

Advance Praise

Girmitiyas and the Global Indian Diaspora takes the reader from India to Natal, Fiji, Trinidad and Surinam. Using new source material such as folklore in the vernacular languages and photographs, the 10 chapters offer bold and fresh perspectives on the transformative experience of Indians who migrated overseas to work on colonial plantations. The focus is on being and the never completed process of becoming. Particularly insightful are the chapters dealing with the recruitment of indentured women, ageing on plantations and migration as resistance to caste oppression. This is an excellent addition to the literature on indenture and migration.

Nira Wickramasinghe, Leiden University

Bringing together leading and emerging voices in the history of indenture today and from across the globe, this crucial volume takes the field towards new concerns around memory, diaspora and identity. At a time when the legacies and after-effects of coerced labour are at the forefront of public and institutional discussions, this is a valuable intervention which foregrounds South Asian labourers and subaltern peoples. It also admirably and innovatively stretches the chronology of the story through decolonisation and to the present, working with the premise that this history continues to live on, needing interrogation and urgent and wide consideration by all of us.

Sujit Sivasundaram, University of Cambridge

This collection of essays provides new and interesting perspectives on the study of indenture in the colonial and post-colonial eras. Untapped archival sources reveal the changing identities of the South Asian labour diaspora globally. The volume details the various difficulties encountered by indentured labourers, including growing older in a foreign society, losing their Indian identity, trying to maintain a sense of belonging in the post-colonial host nations, and adjusting to the new political and social realities and challenges they had encountered as minorities in those nations.

Brij Maharaj, University of KwaZulu-Natal

This refreshingly readable collection of essays offers new insights into the study of indenture and its afterlives, exploring the furthest reaches of the archive and the museum for underutilized sources and excavating evolving identities in the global South Asia labour diaspora.

Marina Carter, author of *Servant, Sirdars and Settlers:
Indians in Mauritius, 1834–1874*

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Girmitiyas and the Global Indian Diaspora combines in-depth analysis of the history of indentured migrations from India and the many impacts to societies such as Fiji, South Africa, Surinam and Trinidad. Moving beyond mere quantitative studies of numbers and dusty colonial reports, the assembled essays tackle issues of recruitment, gender, ageing, citizenship, folklore, biography and anti-caste activism in *girmitiya* spaces across the globe. In doing so, this collection offers numerous insights into one of the most important facets of South Asian contributions to the making of the modern world.

Neilesh Bose, University of Victoria

GIRMITIYAS AND THE GLOBAL INDIAN DIASPORA

Many Indians journeyed out of India to supplant the loss of slave labour in the former European plantation colonies of Mauritius, South Africa, Fiji and the Caribbean from the early nineteenth century onwards. This book aims to highlight the careers of these migrants who served as vital agents in building the global society of the twenty-first century. It explores the transformative experiences of those who migrated, and the memories of those who did not return after expiration of their contracts but chose instead to stay in their respective host countries. It describes the many challenges they faced – ageing in a society far from home, the loss of their formal Indian identity after Indian independence, their efforts to preserve a sense of community in the post-independence societies of South Africa and the Caribbean, and their adaptation to the new political and social realities they faced as minorities in the countries in which their ancestors had adventurously determined to settle and live.

Ashutosh Kumar is Associate Professor of history at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. He was a fellow at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi, at the Centre for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition at Yale University, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, and at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. His publications include *Coolies of the Empire: Indentured Indians in the Sugar Colonies, 1830–1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); *The Indian Labour Diaspora*, authored with Professor Crispin Bates (2017); *Re-visiting the First World War: Indian Soldiers in the Global Conflict*, edited with Professor Claude Markovits (2021); and *Warfare Society in British India, 1757–1947*, edited with Kaushik Roy (2022).

Crispin Bates is Professor of modern and contemporary South Asian history at the University of Edinburgh and holds an Honorary Visiting Professorship in the Graduate School of African and Asian Studies, Kyoto University. He completed his PhD at Cambridge University, where he was also a junior research fellow at Churchill College. He has held visiting professorships in Paris, Kolkata, Beijing, Kyoto, Tokyo and the National Museum of Ethnology in Japan. He has authored, co-authored and edited a total of 15 books including a history of South Asia from 1600 to the present entitled *Subalterns and Raj* (2010), and a series of seven volumes concerning the history of the Indian Uprising of 1857, entitled *Mutiny at the Margins* (2013–17).

GLOBAL SOUTH ASIANS

Throughout the modern era, South Asia and South Asians have been entangled with global flows of goods, people and ideas. In the context of these globalised conditions, migrants from the subcontinent of India created some of the world's most extensive and influential transnational networks. While operating within the constraints of imperial systems, they nevertheless made distinctive and important contributions to international trade, global cultures and transnational circuits of knowledge. This series seeks to explore these phenomena, placing labourers, traders, thinkers and activists at the centre of the analysis. Beginning with volumes that seek to radically reappraise indenture, the series will continue with books on the mobility of elite actors, including intellectuals, and their contributions to the global circulation of ideas and the evolution of political practice. It will highlight the creativity and agency of diasporic South Asians and illuminate the crucial role they played in the making of global histories. As such it sets out to challenge popular misconceptions and established scholarly narratives that too often cast South Asians as passive observers.

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Origins, Memories, and Identity

Edited by
ASHUTOSH KUMAR
CRISPIN BATES



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ABBREVIATIONS

ABH	Aryan Benevolent Home
ASM	Adiwasi Samta Manch
AYS	Arya Yuvak Sabha
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CAALAS	Centre for Asian, African and Latin American Studies
CASSS	Centre for Alternative Studies in Social Sciences
CBD	Central Business District
DUT	Durban University of Technology
GHDS	Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha
IIP	Indian Immigration Papers
ISS	Institute of Social Sciences
IT	information technology
IUAES	International Union for Anthropological and Ethnographic Sciences
MP	member of parliament
NGO	non-governmental organization
NGR	Natal Government Railways
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NIO	Natal Indian Organisation

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xvi	ABBREVIATIONS
NP	National Party
NRI	non-resident Indian
OCI	overseas citizens of India
PIO	person of Indian origin
SAI	state-aided Indian (school)
SAIC	South African Indian Council
SAIO	South African Indian Organisation
SDMS	Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha
SRC	Sugar Refining Company
STI	sexually transmitted infection
UP	Uttar Pradesh