



BACKGROUND GUIDE

# PARLIAMENT OF UNITED KINGDOM

SNAMUN'24

*AGENDA: "DISCUSSING THE FUTURE COURSE OF  
ACTION FOR BRITISH INDIA 1947"*

# LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD

**It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you to SNA MUN 2024.**

**The following Background Guide has been formulated keeping in mind various aspects of the agenda to be discussed in committee. Though this Background Guide lists out the broad facets of the agenda that we would like to see being debated upon in committee, let us highlight the fact that this piece of document is NOT exhaustive and that further reading on part of the delegates is essential in order to steer the debate in the right direction. Also, not under any circumstances can the Background Guide be quoted or used as substantial proof in committee sessions. Delegates are expected to build their research upon the topics highlighted in the following pages, though further research would also be appreciated.**

**We are most looking forward to seeing what you, members of the committee, can bring to the table, both in terms of your ideas in debate and your creativity in crafting Please send your position papers to the email ID mentioned.**

**Regards,  
Executive Board  
anhadpratap.s@gmail.com**

# PARLIAMENT OF UNITED KINGDOM



## *Agenda:*

“Discussing the future course of action for  
British India 1947”

# OVERVIEW OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

The year 1947 was a pivotal moment in the history of the United Kingdom. Emerging from the crucible of World War II, the nation was grappling with the immense task of rebuilding its economy, society, and infrastructure. The Parliament of the United Kingdom, as the supreme legislative body, played a central role in this process.

The immediate post-war period was marked by a sense of national unity and purpose. The Conservative Party, led by Winston Churchill, had been defeated in the 1945 general election by the Labour Party, led by Clement Attlee. Labour's victory reflected the public's desire for radical social and economic change.

The Parliament of 1947 was dominated by the Labour Party, which held a substantial majority. This allowed the government to implement its ambitious program of nationalization and social reform. Key industries such as coal, railways, and electricity were brought into public ownership. The National Health Service (NHS), a cornerstone of the modern welfare state, was established, providing free healthcare for all citizens.

The Parliament was also preoccupied with the challenges of demobilization. Millions of servicemen and women were returning to civilian life, and the government had to address issues such as unemployment, housing shortages, and education. The Education Act of 1944, passed before the end of the war, was being implemented, raising the school-leaving age and expanding opportunities for higher education.

However, the shadow of empire loomed large over the parliamentary agenda. The year 1947 marked the beginning of the end of British colonial rule in India. The Indian Independence Act, which partitioned India into India and Pakistan, was a complex and controversial piece of legislation that required careful negotiation and parliamentary approval. The Act represented a profound shift in Britain's global role, marking the decline of empire and the emergence of a new geopolitical order.

Domestically, the government faced economic challenges, including rationing and shortages of essential goods. The austerity measures imposed during the war continued to be felt, and there was growing public discontent with the pace of reconstruction. The Parliament was tasked with balancing the need for economic recovery with the demands for social justice.

In addition to these major issues, Parliament also dealt with a wide range of other legislation, including reforms in housing, agriculture, and social security. The Parliament building itself, the Palace of Westminster, had suffered damage during the war and was undergoing repairs.

The Parliament of 1947 was a microcosm of the nation it represented. It was a time of both hope and challenge, as the UK sought to rebuild itself and redefine its place in the world. The decisions made by Parliament during this period would shape the country's trajectory for decades to come.

It is important to note that while the Parliament of 1947 was dominated by the Labour Party, there was a vibrant opposition from the Conservative Party. The Conservatives offered a different vision for the country's future, emphasizing free enterprise and individual responsibility. The clashes between the two parties provided a dynamic and often contentious atmosphere within the parliamentary chamber.

However, the echoes of the past continued to reverberate. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, a horrific event where British troops fired upon a peaceful crowd in Amritsar, India, had left a deep scar on the Indian psyche. The impending independence of India brought this dark chapter of colonial history into sharp focus, forcing the British Parliament to confront the legacy of imperial brutality.

Overall, the Parliament of 1947 was a complex and multifaceted institution. It was a time of great change and upheaval, as the UK sought to emerge from the shadow of war and build a new society. The weight of the past, particularly the atrocities committed in India, added a layer of complexity to the challenges faced by the Parliament.

The Cripps Mission was a significant yet ultimately unsuccessful attempt by the British government to secure India's cooperation in the Second World War. Dispatched in March 1942, the mission was headed by Sir Stafford Cripps, a prominent member of the British War Cabinet. The backdrop to the mission was a deteriorating situation in Southeast Asia, with the Japanese advancing rapidly, and a growing sense of urgency in London to enlist India's support.

The central proposal of the Cripps Mission was to offer India dominion status after the war. This meant self-governance within the British Commonwealth, akin to Canada and Australia. Cripps also proposed the formation of a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution for India. However, the offer was fraught with conditions and ambiguities that proved to be major stumbling blocks.

The Indian National Congress, led by Mahatma Gandhi, rejected the proposal outright. Their primary objections were twofold. First, the offer of dominion status was contingent upon India's full cooperation in the war effort. Second, the proposed Constituent Assembly would not have the power to decide on the constitutional status of princely states, a major issue given their significant territorial expanse.

**The Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, also expressed dissatisfaction. While they welcomed the prospect of a Constituent Assembly, they insisted on a separate Muslim state, Pakistan. This demand was non-negotiable for the League, and it further complicated the already complex situation.**

**Ultimately, the Cripps Mission failed to bridge the divide between the British and Indian leadership. The offer was perceived as inadequate and insincere by many Indians, fueling the growing nationalist sentiment. The mission's failure exacerbated tensions between the British and Indians and brought India closer to independence. It also highlighted the deep-rooted divisions between the Congress and the Muslim League, which would have far-reaching consequences for the subcontinent.**

**The Cripps Mission stands as a crucial turning point in the history of India's struggle for independence. Its failure accelerated the momentum for self-rule and paved the way for the eventual partition of India in 1947.**

# TIMELINE

## **Timeline: British Parliament and India (1939-1947)**

### **1919**

**-April 13: The Jallianwala Bagh massacre occurs in Amritsar, India. British troops, under the command of General Reginald Dyer, fire on a peaceful gathering, killing hundreds of unarmed civilians. This event significantly impacts the Indian independence movement and increases opposition to British rule.**

### **1939**

- September 1: Germany invades Poland, prompting Britain and France to declare war on Germany, marking the start of World War II.**
- September 3: Neville Chamberlain, then Prime Minister of Britain, announces the declaration of war on Germany.**

### **1940**

- May 10: Winston Churchill becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom following the resignation of Neville Chamberlain.**
- May 26-June 4: The Dunkirk evacuation (Operation Dynamo) sees the rescue of Allied soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk, France.**
- July 10: The Battle of Britain begins as Germany's Luftwaffe starts an aerial campaign to gain air superiority over the Royal Air Force.**

### **1941**

- June 22: Germany invades the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa), breaking the non-aggression pact between the two nations.**
- December 7: Japan attacks Pearl Harbor, prompting the United States to enter World War II.**

### **1942**

- March 22: The Cripps Mission, led by Sir Stafford Cripps, arrives in India to secure Indian support for the British war effort in exchange for a promise of self-governance after the war. The mission fails as its proposals are rejected by Indian leaders.**



- **August 8:** The Quit India Movement is launched by the Indian National Congress, demanding an end to British rule in India.
- **October 23-November 11:** The Second Battle of El Alamein in Egypt sees a decisive Allied victory against the Axis forces.

**1943**

- **May:** The Bengal Famine begins, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2-3 million people due to starvation and disease.
- **July 9:** The Allied invasion of Sicily (Operation Husky) begins, leading to the eventual fall of Mussolini's regime in Italy.
- **November 28-December 1:** The Tehran Conference takes place, where Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin discuss the strategy for the rest of the war.

**1944**

- **June 6:** D-Day, the Allied invasion of Normandy, France, marks the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe from Nazi control.
- **September 17-25:** Operation Market Garden, an unsuccessful Allied military operation aimed at capturing bridges in the Netherlands.

**1945**

- **May 7:** Germany surrenders unconditionally, leading to Victory in Europe (VE) Day on May 8.
- **July 5:** The Labour Party wins a landslide victory in the general election, and Clement Attlee becomes Prime Minister.
- **July 17-August 2:** The Potsdam Conference is held, where Churchill, Attlee, Truman, and Stalin discuss post-war order and peace treaties.
- **August 6:** The United States drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.
- **August 9:** The United States drops a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan.
- **August 15:** Japan announces its surrender, marking the end of World War II (VJ Day).

**1946**

- **March 15:** The British Cabinet Mission arrives in India to discuss and plan for India's independence.

**- August 16: Direct Action Day in Calcutta leads to widespread communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, resulting in thousands of death.**

# OVERVIEW OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

## **A House Divided: The Internal Struggle**

The INC in April 1947 was a microcosm of the larger societal tensions in India. The party was deeply divided over the partition plan.

- **Conservative Wing:** Led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi, this faction staunchly opposed partition, viewing India as an indivisible nation. They emphasized unity, communal harmony, and the concept of a secular India.
- **Pragmatic Wing:** Led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, this group, while initially opposed to partition, eventually accepted it as a necessary evil to prevent further bloodshed. They focused on practical solutions, such as power-sharing arrangements and refugee rehabilitation.

The internal conflict within the INC mirrored the broader societal divisions and made it difficult for the party to present a united front.

## **The Challenge of Leadership**

The absence of a clear, decisive leader after the resignation of Jawaharlal Nehru in September 1946 further compounded the INC's problems. Interim Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was grappling with the immense pressure of the impending transfer of power while also trying to maintain party unity.

## **The Growing Shadow of Communalism**

The communal violence that had erupted in various parts of India cast a long shadow over the INC. The party was under immense pressure to

control the situation and protect the lives of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The failure to effectively manage communal tensions could have severe consequences for the party's image and its ability to govern.

### The Economic Challenge:

The war had taken a toll on India's economy. The INC was aware of the daunting task of rebuilding the economy post-independence. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, and industrial development were high on the agenda. The party had to balance the demands of immediate relief with long-term economic planning.

### International Relations:

The world stage was rapidly changing. The Cold War was looming, and India's position in the global order was uncertain. The INC had to consider India's foreign policy options, its relationship with Britain, and its potential role in international affairs.

In essence, the INC in April 1947 was a complex organization facing immense challenges. Its ability to navigate these complexities would determine the shape of independent India.

# KEY ISSUES TO LOOK AT

## India and Pakistan:

The partition of India, a process already underway, is one of the most pressing issues facing the UK government. The Cabinet Mission Plan, released in February 1946, proposed a federal union of India with strong provincial autonomy. While accepted by the main Indian parties – the Congress and the Muslim League – the plan has not resolved the deep-seated tensions between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs.

The Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, is adamant about creating a separate Muslim state, Pakistan. The Congress, while initially opposed to partition, has now accepted the idea of a division as the only way to avoid widespread violence. The issue of the Radcliffe Line, which will determine the exact border between India and Pakistan, remains unresolved and is a potential flashpoint for conflict.

The UK government faces a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, it must ensure a smooth transition to independence for both India and Pakistan. On the other hand, it must prevent large-scale violence and maintain stability in the region. The potential for mass migration and refugee crises is a significant concern, as is the future of the princely states, which have yet to decide whether to join India, Pakistan, or remain independent.

## Economic Recovery

The UK is still reeling from the economic devastation of World War II. Rationing, housing shortages, and a balance of payments crisis are among the most pressing challenges facing the country. The Labour government has introduced a range of measures to address these issues, including nationalization of key industries, increased public spending on social welfare, and efforts to boost exports.

However, economic recovery is a slow and painful process. The country faces a shortage of raw materials, labor, and capital. The global economy is also unstable, with the threat of recession looming. The term

government must find a way to balance the need for short-term economic stimulus with long-term sustainable growth.

### Social Welfare

The Labour government is committed to creating a more equitable society through a comprehensive program of social welfare reforms. This includes the establishment of the National Health Service, expansion of education, and the creation of a welfare state to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable.

However, implementing these ambitious plans is challenging given the economic constraints. There is also opposition from conservative elements who argue that the government is overspending and creating a dependency culture. The government must find a way to balance the demands for social justice with the need for economic stability.

### Foreign Policy

The UK's foreign policy is undergoing a significant shift as the empire begins to crumble. The country is seeking to maintain its position as a global superpower while adapting to the new realities of a bipolar world. The Cold War is emerging, with the United States and the Soviet Union vying for influence.

The UK must balance its relationship with these two superpowers while also maintaining its ties to the Commonwealth. The country's role in international organizations such as the United Nations is becoming increasingly important. The government must also address the challenge of decolonization, which is creating new opportunities and threats.

### Maintaining Imperial Influence

The UK is grappling with the decline of its empire. While the government is committed to granting independence to India and Pakistan, it is also determined to maintain a significant global presence. The Commonwealth is seen as a vehicle for preserving British influence, but its future is uncertain.

The government must find a way to balance the desire to retain imperial power with the growing demands for self-determination. This will require a delicate approach to negotiations with other colonial territories, as well as a strategy for economic and cultural engagement with former colonies.

Given the critical juncture of 13 April 1947, the British Parliament would be deeply engrossed in the Indian question.

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

**Partition Plan Implementation:** Delve into the practical challenges of implementing the Mountbatten Plan, including the demarcation of borders, the transfer of power, and the security situation.

**Communal Violence:** Discuss strategies to mitigate the escalating communal violence in India and protect British lives and property.

**Economic and Financial Implications:** Analyze the economic and financial consequences of partition for both Britain and the newly independent states.

## Political Maneuvering

**Domestic Opinion:** Explore the domestic political climate surrounding India's independence, including public opinion, party stances, and potential backlash.

**International Relations:** Consider the implications of India's independence for Britain's global standing, particularly in relation to the Cold War and the Commonwealth.

**Future of the Empire:** Debate the future of the British Empire post-India, including strategies for maintaining influence and managing decolonization processes in other territories.

## Strategic Planning

**Power Transfer:** Discuss the mechanics of transferring power to the Indian leadership, including the role of the British Governor-General and the armed forces.

**Economic Cooperation:** Explore opportunities for economic cooperation between Britain and the new Indian states, including trade, investment, and aid.

**Security Concerns:** Address the security challenges posed by a newly independent India, including defense cooperation, border disputes, and regional stability.



# SITES TO REFER

- <https://gacbe.ac.in/pdf/ematerial/18BPA66S-U5.pdf>
- <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliament-and-empire/parliament-and-the-american-colonies-before-1765/the-raj-and-independence-1914-47/>
- <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliament-and-empire/collections1/collections2/1947-indian-independence-act/>

# CONTACT US

- 1) Ashali Solomon**  
(HEAD OF FACULTY) +91 98163 62496  
hof.humanities@sanawar.edu.in
- 2) Mona Gautam**  
(MUN IN-CHARGE) +91 94186 86882  
snamun@sanawar.edu.in
- 3) Ranbir S. Randhawa**  
(MUN CO- INCHARGE) +91 98051 69677  
snamun@sanawar.edu.in
- 4) Gayatri Sud**  
(SECRETARY GENERAL) +91 98161 00879  
sudgayatri@gmail.com
- 5) Saanvi Banyana**  
(DIRECTOR GENERAL) +91 75770 43433  
saanvibanyana@gmail.com
- 6) Gurnek S. Gabadia**  
(CONVENOR) +91 84519 02625  
gurneksinghgabadia@gmail.com
- 7) Keerat Sandhu**  
(CHIEF OF STAFF) +91 98881 05862  
keeratsandhu2208@gmail.com
- 8) Viraj Gupta**  
(CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES) +91 96672 25881  
virajgupta0508@gmail.com
- 9) Ayanna Soin**  
(HEAD OF IP) +91 98888 88817  
ayannasoin@gmail.com
- 10) Saaqib Singha**  
(ATTACHÉ DIPLOMATIQUE) +91 99710 11475  
singhasaaqib@gmail.com



<http://snamun.sanawar.edu.in>



@officialthelawrenceschoolsanawar