

Class 12 History
Part-III: Chapter 2
Rebels and the Raj
Revision Notes
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Key concepts in nutshell

- **Rebels and the Raj** – The revolt of 1857 and its representation Pattern of Rebellion – People from different walks of life plunged into the revolt – due to their hatred against the oppressive policies of the British
Centres of the Revolt – Lucknow, Kanpur, Bareilly, Meerut, Arrah in Bihar.
- **Leaders** – Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, Nana Saheb, Kunwar Singh, Bakt Khan, Begum Hazrat Mehal, Tatya Tope.
- **Awadh revolt** – direct annexation policy of Dalhousie – 1856. Hatred provoked – dispossessed taluqdars of Awadh, Injustice done to Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh embittered the people.
- **Revolt of the sepoys:**
 1. Policy of social superiority of British.
 2. Interference in religious matters – greased cartridges issues.
- **The vision of unity:**
 1. Hindu Muslim unity
 2. Search for alternative powers
 3. Rebels established parallel administration, in Delhi, Lucknow, and Kanpur after capturing centers of British power. Later they failed.
 4. The British policy of repression.
- **Repression – 1857** – North India was brought under a strict law to prolonged attack of British – one from

Calcutta to North India, another from Punjab to recover Delhi, 27,000 Muslims hanged.

- Image of the Revolt – Pictorial images produced by British and Indians – posters and cartoons.
- The performance of terror:
 1. Execution of rebels Nationalist imageries.
 2. Inspiration to nationalists celebration as the first war of Independence – leaders depicted as heroic figures.

1. PATTERN OF THE REBELLION

How the mutinies began?

1. The sepoys began their action with a signal, firing of the evening gun or the sounding of the bugle.
2. They seized the bell of the arms and plundered the treasury.
3. They attacked the government buildings – the jail, treasury, telephone office, record room, bungalows –burning all records.
4. Everything and everybody connected with the white man became a target.
5. In major towns like Kanpur, Lucknow, and Bareilly, moneylenders and rich became the objects of the rebels.

2. Leaders and followers

1. To fight the British, leadership and organisation were required, and for this, they turned towards the Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah who agreed to be the nominal leader of the rebellion.
2. In Kanpur, the sepoys and the people of the town agreed to support Nana Sahib.
3. In Jhansi, the Rani was forced to assume the leadership of the uprising.
4. Kunwar Singh, a local Zamindar in Arrah in Bihar, too took the leadership.

5. The local leaders emerged, urging peasants, zamindars, and tribals to revolt eg – Shah Mal mobilized the villagers of pargana Barout in Uttar Pradesh; Gonooa, a tribal cultivator of Singhbhum in Chotanagpur, became a rebel leader of the Kol tribals of the region.