Abstract:
Democracy has survived and even flourished in India for over six decades since Independence, with the sixteenth General Elections having taken place less than a month ago. The predictions of many prophets of doom have been belied in the process. In 1967, Neville Maxwell, considered an expert on India, predicted with certainty that the next elections (1967) were bound to be the last! When democracy refused to go away as ordered, it was dismissed as only "formal" and not "substantive". However, the 65 per cent voter turnout in this year's elections places a big question-mark on this kind of judgment. - To understand democracy's trajectory, we need to look also at its history, particularly at that embedded in the story of the movement for Independence. The ideas of democracy, of civil liberties, of representative government, of republicanism, of citizenship, were all articulated, popularized, practised and internalized by the leaders, cadres and participants. Nationalist constitutional demands were, generally at least, a couple of decades ahead of British constitutional concessions. Democracy was not a gift of colonialism but a path chosen, wrested and fashioned according to their genius by the people of India.

Datum: 03.06.2014, 19:00 Uhr
Ort: SAI, Raum 316