Partition refugees arrive in Lahore

The partition of British India prompted millions of Muslims to flee to Lahore, in the newly created state of Pakistan.

Over the summer of 1947 millions of Muslims left their ancestral homelands for newly created Pakistan, while millions of Hindu and Sikhs travelled in the opposite direction. This amateur film footage shows Muslim refugees from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds arriving in Lahore; wealthy migrants shipped their cars and belongings but many were forced to make the long journey on foot.

Estimates of the numbers of migrants produced by partition vary between 10 and 13 million people. The final decision to partition India was taken only a few months before the British withdrew from India and was heavily criticised by many Indian and British officials who voiced concern about the humanitarian crisis it would produce. The decision sparked brutal rioting across much of India in which more than a million people were killed. Trains carrying refugees across the new boarders were particular targets of this violence.

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