ISSN: 2456-9550
JMC
November 2019

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Volume 3, 2019

THE JMC REVIEW

An Interdisciplinary Social Science Journal of Criticism, Practice and Theory

JESUS AND MARY COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
NEW DELHI-110021

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, COSMOPOLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Among the many complexities of contemporary India is the steady increase in the numbers, frequency, pervasiveness and intensity, of structural encounters between diverse, even contradictory forces and agencies. These include, among others, caste, communal, linguistic, and ethnic encounters; but perhaps the most fundamental, persistent and pervasive kind of encounter, especially over the last few decades, has been the quadripolar ones between (a) left-wing extremist (LWE) forces, also referred to generically as 'Naxals', 'Naxalites' and/or 'Maoists'; (b) the Indian state; (c) the tribal populations of central and western India, especially in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra; and (d) large multinational industrial corporations, of both Indian and foreign origin, seeking to establish operations in these areas. The multivalent, multilayered and often overlapping and intersecting nature of these encounters is one important reason for their characterisation as 'cosmopolitical'. The other is the persistence and pervasiveness of certain specific dynamics of encounter, even in and through this diversity of kinds of encounters. This article addresses some of these issues.

Key words: indigenous, tribal, cosmopolitics, development, left wing extremists.

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I. Introduction

Among the many complexities of contemporary India is the steady increase in the numbers, frequency, pervasiveness and intensity of structural encounters between diverse, even contradictory, forces and agencies. These include, among others, caste, communal, linguistic

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and ethnic encounters; but perhaps the most fundamental, persistent and pervasive kind of encounter, especially over the last few decades, has been the quadripolar ones between (a) Left-wing extremist (LWE) forces, also referred to generically as 'Naxals', 'Naxalites' and/or 'Maoists'; (b) the Indian state; (c) the tribal populations of central and western India, especially in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra; and (d) large, multinational industrial corporations, of both Indian and foreign origin, seeking to establish operations in these areas. The multivalent, multilayered and often overlapping and intersecting nature of these encounters is one important reason for their characterisation as 'cosmopolitical'. The other is the persistence and pervasiveness of certain specific dynamics in this particular instance, even in and through this diversity of kinds of encounters. In order to elaborate these points, however, we need to first dwell a little on the encounters themselves—to get a sense of the context that led to their build-up and occurrence. In what follows, we will offer a brief sketch of that context.

II. Context

This context is probably best understood as the current phase of an evolving cosmopolitical dynamic that had its inception in the 1980s. It began with the opening out of the Indian airwaves to private broadcasters, many of whom were, and remain, global players (e.g., the Star network, BBC, CNN, etc.). The subsequent exposure to, and adaptation of, global (read 'western') cultures, arguably served as an ideational and discursive preparation for the further, more intensive, forms of economic liberalisation that began in the 1990s (Rajagopal 2001). One persistent and compelling dimension of this process was the increasing pressure on the central and state governments towards rolling back the state and facilitating privatisation. This pressure came from both, the 'national bourgeoisie' that Fanon describes as 'a conveyor belt for capitalism' that 'revels in the role of agent in its dealings with the Western bourgeoisie' (Fanon 1967: 100–101); as well as from the multinationals that this national bourgeoisie dealt with, and were agents of.

In practical terms, this not only meant allowing international corporates to privately own or lease land towards the extraction of the natural resources in it, but also that the state would facilitate and support such private claims. It is in this sense that the cosmopolitical dynamics of imperialism, first initiated in the colonial period, return at the turn of the millennium as a form of internal colonisation, with the Indian state, overwhelmingly composed of this very 'national bourgeoisie', serving as the neo-imperial engine through which transnational

corporates could leverage their way into lands that were otherwise explicitly recognised as tribal.

Tribal ownership of their lands is constitutionally protected, under the 5th Schedule of the Indian Constitution (UNDP 2017). For several decades since Independence, however, these tribal areas, especially in the states noted above, have also been the recruitment base for LWE organisations, beginning with the famous Naxalbari uprising of 1967 (Dubey 2013: 4). The organisational skills of these outfits often served as the only real protection for the tribal peoples from being exploited by local small-scale landlords and businesses. These insurgent movements proved to be the biggest obstacle to the entry of the large transnational corporates into these territories—but they also served, ironically, to provide the perfect excuse to violate the constitutional provisions to protect tribal lands. By declaring the Maoists the 'greatest threat to internal security in the country' (Singh 2006), the state could initiate the massive paramilitary action that came to be known as 'Operation Green Hunt' (OGH), which was effectively aimed at large-scale displacement of the tribal peoples from their lands by labelling them Maoists. It also permitted the completely unjustifiable imposition of the extra-constitutional provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) (UAPA) Act, 1967 (amended most recently in August 2019)‡ on thousands of tribal peoples—a repressive measure with far-reaching consequences.

We will engage in greater detail shortly, with the continuities and discontinuities of this transition from 19th century imperialism to 21st century corporate capitalism. For now, we must note that the alacrity, persistence and diligence with which the Indian state undertook this role is less a sign of governmental efficiency, and more an indicator of the massive financial stakes involved here. From 1997 onwards, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to the tune of trillions of US dollars have been signed between the state and various transnational corporates for the minerals in these tribal lands. Till September 2009, a sum of ₹6,69,388 crore—14 per cent of the total pledged investments in the country—was in the 'troubled areas'. Arundhati Roy, in 2009, wrote:

‡ Originally, only organisations could be labelled 'terrorist' (according to the UAPA), and about 24 organisations were banned as fronts for the Communist Party of India (Maoist), which of course was the first to be banned as 'terrorist', in this regard. The 2019 amendment extends this power to allow the tagging of individuals as 'terrorists' too (NDTV 2019).

> the financial value of the bauxite deposits of Orissa alone is 2.27 trillion dollars. (More than twice India's Gross Domestic Product.) That was at 2004 prices. At today's prices it would be about 4 trillion dollars…. That's just the story of the bauxite in Orissa. Expand the four trillion dollars to include the value of the millions of tonnes of high-quality iron ore in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and the 28 other precious mineral resources, including uranium, limestone, dolomite, coal, tin, granite, marble, copper, diamond, gold, quartzite, corundum, beryl, alexandrite, silica, fluorite and garnet. Add to that the power plants, the dams, the highways, the steel and cement factories, the aluminium smelters, and all the other infrastructure projects that are part of the hundreds of MoUs (more than 90 in Jharkhand alone) that have been signed. That gives us a rough outline of the scale of the operation and the desperation of the stakeholders (Roy 2009).

It is no surprise then, that there is a close nexus between the state and the corporates whose interests it seeks to protect.

A decade ago, Felix Padel offered an instance of the rapport between the state and corporates:

> In December 2009 when the Chief Minister of Odisha went to Kalinga Nagar to open a new police station and he publicly thanked the Sterlite Company for paying for the police station. In that moment (it was reported by *Times of India*), you see it for real that the police are funded by the mining companies. So I stayed in West Odisha where Vedanta is very powerful. They have a hold on the police there.§

But the state itself has a deep interest in mining, it is seen, as

> a major economic activity in India and accounted for 2.3% of the country's gross value added (GVA) for the first quarter of 2017–2018. The sector provides the basic raw materials required by several manufacturing and infrastructure industries in the country (Nanda 2019).

§ https://owlcation.com/social-sciences/An-Interview-with-Felix-Padel-the-Great-Great-Grandson-of-Charles-Darwin-and-Renowned-Anthropologist

The 2019 *National Mineral Policy* document is explicit about these interests and the privatisation of mining exploration and extraction.

> The private sector would be encouraged to take up exploration activities. Government agencies will expend public funds particularly in areas where private sector investments are not forthcoming due to reasons such as high uncertainties. States may be mandated to create dedicated funding for boosting exploration activities without additional burden on miners.**

The financial stakes that have been documented above, suggest that the state's war against its own citizens in the area is being waged to secure the interest of the multinational corporations that have a stake in the mineral rich areas, rather than to ensure development, of even the most problematic kind.

For the past two decades then, this war has taken the form of an undeclared but concerted and intensifying armed campaign against the tribal peoples in parts of Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and particularly, in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa, alleging that they are Left-wing extremists/Naxalites/Maoists.†† By 2005, this campaign had been intensified quite significantly in the various states; by 2009, it was run as a federally coordinated operation code-named 'Operation Green Hunt' (OGH), an operation that entailed the deployment and cooperative action of approximately 2.5 lakh police and paramilitary personnel across the various states. These state forces worked in tandem with central armed forces to 'search and comb', 'clear, hold and develop' the jungles of the 'Maoist menace'.‡‡ Even as the then Home Minister, P. Chidambaram, in response to building public opinion, termed OGH a

** https://mines.gov.in/writereaddata/Content/NMP12032019.pdf

†† Commentators have noted that those killed by the police are retrospectively termed Naxals. For instance, Nandini Sundar writes that 'The police often inflate figures of Naxalite losses, or try to pass of the killing of villagers as Naxalites to reduce the morale of the rebels' (Sundar 2019: 305).

‡‡ Significant protest to OGH was made in 2011 by CPI General Scretary A. B. Bardhan, who said that 'The Army should not be used to fight a war against our own people. The Indian Air Force is also being mobilised…. It's a war of extermination against those who hold the red banner.' (//economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/5082472.cms?from=mdr&utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)'. Again, the then Air Chief Marshall P.V . Naik, said that 'the military—Air Force, Army and Navy—are trained for maximum lethality… it is not fair to use the Air Force within our borders…. The Naxals are basically our own people' (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/IAF-chief-not-in-favour-of-use-of-air-power-against-Naxals/articleshow/5770051.cms)

media invention, over 20,000 troops were stationed and fighting in Bastar district alone.§§ By 2013, this number was up to 85,000.***

Since 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) formalised this warfare and identified districts that are to be covered under their Security Related Expenditure scheme (SRE). These include the trijunction of the three southern states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.††† Therefore, the now corporatised state has followed a multi-pronged strategy that simultaneously involves 'security and development'. The main focus, however, is on 'security', as the website of the Left-wing Extremism Division of the MHA reveals:

> The Central Government closely monitors the situation and supplements and coordinates their efforts in several ways. These include providing the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs); sanction of India Reserve (IR) battalions, setting up of Counter Insurgency and Anti Terrorism (CIAT) schools; modernisation and upgradation of the State Police and their Intelligence apparatus; reimbursement of security related expenditure under the Security-related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme; providing helicopters for anti-LWE operations, assistance in training of State Police through the Ministry of Defence, the Central Police Organisations and the Bureau of Police Research and Development; sharing of Intelligence; facilitating inter-State coordination; assistance in community policing and civic action programmes etc.‡‡‡

The steady intensification of this armed repression is evident in the figures of just the last four years. While 46 encounters took place in 2017, there were 36 in 2016 and 30 in 2015. By March of 2018, 19 encounters had occurred, and 39 were killed in just two encounters in Kasanasur jungle and Kapewancha area of Rajaram Khandla post (Rajput 2018).

In April 2018, the elite C-60 commando force of Gadchiroli gunned down at least 16 '"extremists" including seven women'. This elite C-60 force, which is now second only to the lethal greyhounds in terms of 'capability and success', is responsible for what the MHA) in 2018 termed the 'best encounter in recent times' (Arunima 2018). At the encounter at Gadchiroli, state forces deployed heavy artillery that included Under Barrel Grenade

§§ The Bastar Zone is a 40,000 square kilometre area in Chhattisgarh, and home to the best iron ore in the world.
*** https://www.indiastrategic.in/topstories2096_CRPF_fights_toughest_battle_anti-naxal_operations.htm
††† (https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178704)
‡‡‡ https://mha.gov.in/division_of_mha/left-wing-extremism-division

Launchers (UGBLs), drones, assault rifles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and they used night vision goggles, thermal imaging reflex sights, bullet resistant jackets, helmets and shields. Besides being given this hi-tech equipment, the men, according to an unnamed official, 'are undergoing training by NSG (National Security Guard)'§§§ (Express News Service 2018). These measures have begun to bear real fruit, transforming the potential promises of the MoUs into actual gain: till December, 2017, 33 mineral blocks have been successfully auctioned, having a total value of estimated resource of 1,69,391 crore (Mines 2018: 7).

This resource grab has gone hand in hand with the initiative to set up Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which again involves land grab. According to the SEZ Act 2005, a Special Economic Zone is an especially demarcated geographical area that is owned and operated by a private company, which is deemed to be foreign territory for the purpose of trade, duties and tariffs. It is a 'regulatory regime distinct from the rest of the economy (most often customs and fiscal rules, but potentially covering other relevant regulations, such as foreign ownership rules, access to land or employment rules)' (UNCTAD 2019: 137). They enjoy exemption from customs duties, income tax, sales tax, service tax (Commerce 2019). Setting up SEZs then has characteristically involved the state-backed acquisition of predominantly agricultural and typically multi-cropped agricultural land by private corporations. Anything between 50–500 acres are acquired based on whether it is to be a sector specific or a multi-sector SEZ. In April 2013, it was decided that for every additional 50 hectares of contiguous area, an additional sector would be allowed on a graded scale to be added in the existing SEZ.**** Currently, India has 373 SEZs (of the total of 456 SEZs in South Asia), with an additional 142 under development and 61 in the planning stage (UNCTAD 2019: 137). Most of these lands have simply been grabbed or have been acquired coercively. Those displaced from these areas are advised to become labour for the multinational corporations normally involved in mining extraction, thereby generating an army of reserve labour—an essential feature of all capitalist systems (Patnaik 2019).

§§§ The NSG is an elite Federal Contingency Deployment Force that specialises in counter terrorism and comes directly under the MHA.

**** https://www.gktoday.in/gk/special-economic-zones/

III. The Tribal as Impediment to 'Development'

Within such a paradigm, the 'tribal' is perceived to be *triply* obstructive to 'development': first, simply in 'occupying' the lands with the natural resources needed for that 'development' to be fed; second, in fighting to retain those lands, and the lifestyle and culture associated with them—and thus their very identity as 'tribals'; and third, in many cases, actually rejecting this imported understanding of 'development', in favour of their traditional lifestyles (Behera 2015). The term 'tribal' carries a baggage of cultural connotations that go far beyond the ethnographic denotation of belonging to a tribe. Typically, these very heterogeneous people tend to be characterised as being, variously, poor, primitive, nomadic, needy of but resistant to 'development', insular, irrational, infantile, without political agency (easily influenced by 'Maoists'), given to drinking, morally suspect, deceitful, bound by strict tribal codes, unrestrained, etc. They are simultaneously demonised (as Maoists/ Naxals), sentimentalised (as victims of Naxals), infantilised (as brainwashed by Naxals), and thereby placed at a psychological, moral and legal distance that precludes empathy, identification and scrupulousness.

The current characterisation of the 'tribal' or 'adivasi' has a fine imperial pedigree, going back to the Rousseau-esque imagination of the 'noble savage'. But there were other, less complimentary, imperial imaginations of the tribal too. Albert Pionke, for instance, notes how the British Imperial State fostered the understanding that Indians were 'savages, unreasonable and prone to underhand conspiracies' (2007). It licensed the excesses committed by the British against Indians, while tacitly justifying the economic depredations of colonialism—the natives did not deserve the wealth they were sitting on. The ironies of our postcolonial imperialism against the native people of the country are recognised only obtusely in the repeated protests that the war on the Maoists is actually a war on 'our own people'.

Currently, there are plans to amend the 5th Schedule of the Constitution to permit the acquisition of 'tribal' lands, because the 'tribal' is deemed blind to and thus undeserving of the wealth s/he sits on. And this, after a 15-member committee on 'State Agrarian Relations and Unfinished Task of Land Reforms', of the Union Rural Development Ministry, labelled the government's own policies in the area as the 'biggest grab of tribal lands after Columbus':

> The development paradigm pursued since independence has aggravated the prevailing discontent among marginalised sections of society. This is because the development paradigm as conceived by the policy makers has always been imposed on these communities, and therefore it has remained insensitive to their needs and concerns, causing irreparable damage to these sections. The benefits of this paradigm of development have been disproportionately cornered by the dominant sections at the expense of the poor, who have borne most of the costs (Commission 2008: 29).

The state's focus on 'development' in the region has, therefore, more to do with facilitating the operations of corporate interests, rather than with improving the quality of life of the tribal communities. Most development projects focus on infrastructure, roads, cellphone connectivity, bridges and structures for schools that frequently function as barracks. As per MHA data on LWE, 2,329 mobile towers were installed in the Scheduled Areas that have been deemed 'Left-wing Extremist Areas' in the first phase of the project aimed at improving cellphone connectivity. In the second phase, the government plans to install another 4,072 mobile towers.

Even if we take the 'development' argument at face value, we observe that the 'tribal', who stakes a constitutionally ratified claim to mineral-rich lands, but little stake in the mining industry, must be displaced—with or without compensation.

> Even the most generous 'R & R packages' offer only cash and promises of jobs (which in practice are rarely kept): not land for land (as required by international standards set by the International Labour Organisation etc.). This means Adivasis inevitably lose their traditional lifestyle of cultivating their own food as their own masters (Padel and Das 2006).

It is for these reasons that

> the Naxalite movement has to be recognised as a political movement with a strong base among the landless and poor peasantry and adivasis. Its emergence and growth need to be contextualised in the social conditions and experience of people who form

> a part of it. The huge gap between state policy and performance is a feature of these conditions (Commission 2008: 59–60).

A BBC Report on corruption in the mining sector notes that:

> Investigations have shown that while the government receives paltry royalties from private mining companies, a few influential oligarchs in collusion with politicians have made massive profits. No wonder that for many in India, mining has come to epitomise the ugly underbelly of economic liberalization— crony capitalism and rampant loot of natural resources. The mines ministry now admits that 'mining activities have resulted in little local benefit and, in fact, has been at the cost of environmental degradation'. Now the government plans to amend a 54-year-old law to make it mandatory for mining companies to put in place rehabilitation and resettlement programmes for the people affected by their activities and protect the environment. Otherwise, as the government itself concedes, mining will continue to contribute to social dissatisfaction and unrest.††††

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha on the LWE affected areas, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, noted that there is an umbrella scheme for the

> 'Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF)' with a total outlay of Rs. 25,061 crore. Under this umbrella scheme, a sub-scheme of 'Assistance to States for Modernization of Police' with an outlay of Rs. 7,380 crore has been approved for the period from 2017–18 to 2019–20. This sub-scheme is in continuation of the scheme of Modernisation of State Police Forces. Under this sub-scheme, central assistance to States is provided for acquisition of security/surveillance/communication equipments, modern weaponry, forensic equipments etc.‡‡‡‡

Additionally, as per the GOI Press release, LWE districts are covered under the

> Security Related Expenditure Scheme (SRE) of the MHA for the purpose of reimbursement of security related expenditure like transportation, communication,

†††† https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-14486290
‡‡‡‡ https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1527652

hiring of vehicles, stipend for surrendered Maoists, temporary infrastructure for forces etc. to the states. This categorization provided the basis for focused deployment of resources—both security and development related.§§§§

We may then expect to see a further escalation of violence by the state which, ironically, claims that it has a new policy of 'zero tolerance towards violence coupled with a big push to developmental activities'.***** The numbers of encounters and extrajudicial killings by the state are only rising.†††††

IV. Analysing the Cosmopolitics

It should be clear by now that what we have outlined above is one kind of encounter, between two of the actors involved in such encounters that we had identified at the beginning of this article, i.e., the encounter between the LWE and the state. Another kind of encounter also becomes evident in the fact that, to add to this, the state has involved local and organised 'non-state actors' as 'force multipliers' (Sendra, Village Defence Committees [VDCs], Salwa Judum, Koya Commandos, Harmad Bahini/ Bhairav Bahini, Santi Sena/Sangham, and the latest addition, the CRPF's Bastariya Battalion, constituted wholly of tribal personnel). Here, we see the enactment of multiple and complex encounters:

(a) Between the tribal communities and the LWE. Left-wing extremist groups like the People's War Group, or the Communist Party of India (Maoist), have been working for decades amongst the tribal communities to build a revolutionary base. From the tribals' perspective, however, the biggest contribution of these outfits was to organise them against predatory and exploitative landlords and small businesses, to ensure better wages for their labour and better prices for their produce. By early 2005, it was estimated that almost 300 districts, especially in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, were under the control of the LWE. It resulted in enough conscription for the LWE to become a discernibly strong military presence, along a 'Red Corridor' stretching from Karnataka to West Bengal (Garge 2019). But if this

§§§§ https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178704
***** https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=178704
††††† For instance, in the 'encounter killings' of April 2018, initially 22 bodies were labelled 'Maoists'; by 1 May 2018, 18 more bodies were recovered, and also labelled 'Maoists', leading to strong suspicions of a large scale fake encounter (Maitra 2018).

was an index of how positively the LWE were perceived and received by the tribal communities, it also became the excuse for bringing in more paramilitary forces, with more sophisticated arms, and with the logistical support of the armed forces. In other words, the encounter between the state and the LWE intersected with, and bled into, the encounter between the latter and the tribal communities, as well as between the state and these communities.

(b) Between the tribal communities and the state. One aspect of this encounter is a benevolent one, deriving from the state's legal obligation to safeguard the Constitutional guarantees to these communities, regarding their claims to lands that they have inhabited for millennia. Further, the state was also obliged to provide the 'development' programmes (for education, health, nutrition, the infrastructure for all of these, as also minimum wage protection and price guarantees, etc.) that it was (at least making an appearance of) providing the rest of the country's poor. Till the last decade or so—i.e., for more than 60 years—there was little evidence of such a benevolent state in these regions. Thus, in many ways, the first extended encounter of the tribals with the Indian state was through its repressive actions—not just in terms of bringing in troops from outside, but in setting up 'Special Police Officer' (SPO) outfits like the Salwa Judum, and now the Bastariya Battalion, constituted of conscripted tribals, to combat the LWE influence. These inevitably split the communities themselves, pitting them violently against each other.‡‡‡‡‡ In 2011, the Supreme Court ordered the disbanding of such SPO outfits, because of the scale of human rights violations committed by them, with the tacit and often explicit backing of the state. Although the head of the Salwa Judum, Mahendra Karma, was killed in 2013, allegedly by the LWE, there are suggestions that it was revived in 2015–16, under the leadership of Karma's son, Chavindra Karma, with a new name, the Vikas Sangharsh Samiti [Committee for the Struggle for Development] (Sundar 2015).

(c) While the putative reason for this state war against its own people is the bogey of the LWE, the actual reason for the sudden state interest in 'developing' these areas, more than 60 years after Independence, is a financial one, the magnitude of which is evident

‡‡‡‡‡'In the last week of July 2019, a brother and sister pair, in a representation of the two principal adversaries in India's LWE-affected heartland, came face-to-face. In Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, Vetti Rama, a member of the Chhattisgarh state police, was fired upon by a group of extremists that included his own sister, Vetti Kanni. Rama, himself an extremist until a year ago, has since surrendered and is now a part of the 'eye and ear' scheme of the state police. Kanni continues to be a member of the Communist Party of India–Maoist (CPI–Maoist). Both escaped unhurt in the encounter' (Routray 2019).

from the MoUs referred to earlier. These MoUs represent the third kind of encounter, between the state and the various multinational industrial corporations with whom the MoUs have been signed. Both are consequently heavily invested in extracting the mineral and other resources of these lands. The multiple dimensions of this encounter are not always evident or even available to the public gaze: for instance, there have been suggestions of shadowy deals between these big corporations and state agents, i.e., government personnel acting as, and with the authority of, the Indian state.§§§§§ The crucial point here is that, these encounters reveal the state and its agents, as well as the big corporate interests, as themselves guilty of acting outside the law. Given that the MoUs were for lands that were, and remain, under Constitutional protection, they should not have been signed in the first place, unless there was already an intent to violate these Constitutional provisions. If the LWE are seen as guilty of operating outside the law, then, so are these parties—guilty, not just of bribery and corruption, but of subverting the letter and spirit of the very Constitution from which they (or at least, the state) derive their authority.

(d) This encounter is intersected in turn by others, the most obvious of which is perhaps, that between the corporates and the tribal communities. There is a credible argument, for instance, that the Salwa Judum was created and sponsored by mining interests, working in collusion with government officials, with the specific intent to recruit the local populace against their own people.****** This particular encounter is, in many ways, not just between two massively incommensurable forces, but between two fundamentally divergent approaches to the environment, and to human duties and rights in relation to it. The tribal approach is captured well in the slogan, '*jal, jungle, jameen*' (water, forests, earth), which explicitly places primary value on the preservation of the environment, even as it is claimed. This contrasts strongly with the instrumental, expropriative and fundamentally destructive approach of the predatory corporates seeking access to these regions, and to their resources. This encounter is complicated by the fact that the corporates are represented, by themselves and the state, as the harbingers of 'modernity' and 'development' to these areas—leading

§§§§§A case in point being the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh being caught receiving a bribe, allegedly from an Australian mining concern (Rediff.com 2003).

******'Formed in 2005—the result of a secret deal between the state and a giant conglomerate that wanted to set up a steel plant at a cost of ₹10,000 crore or roughly $2.3 billion, according to a popular rumour prevailing among the mostly illiterate tribals in southern Chhattisgarh—Salwa Judum sought to conscript villagers, moved entire villages to what were essentially detention camps so as to cut the support base for Maoists, and engaged in pitched battles with the insurgents' (Ramasubbu 2008).

some among the tribal communities to advocate for their entry. Crucially, it is also cross-cut by a more global, fundamentally inimical encounter—the political–ideological one between capitalist and communist world-views.

(e) This last encounter may be understood as the most fundamental one, underlying, intersecting with, and 'possessing' (in the demonological sense of 'possession') all the others. It is the cosmopolitical nub, so to speak, of the various encounters being mapped here, drawing into its dynamics all the concerns of all the other encounters. More significantly, both 'sides' of this encounter are transnational phenomena that draw on sources and resources—of knowledge, politics and perceptions, as much as on financial capital—that are in international circulation, and whose inimicality is everywhere evident, if not always in the same ways. Neither party to the inimicality, nor the inimicality itself, can be contained by the nation-state form and its boundaries—perhaps because almost every instance of this form is the culmination (albeit in its own way) of the colonial encounter, of the history of imperial conquest, and of the nationalist movements and liberation struggles they gave rise to. It is a political form that consequently sings of Independence and self-sufficiency, but in actual fact was never designed to be an isolated entity. Rather, it was—has always been—locked into a historical cosmopolitics, going back to the history of colonialism, of predation and resistance. This is one of the reasons why it is possible to trace the history of tribal resistance in the areas in question, back to the colonial period (Mukherjee 2013). More significantly though, it is one of the reasons why this particular kind of encounter—this particular inimicality— is found far more in the former colonies, than in the former colonial powers, also known generically as the 'West', or the 'North'.

Finally, it would probably have been noticed by now that the word 'encounter' has been used throughout this paper to refer to the interface and intercourse between a variety of processes, some of them inextricably intersected. It would also probably have been realised that the same word also has a darker denotation, captured in the euphemism, 'encounter killing'. We have deliberately used this word repeatedly, partly because it is a fairly accurate register of the processual intercourses we have identified above; but partly also because it serves as a reminder of the ways in which such encounters can turn ugly, dangerous, treacherous. 'Encountered', and 'encounter killing' evoke a powerful sense of the inimicality latent to

such cosmopolitical encounters. If this paper has managed to alert its readers to this often deceitful, even deadly, aspect of cosmopolitical logics, then it would have served a substantial part of its purpose.

V. By Way of Conclusion

The interplay of encounters that we have sketched here is revealed now to be a complex choreography of cosmopolitical factors in engagement with each other. The cosmopolitics of these multiple kinds of encounters must therefore be understood as registering conversations, transactions and struggles taking place, not just globally, but historically; not just synchronically but diachronically; and not just between peoples, or between peoples and politics, but between peoples, their politics and their environments. These conversations, transactions and struggles are not orderly, can even turn violent; they can overlap, intersect, eclipse, even overwhelm each other, just as they can revive, nourish and foster each other, in complex, layered ways. The sheer multivalency, plurality, complexity and extensiveness of these encounters, therefore, in themselves constitute a strong case for considering them 'cosmopolitical'.

There is, however, another important reason. These encounters are rarely, if ever, between evenly matched parties: arguably, the imperial–colonial historical roots of this cosmopolitics has ensured that, in its contemporary forms, at least one party (usually the dominant one) is almost inevitably (rooted in) capitalism.†††††† The other can be, and has been, any of a variety of oppositional parties, ranging from the religiously disapproving, to trade union movements, socialist oppositions, anarchist challenges, feminists protests, racial and ethnic mobilisations, communist resistances, nationalist and/or liberationist struggles, among others—sometimes in combinations, and many in the form of militant insurgencies.

The sheer persistence of the colonial-imperial-capitalist logic, and the sheer diversity of the resistances to it, have led to several collaborative-alliance forms too, and on both sides – e.g., capitalism with nationalism, feminism, religion; or communism with socialism, race with feminism, feminism with socialism, religion with nationalism. However, the same sheer

††††††'Imperialism' here refers to the convention of using it to denote a historical period, not as denoting a particular political–economic dynamic. This 'Imperialism'-as-a-dynamic, arguably, not only survived its demise in 'Imperialism'-as-a-period, but thrived in the so-called post-imperialist' 20th century and later. This understanding is therefore an affirmation of, and not a deviation from, Lenin's formulation of imperialism as the 'highest stage of capitalism'.

persistence and pervasiveness of the colonial-imperial-capitalist logic, with or without combinations (its own or the others'), is also responsible for (a) the air of invincibility that this logic seems to be gaining; and (b) the consequent implication of being a globally pertinent form – i.e., a 'cosmopolitical' form. This understanding of 'cosmopolitics' also leads therefore, very easily, if wrongly, to the converse implication – that only a capitalist logic can produce a genuine 'cosmopolitics'.

That said, it is also true that no genuinely globally relevant, viable, desirable and realizable kind of 'cosmopolitics' has emerged successfully from any other corner, with the last serious challenger – in the form of the 'cosmopolitical' ambitions of communist Russia – coming down with the Berlin Wall. The explorations of the reasons for that, and possibly also of what such an alternative 'cosmopolitics' might look like, must, however, be kept for another paper.

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