

Book Reviews

Joyce E. Salisbury. *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence*. New York: Routledge, 2004. 233 pp. \$27.50. ISBN: 0-415-94129-6.

Reviewed by **Francis X. Hartigan**
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“The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians,” wrote Tertullian in the third century. He recognized the importance of martyrs for the spread of Christianity. Joyce E. Salisbury in this book explores martyrdom in the first three centuries of the Christian era. She too recognizes the importance of martyrs. Her analysis includes the development and evolution of martyrdom but also its consequences—especially unintended consequences—for our own times. Several long-term unintended consequences grew from martyrdom: the doctrine of resurrection of the flesh, attitudes such as expecting mothers to be self-sacrificing, the banning of suicide, the vilification of Jews, and the incorporation of traditional ideas of magic, sacrifice, and dreams into Christian martyrology. Salisbury divides her book into two sections. One concerns the power of the martyrs in their ability to affect change. The second concerns the use of martyrs by others over time to affect and reflect changes in belief and spirituality. She states her thesis in the introduction to the book: “Martyrs matter, and they matter for a long time, even to our modern headlines.”

The first impact of martyrs was to create a view that the world is engaged in a struggle between good and evil. This struggle begins with the Book of Revelations (ca. 95 C.E.) and continues throughout history even to our own times. The struggle between good and evil leaves no room for compromise, no gray area. Accordingly, “good” is represented by the believers and the church, while “evil” is the domain of unbelievers and the state. Christians were persecuted for not accepting the state on its terms, normally by refusing to offer sacrifice to the emperor. But persecution changed over time, eventually including Christians persecuting Christians. During the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire, some people were attracted to Christianity because of the bravery of its adherents, while some Christians buckled under persecution and joined large-scale defections from Christianity such as that at Carthage in 250 C.E. When Caracalla in 212 extended Roman citizenship to all free people, he actually increased persecution by increasing the number of people who were required to offer sacrifice to the emperor. The Great Persecution, the most serious persecution by the Romans, begun by Diocletian in 303 C.E., set a new standard of terror by introducing torture. Torture became a horror for Christians to face and a glory for Christian martyrology.

In pursuing her thesis that martyrdom matters, Salisbury demonstrates that it influenced the debate on Christian resurrection. Thanks to veneration of martyrs by Christians, the theological debate over whether the soul alone or the soul and the body would be united in paradise was resolved in favor of the resurrection of the flesh, meaning that both soul and body would be united in paradise. Relics of martyrs were so sought after by Christians that pagans were often scandalized by

the Christian quest for body parts. Christian theology was further influenced by the cult of relics, usually from martyrs. By the eleventh century all churches were required to have relics, and numerous centers of pilgrimage had developed across Europe. Tertullian, a third-century Christian theologian, claimed that only martyrs go immediately to paradise, a position held by Mohammad several centuries later.

Holy war too is advanced by martyrdom. Salisbury recounts the impact of the apostle St. James, martyred in Spain in the first century. St. James (Santiago), a much revered martyr whose grave at Compostella was the greatest pilgrimage site in the Middle Ages, magically appeared centuries later before Christian warriors as they fought Muslims. St. James the Apostle becomes transformed into St. James the Moorslayer (“Santiago Matamoreos”), a warrior martyr. St. James exemplifies Salisbury’s argument that martyrs undergo transformations to meet new theological or spiritual needs. Martyrs Perpetua and Felicity illustrate that even motherhood should not stand in the way of martyrdom. Both rejected their infants to accept martyrdom. If martyrdom contributed to the violence of holy war, it greatly contributed to violence toward Jews. Conflicts among Jews, Romans, and Christians are well-known, but Salisbury adds useful background information and then presents several important martyrs whose deaths inflamed anti-Semitism. Incidents were exploited by Christian writers such as Tertullian, who argued that Christians replaced Jews as God’s chosen people and, increasingly, Christian persecution of Jews flourished after the conversion of Constantine with the consequent rise of Christian political power.

The second section of the book Salisbury calls “Controlling the Martyrs.” The creation of martyrs shifted from the pagan state to the Christian state. Constantine’s Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. ended the persecution of Christians but it did not end martyrdom. A dispute over who should be the bishop of Carthage led to an appeal to Constantine, whose decision created the Donatist schism in the church. The Donatists resisted Constantine’s decision and welcomed martyrdom and many were persecuted. St. Augustine even called for a “just war” against the self-styled martyrs. A radical fringe of the Donatists, called the Circumcellions, linked social revolution to martyrdom, which they actively sought even by suicide. For the Circumcellions, martyrdom justified terror just as today’s suicide bombers justify their actions. Salisbury sees the spirit of the Circumcellions reappearing in the mass suicide at Jim Jones’s People’s Temple in Jonestown. Another example of “Controlling the Martyrs” is St. Vincent of Saragossa (304 C.E.) who, it was believed, received special divine support to resist torture. Augustine interpreted this as a triumph of God’s grace over one’s own works. In other words, Augustine used the martyrdom of St. Vincent to press home his ideas that one is saved by grace and not good works, a position he maintained in opposition to the Pelagians. The St. Vincent story is rewritten at other times to produce other messages such as the need for religious uniformity (633 C.E.).

Salisbury’s last chapter concerns suicide. The word “suicide” was not coined until the seventeenth century and then as a pejorative for “self-murder.” Romans chose suicide as an honorable alternative to suffering in old age, to escape death by an enemy, and even as an exercise in freedom (Seneca). The mass suicide at Masada earned the praise of many Jews. Later, however, Judaism condemned suicide in the Mishnah, although with some exceptions. Ambrose, Augustine’s mentor, praised Pelagia, a fifteen-year-old virgin, for preferring suicide to submission to an anti-Christian mob. Tertullian went so far as to actually advocate sacrificial suicide. However, the church’s efforts to stop sacrificial suicide (Council of Carthage, 348; St. Augustine) led to condemnation of Roman-style voluntary death as well.

In *The City of God*, Augustine attacks the Roman heroine Lucretia who killed herself to save herself and her family from the dishonor of rape. Augustine rejected suicide for the sake of honor and advanced the argument that Lucretia's suicide arose from guilt she felt because she must have enjoyed the rape. Salisbury goes on to say that Augustine's prohibition of voluntary martyrdom was later legislated into church law, thus creating the abhorrence of suicide that continues into modern times.

Salisbury presents an excellent overview of martyrdom along with its unintended consequences. The argument is strong and defended well. She presents information valuable to scholars of contemporary events who would like to know the background of many of today's values. The book includes a chart of martyrs mentioned in the book, notes, a bibliography, and is marred only by an incomplete index.

Stewart Bell. *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism Around the World*. Mississauga, ON: Wiley, 2005. 268 pp. U.S.\$18.95, Can\$24.99 (pbk). ISBN: 0-470-83645-8.

Reviewed by **Bob Martyn**
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Although former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, retracted his often repeated statement that terrorists involved in the September 11 attacks entered the United States from Canada, one may read this book and wonder, "Why didn't they?" For Stewart Bell's thorough research into the subject of terrorists in Canada, particularly his scathing indictment of the federal government's feeble anti-terrorism efforts, is anything but reassuring.

Cold Terror opens with a telling quote from the former head of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), that "with perhaps the singular exception of the United States, there are more international terrorist groups active here than any other country in the world" (p. 3: in the original CSIS document, "perhaps" is emphasized, while it is not in Bell's text). With this 1998 testimony to the Special Senate Committee on Security and Intelligence, three and a half years before the catastrophic World Trade Center/Pentagon attacks, the government was made aware of the extensive terrorist presence on Canadian soil. We shall return momentarily to the negligible government actions resulting from this knowledge.

Although the world has changed with September 11, most Canadians remain comforted with the belief that they live in a fireproof house, far from flammable materials. The security provided by geographic distance, inhospitable winters, cheerful disposition, and lack of imperial aspirations has usually been sufficient. This certainty was only mildly shaken when Osama bin Laden included Canada among the five so-called Christian nations targeted for terror, along with the United States, Britain, Spain, and Australia. For most Canadians this targeting pronouncement was not accompanied by any widespread feeling of being threatened. Rather, the average response was one of, "Who, us?"

This is not because Canadians are particularly unconcerned with terror; it just seemed to happen elsewhere, or to other people. This, notwithstanding a history of Canadian terrorism that spans over a thousand Doukhobor arson and bombing attacks; kidnapping, arson, and bombings by Quebec separatists; and various

shootings by Armenian terrorists. Attacks by Sikh extremists culminated in the near-simultaneous bombings of Air Pacific Flight 003, luckily on the ground in Japan, and Air India Flight 182 off the coast of Ireland. The combined death toll of 331 people set a “record” unequalled until Al Qaeda’s September 11 attacks. Thus, those with an interest in terrorism within Canada are not unfamiliar with the issues; it is merely the scale and focus of the threats that now appears most shocking.

Cold Terror presents a succinct primer on many of the ethnic/nationalist struggles currently being fought and supported via Canadian-based terrorists. Emphasized are the fundraising, recruiting, and direct actions of the major factions, including the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers), the variants of Sikh extremism, as well as Al Qaeda. This informative exploration of terrorist groups’ historical antecedents and current activities is facilitated through a focus on key Canadian players. By concentrating much of the narrative on individuals, Bell adds significant detail to what is known through press reports of recognized Canadian terrorists, as well as introducing us to largely unfamiliar characters.

Toronto’s publicly self-proclaimed “Al Qaeda family,” the Khadr, aptly exemplifies the first group. The mother, Maha Elsamnah, wanted her eleven-year-old son Abdurahman to get “into something just to be disciplined.” Admirable parenting. He was, however, sent off for weapons and explosives training at Al Qaeda’s renowned Khaldun camp, near Khost, Afghanistan (p. 183). The family received much public condemnation in announcing that Al Qaeda training camps were the best place to raise their children, since being brought up in Canada would have them “be on drugs or having some homosexual relationship”—clearly the inevitable outcome of North American living. That was before son Abdul was seriously wounded in a shoot-out with Pakistani security forces, making Canada’s health care system sufficiently attractive that the family could tolerate the negative aspects of Western society. The government let them return to Canada despite their acknowledged terrorist support and activities. Notwithstanding petitions and public outcries for their deportation, as of this writing the Khadr, minus those killed or residing in Guantanamo, remain in Canada.

In another poignant chapter, Bell interweaves the tales of two virtually unknown Canadians—one, a young woman from Quebec, the other, a young man from southern Ontario—one vacationing with her boyfriend, the other a key terrorist in the joint Al Qaeda/Jemaah Islamiyah bombing of two nightclubs in Bali, Indonesia. Readers are taken on a journey, which naturally emphasizes Mansour Jabarah’s transition from being an unremarkable high school student in St Catharines, Ontario, to becoming a key accomplice in the planning and financing of terrorist attacks against “white meat,” or Westerners, in Southeast Asia. This chapter is particularly valuable in dispelling the Canadian myth that terrorism happens only to “other people.”

Reading into the various terrorists and their organizations, one troubling question emerges repeatedly—why is nothing being done? Or worse, how can it be that an organization declared a front for terrorism by both U.S. and Canadian intelligence independently, in this case the Tamil Eelam Society, still manage to receive about \$2 million per year in Canadian government funding? (p. 51) Bell’s text suggests the reason is tied to North America being a continent of immigrants, in which Canada and the United States have taken separate approaches to the newcomers. Americans adopt the “melting pot” philosophy, in which if one is going to live in

the U.S., one will be an American first and foremost. Canada, however, prefers a “mosaic” view, in which foreign arrivals retain the culture and worldview of their homelands, adding pieces to the overall Canadian way of life. Regrettably these old world ties may often include continuing the attendant violence, either willingly or through extortion and intimidation within their ethnic communities.

This social construct becomes problematic for Canada, and hence the world, because government inaction is shamefully linked to the self-interest of elected politicians. Despite unequivocal reports from the intelligence community that certain ethnic-based organizations are terrorist fronts, provincial and federal politicians continue to attend their events in order to garner votes. In one incident, two Cabinet Ministers, including Paul Martin who has since become Canada’s Prime Minister, attended a large Tamil fundraiser in Toronto. Needless to say, this became a major propaganda coup for the LTTE, which cited their presence as demonstrating senior Canadian government support for the Tamil Tigers (pp. 71–72). In response to incredulous demands that they explain this perceived support of terrorism, both politicians merely dismissed any questions as anti-Tamil racism.

While the message in these case studies in terrorism and government disinterest is therefore disheartening, the book’s prose is nonetheless clear and enjoyable to read. It is not laden with the sometimes esoteric theorizing of some academic writers or the buzzwords and acronyms of military authors. It does, however, occasionally lapse into prose that can only be described as hokey: “but you are also terrified, by the unknown, by your own laughable vulnerability and the dread that you will never return. A sensible person would flee. The journalist steps willingly into the unknown, in pursuit of nothing more tangible than a story” (p. 79). One can also find the occasional confusing passage that escaped editing. It is said of one terrorist, for example, that “he left Amal and joined the more radical Hezbollah,” only to be followed with another terrorist who “joined the Amal movement, which eventually became Hezbollah” (pp. 94, 98). These lapses, however, are sufficiently rare that they do not detract from the book’s positive aspects.

Bell’s background as a journalist is obvious in that most of his research was conducted through personal interviews. This gives the work a feeling of intimacy; the reader feels present in the room with the terrorist, the terrorism supporter, the intelligence officer, or the victim. While this makes for pleasant reading, the absence of direct, clearly-linked citations will doubtless evoke grumbles from the academic audience. Yet do not dismiss the scholarly value of this work. Bell has done his homework. The book contains over a dozen pages of notes, divided by chapter, outlining the documentary source material that informed this project. Such material spans legal affidavits and court transcripts of terrorist and immigration trials, classified CSIS and RCMP reports, and a varied cross-section of secondary resources. While subsequent researchers may have to work a bit harder to retrace Bell’s steps, the primary sources used are solid and well chosen.

Cold Terror is certainly a suitable text for inclusion in an undergraduate survey course. Stewart Bell has crafted an informative work that contributes to the scholarly literature while still managing to inform a more general audience that can certainly benefit from having read this book.

Farhad Khosrokhavar. *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, translated from the French by David Macey. London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005. 258 pp. \$27.50 (pbk). ISBN: 0-745-32283-2.

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In recent years, a number of important studies have appeared on the topic of suicide terrorism that have contributed to the theoretical advancement of a field that has sparked intensive interest among scholars and policymakers after September 11.¹ Most explanations of suicide terrorism offered in these works are organizational in character and are more plausible with regard to traditional occurrences of suicide attacks, i.e., those that have appeared in the context of localized conflicts such as Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Southern Lebanon, or the West Bank and Gaza. They are less convincing in their discussions of what has crystallized as a new, globalized form of martyrdom best exemplified in the global jihad movement nominally led by Al Qaeda. Enter *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs*, by Farhad Khosrokhavar, a book that distinguishes itself from the most prominent studies conducted on this topic to date in two major respects. First, it focuses on an individual, rather than an organizational-strategic approach; and second, its analysis is most compelling with regard to the new Islamic martyrs willing to die in the name of global jihad.

For Khosrokhavar, a professor at the Parisian *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, today's global martyrs are closely tied to Islam. The first of the book's three chapters offers an insightful discussion of two essential and interconnected concepts that form the basis for the making of the modern Muslim suicide bomber, namely jihad and martyrdom. A tiny fringe group among Muslims, many of whom live in the metropolitan areas of Western Europe, subscribe to what he calls an "offensive martyrdom," a cult of self-sacrifice that entails an active struggle against perceived heretics and oppressors. Unlike "defensive martyrdom"—best exemplified by the suffering of Jesus Christ—offensive self-sacrifice, which characterizes today's suicide bombers, entails a desire to destroy the enemy in a total war that neither side can win. These modern martyrs are mostly Muslims, because unlike Christianity, Islam "does not avoid the question of legitimate violence. It resorts to violence when justice requires it to do so. It gives a sense of righteousness that knows no ambiguity" (p. 214). In explaining the willingness of the new martyrs to die, Khosrokhavar offers the concept of "martyrography," a form of behavior that regards death, not life, as the goal. Martyrography, he writes, "is the result of an inversion born of resentment. The goal is no longer to realize an ideal, but to take leave of life by destroying the enemy in an apocalyptic vision that will put an end to life" (p. 60).

In the book's second chapter, the author offers a discussion of martyrdom in Iran that centers around the *Bassidj*, a state-financed popular organization that recruited the bulk of martyrs who subsequently sacrificed their lives in the long and brutal war against Iraq. The *Bassidj*'s "martyrography," Khosrokhavar argues, stemmed from a deadly religiosity—a "morbid Shiism" that, in contrast to traditional Shiism, resulted from an active fascination with death. It was born of a unique constellation of factors that included the collapse of the revolutionary utopia,

a war against a neighbor that threatened the Islamic Revolution, and a crisis in a society bent on restoring dignity and freedom.

Next, the author discusses the minds of Palestinian suicide bombers, arguing that their acts of martyrdom result from frustrated ambitions to have a nation whose existence has been denied. At the time that the Second Intifada erupted in September 2000, holy death became the only tenable solution guaranteeing the martyr a place in paradise while destroying parts of Israeli society. Khosrokhavar expands on the Palestinians' humiliation in a very well articulated section where he describes how day-to-day life makes Palestinians feel "dirty," turning their lives into degrading ones in economic terms and humiliating in social terms. He also argues that Palestinians suffer from a guilt complex about having been forced into their dire situation. Eventually, "a beatifying death releases them from their everyday humiliation" (p. 133).

The book's most valuable contribution is its third chapter, titled "The Transnational Neo-Umma: Al-Qaeda's Martyrs." Khosrokhavar's use of the term Al Qaeda rather than what should more adequately be understood as a global jihad movement must be forgiven in light of the book's original publication date of 2002. Despite its first release in French over three years ago, *Suicide Bombers* is a highly relevant book, for its descriptions of young, alienated Muslims who join radical, transnational Islamic networks describe the perpetrators of globalized suicide attacks such as those in Bali, Morocco, Istanbul, or London better than many contemporary treatments of the subject. Unlike some recent works on suicide terrorism, Khosrokhavar emphasizes the novelty behind the new globalized martyrs as "products of our world" (p. 3), thus drawing a distinguishing line between nationally-focused suicide bombings and the new globalized phenomenon. Unlike suicide bombers in Palestine or Lebanon, he writes, the ambition of some modern martyrs is to build a transnational community, or umma, rather than a nation. "This type of martyrdom is the product of globalization, the vicissitudes of the Islamic diaspora in the West and the crisis in the Muslim societies of the Middle East and the former Soviet Empire" (p. 149).

Khosrokhavar's wise insights are drawn from his field experience as a sociologist and anthropologist, and from interviews with Muslim prisoners in France carried out over a period of eighteen months. From these, he concludes that for the martyrs seeking to join "Al Qaeda," humiliation is felt as a widespread sensation that "their immersion in the Western world has defiled them [because] they have been unfairly spared the sufferings of their coreligionists in Muslim societies" (p. 152). This feeling is coupled with a disgust for "Western arrogance," and it is the participation in the activities of a group that is challenging Western hegemony that provides those individuals with a new sense of pride that helps them restore their lost dignity.

As in his discussion of martyrdom in Iran and Palestine, his description of the mindset of the Al Qaeda-affiliated martyrs is at times philosophical, even psychological. He extensively discusses the effect that the large metropolitan cities of Western Europe have on some young and alienated Muslims. The modern megalopolis is the center of the West's seemingly unbridled sexual promiscuity, where relations between men and women are deregulated, and where the disintegration of traditional patriarchal family structures are perceived as a frontal assault to Islam—a religion where such relations are more strictly regulated.

Khosrokhavar's fascinating account has a number of shortcomings. First, its focus is on the individual motivations of the suicide bomber, and thus lacks an in-depth discussion about the organizations that employ suicide attacks. It also fails to elaborate on the important interplay between the individual and the organization

in the overall genesis of suicide attacks. Second, the book's title may be slightly deceiving since the book deals not exclusively with suicide bombers per se. As interesting as Khosrokhavar's essay on the Iranian martyrs recruited by the Bassidj may be, they are not suicide bombers as the term is generally understood today. Third, and more substantively, it is not always clear how the author reaches some of his conclusions. While it is commendable that the author has conducted interviews, it is not always apparent whether his findings follow directly from interviews, or are his personal beliefs. Results from his interviews are interwoven with his own comments, and the reader has difficulty isolating the one from the other, partly due to a lack of systematic referencing of the interviews. Fourth, the book suffers from some shortcomings integral to any book written in thick description. One of the strengths of *Suicide Bombers* is its author's keen ability to capture the genesis of the suicide bomber in all its complexities. Khosrokhavar's intuition seems remarkable, and his explanations are highly plausible and well articulated. The book's rich, at times philosophical, description, however, also paints such a complex picture of the motives of Islamic suicide bombers that in the end the reader may be left even more puzzled, unable to distinguish the truly critical factors from other existing conditions giving rise to suicide bombings. In addition, Khosrokhavar's analysis cannot be falsified. His intelligent forays make for a highly interesting read, but they can be neither proven nor disproven. Finally, *Suicide Bombers* is often repetitive, although the reader is likely to overlook this due to the author's eloquence and David Macey's formidable translation.

Ultimately, *Suicide Bombers* is a thoughtful, honest, and enlightening account of the highly complex and interdependent sets of motives affecting Muslim suicide bombers. Its contribution is particularly valuable with regard to the new martyrs—oftentimes young and alienated Muslims radicalized in the Western metropolitan centers and inspired by Al Qaeda's message. It is highly recommended to anyone interested in the transformation of suicide attacks into a global phenomenon.

Note

1. See, in particular, Christoph Reuter, *My Life is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Diego Gambetta, ed., *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

Mikel Dunham. *Buddha's Warriors: The Story of the CIA-Backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion, and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004. 434 pp; maps, forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, bibliog., and index. \$29.95 (hdbk). ISBN: 1-58542-348-3.

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Mikel Dunham, an American author, photographer, and artist, currently lives in Santa Monica, California. His earlier works include murder mysteries and a non-fiction book about Tibetan Buddhism.

Much of the focus of the book is the rebellion of the inhabitants of eastern Tibet against the Chinese Communists. The provinces of Kham, Amdo, and Golok, unlike other parts of the country, had often not been under the control of the Tibetan government in the capital of Lhasa and had largely ruled themselves until the Communists began their "liberation" in October 1950. Although the revolt against communist rule would come to involve much of Tibet by 1959, the eastern provinces would lead the way in bloody fighting that would last until the 1970s. Dunham was much struck by the contrast between the ferocity of the Khampa, Amdoan, and Golok warriors in battle on the one hand and their devotion to Buddhism on the other, and set out to examine this seeming paradox.

However, the fight against the Chinese Communists in Tibet also came to involve Americans and others. The Eisenhower administration began a program of support for the rebels. The Central Intelligence Agency provided training in such skills as basic tactics, use of infantry weapons, radio communications, and demolitions at various facilities on Saipan and Okinawa and in the United States. American aid also involved hazardous long-distance flights by American, Polish, and Czech aircrews over great distances to drop supplies to the resistance and to return CIA-trained Tibetans to their homeland.

The telling of the Tibetan revolt and its relationship to the U.S. has often been complicated by various agendas. Canadian journalist William Stevenson wrote in *The Yellow Wind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959) that it had become obvious to foreign observers in Beijing that a serious military action was underway in Tibet by early 1956 (p. 191). He also wryly noted that someone with his anticommunist political views was unlikely to pass the "medical exam" that Chinese authorities required before permitting foreigners to travel to Tibet (p. 213). At first, observers not sympathetic to Mao's China tended to support the resistance and to dismiss reports of American, *Kuomintang* Chinese, and other aid to the rebels as "propaganda" designed to explain away the difficulties of consolidating Communist rule. An example of this type of reporting was Lowell Thomas, Jr. in *The Silent War in Tibet* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960, p. 282). However, communist authorities always attempted to portray the Tibetan resistance in the worst possible light and as agents of the United States and of the *Kuomintang* regime in exile on Taiwan. In this they were greatly assisted by fellow travelers such as Felix Greene of the BBC, who, in *Awakened China: The Country Americans Don't Know* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), uncritically parroted the official Chinese government line that its actions were truly a "liberation." "The so-called 'Tibetan independence movement' was in fact a counterrevolutionary action, led by groups of feudal landlords and religious aristocrats, with assistance from outside" (p. 283). The involvement of the CIA in the Tibetan revolt was confirmed in the 1970s, often in works by disaffected employees of the U.S. government who were writing at a time in which American anticommunism was supposedly discredited by the Vietnam War and Americans' distrust of their government was fanned by Watergate. The Tibetan insurgency and the Agency's role in it were often dismissed as just one more example of poorly conceived CIA "special ops." An example of this genre is Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Dell, 1975).

A rather different picture of the revolt against China's rule in Tibet has emerged in recent years in a scholarly literature using both Chinese and Tibetan documentation. This includes Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). Whatever

American involvement was, and whatever criticisms one can make of Tibet's *ancien regime*, the rebellion was very much Tibetan and rooted in popular resistance to "reforms" which many, perhaps most, of the country's inhabitants saw as an attack on their culture.

The book being reviewed here is often told through the eyes of the participants. Although a number of the CIA personnel involved in the operation and Gompo Tashi, the most prominent leader of the Khampa resistance, have had memoirs published, the stories of Tibetans at the level of the common soldier and lower-level leadership also deserve some telling. Dunham, who became friends with former, now aging veterans of the Tibetan resistance, has filled in this void somewhat.

Although he is clearly emotionally committed to the resistance fighters about whom he writes, and has even converted to their religion, Dunham avoids the pitfall of trying to romanticize the Tibetans. He notes that Tibet before "liberation" was often backward. For example, public health was so poor that much of the population suffered from venereal diseases (pp. 127–128). At times, the regime was downright barbarous. Dunham recounts the story of the progressive official Lungshar (pp. 63–64), who would be blinded for urging a reform program that would have harmed the interests of the aristocracy.

However, the author also makes clear that, contrary to what apologists for communist rule have asserted, it is horribly simplistic to dismiss the resistance as the dying gasp of a benighted old order struggling to retain its privileges. Lungshar's son Lhalu Shape would try to mobilize opposition to the Chinese, and in 1959 would be the victim of a "struggle" campaign involving public humiliation and torture (p. 326). Some members of Tibet's aristocracy, such as the notorious Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, would shamelessly collaborate with the Chinese, often for no apparent reason more exalted than their own desire to continue to live well. And it was the poor and humble Tibetans, the supposed beneficiaries of the "reforms," who provided much of the rebel manpower.

There are a number of things about the book that might be a bit better. Dunham seems to accept as literally true a story that CIA Director Allen Dulles was unaware of where Tibet was on a world map (p. 314). This is almost certainly apocryphal. Sometimes he leaves some loose ends. For example, he mentions that in October 1956 Gompo Tashi selected a group of fighters to be trained by the *Kuomintang* on Taiwan (p. 174), but nothing further is mentioned about the Nationalist Chinese role in the Tibetan struggle. Since Nationalist China did play a rather important role in supporting the resistance at times, this seems to rate at least some mention. (The details are provided by American historian John W. Graver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997)).

Despite these small criticisms, and although Dunham's work is written more for a general audience than a scholarly one, this book is a worthwhile addition to the growing literature about this somewhat forgotten Cold War battlefield that many with an interest in this part of the world would find of interest. Even though the sacrifices of the Tibetans who fought to regain their independence, and the bravery of the aircrews that were involved in supporting them, appear rather futile now, they seem to deserve some memorial. Given the current pusillanimity by much of the world today when it comes to confronting Beijing's record in Tibet, this book serves as a small substitute.

Lesley Gill. *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004. 282 pp. \$19.95 (pbk). ISBN: 0-8223-3392-9.

Reviewed by **Carlos Guevara Mann**

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The United States acts as an imperial power in today's international scenario, says Lesley Gill. Imperialism, "the use of state power to penetrate and transform other states for [the imperial power's] own purposes" (p. 234), is this book's guiding concept. The purposes of U.S. imperialism are, according to Gill, maintaining Washington's "dominance and control over raw materials" (p. 64). Its consequences are "the brutalization and oppression of peoples around the world" (p. 3), through means including U.S.-backed, state-sponsored terrorism (p. 2).

From this perspective, Gill sees the School of the Americas (SOA, renamed Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation, or WHINSEC, in 2001) as part of the "hydra-headed" repressive apparatus of U.S. imperialism, including armies, police forces, paramilitaries, training centers, arms manufacturers, think tanks, intelligence operations, military bases, defense budgets, nuclear weapons, and "unholy alliances," among other features (pp. 234, 3). SOA is thus but a minuscule component of the U.S. security apparatus; it trains between 600 and 800 Latin American military and police officers per year plus an undisclosed number of additional personnel through mobile teams. Overall, however, the U.S. military instructs about 100,000 foreign soldiers annually in the United States, plus others abroad (p. 8). This raises the question of SOA's actual significance within the U.S. security apparatus.

Throughout the text, Gill underscores the symbolic dimension of SOA's role in perpetuating Washington's domination, suggesting that the institution's most important function is as a symbol of U.S. imperialism. For example, she emphasizes how the school's architecture and the layout of Fort Benning—the Georgia base housing the SOA—symbolize U.S. "imperialism" (p. 24). Gill also goes to great lengths in arguing, with quite specific examples, that the curricular and extracurricular instruction imparted at SOA is geared towards projecting the "cultural superiority" of an "American way of life" based on practices such as consumerism and domination of peoples of other colors, economic condition, gender, and sexual orientation by prosperous, white, heterosexual Anglo-Saxon males (p. 30). Gill maintains that the transmission of the "American way" to SOA trainees helps discipline and "incorporate them into a U.S.-controlled, hemispheric military apparatus as junior partners and local level enforcers" (p. 32). This is a deceitful foundation for empire, argues Gill, because of the hypocrisy inherent in the values associated with an "American lifestyle." The author dismisses these values as modern-day renditions of the "nineteenth-century racist notions about the 'civilized' qualities of white Europeans and Euro-Americans," grounded in "economic, cultural, and national attributes" (p. 31).

SOA's responsibility in the human rights violations of some Latin American states is yet another of the author's principal points. Critics, including SOA Watch and other groups, claim that the school specializes in providing Latin American security officers with the training they need to torture and neutralize political

opponents. They draw “a direct line between the SOA and the brutal practices of Latin American security forces,” opening “the door for thinking about the United States as a perpetrator of terrorism” (p. 138). The discovery, in 1996, of the so-called “Torture Manuals” advocating “the use of fear, beatings, the payments of bounties for enemy dead, false imprisonment, executions, and truth serum as methods of recruiting and controlling intelligence sources,” provided some empirical evidence for this contention. These manuals, which drew inspiration from Army Foreign Intelligence Assistance Program (“Project X”) material used in the 1960s, were employed at SOA between 1989 and 1991 and also served in mobile training courses abroad. But the outcry sparked by their disclosure forced the shelving of the manuals and an overhaul of the courses they were used in (p. 49).

The issue remains, however, as to whether or not SOA graduates systematically engage in torture and state-sponsored terrorism. And, if they do, can we ascertain that the instruction they receive at Ft. Benning explicitly prepares them for those pursuits? Do Latin American soldiers and policemen go to SOA with the objective of becoming better at thuggery? While it is true that the trajectories of many notorious Latin American human rights violators have included a term at SOA, training at the school does not automatically transform all or most students into torturers and pawns of the United States, as demonstrated by the careers of a Honduran and a Bolivian military officer, showcased by the author (pp. 88–89, 93–109). As Gill herself points out, the declassified list of SOA graduates in 1993 “did not provide a direct connection between SOA training and the subsequent human rights violations perpetrated by alumni . . . but the list raised disturbing questions about the SOA’s training methods, the people it trained, and, more broadly, U.S. policy in the hemisphere” (p. 137). Thus, even if systematic evidence to support an interpretation of SOA as a “school of torturers” is not garnered, the fact that so many graduates end up as human rights abusers raises questions about the extent of moral responsibility in military instruction.

From a political science viewpoint, the book would have benefited from a more precise definition of various concepts. Terms such as “imperialism,” “U.S. military doctrine,” “terrorism,” “neoliberalism” or “free-market capitalism,” the relationships between them, and their links with U.S. global security concerns would have helped the reader better understand the author’s points and assess their validity. As well, a more meticulous revision of SOA’s early history in Panama would have helped prevent minor mistakes such as the author’s confusing the Colon Free Zone and the city of Colon with the Canal Zone (pp. 101, 102), or situating Fort Amador at the Atlantic rather than the Pacific entrance to the waterway (p. 62).

An important issue that probably merited more in-depth treatment is the training of police (rather than military) officers at army institutions such as SOA. The issue is especially significant for Costa Rica and Panama, the two Latin American republics that formally abolished their armies. According to the SOA Watch database (www.soaw.org), over 2000 Costa Rican policemen have attended the school since the country proscribed its army in 1949. After abolishing its armed forces in 1990, Panama began sending police officers to SOA training programs in 2002. In the Latin American context of unstable politics, weak democratic institutionalization, and social dislocation, is the militarization of the police a convenient development? How does SOA training contribute to this phenomenon?

The School of the Americas is a skillfully written critique of the objectives of U.S. policy toward Latin America and the values underlying that policy. It is also a strong

denunciation of the impunity prevalent throughout the region, one of the major obstacles to the rule of law and sustainable human development in Latin America. While some might object to the book's ideological tone, the perceptive reader will no doubt appreciate the author's sensitivity to the role of symbols and the importance of principles in political analysis. Gill's commitment to the norms of liberal idealism—which posit an alternative to the politics of realism that have, once more, gained the upper hand among U.S. foreign policy makers—is yet another feature of the book that the sensitive reader will appreciate.

The book is appropriate for upper-level and graduate courses in International Affairs, U.S. Foreign Policy, and Latin American Politics. It is bound to elicit interesting reactions from students, especially when assigned in conjunction with recent texts presenting alternative views of U.S. "imperialism," such as Niall Ferguson's *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire*.