

RAJNARAYAN CHANDAVARKAR. *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940*. (Cambridge South Asian Studies, number 51.) New York: Cambridge University Press. 1994. Pp. xviii, 468. \$69.95.

Rajnarayan Chandavarkar's book furthers our understanding of the evolution of Bombay from an insignificant settlement on swampy, inhospitable islands to its current position as the financial capital of India. The book traces the evolution of the textile industry in Bombay and its significant role in consolidating the city's position as India's major commercial center. It describes the social, political, and economic realities that shaped the life of Bombay's working class, highlighting the specific case of labor and its organization in the textile industry from 1900 to 1940.

Drawing on detailed documentation about mill workers, Chandavarkar comes to some fundamental notions about the working class in emerging industrial capitalism in India. Prevailing conceptual frameworks, including the currently ubiquitous deconstructionist approach, with which the working class has been analyzed, are reviewed in chapter 1. The author convincingly argues for grounding in the facts of the case the analysis of the role of labor in capitalist development in the Third World. This approach, he argues, has the potential to make a valuable contri-

bution to recasting social theory and social history. The result is a rich case study that allows a critical assessment of the prevailing theories about the working class from a non-Western, non-European perspective. As such, it makes a needed and valuable contribution. Yet, although it raises critical questions about existing theories about the working class, it does not forcefully and evocatively develop alternative conceptual notions.

Chandavarkar lays out the details of the textile industry in Bombay as follows: chapter 2 places the growth of indigenous capital investment in Bombay's textile industry in the context of the colonial posture and prevailing shifts in international trade. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provide a portrait of the relationship of the city and its economy with its hinterland with particular reference to city labor. In chapters 3 and 4 migration streams, the nature of the sending areas, and the linkages with and impact of migration to and from the hinterland are related to the structure of the labor market in Bombay. Chapter 5 provides a description of the social organization of Bombay's working-class neighborhoods. These chapters provide an engaging overview to the complex social, religious, cultural, political, class, and caste-based forces that shape the power dynamics of society in Bombay's working-class areas. This process affected and shaped the spatial layout and class-based segregation of the city fabric as well. But there is a paucity of maps documenting the relationships of the city with its region or of districts and wards within the city. Graphics providing images of physical, spatial impacts that demonstrate the ways in which social dynamics translated to tangible "on the ground" realities of life for the working classes would have enhanced the message.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 focus on the workings of the textile industry. In chapter 6 the development of the cotton-textile industry is described. Chapter 7 delves into the divisions in the working class in the city, which are identified as resulting not only from the traditional divisions of caste and kinship but also from the specific economics of the textile industry. In chapter 8 the widely held discussions about rationalizing the industry, which started in the 1920s, are reported, as is the lack of comprehensive programs to define and implement various models of rationalization. In the epilogue Chandavarkar shows how the role of class actions (in the form of general strikes), national movements, and caste and religious identities interacted to shape worker politics and social formation.

With its meticulous attention to a breadth of literature on Bombay's textile industry, Chandavarkar's book is a valuable addition to the historical literature on the city. It will become an important reference for those working on historical and current aspects of the city's economy and polity. The strength, and to some extent the weakness, of the book is the richness of the descriptions of processes and historical events within

and related to the industry. The book fails to develop from this a forceful alternative framework for thinking of the working class in non-Western industrial development. It does point out the inconsistencies in prevailing formulations.

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