

End of Empire

c.1919–1969 Answers

1. a)
 - The Amritsar Massacre in 1919 was a catalyst for the independence movement.
 - There was a growing sense of nationalism.
 - Reluctance to participate in Britain's wars with little say over how their own country would be run.
- b)
 - Kenyans fought on behalf of the British Empire in the Second World War, and thought that they would be rewarded at the end of the war with more freedoms.
 - The politician Jomo Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946 after almost 15 years abroad where he had studied and campaigned for African independence.
 - Anger at the white settlers, along with the hardships of economic poverty.
- c) Britain did not handle the partitioning of India well as they acted so quickly that millions of people were left in a country that did not want them and faced great violence.

When the Labour government decided to give India independence in 1945, what was not decided was what to do about the different religious groups, especially the Muslims and Hindus who traditionally did not get on. The Muslims wanted their own country and politicians like Mohammed Ali Jinnah who led the Muslim League called for a separate homeland for Muslims. The British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, agreed to the partition of the country with a Hindu-dominated India and a Muslim-dominated Pakistan.

However, Mountbatten thought that the partition should happen quickly, partly so that Britain would not be associated with the violence that might follow. When independence came in 1947 it left 15 million people wanting to move from one country to the other, leading to mass violence and the deaths of millions.

Therefore, although Britain could be praised for giving India independence quickly once the decision to do so had been made they did it so quickly that violence was bound to happen meaning they had not handled it well.