

1: The Portuguese on the Bay of Bengal - Colonial Voyage

Great Bengal famines struck several times during colonial rule (notably the Great Bengal famine of and Bengal famine of). The Indian Rebellion of was initiated on the outskirts of Calcutta, and spread to Dhaka, Chittagong, Jalpaiguri, Sylhet and Agartala, in solidarity with revolts in North India.

Thomas Basilica , Mylapore, Chennai, India. On the Bay of Bengal there was a rather peculiar form of Portuguese settlements. In the Portuguese built a church there and, around it, a settlement was started. In a new city was born. By their number had doubled. In the inhabitants erected fortifications and the whole population, i. Portuguese settlements in the bay of Bengal. In a tenuous Portuguese administration was re-established. In January the fortification was pulled down; the only privilege that remained to the Portuguese residents in was to display their flag on Sundays and Holidays. It was the best port of the entire Coromandel coast, ten villages Nagappattinam Port, Puthur, Muttam, Poruvalancheri, Anthonippettai, Karureppankadu, Azhinji Mangalam, Sangamangalam, Thiruthina mangalam, Manjakollai, Nariyankudi were controlled by the Portuguese traders. At the end of the s the Franciscans and later the Jesuits settled in the town. Several churches were built in the city: In there were in Nagapattinam 60 casados, Eurasians, 3, Christian Indians. In the years Nagapattinam was fortified and a customs-house was also built. On 23 July a Dutch fleet under the command of Jan van der Laan conquered the fort. In the s the Portuguese settled north of Nagapattinam in a port, they named Porto Novo New Harbour , this port was the place, where the Portuguese moved in after the Dutch conquest of Nagapattinam. After this first visit the Portuguese sent to Bengal a ship with merchandise annually. Pipli was an important trading center and the Augustinians had built a church and a residence. Author Grentidez The destiny of the first settlement in Satgaon is obscure. The town grew rapidly. The religious orders erected many churches and in it had about 5, Portuguese inhabitants. Satgaon was again under the authority of the Portuguese from the s, but Ugolim outshined this settlement. The Portuguese of Ugolim extended their settlements sixty leagues inland from the banks of the river. The Portuguese never fortified Ugolim and when the Mughals besieged the city it had only an earthen parapet. The siege began on 24 June and the Portuguese defenders were only three hundred and about six hundred native Christians. The defenders held out for three months, but on 25 September the Mughals launched a violent attack and captured the town. The Portuguese lost about 3,, men, the civil population included. There were only three thousand Portuguese survivors. They escaped to Saugor island, where they built a fortress. By July , only a year after the siege of Ugolim, the Portuguese settled again in Ugolim The Shah Jahan conceded to them a grant of land there. The motive of their return remains unexplained. Notwithstanding this move, the Portuguese never regained their past power. In a witness reported that at Ugolim there were about 8, to 9, Portuguese and Eurasians and the Augustinians and the Jesuits possessed large churches. The Jesuits erected two churches and a residence. About the Portuguese also captured the fort of Chittagong and made the island of Sandwip a tributary. In there were 2, Portuguese and Eurasians in Chittagong and Arakan. This island was, however, lost a short time later ? In the King of Arakan massacred about Portuguese inhabitants of Dianga. The Portuguese settled again in Dianga after Despite the Dianga massacre a small number of Portuguese managed to escape and settled on an island at the mouth of the Ganges. He ruled the island like an independent king, having under his command a force of 1, Portuguese. Tibau also seized the islands of Dakhin Shahbazpur and Patelbanga. In Tibau proceeded to conquer Arakan and asked for help from Goa, which promptly came. On October the Portuguese fleet attacked the Arakanese fleet, which was reinforced by a Dutch fleet. They won the battle and the majority of the Portuguese Navy returned to Goa. They allied with the King of Arakan and settled in Dianga and Chittagong. The remains of the Portuguese trading factory, close to the church of Our Ladies of Rosary, were still evident in Other small Portuguese settlements thrived in Bengal: In the s some Portuguese settled in Hijili Hidgelee or Angelim. Here they possessed a large tract of land. The Augustinians built two churches in Hijili. Hijili was lost in In the ruins of the Portuguese settlement were still visible. In at Merepore three kms south of Hijili a community of Christians, who claimed to be descendents of the Portuguese from Goa, was found. At Tamluk Tambolim was built a church in and as late as in the Portuguese had churches and traded there. At

Balasore there were small Portuguese settlements. In a small chapel was still standing. It has disappeared by now. There the Portuguese built a fort and a customs-house. Syriam remained in the hands of the Portuguese until when the King of Ava captured it. Author Grentidez Portuguese settlements in the bay of Bengal. An old, but very interesting, book about the Portuguese history in Bengal, history unknown to many people. Xavier Press, , Kozhikode, India. A collection of very interesting articles of Subrahmanyam.

2: Bengal - Wikipedia

The timing of the famine was precisely when the war was turning in Europe, making Bengal expendable. Footnote on Leopold Amery (): Very typical of the British hierarchy, his mother's family was crypto-Jewish.

Bring fact-checked results to the top of your browser search. Revolution in Bengal The revolution in Bengal was the product of a number of unrelated causes. Succession troubles in Bengal combined with British mercantile incompetence to produce a crisis at a moment when the French in south India were still awaiting reinforcements from France. On an exaggerated report that the British were fortifying Calcutta, he attacked and took the city after a four-day siege, on June 20, The flight of the British governor and several councillors added ignominy to defeat. The survivors were held for a night in the local lockup, known as the Black Hole of Calcutta ; many were dead the next morning. News of this disaster caused consternation in Madras. A force preparing to oust Bussy-Castelnau from the Deccan was diverted to Bengal, giving Clive an army of Europeans and 1, Indians. He relieved the Calcutta survivors and recovered the city on Jan. This was a decisive point in British Indian history. According to plan, Clive should have returned to Madras to pursue the campaign against the French; but he did not. The chance of installing a friendly and dependent nawab seemed too good to be missed. The prospects for success seemed good. The event, however, proved otherwise, and there were reasons for this not realized at the time. The chiefs were so lacking in vigour that they made little resistance to British encroachments. External danger could come from only one direction and sourceâ€”the Mughal authorityâ€”and that was at the moment in dissolution. While Bussy-Castelnau had no French merchants to satisfy, the British merchants in Calcutta were ready and eager to exploit the situation. Plassey was, in fact, more of a cannonade than a battle. Clive now controlled a sponsored state, and he played the part with great skill. The nawab therefore looked for financial support toward his Hindu deputies, with whom saving was second nature. Clive had therefore to intervene repeatedly. Though Britain was at peace with the Netherlands at the time, Clive maneuvered the Dutch into acts of aggression, captured their fleet, defeated them on land, and exacted compensation. They retained Chinsura but could never again challenge the British position in Bengal. Clive left Calcutta on Feb. The nawab was completely dependent on the British, to whose trade it seemed that the rich resources of Bengal were now open. But the prospect was less brilliant than it looked; and for this, and for the troubles that ensued in the next few years, Clive had a direct responsibility. Local Indian traders were soon unable to compete against rivals with such an advantage, and the company itself was soon out-positioned by its own employees who received little compensation from the company and relied on their own entrepreneurial skills to make ends meet. The second measure was the acceptance of gifts. This was not forbidden by the company and was, in fact, a recognized custom; but it opened the floodgates of corruption. In the context of contemporary values these grants equaled nearly one-fourth of the average annual Bengal revenue and represented some 6 percent of the then annual revenue of Great Britain. The effects became speedily apparent when in fact the Murshidabad treasure turned out to be only a fraction of its rumoured value, so that as Clive later admitted to a parliamentary enquiry , the nawab had to sell jewels, goods, and furniture to meet his obligations. The results of these measures unfolded in the next decade and continued to be felt for a generation. These urges were so strong that the governor, Henry Vansittart served â€”64 , found himself unable to control them. During these years, a body of British merchants, long separated from British standards and social restraints, suddenly found themselves with real but undefined authority over the whole of a large and rich province. It is not surprising that they thought mainly of getting rich quickly. In addition, he ceded to the British the districts of Burdwan , Midnapore , and Chittagong. Both sides wanted power, and both sides were short of money. A clash was inevitable. That conflict, rather than Plassey, was the decisive battle that gave Bengal to the British. These events had been viewed with growing alarm in London. Clive used it to appoint himself governor with power to act over the head of the council; he intended an administrative reformation and a political settlement. The British merchants and their agents were the unresisted predators of the Bengal economy, and no one knew the next step to take. Clive acted with extraordinary vigour. Within four days of arrival he had set up a Select Committee; and, when he left less than

two years later, he had effected another revolution. No one barred his way to Delhi, and he could at that moment have turned the whole Mughal Empire into a company-sponsored state. But he realized that Delhi was easier to have than to hold. He fixed his frontier at the borders of Bihar and Avadh. These two were to be buffers between the company and the Marathas and possible marauders from the north. The Mughal emperor still had much influence, though little power; his complete disfavour might therefore have done the company more harm than good. The nawab was left in charge of the judiciary and magistracy, but he was helpless because he had no army and could get money to raise one only from the company. The chain was thus complete. The company, acting in the name of the emperor and using Indian personnel and the traditional apparatus of government, now ruled Bengal. Within the company, Clive enforced his authority by accepting some resignations and enforcing others. Gifts amounting to a value of more than 4, rupees were forbidden, and those between that figure and 1, rupees were only to be received with official consent. The regulation of private trade was more difficult, for the company paid virtually no salaries. Clive formed a Society of Trade, which operated the salt monopoly, to provide salaries on a graduated scale; but the company directors disallowed this on the ground of expense, and two years later they replaced it by commissions on the revenue, which cost the company more. Finally, Clive dealt with overgrown military allowances with equal vigour, overcoming a mutiny headed by a brigade commander. Clive left Calcutta in February. His work—diplomatic, political, and administrative—was a beginning rather than a complete settlement. But in each direction, instead of looking back to the past, it reached out to the future. This creative period exacted a heavy price. Clive was pursued to England by his enemies, who launched a parliamentary attack, which, though triumphantly repulsed in 1774, led to his suicide the following year. They had the means of using intimidation through their agents against Indian rivals such as the indigo growers and Indian police, customs, revenue, and judicial officials. Presents and bribes were the price Indians had to pay for freedom from harassment. They were able, through their connection with the administration, to arrange virtual monopolies for particular articles in particular districts, fixing a low purchase price as well as a high selling price. They could arrange commissions on revenue collection, mercantile transactions, and any form of commercial activity. What was not done through agents could be arranged through intermediaries, who also, of course, had their own compensation. Thus, a man could make a fortune, lose it in Britain, return for another, lose it again, and return for a third. The Company Bahadur The year 1757, when Clive arrived in India, can be said to mark the real beginning of the British Empire in India as a territorial dominion. However, the regime he established was really a private dominion of the East India Company. It was not a British colony, and it fitted into the highly flexible structure of the dying Mughal Empire. This Company Bahadur state continued through the governorship of Warren Hastings and in essence until the early 19th century, although Lord Cornwallis governor-general, 1793 and substituted largely British for Indian personnel. The revenue was collected by the officers of the deputy nawab; the law administered was the current Mughal Islamic criminal code, with the traditional personal codes of the Hindu and Muslim communities; the language of administration was Persian. Only the army broke with the past, with its British officers, its discipline, and its Western organization and tactics. Warren Hastings, oil painting by Tilly Kettle. Noteworthy in his year rule were his internal administration, his dealings with his council, and his foreign policy. But Hastings was armed with authority by the directors, so that the first two years of his government were a period of real reform. The Bengalis began to experience some security and a settled order, if not yet an equitable society. Hastings substituted British for Indian collectors working under a Board of Revenue. In a way this was a retrograde step, for the new collectors were often as corrupt as their predecessors and more powerful; but the change gave legal power to those who already wielded it in fact, and in the future their irregularities could more easily be dealt with than could the surreptitious dealings through the old Indian collectors. The same law was administered by British judges, who were often incompetent, but a model was provided into which Western ideas and practices could later be fed. Hastings was least successful in his revenue administration, in which he never advanced beyond a condition of trial and error; a five-year settlement made in ignorance proved unsuccessful, and he was finally reduced to annual settlements, which meant hit-and-miss arrangements with the traditional zamindars. Hastings was personally incorrupt, but he had to tolerate a good deal in others and to resort to extensive

jobbing to placate his supporters both in Bengal and in London. He left a personal legend behind him, but his administration was disorderly as well as strong. A reason for this can be found in his relations with his council. He was also given a supreme court, administering English law to the British and those connected with them, and a council of four, appointed in the Regulating Act. The leading council member, Sir Philip Francis, hoped to succeed him, and, because Hastings had no power of veto, Francis was able with two supporters to overrule him. For two years Hastings was outvoted, until the death of one member enabled him to use his casting vote. But the struggle continued until Francis, wounded by Hastings in a duel, returned to London, to continue his vendetta there. Sir Philip Francis, detail of an oil painting by James Lonsdale. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London This struggle, lasting for years, left Hastings triumphant but also embittered; he had to deal not only with the opposition in Calcutta, which never ceased, but also with the constant threat of supersession in the involved politics of London at that time. The impeachment of Hastings at the behest of Edmund Burke and the Whigs, which followed his return from India and ended in his acquittal but retirement in 1795, was a kind of very rough justice. Hastings had saved for the company its Indian dominions, and he was relatively incorrupt. The company and the state During the first half of the 18th century, the East India Company was a trading corporation with a steady annual dividend of 8-10 percent, offering its employees prospects of a modest fortune through private trade, along with great hazards to health and life. It was directed in London by 24 directors elected annually by the shareholding body, the Court of Proprietors who worked through a series of committees. The Bengal adventure from 1757 turned the two courts of directors and proprietors into political bodies, because they now controlled a great eastern state. These events soon produced reactions. The shareholders wanted to share in this new wealth, in the guise of increased dividends, and the directors wanted the company as well as its servants to benefit from this wealth. Two processes were thus set in motion—one a rising pressure for increased dividends and the other an attempt by the company to discipline its servants and to secure some profit for itself.

Bangladesh Liberation War, c. This is a list of battles and wars that involved and occurred in Bangladesh, or Bengal throughout different periods in history.

Privacy Policy Notice Notice: We do not care how far inside we have to go if it becomes a matter of our self defense. Inexorably, the two nations appeared to be heading for a wholly unnecessary war, one for which each side would have to shoulder an equal share of guilt. Over the past nine months, the Pakistani Government of President Mohammed Yahya Khan had indiscriminately slaughtered more than a million of its subjects in a cruel and myopic attempt to prevent autonomy for the Bengalis of East Pakistan. And the Soviet Union, notwithstanding its recently signed friendship treaty with India, had no better luck reining in Mrs. Thus unchecked, the rush to war was on, even though both countries had much to lose by it. The clash between India and Pakistan had been a long time coming. Like a pair of angry cats, the two armies had been circling and spitting at each other for months before the first lunge came. At scattered points along the 1,100 mile frontier between India and East Pakistan, troops stood poised while each side probed and harassed the other with artillery and mortar barrages, piecemeal sniping and an occasional small fire fight. All the while, the Indian and Pakistani governments loudly accused each other of provocations and self-righteously maintained that they themselves would never be the aggressors. But, in fact, India was preparing to strike. There was not a sign of war as we drove the 54 miles from Calcutta to the border town of Bangaon no military traffic, no Indian Army units, no thudding artillery. The major took us down a roadside ditch toward the border, and though we could hear the tumble of distant shelling and the whistle of an occasional bullet as we walked, the area was still calm. Where is the fighting, we asked, and the major replied: A bit of automatic stuff at night, a few mortar rounds but otherwise no movement. But beyond the walls, a sign was still visible, and it read: In choking clouds of red dust, an awesome convoy was churning toward the border. Lumbering Soviet-built trucks towed twelve mm. We slipped in among a seemingly endless procession of trucks, each jammed with soldiers in full combat gear and automatic weapons. Everything from amphibious armored personnel carriers to furniture for command posts was in the convoy, and it all indicated that the Indian Army was positioning itself for an incursion into Pakistan. And, in another clear indication that India was stepping up its involvement in the battle for Bengal, an Indian Cabinet minister told me: Speed is now essential. To that end, the Indians reportedly thrust into the districts of Sylhet, Comilla and the Chittagong Hills along the eastern border, as well as pushing in from the west towards Jessore. I was quickly hustled off to the Pakistani headquarters where Maj. Ansari the sector commander, described the Indian attack: They pushed in about 6 miles. That was too much, so we counter-attacked and pushed them back almost to the border. They came from the Fourteenth Punjab Regiment. Even though Ansari said that he had driven the Indians back toward the border, no Pakistani official denies that the area surrounding Jessore is effectively in enemy hands. And wresting any part of East Pakistan back from a guerrilla force will be a thankless task for the army. Although the monsoons have ended, vast areas of land are still covered with water, and literally hundreds of rivers and streams crisscross the terrain. The few roads that do exist are puny tracks, all highly vulnerable to guerrilla attack. An equal threat to the government exists on the opposite side of East Pakistan in the Comilla district. I flew into a Pakistani headquarters near the town of Brahmanbaria where army officers charged that Indian troops had mounted a major battle. The Pakistani commander led me to a rail road truck piled high with dead bodies and showed off! The brigadier had no doubts that his enemies were Indians, and he was almost gleeful when he described the battle. For the two states have been uneasy and often hostile neighbors since they were carved out of British-ruled India in 1947. Nor is the - India-Pakistan enmity the only hostility that scars the troubled sub-continent. But Yahya Khan postponed the parliamentary opening, provoking a general strike and murderous Bengali rioting in East Pakistan. He loosed the Punjabi army on the East in a terror campaign that eventually took the lives of more than 1 million Bengalis and drove 9 million to India. And, however, unwittingly, he brought his country and India to the brink of war. But beyond that, the weather, political geography and the Mukti Bahini have all combined to give India a virtually fail-safe position. The winter snows have closed off the

Himalayan passes, thereby reducing the danger of a Communist Chinese attack in support of Pakistan; in fact, so confident is India that its Chinese border is safe that it recently repositioned some of its mountain troops along the Pakistani borders. But seeing no sign that Yahya Khan would agree to autonomy for the East, and bleeding to death economically from the cost of caring for the refugees, India upped the ante. Gandhi began a series of visits to border troops, New Delhi abounded with rumors of further dramatic escalation. While the Indians and Pakistanis were trading bullets and talking of a larger war to come, the rest of the world was merely talking. Nobody Is Listening Nowhere was the impotence of a major power more evident than in Washington. Although the Nixon Administration called on the combatants to show restraint, the pleas fell on deaf ears. In India, where anger at the fact that the U. For all his reliance on U. If that should happen the sub-continent would be engulfed in a more punishing conflict than any it has ever seen. For unlike past wars between India and Pakistan, this might well decide the ultimate fate of one of the antagonists. His army knows it. True enough, no one seriously believed that New Delhi had precipitated problems in East Pakistan where none had existed before. But neither did anyone doubt that the Indians had sought to take every possible advantage of the crisis from the beginning. As most Indians saw it, there was really no other choice. With the bills for refugee care soaring astronomically, officials in New Delhi were convinced that a full-scale war would be far cheaper than being stuck with the refugee problem for even one more year. And they even produced the figures to prove it. In short, if the current crisis dragged on, the financial drain on the Indian budget might well become unbearable. Indeed, what the Indians seemed to fear most was a Palestinian-style denouement in which the government would have to contend with both the refugees and a continuing and costly standoff with hostile Pakistani forces in East Bengal. Given the dismal alternatives, Yahya has understandably tried to carve out a more favorable position somewhere in between. For despite his apparent willingness to haggle, he remains unwilling to make the only concessions that would seem to appeal to New Delhi: Still on trial for treason, Mujib remains in jail in the Punjab town of Layallpur. And Yahya is by no means ready to accept the humiliation of Bengali independence just yet. As the Indian pressure has escalated, in fact, Yahya has stiffened too talking very much like a man who knows a fight is coming. An escalation of the conflict by that degree, the Pakistanis were said to believe, might be enough to force the U. Security Council to take up the crisis and perhaps even to implement a U. But that ploy seemed doomed from the beginning. For one thing, great-power rivalries over the sub-continent appeared significant enough to forestall any U. No matter what short-term tactics Yahya chose, in other words, Pakistan ultimately seemed on the way out of the eastern zone. Nonetheless, no one was suggesting that India had any ideas of annexing the territory. In fact, India appeared likely to inherit enough troubles just by acquiring an independent Bangladesh on its doorstep to discourage any thoughts of bringing it into the Indian fold. Its rickety communications network and minuscule industrial base have been all but destroyed. The region will plainly need massive infusions of Indian money and materials to get back even minimal stability. From the Indian point of view, however, there was no question that an independent Bangladesh would do far more good than harm. For starters, it would allow New Delhi at least to ease the refugee problem somewhat. For with the loss of an estimated 60 per cent of its population, 50 per cent of its foreign exchange and 20 per cent of its tax revenue, Pakistan seemed likely to present little in the way of a sustained military threat to the New Delhi government and appeared destined to wind up with just about as much diplomatic clout as that wielded by neighboring Afghanistan. Particularly in Asia, Mrs. The Indians have long resented playing diplomatic second fiddle to their Chinese rivals, and in view of the international attention lavished upon the Chinese, the Foreign Office in New Delhi is smarting more than ever. In , we were as advanced as China in these weapons but we chose not to go on, in the interest of everyone. For in supporting the Pakistanis in the latest upheaval, however reluctantly, Washington clearly seems to have bet on the wrong team. As one American diplomat put it last week: Only the Russians have done their maths right. But while the Russians have plainly enhanced their standing in the area, that assessment seemed a bit overdrawn. For throughout, the current crisis, Mrs. Gandhi has resolutely steered her own course—neither asking for nor accepting direction from any quarter. And with India riding high, there seemed to be little reason to suspect that the headstrong Prime Minister was about to begin listening to outsiders now. Among other things they create a mind-boggling logistical puzzle for Luthra and his man staff.

With the onset of winter, some 4 million blankets must be distributed immediately in the colder districts near the Himalayan foothills, but fewer than a half million have arrived from abroad. Concerned with reports that perhaps 30 per cent of the drug supplies and 15 per cent of the foodstuffs earmarked for the refugees vanish before reaching the 1, camps India now maintains, Luthra recently decreed: Speed is more important now than trying to prevent the inevitable pilfering that goes on. In addition the children at the camp now attend an open-air school under the direction of teachers who are themselves refugees from East Pakistan. Children also get a pint of milk per day plus a multiple vitamin pill under a supplementary feeding program to cure the malnutrition that afflicted most of them when they first crossed the border. Babies are scattered all over the place, crying and vomiting, and the overpowering stench of human waste pervades the camp from one end to the other. At most camps, all a refugee has to do is to look over to an adjoining Indian village, sometimes only yards away, to see that, thanks to the relief program, he usually gets more to eat and receives better medical care than does the local Indian population. Resentment Understandably, the impression that the refugees are getting favored treatment from the Indian Government has bred resentment among the locals. These social strains and the staggering financial burden of refugee relief seem more than India can possibly bear. Special taxes have been levied, and the government has cut back drastically on all other spending areas, even to the extent of shelving of long-planned development programs.

4: Hungry Bengal: War, Famine, Riots, and the End of Empire,

The Bengal famine of (Bengali: পাঁচালী "ra manvantara) was a major famine in the Bengal province in British India during World War www.enganhecubano.com estimated million, out of a population of million, died of starvation, malaria and other diseases aggravated by malnutrition, population displacement, unsanitary conditions and lack of health care.

On the rooftops overhead, vultures swoop in. They barely even notice it is too common a sight. Wikimedia Commons 8 of 36 A mother and her child, struggling through the famine. The photographer, Kalyani Bhattacharjee, sent this photo to England with this disclaimer: To make them look less gruesome, we have got them decorated with relief drawings in pleasant light colours. Wikimedia Commons 9 of 36 A child infected with smallpox. The most devastating part of the famine was the influx of disease. Smallpox, cholera, and dysentery wiped out people in droves. With too little food to keep their strength up, there was little they could do to fight off the disease. Wikimedia Commons Devout Hindu Brahmins gather to pray. The influx of refugees, the loss of food supplies from Burma, and the new-found focus of Japanese bombers would be some of the biggest causes of the Bengal famine. Wikimedia Commons 12 of 36 A starving family sits by the doorway. Wikimedia Commons A woman struggles to nurse a starving man back to health. Though the soldier is unaware, these women have turned to prostitution out of desperate starvation because of the famine. Wikimedia Commons 20 of 36 The dead body of an old man, starved to death, lies on the streets of Calcutta. Soon, the mats and the bodies below them will be burned. Wikimedia Commons Workers struggle to spread enough kindling to cremate all of the dead. Circa - The small bundle before him is the lifeless body of an infant child. This picture was taken after the famine had officially ended. Its impact still lingers on. As the original caption notes:

NEWSWEEK December 6, *When nations go to war, they almost invariably claim to be acting out of the purest motives. Last week, as India's leaders met in the high-domed central hall of the New Delhi Parliament, there was much pious table-thumping and jingoistic rhetoric to justify an attack against Pakistan.*

With the fall of Burma and Singapore in 1942, Kolkata was on the frontline and both a key strategic point and industrial centre. The immediate effect of the war was to drive up food prices: These price pressures in Bengal were made worse by the export of large amounts of rice to western India and the Middle East and the requisitioning of supplies to feed troops, at the same time as the region was receiving large numbers of refugees fleeing from the Japanese in Burma. When the Japanese started bombing Kolkata in December 1944, this was then a catalyst for wealthier Kolkatan individuals to flee to the countryside, where their increased purchasing power would contribute to food price inflation, and for businesses to leave. At the same time, British preparations for a Japanese invasion included the deliberate destruction of food supplies and the means of its production. As Mukherjee points out, however, there is evidence that the most meaningful hoarding was being done by major corporations and by the government itself. When rations for industrial workers in Kolkata were introduced in January 1945, much of the rice supplied was rotten. Since rice can be stored for up to a year without deterioration, this implies that the government, and the companies it was using for the ration supplies, had had it for some time. That the people of Bengal were not in fact passive victims of starvation provides some of the context for the Kolkata riots of 1946, as does the importance of the right of residence in Kolkata. As Mukherjee points out: The flashpoint, a day of direct action, effectively a general strike, called by the Muslim League campaigning for Pakistan, was certainly a communal issue and there were numerous instances of communal violence in the days that followed. Mukherjee points out, however, that many of the most famous incidents were clearly not Hindu-Muslim violence, such as for example the looting of a Hindu wine shop by a mob who were presumably not observant Muslims. Many of the targets in the fighting in fact seem to relate to the shortages of the famine years. Clothes shops and clothing factories and warehouses for example were particularly hit by looting, presumably in reaction to the severe dearth of clothing which had seen many of the poorest go practically naked. There was clearly a significant territorial aspect to the fighting. The subsequent violence often centred around attempts to take paras inhabited by communities in the minority in that part of the city, so Hindu paras in majority Muslim areas and Muslim paras surrounded by Hindus. This focus on taking territory convincingly had its origins in the importance of territory and residence in Kolkata during the famine. While this territorial fighting occurred along communal lines, Mukherjee shows that the primary motivations for much of the violence were in fact not so much communal as class based. It is clear that Hindu resentment of Muslim invaders in their space has its roots in class-based antagonism of middle-class communities in straightened conditions against those who they fear will take their small amount of privilege from them. For many in the Muslim community, the riots were also an opportunity to act on specific grievances against class enemies. Mukherjee cites the example of the attack by five hundred khalasis Muslim boatmen from eastern Bengal on various warehouses and boats along the Hooghly River. The khalasis had been largely deprived of their livelihoods when the Denial policy destroyed the boats on which they worked, but while many of them went on to do casual work on the docks, they were denied the formal recognition which would have entitled them to rations as Kolkata workers. The boats they attacked were not crewed by any khalasis, which further indicates that discriminatory labour practices by the boat owners, rather than their communal identities, were the issue here. The famous attacks by Muslim workers against the Marwari mills and factories follow the same pattern. The Marwaris were resented as hoarders and as controllers of the cloth industry. While communal identity was not unimportant, the class logic of these attacks was clearly the determining factor. Mukherjee remarks on how both the riots and the famine were remembered overwhelmingly for their sounds: It only remains to add: Notes in A Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation* Oxford, p. Towards a Marxist Perception London, pp. Help us launch Counterfire Media Support our Crowdfunder.

6: List of wars involving Bangladesh - Wikipedia

Severe food shortages developed in Bengal after the fall of Burma (). Historians debate the cause of the famine. Several factors have been identified. Burma was a major exporter of rice before the War.

China[edit] Political relations between China and the Indian subcontinent became nonexistent after the decline of Buddhism in India. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah began sending envoys to the Ming dynasty. He sent ambassadors in , and In the early 16th century, Bengal received official Portuguese envoys. The latter sent the Bengali sultan a robe of honor and a letter of recognition. He sent elephants as gifts to Sultan Khawja Jahan. The end of the war brought a long period of peace between the neighboring states. Taqiuddin Fasi, a contemporary Arab historian, was a teacher at the madrasa in Mecca. By the turn of the 16th century, a vernacular literature based on concepts of Sufism and Islamic cosmology flourished in the region. Bengali Muslim mystic literature was one of the most original in Islamic India. The Iranian poet wrote a poem for the Sultan of Bengal And with the three washers [cups of wine], this dispute is going on. All the parrots [poets] of India have fallen into a sugar shattering situation become excited That this Persian candy [ode], to Bangalah [Bengal] is going on. It was the preferred language of the aristocracy and the Sufis. Thousands of Persian books and manuscripts were published in Bengal. During the reign of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah , the city of Sonargaon became an important centre of Persian literature , with many publications of prose and poetry. The period is described as the " golden age of Persian literature in Bengal". The invocation tradition saw Islamic figures replacing the invocation of Hindu gods and goddesses in Bengali texts. The Dobhashi culture featured the use of Arabic and Persian words in Bengali texts to illustrate Muslim conquests. Sufi literature flourished with a dominant theme of cosmology. Bengali Muslim writers produced translations of numerous Arabic and Persian works, including the Thousand and One Nights and the Shahnameh. Bengali architecture and Islamic architecture The large number of mosques built during the Bengal Sultanate indicates the rapidity with which the local population converted to Islam. The period between and was an intensive mosque building era. These mosques dotted the countryside, ranged from small to medium sizes and were used for daily devotion. Most mosques were either of rectangular or square shape. The rectangular building without an enclosed courtyard became a popular type for both large and medium sized mosques. Bengali mosques would be covered several small domes. Bengali mosques had a conspicuous absence of minarets. Ponds were often located beside a mosque. Arabic inscriptions in the mosques often include the name of the patron or builder. The most commonly cited verse from the Quran in inscriptions was Surah 72, Al-Jinn. The brick mosque with terracotta decoration represented a grand structure in the Bengal Sultanate. They were often the gift of a wealthy patron and the fruit of extraordinary effort, which would not be found in every Muslim neighborhood. The style is associated with the introduction of Islam in new areas.

7: Bengal famine of - Wikipedia

Hungry Bengal examines these intricately interconnected events, foregrounding the political economy of war and famine in order to analyse the complex nexus of hunger, war and civil violence in colonial Bengal at the twilight of British rule.

These included a rapidly growing population, increasing household debt, stagnant agricultural productivity, increased social stratification, and alienation of the peasant class from their landholdings. These processes left social and economic groups mired in poverty and indebtedness, unable to cope with the economic shocks they faced in and , in the context of the Second World War. By far the most important is the winter crop of aman rice, sown in May and June and harvested in November and December. Permanent Settlement , Bengal Tenancy Act , and Great Depression in India Structural changes in the credit market and the rights of land transfer in rural Bengal not only helped push it into recurring danger of famine, but also dictated which economic groups would suffer the greatest hardship. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the power and influence of the landowners fell and that of the jotedars rose. Particularly in less developed regions, jotedars began to make substantial profits and gained power through their roles as grain or jute traders and, more importantly, by making loans to sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and ryots. Many formal credit market entities had disappeared during the Great Depression; peasants with small landholdings generally had to resort to informal local lenders [39] to purchase basic necessities during lean months between harvests. It was then relatively easy for the jotedars to use litigation to force debtors to sell all or part of their landholdings at a low price or forfeit them at auction. Debtors then became landless or land-poor sharecroppers and labourers, usually working the same fields they had once owned. In this way, the jotedars effectively dominated and impoverished the lowest tier of economic classes in several districts of Bengal. The construction of a network of railway embankments disrupted natural drainage and divided Bengal into innumerable poorly drained "compartments". Such diseases clustered around the tracks of railways. The sandy soil of the east and the lighter sedimentary soil of the Sundarbans tended to drain more rapidly after the monsoon season than the laterite or heavy clay regions of western Bengal. The flooding of fallow fields created a breeding place for malaria-carrying mosquitoes; [56] malaria epidemics lasted a month longer in the central and western areas with slower drainage. Water came primarily from large earthen tanks, rivers and tube wells. In the dry season, partially drained tanks became a further breeding area for malaria- vector mosquitoes. Japanese invasion of Burma[edit] Main articles: Military build-up, inflation, and displacement[edit] American soldiers at the Calcutta Jain Temple , July Calcutta became a hub for hundreds of thousands of Allied troops. Unskilled labourers from Bengal and nearby provinces were employed by military contractors for numerous projects, particularly the construction of American and British airfields. The rise in prices of essential goods and services was "not disturbing" until , when it became more alarming. Firms were required to sell goods to the military on credit and at fixed, low prices. In the case of the textiles industries that supplied cloth for the uniforms of the British military, for example, they charged "a very high price indeed" in domestic markets. Construction of multiple airfields displaced the civilian population and increased inflation. The method of credit financing was also tailored to UK wartime needs. The UK agreed to pay for defence expenditures over and above the amount that India had paid in peacetime adjusted for inflation. However, their purchases were made entirely on credit accumulated in the Bank of England and not redeemable until after the war. At the same time, the Bank of India was permitted to treat those credits as assets against which it could print currency up to two and a half times more than the total debt incurred. The tremendous rise in nominal money supply coupled with a scarcity of consumption goods spurred monetary inflation , reaching its peak in "â€” Farmland purchased for airstrip and camp construction is "estimated to have driven between 30, and 36, families about , to , persons off their land", according to Greenough. They were paid for the land, but they had lost their employment. Military barracks were scattered around Calcutta. Denial policies[edit] British military authorities [Z] feared that the Japanese would proceed through Burma and invade British India via the eastern border of Bengal. As a preemptive measure, they launched a two-pronged scorched-earth initiative in eastern and coastal Bengal to prevent or impede the invasion by denying access to food supplies, transport and other

resources. John Herbert , the governor of Bengal, issued an urgent directive in late March requiring stocks of paddy unmilled rice deemed surplus, as well as other food items, to be removed or destroyed in these districts, [99] beginning immediately. It applied to districts readily accessible via the Bay of Bengal and the larger rivers that flow into it. The Indian National Congress and many other groups staged protests denouncing the denial policies for placing draconian burdens on Bengali peasants; these were part of a nationalist sentiment and outpouring that later peaked in the "Quit India" movement. Inter-provincial trade barriers[edit] Many Indian provinces and princely states imposed inter-provincial trade barriers beginning in mid, preventing other provinces from buying domestic rice. One underlying cause was the anxiety and soaring prices that followed the fall of Burma, [] but a more direct impetus in some cases for example, Bihar was the trade imbalances directly caused by provincial price controls. These barriers reflected a desire to see that local populations were well fed, thus forestalling civil unrest. The trade machinery for the distribution of food [between provinces] throughout the east of India was slowly strangled, and by the spring of was dead. Protecting their interests was a major concern of both private and public relief efforts. Essential workers received subsidised food, [] and were frequently paid in part in weekly allotments of rice sufficient to feed their immediate families, further protecting them from inflation. Public and private medical staff at all levels were transferred to military duty, while medical supplies were monopolised. Civil unrest[edit] Main articles: India to the UK War Office, dated 17 August , describing the civil unrest in wake of the Quit India Resolution, 9 August Discontent, resentment, and fear of the Raj among rural agriculturalists and business and industrial elements in Greater Calcutta had been simmering since the outset of the war. In several ways, then, the political and social disorder and distrust that were the effects and aftereffects of rebellion and civil unrest placed political, logistical, and infrastructural constraints on the Government of India that contributed to later famine-driven woes. Price chaos and policy failures[edit] Throughout April , British and Indian refugees continued to flee from Burma, many through Bengal, as the cessation of Burmese imports continued to drive up rice prices. In June, the Government of Bengal decided to establish price controls for rice, and on 1 July fixed prices at a level considerably lower than the prevailing market price. The principal result of the fixed low price was to make sellers reluctant to sell; stocks disappeared, either into the black market or into storage. Prices remained high, and the black market was not brought under control. Natural disasters[edit] See also: North Indian Ocean tropical cyclone Brown spot disease: First, the winter rice crop was afflicted by a severe outbreak of fungal brown spot disease. Then, on 16â€”17 October a cyclone and three storm surges in October ravaged croplands, destroyed houses and killed thousands, at the same time dispersing high levels of fungal spores across the region and increasing the spread of the crop disease.

8: War of Words in West Bengal | INDIA'S FORGOTTEN WAR - blogging naxalism.

Even before the war, the people of Bengal, India had already been struggling with a small food supply and a skyrocketing population. By , the area had the least nutritious diet in the world, and the battering of tropical storms wasn't making it any better.

The Bengal famine resulted in an estimated 2. The estimated number of victims that succumbed to death due to diseases, starvation, population displacement, malnutrition, lack of medical care, and the unsanitary environment is estimated at 2. With diseases such as dysentery, malaria, kala-azar, smallpox, and cholera, the Bengal Famine overwhelmed the citizens, affected large portions of the economy and social fabric, which further increased levels of inequality. Fish was the second major food source, plus small amounts of wheat, and the consumption of other foods was comparatively low. Rice crops in Bengal are divided into three seasonal crops, the most important being the winter aman crop. Lastly, boro, also known as spring crop, accounted for small amounts of harvest. It is believed that a poor production of rice in during the all-important aman seasonal harvest lead to the Bengal famine. Main Causes The economy of Bengal was predominantly agrarian, and between half and three-quarters of the population depended on subsistence agriculture. Some of the underlying causes of the Bengal famine included dense population, inefficient agricultural practices, and de-peasantisation due to land grabbing and debt bondage. There were also high levels of inflation, failed policies, hoarding, war profiteering, and speculation. High priority was given to defense and military services, at the expense of allocating medical care and food to the poor living in the rural areas. There were also constraints on domestic sources by the emergency inter-provincial trade barriers, denied accessibility to international sources by the War Cabinet of Great Britain, and restrictions to accessible grains, which together with the other factors contributed to the crisis resulting in the deaths of many men, women, and children. Propaganda The government of Bengal was slow to supply those affected with the required humanitarian aid. Initially, the government tried to use propaganda to discourage hoarding before attempting to reduce the price of rice through various procurement and price control schemes. These attempts only led to sellers withholding their produce and a thriving black market which further increased the cost of rice after the price controls failed. The government opted to offer relief efforts in the form of agricultural loans, test works, and gruel kitchens, which were ineffective and only worsened the food situation. The military took control of the crisis in October , hence increasing relief efforts. However, Bengal received more effective aid following an improved rice harvest in December of that same year, leading to a decline in the number of deaths caused by starvation. Another observable effect was the selling off of assets for food. There was the unprecedented number of small-scale farmers who sold or mortgaged their land, either in part or in full, to save themselves. As a result, almost 1. This page was last updated on September 29,

9: "Hungry Bengal: War, Famine and the End of Empire" by Janam Mukherjee

War elephants played an important part in the Bengal army. Apart from carrying war materials, elephants were also used for the movement of the armed personnel. Apart from carrying war materials, elephants were also used for the movement of the armed personnel.

Rakhi Chakraborty "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion. The famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits. Under the British Raj, India suffered countless famines. But the worst hit was Bengal. The first of these was in 1769, followed by severe ones in 1770, 1783, 1817, and lastly 1943. Previously, when famines had hit the country, indigenous rulers were quick with useful responses to avert major disasters. Yet they did little to acknowledge the havoc these actions wrought. If anything, they were irritated at the inconveniences in taxation the famines brought about. Image source The first of these famines was in 1769 and was ghastly brutal. The first signs indicating the coming of such a huge famine manifested in 1769 and the famine itself went on till 1770. It killed approximately 10 million people, millions more than the Jews incarcerated during the Second World War. It wiped out one-third the population of Bengal. Under the Mughal rule, peasants were required to pay a tribute of 10 percent of their cash harvest. This ensured a comfortable treasury for the rulers and a wide net of safety for the peasants in case the weather did not hold for future harvests. Overnight the tributes, the British insisted on calling them tributes and not taxes for reasons of suppressing rebellion, increased to 50 percent. The peasants were not even aware that the money had changed hands. They paid, still believing that it went to the Emperor. That is why the surplus stock, which remained after paying the tributes, was so important to their livelihood. But with the increased taxation, this surplus deteriorated rapidly. When partial failure of crops came in 1769, this safety net was no longer in place. The rains of 1769 were dismal and herein the first signs of the terrible drought began to appear. The famine occurred mainly in the modern states of West Bengal and Bihar but also hit Orissa, Jharkhand and Bangladesh. Bengal was the worst hit. Among the worst affected areas were Birbhum and Murshidabad in Bengal. Thousands migrated from the area in hopes of finding sustenance elsewhere, only to die of starvation later on. Those who stayed on perished nonetheless. Huge tracts of farmland were abandoned. Wilderness started to thrive here, resulting in deep and inhabitable jungle areas. Tirhut, Champaran and Bettiah in Bihar were similarly affected. Prior to this, whenever the possibility of a famine had emerged, the Indian rulers would waive their taxes and see compensatory measures, such as irrigation, instituted to provide as much relief as possible to the stricken farmers. The colonial rulers continued to ignore any warnings that came their way regarding the famine, although starvation had set in from early 1769. Then the deaths started in 1770. That year, the Company raised the land tax to 60 percent in order to recompense themselves for the lost lives of so many peasants. Fewer peasants resulted in fewer crops, which in turn meant less revenue. Hence the ones who had not yet succumbed to the famine had to pay even greater taxes so as to ensure that the British treasury did not suffer any losses during this travesty. After taking over from the Mughal rulers, the British had issued widespread orders for cash crops to be cultivated. These were intended to be exported. Thus, farmers who were used to growing paddy and vegetables were now being forced to cultivate indigo, poppy and other such items that yielded a high market value for them but could be of no relief to a population starved of food. There was no backup of edible crops in case of a famine. The natural causes that had contributed to the drought were commonplace. It was the single-minded motive for profit that wrought such devastating consequences. No relief measure was provided for those affected. Rather, as mentioned above, taxation was increased to make up for any shortfall in revenue. What is even more ironic is that the East India Company generated higher profits in 1770 than they did in 1769. Image source Although the starved populace of Bengal did not know it yet, this was just the first of umpteen famines, caused solely by the motive for profit, that were to scourge the country side. Although all these massacres were deadly in their own right, the deadliest one to occur after was in 1943, when three million people died and others resorted to eating grass and human flesh in order to survive. He casually diverted the supplies of medical aid and food that was being dispatched to the starving victims to the already well supplied soldiers of Europe. Image Source Image source This Independence Day, it is worthwhile to remember that the riches of the West were built on the graves of

the East. Shed a tear in their memory and strive to make the most of this hard won independence that we take for granted today. Pledge to stand up for those whose voice the world refuses to hear because they are too lowly to matter. To be free is a great privilege.

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