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INDIA TAKES OVER

August 15th, 1947 - Independence Day for India. In London, the flags of the new Indian Union flutter over the Headquarters of India and Pakistan. An era has ended - a new epoch begins. A sub-continent larger than the whole of Europe becomes two self-governing dominions within the British Commonwealth of Nations. After less than a century under the British Crown, India's most crucial hour has struck.

Five months ago Earl Wavell left Delhi to be succeeded by Earl Mountbatten. Under Queen Victoria's great-grandson, the transfer of power is completed. Pandit Nehru, Congress leader, is India's Prime Minister. Mohamed Ali Jinnah, Muslim chief, becomes Pakistan's Governor-General. Baldev Singh takes over India's defence. Liaquat Ali Khan is Pakistan's first Premier. The Nawab of Bhopal is one of the Princes who has joined the Indian Union. Mahatma Gandhi, the 78 year old mystic, stands inscrutable and aloof. Today the fate of 400 million Indians is in the hands of these leaders. During the past 200 years the British gave India law and order. They built roads and railways. They irrigated the lands. But India's future welfare largely depends upon communal harmony - 40 million Muslims will live in India, 18 million Hindus in Pakistan. Stirred by intense religious passion, communal strife has shed much blood. It still continues. Can Hindus and Muslims live peacefully together?

In India nearly everyone is hungry.

When they are too frail to beg, they die. And each year famine claims seven million.

Economically, India and Pakistan are inter-dependent. Success of the new regimes may ultimately depend on whether India's leaders can improve rapidly the general standard of living. To people like these (the heart of India) the word "Freedom" is empty. To the average Indian, his rulers mean little. Democracy is just a word, unheard of by the majority. This is the real challenge to Nehru and to Jinnah. Britain has fulfilled her mission. It is for India herself now to make her destiny.