

THE COLONIAL CANKER

The British, who succeeded the Mughals, claimed to be the harbinger of 'a new age' - a new age, where there would be, they declared from housetops, perfect law and order. No corruption. No crime. But, drenched in the culture of corruption and violence, they did just the opposite. Look at the record of their East India Company (1600-1858). 'Well- versed in tyranny, plunder, oppression and bloodshed', it, in the words of Edmund Burke, 'radically and irretrievably ruined India'. Their Governors-General - most of them - behaved like robbers and the so-called public servants like thieves. They indulged in corruption - openly. And it were, precisely, their these misdeeds that brought about the Great Uprising of 1857, which erased the East India Company from the pages of the Book of Life.

After the Company was gone, India was placed under the direct rule of the British Crown and Parliament on 1st November, 1858.

After the coming of the East India Company, especially in the late 18th century and early 19th century, the wealth of India began to pour into England on a huge scale. The ships above show the Company's trade activity in the Diamond Harbour, Calcutta.







The ruthlessly exploited and bestially oppressed masses of India rose against the Company Raj in 1857.
A *Sawar* from Meerut attacking the British establishment in Delhi, 11th May, 1857 : A Painting from CBI Museum.

UNDER THE CROWN

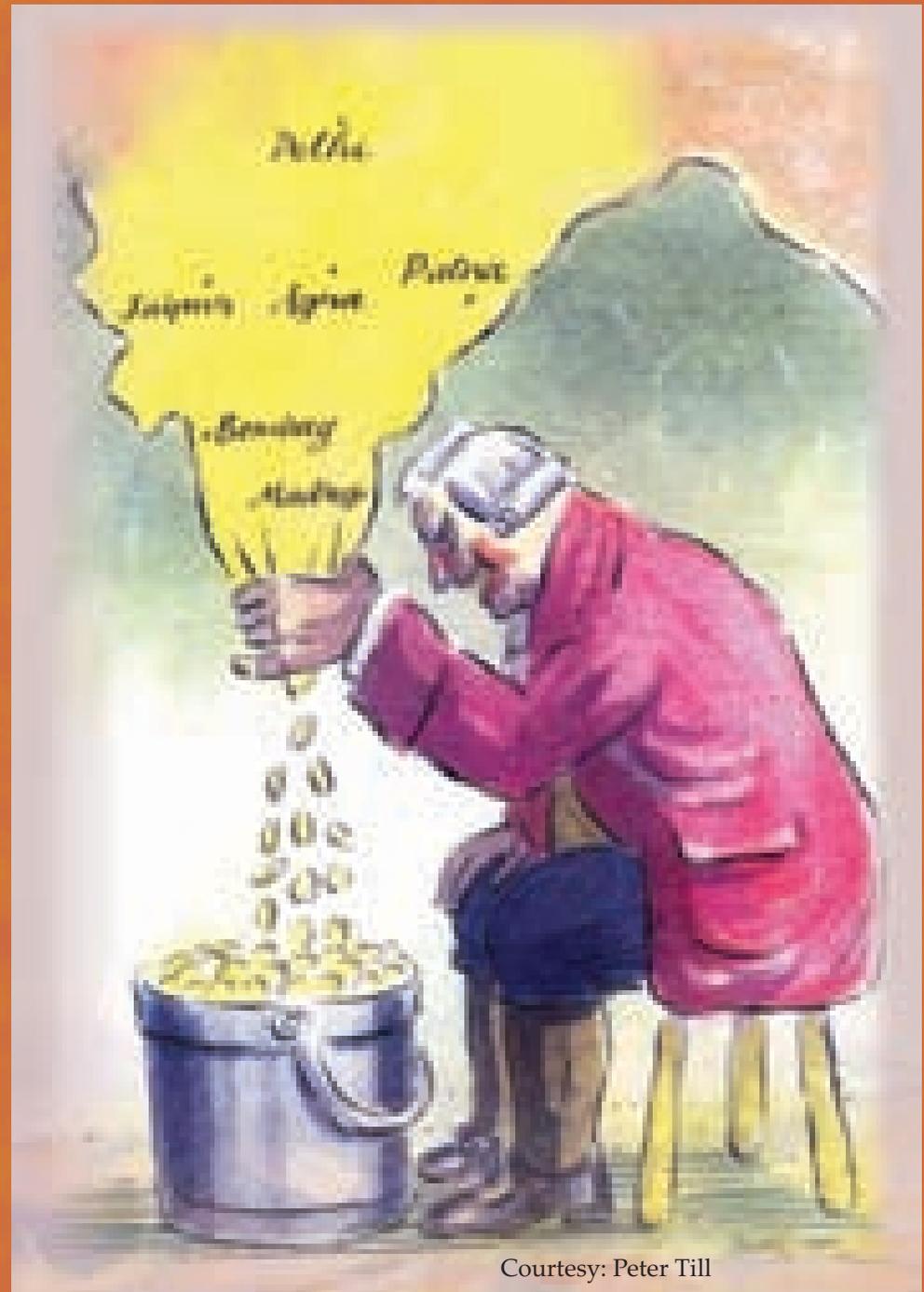
Many a people 'saw big dreams and better days ahead'. But, though there was some improvement in governance, the exploitation of our people, and draining of our wealth continued unabated. Crime situation seems to have improved somewhat, but corruption, by and large, harassed and harried one and all as before, if not more.



Worst, despite this, the alien Government did not think of any need to help the helpless mass of our people by removing the menace, until it came, as we shall see later, in their War Department during the Second World War, hurting their War effort.

THE GREAT LOOT

The East India Company, in the words of Edmund Burke, 'radically and irretrievably ruined India' hopelessly. The following regime was no better. Though it changed its style of looting and processes of exploitation, they bled India white and milked its wealth to such an extent that once a 'land of milk and honey' became a land of 'dearth, droughts and



Courtesy: Peter Till