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Primary Source 3: Newsreel

Thesis: A newsreel from 1947 produced in the United Kingdom about the partition of India called One Million Refugees on the Move.

After World War II, many countries were trying to find refuge after being liberated from the control of the Soviet Union and communist influence in their country. The country India struggled for independence through non-violent resistance, as figures like Mahatma Gandhi. The Indian National Congress helped mobilize masses who demanded self-rule through various ways such as boycotts, civil disobedience, and mass protests. In 1942, the quiet Indian movement was a representation of how the people of India worshiped their country through resilience and determination in the quest for their freedom, despite the repression of the British authorities (Modern World History, Decolonization). The contribution of the Indian soldiers during both World Wars, and the sacrifice that the soldiers made, allowed the country to know that they were strong enough to liberate themselves from the British Empire. The non-violent protest allowed India's independence to be a diverse strategy in defense of resorting to armed struggle due to entrenched colonial resistance.

Through the images and the audio of the newsreel, you can identify how the lands were filled with rain as the country felt the tension, struggle, and political issues through Mother Nature. Fields were flooded and riverbanks overflowed as the bloodshed went on with the religious, social, and political fighting between India and Pakistan. The hatred between the two countries, under the influence of the violent British Empire, became a communal hatred that flared as independence had not brought them peace (Newsreel 1947, One Million Refugees on the Move). Through these vast horrors, Hindus and Muslims seek safety in new surroundings and a peaceful existence. As they migrated with their possessions from savagery and butchery, one million people became refugees overnight.

This primary source connects to the historical reading of the non-violent struggle for the independence of India as a prime example of how the people of a nation can stand together to protect their lives and their country. The darkest chapter in the British colonial rule of India was the Bengal Famine in 1943. It became a natural disaster compounded by wartime policies and administrative failure (Modern World History, Decolonization). Many died from starvation and disease due to the lack of empathy and urgency shown by the British leaders, including Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The significant contribution of India to the British war effort, including its immense financial and military support, the colonial administrator's negligence, and indifference towards the plight of the Indian populace during the famine underscored the exploitative nature of colonial rule.

References

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