

Of Resistances and their Interfaces
A Collaborative Workshop
Organised by
Calcutta Research Group
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung
West Bengal State University, Barasat
Date: June 22, 2018 Venue: West Bengal State University, Barasat

**UNDERSTANDING AN OUTLIER
STATE AND SOCIETY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH**

Aniket Alam, IIT-Hyderabad

Mountain societies have had a difficult relation, often breaking out into open conflict, with States, particularly those which emerged in the fertile alluvial plains. The Indian sub-continent has not been an exception. An overview of even the last three centuries will show how conflicted has been the relations of the mountain societies with the States of the plains – in the northern mountainous belt stretching from Balochistan to Burma, in the central Indian highlands, in the Peninsular highlands, etc. Even today, the insurgencies of secession, separatism, and Maoism map closely to the highlands.

The only exception to this geography of conflict has been Himachal Pradesh which has, by all accounts, integrated well with the colonial and post-colonial State of India.

There has been, by now, a rich scholarship about mountain societies spanning the disciplines of anthropology, history and politics trying to understand how and what separates the mountain societies from those of the plains. There has been an even richer scholarship of peasant and other popular movements, of which this workshop is a good illustration. However, what explains the exception that is Himachal. My presentation hopes to lay out the foundation on which possible explanations can be framed.