

Responsibility Information Cards

Lord Mountbatten and the British Government

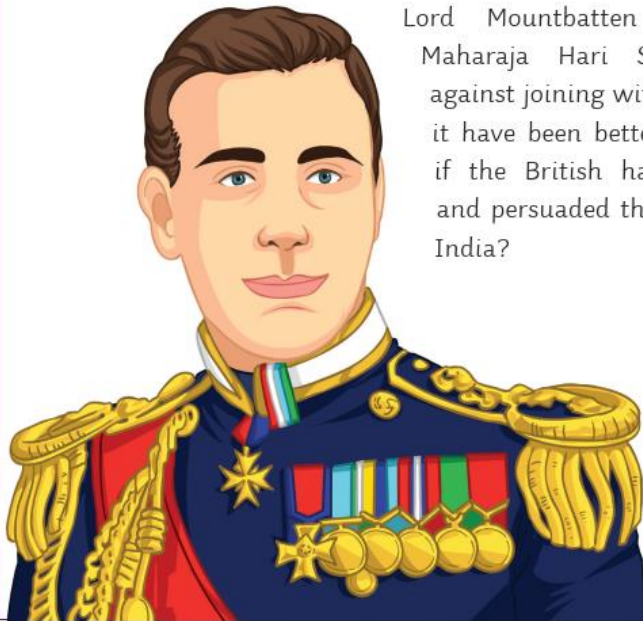
Lord Mountbatten was the Viceroy of India and oversaw planning for independence and partition.

He has been accused of pushing independence forward too quickly and therefore causing a lot of problems.

Originally, independence was supposed to be granted in the summer of 1948, but the British government pushed this forward by a year as they were worried about growing political and ethnic violence across India.

Some people think that since independence was rushed, places like Kashmir did not have time to plan what to do. The new governments of Pakistan and India did not have enough time to work partition out effectively before the countries were split.

Lord Mountbatten also supported Maharaja Hari Singh's resistance against joining with Pakistan. Would it have been better in the long run if the British had not intervened and persuaded the Maharaja to join India?



Responsibility Information Cards

Maharaja Hari Singh

The Maharaja was the ruler of Kashmir before independence, beneath the rule of the British Empire.

He made the decision for Kashmir to remain an independent kingdom rather than becoming part of India or Pakistan.

He was supported by many Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, but these people were in the minority. 77% of Kashmir were Muslims and many, but not all, of these people wished to become part of Pakistan.

By declaring Kashmir independent, some think that the Maharaja turned Kashmir into a region that Pakistan and India could fight over.

Should Maharaja Hari Singh have declared that he would join either Pakistan or India, thereby stopping any arguments?



Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and the Muslim Conference Party

Khan was the leader of the Muslim Conference, a group of Muslims who believed that Kashmir should be aligned with Pakistan.

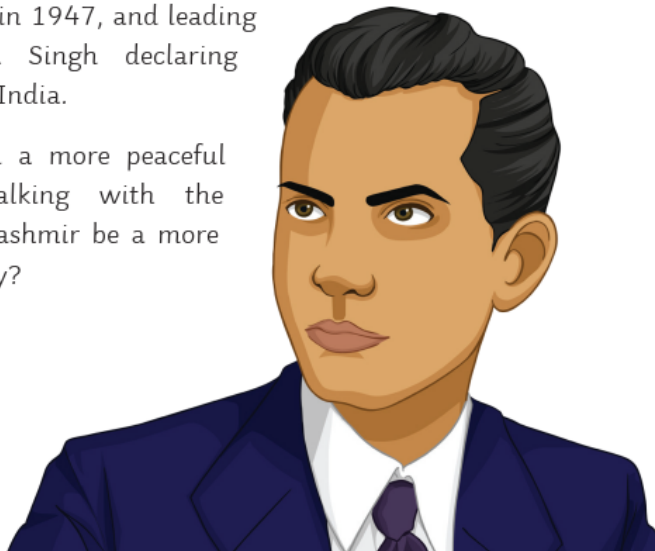
When partition came, Kahn and his party raised Pakistani flags and declared themselves part of Pakistan. It was Khan who led the first guerrilla groups against the government of the Maharaja in an attempt to force him into joining Pakistan.

Khan had many supporters, with 77% of the Kashmiri population being Muslims. He became the Prime Minister for an area of Kashmir in Pakistan known as Azad Kashmir due to his popularity.

Khan is known as the 'Father of the Nation' of Azad Kashmir.

Khan's attacks against the government led directly to Lord Mountbatten sending in the Indian Army, starting the first Indo-Pakistan War in 1947, and leading to Maharaja Hari Singh declaring Kashmir as part of India.

If Khan had taken a more peaceful route, perhaps talking with the Maharaja, would Kashmir be a more peaceful place today?



The United Nations

The United Nations is a world body that was established after the Second World War with the aim of bringing peace to the world.

The UN intervened during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947-8 in Kashmir and helped to bring peace.

They declared that there should be a referendum, or public vote, on whether Kashmir should join Pakistan or India. The UN was largely ignored and this referendum never happened.

Should the UN have used force and threats to ensure that this referendum took place? Could a vote like this have stopped the fighting and arguments?



