

**A Conference on  
DEMOCRACY AND DISSENT IN CHINA AND INDIA:  
Resistance and Accommodation in Tibet and Kashmir**

including *C R Parekh Annual Lecture by Arundhati Roy*

**2 June 2011**

University of Westminster, London

***Final Announcement***

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*Sponsors:* Nirman Foundation and Department of Politics and International Relations'  
Centre for the Study of Democracy and Security and IR Programme

Conference Website: <http://chinaindiatibetkashmir.wordpress.com/>

Venue: Fyvie Hall, University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London W1B 2UW

**C R Parekh Lecture -- Arundhati Roy**

**Plenary speakers -- Bhikhu Parekh and Wang Lixiong**

**Panelists -- Sanjay Kak, Nitasha Kaul, Mirza Waheed, Lama Jabb,  
Jianglin Li, and Dechen Pemba**

Dissent is integral to the idea of democracy. But what constitutes dissent? Who draws the line between legitimate and illegitimate dissent? Or for that matter, who defines the limits of democracy? Are democratic states better at accepting plurality and differences of opinion or are they better at managing them, and in the process, disciplining them? What do democracy, dissent, democratic dissent, and dissenting democrats mean in the context of world's two largest countries: China and India? As the two states become major economic and military powers, what significance does it have for the diverse peoples residing within and connected without? The keynote speeches by two foremost and internationally renowned writers and intellectuals from India and China -- Arundhati Roy and Wang Lixiong will discuss some of these issues.

Nationalisms of all kinds play an important role in how states include or exclude people as well as in how people control or resist the state. The problematic nature of inclusionary/exclusionary nationalisms and coercive/cooptive statehood in China and India are nowhere better illustrated than in Tibet and Kashmir. Kashmir and Tibet are places with people -- people who live in a system they may not necessarily identify with, people whose life and livelihood is extra-ordinarily precarious under an overbearing, people many of whom have been forcibly displaced or involuntarily exiled -- and yet for the international audience they are mainly intractable problems. What does it mean to belong to the 'troublesome paradises'? How does the experience of exile affect displaced subjects' engagement with their homelands? What do the protests in Tibet and Kashmir since 2008

tell us about the aspirations of the people as well as about the myths associated with nationalism and statehood in 'rising' India and China? The panels on Kashmir and Tibet will bring together leading writers, filmmakers, poets, bloggers and intellectuals.

## **Preliminary Programme**

- 0900-0930 Registration and Opening remarks
- 0945-1045 Plenary Speech by Wang Lixiong followed by Q&A
- 1045-1100 Tea break
- 1100-1245 Panel on Tibet (Lama Jabb, Jianlin Li, Dechen Pemba)
- 1245-1400 Lunch
- 1400-1500 Plenary speech by Lord Bhikhu Parekh
- 1500-1645 Panel on Kashmir (Sanjay Kak, Nitasha Kaul and Mirza Waheed)
- 1645-1700 Tea break
- 1700-1830 C R Parekh Annual Lecture by Arundhati Roy followed by Q&A
- 1830-1845 Closing Remarks

## **Speakers brief bio**

ARUNDHATI ROY, described recently by The Guardian as India's 'harshest critic and its most fearless activist' is a recipient of Sydney Peace Prize and has authored the booker prize winning *The God of Small Things*, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *War Talk*, *Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy*, and most recently *Broken Republic*.

BHIKHU PAREKH is an eminent political philosopher and a Labour Member of the House of Lords. He has published, among others, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, *A New Politics of Identity*, and *Gandhi*. He has received Sir Isaiah Berlin Prize for Lifetime Contribution to Political Philosophy, BBC's Special Lifetime Achievement Award, and Padma Bhushan from the President of India.

WANG LIXIONG is an intellectual and writer, famous for his *Yellow Peril*, *My West China*; *Your East Turkestan*, *Bottom-up Democracy*, *Sky Burial: The Fate of Tibet* and recipient of numerous honours including the *Light of Truth Award* from the Dalai Lama. He is a prominent advocate of Beijing-Dalai Lama dialogue.

DECHEN PEMBA is a UK-based Tibetan activist and runs the blog *High Peaks, Pure Earth* that gives an international audience to Tibetans writing from inside China.

JIANGLIN LI is a writer from New York who has authored *1959 Lhasa! How did the Dalai Lama Escape* and is the deputy secretary-general of the Independent Chinese PEN Centre.

LAMA JABB was born and brought in Amdo, Northeastern Tibet. He escaped to India in 1989 to further his Tibetan studies and learn English. He came to England and graduated from the University of London with a BA Hons in Political Science and an MSc in International Relations. He is an independent researcher and interpreter and is currently carrying out a DPhil in Modern Tibetan Literature at Oxford University.

MIRZA WAHEED works for the BBC Urdu Service and is the author of a Penguin book on Kashmir *The Collaborator*.

NITASHA KAUL is a scholar and writer and her novel *Residue* was shortlisted for Man Asian Literary Prize; she has also authored *Imagining Economics Otherwise: Encounters with Identity/Difference*.

SANJAY KAK is an independent documentary maker whose films include *Words on Water* on Narmada anti-dam movement, *In the Forest Hangs a Bridge*, most recently on Kashmir *Jashn-e-azadi* ('How we celebrate freedom').

[Tenzin Tsundue is not able to join us]

Registration: <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/about/news-and-events/events/2011/?a=88298>