



This Week in History

in collaboration with Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous)

Discourses | Trajectories | Forecasts



18 August 2019

Iceland holds a funeral for the Okjokull glacier

17 August 1945

George Orwell publishes the Animal Farm

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Bahrain becomes independent

14 August 1941

The UK Prime Minister and the American President sign the Atlantic Charter

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East Germany begins the construction of the Berlin Wall



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Kristu Jayanti College

AUTONOMOUS Bengaluru

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About This Week in History

TWIH aims to examine major historical developments during the week, and their importance. It also aims to analyse historic events in terms of their consequences/legacies, and their relevance to contemporary global politics, peace and conflict, and other relevant disciplines. We hope this will add value to two of our flagship publications - *Conflict Weekly* and *The World This Week*.

The TWIH is also a network and capacity-building initiative. It aims to build a network of academic institutions/departments teaching history. It also aims to build a network of young faculty and scholars, who will be interested in looking at history through contemporary global politics prism and vice versa.

NIAS Global Politics join the Department of History at the Kristu Jayanti College in this initiative.

About the Department of History, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru

The Department of History, Kristu Jayanti College [Autonomous], was established in 2006 to cultivate the historical learning, critical thinking, and research abilities of the students. The Department offers the latest in curriculum, workshops, training, field visits, projects, and experiential learning activities for the holistic development of students. The Department organises interactive programmes on themes of archaeology, culture and heritage, contemporary history, and global politics.

Editor

D Suba Chandran, Professor & Dean, School of Conflict and Security Studies, NIAS.

Editorial Advisors

Ms Ramya B, Department of History, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru.

Dr Anuradha, Department of History, Loyola College, Chennai.

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This Week in History #07

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CONTENT

18 August 2019: Iceland holds a funeral for the Okjokull glacier
Rianne Rajath P

17 August 1945: George Orwell publishes the Animal Farm
Ankita Chakra

15 August 1971: Bahrain becomes independent
Arya Madhavan S

14 August 1941: The UK Prime Minister and the American President sign the Atlantic Charter
Pummy Lathigara

14 August 2021: Taliban returns to Kabul, following the American withdrawal
Sim V

13 August 1784: The UK Parliament passes the Pitts India Act, bringing India under the direct control of the British rule
Ramya B

13 August 1961: East Germany begins the construction of the Berlin Wall
Ronakk Tijoriwala

18 August 2019:

Iceland holds a funeral for the Okjökull glacier

Rianne Rajath P

Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru

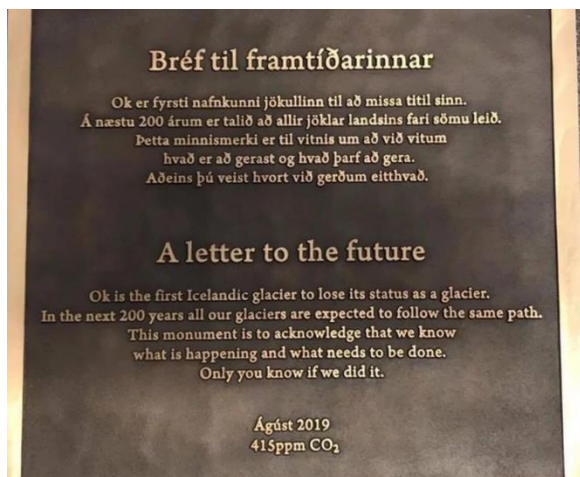


Image Source: BBC

In August 2019, the famous 700-year-old Ok Glacier, formally called Okjökull, located in the northeast of Reykjavík, was publicly removed from the Glacier National Park's official maps. It was commemorated as the first glacier to be lost due to climate change, making it lose its status as an active glacier. It was pronounced dead in 2014 by the glaciologist, Oddur Sigurðsson. This was due to the receding of the glaciers' thickness not meeting the criteria and the significant lessening in their size over the years.

About the Okjökull glacier

The Okjökull glacier reached its peak size nearing the conclusion of the 19th century, spanning an area of sixteen square kilometres. By 1978, it had diminished to merely three square kilometres. In 2014, renowned Icelandic glaciologist Oddur Sigurðsson visited the location and regrettably noted the absence of substantial ice, leading to his declaration of the glacier's demise. In 2019, a formal ceremony was organised to commemorate the loss of the Ok glacier. As a part of this tribute, a memorial plaque was installed, alongside the poignant inscription "A letter to the future." It read:

'Ok is the first Icelandic glacier to lose its status as a glacier.

In the next 200 years, all our glaciers are expected to follow the same path.

This monument is to acknowledge that we know what is happening and what needs to be done.

Only you know if we did it.'

Andri Snaer Magnason, in the author, in an interview with the BBC, she stated, "Climate change doesn't have a beginning or end, and I think the philosophy behind this plaque is to place this warning sign to

remind ourselves that historical events are happening and we should not normalise them. We should put our feet down and say, Okay, this is gone; this is significant." Many expressed their concerns with the diminishing of the glaciers, which could lead to the global sea level rising approximately 230 feet, submerging all the present coastal cities on the earth.

This marked the fight against the depleting ozone layer and its harmful effects. Furthermore, in 2018, "Not Ok," a documentary was made to increase awareness and alertness worldwide regarding the growing climatic changes in the upcoming years. This documentary showed the impact of these changes on a wider scale.

Climate Change and the Glaciers

The unveiling ceremony of the plaque was presided over by researchers from Rice University, in conjunction with Magnason and glaciologist Oddur Sigurðsson. Many, including Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the Prime Minister of Iceland; Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, the Environment Minister; and Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, were present. Cymene Howe, of Rice University, said that "memorials are not for the dead; they are for the living. We want to underscore that it is up to us, the living, to respond to the rapid loss of glaciers and the ongoing impacts of climate change. For Ok Glacier, it is already too late." The commemorative plaque serves as a significant emblem of the consequences of climate change, acting as a cautionary reminder of the far-reaching global effects resulting from ongoing environmental pollution.

Communities worldwide are confronting loss due to climate change, resulting in what experts now term 'ecological grief'. Many have chosen to address this grief like coping with the loss of human life—through ceremonies. For example, over 100 individuals hiked to the glacier and held a ceremony featuring poetry readings and speeches. This meltdown of the glaciers made the UN General Assembly declare 2025 the year of glacial preservation. Iceland is one of the places with a vast majority of glaciers, it has been said that the island can be completely underwater within the next 200 years if the glaciers are diminishing at a rate of about 40 square kilometres annually.

This alarming diminishment of the Ok glacier has aghast and astounded the world and left an impact so alarming by witnessing such a sizable glacier vanish so swiftly, especially when smaller yet equally vital glaciers could also vanish rapidly, posing a significant threat to the world and its ecosystems.

About the author

Rianne Rajath P is an undergraduate student of the Department of Biotechnology and Genetics at Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru.

17 August 1914:

George Orwell publishes the Animal Farm

Ankita Chakra

Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru



Image Source: Linda Secundari (LinkedIN)

On 17 August 1945, George Orwell published the *Animal Farm*, a political fable and a psychological exploration of the human mind. It was not just a novella about farm animals but a profound and unsettling allegory that showcases the complexities of human nature and, with that, the corrupting nature of power.

Born as Eric Arthur Blair Orwell was a British novelist, poet, essayist, journalist, and critic. He wrote under the pen name George Orwell, a name inspired by his favourite place, the River Orwell. Orwell, was born in Motihari, Bengal, India, under British rule. His early childhood experiences of being ruled over and class struggles deeply impacted him. At the beginning of his life, he was initially a part of the British Council, serving as a colonial officer in Burma. This experience of being an officer made him question and criticise imperialism. He resigned from the council and started his journey as a writer. He has begun to question the corruption of power in society. The

foundation of the animal farm was set in his mind when he joined the Spanish Civil War; he developed a hatred for authoritarianism and propaganda.

The Making of Animal Farm

On the surface, it is about a group of farm animals overthrowing their human owner, Mr Jones, and hoping to establish an egalitarian society where every animal is equal and important. However, the pigs on the farm, led by Napoleon, gradually seize power, and the idea of an egalitarian society gets corrupted. The pigs then re-establish the human they overthrew, giving a chilling proclamation: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

It is a satirical allegory of the Russian revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin. Due to its political views, the book got banned, but the controversy only highlighted it more. Orwell's determination to question the truth

solidified his reputation as a writer. As it is rightly said, the truth will be the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it is.

Orwell also touches on human psychology. He understood that the power struggle is a fundamental aspect of human nature. He showcased this aspect of human nature in the various characters of his novella who struggle to gain control. This novella is a dark reminder of how easily power struggles can lead to tyranny. Through Napoleon's character, Orwell showcased the corrupting influence of power; the leaders contradicted the ideals they claimed after gaining power. The other animals on the farm represent various sections of society and particular groups of people. The hard-working horse represents the exploited working class, whose blind trust in societal propaganda leads to its downfall. The sheep represent the group of people who mindlessly agree on all things; these people are easily manipulated by the people in power. By studying the characters, one can clearly see the darker aspects of human psychology: the capacity to be both submissive and cruel, the willingness to be both deceived and also the deceiver.

The Animal Farm Today

Animal Farm is not just a text in literature but a timeless exploration of human psychology. The

novella's characters embody a variety of timeless and universally pertinent human characteristics, including ambition, greed, and betrayal. Orwell included themes of power, corruption, politics, and human nature, and he wrote the novella in a very simple structure, making it relatable to all readers of different ages. Through this novella, Orwell showed us the power of literature to critically examine and also to voice out our opinions, challenging societal norms.

The answer is a definite yes; Orwell's willingness to speak his opinions challenges privileged ones, who are utilising their powers to satisfy their needs. In a world where the manipulation of truth and the disappearance of principles are pressing concerns, Orwell's Animal Farm serves as both a warning and a call for action. It acts as a mirror that reflects the faults residing in society, human strengths, and vulnerabilities. It might be a work that is surrounded by many controversies, but it definitely demands to be acknowledged, discussed, and definitely read.

About the author

Ankita Chakra is a postgraduate student of the Department of English at Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru.

15 August 1971:

Bahrain becomes independent

Arya Madhavan S

Pondicherry University



Image Source: Britannica

On 15 August 1971 Bahrain became independent from British colonial rule.

By the nineteenth century, Bahrain had been a focus of attention for European countries, notably the British Empire. The British wanted to secure

their maritime trade routes and safeguard their interests in the region. Bahrain signed a pact with the British in 1820, thus establishing its position as a British protectorate. Under this system, Bahrain's rulers retained domestic authority while the

British handled the island's defence and external affairs

The Road to Independence

The mid-twentieth century saw major political transformation in the Middle East and North Africa. The decolonisation wave, which witnessed the rise of newly sovereign governments from former European colonies, had a dramatic influence on Bahrain. Bahrain's path to independence was largely shaped by the interplay of local activism, regional dynamics, and British colonial policy. However, some significant organisations and activities helped to fuel the independence struggle. The National Union Committee, founded in 1954, was one of Bahrain's early political groups, uniting many parts of Bahraini society, including Sunnis, Shias, and secular nationalists. The NUC was instrumental in organising rallies and strikes in opposition to British colonial control, as well as campaigning for political change, more autonomy, and the development of representative government.

During the 1950s and 1960s, trade unions and workers' organisations emerged to advocate for labour rights and political changes. These unions frequently supported nationalist ideas and helped organise strikes and protests calling for an end to British dominance and the formation of an independent government. The PFLB (Popular Front for the Liberation of Bahrain) emerged in the late 1960s, motivated by Arab nationalist and Marxist ideals, with the goal of challenging British authority and advocating for Bahrain's ultimate independence. Although the PFLB became more active after Bahrain's independence, its origins and actions were part of a larger nationalist and anti-colonial movement that contributed to the independence war. The larger Pan-Arab nationalist movements, led by figures such as Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, had a considerable impact on Bahrain's independence campaign. These movements promoted Arab identity and togetherness, rejecting colonialism and striving for independence throughout the Arab world. Religious leaders, notably those from the Shia minority, also advocated for increased autonomy and political reforms.

In Bahrain, negotiations between the British government and the ruling Al Khalifa family intensified in the 1960s. The United Nations also played a significant role, sending a fact-finding team to Bahrain in 1970 to determine the Bahraini people's views. The expedition confirmed that the vast majority of Bahrainis preferred independence above any option, including union with Iran, which claimed the island. Following these conversations and international pressure, the British government decided to surrender jurisdiction of Bahrain.

Sheikh Isa, Bahrain's Emir at the time of independence, played an important part in negotiating the terms of the country's independence from Britain. He reconciled the demands of nationalist organisations with the necessity to preserve peace and obtain international recognition for Bahrain's sovereignty. Thus Bahrain proclaimed independence on August 15, 1971, and Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa became the country's first Emir.

Bahrain after Independence

Bahrain's politics has changed dramatically since independence. As the country handled the difficulties of government and foreign relations, it experienced both development and setbacks. Bahrain became a constitutional monarchy in 2002 after adopting a new constitution that contained provisions for a bicameral legislature. This action was part of a larger initiative to implement political reforms and increase citizen engagement in governance.

However, Bahrain has encountered considerable obstacles, notably in the areas of human rights and political freedom. The country has had moments of upheaval and protest, with calls for more political representation and change. These concerns have attracted worldwide attention, prompting calls for more political and social changes.

In recent years, Bahrain has pursued its agenda of economic diversification and modernisation. Major infrastructure projects, such as the expansion of Bahrain International Airport and the creation of new metropolitan areas like Bahrain Bay, have been critical components of the country's growth plan.

Bahrain has also taken an active role in regional diplomacy and security. Bahrain, as a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), has played an active role in attempts to maintain Gulf regional stability. The country has also developed strong relations with key global powers, like the United States, with which it has a longstanding security alliance.

Bahrain achieved independence on August 15, 1971, marking a watershed moment in the country's history. It marked the end of colonialism and the start of a new age of sovereignty and self-determination. Since that day, Bahrain has achieved amazing development in a variety of areas, converting itself into a modern, vibrant state with a strong economy and a significant position in the region. As Bahrain continues to grow and adapt to the difficulties of the twenty-first century, the country's independence past remains a source of pride and inspiration for its citizens.

About the author

Arya Madhavan S is a Postgraduate student of the Department of Political Science and International Studies at Pondicherry University

14 August 1941:

The UK Prime Minister and the American President sign the Atlantic Charter

Pummy Lathigara

Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Gujarat



Image Source: Wall Street Journal

On 14 August 1941, during World War II, following the four-day Atlantic Conference, the British Prime Minister and the American President issued a joint declaration called 'Atlantic Charter.' The document enunciated a vision of the post-war democratic, liberal world order and it served as an inspiration for the several future agreements to ensure peace, security and free trade.

Towards the Charter

The Charter emerged in a desperate context of the Second World War. As the Nazi Germany swiftly overran Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg and France till 1940, Great Britain was left without any allies to counter the influence of Hitler on the continent. Hitler's Blitzkrieg tactics and the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940 left the Great Britain inefficient against the Nazi Germany. Meanwhile, in the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was running for his third term, upheld the "isolationist policy", according to which he promised to his countrymen that the Americans would not entangle themselves in the "European War."

In the fall of 1940, as the Great Britain was in financial distress, PM Winston Churchill wrote a letter to the US President Roosevelt, pleading for American assistance as the fall of the UK to the Nazi Germany would not be in the interest of the USA. In March 1941, Roosevelt responded with his 'Lend-Lease Proposal', according to which, as an arsenal of Democracy, United States assured material assistance to the Great Britain. By May 1941, the German forces had caused humiliating defeats on

the British, Greek and Yugoslav forces in the Balkans and were threatening to seize Egypt, thereby blocking British access to the Suez Canal. It would result in Great Britain losing contact with India. Meanwhile, Britain was also mindful about the possibility that the Japanese forces, taking advantage of the situation might seize the British, French and Dutch territories in Southeast Asia. One of the closest aides of President Roosevelt, Harry Hopkins was of the opinion that the nation must provide more assistance to the Great Britain rather than just material assistance. Hence, he persuaded Roosevelt and Churchill for a meeting, which led to the Atlantic Conference in August 1941, held in utmost secrecy, as Churchill passed through the waters where German U-boats patrolled.

The Atlantic Charter

The Atlantic Conference was held aboard naval ships in Placentia Bay, off the coast of Newfoundland on the east coast of Canada. The leaders met during 9-12 August 1941 to discuss their war policies for the Second World War and outline an international system. This was for the first time that the leaders were meeting as their respective heads of governments. The 'Atlantic Charter' was a joint statement by Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of UK and Franklin D Roosevelt, the US President as an outcome of the Atlantic Conference. The charter they drafted included eight common principles to guide the policies of both the nations during the war. Those principles and values laid the foundation of the post-war world order.

First principle was that both the countries agreed to no aggrandizement, of territorial or of any other form. Second, they desired no territorial changes which were against the freely expressed wishes of the people of the territories concerned. Third, they upheld the value of self-determination of all the peoples to choose the form of government. It upheld the sovereign rights and right to self-government of those who had been forcibly deprived of the same. Fourth, they would ensure to all the states, great or small, victor or vanquished, equal access to trade and raw materials. Fifth, they would ensure fullest economic collaboration between all the nations to secure social security, economic prosperity and improved labour conditions.

The sixth clause articulated the principle of security. The nations hoped to establish peace after the final destruction of Nazi Germany, which would afford to all the nations safety within their boundaries and assurance to humanity of the freedom from fear and want. Seventh, they agreed to the freedom of the seas. Eighth, they emphasised on disarmament and establishment of a permanent system of general security. The core of the principles was Franklin Roosevelt's Wilsonian vision of the post-war world. At the centre of these principles was the idea of Roosevelt's Four Freedoms- the freedom of speech, the freedom of worship, the freedom from wants and the freedom from fear.

However, the meeting failed to produce the desired results for either of the leaders. Churchill's primary goal was American intervention in the war or to increase the American military aid to Great Britain. However, Roosevelt maintained the neutral stance of US in the war as the public opinion opposed American entanglement into the war, until the Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbour in December 1941. Churchill was also alarmed by the third point of the Charter which ensured right of self-government to people, which was against the Imperialist policies of Great Britain in its colonies. However, the Charter ensured closer ties between

Great Britain and USA, even as US remained neutral.

After the Charter

Although the Charter was not a binding treaty, it was significant for several reasons, as it laid the foundation of several post-war agreements and institutions. Firstly, the Charter served as an inspiration for the third world countries as they fought for independence, which led to decolonisation and dismantling of the British Empire. Second, it formally affirmed the British-American solidarity against the aggression of the Axis Powers.

Third, it influenced the establishment of several institutions to ensure collective security. The sixth clause of the Charter led to the creation of the United Nations system as twenty-six countries signed the Declaration by United Nations in January 1942. The seventh clause was legalised in the form of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). The fourth clause of the Charter laid the foundation of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) to ensure equal opportunity to trade. The eighth clause of the charter to ensure 'general security' led to the formation of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. The charter can be identified as a blueprint for multilateral institutional framework, which led to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the European Union and the Climate Change framework.

Although the Atlantic Charter had little legalistic validity, its affirmation of cooperation highlighted a new hope and faith in peace during wartime. In the words of historian Elizabeth Borgwardt, the Atlantic Charter "prefigured the rule-of-law orientation of the Nuremberg Charter, the collective security of the United Nations Charter, and even the free-trade ideology of the Bretton Woods system."

About the author

Pummy Lathigara is a postgraduate student of the Department of Social Sciences, at Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Gujarat.

Taliban returns to Kabul, following the American withdrawal

Sim V

St Joseph's University, Bengaluru



Image Source: Britannica

On 14 August 2021, the Taliban marched into Kabul and took control of Afghanistan. Mohammed Ashraf Ghani, the President of Afghanistan fled the country following the capture of Kabul by the Islamist militant group. Later that day, Taliban announced that they had entered The Arg, Presidential Palace capturing Kabul. The withdrawal of American soldiers from the region led to the downfall of the government and the return of Taliban.

From Doha Agreement to the Fall of Kabul

The United States of America and the Taliban signed a peace deal called the Doha Agreement, that provided withdrawal of troops from the region with the condition of Taliban to engage into peaceful negotiations with the Afghan government. Direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began months after the agreement was signed, however negotiations failed. Thus the longest war on terrorism came to an end on 30 August 2021, when the last group of American forces evacuated. This move generated diverse opinions, the Biden Administration believes that the Americans had trained and equipped the Afghan military. They gave them every chance to determine their future but the Afghanistan political leader gave up and fled the country. The Afghan military collapsed without trying to fight. However, some believe that this was a policy failure as the Americans calculated the risk and still choose to withdraw.

The agreement signed on 29 February 2020, between the U.S. and the Taliban outlined a plan for the US troops to withdraw all troops within fourteen months. NATO and coalition forces would also decrease their numbers. The Taliban committed to preventing any group, including al-Qaeda, from using Afghan soil to threaten the U.S. and its allies.

However, there are significant challenges with the deal. It excluded the Afghan government, which the Taliban does not recognize as legitimate, and it made no reference to the Afghan Constitution, rule of law, democracy, or elections.

The Afghan government failed to recognise that the United States would indeed leave. Even as the United States officially expressed its desire to exit from Afghanistan, the Afghan officials hoped for an alternative scenario. As a result, the Afghan government was not prepared to manage fights with the Taliban. The primary objective of the United States before leaving was to ensure a political stability in the region that would bring peace. However, the exclusion of the Afghan government from the US-Taliban talks was an obstacle to achieving this goal. The Taliban were unwilling to compromise. The issue of the release of prisoners was a major obstacle. While the U.S.-Taliban deal called for prisoner releases, it did not name individuals. The Taliban, however, insisted on a named list. The Afghan government was hesitant to release all 5,000 prisoners at once, fearing it could destabilize security. As a goodwill gesture, Ghani released an initial batch of 1,500 prisoners but also asked for a written promise from each prisoner that they would not return to the battlefield. The Intra-Afghan peace talks criticized, Ghani for repeatedly stalling and undermining the peace process to retain power.

The pace at which the Taliban took over Kabul shocked the international community. In May, American troops had started pulling out. The Taliban announced the capture of Islam Khala and later the insurgents took control of the Spin Boulder an important trade route between Pakistan and Afghanistan. By July the American abandoned Bagram air base, the main hub for military operations. Within a week Taliban had taken Afghanistan's second and third largest cities, Kandahar and Herat. They kept moving towards the

capital once they took the city of Jalalabad and surrounded Kabul. By evening that day, the Taliban were inside the Arg taking full control of the country. According to the United Nations, close to 2400 Afghan civilians were killed or wounded in violence against the Taliban.

Afghanistan under the Taliban

Russia and China have been engaging with the Taliban to safeguard their interest in the region. They believe that engaging with the Taliban is a practical approach, the availability of natural resources and trade route have brought the countries to recognize Taliban. Therefore, by legitimizing the Taliban, they aim to gain a foothold and influence Afghanistan's future.

Afghanistan is twenty years behind the time, there is no constitution and everything is based on laws interpreted by the Taliban. Afghanistan's future depends on mutual engagement between the Taliban and the international community, a senior United Nations official told the Security Council.

For the last four decades, Afghanistan has been in a state of war. Even during the time of relative peace, no government had been able to fully control the entire Afghan territory, only an inclusive government will hold the key to a stable and secure future for Afghanistan.

About the author

Sim V is an undergraduate student of the Department of International Relations, Peace and Public Policy at St Joseph's University.

13 August 1784:

The UK Parliament passes the Pitts India Act, bringing India under the direct control of the British rule

Ramya B

Kristu Jayanti College, Autonomous, Bengaluru



Image Source: National Army Museum, UK

On 13 August 1784, the East India Company Act, named after William Pitt the Younger, Britain's Prime Minister, was passed, to remove the shortcomings of the Regulating Act of 1773 and take control of the East India Company and Indian administration.

The Pitt's India Act of 1784 was a significant enactment by the British Parliament aimed at exerting more authority over the operations of the British East India Company in India and placing India's governance directly under the British government's oversight. The official title of the Pitt's India Act was "*An Act for the better Regulation and Management of the Affairs of the East India Company and of the British Possessions in India, and for establishing a Court of Judicature for the more speedy and effectual trial of persons accused of offences committed in the East Indies.*"

Events leading to the Act

During the mid-18th century, the British East India Company had established itself as a prevailing power in India, exerting control over large

territory and amassing substantial wealth. There were several complaints of maladministration and corruption against Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of Bengal (1777–1785). The increasing influence of an economic entity as an autonomous authority with quasi-sovereign powers raised geopolitical and strategic concerns. The company's fear of mishandling Indian affairs and undermining its position in India may make it susceptible to threats from competing nations.

Despite its wealth, the East India Company had financial instability, mostly due to war expenses, and the administration sought financial assistance from the British government. The British government possessed a strategic and enduring goal to extend and safeguard its empire in Asia. The British attempted to establish control with the Regulating Act of 1773, but it proved insufficient. The British government sought to exert dominance to stabilise and enhance its authority in India, paving the way for the foundation of the British Raj.

About the Act and Responses

The Act established a dual control system, enabling two distinct entities to govern the company's territory in India. The British government and the East India Company divided the responsibility equally. The East India Company retained authority over its commercial operations and personnel selection in India, but the Board of Control possessed ultimate decision-making power in all aspects of government. For the first time in India, the territory of the company was referred to as the "British possession of India." Calcutta effectively became the capital of British India. Madras and Bombay presidencies came to be subordinate to the Bengal Presidency. The British Government took complete authority over the Company's administration in India.

The Pitt's India Act of 1784 exerted a significant impact on the British governance of India. However, Indian ruling families such as the Marathas, Mysore, and the Nizam of Hyderabad did not face the immediate consequences of the Act, nor were there any notable responses. The implementation of Pitt's India Act resulted in improved British rule and caused regional powers to feel the mounting pressure of British expansionism. Over time, the growing effectiveness and power of the British administration became a more significant challenge to their independence. The majority of the Indian population, including the elites, had limited awareness of the Pitt's India Act and its consequences.

The Pitt's India Act, through its formalisation of British control, indirectly facilitated the growth of Indian political awareness, leading to the emergence of intellectuals and nationalists. Nevertheless, in 1784, the nationalist movement was still in its early stages, and there was no coordinated response to the Act.

The legacy of the Pitts India Act

The Act established dual administration between the British government and the East India Company. This separation of powers between political and commercial activities provides an understanding of the importance of clear governance structures. The company established a Board of Control to oversee its affairs in India, ensuring accountability and transparency in governance. The Act centralised administrative power by making the Governor-General of Bengal the supreme authority over other presidencies (Madras and Bombay). The act mandated that all civil and military officers must disclose their property details to ensure integrity and reduce corruption in public offices.

On the other hand, the Act created a dual system of control between the British government and the East India Company, leading to confusion and inefficiency. The Act aimed to improve oversight but failed to establish a robust mechanism to monitor and control the company's activities. The Act did not consider the interests and welfare of the local Indian population, and it failed to address the growing financial crisis and mismanagement within the company, as well as the costs of war in India. Pitt's India Act set a precedent for future legislative reforms, including the Government of India Act 1858, which eventually led to the establishment of British Crown rule in India. The British government's direct involvement in Indian affairs led to a gradual realization among Indians of the true nature of British imperialism.

About the author

Ms Ramya B is the coordinator of the Department of History, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru

East Germany begins the construction of the Berlin Wall

Ronakk Tijoriwala

Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Gujarat



Image Source: The Independent

On 13 August 1961, the Communist Party of the German Democratic Republic, Eastern Germany announced building a 100-mile-long barbed wire wall dividing the city of Berlin into two factions.

The post-war period 1945-1961 is reckoned as one of the most troubled eras in Germany's history and signified radical transformation that led to the building of the Berlin Wall. The Wall construction not only affected the people of Berlin but even classified the whole of Germany and the entirety of the world into 'the east' and 'the west'. It was in this period that the important foreign partnerships such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union intended at preserving peace and order in a world that was fast polarizing were initiated.

Towards the Wall (1945- 1949)

Beginning of the division of Germany can be dated back to the end of the Second World War in the year 1945. The Allied force conferences at Yalta and Potsdam determined the fate of German territories. They split the defeated nation into four "allied occupation zones": The eastern part of the country went to the Soviet Union, while the western part went to the United States, Great Britain and France. Berlin, the capital, was divided in the same way though it was located wholly in the Soviet sphere of influence. This division was considered as a temporary measure but for technological advancements in armaments, security issues with it and the ideological differences between the western allied and Soviets the division became more or less permanent.

Western zones, the pursuers of the democratic paradigm, start reconstructing Germany into a capitalist democracy giving way to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1949. On the other hand, the Soviet controlled zone was known as the German Democratic Republic or East Germany, which was a socialist country being a part of the Eastern Bloc. The division of

Germany became the focus of Cold War rivalries and the city of Berlin, an 'island' of freedom surrounded by East Germany, particularly so.

The Construction and after

Tensions between East and West Germany rose during the course of the fifties. Socio-economically the two Germans were poles apart; the first (West) ranked economically far higher than second (East). The Marshall Plan, 1948 and the adoptions of free-market economy provided West Germany economic prosperity and increased standards of living and labelled as 'Economic Miracle'. At the same time the citizens of East Germany waited in long lines to buy daily necessities, goods they could get in their centrally planned economy which was most unsatisfactory.

Consequently, many millions of East Germans defected to West, a mass exodus, many of them crossing through Berlin. Emigration of educated people who were the pillars of each country's economy was a major loss and embarrassment for the GDR and the Soviet Union. Thus, by the early 1960, on the orders of Nikita Khrushchev, the decision of constructing a permanent deterrent against further brain drain was taken. East Germany had all but collapsed and that is why the Soviet leadership had to intervene.

Since the night of August 13, 1961, East German soldiers began building a barrier that, with time, developed into the Berlin Wall. Families were separated in a single night; interconnected Berlin was split into two hostile communities. The Wall had evolved into the greatest symbol of the Cold War becoming the concrete version of the dividing Iron Curtain in Europe.

The Berlin Wall affected the German people deeply it alienated families, and people got up one morning to find their relatives on another side of the wall among the enemy. Many citizens of East Germany tried to cross the wall and emigrate to

the West; many perished in the process. The Wall for the people of East Berlin was an everyday living portrayal of the fact that they indeed lived in a country that deprived them of their freedoms as they democratically elected the GDR a socialist/communist regime. To the residents of West Berlin the concrete represented their freedom but they were always in a state of alert for the Soviets.

The Wall's construction also ensured that Germany was divided into two different nations, and only in 1989, was the Wall broken down. All the while West Germany progressively grew strong, East Germany lived in relative poverty and isolation. Influence on mental state of East and West German separated by Wall was significant and caused hatred and animosity that can still be seen in the population after many years.

The Berlin Wall and International alliances

The construction of the Berlin Wall added that there was a need to forge stronger leagues that could help prevent the spread of communism and protect the free world nations. NATO was formerly formed in 1949 to take control in the defence of Western Europe and also assumed the responsibility of defending West Germany. Thus, the Wall's erection underlined the role of NATO as the bulwark against the Soviet aggression and the guardian of the western civilisation. Likewise, the forerunner of the European Union –

the European Economic Community (EEC), established in 1957, became important for the development of economic cooperation and integration of the Western European countries. The division of Germany therefore gave further reasons for a union Europe to avoid further repetitions and to also equally wet the balance of power or the Eastern Bloc.

The years between 1945 and 1961 may be considered as the key ones in the formation of the post-war Germany and the world. The formation of the Berlin Wall brought out the climax of the Cold war, bringing out the clear divisions between the East and the West. As is evident, the Wall influenced the lives of the German population in the ultimate way of re-establishing the division of East and West Germany for nearly three decades. Furthermore, the dynamics that culminated in the erection of the Berlin wall only proved that the ideas of cooperation in the form of NATO/ EU were crucial in ensuring world peace, security and cooperation in a world that was divided into two.

About the Author

Ronakk Tijoriwala is a postgraduate student of the Department of International Relations at Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Gujarat.

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This Week in History #06 | Vol 01, No 06 | 09 August 2024



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An International Journal of History, Politics, Culture, and Society

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This Week in History #06 | Vol 01, No 06 | 09 August 2024



National Institute of Advanced Studies
This Week in History
An International Journal of History, Politics, Culture, and Society

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The Ascendance of Lukashenko to Presidency of Belarus

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The 1848 Women's Rights Convention

18 July 1926
Hitler publishes 'Mein Kampf'

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Apollo launches from Kennedy Space Centre

16 July 1979
Saddam Hussein becomes the President of Iraq

This Week in History #05-04 | Vol 01, Nos 03 & 04 | 25 July 2024



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01 July 1968: US, Soviet Union, UK and 40 countries signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty

01 July 2002: The Rome Statute establishes the International Criminal Court

05 July 1962: Algeria declares its independence, ending 132 years of French occupation

05 July 1962: The Algerian War comes to an end

05 July 1996: Dolly becomes the first mammal to be cloned

07 July 1978: Solomon Islands gains independence from British rule

