



India's First Dictatorship

The Emergency, 1975-77

CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT & PRATINAV ANIL

In June 1975 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed a state of emergency, resulting in a 21-month suspension of democracy. Jaffrelot and Anil explore this black page in India's history, a constitutional dictatorship of unequal impact, with South India largely spared thanks to the resilience of Indian federalism.

India's First Dictatorship focuses on Mrs Gandhi and her son, Sanjay, who was largely responsible for the mass sterilisation programmes and deportation of urban slum-dwellers. However, it equally exposes the facilitation of authoritarian rule by Congressmen, Communists, trade unions, businessmen and the urban middle class, as well as the complacency of the judiciary and media. While opposition leaders eventually closed ranks in jail, many of them—especially in the RSS—tried to collaborate with the new regime. Those who resisted the Emergency, in the media or on the streets, were few in number.

This episode was an acid test for India's political culture. While a tiny minority of citizens fought for democracy during the Emergency, in large numbers the people bowed to the strong woman in power, even worshipped her. Equally importantly, Hindu nationalists were endowed with a new legitimacy. Yet, the Emergency was neither a parenthesis, nor so much a turning point but a concentrate of a style of rule that is very much alive today.

December 2020 | Hardback | 600pp | 9781787384026 | £45

Get 35% off with the code **DICTATORSHIP35** here: <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/indias-first-dictatorship/>

'Jaffrelot and Anil present a comprehensive account of the suspension of formal democracy in India. A sharp analytical assessment of the Emergency, it is bold, original and well-researched. This promises to be a landmark work in Indian politics.'

— Uday Chandra, Assistant Professor of Government, Georgetown University, Qatar, and co-editor of *Staking Claims: The Politics of Social Movements in Contemporary Rural India*

Christophe Jaffrelot is Research Director at CNRS, Sciences Po and Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at the King's India Institute. Hurst has published nine of his books, most recently the co-edited *Majoritarian State*.

Pratinav Anil, a Clarendon scholar, is a DPhil candidate at St John's College, University of Oxford.