

**RED ALERT: THE WAR WITHIN (2010): A RIPOSTE TO THE  
MACHIAVELLIAN INTELLIGENCE**

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**Abstract**

*A long factional history of naxalite rebel attests to the fact that the movement controls large swathes of Indian countryside in the recent decades. Nurturing in scope, breadth and violence, the activity has been challenging Indian's internal security and further development. Tracing its history, the aim here lies in exploring how the movement possesses a danger in its current iteration and what can be the implications for India's continued rise. Keeping up with the aforementioned idea, the paper will further make an attempt to analyze how Bollywood projects a solution to end the war between government and naxalites. Very often the movies related to such serious issues present an angry hero destroying a complete mass of terrorists. To boost such courage in Indian security forces, the movie Red Alert: A War Within can be seen as a solution to the threat posed by Naxalites. Revolving around the story of a poor cook who belongs to naxalite territory, the movie projects him as a great savior who finally decides to stop the worst wounds of the bloody war.*

**Keywords: Naxalite, Bollywood, Machiavellian, Cinema, Maoist.**

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**R**ight from its inception, Hindi Cinema has been a tool to entertain people. This revolutionary medium has affected our lives, our society and our social system a lot. Whether it is on the social front, or economic, political or religious front, it has gained popularity, earned money and influenced people at large. Filmmakers have used the real life experiences as well as imaginary, mythological, fictional or historical imprints to express their ideas and translate them creatively into celluloid.

In India today, films are the most popular form of mass communication and Bollywood has the biggest film industry in the world, producing over nine hundred films annually and attracting over fifteen million viewers daily. Indeed, the Bombay film is alleged to be 'the opium of the Indian masses' (Gokulsing & Dissanayake 88). During the nationalist project and after Independence, the films produced were standardised to incorporate and communicate nationalist issues. A critic Jyotika Viridi argues, 'In India Popular films touch a major nerve in the nation's body politic, address common anxieties and social tensions, and articulate vexed problems.' (*The Cinematic Imagination*: 9)

A long factional history of Naxalite rebel attests to the fact that the movement controls large swathes of Indian countryside in the recent decades. Nurturing in scope, breadth and violence, the activity has been challenging India's internal security and further development. Tracing its history, the aim here lies in exploring how the movement possesses a danger in its current iteration. The Naxalites get their name from their starting point – the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal state where, in May 1967, a local communist party leader promised to redistribute land to the peasants who worked but did not own any of the land. This was not the first time such a proclamation by a communist party member had been made before in eastern India – many other attempts at fomenting a

working class rebellion had been started but faltered. This one, however, triggered a wave of violence in which workers killed and intimidated land owners, in many cases running them off their land and reclaiming it as their own. The actions were justified by a sentiment held amongst the working class (which was largely made up of tribal members) that they were merely taking back what they had been forced to give up to wealthier businessmen from the west who had gained the land from the locals through debt schemes in which the newcomers took over possession of the tribal's land as collateral for outstanding debts the tribal owed them. Certainly neither side was innocent in all this, and animosity ran deep through both communities.

In relation to its representation of such serious issues, Hindi cinema with its elusive mind provides a solution to end the war between the insurgents who wage the violent war and the government who failed to fulfil their fundamental demands. Boosting the courage of Indian security forces, the movie *Red Alert: The War Within* (2010) can be seen as a solution to the threat posed by naxalites. Inspired from a real life event, the movie sheds light on the atrocities of a poor left with no other option but to join the Maoists to nosh his family. Commenting upon the real life incident, Mahadevan in the Screen Magazine states:

A couple of years ago I read of a farmer in Andhra Pradesh who needed money for his kids' education. So he started a service to deliver food. On one occasion he realized that he is delivering the food to Naxalites! He was taken as a hostage by them. But eventually he managed to escape. This human story inspired me to make the film.

The main protagonist of the movie, Narashima is a penniless farmer who joins the Maoists mainly out of economic necessity rather than ideological conviction. In exchange for his services as a cook, the Maoists assure that they will fund his children's education. The traumatic conflict within the mind of the protagonist who in order to eke out a living finds himself in the midst of the Naxalite movement. His heart-wrenching story begins when he is rescued by the Maoists from the attack by a squad of policemen. The hapless and naive simpleton gets embroiled in a mess in order to feed his family and send his kids to school.

Initially a cook for a terrorist group, Narashima soon graduates to weapon training, shootouts, kidnapping, killing the innocent and raising a war against the state. In next to no time he finds himself in the thick of life he had never bargained for. To prove his loyalty the chap is even forced to kill an informant police officer, which he unwillingly does. Repenting on his own ignominious act, he says:

Zindagi me pehli baar humne kisiko maar dala, ussi ko maar dala jo humpe bharosa rakhte the... kisi ko aise maarna dil ko acha nhi laga (52:01)

(For the first time in life, I killed somebody. I killed the one who trusted me the most... I didn't like killing someone like this)

Exposing the conflict that runs within the mind of the protagonist Narashima, the movie projects an answer to the endless war. Assisting the police force, the angry young hero helps them demolish a complete mass of naxalites thereby, resolving the crisis posed by such communes. Being a pacifist, his aim lies not in ending the war through the medium of violence and bloodshed as he asserts,

Isko maaro, Usko maaro, Unloka ka bhi ghar hai na, Unn lokaa ka bhi biwi baccha hai na... Dono tarfa humra hi loka hai sahib, phir itna khoon kharaba kahe ko... (54:15)

(Kill these, kill those, those people also have homes, those people also have wife and children... our people are at both the sides sir, then why so much of bloodshed)

A confrontation with the group leaders turns his life upside down. Refusing to be a part of the bloody war, he audaciously breaks with them. Conversing with the group leader regarding the miserable plight of his family life, Narashima pleads him to be relieved but he refuses. Disgruntled with such an aggressive behaviour, Narashima shoots him and flees from there. Nevertheless, this initial step provides him with a route to be accomplished. He with the support of a reporter, Raghav, helps police force to kill insurmountable number of naxalites. Even in this very incident, he urges for a solution rather than for a bloody war. He asserts, "Daalla ke logaa ko kuch hona nhi chahiye" (Nothing should happen to the clan) (1:31:54).

Attesting to the factuality of the narrative discourse of the naxalites in the movie, the director of the movie himself remarks:

Probably for the first time in Indian cinema you will get to hear dialogues which are actually spoken lines and not fabricated. We actually did extensive research. My writer Aruna Raje and I downloaded a lot of interviews with the Maoists and cops from the internet. Every line they spoke was volatile and we ended up using those lines.

The movie ends with providing a solution to such conflicting situation between conscience and survival. *Red Alert: The War Within* hurtles towards a cathartic end that blows apart a few myths about life and the complicated systems that engulfs it. Time and again the movie along with its protagonist and his actions focuses upon an answer to this threat, in the words of Omar Bin Laden, son of Osama Bin Laden:

Father, Find Another Way (1:51:04)

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