



**Centre for European and Latin American Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia**

announces
A Young Scholars' Seminar
on

**DYNAMICS OF
DEVELOPMENT AND DISSENT
IN 21st CENTURY DEMOCRACIES**

(March 25-26, 2014)



Venue: Tagore Hall, Dayar-I Mir Taqi Mir (Administrative Block)
Jamia Millia Islamia

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"Democracy is not a form of State. It is a power of the people, always in tension with the State"

- Jacques Rancière

Aquí manda el pueblo, y el gobierno obedece" (Here the people command and the government obeys)

- A road sign in the Zapatista territory in Chiapas, Mexico.

One of the striking features of the 21st century has been an emphatic expression of dissent against the consensus-based liberal state and its apparatuses of domination. Whether it is movements in Latin America such as the Chilean Students' movement and the Brazilian street protests, or the deep churning in Europe epitomized by the 15-M Movement in Spain, and the political protests and general civil disobedience in Italy, Germany and Britain, or the Occupy Wall Street, or the Arab Spring, we have been witnessing new forms of dissent, particularly involving the youth, which question the ability of liberal democracy to represent the masses.

This widespread dissent raises the question that as consensus-based politics and the liberal state have become the new norm, have we reached the end of history? Is the liberal democratic state under the aegis of a triumphant neoliberalism the only form of democratic representation possible or is there a need to rethink what democracy means and what it entails to be a citizen? This dissent announces a break and the birth of a renewed possibility for new forms of political creativity. How does one then think of dissent institutionally? Alvaro García Linera's work from Latin America speaks of new forms of popular power which are in dynamic tension with parliamentary institutions. In the Bolivarian experiment in Venezuela, there is an attempt to explore an alternative to twentieth century socialism. In the works of radical philosophers of Europe like Jacques Rancière, there has been an attempt to critique institutions like the capitalist parliament from the stand point of radical active equality.

Our endeavour will be to examine dissent in 21st century democracies and their models of development. Given our focus areas of study, we will be particularly looking at singular events that have taken place in Europe and Latin America in the 21st century, but papers focusing on India and the rest of the world are also welcome. The questions that we ask are:

- Do the new social movements have the potential to translate into an autonomous force?
- Do all these dissent movements reveal an opposition between financiers and politicians, and the mass of the people dispossessed of decision-making power?
- The occupation of public places (like Puerta del Sol, India Gate, Jantar Mantar, Tahrir Square) is a trademark of these new movements. If occupying public spaces is a matter of "reclaiming the street", then is it also simultaneously a symptom of not knowing what else to occupy?
- What are the consequences of these things on culture? How are the various new mediums like street graffiti, popular music, graphic novels, Youtube and the social network fashioning dissent?
- How is the internet used as a digital space for dissent to create identities and spur action?
- What about the university? Is the university a consenting or dissenting institution?

We invite abstracts (250 words) from MPhil and PhD scholars, and in-service teachers by February 14, 2014. Selected candidates will be informed within one week. Please mail us at celas.seminar@gmail.com. Also, a few travel grants are available for outstation participants.

