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Mirroring its British masters: state and outsourced terrorism against the Maoist insurgency

Espelhando-se nos seus mestres britânicos: Terrorismos de Estado e terceirizado contra a insurgência maoísta

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Abstract

The Indian state has been adopting controversial policies for countering the Maoist insurgency. Even worse, this behaviour seems to mirror British colonial attitudes against India's population at some level. Consequently, this article attempts to understand this probable 'paradoxical' conduct. With the support of the post-structuralist theory, I discuss state and outsourced terrorist practices of the Indian state apparatus against this insurgency. To reach this goal, first, I try to explicate the concept of state terrorism and its application in India. Then, I analyse the historical development of the Maoist movement and India's concrete policies of state and outsourced terrorism against this counter-hegemonic movement. I believe the British Raj's colonial practices have had a deep dialectical influence on India's state apparatus and major political parties to date. So, this inquiry may clarify the persistence of colonial practices within India.

Keywords: state terrorism; outsourced terrorism; Maoist insurgency.

Resumo

O Estado indiano vem adotando políticas controversas ao lidar com a insurgência maoísta. Pior ainda, esse comportamento parece espelhar as atitudes coloniais britânicas contra a população indiana em algum nível. Consequentemente, este artigo tenta compreender essa provável conduta 'paradoxal'. Com o apoio da teoria pós-estruturalista, discuto as práticas de terrorismo de Estado e terceirizado contra essa insurgência. Para atingir esse objetivo, primeiramente, tento explicar o conceito de terrorismo de Estado e sua aplicação na Índia. Em seguida, analiso o desenvolvimento histórico do movimento maoísta e as políticas estatais concretas de terrorismo de Estado e terceirizado contra esse movimento contra-hegemônico. Acredito que as práticas coloniais do Raj britânico têm tido uma profunda influência dialética sobre o aparato estatal da Índia e os principais partidos políticos desse país até os dias atuais. Assim, esta investigação talvez esclareça a persistência dessas práticas coloniais na Índia.

Palavras-chave: terrorismo de Estado; terrorismo terceirizado; insurgência maoísta.

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Introduction

Affirming that the Indian state is mirroring the British Raj procedures is deeply controversial, especially because I affirm the latter has adopted various terrorist conducts to control and coerce India's territory and population. But it is also contentious to call some of the British Raj's actions terrorism. So, before touching on the Indian state's conduct in countering the Maoist insurgency within its territory, we need to understand what terrorism is. It seems difficult to accept terrorism definitions provided by states, considering that these political/economic/social bodies are the hegemonic actors in the international system. Since states define what is a crime, the possibility of so-called state terrorism is hard to prove legally. Further, in a political conflict, the name 'terrorism' is normally confined to one side, which denotes a marked asymmetry (SCHMID, 2004, p. 198-200). Even worse, endorsing terrorism conceptualizations from the Indian state implies giving this actor a *carte blanche* to 'securitise' no matter what context it may desire. Under the pretext of preventing terrorist attacks, the Indian state apparatus has been attempting to eliminate aggressive (and even non-aggressive) responses to its hegemony within the country. "(The word 'terrorism') begins by reflecting on how political power must be buttressed by legitimacy, which in turn involves the de-legitimation of challengers. This is often achieved by assimilating political dissent to the 'criminality' that by definition governments are created to combat" (PUGH; HERADSTVEIT, 2003, p. 1).

Frankly, it seems a relief that we do not consider states as terrorists, mainly those from the West, given that, based on Hobbesian conceptions, we see states as the primary protectors from our own egoistic and savage human nature. The maintenance of the current perception, however, appears to deploy a false tranquillity, given that the preservation of the actual order of things is a perpetuation of the uncountable crimes against those who have been normalised as terrorists. As Pugh and Heradstveit (2003, p. 1) once pinpointed, 'governments use the term 'order' to mean their own convenience'. A significant amount of flexibility allows states to identify terrorist threats depending on whether this would put in danger peace and order. Then, through 'the politics of naming' and a 'complex web of social/legal/cultural/ historical practices', the word terrorism denies the legitimacy of some forms of violence while affirming the necessity of others, and terrorism becomes a mechanism for excluding particular subjects from the social body, respectively (FOUCAULT, 2015, p. 12).

The present-day deployment of terrorism not merely is a repetition of historical precedents, but also a reinvention for new and changing purposes (ERLENBUSCH-ANDERSON, 2018, p. 14-15). We can reach this understanding by rooting our comprehension in the concept of *dispositif*. This notion highlights that a historical formation is designed for a particular strategic purpose, thus being overdetermined. But, simultaneously, history is permanently readjusted and changed (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 111). It is indispensable to acknowledge the benefits of the post-structuralist viewpoint concerning terrorism when compared with the structuralist mindset. First, structuralists see ideological and repressive state apparatus as monolithic institutions attempting to structure the thoughts of all individuals, regardless of their particularities (ALTHUSSER, 1970). Differently, post-structuralists recognise structural constraints, while opening the path for anti-hegemonic struggles, as reality is malleable. By returning agency to the subject who operates in the structure, Post-structuralism allows the destruction of institutional power structures of domination. Second, structuralist arguments could inhibit the reinvention of the notion of terrorism within India, thus not capturing the new changing purposes of its deployment. I consider these fresh definitions of terrorism to provide an impulse for the deconstruction of the concept and expose the hegemonic reality and ontology within India. This article, therefore, may be the beginning of a project for deconstructing terrorism in India and exposing the sources of the ongoing violence in India.

As we can see, the term *dispositif* avoids universal definition, contrary to some intellectuals and other concerned actors of the international system. As they apprehend terrorism as a universal concept, we could identify many examples of it throughout history, without neither considering empirical situations nor epistemological understandings.

Consequently, states can delegitimize, discredit, and even demonise those who oppose them based on this rhetorical tool. As an illustration, Eugênio Diniz (2002). revised and criticised terrorism definitions by the most prominent intellectuals of the field, such as Thomas Schelling, Brian Jenkins, Jack Gibbs, and David Fromkin. At the end of his text, he reached the following definition:

Terrorism is the use of terror against a specific public, whose goal is to induce (and not compel or dissuade) in another public (which can but need not coincide with the first) a certain behaviour whose expected result is TO CHANGE the power relationship in favour of the actor who employs terrorism, allowing him in the future to achieve his political objective – whatever it may be (DINIZ, 2002, p. 13).

Two conclusions appear to be plausible from this definition: first, states (indeed, the groups controlling them) may carry out (or support) terrorist acts, although it is more common that they enact terror by employing non-terrorist manners for achieving their specific goals.; second, terrorism is considered a stratagem of the weak. I will demonstrate in this article my disagreements with both the content and form of these conclusions. With this Post-structuralist comprehension of terrorism in mind, I believe we can touch on the introductory challenges of considering that a post-colonial state apparatus has been mirroring colonial oppressive structure from the past. More specifically, it appears to be difficult to understand why a country like India, one of the most exploited colonies in human history (THAROOR, 2016), could have a state terrorist apparatus that imitates its former British master. For countries like Brazil, where white elites are more identified with their former European masters (physically and ideologically), it is easier to comprehend why they profoundly despise those who they exploit, such as indigenous and black peoples. Their political and economic interests, since the beginning, have been deeply interrelated with Europe. However, in a country like India, where autochthones¹ were not completely replaced by colonial oppressors, it seems hard to understand this conundrum. I hypothesise that the British Raj's divide and rule background is being applied in India since its formal independence, and sometimes even more intensely. Consequently, I trust that state apparatus and elites play a vital role in this discussion.

From an elite perspective, we can trace this riddle back to India's pre-independence period. Two distinct broad movements took to define the paths India should trace after independence: the modernist and the revivalist. The Western educational style had profound repercussions on the former. Modernist elites participated in the colonial bureaucracy, which means they profited from the British Raj job opportunities. Lawyers, doctors, journalists, professors, traders, and industrialists were the most common examples. Most of them collaborated with the colonial administration and had great participation, for instance, in legislative councils and bureaucracy. Even though they criticised the British Raj, notably from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, they believed reforming India's society was necessary to align it with western standards (ANDERSON; DAMLE, 2019, p. 9-10). That is also true as concerns modernist Islamic elites, who also defended the adoption of the western way of life in independent India (CRS, 2002, p. 12-13).

Revivalists attested that foreign domination (Muslim and British) provided suffering and degradation for the Hindu society. As a result, they intended to enact a massive Hindu movement of independence by reviving traditional symbols and language. For stimulating this uprising, they believed they needed to free educational societies from pro-Christian and pro-British influence. Similarly, revivalist Islam was also a response to colonialist violence (ANDERSON; DAMLE, 2019, p. 9-11). The British Raj heavily discriminated against those who had once held positions of power within the bureaucracy of the Mughal Empire. As a result, the past importance of the Mughal Empire transforms India into an important symbol for present-day transnational political Islam movements (CRS, 2002, p. 12-13). Although dialogues between Hindus and Muslims have occurred and were successful at some level, the British Raj have worked until the end to separate these and other communities within the Indian subcontinent. The tragic consequence of these policies is well known: the British decision to divide the subcontinent on communal differences triggered communal riots that already existed in the territory. These cleavages have been dialectic reinforced since these tragedies, and new ones were gestated,

¹ There are some discussions about who are the autochthonous people of the Indian subcontinent. However, it is not our goal to go deeper on this subject.

triggered, and reworked based on these colonial differences. Besides these cleavages, it is important to bring to light another basis for the construction of state bureaucracy in India.

The creation of the so-called 'Macaulay's elite'², formed by 'the brown sahibs'³, would over time come to run India's administration along with an ingrained caste system (which, in practice, transcends religious boundaries) (WASEEM, 2014). This indispensable element displays why independent India's bureaucracy so closely mimics that of the British Raj. So, an important part of India's elites are brown on the outside but 'white' on the inside. Worsening the problem, from a state bureaucracy viewpoint, the western-style state apparatus in India has kept 'bureaucratic memories' from colonial *modus operandi* when fighting insurgencies (BARNETT; FINNEMORE, 1999). Grounded in this introduction, the principal aim of this inquiry is to show that the Indian state employs state and outsourced terrorism when countering the Maoist uprising, mimicking the British Raj but also reworking its strategies. For accomplishing this goal, first, we explicate the definition of state terrorism and its specific bases and developments within India. Second, we propose a case study of the Maoist insurgency in India, displaying the use of state and outsourced terrorism by the Indian state apparatus to repress this movement.

Defining state terrorism

I think three empirical examples may trigger our understanding of the possibility of state terrorism: The Thermidorian Reaction during the French Revolution, the French policies concerning its Algerian colony, and the British Raj 'law and order' rhetoric and policies in India. According to the journalist, political activist, and radical egalitarian François-Noël Babeuf, the new Thermidorian government under Tallien's leadership, from 27 July 1794 to 01 November 1795, had become a terrorist regime, since any political system that relied on the undermining of civil rights, the constriction of freedom of speech, and the sacrifice of an immense number of people in the name of security and private property is terrorist (in ERLENBUSCH-ANDERSON, 2018, p. 45-52). The French project for transforming Algeria into a penal colony for France's criminal population and a settler colony to be populated with France's indigent classes can also shed some light on this investigation.

Rooted in the science of colonial war, Tocqueville constructed a scheme for allowing French colonisers to exert domain over Algeria and its autochthonous population. In his 1841s *Essays* (2001, p. 69-71) and 1847s *First report on Algeria* (2001, p. 135-8), Tocqueville builds a plan to force the Algerian nomadic and 'barbarian' Muslims to remain in a restricted territory under perennial surveillance, separating them from the European settlers (through enclosure and fortification). To achieve this ambition, occasional demonstrations of force into Muslim territories would be necessary to create a permanent display of colonial power, which would make regular interventions unnecessary. State terrorism is more complex in this case since it applies constant structural violence over its targets to minimise the use of direct violence and countering an 'internal' enemy present in an 'external' land.

In the twentieth century, notably after the Indochina war, the French state bureaucracy developed a new theory of revolutionary war to defeat guerrilla fighters, employing measures of constant surveillance and continuous threat of violence. Yet, because of the criminalisation of war in modern international law, the French rhetoric has changed, as they would no longer fight wars but pursue police actions against troublemakers. Also, owing to new international sources criminalising terrorism⁴, the deployment of terrorist actions to destabilise colonial states has become an international crime according to the oppressors – *criminal terrorism*. State counterterrorist actions, hence, became would be

² Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59) was a British colonialist who supported a western educational system in the Indian subcontinent based on the English language as opposed to an 'Orientalist' organisation, grounded in Sanskrit and Persian.

³ This derogatory term is used to refer to the Indian subcontinent natives who imitate or are deeply influenced by western lifestyle, culture and thinking.

⁴ The 1935s Fifth International Conference for the Unification of Penal Law and the 1936s League of Nations Resolution in combination created a new category of terrorism as a special offense against state representatives, thus fixing the meaning of terrorism as antistate violence but allowing some flexibility for states to identify terrorism.

apprehended as *polemic terrorism* (ERLENBUSCH-ANDERSON, 2018, p. 106-117). Although the concept of state terrorism has been developing fluidly, these two examples expose the necessity of analysing terrorism as an essential concept for comprehending our current reality.

When we analyse the Indian state actions touching on its domestic insurgencies, we realise the Indian state apparatus is acting as the Thermidorian government. For instance, this bureaucracy has been crushing the Maoist insurgency through general and indiscriminate kinetic operations, fostering a systematic disrespect of human rights. But contrary to the Thermidorian government, state actions in India are held against an internal enemy (the 'other'), who is constructed rooted in caste (Dalits⁵, for instance), class (the poor) and ethnicity (Adivasi⁶, for example). We can trace the origin of these policies to the British Raj, which is an indispensable source for understanding the current state of things in India. Indeed, the British colonial heritage is indispensable to understanding both present-day secular modernist and religious revivalist projects.

In both modernist and revivalist proposals, the Indian state apparatus appears to be a living tool, adapting itself no matter what project is being enacted, always striving for survival. The same divide and rule policies that resulted in egregious material consequences (i.e., the partition massacres) and ideological constructions (i.e., the over-masculinisation of Muslims and over-feminisation of Hindus), have been reinforced and reworked since India's independence (LEIDIG, 2020, p. 231). In this light, British colonialism exacerbated the autonomous native resistance in that epoch. The relative preservation of the British Raj bureaucracy and its *modus operandi* has been perpetuating and creating additional issues in a post-independence scenario. Although we should not minimise this point, we will constrict our main focal point to state terrorism.

When violence threatened to expose the fictionality of the British 'juridical order' in India, the British colonial state often invented 'exceptional' notions such as sedition, martial law and terrorism. These attempts had the intention of depoliticising and dehumanising the actions of those who opposed the British 'order'. Also, the British tried to show the 'apolitical' aspects of anti-colonial revolutionary activities. For instance, during World War 1 (WW1), the British adopted 'the rule of law' to promulgate the Defence of India Act 1915, from which the police would have wide powers to arrest, search and force people out of provinces. Further, the Revolutionary Crimes Act 1919 (the Rowlatt Act) implemented the rule of executive decree and extension of military authority's wartime powers into the civil sphere. After WW1, British colonial rule embraced the term terrorism to describe any attempt at overcoming its rule in India (2021, p. 43-50).

The post-independent Indian state apparatus controlled by *the brown sahibs* have adapted and transformed these colonial policies and rhetoric. Referring to what we call India's state terrorism, two primordial contexts are basic for the adoption of this concept. First, the use of direct violence, through general and indiscriminate kinetic operations when dealing with domestic insurgencies systemically disrespects Indians human rights, for instance, during the Kashmir (CRS, 2002, p. 23-25; GANIE, 2020, p. 3-4; JACOB, 2016, p. 21-23) and Khalistan insurgencies (CHOPRA, 2010, p. 142-143). Going beyond this comprehension, by applying the Synthetic Terrorism concept, a subtype of state terrorism, a sort of outsourced terrorism⁷, has been employed to handle the Maoist problem - amongst other methods. This method not only increases the knowledge on the battlefield, given that the state can count on local 'soldiers', but also provides deniability for the state on potential atrocities perpetrated by these groups.

That is a stratagem adopted, for example, by the US during the Afghanistan War, when it backed the Afghan Mujahideen to resist the Soviet invasion in 1979. However, as we already know, this financial support has had profound consequences regarding our present reality, considering that Al-Qaeda and other Islamic Jihadist groups are direct consequences of these US 'investments' (TANKEL, 2010; CRS, 2002). The Indian state, at a certain level, has been

⁵ The term Dalit defines people belonging to the lowest caste in India, previously characterised as 'untouchable'.

⁶ Adivasi is the collective term for tribes of the Indian subcontinent.

⁷ We call outsourced terrorism the artificial creation of counter-insurgent groups for 'aiding' state forces to annihilate 'terrorists'.

preparing itself in case its sponsored vigilante groups turn against it (SHAH; PETTIGREW, 2012). Rooted in these discussions, we analyse from now the Maoist movement and India's state counterinsurgent (terrorist) policies to deal with it.

State and outsourced terrorism against the Indian Maoists

The Indian state has been reproducing British rhetoric and methods to date. For instance, the Indian bureaucracy has been rhetorically considering the Maoist insurgency as a menace to India's existence as a state. Although this countermovement was born to (coercively) 'introduce' subalterns into politics, they have turned into the 'other' who must be destroyed by the usage of any means necessary, chiefly direct violence. So, while India's structural violence is enforced as 'order', the direct violence for overcoming it is criminalised as antipolitical and terrorist. For comprehending these continuities and specificities, we analyse the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh, exposing India's state terrorism through the analyses of systemic and direct violence coupled with outsourced terrorism within this region.

The Maoist group and its force within India is a direct repercussion of the persistence of the peasant struggle for better conditions of life, from the Mughal period to date. Exploitative structures largely benefited landlords who had control over the lives of the peasants within their domains. The Second World War strengthened this prior issue since peasants received even less for their products and paid more for their necessities. Landlords and Deshmukhs⁸, consequently, seized as much land as possible, which provoked a tremendous rise in the number of landless peasants. That is the main background to the Telangana movement in the 1940s, which allowed the expel of various landlords, land redistribution, the abolition of forced labour services and the building of a powerful peasant militia. Even though the Communist Party of India (CPI) did not start the movement, its ideological and strategic leadership were indispensable to the organisation of the fight against the British Raj and, afterwards, the Indian state (MEHRA, 2000, p. 40-41). But British colonialism is not the only source of the tragic peasant situation in India.

The Cold War provoked numerous splits among India's communists, especially touching on the different paths to gain state power: i) the European social-democratic way, rooted in a potential democratic agreement between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for constructing a welfare state; ii) the Marxist-Leninist path, focused on the proletariat as the major revolutionary force; iii) and the Maoist route focused on the peasant as the primordial social class to enact revolution in agrarian societies. Therefore, the Maoist counter-hegemonic movement is a complex consequence of a gamut of developments, from colonialism, passing through capitalist hegemony, to socialist revolutionary counter-movements (MEHRA, 2000, p. 41-42). Indian independence in 1947 and the peasant importance to this movement, coupled with Gandhian influence over the Congress party, allowed the donation and redistribution of lands to the peasants by the state. Further, Soviet pressure on the CPI for withdrawing from the movement resulted in the end of the counterinsurgency. Yet, state-leading-land reforms were not fully implemented, notably owing to the zamindars'⁹ resistance to giving their lands away to peasants (MEHRA, 2000, p. 38-39). Then, the 1967's Naxal movement emerged in West Bengal, where a government coalition headed by the CPI (Marxist) was in power (MUKHERJI, 2012, p. 9-11): "The eruption in 1967 of peasant violence (...) proved that though rooted in the country's feudal and colonial past, the seeds of a peasant uprising of the Srikakulam kind had remained in independent India despite the warning signals given by the Telangana movement two decades back" (MEHRA, 2000, p. 42-43).

During the 1970s and the 1980s, almost the same background remained in place, but the Maoists had learned from their past errors. The 'rebirth' of the Maoists in the 1990s and 2000s resulted from a wide range of factors, such as the aggressive neoliberal agenda supported by the Indian state (MEHRA, 2000, p. 52-55). Some consequences of these

⁸ Revenue collectors with colossal power, who were indispensable for different regimes within India since the British Raj.

⁹ Zamindars, which means landowner in Persian, were secular autonomous and semiautonomous rulers who both dominated large portions of territories rooted in hereditary rights and had almost complete control over peasants located within their lands. They were considered as the backbone of India's colonisation, due to their legitimacy functioning as intermediaries of surplus extraction from the Indian population.

policies are still influencing present-day India: 20% of the population was raised to the middle class while the rest of India turned into a 'republic of hunger'; twenty thousand farmers killed themselves in the 2000s; 75% of the population (2007) had a per capita income of fewer than 20 rupees a day; extensive malnutrition of the population; massive destruction of the environment; and atrocious violation of human rights (MUKHERJI, 2012, p. 19-20). And these developments strongly affected the Maoist insurgency.

The Indian Maoists have a significant presence in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and, to a lesser extent, Karnataka, and West Bengal. In each of these states, the local configuration of power and Maoist demands vary. For instance, in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, Maoists have been struggling with local landlords in defence of the poor because of the feudal background and sharp social stratification (class and caste) within these regions. Meanwhile, in the Adivasi-dominated regions within Jharkhand, Orissa, and Chhattisgarh, the fundamental concerns of the people are government policies and forest departments' exploitation, which means struggling against the state is their priority (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 152).

Primordially in the states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, large mineral areas and forests inhabited by scheduled tribes have been seen as targets both by the state and national and multinational companies, notably since the liberalised national mining policy in 2003. The Maoists are an obstacle to rapid industrialisation and land acquisition notwithstanding, they are also a good excuse for massive attacks in the region by the state apparatus and 'artificial' paramilitary groups within these regions. Finally, the Maoist unification in 2004¹⁰ also played a decisive role in this resurgence (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 153-154; SAHOO, 2019, p. 3).

'It is likely that without the ideological, organisational and leadership support from the 'left', these movements, like many others during the colonial period, would have been crushed much earlier'. From this viewpoint, the countermovement from the exploited has ever been present, as the pauperisation of this community has never been solved, owing chiefly to the state complicity (the Mughal, the British and the Indian) with landlords. The systemic violence against the subaltern within India also generates violence from them and consequently from the state apparatus since the upper classes control and/or have the support of the state. However, given that the state machinery cannot respond to these challenges, landlords develop their defence system. As a result, people are often trapped in a whirlpool of violence (MEHRA, 2000, p. 60-62). It is fundamental to connect the use of state terrorism and the different perspectives about the Maoist movement within India. The security viewpoint sees the Maoist movement as a force of oppression, which impedes the development of affected areas, terrorises local populations, establishes secret terror operations, exploits the Adivasi peasantry, uses brutal force, spreads into mining areas to get cash, and acts by grievance (SHAH, 2013, p. 482-486). The Maoists, therefore, are regarded as terrorists, not as insurgents, as they overwhelmingly depend on terror nowadays (MEHRA, 2000, p. 62). Not surprisingly, this understanding is the main rhetoric of the state apparatus and those governments in power.

Differently from the previous interpretation, the liberal perspective maintains that the Maoists have a potent influence because of the lack of development and poverty in these places - 'the root cause perspective'. However, this theory neither explains why other poor areas in India are not affected by these conflicts nor the influence and active role of the middle-class peasants and upper castes in the insurgent movement (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 150). In addition, this type of perspective apprehends subalterns as passive people forced to join the movement, thus putting aside the existence of essential features about and feelings towards the movement, such as the force of the Maoist utopia, the importance of its local agency and organisational presence, as well as sacrifice and love, respectively (SHAH; PETTIGREW, 2012; SHAH, 2013; 2021). In particular, according to the 'sandwich theory', Adivasi are compressed between the Maoist and state violence, thus being obliged to join one side or another.

¹⁰ The merging of the Communist Party of India (Maoist-Leninist), the People's War Group, Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) and 40 other armed factions into the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004 enhanced the Maoist position in the conflict.

Finally, the structural violence perspective considers the violence within Maoist regions as heterogeneous and based on different local power configurations. From this viewpoint, while in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar feudal and sharp social stratification defines the focus of the conflict on local landlords against subalterns, in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa exploitation by the government's police and forest departments determines the primordial focal point of the struggle on state forces against the oppressed (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 152). The security perspective is the most seductive rhetoric for a state apparatus that mirror the methods of its former British master (and the teacher), dominating through economic and extra-economic exploitative extraction and considering a part of the population as expendable for achieving state interests (GUHA, 1985).

The Indian state has been acting since independence as its former British masters, applying *divide and rule* policies against anyone and any group which may oppose it. Going even further, state terrorism is a common practice for achieving state (elites) objectives in India. The application of systemic violence against domestic insurgency groups within the country, mainly by organising extremely violent kinetic operations and supporting 'artificial' paramilitary groups of resistance, has been condemning India to an unstoppable circle of violence. For explaining these actions, the Indian state constantly refers to its enemies as terrorists and anti-national, thus fully applying Rene Girard's 'scapegoat mechanism'¹¹. As a result, insurgent movements and their participants have become religious and cultural enemies of the Indian nation. While in the first section we deal with 'pure' state terrorism (direct and systemic violence), in the second section we highlight the so-called outsourced terrorism, primordially dealing with the Salwa Judum (Purification Hunt), a vigilante group in Chhattisgarh.

Systemic and direct violence: the all-in Operation Green Hunt

A general state's rhetoric regarding the Maoists has been expanding since its formal inception during the 1940s Telangana countryside uprising and the Naxalite movement in 1967. By copying and adapting itself to its creator, India's state apparatus has been criminalising insurgent movements and intensively repressing anyone that challenges its authority. Nevertheless, this egregious discourse has been strengthened by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), mainly in Chhattisgarh. In 2003, under Chief Minister Raman Singh of the BJP, the state government of Chhattisgarh started a more serious counterinsurgency offensive against the Maoists. In this light, conforming to Sahoo (2019, p. 3), in 2005, the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act (CSPSA) was established for providing greater flexibility for security forces to arrest suspect Maoists without hard evidence. In April 2006, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called the Maoist movement 'the single biggest internal-security challenge ever faced by our country'. It is indispensable to highlight, however, that Singh was in the past a member of the Congress Party, which exposes the contradictions in the conflation of strategic ambitions/goals of what are essentially rival political parties. So, when the terrain was ready, an all-out offensive by the government of India and paramilitary forces in the region was launched, called Operation Green Hunt (2009), a kinetic intervention meant to liberate various forested areas from Maoist control (SHAPIRO; EYNDE; INGRAM; AGAWU, 2017, p. 11).

The centre was reluctant to acknowledge the existence of this operation, as the official discourse maintained that the Maoist threat has been dealt with by 'hearts and minds' approaches, not direct violence. However, it has been fully engaging itself in this operation (MUKHERJI, 2012; SHAPIRO; EYNDE; INGRAM; AGAWU, 2017). During this effort, the joint official forces have been pursuing a clear-hold-build model, with many accusations of brutality against civilians and sexual violence against local women perpetrated by paramilitary forces (SHAPIRO; EYNDE; INGRAM; AGAWU, 2017). Killings committed by the state and vigilante groups have been recorded or assigned to the Naxalite, and extrajudicial

¹¹ Scapegoating is the practice of singling out a person or group for unmerited blame and consequent negative treatment. Consequently, this construction of the 'other' is transformed into a mechanism for unifying the self (a particular group/community within that society).

assassinations have been reported as ‘encounters’¹² (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 159; SAHOO, 2019). The Indian government, even though its official rhetoric denies it, has converted the Naxalite ‘problem’ almost exclusively into a security issue (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 156).

In Chhattisgarh, the government of Raman Singh sought to fight the Naxalites by strengthening security and combat infrastructure. To enact this goal, it appointed K.P.S. Gill, former police chief of Punjab, an adviser for counterinsurgency. Gill is recognised for his anti-terrorist means, which are defined by three important requirements: the quality of local intelligence, the capacity for synchronised operations and the degree of political resolve. Rooted in these requirements, he seeks to surgically neutralise as many terrorists as possible, as quickly as possible, and for as long as possible. As regards the Khalistan movement in Punjab, this project seemed to serve in the short term, as the concept of a separate Sikh homeland had practically no grassroots-level support in the local population (MAHADEVAN, 2008). The focus on kinetic approaches has had long-term consequences in Punjab, however, since it has created resentment not only among the local population but also among the Sikh diaspora worldwide (CHOPRA, 2010; SINGH; PUREWAL, 2013; FAIR, 2020). So, aiming attention solely at the supply side may work when dealing with terrorist groups, but can be catastrophic to counter insurgent groups, mainly those with vigorous help from local populations.

By not focusing on the demand side, the government has been triggering deep resentment among those it was supposed to protect (HULTQUIST, 2017). In Punjab, the lack of political compromises for addressing the root causes of the movement is currently showing its dangerousness (HULTQUIST, 2017; FAIR, 2020). Touching on the Maoist issue, the influence of root causes on the force of the movement is even greater, so this method may prove calamitous for constructing long-term resilience. It is curious to realise that, even when the government seeks to build infrastructure in Maoist areas, it does to expand the mobility of the police and security forces (SAHOO, 2019). This issue has been strengthening since the right-wing National Democratic Alliance (NDA) got into power as a majority in the 2014 general elections. Although state terrorism in India cannot be identified with a specific government, neither the Congress nor the BJP, the latter has been more effective in employing India’s state apparatus of war to clean the path for constructing a lasting schema in Maoist regions. We will further detail this conundrum in the conclusion of this inquiry.

The modernisation of police, upgrade of intelligence, the building of infrastructure and some development instruments along with the panic rhetoric created by the government and amplified by the media have allowed, for example, a massive crackdown of the Maoist forces in Andhra Pradesh (SAHOO, 2019). There is an ‘uneasy marriage’ between mass mobilisation and armed struggle within the Maoist movement, considering that state counterterrorist policies oblige the excessive use of the latter by Maoists, which harms the former and makes it harder for the construction of concrete new reality (SHAH, 2021). Beyond the brutality of the government counter-terrorist campaign, state institutions have been failing to provide justice for the victims of state terrorism. From this perspective, the parliament has offered little protection for the people, independent statutory commissions have failed their goals, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has been silent, and the Supreme Court has difficulties persecuting those perpetrators protected by state bureaucracy (SUNDAR, 2012, p. 160-161). This state terrorism, however, has another dangerous facet, which is the government nurturing and strengthening of vigilante groups in areas with Maoist presence (Outsourced Terrorism). In this inquiry, we will deal with the Salwa Judum (Purification Hunt) in the Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh.

Outsourced terrorism

Before dealing directly with the Salwa Judum, it is crucial to expose the relations between this group and other military and paramilitary forces within Chhattisgarh. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the supplementary force

¹² The so-called ‘encounters killings’ violate the fundamental rights of potential criminals, as these illegal procedures prevent their judgment before a judicial court.

of the national police. However, it suffers from human resources shortage, given that those are considered very dangerous posts. As a means through which to surmount this issue, a local militia called Special Police Officers (SPOS) was formally set up to aid the CRPF, even though the former are perceived as expendable and replaceable by the latter. As a result, there are no substantial investments in training or resources (SAHOO, 2019).

This force is normally composed of the poor youth of the region, normally ancient Maoist rebels, who search for survival in an extremely poor area. Switching from the Maoists to the SPOS for earning a stable salary can be the only option for survival. Therefore, armed by the state to fight against the Maoists, this informal institution bolsters the Indian state's military capabilities and allows official deniability as already pinpointed. The Salwa Judum is the third component of this infamous triad (SAHOO, 2019). The Salwa Judum is the brainchild of Mahendra Karma, a former Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) politician who was kicked out for poor performance in 1981. Then, he shifted to the Congress Party, representing Dantewada for a long period.

His chief aim is to exploit natural resources for personal benefit, so the Salwa Judum is a cover to accomplish this purpose. In 1990, Karma led the Jan Jagran Abhiyan (JJA), an anti-Naxal group that resisted the creation of Sanghams (Maoist-village-level organisations) in villages. Still, according to this author, 'the JJA went to villages demanding that senior sangham leaders were handed over. If the villages refused, they were harassed, threatened, and sometimes burned. The JJA was morally supported by BJP leadership, but there was nonofficial funding or arms given from the state'. With little local support, this group faded away in 2002. However, aided by the government of Chhattisgarh, this movement was revived and renamed Salwa Judum in 2005. This movement is commonly framed as a spontaneous village uprising against the Maoists (MIKLIAN, 2012, p. 289-290).

These groups are also involved in other criminal activities. From the obtainment of important know-how of the region, coupled with state funding, these groups started funding personal armies. As a result, they could provide protection and make mineral-rich areas safer for industrial extraction and then gather even more people and weapons (quantitatively and qualitatively), which have been growing this illegal 'business'. In particular, the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC, a state-owned enterprise) is involved in this scheme, not to mention that it is also a great polluter of rivers. It is opportune to highlight that no SPO nor Salwa Judum members were charged or arrested for a single crime from 2005 until 2008 (MIKLIAN, 2012, p. 301-302).

As a result, over 50 per cent of the total casualties of the Maoist conflict in India have happened in Chhattisgarh, with the displacement of over three hundred thousand people. Further, the manipulation of the local population by the state is triggering anti-government sentiments and creating resentment. Although the human costs of this strategy are enormous, this experience has been replicated in other states, where other counter-insurgent groups are built to fight against the Maoists. The declaration of the illegality of the Salwa Judum by India's Supreme Court in 2011 has not curtailed this impetus. Ergo, the killing of any 'Maoist', real or perceived couple with the 'warlordisation'¹³ (SHAH; PETTIGREW, 2012, p. 283-284) of the conflict landscape can be considered as the two main egregious consequences of these vigilant actions (MIKLIAN, 2012, p. 442-458).

Outsourced terrorism has been profoundly harmful to the subaltern Indian population, as outsourcing the repression of insurgent groups to vigilant groups generates an anarchical battlefield, where the civil population has no possibility of claiming neutrality or being secure at all. It ruins even more deeply the social structure of the affected societies and groups involved in the struggle, eliminating any possibility for a long-term conflict resolution, since everyone is concerned and polarisation reigns even within families. These methods appear to take place because these populations are mostly unimportant to the Indian state, given that they are 'the lowest other' within this nation: Adivasi and Dalits. Grounded in our definition of state and outsourced terrorism, we display the Indian state terrorist policies

¹³ Warlords coercively control assets and territories among themselves. For constructing, maintaining and developing their power, they redirect funds provided to handle refugee camps (provided by the Indian State) and protective or ground-cleaning services (provided by multinationals) into their personal armies.

when dealing with counterinsurgencies, primordially when these movements are formed by ‘disposable populations’.

Conclusion

We have been capturing the continuities and innovations of post-independence India’s state terrorism in comparison with the British Raj terrorist rhetoric and practices. Grounded in the Foucauldian concept of *dispositif*, in the first section, when defining state terrorism, we show the fluidity of states’ coercive arrangements when dealing with countermovement and individuals who threaten the existence of the oppressive *status quo*. From India’s independence to date, we can feature heinous constancies, particularly ‘law and order’ rhetoric and extermination policies towards insurgencies. The Maoist countermovement has been often considered, since its inception, as a terrorist, not an insurgent group by Indian authorities in power. In the second section, when analysing the Maoist insurrection in Chhattisgarh, we confirm the existence of state terrorist responses against this rebel group. However, the state apparatus has been adapting itself to India’s contemporaneous context, always searching for maintaining an image of normality.

According to Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (2001), we must understand concepts by considering the larger context in which they are used and gain meaning. Grounded in this, the meaning of terrorism does not exist in the world independently of human thought and practice. By universal characterisation and definitions of terrorism, not only are genealogical approaches undermined but also considerations about the legitimation and justification of certain acts by oppressed peoples. From this perspective, we have considered state terrorism and outsourced terrorism as plausible basis for analysing the Indian state policies. Although not monolithic, the ideological and institutional construction of the state apparatus during the British Raj seems to affect the present-day repressive methods applied by the Indian state for countering its internal enemies.

Even though the state apparatus and Indian elites are independent entities, they are profoundly interrelated and have produced and triggered state terrorism policies in a wide range of different situations, such as in Punjab, Kashmir, and Maoist regions, given that repression is commonly severe and indiscriminate. Keeping and expanding power through violence has been the foremost goal, both when related to the Congress or the BJP, even though for the latter the perpetuation of circles of violence may be even more indispensable for governing. Long-term solutions for achieving peace are not the goal, but a short-term quick fix for gaining votes and elections. That seems to change under the BJP government.

It is no surprise that, in 2019, areas in which people once followed Maoist diktats of boycotting elections brought Narendra Modi’s BJP Political Hinduism (Hindutva) to an electoral victory. Through the state terrorism apparatus, the BJP has been seeking to expand the ‘self’ by incorporating some ‘other’, especially by constructing Hindutva schools for Adivasi peoples. That appears to be another mimicry of the British Raj policies, in particular the Christian missionary approach towards these autochthonies (SHAH, 2021, p. 80). State terrorism and its new current forms in India have always cleared the path for domination and the extraction of surplus value from subaltern territories. However, the BJP, different from the Congress, is using this bureaucratic power to clear the path for building a long-term solution for the Maoist conflict, which is not thought to enact peace but to develop and enhance an ethnic-nationalist Hindu state in India, where the only options for the ‘other’ are to be destroyed or assimilated into the ‘self’.

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