
The Quest for Urban existence: Strikes, Popular Mobilisations and the Birth of Girangaon in the Post First World War Colonial Bombay

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Abstract (in French and/or English)

The end of the First World War marked a watershed moment, which ushered in an era of unprecedented and sustained visibility of labour on the urban political scene. Post-war Bombay was rocked by a wave of strikes by different sections of the labouring classes, which even after half a century of industrialization remained largely migrant. This coincided with the Rowallat Satyagrah, non-cooperation and Khilafat agitation, and both currents of popular mobilisation at times blended into each other. The largely migrant workforce of Bombay was one of the prominent actors on this stage. With the gatherings of thousands of workers belonging to diverse socio-religious and regional backgrounds on the street and maidans of Bombay, urban spaces were reclaimed and turned into sites of popular protest. This paper examines the extent to which the political mobilization of the migrant workforce reconfigured the urban space of colonial Bombay. It will argue that, largely through its participation into the popular upsurges in the post war Bombay, the largely migrant working population of Bombay not only tried to assert their presence on the social and political landscape of Bombay but contributed to define the unique socio-political culture of Bombay's mill district, popularly known as *Girangaon*.

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