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CONTENTS

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Introduction

BURIED IN A FOOTNOTE in Sigmund Freud's masterful study of mass psychology is a fable that captures the central concern of this book. 'A family of hedgehogs', the fable goes, 'massed very close together one cold winter's day, hoping to use one another's warmth to protect themselves against the cold. However, they soon felt one another's prickles, which made them draw apart. When the need for warmth brought them closer together once again, this second evil was repeated, with the result that they were bounced back and forth between the two ills until they established a moderate degree of distance from one another in which they could best endure their condition.'[1]

The famous fable was deployed by Freud to illustrate the relationship between the work of preservation and unity, or love, and the drive to kill and destroy, or death drive, and their mutual potency for humanity. Freud's point was a simple one, even though it is hard fully to comprehend and accept: it is love objects alone that can incite hatred. Published in the wake of the First World War, and with Nazism looming ahead, Freud's study remains powerful and insightful. The ambivalent but ultimately reversible play between love and hatred, as Freud would elaborate, causes war but also offers the potential for peace. In the terms of the fable, it was only proximity that made it possible for the prickly creatures to shield themselves, yet the collision of their sharp points in close intimacy forced them apart. Freud was thus fixated by the play of opposing sentiments in forging human life as he founded psychoanalysis as a discipline devoted to the workings of the psyche and sentiments.

1. The fable was taken from Arthur Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipoena*, Part 2, 'Gleichnisse und Parabeln' (Allegories and fables), quoted in Sigmund Freud, *Mass Psychology and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 55–56.

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India's founding fathers—and the figure of the father is consciously invoked here—were above all animated by the forging of life with others in a context that was shot through with an intimacy that incited hatred and violence. As the fable instructs, however, proximity and intimacy also carried the potential for peace and fellowship. Eschewing the psychological to focus upon the political, this book reconstructs and interprets the significance of intimacy and enmity in the thought of essential, even everlasting, figures and texts that laid the political foundations of modern India.

It is a historical conundrum, and a provocation, that while in 1857 the 'Mutiny'—the greatest anti-imperial rebellion of the nineteenth century—witnessed mass violence against the British, a mere ninety years later, Indian freedom was, by contrast, founded on a deadly fratricide that singularly spared the outgoing masters. A profound transformation of the twinned question of the violence and the enmity or antagonism that frame the political took place in the short but decisive opening decades of the twentieth century. That transformation in the understanding of political violence, this book contends, was crucial. The intimacy of enmity and the making of a violent fraternity relate not only to this question, but significantly also to the nature of political foundations of modern India. As some of the most insightful and classic writings tell us, new orders are preceded by violence; that awareness informs the perspective here, as it rejects the interpretation of violence as simply being functional or causal in relation to historical change.[2]

By focusing on the political thought of well-known figures such as M. K. Gandhi, Muhammad Iqbal, B. R. Ambedkar and Vinayak Savarkar, the book converts these all-too-influential political actors into political thinkers. It furthermore brings into focus significant but now obscure figures such as B. G. Tilak, considered by none other than Lenin as the 'fountainhead of revolution in Asia', Har Dayal, the leader of a violent global insurrection against the British Empire, and Sardar Patel, India's original 'strongman' and first home minister, as the authors of a new and essential canon of political thought. It detaches these figures from their instantly recognisable, if debatable, partisan moorings. In doing so, it seeks to restore and explain the reflective and conceptual capacities that oriented and defined a new political horizon. Their

2. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Orlando: Harcourt Publishing Co., 1970) is particularly insightful especially in discussion of revolutionary change and Karl Marx's work, 11–21; see too Étienne Balibar, *Violence and Civility: On the Limits of Political Philosophy*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

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presentation here as thinkers renders them somewhat unfamiliar figures, as it replaces the mechanistic role of 'self-interest' or even realpolitik, with the power of ideas as the ruling principle of political life.

The book addresses violence as the essential political question, and is bounded by the end of the first, if failed, 'mass moment' of modern Indian politics—namely, the *Swadeshi* or Home Rule movement of 1905–8 that was triggered by the proposed but soon aborted partition of Bengal—and by the independence and partition of India in 1947. The aim is not to apportion blame or adjudicate responsibility, nor is the approach here to accept violence as a means to gain a political end. Although the fact goes largely unnoticed, India's most influential political actors expended considerable reflective energy on this question of political violence, and not merely to decry it or deny its occurrence, albeit they also often did so.

As the book elaborates, the question of violence was posited in relation to life with others and the possibility of fraternity under sovereign conditions. This became an inescapable and even urgent issue in the context of the hectic anticolonial mobilisation and periodic imperial constitutional consultations that unfolded in this dramatic and decisive period. Taking the focus away from the history of events and movements that have been extensively covered and constantly reinterpreted elsewhere, the book centrally positions instead the *power of ideas* in instituting the political foundations of modern India.

It is often remarked, with equal measures of celebration and exasperation, that India is arguably the most political place in the world. As the first country to be decolonised from the British Empire since America, the joint history of its independence and the formation of Pakistan have been understood primarily in the received languages of nationalism and imperialism, in which political machinations of its leaders, the mobilisation of people and the intentions of outgoing rulers have held sway. India, and its historical transformations that produced both the world's largest democratic republic and the first avowedly Muslim nation-state in world history, can no longer be reduced to and understood in terms of a sum of social, economic and cultural approaches and processes.

The power of ideas, and their reconstruction here, enables us to address fundamental questions regarding the nature of the political and its domination in India, the remaking of modern political languages and the generative potential of place in relation to ideas considered in this book. India's struggle for freedom has by and large been received and understood in terms of the nonviolence that made Gandhi not only its global icon but crucially the antithesis

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of the muscular militarism of Hitler and Stalin that epitomised the catastrophic violence of the mid-twentieth century. Whether mythic or historical, this powerful narrative of nonviolent transformation has at the very least marked out India's transition to independence as exceptional.

Yet, as this book reconstructs their political ideas, all the major political actors presented here as 'ideological innovators' were in fact fixated by the fundamental political question of violence, not excluding the apostle of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi.[3] 'Violence' is a capacious category that includes its visible and invisible forms, whether structural or embedded, symbolic or cultural, economic or epistemic, and so on. The focus of the book remains strictly in the political domain, as it takes a minimal, if exacting, view of violence. This is to say that sovereign power is understood here in relation to its ultimate import; that is, its association with the question of killing and dying, as opposed to 'freedom' in any simple sense.[4]

The book foregrounds the question of killing and dying as articulated and understood by modern India's canonical—even 'father'—figures. Although in itself a pointed one, the question of violence was implicated in the larger issues of the political subject, from the individual to the republican ideal of 'the people', of sacrifice, and of the Indian social as the historic source of sovereign power, all of which receive attention here. Violence and sovereignty were inextricable from the central question of life with others, or fraternity. Violence, fraternity and sovereignty thus made up an intimate, deadly and highly consequential triangle of concepts that produced what has been termed here 'the Indian Age'.

India, the book argues, is instructive and definitive of the twentieth century, as it remade modern political languages through an ideological revolution that defied fidelity to any given ideology, whether it be liberalism, Marxism or communism. Opening with the high moment of anti-imperial politics in the early years of the twentieth century and closing with the civil war of 1947 and

3. I take the term 'ideological innovators' from Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1: *Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

4. There is a robust and detailed literature on the sociology of violence or 'riots' and even subaltern political action of the late colonial period. Equally, more recent historical works are uncovering the British Empire as a deeply violent polity both in its brutality and also its ostensibly civil forms such as education institutions, railway infrastructure and public welfare endeavours. The role of the postcolonial Indian state in terms of violence, meanwhile, has now gained the attention of scholars, primarily anthropologists, generating a considerable number of studies and insights.

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the establishment of the world's largest democratic republic, the book foregrounds the power of political ideas in directing historical transformation. 'The Indian Age' produced a highly consequential set of political ideas that have not only endured to the present but continue to provide critical insights into the global condition.

India's dizzying diversity of languages and of religions, and, above all, its scale offer a miniature of the global form itself. Most significantly, foundational questions of modern politics, namely sovereignty and republicanism, were there discovered, posited and deployed in a context of both imperialism and nationalism that compelled ideological innovators to discover the lineaments and potential of the political horizon in a situation rife with distinctions and conflict. Thus, the displacement of the West and a departure from its ideological and political vocabularies allowed for their remaking, to produce the world's largest and most diverse democaracy. The most profound and consequential transformation that was undertaken was in the concept of fraternity, or fellowship and life with distinct others.

The transformative and destructive potential of violence, the promise of peace and fellowship: these centre the entirely innovative and powerful interventions that this book historically contextualises within theoretical perspectives on the global political order. Focused on the formation of fraternity and its relationship to violence, new ideas of sovereignty and republicanism underlay the foundation of independent India and the world's first avowedly Muslim nation, Pakistan.

Indian political thought, especially as it emerged in and through its 'nationalist' canon of the twentieth century, was primarily the domain of political actors and practitioners, and they were all—whether a B. R. Ambedkar or a Jawaharlal Nehru—preoccupied with, to invoke Karl Marx's famous dictum, changing the world, rather than only interpreting it. Yet the book not only 'denationalises' these figures, as it decolonises political thought and places the Indian Age in the global field of interlocution on fundamental questions of violence, sovereignty and fraternity. It also casts the all-too-familiar reception of these figures in a radically new light in relation to the fully ackowledged political thinkers of the twentieth century ranging from Carl Schmitt, through to Hannah Arendt, and Alain Badiou.

Rather than being an 'exception', political thought of the Indian Age instead marked a defining departure from the West, as it radically reconstituted the place and potential of violence. The central norm of modern politics as experienced and theorised from the West is that of the 'state'. Whether it is in the

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work of the foundational thinker of modern sovereignty, Thomas Hobbes, who wrote in the era of civil wars in seventeenth-century England, or of the founder of sociology in the twentieth century, Max Weber, the state has come to be seen as violence's natural and rightful home. The state became the legitimate holder of the monopoly on violence, as the vast and vibrant canon of modern politics and theory testifies. Above all, the state became the natural destination of modern politics. This has much to do with liberalism as a creed of individual rights and the architecture of power and division in the organs of government. It is, therefore, not surprising that liberalism, including in its imperial form, has animated recent scholarly works, making it the principal focus of political thought.[5]

The primacy of the political in India was initially forged through the rewriting, if not the rejection, of liberalism in the opening years of the twentieth century.[6] As they became icons of an ideological revolution, Gandhi and his ideological predecessor, Tilak, forged a new vocabulary that broke with liberal considerations as they critiqued and circumvented dominant ideas of contract and self-interest as the basis of political life. This consideration of the domain of the political was posited in relation to its ethical boundaries. Such a positioning of politics and ethics allowed for the circumvention of the 'state' and powerfully instituted an anti-statist political subject. In creating a subject-oriented horizon of the political, Tilak and Gandhi subtracted violence from the state and posited it as an individual capacity. The political, in short, was discovered at the limits and ends of the law. To be sure, 'the political' here refers to the consideration and the domain of power, conflict and antagonism, rather than to either the institutional management or representation of 'interests' commonly understood as 'politics', or even to the domain of deliberation and freedom associated with a wide range of traditions, from classical liberalism to the thought of Hannah Arendt.[7]

The notion of an anti-statist subject with a commitment to the precepts of 'sacrifice' nourished a wide range of the political thinking that is historically

5. Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), and Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

6. But see notably C. A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

7. Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political (Thinking in Action)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005).

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reconstructed and analysed here. From Tilak to Gandhi and the *Ghadar* (global insurgency) that became integrated with Pan-Islamism during the First World War, and beyond into the founding of Hindutva by its ideologue Vinayak Savarkar, anti-statism remained potent. Eschewing any recuperative temptations to fold the Ghadar into anarchism, communism or nationalism, this book instead deepens the history of the new, anti-statist political subject as militant, mobile, partisan and taking the planet as its horizon. In doing so, this anti-statist political subject promoted globally a new and powerful vocabulary of sovereignty that was premised on secrecy, death, sacrifice and martyrdom. Predicated on the visibility of spectacular violence as communication, it not only caused a breach in normative languages of sovereign power and order, notably those of empire and nation, but created a potent irregularity and interruption. Meanwhile, in direct contrast to its highly visible violent acts, secrecy was in fact the premise of the individualised but fraternal bonds of the global Ghadar. Hindutva then transformed secrecy and fraternity into an anonymous and institutionalised bond.

The twentieth century specifically positioned fraternity, as opposed to liberty or equality, as the 'real manifestation' of the political order.[8] Marked by an appraisal and even the overcoming of the past, the century posited combat, confrontation, war and scission regardless of scale—from the private to the planetary—as its subjective identity. Questions of violence, enmity, civil war and sacrifice, but equally the promise of peace and the ambitions of agonism or struggle, are reconstructed in this book through the political thought of significant but also obscured political actors who founded and instituted the political foundations of India, with enduring ramifications for both contemporary India and the global order.

In a foundational departure from Western political thinking, violence and enmity were understood for the Indian Age only as an aspect of intimacy.[9] Neither the fabricated foreigner nor the invented internal enemy was salient; instead, the foe or enemy was discovered to be the intimate brother and kinsman with a potential for destruction. The conversion of kinsmen into enemies became the central concern of the founding of the political and its potential for antagonism in an entrenched context of deep colonialism. Sovereignty was thus detached from its mooring in the state and deposited in the political subject, including in the latter's profound potential for violence.

8. Alain Badiou, *The Century*, trans. Alberto Toscano (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).
9. Shruti Kapila, 'A History of Violence', *Modern Intellectual History* 7:2 (2010), 437–57.

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The year 1908 was a turning point and point of departure for Indian political thinking. The 'failure' of the mass anticolonial movement of the Swadeshi (Home Rule) era incited deep reflection. Three major and foundational texts were written within a few short years of this watershed point: Tilak's monumental commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, Gandhi's aphoristic *Hind Swaraj* and Savarkar's historical account of the Indian Mutiny and Rebellions of 1857, that in drawing out the above-mentioned themes reconsidered the nature of politics and its horizons. In reconstructing these texts, together with related texts such as Savarkar's political writings, and speeches and essays by Tilak, Gandhi and the global *ghadris* (insurgents), this book investigates the role of time or temporality in relation to political action. It further develops the work of intimacy and enmity in relation to a new historical outlook. History and its writing became the template to consider and convey political ideas. The book further recovers the salience of secrecy and secret societies and publicity for the creation of a new but violent fraternity that was amplified in Hindutva, and particularly in the highly influential historical writings of Savarkar. Crucially, Hindutva here is reconstructed as a theory and creed of violence, rather than as a history of identity.

In the now classic intervention by Ashis Nandy, India's relationship with the West, and particularly the Enlightenment, was uncovered as one of intimate enmity, with an estrangement that marked Indian selfhood.[10] This book, by contrast, posits the opening of the twentieth century as the time that saw a forceful and powerful positioning of a new subject-oriented horizon of the political, and at which enmity was delineated instead in relation to the proximate. Whether it was the commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* that became ascendant, or other related texts, the emphasis of politics, this book shows, was to think beyond and after imperialism. Yet the political was not conceived as a set of idealised interactions predicated upon some normative vision of national or international order; rather it was expressed in terms of the most disruptive violence.

Directed to a future beyond the colonial state, debates on subjective and fraternal horizons represent the coming into being of a world in which everything was possible. Precisely because hostility was understood to stem from identification and intimacy, its power was all the more significant, as it offered potential for its reversibility. Such an intimate enmity thus entailed the dual

10. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

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logics of murder and affinity, that led to wars, but was ultimately equally significant in the creation of fellowship. A violent fraternity was thus born at the limits and ends of colonial covenants, that circumvented, if it did not destroy, liberal ideas of contract, positing instead the ambivalence of intimacy and hostility centred on the anti-statist political subject. The first half of the book elaborates on this in relation to Tilak, Gandhi, the global insurrection of the Ghadar and the making of Hindutva.

The absence of a liberal contract and the making of this new form of fraternity as a basis of political life was, however, notably critiqued and successfully revised by the Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar, in steering discussions towards and uncovering the violent basis of caste, and in unmasking what I have termed the 'dispersed monarchy of the Brahmin'. Taking the Brahmin as the historic basis of sovereignty in India, Ambedkar's redirecting of fraternity was concerned with the conversion of violent antagonism into nonviolent competition between adversaries. In a departure from prevalent receptions of Ambedkar that have portrayed him as a caste leader and a theorist of liberal constitutionalism, equality or justice, this book revises our understanding of him and places him centrally as the arch-thinker of modern sovereignty. Ambedkar was not squeamish on the question of violence, nor did the theme of 'separation' cause him anxiety. The book thus interprets his writings on the founding of Pakistan within the same analytical frame as his writings on caste and his debates with several contemporaries, notably Gandhi. Ambedkar's agonism and struggle thus marked both the triumph of fraternity and the recognition of a new nation—namely Pakistan.

Unlike all the nation-based historical accounts that have obscured the mutually constitutive worlds of divergent views and actors that made the Indian Age, this book centrally reconstructs Muslim political thinking, rather than treating it as discrete. It elaborates on the work of the twentieth century's arguably most influential Muslim thinker, namely Muhammad Iqbal, identifying him as a thinker of republican sovereignty who eschewed the global and long-distance thrust of political Islam for, instead, a proximate and sovereign fraternity. Republican Turkey as opposed to Arabia incited a new, and potent, political vocabulary of Muslim republicanism. Such potency was not simply related to the individual subject for which Iqbal, as a philosopher, is primarily known. Instead, Iqbal articulated a new political meaning and purpose for modern Islam. Like his contemporaries of the Indian Age, he made the intimate and the fraternal the focus of exclusionary impulses. Crucially and tellingly, for Iqbal, such intimate hostilities turned towards his co-religionists.

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The book concludes with the fratricide of 1947, approached as a 'civil war'. The work of intimate violence for the historical transformation of fraternity and the making of brothers into neighbours is centred in this account. The catastrophic violence is here interpreted as political. In creating an internal sovereign order with the demarcation of new borders, the event of violence occasioned the discovery of 'the people' as the basis of the new republic, displacing the political subject of fraternity in favour of the singularity of unitary popular sovereignty. Through a reconstruction of the speeches of Sardar Patel, the symbolic remaking of this violence as republican peace is here seen as pointing to the convertibility of violence into order for the start of a new history.[11] Patel's political ideas also refer to the transformation of fraternity into republican sovereignty, or a search for 'brotherhood' into the rule of 'the people'. This is in sharp contrast to dominant receptions that have approached 'partition violence' as 'memory portraits' located purely in the subjective terrain of the individual or family.

In revising 'partition violence' as civil war, the concern with fraternity, fellowship and life with others was transfigured into the domination of the language and pursuit of sovereignty. This transfiguration was founded in the violence of civil war. The language of brotherhood and fellowship, however fraught, was replaced with the discovery and the demarcation of 'the people' that found its repeated utterance in powerful pronouncements. The arrival of the people as the proper subject of the political in independent India was founded in violence. As the new but dominant political category, the people not only inaugurated and went on to become the basis of the Indian constitution soon after this civil war, but also, crucially, became the foundational principle of the new sovereign power of India.

The second half of this book, in short, addresses the enduring legacy of anti-statist political subjectivity that marked out a violent fraternity for the making of a republican sovereignty. As opposed to the French revolutionary discovery of republican ideals and popular will, there was no automatic replacement of a displaced monarch by 'the people'. In contrast to the French or the American republican revolutions, the immanent and intimate nature of violence, as uncovered in chapters here preceding discussion of this point, led instead to the integration of the 'social' as the basis of republican sovereignty. Further and in this context, the retention of 'sedition' laws in the Indian constitution, that have been resurrected and weaponised in our own times, point

11. Balibar, *Violence and Civility*.

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to the legal suspicion of the political that independent India has enshrined in a bid to curtail the hostile powers of a violent fraternity.

The study of political thought has by and large confined itself to a highly particular canon of thinkers, primarily if not exclusively Western. Their work is zealously and finely attended to with regard to their intentions, the context of their writings, the range of their influences and the nature of the reception of their works. The modern canon of political ideas is dominated by the figure of the scholar-philosopher. By contrast, almost all the figures considered here were prime political actors. The notable exception is Iqbal; yet he too delved, if fitfully, into concrete politics. In transfiguring these figures' role into that of thinkers here, an eclectic set of sources, from letters and pamphlets to speeches, has undergone examination alongside the interpretation of books and texts that they wrote. The book is necessarily 'pointillistic', rather than being an exhaustive or comprehensive synthesis. In relation to the established canon of modern political thought, the book is neither comparative nor derivative. In integrating certain canonical and contemporary insights into the political, it places the Indian Age at the centre of a reworking of the political foundations of the twentieth century.

The focus on some of the most powerful figures of the last century is deliberate. The recent thrust of popular biographies of India's founding figures seeks to amplify or multiply the official canon of national heroes. The concern has been primarily to 'balance', to revise or to reposition the partisan matrix of this period. In particular, two figures from opposite ends of the ideological spectrum have come to the fore. On the one hand, Ambedkar and his foundational role have been receiving hitherto unprecedented attention, and he is increasingly positioned as the antithesis to Gandhi. Patel, on the other hand, has recently received much revisionist attention, not only from political parties but also from writers who increasingly argue for his foundational role to be seen as certainly equal to that of Nehru, if not overwhelming him, and others too.

The book is not especially focused on any one particular figure. Unlike most of those considered here, Gandhi's stature as a philosopher has become increasingly secure, thanks to the recent spate of excellent works that have revised and repositioned him as a thinker.[12] If his reputation as a philosopher has acquired near canonical status, however, his reputation and reception as an icon of justice is today certainly deeply contested. Gandhi's reception as a

12. Faisal Devji, *The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptations of Violence* (London: Hurst and Co., 2012); Ajay Skaria, *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

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philosopher is inversely related today to his reputation as a political actor.[13] Significantly, Ambedkar is meanwhile gaining attention, especially in his role as a thinker of mid-twentieth-century justice and law.

The profound, deep and foundational legacy of political thinking is widely and popularly apprehended in what can thus be termed 'father figurations'. The founding political actors of India remain figures of visceral identification. In contemporary India, it is hard to escape the partisan polemics, political rhetoric and dispositions that now fill opinion pages and are the stuff of popular best-seller accounts, and particularly biographies of political figures of this age. Far from being dead, or even dated, these father figures of the era termed here 'the Indian Age', whether it be Patel or Ambedkar, have returned (that is, if they ever left), haunting and animating a new political landscape. Their returning, re-made figurations serve as landmarks in tracing new lineaments of hostility and violence as they are redrawn in India's competitive democracy in unexpected ways. The political thought of the Indian Age can be presented here, therefore, as instructive in regard both to the last century and to the contemporary political order.

The Indian Age thus refers as shorthand to an orientation of thinking and a horizon of thought on the fundamental question of violence. To be sure, it does not rehearse the now worn-out but viscerally alive cliché of the 'idea of India' penned by Nehru. For Nehru, India's history was a testament to a new theory of nationality that could be based on her much-vaunted and celebrated diversity. India was more than a place: it was also a vision.[14] By contrast, Perry Anderson has sought to replace Nehru's pithily conveyed celebration with 'The Indian Ideology'—an equally pithy term that excoriates the 'idea of India' as supreme and self-serving nationalist myth-making. Essentially, Anderson's highly influential intervention resurrects the old chestnut of the malevolent intentions of India's political elites, coming alive yet again through the thickets of realpolitik.[15] Ideas, and especially nationalism—whether self-serving or magical myth-making—for Anderson only reflect and testify to the bad faith of India's political elites, and, above all, of Gandhi.

In circumventing the registers both of calculating realpolitik and of ready-made if internal histories of an 'ism' or ideology—notably nationalism, or even

13. Pankaj Mishra, 'Gandhi for the Post-Truth Age', *The New Yorker*, 22 October 2018.

14. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1961 [1945]).

15. Perry Anderson, *The Indian Ideology* (Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2012).

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the state as the naturalised modern pre-eminent actor—this book is instead concerned with the paradigm of the political. It demonstrates the constitution of the political through the remaking of concepts over and above fidelity to any received ideology. This remaking of foundational concepts from the inside out can only be ignored at our peril.

India, indeed, conjures an idea, and is thus both a place and horizon of vision. The Indian Age here refers not to the civilisational grandeur envisioned by Nehru, but rather to the historical epoch of a new political thinking. Its ambitions were concerned with the creation of political norms that repeatedly returned to the essential question of violence. The Indian Age points to the historical, and to the importance of India as generative of political ideas that were instructive for the global twentieth century. As a historical time, orientation and field of thinking, this era was highly consequential for the political foundations of what was to become the world's largest democratic republic. In capturing the innovations of this era as it presents India as the generative site of political ideas, this book resists the temptation to offer a manifesto or an instruction manual for scholarship.[16] In a related way, it also resists the urge to referee the ongoing partisan rise and fall of fatherly reputations in current Indian political polemics.

Is India potentially the new Europe? To ask this is to ask whether the political ideas and innovations of the Indian Age do not contain a new, if unacknowledged, universal grammar. Although Europe, as a place but above all as a name conveying a set of norms, has remained the (contested) habitus for modern conceptual political vocabularies, is it not rather India that signals the political conditions of our own global age? Does the political thinking of the Indian Age offer insights, or even a historical precedent? This book is an open invitation and provocation to consider the possibility. The power of intimacy as a condition of enmity and the resurrection of sovereignty have become compelling in our new century. The book above all presents India as generative of political ideas—even if, or perhaps precisely because, this world-transforming era was made not by self-identified philosophers, but by some of the most influential of political actors.

16. But see Shruti Kapila, 'Global Intellectual History and the Indian Political', in Darrin McMahon and Samuel Moyn (eds.), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 253–74.

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INDEX

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