

# **Asian Association of World Historians (AAWH)**

## **Fifth International Conference**

### **Call for Papers and Panels**

The Fifth “Asian Association of World Historians” International Conference will be held at **Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi on 12-13 October 2022**. We cordially invite scholars from Asia and the world to participate in this conference to explore related issues in world history.

The conference will be **in hybrid mode, physical as well as online**, given the uncertainties due to the Covid situation. The precise modalities will be announced closer to the event.

### **Conference Goals and General Theme:**

#### **Asia and the Globe: Connecting the Past with the Present**

The assumption underpinning this conference is of ‘connected’ histories, an assumption that histories of different parts of the world are deeply connected to each other. Keeping this connectedness in mind the overall perspective of the conference will be to examine various aspects of Asian and World history, from the Ancient to the Contemporary period, seeing how they shaped the course of events in each other. This will enable a deeper understanding of both Asian and Global history and also throw light on the challenges faced globally today.

#### **Sub Theme 1**

##### **Religion and Society**

This subtheme will have papers which look at religion in a socio-economic and political context, from the Ancient to the Contemporary period. They will examine how many of these religions evolved over time in their own distinct way in different parts of the world. Papers may also look at intra-Asian connections, as well as the connections between Asia and the rest of the world in the role played by religion. This kind of study is of particular relevance today when identity based politics (including religious and other identities like caste) is spreading globally.

#### **Sub Theme 2**

##### **Jawaharlal Nehru and Afro-Asian Solidarity**

Resistance to colonialism in Asia and Africa had begun in the nineteenth century itself. With the beginning of the process of the end of formal colonial power in country after country in Asia and Africa since the mid-twentieth century the newly independent countries were still left with the challenge of consolidating their economic and political sovereignty and not slipping into a neo-colonial situation, or even an unequal situation *vis-a-vis* the advanced countries, particularly the super powers. This called for united action by the newly independent countries. Afro-Asian solidarity was

conceived in this context. Jawaharlal Nehru from his very early years in politics had a global understanding of issues faced by India and other colonial and post-colonial countries. Asian and Afro-Asian solidarity was a priority for him. The 1947 Asian Relations Conference, the 1950 Colombo Plan, the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung followed by the Non-Aligned Movement, etc., were early efforts in this direction. The theme will have papers on various attempts at Afro-Asian solidarity by Nehru and *other leaders* of third world countries. They will bring out the commonalities and the differences in the objectives of methods preferred by various forces pushing for this solidarity from the Communists to Centrist and even Right Wing leaders.

### **Sub Theme 3**

#### **Popular Movements and the State**

The last couple of centuries have witnessed a wide variety of popular movements in Asia. These movements have been against all kind of states. Initially they were against autocratic indigenous rulers or against the rapacious colonial states. The colonial states themselves were varied depending on which country was the metropolitan, colonizing power. French, British, Japanese, Portuguese or Dutch colonial states were different in character spawning vastly different kinds of movements against them. Asia, like in other parts of the world, witnessed popular movement against post-colonial Communist regimes, liberal democratic regimes, right-wing military/bureaucratic dictatorships as well as religious identity based oppressive regimes. Papers in this panel will bring out the rich variety of popular movements and how they succeeded or failed against different kinds of states. These papers will bring out the best practices historically in popular movements successfully overthrowing or transforming the state and thus will provide a direction for the future globally. Conversely papers could analyze the complex circumstances which explain failed popular movements.

### **Sub Theme 4**

#### **Causes and Consequences of the Partition of Countries**

This is a global phenomenon, which has drawn considerable interest among historians, other social scientists and creative writers in recent times. Countries have been partitioned on religious, ethnic, linguistic or purely ideological grounds. Sometimes the impetus for partition came from within but more often it came from external forces. The role of the retreating colonial power in imposing partition is evident in the endgames of empire, be it in Ireland, Palestine or India. While the partition of a country and its people may have had very diverse causes the consequences have often had deep similarities. The long term effects of the trauma of artificially dividing a people, often with violent ruptures, have remained for decades, affecting the psyche of the survivors of this division and even the current politics of the divided territories. Papers in this panel will bring out the experiences of different parts of the world which have experienced partition, and contribute to understanding the causes and consequences of such divisions.

### **Sub Theme 5**

#### **Political Economy of Development**

The issue of Asian and African development has been inextricably linked with their colonial past. A rich historiography has emerged on this theme over more than a century. At one end it has been argued that the colonial connection led to development in these regions or at least it produced the initial

conditions for development. At the other end it is argued that the colonial connection was the cause of the great divergence between the West and the rest, i.e., the rise of the West was predicated upon the *decline* of the rest, not on its development. A clear understanding of this phenomenon is critical in policy making today. Is development likely to occur through colonial or colonial type connections or is it likely to occur as a result of break from such connections? Papers in this sub theme will bring in the actual historical experience of various colonial countries during their colonial past. A comparative study of different colonial situations under, e.g., British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, American or Japanese domination can be extremely fruitful. Papers may also analyse the experience of former colonial countries after independence. A special focus could be an effort to understand the extremely successful growth stories in Asia, particularly East and South East Asia, among former colonial countries and bring out what were the driving forces.

## **Sub Theme 6**

### **Teaching History**

A very important indicator of how each society is organized is the way they teach their own national history and global history, particularly at the primary and secondary school level. A lot of controversy on this question has emerged in countries like USA, Germany, Japan and India (to name a few). Papers in this Sub Theme could analyse how both state sponsored and private institutions and publishers in a particular country promote history teaching. It would be interesting to see if they have changed over time and if so under what stimulus. A comparative study across countries would be extremely useful. Studies of this issue could throw much light. For example, in India an effort was made after independence to promote scientific history, using standard protocols of the discipline accepted globally, replacing colonial and religious communal stereotypes based narrations. It is a major issue, which needs to be seriously studied as the kind of ‘history’ that is taught, to a great extent determines the kind of future a country moves towards.

## **Sub Theme 7**

### **Epidemics: the Past and the Present**

The current Corona pandemic is an urgent reminder of the need to study the phenomenon of epidemics in world history. The world has faced several epidemics over the past many centuries, from the ancient past to the present. But, “each epidemic is unique , each one tells us something about the society in which it occurred” as recently argued by Prof. Frank Snowden, Professor emeritus of History and Medical History, Yale University and author of the recent book *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to Present*. The causes of each epidemic, environmental or social, the responses from the people and the state, tell us something about the society as a whole at that time.

Yet, as the Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk, who over the past few years is writing a historical novel on the Third Plague epidemic at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, highlights in a recent interview in New York Times (23 April 2020) that there are amazing similarities among the pandemics that hit the globe over several centuries. To list just a few, the initial response of denial; the late response of the state; attempt to ascribe deaths to ‘other’ causes; spread of false information; rumours about fixing responsibility; tendency to blame the outsider or the ‘other’, widespread fear; fatalism as well as social anger at inadequate state response.

Papers in this sub theme would capture the specificities of each episode temporally and spatially and yet bring out the underlying commonalities; they would also indicate pathways to the future.

## TIMELINE

Deadline for submitting proposals for papers and/or panels in line with the theme and sub themes given above: **28 February 2022**

Date for announcement of papers and panels accepted: **1 April 2022**

Deadline for submitting complete papers: **1 September 2022**

**Proposals should be approximately 500 words accompanied by a brief CV (about 100 words).**

All submissions must be in electronic form and should be sent to:

:(from India) to Organising Committee at JNU [aawhjnu22@gmail.com](mailto:aawhjnu22@gmail.com)

:(from Countries other than India) to AAWH Conference Secretariat  
[aawh5thconference@gmail.com](mailto:aawh5thconference@gmail.com)

Please indicate your names, institutions, and other contact information (such as telephone number). Hard copies are not accepted.

Language of communication in the Conference: English

Expenses of participants:

- (1) Conference registration fee for **non-Indian participants**  
Scholars: US\$100.00 ; Graduate students discount: US\$50.00  
(both online and offline) .
- (2) Conference registration fee for **Indian participants**  
Registration fee for all paper presenters: Rs 1000  
For online attendees who do not read papers: Rs 500  
Delegate fee for Indian paper presenters who attend the Congress in person  
: Rs 2000

Delegates will make their own arrangements for travel, food and stay. Local hosts will assist them if necessary.