



Press Release

Talk on 'Post-Colonial Politics of Urban Resistance' at ITU

On April 27, 2018

Dr Kirstin Plys of University of Toronto delivered a talk on 'Post-Colonial Politics of Urban Resistance: Lahore's Pak Tea House and Indian Coffee House in a Comparative Perspective', held under the auspices of the Information Technology University (ITU) the Punjab here today.

Dr Plys analyzed the role of these 'coffee/tea houses' from their inception as places of 'resistance.' During the colonial era, people began to congregate at these coffee houses to discuss colonial actions and narratives.' After independence these places remained as places of 'resistance' and became hubs for scholars, artists, activists and other creative people. 'Such Cafes were also important spaces for academic discussion and debate, creating a new public classroom where old and young mingled, and everyone expressed themselves.'

Dr Plys gave example of the Military Dictatorship in Pakistan, 1958-1970, and the Indian Emergency, 1975-77, as key moments where these coffee houses became the center of activity for the protection of rights and liberties. 'Coffee houses were places of collective resistance in South Asia,'

While underscoring their critical, little researched, role in promoting democracy and rights in the region he added that this cafe culture encouraged political expression when other avenues were closed and nourished the memory of a democratic political culture for the future.

He lamented the closure of the Indian Coffee House in Delhi and the almost abandonment of the Pak Tea House by most of its illustrious patrons.