



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 21 May 2019 – Afternoon

A Level History A

**Y320/01 From Colonialism to Independence:
The British Empire 1857–1965**

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet
(OCR12 sent with general stationery)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question number(s) must be clearly shown.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document consists of **4** pages.

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the nature of the events of 1857. [30]

Passage A

The impact of the military mutiny was magnified by a simultaneous series of rural rebellions reflecting peasant resentment at loss of land control to new men or urban money-making castes and also local grievances against excessive taxation. In North India 'rajās' like Devi Singh in Mathura and Adam Singh Beer in Meerut emerged overnight to rally a generally recalcitrant* peasantry to rise up against authority. Some districts however remained loyal enough to collect revenues which were transmitted to the British Raj, even during the revolt. No nationalist leadership, in the modern sense, emerged; the revolt had several sub national Indian currents, the most powerful of which was the reassertion of tradition-bound monarchies. The greatest landed magnates of Oudh, like Man Singh and Rana Beni Madho, had virtually been feudal monarchs before the annexation; now they saw themselves stripped both of their traditional martial lordships and substantial village revenues. In such regions the 'mutiny' is more accurately seen as a 'post pacification' revolt. The traditional inability of Indian rajās and nawabs to subordinate personal ambitions and jealousies to national goals plagued rebel ranks from the Great Revolt's inception. The British on the other hand never seriously doubted their military capacity to win back the ground they had lost and never lost faith in their Raj. It was the last desperate struggle of many an Indian ancient regime, united by their fears and their hatred of the foreigner, whose Western Raj had become too powerful to destroy. It was far more than a mutiny, yet much less than a first War of Independence, as some Indian nationalists like to call it.

**recalcitrant* = unwilling to cooperate with or obey figures in authority

Adapted from: S. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, published in 1977.

Passage B

The events of 1857 have often been taken to mark a watershed in both British rule and the Indian response to it. But the interpretation of these events remains controversial, and so does the their title. Known to the British as 'the Sepoy', 'Bengal' or 'Indian Mutiny', to Indians as the National Uprising or the First War of Independence, and to the less partisan as the Great Rebellion, what happened in 1857 defies simplistic analysis. Equating the rebellion with the traditional, even 'feudal' form of reaction, whose failure would usher in a new age of nationalism and politically organised protest, is no longer acceptable. Many different groups with different grievances became aligned with either side in the Great Rebellion. The rights and wrongs of British rule were not always a decisive factor and the frontier between the two sides sliced through both agrarian and urban communities, both settled and nomadic peoples, both high caste and low, both landlord and tenant, Muslim and Hindu. There was something of a national character in both those who opposed the rebellion as well as in that of those who supported it.

Adapted from: J. Keay, *India: A History*, published in 2000.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** To what extent did the reasons for the growth of the British Empire change in the period 1857–1965? **[25]**
- 3*** ‘Opposition to British colonial rule was more violent in Asia than Africa between 1857 and 1965.’ How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** ‘The British Empire always had a negative impact on international relations during the period from 1857 to 1965.’ How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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