

AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF TERRORISM

WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN EXPERIENCES



Edited by

**Jussi M. Hanhimäki and
Bernhard Blumenau**

ROUTLEDGE

An International History of Terrorism

Western and non-Western experiences

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Bernhard Blumenau**



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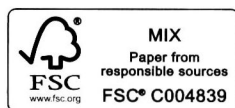
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An International History of Terrorism

The aim of this book is to provide readers with the tools to understand the historical evolution of terrorism and counterterrorism over the past 150 years.

To appreciate the contemporary challenges posed by terrorism, it is necessary to look at its evolution, at the different phases it has gone through and the transformations it has experienced. The same applies to the solutions that states have come up with to combat terrorism: the nature of terrorism changes but still it is possible to learn from past experiences, even though they are not directly applicable to the present.

This book provides a fresh look at the history of terrorism by providing an in-depth analysis of several important terrorist crises and the reactions to them in the West and beyond. The general framework is laid out in four parts: terrorism prior to the Cold War, the Western experience with terrorism, non-Western experiences with terrorism and contemporary terrorism and anti-terrorism. The issues covered offer a broad range of historical and current themes, many of which have been neglected in existing scholarship; it also features a chapter on the waves phenomenon of terrorism against its international background.

This book will be of much interest to students of terrorism studies, political violence, international history, security studies and international relations.

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Political Violence

Series Editor: David Rapoport

This book series contains sober, thoughtful and authoritative academic accounts of terrorism and political violence. Its aim is to produce a useful taxonomy of terror and violence through comparative and historical analysis in both national and international spheres. Each book discusses origins, organisational dynamics and outcomes of particular forms and expressions of political violence.

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Western and non-Western experiences

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Friend or foe?

Leonard Weinberg

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Preface

On behalf of the Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History, it is a great privilege and pleasure for me to introduce this Routledge volume on *An International History of Terrorism: Western and non-Western Experiences*. This is the second book that Routledge has published as the outcome of a scientific international conference organized by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland, in partnership with the Foundation.

The Foundation carries the name of Pierre du Bois, my husband, who was a Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International Studies for 15 years. He was an expert in European integration, security issues, and contemporary international relations. Pierre du Bois left us prematurely, suddenly, and extremely sadly in June 2007, at the age of 64.

In keeping with his wishes, the Foundation was established, which aims at promoting and supporting research in the area of current history. The Foundation supports the organization of public conferences and lectures, encourages interaction between young researchers and recognized scholars, and contributes to the creation of academic networks. It offers scholarships, research and publication grants, as well as the Pierre du Bois Prize. The research and interest focus of the Foundation are, to start with, Europe and the challenges of European construction, security issues in all forms, and Latin America, always from a multidisciplinary angle.

This book fits perfectly within the framework of security-related issues. It is edited by Professor Jussi M. Hanhimäki, from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, and Bernhard Blumenau, who is completing his PhD under the supervision of Professor Hanhimäki. Jussi M. Hanhimäki is one of the foremost specialists in transatlantic relationships after 1945, the history of the Cold War, and American foreign policy. He is the editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Transatlantic Security* and his most recent book deals with *Transatlantic Relations since 1945: An Introduction*. Bernhard Blumenau is working on West Germany's strategies against international terrorism in the 1970s. In preparing this book, the editors did not intend to offer a comprehensive history of terrorism.

Rather, they intended to demonstrate that the twenty-first century did not invent the phenomenon of terrorism but certainly renewed it, with new challenges, actors, battlefields, and methods.

The international conference where most of the chapters of this volume were originally presented brought together many brilliant scholars from all over the world, both well-known historians and young and promising researchers. Their gathering on the theme of terrorism at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies confirms the strengthening of Geneva as a hub for expertise on security and foreign policy issues. The Conference dinner took place at the Hôtel Beau-Rivage on the shores of Lake Geneva. This location has particular historical relevance as the Empress Elisabeth of Austria was assassinated in 1898 by the Italian anarchist Luigi Lucheni a few metres in front of the hotel. She had been staying incognito at the Hôtel Beau-Rivage. Today, one can still visit her former apartment.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Bernhard Blumenau; they have brilliantly designed, planned, organized, and animated the conference and edited this book.

I am grateful for this second volume resulting from the association between Routledge and the Foundation and for the partnership between the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History and hope that it will be followed by many more publications in the future.

Irina du Bois
President of the Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History



Fondation Pierre du Bois
pour l'histoire du temps présent

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Introduction

Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Bernhard Blumenau

‘Two hours that shook the world’, was how the late Fred Halliday summed up the meaning of the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.¹ In many ways, he was entirely correct. The collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York after two hijacked commercial airplanes had hit them on that Tuesday morning – with another plane striking into the Pentagon and one crashing in rural Pennsylvania after the passengers tried to gain back control – prompted a sustained global response that, in the years that followed, transformed international relations. No stone was to be left unturned in rooting out those responsible for these acts, the American president, George W. Bush, declared on 20 September 2001. The United States (US) was going to ‘direct every resource at our command, every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war, to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network’. With these unyielding words, Bush declared what would be dubbed the ‘Global War on Terror’. It was to be ‘a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen’. The Global War on Terror was to be a total war, a conflict in which every nation would need to choose whether ‘you are with us or with the terrorists’.² There were to be no shades of grey.

Little over a decade later, the war that Bush had declared looks immensely more complicated than the black-and-white rhetoric had suggested in 2001. The terrorist network that had organized the 9/11 attacks – *al Qaeda* – has lost most of its masterminds, including its founder, Osama Bin Laden, who was killed by American troops on 1 May 2011. But *al Qaeda* still exists and its ‘affiliates’ have proliferated; terrorist attacks take place, regularly, in many parts of the world. Many countries that initially signalled their sympathy and support for the Bush administration in the wake of 9/11 became gradually more critical about the way in which the Global War on Terror was waged. Indeed, by 2003 many Europeans seemed to be implying that US policies, like the terrorist networks, presented a serious threat to international security. Or worse, certain American policies – such as the invasion and occupation of Iraq – seemed to increase, rather

than extinguish, the appeal of the causes for which such transnational networks as *al Qaeda* claimed they were fighting. The selective use of torture to gain information from suspected terrorists and the denial of legal rights to others further inflamed public opinion about a war that, unlike what Bush had implied, had no clear end.

The problems with declaring and fighting a war on terrorism were manifold. For one, combating an 'ism' is by nature far more complicated than confronting a physical entity (such as a country). For another, this was a particular kind of 'ism': terrorism was not an ideology but rather a method of using violence to advance political goals. Or to put it differently: terrorists were united only by their use of indiscriminate violence to promote certain political goals. Although *al Qaeda* was the most talked about transnational terrorist organization of the early twenty-first century, it had no monopoly or copyright on 'terrorism'. These – and many other – problems of definition, strategy, and goals have been discussed vehemently since September 2001. They are likely to be debated for some time to come.

Yet much of the discussion regarding terrorism and counter-terrorism during the early twenty-first century has proceeded from the presumption, explicit or implicit, that something unique in human history had occurred in those two hours on the morning of 11 September 2001. Was this truly the case? This is the basic question at the heart of this book. The answer that emerges from a study of the international history of terrorism is, by and large, negative.

Terrorism has existed in different forms for far longer than the grand declarations of the early twenty-first century would lead one to believe. In the first century AD, the Zealots in Judea, modern day Israel, targeted the Roman occupiers as well as their Jewish collaborators. In the thirteenth century, the Assassins, a Shia Islam group based in Northern Iran, employed killers who, in the manner of twenty-first century suicide bombers, would target an enemy even at the price of their own lives. The term 'terrorism' itself was finally coined during the French Revolution and the so-called Reign of Terror in 1793–94. Given that the term referred to a purge of the (presumed) internal enemies of the revolutionary government, another complicated question is raised related to the modern definition of terrorism: sometimes acts of terror are sanctioned by the nation state either within or outside its borders. It has touched, at one time or another, almost every nation on earth. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, the Russian Czar Alexander II in 1881, French President Marie-Francois Sadi Carnot in 1894 and American President William McKinley in 1901 were assassinated as part of a global wave of anarchist attacks.

If the anarchists were generally content with targeting high-profile individuals (including the empress and crown prince of Austria in 1898 and 1914, respectively), the century that preceded ours saw the gradual

increase of terrorist activities with an increased human toll. Throughout the twentieth century, various national liberation movements used terrorist tactics – targeted and random assassinations and bombings in particular – to advance their goals. The Irish Republican Army in Ireland, the Zimbabwe African National Union in Rhodesia, various Zionist groups in Israel before 1947 and Palestinian factions in the last six decades, a number of Hindu and Muslim groups in South Asia, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia in Colombia are but a miniscule sampling of the hundreds of organizations that have, at one point or another, orchestrated or condoned terrorist acts in various parts of the globe. In the Cold War era, yet another headline-grabbing terrorist method emerged: the hijacking of commercial airplanes.

In short, terrorism is not a phenomenon that emerged unexpectedly in the early twenty-first century. Nor is it likely that any declaration of a war (global or otherwise) on terror is going to be followed, at some specific juncture, by a credible statement expounding that terrorism no longer exists. To be sure, the Obama administration may have stopped using the term ‘war on terror’ but the phenomenon lives on as television newscasters and newspaper headlines inform us virtually on a daily basis.

Given that terrorism has a long history, this fact prompts a number of questions. What do we mean by (international) terrorism? How has terrorism – as well as the reactions to it and the impact it has had on the evolution of international relations – changed over time? What did the notion of ‘terrorism’ mean to people during different historical epochs? What acts were committed, why were they committed, and by whom at different times and in different places? What were the responses of states, international organizations and the international community at large? What were the successes and shortcomings in responding to terrorism? How far were states themselves involved in committing or sponsoring terrorist acts? What are the current and future challenges posed by terrorism?

These are some of the key questions that will be addressed in the chapters of this book. Before summarizing the contents, however, a few words about the definition of terrorism itself are necessary.

In some dictionaries, such as *Webster’s*, terrorism is simply defined as ‘the use of violence and threats to intimidate or coerce, especially for political purposes’. Such a formulation does, quite naturally, lead to further demand for specificity, particularly in regard to agency and goals. Who can be described as a terrorist? Deranged individuals and fanatical groups motivated by ideology or religion? The broad definition does not, for example, exclude governments as possible perpetrators of terrorism. Nor does the definition say anything about the possibility of ‘just cause’; a formulation that has clouded discussion about terrorism for as long as terrorist acts have been committed. Were the above-mentioned Zealots or rather the Roman legionaries that hunted Jewish resisters down and crucified them the real