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978-0-521-59692-3 - Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850-1950

Rajnarayan Chandavarkar

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## Imperial power and popular politics

In this series of interconnected studies Rajnarayan Chandavarkar offers a powerful revisionist analysis of the relationship between class and politics in India between the Mutiny and Independence. Dr Chandavarkar rejects the 'Orientalist' view of Indian social and economic development as unique and exceptional, which calls for explanations specific to its culture, and reasserts the critical role of the working classes in shaping the pattern of Indian capitalist development. He demonstrates the inadequacy of 'culture' as a dominant tool of historical analysis, especially as manifested in those recent subaltern studies which have focused upon colonial discourse to the almost complete exclusion of the material things. An underlying and recurrent theme of the book is how perceptions of power shaped alignments of class and influenced changing definitions of social identity. The book ranges widely across the social and political history of the working classes in India, examining the character of trade unions, the political culture of the working class neighbourhoods, the nature of violence and policing, popular responses to the moral panic of the plague epidemic and the Gandhian inflection of nationalist rhetoric. Dr Chandavarkar's analysis of political discourse, community structure and class relations in industrializing India has major implications, and *Imperial power and popular politics* offers one of the most sustained and sophisticated critiques yet made of both Marxist and functionalist narratives of industrialization. In their stead Dr Chandavarkar emphasizes the fluidity and flexibility of the relationships between discourse and power, language and political practice, and in the work's concluding chapter he offers an alternative schematic view of the process of class formation in India, within the context of 'world capitalism'.

Sustained in argument and elegant in exposition, this book represents a major contribution not only to the history of the Indian working classes, but to the history of industrial capitalism and colonialism as a whole. *Imperial power and popular politics* will be essential reading for all scholars and students of recent political, economic and social history, social theory, and cultural and colonial studies.

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## Abbreviations

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AICC	All-India Congress Committee
AITUC	All-India Trade Union Congress
ATLA	Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association
BDEC	Bombay Disturbances Enquiry Committee
BMOA	Bombay Millowners' Association
<i>BPP SAI</i>	<i>Bombay Presidency Police, Secret Abstracts of Intelligence</i>
BRIC	Bombay Riots Inquiry Committee
BSEC	Bombay Strike Enquiry Committee
BTLU	Bombay Textile Labour Union
<i>CEHI</i>	<i>The Cambridge Economic History of India</i>
CPI	Communist Party of India
<i>CWMG</i>	<i>The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</i>
GOB	Government of Bombay
GOI	Government of India
<i>IESHR</i>	<i>Indian Economic and Social History Review</i>
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITB	Indian Tariff Board
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Asian Studies</i>
<i>MAS</i>	<i>Modern Asian Studies</i>
MCC	Proceedings of the Meerut Conspiracy Case
MSA	Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay
NAI	National Archives of India, New Delhi
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London
<i>PP</i>	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
PRO	Public Record Office, London
PWD	Public Works Department
<i>RCLI</i>	<i>Royal Commission on Labour in India</i>
TLIC	Textile Labour Inquiry Committee



## Glossary

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adivasi	original inhabitants; denotes 'scheduled tribes' under the Indian constitution
ahimsa	non-violence
akhada	gymnasium; meeting place; residence of religious mendicants
badmash	hooligan
bania	trader, moneylender, grain dealer; also a caste name
bhadralok	gentle-folk; refers mainly to higher caste and literate groups in Bengal
charkha	spinning wheel
chawl	tenement
dacoit	bandit; robber who uses violence and operates in gangs
dada	literally, 'elder brother'; used to describe a neighbourhood tough
dalit	oppressed; 'untouchable' caste
ganja	cannabis
Ganpati	another name for the Hindu god Ganesh
garibi hatao	abolish poverty; Congress Party slogan in the early 1970s
goonda	hooligan, thug
hakim	physician
halalkhore	sweeper who removed refuse and excreta from houses and streets
hartal	strike, cessation of work or trade dispute
havildar	constable
jamat	council of a caste, neighbourhood or sect
khaddar	coarse, home-spun cloth
kotwal	police or legal official
lathi	stick, bludgeon
mahajan	merchants' guild, assembly, association
majur	labourer
malik	patron, proprietor, boss

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## xii Glossary

maulvi	Muslim priest or learned man
mela	festival; company of dancers taking part in a festival
mofussil	the provinces or hinterland
moholla	neighbourhood, quarter of a town
panchayat	council or tribunal, typically consisting of five people
patel	village official, headman
sadhu	Hindu ascetic; holy man with saintly qualities
sangh	association, organization
saraf, shroff	banker, money-changer
satyagraha	truth-force; a term used by Gandhi for his technique of passive resistance
seth	wealthy financier; merchant; head of trade guild
shuddhi	ritual of purification, movement for conversion of Muslims to Hinduism
sirdar, sardar	foreman, labour contractor, jobber
swadeshi	product of the nation; goods made in India
swaraj	self-rule
tabut	shrine; a model of the tomb of Husain at Kerbala which is carried in procession during a festival
talimkhana	gymnasium
taluka	an administrative unit below the level of the district
taluqdar	landlord, especially in north India
tamasha	show or entertainment; folk theatre
tanzeem	organization; specifically organization for Muslim unity
toli	gang of men who levied contributions from shopkeepers for Mohurran or other festivals
ugarani	the collection of money which is considered to be due
vaidya	physician, especially in the Ayurvedic tradition
waaz	sermon or discourse preached in a mosque
wadi	quarter or neighbourhood of a town
zamindar	landowner