

***FACES OF TERRORISM IN THE
AGE OF GLOBALIZATION:
Terrorism from above and below***

ASAFA JALATA, Ph.D.

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville

Oak Ridge Institute of Continuing Learning

Philosophical Society



INTRODUCTION-1

- Issues of Terrorism from above (i.e. state terrorism) and from below (i.e. non-state terrorism)
- The causes and main characteristics of terrorism in the capitalist world system
- The meaning of terrorism and its function in the capitalist world system
- Definition: *terrorism as a systematic governmental or organizational policy and action that involves lethal violence in the form of unjustified war or massive repression and/or destruction of lives, culture, and institutions of a given population group for political and economic gains or other reasons.*

INTRODUCTION-2

- Terrorism as a major global issue emerged on September 11, 2001, when the US was attacked by Al Qaeda, a subversive non-state terrorist organization.
- Terrorism is not a new phenomenon; colonial terrorism on indigenous Americans, Australians, Africans, and Asians—state terrorism or state sponsored terrorism
- State terrorism by postcolonial states; supported by Western powers

INTRODUCTION-3

- My interest in studies of terrorism-the terrorist episode of 9/11 and my experience and knowledge with terrorism in my previous homeland, Oromia, a colony of Ethiopia
- The question of social justice and the lack of a single standard for studying and dealing with terrorism from above and from below
- Terrorism as a crime against humanity

9/11 and My Interest in Terrorism Studies

- 9/11 event shocked me as it did all Americans and the international community
- The destruction on the American human lives and liberty
- The terrorist event showed that nobody could be safe from horrific consequences of terrorism; the US, the superpower with the massive nuclear arsenal, complex intelligence networks, and highly advanced military capability was attacked on its soil by members Al Qaeed willing to commit suicide
- Before this day, nobody imagined that this could happen

9/11 and My Interest-continued

- It was new and unexpected that commercial planes were used for a terrorist warfare
- This new dramatic event should force us to go beyond an ideological and cultural blind lens to understand the cause and effects of all forms terrorism in the modern world system
- Consequences of 9/11:

9/11 My Interest-Continued

- Terrorists attacked American military and economic symbols-Pentagon and the World Trade Center
- The effects were devastating and humiliating; more than 3,000 people and 343 firefighters lost their lives; 1,337 vehicles were crashed
- Like other forms of terrorism, it did not spare children, women, and old people

9/11 and My Interest-Continued

- The surviving families were denied closure and comfort from a proper burial in a normal circumstance since the victims were burned beyond recognition or since some of the corpses were not found
- The financial damage was estimated at about \$285 billion without including Homeland Security, the funding of war in Iraq, Afghanistan and other global war on terrorism
- This terrorist episode only shows that terrorism still exists in the capitalist world system

9/11 and My Interest-Continued

- Terrorism has moved from the Rest to the West
- The West and their client states in the Rest have been engaging in state terrorism
- New technology and organizational capacity have reached the Rest
- The 9/11 terrorist episode renewed in my mind nightmare, pain, frustration, and hopelessness about terrorism that forced me to leave my homeland, Oromia, a colony of Ethiopia

The Impact of State Terrorism on the Oromos

- I felt that terrorism was following me in the US that I thought immune to terrorism
- The event of 9/11 traumatized the Americans including myself as successive Ethiopian regimes have been terrorizing my people, the Oromos

Terrorism and the Oromos- Continued

- Ethiopian colonial terrorism and genocide began to affect the Oromos in the last decades of the 19th century
- De Salviac said, Oromia was “flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage,” and called the event “the theatre of a great massacre.”
- The Oromo population was reduced from 10 to 5 million
- Oromo lives, institutions and liberty were destroyed

Terrorism and the Oromos-Continued

- Oromia was raped and destroyed; it was “an oasis luxuriant with large trees” and known for its “opulent and dark greenery used to shoot up from the soil.”
- It was the country “flowing in milk and honey.” The Ethiopians burned down the country and devastated it.
- The remaining five million Oromos were reduced to the status of slaves and semi-slaves

State Terrorism and the Oromos-Continued

- State terrorism has continued under successive Ethiopian regimes until today
- The Haile Selassie regime supported by Western countries, particularly the US
- The military regime supported by former USSR
- I supported the Oromo national struggle in the 1970s. State terrorism increased I sought political asylum in the US in 1981.
- The Meles regime emerged in 1991 with the support of the US and increased state terrorism

State Terrorism and the Oromos-Continued

- Mass murders and hidden genocide
- Terrorism in the form of war, assassination or murder, castration, burying alive, throwing of cliffs, torture, rape, confiscation of properties, beating, disarming people, etc.
- Massive and absolute poverty, lack of subsistence, protection, and security, lack of freedom for self expression, organization, and development, etc.

Reflecting on Ethiopian and Al Qaeda Terrorisms

- Both of them have destroyed noncombatant and peaceful citizens; they are crimes against humanity
- Both of them are morally, legally, and politically wrong
- Both of them have destroyed human lives, institutions, and liberty
- Most of the people who were destroyed by Al Qaeda were burned and did not get normal burial; most of Oromos who were murdered are eaten by hyenas; their relatives are not allowed to express their grief

Reflections-Continued

- The US is fighting against Al Qaeda since it is powerful; Oromos are powerless victims
- The US government supports the Ethiopian government and contributes to Ethiopian terrorism
- The US government only give lip service to human rights and democracy as the case of Ethiopia demonstrates
- The impossibility of eliminating subversive terrorism without eliminating state terrorism

Discussion and Conclusion

- 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.
- Without employing critical 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 21st century people should not be imprisoned by their old traditions of ideological and cultural blindness for individual and group interests.

Discussion and Conclusion

- The mechanisms of stopping terrorism and genocide require human-centric visions by going beyond self- and group-centered values, 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. 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 corrupt civilization.
- Thank you for listening!

Conclusion and Discussion

- All powerful individuals and groups should critically interrogate themselves morally, culturally, ideologically, intellectually, 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 continue to commit collective crimes by engaging in or supporting unjust and corrupt political and ideological practices. Engaging in or supporting a system that annihilates human beings is morally, ethically, philosophically, and intellectually wrong because of ideological and cultural blindness and/or to satisfy the appetite for power and money. 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.