

How did India achieve independence in 1947?

History

Lesson 3 of 4 lessons

Lesson 3: Britain and India after the War

Mr Mastin



Britain after the War

Five years of fighting, in the Second World War, had cost Britain thousands of lives, huge amounts of money and power.

Not only had Britain lost many lives, the economic cost of the War was huge! Britain had taken out loans to pay for the War. Britain was in **debt**. Although Britain was on the winning side, the country would now have to start repaying the debt that paid for all of the ships, weapons and supplies.

In 1945, Britain was tired and devastated. Enemy bombing raids had destroyed many British homes and cities, and these homes and cities would take time and money to rebuild. Throughout Britain, there were shortages of goods and workers for the rebuilding of the country.



Britain after the War

Having a large empire spread all over the world was not something the British Government could afford. India was one of the largest parts of the British Empire. Britain had to decide, whether it was a priority to force India to stay inside the Empire or grant India independence.

Britain had a debt to those colonies who had sacrificed their lives. During the War, Britain had fought to help countries free themselves from Nazism. Many people in Britain now believed Britain owed a debt of thanks to India. The USA had fought alongside India and the British during the War. The USA was opposed to imperialism and supported India's demand for independence. After the War, Britain and the USA helped set up the **United Nations**. The aims of the UN were for equality and human rights for all people in all nations.



India after the War

After the War, Indians were feeling confident. Indians had sacrificed their lives for the freedom of others. Now it was India's moment for freedom. Britain owed India a debt of thanks. How could the British stand in the way of India's call for independence?

After the War, the Congress was led by Gandhi and **Nehru**. Nehru demanded the British begin preparations to hand over power to Indians. All over India, Indians went on strike. Some Indians who worked in the British Indian Government refused to obey orders unless the orders came from Indians.



The bookshop at the end of the War

Sati was now 23. She had been running the bookshop in Pune since her father and Vishnu had been jailed by the British. Sati had put up large signs outside the shop that read, ***“Out of Bounds to British Soldiers.”***

Sati could not force the British to stay out of her shop but she could show the British that she did not want them ruling India. Vishnu and his father were released from jail at the end of the War. The family originally came from Sindh, not Pune. Their family in Sindh contacted Vishnu and his family to see if they were alright.

Vishnu and his family were hopeful that India's independence was near.



Glossary

Debt: When you owe something to someone, usually money, but debt can also mean something valuable that you need to repay.

United Nations: An organisation of countries set up after World War Two to promote equality between countries and human rights throughout the world. It is also known as the UN.

Nehru: One of the early leaders of Congress and a supporter of Indian independence. Nehru was close friends with Gandhi and, like Gandhi, was arrested and sent to jail by the British.

