



FETTERS OF FREEDOM

09

August, 2020 Issue

Religious Partition - Britain's Final Blow to India

National struggles for independence come in two flavors: settlers separating from the motherland and indigenous peoples freeing themselves from foreign oppressors. Today we commemorate the latter: the hard-fought independence of nearly 50 mostly Asian and African nations in the short three decade span of 1943 to 1973. For many, independence day is an occasion to attend parades, be merry, But as the lived memories of those people's freedom from invaders to take stock of the great those they colonized.

year-long bloodbath, India her arms amputated. East India's bosom by the

Now, even over seven difficult to look back upon dismemberment, with its riots, rape, murder, the forced migration millions of human forget the more consequences of families, friendships,

and celebrate. who fought for their fades, it becomes increasingly important sacrifices the imperialists extracted from

On August 14th, 1947, after a 90 finally rid herself of the occupiers, but with and West Pakistan were severed from departing British administration. decades later, it is painfully the savagery of this rippling effects of destruction, and of tens of beings. Not to intangible dismantled ruined

dis-informed history, and fractured geographies.

What was the cause of such horror? The answer lies in the conniving British policy of Divide and Conquer, meant to weaken collective strength by segregating interests and sentiments, a favorite machete of imperialist powers. During the revolt of 1857, the unified battle of Muslims against their foreign oppressor took British forces by complete surprise vowed to destroy this spirit of unified nationalism in a systematic and organized Selecting religion as their weapon, the British began sowing the seeds of division by creating separate communal electorates.

Although originally the British had no intention of relinquishing their imperial hold over the Indian subcontinent, the catastrophic effects of World War II left them with no other option. But the British had already put into motion their plan of vengeance: if they could not rule India, they would divide her. Their strategy involved sufficiently strengthening the Muslim League party so that they would strongly voice a demand for a separate homeland for Muslims. As a result, the British exit left behind a fractured and weakened India: an ancient and mighty subcontinent divided, for the first time in her millennia-old history, along religious lines.

The British not only looted India, one of the world's foremost economic powerhouses until the Europeans arrived, but devastated her very essence, a thriving refuge of acceptance and harmonious co-existence for an astounding diversity of peoples throughout history. Today, it is vital that India pick herself up again and reassert her age-old resilience to adversity, so that Indians can once more fulfill their tremendous potential as human beings.



Hindus and and they manner.





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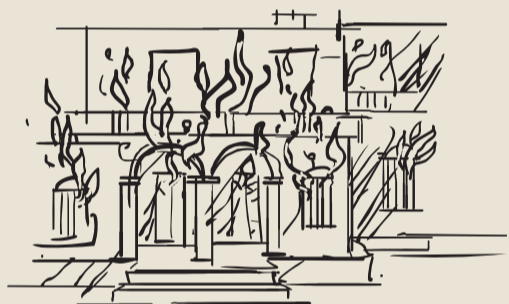
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Living Memories

History forms an essential part of who we are and how we relate to ourselves and others. When people who have lived through seminal events in the past bestow upon us their living memories, history becomes wonderfully tangible. As a special tribute to the living memorians of the past who experienced the decades surrounding the 1947 British exodus from India, members of our production team share the words of their elders. In doing so, we ourselves become living memorians of the present.

Amalesh recollects his father-in-law's memories, "Until 1956, my family used to travel without problems to India from our home in East Bengal [which became East Pakistan and then Bangladesh]. One day, communal clashes erupted. We had no choice but to flee in the dead of night, taking with us only what we could carry. We were forced to abandon our home to seek refuge in India."



Sudarshana remembers her grandmother's words, "One day during partition [India's division into three countries in 1947], we received word that our house in an old part of Kolkata would be attacked during the riots. So we woke up the children, tied up whatever ornaments and belongings would fit into cloth bundles, and left our home in the middle of the night. Our house was set on fire and we could never return."

Palash shares the words of his grandfather, "Just before the British exodus, I lived in Malda [a town in northern West Bengal, bordering East Bengal]. Communal riots had escalated to horrific proportions; we were inundated by stories of Hindu-Muslim bloodbaths. So I secretly gave shelter to an affluent Muslim family who were our neighbors. I hid them until we could make safe arrangements for them to leave for East Pakistan. In times of darkness our humanity must shine brightly."



Subrata recollects his uncle's memories, "Our family owned a sweetshop in Midnapur [a town in western West Bengal]. In the 1930s, revolutionaries in Bengal agitated to free India from the British, engaging in protests, strikes, and assassinations. It so happened, that three successive British magistrates stationed in Midnapur were assassinated one after the other. When it was Magistrate D. E. Burge's turn in 1933, we had to close down our sweetshop and flee to Kolkata."

Purba shares the proud words of her grandmother, "In 1930, revolutionaries planned to storm the British armory in Chittagong [a coastal town in East Bengal, now Bangladesh], as part of their ongoing revolt against the foreign occupiers. My family risked their safety to give shelter to a few key members of the rebels who orchestrated the Chittagong Armory Raid. The women even donated their gold jewelry to help fund the uprising. How brave those men were."





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Europe's Pillage of the World

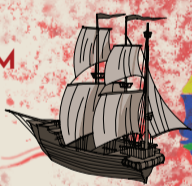
While history has witnessed several empires, perhaps none has left as devastating an effect as the empires of Europe. They were motivated by two significant factors. First, in the 1400s, Europe was struggling with internal political and religious conflict, disease, hunger, and poverty. Second, much of the world's wealth was concentrated in Asia.

Indian, Arab, Jewish, and Chinese merchants had already established a millennia-old trading network across Asia that helped civilizations throughout the continent flourish. The Europeans sought to interject themselves into this system. But since the Ottoman empire blocked them from accessing established land routes to Asia, they turned to the Atlantic Ocean. The first naval expeditions financed by the Portuguese and other Europeans targeted the prosperous Indian subcontinent as their destination, with West Africa forming a lucrative stop on the journey.

The Europeans were not content to merely participate in trans-continental merchant trade. Instead, they sought to control and plunder the very people and lands that produced the goods they coveted. In effect, the Europeans militarized trade and then replaced trade with plunder using a Machiavellian tool: the shareholder-owned company. Many of these companies, granted trade and colonization monopolies through charters issued by European governments, were backed by military power, which enabled them to invade, occupy, and exploit large swaths of earth. Not limiting themselves to conventional goods like spices and cloth, Portuguese, Dutch, British, French, and Spanish companies conducted and profited off of the Atlantic slave trade: over 15 million African human beings were captured or bought and forcibly taken to the Americas to labor as the chattel of European colonists.

Each continent the European imperialists occupied suffered its own set of horrors. Almost all of Asia's wealth was depleted and its peoples subjugated. Most of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand were either annihilated or assimilated through physical and cultural genocide. And

- UNITED KINGDOM
- FRANCE
- PORTUGAL
- SPAIN
- RUSSIA/USSR
- OTTOMAN EMPIRE/TURKEY
- DENMARK
- NETHERLANDS
- UNITED STATES
- BELGIUM
- ITALY
- GERMANY



Africa remained the unfortunate playground of Europe until a few years ago. The Italians, Germans, and Belgians joined the older imperialists and divided the peoples and rich resources of Africa amongst themselves, uncaring about the protracted civil wars and ethnic conflicts their artificially drawn boundaries brought about.

Colonized peoples around the world fought courageously for centuries to rid themselves of the European invaders, even at the cost of being annihilated, like in the Americas. But even decades after the European departure, most African and Asian nations still face crushing debt, resource scarcity, and political and religious instability. Is it a wonder, when Europeans, and later Americans, systematically depleted the world's human, mineral, and living resources for their own gain? When will the repatriation of this immeasurable stolen wealth finally begin so that justice can at least be imagined?





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Art Corner



This special issue is dedicated to freedom struggles all across the world, past and present. Our featured artwork is a special painting inspired by the tri-colored flag of India, adopted as one of her national symbols upon the British exodus in 1947. May we never forget the message that these colors convey: saffron for courage and sacrifice, white for peace, and green for fertility and growth.

Behind the scenes

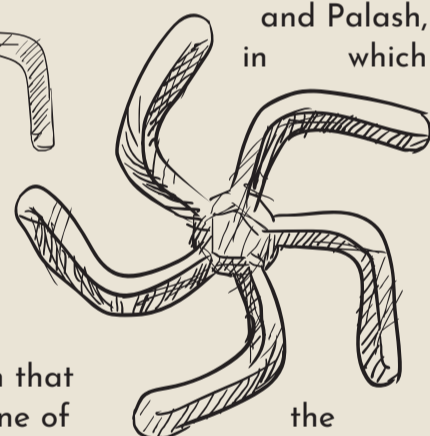
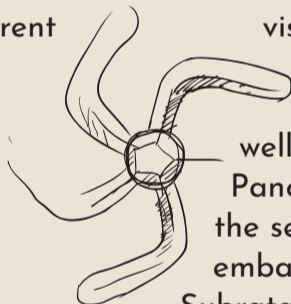
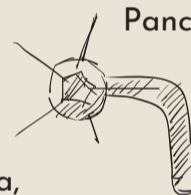
up with animation and special effects. Director of Operations, had a different vision, "The Panchika is an ancient symbol that taken seriously, for it distills the essence of the science of Creating a video with a spinning trivialize the symbol and disrupt needs to be cultivated in order to five paths the Panchika embodies." all agreed to the serene and explored in the featured video.

The **Panchika** is an important emblem in the *Svevi Avatar* universe, symbolizing the five paths to wellbeing: serve the world, devote to God, love others, seek knowledge, and merge with Oneness. To visualize the meaning and story of the Panchika, our Art and Illustration, Amalesh wanted to create a short video, the Panchika would be jazzed

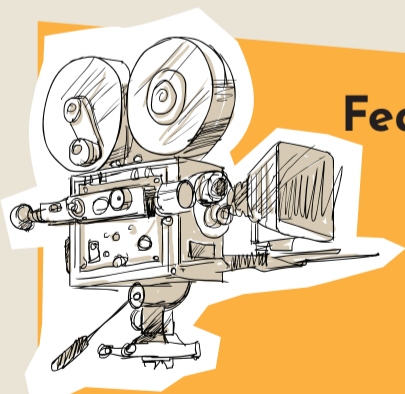
But Subrata,

vision, "The must be very wellbeing.

Panchika would the sense of calm that embark on any one of Subrata's logic was so respectful depiction of the



the convincing that ancient symbol that is



Featured Video



<https://tinyurl.com/y66ajfox>

The Panchika 1

Next issue 23 August, 2020

► THE BODY REMEMBERS