NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

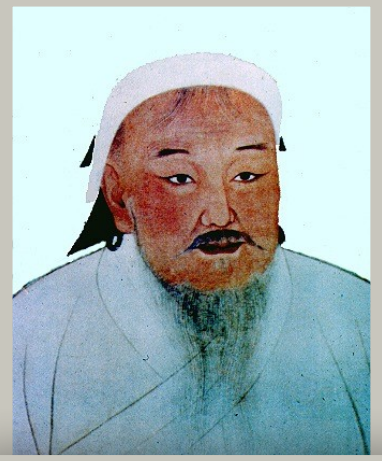
DHP

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Impact of oppressive British policies between 1757 & 1911 on fostering continuous discord between Hindu-Muslim communities in India & understand their pivotal role in shaping the region's political trajectory.

GENERAL

- The diverse socio-political canvas that sustained the birth of Bangladesh is intertwined by cultural, religious, linguistic, economic & geographical factors spanning over several decades.
- It's important to go over the history and understand the big social and economic influences that shaped the way Muslims in the subcontinent thought politically. This helps us figure out how Bangladesh came to be.
- Against the backdrop of such an intricate socio-political development, I would like to historically contextualize the impact of divide & rule policy adopted by the British.
- Although for a long time we were not part of this extended sub-continental political antiquity and mostly remained in the back water but their impact has been so strongly linked.



Aim

To analyze the Impact of oppressive British policies between 1757 & 1911 on fostering continuous discord between Hindu-Muslim communities in India & understand their pivotal role in shaping the region's political trajectory.

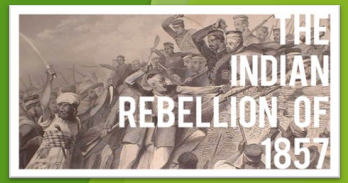
Advent of Hindu-Muslim & Subsequent British Conquest

- Historically, Hinduism made its presence much before the faith of the Prophet (sm) that came and ruled this region for less than seven hundred years.

- The initial British arrival in India was an indirect result of fierce competition with Dutch and Portuguese trading interests in Asia.

- The British were relative latecomers to colonization and their only remaining option was to take away from others, in an effort to secure their share of this unique treasure.

- That's how they exactly implemented their plan defeating Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah in the Battle of Plessey in 1757.



- On assuming control they preferred the Hindus over the Muslims in every department and pushed the Muslims to the edge.

- As, Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II was defeated in Battle of Buxar (Bihar) in 1764, the Company obtained the right to collect tax for which they didn't have trained officials to supervise the landlords.
- The famine of 1770, triggered by adverse weather conditions & worsened by agricultural commercialization & ineffective tax collection, served as a reminder for company officials to recognize the significance of supervising revenue officials.
- So, Warren Hastings, then Governor-General, introduced a system of 5-yearly inspections and temporary tax farmers.
- Many appointed tax farmers absconded with as much revenue as they could collect during the time period between inspections.
- In 1784, British Parliament directed Calcutta administration to alter it immediately.
- In 1786 Charles Cornwallis (1786 -1793) was sent out to India to reform the revenue practices when he came up with the idea of Permanent Settlement of 1793

Before the British rule, under the Delhi Sultanate & Mughal Empire the people had customary right over the lands. The Emperor appointed agents to collect tax and they in turn received a commission.

As soon as Mughal empire began to weaken in terms of its control over the estates, these tax agents started acquiring land as their personal property and became self-claimed Zamindars.

So, the English on arrival thought if they could only make the Zamindars responsible if they own the land.

The British didn't believe in collective ownership of land.

Since then the Blackstonian concept of private ownership which was in vogue in Britain was introduced in India.

Such concept of land ownership never existed in this sub-continent. Since then the land is considered as a commodity and commodification of land started.

You may be knowing that, the concept of collective ownership still exists in CHT.

Initially, it wasn't problematic, but it all began after the arrival of Governor General Wellesley(1798 and 1805)who was a war monger & while fighting against Tipu Sultan, revenue need enhanced. (During Anglo-Myshore war)

The Zamindars were in trouble as they were required to pay the revenue by a stipulated date in every year & in failing to do so their estates would be auctioned off through open sell.

So, the Zamindaris were demanding to bring in some reform to the act & that was the time the Zamindars were allowed to even manhandle the peasants on failing to pay revenue under 1799 regulation

Lord Cornwallis's Land Settlement (1793)

Francis, Sir Philip was one of the 04 members of the Governor General & Council of the Fort William in Bengal.

In 1775, Francis first floated the idea of making a Permanent Settlement for revenue management in Bengal.

He was influenced by the French physiocratic thought which was an economic theory developed by French thinkers in the 18th century.

Physiocrats believed & argued that agricultural productivity was the primary source of wealth for a nation.

Accordingly, Francis drew out his famous *'Plan for a Settlement of the Revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa'* on 22 January 1776.

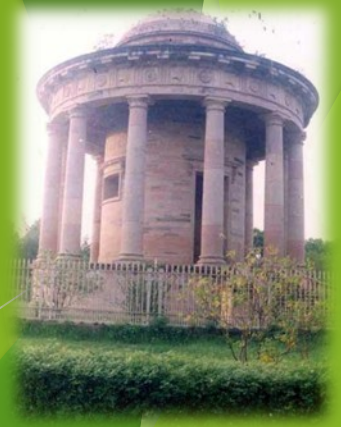
His plan was first adopted in Bihar for revenue experiments there.

Governor General Lord Cornwallis adopted the same idea in Bengal in 1789-90 for ten years.

It was also declared that if it yielded the expected results, the settlement would be declared permanent which was done in 1793.

Lord Cornwallis was a British Lieutenant General who participated in the American revolution as Deputy Force Commander & was defeated.

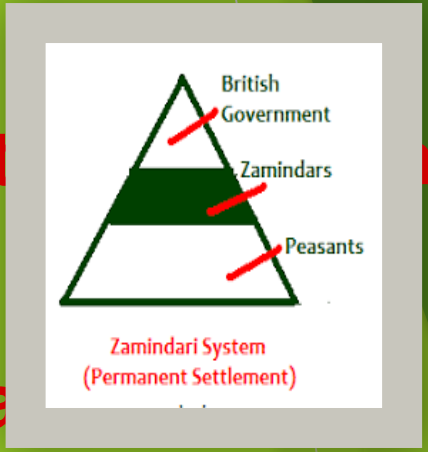
#Despite this defeat, Cornwallis retained the confidence of successive British governments & was assigned with the post of Governor General(1786 - 1793)



He was reappointed Governor-General of India in 1805 and it was there that he died in Ghazipur, UP shortly after arriving.

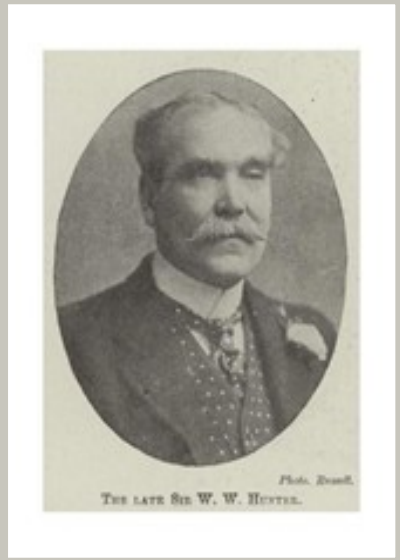
If anyone can be held responsible for disrupting the social fabric of the Indian society, it was lord Cornwallis who can be solely made responsible for.

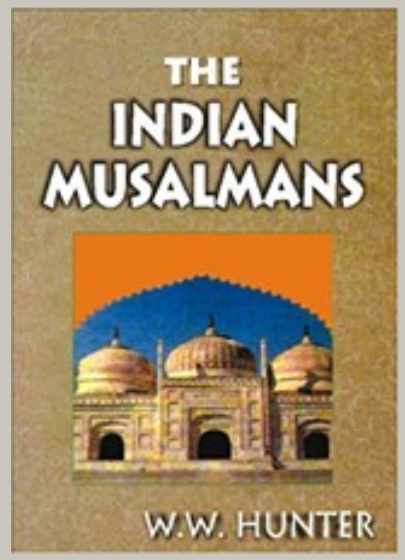
- He thought, the permanent settlement would not only ease the revenue collection but also divide the population into Zamindaris and peasants.
- By making the Zamindaris owners of the land, they would remain loyal.
  - The company's share in revenue was fixed wit dars.
  - The Zamindars could sell & purchase lands.
  - The state had no direct contact with the peasa
  - It helped in the growth of money lenders class



- Besides, land settlement, Lord Cornwallis fought against corruption & worked in judicial system.
- Court system that we have today much inherited to his work in this field.

- By 1850s the EIC controlled much of India - a trading company eventually transformed into a diplomatic & military outfit.
- Company also started meddling with India's political & financial system.
- Large numbers of native soldiers were employed to maintain order and defend trading posts/centers.
- Initially, the native soldiers took great pride in their military job, but around 1830s & 1840s, pressures began to emerge.
- A number of Indians began to suspect that the British intended to convert the Indian population to Christianity.





- Arrival of Christian missionaries in India gave credence to rumors of impending conversions.
- Doctrine of lapse was another issue under which Company would take control of states in which a local ruler had no successor

  (Queen of Maratha, Princely State of Jhansi – Lakshmibai)
- As the EIC annexed Indian states arbitrarily, in 1840s/1850s, the disbanded Indian soldiers began to feel offended.
- Apart from deplorable socio-economic condition, the introduction of a new cartridge for the Enfield Rifle added

- **Loading the Enfield required tearing off one end of the greased cartridge using one's teeth which was made of cow/sow fat.**
- **This would have insulted both Hindu & Muslims since cows were considered holy by Hindus, while pigs were considered Haram by the Muslims.**

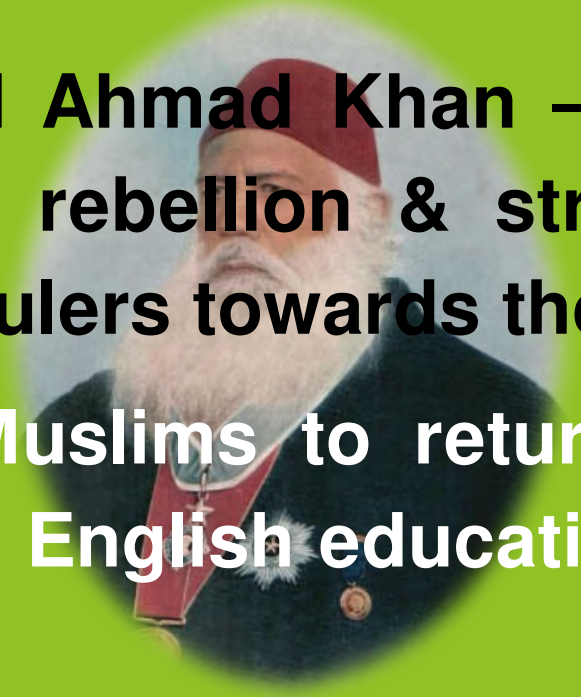
- There is no doubt that conflict over the new rifle cartridges sparked the uprising, but in reality, the social, political & technological reforms had set the stage for what happened.

Barrack pore – Start point of the Rebellion of 1857

- On 29 March 1857, in Barrack pore parade ground, a Sepoy named Mangal Pandey of 34th Bengal fired the first shot of the uprising.
- Pandey rebelled by shooting a British sergeant-major and a lieutenant.
- As the British soldiers surrounded him, Pandey shot him in the chest but he survived and was put on trial and hanged on 8 April 1857.
- Conflict erupted in Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and it needed 14 months to quell this rebellion.
- We shall have a separate session on this historic rebellion of 1857. The Revolt of 1857 Brought the end of the EIC.

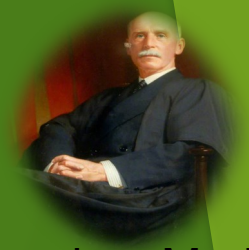
Role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan – Aligarh Movement

This event is variously named and the British historians always tried to downplay the tone while the nationalist leaders highlighted it as the first war of independence.



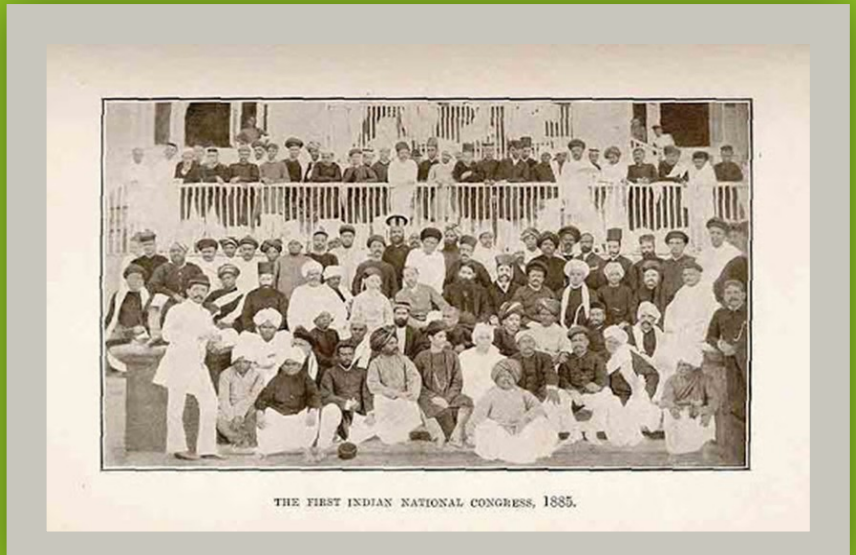
- **For example, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan – a judicial officer of EIC, dubbed this event as rebellion & strove hard to remove the hostility of the British rulers towards the Muslims.**
- **He appealed to the Muslims to return to the original Islamic principles & advocated English education for the regeneration of Muslims in India.**
- **In 1864, he founded Translation Society which was later renamed 'The Scientific Society' *to publish Urdu* translations of English books.**

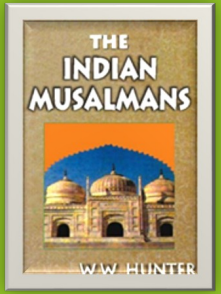
- He established Aligarh Muslim University in 1875 to educate the Muslim students & warned them not to join INC in the interest of Muslim community.
- He led the Aligarh Movement following which Nawab Abdul Latif, Syed Amir Ali & others set up cultural institutions for spreading of English education among the Muslims:
  - Mohammedan Literary Society (1863)
  - Central National Mohammedan Association (1877)
  - United Indian Patriotic Association (1888)



Theodore Morison

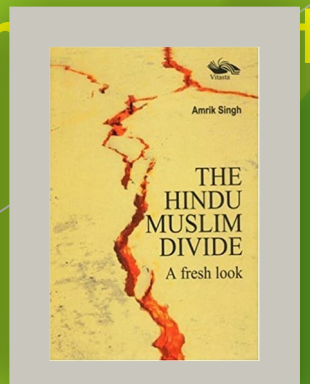
- **Despite all these, Muslims continued to remain dormant in various sectors until end of 19th century.**
- **This had taken the Muslims too far back which is evident from the statement made by WW Hunter towards the end of the British rule. a 170 years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Musalman in Bengal to become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich".**
- However, birth of **Congress** in 1885 followed by **partition** of Bengal in 1905 contributed much to the **Muslim's awakening**.





Partition of Bengal & Rising Nationalist Spirit

- In 1905, Viceroy Lord Curzon, partitioned Bengal on account of administrative reasons but underlying reason was divide & rule policy.
- It was also aimed to counter growing Indian nationalism.
- Partition did not last long but the Muslims were benefitted by it.
- By this time, introduction of legal & land policies, western education, technology, capitalist enterprise, communication and commerce gave rise to middle class societies cantering Calcutta.
- All these led to the growth of Indian nationalism [illegible] influenced the Independent movement subsequently.

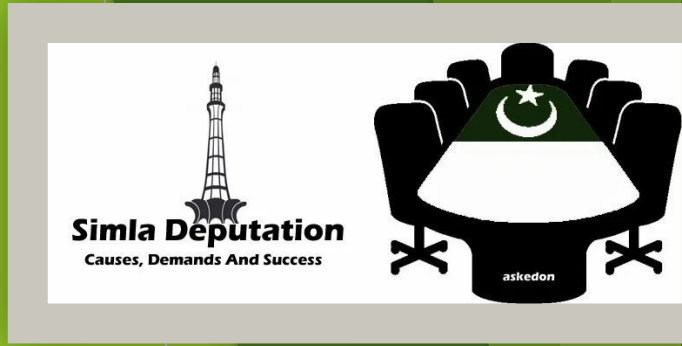


Jinnah & Gandhi in Indian Politics

- In 1906, Jinnah after completing Bar-at-Law from London joined congress & became a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity.
- By then, Gandhi obtained Bar at Law from London & worked in South Africa as Legal Advisor where he experienced discriminatory laws against which he launched his non-violent movement to save his countrymen.
- Besides, the inception of Congress, the ongoing strong Hindu led anti-partition movement created some kind of panic in the minds of the Muslims.
- Resignation of Lt Governor Fuller(East Bengal & Assam) on account of difference of opinion with central govt in 1906 also made the Muslims unsure of their position for which they undertake some measures to secure their position.

Jinnah, even as a young man, was famous for never wearing a silk tie twice

Shimla Delegation & Formation of AIML



- After witnessing strong anti-partition Hindu sentiment, Muslims couldn't expect any fair play from them.
- To safeguard Muslim's interests, a 35 Member delegation led by Sir Aga Khan met new Viceroy Lord Minto at Shimla on 01 October 1906.
- Delegation highlighted that the Muslims should be evaluated in terms of their political importance & services rendered to the Empire.
- It also pointed out that the representative institutions of West were not suitable for India and that their application was raising difficulties.

- The Delegation urged to represent the Muslims as a community.
- The Viceroy reassured the Muslims of their political rights as a community & assured to safeguard by administrative reorganization under him.
- Meanwhile, All India Muhammadan Educational Conference with 3000 leaders met at Shahbagh, Dhaka from 27-30 December 1906. In its political session AIML was formed.
- Since then the Muslims of all Indian provinces were under the mainstream political umbrella of AIML

- Dominated by feudal lords, religious scholars and educationalists, it elected Adamjee Pirbhoy as its president.
- He was followed by Sir Ali Imam & the 23 year-old Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah - popularly known as Aga Khan - in successive years.
- AIML Headquarters was located in Lucknow.
- Its primary goal was to promote loyalty to the British crown while advancing Muslims' political rights.

Significance of Shimla Delegation....

- First time, Hindu-Muslim conflict was raised in the constitutional level.
- The acceptance of the Deputation's demands was a turning point.
- It was made clear that Muslims had no confidence in the Hindu majority and that they were not ready to put their future in the hands of an assembly elected on the basis of assumed homogenous Indian nation.
- It is in this sense that the idea of a separate electorate may be seen as the beginning of the realization of the Two-Nation theory.
- In 1906 UK Election, Liberal Party won with Mr. Morley as Secretary of State for India who wished to gather moderate Indians away from the radical Congressmen.

Morley-Minto Reform (Indian Council Act of 1909)

- It was instituted to pacify the Moderates & introduce separate electorates on the basis of religion for which Lord Minto came to be known as Father of Communal Electorate in India.

- Mr Morley's judgement was largely guided by Viceroy Lord Minto and as such the reform came to be known as Morley-Minto Reform.

- To pacify INC moderates a larger share was given in legislative affairs.

- The membership of the central (16 to 60) & provincial legislative councils was enlarged including their f

- However, the number of elected mem cils was less than half of their total membership

- Elected members were elected by the landlords, org or traders and industrialists, universities & local bodies not by the people.
- It introduced a system of communal representation by accepting the concept of ‘separate electorate’ under which the Muslim members were to be elected by Muslim voters.
- This was welcomed by INC in their 1909 session but opposed the issue of separate electorates on the basis of religion, therefore, the autocratic form of government continued.
- Under tremendous resistance from the Hindus of West Bengal and also apprehending the spread of nationalist movement across India, British annulled the partition in

Delhi Durbar & Shifting of the Capital to Delhi

- King George V travelled to India to participate in his coronation programme organized in Delhi and there on 12 December 1912, he declared the annulment of Partition of Bengal.

- They received homage from the native princes and finally announced the move of India's capital from Calcutta to Delhi.

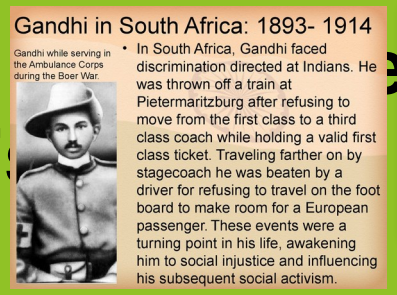
- To appease the Muslims of East Bengal, it was decided to set up Dhaka University.

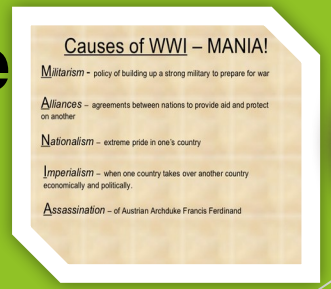
- By 1914, Jinnah was prominent enough in Congress to even led a delegation to London to present the case for reforms in India.

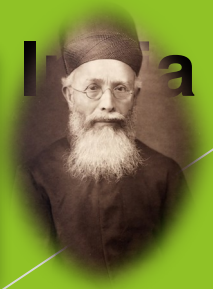
- In the following year in 1915, Gandhi returned to India spending 21 yrs in SA, famous for his movement of non-violence but little known in India.

- In 1916 Jinnah was the Chairman of AIML & by then rose to the national stage as a next-generation successor to Congress leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji & Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

- From 1914 to 1918, e India made great contribution in Britain'







- Despite India's support, the relationship between Britain and India during this period was marked by colonial dynamics.
- India's support for the war effort was not met with an immediate promise of greater autonomy.
- Instead, the aftermath of World War I saw increased demands for self-determination and independence in India.
- The British passed Rowlatt Act (Black Act) on 10 March, 1919, authorizing the government to imprison any person associated with seditious activities.
- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, contributed to the growth of the Indian independence movement.

- WW-1 links to Franco-German war of 1871 when French & Germany fought for 6 months & ended up annexing slice of French territory.
- That was a time of mistrust prevailed among the major powers for which they often associated in alliance.
- Germany, Austo-Hungary & Italy formed Triple Alliance.
- France, Russia & Britain formed Triple Entente.
- French signed an underhand pact with Italy so that it didn't have to fight on two fronts.
- As such Italy remains out of war for some time.

- In **Balkan** **(Adriatic sea in the West & Black sea in the East)** Austro-Hungarian empire annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina much to the displeasure of Serbia.
- Serbia had a desire to unite with the south-serve people and it had the support of Russia.

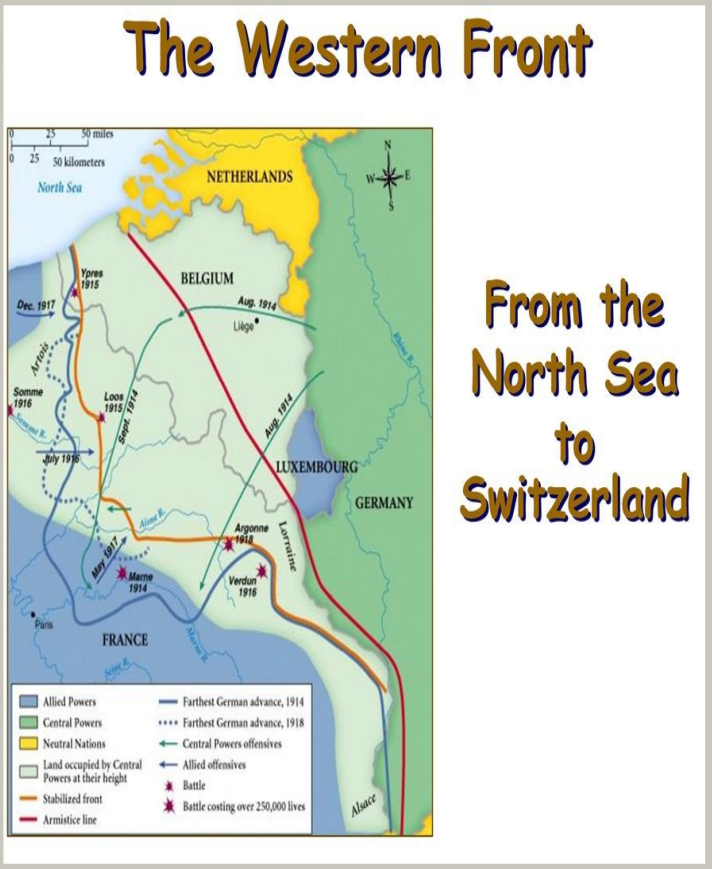
- On **29 June 1914**, a young Serb named **Gavrilo Princip** from Bosnia murdered the would be heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire with his wife in Sarajevo.

Gavrilo Princip

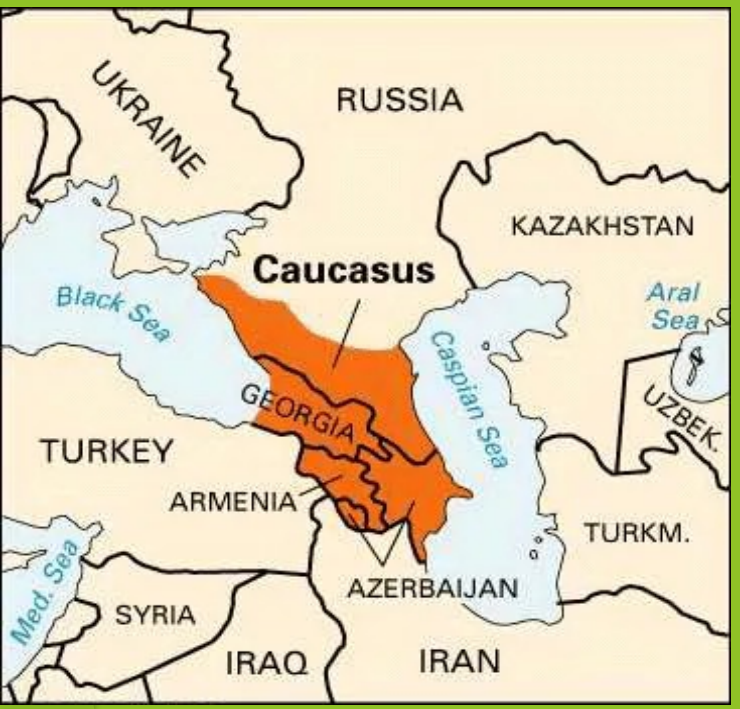
Archduke Franz Ferdinand

- **Austro-Hungarian Empire accused Serbia for organizing the attack and declared war against it.**

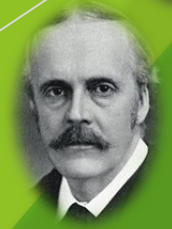
- Soon **conflict spreads** among countries of triple alliance & triple entente except Italy.
- **German attacked** French from north invading Belgium when **France-British-Belgium** army retreated.
- **French army counter attacked** and the German forces retreated towards north.
- Both the forces resorted to trench warfare making a **700 km** trench from **North Sea to Switzerland**.
- After s**tabilizing western front**, Germany focussed to the east to fight against Russia.

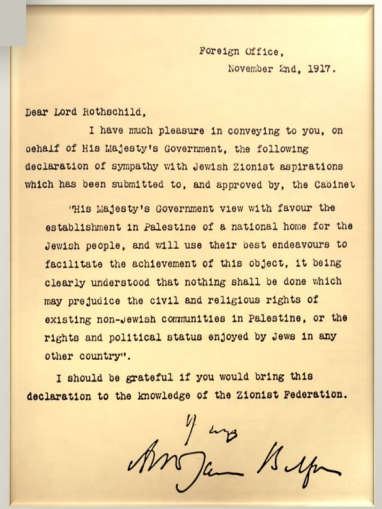


- **Ottoman Empire** after some hesitation joined the war & opened several fronts:
- One in the **Caucasus** facing the Russians,
- Another in **Sinai** with British protectorate aiming to control Suez Canal.
- Third one in the **British protectorate in Kuwait** over the oil resources.
- **To weaken the Ottomans, Britain supported the Arab Rebellion by promising them independence.**



- In Africa, **German colonies** are stormed by UK, French and Belgian forces.
- In the Balkans, besides Austo-Hungarian empire **Bulgaria attacked Serbia** & quickly invaded.
- In the west, Germany continues with air strike and marine adventure continues **targeting commercial ships of UK and USA including capital cities**.
- Exhausted by war, morale of Russian forces reached at low ebb that **brought down Nicholas II** from the power.
- By this time, Jew MP in British parliament convinced British **Foreign Secretary Arthur Belfour** that they would bring US on their side against Germans but in exchange of a Jew State which later came to be known as Israel. This was known as **Belfour declaration.**





Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours
Arthur James Balfour

- After the revolution, the Bolsheviks took power in Russia & immediately signed a ceasefire with central powers.
- With Russian front under control Germany turned to West.
- Germans attacked & French counter attacked & disintegrated Germans from where they could never come back.
- In Germany, revolution forced the Emperor to abdicate and allowed the signing of the armistices ending the great war.
- On 28 June 1919, Versailles treaty was signed & Germany forced to pay compensation, asked to dismantle her armed forces.
- Treaty also dismembered Austo-Hungarian & Ottoman