

## India – Early 1930s

**Self-Governance** – Having the right to govern one's own country and make laws for that country. Not to be ruled by the government of another country.

British rule in India was coming under increasing pressure in the 1920's and 30's from an Indian population who wanted self-governance. One of the key leaders of this movement was Mahatma Gandhi. His pursuit of freedom without violence was raising awareness of the cause in India and also Britain. Awareness grew when British forces in India responded to the peaceful protest with acts of violence often killing and wounding protestors. A civil disobedience campaign followed which led to the arrests of many protestors including Gandhi. In 1930 and 1931 Gandhi attended conferences in Britain to try to reach an agreement to end the conflict in Britain.

The government in Britain were keen to reach an agreement to settle the issue over India and although the conferences in the early 1930's did not reach an agreement, Britain was slowly trying to work out a solution. In 1933 Britain announced its intention of allowing India greater self-governance. This paved the way for the Government of India Act of 1935 which took effect in 1937. The electorate in India expanded to 35 million and there were elected legislatures set up to deal with local affairs.

Source A – Churchill speaking to the India Empire Society. This society was supported by many ex-officers and was strongly opposed to any change in India.

*No agreement reached at the round table conference will be binding. The British nation has no intention whatever of relinquishing effectual control of Indian life and progress. The bold experiment of the Montagu reforms and Lord Irwin's efforts at compromise have failed. It is time for Parliament to reclaim its right to restrict Indian constitutional liberties. Gandh-ism and all it stands for will have to be grappled with and crushed. It is no use trying to satisfy a tiger by feeding it cat's meat.*

Speech by Churchill, December 1930.

Source B – Churchill speaks to the West Essex Conservative Association about India.

*It is alarming and even nauseating to see Mr Gandhi, a seditious (treasonable) Middle Temple lawyer now posing as a fakir (holy man) of a type well-known in the East, striding half naked up the steps to the Viceroy's palace, while he is organising and conducting a campaign of civil disobedience, to negotiate on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor (King George V). Such a spectacle can only increase the unrest in India and the danger to which white people there are exposed.*

Speech by Churchill, February 1931.