

The Uprising of 1857

‘The First War of Independence’

Socio-economic and political causes of the Revolt

Military Cause highlighted by the British

Suppression of the Rebellion

Critical Overview

Presented By

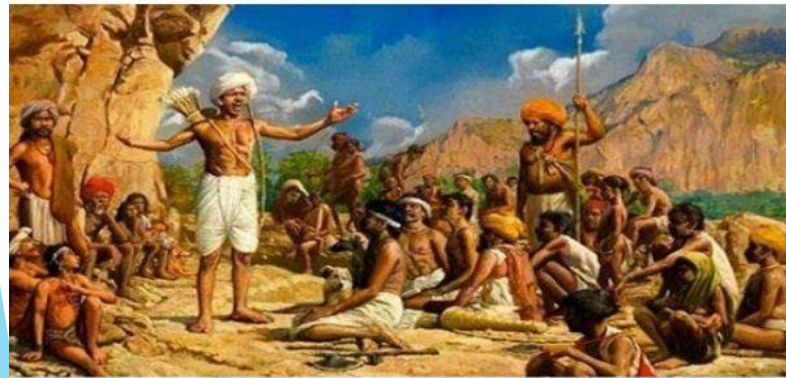
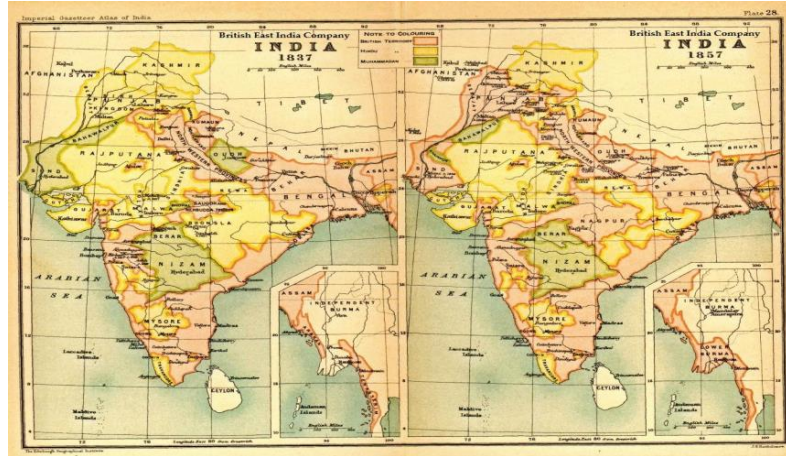
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The Uprising of 1857



Peasant Revolts Indigo, Pabna and Dacca

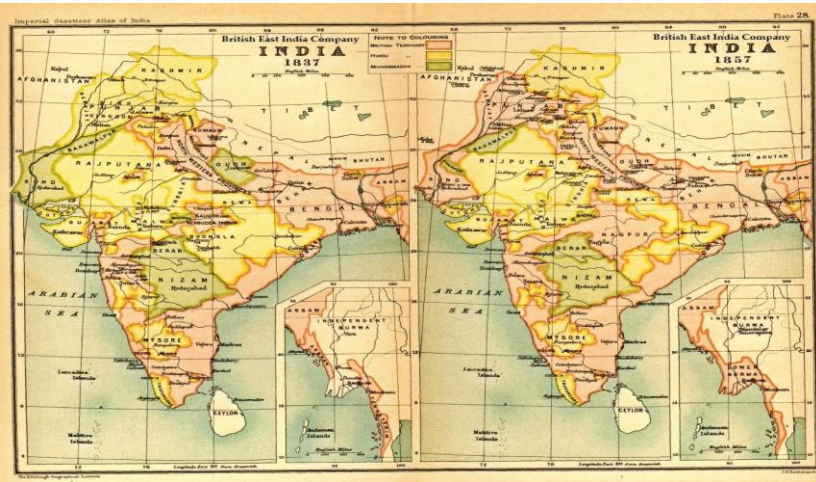
□ Background

❖ The uprising of 1857 forms one of the most important chapters in the history of the struggle of the Indian people for liberation from the British rule. What started merely as a sepoy mutiny soon engulfed the peasantry (Indigo Movement) and other civilian population over wide areas in northern India.

❖ This historic event was the first large scale uprising in its kind against British rule in India. This rebellion marked the end of the old style monarchies and inaugurated a new idea of nationalism among many Indians.

□ Background

❖ The Sepoy Mutiny (1857), also commonly known as the Indian Rebellion, or, amongst an older generation of nationalist historians, the First War of Independence, was an armed uprising that began in locally raised units of the East India Company's Bengal Army (the other two armies of the East India Company were the Madras Army and the Bombay Army).

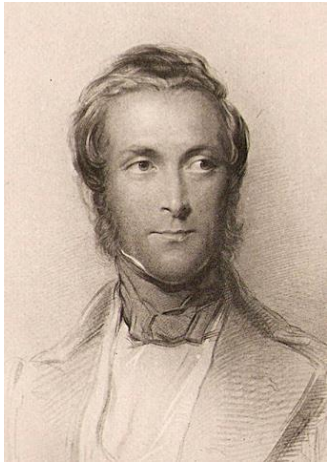


The Uprising of 1857

❑ Nature of the event

- ❖ **Historians have held divergent views about the nature of the event.** It has been described as a “**Mutiny**” confined to the army which did not have the command over the people in any manner. **Many others described it** as a religious war against the Christians.
- ❖ **Some Indian nationalists have called it** a well-planned national struggle and as the first war of Indian Independence.

The Uprising of 1857: Causes of the Revolt



Lord Dalhousie

❑ a. Political Causes

- ❖ Lord Dalhousie was the Governor-General of India till 1848-1856 ACE. Under him the British followed an expansionist policy in India. Dalhousie through his policies added considerable territories to the British Empire in India.

❑ Doctrine of Lapse

- ❖ The policy of annexation reached its climax when he implemented the policy of Doctrine of Lapse and annexed the Indian states on charges of mis-governance and absence of an heir. In the course of eight years Dalhousie annexed Satara (1848), Sambhalpur (1850), Jhansi (1853), Nagpur (1853), Jaipur (1849) and Bhagat (1850). This policy enraged the Indian rulers against the British government.



Nana Sahib



Baji Rao II



Rani of Jhansi

❑ a. Political Causes: Doctrine of Lapse

❖ As part of the Doctrine of Lapse policy, the titles and pensions of some Indian princes were confiscated. The pension of Baji Rao II's son Nana Sahib was discontinued after his father's death and Rani of Jhansi had been deprived of her right to rule in violation of the recognized Hindu law.

❖ Dalhousie further proposed to abolish the title of the Mughal emperor after the death of Bahadur Shah II. Thousands of people were unemployed when the English under Dalhousie annexed Audh.

❑ b. Economic Causes

- ❖ The economic policy of the British adversely affected every section of the Indian society. The British exploited the economic resources of India to their advantage and drained her wealth by crippling the Indian trade and industry.
- ❖ Under the British, India turned into a colonial economy to serve the British capitalist interests. Indian resources were exported to London to promote British industries. Consequently, the country was reduced to poverty as traditional handicrafts and industries were ruined.

❑ b. Economic Causes

❖ Many people were rendered jobless and there was overcrowding in the agrarian sector. Further the high revenue demand crippled the agrarian sector.

❖ Both the Peasants and the Zamindars were pushed by the British to produce more to appropriate the maximum revenue.

❑ b. Economic Causes

- ❖ The various revenue settlements were designed to benefit the government and displayed total disregard for the cultivators. In case of failure to pay the specified amount the lands of the Zamindar were taken away by the government.
- ❖ A large number of Zamindars were thus evicted from their lands and estates as part of this policy. These grievances left the Indian people dissatisfied of the British eventually turned out to be bitter enemies of the British.

❑ Social and Religious Causes: inferior race

❖ The British looked down upon the Indians as inferior race and discriminated them racially at every step. Indians were not allowed at many places such as railway compartments and public places as parks and hotels as these were especially reserved for the Englishmen.

❖ This racial arrogance of the British hurt the Indian masses most and they began to regard the Englishmen as their worst enemies.

❑ Social and Religious Causes

❖ The attempt to bring about social reforms in India by the British was not liked by the general public.

❖ The social legislations on the evils as sati, infanticide (killing of infants), re-marriage of widows, polygamy etc. were considered as interference in the religious matters of Indians about which the Englishmen knew nothing.

❑ Social and Religious Causes

❖ The introduction of English education, the propagation of the work of the Christian missionaries and the changing of the Hindu law of property with a view to facilitate the conversion of Hindus to Christianity alarmed many orthodox Indians.

❖ They feared that these practices would upset the social and religious order of the traditional Indian society. European juries allowed European criminals with little or no punishment.

❑ d. Military Causes:

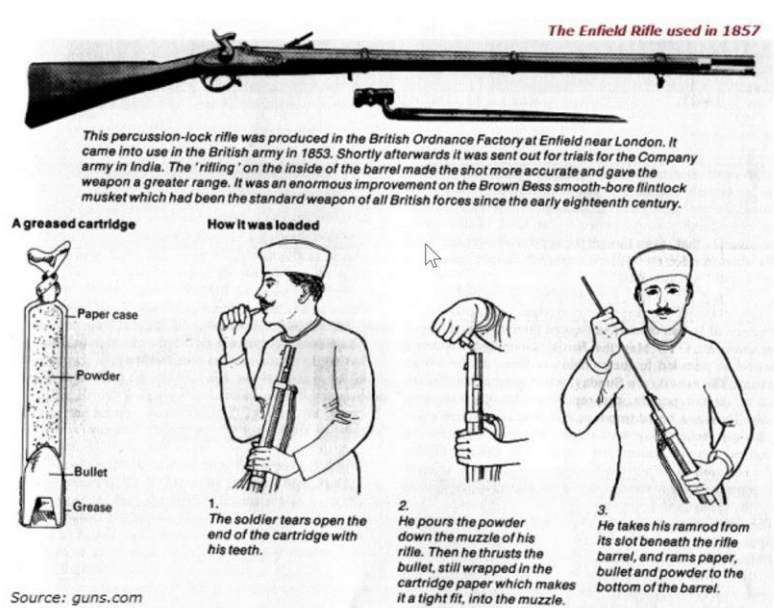
- ❖ Dissatisfaction was widespread among the military rank and files under the British. There was great inequality in treatment between the Indian and the British counterparts in terms of salary and other benefits. There was also a disparity in numbers between the Indian and European troops as the latter numbered far less than the Indians.
- ❖ Majority of the Indian soldiers were sent to Crimea, China and Iran to fight wars of the English.

❑ d. Military Causes:

- ❖ The Indian soldiers were considered inferior and were ill-treated by high officers. The high ranks in the army were exclusively reserved for the Englishmen and the Indians were deliberately excluded from responsible positions.
- ❖ What hurt the Indian soldiers most was the prohibition to wear caste and religious marks while serving (on duty) that amounted to interference in their personal affairs by the British.

The Uprising of 1857: Causes of the Revolt

❑ e. Immediate cause: Introduction of a new rifle in Indian army



- The grease was in some instances composed of beef and pig fat. The *sepoys*, Hindu as well as Muslim, were enraged, as the use of the greased cartridges would endanger their religion.
- Many of the *sepoys*, believed that the Government was deliberately trying to destroy their religion.

The spark for the sepoy mutiny was provided through the introduction of a new rifle in Indian army. At this time, the Enfield rifle was introduced in the army.

❖ Its cartridges were covered with a greased paper cover. This greased cover had to be bitten off before the cartridge could be loaded into the rifle.

❑ e. Immediate cause:

- ❖ The news spread that the grease was made of cow and pig fat. As the Hindus consider the cow sacred and the Muslims do not eat pig meat, both these communities were enraged at such a blatant attempt to harm their religion.
- ❖ This incident, popularly known as the greased cartridges incident, became the immediate cause of the revolt.



❑ Course and Spread of the Revolt:

- ❖ The war started at Barrackpur under the leadership of Mangal Pandey on 29 March 1857 and soon spread to Meerut, Delhi, Benaras, Allahabad, Indore, Kanpur, Lucknow and other parts of India.

❑ Meerut:

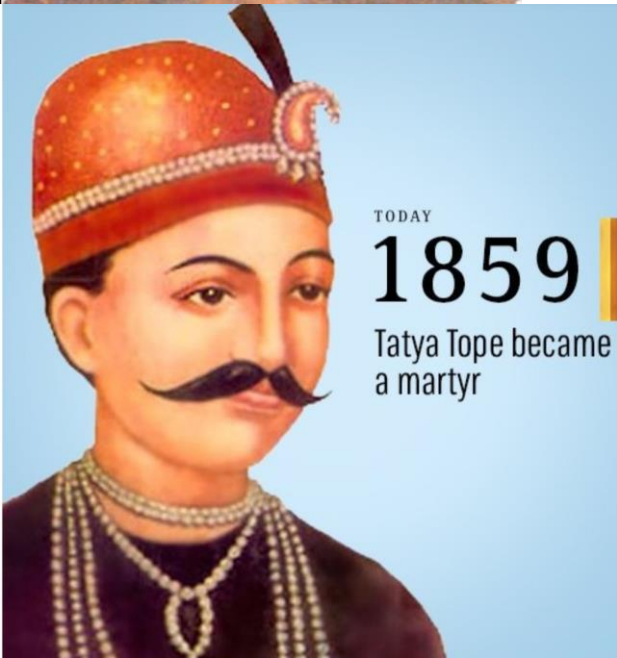
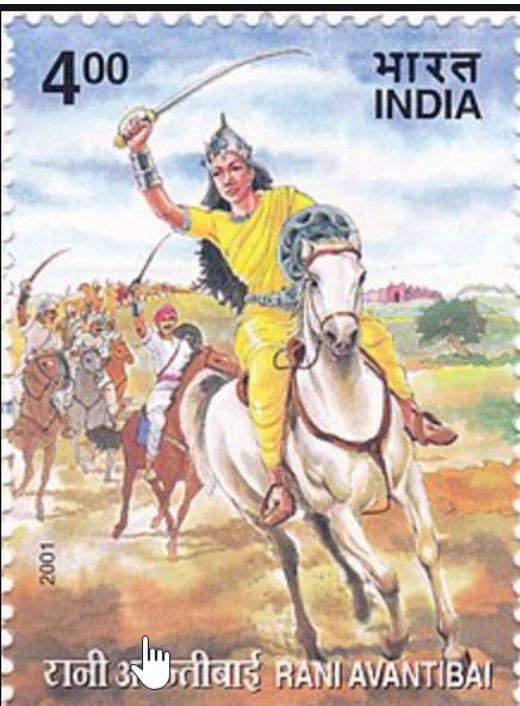
- ❖ On 24th April 1857 about 90 men of the Native Cavalry stationed at Meerut refused to accept the greased cartridges. Eighty-five of them were dismissed and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. On 10th May the revolt started at Meerut and the mutineers after killing some of their officials marched towards Delhi.



❑ Course and Spread of the Revolt:

❖ **Delhi:** On 12th May Delhi was seized and **Bahadur Shah II** was proclaimed the emperor of India.

❖ The real command was in the hands of Bakht Khan who had led the revolt at Bareilly and brought the troops to Delhi.



❑ Course and Spread of the Revolt:

- ❖ **Jhansi:** After some initial indecision, Rani Laxmi Bai assumed the leadership of the mutiny. After being defeated at Jhansi, she captured Gwalior with the help of Tanya Tope and Afghan guards. At Jhansi Hugh Rose suppressed the revolt and Rani Laxmi Bai died on the battle field.
- ❖ **Tanya Tope** was later arrested by the British soldiers and hanged in April 1859.

❑ Course and Spread of the Revolt: In Bangladesh

- ❖ It created serious tension throughout the region of (east Bengal) present Bangladesh. The resistance in Chittagong, Dhaka and conflicts at Sylhet, Jessore, Rangpur, Pabna and Dinajpur had left the region in a state of alert and excitement.
- ❖ On 18 November 1857, the Native Infantry of Chittagong rose in open rebellion and released all prisoners from the jail. They seized arms and ammunition, ransacked the treasury, set the Magazine House on fire and preceded towards Tippera.

❑ Course and Spread of the Revolt:

❖ In all these places the sepoys killed the senior officers and other Europeans on whom they could lay their hands, in many cases not even sparing women and children.

❖ They also released prisoners from jail, plundered the treasury and burnt land records in many pieces. However the superior British forces soon suppressed the revolt. Bahadur Shah II proved to be a weak leader.

❑ Course and Spread of the Revolt:

- ❖ Delhi was recaptured on 20th September 1857 by John Nicholson. Bahadur Shah was arrested and deported to Rangoon where he died in 1862. The rebels were defeated by General Havelock in Kanpur.
- ❖ Nana Saheb after being defeated refused to surrender and escaped to Nepal. Benaras, Bareilly and Gwalior were also recaptured by British officers.

❑ Reasons for the Failure of the revolt:

- ❖ (a) The revolt was highly localized and restricted to North India. Regions beyond the river Narmada in the south remained largely undisturbed.
- ❖ (b) The revolt failed to embrace all the sections of the society. Many of the *native rulers and the big zamindars* refused to join the revolt against the British. *They extended an active support to the British to suppress the revolt. Modern educated Indians were suspicious of the rebels.* They feared the opposition of the rebels in bringing about social reforms.

❑ Reasons for the Failure of the revolt:

❖ (c) The revolt was poorly organized and lacked coordinated planning amongst the leaders.

❖ (d) The rebels lacked a common cause and had different goals. At most places the rebels were encouraged to revolt against the local zamindars and money-lenders and did not have a larger goal to pursue. They lacked a spirit of nationalism.

❑ Reasons for the Failure of the revolt:

- ❖ (e) The British had better resources and succeeded in suppressing the revolt. They had vast resources at their disposal and were helped by the modern means of transport and communications.
- ❖ They also had the services of capable generals as Havelock, Outram, and Lawrence available who could plan the suppression of the revolt well and win back their lost regions.

❑ End of the Revolt

- ❖ The British government came out with all the powers to suppress the revolt. The sepoys fought the battle with their limited strength for four months.
- ❖ Then, the sepoys had to retreat. On 25th September British troops regained Delhi. *Bahadur Shah was arrested.* Nana Saheb lost the battle of Kanpur.

❑ The Uprising of 1857 End of the Revolt

- ❖ His commander Tantia Topi continued the fight up to April, 1859 ACE. and surrendered to the British force. Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi lost her life in the battle-ground.
- ❖ Kunwar Singh, Bakht Khan of Bihar, Bahadur Khan, Moulavi Ahmed of Faizabad lost their lives one after the other. By the end of 1859 ACE. the British power was reestablished in troubled areas.

❑ Results of the 1857 Revolt:

❖ While in the first century, i.e., from 1757 to 1857, the British crown indirectly ruled India, in the second century, i.e., from 1858 to 1947, the British crown directly ruled India through the Viceroy appointed by the Monarch. The results of the 1857 revolt may be subdivided as:

- (i) Constitutional changes,
- (ii) Changes in the army,
- (iii) Religious, judicial and diplomatic effects, and
- (iv) Social effects.

❑ Results of the 1857 Revolt:

- ❖ The 1857 revolt though failed and crushed by the superior military force of the British was a significant event of far-reaching consequences in the history of British rule in India.
- ❖ It marks the end of an era of mercantile capitalism and early colonial rule and the beginning of direct imperial supremacy of the British crown.

❑ Constitutional Changes: Transfer of power

- ❖ The most significant result of the mutiny was the transfer of power from a trading company to a sovereign power of Britain by the Government of India Act of 1858. This Act of 1858 completed the process initiated by the Charter Act of 1853. In the place of the President of the Board of Control, the Secretary of State for India was appointed.
- ❖ The Secretary of State for India was assisted and helped by a 15-member body of India Council. Out of the fifteen, eight were appointed by the crown and the rest were to be appointed by the court of the directors.

❑ Changes in the Army:

- ❖ Before the revolt of 1857, the army of the British in India was divided into two major divisions - *king's forces and company's troops*. As a result of the revolt the two forces were united and called king's forces and one-third of it should consist of the Europeans.
- ❖ The artillery section was exclusively kept under the British. As a consequence of more European soldiers in the army, the expenditure on the army doubled up. The Bengal Army was virtually abolished. They reduced the Brahmins from the army and recruited Gurkhas, Sikhs, Jats and Rajputs of the Punjab.



□ Religionist, Judicial and Diplomatic Effects:

❖ **Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1 November, 1858 guaranteed freedom of faith and equal treatment to all Indians.**

❖ **The Queen made it clear that there was to be no distinction between one individual and another on the pretext of race, religion, sex and creed.**

❑ Judicial and Diplomatic Effects:

- ❖ The British crown agreed to provide employment to the Indians in the bureaucratic structure of the times, which was denied previously.
- ❖ In the sphere of judiciary, the Sadar courts and Crown's Supreme Court were integrated into High Courts which were established in the presidency towns of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. In the sphere of diplomatic ties between India and Britain, now there was a change and the British began to show greater interest in the internal development of India than in foreign affairs.

❑ Social Effects:

- ❖ In the sphere of social relations, the gulf between the Europeans and the Indians not only widened but animosity and disgust between the two social groups became marked, and there was definite social estrangement between **Indians and Europeans**.
- ❖ **Dislike, hatred, ferocity and punishment became marked features of the British in India in the post-mutiny period.**

❑ Social Effects:

- ❖ The Indians too did not lag behind in maintaining social distance. What we notice in this period was neglect of social and educational welfare measures by the British purposefully and willingly.
- ❖ As if it is not sufficient, orthodoxy, religious superstitions, communal, caste and religious discrimination began to be practiced by the Indians. The British who were quite aloof in the beginning realized their mistake and changed their policy with 1861 Indian Council Act.

❑ Social Effects:

❖ A very disturbing feature of post-mutiny period in India was the growth of social distance between the *Hindus and Muslims* which ultimately led to communalization of social life and partition of India on communal lines.

❖ The post-mutiny period also witnessed setback to Muslim renaissance and efforts of modernity. At the end, we may conclude by agreeing with Tarachand: “imperialist Britain treated India as a satellite whose main function was to sweat and labour for the master, to sub-serve its economy and to enhance the glory and prestige of the empire”.

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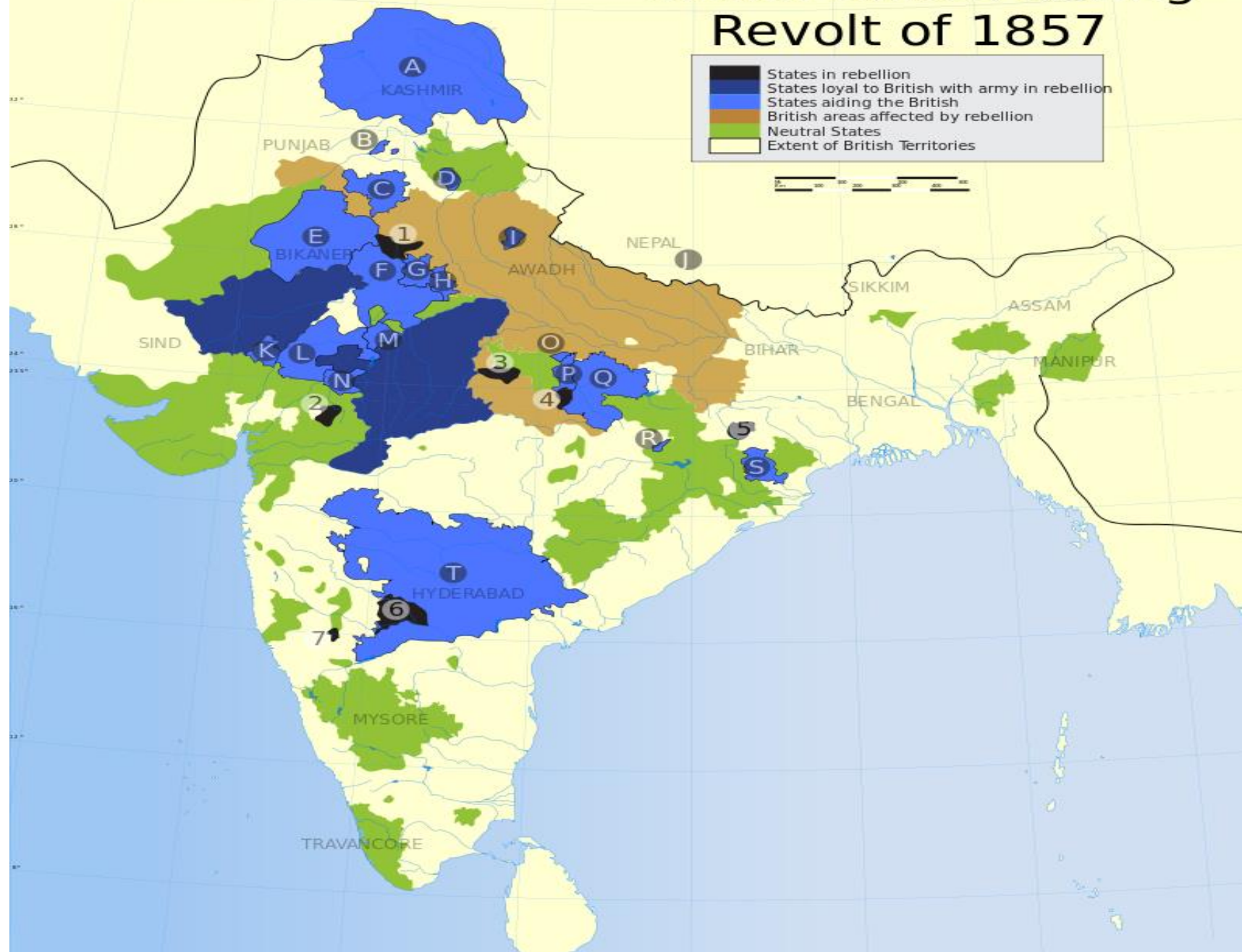
Sepoy mutiny 1857

The Uprising of 1857



Sepoy mutiny 1857

Indian States during Revolt of 1857





Attack of the mutineers on the Redan Battery at Lucknow, 30 July 1857

The Uprising of 1857



Assault of Delhi and capture of the Cashmere Gate, 14 September 1857

The Uprising of 1857



The Jantar Mantar observatory in Delhi in 1858, damaged in the fighting

The Uprising of 1857



Mortar damage to Kashmiri Gate, Delhi, 1858

The Uprising of 1857



Hindu Rao's house in Delhi, now a hospital, was extensively damaged in the fighting

The Uprising of 1857



Bank of Delhi was attacked by mortar and gunfire

The Uprising of 1857



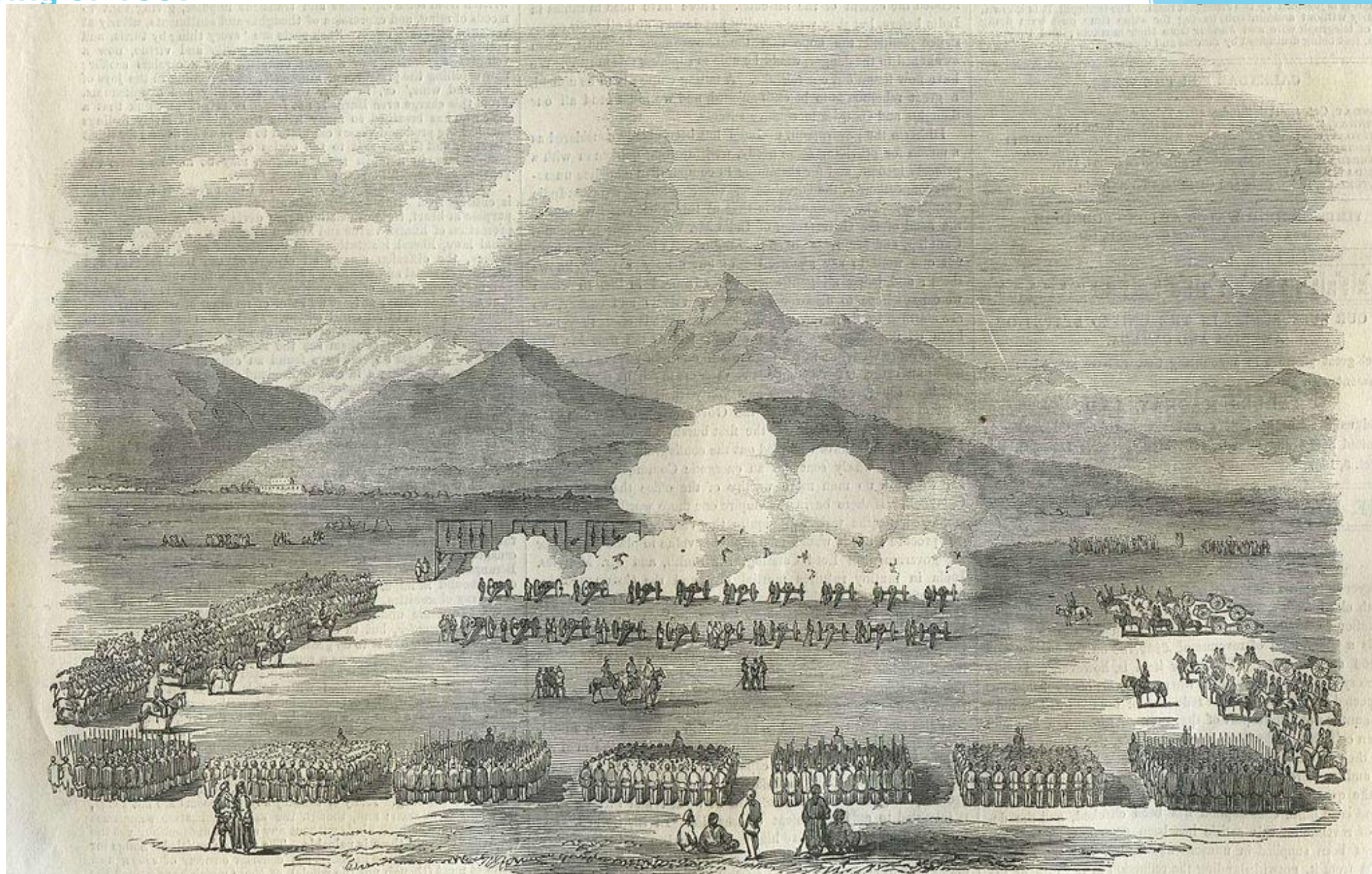
Capture of Bahadur Shah Zafar and his sons by William Hodson at Humayun's tomb on 20 September 1857

The Uprising of 1857



Jhansi Fort, which was taken over by rebel forces, and subsequently defended against British recapture by the Rani of Jhansi

The Uprising of 1857



EXECUTION OF MUTINEERS AT PESHAWUR: BLOWING FROM THE GUNS, ETC.



Hanging of defeated soldiers at Bahadur Shah Park in Dhaka.





Mangal Pandey



Laxmi Bai



Hazrat Mahal



Tanti Tope



The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, dynamic border around the central text.

Thank You