

Book Reviews

Ganor, Boaz. *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005. 334 pp. \$39.95. ISBN: 0-7658-0298-8.

Reviewed by **Leonard Weinberg**
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This is a valuable book about a vital topic. The subtitle suggests that the Israeli analyst Boaz Ganor wrote it with a limited audience in mind, i.e., those government officials around the world responsible for suppressing terrorist violence. But the fact that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* with the rulers of Florence in mind has not prevented generations of readers outside the Medici from learning the lessons originally intended to help them retain power. Those readers with a general interest in the problems of counter-terrorism will benefit from Ganor's work.

If the approach he adopts has a flaw it is a methodological one. By and large Ganor provides general advice on how to defeat terrorist organizations based on a single case: the Israeli one. No doubt many important lessons may be learned from the Israeli experience. Readers, though, need to bear in mind the latter is an extreme case. Few, if any, democratic countries have suffered so sustained and so lethal a campaign of terrorism as has Israel. Over the decades a succession of terrorist groups inspired variously by pan-Arab, Marxist, and Islamist ideas have sought to demoralize and, eventually, destroy the Jewish state by staging indiscriminate attacks on the country's population. Towards this end the groups involved have received great sums of money, logistical assistance, and much moral support from countries ranging from the ex-Soviet Union and its allies to Saudi Arabia and Iran. Can physicians learn to treat individuals with mild colds and low-grade fevers based on examining a single patient suffering acute pneumonia? Perhaps, but some caution is required.

Ganor divides his commentary into a series of "dilemmas." Each chapter confronts decision makers with a set of dilemmas they will need to solve in order to formulate and carry out effective responses to terrorist activities. The focus is both domestic and international. Ganor's recommendations are intended to be applied within the democracies as well as at the international level when these states decide to act collectively. The first and so far unresolved international dilemma Ganor identifies is definitional. Unless and until the United Nations is able to stipulate a definition of "terrorism" that achieves widespread agreement, the task of combating it, whatever "it" may be, becomes more difficult. Consequently, Ganor urges the adoption of a definition that is "... based upon a system of norms and laws of warfare that have already been stipulated through international treaties and have been accepted by most of the world's nations" (p. 18). This recommendation seems a logical way to proceed and, in fact, it appears to be the way the UN *is* proceeding, as a proposed anti-terrorism convention reaches the drafting stage and with the category of "non-combatants" serving as a cornerstone

of the definition. (We might note in passing, there are already about a dozen international conventions concerning various forms of terrorist violence, e.g., on airline skyjacking, attacking internationally “protected persons,” without benefit of such a general definition.)

Space does not permit a complete review of all or even most of the dilemmas with which Ganor confronts decision makers. To capture some sense of the difficulties involved we should mention a few. In the chapter on “Dilemmas Concerning Offensive and Defensive Counter-Terrorism Actions,” he presents us with the dilemma of the “boomerang effect.” If you take action against a terrorist organization that has harmed your citizens, will you make things worse? Will your response prove self-defeating? If you carry out a targeted killing of a terrorist chieftain, won’t his followers become so infuriated they will escalate their attacks, leaving the situation worse than it was before the assassination? On the other hand, if you do not retaliate the terrorist leadership will have little incentive to stop sending young “martyrs” on suicide missions. At this point Ganor introduces a distinction suggested by Meir Dagan, head of the Mossad. The distinction is between *motivation* and *capability*. Targeted killings may raise the motivation of the organization to step up its terrorist campaign, but it may also weaken its ability to carry out such operations. Decision makers then need to make a calculation: how much reduction in capacity will be achieved versus how much the desire for revenge will be enhanced.

Another dilemma: Should the general public be alerted about the existence of a terrorist threat as has become the practice in the United States following 9/11? The benefit of doing so is that it will make citizens more vigilant and help the authorities identify potential perpetrators before they can carry out their attacks. Consequently such alerts may save lives. On the other hand, keeping the public on alert about the terrorist danger may cause widespread anxiety and heighten tension. In short, terrorism being a type of psychological warfare, the policy may go some distance in achieving the terrorist organization’s own objectives.

There are clearly a variety of ethical and practical dilemmas presently confronting decision makers in the democracies. These may be illustrated by posing the following questions: To what extent do the principles of the rule of law and constitutional democracy have to be compromised in order to wage an effective campaign against the terrorists? May coercion be used to extract information from individuals the authorities believe possess knowledge of coming attacks? Where does coercion stop and torture start? May suspected terrorists be detained for some time without being charged with a specific crime? How long? When and under what circumstances should an individual’s right to privacy be superseded by concerns for the public safety? In responding to these questions, Ganor discusses the views of key figures in Israeli political life, left, right, and center.

In his concluding recommendations for an effective counter-terrorism strategy by the democracies, Ganor stresses the importance of intelligence. To quote: “It should be clear that the first and primary component of a counter-terrorist policy is intelligence gathering. Accordingly, the nation must invest the resources necessary to gather and process basic intelligence data and tactical intelligence regarding terrorist organizations, if necessary, even at the expense of other components of the war against terrorism” (p. 295). This is a recommendation those responsible for waging the war against terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere would do very well to follow.

Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe. By Sabrina P. Ramet. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. 233 pages. Paper \$22.95.

Reviewed by **László Kürti**
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Ramet opens her book paraphrasing a line from Marx: “A specter is haunting Eastern Europe.” In this book Sabrina Ramet, a long-time observer of the East European scene, proposes to look at East European political history from a philosophical and moral angle. Ramet rejects the notion that Eastern European political history should be viewed solely in terms of national or collective rights as if that region’s history was different from political history elsewhere in Europe. Ramet starts out by claiming that the notion of rights is part of the “holy trinity” of the political order, what she calls, legitimacy, succession, and rights.

The author asks why does the holy trinity of the East European kind emerge? How can we describe it, and how can we explain what took place after 1989 in this part of the world? The philosophical/moral foundation for this understanding for Ramet is the Enlightenment’s discovery of Natural Law, or Universal Reason. The failure of East European elites and nationalist leaders to see and live up to these ideals resulted in what Ramet terms, after T. G. Miklos, the ethnarchy of majority rule. But she is not so narrow-minded, even though hers is clearly an avid neo-liberalist approach. She also highlights in chapter 2 that Western diplomatic involvement and the communist heritage of these countries are also to be blamed for the rabid nationalistic, fundamentalistic religious and chauvinistic developments.

All in all, Ramet utilizes eight specific settings to make her point about the failure of establishing democratic states in post-1989 Eastern Europe: Hungarians in Transylvania, Turks in Bulgaria, Albanians in Macedonia, the Serbs of Croatia, Bosnia, Poland, Slovakia, and Kosovo. Each of these cases are ridden with conflict, animosities, and ethnic hatred. In each Ramet shows how majority and minority conflicts have escalated resulting in the emergence of ethnarchies; how ethnic and religious values have been utilized in order to form the national community and culture at the expense of a more inclusive and encompassing democratic principle of equality and tolerance. The problems in these states, Ramet argues, are complex and not without their specificities. Yet, the fundamental lack of the legitimacy of the state can be identified as the single-most important element in the rising nationalistic fervor.

In order to combat religious fanaticism and ethnocentric nationalism rampant in post-1989 Eastern Europe – as well as the one-sided political philosophy completely separated from moral philosophy – Ramet asks the reader to accept her rejection of collective rights in favor of individual and societal rights grounded in Universal Reason. Clearly, for Ramet the problem with Eastern European democracy is the lack of respect for individual rights, and not that of collective rights. She is very much in line with Locke, Hobbes, James Madison, and Kant – and other classic liberals – in espousing the view that if a state wants to be legitimate, it must be the strong defender of Natural Law or Universal Reason. If that is not the case, then, rebellion is a justified means against authority and tyranny. As she claims: “the concept of individual rights – which is anchored in Natural Law – provides sufficient basis on which to assert the legitimacy of cultural

differences and even mobilize people for action on the basis of shared policy interests and goals, without regard to group membership” (p. 9).

In opposition to this, the doctrine of collective rights “translates cultural differences into cultural divisions . . . and makes religion and/or nation the basis for political action and mobilizes people on the basis of membership in the (religious or ethnic) cultural collectivity” (p. 9). Naturally, for Ramet, this creates conformity and homogeneity suppressing all groups deemed as disfavored. No wonder, then, that she is against any form of nationalism and political movements – including religious ones – that mobilize population by espousing collective rights. Unfortunately, she does not discuss recent theories of liberal nationalism or liberationist approaches to nationalist movements, a hiatus that would have, I believe, added to her framework criticizing extremist and reactionary versions of nationalism.

There is plenty to learn from Ramet’s book even though she does not discuss all the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Individual chapters detail how post-1989, ex-communist states have attempted to establish democratic principles while legitimating countervailing tendencies. There are plenty of novel insights here and a lot to debate. Ramet, for instance, emphasizes that ethnic hatred is not of ancient vintage, but the result of mismanaged peace treaties of two world wars as well as the by-product of state socialism. Three states are notable absent in Ramet’s analysis: Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. These are perhaps the most “Central European,” to utilize the phrase in vogue these days. To be sure, relative economic successes, a rather symbolic NATO membership and the drive to be admitted to the EU places these states in a different category from the ones discussed by Ramet even though nationalistic policies, ethnic conflict and xenophobia have been noted here as well.

Whose democracy? is a handsomely crafted, well-balanced book written by one of the most gifted American thinkers on the subject of Eastern Europe. It will make an excellent source book for graduate students and will give plenty of food for thought for scholars. One can disagree with Ramet’s theoretical treatment of East European nationalism and religion and the way in which she frames her discussion on individual versus collective rights; but one cannot disregard her book, for it is a novel departure from the usual, run-of-the-mill publications on the East European scene of the 1990s. Thanks to her there is now an alternative.

Learning Lessons from Waco: When the Parties Bring their Gods to the Negotiating Table. By Jayne Seminare Docherty. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001. xviii & 351 pages. \$49.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by **Eugene V. Gallagher**
Connecticut College, New London, CT

This book makes important contributions to the ongoing discussion of both the Waco incident and to the broader topic of the interaction between millennialist groups and their cultural opponents, particularly law enforcement. First, Docherty provides detailed analysis of the negotiations between the Branch Davidians and government agents, focusing on the period between February 28, 1993 and March 15, at which point, she argues, negotiations effectively ended. Docherty’s perspective is informed both by her familiarity with the study of religion and by her extensive work in the emerging field of conflict analysis and resolution, and it is supplemented

by interviews with several FBI agents who played important roles at the Mount Carmel Center. In her analysis Docherty insists on a “symmetrical anthropology,” which gives equal attention to the world views of both the negotiators and of the Branch Davidians. She shows how each side constructed narratives of naming the conflict, assigning blame for it, and framing appropriate responses to it. When those narratives overlapped, there was substantial possibility of productive negotiation; when they didn’t, as was often the case, a stalemate ensued. She is especially effective in bringing to light the generally ignored worldview of the negotiators and emphasizing that it too had its symbolic elements and fundamental assumptions about human nature that led the agents “to shape the Waco negotiations into a process of ‘rational bargaining’” (155). The Branch Davidians’ commitment to other values, however, was neatly summarized by David Koresh’s caution that “I want to serve your laws where they coincide with God’s laws” (230). Docherty’s analysis of the negotiations is the best account so far of what worked, what didn’t, what might have been done differently, and why.

Her close reading of the negotiations leads Docherty to offer fourteen lessons that she hopes will have broader applicability, even though she acknowledges that her interlocutors within the FBI have rarely been persuaded by her arguments. The lessons center on the importance of recognizing the idiosyncratic worldviews that parties may bring to a conflict and adapting negotiating strategies to take account of them. Whether Docherty’s suggestions will make any impact on law enforcement negotiating practices remains to be seen, but they do offer scholars a useful and flexible set of concepts for the retrospective analysis of any future stand-offs. *Learning Lessons from Waco* deserves a wide reading both for its subtle analysis of the negotiations and for its creative suggestions for improving the practice of negotiation with unconventional religious groups.

Apocalyptic Trajectories: Millenarianism and Violence in the Contemporary World.
By John Walliss. Bloomington, IN: Peter Lang, 2004. 271 pages. Paper \$30.00.

Reviewed by **Thomas Robbins**
Rochester, MN

The philosopher Hegel has noted that the “Owl of Minerva” takes wing at dusk, i.e., we only comprehend a historical epoch when it is passing. With the exception of the Jonestown event in 1978, the millenarian violence discussed in this volume all transpired within a period of less than a decade between the Branch Davidian tragedy at Waco in 1993 and the Ugandan disaster involving the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (MRTCG) in 2000. Other suicides and homicides connected to “cults” have been enacted during and after this period, however, the events discussed by John Walliss represent the largest and most spectacular “cult-related” disasters. No comparable event has transpired in the half-decade since the Ugandan tragedy in 2000. It may be tentatively ventured that a distinctive and tumultuous period in religious history has recently departed.

Apocalyptic Trajectories may be the best history of this period and its millenarian catastrophes. This may not be saying much since it is practically the only serious study which looks at not only one or two terrible events but at the general sequence of recent disasters blamed on “cults.” The main competitor may be

Catherine Wessinger's excellent volume, *How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate*, which appeared in 2000 and is naturally deficient with respect to the Ugandan incident (originally brought out by an obscure publisher, it may be out of print). Collections of papers and monographs on particular episodes abound, as do books dealing with various NRMs, but the present volume is almost unique. Dr. Walliss, a university lecturer in Liverpool, has previously authored a monograph on the Brahma Kumaris movement.

The bulk of this volume consists of "detailed case studies of six incidents" involving large-scale violence arising from internal tensions within a fervent millenarian movement and/or the confrontation between such a group and a nearly equally fervent "cultural opposition" to the movement. The sequence of events and the escalation of tensions culminating in large-scale violence represents the 'apocalyptic trajectory' of each movement or what John Hall and his associates had earlier termed a controversial group's 'trajectory of violence'. Walliss seeks "to uncover key recurring issues and social processes that fostered the progressive acceptance of violence within each group's ideology, and ultimately helped to precipitate the use of force against the group's own members or against outsiders" (11).

Besides the 1978 Peoples Temple Holocaust in Guyana, the Branch Davidian confrontation at Waco, Texas in 1993, and the destruction of the MRTCG in Uganda in 2000, the author additionally treats the deadly "transits" in France, Switzerland and Quebec associated with the Solar Temple Order in 1994–1997, the extinction of the Heavens Gate community in Rancho Santa Fe, California in 1997, and the escalating attempted and actual violence inflicted on both recalcitrant devotees and non-members by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in several Japanese locations during 1990–1995.

The various episodes are effectively and informatively narrated. Each case study refreshed this reader's memory as to key details of each unfolding crisis and in some cases brought to light facets of an episode with which the present reader was not previously familiar. The author relies heavily on scholars in religious studies and sociology who have researched each group and crisis: Ian Reader on Aum, John Hall on the Peoples Temple, Susan Palmer and J.-F. Mayer on the Solar Temple, Stuart Wright and Eugene Gallagher on the Davidians, Rob Balch on Heavens Gate, Mayer and G. Banura on the MRTCG. Surprisingly missing from the bibliography and text is Robert Lifton's 1999 book on Aum Shinrikyo, *Destroying the World to Save It*, although the author discusses an essay by Lifton in the *LA Times* in which "important parallels" between Aum Shinrikyo and MRTCG are noted (225). The author also draws on NRM research by scholars such as Marc Galanter, James Richardson, Dick Anthony, Mike Barkun, David Bromley and others. Although a book by Margaret Singer is quoted, relatively little attention is paid to "mind control."

Each of the six doomed movements explored by Walliss receives its own chapter, except for the Solar Temple and Heaven's Gate, which share chapter four. Interestingly, Catherine Wessinger also took this approach in *How the Millennium Comes Violently*. Walliss notes that the apocalyptic trajectories of the Solar Temple and Heavens Gate were superficially similar but significantly divergent on a deeper level.

Chapter Three dealing with the Branch Davidians and the Waco confrontation is particularly perceptive from an interactionist standpoint. Both the Branch Davidians and the authorities were locked into contrasting and somewhat apocalyptic understandings of their antagonists as embodying either persecutory demons or

dangerous cultists threatening to enact “another Jonestown.” Thus, “during the fifty-one-day standoff, both sides literally ‘talked past each other’ and, in doing so, confirmed the worst beliefs that they had about each other” (97). In contrast, the opposition faced by the Solar Temple was substantially weaker but was vividly magnified in the imagination of the leaders.

The author attempts to show how in each case external constraint – mainly “cultural opposition” – and “internal” tensions interacted to bring on a crisis. In each situation Walliss evaluates the relative salience of actual external opposition and leaders’ imaginative extrapolation of such constraint. Thus, Aum leader Asahara “spoke of an international conspiracy involving not only the Japanese authorities, but also Freemasons and international Jews” seeking “to control the world” (186). Under the impact of such conspiracy theories, reinforced by the abject failure of Aum’s political mobilization, Aum Shinrikyo became increasingly paramilitarist and even sought “to arm itself with weapons of mass destruction” (188).

The strength of this volume lies in the empirical chapters (2–6) which dissect each group’s evolution and de-stabilization. The generic conceptualization presented in the introductory chapter, “Thinking Sociologically About Millenarianism and Violence,” is useful but somewhat perfunctory, e.g., ‘endogenous’ factors such as charismatic leadership and apocalyptic beliefs interact with ‘exogenous’ factors such as external ‘cultural opposition’ to produce instability. The final chapter fleshes out this approach with brief applications to the movements whose trajectories have been examined. Challenges to leaders’ authority and to millennialist goal attainment are highlighted. The analysis might have been strengthened by a comparative discussion of one or more controversial NRMs which did not self-destruct, e.g., the Unification Church. It has been suggested elsewhere that several factors including hierarchical organization (as in the U.C.) may inhibit violent altercations. The author does not venture theories or speculations along these or other lines, nor does he exhibit sensitivity to the possibility that the events he analyzes do not represent a continuous modern drama but rather may entail a period of religious history which has passed. Nevertheless, John Walliss has produced an important and nearly unique study.

Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism. By Mattias Gardell. Duke University Press, 2003. x + 445 pages. \$23.95 paper.

Reviewed by **Amos Yong**

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Recent scholarship by Michael Barkun, Jeffrey Kaplan and a handful of others has brought attention to the radical right as a fractured but yet noteworthy ideological, political and religious movement across contemporary American society. Gardell’s contribution extends the coverage by focusing specifically on the convergence of paganism and white racism. The groups and individuals involved are most clearly demarcated from their radical right counterparts by their anti-American (being against multiculturalism, globalism, capitalism, etc.) and anti-Christian (moving beyond Christian Identity, etc.) ideology. Although he is an associate professor of the history of religions at Stockholm University, Gardell has thoroughly canvassed the pagan white separatist landscape in America – literally in terms of fieldwork and virtually in terms of research – and produced a well-written report and analysis of this phenomenon.

After an introduction of the background elements of this research project (globalization, nationalism and paganism), the first three chapters set the stage with a brief history of racism in America (including the KKK and its offshoots, the Ruby Ridge shootout, and the Branch Davidian disaster at Waco), an overview of the white-racist counterculture (including Klandom, National Socialism, white-power music/skinhead culture, warrior ideals, conspiracy theories, and Christian Identity), and the pagan revival (focused on Wicca, Druidry, goddess paganism, and Asatrú/Odinism).

Chapters four through seven consist of the heart of the book wherein Gardell unveils the pagan and racist worlds of Odinism, Wotansvolk, and ethnic and 'dark-side' Asatrú. Odinists – after Odin, the chief Norse deity – include racially militant pagans who are unabashedly revolutionary in their discourse, and less violent esotericists who have melded together Norse mysticism and tantric Hinduism. Wotansvolker – after Wotan, the Teutonic variant of Odin – emerged in the mid- to late-1990s among those who wished to take Odinist ideology in a more explicitly racist direction. While ethnocentric Asatrúers attempt to get beyond the politics of racism and antiracism by cultivating their northern European ancestry, the fundamental ambiguity in their position due to celebrating their tribal roots has given impetus to "darkside" Asatrúers and their blending of Norse paganism, racist Aryanism, religious Satanism, Eurocentric heathenism, occultic fascism, and white noise rage. Throughout, Gardell provides a wide-ranging and yet detailed portrait of the inter-related personalities, places, activities, productions, practices and beliefs of these groups.

The final chapter returns to the broader canvas of globalization trends which sustain Aryan paganism and its violent separatism. Here, Gardell also presents a complex typology of pagan white separatism as negotiating various tensions – e.g., between the ideological left and right, between political centralization and decentralization, and between monoculturalism and multiculturalism. At the end of day, however, pagan white separatism may represent, for all its rhetoric and even violent activity, the flowering of indigenous pride – in this case, representing Aryan, Teutonic, and Nordic traditions – on the soil nourished by the postmodern multiculturalism which it so mightily but ineffectively attempts to resist.

This is a fascinating read, including twenty-six photos, fifty-five pages of informative endnotes, and a helpful index. Any revised edition should provide an abbreviations list for the many acronyms in the volume.

The Martyrs of Columbine: Faith and the Politics of Tragedy. By Justin Watson. Palgrave MacMillan, 2002. 212 pages. Cloth \$24.95.

Reviewed by **Edward T. Linenthal**
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In the cultural rubble of post-September 11th America, it takes some effort to recall our recent ancient history when the media spectacle of mass murder in Oklahoma City and at Columbine High School was not yet part of business as usual. In both horrors, people were enfranchised as part of an imagined bereaved community that often seemed, perhaps, one of the only ways Americans could imagine themselves as one people, united in grief. And yet this unity was as illusory as was the desire for

purposeful community, as bitter conflict over root causes, legacies, meanings, and forecasts almost immediately became the order of the day. Such horrors rip people and communities apart as much—or more—than they bring them together.

Justin Watson's *The Martyrs of Columbine* offers readers a cogent, judicious, well-written analysis of the cultural alchemy through which mass murder becomes martyrdom, and a troubling case study about how "Columbine" became a cultural flash-card put to good strategic use by conservative evangelicals convinced that this bloodshed told us little about the easy availability of guns, or the attraction of a culture permeated by violent imagery and expression. It told us, rather, about the nefarious forces of secularism that have led the country astray since the 1960s. (No mass murder, apparently, before this "fall." Descendants of victims of spectacle lynching, which many good church folk eagerly attended, would find this interesting, but never mind.)

Watson offers a brief introduction to the history of martyrdom in the Christian tradition, and how both the narratives of Cassie Bernall and Rachel Scott fit into this tradition, and what tensions remained to resolve, particularly the fact that the choice of sacrifice—so much a part of martyr narratives—did not seem to be an option, nor was there distinct ideological conflict involved, perhaps just cold-blooded murder.

Watson also offers a fine analysis of how these contemporary martyr narratives easily became a part of American folk evangelicalism, comodified by books, parents on lecture tours, memorial expression in cyber and physical space, religious and political rhetoric and material commemorative forms. "Columbine" symbolized many issues: school prayer, gun control, the mystery of evil (yet again), the culture of schools in America, the "evil" of secularism and the "need" to return to traditional religion.

In the book's final chapter, Watson attempts to demythologize the narratives by offering a careful reading of evidence in order to deduce what "really" happened. As he points out, however, the compelling power of the martyr narratives will far outweigh skeptical interpretation, particularly among conservative evangelicals.