THE MAP AS HISTORY

This series contains 14 animated historical maps. For a preview, see the maps on :

▶ Independence for India and Pakistan

▶ For online access to this series of 14 historical maps

🇫🇷 Les décolonisations depuis 1945

Decolonization after 1945

The reasons why decolonization took place are many and complex, varying widely from one country to another. Three key elements played a major role in the process: colonized peoples' thirst for independence, the Second World War which demonstrated that colonial powers were no longer invulnerable, and a new focus on anti-colonialism in international arenas such as the United Nations.

Colonial empires, colonial powers, British Empire, French Empire, Dutch Empire, decolonization of Africa, decolonization of Asia, Indian Independence, anti-colonialism, war of independence

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Colonial world dominance in 1939

Before the Second World War broke out, a large proportion of the world population was living under the sovereignty of a colonial power, for the most part European.

European domination in *Africa* was particularly impressive.

World War II undermines the colonial system

Myths such as the invulnerability of colonial powers and white supremacy were seriously challenged by the outbreak of the Second World War.

Accelerated decolonization after 1945

Following the Second World War, the colonial system was subject to growing unrest and many countries quickly acquired their independence.

Independence for India and Pakistan

Clement Attlee, the Labour Prime Minister who replaced Winston Churchill in July 1945, soon realised that independence for India was inevitable, but disagreements among the Indian politicians made the negotiations very difficult.

Independence for Burma, Ceylon and Malaysia

Burma and Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) obtained their independence soon after India but, in Malaysia, the situation was more complex.

Independence for the Indonesian Archipelago

A direct consequence of Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies during the Second World War was the emergence of Indonesian nationalism. Nevertheless, at the end of the war, the Netherlands was opposed to independence.

Independence for Indochina

The Communist Party led by Ho Chi Minh took advantage of the Japanese occupation of Indochina during the Second World War to launch the Viet Minh Independence Movement.

The failure to create an Indochinese federation in 1946 as part of the French Union led to a long war of independence.

Independence for Italy's African colonies

Independence for Italy's African colonies (Ethiopia, Libya, Eritrea, Somalia) came as a direct consequence of Italy's downfall during the Second World War.

Decolonization of the United Kingdom's territories in Africa

In Africa, the United Kingdom launched the process of decolonization in the early 1950s. Some countries achieved independence peacefully. Others, however, became embroiled in inter-community rivalries or faced with opposition from the British colonial settlers.

Decolonization of North Africa by France

French North Africa covered three territories: the Protectorates of Morocco in the west and Tunisia in the East, with Algeria in the centre.

Algeria was considered by France to be an extension of its national territory and only obtained its independence after a long drawn-out conflict lasting 8 years.

Decolonization of French black Africa

Independence in Africa was introduced in phases.

Most of the French colonies in Black Africa became independent in 1960.

Independence for Belgium's African colonies

The immense Belgian Congo was one of the richest colonies in Africa. After bloody riots in 1959, the Belgian Government quickly yielded to demands for independence in 1960.

Independence for Portugal's African colonies

Portuguese colonies in Africa gained their independence only after the "Carnation Revolution" which took place in Lisbon in April 1974.

Independence for Spain's African territories

Spain had few colonies on the African continent.

North of Morocco, Spanish Guinea and Western Sahara gained their independence from Spain during the period 1956 to 1975.

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