

Bastar, Maoism and Salwa Judum.” In *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XLI 29, July 22, 2006, pp. 3187-3192

Bastar, Maoism and Salwa Judum

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Visitors to the official Bastar website (www.bastar.nic.in) will ‘discover’ that Gonds “have pro-fertility mentality”, that “marriages...between brothers and sisters are common,” and that “the Murias prefer 'Mahua' drinks rather than medicines for their ailments.” “The tribals of this area”, says the website, “is famous for their 'Ghotuls' where the prospective couples do the 'dating' and have free sex also.” As for the Abhuj Marias, “(t)hese people are not cleanly in their habits, and even when a Maria does bathe he does not wash his solitary garments but leaves it on the bank. When drinking from a stream they do not take up water in their hands but put their mouth down to it like cattle.” Some of the tribals are “leading a savage life”, we are told, “they do not like to come to the outer world and mingle with the modern civilisation.”

Into this charming picture of ‘savages’ who ‘shoot down strangers with arrows’, one must unfortunately bring in a few uncomfortable facts. What used to be the former undivided district of Bastar (since 2001 carved into the districts of Dantewada, Bastar and Kanker) is currently a war zone. The main roads, in Dantewada in particular, but also in parts of Bastar and Kanker, are full of CRPF and other security personnel, out on combing operations.² The Maoists control the jungles. In the frontlines of this battle are ordinary villagers who are being pitted against each other on a scale unparalleled in the history of Indian counterinsurgency. The officially year old Salwa Judum, is touted by the government as a ‘spontaneous people’s movement’ and a ‘peace mission’. Villagers go in procession to other villages and ‘convince’ them to join. However, as a wireless message from the former SP of Bijapur, recorded by the Maoists and released to the press shows, “The janjagaran people are telling very clearly to villagers "you come with us first time, or second time. If you do not come third time, we will burn your village.”³

At least five different investigative teams have confirmed that of the nearly 46,000 people living in camps strung along the main road, the majority have come to pre-empt attacks or been forcibly brought in by the Salwa Judum and the security forces.⁴ Some of them are now being permanently settled by the road, with plans to establish 581 new villages.⁵ But no provision has been made for

suitable employment or access to land. Rendered desperate by the lack of food, they resort to looting when set loose on other villages. The Government has appointed some 3500 Special Police Officers, many of them minors, equipped them with lathis, bows and arrows and .303 rifles, supposedly to counter the Naxalites.⁶ Many were attracted by the promise of Rs. 1500 a month, the machismo of weapons, and the hope of getting permanent employment in the police force. However, several now regret joining, feeling immensely vulnerable to retaliatory action by the Maoists. Those not in camps are hiding out with the Maoists in the jungles, while an equally large number is said to have fled to neighbouring states. Fields lie abandoned, taken over by feral cattle. Entire villages are divided, each side resentful of the other for the choices they are being forced to make.

Deaths have become so commonplace that nobody bothers to talk about them anymore, and nobody knows what the real figures are. Government figures list 268 civilians killed (including some 50 SPOs) and 706 injured by the Maoists since June 2005; the Maoists have released a partial list of 116 civilians killed by the Salwa Judum till March 2006.⁷ In addition 72 police personnel and 30 Naxalites have died.⁸ The killings by the Salwa Judum are simply not recognized either by the government or the media. What the newspapers report is only a total count of deaths and violent attacks, mostly by the Maoists of civilians and police personnel, and some by the police/CRPF of Maoist guerillas, creating the impression of endless one-sided violence. What they don't report at all is the scale of state terror on civilians.⁹ Initially the salwa judum seems to have targeted the mass front members or sangham (compelling co-villagers to inform on them), but given the atmosphere of suspicion, anyone can be described as a Naxalite and killed. There is complete impunity. For their part, the Maoists initially picked out individuals active in the Salwa Judum, but since February 2006, they have resorted to large scale 'counter-terror'.

Rumours that women are being used as sexual slaves in Salwa Judum camps are rife. The Citizens Initiative got testimony from one woman in jail, charged under the arms act. She said she had been pulled off the backseat of her brother's cycle, and gangraped by the CRPF on the road. Her brother had been shot. She was taken to the local thana and raped repeatedly over the next ten days. The other women in jail said she was so bruised when she came, she could hardly walk. Other prisoners said that they had been picked up on their way to market or simply while working on their fields. A number of sangham members have been forced to 'surrender' and are being kept in chains.¹⁰ The Salwa Judum has burnt houses -- nearly 2000 according to a Maoist list -- but this doesn't include villages like Arlempally in Konta tahsil, where the entire village is said to have smouldered for weeks. One Salwa Judum activist confessed to the Citizens Initiative that he had participated in the burning. When we

tried to go there, the Salwa Judum chased us, turned us back and beat up our young guide.¹¹ We saw a house in Asirguda village where even the pigpen had been burnt to ashes. Villagers on the 'Maoist side' of the Indrawati river are completely cut off, unable even to visit the weekly markets for fear of the Salwa Judum. Whatever authority the government exercised over the villages and small towns on the main road, has now been ceded to the Salwa Judum. Camp leaders, mostly non-tribals, give orders to the thanedars and to SDMs, passing vehicles are repeatedly searched and local people fear that even if the government were now to suspend its support to the Salwa Judum, it would be too late.

Senior officials told the Citizens Initiative they had received no complaint about the Salwa Judum, but conceded that there may be some 'anti-social elements'.¹² To men who think that Gonds are 'primitive and promiscuous' or that Abujmarh is populated by 'Bhils and Bustars', no doubt what is happening is merely 'anti-social.'¹³ As the *Pioneer* so helpfully exhorts us, why worry about the Constitution and some dead adivasis when the Naxalites have to be finished off?¹⁴

Competing for the legacy of the Bhumkal

The leader of the Salwa Judum, Mahendra Karma, Congress MLA from Dantewada, and Leader of the Opposition, told the Citizens Initiative in an interview that the Maoists had opposed modern development.¹⁵ Since there was a limit to how long adivasis could live under terror, they had now chosen to rebel in a 'repeat' of the 1910 rebellion against the British known as the Bhumkal. The Maoists have also laid claim to the Bhumkal. On February 10, 2004, they held what they claimed was their biggest rally ever to commemorate the event, with 10,000 people in attendance.¹⁶ Footage of the rally shown on Sahara Samay television channel certainly indicates massive attendance, not all of it possible under the shadow of the gun, and all of it completely unknown to the authorities. To decide which of these two contenders, if any – Karma or the Maoists - is a more appropriate heir of the Bhumkal, one must look at both the history of Bastar and the stated positions of the two parties regarding their vision of development.

Forest reservation in Bastar (then a Feudatory state in the Central Provinces) began in the early 1900s. People's shifting cultivation, hunting, and collection of forest produce was restricted, land taxes were raised, a number of villages were displaced from the reserves, and the influx of officials, policemen, foresters and malguzars led to a rise in the demand for corvee. In February 1910, the entire area rebelled, led by their majhis and village headmen. Bazaars were looted, the houses of officials, traders, and police stations - all those associated with the state - were burnt and robbed and grain redistributed.

Then too, villages which did not join in the rebellion were threatened by the others. In the months it took the British to suppress the uprising, many villagers escaped into the jungles.¹⁷

For several decades after this, the administration of the area was kept deliberately light, yet the advance of capitalism showed in the commercial exploitation of forests. The two major projects post independence, the Dandakaranya resettlement project, and the Bailadilla iron ore mines which started exporting to Japan in 1966, provided neither land nor employment to the locals. Instead the rivers Sankini and Dankini ran red with effluent. In the 1960s, under the leadership of the ex Raja, Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo, people protested asking for land, access to forests, and cheaper rice. Pravir was killed in 1966 and the protests eventually faded out.¹⁸

Even as people's access to forests was restricted,¹⁹ senior officials and politicians were allowed to decimate tree cover under the Malik Makbuja scam. Influential people would buy land cheap in order to profit from the sale of trees on it. Trees on forest land were fudged as being on private land. In response to a case filed by two NGOs in 1997, the Supreme Court ordered a Lokayukt enquiry. The final report of the Lokayukt states²⁰:

“On scrutiny of the case records it is found that the purchasers of land have purchased it for a paltry sum not commensurate with the value of land with trees standing thereon...The Committee came across a number of such cases in which even the full amount agreed upon between the parties was not paid and payment of part amount was deferred on some pretext or the other.... Revenue case Nos. 107-A-63/1995-96, 108-A-63/95-96, 155-A-63/95-96 all of one applicant namely Rajkumar Mandavi and 132-A-63/1993-94 in which applicant is Mahendra Karma may be cited as examples of such cases.” (p. 16)

“These officers (Forest and Revenue officials responsible for supervising sales) granted permission freely in favour of other influential persons also like Mahendra Karma (the then Member of Parliament), Rajaram Todem (presently Dy. Leader of Opposition in M.P. Legislative Assembly) and other influential merchant families like Suranas, Awasthis, Brij Mohan Gupta and many others who have entered in this trade of purchasing land with standing trees and selling the timber.” (p. 22)

On the basis of the Lokayukt's calculations, Karma made a profit of almost 16 lakhs on the sale of the trees in just six months.²¹ A CBI FIR was filed against him and others in 1998, but no further action appears to have been taken.

In the 1990s, especially following the formation of Chhattisgarh, there has been a concerted emphasis on industrialisation, taking advantage of the region's rich mineral deposits. Despite a token gesture to tribal entrepreneurs,²² what is quickly emerging is that the process depends on how easily adivasis can be forced into parting with their land. In 1992, when the Bharat Jan Andolan demanded proper rehabilitation and shares for adivasis who were to be displaced by a steel plant at Maolibhata village, its leader and former Collector of Bastar, the sixty five year old Dr. B.D. Sharma, was pulled off the pillion of a scooter by BJP activists, stripped and paraded through the streets of Jagdalpur with a garland of shoes around his neck. A decade later, the residents of Nagarnar village, were beaten up and arrested for protesting against land acquisition for another steel plant. When the gram sabha rejected the proposal (under the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1996, the gram sabha has to be consulted before land is acquired), the authorities rewrote the minutes of the gram sabha meeting. Justice Bhargava who investigated the incident also noted several serious violations of environmental and other procedures.²³ Similar fake gram sabhas (consisting of shopkeepers and mining employees rather than villagers) and threats by gangs of goons are being reported from the areas around Dhurli and Bhansi villages, near Dantewada, where Essar is currently trying to acquire 900 ha for its steel plant.²⁴ The 267 km. Essar slurry pipeline connecting Bailadilla and Visakapatnam, has apparently cut down forests in a 20 m width as against the 8.4 m width it was sanctioned.²⁵ The Tata Steel plant at Lohandiguda, for which the company wants 4500 acres, has run into opposition by 10 villages whose lands will be acquired. The recently revived Bodhghat Hydroelectric Project, the Jagdalpur-Dalli Rajhara railway line and the Polavaram dam, will also involve large-scale forest diversion and displacement.²⁶

The issue is not so much whether such steel plants should be built (although one may legitimately debate how many are needed and whether they should trump all other land uses) but how the benefits and losses will be distributed, and why a colonial law like the Land Acquisition Act should be used to compel villagers to sell their lands, at throwaway prices, to private companies. The people who are rooting for these projects most strongly are the non-tribals settled in urban centers like Jagdalpur and Kanker, traders who came with little but grew rich on the profits of minor forest produce, illegal tin smelting, illicit felling etc.²⁷ The non-tribal population in the area has expanded so dramatically in less than a decade (1991-2001) that moves are on to de-reserve Jagdalpur and Kanker constituencies. While many unemployed tribal youth want jobs, the government has not invested anything in their education that would enable them to get anything more than menial jobs in these projects. Proper information, compensation, or shares in the project are not 'sops', but constitutional rights. However, to those used to thinking of adivasis as expendable "primitives", even this begins to seem an affront.

When the Citizens Initiative asked Mahendra Karma, what he thought about shares for adivasis in projects using their land, he laughed contemptuously and said, “all this sounds good on paper”. As for employment for the locals, “since tribals will consume any compensation they are given, they should be given work in ancillary industries. Instead of tractors, use them for land leveling.” The Naxalites, on the other hand, argue for a ‘new democratic economy’ based on increasing agricultural production through co-operatives, education, health etc., rather than large projects which displace people²⁸

Where does the Salwa Judum come into this? The following ‘orientation’ program for Salwa Judum activists and SPOs observed by ACHR in Konta camp is revealing. Mr. Achla (Konta SDPO telling the villagers): “You leave your forests and shift to the road sides. You will be adequately compensated by the industrialists and commercial concerns, who are ready to take your land and develop it. You will get employment and other provisions. But if you stay back in the forest, Naxalites will kill you.”²⁹ At a minimum, no one would dispute that ‘sanitising’ the area of Maoists and ensuring ‘peace’ is necessary to lure investors.

So far, if one reads the 1910 Bhumkal as a movement by the people of Bastar to defend their rights, the balance of the legacy is in the Maoist favour. Yet the Maoist vision, for all its talk of ‘people’s democratic authority organized in the form of Gram Rajya Committees’ appears peculiarly self-serving in its conception of base areas: “A base area, besides certain military aspects, would (and must) necessarily have a *self sufficient economy*. Without that, it can neither sustain itself, nor can it provide the ever growing needs of the Party and people’s armed forces.”³⁰ It is debatable how practical or realistic such autarky is in today’s context of advanced capitalism, and how useful to its inhabitants.

The Maoists in Bastar

The Maoists claim to include 60 lakh people in the ‘organisational sweep’ of their Dandakaranya ‘guerilla zone’ (comprising Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Balaghat, Rajnandgaon, undivided Bastar, and Malkangiri), which is headed by a Special Zonal Committee.³¹ Their mass organizations, the most prominent among which are the Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sanghatan (DAKMS) and the Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sanghatan (KAMS), are colloquially called sanghams. In 1995, after the sanghams had practically overthrown the traditional village leadership, the Party set up Gram Rajya Committees elected by the gram sabha, which settle disputes and delegate developmental work to

other sub-committees.³² From 1993 onwards, the People’s War Group began to form special guerilla squads and in 2000, the People’s Liberation Guerilla Army was formed. Militias have been formed on a large scale in villages.³³ Indeed, after the Salwa Judum started, there appears to have been a spurt in recruitment to these militias.³⁴ The degree of weaponisation, however, seems no match for the government – with about 7300 weapons for 10,500 armed cadre.³⁵

Maoist literature claims that they have engaged in considerable development work over the last twenty years. For instance, in south Bastar and Gadchiroli they say they have established 135 people’s clinics, started 6 primary schools, 10 night schools, built 25 huts for government teachers to persuade them to come, set up 10 village libraries etc.³⁶ The maximum work has been in the field of agricultural and livelihood improvement: 81 tanks in Dantewada district, 4 lakh fish seedlings distributed in the Kanta squad area, 16,200 saplings distributed (of which like any government document they note that only 30% survived because the people did not take sufficient care), bullock carts built in ten villages, diesel pumpsets introduced in nine, 268 cattle detention yards built, five rice mills introduced, people trained in forest protection, co-operative paddy banks set up and agricultural co-operatives created in 220 villages.³⁷

While these figures, assuming them to be true, do not match what the state could achieve, it shows more commitment to people’s development than the government. Doctors willing to work in rural areas may be difficult to find, but surely the government could do better than 112 primary health care centres (PHCs) in this vast area. To blame the lack of basic facilities and the starvation deaths on the Naxalites simply echoes the excuse that many staff, including teachers, employ to shirk work. To argue, as some officials do, that regrouping people on the roadside is actually meant to benefit them by making it easier to provide services is an even worse insult to intelligence. If this logic held, how come government schools in urban slums are so badly provisioned?

Table: Bastar, Kanker and Dantewada, 2001 Census,

	Bastar	Dantewada	Kanker
Area sq km.	14,974	17,634	6,506
Population	13,06,673	7,19,487	650,934
Population density	87	41	100
No. of villages	1461	1,220	1068
Literacy rate total	43.9	30.2	72.9

Percentage ST pop.	66.3	78.5	56.1
No. of PHCs	57	34	21
No. of primary Schools (from govt. website)	1473	918	NA

However, in the drive to establish their own ‘Janata Sarkar’ the Maoists have resisted even genuine government initiatives. While recognizing that traders cheat adivasis over minor forest produce, they have defended them against government attempts to introduce co-operatives to buy tamarind and tendu.³⁸ The grounds given are that the government is more impervious to price struggles, they offer lower rates than private contractors, and these co-operatives engender corruption. This logic may work in areas where the Maoists are strong and they keep prices up, (which has been a genuine help to people) but elsewhere as soon as the co-operatives stop, the traders drop their prices and resume cheating.³⁹ If made to work, the co-operatives can offer much needed employment to village youth or women. The dependence on immigrant traders also has other negative spin off effects –they are the very constituency which has been responsible for support to Hindutva, displacement and salwa judum. Even in the unlikely event that the government introduced co-operatives only to ‘ensure that the revolutionaries will stop being able to levy taxes on the thekedars,’⁴⁰ it would be well within its rights, since it is scarcely obliged to help fund its enemy. While ‘extortion’ is not the appropriate word, the relationship between big thekedars and the party is unhealthy, based on mutual and simultaneous mistrust and dependence. The Maoists are dependent on the thekedars for funds, and the thekedars are dependent on the Maoists to work in their areas or get contracts, yet scared of their dictates on proper labour payments or higher rates for forest produce and eager to seize the first opportunity to turn them in.

The Maoists claim to have transformed social relations, though their depiction of the ‘ocean of darkness’ which Dandakaranya represented, betrays revolutionary reductionism. For instance, take the claim that before the party came “women were no more than chattels slaving away from morning to night”⁴¹ or that children led ‘wasted lives’ making armed struggle a better alternative for them.⁴² Certainly, in my experience, while people lead miserably poor lives, their lives have meaning even without armed struggle. The festivals that punctuate every agricultural task and which the party sees as needless superstition⁴³ break the monotony of the year. The fines that are imposed for violating these festival rules (such as eating new mangoes before the rest of the village) are important to maintain the

social solidarity that is one of the strengths of adivasi society. Sometimes the expenses *are* onerous – for the same reason people in other areas convert to Hindu sects or Christianity which do not demand so much - but this is no reason to treat the entire practice merely as evidence of the feudal hold of priests and headmen. Of course children deserve a better life but to think that playing games of cops and Naxalites, mimicking the use of the gun in their games and dances, acting as informers for the guerrillas thus exposing themselves to danger or learning how to use arms from the age of sixteen onwards is a great alternative, displays an unacceptable fetishisation of militarism.⁴⁴ Indeed, much of the Maoist literature un-necessarily glorifies killing the enemy and dying a martyr's death.⁴⁵

However, unlike the urban elite who rail against 'keeping tribals as museum pieces',⁴⁶ the Maoists actually live among the people whose lives they seek to transform. The Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangham (KAMS) is said to take up issues of bigamy, forced marriages, and the involvement of women in social and political decision making in the village.⁴⁷ They appear to draw huge crowds to their demonstrations, and to performances of their cultural troupe, Chetna Natya Manch.⁴⁸ Unlike the RSS, which is heavily penetrating these areas and which has contempt for adivasi language and religion,⁴⁹ the Maoists consciously promote Gondi language and literature.⁵⁰

These achievements, however, have coexisted with brute force. In establishing their Gram Rajya Committees, the Maoists have killed village headmen, sarpanches, and others who have opposed them. One account lists at least 17 people who have died 'a dog's death at the hands of people'.⁵¹ Anyone producing above 50 quintals is considered a 'landlord', while those producing 30-50 quintal are seen as rich peasants. We are told that only the 'most notorious landlords' have been killed for resisting land distribution, while others have been allowed to live on their smaller plots. As for the rich peasants, only the excess forest land they grabbed during the first phase of forest occupation has been distributed.⁵² It is not surprising that this has engendered some support for the Salwa Judum. However, it would require intensive fieldwork to assess how much the Maoist movement has built on existing structures of solidarity and authority and how much it has overthrown them. Indeed, a Maoist representative the Citizens Initiative met conceded that in the Marh there was little 'rupture' with the traditional headman, whereas there was greater differentiation in the South.⁵³

The histories of individual villages would reveal an even more complicated picture of Maoist influence and adivasi agency. For instance, in 2004, I met a rich family from Bheji who had to leave their village because other villagers complained against them to the dalam (local guerrilla squad). When that dalam tried to sort it out through a face-to-face meeting, the villagers complained to another

dalam. The Bheji family told me that the People's War told them to leave the village for two years and promised to look after their fields for them in the meantime. In another story I was told about Sattuwa village,⁵⁴ the Sarpanch (who like others had been forced to resign by the Maoists after being elected in January 2005), drew money for himself from the block office in collusion with the gram sachiv. When the village sangham leader complained he was shot. In return the dalam killed the sarpanch and told his family to leave. Eleven other families left with them and were settled by the government elsewhere. Later, after Salwa Judum started, the Naga Battalion forced the rest of the village into camp.⁵⁵ In Arlempalli village, the Citizens Initiative was told, the village went over entirely to the People's War after they broke the hand of the local CPI leader. Having suffered once, the village refused to join the Salwa Judum, and was destroyed as a consequence.

In keeping with their emphasis on militarism, the Maoists proudly list attacks on police stations, especially during 'retaliation week', the 'annihilation' of CRPF personnel, attacks on the NMDC explosives depot, and the killing of 'salwa judum goons'.⁵⁶ Land mines have been indiscriminately laid.⁵⁷ The police also see killing Maoists as an occasion for rewards.⁵⁸ For both sides to consider each other fair game leads nowhere politically, especially when unemployment or desperation drives recruits on both sides.

While the Maoists promote election boycotts as a way of showing up an electoral system relying on big money, it is not clear what purpose these boycotts ultimately serve, since people end up with representatives like Karma. A visit to Konta tahsil during the Lok Sabha elections of 2004 revealed deserted villages and shut polling booths. Yet 'votes' were 'cast' from them - in the Vidhan Sabha elections, for the then ruling Congress, and in the Lok Sabha, for the ruling BJP.⁵⁹

To summarise, the considerable local support for the Maoists – which as K. Balagopal points out demands a political response – has also come with some violence.⁶⁰ Their supporters need to debate whether armed struggle was necessary to their positive work, and whether peaceful mass mobilisation would not work better. Certainly, the attempt to defend their guerrilla zone seems now to have overtaken people's needs, including the desperate desire for peace.

Salwa Judum: shifting violence onto civil society

The Salwa Judum is perhaps the most egregious example of an increasingly common phenomenon, viz. the use of 'civil society' groups to fight others. The formal structure of government participatory

policies and the political reality in which they operate means that for every adivasi movement opposing a project there is often a counter adivasi movement propped up by the ruling party⁶¹ If violence ensues, the government can claim it is helpless, and even better, point to the differences as evidence that the movement in question does not enjoy a mass base.

There have been previous Jan Jagran Abhiyans led by Mahendra Karma, and Salwa Judum too seems to originate as another such Abhiyan.⁶² Local factors at Kutru (in north west Dantewada district) may have provided the immediate spark in June 2005 but several pieces of evidence suggest that there was prior government planning, including a police video which talks of 'Operation Salwa Judum' initiated from January 2005 onwards, the DGP Chhattisgarh saying that Salwa Judum had been introduced as a 'pilot project' in 2 blocks of Dantewara district⁶³ the Ministry of Home Affairs policy on supporting 'local resistance groups' against militants,⁶⁴ and the mysterious phenomenon of letters inviting people to attend Salwa Judum meetings issued in the name of a non-existent Sodi Deva.⁶⁵

The government does not make it easy for people who wish to engage in peaceful struggle.⁶⁶ The politics of bans also betray an inherent bias, apart from being pointless. As EAS Sarma points out, parties like the Congress and BJP which have both engaged in large scale programs (Delhi, 1984; Gujarat 2002) are never outlawed.⁶⁷ Even when there is evidence that the Bajrang Dal is engaged in bomb making there is no further enquiry or media coverage.⁶⁸ If the ruling parties were willing to shun violence, they would have a greater moral right to demand that others do too.

¹ The views expressed in this article are entirely my responsibility. I have relied on certain interviews conducted as part of a Citizens Initiative, which visited the area between 17 and 22nd May, 2006, but the other members are not responsible for their use here. Since I have not done fieldwork in the Maoist dominated areas of undivided Bastar, I have relied extensively on their literature and secondary sources.

² There are currently 26 battalions or 26,000 security personnel deputed against Naxalites in Chhattisgarh; see also Gautam Navalakha, Maoists in India, *EPW* June 3 2006, pp. 2186-2189.

³ The authenticity of this tape needs to be judicially verified but it has been informally confirmed by another senior police officer.

⁴ Human Rights Forum Press Releases, August 2005 and May 2006; Open Letter from the CPI to the Prime Minister, 16.11.2005; PUDR, APDR, PUCL et al, *When the State Makes War on Its Own People*, Delhi 2006, Asian Centre for Human Rights, *The Adivasis of Chhattisgarh: Victims*

of the Naxalite Movement and Salwa Judum Campaign, Delhi 2006 and the Independent Citizens Initiative (report in progress), 2006. See also www.cgnet.in for news reports by the BBC, Tehelka, Outlook, Guardian etc.. which corroborate this.

⁵ Hitvada 13 March 2006.

⁶ Times of India (TOI), 2 April 2006; see also Jan Jagran Abhiyan 2005 Karya Yojana, Dantewada district, p. 10, Sec 4.5, the District Collector's workplan for the Salwa Judum.

⁷ Government Press Release, 4 June 2006; Maoist list given to Citizens Initiative in May 2006. Till December 2005, the number killed by Maoists was 90. 268 by mid 2006 seems discrepant with this and with other tallies.

⁸ Zee News Jagdalpur, June 3 2006.

⁹ ACHR's compilation of news reports on armed conflict in Chhattisgarh in 2006 has only 6 pages on atrocities by security forces, and nearly 100 pages on atrocities by the Maoists. Given that the deaths ran nearly neck and neck in 2005, this is a clear indication of media dependence on police sources alone for its news stories.

¹⁰ ACHR 2006: 40

¹¹ The PUDR-PUCL team which visited in November 2005 had similar experiences.

¹² Interview with the Citizens Initiative 17, & 21 May 2006.

¹³ Interview with the Citizens Initiative 17, & 21 May 2006.

¹⁴ Pioneer editorial, Infantile Protest, 21 June 2006.

¹⁵ Interview with the Citizens Initiative, 22 May 2006

¹⁶ *Masses of Dandakaranya Rebel In the Path of Liberation* (henceforth IPL), Calcutta, Radical Publications, 2005, p. 4-6

¹⁷ Nandini Sundar, *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar 1854-1996*, Delhi, OUP, 1997, pp. 104-155.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 191-233.

¹⁹ The Hitavada 11 November 2005 reported there were over 2.5 lakh forest cases against tribals in Chhattisgarh, mostly for illegal felling for domestic use and ferrying of wood by bullock cart. 16,886 cases were pending in Bastar district, 8897 in Kanker, and 5915 in Dantewada. The state government had decided to close all of these.

²⁰ Final Report of the Lokayukt Committee on the Felling of Trees on Malik Makbuja and Other Government Land in Bastar District (M.P.) March 1998

²¹ *Ibid.*, 31

²² Government of Chhattisgarh Industrial Policy, 2004-2009.

²³ Justice S.N. Bhargava, IPT, Nagarnar, An investigation into land acquisition and state repression in Nagarnar, Chhattisgarh, 2002.

²⁴ Report by Citizen journalist on www.cgnet.in

²⁵ IA of 2005 in WP 202 of 1995, Bhupesh Baghel vs Union of India.

²⁶ MoEF Press Release, 6 February 2004.

²⁷ See Sundar 1997, pp. 247-264.

²⁸ *New People's Power in Dandakaranya* (henceforth NPP), Calcutta, Biplabi Yug, 2000, p. 7, 21.

²⁹ Cited in ACHR 2006: 41.

³⁰ NPP, pp. 10, 20.

³¹ NPP, p. 4

³² NPP, p. 12, 17

³³ *People's March*, 7(1), January 2006, p. 5.

³⁴ Citizens Initiative (report in progress).

³⁵ Navlakha 2006, p. 2187

³⁶ NPP, pp. 49-51, 53.

³⁷ NPP, pp. 19-49.

³⁸ NPP, p. 9; P. Shankar, *Yeh Jungle Hamara Hai*, Delhi: New Vistas, 2006, p. 50-52.

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- ³⁹ See Sundar, Is Devolution Democratisation?, *World Development*, 29 (12), 2001, 2007-2024.
- ⁴⁰ Shankar 2006, p. 13
- ⁴¹ NPP, pg. 7
- ⁴² Shankar, 2006, p. 111.
- ⁴³ Shankar 2006, p. 8
- ⁴⁴ NPP, p. 13, Shankar 2006: 111-114; my own observations at an adivasi women's rally in Ranchi, in which some of their fronts participated.
- ⁴⁵ See for instance, Press Release by CPI (Maoist), *People's March*, 6 (11), November-December 2005, p. 5
- ⁴⁶ This is precisely what they themselves want to do after displacing them, as shown by the adivasi museum on the Sardar Sarovar dam site.
- ⁴⁷ Shankar 2006, pp. 100-105.
- ⁴⁸ *People's March* 7(1) January 2006, p. 12, IPL, p. 18, Sahara Samay and CNN-IBN programs.
- ⁴⁹ Several news reports have indicated that RSS fronts are very active in the Salwa Judum camps. On RSS plans for adivasis, see Nandini Sundar, Adivasi vs. Vanvasi: The Politics of Conversion in Central India. In Satish Saberwal and Mushirul Hasan eds., *Assertive Religious Identities*, Delhi, Manohar, 2006, pp. 357-390.
- ⁵⁰ *People's March* 7(1) January 2006, p. 7
- ⁵¹ Shankar 2006, p. 16.
- ⁵² NPP: 41, 49
- ⁵³ Interestingly, this matches the historical formation of parganas in Bastar, where those in the Marh were based on clan areas, while those in the south (Bijapur, Bhairamgarh, Dantewara etc.) were formed by the state on the basis of old feudal divisions as part of a program of limited judicial reforms to help people avoid the police and courts (Sundar 1997, pp. 166-170)
- ⁵⁴ Local resident, pers com.
- ⁵⁵ For the Sattuva arrests, see PUDR 2006: 26.
- ⁵⁶ IPL, pp. 10-12; *People's March* Nov-Dec 2005, p. 5; *People's March*, March 2006, p. 10, 15. 24 CRPF personnel were killed in a landmine blast on 3 September 2005.
- ⁵⁷ Times of India 2 April 2006 reports a cow blown up by a land mine; another one was killed in May. (Local resident, pers. com.)
- ⁵⁸ In 2004, 100 police were killed, in 2005, 153, all India. Figures for Maoists killed were 87 and 223 respectively. *Hindustan Times* 14 March 2000.
- ⁵⁹ Kolaiguda (LS 63, VS 98), Pentapad (LS 23, VS 27), Gachanpalli (LS 126, VS 17).
- ⁶⁰ K. Balagopal, Chhattisgarh, Physiognomy of Violence, *EPW*, 41 (22), June 3, 2006, pp. 2185
- ⁶¹ Evidence of trumped up gram sabhas 'consenting' to projects is emerging not just from Chhattisgarh but also from Jharkhand and Orissa.
- ⁶² PUDR et al 2006: 11-13.
- ⁶³ Asian Age 31 October 2005
- ⁶⁴ PUDR et al 2006: 31
- ⁶⁵ Citizens Initiative Report (in progress).
- ⁶⁶ 4 adivasis were killed in Maikanch, Orissa in 2000, 8 in Topkara, Jharkhand in 2001, and 12 in Kalinganagar, Orissa while protesting against land acquisition. Government indifference to the Manipuri mobilisation against AFSPA, or the long Narmada struggle is also revealing.
- ⁶⁷ EAS Sarma, The Adivasi, the State and the Naxalite: Case of Andhra Pradesh. *EPW* 41 (15) April 15 2006, pp. 1434-1437.
- ⁶⁸ Secular Citizens Forum and PUCL Nagpur, Nanded Bomb Blasts, 2006.