The British in India

The Human Legacy,
Chapter 25.1, Pages 741-745
Colonial Empires on the Eve of WW I
Setting the Stage

“The arrival of the British in India was an example of European imperialism, the process of one people ruling or controlling another. By 1700, Spain, Great Britain, France, and Portugal ruled vast territories in the Americas. Europeans had less success, however, in ruling territory in Asia and Africa. While Europeans had built trading posts along those continents’ coasts, they held little territory inland.

By the late 1700s, however, European states began expanding their power in Asia and Africa. Two factors that made this possible were new technologies and the weakening of the great empires of Asia and North Africa.”

~The Human Legacy, page 742.
New Technologies

• **Industrial Revolution**
  - Europeans could mass produce military equipment
  - Better communications
  - Faster transportation

• **Military advantage**
  - Steam-powered gunboats
  - Repeating rifles
  - Machine guns
  - Exploding shells
Weakening Empires

- Mughal Empire
  - Went into decline in 1707
  - Struggles over succession
- Ottoman Empire
  - Weak hold on North Africa
  - Corrupt & inefficient bureaucracy
- Qing Dynasty
  - Major internal rebellions
  - Corrupt & inefficient bureaucracy
The British East India Company

“Early British imperialism in India was not carried out by the government but by a trading company, the British East India Company. Created to control trade between Britain, India, and East Asia, the company soon became embroiled in Indian politics. By 1800 it had come to rule much of India in the name of great Britain.”

~*The Human Legacy*, page 742
The British Take Control

• Decline of Mughal Empire
  – British no longer restricted to coastal cities
  – India breaks up into smaller states

• Smaller independent states
  – British play one ruler off against another
  – India in Chaos
  – East India company seizes control “to restore order”
Changes in India

- British educational system
- English Language
- British laws
  - Banned some Indian customs
- Christian missionaries
- Indian Reactions
  - British trying to destroy Indian culture
  - Eliminating Hinduism
The Sepoy Mutiny 1857

- **Sepoys**
  - Indian soldiers serving in British Armies

- **Cause of Mutiny**
  - Cartridge greased in pork & beef fat
  - End had to be bitten off
  - Offended both Muslims & Hindus

- **Results**
  - Sepoys rise up and seize Delhi
  - Atrocities committed on both sides
  - British Government takes control away from British East India Company in 1858
  - Continued distrust
India as a British Colony

“India was Britain’s most important colony—the “jewel in the crown” of the British Empire. Ruling India gave the British great political and financial rewards, as well as national pride. But for many Indians, British rule was a source of frustration and humiliation. This frustration gave rise to powerful feelings of nationalism.”

~The Human Legacy, page 743.
The Raj

- **Indian Civil Service**
  - Government administration
  - Almost no Indian officials

- **British development of India**
  - Built railroads to carry troops
  - Source of cotton, tea & indigo
  - Market for British goods
  - Destroyed Indian Textile industry
  - Taxes paid for British rule

- **British Prejudice**
  - Lived in segregated communities
  - Believed they were bettering the Indians
  - Believed Indians were incapable of self-government
The Rise of Indian Nationalism

- Indian Elites resent having no say in government
- Indian Nationalism
  - **Ram Mohun Roy** 1820s
    - Advocates freedom of speech & religion
    - Established schools
    - Publishes texts inspiring Indian nationalism
Indian Nationalism Continued

- **Indian National Congress**
  - Founded in 1885
  - English speaking Indians
  - Primarily Hindu
  - Advocate for more representation
  - *Swadeshi* 1905-1908
    - Boycott of British goods
    - Protesting Partitioning of Bengal

- **Muslim League** 1906
  - Muslim leaders fear Hindu power
  - Sought to protect interests of Indian Muslims