

***Of Resistances and their Interfaces***  
**A Collaborative Workshop**  
Organised by  
Calcutta Research Group  
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung  
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**Contentious Issues, People's Politics and Popular Leadership**

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The presentation examines the materialization of popular politics in post-colonial Bihar. Drawing from the lineage of socialist politics that articulated the concerns of backward castes and facilitated the political assertion of the subaltern communities, the presentation elucidates the nuances of contentious issues, people's politics and role of popular leadership. Popular politics generally refers to the presence of ordinary, non-elite subjects as the conversationist with a political action. The idea is to reflect upon the fundamental challenges that have confronted and continues to confront the shape of politics in the state. What defined popular politics, then, was not the social class of the people politicking, but rather the extent to which the governed got activated to play a role in their own governance. How has this happened in a state like Bihar? As the vanguard of the popular politics and an architect of the policy that actualized people's aspiration, the role of political leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Karpoori Thakur in altering the political agenda would be explained. The discussion examines their ideas and articulation about social justice, popular politics, and the assertion by subaltern groups. The presentation also explicates how governmental route has been foregrounded to engage with the issues of the peasants, farmers, students and other groups. As a perceptible leader of popular mood, leaders invoke politics of reservation, language and leadership craftily and weaved it in slogans that aroused people's imagination and thereafter made it an agenda for public discourse. Through the figure of the select leader(s), we are exploring the facets of contentious politics, its conundrum and challenges to the received wisdom of dominant politics.