

- The conclusion that a slow response had been disastrous. The fear of repeating this apparent mistake was, however, to have even more devastating consequences in the Amritsar Massacre of 1919 (see page 29).
- The British were determined to bring the administration of India under closer government control.

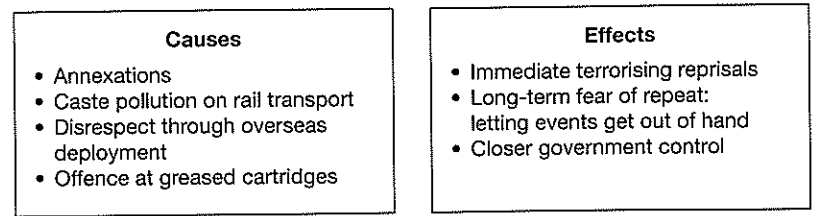
SOURCE A



A contemporary engraving of Ulrica Wheeler (aged eighteen years) defending herself during the Indian Mutiny, published in a popular book. Miss Wheeler was thought to have died; however, there is evidence that she lived a full but disguised life as the Muslim wife of one of her attackers or rescuers.

? What feelings might an image like Source A have aroused in British readers at the time?

Summary diagram: The Indian Mutiny



3 The British Raj

► *Why and how did the British reorganise the governance of India?*

In the aftermath of the mutiny, the British took official control of India. In 1858 the East India Company was abolished and the British monarch, Queen Victoria, became the ruler of India. From 1877 India was declared an empire in itself under the Queen-Empress. The Governor General took the title of **Viceroy**.

In 1858 the Queen issued a Royal Proclamation which included promises to admit suitably educated Indians into the administration of Indian government and this promise led to the involvement of Indians at all levels in the administration.

Structure of government in 1914

The governance of British India retained the structure set up in the aftermath of the mutiny, as set out in Figure 1.2 on page 8:

- Responsibility for Indian affairs rested with the secretary of state for India, a member of the cabinet and accountable to Parliament, who was advised by the India Council.
- In India itself, the viceroy was supreme, the representative of the monarch but appointed by the prime minister and accountable to the secretary of state. The personal and political relationship of these two post-holders – viceroy and secretary of state – was crucial to the initiation, or not, of constitutional and political developments in and for India.
- Although technological progress meant that by 1914 telegraphic communication between London and India was relatively quick and easy, the viceroy had considerable powers of delegated government and, in states of emergency, absolute power.
- The viceroy had a military commander-in-chief in India and was advised by a national Legislative Council, overwhelmingly composed of British officials.
- The eleven British provinces had governors, advised by provincial councils, although only certain matters were permitted for discussion and decision.
- The Indian Civil Service (ICS) comprised about 2000 administrators for a population of 350 million, backed up by 60,000 British soldiers and 200,000 Indians, less than one soldier for every 1000 Indians.

The princely states

Many areas of the subcontinent were still not ruled directly by the British. About one-fifth of the population, 72 million people, were the subjects of the 561 Indian rulers, some Hindu, some Muslim, with various titles such as Rajah, Nawab or Nizam, but known collectively as the Indian princes.

KEY TERM

Viceroy The deputy for a monarch.

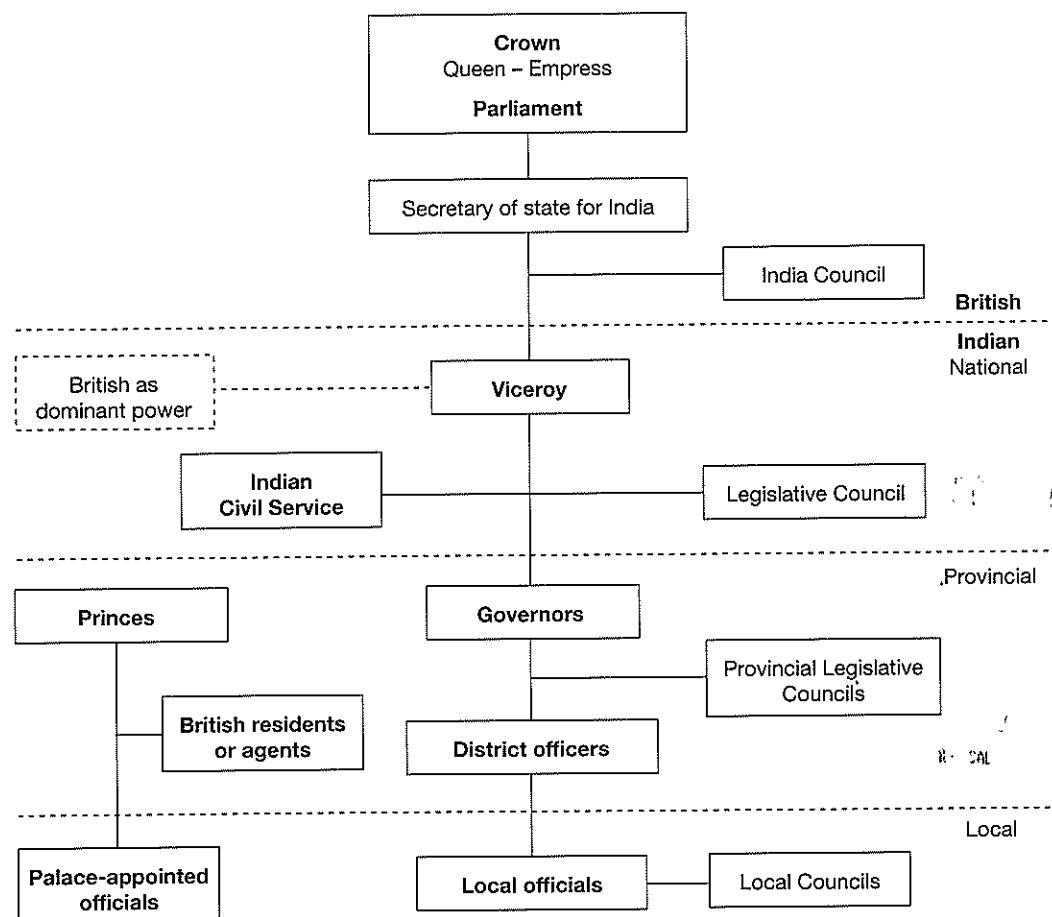


Figure 1.2 Governance of British India from 1857 to 1947.

The princes ruled nominally independent states (originally styled 'native' states and then 'princely' states), which varied considerably in size. Some states, such as Hyderabad in the south or Jammu and Kashmir in the north-west (c.200,000 km² each), were larger than Britain itself. Others were so small they were more like country estates and could not be found on maps.

After the mutiny, the British stopped acquiring territory either by military force or by political annexation. They permitted the Indian princes to continue to rule, partly as a reward for loyalty during the mutiny and partly to save more direct expense by the government.

On the other hand, the princely states were forced to acknowledge Britain as the **paramount power** within the subcontinent. This too was typically sweetened as a treaty guaranteeing British military protection. However, the British reserved, and sometimes exercised, the right to remove a prince found to be working against the British interest or causing trouble with neighbouring princes.

KEY TERM

Paramount power

A diplomatic term for the most powerful force, often an occupying army.

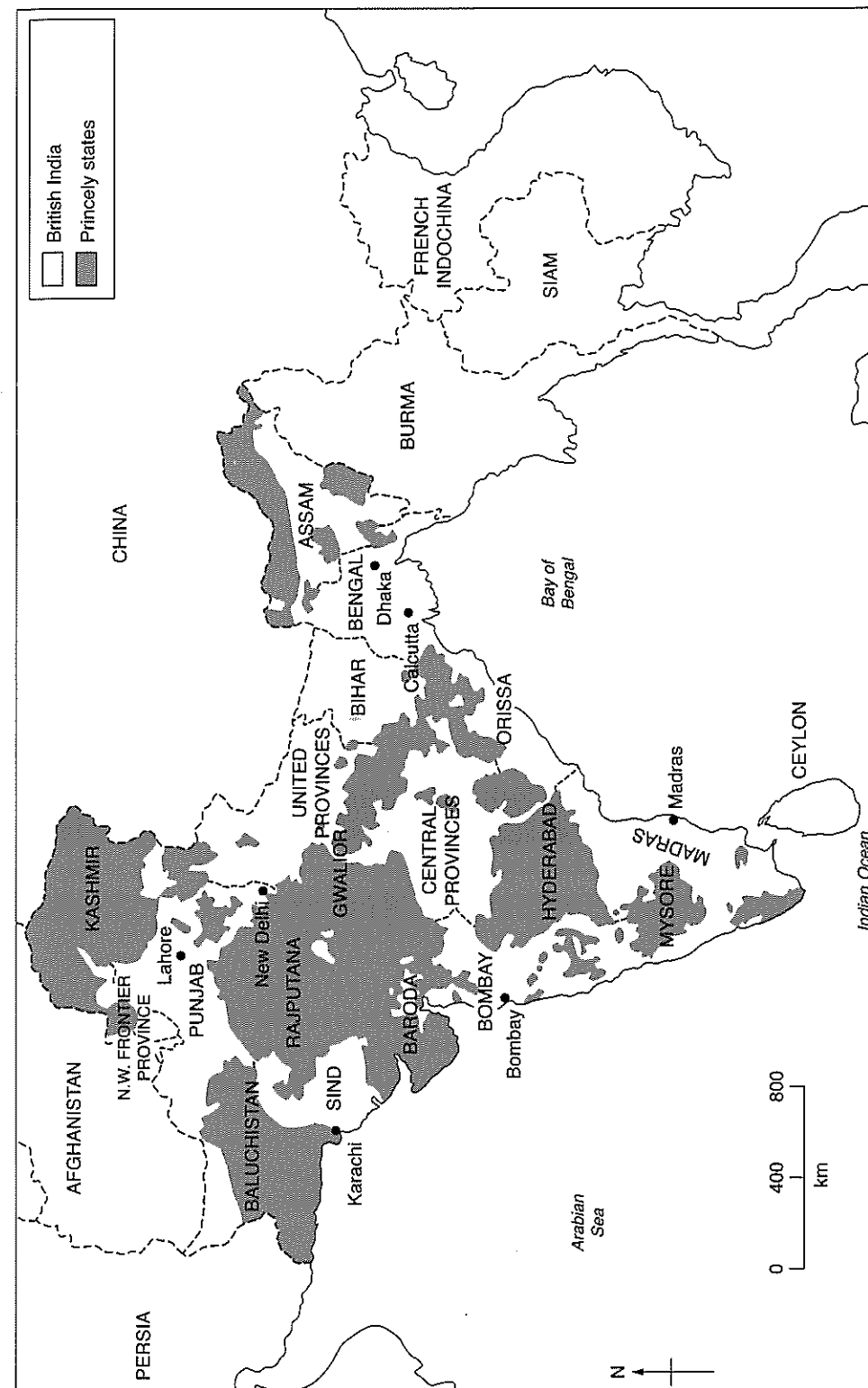


Figure 1.3 India c.1914 showing British provinces and major princely states.