

Maria-Magdalena Fuchs (Princeton University), AIPS Summer Research Grant

In July and August 2014, I visited Lahore for a short research trip in preparation of my dissertation project. I am interested to see how Muslim associations (so-called Anjumans) contributed to the creation of an Urdu public sphere in late colonial Punjab by pushing for educational, social, and religious reforms. Even though the stand-off between opposition politicians and the Pakistani government last summer caused major disruptions to life in Lahore, my trip was very productive. The Punjab Public Library proved a treasure house for the topic I am researching. The chief librarian, Mrs. Azra Usman, supported my project whole-heartedly. I was able to locate a lot of relevant material, including membership registries, annual reports, and general publications by several Anjumans, as well as Urdu periodicals. Accompanied by gushes of monsoon rains and frequent electricity cuts, I worked my way through the PPL holdings. The staff librarians were incredibly friendly and helpful, providing me with further references, and pointing me to other institutions with relevant archival collections. The material I was able to collect at the PPL will form the core of my dissertation, supplemented by sources from smaller archives in Lahore, as well as state archives in India and Great Britain.