

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON TEACHING HISTORY

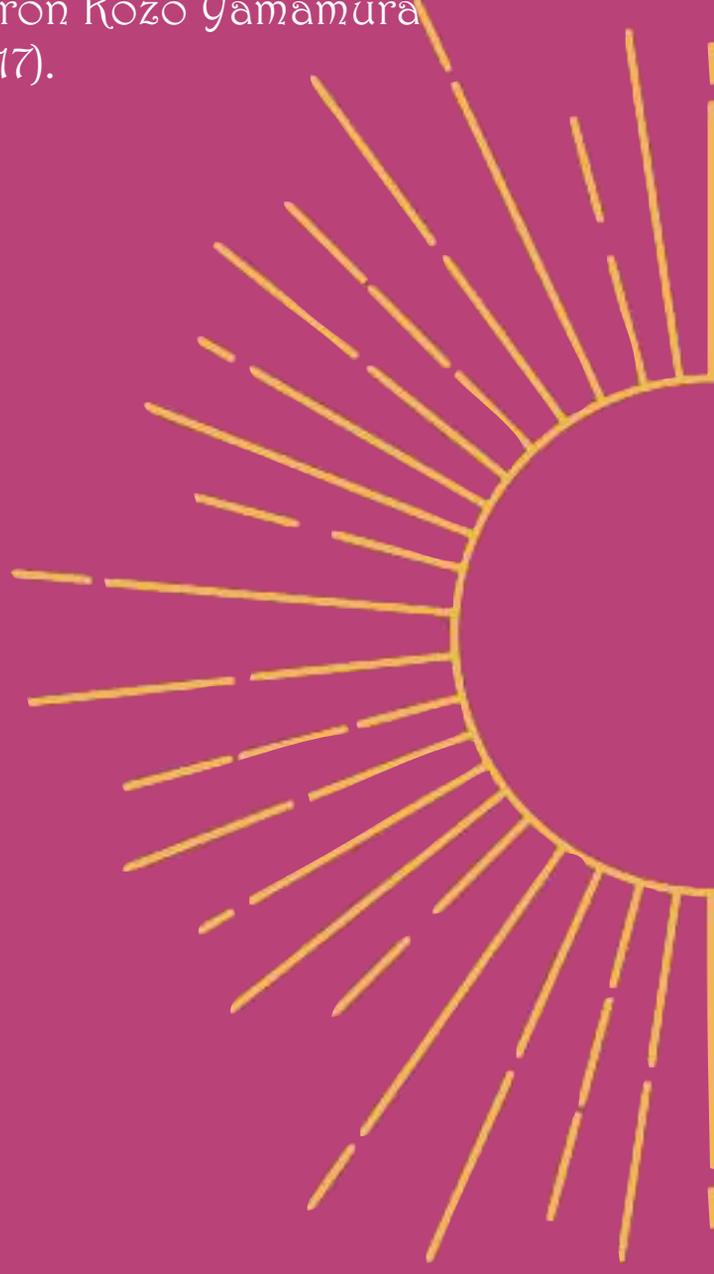
THE IDEA

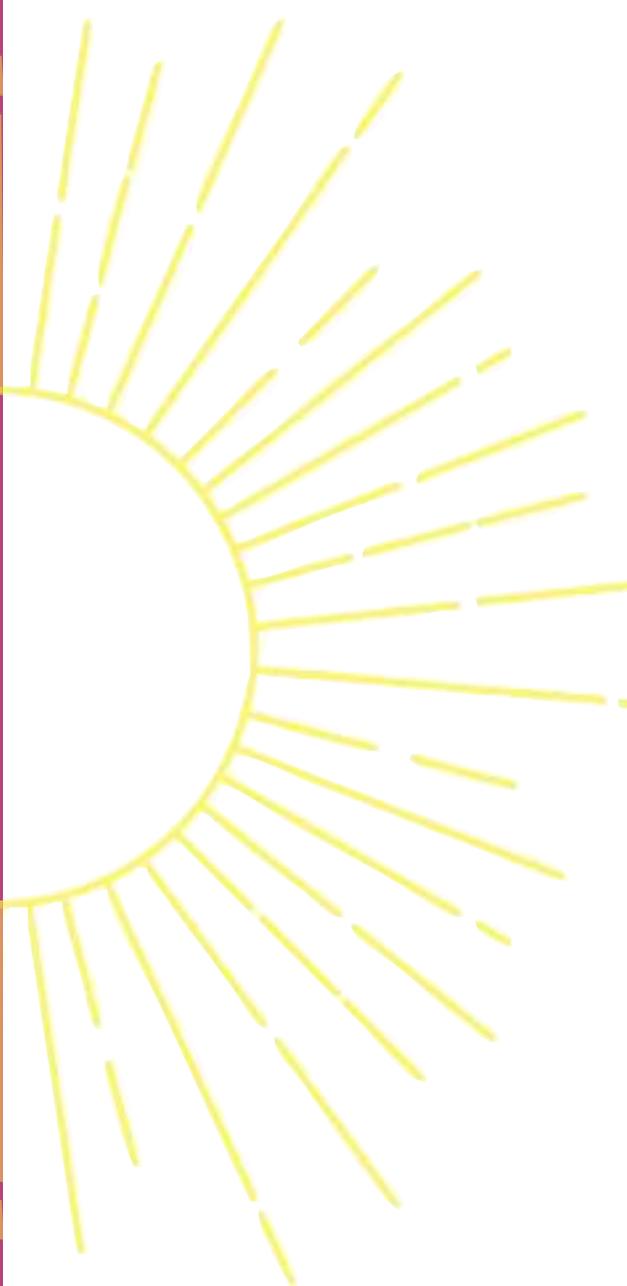
of

INDIA



This conference is dedicated to the memory of
PeaceWorks friend and patron Kozo Yamamura
(1934 - 2017).





In 2015, at the annual conference that launched the History for Peace project, Dr Barbara Christophe delivered a powerful keynote address that has since served as a prism, refracting ideas that strengthen our objectives. Speaking about memory, history and history textbooks and the ambivalence inherent in these, she elaborated on the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to the use of history teaching as a resource for reconciliation and thus for 'teaching history for peace'.

Traditionally, history has been defined as the study of the past as it is recorded in documents. However, in recent years, Memory Studies has become an integral part of the historiographical landscape. Urvashi Butalia, also speaking at the same conference, discussed how marginalised histories emerge when we record oral narratives. Thus, textual, visual and oral representations of the past have gradually gained equal importance among historians as source and evidence.

This year, as we complete 70 years of Independence, the History for Peace annual conference looks at India's engagement or its lack thereof with institutionalised, collective and individual histories that make up the 'Idea of India'.

The Idea of India



Monday,
14 August
2017

In Conversation:
Romila Thapar
and
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
[6.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.]

Satyajit Ray Auditorium, ICCR,
9A, Ho Chi Minh Sarani, Calcutta 700 071



Romila Thapar is an Indian historian whose principal area of study is ancient India. Author of several books, including *Early India, History and Beyond, The Past as Present*, she is currently Professor Emerita, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is University Professor in the Humanities, Columbia University, New York, and is author of *The Post-Colonial Critic, Death of a Discipline, Nationalism and the Imagination*, among others.

Tuesday, 15 August 2017

Registration

[10.15 a.m.-10.45 a.m.]

Opening remarks

Naveen Kishore, Managing Trustee, The Seagull Foundation for the Arts

[10.45 a.m.- 11 a.m.]

In Conversation:

Romila Thapar and educators from schools.

[11 a.m. to 1 p.m.]

Tina Servaia has taught for twenty years at various school and college levels and currently teaches History and Theory of Knowledge in the A'Level and IB curricula at the Calcutta International School, where she strives to use a variety of techniques to make students independent thinkers. She has co-authored History and Civics Textbooks for classes 6 - 8.

Amita Prasad has over 30 years of experience in teaching and administration at various schools in Kolkata. She is the co-author of history and civics textbooks for Classes 3 to 8 published by Oxford University Press, and is Dean, Research and Development, The Heritage School, Kolkata.

Alok Mathur has been a teacher for over 35 years in the Krishnamurti Foundation Schools and served as an administrator at the Rishi Valley School. He is currently Head, Teacher Education, Rishi Valley School, Andhra Pradesh.

1 p.m. - 1.30 p.m. Lunch

History Textbooks and The Idea of India

PRESENTATIONS

Krishna Kumar, Hari Vasudevan, Shireen Maswood and Manish Jain

Followed by a discussion among the presenters and a Q&A session with the audience

[1.30 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.]

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Krishna Kumar is Honorary Professor of Education, Punjab University. For most of his career, he served the Central Institute of Education, Delhi University. Between 2004 and 2010, he was Director of NCERT. His books include *Politics of Education in Colonial India*, *Prejudice and Pride* (a study of history textbooks in India and Pakistan), *Battle for Peace*, *A Pedagogue's Romance*, and *Education, Conflict and Peace*. A Padma Shri awardee, he also has an Honorary DLitt from the Institute of Education, University of London.

Hari Vasudevan is Professor, University of Calcutta, and former Chairman, Syllabus Committees and Textbook Development Committees for Social Sciences, NCERT.

Manish Jain is Assistant Professor, School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Before joining AUD, he taught at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and has a decade-long experience as a schoolteacher. His teaching and research interests lie at the intersections of history, politics and sociology of education. His doctoral research was a comparative study of citizenship and civics curriculum in India and Canada. He has been awarded various fellowships for his research on textbooks including the Otto Bennemann Grant for Innovative Methodological Approaches in International Textbook Research at Georg Eckert Institute, Braunschweig (Germany).

Shireen Maswood is Associate Professor, Dept of History, University of Calcutta and Member, Expert Committee on School Education and Syllabus Committee (History), WB School Education Dept.



3.30 p.m. - 3.50 p.m. Coffee Break

Discussion with the audience,
following the themes of the afternoon presentation

Facilitated by Anjum Katyal And Meena Megha Malhotra.

Anjum Katyal is an editor, translator and writer with a background in education. She is the author of *Habib Tanvir: Towards an Inclusive Theatre* and *Badal Sircar: Towards a Theatre of Conscience*. She also writes poetry and sings the blues.

Meena Megha Malhotra is Director, PeaceWorks—An initiative of The Seagull Foundation for the Arts

[3.50 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.]

Dealing with the Past in History Education

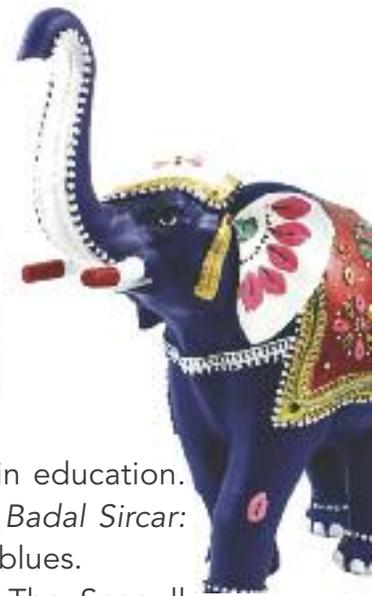
PRESENTATION

a EUROCLIO project

[4.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.]

This project involves a core group from eight regions across the world who experience, through study visits, what history education can contribute to conflict prevention and transnational justice, and identify ways to overcome the practical challenges related to dealing with conflicting memories and narratives, with emotional and difficult histories, with uncertainties and sensitivities.

This presentation will focus on study visits conducted in South Africa and Colombia.



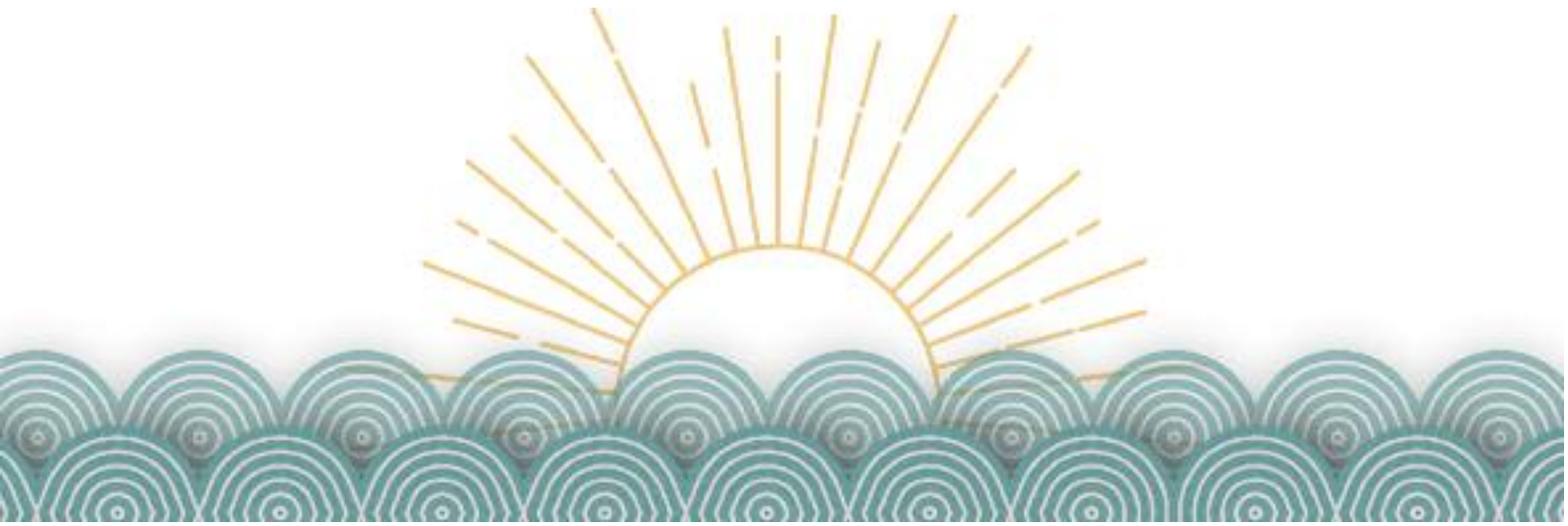


Wednesday, 16 August 2017

Much of our knowledge of the past that is not 'institutionalised' comes from sources outside the educational institutions—from collective and individual memories, from the arts, from conventional as well as social media.

This year's conference also seeks to explore how history is narrated (texts and the arts), memories are created and events are remembered.

Showcasing a few well-researched art projects, the conference will consider the role of art as a function of preserving memory.



Opening remarks

[9.30 a.m.]

The Un-equivalence of Violence: The Communal Question in Janam's Plays

ILLUSTRATED TALK

Sudhanva Deshpande

[9.45 a.m. - 11. 15 a.m.]



From *Hatyare* (1979, about the communal riots in Aligarh) to *Achchhe Din* (2016, on Narendra Modi's rule), the Delhi-based street-theatre group Jana Natya Manch (Janam) has done a large number of plays on the issue of communalism. This talk will trace the evolution of the communal question with examples from Janam's plays. The presentation will focus on the difficulties and challenges of portraying situations of asymmetrical violence.

Sudhanva Deshpande joined Jana Natya Manch in 1987, motivated and inspired by Safdar Hashmi. Over the past three decades, he has been involved in the creation and direction of dozens of street, proscenium and other performances. As an actor, he has over 2,000 performances to his credit. He has led workshops all over the country, and in Palestine, South Africa, and in several countries of Europe and North America. He has co-directed two films on Habib Tanvir and Naya Theatre, and has edited two volumes of essays on theatre and politics. He is involved in the running of Studio Safdar and the May Day Bookstore in New Delhi, and works as editor at LeftWord Books.

11.15 a.m. - 11.30- a.m. Coffee break





How to draw histories? Art as Method

Presentation

T. Sanathanan

[11.30 a.m.- 1 p.m.]



The Sri Lankan civil war that came to a violent end in 2009 was, in a way, a product of ideological fix and the methodological limitation of the written history of the island. In the post-armed-conflict context, historical narratives of dominance have been further strengthened by monumentalization/ memorialization projects of military victory. In the process of narrating this victory, the history of civilians who carried the burden of the war has been completely erased.

This presentation discusses four art projects created by T. Sanathanan since 2004: 'History of Histories' (2004), 'Imag(in)ing Home' (2009), 'The Incomplete Thombu' (2011) and 'The Cabinet of Resistance' (2016) that dealt with the memory of the civilians caught in the civil war. These works employed art as a tool of collecting, archiving and narrating the experience of war through ordinary and mundane material.

T. Sanathanan is a visual artist living and working in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. His work has been exhibited widely in Sri Lanka and at the Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Museum of Ethnology, Vienna; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; Asian Art Archive, Hong Kong; Kochi Art Biennial; and elsewhere. His artist-book projects include *The One-Year Drawing Project*, *The Incomplete Thombu* and *A-Z of Conflict* (forthcoming). He is currently Senior Lecturer, Art History, Department of Fine Arts, Jaffna University, and co-funder of the Sri Lankan Archive for Contemporary Art, Architecture and Design.



1 p.m.- 1.30 p.m. Lunch



The Camera as Witness

ILLUSTRATED TALKS

Joy LK Pachuau, Ryan Lobo

[2 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.]

Visualizing Mizo History through Photographs: Joy Pachuau

A talk that will address the importance of looking at photographs as a source in studying Mizo history; investigating the larger question of photographs as a historical source; and considering the implications of the lack of visual representations of the Mizos. One of the most important consequences of Joy Pachuau's project has been the gathering of photographs from personal collections and family albums, thereby creating a vast resource of 'local self-representations' rather than a mere colonial repertoire of photographs, a common scenario in North-East India. This talk will also try and analyse the nature of photographs from three sources—colonial, missionary and the local populace, suggesting that a particular narrative embodies each category of images.

A Million Mutinies and Udanta: Ryan Lobo

As the saying goes, 'History flows in our blood and is not written in our books'. For many in once- 'remote' areas of India, regional talent shows and the Internet have become stages for the sharing of performance and stories. *A Million Mutinies* is a series of photographs of the Bir Khalsa group, a semi-rural troupe



of performers at a 'talent show' in a small Indian city. The captions are from Sikh mythology and the words of the performers themselves. *Udanta* is an attempt at a contemporary revelation of our times, an exploration of a 'wounded' civilization grappling with its past and attempting to create a future, using photographs of symbols and museum visitors, conscious of the fact that the iceberg floats on, relentless and regardless. The captions are therefore taken from mythology, as myth is an image in terms of which we try to make sense of the world, more potent than mere history.

Joy LK Pachau is Professor, History, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has been working on the history of North-East India with a focus on the history of identity formations, and her recent publications include *Being Mizo: Identity and Belonging in Northeast India*, *The Camera as Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India* (with Willem van Schendel) and *Christianity in Indian History: Issues of Culture, Power and Knowledge* (co-edited, with P. Malekandathil and Tanika Sarkar).

Ryan Lobo is a filmmaker, writer and photographer who has produced and shot more than 80 documentaries on subjects ranging from the Afghan drug trade, Papua New Guinean tribal rites to King Cobras and various photography and film projects for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and C&A Foundation. His films have aired on the National Geographic Channel, Animal Planet, OWN and PBS, among other networks. A TED speaker, Lobo has co-produced the 2011 Sundance Film Festival award-winning film, *The Redemption of General Butt Naked*. Lobo owns Mad Monitor Productions, a film- and photo-production company based in Bangalore and is author of *Mr Iyer Goes to War*.

3.30 p.m. - 3.50 p.m. Coffee break

Biography as History

PRESENTATION

Jerry Pinto

[3.50 p.m. - 5.15 p.m.]

How do we understand history? Is it the story of the doings of kings and parliaments? Or is it the histoire, the story of the doings of ordinary mortals? And how ordinary can that ordinary be? Jerry Pinto will talk about the use of Dalit biographies in creating a more balanced picture of our histories.

Jerry Pinto is a poet, award-winning novelist and translator who lives in Mumbai. His translations include Daya Pawar's *Baluta*, reputed to be the first Dalit autobiography in Marathi; Mallika Amar Sheikh's *I Want to Destroy Myself*, the memoir of a poet who was married to Namdeo Dhasal, the founder of the Dalit Panther movement; and Vandana Mishra's *I, the Salt Doll*, the autobiography of a Konkani-speaking woman who went on to become a star of the Gujarati and Marwari stages. Currently he is at work on translations of Mang activist Eknath Awad's *Strike a Blow to Change the World* and Swadesh Deepak's *I Have Not Seen Mandu*.



Thursday, 17 August 2017

'Knowledge' of the past comes easy in the highly technological, connected world we live in today—often without scholarly intervention. The concepts are not very different from what we know as traditional historical sources. Diaries have become blogs, letters and postcards have become emails, print newspapers have virtual presence that allows them to send out byte-sized news items round the clock through social media. And all of this data is stored for recall at a touch of our fingertips.

At this conference, we will aim to make an academic enquiry into the possibility or viability of social-media data as primary/secondary sources for historians. What are the challenges?



India in the Ruins of the Present

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Vijay Prashad

[9.30 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.]

Vijay Prashad is George and Martha Kellner Chair in South Asian History and Professor, International Studies, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. He is the author of more than 20 books, including *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South* and *No Free Left: The Future of Indian Communism*. A regular contributor to *Frontline* and the *Hindu* (India), *BirGün* (Turkey) and *Alternet* (USA), he is Chief Editor, LeftWord Books.

10.30 a.m. - 10.45 a.m. Coffee break

Social Media and the Idea of India

PRESENTATION

Radhika Bordia

[10.45 a.m. - 11.15 a.m.]

A look at the impact of social media—particularly Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp—being our 'go to' source for news about current events.

A television journalist for more than 20 years, Radhika Bordia is Senior Features Editor, NDTV. She has worked on several docu-style series, such as 24 Hours, Witness and India Matters, each of which has looked at issues through the combined lenses of current affairs and culture.



Social Media and The Idea of India

STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

Suhasini Das Goptu, Student, Class XII, Modern High School for Girls

Nikhat Khatoon, Student, Class XII, Future Hope Foundation

Shrijit Dasgupta, Student, Class XII, Calcutta International School

Followed by a discussion on the importance of media literacy

Moderated by Gulan Kripalani

[11.15 a.m. - 12 p.m.]

Gulan Kripalani, Transformational Leadership Development facilitator and Development Communications professional and member, Advisory Board, History for Peace.

Social Media as Primary Source for Future Historians

PRESENTATION

Ed Summers

[12 p.m. - 1 p.m.]

Ed Summers is Lead Developer, Humanities, Maryland Institute of Technology in the Humanities (USA). He has helped create the Twitter archiving application that has archived close to 500 billion tweets at the Library of Congress and the Chronicling of America project on the digitization of newspapers. Summers likes to use experiments to learn about the Web and digital curation.

1 p.m.~ 2 p.m. Lunch

The Idea of India, the Conference

CONFERENCE REVIEW

Abeer Gupta

[2 p.m. - 3 p.m.]

A summing up of the key issues and concerns discussed over the days of the conference.

Abeer Gupta is Assistant Professor, School of Design, Ambedkar University, Delhi, and Member, Advisory Board, History for Peace.

3 p.m. - 3.15 p.m. Coffee break

In Conclusion: The Idea of India

Ravish Kumar

[3.15 p.m. - 4.45 p.m.]

Ravish Kumar has been in the television industry for more than 20 years. He is a news anchor, columnist, blogger, fiction writer and storyteller. He writes more than 2,000 words every day and also publishes his own podcast—Radio Ravish on SoundCloud. Ravish has received many awards, but returned none.



The Idea of India
An International Conference on Teaching History

15, 16, 17 August 2017
Tollygunge Club
120 Deshapran Sasmal Road, Calcutta 700033



**Peace
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