



Maulana Azad College
8 Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Kolkata, West Bengal 700013

No.33/Eng/MAC/2025

Date:04.04.25

conference.pgeng.mac@gmail.com

Proposed ICSSR-Sponsored International Conference organised by the Postgraduate Department of English, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata in collaboration with the Department of History, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

CALL FOR PAPERS

Di(s)-secting India: Languages, Identities and Power in the Long Nineteenth Century (1835 – 1950)

Tentative Dates: 10 and 11 November 2025

In a previous conference named 'Desiring India' held at a sister institution we focused on the idea of India as imagined by the colonial powers viz. the British and the French in an earlier period. In 1835, the *terminus ad quo* of our present proposed deliberation, Macaulay presented his *Minute on Indian Education* proposing English education for Indians. English was declared the language of Court and Government. With the declaration of the Indian Constitution in 1950 we come to the *terminus ad quem* of the Conference.

The long Nineteenth Century takes us from the pre-1857 to the gradual consolidation of the idea of the Indian Nation rising out of a plural, multi-ethnic and rift-ridden society. Whether it is an 'imagined community' or a palpable flesh-and-blood pool of humanity, the idea of the Nation passed through the inevitable frictions of history. This conference will focus on the efforts of union as well as the inevitable and avoidable fractures among communities, dissecting the idea of India, examining the causes of the sectarian and the communal identities; the identities of the mainstream and the peripheral communities by following the language issues; and emerging identities through linguistic and cultural constructs. Policies of the British and of the Indian states had significant roles to play in constructing the grand narrative of the Nation as opposed to the tribal, the Dalit, the sub-altern who were never blended properly. This grand narrative has sometimes been questioned by the provocative suggestion of 'playing the nation game'. Historiography, therefore, has been standing at the crossroads and has often faced and accommodated counternarratives. The two-nation theory of Jinnah, and the birth of Pakistan are examples of theory and practice in the cauldron of history – demanding out of the historian a more introspective subtle approach. The history of the Nation would entail alternative narratives from the Feminist point of view too, offering a challenge of accommodating a gendered counternarrative.

Whereas the organisers invite and intend to maintain a catholic point of view in accepting papers on all related topics, some of the probable areas to focus on are the following:

- Geographical border drawing
- Linguistic maps and dominance: competition between Persian, Sanskrit and English
- Ethnic statehood
- Religious consolidations
- Literature of aspirations of ethnic identity

- Revision of historiography
- Renaissance or a false paradigm?
- From Sepoy to Soldier: a military history of the Indian army and the INA
- Freedom revisited: theories of freedom by the English, the French and the Indians
- Enumeration of key-texts: Macaulay's *Minutes*
- The concept of nationality in the Indian context: Two nations theory and playing the nation game
- Through the text darkly: Texts and subtexts in literature, arts, music in defining the 'Indian' – Satinath Bhaduri's *Jagari*, Sharatchandra's *Pather Dabi*, Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora*, Pijush Basu's *Sabyasachi*, Attenborough's *Gandhi*.
- Tribal Language Movements and Dalit Identity Formations
- Feminism and Linguistic Chauvinism in the Indian Context
- Domesticity and Nationalism

Steering Committee:

Convenor of the International Conference: Dr Niranjan Goswami, Associate Professor and Head of the Department, Postgraduate Department of English, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Joint Convenor: Sri Ashoke Kumar Mandal, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of History, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Joint Convenor: Dr Nilanjana Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Treasurer: Sm. Resha Barman, Associate Professor, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Sri Parimal Bhattacharya, Associate Professor, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Sm. Saranya Mukherjee, Assistant Professor, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Sri Somraj Banerjee, Assistant Professor, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Dr. Anjan Saha, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Dr. Saika Hossain, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Sri Aritra Rudra, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Member: Sri Arunangsha Maity, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Maulana Azad College, Kolkata

Confirmed Plenary Speakers:

Prof. Supriya Chaudhuri, Prof. Emerita, Department of English, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Prof. Himadri Sankar Bandyopadhyay, Former Guru Nanak Chair Professor of Indian History, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Dr. John Hutnyk, Associate Professor, Global Inquiries and Social Theory Research

Group, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Prof. Anna Becker, Department for Philosophy and History of Ideas, School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Jens Chr Skous Vej 7, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark

Prof. Maroona Murmu, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

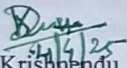
Dr. Jyoti Mohan, Historian, Independent Researcher, previously taught at the University of Maryland and Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland, the United States

Dr. Aparna Bandyopadhyay, Associate Professor, Department of History, Diamond Harbour Women's University, Sarisha, West Bengal

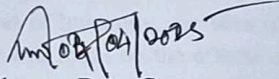
Please send abstracts of 300 to 350 words to conference.pgeng.mac@gmail.com within **30 April 2025**.

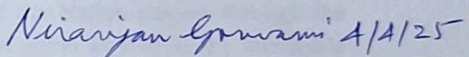
Some Possible Sources:

- V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*
- Benjamin Zacharia, *Playing the Nation Game*
- Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Nationalist Movement in India A Reader*
- Shashi Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*
- William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy*
- Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Three Interpretations of Indian Nationalism' in B.R. Nanda ed. *Essays in Modern Indian History*
- Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*
- R.J. Moore, *The Crisis of Indian Unity, 1917-1940*.
- Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*
- Partha Chatterjee, *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*
- Tanika Sarkar, *Rebels, Wives, Saints*


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