

**British Colonialism: Myths and Realities:
A Mukto-Mona E-book**



British Colonialism: Myths and Realities

Shahidul Islam

Translated from Bengali by
Kajal Bandyopadhyay



Bangladesh Foundation For Development Research
Dhaka

British Uponibeshbad: Myth O Bastobata
(British Colonialism: Myths
and Realities)

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To
Nirovro
My beloved grandson

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Foreword

On February 13, 2008, Kevin Rudd, the newly elected Prime Minister of Australia, begged apology to the indigenous people there for the imperialistic torture and tyranny in the past and declared pledges to remove the social, political and economic discrimination they are still suffering from. Not long after getting this piece of information, I read two or three essays by Professor Shahidul Islam in the dailies of Dhaka, and it occurred to me that the British Government also should beg apology to the people of Bangladesh and should pay compensation for the loot and plunder during almost two hundred years of colonial rule. I was not personally acquainted with Professor Shahidul Islam before this. I knew him through his writings only. He came over to the office of our research organization, Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research, when after reading his essays in the dailies, I collected his phone number, rang him up and invited. I discussed with him if a seminar could be organized on seeking of apology by the British and Pakistani governments. He expressed enthusiasm at the idea of the seminar, and agreed to write a not-so-long essay about almost two hundred years' colonial rule by the British. In the mean time the Italian Premier also sought apology for the torture over the people of Libya and plunder of wealth by Italian imperialism. He pledged to pay compensation. All these enhanced the relevance and importance of organizing our seminar. It may be mentioned that in the past other imperialistic powers including Japan had begged forgiveness to peoples of colonized countries for their exploitation, misrule, rape, etc.

I requested Prof. Shahidul Islam for submitting the paper to be presented at our seminar within one month's time. We had the plan of arranging it towards the end of July last year (2008). But that could not be. A remarkable stir developed in the politics of our country, and date was declared for holding the election for the ninth Parliament in the third week of December, 2008. After completing the paper through seven months of work, Shahidul Islam submitted it in the first part of September. The seminar had to be deferred for the national election and the delay in getting the paper. At last the seminar was held on March 28, 2009.

People doing research on and writing about imperialism and colonialism can be divided into two categories. One set of them consists of colonialists and the other of anti-colonialists. Prof. Islam ideologically belongs to the second category. In the present essay, with the help of scientific arguments, he has tried to prove the correctness of the anti-colonialists' opinions. And, towards the close of his essay, he hasn't hesitated to claim that even if the British government declares compensation to the amount of 10 pounds only, that also will make the death-bell of colonialist historiography toll. That will vindicate the truth of the anti-colonialist thesis. After seeking of apology by the present Australian and Italian governments for the misdeeds by their imperialist ancestors, it is no longer possible to conceal the truth that the British and Italian imperialism actually committed tyranny and injustice to Australia and Libya. That the colonizers tried to destroy the colonized countries and perpetrated big plunder are no longer myths; they have appeared as clear realities before the people of the world.

So, the people of Bangladesh also should demand that the present British government will accept the present political reality in the world, seek apology for the colonial rule and exploitation for almost two hundred years and pay compensation like the Italian government.

I did not expect that Prof. Shahidul Islam would present such a nice essay. I, therefore, express sincere thanks and congratulations both from my part and the part of BFDR. I also thank Professor Kajal Bandyopadhyay for translating the essay into English.

Monaem Sarker
Director General
Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research

(BFDR)

Preface

I have related in the essay itself how it originated. It won't be proper to repeat. But, what must be stated is that Mr. Monaem Sarker, the founder Director General of Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research, is the person who created all inspiration for this essay. I am endlessly grateful to him for that. I still fail to understand why he entrusted me with the important charge of writing it. I however admit that I have very much enjoyed the writing. Many more questions have struck me, rather in a crowd. One such question as created big curiosity is how at the end of colonial rule in 1947, our subcontinent got divided into two independent and sovereign states-India and Pakistan. And how India, burdened with numerous problems, could yet proceed on the path of a steady and permanent democracy, and why Pakistan, with much less problem, could not do so. And, Pakistan fell divided also. Why doesn't Pakistan have bourgeois democracy even today? Why cannot democracy be stable in Bangladesh also, that was liberated at the cost of a sea of blood? There is no end to our people's cravings for democracy-they have profusely shed blood for that; why isn't democracy yet stable here? Where does the shortfall slouch? All these questions have increased my interest and curiosity. I hope to write in future regarding these questions. I am looking for answers to them. I, however, think that I have found answer to one question. It is that the answers to the above questions lie in the two-hundred years old history of British colonialism.

Two opposite theories of economic development emerged in the Indian sub-continent since the second half of the nineteenth century. One is called the colonial theory. It was created, propagated and upheld by the colonizer British people. The second one is the anti-colonial stream. The people of colonized India gave rise to it. The first and colonial theory claims that the British are the people who gave birth to a new civilization here, after pulling up the half-savage society. The British rulers, after demolishing the anarchy of pre-British despotism here, established an empire of peace, as a result of which there came a spate of development. Whatever indiscipline and non-development is there in the society and economy of this country are nothing else than remnants of pre-British, Mughal and Maratha misrule.

On the other hand, people in the anti-colonial Indian position reject this claim. They point out that there started a downward trend in Indian economy during the British rule. They further claim that the economic non-development of India is no continuation of the pre-British time, but a result of the colonization of Indian economy. The British writers, most of whom were government officials, denied that Indian economy had reached a level of stagnation, and had started on a course of regression. They were of the opinion that India was proceeding on the path of economic development at a quick pace. Let me cite a representative instance regarding this. William Hunter, the first collector of Imperial Gazetteers of India, wrote in 1880 that the pace of India's development in trade and industrialization beat imagination. In 1887, he compared India's progress with that of America. In 1905, Lord Curzon wrote that the economic development of India then was unprecedented. It was unprecedented in the whole world. This is the gist of the colonialist exercise in colonialist historiography and economics.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the intellectuals of this country dreamed that the key to the economic emancipation of this country lay in the British rule. They had hopes that by coming into contact with the most developed country of the world, this country also would turn into a developed capitalist country. But, with the passage of time, inner contradictions of colonialism manifested, and dreams of the following generations got disturbed. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century they gradually reached the truth that the regression in India's economy had set in because of the colonial rule of the British. People of this country were becoming poor and poorer. They held the British colonial rule responsible for this poverty. This was man-made poverty. It was a direct result of the British rule. Dadabhai Naoroji, a first-generation nationalist leader, reached this realization right in 1871, and expressed that in the book, *The Poverty of India* published in 1876. Intellectuals of India were not agreeable to accept non-development of India as the pernicious result of past misrule. They said, "This non-development is recent." It had set in after the British occupation. Indian economy was one of the

strongest economies of the world till the eighteenth century. One hundred years' British colonial rule had turned the country into a poor region of the world. Let me place an example in support of this theory.

The British used to claim that law and order had been established in the county because of their rule. And, who doesn't know how much urgent law and order was for economic development. Dadabhai Naoroji, in the book, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, published in 1901, wrote as follows about law and order and peace and prosperity, "Under the British India despot, the man is at peace, there is no violence, his substance is drained away, unseen, peaceably and subtly, he starves in peace and perishes in peace with law and order."

Over time, the conflicts of colonialism with the people of this country became as clear as day-light. Nationalist movement became as clear as day-light. The dormant nationalism of the initial days no longer remained dormant. Direct nationalist movement became fiery. When nationalist movement was proceeding to turn into a liberation war, there took place the independence of compromise and partition.

Though research into colonialism gradually increased in volume in India after partition, an unwritten ban on that as if remained in force in Pakistan. I never came across any research into this during the Pakistan time. Why? It is very urgent to look for the answer to this question. In independent Bangladesh, some research was done into various movements of the 24 years of Pakistan-some books have been published. But, why are the intellectuals of this country also silent about the almost two hundred years' British imperialist rule? The answer to this question also needs to be known. However, this is not perhaps untrue that the same reasons for anti-imperialist research remaining unofficially banned in Pakistan hold good for nobody in Bangladesh also conducting any research into British colonialism. Let it be whatever it may be. I hope to write in future about this situation.

Mr. Monaem Sarker proposed to publish this not-so-long essay as a booklet. And he requested me to write a brief preface. It is at his earnest desire that this booklet is getting published. I thank him for this. I am indebted to Mr. Ashfaq-ul-Alam for supervision, designing, etc. It has been computer-composed by Mr. Abdul Kader who has corrected the mistakes also; I express my gratefulness to him. Thanks also to my daughter Shaouli Shahid, now doing her Ph.D. in Australia, for the trouble she took to rewrite the portion about Kevin Rudd's apology to the Aborigines in the Parliament. I also thank Professor Kajal Bandyopadhyay for translating the essay into English. I am grateful to all who were connected with the different stages of publication of this booklet. And I pay homage to all the heroic martyrs who sacrificed their lives to bring what invaluable freedom we have now.

Dhaka
July, 2009

Shahidul Islam

British Colonialism: Myths and Realities

1.

Colonial Legacy: Seeking Apology by Italy and Compensation Treaty

News was broadcast on BBC that Italy Government would give Libya, terribly damaged by Italian colonialism, compensation-money of 5 billion dollars. Italy would annually invest an amount of 200 million US dollars for coming 25 years for infrastructural development of Libya that lost a lot during colonial rule. On August 30, 2008, Saturday, the Italian Premier, Silvio Berlusconi signed in Benghazi a pact of friendship and cooperation with the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi. Seeking apology on behalf of his countrymen, the Italian Premier said, “It is my duty as ahead of government to express to you in the name of the Italian people our regret and apology for the deep wounds that we have caused you.” The Italian colonialism ruled over Libya for forty years, and exploited her. The Italian Premier said, “This pact of friendship and cooperation would alleviate the colonial wounds of forty years.” He said, “It is concrete and moral acknowledgement of the damage inflicted on Libya by Italy during the colonial era.”¹

Apology by Kevin Rudd: Colonial Reality

On February 13, 2008, the newly elected Australian Premier Kevin Rudd stood before the national parliament and sought forgiveness for what torture and tyranny were perpetrated on the indigenous people of his country by his predecessors, British imperialism, and the leader of the opposition, Brenden Nelson supported that. All the parliament members stood up to welcome the seeking of apology through hand-clapping. So, it can be assumed that all the Australians had support for seeking of apology by the Premier Kevin Rudd. ‘Sorry day’ is celebrated every year on 26 May since 1998 when Australia nationally apologised to the aborigines.

It was in 1788 that the British trading class took the port of Sydney of Australia. They encountered local inhabitants, though they claimed Australia was an empty land (Terra Nullius). The British pushed the people who were living at that time to inland areas for occupying the whole of Australia. Indigenous people could hardly resist well-equipped British warriors and gradually got defeated. To plunder the wealth of Australia and consolidate their own rule, the British drove a steam-roller of tyranny and torture over the original people of Australia. There’s no category of violence and savagery that they did not perpetrate there. The British grabbed the land from the indigenous people. But one can conceive of nothing like the savagery that was adopted to destroy the culture of the indigenous people there. Between 1910 and 1970 about 100,000 children under five years of age were snatched from the indigenous families, and were raised in Church and state institutions. Some were fostered by White parents. Thus they made the indigenous children accustomed to alien European education and culture. Indigenous people brought up in missions are called the “Stolen Generation.” Most of these children grew up in a hostile environment without family-ties or cultural identity. As adults, many suffered from insecurity, lack of self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, depression, suicide, violence, delinquency, abuse of alcohol and drugs and inability to trust. Lacking a parental model, many had difficulty bringing up their own children. The scale of separation also had profound consequences for the whole indigenous community. Anger, powerlessness and lack of purpose as well as an abiding distrust of Government, police and officials developed and went on through generations.

The East India Company defeated the Nawab of Bengal through conspiracy in the Battle of Plessey of 1757. After passage of one hundred years since then, they occupied the whole of India through victory in

the Punjab in 1848. They developed a system of education through English language that replaced Persian, the then king's language. That history is known to all. The education system gradually introduced by the British grew up as the mainstream education in this country. But, they couldn't exterminate the whole Indian community here through that education. The Anglo-Indian community that developed through marriage with the English could never come up as the mainstream population here. They have rather become extinct. But, as a result of what cruel method was adopted by them in Australia, the "Stolen Generation" has turned into the mainstream population of the country. They are the whites. Gradually racism grew in them. For, colonialism creates fertile soil for contemptible social growths like racism, communalism, etc. Premier Kevin Rudd happens to be a representative of the mainstream white Australians. In the last election, the indigenous people extended support to him with the hope that an acceptable solution to their problems would come from his government. As a first step in that direction, Kevin Rudd, in his speech at the parliament, sought forgiveness for the misdeeds of the British colonial powers. As Prime Minister of Australia, on behalf of the Government of Australia and the Parliament, he said,

We apologise for the hurt, the pain and suffering that we, the parliament, have caused you by the laws that previous parliaments have enacted. We apologise for the indignity, the degradation and the humiliation these laws embodied. We offer this apology to the mothers, the fathers, the brothers, the sisters, the families and the communities whose lives were ripped apart by the actions of successive governments under successive parliaments.²

He said so without naming those who perpetrated those "wrongs, discriminations, coercion and tyranny." He further said, "A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia."³ He expressed his resolve to remove the economic and cultural gap that has been created between the whites and the non-whites because of long administrative and political discrimination towards the indigenous people. He promised improved housing, education and medication for the indigenous people.

This is undoubtedly a historical moment in the history of Australia. True, the deprived and neglected indigenous people are happy at this declaration; but, they are not satisfied with mere declaration. They want to see implementation of this declaration. Michael Mansell, the spokesman of the Alliance National Aboriginal, has made that clear to the people of the whole world. Noel Pearson, a respected Australian Aboriginal Lawyer wrote in *The Australian* on 12 February, 2008 about the contradictions in the apology to the Stolen Generations. The National Aboriginal Alliance spokesman Les Malezer said that 13th February's formal apology was welcome, but not enough.⁴

True that because of Kevin Rudd's seeking of apology, past barbarity and cruelty will not be wiped off from the pages of history. Yet, seeking forgiveness holds endless importance. It proves that as a consequence of the geographical conquests by the European imperialists, thousands of indigenous people have been wiped off from the face of the earth. Through this, he has admitted the truth of the torture, tyranny and plunder of the former imperialist forces. The history of past savagery of the so-called civilized countries of the presently developed world has been echoed through the seeking of apology by Kevin Rudd. Even present-day neo-imperialism and the politicians and intellectuals supporting it cannot but admit this.

Samuel P. Huntington is one of the names that have become household ones through present-day internet. He is a political scientist supporting western liberal democracy devoutly. He dreams of a new world at whose command there will be the USA and the colonizer states of assistant Europe. But, even he could not but admit in his sensational book that "The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion, but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do."⁵ We shall find in the present essay that the main purpose of setting

up of colonies in different countries by European states is economic. It is not circulation of any humanistic message, preaching of religion, or publicity of higher culture, but economic exploitation and plunder that motivated. But, there was another purpose that we come to know from Edward Said. About the purpose of setting up of the British colonies in Australia, he writes,

Australia was established as a penal colony in the late Eighteenth century mainly so that England could transport an irredeemable, unwanted excess population of felons to a place originally charted by Captain Cook that would also function as a colony replacing those lost in America.⁶

A total criminalization happened to the society of England and Europe because of the rise of capitalism, industrialization, urbanization and modernization. The number of miscreants, irredeemable and accused of grievous charges including that of murder, saw such an increase as made it imperative to transport them to the colonies, and laws were enacted so that they could not return to England immediately after change of their fortune.

2.

Invitation to Write On British Colonialism

Almost no sooner had the Australian Prime Minister had sought forgiveness than demands were raised in India that the present British Government would have to beg pardon for their misdeeds of 190 years in the sub-continent. The Indian Prime Minister has declared a policy of go-slow in this regard. It was in Bengal of India that the British rule was first established. Within about one hundred years after that, they took the whole of India in their grip. So, an estimate shows that we were the people who had been victimized by the torture-tyranny and plunder of the British imperialism for the longest period of time. At the time of departing they played another game of conspiracy in 1947. They handed over power to an obedient class of bourgeoisie that the British rulers had brought up for 190 years, and simultaneously they bifurcated India on the basis of communalism, and annexed Bangladesh with a communal state called Pakistan. Bangladesh snatched away her place on the world-map by defeating Pakistan in a do-or-die armed struggle in 1971. With that, there came to an end Pakistani colonial plunder, tyranny and torture for twenty-four years, and the independence movement of the people of this soil against that. Going by that estimate, one would consider the duration of colonial rule and exploitation in Bangladesh longer yet. Bangladesh became independent after 214 years of colonial and Pakistani national rule. So, it is our demand to the present British and Pakistani rulers to seek apology for the misdeeds by their predecessors which is a bigger and more logical one. I have been assigned the responsibility of presenting the rationale of the British Government's seeking of apology for the British rule and exploitation for 190 years. Our demand has become stronger and more logical after begging of pardon by the Australian and Italian Prime Ministers. This history of autocratic rule by the British here for 190 years is spread over millions of pages of thousands of books across the world. They captured Bangladesh in 1757 through conspiracy. They were able to maintain their direct rule over this country till 1947 by taking advantage of the unequal development of the Hindus and Muslims-the major two communities in India. There was conspiracy again at the time of their departure. They divided the subcontinent into two oppositional states. So, it can be concluded that from the very beginning to the end, the presence of the British and colonial rulers was conspiratorial. I therefore consider it unnecessary to lift some touchy incidents from the millions of pages of history. Everybody knows them. Even the very Englishers do so. Instead of doing that, we can directly demand that you will have to follow the instances of the Italian and Australian Prime Ministers for your 190 years of colonialism-you will seek our pardon. Along with that, to the Pakistan Government we demand that they will have to beg apology for their exploitation, rule and tyranny and for the genocide of 1971, and pay compensation. But, I think that one can also initiate a general discussion regarding

different aspects of colonialism. I would like to raise some issues today in the context of colonialist philosophy.

After seeking of apology by the Australian Prime Minister, I had written four columns (articles) in four newspapers from different viewpoints. On reading them, Mr. Monaem Sarker, Director General of Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research, proposed to me if it is possible to organize a seminar to focus on the issue of seeking apology by Britain and Pakistan. I readily agreed with him. He requested me to write a not-so-long article about the issue of seeking pardon by the British Government. I gave consent without much thinking. I thought that it wouldn't be any difficult task. I had already written four essays. Writing this one wouldn't bring much inconvenience. Many books are available with the countrymen about how the British colonialism had done wrongs to our country and had taken away wealth worth millions and billions of taka. Many research works have been done on this. So, writing this essay wouldn't be any problem at all. A structure was already there in my mind. It would be a question of mere sitting down to write.

Before starting to write, I piled up books that I plucked from shelves and dusted off. I was reading them. Mr. Monaem Sarker also was sending books and journals to help me out. I started reading those also. The more I read the more I found rifts in my initial plans. I needed to think anew. New plans appeared. The more help came from Mr. Monaem Sarker, the more thoughts got knotted up in the brain. I had an idea of being able to finish the write-up within May. But, I could not start it even within May. In the mean time, my plans got more disarrayed on my reading of two books by two social scientists from Africa. One of them is from Uganda⁷; the other one from Tunisia⁸. Both Uganda and Tunisia were at one time under European colonial rule. The experience of those two countries or of the whole African continent is no less important than that of us. It is one and the same condition of colonial rule everywhere in the world. The experience of the colonized people also is the same everywhere. Yet, there may be-some differences between thoughts of the colonized peoples. I have got this impression on reading the two books by Mahmood Mamdani and Albert Memmi.

Moreover, though all those from our sub-continent who wrote original books about colonialism, nationalism and independence movement are opposed to colonialism, a lot of difference can be marked in their evaluation. It was even found that the same historian or economist reached different conclusions on getting new materials after the passage of some twenty years' time. So, I cannot claim to have got answers to all my questions after writing this essay. This would have been a different book, had I got them. However, I have first of all placed an account of the European traders' coming to Bangladesh or the sub-continent, for that matter. Secondly, it has appeared to me that there is widespread confusion among us regarding capitalism, colonialism, modernity, modern science and nationalist movement. So, I have thought it necessary to elaborately discuss the points of interconnection among them. For, we know that capitalistic production relations gradually manifested themselves in shades within the feudalistic society of Europe. It became clear that the death-bells of feudalism were tolling. Europe, particularly England, following the path of Italian Renaissance, became the centre of modern bourgeois civilization. The trading community of that central point conquered Bengal in 1757, and ruled this country for the following two hundred years. So, kind of a thought that modern capitalism and bourgeois civilization would develop in this country also, through its coming into contact with England, is not unlikely. Thus it is found that many are the intellectuals who expressed sympathetic attitude to colonialism because of their deep attachment to progressive capitalism. On the other hand, many had opposed capitalism in course of opposing colonialism. It has appeared that strong resentment against colonialism had led many to stand against historicity. Opposition to colonialism has turned into opposition to capitalism-people had become soft towards pre-capitalistic and reactionary feudalism. So, I have tried to discuss different aspects of capitalism, colonialism, modernity, etc., a little, keeping my conviction in the dynamism of history. But, it would be wrong not to admit that the root of this confusion lies in historical reality. Capitalistic development in an independent country and development of capitalism under colonialism cannot proceed

in the same manner. Hence there is so much of confusion among us regarding colonialism. An additional reason is the stumbling presence of the Pakistani rule of 24 years between the termination of British colonial rule in 1947 and the emergence of independent Bangladesh in 1971. Pakistani rule for 24 years stood as a big hindrance on the path of research into British colonialism. Thirdly, I have tried to place some brief accounts of the self-destructive and anti-humanistic character of colonialism and its tyranny, torture and plunder. Those are so much so well-known to the people of the world that I haven't found it necessary to discuss them elaborately.

But, I want to clarify one thing at the very outset. This discussion can in no way be confined within the limits of Bangladesh. That cannot be done. For, I myself was born in undivided India—a British colony. The prime 24 years of my life after the exit of the British was spent in Pakistan which was a subordinate party to British colonialism. So, though the centre of my discussion is present-day Bangladesh, it would time and again cross her borders. I make this clear, so that nobody misunderstands on that count.

3.

Coming of the European Colonial Forces

The doors of India were opened for European traders through the landing of Vasco-da-Gama at the port of Calicut in south-west India in 1498. Then relationship of Europe with Bangladesh, and India, for that matter, became closer through the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British traders. The Portuguese first came to Bengal from the Maldives in 1517 and, with permission and support from Emperor Akbar and Jahangir, started living at Hoogly, Chittagong, Jessore, Dhaka, Barisal, Noakhali, Faridpur and Sandwip, and went on conducting trade and proselytizing. Hoogly became their chief centre. In 1536, Giasuddin Mahmud Shah, the Sultan of Bengal, granted the Portuguese permission to build office and residence at Chittagong or Saptagram on the Ganges. The Portuguese pirates joined the natives of Arakan in turning the southern Bengal into a heap of debris. Father of the poet Alaol died at the hands of the Portuguese pirates. Alaol has written in a poem,

“As it was fated to happen in course of action,

We met the roguish robbers on the path.

After an intense battle, my father got martyred.

Rosanga made a heated appearance at the battle-field.”⁹

After the Portuguese, those were the Dutch, French and British who, through their naval power, established command over the Indian Ocean.

On 31st January, 1600, Queen Elizabeth handed over a Charter to the East India Company composed of some enterprising traders of London for trading in India and the eastern hemisphere, granting them monopoly right for that. When the East India Company reached the Port of Surat in 1608, they, being defeated in an encounter with the Portuguese, fled. But, after four years, in 1612, the Company got from the Mughal administration the charter of trading in Surat. Then the British Company, in a counter-attack, defeated the Portuguese forces. In 1615, King James the First sent Sir Thomas Row as an ambassador to the court of Jahangir. Row pleased the Emperor through a lot of gifts and suitable personal conduct. In 1623, the Emperor granted the East India Company rights to make trading in the whole of the Mughal Empire including Bengal. The company entered into Bengal by setting up a factory in 1633 at Hariharapur of the delta of Mahanadi. It was in the same year that the Company secured the permission to trade in Bengal from Emperor Shah Alam. In 1651, Prince Suja, son of Emperor Shahjahan and the ruler of Bengal granted the Company permission to trade in Bengal without any tariff and any other control, in lieu of Taka 3,000 only. The Company started to use this for creating political supremacy. It set up a

factory in 1668 in Dhaka, the capital of Bengal. In 1690, they constructed their office and residence at Sutanoti on the eastern bank of the Ganges, and secured permission to construct a fort. The Company purchased three villages-Sutanoty, Dihi Kolkata and Gobindapur. These three villages later on became known as Kolkata. The first 150 years the Company had to spend in battles and conflicts with the European contenders. It was during the Mughal rule that the Europeans started coming to Bengal with the scales of traders and those soon appeared as the wand of the rulers. Taking advantage of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century, Clive, the 'great robber', to use Marx's language, in conspiracy with the comprador agent class of Bengal and the army-officers loyal to the Nawab, snatched away the independence of Bengal. The history of the 190 years that followed is that of uninterrupted loot and plunders by the East India Company and British Imperialism. Imperialism is a new face of capitalism. Marx called this the highest stage of capitalism. Time is come for the Marxists to think anew. There started after the Second World War a phase of fall of imperialism and colonialism. One after another, colonies gained independence. Gaining independence, India got divided into two feuding states-India and Pakistan. The eastern part of Pakistan, after 24 years of colonial kind of rule and exploitation, turned in 1971 into 'Independent Bangladesh' state. We are now citizens of a politically free and sovereign state.

4.

Imperialism: Colonialism, Capitalism and Modernism

Bangladesh got subjugated by a communal state named Pakistan as a result of partition on the basis of communalism in 1947. In 24 years of study of history during Pakistan time, British imperialism was left out. As a result, people of this country almost forgot that they had been pressed under the grinding stone of British imperialism for 190 years. There was no big change in the situation even after the liberation of Bangladesh through a liberation war in 1971. From our study-academic and non-academic-of history, the phenomenon of colonialism has vanished like camphor. I am not a student of history. How much is it possible on my part to keep track of study of history in this country? But, I did not come across any book of research about colonialism in course of what little study I have undertaken out of my general weakness for and interest in history. The topic of colonialism, however, cropped up in the writings by those who deal with nationalism and independence struggle. The matter has appeared quite strange to me. That's why I have felt advised that as a part of this essay, I should discuss a little different aspects of colonialism. For example, the structure and traits of colonialism, colonial state, its likeness and unlikeness with capitalism, philosophy of colonialism, psychology of the colonizer and colonized, etc. For doing that I had to rely on almost all of whom are foreigners-Indian and Non-Indian. I can mention some of them-Rajani Palme Dutt, Jawaharlal Nehru, A. R. Desai, Bipanchandra, Romilla Thapar, A. K. Bagchi, Sunity Kumar Ghose, Barun Dey, Irfan Habib, etc. Some from outside India are Hamza Alavi, Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Edward Said, Mahmood Mamdani, Albert Memmi, E. M. Forster, etc. This dark side of study of history is notable not only in India. It can be said to be a universal process. In the present world controlled by capitalism and bourgeois civilization, colonialism is disregarded in study of history centering university-campuses. This is true particularly for England, France and the U.S.A. Across the whole world they are a few Marxist thinkers, historians and economists who have gone for serious research into colonialism, and they are doing so even now. It is mentionable again that it was Marx and Engels who first paid attention to the nature and impact of colonialism. It would, however, be injustice if we do not recognize the researches and writings by the nationalist historians and economists. For example, Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, K.T. Telang, Joshi, De, Subramanaia Ayer, R.C. Dutt, P.C. Roy, Lazpot Roy, Gokhale, etc.

This situation did not escape the notice of the famous Marxist historian, Bipanchandra, of India. He has discussed the matter in *Essays on Colonialism*. Right at the start of the book, he expresses amazement by writing as follows,

A surprising omission in this respect was the complete ignoring and even suppression of the subject in the Universities of the chief metropolitan countries of the day i.e. Britain and France. (An omission which is even more glaring today, except that, while a small minority of Marxist scholars have made significant contributions, the dominant academics in these universities have advanced from a neglect to an attack on the Marxist analysis of colonialism and to a defense of the colonial record.)¹⁰

The mainstream historians of the universities of those countries not only attack Marxist analysis of colonialism, but sort of defend colonialism also. There is no doubt that the charge is serious. He draws readers' attention to another interesting fact. America herself was at one time under European colonialism. She declared independence against British colonialism in 1776. After eight years of civil war, there appeared independent United States of America. So, during the first one hundred years, U.S. historians researched into colonialism and its different aspects. But, after the First World War, U.S.A. started coming up to the leadership of neo-colonialism, and after the Second World War, she took a position in the leadership there. One of the main causes of that is that the U.S.A. remained unharmed in the two imperialist world wars of the twentieth century. The truth to which Chandra draws our attention is that there came big changes in the U.S. study of history because of McCarthy's witch-hunting. The stream of research into colonialism dried up in that country. Research into colonialism was picked for identifying communists from the universities and research-organizations. Thus scholars like Owen Lattimore, Daniel Thurner, and Lawrence Rosinger lost their jobs and the Institute of Pacific Affairs was almost closed. As a weak and small organization, it had to shift to Canada. The capitalist and bourgeois civilization which is controlling the whole world today has as its basis colonialism spread throughout the world in the eighteenth, nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

The truth is no longer a 'myth' that exploitation and plunder by the imperialist European forces made the Industrial Revolution possible in England. Please read the chapter entitled "India and Industrial Revolution" in the book *India Today* by Rajani Palme Dutt to know in details about this. The reputed British historian, Dr. Cunningham has written,

The development of the age of inventions depended not simply on some special and unaccountable burst of inventive genius but on the accumulation of a sufficient body of capital as the indispensable condition to make possible the large-scale outlay for their utilisation.¹¹

Dutt raises the question, "Whence came the sudden access to accumulation of capital in the second half of the eighteenth century?"¹² The answer to this question was given by Marx long ago in *The Capital*. Dutt goes to quote from Marx, and says that wealth "derives above all from the spoils of the colonial system, from the silver of Mexico and South America, from the slave trade and from the plunder of India."¹³

So, the former colonizer states of Europe and the U.S.A. are no longer enthusiastic about research into and study of colonialism. For, this is the history of their own 'barbarity' and savagery'-history of their shame. Reading of that cruel account will give rise in the minds of people of the present generation 'horrible' portraits of their 'robber' predecessors- giving rise to hatred. Rajani Palme Dutt comments as follows,

The most elementary facts of a record which lays bare the true character of bourgeois civilization in all its nakedness are elaborately veiled and suppressed from general consciousness of the English people, and only remain treasured in the burning memories of an Irishman or an Indian.¹⁴

Huntington says, "Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do"-words that echo those of Rajani Palme quoted above.

After the Second World War, the colonies victimized under long colonial rule and exploitation gained independence one by one. Yet, for about 20 years after independence there was no deep research into

colonialism in those countries. Attention of many was drawn to the history and economics of colonialism after the anti-colonial revolution and national liberation war in Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, Brazil, Chile and Argentina. Advanced role was played in this regard by Marxist historians, economists and social scientists. But, before that, one needs to mention three exceptional books. *India Today* by Rajani Palme Dutt was published in 1940 by Victor Gollancz Ltd. of England. The second book, *Discovery of India* by Jawaharlal Nehru, was published in 1946 by Signet Press of Kolkata. The other book, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, by A. R. Desai was published in 1948. A big pride that England takes is that modern bourgeois democracy took its birth in England. Right to freedom of opinion and right to freedom of writing are recognized by the manual of that democracy. Knowledge of the history of publication of *India Today* by Rajani Palme Dutt makes clear how void and merely wordy is the sound of drum-beating of Democracy and her great ideals. Those who would not place trust in McCarthyism would find a burning proof in this piece of history. Dutt finished preparing the manuscript of this book in 1936-39 on behalf of the Left Book Club. In 1936, he signed a contract with Victor Gallancz for publishing the book. Rajani Palme Dutt handed over the book to the publisher in November after the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. In the mean time, in October, Gallancz severed its ties with the Communist Party. So, Gallancz then expressed disinclination to publishing the book. But, Rajani Palme Dutt remained firm in his contract. He created pressure on the publisher. The publisher claimed that publishing the book was risky. Dutt said that the publisher was legally bound to publish the book. The publisher then took resort to a lawyer to check with if the book really had anything inflammable. After going through the whole of the book, the lawyer did not find anything anti-law. But, he said that the impact of the book would be inflammatory. He wrote that the book “directly aimed at inciting and inflaming public opinion to do no less than overturn the British Empire.”¹⁵ After failure in this initiative, the publisher sat down with Rajani Palme Dutt to analyse the book and underlined in red ink the portions risky to publish. Each time the word ‘revolution’ occurred was thus underlined. Even when it was the context of the 18th century industrial revolution, that was not omitted. British democracy was so much so scared about the word, ‘revolution’! Then the publisher published the book. I have pointed out that this miserable condition was there in the birthplace of capitalism, democracy and modernity. The joy of victory in the Second World War could not last for even four years. The successful socialist revolution in China broke the morale of imperialism and colonialism all the more. So, one meaningful explanation of McCarthy’s ‘witch-hunting’ could be found out. A.R. Desai wrote in the Introduction to his book published in 1948, “There is not a single book other than *India Today* written by Rajani Palme Dutt and *Discovery of India* by Jawaharlal Nehru in which one can find a full account of the social transformation that had taken place in India from the beginning of British rule to its close.”¹⁶

Let this part be started with Marx. For, the essays that he wrote serially in 1853 in the *New York Daily Tribune* about the impact of British rule on India is said to be the beginning of modern thinking about inter-relationship between India and the British colonialism. In an essay of June 10, 1853 he wrote about two impacts of British colonialism in India. One was destructive and the other constructive. Marx’s opinion about the “annihilation of the old Asiatic society and the laying of the moral foundations of Western society in Asia” is widely circulated. It is found to have been quoted in many books. In that essay, he further wrote,

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest interests and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is: can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.¹⁷

This conclusion by Marx had a deep impact on Marxist thinkers of later times. Many of the Marxists accepted this opinion as the last word and mentioned this in support of their own position. On August 8 that year, Marx wrote,

The British were the first conquerors superior and therefore inaccessible to Hindoo civilization. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by leveling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun.¹⁸

There is no mistake in saying that capitalism is more developed and progressive than any pre-capitalist economic structure. Everybody knows that progressive and developed capitalism had its inception in England. The institutions that developed on the basis of that capitalism worked as the centre of development of modern-day bourgeoisie civilization and modernity. When that England occupied India, it was not unfair to suppose that they would play important role in the full development of capitalism, bourgeoisie democracy and modernity in the colony named India. And actually they did so. They proceeded to destroy the static society and feudal economy that had been there for a thousand years. For, without destroying the old social structure, no new structure can take its place. Is destruction then destructive? In this context, A. R. Desai, in his famous book, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, writes, "However painful might be the demolition of sovereign villages and collective lifestyle of the rural people, it was essential for the financial, social and political unity of the Indian people."¹⁹ So, he placed the conclusion, "Seen from a historical perspective, abolition of self-dependent village society may be mentioned as a progressive event."²⁰ Demolition of ancient society and economic structure of India was a must for the materialization of the restorative role of British colonialism. Marx thought that no description of any reconstruction would find any place on the pages of history of the British colonialism beyond that of those heaps of debris. Yet he deemed that that process had started in that demolition without their knowledge.

Marx stated in his essay of 8th August that Indians would not be able to enjoy the fruits of constructive activities that the British colonialism had unconsciously started performing through that demolition. The Indians would have to wait for that till India's independence. Many scholars sympathetic towards capitalism express weakness for colonialism also. The following observation by Marx usually remains unmentioned:

The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie till in Great Britain itself the ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether²¹

This is Marx's third conclusion. India would not be able to reap the harvest of capitalism without independence.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, before the birth of Marx, saw the prospect of the death of the ancient feudalistic inhumanity of India in 'capitalism.' He thought that capitalism would flourish in the Indian colony under British colonial capitalism. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, nationalist leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, etc. would go by such ideas. The nationalist leaders of the first phase including Ram Mohan Roy would not try to consciously differentiate among capitalism, colonialism and modernity. They considered 'capitalism' to be the crucial weapon against the feudalistic culture of India. They had no idea about its efficacy under British colonialism. This was perhaps the reflection of time and reality.

Is colonialism, like capitalism, a proper economic structure? No. it isn't. Colonialism is not a specific economic structure. Colonialism is a combined nomenclature for various kinds of production modes, production relations and various kinds of exploitation. Some are of the opinion that traditional social structures exist in colonies, and colonialism tends to perpetuate old and traditional social structures and old modes of production. Some again consider colonialism to be a transitional phase between old and traditional society and modern capitalistic society. Many consider colonialism to be a social structure of

dualistic character. Pre-capitalistic traditional society and modern capitalistic society co-exist there. Many Marxist and radical writers, while taking anti-colonialist position, support the latter idea of dualistic model. They think that though imperialism executes some reforms in colonies, it does not complete them. They want to claim that the limitations of capitalistic economy under colonialism, its feudal or half-feudal character are remnants of its remaining traditions of the past. Imperialism, for its own interests, does not completely demolish them, or does not want to do so. Imperialism wants to continue in the feudal economy of the past. Co-existence of modern capitalistic economic structure with pre-capitalistic structure is not any unnatural happening.

But, exploration into history reveals that colonialism wants to demolish pre-capitalistic modes of production and relations of productions. It wants reform and reconstruction of the old system. They want to include the old into the colonial structure. Production modes reformed and reconstructed by them are not the traditional pre-colonial and pre-capitalistic structures. The old production methods and relations that we meet in colonialism are basically the reappings from colonialism. Those pre-colonial structures are the products of history. Marxist scholars complain that colonialism is responsible for those residual matters. They maintain them carefully in their own interests. It can be cited, for instance, that after only 37 years of the Battle of Plessey, the British colonial ruler brought about a revolutionary change in the land-relations of this country through the “Permanent Settlement.” Capitalist relations were established in agriculture through that land reform. As that land reform was carried out in colonial Bengal, its result so stood that it became half-feudal and half-capitalistic; relation was established between the agriculture system of Bengal and world capitalistic market, capitalist landowners, traders and interest-suckers. Thus a fundamental change was initiated in Indian economy under British colonialism. India, particularly Bengal, was closely linked with world capitalistic system. But, was the path of capitalism broadened in Bengal through this union, as in England? Imperialistic writers claim that colonialist reforms were carried out in the colonies in the nineteenth century to replace capitalism there, and capitalistic structures were introduced into agriculture, trade and industry. But, colonial rulers were not responsible for their failures. Responsible were the pertaining weaknesses of pre-capitalistic structures and the pressures of society, economy, geography, culture and population. This sort of opinions still prevails.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels identified capitalism as a universal system. According to them, “Capitalism compels all nations on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeoisie mode of production.... to become bourgeoisie themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”²² The claim is not untrue. Capitalism is now a universal economic system. It cannot remain confined to any state-boundary. It will take the whole world in its fold. It will change the face of the whole world. This has turned into a total truth. But, Marx could not realize the conflict between the colonial reality of India and British capitalism. He never came to India. He arrived at the above conclusion on reading the debates held in the British Parliament about India. It is true that capitalism is a universal system, colonies turn into their special organs, but it is not true that as a result of coming into contact with the capitalist centre, colonies themselves will turn into capitalistic states as those at the centre. It is not valid that capitalism will gain ground in the colonies in the ways England became capitalistic. Though capitalism is a universal system, its shapes are bound to be different in independent and dependent states. After 50 years of the Second World War, colonialism has been wiped off the face of the world. About two hundred independent and sovereign states have emerged now on the face of the world. The basic economic system in those politically independent states also is capitalism. Those states are now classed as poor, underdeveloped, developing and developed. The capitalism of these states is not of the same appearance. At close attention, one can mark that the developed world is composed of former colonizer states. And, the former colonized states make poor, underdeveloped and developing states. Isn't there any connection between these two facts? It has been proved now that it is as a result of cruel colonial exploitation and plunder that the developed world is developed and the former colonies are underdeveloped. But, this is not true that imperialism did not try to introduce capitalistic structure in the colonies during the colonial

rule. They did so. Karl Marx also marked this. So, he made it clear that India would not be able to reap the harvest of capitalism without India's independence. But, colonial forces tried to transplant or transplanted colonial structure in this country in their own interest. Transplantation of capitalistic system into colonial structure cannot establish capitalism as progressive and strong as it is there at the centre. It could not do so in India either. Rather, according to Gunder Frank, that led to the 'development of underdevelopment'²³ in the colonies. Those turned into colonized states. The idea can be expressed better by saying that imperialism wanted to establish in the colonies capitalism, capitalistic mode of production and capitalistic production relations, but not capitalistic development. That rather resulted in the destruction of old economy, old social organization and old social structures, but was not conducive to new colonial economy and new social organization. That was rather synonymous with non-development—that was retrogressive. Colonies turned into parts of world capitalism, but remained deprived from enjoying fruits of capitalistic development. No industrial revolution takes place in colonies. But, colonialism establishes capitalistic mode of production in colonies.

Colonialism creates a bourgeois state, and provides in each area its democracy-universal franchise, parliament, trade and commerce, factory and industry, agriculture, bank-insurance-corporation, law-education-property; but capitalistic production and development of production relations remain inhibited. Capitalism means development of production forces. If development of production-forces suffers, capitalistic production and capitalistic system slow down at one time. Colonialism does exactly this in a well-thought-out manner. It creates impediments on the path of developmental transformation. It destroys old indigenous industries, but does not put up new capitalistic ones in their place. Colonialism rather goes by the principal aim of turning the colonies into regions supplying raw materials for the industrial areas of the centre. So, though capitalism is an advanced stage in social and economic evolution, but this truth is valid for the centre of the colonialism and not for the colonized areas.

The seeds of capitalism's death, again, lie in the development of productive forces. Its conflict with the production relations destroys it. Bipanchandra, a Marxist historian of India, identifies the difference between capitalism and colonialism in the following words:

Capitalism develops, and cannot but develop, social productive forces and is overthrown as a result of the development of the contradiction generated by this development between relations of production and the forces of production; colonialism, on the other hand, has to be overthrown because it does not develop, but represses productive forces. Its inner contradiction results not from the development of productive forces but from the lack of their development.²⁴

One of the inherent decisions is that colonialism is not the name of any mode of production; all kinds of modes of production can co-exist there. There can be an assembly of serfdom, feudalism, half-feudalism, and weak capitalism there. This co-existence may not necessarily be peaceful or non-conflictual. But this bunch of production-modes remains tied up with the colonial centre.

In the same manner, there is difference between the colonial centre and the colonized states. There remains a class in power in a capitalist state. That class keeps the subordinate classes in control. But, in a colonial state, colonialism establishes its hold over the whole society. In the colonial centre, inter-class relationship is more important; but, in the colonized state the relationship between the foreign and colonial ruling class and the whole people of the colony is important. The colonized state does not represent any single social class. It represents the whole people including all classes, castes and religions. So, in a colonized state, all people living in the state are placed under colonialism. No aristocratic or high class gets any share in state-power—none is included in the ruling class. The foreign colonial force may share social surplus with the aristocratic colonized feudal class, but it does not share power with them. Jawaharlal Nehru writes, "There is perhaps no example of any conquest in which the native have been so completely excluded from all share of a government of their country as in British India."²⁵ The experience of India tells us that even in a colonized condition conflicts of interest among different classes

appear. For example, it is there between the landlord and the subject people, capitalists and the workers, high and low classes, and between majority and minority, etc. But what else also is true is that colonialism remains like a heavy pressure on all of them. So, it is found that in certain circumstances and at certain times people of high and aristocratic class turn vocal against colonialism. In Egypt and Poland, the landlord class gave leadership to anti-colonial movement. This explains the 'elite theory' in nationalism. According to this theory, nationalism is the conflict of the indigenous elite with the foreign elite for power. This explanation is strongly placed even now. This theory conceals the principal conflict of the foreign colonial force with the colonial society as a whole. It places the local elite classes to be standing on the same row with the imperialist rulers. It is claimed that there is no difference between the local elite classes and the foreign imperialist rulers. Both of these are rulers-enemies of the exploited masses. It thus can mislead the anti-colonial, nationalist movement at least for some time.

For this theory obfuscates the reality of colonialism and the imperialist ruling classes by equating the indigenous elite of colonial society with the imperialist ruling classes-suggesting that both were oppressors of the colonial people in the same manner or that the manner in which the indigenous elite were oppressors made no political difference to the anticolonial struggle.²⁶

Imperialism and its subservient elite class can sometimes mislead the people by using revolutionary slogans. In this context, Lenin's decision regarding national liberation movement is worth consideration. He divided the nationalist movement in the colonized states into two phases. One is the democratic phase of national liberation movement and the other one is the socialistic. Lenin time and again placed warning not to confuse the roles of the national bourgeoisie of the colonized countries with those of the bourgeoisie of the colonizing countries. In the former bunch of countries, the revolutionary potential of the bourgeoisie had not been exhausted. Lenin laid down that when the autocratic rulers of the east were being equally tyrannized by imperialism, then the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia community there would turn into the carriers of nationalist consciousness. Very slowly and with some fear, they would want to get the support of the working class. They wanted to depend on the strength and hatred of the working class against colonialism. Thus anti-imperialist nationalist movement went on gaining strength. Similar events took place in China. During 1927-33 and 1946-49, the struggle against Chinese feudalism and semi-colonialism receded in the face of Japanese aggression. When it became clear that Chinese feudalism and semi-colonialism were under attack from aggressive Japanese colonialism, the Communist Party of China refused to give equal importance to Chinese feudalism and Japanese colonialism. But, when, after 1946, Japanese colonialism was no longer the principal enemy, the struggle then got shifted against feudalism and semi-feudalism-internal problems of China.

One needs to have an idea about the structural features of colonialism. We have already stated that there has been little research in the sub-continent about colonialism. The historians, economists, sociologists or anthropologists of this country are not heard to have done any research in the way Karl Marx could give a definite idea about the structure of capitalism during the mid-nineteenth century. So, it is very difficult to develop a complete idea about the structure of colonialism even now. There is no theory in our hand about colonial structure. Recently Bipan Chandra has drawn our attention to this matter. I think that, following the conclusions of Bipan Chandra, we require to make deeper research into colonialism, its structural philosophy and various other aspects. Classical economists like Karl Marx, Frederic Engels and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade, Gokhale and other proto-nationalist politicians reached the decision that capitalist institutions would one day play advanced role in the colonies occupied and ruled by England, which was an advanced capitalist state in the world and the lying-in chamber of bourgeoisie civilization. Bipan Chandra has raised the question as to why that has proved untrue. For getting an answer to that question, one requires to have sufficient knowledge about the structural traits of colonialism. Though it is a matter of sorrow, we do not really have sufficient information about this. But, this is necessary; for, it will give direction about the economic development and social progress of the independent states once colonialism is over. Bipanchandra, in his famous book *Essays on Colonialism*,

has identified four structural features of colonialism on the basis of the history and economic analysis written during the last 150 years.²⁷ “The first basic feature is the complete but complex integration and enmeshing of the colony with the world capitalist system in a subordinate or subservient position.”²⁸ The first and foremost feature is that world-imperialist capitalism takes a control over the colonies. The latter’s is a slave-lord relationship with world capitalism. The meaning of that subordination is that economic or social policies of the centre are not decided by looking at the needs of the colonies. Needs of imperialism, and not those of the colonies, are taken into consideration. But, it needs to be kept in mind that economic and social policies of independent states also may be tied up with world capitalism. This remains unmentioned in discussions about colonialism. This is found to be true in relationship of independent nation-states with developed capitalist states in the present-day colonialism-free world. The present-day situation has been described as neo-colonialism. The centre of neo-colonialism, USA and the former colonizing states of Europe are now transferring wealth from the whole world at a greater pace and an increased rate. This has been nicely presented by Samir Amin.²⁹ He writes, “The development of capitalism in the periphery was to remain extraverted, based on the external market, and could therefore not lead to a full flowering of the capitalist mode of production in the periphery.”³⁰

According to Bipanchandra, “The second feature of colonialism is encompassed by the twin notions of unequal exchange, and internal disarticulation of the colonial economy and the articulation of its different disarticulated parts, through the world market and imperialist hegemony, with the metropolitan economy.”³¹ That means the second trait is the two-way trend with unequal exchanges: internal indiscipline of economies of the colonized areas and adjustment of colonial economy with the disordered organs of internal economy, thanks to world market and imperialistic hegemony. For example, adjustment of indigenous industries is made with the capitalistic production of the Centre instead of doing so with the internal agricultural production of the colonies. That means agricultural production of the colonies is not related with the industrial production there. Consistency is brought with that of the centre of capitalistic production. The colonies will produce agricultural raw materials, but those will not be utilized at the industrial sites there. That will be done for capitalistic industrial production at the Centre which will buy them. The industrial commodities are imported by the colonies, and a natural end is brought to the process by selling those at the rural markets. Thus, the colonized countries are turned into areas of production of agricultural raw materials, and those raw materials are used for developed industrial production at the colonial centre. Rail line is set up not for the help of indigenous industries, but in the interest of colonial production. In the essay, “The Future Results of British Rule in India” Marx writes, “The plundering of India by the British aristocracy and merchant capital will be followed by industrialization carried out by the bourgeoisie of the metropolitan country: The railways will give rise to autocentric industries.”³² As a result of an international division of labour, the system of international marketing system turns into a tool of exploitation and under-development.

“The third feature of colonialism is the drain of wealth or unilateral transfer of social surplus to the metropolis through unrequited exports.”³³ This means one-way and repayment-free transfer of wealth and social surplus of the colonies to the centers of the colonies. Surplus will rise in the colonies and those will be deposited at the imperialist centers. Marx and the first generation of nationalists gave much importance to this. This feature is true for the neo-colonial world of today and the colonies are vocal about this. “The fourth basic feature of colonialism is foreign political domination or the existence and role of the colonial state which plays a crucial role in the colonial structure.”³⁴ This is why a clear idea about the role of the colonial state is urgently necessary; that works as the determinant in the colonial structure. Not only does this play a helpful role in formation of a correct idea about colonialism; it helps in making out the post-colonial state and society. It gives direction in determining the structure of politics and economics of the decolonized and, for that matter, politically independent countries.

About the Basic Nature of the Colonial State³⁵

Colonial state is the basic organization of the colonial structure. It is through the colonial state that connection of the colonies is established with the imperialist centre, and the flow of uninterrupted plunder remains in function. Capitalist state and colonial state are not synonymous. There are important differences between the two. Capitalism is a specific economic structure, but the colonial state is not so. Capitalism results in development of the economy, but colonialism does not do that. But, it provides strength to the capitalism at the Centre. And, again colonialism is no superstructure dependent on the economic basic structure. But it helps in establishing the economic basic structure. Not only that the ruling class steals surplus through it, colonialism turns into an instrument of thieving social surplus. In capitalistic economy, owners and controllers of production means make the ruling class. By thus being the owners of economic power they create and maintain a monopoly command over the whole society. It is the reverse of this that happens in colonialism.

Something opposite to this happens in colonialism. Because of the control established over the colonized state, the ruling classes placed at the centre of imperialism can keep the colonized society in a subordinated condition. In other words, the imperialist and central ruling class does not control state power and social surplus. Main reason for this is that state power and means of production remain in the hands of the colony. This is where capitalist imperialism differs from feudalistic empire. The Moghuls, after occupying this country, directly captured the position of the ruling class; but this is not true for the British. The latter made the people of this country cultivate indigo on payment of loan; they conducted exploitation through the new class of zamindars whom they created through the Permanent Settlement. They defeated the First War of Independence of 1857 with the help of zamindar aristocratic and educated middle class, and that they did with the help of the army of this country. A capitalist state places a class in power. Other classes remain subordinated to it. But, that does not happen in a colonial state. There the ruling class of the imperialist centre controls the whole of the colonial society. Though class relations and class character dominate at the centre, it is the conflict of the whole colonialisied population with the foreign imperialist ruler which is important. In colonialist study of history this truth is generally ignored or concealed behind the twilight of truth and falsehood. Thus, the colonial state does not represent any indigenous social class. But, it subordinates the whole population irrespective of religion, caste and class to the colonialist centre. The capitalism at the centre controls and rules all the classes. No class-either the landlord or aristocrat-gets share of state-power. None of them is part of the ruling class. They are not even a junior partner of the imperialist ruler. They are 'aristocrat servants.' The ruling class present at the centre of imperialism may give them some share of the social surplus-they give that; but they do not give any share of power. The control of power remains with the colonialist centre. Even the native rajamaharaja, landlord, and zamindar and jotdar class do not get a particle of the state-power. But, it is true that the colonial state makes the landlord and capitalist class subservient to the Centre of imperialism. That means that their support for colonialism is exacted through the colonial state. But, they do not make them even the junior partner of the imperialist ruling class. Their interests are sacrificed to the bourgeoisie class of the Centre.

The colonial state takes some reform-steps in areas of economics, administration, education, etc. It has to take those steps. For example, Acts on Tenancy and Anti-Usury Act, Factory Act, Flexibility towards Minorities Act, etc. But one cannot forget that the main objective of these reforms is to strengthen the basis of the colonial ruler. Thus, at particular places and times, a colonial state shows special excellence in creating conflicts between the landlord and the subject peoples, capitalist and workers and high and low classes. They can create conflict between the national majority and minority and go on keeping it up. As a result, as said earlier, people of the highest and aristocratic classes may come up to the leadership of the anti-imperialist and nationalist movement. This is what happened in Egypt and Poland.

Difference between Colonial and Half-colonial State

Firstly, in a half-feudalist state, foreign imperialistic forces share power with indigenous elites. There is political and economic partnership of the indigenous ruling class. So, they get a big or small share of the social surplus. Secondly, the indigenous wealthy class or some of them, for example, the landlord and the intermediary class and the broker class, and even one portion of the national bourgeoisie class combine to form the exploiter class. In a half-feudalist society, the local elite class gets a share of state-power, and sometimes their domination becomes very pressing. The class-character of the colonial state is determined by the character of the imperialistic and dominating class. But, the class-character of the half-colonial state is determined by the class-character of the local elite class tied up with the imperialistic class. And, there lies the difference between the colonial state and pre-capitalistic feudalistic and autocratic state. However much autocratic and tyrannical the pre-colonial and feudalistic state may be, it is an organic part of the local and traditional society. That state does not want to hand over the country to a foreign force, or does not create any opportunity of stealing of social surplus by any foreign force unless extremely compelled.

A colonial state is mainly a bourgeoisie state. So, bourgeois organization is built up in every organ of that state. For example, bourgeois democracy, bourgeois education system, bourgeois bureaucracy and administrative machinery, bourgeois law and judiciary, bourgeois financial bodies like bank-insurance-corporation, bourgeois labour policy, etc. Like the imperialistic centres, the colonies may be authoritarian, or like many countries of Africa and south-east Asia, they may be autocratic, or like India, they may be half-authoritarian and half-democratic. But, they are not fully democratic. The colonized states may be ruled by the force of arms and muscle, or depending on the nature, size, culture and history of the colonial state and the character of the colonizing imperialist state or its econo-socio-political character, it may turn into a half-authoritarian state. But, whatever may be the state, its colonial character doesn't alter.

Comparative Study of the British Elites and the Indian Elites of the Eighteenth Century

In his essay of August 8, 1853, Marx said that the British were the first conqueror nation who had a higher civilization than the one Indians had. That civilization was beyond the reach of the Hindus. The point is worth consideration. When we think of the conquest of this country by the East India Company and the 190 years before the end of the British imperialistic rule, we then generally do not keep in mind the question of social transformation right in England. We take it for granted that all who came to this country during these 190 years were possessors of equally advanced thoughts. When the British East India Company placed their feet on the soil of this country and even when they came out winner in the Battle of Plessey, it is not that then they were upholders of more advanced thoughts than the countrymen here were. When in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries trading organizations of many countries of Europe voyaged out for new countries, sea-navigation was then very fearsome, and there were terribly confusing thoughts. The ideas in general circulation about India were that the country was completely covered with jungles and those jungles were full of tiger, lion, snake, and other violent animals and beasts. It was the habitat of cholera, malaria and small pox-incurable diseases. People there were half-savage. So, there was an impression of big fright about India. When Clive embarked on his voyage for India, the ideas then in the minds of people there were similar to those we had about the Andamans during the British rule. So, nobody would dare to come to India then. During the initial years, anti-social people, terrorists, pickpockets, murderers, thieves and rogues and convicts from jail would be forcibly made to embark on ships sailing out for India.

Abel Magwitch of *Great Expectations* written by Charles Dickens in 1861 is a convict. He was sent to Australia by way of transportation. Convicts would be rehabilitated in the colonies. Usually they would not be repatriated. Edward Said has written, "Being from Australia a penal colony designed for the rehabilitation but not the repatriation of transported English criminals."³⁶

There needs to be research on how many of the people who along with Clive voyaged for India were anti-social criminals. I do not think that it requires to be indicated what kind of people were those who could finally place their feet on the soil of India after sea-navigation for a long time and battling with ships of contending countries. They would turn into civilized people of the civilized world right after placing feet on the soil of India. The observation of the famous Indian Marxist sociologist, Benoy Ghose, is worth consideration. He writes,

Those English traders who gave up the traders' scale after the Battle of Plessey and took up the rulers' wand were not upholders of any social ideals especially higher than those we went by. There was no big difference between the elites of eighteenth century England and elites of eighteenth century Bengal in matters of education and taste. This needs to be specially kept in mind regarding the English newly-come to this country. For, we tend to consider the coming of the English to this country as the coming of new age and new ideals. This is not at all true. Though the middle age got terminated in England during the eighteenth century true new age got initiated since beginning of the nineteenth century, after the Industrial Revolution.³⁷

Jawaharlal Nehru also has written as follows, "The British who came to India were not political or social revolutionaries, they were conservatives representing the most reactionary social class in England and England was in some ways one of the most conservative countries in Europe."³⁸

We have forgotten that at the time of coming of the British this country was one of the richest in the world. The standard of education and culture was very high. That's why the famous historian Will Durant writes, "It was the wealth of the 18th century India which attracted the commercial pirates of England and France."³⁹

Thomas Macaulay was a liberal imperialist. Standing at the British Parliament on 2nd February, 1835 he said as follows about the morality and culture of the Indians,

I have traveled across the length and breadth of India and have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such moral values. People of such calibre that I never think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage and, therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self- esteem, their native culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nations.⁴⁰

All these opinions find support from the report of the Governor General, Lord Cornwallis. In a report on the economic condition of Bengal in 1790, he said as follows: "England was fortunate in establishing her dominion over one of the most fertile countries on the face of the globe."⁴¹ So, Macaulay rejected the recommendations of Bishop William Adam for scientific education, and recommended for introducing an education system through which such an educated class will grow up as will be Indian in blood and caste, but English in taste, ideology, morality and intellectuality. With the help and co-operation of people of this class, British colonialism will be able to safeguard their rule and exploitation in this country. That his expectation was not falsified has been proved many a time. All know how that educated class stood by the British colonial force at the time of the first war of independence in 1857. The main aim of colonialism is economic exploitation. It is not meant to enhance the prestige of the flag of any European nation or state; neither is it for disseminating a higher culture. Colonialism did not have the main objective of helping the directors of any undeveloped society in running the country. It did not have the true aim of administering any kind of a humanistic or human welfare programme. The 'grand' objective, initial and genuine, of colonialism is economic-unbridled looting of the wealth of the colonies. Liberal colonialists want to idealize the role of colonialism behind the guise of good adjectives. The statistics given below prove that it is false. An essay, titled 'International Industrialization Levels from 1750 to

1980', by Paul Bairoch was published in 1982 in Journal of European Economic History. In that essay, Bairoch has divided the whole world into 7 regions (civilization and country) and placed statistics of what percentage of industrial commodities was produced by which region during years 1750-1980. The piece of statistics goes as follows:

[Shares of World Manufacturing Output by Civilization or country, 1750-1980 (in percentages, World=100)]⁴²

Country	1750	1800	1830	1860	1880	1900	1913	1928	1938	1953	1963	1973	1980
West	18.2	23.3	31.1	53.7	68.8	77.4	81.6	84.2	78.6	74.6	65.4	61.2	57.8
China	32.8	33.3	29.8	19.7	12.5	6.2	3.6	3.4	3.1	2.3	3.5	3.9	5.0
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.7	3.3	5.2	2.9	5.1	8.8	9.1
India/ Pakistan	24.5	19.7	17.6	8.6	2.8	1.7	1.4	1.9	2.4	1.7	1.8	2.1	2.3
Rasia/ USSR	5.0	5.6	5.6	7.0	7.6	8.8	8.2	5.3	9.0	16.0	20.9	20.1	21.1
Brazil/ Mexico				0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.6	2.2
Others	15.7	14.6	13.1	7.6	5.3	2.8	1.7	1.1	0.9	1.6	2.1	2.3	2.5

It is found that 18.2% of industrial commodities produced in the world in 1750 came from the West. This was less than one-fifth of the total industrial produce of the world. And 24.5% was produced in India (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), and that was almost one-fourth of total industrial production. 32.8% was produced in China—almost one-third. This piece of information proves that in the decade of the disaster at Plessey industrial production of India was more than that of the whole of West. So, it needs to be said in words of Will Durant that greedy eyes of all western pirates, including those of England and France, fell on India. The rate at which wealth of India declined and that of the West increased during the 230 years of 1753-1980 becomes clear from the essay by Paul Bairoch. One finds that industrial production of the west went on increasing up to 1928. It suddenly started decreasing since 1938. On the other hand, industrial production of a colony named India suddenly increased in 1928 and 1938. It decreased a little in 1953 and 1963. Then it went on increasing since 1973. Does not this have any reason? Bipanchandra has explained this nicely in his book.⁴³

There is generally an idea in currency that the little industrialization that had taken place in India during the colonial period before independence could do so because of Indian economy's connection with world capitalism. Bipanchandra has disproved this theory. According to him, rather the opposite of this is true. Quite emphatically he says that whenever there was any weakening or sapping up of subjugated Indian economy's ties with world- imperialistic capitalism, it was exactly then that industrial development in this country got enhanced. Reversely, whenever there was strengthening of her ties with imperialistic capitalism, industrialization of India got impeded and slowed down. In support of his conclusion, Bipanchandra says that at least for three times Indian economy's ties with world imperialistic capitalism became weak. India's foreign trade and inflow of foreign capital got obstructed. That happened at the times of the two world wars and the Great Depression. In addition to these, Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movement of 1919-1922 and boycott of British goods made Indian economy's ties with world capitalism weaker. Boycott of British goods adversely impacted on British industry. In each case, industrial production in India, instead of reducing, increased, and the Indian industrialist class got more

deeply grounded. On the other hand, the international economy did not pass any idle time in a frustrated condition. It wanted to overcome the temporary weakening of ties with colonial economy, and strengthen ties with imperialistic capitalism. The weak capitalist class in India started panicking at this. They started looking for some new paths in fear of losing what opportunity they had got, and finally lent support to anti-imperialist nationalistic movement.

So, it is not false that the sub-continent that was one of the most prosperous in the 1750s turned into one of the poorest countries of the world because of the colonial rule and exploitation for about 200 years. Why did not Bangladesh turn into a developed capitalistic country even after remaining subjugated under the foremost capitalist state, Britain? We are to get an answer to this question before everything else. That will make it possible to get a true picture of the non-development and future development of Bangladesh. The reason for Bangladesh's non-development will not be found only in the colonial policies; that will have to be looked for into the contact between Bangladesh and world capitalism through trade, commerce and capitalism. Colonialism never wanted a weakening of contact between world capitalism and Bangladesh. Colonialism had rather the chief aim of building up Bangladesh into an unequal partner of world capitalism by making her contact with world capitalism closer. Thus, the present non-development of Bangladesh is a result of the British colonialism of long two hundred years.

Looked for from this historical viewpoint, an answer to the question of independent Bangladesh's increasing non-development can be had.

5.

Ferocious Colonialism and Repressed Humanism

I would like to initiate this section of the essay by placing a quotation from the famous historian, Tapan Roy Choudhury. In the recently published *Bangalnama*, he writes, "That we are servants of the British, and that it is the fate of the servant to be beaten up in the case of discourtesy was made clear to me in my very boyhood by familiar Congress volunteers."⁴⁴ This truth has found expression in E.M. Forster's famous novel, *A Passage to India* (1924) too.

Ronny Heaslop was an unmarried youth of 20/22 years. His knowledge of law might not be that sharp. Yet, he came to this country as a judicial official. "Ronny Heaslop had turned into a strong officer" in the mean time. The boy might make a big officer one day. Recently, Ronny's old mother, Mrs. Moore had come to India. With her there was Adela Quested, one unmarried girl. The mother wished that Ronny would marry her. We place some extracts from their conversation:

'We're not out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly!'

'What do you mean?'

'What I say. We're out here to do justice and keep the peace. Them's my sentiments. India isn't a drawing-room.'

'Your sentiments are those of a god', she said quietly; but it was his manner rather than his sentiments that annoyed her.

'Trying to recover his temper he said: 'India likes gods.'

'And Englishmen like posing as gods.'

There's no point in all this. Here we are, and we're going to stop, and the country's got to put up with us, gods or no gods. Oh look here' he broke out, rather pathetically, 'what do you and Adela want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire out here? Lose such powers as I have for

doing good in this country because my behavior isn't pleasant? You neither of you understand what work is, or you'd never talk such eyewash. I hate talking like this, but one must occasionally. It's morbidly sensitive to go on as Adela and you do. I noticed you both at the club to-day-after the Collector had been at all that trouble to amuse you. I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force. I'm not a missionary or a Labour Member, or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I'm just a servant of the Government; it's the profession you wanted me to choose myself, and that's that. We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do.'⁴⁵

On hearing this, Mrs. Moore is reminded of his son's school-days. The son has now become very strong in words. The humanism of his youth has vanished into the hole of sloth. The roots of the nationalist movement of the people of this country and aspirations for independence have by that time turned very strong. Ronny therefore laments that he no longer gets the unconditional loyalty of the servile people of this country that his ancestors would enjoy. The people of this country have become arrogant.

What I would like to stress upon in this section has been nicely ventilated through the words of Tapan Roy Choudhury quoted above. That has been well-expressed through *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster also. Colonialism destroys the souls of not only the natives of the colonies, but those of the people of the imperialist colonies also. It becomes clear from an analysis of the above statement by Tapan Roy Choudhury that colonialism turns the people of the colonies into servants. Servants need not have any freedom. And, can freedomless people be humans? During the whole period of British rule we were subjugated people-not human beings. Bankimchandra can be mentioned as an example. The person with the best mind of the nineteenth century was a Deputy Collector. One collector was above him wherever in Bangladesh he worked, and that boss was definitely a British person-a British person without any name or fame. In his own country he was perhaps a convict like Abel Magwitch of *Great Expectations*. Karl Marx mentioned Clive as a robber. But, in colonialism, he was above Bankim; he was considered to be cultured, humanist, a representative of the civilized world. We are coming to discuss that later on. In colonialism, it is not only that people of the colonies are not human beings; colonizers also do not remain so. They are criminals in their motherland-and they are lords in the colonies. They have total command over the lives of the servants. Giving up humanism, they turn into beasts. Colonialism has the same appearance all-over the world. In words of Jean Paul Sartre, "There are neither good, nor bad colonialists; there are colonialists."⁴⁶

Memmi has written in that book, "Colonialism is an incurable disease of Europe." Describing the condition of Algeria persecuted by French colonialism, he writes, "There are only nine Algerians for each Frenchman. All that would be necessary would be to give each Frenchman a gun and nine bullets."⁴⁷

As colonialism is annihilating in character, so it spreads many kinds of unscientific net over the colonies. Ideas of racialism, communalism, blue blood and national superiority-all are products of colonialism. As the colonizers are lords, they make the greatest nation; they are upholders and carriers of high civilization and high culture. For the security of their rule and exploitation, colonialism creates communalism and racialism. They strengthen the walls of inhuman rules of feudalism, religious rituals and feudal conflicts of religion, race, caste and creed, and want to prolong a smooth rule by raising anew walls of capitalism and colonialism. Colonialism does not only kill the colonized people physically, but maims them psychologically also. It therefore destroys the old traditional-social institutions. From the centre, the new kind of organizations replaces them quite forcibly. As a result, the old traditional-social structure crumbles down, but the people of the colonies cannot easily accept the replacing institutions coming from the new country. There continues thus a contest between the old and the new for a long time, which paves the ground for exploitation by colonialism. In a country consisting of many nations, religions and castes and communities, colonialism incites differences among them and introduces hatred through many tactics. 'Divide and rule' is a very dear policy with colonialism. In India also, British colonialism was able to

very tactfully utilize what religious and cultural gaps there were between the Hindus and the Muslims. And at the time of departure, they left India divided into two pieces, and India is now divided into three parts. So Sartre states,

Colonialism denies human rights to human beings whom it subdued by violence and keeps them by force in a state of misery and ignorance that Marx would rightly call a subhuman condition. Racism is ingrained in actions, institutions and in the nature of the colonialist methods of production and exchange. Political and social regulations reinforce one another. Since the native is subhuman, the Declaration of Human Rights does not apply to him; inversely, since he has no rights, he is abandoned without protection to inhuman force-brought in with the colonialist praxis, engendered every moment by the colonialist apparatus and sustained by relations of production that define two sorts of individual—one for whom privilege and humanity are one, who becomes a human being through exercising his rights; and the other, for whom a denial of rights sanctions misery, chronic hunger, ignorance, or in general ‘sub-humanity’.⁴⁸

Colonialism does not believe in the human rights of the humans of the colonies. The colonizer people reject those rights for the natives of the colonies that they enjoy in their motherlands. To be brief, colonialism is the breeding ground for all the enemies of humanity. Racialism and communalism take birth and grow in the fertile soil of the colonies. Millions of instances of that are scattered across history. How many of those can be mentioned in this essay? I have already mentioned that colonialism has a universal appearance or feature. Albert Memmi, coming from Tunisia, a French colony, wrote in the Introduction to his book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, “I was a Tunisian national. Like all other Tunisians I was treated as a second-class citizen, deprived of political rights, refused admission to most civil service department, etc.”⁴⁹ Let us remember Surendranath Banerjee of United Bengal; let us remember racialism in South Africa, Nelson Mandela, and Gandhi. Let us recollect how Gandhi was thrown out of the first class compartment of the train. Most of the white people of South Africa considered that it was their divine right to tread on the black people. Nelson Mandela and tens ‘of his comrades were arrested in 1964 for crimes of leading a movement against anti-human apartheid and securing democracy and a free society, and in trial’ they got sentenced with life-term imprisonment. One of them, Denis Goldberg was white in complexion. That even the prison-system was not free from apartheid got a proof in the separate jail for Goldberg- for his white complexion. Trains, clubs for entertainment, hotels-restaurants and even the prisons were not free from the bites of racialism. Let us, however, come back to the discussion about India.

In words of Tapan Roy Choudhury, we were ‘servants’ in colonies. Read any book on imperialism and colonialism, and check how true his words are. Thousands of proofs of that are scattered over pages of those books. It is not possible to mention even a little of that in an essay like the present one. I shall close this section by mentioning one or two small incidents.

Albert Edward, son of Queen Victoria of England, came to Calcutta on December 23 in 1875. Arrangements of according him a reception started in the city some months ahead of this historical happening. *Bangadarshan*, the periodical edited by Bankimchandra, had its sixth number of the fourth year published in Ashwin of 1282 (September, 1875). A poem by Poet Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay was published in that number. It was titled ‘Reception by Bharatbhoomi.’ Inscribed above the title were the words: “Bhabeepati Rajonnati Niketan Sreela Sreejukta Yubaraj Prince Wales Bahadurer Protii” The first two lines read: Bharatbhoomi says, “Come my Lord, The First Son of the All-Honourable Queen.”

In a special Declaration of April 24, 1875, the queen took the title of “Empress of India.” In a court-session arranged on January 1, 1877 in Delhi, Governor General Lytton made this Declaration. Poet Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay composed a booklet on the occasion of the welcome arrival in India of the Prince. This was titled “Prayer from India.”

Now, please take a look at a part of that poem:

Listen oh my future Lord,listen, oh sea of virtues,
To our supplication at your red feet with folded hands.
Oh Prince, do not hateas the maid is poor, frail
and very old; keep her in your memory.
Though the boys are black,their heart-lotuses are
bright with the light of devotion to the Lord.
Do not neglect from your position of lordship, as they are black,
Give them food and water when they are hungry.
They would relate everythingto the mother who is
affectionate and source of kindness.
She is in the know of all my pains;
In Indira, she is the Mother-India.⁵⁰

Does this require any further explanation? If freedom is the other name of a human being, this poem by a Bengali poet with modern education, and living in the second half of the nineteenth century, is a burning denial of that. Let us judge how Edward Said looked at this matter,

Thus, in 1876 Victoria was declared Empress of India; her Viceroy, Lord Lytton, was sent there on a visit, greeted and celebrated in ‘traditional’ jamborees and durbars all over the country, as well as in a great Imperial Assemblage in Delhi, as if her rule was not mainly a matter of power and unilateral edict, rather than age-old custom.⁵¹

When Jyotishchandra Chattopadhyay, son of Sanjibchandra, brother of Bankimchandra, got the job of a police inspector in August, 1887, the latter, in a letter expressing joy at the happening, advised him as follows, “The sahibs can do as they like. Know for certain that no word from a Bengali, particularly of a small employee like you, carries any force. ... Accept whatever the superior sahib says at any time and carry that out as far as your ability allows.”⁵² The rebellious Marxist poet Sukanta Bhattacharya, in his poem entitled “Aggrieved Homeland,” has written as follows: “I have got only kicks after my birth in this country.” The present generation of youths also has not forgotten that kicks from the colonizer lords were the only gift for the natives living in colonies.

Dear readers and audience, but this is not my last word. Sartre said, “Colonialism creates the patriotism of the colonized.”⁵³

It intensifies the thirst for freedom among humans. Man becomes human. It gives birth to heroes like Khudiram, Surya Sen, Bhagat Singh, Preeti Lata and Binoy-Badal-Dinesh-people whose feet do not tremble the least for embracing death for freedom. They are terrorists in the eyes of the colonizers. They are not terrorists-they are martyrs. They tried to recover the country’s independence from under the paws of ferocious beasts. Even today they are deemed to be terrorists by the servants and pages of colonialism in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. About why and when servants of colonialism are desperate in sacrificing their lives, Sartre writes,

Kept at the level of a beast by an oppressive system, the natives are given no right, not even the right to live. Their condition worsens daily. And when a people has no choice but how it will die, where a people has received from its oppressors only gift of despair, what does it have to loose? A people’s misfortune will become its courage; it will make, of its endless rejection by colonialism, the absolute rejection of colonization.⁵⁴

And, so, after the Second World War, there started a fall of colonialism which started taking a leave from the face of the world towards the end of the twentieth century. The whole world is now divided among almost two hundred free and sovereign states.

You have so long been told how colonialism, along with enslaving people, gives rise to national heroes. But, we are to remember some incidents of colonialism turning colonizing people into ferocious beasts also. We should recollect the stories of Bengalees' heroism-glory. We are found to be recollecting only the achievements of the Bengalees during the 24 years of Pakistani rule. We recollect 21st February, the Education Movement of '62, Elections of '54 and '70, the Liberation War of '71. We proudly remember Wajiullah, Asad, Sergeant Jahurul Haq and Dr. Shamsuzzoha; we remember the millions of people who got martyred in the Liberation War of '71. But, think a little if we do equally remember those who had sacrificed their lives fighting against British colonialism with smiling faces. We are to know the answers to the question why we do not do so. We should remember those martyrs who fell fighting against British colonialism. That will create patriotism among us, and Khudiram, Surya Sen, Bhagat Singh and Preeti Lata will reappear in rows fighting out the neo-colonialism of our present time.

6.

A Brief Account of Torture-Tyranny-Exploitation-Plunder by British Colonialism

Lenin wrote in 1908 that British rule in India is the name of terrorism and plunder that does not have any end. We get an elaborate picture of that in *India Today* by Rajani Palme Dutt. He has indicated three stages of British colonialism. The first one is the stage of trade capital. It is safe to say that it is the time of contest-free and monopoly plunder by East India Company up to the second half of the eighteenth century. It had the life-span from 1600 to 1858. It got abolished in 1858, and India went under capitalist British imperialism. The second stage is that of industrial capital. This new and modern scientific stage started in the first part of nineteenth century. The third one is that of the rule of finance capital. It started in the last foot of the nineteenth century. Karl Marx, therefore, saw the first two stages of exploitation and plunder. He did not see the exploitation by finance capital. People of the decolonized and free world now are watching the fourth stage of exploitation by capitalism. That is the rule of corporate capital-rule and exploitation by free market economy and so called globalization.

The first stage can in no way be called rule-it is plunder. In a letter written to Conrad Schmidt on October 27 1890, Engels wrote, "The aim of the conquest of India by the Portuguese, Dutch and the British during 1500-1800 was import from India-nobody thought of export to India."⁵⁵ They destroyed the muslin industry-the best in the world-in a well-planned manner. About one-third of the revenue- collection during the first two years' plunder by the Company went to England. "The revenue collected during the first two years amounted to 13,066,761 pounds, and the total expenditure came to 9,027,609. The surplus of 4,037,152 pounds was sent to England."⁵⁶ Robber Clive grabbed 100,000 pounds during those two years. He had come to Bengal empty-handed. He went back home with 250,000 pounds. He had an annual earning of 27, 000 pounds from his trading organization in Bengal. A picture of the huge amount of wealth they had dispatched to England through export and import can be had from the accounts of export and import of years 1766-68. "According to the Report of Governor Verelst, the export from Bengal during these three years amounted to 6,311,250 pounds, and import amounted to only 624, 375 pounds. That means the ruler East India Company had sent ten times of wealth to England during these three years."⁵⁷

The East India Company got the authority to collect revenue in this country in 1765. During the last year of revenue-collection by the native ruler (1764-65), collection amounted to 817,000 pounds, and during the first year of company-rule (1765-66) revenue-collection in Bengal was to the amount of 1,470,000 pounds. The increase was to the tune of 653,000 pounds. This trend continued to be there. 2,341,000

pounds and 2, 818,000 pounds were collected in 1771-72 and 1775-76 respectively. When Lord Cornwallis introduced Permanent Settlement in 1793, revenue for collection was fixed at 3,400,000 pounds.⁵⁸ To know about what amount of wealth was dispatched from Bengal to England, one can consult the Fourth Chapter, “British Rule in India—the Old Basis” of *India Today* by Rajani Palme Dutt and the 11th Chapter, “Drain of Wealth from Bengal in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century” of the book, *The Economic History of Bengal: From Plessey to the Permanent Settlement* by N. K. Sinha.

Famine of '76: As a result of the persistent continuity in such inhuman collection of revenue, there occurred in Bengal the Famine of '76 (1769-70). In a written report, Mr. Beker, Resident of Murshidabad, informed the Company in 1769 as follows,

It must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think that since the accession of the company to the Dewani the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before and yet I am afraid the fact is undoubted... This fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary Government, is verging towards its ruin while the English have really so great a share in the Administration.⁵⁹

So, there's no doubt today that the total liability of the great famine of '76 lies with the reckless loot, exploitation and tyranny of the Company. The eyewitness writer Younghusband did not ascribe the liability of this great famine on draught or any other accident or calamity.⁶⁰ He held the British traders responsible for this famine. In his book *Transactions in India* published in 1786, he wrote,

The year 1769 appeared with a terrible hint of acute food- shortage; immediately thereafter all the British traders of Bengal and Bihar, all their officers and agents and all employees of the Revenue Department, wherever they were employed, started buying paddy and rice night and day with untiring labour. Profit came so much so in this most ignoble trade and so quickly that a penniless person employed at the court of the Nawab of Murshidabad dispatched 60,000 pounds (1.5 lac rupees) to Europe.”⁶¹

According to official statistics, one-third of Bengal's population died because of that famine. But, revenue-collection in that year crossed records of all preceding years. “The British Resident at the Court of Murshidabad admitted that revenue was too much rigorously collected during the famine; never earlier was so much of rigor imposed in revenue-collection.”⁶²

William Hunter wrote, “When 35% of the total population and half of the peasants died, 5% of the revenue-collection was not reduced, and next year it was enhanced by 10%.”⁶³ On November 3, 1772, Governor General Warren Hastings, in a report to the Court of Directors in England, informed, “It was naturally to be expected that the diminution of the revenue should have kept an equal pace with the other consequences of so great a calamity; that it did not was owing to its being ‘violently’ kept up to its former standard.”⁶⁴

In his essay “A View of the English Interests in India”⁶⁵ William Fullarton MP has recorded a nice account of how Bengal, the grain-store of India and the centre of oriental trade and commerce, wealth and industrial production, turned, during only 20 years of the Company's rule, into a cemetery. Lord Cornwallis wrote in his report of September 18, 1789, “I may safely assert that one third of the company's territory in Hindustan is now a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts.”⁶⁶ It is mentionable that during 6 years of the Company's misrule one-third of the artisans of the world-famous muslin industry had to flee. The industry got destroyed. As a result, the first rebellion of the people of this country sparked off from Dhaka and its surroundings. It is recorded as *Sanyasi Bidroha* in history. It went on for 38 years.

The main policy of the East India Company at this stage was “Killing the Swan laying golden eggs and grabbing all of them at a time.” The following statistics can be placed in support of Warren Hastings' above-quoted statement of November 3, 1772:

Table⁶⁷

Bengali Year	Gregorian Year Collected (in Taka)	Volume of Revenue
1175	1768-69	1,52,54,856
1176	1769-70	1,31,49,148
1177	1770-71	1,40,06,030
1178	1771-72	1,53,33,660

Rule of Industrial Capital

As it was stated earlier, a process of change uninterruptedly went on in the society of England, the centre of colonialism, after 1757. Trade capital became very helpless there in the face of growing industrial capital. And that found reflection in England and India. Industrial capital ceaselessly became loudly vocal against the monopoly trade by the East India Company. As a result, the monopoly trading by the Company came to a stop at the time of renewal of the Charter in 1813.

Industrial capital came out winner. There appeared the stage of scientific exploitation by progressive industrial capital. Dutt writes, “In 1813, the offensive of the industrialist and other trading interests was at last successful and the monopoly of the East India Company in trade with India was ended. The new stage of industrial capitalist exploitation of India may thus be dated from 1813.”⁶⁸

Seeley has made it clear in his book, *Expansion of England* how the plunder by trading capital of the East India Company was very insignificant as compared to the exploitation by industrial capital. He writes that up to 1811-during the time of monopoly trading-India was not bigger than a small island to England. But, the rule by industrial capital made India equal to the USA or France. The British industries were built up through tariff discrimination against Indian goods. Dutt writes,

Thus, it was not only on the basis of the technical superiority of machine industry, but also with direct state assistance of one-way free trade (free entry, or virtual free entry, for British goods into India, but tariffs against the entry of Indian manufactures into Britain and prevention of direct trade between India and European or other foreign countries by the operation of the Navigation Acts) and the predominance of British manufactures was built up in the Indian Market and the Indian manufacturing industries were destroyed.⁶⁹

The British industrial capital wanted to turn the sub-continent into a country producing agricultural goods for the British factories and industries. India would supply raw materials for the British factories and the industrial commodities would fill up Indian markets unobstructed. As a result of implementation of this policy, India producing agricultural and industrial goods turned within a span of 100 years into a country producing agricultural goods in the interest of British capital. The colonizer British people secured the right to buy land and farm land in this country by dint of the Charter of 1833. During this phase, colonialism did not want to kill the swan laying golden eggs; it wanted to keep it living by feeding and clothing it.

Modern Colonialism: Phase of Finance Capital

After the First World War, British imperialism reached a new (third) stage. Rajani Palme Dutt has described this to be ‘modern imperialism.’ In the words of Dutt, “Since the war of 1914-18, imperialism in India has been widely regarded as having entered on a new stage which has little in common with the preceding period.”⁷⁰ Lord Curzon, who was opposed to nationalist movement and the Bengalis, said in 1905, “Administration and exploitation go hand in hand.” It is supposed that along with Montagu-Chelmsford Declaration, there came an end to autocratic rule in the area of politics. Commitment was expressed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Declaration that the new policy of the British colonialism was ‘... the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire.’⁷¹

Colonialism wanted our existence to melt into British imperialism. They were successful in Australia, but they failed in the sub-continent. Since the time of Lord Curzon, however, need for administrative-structural reforms in the interest of colonial rule was felt, and the Morley-Minto reforms opened up that path in 1909.

Words were in circulation about bringing an end to the obstructions of the old colonialist totalitarian policy on the path of industrial development in India, and commitment was made that India would be turned into an industrialized country on the colonial cradle and with the help of British capital. Thus, path for new and modern capitalistic exploitation was facilitated in the colony called India. Rule of finance capital replaced free industrial capital. But, what should be kept in mind in this connection is that during the phase of any process of exploitation, the process of the earlier phase also remains operative. Another thing should be kept in mind. It is that both the industrial capital that had become vocal against monopoly exploitation and plunder and the rule of finance capital that was established through administrative reforms in place of industrial capital had increased the level of exploitation and plunder in this country. Statistics given below proves that very clearly.

Volume of wealth dispatched from India to England (million pounds)⁷² :

	1851	1901	1913-14	1933-34
Home charges	2.5	17.3	19.4	27.4
Excess of Indian Exports	3.3	11.0	14.2	69.7
It becomes clearer if one takes the average of five years into consideration:				
Annual Average of Five-Year periods (In million pounds)				
	1851-55	1897-1901 to 1913-1914	1909-10 to 1935-36	1931-32
Excess of Indian Exports	4.3	15.3	22.4	59.2

The truth to which this unthinkable increase in dispatch of wealth draws our attention is that this became possible because of the change in the qualitative level of exploitation and plunder and their method. The British policy in India underwent development according to the needs of the reckless mercantile capitalism in the nineteenth century.

Firstly, the advantage of monopoly trade by the Company was withdrawn, and the British government, representing the British industrial capital, took over power in India. It became partially operative at the time of renewal of the Charter in 1833, and became complete in 1858.

Secondly, India was handed over to the trading capital of Britain. For that, it became necessary to pay attention to development of roads, setting up of railways and irrigation. Trade and commerce in India by any other country was made impossible through fixation of economic policies. Whatever might have been told by the British rulers, pledges of industrial development in India under colonialism turned into big irony and myth. Hobsbawm, one of the greatest historians in the world, said,

But as the industrialist vested interest prevailed in Britain, the East India mercantile interests (not to mention the Indian ones) were pressed back. India was systematically reindustrialized and became in turn a market for Lancashire cottons; in 1820 the subcontinent took only 11 million yards; but by 1840 it

already took 145 million yards. ... For since the dawn of time Europe had always imported more from the East than she had sold thereto.⁷³

Import of yarn from Lancashire to India increased by 134 million yards in 20 years.

First Mutiny against the British⁷⁴

1764 A.D. That was only seven years after the Battle of Plessey. The soldiers of the Bengal Army launched (this) rebellion 93 years before the first war of independence, and 24 soldiers got martyred helplessly but heroically. The cause of the rebellion was that a white-skinned soldier would then get a monthly salary of 40 rupees. And a dark-skinned native soldier, 6 rupees only. Sharp reaction developed in some soldiers of the Bengal Army over this discrimination. They engaged in altercation with white officers regarding this, and at one stage, they said, "We cannot work where there is no justice." The officers marked sparks of rebellion in this. They identified and separated 24 soldiers. Charges were brought against them of agitating soldiers and inciting rebellion in the Army, and in a verdict of a farcical trial, a declaration was issued for firing those 24 soldiers off barrels of canons. All the soldiers were made to assemble in the field on the day of execution of this verdict. They would watch the punishment befalling the rebels. Four canons were put in a row. Major General Munro came forward to deliver the command. Four soldiers were tied up with the barrel of each canon. Four canons roared up at the same time. Thus, 24 soldiers secured the honour of being the first martyrs of subjugated India.

Death by Hanging of Maharaja Nandakumar

Warren Hastings was the Governor General of Bengal during 1772-1785. Storms of criticism rose right in England as a result of his corruption and administrative indiscipline. Moreover, Warren Hastings, with assistance from Eliza Impe, Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, arranged for a trial of Maharaja Nandakumar who was sentenced to a punishment of death by hanging. This verdict was executed on August 5, 1775. British civilians and historians gave rise to storms of criticism against this killing in cold blood. Mr. Beveridge, historian and British civil servant, wrote a book on this act of murder and it was titled *The Trial of Moharaj Nandakumar, a Narrative of a Judicial Murder*.⁷⁵ He has proved in this book that the Governor General and the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court arranged for a farcical trial to get Maharaja Nandakumar killed, and "That there is a strong circumstantial evidence that Hastings was the real prosecutor." The writer of the history of the district of Murshidabad, Walsh writes, "Personally I think (agree) with Mr. Beveridge that the execution of Nandakumar was grave miscarriage of justice."⁷⁶

Hastings was impeached for his corruption, administrative indiscipline and his killing of Maharaja Nandakumar. A good number of books have been written on the impeachment of Hastings. Of those, *Impeachment of Warren Hastings* by Burke; *Debbrette's History of the Trial of Warren Hastings*, *Minutes of Evidence of Hastings's trial*, etc. are particularly mentionable. Readers may consult *Murshidabad Kahini* by Nikhilmath Roy also.

The First War of Independence of India (1857)

Colonialism does not only make servants of humans, it turns humans of servants also-it intensifies patriotism and aspirations for freedom in human beings. Life and death then are no more than servants at one's heels. During the hundred years from 1757 to 1857, British colonial rule and exploitation, torture and tyranny, murder, plunder and rape crossed all limits of tolerance. In words of Sartre, when all lights go out from before the presence of humans-when they find nothing else than frustration-when death is the only eventuality, they do not have anything to lose. Direct proofs of this situation we have found in 1971. Humans wake up. They take up arms, knowing death to be the only certainty. Let me write, using Bipanchandra's words, "The revolt of 1857, an unsuccessful but heroic effort to eliminate foreign rule,

had begun.”⁷⁷ Though unsuccessful, the first war of independence in this country started in the year 1857.

When, on 11 May, 1857, Delhi was in deep sleep, a portion of the British Army launched revolt, and crossing the river, Jamuna, it laid seize to the Red Fort of Delhi.

History presents rarely anything comparable to the cruelty. After capturing Delhi, the rebels spread the revolt to Kanpur, Lucknow, Benares, Elahabad, Berili, Jagadishpur and Jhanshi. Leadership to the rebellion was given in Kanpur by Nana Sahib, Mohammad Ahmed Ullah, foster son of Peshwa Bajirao-II, in Lucknow by Begum Hazrat Mahal, in Bareilly by Khan Bahadur, in Bihar by Kunwar Singh and in Jhansi by Rani Luxmibai. All cantonments in Bengal including that of Dhaka joined the rebellion. Delhi fell after 4 months, on 20 September, and the rebellion got crushed. Bahadur Shah fled to the grave-yard of Emperor Humayun; he got arrested. After trial, he was sent to Burma to live in exile there. Chandra writes, “Even in failure it served a grand purpose; a source of inspiration for the national liberation movement which later achieved what the Revolt could not.”⁷⁸

It was savagery that the colonial British government proved after the first war of independence had ended in failure. Delhi turned into a big cemetery. From every tree and lamp-post dead bodies of people were swinging for days together. Vultures danced about in big joy. An editorial in the Dilhi Urdu Akbar described as follows, “how the Kafir Christians have begun to commit grave depredations, especially upon Muslims. Wherever they gain control they indiscriminately hung men, destroy entire villages.”⁷⁹ When three princes (Mirza Mughal, Khizr Sultan and Abu Bakr) were fleeing by a cart, Mr. Hudson stopped the carriage near the wall of Delhi. He ordered them to come down. He ordered them to undress, brought out a colt revolver and in a very cool temper, killed three of them one by one.⁸⁰ Mr. Hudson went on receiving congratulations ceaselessly for this ‘bravery’. He himself said, “I am not cruel, but I confess I did enjoy the opportunity of ridding the earth of these wretches.”

The famous Urdu poet, Mirza Ghalib was living in Delhi at that time. He saw the destruction of Delhi with his own eyes. He was one of the handfuls of Muslim elites who were saved by chance. How that happened has been recorded by William Dalrymple. Ghalib’s brother was murdered by bullets from the English. On October 5, Ghalib was arrested by Colonel Burn for interrogation. Ghalib said, “I am old and crippled and deaf, and as unfit to confer with as I am to fight. I do pray for your success and have done all along but I could do that from here.”⁸¹ Colonel Burn set him free. It is not that Mirza Ghalib told lies to save his life. He truly did not support the indiscipline with the soldiers. But the curse of loneliness came down on his life in friendless and relationless Delhi. To his assessment, only one thousand Muslims were saved in Delhi. He wrote a verse to be sent to a friend in Rampur.

Every Armed British Soldier
Can do whatever he wants
Just going from home to market
Makes one’s heart turn to water
The Chowk is a slaughter ground
And homes are prisons.
Every grain of dust in Delhi
Thirsts for Muslims blood
Even if we were together

We could only weep over our lives.⁸²

In another letter, he wrote, ‘So many of my friends and relatives have died that if now I were to die, not a single soul would be left to mourn for me.’ He concluded his memoirs by writing, ‘I feel as if I am already dead.’

Present Bangladesh did not keep herself much removed from the first war of independence. The soldiers of the 34th regiment of Chittagong declared revolt on 18th November. As information about that reached Dhaka on 21st November, British authorities decided for disarming the soldiers of the 73rd Infantry. But the soldiers of Lalbag proved adamant. The much-delayed revolt in Dhaka then took an armed and bloody shape. As Lieutenant Lewis laid siege on Lalbag, the two sides started exchanging heavy fires. 40 soldiers got martyred in that battle. Many more got wounded. The prisoners were kept hanging from the branches of trees of the field of the present-day Victoria Park. The dead bodies went on hanging for days together, rotten parts started falling down, and vultures got wild with participation in the big feast. The British people observed victory festival in the Antaghar field by creating panic and terror in people's minds."83 Rhridoynath Majumder has narrated that scene in his book, *Reminiscences of Dhaka*.

Jalianowalabag Massacre

In 1919, the British Government passed a notorious Act abrogating people's rights in the name of suppressing terrorism. It was titled Rowlatt Act. The Bill was passed in the Parliament in the face of intense opposition from the part of the Indian members. The people of the whole of the subcontinent became vocal against this Act. After all democratic and parliamentary protests had failed; Gandhi set up 'Satyagraha Sava', and issued a call on 6 April for organizing strike, fasting and prayer meetings. And there was a call for 'Satyagraha' also. The whole country woke up with aspirations for freedom. But, the happening in the Punjab took a very tragic turn. 13 April was the annual Boishakhi Day for the Punjab. Thousands of men, women and children, as in other years, gathered at Jalianwalabag for enjoyment and jubilation. Then the charge of Jalianwalabag was handed over to the killer General Dyer. Dyer promulgated curfew in the town on that day. Meeting, gathering, procession, etc were declared illegal, banning the Boishakhi gathering also. Ceaseless firing like rain-shower continued for ten minutes. Though the number of people killed was officially admitted to be 379, the correct figure would be bigger. The whole country got dumbfounded in surprise. In protest, Rabindranath Tagore renounced the title of knighthood. The government tried to deceive the people by forming one Hunter Commission for investigation. The colonial government went for showy and 'light rebuking.' But the true identity of the colonial rule got exposed when verdict was given in the House of Lords in favour of General Dyer. Moreover, the people of England known to be the lying-in chamber of modern civilization then organized meeting and procession in support of General Dyer, and raised a fund of 30,000 pounds for him.⁸⁴ What are the English people of today thinking about that barbaric happening of that time? Let us know about this from Tapan Roy Choudhury,

I found no English person informed about the densely dark aspects of the Empire. No student or teacher at the Oxford appeared to have heard about how three million people died from starvation in the famine of 1943, right four years before India became independent. I have heard many sorts of comments after the film made by Attenborough on Mahatma Gandhi's life had been released. Some commented that the scene on Jalianwalabag was imaginary. One rightist teacher commented that 'Dyer did it right by opening fire. For, many Sikhs had come to the meeting with arms and ammunitions. If they had not been dispersed, there would have been rebellion in the town after the meeting.' Those who were not rightists fell silent after watching the film. It was beyond their imagination that people of their nation could perpetrate such dastardly acts. The imperialist and reactionary quarters were able to carefully conceal the shameful acts of the Empire from the people.⁸⁵

It is very natural that imperialist England would try to hide their dastardly and shameful acts. None wants to publicize one's weakness and happenings of shame. This is understandable. But, the time is ripe for looking for reasons of why the reactionary ruling quarters of 'independent' Pakistan would conceal the events of shame, violence and savagery of Britain from people's view. In addition to that, we shall have to think also as to why even after the end of Pakistani rule in 1971, there has not been a beginning of

basic research into British colonialism. It has become a national duty of the progressive persons and groups of this country to expose the 'uncivilized' faces of 'civilized' England before the whole world.

The Judiciary Suffering from Discrimination

Suproakash Roy writes, "The British rulers, immediately after conquering India, started creating discrimination between the conquerors and the conquered and exercising special rights of the conqueror ruling forces."⁸⁶

The judiciary did not remain outside this pattern. There were two judicial systems in force under colonialism. One was for the conqueror whites and another for the natives.

There were rules in India ruled by the British that none but the British judges, not even civilian magistrates of this country, would be able to try the accused English persons. In Bengal, trial of any British person committing any illegal act would be held at no other court than the Supreme Court of Kolkata. As a result of this, any person of a far-off mofussil willing to take recourse to law against any British person would have to file a suit by coming over to and staying at Kolkata.⁸⁷

Thus, justice would suffer. Moreover, we have marked at the time of trial of Nandakumar how unfairly trial would proceed at Kolkata Supreme Court. To correct this ill-motivated system, the Law Member Mr. Bethun placed drafts of four laws before the Government in 1849. But, as the whites put up strong movement against him, terming these as black laws, the government withdrew them. The educated Bengalis got shocked at this, and realized the value of united political movement. To remove this bottleneck in administration and tranquilize the agitation of the educated community, C.P. Ilbert, the Law Secretary of Governor General Lord Ripon, brought another bill in January, 1883. The British community again organised a strong movement. The English would never stand at the dock of a native judge. The Government again turned back. The minds of the educated Indians got filled up with senses of 'national dishonor.' The same Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay now wrote a satirical poem on this occasion. The poem became very popular.

The Englishmen shouted out, shouted out Bransion,

Keoic, Miller: Empire goes, Honour goes-

Never, never can we stand at the dock before the natives.⁸⁸

Bransion was one who led the movement against the Ilbert Bill. Bankimchandra wrote an essay entitled "Bransionism" in the Falgun number of Bangadarshan with that notorious Bransion as its target. This essay makes an equal target of the British laws and of the local flatterers and promotion-seekers.⁸⁹

"To make the Indians 'loyal' and 'civilized', the British were habituated to dealing booted blows at the bodies of native workers and low-paid employees. It was a daily and trifling incident in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Some people died from such booted blows. Only the British judges could try these murderer English people. In verdicts of such trials, they would be exempted on paying some fines. "In 1876, in Agra district, when a British person named Fuller dealt a booted blow on the stomach of his horseman at the gate, the latter died. Does it go with the honour of the 'civilized' English if murder is not brought under trial? The British magistrate of Agra fined Fuller taka thirty only and the Governor General finished his duty by expressing only contempt at such conduct."⁹⁰ Such was the value of our life 'during the civilized rule' of the British. One is reminded again of Poet Sukanta who wrote, "I have got only kicks after my birth in this country." This is not a mere line of a poem, this is truth about reality.

7.

Stories of a Few Patriotic Heroes

We have marked opinions of Tapan Roy Choudhury and Jean Paul Sartre. Colonialism gives birth not only to servants, but to heroes also. Rule and exploitation, torture and tyranny, rape and plunder, etc. by colonialism reach an extent when freedom of people gets pressed under the heavy stone of colonialism. It becomes very difficult for a common person to maintain his or her existence. Then all fears and trepidation take leave from people's minds, and there appears people's humanity. People make forward strides on the path of life, though they know the consequence of facing fire arms with bamboo-sticks. They get prepared for embracing life by kicking at death. It has been proved again and again in history that finally it is life that comes out victorious. Beastliness fall compelled to accept defeat. This account will remain incomplete if we do not present a few martyrs from among the thousands of humans who embraced death with smiling faces and made of gift of our freedom to us.

It has been found that whenever some parliamentary or constitutional movements fail, revolutionary extremists then, finding no other way, take up arms-there appears an increase in terrorist and revolutionary activities. There was ebb in anti-colonial movement right at the start of the twentieth century. Extremist politics saw a big tide or rise. The British colonial government started dealing final blows on extremist and radical politics. Thousands of extremist politicians got arrested-all daily newspapers supporting them were banned. The leader of the extremists, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was arrested, and he was sentenced to six years of imprisonment. Extremist politics met a debacle in the face of state terrorism of the British government came out victorious, even though temporarily. 186 revolutionaries were sentenced to death by hanging or many other kinds of punishment between 1908-1918.⁹¹

Khudiram Basu: Is there any Bengali who hasn't heard the name of Khudiram in Bangladesh? One hundred years back he gave rise to an emotional song by accepting the ropes of gallows with a smiling face. People of this country have accepted him in the chores of their hearts. That place has not become any less bright during the last hundred years. Is there anyone in Bangladesh who has not shed a drop of tear on hearing the song, "Ekbar biday de ma ghure asi"? I saw my grandmother crying, my mother crying, and my eyes also get drenched even today on hearing this song. The group of extremist revolutionaries decided for killing Kingsford, the tyrannical Chief Presidency Magistrate of Kolkata, and the responsibility of executing that decision devolved on Khudiram, of eighteen years of age, and Prafulla Chaki. The British Government transferred Kingsford to Muzaffarpur for security reasons. Khudiram and Prafulla Chaki went to Muzaffarpur. At 8 p.m. on 30 April, 1908, they threw bomb on a car they thought was carrying Kingsford. Two British women moving by it got killed. Khudiram Basu expressed regret for that. The following day he was arrested. On trial, he was sentenced to death by hanging. On August 11, 1908, Khudiram, on the gallows, put on the ropes for hanging with a smiling face.

A Decade of Revolution: 1920

The nineteen-twenties made a decade of such revolution. After the movement of all sorts of legal petitioning and praying had met a fiasco, all hopes and aspirations of the people of the subcontinent crumbled down. They did not find out any other path for securing independence of their country than that of armed struggle. The revolutionaries took up arms in hand for securing the freedom of the people from the British colonialism. There started a grand phase of our independence struggle-the phase of armed revolution. This is known in history more generally as 'revolutionary terrorism'. The whole subcontinent got revolutionary fever. People started dreaming anew of coming back to life. None of those that the English historians and the native historians who were their stooges identified as terrorists actually believed in terrorism. The truth remains generally unmentioned in imperialistic exercises in history that

all of them had been enthusiastic supporters of and active participants in legal Khilaphat and Non-cooperation Movement. So, that truth is less known to us. All the brave fighters in Surya Sen, Jateen Das, Jogeshchandra Chatterjee, Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Shiv Varma, Bhagwati Charan Bhora, Jaidev Kapur, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rapsasad Bismil, Rowshan Singh, Rajendra Lahiri, etc. had participated in Khilaphat and Non-cooperation Movement.⁹² They did not find any alternative to taking up arms in hand after the ground of constitutional movement had slipped off from under their feet. They did not believe in individual heroism isolated from the masses. The successful October revolution and formation of the Communist Party of India inspired them to go for revolution.

Rang De Basanti

Shere-Punjab Lala-Lazpat Roy got killed when police made lathi-charge on the masses demonstrating against the Simon Commission in Lahore. This happening incited the young community very strongly with patriotism. Bhagat Singh, Chandra Sekhar Azad and Rajguru killed that killer police officer, Sanders in Lahore on December 17, 1928. The handbill circulated after the incident of killing bears proof that these people had not believed in individual killing. In that handbill, they wrote,

The murder of a leader respected by millions of people at the unworthy hands of an ordinary police official... was an insult to the nation. It was the bounden duty of young men of India to efface it. ... We regret to have had to kill a person but he was part and parcel of that inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed.⁹³

Down came on these revolutionary sons of the sun most savage torture and repression of the British Government.

On April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru, accused of making bomb-attack on the Central Legislative Assembly, were being brought to the court. When they entered into the court-yard, people present there would make the court-building tremble by chanting slogans like "Inquilab Zindabad," "Down with Colonialism," "Long Live the Working Class," etc. And, an unimaginable scene was created at the court-building when songs like "We want to be martyred", "Brighten my dress with the colour of spring" etc. would be sung. In the Punjab, the colour of spring stands for valour, heroism and self-sacrifice. On March 23, 1931, the sentence of death by hanging for Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru was executed.

There was country-wide hunger-strike going on at that time. On September 13, 1931, Jateen Das died after taking part in that strike for 64 days. Revolutionary Bhagat Singh did not believe in individual terrorism. He writes on February 2, 1931, "Let me announce with all the strength at my command that I am not a terrorist and I never was, except perhaps in the beginning of my revolutionary career. And I am convinced that we cannot gain anything through these methods."⁹⁴ In spite of understanding all these, they did not hesitate to give up their lives for the independence of their homeland. He was indoctrinated into Marxism even before being arrested in 1929. For, as I have said, he believed not in individual heroism, but in the collective strength of the people.

Surya Sen: The Valorous Martyr from Chittagong

April 22, 1930. This day can claim to be written in golden letters in the annals of India's struggle for independence and that of the movement against British colonialism. For,

in this battle of April 22 the revolutionary fighters led by the valorous revolutionary, Surya Sen of Chittagong, for the first time in 173 years after 1757, defeated the soldiers of the British Government miserably, though the latter were much stronger in number, arms and war-experience.⁹⁵

But, Surya Sen and his comrades well knew that that victory was very short-lived. Surya Sen himself also did not believe in heroic terrorism. He wrote to Ananda Gupta, his comrade, "A dedicated band of youth

must show the path of organized armed struggle in place of individual terrorism. Most of us will have to die in the process, but our sacrifice for such a noble cause will not go in vain.”⁹⁶ Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen, Bagha Jateen and other fighters for freedom threw themselves in that struggle, remaining all-conscious of the result of their struggle. Therein lay their greatness-and the difference between their struggle and that of you and me. Their sacrifice of their lives did not go in vain. We are enjoying the fruits of their struggle. The sentence of Surya Sen’s death by hanging was carried out on January 12, 1934.

8.

Before Departure

The wide participation of people in the leadershipless ‘Quit India’ movement of 1942 and the terribly cruel policy of the government for suppressing that movement placed enough proof that it was no longer possible for colonialism to rule this country. The British imperialists wanted to destroy that movement by arresting almost all the leaders including Gandhi, Nehru and others. Instead, the movement spread to grass-root level. After getting release from jails in 1946, the leaders got amazed at marking people’s mood for movement. While the Second World War was going on, thousands of leaders and workers of Subhas Bose’s Indian National Army (INA) were arrested. After the War had come to an end, a process of placing them under trial started. People of all strata of this country joined the movement against such trial. On November 21, 1945, lacs of people declared their solidarity with the soldiers of patriotic INA at a meeting in Kolkata. When Rashid Ali, an officer of the INA, was sentenced to 7 years’ imprisonment, lacs of people in different towns including Dhaka and Kolkata engaged in pitched battle with the government forces. However those were the strike and rebellion at the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) in Bombay on February 18, 1946 that broke the backbone of the British Government. The Indians could visualize freedom through this happening. The soldiers of the Navy flew the flags of Congress, Muslim League and Communist Party atop their ships. An unprecedented unity was established on the level of the people. The government took this into sharp cognizance. In these circumstances, there started the final heinous game of conspiracy from the part of the British colonial rule. As the hero of that game, Lord Mountbatten was sent to India as the last Viceroy. Mountbatten conducted the crucial amputation with the help of the knives of communalism that the British colonialism had sharpened during the preceding one hundred years.⁹⁷ British colonialism took leave of the soil of India on August 14/15 after flooding her with blood. There came an end to 190 years of British colonialism.

9.

Conclusion

It is no use being wordy at the conclusion. I hope that the point of seeking apology by the British Government has been well established. Along with that, justifiability of some other demands has come up. Arranged serially, they appear as follows.

Seeking Apology: There cannot be any hesitation in one’s mind over this after the seeking of apology by the governments of Australia and Italy. Following their examples, the British Government should seek apology for their 190 years’ rule and plunder in the subcontinent.

Compensation: It is now in no way possible to know the exact amount of total resource that the East India Company and the British imperialism plundered and siphoned from this country to England. Particularly impossible it is to assess the reckless and monopoly plunder by the East India Company. Year-wise accounts and documents of how wealth was dispatched from this country to England in modern and scientific ways during the rule of industrial capital have been preserved in the library and archives of

India and England. I did not come across any research that was done in Bangladesh in this area. This absence proves crucial at the time of demanding compensation from the British Government. In the closing years of the twentieth century, some researchers from India and foreign countries did research in this area; they are doing so even now. I had no scope of knowing the findings of their research. Bipanchandra also worked in this area, and has placed an index of the conclusions of their research in his book, *Essays on Colonialism*. Among the Indian researchers are R. C. Dutt, G. V. Joshi, V. V. Bhatt, V. K. R. V. Rao, Irfan Habib, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, Shah & Khambata, Rajat K. Roy, Arun Bose, A. K. Banerjee, Sunanda Sen, Aditya Mukherjee, Mridula Mukherjee, Kumar Dharma, Purushottamdas Thakurdas, etc. Michael Kidron, Simon Kuznets, W. E. Moore, J. J. Spengler, Angus Maddison and Dietmar Rothermund are among the foreigners. After analyzing the results of all their researches, Bipanchandra has said that almost without exception all of them have admitted that wealth had been dispatched. But, there are wide differences over the amount of wealth dispatched. Chandra has said that their researches show that till the end of the nineteenth century, 20-30 million pounds of wealth had been dispatched from this country each year. R. C. Dutt thinks that half of the revenue collected in the subcontinent had been dispatched. According to G. V. Joshi, that amount is 6% of the national income of India. According to Chandra, it is equal to one-third of the social surplus here. V. V. Bhatt thinks that during 1757-1939, 2%-3% of national income had been dispatched. On the other hand, Angus Maddison thinks that during 1921-1938, this amount was 1.5%. Irfan Habib thinks that during 1783-1792, the rate of dispatch was 9% of the national income. And in 1880, it was 4.14%. It has come out from the research of Ramkrishna Mukherjee that during 1834-1857 6.3 million pounds, which was almost half of the land-revenue collected at that time, had been dispatched. According to the accounts placed by Shah and Khambata, only during 1921-22, 2200 million rupees (146 million pounds) was dispatched to England.

Though there has been difference over this, one consensus can be reached over the money that was collected in the name of 'Home Charge.' It was found out through the research by Rothermund that in 1873 and 1893, the amount of "Home Charge" was 13.5 and 15.8 million pounds. According to the account prepared by Ranjit Kumar Roy in 1979, in the years of 1913, 1924 and 1934 this sum was 20.3, 31.9 and 28.5 million pounds respectively. From this essay, 'Home Charge' of 7 years can be known. They add up to:

1851	-	2.5 million pounds
1873	-	13.5 million pounds
1893	-	15.8 million pounds
1901	-	17.3 million pounds
1913	-	20.3 million pounds
1924	-	31.9 million pounds
1934	-	28.5 million pounds
Total	=	129.8 million pounds

We thus find that during only above-mentioned 7 years, home charge of 129.8 million pounds was dispatched to England. From this, an estimate of 190 years can be guessed at.

In two more ways social surplus from India would be dispatched from India to England. One was for the expenditure for the army, and the other was for the salary of English employees of high to low levels. During only 1920-21, an amount of 2128 million rupees was spent for salary and other amenities extended to the English people positioned at army, civil administration and industrial and business administration. Of this, 883.3 millions of rupees were spent for the army. With the support from that money, the imperialist British Government would conduct war in countries of Asia and Africa. The expenses made for the army would come to thirty to fifty percent of the total expenditure. A huge portion of wealth of this country was stolen through the army. We have marked a little at what rate the British

employees would be given salaries. The lowest salary of an English soldier was taka forty in 1760's. The first sepoy mutiny took place in Dhaka in 1764 as a way of protest against this situation. We have marked that a penniless employee of Murshidabad could send 60,000 pounds to his homeland. It was known from Maddison's research in 1971 that the English capitalists and employees including managers appropriated 5% of the national income of India. According to a parliamentary assessment of 1812, the English people getting monthly salary of 1000 rupees or above would enjoy 30% of the revenue earning of the Government of India. For more and detailed information regarding this, one can consult pages 82-88 of Bipanchandra's book Essays on Colonialism.

But, it is not only plundering of wealth that counts. The root of the non-development of the subcontinent lies hidden in colonial rule. I have tried a little to focus on that in my present essay. No compensation can correct that wrong. Even if the present British government gives compensation of 100 pounds or 100 lac billion pounds, that harm is not to be repaired. But, that has value in other respects. If the British government declares compensation of ten pounds only, that also is no less important. For, through that declaration, the British government will admit a big truth. That declaration will prove the 'exercises in knowledge' during the last one hundred years by colonialist historians, economists or political economists false. It will declare the death of colonialist stream of research into colonialism. It will prove the correctness of the anti-colonialist stream. Is that of little value?

Put an End to Neo-Imperialist Exploitation:

Now-a-days the developed world is going on exploiting the poor and developing countries of the world in a new method. With the help of finance and developed armaments, neo-imperialism is occupying different countries on different excuses, and conducting exploitation by putting up stooge governments there. They have big objection to establishing people's government in any country in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This neo-imperialist rule and exploitation have to be stopped, and there must not be any interference in setting up democratic government at people's verdict.

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BACK COVER

A relentless critique of British Colonial exploitation for nearly two hundred years. We need to know the past to make necessary arrangements for history to take unwavering forward steps to future.

Hasan Azizul Huq (*Littérateur*)

This is an interesting, albeit brief and at a cursory glance, study on colonialism-more specifically focusing largely on the experiences under British Colonialism in the Indian Sub-continent. Brilliant and thought-provoking. Shahidul Islam has conceptualized his ideas in the line of eminent scholars on underdevelopment like Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Emmanuel and Amiya Bagchi and has pinpointed colonial rule as the principal cause of poverty and stagnation. This brings to light quite correctly a very critical aspect in the genesis of underdevelopment. This cannot be ignored away as we try to get a comprehensible around view of the history of those people. The book is well-written and easily understandable. Shahidul Islam deserves all our thanks and gratitude for writing this piece.

Sanat Kumar Saha (*Economist*)



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British Colonialism: Myths and Realities

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