

**Richard Jackson, Eamon Murphy & Scott Poynting (Eds.)** *Contemporary State Terrorism: Theory and Practice*.

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**Reviewed by Oluwaseun Bamidele**

*Contemporary State Terrorism: Theory and Practice*, sheds, in a dozen chapters, light on the debates surrounding how terrorism generally, and state terrorism specifically, ought to be defined (pp. 12-15). It argues that while both non-state and state terrorism are highly contested terms, there is now sufficient agreement among scholars on key constitutive elements. What distinguishes state terrorism from other forms of state repression is its instrumentality; it involves the illegal targeting of individuals that the state has normally an obligation to protect in order to instill fear in a target audience beyond the direct victims. The editors also discuss in their introduction, the difficulties associated with identifying when state representatives are acting or not acting on behalf of the state (p. 20).

A chapter by David Mickler argues that the Sudanese state has been guilty of committing terrorism against its own citizens in Dafur since 2003. Mickler finds that the Sudanese state is clearly guilty of acts of state terrorism by deliberately targeting and killing, raping and maiming innocent civilians and destroying their crops, livestock, homes, villages, and wells as part of its strategy both to dissuade support or potential recruitment for the rebels and to effect 'ethnic cleansing'. He further argues that a strong Chinese interest in preserving its key economic relationship with the state, in conjunction with Sudan's valuable cooperation in US-led counter-terrorism operations, has hampered international intervention to protect vulnerable civilians against the oppression undertaken by their own state (pp. 28 - 44). Military-led state terrorism in Pakistan is the subject of a chapter by Eamon Murphy and Aazar Tamana. They refer to acts ranging from widespread mass murder to the use of sexual assaults as a weapons of terror. Their chapter also discusses how state terrorism has been used against many groups and individuals within Pakistani society: regional separatist groups, political rivals of the military and its political allies, human rights activists and lawyers, minority religions and religious sects, and women of Pakistan. The role of the Pakistani military in sponsoring terrorism in the disputed Indian state of Kashmir is also discussed.

Sandra Nasr, in a chapter titled 'Israel's *other* terrorism challenge', claims that Israel has resorted to the use of state terrorism by deliberately targeting innocent civilians in response to suicide attacks and other forms of terrorism by Palestinians against Israeli civilian and military targets. She holds that physical and psychological intimidation at checkpoints, arbitrary closures and curfews, harsh mobility restrictions, home demolitions, random detentions and the denial of a whole range of basic human rights contrive to keep Palestinians in a constant state of anxiety and trepidation – in her view, amounting to state terrorism. Eamon Murphy discusses the role of terrorism in the violent communal riots between Hindus and Muslims that rocked the Western Indian state of Gujarat during 2002. Hindu mobs, ostensibly encouraged by the state's ruling Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its chief minister, brutally

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assaulted, raped, and killed defenseless Muslim men, women, and children. The Gujarat riots are portrayed as a classic example of politically motivated terrorism, in that the primary motivation of the BJP's leaders in encouraging the riots was to send a clear, political message to the Hindu voters of Gujarat that the BJP was the only political party that would protect Hindus from the perceived threat posed by the state's Muslims.

Another author, Joan Wardrop, looking at southern Africa, submits that postcolonial Zimbabwe is frozen in a condition of continuous state terror, nourished by a postcolonial elite determined to maintain its position and power. Wardrop shows that the present difficulties in Zimbabwe do not stand isolated from the past; rather, they can only be understood in the context of Rhodesia's violent history in which terror from above has been naturalized as political technique and cultural practice. The author also discusses examples of memories recuperated and reshaped into public narratives through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-Apartheid South Africa. It demonstrates the power of memory and narrative when exercised in public spaces for healing the terrorized - a power which has not yet been felt but is sorely needed in Zimbabwe.

Victoria Mason examines the Kuwaiti campaign of terror against its Palestinian community following the 1991 liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. Although many Palestinians in Kuwait opposed the Iraqi occupation, Kuwait argued that its Palestinian community had collaborated with the Iraqis. As a result, brutal attacks against Palestinians were undertaken by Kuwaiti vigilantes. To make matters worse, once sovereign rule returned to Kuwait, a systematic campaign of state terror was instituted. While this campaign was driven to a certain extent by revenge, Mason's chapter demonstrates that it was also driven by more sinister motives. Due to the size and influence of the Palestinian community in Kuwait by the 1980s, they were increasingly seen as a potential demographic threat. The chapter explores how the actions taken against Palestinians following liberation were part of a more systematic process aimed at terrorizing the entire Palestinian civilian population in order to force them to leave Kuwait.

Kristian Lasslett discusses how from 1988 to 1990, the Papua New Guinea security apparatus and Bougainville Copper Limited, propped up by the Australian state, undertook a campaign of terror against local communities in the North Solomons province of Papua New Guinea. The campaign was directed against militant landowners of the New Panguna Landowners Association, who, frustrated by the socio-economic consequences of mining in their region, engaged in a campaign of industrial sabotage against the lucrative Panguna copper and gold mines. The goal of terrorism was to coerce civilian communities to support landowner factions loyal to the government and the mining company.

A chapter by Sam Raphael examines the systematic use of terrorism by elements of the Colombian establishment and, indirectly, the US government during the civil war in Colombia

He argues that the vast majority of terrorist acts were conducted by right-wing paramilitary groups closely linked to the state. The author examines the nature and extent of collusion between state security forces and paramilitary groups, particularly in the post-9/11 era. Overall, the chapter charts the extensive use of terrorism by the state in Colombia, and the support the government received from the United States.

Karine Hamilton examines the response of the Israeli government after the Lebanese group Hezbollah launched a series of rockets against northern Israeli towns and simultaneously

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attacked two Israeli army vehicles patrolling the Lebanese border. The Israeli government policy of deterrence involved the use of massive military retaliation in order to prevent future attacks from enemy forces and included, according to the author, the deliberate bombing of civilian targets in order to dissuade Lebanese civilians, especially the Shia population, from supporting Hezbollah.

In a concluding chapter by Richard Jackson, key findings are summarized. Jackson, a leading representative of the Critical Terrorism Studies school, reflects upon how the case studies contribute theoretically to our understanding of the aims, nature, causes, modalities, and consequences of state terrorism under different conditions. He also explores some of the salient questions raised by the case studies which require further research, thereby sketching out a future research agenda. The volume ends with a brief reflection on some dangers and challenges for the ongoing study of state terrorism. Jackson warns that one should "...avoid the temptation to engage in polemics and politically biased analyses, especially the kind which view all state violence as inherently terroristic or which single out particular cases for unrelenting condemnation" (p.238).

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