

IJTIHAD

The Annual Academic Journal of the

Department of History

Lady Shri Ram College for Women

***Maazi-o-Mustaqbil* 2025-26**

Paper Presentation Competition

Call for Proposals for Research Papers

History of Destruction and Reimaginings

The Editorial Board of *Ijtihad*, the academic journal of the Department of History at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, invites proposals for research papers for a Paper Presentation Competition, organised as part of our annual academic meet, *Maazi-o-Mustaqbil*. The winning papers may be published in the twelfth volume of *Ijtihad*, due to be published next summer.

“These fragments I have shored against my ruins.”

— T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

The transient nature of empires and civilisations is perhaps the primary marker of permanence in history. Every epochal shift, whether through war and colonisation or through nature and revolutions, is accompanied by destruction and renewal. Since time immemorial, wherever there is destruction, there is also a paradoxical duality: every ruin is at once a trace of loss but also a site of reconstitution. It is progress that propels humanity forward, even amidst an ever-growing heap of wreckage. In popular discourse, destruction is given an array of pejorative connotations, yet in the annals of history, it has been an essential driver for change. The ruptures in traditions do not mark finality, nor are catastrophes mere collapses. This dual nature of destruction, thus surpasses simplistic binaries of beginning and end, it is a process that simultaneously ruins and revives.

To study destruction, therefore, is to attend to absence. It is to look at vanished archives, find records of displaced peoples, hear silenced voices, and recognise that within these voids lie seeds of renewal. The histories of destruction and reimaginings compel us to see endings not as closures or shutdowns, but rather as unsteady thresholds where ruins meet recoveries and recreations.

Collective memory can be studied empirically to understand how groups remember significant occurrences, such as wars or political leadership. Howard Zinn argued that traditional historical narratives often reflected the memory states want to curate rather than the collective experience of communities. This 'bottom up approach', highlights how significant societal changes often stem from grassroots struggles and resistance. Similarly, Gyanendra Pandey, based on 20th century Indian history, asserted how certain histories became accepted as a nation's "real" history and how this process could lead to violence and collective amnesia regarding that violence. His work suggests that large-scale violence, like the partition, can establish the boundaries of 'community' through shared memories of such intense moments. Shahid Amin detailed how a specific historical event, the Chauri Chaura incident, was remembered, interpreted, and utilized as a metaphor for India's struggle for independence. Amin analysed how local memory interacted with official historical accounts, revealing discrepancies and misinterpretations that shaped a nation's narrative.

Maurice Halbwachs noted that memory was never a solitary echo but a resonant symphony, conducted in the vast theater of society where each note was attuned to the chords of collective life. Time, in his vision, ceases to be a mere linear passage and becomes a shared horizon — a luminous canvas upon which past and present are ceaselessly intertwined. Remembrance, he shows, is not the passive retrieval of what has been but the active, almost ritual reweaving of meaning, giving continuity to the fragile identities of families, faiths, and nations. Through Coser's masterful curation and lucid introduction, Halbwachs's thought becomes newly accessible, revealing memory as both mirror and stage — at once preserving tradition and inventing its renewal. It contemplated memory not as a static relic entombed in history, but as a living, breathing flame, a vigilant guardian of identity, and a bridge of light spanning the chasm between yesterday's shadow and the yet- unwritten dawn.

It is a truism now to say that history is much more than the story of kings and empires — it is a quiet record of how ordinary people lived, loved, and endured. By turning our gaze from palaces to village fields, from grand battles to everyday struggles, the discipline of history enthralls us to write a narrative that breathes with human dignity. In doing so, we move closer to a past that belongs not just to the victors, but to all of us.

This theme aims to explore destruction not only as an endpoint but also as a generative force. What histories are created when collective memory is fragmented? How have societies across time and space reimagined themselves in the aftermath of ruin? In what ways does destruction reshape how we engage with archives, how we understand power, and how we form identities?

This *Maazi-o-Mustaqbil*, we hope to initiate conversations around the ideas of destruction, anarchy, violence, and popular reimagination across the fields of history, literature, sociology, philosophy, political thought, culture and film studies and interrogate literary, textual and oral archives. We invite you to add to this conversation.

“The old world is dying, and the new one struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters.”

— Antonio Gramsci

Guidelines for the proposal submission and selection process

1. The deadline for proposals is Tuesday, 30th September 2025.
2. Please submit your proposals to historyjournal.lsr@gmail.com as a PDF.
3. The call for submission of proposals is open to undergraduate students across disciplines and institutions.
4. A maximum of two co-authors are allowed for any submission.
5. The Editorial Board is looking for original, previously unpublished and unrepresented work that allows for the exploration of issues of historical relevance.
6. The proposal must mention the research topic/subject of the book within its space-time context at the outset. This should be followed by a line or two on the primary sources to be

used. The rest of the proposal should briefly state the research questions as well as the methods/trajectories that the author proposes to pursue.

7. The ideal length of the proposal should be 300 – 400 words. Please do not exceed the word limit.
8. The proposal must be accompanied by
 - about 5 – 6 keywords
 - a tentative bibliography for the paper/review: For the ease of the selection process, it would be ideal if at this stage, the author divides the bibliography into a list of primary and secondary sources they plan to refer to. It is not mandatory for this to be an exhaustive list, but sufficient for the Editorial Board to assess the general direction of the proposed paper/review.
 - a proposed working title for the paper/review, which can always be modified during the writing process if the proposal is selected.
9. The submission must be accompanied by the following details of the author: their name, year of study, course of study, institutional affiliation, email ID and contact number.
10. The selection of proposals will take place after a thorough review by the student members of the Editorial Board in consultation with the journal's Staff Advisors. The tentative selection criteria includes the usage of primary source(s), the quality of the research questions and the potential of the proposed paper/review.
11. The Editorial Board will be conducting strict screenings for plagiarism and the usage of AI software. In case this is detected, the submission will be disqualified without exception.
12. All applicants will be informed of the results of the review process over email within a day or two or the lapse of the deadline.

Guidelines for the writing process (after the selection of the proposal)

1. Authors will get precisely two weeks after the notification of selection to furnish us with their final papers.

2. Authors whose proposals are selected will receive a detailed stylesheet along with the confirmation of their acceptance. This will include further details on the writing process.
3. The estimated word limit for research papers is approximately 2000 - 3000 words (excluding title, byline, abstract and bibliography).
4. Ijtihad follows the Chicago citation format and all research papers are required to adhere to it. For more information on the rules of this citation format, please go through this website: <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>
5. The tentative date for the final Paper Presentation is mid-November. The specifics will be confirmed and notified to all presenters in due time. It will be held in-person and no accommodations for online presentations can be made.
6. The competition will be judged by a panel of judges, comprising academics with expertise in the area. The details of the same will be announced closer to the event.
7. On the day of the conference, participants may use presentations and images to accompany their paper, to be displayed through screen sharing. Any required technical assistance will be provided before the event.
8. Every participant will be given only 10-15 minutes to present their work.
9. Certificates will be awarded to all participants.

We will be happy to speak to you if you have any questions or need assistance. Please feel free to contact us over email (historyjournal.lsr@gmail.com) or our Instagram page (@ijtihad.lsr).