

War of Independence 1857.

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Introduction:

War of Independence 1857 was a major uprising in India against the rule of British East India Company. It was first unsuccessful resistance of Hindu-Muslims against East India company.

The revolt is known by several names: The Revolt of 1857, the Indian Mutiny, Military uprising or the first war of Independence

Background:

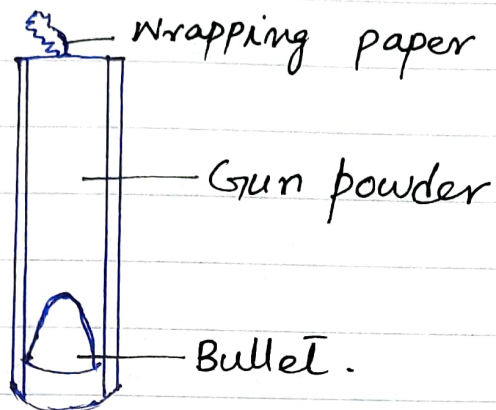
- ↳ Before 1757 East India Company was only a trading company.
 - ↳ After Battle of Plassey 1757, its political power & influence also got increased.
 - ↳ It gradually extended its control over the whole of India.
 - ↳ Common man was adversely affected by the discriminatory policies.
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- ↳ From 1757 to 1857 all the civil rebellions and uprisings were suppressed by BEIC.
 - ↳ In 1857, an uprising occurred and secured the participation of masses.

Immediate cause of War:

ETC issued new rifles in Indian Army → Enfield Rifles with greased cartridges.

↳ local indian army soldiers were not happy with the cartridges.

Structure:



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↳ Soldiers were supposed to tear and open the end of cartridges with their teeth and then load the rifle.

↳ Wrapping paper was made up of Lard & Tallow
pork fat Beef fat.

↳ Pork is forbidden in Islam and cow is sacred for Hindus.

↳ So there were resentments in Contonments.

↳ Lord Canning & Henry Lawrence were of the view that the cartridges formed the real & proximate cause of the War.

Outbreak of War:

- ↳ In April 1857, some soldiers at Meerut Cantonment refused to use the cartridges.
- ↳ Those soldiers were imprisoned for ten years by EIC. Their fellow soldiers broke into the prison & freed them. Meerut was sacked and British officers were put to death.

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- ↳ On May 11, soldiers marched towards Delhi and declared their support for the government of Bahadur Shah Zafar.

What was the company's response?

- ↳ Beginning was successful but in no time company successfully put down the rebellion with the help of Sikhs & other loyalists.
- ↳ On July 8, 1858, fourteen months after the breakout → peace was proclaimed by Lord Canning.

Causes of failure:

① Poor Organisation

↳ British experts like Malletson & Wilson have acknowledged that if the war had started on schedule, the company would have failed to overcome it.

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② Economic Condition / Limited Resources.

③ Absence of Active Leadership

④ Lack of Unity

↳ According to W. Russel, "If all nations had joined hands against us, we would have been completely annihilated despite all our courage & bravery."

⑤ Lack of political perspective

Results:

↳ End of company rule

↳ Direct rule of British Crown

↳ Administrative change

↳ Governor General → Viceroy

↳ Final Blow to the nominal rule of Mughals.