

Zug wie für regelmäßiges Nachschlagen eignet.

**Jussi M. Hanhimäki / Bernard Blumenau (eds.): An International History of Terrorism: Western and non-Western Experiences. London: Routledge 2013, 336 S.**

Rezensiert von  
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The date September 11, 2001 has been etched into the minds of people across the globe as the vast media empires of the world broadcast, and re-broadcast, the memory of the World Trade Centre's Twin Towers hurtling to the ground in fire and ash after two hijacked Boeing 767s successfully collided with their intended targets. In what was quickly framed as an act of war by the United States government, the post-Cold War geopolitical order saw the extension of a new global war, "a total war" (p. 2), drawing lines in the sand between "us or the terrorists" (ibid.). The exponential jump of interest in the subject of terrorism after 9/11, and its elevation to priority security status in the post-Cold War international system, brought to the fore the need for further knowledge on a seemingly "new" threat.

In line with the current trend in questioning "discourses of newness", *An International History of Terrorism: Western and non-Western Experiences* strives to bring a

more historically grounded contemplation to questions related to terrorism and its impact on international security. By aligning a broad historical overview of cases with a chronological architecture strongly influenced by David Rapoport's now popular "wave theory", the book sets out to offer a wide readership the ability to "understand the evolution of terrorism and counter-terrorism over the past hundred and fifty years" (p. 12). The work sets out to question the uniqueness of the happenings of 9/11, a worthwhile enquiry that puts our most recent obsession with terrorism into perspective. As the editors and contributors set out to show, terrorism can be seen to be a historical artifact, consisting of an abundance of means directed towards a cacophony of ends. It has involved religious and secular ideologies, been driven by technological developments, involved both state and non-state actors, and most importantly has played an intricate role in shaping international affairs, at least since the end of the nineteenth century. Ultimately, it would seem that the fundamental "newness" of contemporary terrorism lies in its decentralised and networked nature which challenges a Westphalian system of states, and their hierarchically structured government institutions, to deal adequately with transnational threats that do not necessarily comply with images of security emanating from an "international" imagination.

In their introduction the editors, Professor of International History in Geneva Jussi M. Hanhimäki and his PhD candidate Bernard Blumenau, are realistic in their reservation that the collaborative effort, which emerged from a conference titled "Terrorism and Politics: Past Present and

Future”, falls short of “a complete or definitive international history of terrorism” (p. 11). This is the risk taken when publishing edited volumes, especially those emanating from conferences or workshops. Yet in this case the editors have been more successful in their effort to construct a relatively coherent story. The book is broken up into four sections under which 16 well-researched scholarly contributions consisting of a variety of approaches and cases are divided according to: 1) pre-Cold War terrorism; 2) Western experiences; 3) non-Western experiences; 4) contemporary terrorism and anti-terrorism, as well as a concluding essay by David Rapoport who, by building on his wave theory of modern terrorism, draws the material together and offers his perspective on the continuity and change of modern terrorism since the 1880s. The many different essays that focus on specific case studies attempt to take into account the actors and interests, both state and non-state, that have converged around the use of terror tactics to achieve political ends. Chapters such as Richard Jensen’s discussion on anarchist and nihilist terrorism between 1905-14 (Chapter 1), Shaloma Gauthier’s investigation into the South-West African People’s Organisation’s (SWAPO) relationship with the United Nations during its struggle for national liberation (Chapter 10) or Mohammed Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou’s very interesting approach to Al Qaeda’s reinvention of terrorism and the problematic nature of transnational political violence (Chapter 13) each stands alone as interesting case studies but due to the make-up of the book, which lends itself to diachronic comparison, gains an added value when read against each other.

In introducing the reader to the subject, Hanhimäki and Blumenau elaborate on the essentially contested nature of “terrorism”, a concept in most instances defined so as to direct action against it. One therefore becomes aware of the many different discourses that overlap during different periods in time, as well the different scales at which actors direct their interests. Both Charles Townsend’s investigation into the British role in thwarting attempts to establish the first international convention against terrorism in 1937 (Chapter 2) and Blumenau’s elaboration on the Third World position in the UN related to “just cause” and “state terrorism” in the 1970s (Chapter 4), substantiate this point. While a one-size-fits-all definition is regarded to be a near impossibility, the reader is nevertheless guided by a loose set of characteristics that the editors extract from the experiences illustrated in the volume and that therefore give a good idea of what it is that scholars in the field have considered their subject matter. Instances of terrorism, while differing in means and ends across time and space, have seemed to involve the threat of violence, directed in most instances at victims chosen at random, so as to cause an impact through psychological effects that extend beyond those immediate targets. Such acts have furthermore been committed by groups that in most cases have lacked influence or power, with a view to inflicting a political change of sorts (p. 4).

While the architecture of the book is therefore a boon for opening up room for comparison across time and space, it similarly relies on a problematic terminology not reflected on throughout the work and related to a geographic language that divides

chapters into “Western” and “non-Western” experiences. The entangled nature of transnational experiences becomes evident as the interaction of agents as well as interests and effects move across boundaries. Actor-based strategies are thus very much connected to regimes of geopolitical ordering at the time – including the overlapping of (anti)colonial and Cold War geopolitical spaces, as well as nationalism(s) through liberation and internationalism through International Organisations, such as the League of Nations and the UN. The lines drawn between “the West and the rest” are artificial and blurred, and are exposed as problematic when thinking in terms of “global waves”. Further justification is needed so that the reader may be comfortable with this method of ordering. Another point of contention relates to the final chapters. Contemporary cases, fixated on lessons learned from 9/11 and Al Qaeda, do not leave much space to contemplate other forms of “terror” within this period that may give a more nuanced picture of what it is that makes thinking on terrorism problematic since the end of the Cold War. Drone wars, cyber-activism (hactivism) or “rebel” groups making use of systematic killing and rape come to mind here as challenging conventional thinking about violence, psychological impact and threat. It is therefore interesting to consider why certain uses of terror tactics may be included under the term “terrorism”, while others are left out.

While the book offers no definitive answers to questions of why terrorism occurs and how it must be tackled, the combination of cases is highly informative, holds together and offers an audience interested in both contemporary and historical ques-

tions related to international/global security and globalisation the ability to compare, across time, the multiple strategies that converge around acts of terror. In so doing it stimulates discussion and invites further contemplation, which, as the editors attest, is welcome in this somewhat underdeveloped subfield of international history.

**Sören Urbansky (Hg.): „Unsere Insel“.  
Sowjetische Identitätspolitik auf  
Sachalin nach 1945, Berlin: be.bra  
Verlag 2013, 188 S.**

Rezensiert von  
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Der sogenannte „späte Sozialismus“ der Nachkriegszeit wurde in den letzten Jahren zu einem heißen Thema der osteuropäischen Geschichtsschreibung. Die Zahl der Studien zu verschiedensten Bereichen des sowjetischen Nachkriegslebens steigt stetig. Vor allem das Ende der Sowjetunion versammelt viele Monographien und Studien<sup>1</sup> und provozierte jungst den Historikerstreit zwischen Jörg Baberowski und Manfred Hildermeier.<sup>2</sup> Nachwuchsforscher sowie etablierte Forschungsgruppen wenden sich verstärkt der Erforschung der Brežnev-Ära zu, wie z. B. ein Workshop von jungen Osteuropaforschern 2012 in Tübingen oder ein Projekt der Forschungsstelle Osteuropa zu Brežnevs Biographie deutlich machen.<sup>3</sup> Aber auch frühere Perioden der Nachkriegszeit stehen hoch im Kurs der Historiographie zur Sowjetunion,