

This set of characteristics means the region has a complex set of challenges when it comes to understanding its evolution as well and evaluating the relations that exist between these countries, as well as with their neighbourhood and the rest of the world. Kingsbury's great contribution is dealing with each of the countries in the region chapter by chapter, but also providing an opening chapter that presents the reader with the theoretical key to allow understanding of the political structure in the countries of Southeast Asia. As a researcher of the region, I see this to be a valuable contribution. The high level of detail, the set of data provided and the current literature used are all highlights of this book.

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**Tasneem Khalil**, *Jallad: Death Squads and State Terror in South Asia*. London: Pluto Press, 2016. ix + 166 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7453-3570-4.

This book is a historiographical account of state repression, genocides and 'death squads' in five South Asian 'deep states', namely Bangladesh (Chapter 2), India (Chapter 3), Nepal (Chapter 4), Pakistan (Chapter 5) and Sri Lanka (Chapter 6). The other chapters deal with state terror in post-colonial South Asia (Chapter 7), specialists of violence (Chapter 8) and the international regime of state terror (Chapter 9). The author, Tasneem Khalil, is a young political activist, journalist and self-proclaimed 'prisoner of conscience' who engages with state-sponsored terror in South Asia. His personal saga of abduction and torture by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence or the Rapid Action Battalion of Bangladesh forms the content of Chapter 10.

The term *Jallad* is of Urdu origin and is used as a metaphor for those who actively engage in state-sponsored post-colonial governmentality attained through gross human rights violations which include torture, extra judicial executions, massacres, rape and enforced disappearances. It is illustrative of the black laws injected by the state into the body politic which is the first pillar of the system of state terror in post-colonial South Asia (p. 101). *Jallad* is a hagiography of statecraft and deals with

the techniques of penal terror and state-sponsored genocide aimed at (re)producing a consenting, subservient and submissive population.

According to Khalil, the post-colonial national security state is a system where internal wars, state crimes and terror campaigns are sponsored by the political class, big businesses, the media, civil society and religious institutions and justified in the name of 'internal security' and 'national interest' (p. 108). Khalil asserts that think-tanks are the integral nodes in the core network of power elite in post-colonial society, often referred to as the military-intelligence-media complex (ibid.). The author points out that this state-sponsored terror shares a colonial legacy and is still being executed with extreme brutality while the perpetrator can attain knighthoods and other honours, with star-like status in public life.

The book has an anti-establishment stance and a Marxian take on the issue of national and international systems of state terror which, according to Khalil, works through established nodes and networks and chains of command and are operationalized on the core-periphery axis. He contextualizes the system and functioning of state terror through the developmental analogy of Wallerstein's 'world systems theory'. According to Wallerstein, during colonial times, the mother country (or opulent core) was always surrounded by an impoverished colony (or periphery) and it is the latter that in the modern times is most often the site of state terror (p. 9).

The *business of state terror* (my emphasis) is always dependent on the relationship between the sponsor (franchiser) and the affiliate (franchisee) states and its franchise is the dark underbelly of the 'global security architecture' (p. 118). The genesis of the new political order revealed as the international system of state terror was in the guise of the United Nations (UN) which became a template to be emulated by many sovereign nations. According to Khalil, a covert militarization of media (p. 107), religion (as in Pakistan and Sri Lanka) (pp. 108–109) and education (p. 122) is effected through textbooks and civil administration by venerating 'war heroes' and soldiers in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (p. 111).

Khalil tries to point out that the history of state terror in South Asia correlates with the region's post-colonial geography and is moored in the legacies of British colonialism (p. 92). He further adds that the socio-political conditions such as structural violence, coercive governance and militarism, along with use of black laws, propped up state terror in the post-colonial world (p. 127). Khalil avers that the history of independ-

ence in South Asia is the history of amendments (meant to revise and reintroduce black laws to sponsor new campaigns of terror and violence), depicting the manner in which the ruling elite in the post-colonial state tried to perfect the organs of state terror originally designed by their colonial predecessors (p. 91). Slowly, state brutality is normalized and even lionized in the name of fighting the 'internal enemy' or the *homo sacers* comprising separatists, dissident intellectuals, political activists, insurgents and troublesome journalists.

*Jallad* lays bare few startling facts, although it sets dangerous precedents concerning the process and praxis of state terror. To begin with, state terror is a colonial creation that is given a piggyback ride by the administrators in post-colonial times as has been the case with India, especially with counter-insurgency operatives of the state such as the Assam Rifles of India and the Frontier Corps, Pakistan Rangers of Pakistan and ISI (p. 73). However, un-colonized South Asian nations such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal indulged in learning and borrowing models of governance from their erstwhile colonized neighbours – for example transplanting models of governance and coups in Fiji and Thailand from Bangladesh. Secondly, torture and extrajudicial executions seem to have been 'outsourced' and function as 'backend industries' in the Third World national security states, a process captained and steered by the USA with a mushrooming of torture chambers also referred to as 'black sites'. The author states that Pakistan has been turned into a 'garrison-state-for-rent' by selling services in violence and brutality to eager customers who trade in detainees with the CIA and torture terrorism suspects. This means that terrorism suspects have been 'processed' through a network of unofficial 'hired' secret holding and specialized torture chambers (pp. 70–71).

According to Khalil, nations are becoming 'client states' and security partners, military equipment suppliers and allies who are bereft of any ideological underpinnings and ethical or moral standards (p. 71). Moreover, one nation becomes an asset for another in the regional scheming and in terms of strategic manoeuvres, as in the case of Pakistan and China. Khalil also draws our attention to the 'peacekeeping paradox' whereby 'soldiers from countries with the most unfavourable human rights records serve as UN peacekeepers' and indulge in an orgy of human rights violation in their own country, as was the case with Nepal during the Nepalese Civil War (p. 54).

Khalil rather candidly observes that across South Asia specialists on violence or 'uniformed goons' become 'coparceners' and members of a

special and separate class of praetorian elites (p. 105). There are overt and covert partnerships and pimping between the mainstream media, civil society, government, military and corporate where partners masquerade as patriots and nationalists. Interestingly enough, those who are part of this display of military muscle are the *Jallads* who are embroiled in abduction, torture and extrajudicial executions. Khalil cites the example of India's paramilitary forces who as 'specialists on violence' are also celebrated as national heroes and saviours by the government, media and general public (p. 103). He even claims that under the pretext of protecting law and order these specialists on crime hide behind the constitution to legitimize crimes committed by the armed and uniformed agents of the republic whereas those opposing the state policies are labelled as 'anti-nationals' or 'internal enemies' (p. 105). State patronage is given to the media which engineers and endorses state crime whilst generating widespread condemnation for crimes against the state. Khalil calls these lumpenproletariats 'natsec (or national security) reporters' (p. 107) or the unofficial spokesmen of terror and power whose job is to plant stories in mainstream media or the media wing of the army that advances 'national interest' and bolsters national security narratives. On the other hand, those journo who are not pliable and refuse to be cheerleaders for the state, loyal propagandists and apologists are silenced forever.

Khalil reveals the death squads and specialists on violence along with an elaborate system *Milbus* or '*Military Inc*' (*fouji baniijjo* in Bengali: p. 111) not only among the ruling elite but as powerful economic actors in a symbiotic ecology where resources and opportunities are transferred from ordinary people to their saviours in the barracks (p. 89). The author makes readers aware of the national security state in Pakistan or the 'state within state', oppressive systems sponsored by global and regional hegemons and administered by specialists on violence. The country operates as a Special Economic Zone whereby Pakistan's specialists on violence or praetorian elites double up as business czars who have multiple ventures and stakes in the private sector and run one of the largest and most influential corporations. Khalil cites the example of the Bangladesh army which owns a business empire worth US\$ 500 million (p. 111). On top of this are special perks and privileges, memberships of exclusive clubs, subsidies, and exclusive residential areas for active as retired officers (who are themselves independent civil society groups), thus making the military the most pampered class in Pakistan (p. 75). State terror is encrypted and hidden behind hieroglyphs like the

Emergency Regulations (ERs) which provide blanket immunity cover for the police and army from prosecution for human rights abuses to secure warrantless search and preventive detention of proclaimed or suspected terrorists.

*Jallad* is the archaeology and anthropology of modern-day governance and state terror in South Asia and is a bold exposition of the state's 'capillary power'. As such it deserves appreciation for it steers clear of academic mumbo-jumbo and is easily comprehensible. The author trudges through the corridors of military might and global security structure and shows a mirror image of the so-called democracies of South Asia. On a prescriptive note, Khalil suggests attacking the coercive and exploitative world order that sustains the state and building new societies that destabilize older ones. He also makes a fervent appeal to plan resistance against the *Jallad* which, he believes, should begin by identifying the black laws and the leading specialists on violence and stripping them of their impunities. Khalil urges for challenging regional and global hegemony that sponsors and perpetrates terror in this part of the world.

However, despite throwing valuable light on the functioning of national and international systems of state terror, Khalil forgets to underline the 'legitimation crisis' faced by governments, which is responsible for instigating state terror. Moreover, the absence of Foucauldian power/knowledge framework in the book comes as a surprise. Perhaps a chapter on dissenting voices and offstage mutinies by the victims, human rights activists, writers and journalists and civil society would have served the cause of the martyrs.

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