

## EDITORIAL

It has always been a delight, and a lot of learning, when I have been called upon to edit issues of one or the other of the Institute's journals, Summerhill: IAS Review and Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities. Part of the reason for this is my experience of the Institute as a place of boundless and untrammelled study and research as a Fellow during a two-year stint 2016-18. The collegial circle of Fellows, the weekly Thursday seminars for discussion of our work, the rich library, the glorious views of the snow-clad peaks from our study, the majestic Viceregal Lodge with its wispy wisteria where the Institute is housed, the numerous informal gatherings in our pretty houses on the top of various hills where we discussed everything under the sun threadbare, and the deliciously cool and moist air of Shimla, combined to produce one of the best environments for the pursuits of the mind. Then of course there is the patient perseverance of the Institute, through some of its loyal administrators, to pursue pending issues until they get published, in this case a 'back' issue from the summer of 2021 getting published now in the summer of 2023. Even in well-run places, like the Institute, sometimes circumstances beyond control delay publication of certain issues. I am grateful to Prem Chand ji, Librarian and Publication Officer, and Rajesh ji, whose efforts have made sure this volume is in our hands today.

This brings me to the particular cast of this volume/issue, which has had a chequered journey. Through the first collection handed over to me from the earlier Editor, to the present anthology that I have put together, many essays have fallen away while others have unexpectedly bloomed into the volume. Even if there is no overall theme, the essays display the range of scholarship, of mostly young scholars, that the Institute encourages and promotes.

The volume opens with an interview with T. K. V. Subramanian, the doyen of 'Peninsular History' at the University of Delhi for thirty years. TKV, as he is popularly called, has touched the lives and scholarship of generations of students through his robust academic mentoring and effervescent personality. The range of his academic and administrative work in higher education, whether as HOD Department of History, DU (2001-2004); Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, DU (2001-2003); Principal Investigator, EurIndia

Project, EU-DU (2004-2007); Member Secretary, ICHR (1998-1999); and as significant functionary in many positions with MHRD, UGC and Indian History Congress, is immense. But more importantly, his contribution towards reconceptualizing peninsular history, nay by that token South Asian history, and the subject of history in general, reflected in numerous publications, lectures, talks, etc., and of course his interaction with students, is truly remarkable. Formal retirement from his position in DU has not dimmed his enthusiasm towards research; and he is very excited about his recent turn towards the history of music. When I approached him to look back on his academic journey and tell me something about his future research plans, (unfairly) in 300 words per question (!), he happily took on the task despite the shortage of time, as is his characteristic fashion. I was thrilled to be transported back to TKV's lively yet profoundly immersive lectures during my post-graduate days at DU. In this interview, TKV shares his insights on many things of critical significance to us today.

The main part of the journal is divided in two sections, one for long essays and one for short ones. In the first section, in her deeply moving piece "Mahatma Gandhi and Islam: A Relation Defined by Affinity, Fascination, Crisis and Rupture", Gita Dharampal prides open Gandhi's writings and politics to "explore his enigmatic relationship with Islam". In "Queer Articulation of Self: Indian *Hijra* Autobiographies", Kuhu Chanana Sharma examines the fashioning of subjectivities and selfhoods across a spectrum of *Hijra* autobiographies and an anthology, laying bare expressions that constitute and are in turn shaped by sensibilities and worlds that overflow the strictures of gender and sexual identification. By studying select Southist Syrian Christian folk songs, Ann Susan Aleyas, in "Tracing Christian *Margam* in Malabar: A Study of Select Southist Christian Folklore", argues for a reconceptualization of the history of Malabar Christianity at the intersections of culture and commerce. Monika Saxena undertakes a survey of Puranic Studies in "Antiquarian Origins, Classification, Form and Chronology of the *Puranas*" to help us understand the historical nature and popularity of *Purana* literature. Finally, in the last long essay, "Ecological Disaster in India's Northeast Resource Frontier: Baghjan Natural Gas Well Explosion, Environmental Tragedy and People's Protest in Eastern Assam", Dilip Gogoi and Kasmita Bora investigate an ecological disaster in eastern Assam to foreground the "contested dynamics" of the Northeast as a "resource frontier", adding another dimension to the study of this critical region's location in the nation.

The short essays are leads and provocations for further thinking of traces that carry the mystery of experiences we have ignored and niggling doubts that insistently push themselves out into view. In her piece “In His Service, For Her Health: Women Missionary Doctors in Colonial India”, Disha Ray follows the life of an English woman doctor at a women’s hospital in Delhi to explore “the relationship between medicine, gender and colonialism” in order to understand both regular structures of power as well as unexpected agency. Suchintan Das follows exceptional structures of power and almost invisible resistance when, in “Next time when you feel compelled to make a confession, please, speak for yourself only and not for me without asking me. I am not a Nazi, definitely not!”: A Vignette on Gendering German Internment in Second World War India”, he looks at the “different story” of a German woman held in confinement in India during the 2nd World War through her letter. In “Who can Speak, and Write, for Whom? : Meditations on the Question of Voice in History”, I ask a few uncomfortable questions about identitarianism and argue against a politics of revenge by revisiting questions of the self and the other. Finally, in the reviews for the issue, Ratnakar Tripathy examines Jonardon Ganeri’s attempt to bring to light a hitherto unstudied philosophical efflorescence in South Asia in *The Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India, 1450-1700*; and Tathagata Dutta tells us about Radhika Singha's effort to study the history of labour in the Great War from a non-Eurocentric perspective in her book *The Coolie’s Great War: Indian Labour in a Global Conflict, 1914-1921*.

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