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EDITORIAL

I had hoped to start on a positive note. But that is not to be. Most of what has preoccupied us these last few months has been far from positive. The brutality that has permeated our lives is staggering, and that we are all but impervious to it is frightening. A young girl is being stabbed multiple times, on a busy public street and in broad daylight, and we are watching her die, capturing it on film. How far will we fall? Every morning we wake to screaming headlines of rape, molestation, murder, abetted suicides, death from road rage, medieval flogging of those who supposedly defile religious sentiments, senseless destruction of public property, and maiming pellets fired on our very own.

The massacre at the Holey Artisan Bakery took us to a new level of depravity. What was more chilling was the photograph of the five men responsible—happy, smiling, guns displayed like trophies. And now Uri, which has laid bare the tenuous attempts at diplomacy.

In the midst of all this, a small news item went unnoticed. *Himal Southasian* is shutting down. It is perhaps the first review magazine to recognise the need for South Asian countries to speak to each other sans boundaries and politics, something we desperately need today. To emphasise this, they brought the two words together, hence ‘Southasian’. It was in the late 1990s, if I recall correctly, when the founder of *Himal*, Kanak Mani Dixit, visited the Sage (Publications) office to meet Tejeshwar Singh. I was there when Kanak proudly opened the scroll he was carrying. It was an upside-down map of South Asia, which he called the right-side-up map. As early as that, they were thinking outside the box. I do hope that the circumstances that forced its closure can be resolved. Independent spaces, like ours, for critical thought need to be cherished.

Now on a more positive note. Each year, I look forward to the release of the Autumn issue of the *IIC Quarterly*. It coincides

with the annual *IIC Experience*, and with the sun somewhat less harsh, we look forward to Winter. The contributions to this issue are timely, thought-provoking, and deal with contemporary concerns. Two papers look at foreign policy, one which gives us a theoretical framework, the other, quite presciently, suggests methods of ‘counter- and de-radicalisation’. Just recently we have seen indices of access to health fall. In their own way, five papers look at various forms of inequality and exclusion and its impact. We move then to three papers that look at religious symbolism and perceptions of an ancient knowledge system as a science. We also have a very interesting paper on the destruction of our celluloid legacy, and the author’s own efforts at preservation and restoration. It fits well with the photo essay by the late Prabuddha Dasgupta, who writes about the trajectory of digital and silver print technology.

I hope you enjoy this collection as much as we did putting it together.



OMITA GOYAL