largest colony.

The first organized struggle by the Indians against the British Raj was in the year 1857. It was popularly known as the Sepoy Mutiny but to perceive it purely as a mutiny of "sepoys" would be ignorant. From the 1820s, the British had used a variety of tactics to usurp control over Hindu princely states that were initially just in subsidiary alliance with the British. For example, "doctrine of lapse" was a tactic the British used to prevent a Hindu ruler without a natural heir to annex his land to a successor, and instead, seized control of the land themselves. This frustrated Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who were losing revenues and lucrative positions.

Moreover, there was a strong sense among Hindu society that it was being threatened by Westernization of the British. Governor General Lord Dalhousie spearled these efforts, by, for instance, permitting Hindu widows to remarry.
There was also reason to believe that the British wished to abolish the caste system and challenge Hindu and Muslim orthodoxy by introducing a highly westernized and largely Christian education system.

These factors led to an organized rebellion in 1857, in Bengal, the only state where Indians were sufficiently well organized to pull something like this off. It came to an end with a harrowing defeat, along with a formal end to the Mughal Empire—which by that time existed in name only. The was followed by minimal Indian representation in front of the British Raj and a period of direct rule of Indian affairs from London through the Queen’s representative in India—the Viceroy.

The Indian National Congress

Hope rose again when, in 1885, the Indian National Congress (the Congress) was formed to give official political representation to Indians. Its formation marked the continuation of a desire for nationalist movement to oppose British rule, a seed that had been planted in the 1850s. During its first several decades, the Congress passed reform measures that were thought to be politically moderate, though many within the organization were becoming radicalized by the increased poverty brought about by the British Raj. Early in the 1900s, leaders within the party began to endorse a policy of swadeshi ("of our own country"), which sanctioned the boycott of imported British goods and encouraged the consumption of Indian-made goods.

It is noteworthy that, in 1905, the large province of Bengal was split into East and West Bengal, presumably to ease governance in a region that was home to over 80 million people. The partition led to an East Bengal where Muslims formed the majority in a province and looked forward to the empowerment and emancipation that they hoped would follow. However, the Hindu populace in Bengal and across India protested violently against the partition and the Congress party was seen at the forefront of the protests. Very shortly, the partition was annulled by King George V during his visit to Delhi and was widely seen as a victory for the Congress, and by extension, the Hindu majority.

By 1917 the INC’s “extremist” Home Rule wing, which was formed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant the previous year, had begun to exert significant influence by appealing to India’s diverse social classes.
The All India Muslim League

After the creation of the INC and its role as a ‘representative’ party for the Independence movement, some felt a need to reassess its claims of unbiasedness. From the very beginning of its existence the Congress had manifested its desire to safeguard the rights of Hindus only. Some of the Congress leaders adopted a revolutionary policy to establish Hindu Raj in the sub-continent under the guise of a national movement. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s quote reflects such feelings quite well: “Hindus and Muslims are two different nations who have different ideologies.”

The Muslims in India were left feeling trampled, betrayed and alienated by the Congress that had failed to maintain a balanced stance. In 1906, certain influential Muslim Leaders met to form an organized political body called All India Muslim League (the League) to advance the political interests and civil rights of the Muslim community in India. The difference between the League and the INC, however, was not merely in the notion of religion. One of its three stated objectives was to “To create among Muslims the feelings of loyalty towards British Government and to remove misconception and suspicions.”

With the establishment of these political bodies, the organized struggle began--first to achieve more representation in the governance of India, and then to push for independence from British rule. The two major Indian players--the Congress and the League--had ideologies which both interspersed and varied considerably and resulted in several alliances, betrayals and uneasy marriages. The highest point of Congress-League unity was perhaps the Lucknow Pact in 1916 where both parties held their annual meetings in the city of Lucknow and agreed to campaign together for more Indian representation in government. The Pact argued for several changes in the Legislative structure including separate electorates for Muslims and other minorities and a guaranteed one-third representation for Muslims in the government.

The Hindu-Muslim goodwill continued into the Khilafat Movement that began in 1919 as a protest against the ending of the Ottoman Sultanate at the hands of the British after the First World War. Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement formed a major backdrop for the Khilafat Movement. The Congress was very interested in fueling the movement to result in a destabilization of the British Raj with an eventual aim of achieving
Indian independence. However, the Khilafat Movement did not lead to any results as Mustafa Kemal Ataturk soon abolished the Ottoman Sultanate and formed the secular modern republic of Turkey. The fragile alliance between the Congress and the Muslim League was left badly shaken.
The Brief - 1924

Representing millions of people fighting tooth and nail for freedom is hard work. But what makes your role more complicated is the fact that the territories under British rule are as diverse as they come. The subcontinental populace is divided by ethnicity, language, culture, religion, custom and even food. People living in the Himalayan foothills have a very different set of demands from the Tamils in the South. The Sikhs of Punjab can have fragile alliances with both the Muslim League and the Congress and sometimes call for an independent state for themselves as well.

The Princely states are another interesting conundrum: some are small citywide ones where the royalty is only symbolic and the rulers unquestioningly support the British as long as their status is maintained whereas some, such as Hyderabad or Kashmir, wield enormous influence over whatever legislative system the British have in place and their support (or lack of it) could count for a lot in any activity involving the British Raj.

In the many deals and compromises you will have to make with other Indian parties as well as the British, it would be essential to keep in mind the sort of reaction they could generate in various sections of the population that you represent. Keeping track of the end-goals and aspirations of the many different people from many different parts of the British Indian Empire could be a huge determinant in the success or failure of a particular political move. Navigating these reactions and finding a path that offers the best gains for the smallest hit to your popularity is what you should aspire to do. As mentioned in the opening letter, many of these political leaders have personal followings: they can sometimes sway public opinion more effectively than their entire political party with a charismatic interview or two. Be sure to use these opportunities well when they come along.

Even though the committee convenes during the Khilafat Movement, events happening outside the subcontinent will usually have little impact on our proceedings. Besides any situation which involves the breakout of a major war involving Britain or the subcontinent, foreign powers at the time are not interested enough in the British Raj to interfere.

Despite the diversity of nations that live in the subcontinent, two major political parties—the Congress and the Muslim League—emerge as the key players during this era. The other
stakeholders will eventually begin supporting one of the blocs and managing these relationships could be key for these parties in gaining an advantage over each other and the ruling British. Collaboration on certain issues that unite all stakeholders (usually on a common cause that undermines the British occupiers) is also not unheard of.

The committee will run in a very dynamic way; since this is a real-time crisis committee, events and happenings will be broadcast live to the committee members by a dedicated crisis team. It is the ability to respond to this fast-paced environment which will set the best delegates apart from the rest.

Our discussion will be primarily guided by crisis events which will also set the chronological order. Delegates in this committee are encouraged to be as firm in their subcontinental knowledge as possible because that way they would be able to deal with almost any crisis that comes up as the events unfold. Just remember to study in detail the many contentious political issues from the period to be well-versed with the happenings—something that will help you enormously in engaging with our debates in the committee.

Sources to Consider

A concise introduction for those new to South Asian history

https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/History/British/BrIndia.html
A very comprehensive history that is somewhat tinged with a post-partition India touch

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/empire/g2/cs4/background.htm#bullet3
A British government source that also leads to many informative links for further exploration

http://storyofpakistan.com/the-struggle-for-independence/
Very informative and visually-rich source from a post-Partition Pakistan perspective with personality details
Roles

Governor-General
The highest position in the British administration of India and a direct representative of the British Crown. Also styled as Viceroy. Powers to be kept with the Chair.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah
Revered as the “Great Leader” (Quaid-e-Azam) in Pakistan, he spearheaded the Muslim League in its mission for minority rights and, later, the separate nation of Pakistan. Representative of the Muslims and President of the Muslim League. In the final days before independence, he was also offered Prime Ministership for a united India which he refused.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Prominent lawyer and the political heir to Gandhi. He served as President of the Indian National Congress and almost singly dominated Indian politics in the 1930s before the Muslim League under Jinnah appeared as a major contender. Famed for being the first Prime Minister of independent India and championing a secular, non-aligned, socialist democracy.

Liaquat Ali Khan
Jinnah's close political associate in the years leading up to independence and later Pakistan's first Prime Minister. His major work was the Objectives Resolution which served as a precursor to Pakistan's first Constitution. Represented the Muslims at all major conferences.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
Known as Mahatma Gandhi, he led the Indian National Congress and the Indians on various occasions to oppose British laws. In addition to his incredible personal fame, his leadership of the Congress during the Quit India Movement and the non-cooperation movements won him political acclaim. A staunch pacifist, he remained the figurehead for the Congress and went to many lengths to try and avoid the bloodshed that followed Partition. He had no political role in the State of India.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal
Internationally acclaimed poet and the mind behind the pivotal Pakistan Resolution of 1940 which introduced the concept of a separate nation for the Muslims of India. He was an active member of the Muslim League and represented the party at multiple national conferences.
Abul Kalam Azad
Perhaps the most prominent Muslim leader in the Indian National Congress who argued for unity and against Partition. Served as the youngest President of the Congress and the Minister of Education in independent India. Staungh supporter of Nehru and Gandhi.

Aga Khan III
Prominent campaigner for Muslim rights in the subcontinent and first President of the Muslim League. Supporter of separate Muslim identity in the subcontinent. Internationally recognized figure who also served as President of the now-defunct League of Nations in 1937-38.

Vallabhbhai Patel
A major figure in the Quit India movement, Patel was a fervent critic of the Muslim League and its leaders. After accepting Gandhi’s request to step down from Congress presidency in favor of Nehru, he is reported to have always held an acrimony with Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and other more moderate members of the party. He was responsible for dealing with humanitarian issues stemming from Partition and princely states that wouldn’t simply accede to India.

Zafarullah Khan
Renowned jurist and politician who was known as the brains behind the Muslim League. He drafted the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 and represented the League in the Round Table Conferences as well as the Viceroy's Executive Council. He later served as Pakistan's first Foreign Minister and the first Asian president for both the UN General Assembly and the International Court of Justice.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan
Styled as “Bacha”, or King, of the Khans. He enjoyed massive popularity in the Pashtun region of North-West India and was also known as “Frontier Gandhi” for his deep personal and political affiliation with Gandhi and the Congress. After Partition, though, he decided to stay in Pakistan and engage in politics there.

Baldev Singh
Representative of the Punjabi Sikh community in discussions that led to Independence. He represented the Sikhs at major forums including the Cripps Mission and the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Chaudhri Rehmat Ali
In 1933, Chaudhry Rehmat Ali published a pamphlet called “Now or Never” building on Iqbal's idea of a separate Muslim state and coining the name “Pakistan”. He was a Muslim nationalist and earned his Bachelors and Masters from the University of Cambridge. His movement was inspired by a philosophy of Muslims having an independent community where they could progress economically and politically.

Subhas Chandra Bose
An Indian nationalist and twice-elected President of Indian National Congress. He was a staunch supporter of the Indian National Movement and even conspired against the British with the help of Nazi Germany in World War II. He was later ousted from Congress in 1940 due to differences with Gandhi over supporting the use of military effort to drive out the British from India.

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
A strong campaigner against the widespread discrimination against “Dalits”—a group in the Hindu caste system that is considered to be unmentionable and untouchable by the other “higher” castes. He represented Dalits as the “Scheduled Castes Federation” during the process of independence. He was also later the chief architect of the Indian constitution.

Sarojini Naidu
She served as the first Indian woman president of the Indian National Congress. She was also a prominent activist and participated in the Round Table Conferences alongside Gandhi.
Figure 1: The Mughal Empire in 1700 (source: commons.wikimedia.org)
Figure 2: The British Indian Empire in 1909 (source: Edinburgh Geographical Institute)
Figure 3: Princely States of India (source: mapsofindia.com)
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Figure 4: Map detailing the religious divisions in British India (source: ctevans.net)