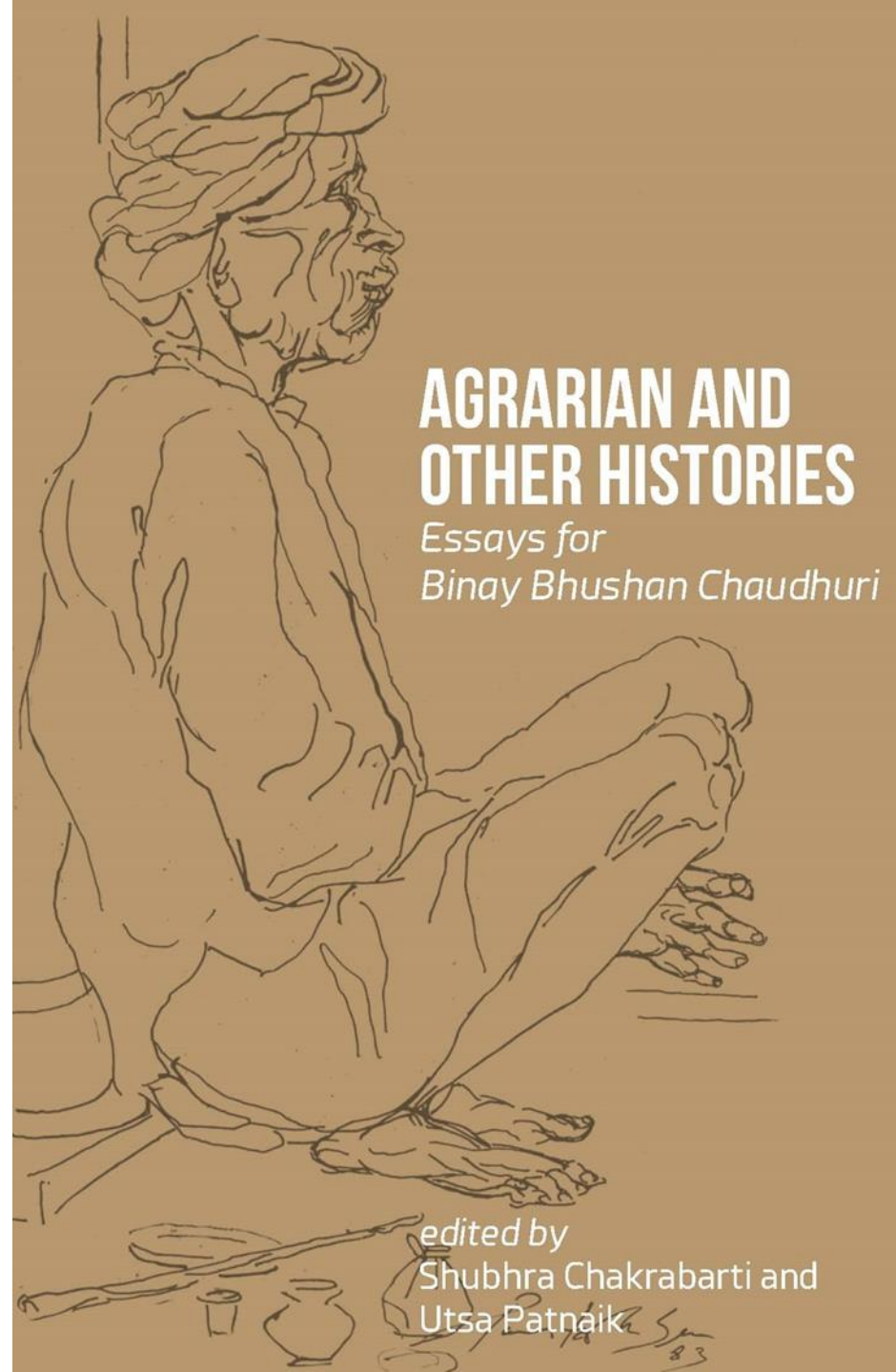


Does Britain owe reparations to
India / her former colonies?

• Enormous Scale of Extraction

- Britain siphoned an estimated **£9.18 trillion (1765–1938)** via “drain of wealth”, underscoring the **vast financial basis for reparations** (Patnaik 2017, p. 311)
- Indian exporters were paid from their own tax revenues (“**Home Charges**”) → reparations must account for both principal and interest on coerced transfers
- India’s forex financed British deficits and capital exports (railways, factories, US infrastructure) → reparations should reflect the downstream benefits Britain derived
- Keynes-influenced budgetary policies deepened extraction and contributed to the Bengal famine’s human toll → **reparations ought to include human and opportunity costs**
- full restoration may be beyond Britain’s current wealth, but collective industrialized-nation repayments are feasible
- reparations should combine financial transfers (adjusted for inflation), policy reforms (debt relief, trade equity), and investments in India’s technological and infrastructural advancement



- Britain may not be rich enough (**anymore? why not actually?**) to repay even a fraction of what it extracted from India
- Besides, such repayment could never compensate for the loss of life or the frustration of economic and technological development that accompanied this extraction/exploitation
- But it is “practicable for the industrial nations as a whole to repay the transfers which they took” provided that their scholars “come to terms with the real drivers and the real history of imperialism” (Patnaik 2017, p. 312)
- in ***A Theory of Imperialism (2016)*** Patnaik argues
 - metropolitan capitalism requires commodities that cannot be produced in temperate zones, imperialism emerges as the imposition of income deflation (declining wages relative to prices) on the people of the peripheries, “in order to squeeze out larger and larger supplies of a range of commodities required in the metropolis, without bringing into play the problem of increasing supply price that would threaten the value of money [i.e., purchasing power] in the metropolis” (p. 145)
 - the historical ‘drain’ of wealth has altered the economic trajectories taken by Britain and India
 - the continuity of imperialism in the post-colonial period where it operates through policies that reduce purchasing power (especially but not exclusively in the Global South) by cutting government expenditure, or by disproportionately taxing non-capitalist classes as opposed to transnational corporations and wealthy elites

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833

- formally freed 800,000 Africans who were then the legal property of Britain's slave owners
- the same act contained a provision for the **financial compensation of the owners of those slaves, by the British taxpayer**, for the loss of their "property"
- the compensation commission was the government body established to evaluate the claims of the slave owners and administer the distribution of the £20m the government had set aside to pay them off
 - **that sum represented 40% of the total government expenditure for 1834** - the modern equivalent of between £16bn and £17bn
 - the largest bailout in British history until the bailout of the banks in 2009
 - the slaves received nothing – instead, under another clause of the act they were compelled to provide 45 hours of unpaid labour each week for their former masters ("apprenticeship system") , for a further four years after their supposed liberation: in effect, the enslaved paid part of the bill for their own manumission
- the man who received the most money from the state was John Gladstone, the father of Victorian prime minister William Ewart Gladstone
 - he was paid £106,769 in compensation for the 2,508 slaves he owned across nine plantations, the modern equivalent of about **£80m**

Final remarks

- the idea of such a course is...
 - to **provide an overview** of key topics, issues and crises in the territories of the former British Raj – the “Jewel in the Crown” of the British Empire
 - to **offer insights into more “specialized” areas** within English and American Studies
- as always, there are pros and cons



The Koh-i-Noor, one of the largest cut diamonds in the world (105.6 carats), set in the Crown of Queen Elizabeth. The diamond originated in the Kollur mine in present day Andhra Pradesh, India.

LV-Nr.

The Israel/Palestine Conflict in British Discourse, 4CP

Wochentag/Uhrzeit

2 st. mo 10-12

Veranstaltungskommentar

Discourse, Stuart Hall writes, quoting Foucault, is ““a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment”” (29). This seminar examines how the Israel/Palestine conflict is constructed in British public and political discourses from the 1840s to the present, with comparative excursions to other national contexts (e.g., Israel/Palestine, the US, Ireland, South Africa, Germany). Given its long-standing involvement as one of the main actors, Britain will be central to our investigation of key historical moments, including the emergence of Christian Zionism in 1840s Britain; the Balfour Declaration (1917); the 1936–39 Arab Revolt (Great Palestinian Revolt); the King David Hotel bombing (1946); the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (the Nakba or War of Independence); the Suez Crisis (1956); the Six-Day War (1967); the so-called “peace process” (Camp David, Madrid, Oslo, etc.); the First and Second Intifadas; and ongoing debates through to the present. By analyzing how key episodes were named, framed, and contested, we will critically assess shifting narratives and identify “rules” that govern language, representation, and power relations in British public culture – deepening our understanding of how these processes shape perceptions, solidarities, and policies in one of the world’s most enduring conflicts.