



## The «Great Muslim Invasion of Assam»

Anti-Migrant/Muslim Politics and  
its Resistance in Colonial Assam,  
c.1920s-1947

### Guest lecture by Dr. Layli Uddin (Queen Mary University of London)

23 May 2024

16.15-18.00

KOL-F-123

Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zürich

As partition loomed over the subcontinent, fears of a Muslim ‘invasion’ afoot in colonial Assam were ratcheted up. East Bengali Muslim migrant cultivators were accused of plotting to displace the indigenous inhabitants of Assam. Cartographical representations of the invasion were found, Gandhi intervened to save Assam and the Chief Minister demanded troop reinforcements from the Eastern Command to halt the Muslim plot. The invasion, however, never materialised.

Drawing on a range of official and vernacular material, this paper examines how East Bengali migrant sharecroppers and peasants came to be perceived as ‘settler colonialists’. I argue that a combination of caste, capitalism and global racial politics produced anti-migrant/Muslim politics. The paper examines the resistance that came from figures such as Maulana Bhashani, Bengali peasant and worker leader, who produced a more expansive idea of what belonging could look like. The paper reflects on the loss of these ideas of Muslim belonging for postcolonial India.

Students, staff and everyone interested is cordially invited.

Prof. Dr. Nicolas Martin  
Dr. Julien Levesque