<u>BOOK REVIEW</u>

Joseph McQuade, A Genealogy of Terrorism: Colonial Law and the Origins of an Idea (Cambridge University Press, 2021) & Alice Martini, The UN and Counter-Terrorism: Global Hegemonies, Power and Identities (Routledge, 2021)

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A Genealogy of Terrorism:
Colonial Law and the Origins of an Idea

Joseph MCQUADE

The UN and Counter-Terrorism:
Global Hegemonies, Power and Identities

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Since the mid-2000s, scholars have been using critical theory, poststructuralism, feminism/queer theory, and postcolonialism to critique the hegemonic narrative of terrorism. They analyze how terrorism discourse (re)produces global hierarchies and power relations. This involves archeological and genealogical research, assessing the formation of the terrorism discourse by analyzing how the peculiar Western discourse has become hegemonic. By incorporating postcolonial and genealogical studies into critical terrorism studies, McQuade and Martini attempt to explain this process in their respective works. Their books are complementary in that they allow readers to trace the historical development of the concept of terrorism from British India to its ubiquity in international institutions. Although they cover different historical periods, it is still possible to see how the concept of terrorism has been used in both of those historical periods – during British colonialism in India in McQuade's book and after the 1980s in Martini's book – to normalize discriminatory practices against (post)colonial societies.

Both McQuade and Martini seek to comprehend how the idea of terrorism came to be used to repress particular societies that were resisting (neo)colonial forces. In his book, McQuade examines the origins of counterterrorism in colonial emergency legislation. The aim of the book is to analyze "how colonial authority was formed, articulated, and protected through an evolving prose of counterterrorism that drew on categories of legal exception dating

back at least as far as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (p. 22). Similarly, Martini discusses it for the construction of global hegemonies in the post-colonial world through the mobilization of the international institutions. In her book, Martini emphasizes that, while international terrorism is a socially constructed reality, and international 'terrorists' have been designated as a 'common adversary' to the international community, it is never properly defined, classified, or identified. This aspect of the construction of terrorism makes it "historically, socially and politically contingent – and thus highly dependent on discourses and the knowledge created about it" (p. 3).

They address the historical development of the idea of terrorism in a genealogical manner. To analyze the colonial legacy of counterterrorism, McQuade examines colonial administrators' reports and diaries and legislation. Over the course of five chapters, the author mainly examines how the image of the 'terrorist' was constructed, from an Orientalist perspective, as a zealot, monstrous, or deranged person to be eradicated to preserve the 'civilized' sections of British India. The author claims that the introduction of the 'terrorist' category was a premediated strategy of British colonial administrators to suppress Indian anti-colonial revolutionaries by portraying them as 'inferior' and to inform and empower the British colonial state. This novel approach to researching the terrorism discourse in colonial emergency legislation offers many insights for understanding how a peculiar category like 'terrorist' has become a universal figure to designate specific acts of political violence.

By employing a similar methodological tool and analyzing the transcripts of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meetings, resolutions and presidential speeches, Martini analyzes how international terrorism and the international community were constructed after 1980s. Martini claims that the international community has three "reasons" that shape the international sphere: the reason of state, the reason of system, and the reason of civilization. International terrorism and international community are discursively embodied in these three power relations. They intersect and form what the author calls "nomos". Martini employs nomos as "an analytical tool to identify the intersection of the relations of power that shape the Council's dispositif" (p. 27). In this aspect, nomos brings three aspects of power relations in which global hierarchies, power struggles, and legitimizations take place. By showing how terrorists who are perceived as 'barbaric' have evolved into the main adversary of 'international order and peace', the author is able to show how international terrorism and the international community have been mutually constructed.

The case selection is also important to analyze the discursive formation of terrorism. Whereas McQuade analyzes the effects of the discursive formation of terrorism in British India, Martini examines the decisions of the UNSC to analyze the social constructiveness of terrorism. Because the formation of terrorism through the international conventions in late 19th century and early 20th century and the UNSC mirror global power dynamics, these were deliberate choices. In this regard, it is fascinating to observe how the concept of terrorism can be used to dehumanize societal groups, despite the nearly 100-year time gap.

According to McQuade, "events taking place in far-flung colonial settings could be just as productive in shaping modern Europe as European ideas were in supposedly 'making the modern world'" (p. 27). For this reason, he focuses on the creation of the new idea of

criminality in the British India. The author argues that as British power in India expanded in the 19th century, there was a need to control and pacify diverse societal groups labeled as 'thugs', 'pirates', or 'fanatics', and eventually 'terrorists'. However, the important cornerstone of the discursive formation of the terrorist figure was the rise of the Indian anti-colonial revolutionaries in the late 19th century. As they started attacks against colonial authorities, they were projected into the 'terrorist' wave of the anarchists such as the Russian nihilists, thus imagining a new transnational revolutionary network, even though those Indian revolutionaries were much more inclined to nationalism rather than socialism or anarchism.

As a result, the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism in 1937, which was the first international convention aimed at preventing the global network of anarchists, was based on the discursive creation of terrorism, as well as draconian emergency legislation. British India became an example since the colonial administrators "framed their ideas about terrorism as a new and particularly dangerous form of global criminality, a 'world crime' that threatened not only the governing structures of an existing political regime, but rather the very notion of civilization itself" (p. 34). Anti-colonial revolutionary struggles were thus portrayed as 'barbaric' acts against the civilized world, necessitating the enactment of special legal prohibitions. As a result, they got involved in a global conversation about how to prevent anti-colonial revolutionism in the name of counterterrorism.

Similarly, the Security Council plays an important role to produce global norms to determine how to continue fighting against terrorism, but also to reflect global hierarchies and power relations in determining the global norms. As Martini discusses, "the Council's dispositif not only maintains two identitarian constructions in a hegemonic place, these categories and their consequences also reflect and (re)articulate the relations of power that structure the international community – and thus, its identity" (p. 25). In the first place, international terrorism was constructed against the state (reason of state). The fight against 'international terrorism' reinforced the sovereign power of states, justifying and enforcing their monopoly of force. This means that terrorism is a form of non-state violence that has rendered state violence obsolete. Second, international terrorism was created in opposition to the system (reason of system). According to this, terrorism's sheer existence as an 'international' threat endangers the state system's most essential element, namely, the sovereign and equal international community of nation-states. Third, international terrorism was designed to be a threat to civilization (reason of civilization). The formation of the international system based on European-liberal ideas has resulted in a binary opposition between civilized and uncivilized peoples. This resulted in the universalization of European principles, which international terrorism now challenges. International terrorism's 'barbaric' nature was contrasted with the 'civilized' nature of international community. These three factors have resulted in a counterterrorism *dispositif* that mirrors global relations of power.

Both McQuade and Martini present compelling evidence for examining how discourse of terrorism was constructed in colonial and post-colonial contexts. While the former examines the discursive construction of terrorist figure in British India to control and suppress native populations, the latter investigates the simultaneous construction of international terrorism and international community in the UNSC. In this way, both authors demonstrate the normative

hierarchization of peoples as well as the reconstruction of global power relations. Their contributions to the critical analysis of terrorism discourse from novel theoretical, empirical, and methodological standpoints highlight the need for more deconstructive studies, revealing the Eurocentric/Western, colonial and (post)imperial legacy of the discourse of terrorism. Their contributions, for example, might be enhanced by incorporating their findings into non-Western terrorism narratives that either challenge or accept those hegemonic narratives. Their works will arouse interest from those who wish to critically examine or understand the discursive formation of terrorism.