

British Colonial Exploitation & Plundering of Bengal Resources 1757-1947

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Grant of Diwani in 1765

- The Treaty of Allahabad also known as Diwani treaty was signed on August 12 1765, between Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II and Lord Robert Clive of East India Company. The Treaty also marked the political and constitutional involvement and the beginning of British rule in India.

Grant of Diwani in 1765

- East India Company was granted *Diwani rights in 1765*, or the right to collect taxes on behalf of the Mughal Emperor from the eastern province of Bengal-Bihar-Orissa. These rights allowed the Company to collect revenue directly from the people of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- The company officers used to impose heavy tax burden upon the people every year, causing immense misery to the native people.



Shah Alam II granting Robert Clive the "Diwani rights of Bengal, Behar and Odisha" after the Battle of Buxar, on 12 August 1765

Bengal Loot Funding Industrial Revolution

- In order to create and expand their external market, the BEIC hampered the local cotton and textile industries, including the world famous Muslin products in Eastern Bengal.
- Britain banned the import of most cotton textiles from Bengal. It affected vast numbers of local artisans and weavers.
- The plunder in Bengal helped the industrial revolution in England. Resources and capital from Bengal were being drained to invest in the industries of England.
- This domineering British control pushed Bengal hundreds of years behind in economic development.

Brainstorm Question:

Why do you think British East India Company was keen to gain *diwani* rights from Bengal province particularly? Write the answer using your words.



Colonial Opium Trade in South Asia



What is Opium?

- Opium: A drug made from the seeds of poppy flowers that is used to control pain or to help people sleep.
- It is a bitter brownish addictive narcotic that consists of the dried latex(plant juice) obtained from immature seeds of opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*).

Picture: Poppy field



Latex being collected from an immature poppy plant



Chunk of opium

Opium



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ISBN: 9780959593688
www.DrugUsersBible.com

Colonial drug trade in Bengal

- Trade in non-medicinal opium evolved through a long process of competition amongst western maritime powers (especially by the British and the Dutch).
- **Opium trade in China, India and Indonesia was a lucrative business for the European companies. Lands in India and Bengal were used to cultivate poppy plant and produce opium. Then the finished product was sold to China.**

Colonial drug trade in Bengal

- To regulate opium business in Bengal, two organizations were created by the British East India Company :
- **Gentlemen Opium Monopoly Council in 1763**
- **Bengal Government Opium Monopoly in 1773**

- Poppy cultivation increased from 2,83,000 hectares in 1765-66 to 3,03,500 hectares in the following year.
- **Ryots (farmers) were forced to cultivate cash crops like opium in the fields instead of food crops.**
- **Sudden conversion of fertile paddy fields into poppy cultivation resulted the Great Bengal Famine of 1770 causing death of 10 million people.**



British East India Company Opium Warehouse, Lithograph by
W. S. Sherwill in 1850

Manufacturing of opium in colonial Bengal



THE MANUFACTURE OF OPIUM IN INDIA

Photo: Bourne & Shepherd, Calcutta.

An opium den in Bengal during 1860s



HERGE
THE ADVENTURES OF

TINTIN

THE BLUE LOTUS



The story tells of young Belgian reporter Tintin and his dog Snowy, who are invited to China, where he uncovers a European opium-smuggling ring.

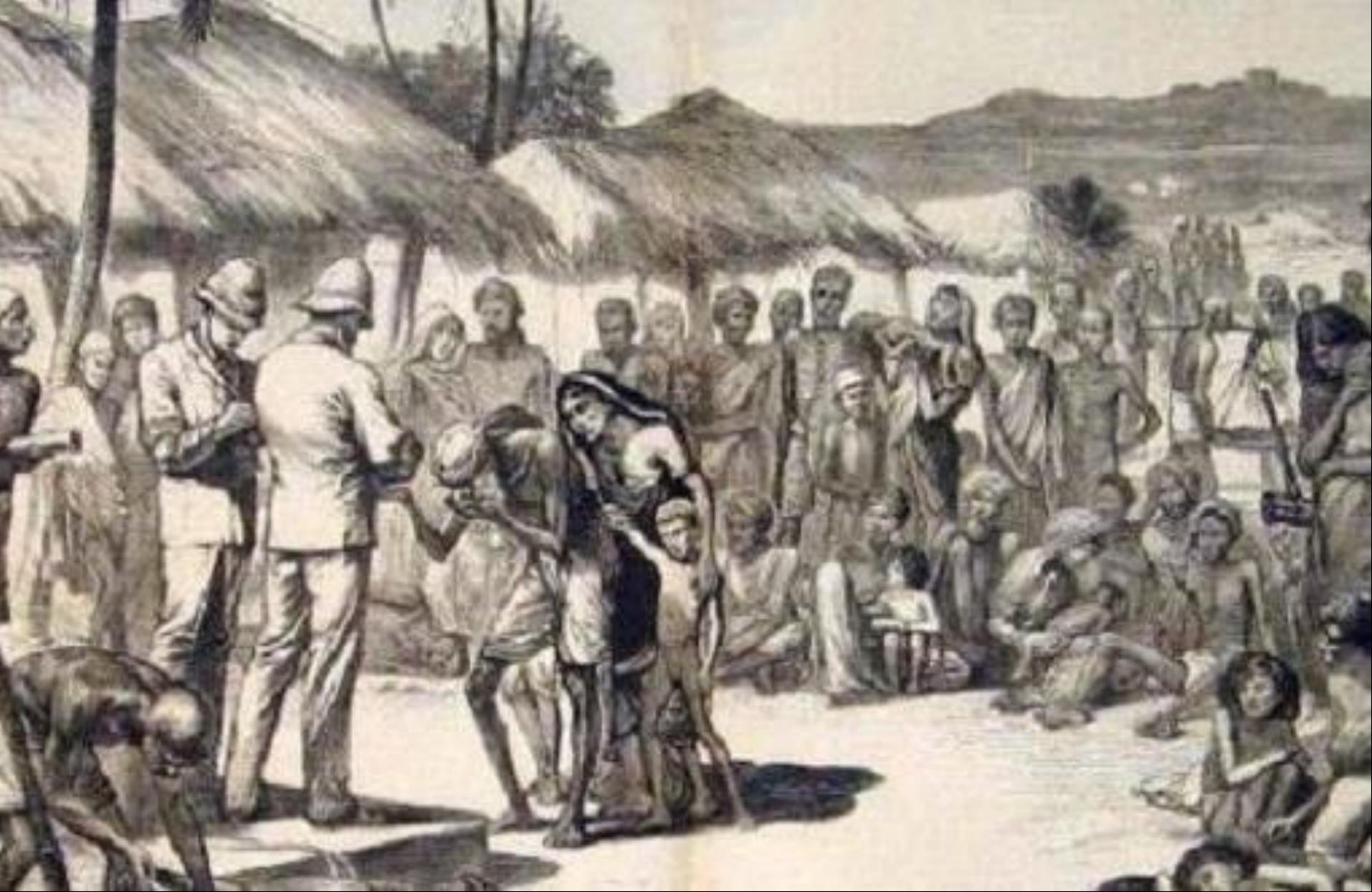


Great Bengal Famine of 1770

- The consequence of all the British exploitation was the collapse of the economy, leading to the Great famine of 1770(Bangla year 1176). Also known as “*Chittarer Manantar*”
- This was the first famine to ever take place in Bengal and caused the death of about 10 million people.

Reasons behind the Bengal Famine of 1770

- Diwani treaty
- Tax burden imposed by the BEIC officers
- Destruction of local cottage and textile industries of Bengal
- Intervention of foreign goods in market
- Drainage of wealth from Bengal to Britain
- Oppression of the Company officers and native zamindars
- Colonial opium trade and poppy cultivation

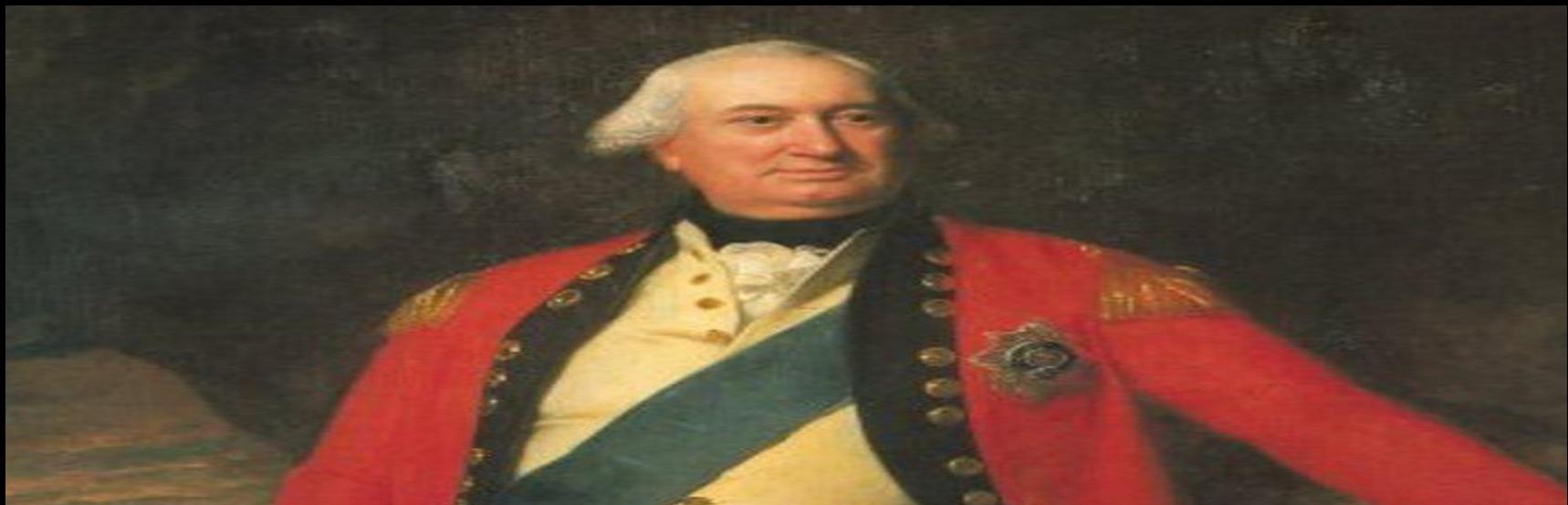


Atrocities of BEIC during the Great Bengal Famine of 1770

Permanent Settlement Policy

- The Permanent Settlement was brought into effect in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Varanasi in 1793. This was basically an agreement between the company and the Zamindars to fix the land revenue.
- Due to this policy, *Zamindars*, who had been the revenue collectors only , became the owners of the land. They were given the rights to collect rent from the peasants using their own methods.

Charles Cornwallis(1738-1805), 1st Marquess Cornwallis

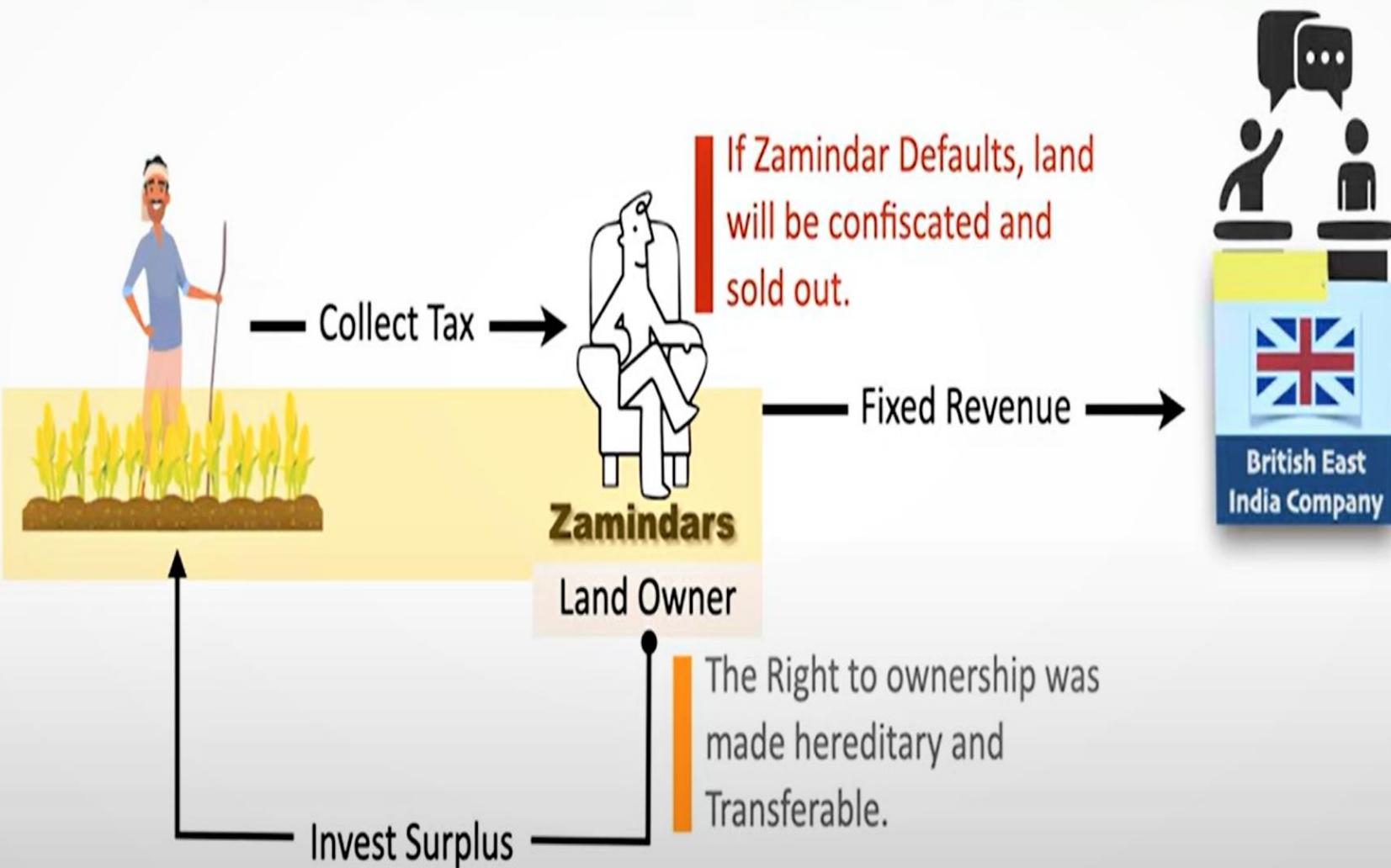


One of the most significant measures introduced by Lord Cornwallis in the year 1793 was the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. This measure was in a way, the beginning of the colonial “divide and rule” policy.

Main features of the Permanent Settlement Policy

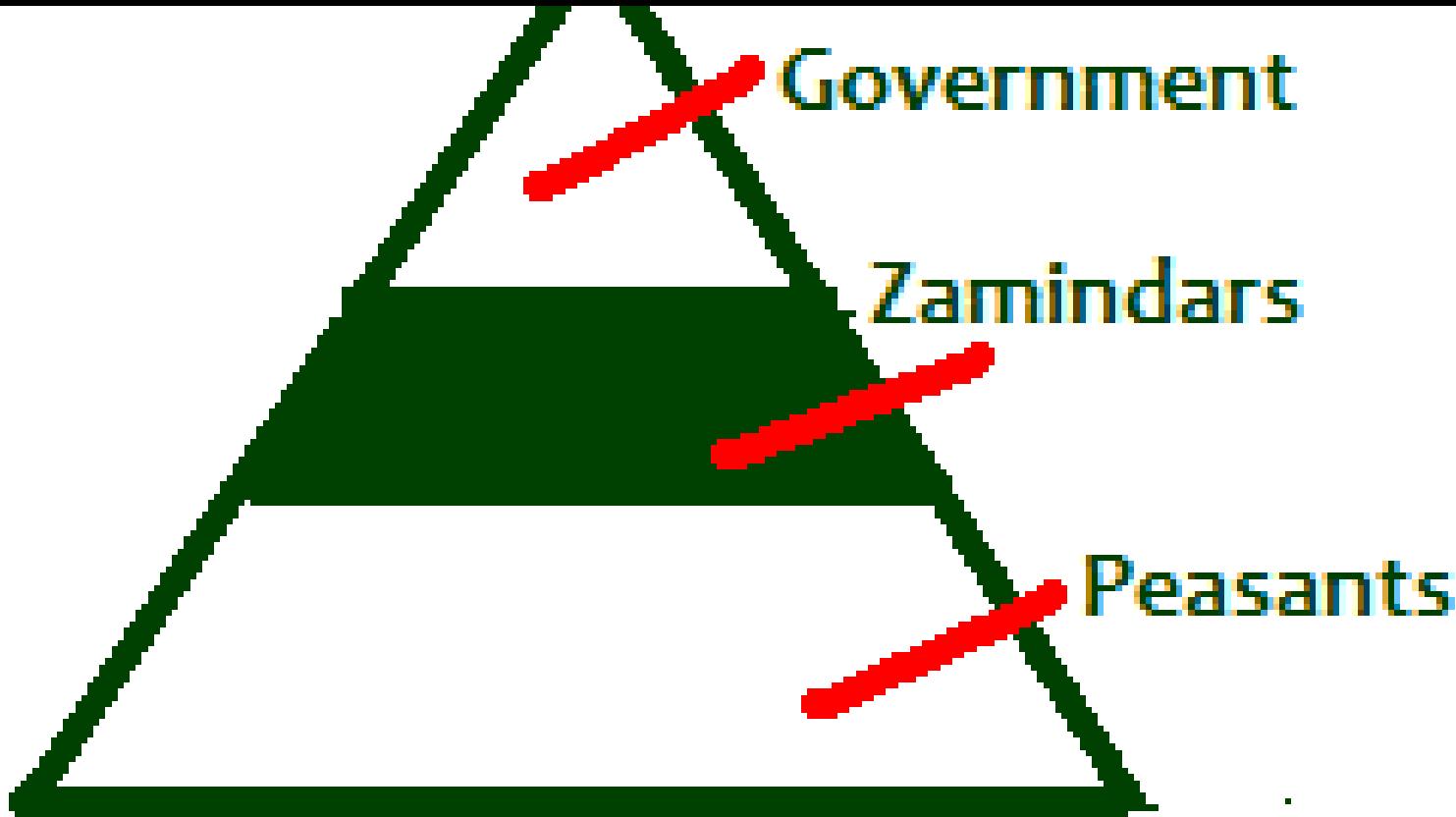
- It reversed the age-old practice of the Mughal administration, whereby the state was the owner of the land and zamindars acted as mere rent collectors.
- Revenue or tax was to be fixed in perpetuity. Some rules were fixed for the Zamindars to pay the fixed annual land revenue for all time to come.
- However, zamindars were warned if they failed to pay the yearly instalment(kisty) before the sunset of the last day of the fiscal year, their land would be sold in auction. It was known as the Sunset Law.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT



Main features of the Permanent Settlement Policy

- With this new policy in place, the landlords earned the capacity to raise the land tax, sell or mortgage any piece of their land or use it in any manner they liked.
- It paved the way for anyone to become zamindar who had cash money and was ready to invest it for attaining superior power and status in the society.
- In this way, British rulers managed to create a class of people who were loyal to them.



Zamindari System

Reasons for implementation

- The expectation behind the permanent settlement was that, over time, Bengal's zamindars would become improving landlords who would invest in agricultural development.
- Fixed government taxes, rising produce prices and new land under the plough would leave more and more wealth in the zamindars' hands.
- By reinvesting in agriculture, zamindars would contribute to boost the Bengal delta's economy.

Impact of Permanent Settlement

The newly adopted permanent policy brought tremendous impact over the socio-economic and political life of the local population. Such as:

- rise of trend of property commercialization of land**
- harsh treatment to the ryots for revenue collection**
- absentee landlords becoming the owners of the land**
- refusal by zamindars to make any discount or mercy for the ryots(farmers) during draught, flood or other natural disasters**
- Many traditional zamindar families lost their estates due to the Sunset Law**

Exploitation by Zamindars

- Land revenue collection caused tremendous financial hardship for the impoverished ryots.
- Zamindar's share from the peasant's produce was not fixed.
- Permanent settlement policy denied the peasantry any property rights in land.
- Zamindars did not invest surplus in the land.
- Absentee zamindars started staying in Kolkata for a better life, while keeping their estate in East Bengal.
- Some absentee Zamindars often sold part of their authority to intermediaries. The intermediaries or sub-zamindars created another segment below the line to exploit the peasantry.

Anti-British struggles in Bengal



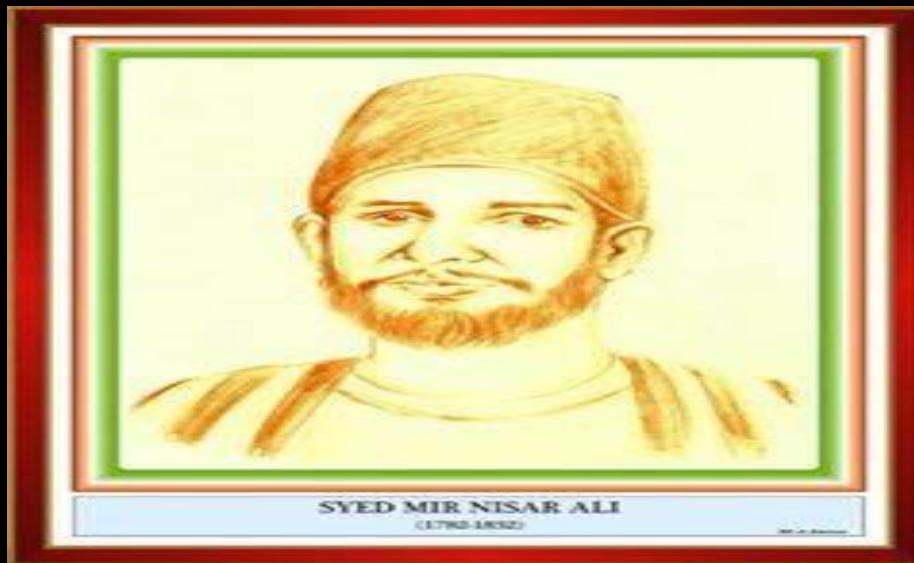
Resistance to the British Rule

- Fakir Sannyasi Rebellion (1760)
- Rebellion of Titumir (1831)
- Faraizi Movement (1800-1862)
- The Sepoy Revolt or the First War of Independence (1857)
- Revolt of Indigo Cultivators / *Neel Bidroho*(1859-1862)



Rebellion of Titumir(1831)

- The oppressed people in Bengal got their leader in **Syed Mir Nisar Ali**, popularly known as **Titumir**.
- In 1827 he defied the British land reforms, which were introduced to strengthen the position of the zamindars.
- He was the leader of the Revolt of Barasat. **His men were surrounded in his famous Bamboo fort in Narikelbaria near Calcutta and he died fighting valiantly against British soldiers on 19th November 1831.**



Faraizi Movement(1800-1862)

- Prominent leaders were Haji Shariatullah and Mohsinuddin Ahmad Dudu Miyan
- Though the Faraizi movement was started as a social and religious reform, it inspired not only the oppressed Muslim cultivators but also the Hindu cultivators to work together against the cruelty of the zamindars and colonial government.



**Haji Shariatullah -
pioneer of Faraizi
movement**

The Revolt of Indigo Cultivators/*Neel Bidroho* (1859-1862)

- European planters compelled the Bengali peasants to grow indigo plant. The plant was used to make blue fabric dye for use in the textile industries in different cities in UK.
- In response to their repressive tactics, the peasants challenged the zamindars, the indigo-planters and also the British through the organized Indigo Movement during 1859-1862.
- The movement was initiated by farmers Digambar and Bishnucharan Biswas.

Indigo(*Indigofera*) plant and indigo dye

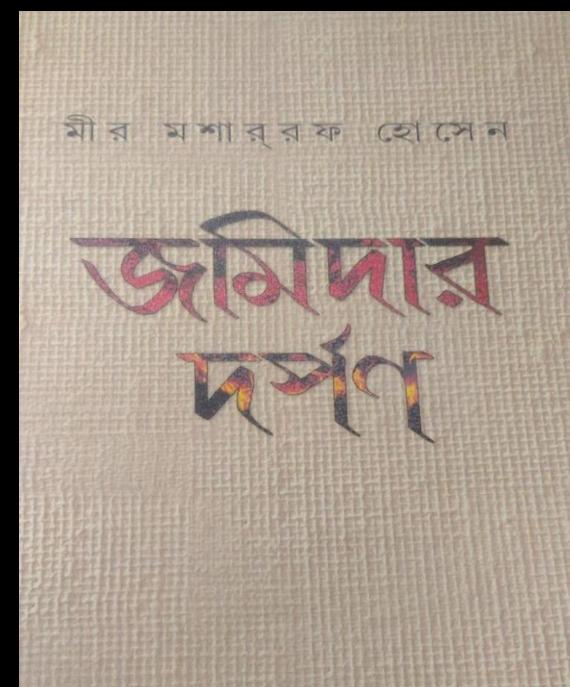
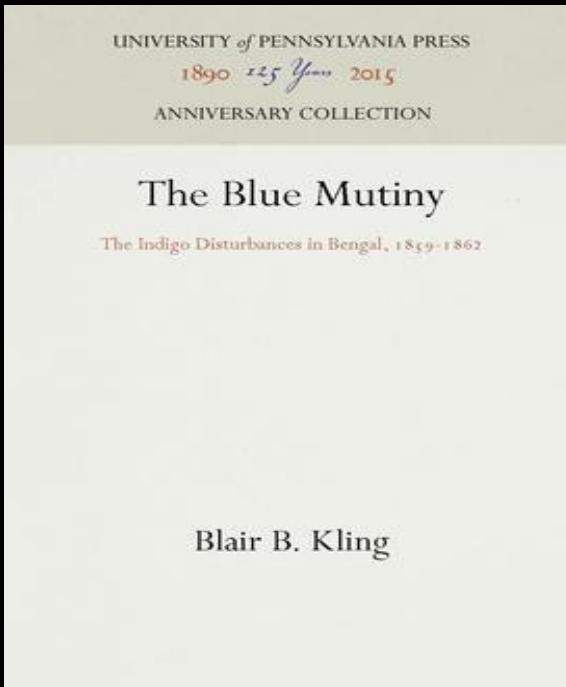
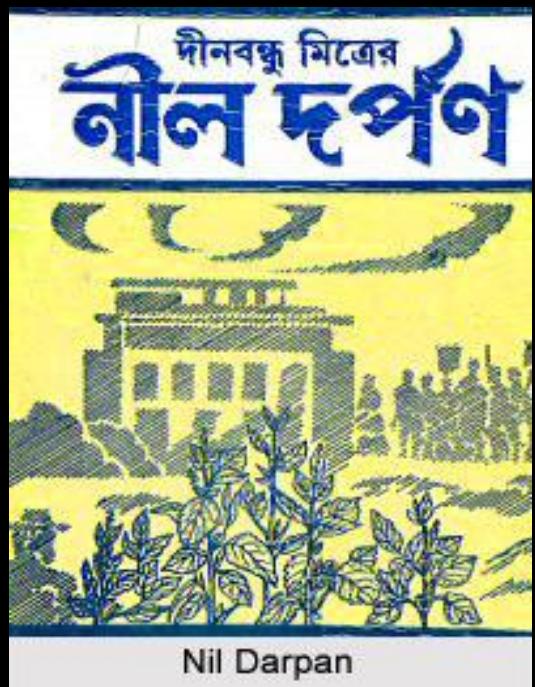


Indigo factory in Bengal in colonial period



The Revolt of Indigo Cultivators(1859-1862)

Notable literary works on Indigo Movement:



The Sepoy Revolt of 1857: The First War of Independence



The First War of Independence of 1857

- Sepoy Revolt was one of the most significant armed struggles for regaining the independence of the subcontinent backed by the common people.
- Behind the revolt of 1857, many factors were at work, which were political, social, economic, religious and **military** in nature.

A sepoy of Bengal native infantry



Military Causes:

- The number of British troops in India was never very large but the Company was able to recruit from the native people.
- Sepoys were native Bengali and Indian soldiers but they were recruited in the Company army.
- They had fought with devotion in the most difficult circumstances and won many wars for the Company in Burma, China, Persia.
- In spite of this, they did not get a fair deal.

Military Causes:

- Their salaries were very low in comparison with those of the British soldiers and they had little chance of promotion.**
- Hindu soldiers were forced to cross the sea to Burma. To cross the *kala pani* of sea was pollution to the orthodox Hindus who considered themselves to be reduced in caste.**
- No Muslim soldiers would eat salt pork provided in the ships.**
- The self-respect of the sepoys was trampled upon at every step. It was not uncommon for a British officer to curse and swear at the native soldiers.**
- All these Company actions were very much resented by the native sepoys.**

Immediate Cause:

- Immediate cause of the revolt was considered to be the introduction of Enfield Rifle.
- The forceful introduction of the Enfield rifle ignited both the Hindu and Muslim soldiers to revolt on distinctive religious grounds in 1857.

Brainstorm Question :

- Why do you think the introduction of Enfield Rifle acted as the triggering cause for the sepoy revolt of 1857?**



Immediate Cause: Enfield Rifle

- In 1857, sepoys throughout India were issued with a new rifle, the **Pattern 1853 Enfield rifled-musket**. It was a more powerful and accurate weapon than the old Brown Bess rifle.
- To load the Enfield rifle, soldiers had to bite the cartridge open and pour the gunpowder it contained into the muzzle.
- Many sepoys believed that the cartridges of the new rifles were greased with lard(pork fat) which was regarded as unclean by Muslims and tallow (cow fat) which angered the Hindus.
- The news soon spread to all the military stations. This roused a storm of indignation and kindled the embers of discontent. The introduction of the cartridges hastened the revolt which had long been brewing.

P53 Enfield rifle and cartridges

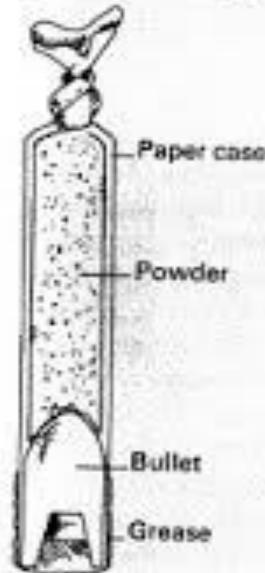


Source: National Army Museum



This percussion-lock rifle was produced in the British Ordnance Factory at Enfield near London. It came into use in the British army in 1853. Shortly afterwards it was sent out for trials for the Company army in India. The 'rifling' on the inside of the barrel made the shot more accurate and gave the weapon a greater range. It was an enormous improvement on the Brown Bess smooth-bore flintlock musket which had been the standard weapon of all British forces since the early eighteenth century.

A greased cartridge



How it was loaded



1. The soldier tears open the end of the cartridge with his teeth.



2. He pours the powder down the muzzle of his rifle. Then he thrusts the bullet, still wrapped in the cartridge paper which makes it a tight fit, into the muzzle.



3. He takes his ramrod from its slot beneath the rifle barrel, and rams paper, bullet and powder to the bottom of the barrel.

Source: guns.com

The War of Independence of 1857

- The rebellion sparked at Barrakpur (current location: West Bengal) under the leadership of Mangal Pandey a young soldier of 34th Bengal Native Infantry, on 29th March 1857. He was later caught and executed.**
- The rebellion soon spread to Meerut, Delhi, Awadh and other parts in Northern India.**
- Also the resistance in Dhaka, Chittagong, and skirmishes at Sylhet, Jessore, Rangpur ,Pabna and Dinajpur left the British Government in a state of red alert and apprehension in the Bengal Presidency.**

Mangal pandey of 34th Bengal native infantry



Notable leadership during the revolt



**Queen Laxmi Bai
Begum Hazrat Mahal
Peshwa Nana Sahib**

Notable leadership during the revolt



Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal Emperor: he became the symbol of the sepoy rebellion

Last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar in 1858, just after his trial and before his departure for exile in Burma.



Consequences of the Revolt of 1857

- End of East India Company rule in India**
- End of the Mughal empire after the demise of the last emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar**
- Reorganisation of Indian Army**
- Establishment of British Raj/Crown Rule in India in 1858 through the proclamation of Queen Victoria.**
- Beginning of the third phase (1858-1947) of British rule in Indian-subcontinent.**



The Bengali Hindu Renaissance

Political and National Awakening in Bengal

বাংলার নবজাগরণ
Bengal Renaissance





Raja Rammohan Roy

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay Rabindranath Tagore



Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das

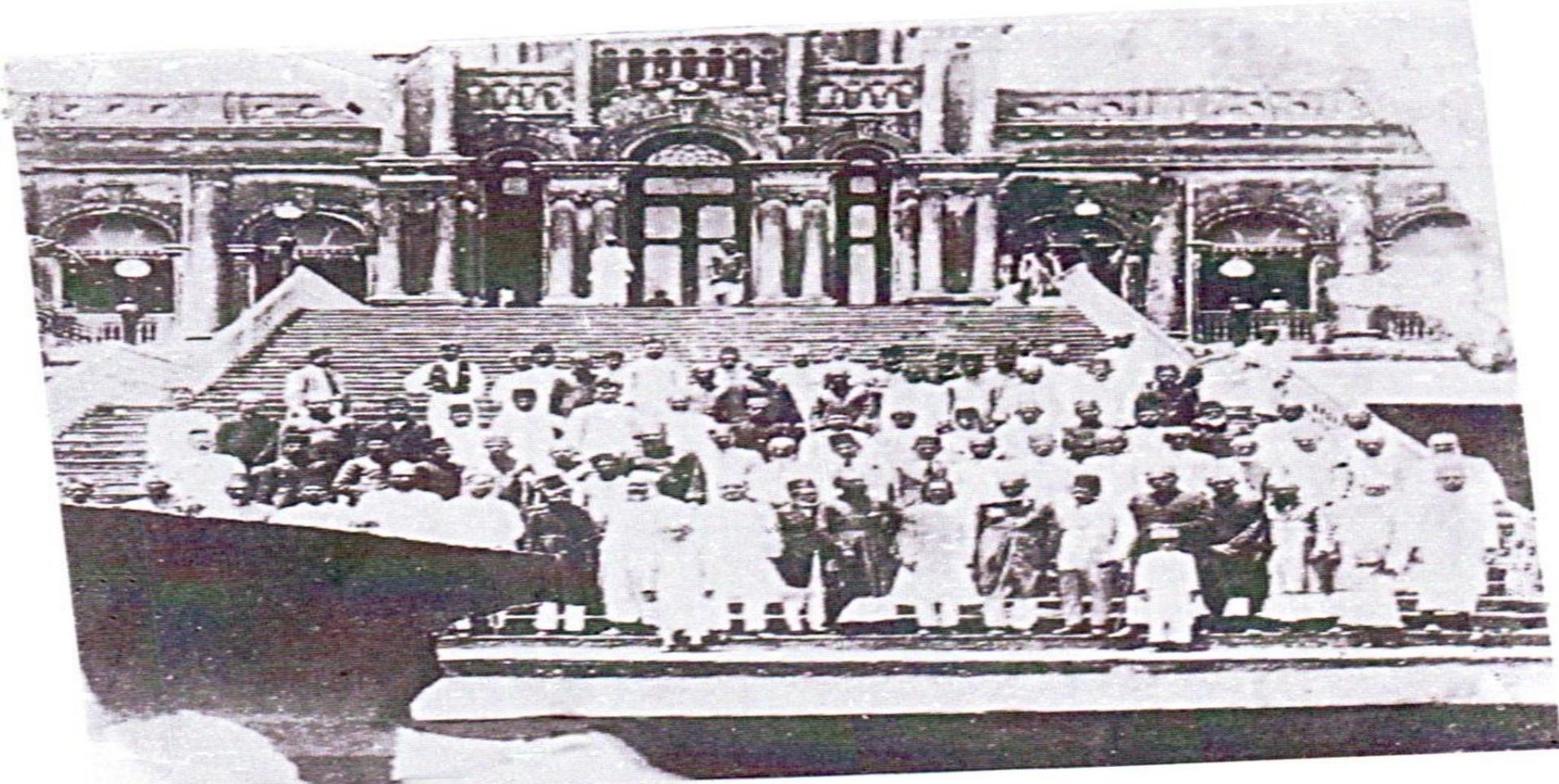
Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose



हेनरी लुईस विवेन डेरोजिओ
HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO

The Bengali Muslim Renaissance



Muslims under the British Raj

- With the consolidation of British hegemony over the Indian Subcontinent, many profound transformations were effected, which disrupted the old order established by the former rulers, the Mughals, centuries back.
- Particularly Muslims, were to suffer the most, politically, economically, as well as psychologically. For them, it meant the loss of power, position, wealth and dignity.**
- Muslims were, indeed, reduced to poverty and destitution as a result of British rule.

Muslims under the British Raj

- As a result, they developed a hostile attitude towards the British whom they accused of expropriating their prestige.
- Muslims could not accept the British rule & their cultural penetration for a long time, but the Hindus gradually adjusted with the emerging situation. By embracing western education and culture, Hindus became trusted subjects in the eyes of the new rulers, and by learning the English language, they were offered services in the Government.
- **The Muslims did not take to the English language, and thus denied themselves opportunities of material as well as intellectual progress.**

Table : Muslim and Hindu Appointments to Government Positions (early 1870)

GAZETTED POSTS	EUROPEANS	HINDUS	MUSLIMS	TOTAL
DEPUTY MAGISTRATE AND DEPUTY COLLECTORS	53	113	30	196
POLICE DEPARTMENT	106	03	00	109
MUNSIFS	01	178	37	216

Source: Dialnet-

TheImpactOfBritishRuleOnTheIndianMuslimCommunityIn-2535970

Table : Muslim Students Enrolment at British-patronized Educational Institutions, 1875

Province	Classes of Institution	Total No. of Students	Total No. of Muslim Students
Bengal	College	2738	106
	High School	43747	3831
	Middle School	37959	5032
	Total	84444	8969

Source: Dialnet-
[TheImpactOfBritishRuleOnTheIndianMuslimCommunityIn-2535970](https://www.dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/ResumenArticulo?codigo_articulo=2535970)

Post-1857 Era

- The post-Great Revolt period was probably the gloomiest period in the history of the Muslim community in the Indian Subcontinent. In the British eyes, Muslims had concocted and taken a prominent part in the events of 1857.
- **As a matter of fact, the British had always regarded the Muslims as their archenemy in India due to the fact that they (the British) had unseated them from power, and the fact that the insurgents endeavoured to restore Bahadur Shah Zafar to power convinced the British enough to assume that the Muslim leaders were behind the planning and leading of the uprising. Though Muslims were not the only ones responsible for the outbreak of the Revolt, they were to bear the brunt of it.**
- By the late nineteenth century the changing patterns of the Government policies confronted the Muslims with the harsh realities of life. At that time, a group of social reformers emerged from the Muslim community who realized that they needed to bring changes in order to remove the plight of the Muslim society in Indian subcontinent.

Pioneers of Muslim Renaissance

□ **Aligarh Muslim Renaissance**

Role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

□ **Bengali Muslim Renaissance**

Nawab Abdul Latif

Syed Ameer Ali

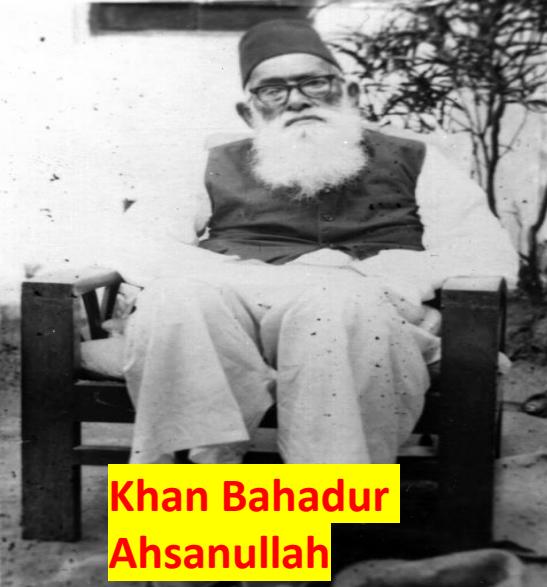
Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain

Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah

Pioneers of Muslim Renaissance



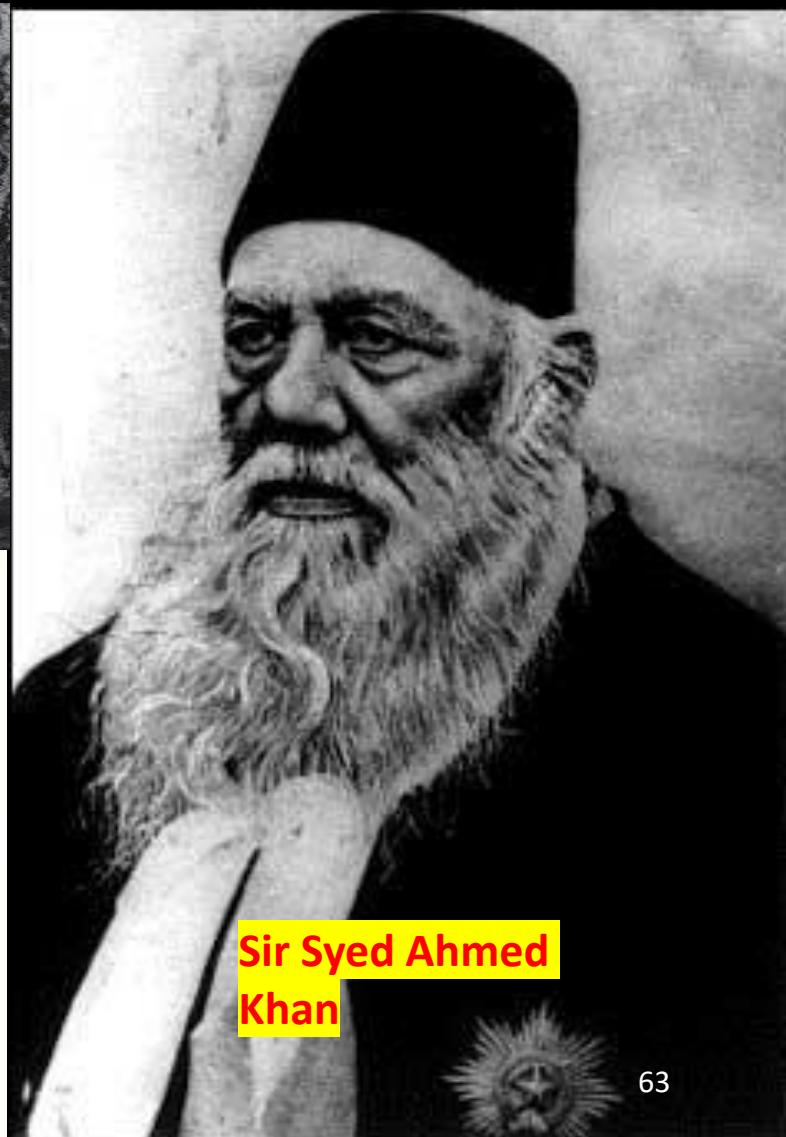
Nawab Abdul Latif



Khan Bahadur
Ahsanullah



Syed Ameer Ali



Sir Syed Ahmed
Khan

Genesis of Indian National Congress(1885)

- The birth of political and national consciousness, naturally also saw the birth of various political organizations, especially in Bengal.
- Eventually, the leading political party, Indian National Congress came to the forefront.
- A retired Scottish civil servant named Allan Octavian Hume, a well wisher of the Indians, founded the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885.

First session of Indian National Congress, Bombay, 28– 31 December 1885



THE FIRST INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1885.

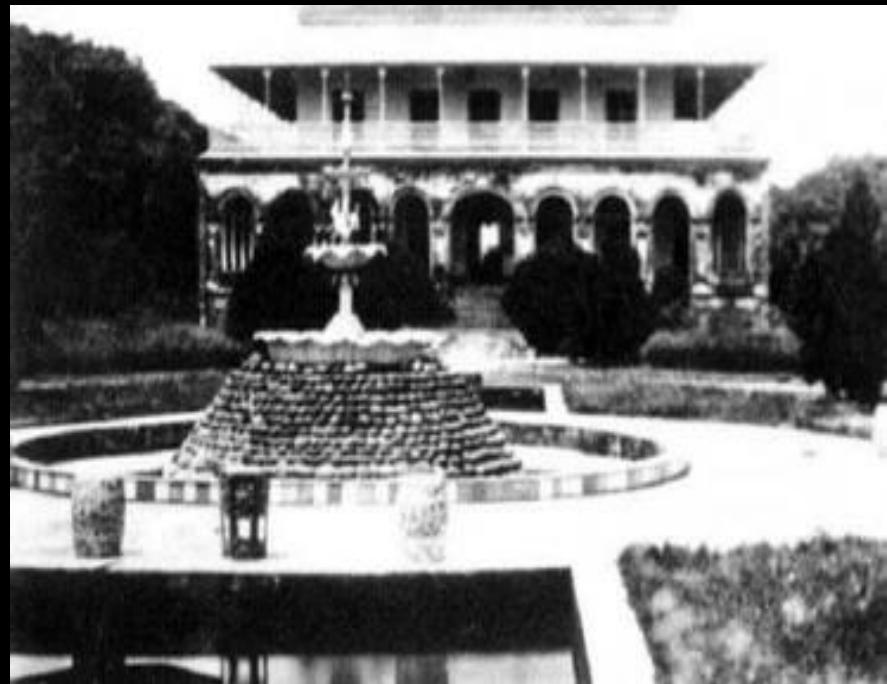
Genesis of All India Muslim League

- The Muslims of Bengal and India felt the necessity of establishing an association to safeguard their separate identity and legal rights.
- **The extremist approach and biasness of the Indian National Congress members had created a strong apprehension among the Muslims.**
- In this situation, the leaders of the Muslim community felt the need for bringing into the notice of the government their own views regarding the formation of the proposed council which would preserve the interests of the Muslims in the future constitution of India.

Genesis of All India Muslim League

- On December 30th 1906 annual meeting of All-India Muhammedan Education Conference was held at Nawab Salimullah's family residence at Ishrat Manzil, Shahbag Dhaka. In this conference, All-India Muslim League was established. Over a thousand delegates from all over India attended the meeting.
- Sir Nawab Khwaja Salimullah of Dhaka proposed in this conference to make a political platform with the objectives of safeguarding the interests of the Muslims.
- The political development in East Bengal received a tremendous boost after the formation of this platform in 1906.
- Many nationalist leaders of East Bengal (present day-Bangladesh) , including Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haq, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani , Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman were associated with All-India Muslim League before the partition in 1947.

Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah Bahadur (1871-1915)



**Ishrat Manzil at Shahbagh, Dhaka
in the early 20th century.**

**Ahsan Manzil-located at Kumartoli, Dhaka
Later became one of the main offices for Muslim League**



Further Readings :

- Dr. M. Emdadul Haq, *Colonial Drug Trade in South Asia: From Palashi to Partition*
- Kamruddin Ahmed, *A Socio Political History of Bengal*
- A.M.A. Muhith , *Emergence of Bangladesh*
- Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Pg:295-302
- V.D. Mahajan, *Modern Indian History* (pg.41-50)

THANK YOU!