



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI**

**SPECIAL LECTURE**

You are cordially invited to a Lecture on

**Memory, History and Narratives of Conflict: Partitions, India and Ireland**

**Date:** 28 July 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

by

**Professor Sucheta Mahajan**

Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences and  
Chairperson, Archives of Contemporary History,  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

**Venue :** Seminar Room, Department of History, University of Mumbai.

## ABSTRACT

### Memory, History and Narratives of Conflict: Partitions, India and Ireland

In this presentation I look at the partitions of India and Ireland in the framework of connected histories and the interface of memory and history. The wider context is of course the division of the two countries by the retreating imperial power. Within that I explore the continuing presence of partition in the societies of India and Ireland in the form of civil conflict, sectarian and communal. Memory complicates the issue here, given the ways it intertwines with history, creating a burden somewhere, lifting the veil elsewhere. The paper will examine memory and “memory work” which gathers testimonies, but not only to collect, preserve and archive. Drawing on the reconciliation initiatives in South Africa and the mega Holocaust memorial projects, commemoration projects and community based oral history groups in Ireland and oral history archival initiatives in India are giving a new meaning to memory work, orienting it to showing a way out of trauma, to bring a closure.

Sucheta Mahajan is Professor at the Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences and Chairperson, Archives of Contemporary History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

She is presently a Visiting Fellow at the Trinity Long Room Hub, Dublin.

She has been Gillespie Visiting Professor at the College of Wooster, Ohio, US, a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center and a Visiting Professor at the Maison des Sciences de l'homme, Paris.

Her significant books include *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India* (2000); *India's Struggle for Independence* (1988; with Bipan Chandra et al); *RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi- The Hindu Communal Project* (2008; with Aditya and Mridula Mukherjee) and *Education and Social Change: MVF and Child Labour* (2008).

She has edited many books such as *Rites of Passage, A Civil Servant Remembers: H.M. Patel* (2005); *Composite Culture in a Multi-Cultural Society* (co-edited with Bipan Chandra), and most recently, *Towards Freedom 1947: Documents on India's Freedom Struggle* (2013 and 2015).

Her fields of interest span the middle years of the long history of the twentieth century, its politics, economy and society, especially colonial state and power, the triad of colonialism-nationalism and communalism; interdisciplinarity in social sciences and humanities, history textbooks as a site for hegemony and counter-hegemony; oral history and public history. Her most recent research project is on the connected histories of India and Ireland through the prism of memory and narrative.

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