

# Terrorism and Narrative Practice

edited by

Thomas Austenfeld, Dimiter Daphinoff  
and Jens Herlth

---

LIT

Berlin, Münster 2011

## **Terrorism in European National Movements in the 19th Century**

Siegfried Weichlein

Terror seems to be a brute and speechless act that defies verbalization. Acts of terror can be told and retold, described and analyzed. They are deeds of violence. The performative qualities of terror seem to be restricted to utter destruction, plain and simple. But that is not the case with terrorism. Terrorism follows an indirect strategy to motivate others. These may be the masses, the underclass, minorities or majorities. Terrorism addresses these groups to violently oppose certain characteristics of the political, social or cultural system of a given society. Terrorism has a political dimension. The use of bombs or hand grenades itself is terror, but terrorism goes beyond that. Terrorism is a strategy that relies heavily on communication among terrorists and also between terrorists and the surrounding society. "Terrorism is fundamentally a social fact rather than a brute fact" (Jackson 247). The contemporary approach of Critical Terrorism Studies uses terrorism as an object that tells us something about the society in which it takes place or about the cultural, political, or economic environment. This critical approach toward terrorism is quite different from the traditional way in which terrorism has been studied. Historiographical research on terrorism was in that older understanding "counterinsurgency masquerading as political science," as one observer put it (Schulze Wessel 361). It was centered around actors and tried to define strategies to prevent terrorism and therefore terrorists from acting.

What is terrorism seen from the perspective of historiography? How can we define it? Broadly speaking, terrorism involves at least three components that are combined in different ways: violence, the state and ille-

gitimacy. Many follow the definition Peter Chalk has given. Terrorism is for him "the systematic use of illegitimate violence that is employed by sub-state actors as a means of achieving specific political objectives, these goals differing according to the group concerned" (Chalk 151). This definition has the advantage that it leaves open the wide range of ideology that motivates terrorists. Others take the indirect political strategy as the defining characteristic of terrorism that sets it apart from other uses of political violence. Alex P. Schmid and Albert Jongman define terrorism "as an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets" (Schmid and Jongman 28). These targets just serve as "message generators." Terrorism is therefore a "threat- and violence-based communication process" (28).

Recently, the analysis of terrorism has developed two alternative strategies of definition, both inspired by the terrorism of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, particularly the Islamic terror of 9/11. Both try to show new paths and dimensions of research on terrorism. The first trend refers to the "new terrorism" after 1979, when the Iranian revolution took place, and particularly after 9/11. Religiously motivated political violence stands at the center of its agenda. Terrorism is here linked to ideology and religion. A second school, Critical Terrorism Studies, points to the subservient role of this kind of analysis to state affairs and counterinsurgency. Scholars of this school follow Antonio Gramsci and conceptualize both the state and terrorists as actors in a political struggle. The Critical Terrorism Studies approach is trying to understand what the presence of terrorism tells us about the operation of the larger cultural, economic and political system around it. Analytical research on terrorism has to distance itself from the state and its imperatives. Terrorism is primarily used as a lens to understand the surrounding society. "Most terrorism occurs in the context of wider political struggles in which the use of terror is one strategy among other core routine forms of contentious action. In this sense terrorism is not a freestanding phenomenon: there is no terrorism as such, just the instrumental use of terror by actors" (Jackson 248).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Richard Jackson, "Introduction: The Case for Critical Terrorism Studies." *Euro-*

Some scholars have compared terrorism studies with cultural anthropology. "Terrorism studies' natives are the terrorists, and its goal is to describe and explain a particular terrorist group's social structure, its culture and motivations, and last but not least its practices" (Hülse and Spencer 575). Terrorism scholars have used different methods to analyze the ideology and the practices of terrorists. One of these methods focuses on discourses, not between the actors, but rather more generally in a Foucaultian sense in the terrorist milieu. Seen from this standpoint, discursive practices inform the individual acts. The social production of terrorism is linked to metaphors that provide an understanding of the political field and of politics in general. Here literary studies come into play. Their techniques to describe and analyze discourses help us understand the mental maps of terrorism.

Terrorism seen through the lens of literary studies looks at these ideological ways to legitimize terrorism. The linguistic turn in historiography has taken our interest to the field of imagination and semantics, to cultural constructions in language and images. The cultural and linguistic construction goes beyond the methodology of literary studies.<sup>2</sup> It concerns the political, cultural and economic, even religious dimension of ideology. No matter how we look at terrorism, whether through the lens of literary studies, political history or cultural construction, terrorism has certain characteristics. First and foremost its logical structure is highly binary, even Manichaeic and dichotomous. The mental set of terrorism is based on a logical structure that presupposes that good causes stand against evil ones. Terrorism's ontology and political ideology correspond to each other. Terrorism has a purpose in a world that is structured. Random violence is no terror, even if it resembles terror from an outsider's view. The good cause provides a purpose worth fighting (and dying) for. Dichotomous worldviews provide the terrorist with a clear view of who is an enemy and who isn't. They identify friend and foe. At the same time they provide the terrorist with a

*pean Political Science* 6 (2007): 225–27; Jeroen Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies." *Government and Opposition* 43 (2007): 363–93; Marie Breen Smyth, "A Critical Research Agenda for the Study of Political Terror." *European Political Science* 6 (2007): 260–67; Ruth Blakeley, "Bringing the State Back into Terrorism Studies." *European Political Science* 6 (2007): 228–35; Schulze Wessel (364).

<sup>2</sup> See Alex Houen, *Terrorism and Modern Literature: From Joseph Conrad to Ciaran Carson*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.

motivation to act. This binary ontology can be found in linguistic as well as iconographic structures. The political imaginary that terrorism is based on looms large in its texts, films, and its general imagery.

The dichotomy of freedom versus oppression is probably one of the most influential binary worldviews. This binary organizes the mindset and the conception of reality among the various brands of terrorism. Among the decolonization movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this binary concept of reality is patently obvious.<sup>3</sup> But it also holds true for terrorism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ireland and Poland provide examples. What looks like a terrorist from one side is a liberating hero from the other. The Fenian Brotherhood fought – although less violently than the IRA – against the British landowners in Ireland. Whenever we use the term “boycott” we refer implicitly to Charles Cunningham Boycott, a landowner in Ireland, against whom the protests of the Irish Land League were directed in 1879. In Poland the cause of freedom provided justification for the rebellions in 1830/31 and 1863/64.

Yet there is no determinism built into this mental structure. Freedom fighters don't have to be terrorists. They often choose other means to achieve their goal. In order to use terrorist violence other variables come into the fray of analysis. Various reasons have been adduced to legitimize terror in modern European history. In what follows, I shall concentrate on two additional binaries that enact the guiding polarity of freedom versus oppression:

- virtue versus vices: the virtue of a collective fights the vices resulting from the lack of virtue within the same collective or another.
- the secret versus the public: the clandestine cell of a terrorist group versus a repressive political superstructure that dominates the public sphere. The terrorist cell is in-group oriented and in violent opposition to a superstructure, be it the administration or the secret service of a perceived enemy.

### 1. Virtue versus vices. The terror of the Jacobins

The French Revolution was not only a caesura in the history of nationalism but also in that of terrorism. It created a new and powerful ideological moti-

<sup>3</sup> See David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of the Empire*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2005.

vation for political terrorism. After France had declared war on the Central European monarchies on 20 April 1792, the outcome was by far unsure and many even within France expected the revolutionaries to lose the war. The ensuing radicalization of the revolution – François Furet termed it a “déravage”<sup>4</sup> – used terror to win the war by strengthening the national will. The protagonists of this strategy in the era of the National Convention in 1793 and 1794 were Maximilien de Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat, at a certain point also Antoine de Saint-Just. Robespierre combined two concepts that were usually seen as opposites: He favored a “despotism of liberty” to rescue liberty from its enemies. In his report on the “Principles of political morality” on February 5, 1794, he wrote:

When the despot uses terror to govern his brutalized subjects, he is right as a despot; when you use terror to daunt the enemies of liberty, you are right as founders of the Republic. The government of the Revolution is the despotism of liberty over tyranny. Was force meant only to protect crime? (Lyman and Spitz 72)

The Jacobins saw the revolutionary project under attack from outside and from within. This was certainly true. Accordingly, the Jacobin leaders tried to win the war *and* at the same time to reconstruct French society. Despite the many early military setbacks of the revolutionary troops in 1792 they steadfastly combined these two tasks: external mobilization required internal homogenization.

This could firstly be read as simply eradicating their enemies by way of terror. Indeed the guillotine served in this way. The enemies of the revolution and counter-revolutionaries were their first targets. The Vendee in Western France and Lyon suffered immensely from the terror of the Paris Jacobins.<sup>5</sup> The *terreur* of the early years went along with rumors about the enemies of the revolution within France, e.g. poisoning doctors in service to the wealthy or the shortage of grain as a result of counter-revolutionary intervention. A closer reading of the Jacobin terror proves secondly that it was part of a vision for a new society and a new man. At the core of the new society stood virtue, which was to be achieved by terror. The dichotomy of

<sup>4</sup> For Furet's notion of “déravage,” see Ernst Schulin, *Die Französische Revolution*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. München: Beck, 2004, esp. pp. 49–52.

<sup>5</sup> See Mona Ozouf, “War and Terror in French Revolutionary Discourse (1792–1794),” *Journal of Modern History* 56 (1984): 579–97.

virtue versus vices became particularly prominent in 1793. Jacob L. Talmon and his followers identified the era of the National Convention as the defining moment of the modern dictatorial state, more precisely the use of violent force by the state against its internal enemies. Terrorism of the state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had its ideological precursors in the radical phase of the French Revolution.<sup>6</sup> The years 1793 and 1794 saw “the experiment of coupling the idea of national sovereignty of France to a regime of direct popular democracy” (Hont 201). This “produced not a *ré-publique*, but a *ré-totale*,” a phrase coined by Sieyès (201). For Jacob L. Talmon, Jacobin policies paved the way for modern totalitarianism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

From early on in 1790 *la terreur* was an answer to the anti-revolutionary forces, where aristocrats, Catholics, and their foreign allied partners played important roles. The *Révue de Paris* wrote in the autumn of 1790: “Le peuple est terrible dans ses punitions. L’aristocratie est barbare dans ces vengeances. Comparons maintenant. La terreur s’attache aux coups de l’un et de l’autre parti” (van den Heuvel 101). “La terreur” understood in this way was a defense strategy of the revolution. For the long tradition of pro-revolutionary historiography “la terreur” could be justified and had explanatory power for the rise of the French nation.<sup>7</sup>

But the rhetoric and imagery of “la terreur” went beyond the classical topos of defense at all costs. Jean-Paul Marat radicalized the classical-republican language from early on. The people’s will could only be found in a unitary and indivisible will, according to Marat. Otherwise crisis and internal tensions would prevent the revolution from building a republic. External attacks on the revolution and internal conflict made homogeneity and the elimination of heterogeneity all the more urgent for Marat. Exclusion was achieved through the use of the guillotine against internal enemies, real or suspected. The political use of the guillotine made it the “crescent of equality.” On December 18, 1790, Marat wrote in his *Ami du peuple*:

Six months ago, five or six hundred heads would have been enough to pull you back from the abyss. Today because you have stupidly let your implacable enemies conspire among themselves and gather strength, perhaps we will have to cut off five

<sup>6</sup> See Jacob L. Talmon, *The origins of totalitarian democracy*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> See particularly Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900*. Vol. IX: *La Révolution et l’Empire*. Paris: Colin, [1933] 1967.

or six thousand. But even if it need twenty thousand, there is no time for hesitation. (Donnachie and Carmen 83)

For the claim to achieve absolute unity, numbers didn’t mean much. The skyrocketing numbers of those suspected and put to the guillotine were proof of the permanent instability of “la terreur.” Marat, Robespierre, and the radical Jacobins could never be sure that their measures would bring about a unified France. The suspicion-driven politics produced constantly new enemies. More and more enemies – internal as well as external – were discovered. In November 1793, Marat was quoted in the National Convention as saying: “Sacrifice 200,000 heads, and you will save a million” (Baker 47). Marat could refer to these extraordinarily high numbers without any moral second thoughts. He instead pointed to the millions of victims of the monarchical system over the centuries. A few hundred thousand victims of the *terreur* would always be less than the result of a thousand years of monarchy. Marat and his followers thereby popularized the notion that the Revolution had no real limits but only enemies (Furet 67).

While Marat looked at terror as a means to achieve absolute national unity, Robespierre looked at terror more from the perspective of justice and political philosophy: Only if *terreur* was linked to justice could it be justified. In his famous speech on terror before the National Convention in February 1794, Robespierre explained:

If the mainspring of popular government in peacetime is virtue, the mainspring of popular government in revolution is virtue and terror both: Virtue, without which terror is disastrous; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a specific principle as a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to the homeland’s most pressing needs. (Law 63)

The close connection of virtue and terror ensured for Robespierre that terror was used politically and not as a means to settle individual accounts between citizens. The political discourse could therefore refer to “la terreur” as “vengeance populaire” (Clay 110).

Louis Antoine de Saint-Just was another protagonist and spokesperson for this radicalized version of a transformation of society by way of terror. He constantly defended the use of terror in the National Convention. As a radical follower of Rousseau he advocated the purification of public morals,

since only a homogeneous morality could serve as a basis for the common weal. On March, 17, 1794, Saint-Just demanded violent measures to bury the monarchy under its own debris. His strictly political and Rousseauian reading of terror was designed to defend the "rights of the people and the Convention" to rigidly police the state and protect the judges who severely punish those who depart from the decrees. Terror must be used politically in defense of the republic and in contempt of wealth. The use of violence and the guillotine by the Convention "is virtue and not fury . . . Let Revolutionists be Romans, not Tartars," Saint-Just declared on March, 17, 1794 in the National Convention (Curtis 228). This decidedly Roman attitude to give everything for the common weal runs through the rest of his speech. The love for the fatherland sacrifices everything for the public interest, it is without pity and has no respect even for human rights.

This kind of terror by the leading Jacobins was essentially a top-down project, a justification for a moral dictatorship. In accordance with Roman political philosophy, the Jacobins established even the idea of a temporary dictatorship to save the state and the republic by force. Besides attacking the (seemingly obvious) enemies of the French Revolution, their dictatorial rule between 1793 and 1794 was directed against those who were lukewarm or indifferent toward the revolution and thereby constituted a threat to the war effort and domestic homogeneity. The guillotine was used as an instrument to establish a society that was morally in step with the revolution and with the war effort. The problem of this strategy – as with most terrorisms – was that it did not provide an exit option or sense of finality. When the Jacobins radicalized their *terreur* and turned on their former allies among the leading Jacobin circles, these fought back. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Thermidor in the year II, otherwise known as July 27, 1794, Robespierre and Saint-Just went to the guillotine with the other Jacobin leaders. From then on the Thermidor has been the term to describe the end of any revolutionary terror. Referring to the Thermidor of a revolution means using a metaphor for the closing of terror.<sup>8</sup>

If we follow Jacob L. Talmon, this binary of virtue versus vices constituted a role model that was practiced throughout the totalitarian regimes of

<sup>8</sup> See Bronislaw Baczkowski (ed.), *Comment sortir de la Terreur: Thermidor et la Révolution*. Paris: Gallimard, 1989.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The French ré-publique turned into a ré-totale. The totalitarian model of the French Revolution could easily be transferred to other totalitarian ideologies, particularly racism and communism. Talmon developed the concept of the "totalitarian democracy" by associating two terms that weren't connected before. The totalitarian democracy is based on political messianism and the absence of conflict resolution. It refuses to accept pluralism as the basis of democracy. Instead, it is based on a political ontology and a strong hierarchy. In practice this allows the use of force against those who do not voluntarily accept this pre-existing political order.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The secret and the public: Terror, cell, and superstructure

Another long-term structuring binary was the opposition between minority and majority. Modern terrorism – particularly in the decolonization era – was built on this model. Even contemporary terrorism is based on the motivation to counter a more powerful and technically advanced enemy. The fight of clandestine groups against a superior enemy followed the path of the partisan strategy and the minority versus majority model.<sup>10</sup>

The formative period of this terrorist strategy was the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic period. The Italian secret society "Carboneria" spread all over Central Europe. It derived from the tradition of the French Revolution, particularly from François-Noël, called Gracchus Babeuf, but its terrorism was different. The motivation of its at least 24,000 members came from an extremely egalitarian, democratic and republican nationalism and was directed against the autocratic forces of the Habsburg monarchy under its first minister Metternich and his Italian allies. Uprisings, assassinations, and individual acts of terror were aimed against the *ancien régime* of the Bourbons in Naples and other ruling families. Their political strategy was the putsch, which they used regularly, starting prominently in 1820 and 1821 in the "Two Sicilies insurrection." The Carbonari were mostly nobles who

<sup>9</sup> See Klaus Hornung, "Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen." *Die offene Flanke der Freiheit*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001. 39–84.

<sup>10</sup> See Herfried Münkler, "Asymmetrische Gewalt. Terrorismus als politisch-militärische Strategie." *Über den Krieg. Stationen der Kriegsgeschichte im Spiegel ihrer theoretischen Reflexion*. Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2002. 252–64.

tried to get on top of the political ladder. The reconstruction of society – that was the telling difference to “la terreur” between 1793 und 1794 – had been postponed after the ascendancy to power.<sup>11</sup> Clandestine cells of likeminded nationalists around Filippo Buonarrotti used terror against the superstructure of the bureaucratic-monarchical state. The objective was taking over the state, not restructuring the society. The revolutions in Naples in July 1820 and in Piedmont 1823 served as examples of a highly motivated cell trying to violently bring down a superstructure that prevented the Italian nation state from coming into existence.

The mental map originating from the binary of cell and superstructure explained the impact of secret societies in post-Napoleonic Europe, which stood in the tradition of the French Revolution. This “revolution under cover” could be found foremost in Germany and Italy in societies like the *Delphic Society*, the *Friends of Virtue*, the *Republican Brothers Protectors* and the *Society of the Black Pin*. Their key aims were political liberty, legal equality, and economic opportunity. All of these goals were to be achieved through a democratic nation-state. The Carbonari inspired themselves on the model of the Bavarian Illuminati, an early modern Freemason society, more than on the Jacobins. Fully antireligious, anticlerical and egalitarian, the Carbonari associated with the Freemasons, who kept to the tradition of secrecy. The Carbonari called each other “good cousins” (“buoni cugini”). Unlike the Freemasons, secrecy was for Buonarrotti and his followers not a goal per se, but rather an instrument to bring down the autocratic monarchies through the creation of open chaos. Already Babeuf had said: “Let everything return to chaos and out of that chaos may arise a new and regenerated world” (Jászi and Lewis 67). The spread of the secret societies gave rise to vast conspiracy theories on the side of the monarchical authorities. The secrecy of the terrorist cells and the conspiracy theories of the ruling classes reassured and stabilized each other.

The tradition of secrecy and clandestine operations was also a characteristic of anarchism, which was influential in Italy and beyond. The anarchists’ motivation was not the building of a nation state, but the downfall of the state and even of statehood. This meant in practice not the implementation of a putsch strategy and the takeover of the state, but rather insurrection

<sup>11</sup> See Eugen Lenhoff (ed.), *Politische Geheimbünde*. München: Amalthea, 1966.

and the overthrow of institutions of statehood. Anarchists had social and political change in mind when they used terror. Carlo Pisacane was one of the early Italian anarchists. He did not advocate propaganda by conviction and argumentation, but a strategy of “propaganda by the deed” (“propaganda dei fatti”). Terror was for him not the result of a rational argument, but an argument itself. He wrote in his political testament in 1857:

The propaganda by the idea is a chimera, the education of the people is an absurdity. Ideas result from deeds, not the latter from the former, and the people will not be free when they are educated, but will be educated when they are free. The only work a citizen can undertake for the good of the country is that of cooperating with the material revolution; therefore, conspiracies, plots, attempts, etc., are that series of deeds by which Italy proceeds to her goal. (Cahm 76)

The legacy of secrecy and conspiracy was nowhere to be felt more strongly than in Eastern Europe and its empires. Empires were by definition not based on any sort of national or egalitarian principles. The imperial nobility, the military, the police, the crown and the church stood for everything terrorists fought against. This was the case in Austrian-dominated Italy in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as in the Balkans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in Poland under Russian aegis.

The most ardent followers of this strategy of “propaganda by the deed” were to be found among Russian anarchists, particularly among the *Narodnaja volia* (*People’s Will*). This revolutionary group used terror to trigger a revolution, to give Russia a constitution and to transfer factories and land to the peasants. They understood themselves as active terrorists. They are best known for their assassination of Tsar Alexander II on March 1, 1881.<sup>12</sup> Their strategy was indirect, not direct as with the French Jacobins. Killing state officials would lead the state to massive retaliation, which then would ignite the masses to revolt and overturn the political system.

It was Leon Trotsky who transformed the terrorism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century into that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He broke with the concept of individual terror and the secrecy of terror. Terror, he observed, had so far been used by ter-

<sup>12</sup> For an in-depth analysis of this assassination, see Carola Dietze and Benjamin Schenk, “Traditionelle Herrscher in moderner Gefahr. Soldatisch-aristokratische Tugendhaftigkeit und das Konzept der Sicherheit im späten 19. Jahrhundert.” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009): 368–401.

rorists instead of the masses. More generally, terrorism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had not come to the core of revolutionary politics: the masses. In 1909 he criticized the *Narodnaia volia* as essentially having no revolutionary class behind it. He identified the problem of the masses behind clandestine terrorism. Terror was only legitimate if it was used in the name and the interest of the masses. While 19<sup>th</sup>-century terrorists had acted instead of the masses, terror was for Trotsky only legitimate if used together with the masses. Terrorism was too absolute a form of political struggle to let it play a limited and subordinate role in the party. Terrorism should instead be understood as the central form of class struggle.

Trotsky's repositioning of terrorism within his radical political strategy had lasting consequences. Trotsky insisted that terror should be used with the masses, not instead of the masses, an approach he accused former terrorists in Russia and elsewhere of pursuing. He radicalized the terrorist strategy. Terror with the masses effectively meant the use of terror through the party of the masses, i.e. the Communist Party. The Party has the legitimate power to use terror. Terror was a legitimate tool to reconstruct society in the name of the masses. Trotsky defended terror against the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, who had criticized Trotsky for the political use of terror in the Russian civil war after 1919. According to Trotsky, War Communism after 1918 had to use terror in order to defend the revolution.<sup>13</sup> The workers were to be militarized. Deserters were to be imprisoned in a camp. Trotsky laid out a program for a political and revolutionary terror.

### 3. The national moment of terrorism

The defining metaphors and mental binaries of modern terrorism developed in a setting that was defined by nation building, nationalism and counter-nationalism. Nationalism provided for the defining moment of modern terrorism. From the perspective of the political agenda of a state-seeking or state-destroying terrorism new questions and perspectives arise, since terrorism has gone beyond that setting. Historically, terrorism has acted in given and territorially demarcated societies. Even the conspiratorial and

<sup>13</sup> See David Dallin and George Denicke, "The period of war communism and the civil war." *The Mensheviks: From the Revolution of 1917 to the Second World War*. Ed. Leopold H. Haimson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. 93–239.

clandestine groups in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had a limited reach. Terrorism affected national or subnational societies. This has fundamentally changed today, since terrorism has succeeded in going global and developing strategies that affect the global dimension of politics and economy. But does this mean that terrorism in our days is absolutely different from its origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries?

There are arguments for continuities and for discontinuities. The two leading binaries of terrorism, virtue versus vices and secrecy versus the public, are still in place and work on a global level. The difference is that the performative aspect of terrorism is now largely absent save for the extremist Islamic terrorism and the Jihad ideology. Global terrorism has adopted an instrumental approach; i.e., to use terrorist means to achieve something else. From an inside perspective, it is not the terror as such that creates a religiously orthodox society, but God, who is the main actor in that drama. On the other side, the instrumental approach of contemporary terrorism does not mean that the use of terror is a means to extract resources and money. Obviously, ideologies matter within the world of terrorism as much or more than they did 200 years ago. This holds true for the complex relationship between religion and violence.<sup>14</sup> But it goes beyond that, if we look at forms of political terrorism that defend independence globally. Accordingly, the self-empowering formulas of terrorism to use violence haven't changed that much. Even for global terrorism the most important binary is still freedom versus oppression. The oppressors are no longer the state governments and apparatuses but rather institutions of more than national significance: international cooperations, embassies, religions.

But there are also discontinuities. The globalization of terrorism has made it the object of state warfare. What historically was set apart – wars were fought by states, terror used by terrorists – became more and more intertwined, as states countered the terrorists' ability to attack their institutions and their military globally. The fronts got blurred since governments

<sup>14</sup> From the plethora of books after 9/11, see Wolfgang Palaver, *Aufgeklärte Apokalypik. Religion, Gewalt und Frieden im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*. Innsbruck: Innsbruck UP, 2007; Volkhard Krech, "Frieden und Gewalt in den Religionen. Zusammenfassung der Tagung und Ausblick." In: Helke Stadtland (ed.), „*Friede auf Erden*.“ *Religiöse Semantiken und Konzepte des Friedens im 20. Jahrhundert*. Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 2009. 55–64.

use informal channels and their surveillance capacities to counter the terrorist threat. We experience the end of wars as we knew them. What we see instead are highly complex police operations, but no wars between enemies that can be distinguished along their uniforms and national sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> The “war on terror” by the U.S. government against the Islamic terrorists around Al-Qaeda is the latest step in a longer process blurring the lines between state and non-state violence. There are several reasons for these shifting metaphors, experiences, enemies and therefore, of course, policy options (Hülse and Spencer 581). Historically, 19<sup>th</sup>-century terrorism had fought for national autonomy against the oppression of monarchical-bureaucratic condominiums or imperial domination. Ideology-driven terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is no longer fighting for that goal, but for hegemony. Hegemony is the political goal of Muslim as well as Hindu or right-wing Christian or Jewish terrorist nationalism. What they encounter is the democratic nation state.

And here lie probably the most important differences between historical and contemporary formations of terrorism. The reaction of the capitalist-democratic nation states cannot be the same as that of the absolute monarchies in post-Napoleonic Europe. The hegemonic position of the rule of law and of human rights would be hurt if contemporary nation states or international organizations were to use the same drastic violence as the terrorists. It is the vulnerability of democratic open societies that open up so many opportunities for their enemies.

The globalization of terror also affects the concept of terror itself. In the era of the nation-states after the Napoleonic period, terrorism was identified by its actors and practices. This no longer holds true on a global scale in our days. What is terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What certain societies in the West see as terrorism looks from a different standpoint like self-defense by violent means. And it is this ambivalence of terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that makes it so familiar with the origins of modern terrorism in the French Revolution. While in the era of the nation states between 1830 and the downfall of communism an actor-centered concept of terrorism stood at the

<sup>15</sup> See Michael Naumann et al. (eds.), *Ritter, Tod und Teufel – Krieg, Terror, Pandemien* (Kursbuch 162). Hamburg: ZEIT-Verlag Bucerius, 2005.

center of terrorism studies, this is no longer the case. Terrorism as a political project and ideology is back – as in the days of “la terreur.”

### Works Cited

- Baker, Michael Keith. “Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France.” *Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001): 32–53.
- Cahm, Caroline. *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872–1886*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Chalk, Peter. “The Evolving Dynamic of Terrorism in the 1990s.” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 53 (1999): 151–67.
- Clay, Stephen. “Justice, vengeance et passé révolutionnaire: les crimes de la terreur blanche.” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 350 (2007): 109–33.
- Curtis, Eugene N. *Saint-Just: Colleague of Robespierre*. New York: Octagon Books, [1935] 1973.
- Donnachie, Ian L., and Carmen Lavin (eds.), *From Enlightenment to Romanticism, Anthology*. Vol. 1. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003.
- Furet, François. *1789 – Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1980.
- van den Heuvel, Gerd. “Terreur, terroriste, terrorisme.” *Handbuch der politisch-sozialen Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680–1820*. München: Oldenbourg, 1985. Vol. 3. 89–132.
- Hont, Istvan. “The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: ‘Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State’ in Historical Perspective.” *Political Studies* 42 (1992): 166–231.
- Hülse, Rainer, and Alexander Spencer. “The Metaphor of Terror: Terrorism Studies and the Constructivist Turn.” *Security Dialogue* 39 (2008): 571–92.
- Jackson, Richard. “The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies.” *European Political Science* 6 (2007): 244–51.
- Jászi, Oscar, and John D. Lewis. *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1957.
- Law, Randall. *Terrorism. A History*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009.
- Lyman, Richard W., and Lewis W. Spitz (eds.). *Major Crises in Western Civilization*. Vol. 2. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965.
- Schmid, Alex P., and Albert Jongman (eds.). *Political Terrorism. A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Databases, Theories and Literature*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publ., 1988.
- Schulze Wessel, Martin. “Terrorismstudien. Bemerkungen zur Entwicklung eines Forschungsfeldes.” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009): 357–67.