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## *Golden Research Thoughts*

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## A BRIEF HISTORY – THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ERA

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### ABSTRACT

**A** thought became a revolution; it took over minds and hearts and it divided a country in two. Once brothers, the people of India turned into enemies when their motherland, India, became India and Pakistan.

*But when did the hatred, the resentment begin? When did the British Raj become insufferable?*

**KEYWORDS:** *Indian Independence era , exercising power and control of Indian Military Forces.*

### INTRODUCTION :

The British entered India in 1608, concentrating on trading on new land. It was only when the Mughal Empire weakened in 1707 and dissolved that the East India Company took over India in 1764 after the Battle of Buxar. The East India Company – a British trading company administered power



over India and ruled most states as well as exercising power and control of Indian Military Forces.

There were many battles and disagreements through Indian history, such as the Battle of Buxar but what began the Indian Independence 'battle' was the 'war' between the British Raj and the Indians in 1857, known as the First War, the Great Rebellion and the Indian Mutiny amongst other such names. This war was a sepoy's (an Indian soldier) fight that escalated throughout India.

Although this was seen as the catalyst of the First War, other factors contributed to the slow

but sure build up of resentment and hate toward the East India Company.

It came to be believed by the sepoys that the East India Company intended to divide faiths and have them convert to Christianity, by force or deception. Land seizure was another British rule, one that forced the fact that if a ruler did not produce a true heir, their land would then be the property of the East India Company. As a result, many kingdoms such as Oudh, Nagpur and Awadh were taken over.

But what started the Mutiny? What was the cause of such an upheaval? The answer – a disregard of the

native's faith. The beliefs of the Hindu and the Muslim man were ridiculed by the East India Company.

Ignoring the Hindu's religious devotion and worshipping of the Cow, the 'mother' who gives milk, and the Muslim's revulsion of the Pig, that they see as dirty, lazy and greedy, the East India company ordered their army to manually load ammunition that was greased with the fat of the pig and the cow. Therefore, biting one end of the cartridge before use in a certain rifle was outrageous!

But no one had the nerve to stand up until Mangal Pandey, an infamous sepoy, took lead and braved to voice the injustice of the Company. He brought the cow/pig greased cartridge fact to the forefront to his fellow sepoys. Anger led to retaliation, with Mangal Pandey leading. He fired the first bullet.

Mangal Pandey with a

few others was arrested and sentenced to death by hanging but Pandey was hanged ten days before his sentence date.

After the 'War', the East India Company was abolished and the responsibility of India was taken over by the Crown. Many steps were taken later to ensure some peace, some which included the end of attainment of land from stately princes.

After a lull in the Indian subcontinent, in 1915 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi arrived from South Africa, known as Bapu (father) and Mahatma (the Great One). Gandhi travelled throughout India to 'see'. He observed the rich and the poor, he witnessed ill treatment from the British Goré (white people) directed at the natives. Racial discrimination and prejudice were high on the list of unforgiveness.

Gandhi realised that India needed to fight back, to win back her rights and to claim her country back from the 'foreigners'. One day, Gandhi settled on his decision. The European's injustices and his tolerance to them went just too far. In 1942, he called for the 'Quit India Movement'. He wanted the British out of India!

Gandhi advertised the Quit India Movement throughout India and voiced clearly that there must be no violence. India's people embraced the Movement and embarked upon it with passion. Vallabhai Patel – Indian barrister and statesman, Jawaharlal Nehru – Indian politician (who became the first Indian Prime Minister), and Muhammad Ali Jinnah – Muslim lawyer, politician, statesman (founder of Pakistan), united with Gandhi in the Quit India Movement and participated and argued in heated discussions and speeches.

They were all arrested for 'disturbing the peace'. But this didn't stop India, who fought back. Nothing was going to stop them now. During the course of the Movement, many riots started along with the damaging of government buildings, derailment of railway lines (which the British Raj had introduced into the country), boycotting of schools and colleges and the throwing away/setting fire of British goods.

Marches, riots and freedom speeches were a regular occurrence; violence (against Gandhi's pleas to stop) turned murderous. Indians were arrested or killed – the lathi, a soldier or policeman's baton was never far away from the protestors. Many were jailed for a long time or executed.

In 1946, Jinnah proposed a new country – Pakistan. He wanted a Muslim country, to be ruled by a Muslim man, not Hindu. The other leaders were not happy about this and tried reasoning with Jinnah to no avail. Jinnah was adamant. He declared 16th August 1946 as Direct Action Day which saw colossal rioting and manslaughter across Calcutta.

Tension, anger and fear grew amongst the Hindu and Muslim communities and during October and November 1946, horrendous numbers of massacres, abductions, rape and forced faith conversions of Hindus, as well as loot and arson were seen in Noakhali, actioned by the Muslim community.

Gandhi spent four months in Noakhali trying to restore peace and bring the communities together. But his efforts failed. During this time, Partition of India was accepted by the Congress Party.

14th August 1947 – Pakistan was formed.

15th August 1947 – midnight, India was made a Free country; she gained her independence. The British flag was lowered and the Indian flag rose.

It was Independence Day and both countries rejoiced in their new found Freedom.

Today, in England and in many other countries, Independence Day is celebrated each year on the 14th and 15th of August remembering those Martyrs who sacrificed their lives for us and mourning those Indians whose lives were taken away through riots and massacres; a time which changed lives forever and is still fresh in those minds who lived during those horrendous times.

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