Name: _____ Date: _____

Indian Independence

The Sepoy Rebellion

Indians from all social classes resented British interference and domination. Well-educated Indians were shut out of high posts. In line with mercantilist policy, the British kept Indians from engaging in large-scale manufacturing, which hurt the business class. Peasants felt the impact of the British-imposed economic policies and were angry at laws that violated ancient customs and traditions.

Unpopular moves. In the 1850s, the East India Company took several unpopular steps. First, it required sepoys - Indian troops-to serve anywhere, either in India or overseas. For high-caste Hindus, however, overseas travel was an offense against their religion. The second cause of discontent was a new law that allowed Hindu widows to remarry. Hindus viewed both moves as a Christian conspiracy to undermine their beliefs.

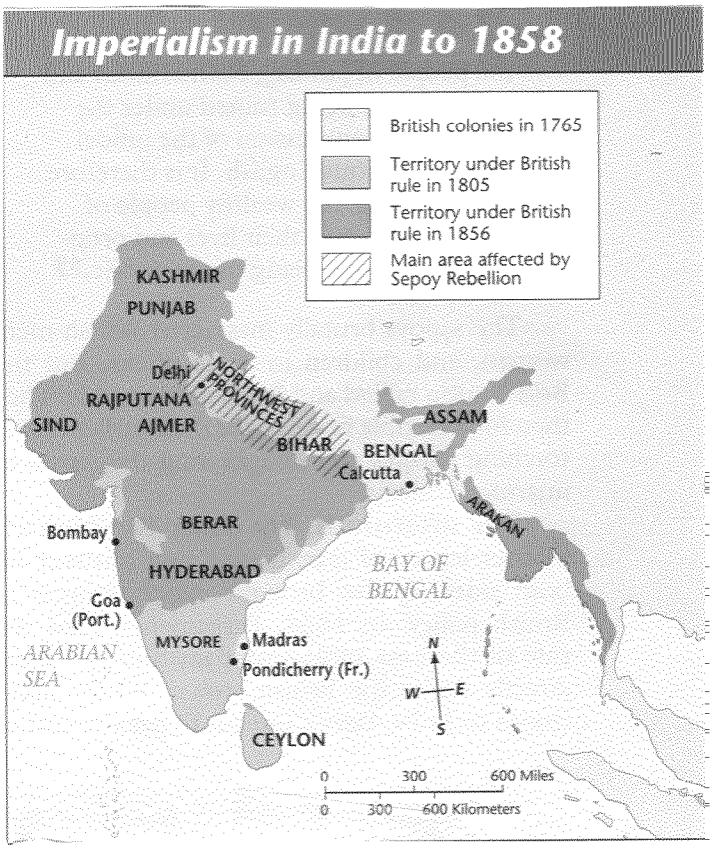
The final insult came in 1857, when the British issued new rifles to the sepoys. Troops were told to bite off the tips of cartridges before loading them into the rifles. The cartridges, however, were greased with animal fat-either from cows, which Hindus considered sacred, or from pigs, which were forbidden to Muslims. When the troops refused the order to "load rifles," they were dismissed without pay and sent home in disgrace.

On to Delhi. Angry sepoys rose up against their British officers. The Sepoy Rebellion swept across northern and central India. Several sepoy regiments marched off to Delhi, the old Mughal capital. There, they hailed the last Mughal ruler as their leader. Other sepoys issued a document calling on both Hindus and Muslims for their support:

> "It is well known to all, that in this age the people of [India], both Hindus and Muslims, are being ruined under the tyranny and oppression of the infidel and treacherous English. It is therefore the duty of all the wealthy people of India . . . to stake their lives and property for the well being of the public."

The sepoys brutally massacred British men, women, and children in some places. But the British soon rallied and crushed the revolt. They then took terrible revenge for their earlier losses, torching villages and slaughtering thousands of unarmed Indians.

The aftermath. The Sepoy Rebellion left a bitter legacy of fear, hatred, and mistrust on both sides. It also brought major changes in British policy. In 1858, Parliament ended the rule of the East India Company and put India directly under the British crown. It sent more troops to India, taxing Indians try the cost of these occupying forces. While it slowed the "reforms" that had angered Hindus and Muslims, it continued to develop India for its own economic benefit.



PARK EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Purpose, Preparation, Pride

Name: _____ Date: _____

Indian Independence

CAUSES AND RESULTS OF THE SEPOY REBELLION

Directions: Answer the quetions below based upon your reading.

1 What European country controlled most of India in 1858? _____

2. British control of India was welcomed by most Indian citizens. True or false. _____

3. What are sepoys? _____
_____
_____

4. Why did Hindus refuse to bite the tips off their new rifle cartridges? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. Why did Muslims refuse to bite the tips off their new rifle cartridges? _____
_____
_____
_____

6. The British responded to the sepoys refusal by immediately putting them on trial. True or False
_____

7. According to the quote on pg. 646, what special obligation did rich Hindus have in the Sepoy Rebellion?
_____
_____
_____

8. Both the sepoys and the British troops slaughtered innocent people. True or False. _____

9. Which side eventually won; the British or the Sepoys? _____

10. As a result of the Sepoy Rebellion, England granted Indians their freedom. True or False. _____

11. If you were the British King, how could you have prevented the Sepoy Rebellion? (Remember: you want to keep India as your colony) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____