

## Asian Dynamics Initiative Workshop

# Reimagining Pakistan

One Day Workshop – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 – 9.30-17.30

In the popular imaginary, Pakistan seldom appears outside the framework of War on Terror – it has become the ‘theatre of war’ where ideological and actual battles are played out in everyday life. The very name ‘Pakistan’ is often no longer mentioned on its own, it is firmly hyphenated with Afghanistan: Af-Pak, an unbounded chaotic space defined by excessive violence and unending turmoil. It is, as if, no histories, geographies, cultural identities of this space existed prior to its global debut as a source of threat.

This workshop intends to examine this popular though ahistorical discourse that, at once, limits our understanding and forecloses any possibility of seeking alternative visions of this region. The aim is to bring together ideas that are not necessarily bound to the imperatives of terror/security, and in doing so address a vast social-political-cultural space that has remained unexplored so far. The intention is to gain a deeper understanding of Pakistan that goes beyond the rhetoric of ‘fundamentalism’ and ‘terrorism’ that currently defines it.

The workshop invites original research, both theoretical and empirical, on the themes related to contemporary Pakistan from as varied fields as development, anthropology, history, sociology and literature. Through their ongoing research, participants will be asked to address the question of popular imagination, discourses and narratives that provoke, inspire and even challenge their work in this region: and if one might ‘re-imagine’ Pakistan outside the current discourses?

### Programme

10.00-10.15 Welcome and Introduction

10.15-11.15 ***Session 1: Urban Imaginaries***

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

11.15-12.15 ***Session 2: Literary and Diasporic Imaginaries***

12.15-13.15 Lunch

13.15-14.45 ***Session 3: Sacred Spaces, Public Imaginaries***

14.45-15.00 Coffee Break

15.00-16.00 ***Session 4: New Political Imaginaries***

**Public Lecture Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power,**  
*Tariq Ali. New Left Review*

16.00-17.30 **Reimagining Pakistan: A public debate**