



Paika Rebellion: 1817

Why in News

Recently, the Centre has said that the **Paika rebellion cannot be called the first War of Independence.**

- It has also been suggested that it would be included as a **case study in the Class 8 National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) history textbook.**
- For the first time in 2017, the **Odisha state cabinet had passed a proposal** to formally urge the centre to **declare the Paika rebellion as the first war of Independence.**
- In 2018 the Government released the [commemorative coin and postage stamp](#) in memory of Paika Rebellion.

Key Points

▪ About:

- The Paikas (pronounced **“paiko”**, literally **‘foot soldiers’**), were a class of military retainers had been **recruited since the 16th century by kings in Odisha** from a variety of social groups to render martial services in return for hereditary rent-free land (**nish-kar jagirs**) and titles.
- When the British arrived they were **peasant militias of the Gajapati ruler Mukund Dev II, of Odisha.**

▪ British Oppression:

- The Paikas **lost their estates when the new colonial establishments and land revenue settlements of the British came into force.**
 - **Establishment of British rule in Odisha** was followed by a policy of repression against the Paikas. They lost their traditional position in the society and their lands were taken away.
- The **continuous interference in the economy and revenue systems** led to exploitation and oppression of the peasants and farmers eventually triggering a rebellion against the British.
 - Before and after the revolt of the Paikas in Khurda came risings in **Paralakhemundi** (1799-1814), **Ghumusar** (1835-36) and **Angul** (1846-47), the rebellion of Kondhs in **Kalahandi** (1855), and the **Sabara** Rebellion of 1856-57, again in **Paralakhemundi.**
 - These rebellions were **led by propertied sections** whose position was undermined by colonial interventions

▪ Paika Rebellion\Revolt:

- The Paika Bidroha (Paika Rebellion) of 1817 **took place nearly 40 years before the first sepoy mutiny.**
- **Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mohapatra Bharamarbar Rai**, the **highest-ranking military general of Mukund Dev II**, and erstwhile holder of the lucrative Rodanga

estate, **led an army of Paikas** to join the uprising of the Kondhs. They confronted the British on **2nd April 1817**.

- The Paikas were **supported by the rajas, zamindars, village heads and ordinary peasants**. The rebellion quickly spread to different parts of the province.
- Government buildings in **Banapur were set on fire**, policemen killed and the British treasury looted.
- Over the next few months, the **revolt continued but was eventually overpowered by the British army**. Bidyadhar was imprisoned in 1825 and died while still in jail four years later.

[Source: TH](#)

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