**British Imperialism in India – Further Notes**

**Pletcher, Kenneth. Ed. *The History of India*. New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2011.**

Britain ruled through princes or directly up to 1857. After they had a central administration and a civil service and an army.

**1857 Mutiny/Rebellion**

**Trigger**: British insisted on use of a rifle that required a cartridge covered in pork and beef fat. Since they had to bite it off, Hindus and Muslims were not happy about having to put this into their mouths and refused. The British separated them from the others but other troops came in and rescued them, shooting their British officers and leaving the area. Eventually they got more support. They captured Delhi.

Was it a war of independence? Did it become a popular revolt? People in the countryside were somewhat primed to accept revolt because of British landholding policies.

People were unhappy with British education: had replaced Persian with English language. Elites felt left out.

Traditionalists were unhappy that Britain had interfered with some cultural practices: suttee (widow burning), anti-infanticide, allowing Hindu widows to remarry, presence of Christian missionaries.

Not everyone agreed with the rebels.

Troops were dissatisfied before the rifle issue. Caste differences within the army were strengthened by the British and discipline was low.

**Golden Age of the Raj, 1858-1885**

* 1858 Gov’t of India Act: E. India Company authority transferred to the Crown.
* India Office established in London.
* British viceroys (Governor Generals) lived in India and were assisted by the civil service made up almost entirely of Brits.
* 560 princes existed.
* British had great fear of another mutiny/rebellion.
* British officials were very disconnected from Indians’ lives.
* Executive Council established: had some non-official Indian members.

**Economy Expanding**

* + Largest source of income was land rents, then opium trade, then salt tax (crown monopoly)
  + There was an income tax, import duty, tax on cloth made in India (at the behest of British industry)
  + Railway construction: 200 miles of rr in 1858 to 35 000 miles in 1914
    - A bad thing in that resources could now be more easily exploited by Britain and manufactured items from Britain could be sent throughout India, destroying handcraft trades
    - A good thing: famine relief supplies more easily transported, for Britain they could transport troops more quickly
  + Coal in Bihar, jute, tea, indigo, cotton
* Famines 1865 to 1900 – caused by boom and bust nature of the economy
* Coal in Bihar, jute, tea, indigo, cotton,

**Indian National Congress Established 1885**

* + Educated Indians joined civil service, as lawyers, journalists and educators, somewhat “emulating” westerners
  + Some universities had been founded in 1857 where Indians got a British-style education but also thought they’d get power eventually in gov’t
    - E.g., Surendranath Banerjea – joined civil service but became an anti-gov’t nationalist through *swadeshi* movement (“of our own country”) that urged Indians to boycott products made in Britain
    - Some became professors and social reformers
    - E.g., Bal Ganghadar Tilak - more radical – was a journalist at a radical newspaper (“*Kesari”* = Lion), later had his own party, New Party
      * Sent to prison in 1897 for his writings
      * Again to prison 1908 to 1914 for inciting violence
      * Emphasized Hindu religion and culture
        + Did not go over well with moderate Muslims within the nationalist movement
  + Some former British officials helped found INC
  + Early members were 54 Hindus, 2 Muslims. 1 British delegate.
    - Conducted business in English
    - A lot of lawyers, journalists, businessmen, professors, land owners
      * Initially very concerned with having more Indians involved in Br’s governing of India (civil service)
      * Complained that Britain was draining India of its wealth and resources
    - Became popular pretty quickly
    - British gov’t didn’t think much of INC (which unintentionally led to even more popularity for INC)
  + *Swaraj* (self-rule) became part of their platform in 1906
  + Internal divisions between radicals and moderates

**Partition of Bengal 1905**

* + a large, populous province
  + boundaries redrawn by British resulted in Hindus and Muslims being separated
  + INC saw this as “divide and rule”
  + Millions protested
  + Had national implications: boycotts, home-spinning stimulated
  + Reversed in 1911 – British wanted to make Muslims feel more satisfied with them

**Muslim League**

* Founded 1906
* During Moghul rule (1556-1707) Muslims had had a sense of cultural unity as they were the rulers
* Wanted British gov’t in India to pay more attention to Muslim interests
* At first against the Hindu dominated boycott movement and for the partition of Bengal

**British “Reforms”**

* After 1906 more reform-minded Liberals were elected in Britain and they wanted to make some changes
* More equality for the different races
* Small group of Indians given the vote in India and could serve as representatives on the legislative council
* More membership given on provincial councils
* But the viceroy could still veto the legislative council
* One proposal that failed to pass multiple times was for compulsory education for all children