

4 Change and continuity 1900–19

What is this unit about?

In the years to 1900, the British Raj had developed strategies for ensuring that it was never again caught unawares by a rising as devastating as the Indian Mutiny (see page xx). A major strategy was to embark on a process where a small number of carefully selected Indians were able to participate, albeit marginally, in the Raj's decision-making process. A second, no less important, strategy was to devolve some financial management to Indians to enable them to manage their own affairs at a local level. The need for some sort of rapprochement with the Indian people was not questioned by the British in positions of authority but the problem was how much to give and when to give it.

This unit focuses on the ways in which this problem was addressed in the years up to 1919. Twice during the early twentieth century the British were forced, by pressure of events, to face this dilemma: between 1906 and 1909 and again between 1916 and 1919. How the imperial authorities reacted and what the impact of this was on India and Indian affairs was to have a profound impact on the direction Indian politics were to take. This careful and almost unwilling rapprochement was running in tandem with a growing sense of national consciousness amongst the Indian people.

Key questions

- How far did the British Raj make concessions to Indian demands for involvement in the governance of India?
- To what extent, and why, did Indian nationalism develop in the years to 1919?

Timeline

1885	First meeting of the Indian National Congress
1905	Lord Minto replaces Lord Curzon as viceroy John Morley becomes Secretary of State at the India Office in London
1906	Simla Deputation of Muslims to Lord Minto
1908	Morley-Minto reforms announced
1909	India Councils Act
1910	Lord Hardinge becomes Viceroy
1911	Durbar to celebrate coronation of King George V and Queen Mary held in Delhi

1911	Capital of British India moved from Calcutta to Delhi Reunification of Bengal
1914	Outbreak of the First World War
1916	Lord Chelmsford becomes Viceroy Lucknow Pact
1917	Edwin Montagu becomes Secretary of State at the India Office in London Montagu Declaration
1919	Rowlatt Acts Montagu-Chelmsford Report Government of India Act

Source A

If only fifty men can be found with sufficient power of self-sacrifice, sufficient love for and pride in their country, sufficient genuine and unselfish heartfelt patriotism to take the initiative, India can be reborn.

Part of a letter written by Allan Octavian Hume in 1883 to Calcutta University graduates

Indian nationalism

Allan Octavian Hume was a former member of the Indian Civil Service who rose to be Secretary of the Revenue and Agriculture Department. He was an outspoken critic of the Raj and who was a close friend of the Liberal politician Lord Ripon (Viceroy 1880–4). In 1883 he wrote an open letter to Calcutta University graduates. Part of what he wrote is shown in Source A.

SKILLS BUILDER

- What sort of person is Allan Hume trying to reach? Why?
- From what you know of India so far, what would you expect the response to have been to a letter like this?
- Should the Raj feel threatened by what Allan Hume had done?

Two years later, 73 representatives from every province of British India met in Bombay at the first annual meeting of the Indian National Congress presided over by Womesh C Bonnerjee, a barrister of the Calcutta High Court. Simultaneously, a national conference of the Indian Association, an organisation started by the Bengali politician and editor, Surendranath Banerjee, was held in Calcutta. The Bombay meeting, however, was more prestigious and more broadly based, and the following year the two were to merge. The holding of these two conferences was indicative of the need felt by the movers and shakers of Indian opinion for a more formal forum in which to discuss, form and direct Indian national sentiment.

Who attended the first meeting of the Indian National Congress?

Most of the delegates at the Congress were high-caste Hindus, all of whom spoke English and most of whom were lawyers, although there was a

smattering of teachers, journalists and businessmen amongst them along with some wealthy landowners and merchants. The delegates were not exclusively Indian. Allan Hume, for example, who had been instrumental in calling the congress in the first place – and– attended and played a key advisory role. It is important to emphasise that in these early days Congress was simply a forum for discussion. It was not a political party and could not even, in any sense, be called a movement. Later, however (see pages xxx–xxx) it was to become the organisational vehicle for India's first great nationalist movement.

What did the first meeting of Congress want?

The delegates met for three days and everyone proclaimed their loyalty to the British crown, and, by extension, to the Raj. However, all the people who spoke expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the ways in which the Raj was governing India. Delegates wanted:

- the basis of the government of India to be widened so that the *people should have their proper and legitimate share in it*
- the opening up of the Indian Civil Service to Indians
- opportunities for Indians to serve on various government councils
- more of India's wealth to be spent on internal improvements and less on the military
- the abolition of the secretary of state's council in Whitehall, viewing it as a waste of India's resources and a block to radical progress within India.

Initially, these resolutions were framed within the spirit of co-operation with the Raj, but, as you will see later, they formed the platform from which more radical demands were made, culminating in the demand for independence. However, not everyone agreed about the nature and purpose of the Congress.

Annie Besant was instrumental in setting up the Indian National Congress. In Source B she recounts part of an address made by its president at the first meeting.

Source B

'Indians are British citizens and claim all British citizens' rights. The first of these is freedom.' He then claimed for Indians in India all the control that Englishmen had in England. This was a necessity, in order to remedy the great economic evil which was at the root of Indian poverty. It was 'absolutely necessary' for the progress and welfare of the Indian people. 'The whole matter can be comprised in one word, Self-government, or Swaraj.' When should a beginning be made which should automatically develop into full Self-Government? At once. 'Not only has the time fully arrived, but had arrived long past.'

From Annie Besant *How India Wrought for Freedom* published in 1915

Source C

The people of India are not the 7000 students at universities, but the millions with whom neither education nor the influence of European ideas have transformed. We are under the shadow of an enormous danger – the overpopulation of the country. Where is there a more crying need for sanitary reform than amongst those who insist on bathing in their tanks of drinking water and where millions die of disease? What misery is spread amongst millions of women by the immoral custom of child marriage! Yet where have any of these been the subject of serious enquiry [by Congress]? The fact is that Congress is the product of a tiny section of the Indian community touched by European education, ideas and literature. They neither represent the aristocratic section of Indian society, nor are they in contact with the great mass of the population: they do not understand their wants or necessities. They are very imperfectly fitted to grasp any of the larger questions which affect the stability or safety of the Empire as a whole.

To hand over, therefore, the Government of India, either partially or otherwise to such a body as this, would simply be to place millions of men, dozens of nationalities, and hundreds of the most stupendous interests under the domination of a microscopic minority, possessing neither experience, administrative ability, nor any adequate conception of the nature of the tasks before them.

Part of a Minute on British policy in India written by the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, in November 1888

Definition

Parsis

Parsis believe in the god, Ahura Mazda, who is good and just and who created the world to be a battleground between himself and the evil spirit, Angra Mainyu, and where evil would be defeated. The role of mankind is to serve the creator and honour his seven creations: sky, water, earth, plant, animal, human and fire. Although Ahura Mazda is wise, he is vulnerable and humans must be his assistants in order to help restore harmony in a world stricken by evil.

SKILLS BUILDER

- 1 Why does Annie Besant believe that India should have self-government?
- 2 What reasons does Viceroy Dufferin give for opposing Indian involvement in governance?
- 3 Set up a debate discussing the differing views of Annie Besant and Viceroy Dufferin, with individuals or groups of 2–3 students taking on the role of each person. Try to convince the rest of the group that your view is correct.

Hindu or Muslim?

Congress was, at the start, dominated by Hindus, most of whom were high-caste. Although a substantial number of **Parsis** and Jains attended the first meeting, there were, significantly, only two Muslims. This situation had changed by the time of the third annual meeting of congress, held in Madras, where 83 of the 600 delegates were Muslim. However, this domination of Congress by Hindus was to continue and the Muslim community, India's largest minority community, never felt easy under the umbrella of Congress. This led them (see pages xxx–xxx) to turn to and to create alternative political organisations that were themselves to pursue a different sort of nationalist agenda.

Biography

Annie Besant (1847–1933)

Annie Besant was a social reformer. She was Vice-President of the National Secular Society and a free-thinker. She formed a close relationship with Charles Bradlaugh, with whom she co-edited *The National Reformer* and with whom in 1875 she was prosecuted for spreading information about birth-control. She became a socialist, joined the Fabian Society and worked to publicise trade union issues, being instrumental in organising the Bryant and May's match girls' strike.

In 1889, Annie converted to theosophy, a philosophy based on an understanding of the nature of God, seeing this as a link between socialism and spirituality. She visited India in 1893, where the headquarters of the Theosophical Society were located. Deciding India was her one true home, she settled there for the rest of her life.

Annie learned Sanskrit, studied Hindu religious books, and was determined to raise Hindu self-esteem in the face of the Imperialism of the British Raj. She founded the Central Hindu College in 1898, and a network of schools throughout India that were administered by the Theosophical Society. After 1913, Annie turned her attention to Indian Independence and in 1917 was appointed President of Congress, a post she held until 1923. Gradually, however, she lost nationalist support and was eclipsed by the campaigns of Gandhi.

Source D

4.1 Religious make-up of Indian National Congress meetings between 1892 and 1909

Year	Place	Number of delegates	Brahmin	Non-Brahmin Hindu	Muslim	Parsi	Christian	Other
1892	Allahabad	625	261	254	91	1	10	8
1893	Lahore	867	207	523	65	20	12	40
1894	Madras	1,163	744	371	23	6	12	7
1895	Poona	1,584	996	494	25	16	10	43
1896	Calcutta	784	282	427	54	4	15	2
1897	Amraoti	692	287	327	57	8	8	5
1898	Madras	614	401	192	10	2	7	2
1899	Lucknow	739	135	280	313	2	6	3
1900	Lahore	567	65	400	56	4	4	38
1901	Calcutta	896	268	533	74	2	7	12
1902	Ahmedabad	471	115	306	20	22	6	2
1903	Madras	538	336	180	9	5	2	6
1904	Bombay	1,010	189	715	35	65	1	5
1905	Benares	757	268	437	20	6	2	24
1906	Calcutta	1,663	523	1,046	45	25	8	16
1907	No data							
1908	Madras	626	383	206	10	20	5	2
1909	Lahore	243	63	169	5	2	2	2

From P Gosh *The Development of the Indian National Congress 1892–1909* published in 1960

SKILLS BUILDER

Work in pairs or small groups.

- 1 What conclusions can you draw from Source D about the religious make-up of the Indian National Congress meetings 1892–1909?
- 2 In your judgement, did the city in which Congress met have an impact on its religious make-up? (An atlas may be helpful here!)

Was Congress the only way Indians were making their views heard?

Something as organised as Congress doesn't come out of nowhere. All kinds of threads and all kinds of different initiatives, led to the 1885 meeting. For example:

- In 1870, the Brahmin Mahadev Govind Ranade founded the 'Sarvajanik Sabha' (All People's Association) in Poona. Its aim was to help all Indians realise their potential by making full and effective use of the existing political institutions. Although prevented by his position on the Indian bench from formally joining the Indian National Congress, he founded India's National Social Conference in 1887 which considered social issues, particularly the plight of Hindu widows.
- **Gopale Krishna Gokale** was a follower of Ranade, who developed the idea of nationalism by insisting on the need for Indians to reform their own social and religious ideas and resolve their own internal conflicts before they could begin to consider anything as radical as political independence.
- In 1879, a petty clerk in the government's Military Accounts Department, Vasudeo Balwant Phadke, suddenly got the bit between his teeth, named himself 'Minister to Shivaji II' and rode off into the hills of Maharashtra to raise an army against the Crown. This wasn't, perhaps, as crazy as it may sound. Shivaji (1627–80) was the founder of the Maratha kingdom. Inspired by the heroes of Hindu mythologies, he considered it his mission to liberate India from the Islamic Mughals. Phadke was following this example and, in his view, living out Hindu mythology and history. It took the British four years to catch him!
- Another nationalist, Vihnu Hari Chiplunkar, was so inspired by Phadke that he, too, left his government post. Instead of taking to the hills, he opened a private school in Poona. Chiplunkar's poetry and political essays inspired many young people, including **Bal Gangadhar Tilak**.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Indian nationalism was well established in a far more formal setting than ever before. It did not simply have a voice, it had the organisational basis from which to grow and develop as a political force.

Biography

Gopale Krishna Gokale (1866–1915)

A member of the Indian National Congress from 1889, Gokale became its joint secretary six years' later, sharing the office with the extremist, Bal Tilak.

Gokale was a moderate and a reformer. He deprecated the caste system and untouchability, and supported the emancipation of women. He believed that the introduction of Western education into India was a positive and liberalising influence, and advocated free primary school education for all children. He wanted greater autonomy for Indians, but only for those who would co-operate with the Raj. In doing this, he argued, India stood the best chance of becoming a self-governing dominion within the British Empire.

Whilst supporting the Raj in general terms, he wasn't afraid to criticise it. He believed, for example, that Britain's economic policy in India was disastrous, leading to considerable poverty and suffering. He was constantly arguing for increased industrialisation and for the mechanisation of agriculture.

Gokale visited England many times and was involved in discussions with John Morley that led directly to the Morley-Minto reforms and the Indian Councils Act of 1909.

Biography

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920)

Indian nationalist, social reformer and the first popular leader of an Indian independence movement, Tilak was born into a middle-class Hindu family. After a modern, college education he first taught mathematics and then became a journalist.

Tilak founded the Marathi daily newspaper *Kesari* in which he strongly criticised the Raj for its suppression of freedom of expression, especially after the partition of Bengal. Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in the 1890s where he opposed the moderate approach of Gokale. When the Congress party split into two factions, Tilak led the extremists (*Garam Dal*). Arrested on charges of sedition in 1906, and defended by Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Tilak was convicted and imprisoned in Mandalay, Burma, until 1914. On his release, Tilak rejoined the Indian National Congress.

Tilak criticised Gandhi's strategy of non-violent, civil disobedience as a way of gaining independence for India. Mellowing in later life, Tilak favoured political dialogue as a way of moving forward. Although he wanted independence for India, he wanted this independence to be exercised within the British Empire.

The Morley-Minto reforms 1909

In 1909, **John Morley**, the Secretary of State for India, and Lord Minto, the Viceroy, introduced a whole raft of reforms.

Why were reforms necessary?

- Backlash against Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal (see pages x-y) had spread far beyond Bengal. When Minto arrived in India to take over as viceroy from Lord Curzon, agitation against partition was at its height. Minto was himself threatened with assassination.
- Towards the end of 1906, the Lieutenant-General of the Punjab, Denzil Ibbetson, faced such unrest that he feared an uprising similar to the Indian Mutiny 50 years earlier. Beginning as a protest against proposals for higher charges and stricter regulations for settlers in areas irrigated by government funded waterways, the situation escalated at such a rate that Ibbetson feared a conspiracy. Riots and murders were commonplace and there were rumours that the Punjabi army was on the point of

mutiny. However, the whole affair turned out to be something of a damp squib. Whilst Minto, based in India, suspected a conspiracy, Morley, the Secretary of State for India and based in London, did not. An enquiry into the loyalty of the Punjabi soldiers revealed that they had been considerably swayed by agitators, who had urged them to strike in order to gain redress of grievances such as pay and promotion prospects. At this critical point, Ibbetson left India for medical treatment in England. The potential threat to the loyalty of the whole Punjabi army, and the devastating consequences this would have on the Raj, convinced Minto that the proposed charges and regulations should be withdrawn, and they were. The Punjabis went wild with delight and made their continuing loyalty to the Crown abundantly clear.

- The Indian National Congress was growing increasingly concerned about the extremists in its midst and by the power struggle that was going on within Congress between the extremists and the moderates. Lord John Morley, in particular, was influenced by Gopal Krishna Gokale, a highly educated, moderate Indian who visited England many times and with whom Morley had many frank discussions about the difficulties faced by Indians in positions of influence in maintaining a moderate stance.

Lord John Morley, back in England and Lord Minto, on the spot in India, together became convinced that more concessions had to be made to the Indian people. Indians had to be drawn in still further to the process of government. It had become clear that politically active Indians could, in certain circumstances, sway the masses behind them. It was therefore obvious, at least to Morley, that loyalty to the British Raj had to be both encouraged and rewarded.

Biography

John Morley (1838–1923)

The British general Election of 1906 swept the Liberal Party to power and John Morley into the Indian Office as Secretary of State and a peerage two years' later.

Morley was a liberal reformer and a follower of the philosopher J S Mill. In Gladstone's administration, Morley had supported Home Rule for Ireland and, in the early years of the twentieth century, was a strong supporter of female suffrage. In 1914 he resigned from the government because of his opposition to the First World War and, later, failed to persuade the coalition government to work for a negotiated peace.

As Secretary of State for India, Morley saw it as his duty to spread throughout India those ideals of justice, law and humanity, which he saw as being fundamental to civilisation. He wanted Indian people to become more involved in governing India in order to eliminate that sense of inferiority that had been impressed upon them by the Raj, and to enable India to make progress towards achieving his ideals for that country. He most definitely did not see Indian participation in government as one of the steps towards independence for India, neither was he in favour of universal suffrage in the Indian context. This was because he believed it was dangerous to apply democratic principles to people so fragmented by religion, race and caste. It would then be too easy, he maintained, for one faction to override the needs of another. Checks and balances were what were required to enable all 'voices' to be heard.

What was the significance of the Simla Deputation?

Agitation by the Indian National Congress against the partition of Bengal was mainly a protest against the 'divide and rule' policy that Viceroy Curzon and the governor of Bengal were attempting to carry out. Many Muslims, however, believed that the Indian National Congress's agitation showed that they would not be fairly treated by any organisation with a Hindu majority. To safeguard their interests, Muslim leaders drew up a plan for separate electorates and presented it to the Viceroy, Lord Minto, at Simla in 1906.

The Simla Deputation consisted of some 70 delegates representing all shades of Muslim opinion. The deputation stressed that the Muslim community should not be judged by its numerical strength alone but by its political importance and the service it had rendered to the Empire. The deputation further pointed out that western ideas of democracy were not appropriate for India and stressed the need for care when introducing or extending the electoral system in whatever sphere – local or national.

Minto replied by assuring the Simla Deputation that their political rights and interests as a community would be safeguarded in any administrative reorganisation in which he was involved.

Source E

This has been a very eventful day: as someone said to me, an epoch in Indian history. We are aware of the feeling of unrest that exists throughout India, and the dissatisfaction that prevails amongst people of all classes and creeds. The Mahommedan population, which numbers sixty-two millions, who have always been intensely loyal, resent not having proper representation, and consider themselves slighted in many ways, preference having been given to the Hindus. The agitators have been most anxious to foster this feeling and have naturally done their utmost to secure the co-operation of this vast community. The younger generation were wavering, inclined to throw in their lot with the advanced agitators of the Congress. The Mahommedans decided, before taking action, that they would bring an Address to the Viceroy, mentioning their grievances. Minto then read his answer, which he had thought out most carefully: 'Your Address, as I understand it, is a claim that, in any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality, a District Board, or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Mahommedan community should be represented as a community. I am entirely in accord with you.'

From the journal of Lady Minto, Simla, 1 October 1906

This assurance was to have long-term significance as the Raj struggled to give Indians a greater say in their own affairs.

Questions

- 1 What is Lady Minto's attitude to the Hindus?
- 2 Why do you think Lord Minto was prepared to move away from the 'one man, one vote' principle to community representation when he was administering India?

What were the reforms proposed by Morley and Minto?

Lord John Morley seems to have been the driving force behind the reforms that were finally agreed. It was Lord Minto who proposed a series of moderate reforms that he said would *satisfy the legitimate aspirations of all but the most advanced Indians* and John Morley who came back with much more radical proposals. Minto, for example, envisaged a modest increase in the number of Indians nominated by the Raj to serve on the various councils, whilst Morley proposed a larger number of Indian representatives and wanted them to be elected. Morley was determined to reduce the number of officials (invariably white and invariably British) serving on provincial councils and on the Viceroy's executive council.

The reforms that were finally agreed between Lord John Morley and Lord Minto were announced in November 1908 and enshrined in the Indian Councils Act of 1909.

- A total of 60 Indian representatives were to be elected to serve on the Viceroy's executive council; 27 of these were to be elected from territorial constituencies and special interest groups. However, officials remained in the majority.
- The provincial councils were to be enlarged sufficiently to create non-official majorities.
- Separate electorates were provided for Muslims and Hindus in order to allow the minority Muslims to have a voice in the various councils.

Additionally, Lord John Morley appointed two Indians to his London-based group of advisers. Minto, responding to Morley's urging to act in a similar way, appointed Satyendra Sinha, the advocate-general of Bengal, to be his Law member. However, Minto and his officials in Calcutta, although believing the reforms to be essential, thought of them as a defensive action. Morley, on the other hand, regarded them as a significant step toward colonial self-government.

Question

What does Lord Morley hope the effects of the reforms will be?

Source F

There are three classes of people whom we have to consider in dealing with a scheme of this kind. There are the extremists, who nurse fanatic dreams that someday they will drive us out of India. The second group nourishes no hopes of this sort, but hope for autonomy or self-government of the colonial species and pattern. And then the third section of this classification asks for no more than to be admitted to co-operation in our administration. I believe the effect of the Reforms has been, is being, and will be to draw the second class, who hope for autonomy, into the third class, who will be content with being admitted to a fair and full co-operation.

Part of Lord Morley's speech to the House of Lords in 1909

What were the effects of the Morley-Minto reforms?

By far the most important effect of the Morley-Minto reforms was that from 1909 onwards, Indians were involved in policy making both in India and, because of Lord John Morley's nominations, in Britain too. Their voice, at this stage, may not have been loud, but it was a voice and it was a voice that was legally entitled to be heard.

However, there were those for whom the reforms were either too much or too little.

The 'extremists'

The right to vote was restricted to the rich and privileged. Indian vested interests were protected because seats were reserved for landowners and members of chambers of commerce. These were exactly the sorts of moderate men who could be expected to support the Raj. Thousands of politically-minded Indians expected more; the extremists were isolated and regarded the reforms as nothing more than cynical window-dressing on the part of the Raj. They resumed their fight for full Indian self-government and terrorism in all its forms continued.

Administrators

Many British administrators were disappointed and disheartened by the changes, which diluted their power. They were no longer in the majority on provincial councils and had to contend with a substantial Indian minority on the Viceroy's executive council. Indeed, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, the governor (for a brief time) of partitioned Eastern Bengal described the reforms as *conciliatory sugar plums*. It was British administrators like these who genuinely believed that they governed India in the best interests of the Indians. They believed that, divided by faction, caste, and religion, Indian people could not be expected to govern India impartially. Dispassionate judgement, they maintained, was beyond the mentality of the Indians. The ICS had, for years, maintained that they spoke for the vast mass of Indian people. They couldn't maintain this stance any longer and so believed their influence had been diminished. They feared for their future.

Congress

Congress, dominated by Hindus, generally supporting the reforms, but bitterly regretted that electoral procedures were designed to achieve a balance of minority interests. Muslim interests were protected by creating a separate electorate for them and by imposing lower property and educational qualifications for Muslim voters than for Hindus. Congress would have had it otherwise.

Question

Was the Indian National Congress loyal to the Raj, or not, at this time?

Source G

That this Congress, whilst gratefully appreciating the earnest and arduous endeavours of Lord Morley and Lord Minto in extending to the people of this country a fairly liberal measure of constitutional reforms as now embodied in the Indian Councils Act, deems it is its duty to place on record its strong sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion and regrets that the Regulations framed under the Act have not been framed in the same liberal spirit in which Lord Morley's despatch of last year was conceived.

Part of the Indian National Congress Resolution at its Lahore session in 1909

SKILLS BUILDER

Study Sources E, F and G.

How far do these sources suggest that the Morley-Minto reforms only benefited the Muslims?

Source H

The 1909 Indian Councils Act modestly extended the franchise, but quite substantially increased the numbers of elected and nominated Indians on the provincial and central legislative councils of the Raj. The British, by holding out the prospect of progress towards responsible government, were undoubtedly hoping to contain and defuse the forces of Indian Nationalism. Thus the extension of democratic institutions was used as a means of shoring up the fundamentally autocratic British Raj.

From Denis Judd *Empire* published in 1996

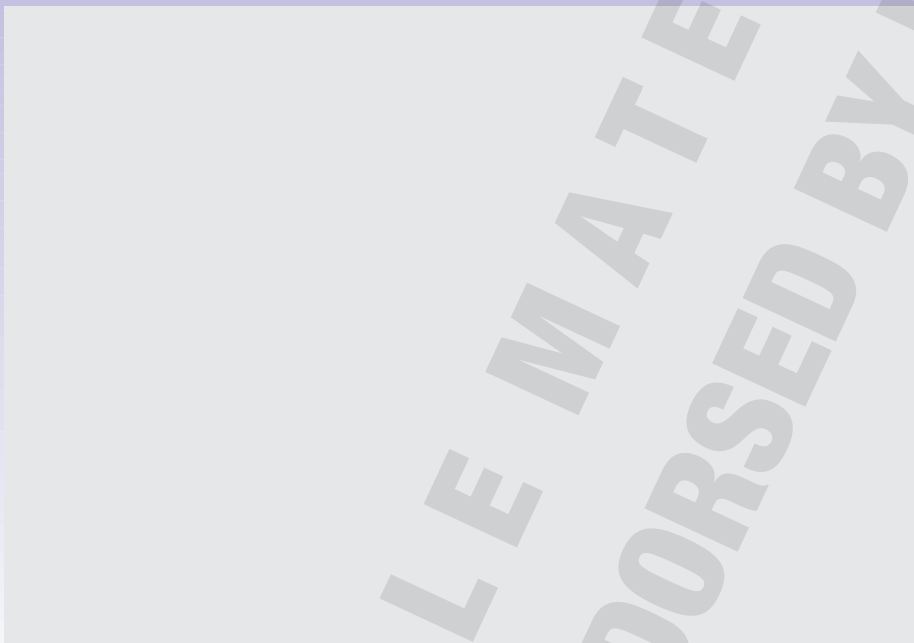
Reasserting the Raj?

The Indian Councils Act of 1909 ended over 100 years of all-white, colonial rule. In other ways colonial rule had definitely not come to an end. The British Raj asserted itself both symbolically and literally, culminating in the 1911 **darbar** to celebrate the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary.

- The Morley-Minto reforms were announced in November 1908, the fiftieth anniversary of the British take-over of the administration of India from the East India Company.
- The Morley-Minto reforms had placated the Muslims by agreeing to the principle of separate Muslim and Hindu electorates. The British now felt able to move to balance this with the reunification of Bengal, which had been summarily divided by Viceroy Curzon in 1905 (see pages xxx–xxx). This decision was announced at the 1911 darbar.

- In time for the 1911 durbar, the capital of India was moved from Calcutta to Delhi, the powerbase of the old Mughal Empire, pleasing the Muslims.
- Nearly every ruling prince and person of note in India attended the 1911 durbar to pay homage to George V their king and emperor. The sovereigns appeared on a balcony built on the Red Fort in Delhi, where below more than half a million ordinary Indians had gathered to greet them. The sovereigns (see Source H) appeared in their coronation robes. King George wore the Imperial crown, containing 6,170 diamonds as well as sapphires, emeralds and rubies.

Source I



4.2 A photograph of King George V and Queen Mary at the Delhi durbar, held in December 1911 to celebrate their coronation

Question

How far would you agree that the 1911 Delhi durbar was nothing more than a public reminder that the future of India was still determined by the British crown and the British parliament?

Definition

Durbar

In Mughal India, durbars were ceremonial gatherings to receive visitors in audience, conduct official business and confer honours. The British Raj adopted the idea: Lord Lytton held a durbar, for example, when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1876. The great Delhi durbars of 1903 and 1911 were staged to celebrate the coronations of the British kings Edward VII and George V. These were fantastic ceremonial displays, involving hundreds of maharajas, bejewelled elephants, music and dancing.

What was the impact on India of the First World War (1914–1918)?

Involvement in the war

The outbreak of war in Europe was met with instant loyalty and declarations of support across all sections of Indian society. Offers of

Definition

The Muslim League

The All India Muslim League was founded at the annual Muhammadan Educational Conference held in Dhaka in December 1906. About 3,000 delegates attended and supported Nawab Salim Ullah Khan's proposal that a political party be established to look after the interests of Muslims: the All India Muslim League.

Question

Why do you think a photograph of Indian soldiers would have been sold as a postcard? Who would have bought it? To whom would they have sent it?

support poured in from the princely states, from Congress and from the **Muslim League**. Even Bal Gangadhar Tilak, leader of the extremist faction in Congress, declared *our sense of loyalty is inherent and unswerving*. Twenty-seven of the largest princely states immediately put their Imperial Service Troops at the Viceroy's disposal. A hospital ship *The Loyalty* was commissioned, fully fitted and provisioned by the princes. Recruitment exceeded all expectations, and Indian troops were soon sailing for Flanders, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, serving overseas as combatants and support staff, dwarfing all other imperial contributions to the war effort. By November 1918, some 827,000 Indians had enlisted as combatants, in addition to those already serving in 1914. It seems from official figures that around 64,449 Indian soldiers died in the war.

Source J



4.3 A photograph of Sikh troops disembarking at Marseilles, France, en route for the trenches of the Western Front

The Western Front

In August and September 1914, as German troops swept through Belgium into France, decimating the British Expeditionary Force, fresh, new troops were desperately needed. The Indian Army, with 161,000 trained soldiers, seemed the obvious choice. The first Indian Expeditionary Force, made up of 16,000 British and 28,500 Indian troops of the Lahore and Meerut divisions and the Secunderabad Cavalry brigade embarked from Karachi on 24 August 1914, reaching Marseilles on 26 September. They reached the Western Front just in time for the first Battle of Ypres. There, their losses were heavy: the average Indian battalion had 764 fighting men and by early November the 47th Sikhs, for example, were down to 385 fit soldiers. In early 1915, the Indian regiments were rested, but were soon back in the

trenches. They provided half the Allied fighting force at Neuve Chapelle and the Lahore division was thrown into the counter-attack at the second Battle of Ypres in April 1915.

In December 1915, the two infantry divisions were withdrawn from France and sent to the Middle East. Some historians argue that this was because of their low morale and War Office fears that the Indians could not survive another winter on the Western Front. On the other hand, it made perfect sense to concentrate the Indian Army in the Middle East, where it was easier to send supplies and reinforcements from India. Two Indian cavalry divisions remained on the Western Front until March 1918, when they were transferred to Palestine to take part in operations against the Turks.

The problem of religion

Religion became a problem after Turkey entered the war because, in the eyes of Muslims, the British Empire was now at war with a Muslim power. Muslims in the Indian Army faced a huge dilemma. Most Muslim soldiers agreed that the War was still lawful, although there were desertions from Muslim units on the Western Front and elsewhere. There were at least three mutinies of Muslim troops, sparked by outrage that they might be sent to fight against fellow Muslim Turkish soldiers.

Attitudes to fighting

For most Indian soldiers, going to war was part of their well-established ancestral tradition of obligation to their emperor. Interestingly, few claimed to be fighting for India. Most cited the King or the Empire as legitimate causes for which they were fighting. In the case of the 1914–18 war, their king-emperor was George V and so they loyally enlisted under his colours. This attitude was reflected in their letters home from the Front.

Havildar Singh wrote from the Western Front in September 1915, *If I die I go to Paradise. It is a fine thing to die in battle. We must honour him who feeds us. Our dear government's rule is very good and gracious.*

Pirhan Dyal, also serving in France, wrote *We must be true to our salt and he who is faithful will go to paradise.*

Jat Havildar, recovering from his wounds, wrote home *Who remembers a man who dies in his bed? But it is our duty as Khastris to kill the enemy and then a man becomes a hero.*

The sister of three brothers stationed in Egypt wrote *War is the task of young men, to sport with death upon the field of battle, to be as a tiger and to draw the sword of honour and daring.*

Compromising internal control?

Thousands upon thousands of Indians left India to fight in the imperial cause. Thousands of British troops stationed in India left too, withdrawn to support allied troops in France and Mesopotamia. Along with them went

many ICS men and expatriate civilians, who volunteered to fight in the armed forces. Indeed, in 1914 Viceroy Hardinge warned of *the risks involved in denuding India of troops* and admitted that *there is no disguising the fact that our position in India is a bit of a gamble at the present time*. By March 1915 there was not a single regular British battalion left in India. Any sort of uprising in this situation would be very difficult to contain.

Great expectations?

The presence of so many Indian soldiers fighting alongside British and white colonial battalions not only increased the self-esteem of the Indians but also strengthened the arguments of Indian politicians that Indians should be given a greater say in Indian affairs. The allies, in rallying support for their cause, frequently referred to the war as one being fought to defend the rights of nations and the sanctity of treaties. They spoke, too, of the importance of democracy and of self-determination – the freedom for countries to determine their own affairs. As the Indians listened and assimilated these values, they began to apply them to their own situation back in India.

Question

What is the implication embedded in Mohandas Gandhi's statement?

Source K

[We must give] such humble assistance as we may be considered capable of performing, as an earnest declaration of our desire to share the responsibilities of membership of a great Empire, just as we would share its privileges.

Part of a statement made by a then little-known lawyer, Mohandas Gandhi, in 1914

What was the economic impact of the First World War?

Economics and politics frequently go hand in hand. A prosperous economy tends to make individuals and whole nations more self-confident and more inclined to pursue their objectives in national and international contexts. Similarly, economic problems involving unemployment, crop failures and the like can make people turn on those who govern them and demand change. The outcomes look very similar although the causes are different. Such was the case with India.

Winners and losers

India had poured men and materials into the war effort and in doing so had become a crucial source of supply for the allied cause. By the end of December 1919, some 1.5 million Indians had been recruited into combatant and non-combatant roles, and nearly all of them had been sent overseas – including 184,350 animals.

By the end of the First World War, Indian revenues had contributed over £146 million to the allied war effort. About half of this amount was made up

of war loans, which in 1917 raised £35.5 million and in 1918 a further £38 million. Military expenditure had risen dramatically, too, and revenue demands here were raised by 16% in 1916–17, 14% in 1917–18 and 10% in 1918–19. As a result most ordinary people felt the effects of the war through increased taxation. They were bothered, too, by shortages of fuel and by rising prices. During the war, prices of food grains rose by 93%, of Indian made goods by 60% and imported goods by 190%. These rises were brought about by the disruption war brought to normal trading patterns, exchange rate problems and the demands of the military. The government tried to control prices, but was too often frustrated by profiteers and speculators.

The situation was exacerbated by the failure of the monsoons to arrive in 1918–19 and consequent grain shortages and famine. Life for many was hard, just as it was on the home front in western European countries. Yet the war did benefit some, and not just the speculators and profiteers. Indian manufacturing industries, particularly cotton, iron and steel, sugar, engineering and chemicals, expanded in order to replace goods normally imported. Shareholders saw their dividends rocket. In Bombay, dividends from cloth mills jumped from 6% in 1914 to over 30% in 1917. In Ahmedabad, the cotton manufacturing centre of India, one mill owner reported a trebling of profits.

It was against this background that the Viceroy had to juggle the demands of London for India's resources and the concerns of his district officers at localised distress and disturbances as they watched prices spiralling out of control. In some areas groups of local government officials went on strike and there were serious concerns by some provincial governments that local support for the Raj was crumbling. By 1918 the Viceroy's office in Delhi was receiving regular reports from provincial legislatures of food riots, petty violence and looting. It was fortunate for British rule in India that these outbreaks were sporadic and never coalesced into a general campaign against increased taxation. If it had done, the withdrawal of so many troops to Europe and the departure of hundreds of ICS men and expatriate civilians, would have made the domestic Indian situation very tricky, to say the least. It was hardly surprising that the economic effects of war had political repercussions.

What were the political effects of the First World War?

The political problems posed by the war were infinitely more complicated than attempting to deal with local protests against intolerable localised conditions. Issues were created that could only be dealt with in India because they focused on the nature of Britain's relationship with India and the Indian people. Broad national shifts in the political spectrum had been created that were to present serious challenges to the Raj.

- Indian soldiers had fought alongside white British and colonial forces, strengthening their self-esteem.

- Indian political arguments that the war should be a turning point in Indian/Raj relationships were also strengthened as a consequence.
- Indians were beginning to apply to their own situation the concepts of democracy and freedom for which their European and, later, US allies said they were fighting.

Congress and the Muslim League

As early as 1915, Congress was speaking openly about self-government and about the changes in attitude that the war was bringing.

Source L

Brother delegates, the idea of re-adjustment is in the air, not only here in India but all the world over. The heart of the Empire is set upon it: it is the problem of problems upon which humanity is engaged. What is this war for? Why are these enormous sufferings endured? Because it is a war of re-adjustment, a war that will set right the claims of minor nationalities, uphold and vindicate the sanctify of treaties, proclamations – ours is one – charters and similar ‘scraps of paper’. They are talking about what will happen after the war in Canada, in Australia; they are talking about it from the floor of the House of Commons and in the gatherings of public men and ministers of the state. May we not also talk about it a little from our stand-point? Are we to be charged with embarrassing the government when we follow the examples of illustrious public men, men weighted with a sense of responsibility at least as onerous as that felt by our critics and our candid friends?

Part of a speech made to Congress by Surendranath Banerjea, its president, early in 1915

By 1916, the political situation in India had hardened, largely because the Muslim League and Congress had buried their differences. How had this happened? The annulment of the partition of Bengal had alarmed the Muslim League. Believing this meant that the British would no longer regard them as a separate community deserving of separate electoral treatment, they had tried to find some sort of accommodation with the Hindus. In this they had been successful, helped in no small part by the efforts of the Englishwoman Annie Besant and her All-India Home Rule League, the Muslim leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Hindu extremist, Bal Tilak.

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 was an agreement between Congress and the Muslim League. It was agreed that Muslims would have a fixed proportion of seats in an Indian parliament and extra seats in areas where they were in a minority. Consequently the Muslims believed they had been given assurances by the Hindus that were similar to those obtained earlier from the British government, and felt themselves able to work with the Hindu dominated Congress. In a similar way, the deaths of the moderates Gopale

Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta enabled Congress to find a formula in which the extremist Bal Tilak, could re-enter Congress. It was hardly surprising that one of the first resolutions passed in 1916 by the newly united Congress was to urge the British to *issue a proclamation stating it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date.*

Source M

The 1916 Lucknow Pact, by which Congress and the League agreed a joint programme, would see the League accept Muslim under-representation in Muslim majority areas (like east Bengal) in return for Congress's acceptance of Hindu under-representation in Hindu majority areas (like the United Provinces). Here was precisely the political horse-trading essential to the working of a plural society. Both sides embraced it; so even did an 'extremist' like the lately returned Tilak. At this stage, with one partition having just failed, another was unthinkable; it was eminently avoidable.

From John Keay *A History of India* published in 2000

Source N

The Congress-League pact was emphatically not an agreement between Congress and the whole Muslim community, any more than the foundation of the League had signified the emergence of a unified Muslim community with a single political voice. At the time of the Pact the league probably had between 500 and 800 members, and the Lucknow agreement did not even represent all of them because the negotiations were carried on by a clique led by UP 'Young Party' Muslims.

From Judith M Brown *Modern India: the Origins of an Asian Democracy* published in 1994

The Imperial Legislative Council

The attitude of Congress was reflected in the Viceroy's Imperial Legislative Council.

Source O

I need hardly say that the question of reform is a much larger one now than it was before the war. As Mr Lloyd George [the British Prime Minister] said the other day, the war has changed us very much. It has changed the angle of vision in India as well as in England. I venture to say that the war has put the clock fifty years forward, and I hope that India will achieve in the next few years what she might not have done in fifty years. Some persons are frightened at the use of the term 'Home Rule'; some cannot bear to hear even 'Self-Government on Colonial lines.' But all will have to recognise that the reforms after the war will have to be such as will meet the requirements of India today and of tomorrow, such as will satisfy the aspirations of her people to take their legitimate part in the administration of their own country.

Part of a speech made in 1917 by Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was Congress President in 1909 and 1918, and member of the Imperial Legislative Council 1910–20

SKILLS BUILDER

1 Study sources L and M.

How far do they disagree about the Lucknow Pact of 1916?

2 Study sources K and N

The authors of both sources are anticipating reform of some kind. To what extent are their reasons the same?

Home Rule Leagues

The claims made by Congress and by the Imperial Legislative Council were backed by two totally new and innovative organisations that were set up in 1916: the Home Rule Leagues. Their aim was to stimulate public opinion and organise public pressure for Home Rule for India. One was started by Bal Tilak and operated mainly in western India; the other was founded by Annie Besant and spread throughout the rest of the country. Both organisations used newspapers, rallies, vernacular pamphlets, preachers and songs in an attempt to reach the masses, who hitherto had been disinterested in the doings of Congress, the Muslim League and the Imperial Legislative Council.

It worked. After one year, over 60,000 Indians had joined the Home Rule Leagues. The conventional assemblies were alarmed by the outspoken demands of these Leagues; the British Raj even more so: the two leaders were banned from several provinces, students were forbidden to attend their meetings and Annie Besant, finally, was interned in June 1917.

How would the British government react to these demands for self-government?

Edwin Montagu, Lord Chelmsford and the Government of India act 1919

The British government faced a huge dilemma. They could not ignore the enormous sacrifices made by the Indian people and the steadfast loyalty they had shown to the British Crown. They were aware that the Indian people and their politicians were looking for a reward for this loyalty. They could not ignore, either, their own belief in the rights of people to democracy and self-determination. On the other hand, they faced the spectacle of the overthrow of Tsardom in Russia, seen by many Indian politicians as a sign that a new day was dawning, and to the British establishment as a sign that anarchy was just around the corner.

What was the Montagu Declaration?

In July 1917, Edwin Montagu was made Secretary of State at the India Office. A passionate Liberal, who had worked under John Morley at the India Office before the war, Montagu was clear that a straightforward

Source P

The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as part of the British Empire.

An extract from the Montagu Declaration, 1917

statement of British policy towards India was essential. Working closely with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, the Montagu Declaration was formulated and agreed by the British government.

Britain was now implicitly committed to allowing Indians to govern themselves, but within the context of the British Empire. Although no timescale was given, the Declaration ended by saying that Montagu would visit India to *consider with the Viceroy the views of local governments, and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others.*

Montagu's travels

Edwin Montagu travelled extensively in India between November 1917 and May 1918, listening to all kinds of opinion from all sorts of different people. A keen ornithologist and game hunter, he found much to amaze and delight him in the activities arranged for him by the Indian princes. However, he found little to amaze and delight in what he saw as the 'dead hand' of British administration. Very little, he believed, had changed since the days of Curzon (see pages x-y) where slow and complex bureaucracy could, even after Curzon's administrative reforms, stifle radical ideas and reform. He was very much afraid the Viceroy would succumb to the reactionaries amongst his administration, and was particularly critical of a Colonel O'Dwyer who was adamantly opposed to any more Indian participation in government.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the Government of India Act 1919

The proposals decided upon by Secretary of State Montagu and Viceroy Chelmsford were published in July 1918 and became law as the Government of India Act in December 1919.

- The Viceroy was to be advised by a Council of six civilians (three of whom had to be Indian) and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India. The Viceroy could enforce laws even if the legislative councils rejected them, and he could choose his own officials.
- The provincial and central legislative councils were enlarged.
- The provincial councils were given control over Indian education, agriculture, health, local self-government and public works.

- The British retained control of military matters, foreign affairs, currency, communications and criminal law.
- The franchise was extended, although it was still linked to the amount and type of tax men paid. After 1919, about 10% of the adult male population was enfranchised. All former soldiers were automatically given the vote.
- Provincial legislatures could give the vote to women if they wished to, and some did. Even so, the number of women voters was less than 1% of the provincial adult female population
- There were 'reserved' seats in all provincial legislatures for different religious groups (Sikhs, Muslims, Indian Christians, for example) and special interest groups like landowners and university graduates.

This system was called 'dyarchy' because it divided power in the provinces (albeit unequally) between the Indians and the British.

Question

What were (a) the strengths and (b) the weaknesses, of dyarchy?

How did people react to the Government of India Act?

In many ways the dyarchy system was an extension of the Minto-Morley reforms ten years earlier. Like them, it tried to enlist the co-operation of India's educated middle class in governing India, but it took the Morley-Minto reforms further by shifting more and more decision making from the centre to the provinces, and by involving more Indians in the governing of their own country. There were, however, problems:

- Montagu saw the Act as a welcome further step towards Indian self-government, and so did his horrified critics.
- In the House of Commons, India became a contentious issue. On the right, MPs were convinced the government was losing its nerve and would soon lose India; on the left, there were protests that the reforms hadn't gone far enough.
- The ICS felt its strength and influence were slipping away.
- Many Indians welcomed the Act, even though it didn't offer immediate self-government.
- Many people, British and Indian, hated the idea of 'reserved seats' with specific electorates, considering them divisive and anti-democratic. Indeed, Montagu and Chelmsford themselves disliked the idea but felt themselves bound to respect the Lucknow Pact of 1916.
- Those Indians hoping for Home Rule were bitterly disappointed. As details of the reforms became known, unrest and violence increased, especially in the Punjab.
- The Indian National Congress rejected the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and boycotted the first elections held under the 1919 Act.

The situation in India was exacerbated by the recession that set in when the war ended. There were lay-offs and unemployment as the demand for war materials, particularly textiles, collapsed. Added to this, the Spanish 'flu epidemic that hit Europe in 1919, affected India, too, killing more than

13 million people. In India the situation was exacerbated by a disastrous harvest and subsequent famine after the monsoon failed to arrive. Also the British government was fearful of Bolshevism taking hold in post-war India (the Russian revolutions of 1917 had established a Bolshevik regime there). In this unstable situation there was further unrest, disturbances and riots. The British Raj responded in the only way it knew how – by repression enforced by the Rowlatt Acts.

What were the effects of the Rowlatt Acts?

The effects of the Rowlatt Acts were in a word: disastrous!

What did the Rowlatt commission propose?

As early as 1917 the Indian government, afraid that the situation was slipping away from them, appointed a Mr S A T Rowlatt (a Scottish judge) to *investigate revolutionary conspiracies*. The Rowlatt commission reported in July 1918. It isolated Bengal, Bombay and Punjab as centres of revolutionary activity and recommended that the old wartime controls should be used there to contain the situation. These included imprisonment without trial, trial by judges sitting without a jury, censorship and house arrest of suspects. These proposals were incorporated into the Rowlatt Acts, passed in March 1919, and sanctioned by Montagu with extreme reluctance. He told the Viceroy that they were *extremely repugnant* although he conceded he appreciated the need to stamp out rebellion and riot. However, Viceroy Chelmsford went ahead and the measure was pushed through the Imperial Legislative Council in the face of opposition from every single Indian member. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (see Source P) and several of his colleagues resigned in protest when the Rowlatt Acts were passed.

What damage did the Acts do?

In reality, the new powers were found to be unnecessary and were soon repealed. But the damage had been done. All Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council were opposed to the Rowlatt Acts; the impression was created – loud and clear – that the promises made by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were meaningless. In the end, when the chips were down, it seemed that the British government was prepared to use force to crush Indian opposition. The Acts suggested, furthermore, that the British had no intention of relaxing their grip on India. Thus the Rowlatt Acts alienated a wide range of public opinion in India and came close to wrecking the 1919 Government of India Act.

Unit summary

What have you learned in this unit?

The period 1900–1919 was marked by both change and continuity. The British made concessions to Indian opinion in that they invited Indian participation in the decision-making process by way of the Morley-Minto

Source Q

The fundamental principles of justice have been uprooted and the constitutional rights of the people have been violated, at a time when there is no real danger to the state, by an overfretful and incompetent bureaucracy which is neither responsible to the people nor in touch with real public opinion.

Part of a letter from the Muslim leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, 28 March 1919

reforms and the Indian Councils Act of 1909, the Montagu-Chelmsford report and the Government of India Act of 1919. Yet these concessions can be seen as a way of strengthening the Raj and their control within India as exemplified by the Rowlatt Acts. For Indians, the period saw a growing awareness of their desire for self-government, heightened by their experience of the First World War. Whilst many were satisfied with the concessions made by the British, there was a steady growth of groundswell opinion that Indians should be in complete control of their own affairs.

What skills have you learned in this unit?

You have used your skills of comprehension, inference-making and cross-referencing, to explore the way in which the Indian National Congress was founded and disagreements about its nature and purpose. You have interpreted data regarding the religious composition of the early meetings of Congress and, in analysing a variety of source material and relating this analysis to their appropriate historical context, have begun to understand the basis of what was later to become an insurmountable Hindu-Muslim divide. Finally, your analysis of source material will have led you to an understanding of the complexity of British motives in making concessions to Indian demands for a share in the government of their country.

Exam tips

This is the sort of question you will find appearing on the examination paper as a (b) question.

Read Sources H, O and P.

Do you agree with the view, expressed in Source H, that the concessions made to Indian democracy by 1919 were given simply to shore up the British Raj?

You tackled a (b) style question at the end of Unit 3. Look back at the Exam Tips in Unit 3 (see page xxx). Now is the time to build on and develop those tips. What do you have to do to write a successful answer to a (b) question?

- What is the view expressed in Source H? Read Source H carefully and write the 'view' in the middle of what will be a spider diagram.
- Read Sources O and P carefully. Establish points that support and points that challenge the view and set those as the spider's 'legs', using knowledge to reinforce and challenge.
- Cross-reference between the different 'legs' for similarities and differences.

You are now ready to write up your answer.

Remember to:

- combine the different points into arguments for and against the stated view
- evaluate the conflicting arguments by reference to the quality of the evidence used
- reach a supported judgement.

RESEARCH TOPIC

You will have seen that Indian involvement in the First World War had a profound effect upon Indian thinking about such concepts as freedom, independence and democracy.

Research the Indian contribution in one of the theatres of war, 1914–18.

Research the contribution Indian soldiers made on either the Western Front or in the Middle East during the First World War.

Find out about Sepoy Khudadad Khan VC and how he earned the Victoria Cross.

SAMPLE MATERIAL
NOT YET ENDORSED BY EDEXCEL