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11-7-2008

# Faces of Terrorism in the Age of Globalization: Terrorism from Above and Below

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### Recommended Citation

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***FACES OF TERRORISM IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION:  
TERRORISM FROM ABOVE AND BELOW***

***Asafa Jalata***

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Paper presented at the Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning Philosophical Society,  
November 7, 2008.

This paper explains how the intensification of globalization as the modern world system with its ideological intensity of racism and religious extremism and its concomitant advancement in technology and organizational skills has increased the danger of all forms of terrorism. In this world system, the contestation over economic resources and power and the resistance to domination and repression or religious and ideological extremism have increased the occurrence of terrorism from above (i.e. state actors) and from below (i.e. non-state actors).<sup>1</sup> We know that human beings, since time immemorial, have been known to engage in violence over resources, religion, and territories.<sup>2</sup> However, the intensity and danger of terrorism and genocide have increased with the advancement of technology—first with gun making and subsequently with the production of other powerful weapons. According to Paul Wilkinson, “We really understand very little about the origins and causes of human violence in all its daunting variety. . . . There is no substantial theoretical literature in social science concerned specifically with terrorist

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<sup>1</sup>However, elements of humanity started to engage in terrorism since ancient times. Terrorism as a “technique is as old as warfare contrary to the widespread notion that [it] was the offspring of nineteenth-century nationalist movements. The confusion may be a result of the late [emergence] of the term in the French Revolution and its Terror” (Chaliand and Blin 2007: 5-6). For instance, the Mesopotamian Empire of Sargon (true king) was founded on terror in c. 2350 BC. Similarly, the Mongols Empire used terror in colonizing various population groups in the thirteenth century in Asia. According to Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin (2007: 5), “History . . . continues to reverberate with the generalized terror incited by the Mongols and their explosive emergence in the thirteenth century, equaled only by Tamerlane and his pyramids of heads after the fall of Baghdad.” These authors also say, “Terror in the name of religion, holy terror, is a recurring historical phenomenon. [The] well-known examples[s] of [is] were the first century Jewish Zealots, also known as the *sicarii*, [and the Assassins, the Islamic terrorist group, between 1090 and 1272]. [The Jewish] murderous sect helped to incite an uprising against the Roman occupation that resulted . . . in the destruction of the second temple in 70 C.E. and the Diaspora. The Isma‘ili sect known as the Assassins was an Islamic correlate. For two centuries . . . it made the political assassination of Muslim dignitaries by the blade its trademark” (Chaliand and Blin 2007: 2-3). Both terrorist forces used religious ideologies and terrorism to challenge the political forces that were dominating them. Gerard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, *The History of Terrorism from Antiquity to Al Qaeda*, translated by Edward Schneider, Kathryn Pulver, and Jesse Browner, (Los Angeles: University of California, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Wilkinson (1979: 46) raises essential questions when he asks, “Why is man the only species that indulges in intraspecies violence on a really massive and disruptive scale? Why does man alone among all creatures commit acts of mass murder and promiscuous cruelty and sadism? Under what conditions and for what reasons do men resort to one form of violence rather than another? And why is that, faced with similar threats, conditions, circumstances, or pressures, some individuals reacting violently when others do not?” There have also been human groups that have engaged in peaceful co-existence and cooperation and have shared their available resources. History demonstrates that some individuals or groups have also engaged in conflict and war over economic interests such as land, water, and commerce (Black 2004: 23). Paul Wilkinson, “Social Scientific Theory and Civil Violence,” in *Terrorism: Theory and Practice*, ed. Yonah Alexander, David Carlton, and Paul Wilkinson. Boulder: Westview Press, 1979, 45-72; Donald Black, “The Geometry of Terrorism,” *Sociological Theory*, 22/1, March, 2004, pp-21-22.

phenomena.”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, since the frequency, intensity, and the volume of terrorism have increased with the emergence and development of global capitalism, a definition and a theory of terrorism cannot be adequately developed without considering terrorism as an aspect of the racialized capitalist world system. Beginning in 1492, European colonialists engaged in terrorism, genocide, and enforced servitude in the Americas and extended their violence into Africa through racial slavery. Then, in the nineteenth century, they incorporated other parts of the world into this system through colonial terrorism and genocidal wars. Most scholars have avoided providing a comprehensive and critical analysis and an objective definition and theorization of this aspect of the modern world system.

The motivation of those who control state power and engage in state terrorism is to maintain the global economy, structures of politics, and hierarchies of cultures and peoples in order to extract economic resources; the motivation of those who engage in non-state terrorism is mainly to politically respond to economic, political, and cultural inequalities or to promote ideological and religious extremism. There is no question that non-state terrorism generally involves grievances. However, as all grievances do not result in revolutionary or social movements, all grievances do not cause subversive terrorism. There must be some intervening structural, conjunctural, and behavioral factors that can transform some grievances into non-state terrorism through some agencies of the aggrieved population. The combination of factors such as collective grievances, the continued oppressive and exploitative policies of state elites, the refusal to address longstanding grievances peacefully and fairly, the development of extreme ideologies in the form of religion or another ideology, and the emergence of leaders, ideologues, and cadres in aggrieved populations can facilitate the emergence of subversive terrorism.

While state terrorism is primarily practiced to dominate and exploit, non-state terrorism is mainly practiced by elements of those who have been dominated one way or another. Terrorism has been used as structural lethal violence to intimidate and frighten people in order to produce systems of domination and subordination; it has been also used as an instrument of extreme violent opposition to structures of domination and exploitation or to advance other objectives. One common denominator of theories of non-state terrorism is that it is mainly caused by grievances of one kind or another. These grievances involve national/religious/cultural oppression, economic exploitation, political repression, and massive human rights violations, attacks on life and liberty, state terrorism, and various forms of social injustices. Rapid technological advancements have globalized the threat of terrorism from a distance and have multiplied its destructive capacity. According to Donald Black, “Rapid transportation and electronic communication shrink the world by shortening the time needed to travel and interact across the physical world . . . As physical distance loses its relevance, terrorists can more easily plan and launch attacks thousands of miles from home, illustrated by the American attacks of September 11, 2001—literally impossible less than a century earlier.”<sup>4</sup>

We cannot adequately grasp the essence and characteristics of modern terrorism without understanding the larger cultural, social, economic, and political contexts in which it takes place. Since terrorism has been conceptualized, defined, and theorized by

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<sup>3</sup>Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, second edition, (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 45.

<sup>4</sup>Donald Black, “The Geometry of Terrorism,” *Sociological Theory*, 22/1, March, 2004, pp-21-22.

those who have contradictory interests and objectives and since the subject matter of terrorism is complex, difficult, and elusive, there is a wide gap in establishing a common understanding among the scholars of terrorism studies. Most experts on the subject look at this issue from a narrow perspective by ignoring the reality that terrorism is a “social cancer” for all human groups affected by it. First, this paper defines the concept of terrorism in relation to different forms of terrorism, and explains how it has increased with the intensification of globalization. Second, taking the events of 9/11 and the case of Ethiopian state terrorism, the piece explores the general impacts of all forms of terrorism.

### **The Challenge of Defining Terrorism**

Terrorism is essentially a contested concept resulting from the failure of scholars of terrorism studies to establish a commonly accepted definition because of their self-and group-centeredness or limited perspectives. Despite the fact that scholars of terrorism studies agree that terrorism primarily involves lethal violence mainly on civilians in order to influence an audience, they do not agree on identifying the agencies of all forms of terrorism. Referring to the case of contemporary sub-state terrorism, for instance, Omar Lizardo provides a minimal definition: “*Modern terrorism refers to a type of violent interaction initiated by a non-state actor, which is not formally recognized as a legitimate wielder of the means of violence or a valid initiator of violent interactions, directed against the representatives (human, material or symbolic) of a formally recognized state actor in the international system, which does not follow the institutionalized rules and conventions of military engagement*” [author’s emphasis].<sup>5</sup> Of course, this definition does not deal with all forms of terrorism since it only focuses on the bottom-up terrorism. Some scholars also define terrorism as premeditated or intentional violence by non-state actors that impose fear on a target population in order to achieve certain political objectives.<sup>6</sup>

A great number of experts define terrorism without identifying whether states or non-state actors commit it.<sup>7</sup> Explaining the challenges of conceptualizing terrorism,

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<sup>5</sup>Omar Lizardo, “Defining and Theorizing Terrorism: A Global Actor-Centered Approach,” *Journal of World-Systems Research*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 2008, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup>For example, the following definitions only deal with the issues of non-state terrorism. According to Walter Enders and Todd Sandler (2006: 3-4), states do not perpetrate terrorism; only individuals or sub-national groups commit terrorism. According to Albert J. Bergesen and Omar Lizardo (2004: 50), terrorism is “the use of violence by non-state groups against noncombatants for symbolic purposes, that is, to influence or somehow affect another audience for some political, social, or religious purpose.” For Martha Crenshaw (1981: 379), terrorism is “the premeditated use or threat of symbolic, low-level violence by conspiratorial organizations.” Enders, Walter and Todd Sandler, *The Political Economy of Terrorism*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006; Albert Bergesen and Omar Lizardo, “International Terrorism and the World-System,” *Sociological Theory* (22), 2004: 38-52; Martha Crenshaw, “The Causes of Terrorism.” *Comparative Politics* 13, 1981, pp. 379-99.

<sup>7</sup>For example, Kent Layne Oots (1986: 7) definition of terrorism includes the following elements: It is a violent crime introduced to create fear by causing material or economic destruction, attacking victims and forcing them to change their behaviors, committing crime for publicity and a political purpose such as political and/or economic gains. For H. H. A. Cooper (2001: 883), “Terrorism is the intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings.” While Charles Tilly (2004: 5) defines terrorism as “systematic deployment of threats and violence against enemies using means that fall outside the forms of political struggle routinely operating within some current regime,” Caleb Carr (2003: 6) explains it as “the contemporary name given to, and the modern permutation of, warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their

Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pendahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler define terrorism as follows: “*Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role*” [author’s emphasis].<sup>8</sup> Although many states engage in terrorist activities, they do not, as some experts state, publicize their illegal activities due to the fear of their implications in the international system. There are scholars who acknowledge that state terrorism begets non-state terrorism: “When terrorism is theoretically examined as a form of social control, fundamental controlling apparatuses of the state may be viewed as terroristic. Organizations, groups, and individuals who legitimate the use of violence to achieve their goals may be viewed as products of, extensions of, or models of the essential structure of a state when its purpose is to regulate behavior via various forms of repression, domination, and terror.”<sup>9</sup> Scholars such as Eqbal Ahmad also recognize that “state terror very often breeds collective terror.”<sup>10</sup>

Although several representative definitions of terrorism converge on the notion that terrorism is “*the deliberate use of violence in order to influence some audience (or audiences)*” [author’s emphasis], these definitions diverge on several issues, such as which agencies can engage in terrorism and who can be the target of terrorism.<sup>11</sup> Some scholars and other experts even ignore the issues of state terrorism. There are “those who would seek to denounce a focus on state terrorism as ‘skewed,’ ‘biased,’ ideological . . . and ‘out of touch with real political events.’”<sup>12</sup> Most terrorist studies scholars and experts do not adequately explain why certain human elements or groups or organizations or states seek to impose control on other human beings through terrorism; they do not include in their definitions the essence and characteristics of all forms of terrorism. They also do not explain under what conditions terrorism emerges and how it has been used in the modern world system over the last six centuries.

Those commentators and scholars who are sympathetic to liberation fronts or other oppositional organizations have also never denounced the terrorist activities of certain groups. More or less, almost all sides endorse the idea that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” Brian M. Jenkins challenges this cliché on the ground that it “implies that there can be no objective definition of terrorism that there are no

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will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence find objectionable.” Austin T. Turk (1982: 122) also defines terrorism as “organized political violence, lethal or non-lethal, designed to deter opposition by maximizing fear, specifically by random targeting of people or sites.” Oots, Kent Layne Ootq, *A Political Organization Approach to Transnational Terrorism*, (New York: Greenwood Press), 1986; H. H. A. Cooper, “Terrorism: The Problem of Definition Revisited,” *American*

*Behavioral Scientist* 44/6, 2001, pp. 881-893; Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Ruesschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 169-191.

<sup>8</sup>Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler, “The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2004, p. 786.

<sup>9</sup>Annamarie Oliverio, *State of Terror*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 27.

<sup>10</sup>Ahmad, Eqbal. 1998. “Terrorism: Theirs and Ours,” A Presentation at the University of Colorado, 12 October,” <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/27d/077.html>, pp. 1-9, accessed on June 8, 2009, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Jeff Goodwin, “A Theory of Categorical Terrorism.” *Social Forces* 84/4, 2006, p. 2028.

<sup>12</sup>Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, “Introduction,” in *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression*. Ed. Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984, p. 3.

universal standards of conduct of in peace or war.”<sup>13</sup> Almost all sides ignore the crimes committed against humanity. Some commentators and scholars of terrorism studies have ignored the principle of “one man’s terrorist is everyone’s terrorist.” Any balanced definition and theory of terrorism must consider all terrorist attacks by state and non-state actors on the life and liberty of noncombatant civilians.<sup>14</sup>

Generally speaking, there is a lack of consensus on a precise definition of terrorism among the experts of terrorism studies. Bruce Hoffman notes that “terrorism has proved increasingly elusive in the face of attempts to construct one consistent definition.”<sup>15</sup> Despite his recognition of the elusiveness of defining of terrorism, Hoffman “defines terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. . . . Terrorism is specifically designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack.”<sup>16</sup> He explains the roles of state and non-state terrorism and notes how the former is different from the latter. However, he focuses on non-state terrorism and tries to explain the difference between state and international terrorism.

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<sup>13</sup>Jenkins, Brian, *A Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. Santa Monica, California: Rand Paper Series, 1981, pp. 6-7.

<sup>14</sup>To illustrate my point, let me briefly introduce such terrorist episodes. Before the Nazi Germany committed large-scale genocide on Jews, it engaged in small-scale terrorist episodes in the preparation to annihilate an entire people. For example, on November 11, 1938, known as *Kristelnacht* or the “night of broken glass”, the Nazis murdered ninety-one Jews (Shaw 2003: 48). In this case, terrorism was the first phase of genocide, and the German state and its supporters committed it. In the two following cases, terrorism did not lead to genocide, and non-state actors committed it. One of these terrorist events deals with the attack of a Jewish terrorist group on the Palestinian Arabs. On the night of December 18, 1947, armed Jewish men threw grenades on the homes of sleeping Palestinian families, killed ten people including women and children, and wounded five in the village Khisas in Palestine (Nassar 2005: 45). This terrorist act was committed to terrorize the surviving Palestinian families so that they would be forced to quit their homes and consequently that the Jews could implement their Zionist plan of ethnic/racial “cleansing” (O’balance 1957: 64; Glubb 1957: 251; Nassar 2005: 45). As Jamal R. Nassar (2005: 46) describes, “The most frequently mentioned incident between the many contributing to a panic flight of the Palestinian inhabitants was the terrorist massacre of Deir Yassan. On April 9, 1948, Irgun attackers massacred 254 men, women, and children in the village of Deir Yassin. The Irgun was a militant Zionist group led by Menachem Begin, who became Israel’s prime minister in 1977. Under British rule in Palestine, Begin was a wanted terrorist. His group, the Irgun, committed hundreds of acts of violence targeting both civilians and public sites. The Irgun also involved itself in assassinations and sabotage. Such incidents contributed to a massive exodus of the Palestinian Arab population and opened the door for the creation of the Jewish state. Another terrorist episode involved a Palestinian group called Black September. This group broke into the dormitory rooms of the Israeli sport team in Munich, Germany, and took eleven athletes and coaches hostage at the 1972 Summer Olympics. Despite the fact that this event was being viewed on television by about 900 million people around the world, the terrorist group killed all of these hostages (Hamm 2007: 1). Whether states or non-state actors committed these terrorist acts or whether Germans or Jews or Palestinian committed them, regardless of their claims, the violent attacks on noncombatant civilians were terrorism of one form or another. Of course, in most cases, oppressive policies and actions facilitate the emergence of non-state terrorism. Hence, it is impossible to solve the problem of terrorism without making state terrorists accountable for their crimes against humanity. Martin Shaw, *War & Genocide*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003); Jamal R. Nassar, *Globalization and Terrorism: The Migration of Dreams and Nightmares*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005); Edgar O’balance, *The Arab-Israeli War, 1948*, (New York: Praeger, 1957); Sir John Baggot Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1957); Mark S.Hamm, *Terrorism as Crime*, (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

<sup>15</sup>Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (New York: Columbia University, 2006 [1998]), 1998, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup>Bruce Hoffman, *Ibid.* p. 40.

Hoffman argues that “one of the fundamental *raison d’être* of international terrorism is a refusal to be bound by such rules of warfare and codes of conduct. International terrorism disdains any concept of delimited areas of combat or demarcated battlefields, much less respect of neutral territory.” It is true that non-state terrorists care less about international rules of warfare and codes of conduct. Although states that claim to abide by these rules and codes of conduct during wars they frequently violate them by framing their terrorist attacks on noncombatant populations as “collateral damages” as we shall see below. Hoffman ignores such state crimes and other crimes. Furthermore, despite the fact that he associates the emergence of contemporary terrorism with the end of empires, he fails to discuss the essence and impacts of colonial terrorism that the West and its collaborators imposed on the indigenous peoples in the Americas, Australia, Africa, and Asia.

Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman also say that the “search for an adequate definition is still on”, after examining more than one hundred pages of 108 definitions of terrorism in order to formulate a broadly acceptable and comprehensive definition.<sup>17</sup> Theoretically speaking, the state “is often considered as an impartial arbiter between the groups and classes in society, wielding the legitimate monopoly of violence to maintain public order.”<sup>18</sup> Practically, however, the state can be a terrorist agency. Alex P. Schmid clearly understands the role and impact of state terrorism when he writes the following:

State terrorism goes beyond the legitimate use of violence by those holding the reigns of power, just as war crimes go beyond what is considered permissible in warfare. Many acts of terrorism such as hostage taking, killing of prisoners, and deliberate attacks on civilians are prohibited by the rules of war. If a state deals with political opponents by tactics which include selective and random murder, abduction and secret torture, massacres, and the use of concentration camps, it engages in methods which might be legalized by the state’s own lawmaking machinery, but which are widely considered as contrary to humane and civilized behavior. These violent methods of control are also contrary to covenants of international law that most states have signed.<sup>19</sup>

However, he does not explain that dictatorial or colonial regimes ignore international rules of warfare and codes of conduct and engage in organized terror. Unfortunately, this perceptive scholar does not explain why state or non-state agencies engage in terrorism, and he also glosses over the role of Western countries that protect the rights of their respective citizens to some degree while violating the rights of the people of the Third World previously through colonial terrorism and currently by allying with and supporting post-colonial state terrorist regimes that ignore the principles of human rights.

In Africa, South and Central America, and Asia, powerful Western countries have directly or indirectly supported the policies and practices of state terrorism while giving lip service to the principles of democracy and human rights. Focusing on state-sponsored

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<sup>17</sup> Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman. 1988. *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature*, (Amsterdam: Swidoc, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Alex Schmid, “Repression, State terrorism and Genocide: Conceptual Clarifications,” In *State Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression*, Eds. P. Timothy Bushnell, V. Shlapentokh, C. K. Vanderpool, and J. Sundram, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 3-4.

terrorism that emerged in Third World countries with the help of the West and naming it “the real terrorist network”, Edward S. Herman notes the following:

There is . . . huge tacit conspiracy between the U.S. government, its agencies and its multinational corporations, on the one hand, and local business and military cliques in the Third World, on the other, to assume complete control of these countries and ‘develop’ them on a joint venture basis. The U.S. security establishment to serve as the ‘enforcers’ of this joint venture partnership carefully nurtured the military leaders of the Third World, and they have been duly supplied with machine guns and the latest data on methods of interrogation of subversives . . . . The ‘side effects’ in the form of widespread hunger, malnutrition, diseases, poverty and social neglect, millions of stunted children, and a huge reserve army of structurally unemployed and uncared for people are the regrettable but necessary costs of ‘growth’ and ‘development.’ These side effects have not been heavily featured in the Western media.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, other Western countries have engaged in similar political activities in the Third World. Furthermore, most post- or neo-colonial states in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia have used massive terrorist tactics in their pursuit of state interests and goals.<sup>21</sup> According to P. T. Bushnell, V. Shlapentokh, C. K. Vanderpool, and J. Sundram, the essence and the impact of state organized terror are not well known because of three major reasons:

First, information on violent internal repression is extremely scarce since most of the relevant documents have been intentionally destroyed or kept secret while journalistic investigation[s] [are] severely restricted. To compound the problem, victims of violent terror often disappear or fear bearing witness to events. Second, outside investigation of [a] state’s terroristic exercise of power over its own population has been viewed as interference with state sovereignty. Only recently has the protection of human and civil rights become a legitimate issue of international concern. Third, predominant theoretical frameworks have failed to identify repressive state violence and terror as phenomena that are central to the modern state.<sup>22</sup>

With the support of powerful countries from the West and the East, terrorist regimes in Third World nations have used various forms of terror such as rape, physical and psychological torture, violent arrest, secret or open imprisonment and usually death,

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<sup>20</sup>Edward S. Herman, *The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda*, (Boston: South End Press, 1982), 1982, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Asafa Jalata, “State Terrorism and Globalization: The Cases of Ethiopia and Sudan,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Volume 46, Issue 1-2, February-April, 2005, pp. 79-102; Schmid, Alex P. 1991. “Repression, State terrorism and Genocide: Conceptual Clarifications,” In *State Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression*, Eds. P. Timothy Bushnell, V. Shlapentokh, C. K. Vanderpool, and J. Sundram. Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 23-37; Edward S. Herman, *ibid*.

<sup>22</sup>Bushnell, P. Timothy et la, ”State Organized Terror: Tragedy of the Modern State,” in *State organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression*, ed. P. Timothy Bushnell, Vladimir Shlapentokh, Christopher K. Vanderpool, and Jeyaratnam Sundram., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 3-4.



disappearances (euphemism for secret killings), assassinations, castration, etc.<sup>23</sup> Claiming that they would promote “socialism” and social justice, the former Soviet Union, China, and others have been involved in assisting terrorist regimes in developing countries. Large-scale state violence and terrorism were also practiced in societies where so-called socialist revolutions and national liberation movements had emerged. The former Soviet Union, China and others who engaged in revolutionary projects failed to overcome the problems of massive human rights violations and the practice of state terrorism.<sup>24</sup> Because of its complexity, the balanced studies of terrorism require dealing with all its issues and forms.

Unfortunately, in order to win a war or to get publicity, these legitimate warriors sometimes engage in terrorism by violently attacking civilian populations who have little or nothing to do with those who committed crimes against them or humanity.<sup>25</sup> The perpetrators call such casualties “collateral damage” to minimize the crimes they have committed against humanity. Some scholars, commentators, and leaders fail to expose such terrorism and consider these legitimate acts of war. Since killing noncombatant people are both morally and legally wrong, it must be exposed and discredited. We should “regard life and liberty as something like absolute values and then try to understand the moral and political processes through which these values are challenged and defended.”<sup>26</sup> Since the international system, particularly the United Nations, lacks a single standard for humanity in a practical sense, almost all states get away with the crimes they commit against their own citizens and other peoples. What some powerful countries did during the WWII demonstrate this reality. “Ordinary warfare often uses terror as a tactic,” Virginia Held notes, “and we should remember that the terror bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki undoubtedly killed far more people than have been killed by all terrorists, as conventionally so labeled throughout the world in all of the years since.”<sup>27</sup>

The terrorist and genocidal regimes of Germany, Japan, and Italy inflicted millions of deaths on various population groups during WWII. But these acts do not justify the bombing and the killing of innocent children and women in the countries of Germany, Japan, and Italy. Recently, the unjust U.S. war on Iraq resulted in deaths of millions of noncombatant individuals and groups. The US has a legitimate right to attack Al Qaeda since it opened an unjust war on the American people. Although it is acceptable to attack the base of this terrorist organization in Afghanistan, it is morally and politically also wrong to attack and kill noncombatant Afghans. Responsible global citizens and states should not accept the rationalization of states that engage in terrorist acts and allow such crimes against noncombatant people to be perpetuated. The lack of responsibility from states in the international system leaves room for criminal states or non-state

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<sup>23</sup>Edward S. Herman, *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan R. Adelman, “The Development of the Secret Police in Communist States,” *State Organized Terror*, edited by P. Timothy Bushnell, V. Shlapentokh, C. K. Vanderpool and J. Sundram, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 99-112.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (New York: Basic Books, 1977),

<sup>26</sup>Michael Waltzer, *ibid.* p. xvi.

<sup>27</sup> Virginia Held, “Terrorism, Rights, and Political Goals.” *Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues*, edited by Igor Primoratz, (New York: Palgrave,) p. 68.

organizations to engage in terrorism without any fear of repercussion. Like other organizations, states should not be allowed to engage in terrorism. The principle of “supreme emergency”<sup>28</sup> that was promoted by Michael Walzer and John Rawls must be rejected since it is pro-state and ignores the victimization of noncombatants during wars. It is more agreeable that, as C. A. J. (Tony) Coady writes:

The discussion of terrorism and supreme emergency does in any event clearly face us with two options. Either we insist that . . . terrorism . . . is always morally wrong and [should] never be allowed, or we accept that there can be circumstances in which the values served by terrorist acts are so important that it is right to do them. If the latter, then this exemption cannot be allowed only to states. Its legitimacy must in principle be more widely available, and decided on a case-by-case basis. My own conviction is that we surely do better to condemn the resort to terrorism outright with no leeway for exemptions, be they for states, revolutionaries or religious and ideological zealots.<sup>29</sup>

Since the main sources of terrorism have been states, states should not be exempted from being morally, legally and politically held responsible for engaging in any kind of terrorism. The same standard should be applied when criticizing, challenging, and solving the problems of both state and non-state actors and their acts of terrorism.

Once we accept that policies and actions of states can beget oppositional terrorism,<sup>30</sup> we must hold accountable, both morally and legally, all entities that engage in crimes against humanity in the name of religion, civilization, progress, revolution or ideology. This is the first step toward establishing a clear and acceptable boundary between legitimate and illegitimate political violence in the modern world system. Practically, the boundary is blurred, and people take different positions on the issues of terrorism. We need a broader and more critical understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of terrorism to establish a clear boundary between legitimate and illegitimate violence and to overcome the darkness of humanity that has manifested through terrorism.

There is no question that the complexity and multiplicity of terrorism raise a serious challenge for defining and theorizing terrorism. Despite the fact that some scholars and commentators recognize the existence of different forms of terrorism, they have yet to define and study different forms of terrorism in a balanced way. “Just as an increasing number of commentators seem to be able to even-handedly apply the term ‘terrorist’ to non-state and state actors,” Grant Wardlaw notes, “they will have to apply it even-handedly to those groups with whose cause they agree and those with whose cause

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<sup>28</sup>This principle suggests that soldiers and state-persons can override the rights of innocent, noncombatant people under the rule of necessity to protect human values and society that are targeted for destruction. Justifying why Great Britain bombed Germany cities and killed women and children in the early 1940s, Michael Walzer (1977: 253) argues that Nazism’s “threat to human values [was] so radical that its imminence would surely constitute a supreme emergency; and this example can help us understand why lesser threats might not do so.”

<sup>29</sup> C. A. J. (Tony) Coady, “Terrorism, Morality, and Supreme Emergency,” *Terrorism: the Philosophical Issues*, edited by Igor Primoratz, (New York: Palgrave, 2004), p. 93.

<sup>30</sup>For example, the Israeli domination and repression of Palestinians have changed organizations such as Hamas into terrorist organizations. Several Palestinian organizations have engaged in terrorism to fight against Israeli state terrorism.

they conflict.”<sup>31</sup> But, without explaining why liberation fronts such as the Algerian FLN, the Vietnamese NLF and other organizations in the Middle East, Africa, South America, and Europe sometimes engage in certain terrorist activities, Wardlaw terms them terrorist organizations.<sup>32</sup> Ignoring the legitimate causes of liberation fronts or organizations that are attempting to resist exploitation and repression and mixing all their legitimate activities with terrorist ones is misleading.

The failure to understand or the refusal to recognize how state terrorism begets the non-state terrorism of liberation fronts and other organizations denies the opportunity to understand the challenge of terrorism. The commentators and scholars who fail to understand the complexity and multiplicity of terrorism characterize revolutionary leaders who have challenged state terrorism as terrorists without explaining whether or not these leaders have engaged in terrorism or without separating their non-terrorist activities from terrorist ones.<sup>33</sup> The failure to differentiate those who have legitimate grievances and are fighting against the injustice of the state from right wing terrorist leaders or organizations or the failure to differentiate the non-terrorist activities of revolutionary forces from non-terrorist ones demonstrates how some commentators and scholars are engaging in an ideological struggle to maintain the status quo rather than studying and understanding terrorism in order to identify a proper solution for such crimes against humanity.

If we accept the position of such commentators and scholars, then we should view the founding fathers of the US as terrorists since they engaged in the American Revolution of 1776 to liberate their country from British domination. The failure to draw a clear boundary between a revolutionary activity and a terrorist practice results in such confusion. This confused ideological position has resulted in “irreconcilable antagonism” among the researchers of terrorism and complicated and frustrated the process of defining and theorizing terrorism.<sup>34</sup> There is no wonder that the United Nations “could not reach any agreement on the definition of ‘terrorism,’ its root causes, or the appropriate steps necessary to be taken to cope with it.”<sup>35</sup> In the modern world system in which “might is

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<sup>31</sup> Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism: Theory, tactics, and counter-erasures*, second edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Grant Wardlaw, *ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> See for example, Alexander, Browne and Nanes (1979: ix-x) argue “terrorists are distinct from ordinary criminals because they are ostensibly dedicated to an altruistic ideological or political cause. Nourished by various cultural roots, their spiritual mentors include Robespierre, Bakunin, Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Sorel, Hitler, Marighella, Castro, Guevara, Debray, Guillen, Marcuse, Fanon, Mao, and Malcolm X. They consist of ethnic, religious, or nationalist groups such as the Provisional Wing of the Irish Republican Army; Marxist-Leninist Groups, as, for example, the Basque Separatist Sixth Assembly; anarchist groups, including the Red Cells in West Germany; neo-fascist and extreme right-wing groups, such as the Mussolini Action Squads in Italy; ideological mercenaries of which the Japanese United Red Army is typical; and pathological groups as exemplified by the Symbionese Liberation Army.” Yonah Alexander, Marjorie Ann Browne and Allan S. Nanes, ed. 1979. *Control of Terrorism: International Documents*, (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, 1979).

<sup>34</sup> H. H. A. Cooper, “Terrorism: The Problem of Definition Revisited,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 44/6, 2001, p. 882.

<sup>35</sup> Ray S. Cline, “Foreword,” in *Control of Terrorism: International Documents*, edited by Yonah Alexander, M. A. Brown and A. S. Nanes, (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1970).

right” and in which states protect one another in the United Nations to avoid moral and political responsibilities, most cases of state terrorism are ignored. Let us look at the movements of indigenous peoples and the reactions of states to these struggles.

When state terrorism is committed on indigenous peoples who do not have their own states, their victimization does not receive political attention. However, whenever such peoples organize themselves into liberation movements and engage in a just struggle or whenever they start to use tactics similar to those of the state in order to defend their political and economic interests, they are labeled as “terrorists” and condemned by some members of the United Nations. In a moral and legal sense, however, the colonized peoples have the right to self-defense without engaging in terrorism. According to the moral theorist Michael Walzer, “*Aggression justifies two kinds of violent response: a war of self-defense by the victim and a war of law enforcement by the victim and any other member of international society*” [author’s emphasis].<sup>36</sup>

Members of the United Nations disagree on defining terrorism by raising three legal arguments:

1. The position that *terrorism* is defined and constituted by the ‘criminal acts’ taken against governments by individuals or groups. Most of the advanced industrial Western states and some Latin governments support this position.
2. The position that *terrorism* should be defined by acts, but in a broader context than [the one] above so as to include acts of governmental groups those violate human rights and reinforce policies such as apartheid. This position was advanced primarily by the African states.
3. The position that the definition of *terrorism* resides in the motivation of the actor and the context of the act. This argument claims that to consider terrorism narrowly . . . is to label inappropriately a freedom fighter as a terrorist. A variety of developing nations and Arab states held this view.<sup>37</sup>

Describing the hypocrisy of the members of the United Nations on their definition of terrorism, Ambassador Charles Yost, the permanent United States representative to the United Nations, commented: “The fact is, of course, that there is a vast amount of hypocrisy on the subject of political terrorism. We all righteously condemn it—except when we . . . or [our] friends . . . are engaging in it. Then we ignore it or gloss over it or attach to it tags like ‘liberation’ or ‘defense of the free world’ or ‘national honor’ to make it seem like something [other] than what it is.”<sup>38</sup>

The problem of terrorism was given less attention until recently when Al Qaeda, a transnational terrorist organization masterminded by Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, attacked the United States and other powerful countries. Even currently, most scholars and non-academic experts focus on terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and fail to engage in a comprehensive study of terrorism. Political leaders, non-academic experts, media personalities, as well as most academics have ignored “the

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Walzer, *ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, “Introduction,” in *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression*, edited Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 September 1972: 20.

multiple meanings of terrorism” and focused on “the definition of behaviors, not with the real relations of domination and subjugation embodied in social structure.”<sup>39</sup> Consequently, their “contributions to the terrorism debate evade the question of institutional domination through fear.”<sup>40</sup> As some terrorists have begun to demonstrate their global impacts by mastering recent changes in the technologies of communication, transportation, and organizational innovations and skills, the interest of studying terrorism is expanding.<sup>41</sup> The danger of terrorism is now widely felt in countries that used to be confident in their ability to maintain security because the revolution in technology “makes terrorism easier and deadlier.”<sup>42</sup>

According to Yonah Alexander, Marjorie Ann Browne and Allan S. Nanes, “The brutality and globalization of modern violence make it amply clear that we have entered a unique ‘Age of Terrorism’ with all its formidable problems and frightening ramifications.”<sup>43</sup> With the possibility of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations acquiring and using nuclear weapons and with the “formidable and frightening ramifications” of global terrorism and the reactions and provocations of some arrogant and less informed leaders of some countries, we are entering into a dangerous era in the modern world system. Although it has so far been easy to ignore the problem of colonial or state terrorism,<sup>44</sup> currently it is unimaginable not to study the essence and consequences of all forms of terrorism since they can affect powerful groups and countries. “Whether manifested in the grinding fear of privation, in the dread of the instrumentalities of the state, or in the caprice of random violence,” William D. Perdue writes, “Terrorism stands as the negation of social being. As such, it is an offense against humanity, against history, and against the human future.”<sup>45</sup> As an aspect of the global capitalist system, the problem of terrorism has not been fully studied.

Until recently, only a few political scientists, sociologists, criminologists and non-academic experts were engaged in descriptive study of terrorism.<sup>46</sup> Descriptive studies did not deal with the political economy of terrorism, and they did not recognize the importance of ideology in defining and labeling terrorism. “For the ideological construction of terrorism is a function of power; of the ability to control events and to impose one’s ways upon others against their will. It follows from the preliminary and sensitizing argument to this point that power consists of more than overt force and coercion. Within its nature must be found an ability to define events and to broadly

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<sup>39</sup> William D. Perdue, *Terrorism and the State: A Critique of Domination through Fear*, (New York: Praeger), p. x.

<sup>40</sup> William D. Perdue, *ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> Since September 11, 2001, scholars and commentators have showed more interest in terrorism studies, and more than one hundred books were published on terrorism. See Mark S. Hamm (2007: 3).

<sup>42</sup> Donald Black, *ibid*, p. 22.

<sup>43</sup> Yonah Alexander, Marjorie Ann Browne and Allan S. Nanes, ed. 1979. *Control of Terrorism: International Documents*, (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, 1979), p. ix.

<sup>44</sup> A few scholars, such as Bartolome De Las Casas, Martin Shaw, William D. Perdue, and Annamari Oliverio wrote about colonial or state terrorism. See B. De Las Casas (1992); W. D. Perdue (1989); M. Shaw (2003).

<sup>45</sup> William D. Perdue, *ibid*, p. xi.

<sup>46</sup> Jeff Goodwin (2006: 2027) notes that prior to September 11, 2001 or 9/11, “terrorism research was the exclusive preserve, with very few exceptions of small networks of political scientists and non-academic ‘security experts,’ relatively few of whom were interested in social science theory. Descriptive case studies abound, replete with ad hoc, case-specific explanations of terrorism.”

disseminate the official view.”<sup>47</sup> The dominant ideology of terrorism has attempted to dismiss all legitimate national or revolutionary movements that have attempted to overthrow oppressive and exploitative institutions and states by labeling them terrorist movements whether they engage in terrorist activities or not. In such cases, as Perdue comments: “Terrorism is a label of defamation, a means of excluding those so branded from human standing. When applied in a one-sided fashion to those who struggle against established political structures, it is a means of organizing both the perceptions and reactions of others in the world community. Once so defined, those affected may become international lepers. Hence . . . their . . . objectives, ideology, and historical reason for being will be dismissed out of hand. Paradoxically then, the very label of terrorism has of itself assumed a terrifying power.”<sup>48</sup>

Although there have been legitimate reasons why colonized peoples have often employed guerrilla methods to liberate themselves from the brutality of colonial institutions, colonial states and their supporters have labeled them “savage” and “terrorist.” “The concept ‘ideology’ reflects the one discovery which emerged from political conflict,” Karl Mannheim notes, “namely, that ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination.”<sup>49</sup> Without clearly identifying, studying, and understanding the major historical, cultural, and sociological causes that have contributed to the emergence and perpetuation of all forms of terrorism, it is impossible to define and theorize terrorism committed by states and/or non-state actors precisely and correctly. Since terrorist experts do not deal with the chains of causation of terrorism, “there is little theoretical knowledge available about the nature and sources of state organized terror”<sup>50</sup> and about other forms of terrorism.

The absence of a comprehensive definition of terrorism has reduced our capacity to thoroughly understand terrorism. Government officials, journalists, non-academic experts, and some scholars use the term terrorism without providing either a rigorous definition or adequate theorization of it. “The dominant ideology of terrorism,” Perdue notes, “refers to a specific thought-system held by institutional elite; the higher circles of political, economic, and military power committed to the preservation of an existing material and super-structural order.”<sup>51</sup> This ideology is a roadblock to critically defining and theorizing terrorism. There are scholars who think that we can adequately study terrorism without a comprehensive and rigorous definition. For example, Walter Laqueur asserts, “a comprehensive definition of terrorism . . . does not exist nor will it be found in the foreseeable future. To argue that terrorism cannot be studied without such a definition is manifestly absurd.”<sup>52</sup>

Yet, without an acceptable objective definition of terrorism, our research into this subject and our effort to find an appropriate solution remains elusive. As Jack P. Gibbs

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<sup>47</sup> William D. Perdue, *ibid*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>48</sup> William D. Perdue, *ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*. (New York: A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1936), p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> Timothy Bushnell et al., “State Organized Terror: Tragedy of the Modern State,” in *State Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression*, ed. P. Timothy Bushnell, Vladimir Shlapentokh, Christopher K. Vanderpool, and Jeyaratnam Sundram., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> William D. Perdue, *ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>52</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p. 5.

explains, “Leaving the definition [of terrorism] implicit is the road to obscurantism.”<sup>53</sup> This same scholar argues that since “labeling actions as ‘terrorism’ promotes condemnation of the actors, [and since] a definition may reflect ideological or political bias,” some scholars and others have avoided the defining terrorism.<sup>54</sup> It can be argued that, in the name of political neutrality, most scholars shy away from comprehensively defining, theorizing, confronting, and challenging all forms terrorism as a crime against humanity while criticizing the particular form of terrorism that is aimed at powerful groups and nations. Without confronting and solving some conceptual issues and problems of terrorism we cannot develop productive research agendas and adequate theories of terrorism.<sup>55</sup>

In an attempt to establish some parameters for the definition of terrorism, Gibbs<sup>56</sup> raises five questions and attempts to answer them: “First, is terrorism *necessarily* illegal (a crime)? Second, is terrorism *necessarily* undertaken to realize some particular type of goal and, if so, what is it? Third, how does terrorism *necessarily* differ from conventional military operations in a war, a civil war, or so-called guerrilla warfare? Fourth, is it *necessarily* the case that only opponents of the government engage in terrorism? Fifth, is terrorism *necessarily* a distinctive strategy in the use of violence and, if so, what is that strategy?” After suggesting that terrorism is a crime committed to attain control, he provides his definition of this concept: Terrorism is illegal violence or threatened violence directed against human or nonhuman objects, provided that it:

- (1) Was undertaken or ordered with a view to altering or maintaining at least one putative norm in at least one particular territorial unit or population;
- (2) Had secretive, furtive, and/or clandestine features that were expected by the participants to conceal their personal identity and/or their future location;
- (3) Was not undertaken or ordered to further the permanent defense of some area;
- (4) Was not conventional warfare and because of their concealed personal identity, concealment of their future location, their threats, and/or their spatial mobility, the participants perceived themselves as less vulnerable to conventional military action; and
- (5) Was perceived by the participants as contributing to the normative goal previously described (*supra*) by inculcating fear of violence in persons (perhaps an indefinite category of them) other than the immediate target of the actual or threatened violence and/or by publicizing.<sup>57</sup>

Although Gibbs’ conceptualization and definition of terrorism have some relevance, they do not adequately address problems and issues, and they do not define terrorism in a broad historical, sociological and global perspective. Despite the fact that terrorism involves a certain kind of lethal violence to change the behavior of a particular and large audience, it may or may not be practiced clandestinely. All terrorists do not necessarily conceal their personal identities and locations. Whether they do these or not

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<sup>53</sup> Jack P. Gibbs, “Conceptualization of Terrorism,” *American Sociological Review*, 1989, p. 329.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 330.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

depends on their relative strength and the danger they may face. Some state terrorists, for example, do not hide their personal identities and locations. Imposing terror and committing genocide in order to take over the territories and resources of indigenous peoples are openly practiced through colonial terrorism. In his definition, although Gibbs talks about illegal violence committed “to alter . . . at least one putative norm in at least one particular territorial unit or population,” he does not consider colonial terrorism in his conceptualization of terrorism.

Bartolomé De Las Casas who traveled to the New World in 1502 with the Spaniards, in their quest to colonize and rob the treasures and lands of the indigenous peoples of the Indies, provides an eyewitness account of the anatomy of colonial terrorism and genocide:<sup>58</sup>

They forced their way into native settlements, slaughtering everyone they found there, including small children, old men, pregnant women, and even women who had just given birth. They hacked them to pieces, slicing open their bellies with their swords as though they were so many sheep herded into a pen. They even laid wagers on whether they could manage to slice a man in two at a stroke, or cut an individual’s head from his body, or disembowel him with a single blow of their axes. They grabbed suckling infants by the feet and, ripping them from their mothers’ breasts, dashed them headlong against the rocks. Others, laughing and joking all the while, threw them over their shoulders into a river . . . They slaughtered anyone and everyone in their path, on occasion running through a mother and her baby with a single thrust of their swords. They spared no one, erecting especially wide gibbets on which they could string their victims up with their feet just off the ground and then burn them alive thirteen at a time, in honor of our Savior and the twelve Apostles, or tie dry straw to their bodies and set fire to it. Some they chose to keep alive and simply cut their wrists, leaving their hands dangling, saying to them: ‘Take this letter’—meaning that their sorry condition would act as a warning to those hiding in the hills. The way they normally dealt with the native leaders and noble was to tie them to a kind of griddle consisting of sticks resting on pitchforks driven into the ground and then grill them over a slow fire, with the result that they howled in agony and despair as they died a lingering death.

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<sup>58</sup>The term genocide was invented in the twentieth century when the Jews and other groups were exterminated in Europe despite the fact that this practice started in ancient times and increased with the devastation of Native Americans beginning with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 in the Americas. Raphael Lemkin (1944: 79) invented the concept genocide in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* explaining it as the annihilation of “the essential foundations of life of national groups” and the disintegration of “the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even lives of the individuals belonging to such groups.” Martin Shaw (2003) summarized terrorism “as the deliberate destruction of a people, principally but not only by means of killing some of its members” [author’s emphasis]. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie, 1944); Martin Shaw, *War & Genocide*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003); Bartolomé De Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, edited and Trans. by Nigel Griffin. London: Penguin Books, 1992).



De Las Casas wrote *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* in 1542 and described the crimes committed against humanity in the Indies for gold, silver, food, land and other resources in the name of Christianity and/or European civilization. Most mainstream and leftist scholars have conveniently ignored the terrorism and genocide committed on such indigenous groups during the expansion of the European-dominated racialized capitalist world system.<sup>59</sup> When “state terrorism can be seen as a method of rule whereby some groups of people are victimized with great brutality, and more or less arbitrarily by the state or state supported actors, so that others who have reason to identify with those murdered, will despair, obey or comply,”<sup>60</sup> genocide can be considered as the elimination in part or in whole a certain group of people in order to expropriate their resources or stop their resistance to the state or the agents of the state.

The idea that terrorists do not need “the permanent defense of some area” fails to recognize that colonial terrorism involved the violent occupation of the territories or lands of the indigenous peoples and the maintaining of these lands through violence. Furthermore, since terrorism and war can be seen to be on a continuum, it is often impossible to draw a clear and neat boundary between them as Gibbs claims. Political repression, state terrorism, war, and genocide<sup>61</sup> are processes on a continuum. When state terrorism “increases to the point where the aim no longer appears to be coercion and intimidation, but elimination of the minority population, the policy moves from one of state terror to genocide. For state terrorism . . . does leave many of its victims and targets still living; genocide clearly does not.”<sup>62</sup>

The colonial Spaniards committed terrorism and genocide in order to transfer the territories and resources of the indigenous peoples to themselves and descendants. Since they discovered that the natives lacked the technological and organizational capacity to defend themselves, they did not fear the possibility of retaliation and, as a result, they did not conceal their personal identities as Gibbs’ definition claims. The Spaniards imposed fear on various indigenous Americans through mass terror and genocide so that they could achieve their economic and political goals without any obstacle. These acts of terrorism and genocide were guided and financed by the government of Spain.<sup>63</sup> Later,

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<sup>59</sup> According to Martin Shaw (2003: 65), a “larger concentration of state power grew with the expansion of European empires in the ‘Orient’ and the ‘New World,’ accompanied by waves of slaughter of people who were often seen, in the religious ideology of the time, as less human than Christian Europeans. In the Americas, the most ‘advanced’ European societies waged genocidal war, wiped out whole civilizations and instituted the most extensive slave system.”

<sup>60</sup> Alex Schmid, *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>61</sup> Although the United Nations rarely plays its appropriate role in stopping or preventing genocide because some of its powerful member states engage in such crimes against humanity, it defines genocide as the following: “genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, such as: (1) killing members of the group, (2) causing seriously bodily or mental harm to members of the group, (3) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, (4) imposing measures intended to prevent birth within the group, and (5) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (Kuper, 1981, 210-214).

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Alex Schmid, *ibid.* pp. 31-32.

<sup>63</sup> J. M. Cohen, ed. and trans., *Christopher Columbus: The Four Voyages*, (London: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 32-36.

several European governments engaged in similar crimes; today mainstream Euro-American scholars gloss over such crimes and refer to them as actions of “discovery” and “civilization.”

Today, the international community rarely requires accountability from its members that engage in state terrorism. Kurt Jonassohn recently noted that terrorist state leaders in developing countries “not only go unpunished, they are even rewarded. On the international scene they are accorded all the respect and courtesies due to government officials.<sup>64</sup> They are treated in accordance with diplomatic protocol in negotiations and are treated in the General Assembly of the United Nations. When they are finally ousted from their offices, they are offered asylum by countries that lack respect for international law, but have a great deal of respect for the ill-gotten wealth that such perpetrators bring with them.” Gibbs’ definition does not deal with all kinds of terrorism; hence his understanding of state terrorism is incomplete. His following statements make my point very clear: “it is grossly unrealistic to assume that all instances of genocide or persecution along racial, ethnic, religious, or class lines are terrorism . . . Nor is it defensible to speak of particular regimes (e.g., Stalin’s, Hitler’s, Pol Pot’s) as though all of the related violence must have been state terrorism.”<sup>65</sup> For Gibbs, since these regimes did not conceal their lethal violence and since they monopolized their so-called legitimate violence, all of their violent activities were not terrorism.

Powerful groups or states can engage in terrorism openly and publicly or clandestinely, depending on local, regional, and global political conditions. The development of the nation-state and the capitalist world system occurred through war making, violence and organized crime.<sup>66</sup> We cannot clearly understand the essence and meaning of global terrorism without comprehending the essence and characteristics of state terrorism since states were born and consolidated through the monopoly of violence. Despite the fact that some government elites and their apologists claim that the state provides protection from domestic and external violence, “governments organize and, wherever possible, monopolize the concentrated means of violence. The distinction between ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ force . . . makes no difference.”<sup>67</sup> Political violence has always been involved in producing and maintaining structures, institutions, and organizations of privileged hierarchy and domination in society. State terrorism is a massive and extreme aspect of political violence. Those who have state power, which includes the power to define terrorism, deny their involvement in political violence or terrorism and confuse abstract theories of the state with reality.

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<sup>64</sup> Kurt Jonassohn, *Genocide and Gross Human Rights Violations: In Comparative Perspective*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>65</sup> Jack P. Gibbs, *ibid*, p. 333.

<sup>66</sup> According to Charles Tilly (1985: 170), “War makes states . . . Banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry, policing, and war making all belong on the same continuum . . . or the historically limited period in which national states were becoming the dominant organizations in Western countries . . . mercantile capitalism and state making reinforced each other.”

<sup>67</sup> Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 171.

Based on the assumption of the ideal relationship between the state and society, philosophers and thinkers such as Hobbes, Hegel, Rousseau, Campanella, Thomas More, and Plato had identified three functions of the state that would earn it legitimacy. According to these abstract theories, the state protects and maintains internal peace and order in society; it organizes and protects national economic activities; and it defends national sovereignty and national interests.<sup>68</sup> In reality, most states violate most of these theoretical principles by engaging in political repression and state terrorism in order to defend the interest of powerful elites. Furthermore, the revolutionary theories of the state by Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin remain a dream because revolutionary states failed to introduce a revolutionary social transformation to eliminate oppression, repression, state terrorism, and exploitation of people.<sup>69</sup> The occurrence of political repression, oppression, state terrorism, and dictatorship in the former Soviet Union, China and other former revolutionary countries demonstrate that the state has remained the site of violence despite its legitimating discourse, and, as Charles Tilly says, political violence is closely related to the art of statecraft.<sup>70</sup>

Most of the time, “the state, like an unchained beast, has ferociously attacked those who claim to be its master, its own citizens”<sup>71</sup> Annamarie Oliverio legitimately criticizes scholars who produce definitions of terrorism on behalf of the state and promote outmoded concepts, analyses, and theories in state bureaucracy, the media, and in academia.<sup>72</sup> According to Oliverio, “Examining terrorism as a discursive practice in the art of statecraft reveals the inextricable link between terrorism and the production of power relations via detailed descriptions, categorizations, and hierarchical organizations of contemporary society.”<sup>73</sup> With the further division of labor, the advancement of technology and organizational capacity in the form of state, the interstate system, and the transnational corporation, and with the limitless capacity to accumulate more capital in a globalized world, certain human groups have demonstrated their willingness and capabilities to impose their power on other human groups through political violence that has involved war, terrorism, and genocide.

The colonizing nations of the West and their collaborators justified “their scramble for foreign territories as fulfillment of a sacred duty to spread their form of civilization to the world.”<sup>74</sup> These countries used the discourses of the superiority of their race, culture, civilization, and Christian religion to promote and justify destructive and exploitative policies such as terrorism, genocide, and economic exploitation. John H. Bodley characterizes the genocide and ethnocide committed by such nation-states as “an

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<sup>68</sup> P. Timothy Bushnell, et la., *ibid.* p. 6; T. Campanella, *The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue*, trans. D. J. Donno, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Thomas More, *Utopica*, ed. G. M. Logan and R. M. Adams, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Plato, *The Republic*, trans. R. W. Sterling and W. C. Scott, (New York: Norton, 1985).

<sup>69</sup> John Maguire, *Marx's Theory of Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, (New York: International Publications, 1971).

<sup>70</sup> Charles Tilly, *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>71</sup> P. Timothy Bushnell et la., *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Annamarie Oliverio, *The State of Terror*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1998).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>74</sup> John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, Third ed., (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing Co. 1990), p. 12.

immense human tragedy.”<sup>75</sup> The more human beings became advanced in technology and organizational capacity, the more they engaged in terrorism and genocide in order to satisfy their group’s or country’s economic interests. Although terrorism and genocide emerged in ancient societies, European countries such as Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland, Germany, and Belgium increasingly committed them during their capitalist colonial expansion to the Americas, Africa, and Australia. Despite the fact that the main goals of these countries were the exploitation of land, raw materials, minerals such as gold and silver from various continents of indigenous peoples, they also boasted about their so-called civilizing missions.

Terrorism as an instrument of massive and lethal violence was practiced through colonialism, servitude, and racial slavery in order to transfer the resources of the indigenous peoples to European colonialists and their descendants between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. For example, between 1820 and 1920, Western Europeans and their descendants terrorized and massacred about 50 million people.<sup>76</sup> As Elizabeth Colson states, “Economic systems have emerged [and created] massive conflicts of interests between classes and also nations. Technologies empower those who are able to seize control of the state apparatus and enhance the stakes for which people contend . . . [T]he further creation of technologies that enable humans to play with destructive emotions and habituate themselves to violence under conditions that give them the pleasure of terror without expectation that it will recoil upon them.”<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the experiences from various continents demonstrate that most of those indigenous peoples who survived terrorism and genocide were reduced to the status of slavery or semi-slavery.

Unfortunately, most social scientists of the nineteenth century justified “a deliberate and violent political act carried out as national policy in order to gain access to the natural resources controlled by” indigenous peoples, and “espoused ‘scientific’ evolutionary theories that explained the destruction and suggested that it was inevitable.”<sup>78</sup> Under the guise of “scientific” theories, some scholars have justified the destruction of indigenous peoples through terrorism and genocide. “Scientific” claims have been made to promote personal and group interests at the cost of humanity. Generally speaking, my critique of mainstream literature on terrorism in defining and theorizing terrorism is intended to suggest that most scholars from both right and left have yet to establish a single practical, moral, legal, and scholarly standard that will enable them to go beyond the discourses of commerce or money, culture, religion, and civilization to critically understand the root causes of terrorism from above and below and to provide an appropriate policy suggestion.

The life and liberty of all human groups should be recognized and defended on an equal level: morally, politically, and intellectually. Otherwise, to oppose one form of terrorism while supporting or promoting another is a moral corruption and is self-defeating. Accepting ideologically, intellectually, and culturally blind thinking has prevented most experts from critically understanding the causes, agencies, essence,

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<sup>75</sup> John H. Bodley, “Anthropology and the Politics of Genocide,” in *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror*, ed. Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 37.

<sup>76</sup> John H. Bodley, *ibid*, 1990.

<sup>77</sup> Colson, Elizabeth. 1992. “Conflict and Violence,” in *The Paths to Domination, Resistance and Terror*, Ed. Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.278.

<sup>78</sup> John H. Bodley, *ibid*, p. 38.

meaning, and consequences of all forms of terrorism. Consequently, they have failed to establish a universal standard for conceptualizing and theorizing terrorism. To expand our understanding of all forms of terrorism, we need to broaden our scope by starting to study the complex subject of terrorism in the global and historical context. Whether non-state actors or powerful states or other entities commit illegal lethal political violence against noncombatant populations, we must recognize the act as terrorism. Paul Wilkinson expounds that “we should not lose sight of the fundamental truth that one couldn’t adequately understand terrorist movements without paying some attention to the effects of the use of force and violence by states. Indeed some of the best historical case-studies of the use of factional terrorism as a weapon vividly demonstrate how state violence often helps to provoke and fuel the violence of terrorist movements.”<sup>79</sup>

The state has the capacity to coordinate and concurrently use oppression, repression, exploitation, terrorism, and genocide. Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez state that “*oppression* [is] the situation where ‘social and economic privileges are denied to whole classes [or groups] of people regardless of whether they oppose the authorities’ and *repression* is ‘the use of coercion or the threat of coercion against opponents or potential opponents in order to prevent or weaken their capability to oppose the authorities and their policies.’ *Terrorism* is the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or complaint behavior in a victim and/or audience of the act or threat.”<sup>80</sup> Exploitation involves looting economic resources, taking over territories or lands, and forcing people to work on them under strenuous conditions without adequate compensation or remuneration. Some social scientists and others have glossed over the problems of oppression, exploitation, political repression, and state terrorism. “Although human rights advocates have awakened those [who] would listen to the human tragedy of violation of civil rights and liberties [by every government],” John F. McCamant writes, “social scientists have, by and large, continued to ignore political repression”<sup>81</sup> and state terrorism.

To expand our understanding, the rigorous and comprehensive definition and theory of terrorism must deal with all forms of terrorism and recognize that state policies, behavior, and actions that can contribute to the emergence of non-state terrorism. The Focus by experts on bottom-up terrorism and the ignoring of top-down terrorism limits our understanding of this subject. If we cannot understand all aspects of terrorism, we cannot develop an appropriate policy to deal with this lethal problem. Furthermore, scholars of terrorism studies need to recognize that extreme religious and racist ideologies that have emerged within the racialized capitalist world system have facilitated the rationalization and justification of colonial terrorism that has destroyed or dehumanized and marginalized indigenous peoples.

In the globalized world order, state-centered or state-sponsored terrorism still plays a central role in maintaining racial/ethnic hierarchies.<sup>82</sup> So without critically comprehending the causal relationship between bottom-up terrorism and top-down

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<sup>79</sup> Paul Wilkinson, “Can a State Be ‘Terrorist?’” *International Affairs* 57/3, summer, 1981, p. 467.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> John F. McCamant, “Governance without Blood: Social Science’s Antiseptic View of Rule; or, The Neglect of Political Repression,” in *The State as Terrorist*, Ed. Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *ibid*, p.11.

<sup>82</sup> Asafa Jalata, *ibid*.

terrorism and without developing appropriate human rights-based policies, the so-called war on global terror cannot effectively address and solve this social cancer. In the current global system, the metaphor of “might is right” is being challenged with the expansion of modern education, skills, knowledge, and technological information to different corners of the world. With the intensification of globalization and the expansion of knowledge and information, old ideologies that created and justified double standards among human groups based on race, culture, religion, and civilization cannot be maintained. The use of massive human rights violations including terrorism and genocide are increasingly becoming outdated, unpopular, unprofitable, and expensive both financially as well as in human lives, and cannot be sustained.

Considering the historical and global context in which terrorism has been intensified, we need a more comprehensive and broader definition of terrorism. So, I define *terrorism as a systematic governmental or organizational policy through which lethal violence is practiced openly or covertly to impose terror on a given population group and their institutions or symbols or their representative members to change their behavior of political resistance to domination or their behavior of domination for political and economic gains or other reasons*. In my definition, I am not suggesting that the impacts of top-down and bottom-up terrorisms are the same or similar. According to John W. Sloan, “Since governmental groups have the resources of the state at their disposal, they are usually capable of engaging in higher levels of terrorism than the guerrillas.”<sup>83</sup> However, transnational terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda have adequate human, financial, and intellectual resources to impose horrifying terrorist activities on targeted audiences on a global level.

All forms of terrorists attempt to hide the lethal consequences of terrorism and their crimes against humanity by discoursing over civilization, progress, democracy, national liberation or religion. Most people are easily persuaded by such discourses and take sides without understanding or ignoring the consequences. Unfortunately, the terrorism that powerless or colonized peoples experience receives inadequate attention while terrorism that is visited upon powerful groups or nations receives much more attention and publicity. Some states and powerful people do not recognize that all human groups have the right to life and liberty and that they should be protected from all forms terrorism. Even those critical scholars like Karl Marx,<sup>84</sup> Andre Gunder Frank,<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> John W. Sloan, “State Repression and Enforcement Terrorism in Latin America,” *The State as Terrorist*, ed. Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, (Westport: Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 84.

<sup>84</sup>It was Karl Marx who started the study of the emergence and development of capitalism as the modern world system. Although he did not adequately explain the consequences of terrorism and genocide on the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Asia, and Africa, he briefly mentioned the devastating effects of colonial capitalism on these peoples. According to Karl Marx (1967: 753-754), “The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increasing accumulation. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother country and were turned into capital. . . . As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic. . . . In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, plays the great part. . . . In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world. . . . Capital comes [into the world] dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.” Marx, Karl. 1967. *Capital*, Ed. F. Engels, (New York: International Publishers, 1967).

Immanuel Wallerstein,<sup>86</sup> and others who have studied the emergence, development, and expansion of the racialized capitalist world system have primarily focused on trade, the international division of labor, exploitation, capital accumulation, political structures, development and underdevelopment, and social inequality and have ignored the role of terrorism in creating and maintaining the system.

Such critical scholars have not provided an adequate explanation of the role of state-centered or state-sponsored terrorism in destroying or enslaving the indigenous peoples of the world and in creating, developing, and maintaining the racialized capitalist world system. Despite the fact that Marx recognized the cruelty and consequences of the capitalist world system, he did not explore the idea that terrorism was an integral part of the broadening of the system. Marx focused on capitalist development in Europe and indirectly studied its relations to colonized societies. Other critical scholars have also followed his Euro-centric paradigm. We learn from history that political violence has increased as different societies engaged in improved techniques of production, produced surplus wealth, developed their organizational capacity, and improved their technological innovations. The emergence of the nation-state with the development of capitalism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Europe created the organizational and technological capacity to engage in more lethal violence and war. In England, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the period of the formation of the nation-state.<sup>87</sup>

Capitalism had “witnessed the first long, sustained, and widespread quantitative and qualitative development . . . in its mercantile stage and the first period of concentrated capital accumulation in Europe.”<sup>88</sup> As competition increased among individuals, groups, and states over scarce and valued resources, political violence, terrorism, and war increased. The West and their collaborators used the ideologies of racism<sup>89</sup> and religious absolutism to justify colonial terrorism, war, slavery, and genocide. Despite the fact that “ideologies [as] qua abstract doctrine do not in themselves directly cause violence, ideological *movements*, which define enemies and incite to

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<sup>85</sup>See Andre Gunder Frank (1778, 1979) for global accumulation of capital between 1492 and 1789. Andre Gunder Frank, *World Accumulation, 1492-1789*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978); Andre Gunder Frank, *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

<sup>86</sup>Immanuel Wallerstein also wrote several books and articles to explain how capitalism became the global system. Despite this, he too has not adequately explained the role of terrorism in creating and maintaining the capitalist world system. See for example, Immanuel Wallerstein, (1974; 1980). Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750*, (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

<sup>87</sup> Andre Gunder Frank, *ibid*, 1978, pp. 51-52.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>89</sup>“Capitalism brought large-scale and long-term structural changes first in Western Europe and then the whole world. The process of expropriation, slavery, and colonialism resulted in hierarchical organization of world populations through the creation of an elaborate discourse of racism to maintain the system. It is essential to provide a pragmatic definition of racism. . . . As the meaning of *race* is complex, so is that of racism. Racism is a discourse and a practice in which a racial/ethnonational project is politically, culturally, and ‘scientifically’ constructed by global and regional elites in the capitalist world system to naturalize and justify racial/ethnonational inequality in which those at the top of the hierarchy oppress and exploit those below them by claiming biological and/or cultural superiority” (Jalata 2001:8). Asafa Jalata, *Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

combat, do frequently instigate political violence, wars, and ‘crusades.’”<sup>90</sup> As capitalism developed in Western Europe, the need for raw materials, minerals such as gold and silver, markets, and free or cheap labor expanded due to the desire to minimize the cost of production and to increase the accumulation of capital or wealth. This need was fulfilled through terrorism and genocide. “The treasures captured outside of Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder,” Karl Marx writes, “floated back to the mother-country and were there turned to capital.”<sup>91</sup>

Most liberal and leftist scholars have failed to identify and explain the role of state-sponsored or state terrorism that colonial officials, European companies, and expeditionary forces used during the expansion of the racialized capitalist world system to transfer economic resources of the indigenous peoples to European colonial forces or settlers, or their collaborators. Under the guises of “free markets,” “civilization,” and Christianity, forces of European states or state-sponsored companies committed acts of terrorism and genocide that were, more or less, ignored. In fact, the issue of terrorism only started to be addressed when, after WWI, colonized peoples began their liberation struggles against European colonial states. The terrorist attack on the life and liberty of indigenous peoples by European colonial powers and their collaborators destroyed existing institutions and economies and exposed the conquered peoples to poverty and famine-induced “holocausts.”<sup>92</sup>

Discussing how the cultural destruction of indigenous peoples resulted in massive deaths, Karl Polanyi argues, “The catastrophe of the native community is a direct result of the rapid and violent disruption of the basic institutions of the victim. . . . These institutions are disrupted by the very fact that a market economy is foisted upon an entirely differently organized community; labor and land are made into a commodity, which, again, is only a short formula for the liquidation of every . . . cultural institution in an organic society.”<sup>93</sup> The capitalist world economy that, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was permanently eliminating famine from Western Europe was at the same time accelerating famine and famine-induced deaths in the rest of the world: “Millions died, not outside the ‘modern world system,’ but in the very process of being forcibly incorporated into its economic and political structures. They died in the golden age of Liberal Capitalism; indeed, many were murdered . . . by the theological application of the sacred principles of [Adam] Smith.”<sup>94</sup>

As I have already mentioned, most commentators and scholars have focused on the oppositional terrorism of various organizations or movements in the West and national liberation movements in the periphery of the world.<sup>95</sup> In the names of “free

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<sup>90</sup> Paul Wilkinson, *ibid*, 1979, p. 62.

<sup>91</sup> Karl Marx, *ibid*, 753-754.

<sup>92</sup> Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*, (London: Verso, 2001).

<sup>93</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944), pp. 159-160.

<sup>94</sup> Mike Davis, *ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>95</sup> National liberation movements that have been fighting against colonialism and racism have been labeled terrorist whether they used terrorist tactics or not in their struggles. For instance, the Algerian National Liberation Front (1954-1962), the Palestine Liberation Organization (1964-present) and other Palestinian liberation organizations (such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka (1983-present) [it was defeated recently], the African National Congress in South Africa (1961-1990), the Basque Homeland and Freedom in Spain (1968-present), the Irish Republican Army (1969-1997), and Chechen Separatists (1996-



markets,” economic liberalization, the promotion of democracy, and a global war against terrorism, Western powers and some states in the Rest still engage in terrorism and hidden genocide to implement their draconian economic and political policies. “The war on terrorism is being used as a continuation of the war on social justice,” Hester Eisenstein writes, “[it is a war] waged with the economic weapons of the international financial institutions.”<sup>96</sup> Western powers, multinational corporations, and state elites in the Rest have collaborated and engaged in massive human rights violations and terrorism<sup>97</sup> despite the fact that Western-based human right organizations have systematically exposed such crimes in different corners of the world. Bushnell, Shlapentokh, Vanderpool, and Sundram identify four conditions that are associated with the development of state terrorism: “They are: (1) distorted conceptions of the state and society and their inter-relationship, (2) the disarray of state institutions, (3) the presence of deep economic and/or ethnic conflicts in society or between the society and the state, and (4) state dependence on foreign power.”<sup>98</sup>

In the capitalist world system, political institutions such as nation-states, multinational corporations, and international organizations allow the practices of state organized terror since it does not directly affect their interests. In theorizing non-state terrorism, scholars such as Roberta Senechal de la Roche assert that the accumulation of grievances causes terrorism and “social polarization” between socially and culturally distant groups.<sup>99</sup> Long standing collective grievances and the right social geometry, such as a higher degree of cultural and religious differences, relational distance, and social inequality between the aggrieved and the dominant population groups can sometimes contribute to the development of non-state terrorism<sup>100</sup> Jeff Goodwin advances a theory of categorical terrorism: “The main strategic objective – the primary incentive – of categorical terrorism is to *induce complicitous civilians to support, or to proactively demand changes in, certain government policies or the government itself*. Categorical

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present) have been labeled as terrorist organizations since they used “limited selective terrorism” (Goodwin 2006, 2032) in their respective national struggles. Other political organizations, such as the Sandinista National Liberation Front (1961-1979) in Nicaragua and the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation in El Salvador (1980-1992) and others were also labeled as terrorists by states and their international collaborators for using “limited selective terrorism.” Most scholars and state elites in the capitalist world system believe that since the state has the monopoly of violence its violent activities are not terrorism.

<sup>96</sup> Hester Eisenstein, “After 9/11: Globalization and the Events of September 11, 2001,” In *Socialism and Democracy: the bulletin of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy*, 2001, p.136.

<sup>97</sup> See the film narrated by Robert Richter, *Hungry for Profit*, 1990 (New Day Film library, 22 D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423). In this film Richter explains how transnational corporations in agribusiness work with Third World governments and international banks, international agencies, foundations, and the World Bank to engage in terrorizing and evicting or forcing peasants to sell their lands at gunpoint in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. These Third World governments use military and paramilitary forces to implement these draconian economic policies through state terrorism. Sometimes those who lose their lands engage in revolutionary or peaceful resistance to regain their lands, liberty and life.

<sup>98</sup> P. Timothy Bushnell, Shlapentokh, Vanderpool, and Sundram, *ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>99</sup> Roberta Senechal de la Roche, Roberta, “Collective Violence as Social Control,” *Sociological Forum*, 11, 1996, pp. 97-128.

<sup>100</sup> For some scholars, weak and desperate groups that lack popular support to redress what they consider grievances engage in terrorism. For instance, according to Martha Crenshaw (1981, 384), “Terrorism is the resort of an elite when conditions are not revolutionary . . . terrorism is most likely to occur precisely where mass passivity and elite dissatisfaction coincide.” See also Donald Black, *ibid*.

terrorism, in other words, mainly aims to apply such intense pressure to complicitous civilians that they will demand that ‘their’ government change or abandon policies that the revolutionaries oppose.”<sup>101</sup> Using this theory, Goodwin concludes that Al Qaeda attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, because they considered American citizens to be “complicitous citizens” who support the foreign policy of the US country in the Middle East.

Similarly, Ward Churchill severely criticizes the American people for not preventing US policies and actions that have caused massive human rights violations around the world; he also asserts that claiming “innocence” or ignorance of the facts cannot absolve them from being accountable for the government that they put in power through election.<sup>102</sup> Faith Attaguile also suggests that “until we take responsibility for terrorism perpetrated in our name, and until we end that terror, we can’t stop the terror returned.”<sup>103</sup> Although the American people have a moral and political responsibility to make their government accountable, the failure to do this cannot justify terrorist attacks on them such as that of 9/11. Churchill explains why those who push back unfair US policies sometimes decide to engage in terrorism have twisted minds: “whoever they might otherwise have been or become the sheer and unrelenting brutality of the circumstances compelling their response is all but guaranteed to have twisted and deformed their outlooks in some truly hideous ways.”<sup>104</sup> Now let me turn to explain my two cases to further elaborate the impacts of terrorism from below and above

### **9/11 and My Interest in Terrorism Studies**

The terrorist event of 9/11 shocked me as it did all Americans and the international community as a whole. The destruction on the American human lives and liberty was devastating and convinced Americans and others that nobody can be safe from horrific consequences of terrorism in the modern world system. The United States, the superpower of the current modern world, with the massive nuclear arsenal, complex intelligence networks, and highly advanced military capability was attacked on its soil by members of a terrorist organization willing to commit suicide and murder others. Before this day, I never imagined the possibility of this kind of terrorism in my mind. The use of commercial planes for a terrorist warfare was new and unexpected.

The attack on the United States by a terrorist network was an unexpected and new. Attesting to this reality Noam Chomsky states the following:

The horrifying atrocities of September 11 are something quite new in world affairs, not in their scale and character, but in the target. For the United States, this is the first time since the War of 1812<sup>105</sup> that the national territory has been

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<sup>101</sup> Jeff Goodwin, “A Theory of Categorical Terrorism.” *Social Forces* 84/4, 2006, p. 2038.

<sup>102</sup> Ward Churchill, *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections on the Consequences of US Imperial Arrogance and Criminality*, (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2003).

<sup>103</sup> Faith Attaguile, “Book Review: *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens*” by Ward Churchill, [http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/books/reviews/churchill\\_lip.html](http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/books/reviews/churchill_lip.html), 2004, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> Ward Churchill, *ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> When some Republican representatives and senators urged war against Great Britain to incorporate Canada and to gain influence for the United States in world affairs, President Madison declared war in 1812 against the interest of Great Britain. However, since the U.S. Navy could not challenge the British

under attack, or even threatened. Many commentators have brought up a Pearl Harbor analogy, but that is misleading. On December 7, 1941, military bases in two U.S. colonies were attacked—not the national territory, which was never threatened. The U.S. preferred to call Hawaii a ‘territory,’ but it was in effect a colony. During the past several hundred years the U.S. annihilated the indigenous population ... intervened violently in the surrounding region, conquered Hawaii and the Philippine (killing hundreds of thousands of Filipinos), and, in the past half century particularly, extended its resort to force throughout much of the world. The number of victims is colossal. For the first time, the guns have been directed the other way. That is a dramatic change.<sup>106</sup>

This new dramatic change in world affairs should force us to go beyond an ideological and cultural blind lens to understand the causes and effects of all forms of terrorism in the modern world system.

On September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorists belonging to Al Qaeda network hijacked four U.S. commercial jet planes and crashed two planes into the twin towers of New York’s World Trade Center and one into the headquarters of the Department of Defense, the Pentagon, in Washington, DC. American Flight 11 was crashed into Tower One of the World Trade Center at 8:45 a.m., tearing a gaping hole in the building and setting it afire. United Airlines Flight 175 was crashed into Tower Two at 9:03 a.m. Both buildings started burning, sending a massive cloud of dust and debris to the air. Consequently, Tower Two collapsed to the ground at about 10:05 a.m. and Tower One at 10:28 a.m. At 9:43 a.m., a third plane, American Airlines Flight 77 slammed into the pentagon, the US military headquarters, killing 184 people and destroying some aspects of the building.

After a huge plume of smoke went up, a portion of the Pentagon collapsed at 10:10 a.m. A fourth jet crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, at 10: 10 a.m. without reaching its target, probably the White House or the Pentagon or the Capitol.<sup>107</sup> As a result of this crash in Pennsylvania 40 people perished. Since the danger of 9/11 was widely felt, at 2:30 p.m. the FAA announced that there would be no U.S. commercial traffic until noon Wednesday. Furthermore, the city of Washington declared a state of emergence at 1: 27 p.m. on the day of the attack. The terrorists who hijacked these four commercial planes attacked American military and economic symbols to undermine the American confidence in the modern world system. “It was presumably important to the September 11 terrorists that the World Trade Center was understood to be the heart of the American global business domination that they hated and that it was such an important

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Navy, the U.S. could not conquer Canada. Then Britain attacked New York, and burned Washington, DC, to the ground in August of 1812. The war was ended by the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814.

<sup>106</sup> Noam Chomsky, 9-11 (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), pp. 11-12.

<sup>107</sup> According to Burton M. Leiser (2004, 193), “Lisa Jefferson, on duty at the in-flight service of the GTE telephone company, took a call from Todd Beamer, a passenger on United Flight 93, who described the situation to her. Passengers on that flight witnessed the slaughter of at least two people – probably the pilot and co-pilot – with knives and box cutters. Their bodies lay in the aisle in front of the cockpit door. Beamer told her, ‘I know I’m not going to get out of this,’ and asked her to call his wife if the worst happened, and to pray with him. He told Ms. Jefferson that he and others were going to try to overpower the hijackers; then he said, ‘Le’s roll!’ Lisa and others who had received calls from passengers on the plane listened as passengers screamed, and glass and china were smashed. Then all the phones went dead.”

symbol of American pride.”<sup>108</sup>

These “terrorists succeeded, through a spectacular act of force”<sup>109</sup> by transforming these commercial jets into war machines and by terrorizing the citizens of the United States and committing such horrific crimes against humanity. The effects of these terrorist acts were devastating and humiliating, and 3, 000<sup>110</sup> people were murdered “in these attacks, the vast majority of them in the collapse of the New York skyscrapers, whose metal structure melted in the fires caused by the explosion of the two airliners: long-range aircraft had been chosen because of the large quantity of fuel they would be carrying” (Blin 2007, 413). Furthermore, 343 firefighters lost their lives and 1,337 vehicles were crashed when the towers collapsed. According to Arnaud Blin, “The 9/11 attacks were the highest achievement yet by a terrorist group: in media terms (the attacks were broadcast alive around the world); symbolically (the attacks struck at the core of America’s center and military establishment); and statistically, with the large numbers of victims (the term ‘mega terrorism’ was used). There was no doubt that, psychologically, America and much of the world, especially in the West, were in a state of shock.”<sup>111</sup>

Like other forms of terrorism, this terrorism did not spare children, women, and old people. Thousands of children also lost their parents. The surviving families and the relatives of the terrorist victims were denied closure and comfort that they would receive from a proper burial in a normal circumstance “because many of the victims of the twin towers disaster were burned beyond recognition and beyond identification by DNA matching.”<sup>112</sup> Although it is very difficult to exactly know the financial damage inflicted upon the United States by the event of 9/11, one source estimates it at about \$285 billion. According to the Office of Management and Budget, without including Homeland Security, the funding of war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other global war on terrorism operations since 9/11 would be \$110 billion in FY 2007.<sup>113</sup> Still the United States engages in war on terrorism and spending billions of dollars and sacrificing thousands of American lives.

Unfortunately, the modern world system was born through violence and it is also maintained through violence. Usually the West and their client states in the Rest have been engaging in state terrorism. But in the case of 9-11, a terrorist group from the Rest, the Middle East attacked the United States. The terrorist events of 9-11 “changed the world dramatically, that nothing will be the same as the world enters into an ‘age of terror;’” due to new technology and new organizational capacity the West “lost their virtual monopoly of violence” and “[f]or the first time in modern history, [the West] ... were subjected, on home soil, to the kind of atrocity that they routinely have carried out

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<sup>108</sup>Coady, C. A. J. (Tony) (Coady, Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> Arnaud Blin, “The United States Confronting Terrorism,” *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Al Qaeda*. Ed. Gerard Challand and Arnaud Belin and trs. By Edward Schneider, Kathryn Pulver, and Jesse Browner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 413.

<sup>110</sup> But, according to Frederick H. Gareau (2004, 12), the 9/11 terrorist event “cost the lives of an estimated 3,119 victims who died or were missing and presumed dead. This did not count the 19 terrorists who perpetrated the crimes. Two thousand eight hundred and ninety-five met this fate at the World Trade Center, 184 at the Pentagon, and 40 in Pennsylvania.”

<sup>111</sup> Arnaud Blin, *ibid*.

<sup>112</sup> Frederick H. Gareau, *State Terrorism and the United States: From Counterinsurgency to the War on Terrorism*, (London: Zed Books, 2004), p. 11.

<sup>113</sup> See <http://Zfacts.com/metaPage/lib/CRS-Belasco-2006-09-Iraq-Costs-RL33110.pdf>.

elsewhere.”<sup>114</sup> One would hope and expect that this terrorist tragedy would help us in correctly and profoundly reflecting on the proximate and immediate causes of all forms of terrorism in order to find a lasting solution for this crime against humanity.

The 9-11 terrorist episodes renewed in my mind my nightmare, pain, frustration, and hopelessness about terrorism that forced me to leave my homeland, Oromia. It made me to feel that terrorism was following me in the United States that I thought immune to terrorism. The terrorism events of 9/11 had traumatized the citizens of the United States including myself as successive Ethiopian regimes have been terrorizing the Oromo and other peoples. The only difference is that the former was committed by a transnational terrorist organization and the later is by the state that has been supported by global powers, particularly the United States of America. These conditions demonstrate the complexities and contradictions in the capitalist world system that most people of the world do not understand. To illustrate the impact of state terrorism, let us explore the effects of Ethiopian state terrorism on the Oromo people.

### **The Impact of Ethiopian State Terrorism on the Oromos**

The Ethiopian colonial terrorism that started during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century still continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ethiopia/Abyssinia terrorized and committed genocide on the Oromo people during the Scramble for Africa with the help of European imperial powers and the modern weapons they received from them.<sup>115</sup> During Ethiopian colonial expansion, Oromia, “the charming Oromo land, [would] be ploughed by the iron and the fire; flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage.”<sup>116</sup> Calling this event as “the theatre of a great massacre,” Martial De Salviac states, “The conduct of Abyssinian armies invading a land is simply barbaric. They contrive a sudden irruption, more often at night. At daybreak, the fire begins; surprised men in the huts or in the fields are three quarter massacred and horribly mutilated; the women and the children and many men are reduced to captivity; the soldiers lead the frightened herds toward the camp, take away the grain and the flour which they load on the shoulders of their prisoners spurred on by blows of the whip, destroy the harvest, then, gluttoned with booty and intoxicated with blood, go to walk a bit further from the devastation. That is what they call ‘civilizing a land.’”<sup>117</sup>

The Oromo oral story also testifies that Ethiopians/Abyssinians (Amharas and Tigrayans) and their supporters destroyed and looted the resources of Oromia, committed genocide on the Oromo people through massacre, slavery, depopulation, cutting hands, famine, and diseases before and after they colonized Oromia. The European firearms enabled Abyssinians to defeat their formidable contenders, the Oromos, in the Horn of Africa. Recognizing this tragedy, “the Oromo said: ‘It is *Waaqa* [God] ... who has subjected us to the Amhara.’”<sup>118</sup> According to Martial De Salviac, “With equal arms, the Abyssinia [would] never [conquer] an inch of land. With the power of firearms imported

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<sup>114</sup> Noam Chomsky, *ibid*, 2002, p. 119.

<sup>115</sup> Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia*, (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 1990); Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*, (Denver: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993).

<sup>116</sup> Martial De Salviac, *An Ancient People, Great African Nation*, Trans. By Ayalew Kano (East Lansing, Michigan, 2005, [1901]), p. 349.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, P. 350.

from Europe, Menelik [Abyssinian warlord] began a murderous revenge.”<sup>119</sup>

The violent colonization of Oromia involved genocide and slavery: “The Abyssinian, in bloody raids, operated by surprise, mowed down without pity, in the country of the Oromo population, a mournful harvest of slaves for which the Muslims were thirsty and whom they bought at very high price. An Oromo child [boy] would cost up to 800 francs in Cairo; an Oromo girl would well be worth two thousand francs in Constantinople”<sup>120</sup> The Ethiopian colonial government massacred half of the Oromo population (five million out of ten million) and their leadership during its colonial expansion to Oromia.<sup>121</sup> According to Alexander Bulatovich (2000: 68-69), “The dreadful annihilation of more than half of the population during the conquest took away from the Gallas [Oromos] all possibilities of thinking about any sort of uprising. . . . Without a doubt, the Galla, with their least five million population, occupying the best land, all speaking one language, could represent a tremendous force if united.”

The destruction of Oromo lives, institutions, liberty, and Oromian natural beauty were aspects of Ethiopian colonial terrorism. Most Oromos who used to enjoy an egalitarian democracy known as the *gada* system<sup>122</sup> were forced to face political repression and an impoverished life. Alexander Bulatovich explains about the *gada* administration, and notes that “the peaceful free way of life, which could have become the ideal for philosophers and writers of the eighteenth century, if they had known it, was completely changed. Their peaceful way of life is broken; freedom is lost; and the independent, freedom loving Gallas [Oromos] find themselves under the severe authority of the Abyssinian conquerors.”<sup>123</sup> Ethiopian colonialists also destroyed Oromo natural resources and the beauty of Oromia. Oromia was “an oasis luxuriant with large trees” and known for its “opulent and dark greenery used to shoot up from the soil.”<sup>124</sup>

Bulatovich who visited Oromia between 1892 and 1896 applied to this country the phrase “flowing in milk and honey”<sup>125</sup> to indicate its abundant wealth in cattle and honey. De Salviac notes also that “the greenery and the shade delight the eyes all over and give the landscape richness and a variety which make it like *a garden without boundary*. Healthful climate, uniform and temperate, fertility of the soil, beauty of the inhabitants, the security in which their houses seem to be situated, makes one dream of remaining in such a beautiful country.”<sup>126</sup> The Abyssinian colonialists devastated “the forests by pulling from it the laths for their houses and [made] camp fires or firewood for their dwellings.... [They were] the great destructors of trees, others [accused] them of

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>121</sup> De Salviac, *ibid*, pp. 6-8, 278; Alexander Bulatovich, *Ethiopia through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition*, translated by Richard Seltzer, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2000), pp. 68-68.

<sup>122</sup> Before their colonization, the Oromo had an egalitarian democratic system known as *gada*. This system had the principles of checks and balances, balanced opposition, and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power falling into the hands of despots. Other principles included balanced representation of clans, lineages, regions, and confederacies; accountability of leaders; the settlement of disputes through reconciliation; and respect for basic rights and liberties (see Legesse, 2000). Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy*, (Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press, 2000).

<sup>123</sup> Alexander Bulatovich, *ibid*, p. 68.

<sup>124</sup> De Salviac, *ibid*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>125</sup> Bulatovich, *ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>126</sup> De Salviac, *ibid*, p. 21.

exercising their barbarity against the forests for the sole pleasure of ravaging.”<sup>127</sup>

The Ethiopian colonial state established settler colonialism in Oromia and developed five major types of colonial institutions, namely, slavery, the colonial landholding system, the *nafxanya-gabbar* system (semi-slavery), the collaborative class, and garrison and non-garrison cities. It introduced the process of forced recruitment of labor via slavery and the *nafxanya-gabbar* (semi-slavery) system.<sup>128</sup> The colonial state expropriated almost all Oromo lands and divided up the Oromo among colonial officials and soldiers and their collaborators to force them to produce agricultural commodities and food for local consumption and an international market. The remaining Oromos were reduced to serfs or slaves or semi-slaves and coerced to work without remuneration for the settlers, intermediaries, and the colonial state for certain days every week. Whenever they failed to provide free labor or pay taxes or tributes, the settlers enslaved their children or wives. The Ethiopian state destroyed the Oromo leadership that resisted Ethiopian colonialism, and co-opted those submissive leaders who accepted the role of intermediary in the Ethiopian colonial system.

The Amhara and Tigrayan colonial settlers and their collaborators and their state developed garrison and non-garrison cities in Oromia as their central institutions to suppress and exploit the Oromo people. The repression, exploitation, and terrorism started during the reign of Menelik had continued under successive Ethiopian governments. The Haile Selassie government continued the policies of Menelik until it was overthrown by the popular revolt of 1974. In opposition to Ethiopian colonialism and the policies of the government of Haile Selassie, I joined an Oromo student movement that was an integral part of the Oromo national movement led by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in the mid-1970s. During this period, I was a student at the Haile Selassie I University. The Haile Selassie government terrorized the Oromo of Raya-Azabo, Wallo, Hararghe, Bale and other regions because of their political and cultural resistance to the Amhara-Tigray domination. It also imprisoned, tortured or hanged prominent Oromo leaders, such as Mamo Mazamir and Haile Mariam Gamada, and banded civic organizations and musical groups in the 1960s.

The military regime that emerged in 1974 under the leadership Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam by replacing the Haile Selassie government continued dictatorship and Ethiopian colonial policies. When Oromo activists and the people started to resist the military regime, it intensified its state terrorism. The Military regime (derg) and its supporters committed massive human rights violations in the name of the so-called Revolution. According to Norman J. Singer, “Those killed in the first three months of [the] campaign [of] the ‘Red Revolutionary Terror’ . . . numbered around 4000-5000 [in Addis Ababa alone], the killings continued in March 1978, spreading to the rest of the country . . . Those detained for political instruction numbered from 30,000 upwards . . . Torture methods emphasized in the Red Terror . . . included severe beating on the head, soles of the feet . . . and shoulders, with the victim hung by the wrists or suspended by wrists and feet from a horizontal bar . . . ; sexual torture of boys and girls, including

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>128</sup> The Ethiopian settlers continued to depopulate Oromia through slave trade until the 1930s when the Italian fascists abolished slavery to recruit adequate labor for their agricultural plantations in the Horn of Africa. The *nafxanya-gabbar* system was also abolished during this time through the same process. Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *ibid.*, p. 135.

pushing bottles or red-hot iron bars into girls' vaginas; and other cruel methods.”<sup>129</sup>

The derg continued its mass imprisonments and killings. In 1980, one Oromo source mentioned that "the Oromo constitutes the majority of the more than two million prisoners that glut Ethiopia's jails today"<sup>130</sup> In the 1980s, hundreds of Oromo nationalists were murdered or imprisoned. The regime also terrorized other elements of Oromo society. According to Gunnar Hasselblatt, the military government

Repeatedly held mass shooting among the Oromo population, hoping to break the free, independent Oromo spirit. Sometimes a hundred, sometimes two hundred men were shot on this raised dry field ... and were buried with bulldozers. Over years this procedure was repeated several times. When the method did not work and the Oromo population could not be forced into submission, other methods were used. The victims were made to lie down with their heads on stone, and their skulls were smashed with another stone. The ... government ... tried everything to consolidate its reign of terror and exploitation of Oromia.... When the Oromo movement could not be quenched by shooting or by the smashing of skulls, [the government] came up with a new idea. Men's testicles were smashed between a hammer and an anvil. Three men tortured and maimed in this way are still living.<sup>131</sup>

As Ethiopia terrorized and colonized the Oromo nation with the help of European powers, such as Great Britain, France, and Italy, it has maintained its oppressive and repressive structures on them by the assistance of successive global powers, namely, Great Britain, the United States, and former Soviet Union.<sup>132</sup> Today, Ethiopian colonial settlers led by the Tigrayan-led regime<sup>133</sup> have dominated cities in Oromia and segregated the Oromo national majority in urban and rural areas and kept them under “Ethiopian political slavery” by using the army, modern weaponry, the media, the telephone, the fax, the Internet, and other communication and information apparatus and networks. Using political violence, the Tigrayan authoritarian-terrorist regime<sup>134</sup> has totally controlled the Oromo and denied them the freedom of expression, association, organization, and the media, and all forms of communication and information networks.<sup>135</sup> Since the Tigrayan-

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<sup>129</sup> Singer, Norman J. 1978. “Ethiopia: Human Rights, 1948-1978,” *Proceeding of the First International Conference on Ethiopian Studies*. April 13-16, pp. 672-673,

<sup>130</sup>(The Oromo Relief Association, 1980, p. 30

<sup>131</sup> Gunnar Hasselblatt, “After Fourteen Years: Return to Addis Ababa—and to a Free Oromia,” December 1991-January 1992,” *A Travel Diary*, Berlin, pp. 17-19.

<sup>132</sup>See Asafa Jalata, *Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>133</sup>The main base of this regime is the Tigrayan ethnonational group, which is estimated at the seven percent of the 80 million Ethiopian populations. The Oromos are estimated at 40 million.

<sup>134</sup>The Ethiopian state has been authoritarian to Amhara and Tigrayan communities since it has been against democracy, and it has been terrorist against the colonized people like Oromos because it has been ruling by practicing state-terrorism and massive human rights violations.

<sup>135</sup>In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Oromo and other peoples are denied the freedom of self-expression and self-development, and are forced to provide their economic and labor resources to the Ethiopian colonizers and their supporters, and live under deplorable conditions. The Tigrayan state elites try to hide the true characteristics of the Ethiopian regime that include state-terrorism and other forms of violence that terrorize and control the colonized population groups, particularly the Oromo. While engaging in political violence



dominated Ethiopian government is weak, illegitimate, and lacks accountability and professionalism, it engages in terrorism and hidden genocide to protect its power.<sup>136</sup> This regime is committed to improve the living standard of the Tigrayan population group at the cost of the colonized population groups, particularly the Oromos.

Since most of the Oromo people, under the leadership of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), are determined to challenge the racist policy of this regime, this government mainly targets to destruct and devastate the Oromos.<sup>137</sup> Ethiopian state terrorism manifests itself in the Ethiopian Empire in different forms: Its obvious manifestation is violence in the form of unjustified war, assassination, murder, castration, burying alive, throwing off cliffs, hanging, torture, rape, confiscation of properties by the police and the army, forcing people to submission by intimidation, beating, and disarming citizens.<sup>138</sup> Former prisoners testified that their arms and legs were tied tightly together on their backs and their naked bodies were whipped. Large containers or bottles filled with water were fixed to their testicles, or if they were women, bottles or poles were pushed into their vaginas. There were prisoners who were locked up in empty steel barrels and tormented with heat in the tropical sun during the day and with cold at night. There were also prisoners who were forced into pits so that fire could be made on top of them. Currently tens of thousands of Oromo are imprisoned, tortured, harassed or killed by the Meles regime because their struggle for national self-determination and democracy.

Although it is impossible to exactly know at this time how many Oromos have been murdered because the Meles government hides this information, the Oromia Support Group reports “3,981 extra-judicial killings and 943 disappearances [euphemism for hidden murder] of civilians suspected of supporting groups opposing the government.”<sup>139</sup> Since 1992, security forces have imprisoned thousands of Oromo on charges of plotting armed insurrection on behalf of the OLF. Such accusations have regularly been used as a transparent pretext to imprison individuals who publicly question

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in the form of state terrorism, state rape, and hidden genocide to control the Oromo people and loot their economic resources, the Tigrayan state elite claims that they are promoting democracy, federalism, and national self-determination.

<sup>136</sup>Bridget Welsh suggests that since weak states “lack the capacity to meet the demands and rights of citizens and improve the standard of living for the majority of population,” they involve in political violence and engage in genocidal massacres to suppress the population groups that struggle for political and economic rights. See Bridget Welsh, “Globalization, Weak States, and Death Toll in East Asia,” *Violence and Politics; Globalization’s Paradox*. Edited by Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar, (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 67-68.

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<sup>138</sup>See Sue Pollock, "Ethiopia- Human Tragedy in the Making: Democracy or Dictatorship?" *The Oromia Support Group*, 1996; Sue Pollock, "Politics and Conflict: Participation and Self-determination in Ethiopia: Conquest and the Quest for Freedom and Democracy", edited by Seyoum Y. Hameso, T. Trueman, and T. E. Erena, (London: TSC Publications, 1997), pp. 81-110; Trevor Trueman, "Democracy or dictatorship," in *Ethiopia, ibid*, pp. 141-150; *Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa*, 1997; *Survival International*, 1995; *The Oromia Support Group*, 1997 series)

<sup>139</sup> The Oromia Support Group, 2007, p. 1.

government policies or actions. Security forces have tortured many detainees and subjected them to continuing harassment and abuse for years after their release. That harassment, in turn has often destroyed victims' ability to earn a livelihood and isolated them from their communities. The Ethiopian colonial system has taken away the sovereignty of the Oromo people and exposed them to massive and absolute poverty by denying them their fundamental human rights and needs that Ron Shiffman calls subsistence, protection, affection, and understanding. Most Oromos in urban and rural areas have low levels of subsistence because they do not have adequate income, enough food, and livable homes.<sup>140</sup>

Successive Ethiopian regimes did not have any concern and affection for the Oromo people since they have been considered inferior people who do not deserve basic human rights.<sup>141</sup> The Oromos have been denied their inalienable right to self-determination and democracy. They have been denied to build their social, economic, cultural and organizational infrastructures. Without political freedom, democracy, as well as a responsible government, a community cannot improve its quality of life. People like the Oromo who do not have personal and public safety in their homes and communities, and also who are denied the freedom of expression, association, and organization, do not have a good quality of life. In the 21st century, when the world is changing fast because of the intensification of globalization, social revolutions, and revolutions in technology, information, communication, and transportation, the Oromo people are in the darkness of ignorance and poverty.<sup>142</sup>

When a community or a society lacks independence or autonomy to determine its political destiny through self-determination and democracy, it is confronted with the problems of underdevelopment, which is characterized as powerlessness, victimization, illiteracy, poverty, and other forms of socioeconomic crises. Ethiopian state terrorism has resulted in deep social, political, cultural and economic crises in Oromo society. When I confront the problem of terrorism, I remember about Ethiopia state terrorism and how my people live and suffer.

### **Reflecting on Ethiopian and Al Qaeda Terrorisms**

The dramatic terrorist event on September 11, 2001 in the United States had reminded me the experiences of the destruction of human lives and liberty in the Ethiopian Empire under the terrorist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam who was only exceeded by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the Pol Pot of Ethiopia, who has massacred millions of Oromos and others because of their political beliefs and their ethnonational backgrounds. The Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government practices state terrorism against the Oromo, Sidama, Annuak, and Somali peoples as a legitimate means of establishing political stability and order. When I was studying and writing about Ethiopian terrorism, the 9/11 attack

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<sup>140</sup>They do not have protection from disease since they do not have adequate access to health and medical services. They do not have protection from political violence since the Ethiopian state engages in massive human rights violations and state terrorism. Ron Shiffman, "Urban Poverty – The Global Phenomenon of Poverty and Social Marginalization in our Cities: Facts and Strategies, ttp: //www.picced.org/advocacy/poverty.htm., 1995, pp. 6-8.

<sup>141</sup> Asafa Jalata, 2001, *ibid*.

<sup>142</sup>Because of the magnitude of the problems of the Oromo people, it is impossible to provide a numerical face to the devastating effects of poverty, suffering, hunger, malnutrition, starvation, sickness, literacy and ignorance, alienation, and hopelessness.

occurred. When the United States was attacked by Al Qaeda I thought that I could not escape from terrorism and I openly faced my nightmare. What I learned from the brutal experiences of these two forms of terrorism is that terrorist practices are morally, legally, and intellectually wrong since they victimize noncombatant and innocent citizens.

Despite the fact that Ethiopian terrorism has been committed by successive Ethiopian governments, and 9/11 terrorism was committed by a transnational organization, the effects of all forms terrorism are similar. Since all forms terrorism destroys human lives and liberty, they are crimes against humanity. People engage in such crimes because of self- or group interest, ideological extremism or decadence that Oromo call *fuca*.<sup>143</sup> Like Americans who were burned and did not get burial during the terrorist episodes of 9/11, most Oromos who were murdered by the agents of the Ethiopian government are eaten by hyenas and denied burial. The relatives of the murdered Oromos are not allowed to cry to express their sadness according to their cultural tradition. For example, the wife of Ahmed Mohamed Kuree, a seventy years old elderly farmer, expressed on February 21, 2007 on the Voice of America, *Afaan Oromo Program*.<sup>144</sup> “We found his prayer beads, his cloth and a single piece of his bone which the hyenas left behind after devouring the rest of his body and we took those items home. What is more, after we got home, they [government agents] condemned us for going to Gaara Suufii and for mourning. For fear of repercussions, we have not offered the customary prayer for the dead ... husband by reading from the Qur’an. Justice has not been served. That is where we are today.” But, the relatives of 9/11 terrorist victims at least openly expressed their grief and denounced the terrorists.

In the same year, the Meles militia killed twenty Oromos and left their corpses on the Mountain of Suufi in Eastern Oromia. Ahmed Mohamed Kuree was one of these Oromos. Another Oromo, Ayisha Ali, a fourteen years old teenager, was also killed and eaten by hyena. Her mother also said the following: “After we heard the rumor about the old man [Ahmed Mohamed Kuree] I followed his family to Gaara Suufii [in search of my daughter]. There we found her skirt, sweater, under wears and her hair, braided ... That was all we found of my daughter remains.” These individuals were murdered by the agents of the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian regime because of their Oromoness and their religion. Of course the regime also targets Christian Oromos because of their

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<sup>143</sup>*Fuca* is an Oromo philosophical word that explains the state of over satisfaction, ideological blindness and decadence. In the state of *fuca*, human beings ignore *saffu* (ethical and moral order) and decent principles of respecting human lives, nature and the principles of *Waaqa* (God), and engage in massive criminal activities to satisfy their lust for power and economic resources. In the Oromo indigenous tradition, violence like terrorism indicates a state of *fuca* in which the balance among *Waaqa* (Supreme Being/ultimate power of perfection), human beings, and nature is disturbed by individuals or groups who have no respect for human lives. The Oromo call the process of maintaining moral and ethical order in society *saffu*. *Saffu* is an ethical and moral code that Oromos use to differentiate bad from good and wrong from right. It constitutes the ethical basis on which all human action should be founded. *Saffu* directs one on the right path by showing the way in which life can be best lived without corruption and decadence. Individuals or groups that violate the principles of *saffu*, Oromo popular and egalitarian democracy known as *Gada*, and God’s law are considered criminals. For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse: The Search for Self-determination and Democracy*, edited, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1998); Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1973); Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy*, (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2006). The Oromo are the largest subjugated national group in Ethiopia, and they are estimated at half of the 72 million Ethiopian population.

<sup>144</sup>The translation into English was made by <http://Oromoaffairs.blogspot.com/>

ethnonational background. Except human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Africa Watch, nobody cares about the terrorism committed on the Oromo people because the Oromo are powerless people.

When the United States and its allies are fighting back against Al Qaeda and also engaging in an offensive war in Iraq claiming that the government of Saddam Hussein had connection with Al Qaeda, the Oromo people are mainly engaged in peaceful resistance without any support from the international community. Although I have no capacity to change this situation it pains me and frustrates me. Furthermore, what is disturbing for me is that the United States government, my government, financially, militarily, and diplomatically supports the Ethiopian terrorist regime. My government assists the Meles regime that terrorizes my people as it supported the Haile Selassie regime from the 1950s to the 1970s.<sup>145</sup> When the Ethiopian military regime was overthrown in 1991, the United States came back to Ethiopia and continued its previous policies in Ethiopia.

What frustrates me more is the claim that my government makes in supporting the Ethiopian government. It claims that it is committed to promote democracy, human rights, and development in Ethiopia; it also claims that the Meles regime is one of the allies of the United States in fighting against global terrorism. Most Americans may believe in these claims, but the reality on the ground in Ethiopia falsifies these claims.<sup>146</sup> Despite the fact that the United States government supports the regime of Ethiopia, which engages in terrorism, it recognizes that the human rights of the Oromo and other peoples in the Ethiopian Empire are violated. The U. S. State Department annually publishes Country Reports on Human Rights practices of every country in the world since 1977 to claim that it cares for human rights. However, as the United States supported the dictatorial regime of Haile Selassie between 1951 and 1974, it is currently assisting the terrorist regime of Meles Zenawi since 1991.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>The United States, which started its connections with the Haile Selassie government in the early 1940s, inherited Britain's position in Ethiopia 1952 and began to sponsor Ethiopian colonialism. It began to provide economic and military assistance and sent a Technical Mission in 1944 to Ethiopia; the United States and Ethiopia signed a mutual defense agreement in 1953, which remained in effect until 1977. Practically the United States government defended and protected the corrupt and dictatorial government of Haile Selassie for almost twenty-five years. The United States considered "its investment in Ethiopia as an investment toward the future realization of its wider interests in Africa" (Agyeman-Duah 1984, 209) and the Middle East (Schwab 1979, 91-91). The United States modernized the Ethiopian military by training and equipping it with modern weapons and organizational skills. According to F. Halliday and M. Molyneux (1981, 150), "Between 1951 and 1976 Ethiopia received over \$350 million economic aid from the U.S.A. and a further 279 million in military aid." By supporting the dictatorial regime, the United States contributed to human rights violations and discouraged the struggle for social justice, self-determination, and democracy in Ethiopia. Despite its claim of democratic ideals, the United States assisted the Ethiopian colonial regime to stay in power by suppressing the Oromo and other peoples in the Ethiopian Empire. "The military, in conjunction with other security forces," Agyeman-Duah (1984, 179) comments, "became the instrument for social control and counterinsurgency during the turbulent years of the 1960s, and an active American support in all this was by no means limited." After 1977, the former Soviet Union allied with the military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam and continued to do the same thing the United States did. Baffour Agyeman-Duah, "United States Military Assistance Relationship with Ethiopia, 1953-77: Historical and Theoretical Analysis," (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Denver, 1984).

<sup>146</sup>For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict 1868-2004* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2005), pp.148-153.

<sup>147</sup>Nevertheless, Washington has refused to characterize the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) as a terrorist organization although the Meles regime has tried its best to convince the United States government that this

The United States government only gives lip service to the issues of human rights violations by terrorist states because “congress ... has decreed that the executive cut of aid to any country that by its actions reveals a consistent pattern of violating human rights. No matter the restrictions, administrations determined to provide aid to governments practicing terrorism or in other ways violating human rights have usually succeeded. Moreover, the restrictions and the reporting give the impression that Washington is a firm upholder of human rights and a foe of terrorism.”<sup>148</sup> In his impressive study, Frederick H. Gareau demonstrates how the United government supported state terrorism in Chile, El Salvador, Argentina, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Cambodia (the Khmer Rouge), and South Africa, and contributed to the terrorist victimization of political and human rights activists, peasants, workers and union leaders, teachers, and priests and nuns.<sup>149</sup> He concludes “that Washington was, and continues to be, an accomplice to state terrorism.”<sup>150</sup>

The United States government has supported “some of the world’s worst dictatorships, such as Pinochet’s government of in Chile.”<sup>151</sup> Despite the fact that the terrorist events of 9/11 is forcing the United States government to reevaluate its position on all forms terrorism, it is still “an accomplice to” the terrorism of a friendly state like that of Ethiopia. The Washington’s attempt to reevaluate its position is reflected in National Security Strategy of the United States of America: “to make clear that all acts of terrorism are illegitimate so that terrorism will be viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide: behavior that no respectable government can condone or support and all must oppose.”<sup>152</sup> In actuality, if the United States government wants to directly confront the underlying causes of terrorism and oppose all forms of terrorism, it must recognize that state terrorism is a crime against humanity as terrorism by non-state actors like Al Qaeda and stop to support terrorist governments such as that of Ethiopia by promoting a single moral, legal, and political position against all forms of terrorism. It is impossible to eliminate one form of terrorism while supporting another.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

As states engage in terrorist activities to promote their economic and political domination, non-state terrorist agencies use similar techniques to oppose and challenge such policies, behavior, and practices. Therefore, without making governments that engage in state terrorism directly or indirectly accountable and without understanding and dealing with the root problems of terrorism, we cannot deal with a branch of terrorism—non-state terrorism. Whether terrorism is committed by states or non-states, it affects noncombatant civilians. As a crime against humanity, it is a dark side of human

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organization is a terrorist organization. It has also allowed the OLF to have an office in Washington, DC, and has given political asylum to thousands of Oromo to settle in the United States.

<sup>148</sup> Frederick H. Gareau, *State Terrorism and the United States: From Counterinsurgency to the War on Terrorism* (Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Winner of the Noble Prize for peace in 1984 and Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, expressed this statement considering the U.S. foreign policy in South Africa and other countries. It was cited in Frederick H. Gareau, *State Terrorism and the United States: From Counterinsurgency to the War on Terrorism* (Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, 2004), p. 18.

<sup>152</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002), p. 6.

civilization. Hence, it is urgent that serious scholars establish a single moral, intellectual, legal, and political position in the study and understanding of all forms of terrorism and suggest pragmatic policies to reduce or eliminate the problem of terrorism. This piece attempts to contribute to this objective.

One of the central problems that all people who believe in social justice, human rights, peace, and democracy confront is the lack a single moral, legal, philosophical, intellectual standard to study, understand, and deal with all forms of terrorism for all members of human family. I have faced a difficult and complex task encountering several conceptual, theoretical, and methodological challenges in studying terrorism from above and below. To overcome this challenge, I have employed interdisciplinary, multidimensional, comparative methods, and critical approaches to examine the dynamic interplay among social structures, human agency, and terrorism. My comparative approaches have required a critical social history that looks at societal issues and problems from the bottom-up in order to comprehensively grasp the issues of terrorism and globalization.

Without employing such approaches in studying terrorism to critically understand it in order to struggle for a just, democratic and peaceful global order, we continue to hold to the current dominant intellectual, political, philosophical, and ideological paradigms of domination and subordination that perpetuate terrorist conflicts that may cause the breakdown of the current global order. Hence, all conscious citizens of the world must realize that whether terrorism is promoted by states or subversive organizations, it is a crime against humanity and it must be rejected both on policy and practical levels. My hope is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century people should not be imprisoned by their old traditions of ideological and cultural blindness for individual and group interests.

The mechanisms of stopping terrorism and genocide require human-centric visions by going beyond self- and group-centered interests, and ideologies. As a crime against humanity, terrorism has been a dark side of human civilization. Hence, it is urgent that serious scholars establish a single moral, intellectual, legal, philosophical, and political position in studying and understanding of terrorism and suggesting pragmatic policies to eliminate or reduce terrorism in the modern world system. Humanity should stop to brag about its progress, civilization, scientific revolution, and religion until it goes back and study its darkness, barbarism, and falsehood and overcome them. Mainstream modern ideologies have degraded the values of sharing and caring for others regardless of religious beliefs, skin color, and ethnicity while glorifying dominance, cruelty, robbery, terrorism, and genocide in the names of wealth making and promoting civilization.

All powerful individuals and groups should critically interrogate themselves morally, ideologically, and politically to develop their humanness rather than hiding their criminal behaviors and actions under the discourses of modernity, civilization, religion, race or culture, and democracy, and continuing to commit collective crimes by engaging in or supporting unjust and corrupt political and ideological practices. Engaging in or supporting a system that annihilates certain human beings or groups because of ideological and cultural blindness and/or to satisfy the appetite for power and money is morally, ethically, philosophically, and intellectually wrong. Without critically and adequately learning about the crimes of all forms terrorism, we cannot confront the moral, philosophical, and political contradictions in the capitalist world system in order to

move towards establishing a just and truly democratic world order.