

Three Indian Theorists of Nationalism

Aniket Alam

Theories and Practices of Nationalism

HSS444, Monsoon 2020

What will we study

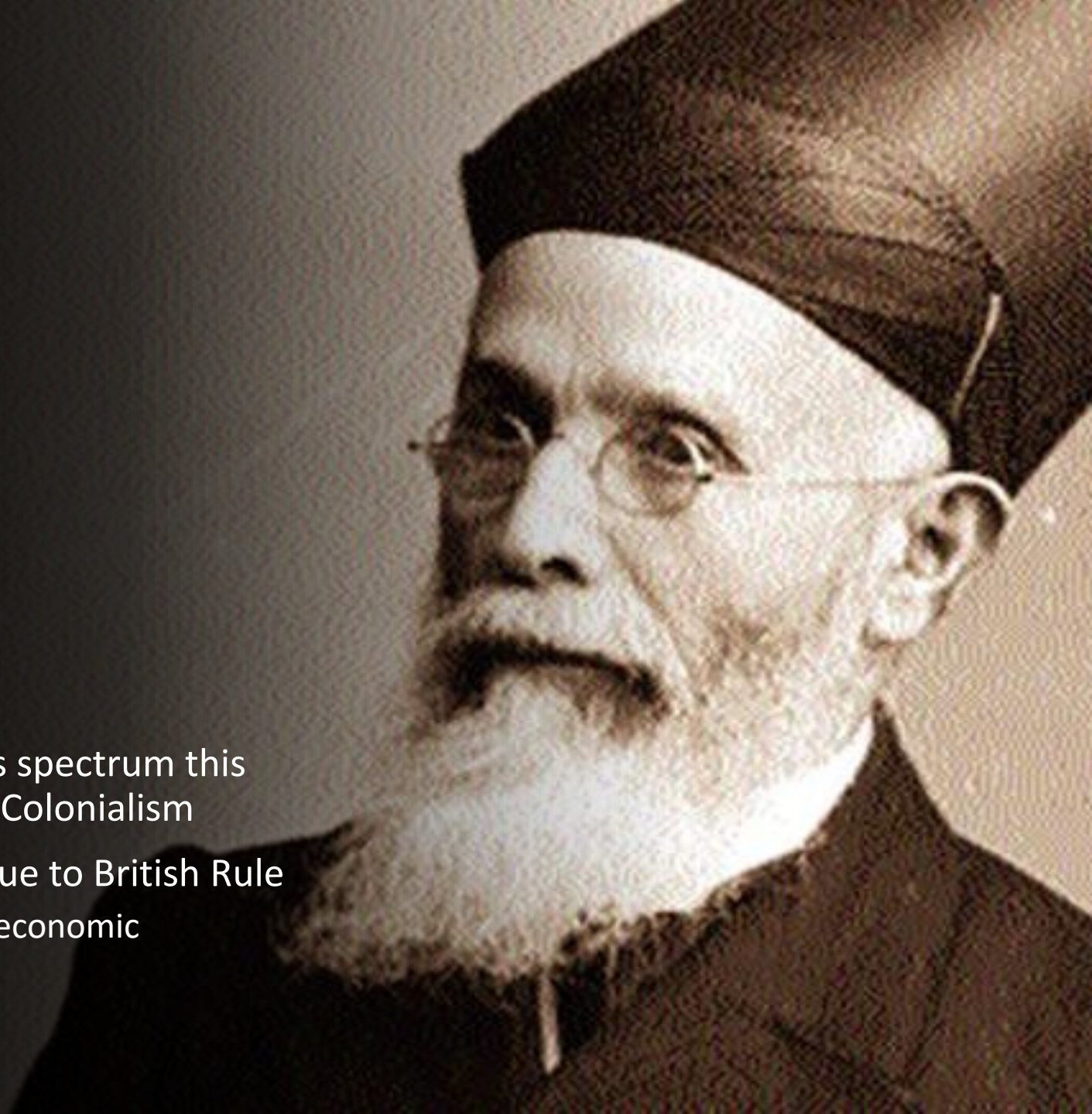
- Bipan Chandra
 - Understanding of Indian nation as one based on civic nationalism
- Partha Chatterjee
 - Culturalist, Post-Colonial theory of Indian Nationalism
- Javeed Alam
 - Marxist, Class based theory of Indian Nationalism

Bipan Chandra: Primary Contradiction of Colonialism

- Nationalism in India emerged as a **consequence** of colonial rule
- Nationalism in India emerged in **contestation** with colonial rule
- Primary contradictions between British colonialism and the people who lived in its Indian colony
- **Economic exploitation** was the basis of the colonial relationship
 - Drain of Wealth
- All other social, cultural, economic distinctions/divisions paled in front of this

Drain of Wealth

- First propounded by Dadabhai Naoroji 1870s
 - Poverty and Un-British Rule in India
- Three main components
 - Home Charges and “loot”
 - Free Trade and Custom duties
 - Capital Investments and profits
- Across ideological, linguistic, regional, religious spectrum this remained the core of India’s critique of British Colonialism
- India’s poverty and lack of development was due to British Rule
 - Not rule by foreigners but because of colonial economic exploitation



British Colonial State in India

- Semi-Hegemonic

- Mai-Baap Sarkar: The British cultivated the idea that they are protectors of India, specially its poor, and that they keep the peace
- That British Rule is bringing with it development, rule of law, modern state\
- That the British are invincible and the only people who can rule a country as diverse, conflicted and difficult as India

- Semi-Authoritarian

- Massive Army and police establishment
- Dividing people along caste, religious and other ethnic lines
- Coercive laws; racism



Indian National Movement

- India's Anti-Colonial Movement was India's National Movement
 - Fight against Colonialism = Unity of Nation
- Realised that people are under the colonial yoke
 - Both economic and ideological-political
- Building Nationalism was to build
 - Self-confidence (Swaraj)
 - Self-reliance (Swadeshi)
- Get people to believe in their ability to unite, to demand equality, liberty and justice for themselves

Republican, Democratic, Civil Libertarian, Secular

- Despite differences among themselves on political tactics, ideological orientation, etc all streams of the freedom struggle had these three ideals in common
- All saw themselves as anti-imperialist
 - For independent economic development
- All foregrounded representative government
- All demanded civil liberties
- All spoke about the need for inter-religious cooperation and unity
- Sharp distinction between Nationalism and Communalism
 - Latter is a anti-nationalist political position which defends colonial rule



Bipan Chandra: Main Points

- Indian Nationalism emerged out of the primary contradiction of Indian people against colonial exploitation
 - Non-violence a symptom of this national unity
 - All people irrespective of their different interests and demands had to unite under one banner
- Indian Nationalism is a modern phenomenon created by its leaders to deal with a modern problem: Colonialism
- Indian Nation is old, Indian Nationalism is Modern
- Bipan Chandra doesn't use the phrase but his conception of Indian nationalism is that it was civic nationalism
 - What was ethnic was communalism