

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC WATCH

# The History of Terrorism: A State of Knowledge and Debate

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John Lynn II, *Another Kind of War. The Nature and History of Terrorism*, Yale University Press, New Haven - London, 2019, 507 pp.

### ABSTRACT

Lynn's book can be seen as one of the most ambitious elaborations, or even the culmination of half a century of work on the history of terrorism. Understanding the nature and importance of this historiography, requires recalling two elements. First, the fact that in the understanding of terrorism, and therefore also in its definition, three reference strata, each with its own particular history, intervene in varying proportions.

**Keywords:** Terrorism studies, Historiography, Wave theory, Theoretical perspectives, John Lynn

## La historia del terrorismo: un estado de conocimiento y debate

### RESUMEN

El libro de Lynn puede verse como una de las elaboraciones más ambiciosas, o incluso como la culminación de medio siglo de trabajo sobre la historia del terrorismo. Comprender la naturaleza y la importancia de esta historiografía requiere recordar dos elementos. En primer lugar, el hecho de que en la comprensión del terrorismo, y por tanto también en su definición, intervienen en proporciones variables tres estratos de referencia, cada uno con su historia particular.

**Palabras clave:** Estudios del terrorismo, Historiografía, Teoría ondulatoria, Perspectivas teóricas, John Lynn

## 恐怖主义史：相关知识和辩论进展

### 摘要

Lynn的著作可被视为半世纪以来关于恐怖主义史的著作中最负有企图心、甚至是最出色的著作之一。理解这部历史编纂学的本质和重要性，需要回顾两个要素。第一，就理解恐怖主义及其定义而言，三个参考阶层（各自拥有特定的历史）发挥不同比例的影响。

关键词：恐怖主义研究，历史编纂学，浪潮理论（Wave theory），理论视角，约翰·林恩

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The recent publication of his book by the American military historian John Lynn provides a remarkable opportunity to assess the achievements and debates in the history of terrorism. It is easily understandable that such an approach mobilizes issues that go far beyond those of a single specialized branch (or discipline) of terrorism studies, for only a serious study of the terrorist phenomenon in all its temporal (and spatial) depth can produce an adequate knowledge of it. The paucity of comments by too many “specialists,” for whom terrorism only begins with the contemporary forms of jihadist Islamism (or even with the acts of Mohamed Merah), is enough to prove this. This is why, unlike the previous *Bibliographic Watch*, the focus here will be on Lynn’s work alone, situating it first in the specialized historiography. Then, we will focus on his contribution to the two debates that have run through the discipline since its implicit beginnings in the mid-1960s; namely, the debate on the origins of (modern?) terrorism, and that on the most relevant periodization for understanding its successive transformations.

### Half a century of historiography

Lynn’s book can be seen as one of the most ambitious elaborations, or even the culmination of half a century of work on the history of terrorism. Understanding the nature and importance of this historiography, requires recalling two elements. First, the fact that in the understanding of terrorism, and therefore also in its definition, three reference strata, each with its own particular history, intervene in varying proportions. A *polemical stratum* (the most effective and invasive), through which the “terrorist” designates the infamous and absolute enemy, whose “cowardly and barbaric” acts put “the whole world” and “civilization” in danger. Of course, from this infamous construction of “terrorism,” the designation of concrete “terrorists” varies according to the times, the geopolitical situations and the

actors engaged in semantic and practical wars. The *legal stratum* aims at defining, qualifying and repressing acts (and/or thoughts and feelings such as “hatred”); it therefore requires a certain precision that anti-terrorist legislations (strongly dependent on the polemical stratum) have the greatest difficulty to achieve. The *scientific stratum* on the other hand, is conceived as an effort to analyze and understand the terrorist act, considered as a technique belonging to the repertoire of political violence. It must constantly be borne in mind that this intellectual enterprise can only be achieved on the condition that the terrorist fact is removed from the grip of the polemical stratum.<sup>1</sup>

The second element that must be remembered when looking at the history of terrorism as a whole, concerns the very modalities of production of this knowledge. In fact, unlike other branches of university historical research, the history of terrorism emerged and remains to this day the business of journalists or researchers with little or no specialization in terrorism studies (i.e., in the *terrorism studies* that developed in the Anglo-Israeli-American world in the early 1970s).<sup>2</sup> The result was a series of works of very uneven value, not very cumulative, rarely based on primary sources (archives, surveys, databases) and, obviously, too often dependent on the needs of actors managing the conjunctural imperatives of the polemical stratum. It is thus a very heterogeneous historiographic corpus that we are dealing with here, where some solid scientific works rub shoulders with various propagandist hoaxes, only interesting as illustrations of the innumerable manipulations to which terrorism lends itself to due to its nature as a (mainly) psychological weapon.

In view of the above-mentioned particularities, a very quick overview of the historiography of terrorism can be made, without which the contribution of Lynn’s book cannot be properly assessed. Without in any way aiming at exhaustiveness, we can consider the 1965 book by French journalist Roland Gaucher<sup>3</sup> as the first essay to consider terrorism from the perspective of its history, covering the period from the *Catechism of Netchaev* (1869) to the end of the OAS (1962). It was followed, more than ten years later, by the first English-language synthesis by Albert Parry, a Russian-American historian, and it still remains a source of interesting data.<sup>4</sup>

A year later, in 1977, the influential historian Walter Laqueur published *Terrorism*, which, despite its obvious flaws in data treatment and lack of chronological coherence,<sup>5</sup> was to have a definite influence on future work.<sup>6</sup> Prior to 2001, L. Bonante’s brief popular synthesis, especially interesting for its rich iconography,<sup>7</sup> and Martha Crenshaw’s large, edited volume, *Terrorism in Context*,<sup>8</sup> containing some solid case studies with historical depth, deserve attention.

The two decades following the attacks of September 11, 2001, have seen a tremendous quantitative expansion in studies of terrorism (but much less qualitative improvement...), and leaving aside for now the works that participate directly in the historiographical debates that will be discussed later, we can retain

the following references. First of all, the good journalistic synthesis by Dominique Venner<sup>9</sup> constitutes in a way the extension of Roland Gaucher's work until 2001. At the same time, a compilation of extracts from hastily assembled texts appeared in the United States, which completes Laqueur's anthology in certain respects.<sup>10</sup>

We remain in the domain of amateurism and pseudo-encyclopedic confusion with the book of the English polygrapher Andrew Sinclair,<sup>11</sup> who offers a vast moralistic fresco without much scientific interest. A similar comment can be made about the book by the British journalist Matthew Carr,<sup>12</sup> whose 2006 volume is riddled with ideological bias, while benefiting from the achievements of some serious works that are beginning to appear around particular periods, groups and causes. Moreover, Carr rightly considers terrorism as a cultural fact, giving rise to novels, films, etc., which constitute important sources for studying the terrorist fact in all its complexity.

Despite the very pertinent plea of historian Isabelle Duyvesteyn in 2007 in favor of the development of the history of terrorism as a major theoretical and practical issue,<sup>13</sup> the quality of synthetic works remained generally mediocre in the following years. We owe to Michael Burleigh, a historian not specialized in terrorism, a volume whose political influence (due to the uncritical repetition of the major themes of the "Western" propaganda) was undoubtedly greater than its scientific impact.<sup>14</sup>

The persistent gap between the often-remarkable sectoral advances and the theoretical deficiencies that too often affect the synthesis works that deal with the whole of the history of terrorism,<sup>15</sup> is clearly seen with the publication in 2013 of the collective work directed by J. Hanhimäki and B. Blumenau, which offers a series of high-quality monographic chapters on well-defined periods or episodes.<sup>16</sup>

A much more ambitious project gave rise, in 2015, to the publication of *The Routledge History of Terrorism*. This large collective volume, edited by Randall Law, aims to synthesize knowledge from antiquity to the present day.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, both conceptual imprecisions and the very uneven value of the chapters (ranging from excellent to deplorable) prevent this work from becoming the expected reference work.

As for recent works in French that offer a general approach to the history of terrorism, Gilles Ferragu's book,<sup>18</sup> without great theoretical pretensions, provides useful data, despite explicit ideological biases that the informed reader has no trouble detecting. Similar remarks can be made about Jenny Raflik's<sup>19</sup> book, which, without being a history of terrorism, is directly relevant to our subject and therefore deserves to be mentioned here. For, despite an often-confused presentation and a large number of factual errors (of dates (p. 25) or factual ones such as the "assassination of Nasser" (p. 281)), this work makes it possible to sketch out a reflection on the conditions of the elaboration of a history of terrorism. Finally, in 2016, the latest edition of the collective volume edited by Gérard Chaliand

and Arnaud Blin<sup>20</sup> was published (first published in 2006). The volume includes a small anthology of indispensable texts, even in fragmentary form, for the novice researcher. The mass of data gathered in this volume, however, contrasts with the poverty of the theoretical contribution concerning the historiographic debates that will be discussed later.

In the course of 2019, three large collective textbooks on terrorism and counterterrorism have been published. Concerning the Routledge textbook, we have already indicated (see note 2) the deplorable treatment given to the history of terrorism. The second volume,<sup>21</sup> explicitly focused on events after September 11, 2001, logically makes no room for history. On the other hand, the third manual<sup>22</sup> devotes its second part to “the history of terrorist violence,” containing three chapters dealing respectively with the Middle Ages, the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (pp. 85-129), to which is added a (rather weak) chapter on the historical approach to terrorism (pp.194-206). Here again, a reflection on the status, the objectives and the conditions of elaboration of the history of terrorism is largely missing.

It is therefore in this context of sectoral advances and persistent difficulties in truly founding the field of the history of terrorism as a discipline in its own right that John Lynn’s book is published. As such, it can be read both as a kind of state of the art and as an attempt to structure a rapidly expanding scientific field. In order to assess the extent to which the author has achieved these ambitious goals, we examine his contribution to the discussion of the two major historiographical problems surrounding the origin of terrorism and (thus) its operational definition on the one hand, and the periodization of the history of terrorism on the other. As we shall see, in both cases, Lynn suggests, if not definitive solutions, at least some extremely stimulating ideas.

## **The definitional problem and the origins of terrorism**

The question of knowing when terrorism emerges in the repertoire of political violence depends on its definition. And we know of the endless debates about the definition of terrorism, which lead practically every researcher to suggest, if not an original definition, at least adjustments to the formulations in use at a given time. With this in mind, rather than giving yet another definitional proposal, Lynn identifies a set of descriptive features or elements of “terrorism” (pp. 5-6), including the use or threat of violence against noncombatant (or defenseless) victims; provoking fear and outrage among larger audiences; and among whom, through the mediatisation effect, psychological reactions may engender behaviors consistent with the terrorists’ political, social, and cultural goals.

It does not matter, at this stage of the analysis, whether this characterization is absolutely satisfactory or not. Indeed, many comments can be made about the nature (and especially the identity) of the victims, or the necessarily political mo-

tivations of the terrorist act (a question that is usefully discussed in Chapter 13, which deals with narcoterrorism). What is important to remember, however, is the overall relevance of these features, which offers a framework both flexible and sufficiently precise to delimit the field of the history of terrorism. In particular, we retain the important idea according to which the terrorist act does not only aim at provoking fear (with its inhibiting effects), but also, and sometimes even particularly, outrage, i.e., an emotion which pushes to action and to revenge, and which can thus provoke reactions which can help the terrorists' cause.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps less convincing and unwieldy is the author's subsequent distinction between six levels of terrorism, differentiated according to the capability resources of the actors, ranging from states to individuals (inaccurately equated with "lone wolves"), armed forces, social groups, criminal entities, and sub-state groups engaged in "radical" terrorism (pp. 7-13). Solid ground is found later in the paper when Lynn differentiates the strategic intentions associated with the use of terrorist techniques (pp. 22-27), namely, intimidation, initiation (the first phase of an insurgency), attrition (of the enemy's will), evolution (based on a gradual shift to regular confrontation, following the Maoist pattern in particular). Here Lynn, whose specialty is, let us recall, military history, revives a current of thought on the strategic dimension of terrorism, whose antecedents even precede the birth of *terrorism studies*.<sup>24</sup> With these clarifications, the reader has a clear framework, sometimes debatable, but sufficiently coherent to be able to engage in the teeming subject of the history of terrorism.

From then on, the question of the inaugural moment of this form of violence also arises. In this respect, Lynn's contribution is extremely interesting, because he identifies the decisive moment around the middle of the 19th century when terrorism, integrated into a revolutionary and/or insurrectionary dynamic, becomes an "ism." That is to say, a specific technique of political violence with its own theory, modus operandi and history (p. 108). Two conditions shape this preliminary moment, which begins with Heinzen's theoretical writings and ends with the first truly terrorist attacks, around 1893. The first condition, according to Lynn and many other authors, is the French Revolution, which, beyond the episode of the Terror (1793-1794), inaugurates an era in which the ideas of popular sovereignty and democracy radically challenge the legitimacy of previous rulers and political systems, while giving the right to govern to more or less violent individuals and groups of citizens claiming to represent popular will, legitimacy or any other cause.<sup>25</sup> The second condition, outlined by Lynn in his remarkable fifth chapter (pp. 105-150), consists of the gradual realization of the tactical futility of mass urban insurrectionary warfare based on the construction of barricades, following the failure of the revolutions of 1848. The disaster of the Paris Commune in 1871 definitively confirmed the unsuitability of this form of combat in the face of regular military formations equipped with increasingly powerful weapons.

In this context, Lynn, in the wake of previous works on the issue,<sup>26</sup> identifies “The Murder,” a text first published by Karl Heinzen in 1849, as the starting point for the intellectual construction of terrorism.

It is thus by the articulation of political conditions, theoretical reflections and technical innovations (dynamite, handguns, popular press with great circulation, etc.) that terrorism appears at the end of the 19th century, differentiating itself from political assassinations (like the murder of Tsar Alexander II in 1881), even if the actors of the attack designate themselves as “terrorists.” This point is important, because if it is true that there is a certain fuzzy zone of intersection between the political assassination and the terrorist act, it is advisable to underline their difference which holds with the identity of the victims; personal in the first case and vectorial in the second.<sup>27</sup>

On the basis of the above considerations, it is possible to distinguish a long “prehistory”<sup>28</sup> (in which the Zealots, the Assassins and many other actors take their place) from the inaugural moment of terrorism, conceived as an exclusively modern phenomenon. And we are talking here about an inaugural *moment*, rather than risking a precise date,<sup>29</sup> even if the year 1893, especially because of the attack on the Liceu theater in Barcelona, seems to us a good option.<sup>30</sup>

Once the question of the beginning has been resolved, it remains to be seen whether there are identifiable periods in the history of terrorism, and if so, how many, and above all, according to what criteria. This is the subject of the second major historiographical debate, in which Lynn also engages creatively.

## **The “waves” and “novelty” in the history of terrorism**

To understand the value (and limitations) of Lynn’s book’s contribution to periodization in the history of terrorism, we must grasp the complexity of that issue in 2019.

The first (and still dominant) attempt in this area is the work of the political scientist David Rapoport, which was carried out, perhaps somewhat hastily, under the impact of 9/11 and then developed and adjusted in a series of consecutive publications.<sup>31</sup>

In essence, Rapoport distinguishes four successive waves of terrorism from the 1880s, when the phenomenon began, according to him, in Russia. These “waves” are differentiated mainly according to a specific “energy” that is linked to the nature of the causes (understood here as motivations) that give them their originality. These four waves are:

- 1 - *The anarchist wave* (1880-1920)
- 2 - *The anti-colonial wave* (1920s-1960s)

3 - *The wave of the "New Left" (1960s- late 1980s?)*

4 - *The religious wave (1979- ?)*

The duration of each wave is variable, for while the first two lasted about forty years, the third lasted about twenty years, and the end of the fourth (current) wave is difficult to predict. Moreover, the overlapping of the different moments makes this periodization sufficiently flexible to make it an excellent pedagogical tool, even if its factual and conceptual bases quickly prove to be very fragile. Still, the main efforts to construct a periodization in the history of terrorism so far start from (and depart from) the general framework elaborated by Rapoport.

In 2007, British historian Marc Sedgwick presented an organization of data based on the effects of inspiration (and therefore also of contagion) that configured sequences of recourse to terrorism.<sup>32</sup> In this perspective, he distinguishes four waves (like Rapoport...) designated according to their country of origin: Italian (beginning around 1820 with the Carbonari and extending until the end of the Zionist campaign in 1948); German (between 1919 and 1945, mainly "fascist"); Chinese (beginning in 1937 and continuing today in the form of anti-colonial struggles); and Afghan (since 1979, with a mainly Islamist tonality). Beyond obvious errors and conceptual shortcomings, this approach has the advantage of showing the possibility of organizing the corpus of historical data by emphasizing the impact of a few founding episodes in the genesis of more or less prolonged terrorist campaigns. However, by focusing on the causes/motivations of the actors, Sedgwick ends up focusing more on the political and contextual history of terrorist acts than on the transformations of terrorism as a specific technique belonging to the repertoire of political violence.

Two years later, political scientists Rasler and Thompson attempted a quantitative empirical validation of Rapoport's wave theory using the ITERATE database for the years 1968-2004.<sup>33</sup> The conceptual problems are considerable here as well, especially the confusion between strategies and *modus operandi*, as well as the uncertainties about the ideological motivations of the actors. But on the basis of the frequency of attacks linked to the causes that the actors claim, Rapoport's scheme seems largely validated, at least for the last two waves. This same article was republished two years later in the collective work directed by Jean Rosenfeld, entirely devoted to the discussion of the "wave theory."<sup>34</sup> Among the very uneven texts in this confused and heterogeneous volume, we retain the chapter by Marc Sageman,<sup>35</sup> who formulates, from the sole case of Al Qaeda, the hypothesis of a kind of progressive degradation of motivating ideas that corresponds to a correlative transformation of the acts they inspire. Thus, the generation of "founders" of this social movement is composed of educated men belonging to the upper and middle wealthy classes of several Arab countries, who in addition to a solid academic education possess considerable financial means (e.g., Osama Bin Laden).

This is followed by a second generation of upper-middle class students who are sent to Europe to complete their studies and who become involved in Islamism as a consequence of their rejection of the Western way of life, their isolation, and the contacts they make in mosques. This generation (which is that of the perpetrators of September 11<sup>th</sup>) is followed after the destruction of the Afghan sanctuary by a third, whose actors are the sons and grandsons of unskilled immigrants populating the “working class” neighborhoods of large Western cities. These young people are fascinated by the heroic acts of previous jihadists, but themselves poorly or not at all educated and generally involved in delinquency (or even criminality) at a very early age. They form unstable groups of “friends” who are the basis of the “*leaderless jihad*” that Sageman has studied elsewhere. In this particular case, we have the hypothesis of a generational succession within the same terrorist wave (here “religious”) which would account for its internal transformations and the reasons for its decline. This hypothesis, which enriches Rapoport’s theory, has not yet been tested (to our knowledge) on any other body of data.

In 2016, Parker and Sitter published an article on “The Four Horsemen of Terrorism,”<sup>36</sup> which provides a new critique of the wave theory, while remaining, once again, within the framework of motivational (or “causal”) criteria. In this case, we are not dealing with successive waves, but with the permanence of four “strains” which, following an analogy borrowed from virology, each go back to a “patient zero” dating from the middle of the 19th century. In this perspective, the authors insist above all on the permanence of terrorist “lineages” that are perpetuated in various historical contexts by imitation and influence.

John Lynn ultimately follows Rapoport’s approach, also basing it on ideological “causes,” but modifying it by merging the second and third waves. The result is the following periodization (p. 13):

- *First wave.* From the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848 to around 1920. Corresponds to the era of “propaganda by deed” and to the emergence of a “self-conscious” terrorism, with specific modes of operation and an international diffusion of counterterrorist practices and responses (Chapter 5, pp. 105-150). The violent anarchists and the Russian revolutionaries best represent this trend.
- *Second wave.* From 1945 to 1980. It brings together ethno-nationalist movements (such as the Irgun, the FLN and the Tamil Tigers) and Marxist groups such as the Tupamaros, the RAF, and the Weathermen.
- *Third wave.* From 1980 to the present. It begins in the wake of the Iranian Revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, not forgetting the enormous impact of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (which Lynn opportunely recalls on p. 297). This wave is essentially “religious” and overwhelmingly Islamist (Chapter 9, pp. 253-266), and the author distinguishes regional jihads (Hezbollah, Hamas; Chapter 10, pp. 267-288) from global jihads such as those waged by Al Qaeda and

the Islamic State (Chapter 11, pp. 289-331). Suicide attacks are part of the *modus operandi* that distinguish this period, although non-religious groups (such as the Tamil Tigers) also resort to them.

We therefore see that Lynn, while adopting Rapoport's "causal" criterion, achieves a slightly different periodization, giving (rightly) greater historical depth to terrorism, while proposing a more coherent approach to its successive waves, which nevertheless does not integrate the years 1920-1945 into a truly comprehensive picture.

On the other hand, the inherent limitations of focusing on motivational and contextual aspects of ideology obscure the essential problem of why, in a given geopolitical situation and while claiming the same cause, some individuals and groups resort to terrorism, while others choose different modalities of action (violent or non-violent).

It should also be noted that the weakness of identifying solely a motivational criteria became clear during a debate that occupied a large part of specialized researchers between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, concerning the existence of a "new" terrorism. Although rarely explicitly linked to the theme of the overall periodization of the terrorist fact, this question emerges around 1995, notably under the impact of the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo sect on March 20, 1995,<sup>37</sup> and the Oklahoma explosion (April 19, 1995). Later, of course, the insistence on the willingness of religiously inspired networks to commit attacks, apparently without clear political claims or achievable goals, found some semblance of confirmation on September 11, 2001. This debate, which manifested above all a dismaying ignorance of history on the part of many "specialists" in terrorism, took a rather confused and repetitive turn before going out of fashion towards the end of the 2000s; it nonetheless constitutes an interesting milestone in the recent historiography of terrorism that should not be overlooked.<sup>38</sup> And if it is still of interest today, it is undoubtedly because it suggested the possibility of using other facts and criteria than those of ideology to differentiate particular moments of terrorism. Thus, to take only a few examples about which there are already promising sketches of reflection, we can cite the transformations linked to the techniques of mediatization of the terrorist act;<sup>39</sup> the changes concerning the modes of operation;<sup>40</sup> the evolution of counter-terrorist devices;<sup>41</sup> or the avatars of the literary representation of terrorism.<sup>42</sup>

## **A welcome synthesis that leads to interesting perspectives**

If Lynn's book undoubtedly marks an important milestone in the historiography of terrorism, while contributing to a possible "historical turn" in terrorism studies,<sup>43</sup> it is probably because of its theoretical ambition. The result is an organization of the volume according to two complementary criteria, producing a periodization

on the one hand (the three waves of “radical” sub-state terrorism discussed above), and a typology on the other (according to decreasing capability variables).

Thus, a presentation of the theoretical framework of the book (Chapter 1, pp. 1-30), is followed by a good synthesis on terrorism or, more exactly, state terror (Chapter 2, pp. 31-50); then by a very interesting and timely evocation of “military terrorism,” directed by regular armed forces against civilian populations, and of which the criminal bombing of Dresden (February 13-15, 1945) is an emblematic example (Chapter 3, pp. 51-75). Chapter 4 (pp. 76-104) concerns racial violence (although exclusively white...) in the United States between 1865 and 1965, that is, between the end of the Civil War and the triumph of the civil rights movement, with interesting information on the three moments that mark the history of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). This chapter, which according to Lynn illustrates a form of terrorism exercised by social groups, often in the majority and according to ethno-racial criteria, also serves as an antecedent to the developments contained in Chapter 12 (pp. 332-358), devoted to the “violence” of the Radical Right, still in the United States, a subject to which we shall return later.

This rather complete panorama of the history of terrorism envisaged by Lynn according to the two criteria just mentioned (periodization and typology), also leads to working hypotheses concerning the future of this phenomenon. In this respect, the history of terrorism, insofar as it falls within the general framework of studies on terrorism, cannot be limited to the pursuit of an exclusively academic knowledge, however necessary it may be. And if the history of terrorism, rigorously undertaken, must allow for a better analysis and understanding of this manifestation of political violence, it cannot fail to be used to envisage—with all the necessary precautions—its future evolution.

In order to do this, the “wave theory” appears as a sound basis for exploring, as Lynn also does in the last chapter of his book (pp. 416-432), the more or less weak signals that make it possible to foresee either the possible end of the fourth wave (of Rapoport),<sup>44</sup> or the appearance of a fifth wave, the characteristics of which are still the subject of controversy. Thus, in 2007, J. Kaplan proposed a quite confused and unspecific theory concerning a fifth wave, made up of tribalism and mass violence inspired by millenarian beliefs. Its actors would come from the previous waves following internal transformations that lead them to want to realize the “new world” immediately by extermination and/or replacement of populations (hence the role of rape). As examples of these movements, Kaplan cites the Khmer Rouge before they came to power, the Ugandan *Lord's Resistance Army*, or the Janjaweed militias in Darfur.<sup>45</sup> Despite its inaccuracies, this essay opens up some avenues for reflection on the potential use of terrorism by groups and networks (globalist or not) committed to messianic projects for the transformation of humanity in the shortest possible time, the study of which is beyond the scope of this text.

A few years later, Jeffrey Simon formulated a hypothesis no less confused, but totally different, concerning the “fifth wave.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, for this author, it is technological innovations (notably the Internet) much more than particular ideological motivations that are shaping a “new terrorism,” implemented mainly by solitary actors or small more or less autonomous groups. This perspective also allows Simon to recycle the theme of the threat of the use of CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) weapons, recalling the potential danger of “rogue states,” enemies of the West and particularly of Israel.

Much more concrete but limited in their theoretical scope due to the adoption of criteria based on the motivations presiding over the choice to resort to terrorist acts, several hypotheses have been formulated in recent years. Thus, according to Benoît Gagnon, the fifth wave could be structured (at least in North America) by ecoterrorism,<sup>47</sup> because of the increasing violence of the actions of radical environmentalist groups. On the other hand, and without it being strictly speaking a wave, many authors mention, if not the emergence, at least the aggravation of terrorist actions committed for mainly criminal reasons.<sup>48</sup> This variant is the subject of a chapter in Lynn’s book (Chapter 13, “Narcoterrorism,” pp. 359-388) where various processes of hybridization and criminal drift are examined, as well as the use of terrorism by Colombian and Mexican cartels as a means of intimidating the population and the authorities in order to influence political decisions, particularly in the area of extradition to the United States.

Finally, for the last ten years or so, there has been a massive diffusion in academic circles and “Western” governmental institutions of the theme of the threat (obviously very serious) of “extreme right-wing” terrorism, to which Lynn devotes Chapter 12 (pp. 332-358) of his book on the basis of almost exclusively North American data. Without being able to discuss this theme in depth as it deserves, let us note that all the conditions are met for transferring the counter-terrorist system from jihadist terrorism (which is possibly in decline) to terrorism originating from the “extreme right.” Indeed, the combination of “supremacism” and “racism” (exclusively by whites), as well as “conspiracy,” “populism,” “anti-Semitism,” and a few other repulsive “isms,” synthesized in the vague category of “extremism” polemically associated with terrorism, means that the ingredients are available to envisage the emergence of a fifth wave of terrorism, which has apparently been developing since around 2011 (Breivik case).<sup>49</sup>

Thus, while the future of terrorism remains controversial, its past is becoming much better known. Certainly, enormous strides remain to be made in order to achieve an empirically and theoretically coherent and cumulative history of terrorism. Lynn’s book is undoubtedly an important milestone on the road to consolidating this field of research, which is essential to understanding terrorism and for public and private action to confront it effectively. It is therefore predictable that it will become an essential basic reference on the subject for the next few years.<sup>50</sup> This is a book to be read and studied in depth, without hesitation.

## Notes

- 1 Daniel Dory, Senior Lecturer at the University of La Rochelle, specialized in the geopolitical analysis of terrorism.
- 2 See, for example: Edna Reid, "Evolution of a Body of Knowledge. An Analysis of Terrorism Research," *Information Processing and Management*, Vol. 33, N° 1, 1997, 91-106; Daniel Dory, "Les *Terrorism studies* à l'heure du bilan," *Sécurité Globale*, N° 22, 2020, 123-142. Concerning specifically research in the history of terrorism, its indispensable character and the little interest it arouses on the part of researchers subjected to the grip of the immediate, is already pointed out by Andrew Silke "The Road Less Travelled. Recent Trends in Terrorism Research," in: A. Silke, (Ed.), *Research on Terrorism. Trends, Achievements and Failures*, Frank Cass, London - Portland, 2004, 186-213. This does not prevent this same author from giving a very small and scientifically deficient place to history in the reference manual he recently edited: Leonard Weinberg, "A history of terrorism," in: A. Silke (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 34-56. For a confused but useful discussion of the difficulties of understanding terrorism in the social sciences, particularly in France, see: Michel Wieviorka, "Terrorism in the Context of Academic Research," in: Martha Crenshaw (Ed.), *Terrorism in Context*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 1995, 597-606.
- 3 Roland Gaucher, *Les Terroristes*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1965. Translated and published in English in 1968 by Sacker and Warburg, London.
- 4 Albert Parry, *Terrorism. From Robespierre to Arafat*, The Vanguard Press, New York, 1976. Despite its title, which obviously obeys the imperatives of the Israeli propaganda of the time, and numerous conceptual inaccuracies, this book remains a stimulating attempt to put together a mass of often relevant data.
- 5 See, for example, David Rapoport's highly critical account in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 73, No. 1, 1979, 393-4.
- 6 Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1977. Translated into French: *Terrorisme*, PUF, Paris, 1979. Interesting point: following this author's habit of publishing the same text several times under different titles, this book appears in 2001 as: *A History of Terrorism*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick-London, 2001, with a new seven-page introduction, theoretically indigent but warning about the danger of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of terrorists (thus anticipating the disinformation campaign that preceded the invasion of Iraq in 2003). On the other hand, in two respects Laqueur did a useful job. First, by extending the field of the history of terrorism to cultural and especially literary facts, for example in: W. Laqueur, "Interpretations of Terrorism: Facts, Fiction and Political Science," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 12, N° 1, 1977, 1-42. On the other hand, in 1978 he published *The Terrorism Reader*, an anthology of selected texts that filled an obvious gap in sources. Later republished with Yonah Alexander (Meridian Books, 1987) and included and updated in *The Voices of Terror*, Reed, New York, 2004.

- 7 Luigi Bonante, *Le terrorisme international*, Casterman-Giunti, Paris-Florence, 1994.
- 8 Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, Pennsylvania State University press, Pennsylvania, 1995. It should also be recalled that Dr. Crenshaw co-edited with John Pimlott the *Encyclopedia of World Terrorism* (3 Vols.), Sharpe, Armonk, 1997, which contains abundant material of historical interest.
- 9 Dominique Venner, *Histoire du Terrorisme*, Pygmalion, Paris, 2002.
- 10 Isaac Cronin (Ed.), *Confronting Fear. A History of Terrorism*, Thunder's Mouth Press, New York, 2002.
- 11 Andrew Sinclair, *An Anatomy of Terror. A History of Terrorism*, Pan Books, London, 2003.
- 12 Matthew Carr, *La mécanique infernale. The History of the 20th Century through Terrorism* [2006], Éditions Héloïse d'Ormesson, Paris, 2008.
- 13 Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "The Role of History and Continuity in Terrorism Research," in: Magnus Ranstorp, (Ed.), *Mapping Terrorism Research*, Routledge, London-New York, 2007, 51-75.
- 14 Michael Burleigh, *Blood and Rage. A Cultural History of Terrorism*, Harper Perennial, London, 2008.
- 15 For an example, among others, but very significant, see: Henry Laurens, "Le terrorisme comme personnage historique," in: H. Laurens; M. Delmas-Marty, *Terrorismes. Histoire et Droit*, CNRS Éditions, Paris, 2010, 9-66. This text, sometimes interesting, shows the limits of the treatment of the question by educated non-specialists, who situate the Sandinistas in Guatemala (p. 47), or assimilate Al-Qaeda to the *focos guévaristes*.
- 16 Jussi M. Hanhimäki; Bernhard Blumenau, (Eds.), *An International History of Terrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 2013. See the book's Introduction (pp. 1-13) to appreciate its scope and limitations.
- 17 Randall D. Law (Ed.), *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 2015. The Introduction (pp. 1-11) offers interesting reflections on the history and historiography of terrorism. By the same Randall Law one can also consult (with similar problems concerning the specificity of the terrorist fact): *Terrorism. A History* [2009], 2nd Ed. by Polity, Cambridge, 2016.
- 18 Gilles Ferragu, *Histoire du Terrorisme*, Perrin, Paris, 2014. Two years before, Michaël Prazan's book, *Une Histoire du terrorisme*, Flammarion, Paris, 2012, was published, which tells us more about the author's obsessions than about the subject of the book, although it is sometimes interesting for the interviews with various protagonists it contains.
- 19 Jenny Raflik, *Terrorism and Globalization. Approches historiques*, Gallimard, Paris, 2016.

- 20 Gérard Chaliand; Arnaud Blin, (Dirs.), *Histoire du Terrorisme. From Antiquity to Daech*, Arthème Fayard/Pluriel, Paris, 2016.
- 21 David Martin et al. (Eds.), *Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Post 9/11*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham/Northampton, 2019.
- 22 Erica Chenoweth et al. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019. This book was reported in the Literature Watch cited in note 2.
- 23 This idea was previously developed by the author in: John Lynn II, "Fear and Outrage as Terrorists' Goals," *Parameters*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2012, 51-62.
- 24 See, for example: Thomas P. Thornton, "Terror as Weapon of Political Agitation," in: Harry Eckstein (Ed.), *Internal War. Problems and Approaches*, Free Press, New York, 1964, 71-99; Edward Price, "The Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Terrorism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1977; and especially: Andrew Kidd; Barbara Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2006, 49-80.
- 25 The relationship between the French Revolution and the emergence of terrorism has been explored further in: Martin A. Miller, *The Foundations of Modern Terrorism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013. See the summary of his argument on p. 2.
- 26 Daniel Bessner; Michael Stauch, "Karl Heinzen and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2010, 143-176.
- 27 A good overview of this issue can be found in: David George, "Distinguishing Classical Tyrannicide from Modern Terrorism," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1988, 390-419.
- 28 It is this "prehistory" that is, for example, and at the cost of many conceptual acrobatics, the subject of the first part of: Randall Law (Ed.), *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 2015, 13-59.
- 29 This moment is well evoked by Gilles Ferragu, "L'écho des bombes: L'invention du terrorisme "à l'aveugle" (1893-1895)," *Ethnologie Française*, Vol. 49, N° 1, 2019, 21-31.
- 30 On the context of this remarkable attack: Angel Herrerín López, "1893: año clave del terrorismo en la España de la Restauración," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, Serie V, T. 20, 2008, 71-91.
- 31 See especially: David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism," *Current History*, Vol. 100, 2001, 419-424; David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in: Audrey Kurth Cronin; James M. Ludes (Eds.), *Attacking Terrorism*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2004, 46-73; David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism. International Dimensions and Consequences," in: Jussi M. Hanhimäki; Bernhard Blumenau (Eds.), *An International History of Terrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 2013, 282-310. Note that the idea of a "terrorist wave" is an old one, as it is already found in Roland Gaucher's book ref-

- erenced in note 3. For a convenient presentation of Rapoport's theory, see: Jeffrey Kaplan, "Waves of Political Terrorism," in: William R. Thompson (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedias. Politics*, 2016 (online).
- 32 Marc Sedgwick, "Inspiration and the Origin of Global Waves of Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2007, 97-112.
- 33 Karen Rasler; William R. Thompson, "Looking for Waves of Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2009, 28-41.
- 34 Jean E. Rosenfeld (Ed.), *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy. The Four Waves theory and political violence*, Routledge, London-New York, 2011.
- 35 Marc Sageman, "Ripples in the waves. Fantasies and fashions," in: Jean E. Rosenfeld (Ed.), *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy. The Four Waves theory and political violence*, Routledge, London-New York, 2011, 87-92.
- 36 Tom Parker; Nick Sitter, "The Four Horsemen of Terrorism: It's Not Waves, It's Strains," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2016, 197-216. This article was followed by a discussion, including by Rappoport on pp. 217-235 of the same issue. From a different perspective, we also have the testing of "wave theory" in relation to ecoterrorism, a phenomenon hardly considered by Rapoport. See: João Raphael da Silva, "The Eco-Terrorist Wave," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, Vol. 12, N° 3, 2020, 203-216.
- 37 On the (disastrous) impact of the Aum affair on the process of constructing the "new terrorism" theme related to the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), see Ian Reader's excellent article, "Globally Aum. The Aum Affair, Counterterrorism and Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2012, 179-198.
- 38 For a good overview of the debate, see: Steven Simon; Daniel Benjamin, "America and the New Terrorism," *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2000, 59-75; as well as historian Isabelle Duyvesteyn's very relevant focus, "How New is the New Terrorism?" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 27, No. 5, 2004, 439-453. For an updated view of the issue: Stuart Gottlieb (Ed.), *Debating Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, Sage-Cq Press, Los Angeles-London, 2014, Chapter 1: "Is the 'New Terrorism' Really New?" 1-34.
- 39 See the interesting periodization proposed by Catherine Bertho Lavenir, "Bombes, protes & pistolets. Les âges médiologiques de l'attentat," *Cahiers de Médiologie*, N° 13, 2002, 17-35.
- 40 On this issue, historical research could, for example, be inspired by the theoretical and methodological achievements of the following article: Brian Jackson; David Frelinger, "Riffling Through the Terrorist's Arsenal: Exploring Groups' Weapon Choices and Technology Strategies," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 31, No. 7, 2008, 583-604.
- 41 A true history of counterterrorism, which seeks to identify its invariants, local differences and temporal transformations, is still largely untried. For an overview of the interest of the question: Robert J. Art; Louise Richardson, "Introduction," in: Robert J. Art; Louise Richardson (Eds.), *Democracy and Counterterrorism. Lessons from the Past*,

United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, 2007, 1-23. Perhaps the best introduction to this issue to date is Beatrice de Graaf, "Counter-Terrorism and Conspiracy. Historicizing the struggle against terrorism," in: Randall Law (Ed.), *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 2015, 411-427. In contrast, Lynn's chapter on counterterrorism (Ch. 14, "Homeland security," pp. 389-415) only deals—superficially—with the case of the U.S.

42 On the fruitfulness of this area of research, see especially Lynn Patyk's excellent chapter, "The age of terrorism in the age of literature," in: Randall Law (Ed.), *The Routledge History of Terrorism*, Routledge, London-New York, 2015, 470-483.

43 See: Giovanni Mario Ceci, "A 'Historical Turn' in Terrorism Studies?" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 51, No. 4, 2016, 888-896.

44 On this point, see Leonard Weinberg; William Eubank, "An End to the Fourth Wave of Terrorism?" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 33, N° 7, 2010, 594-602. This article, which suggests the decline of Rapoport's fourth wave (Islamist, largely equated with Al Qaeda) testifies both to the problematic nature of the "wave theory" and, more importantly, to the difficulty of incorporating into it the emergence of the Islamic State in 2014. In this regard, see also the following note by Xavier Raufer, "Une dégénérescence des djihadistes et peut-être du djihad," *Sécurité Globale*, N° 20 NS, 2019, 143-145; a text which, moreover, resonates with the hypothesis that Marc Sageman formulates in the work mentioned in note 35.

45 Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Fifth Wave: The New Tribalism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 2007, 545-570. See also: Jeffrey Kaplan, "Terrorism's Fifth Wave: A Theory, a Conundrum and a Dilemma," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2008, 12-25.

46 Jeffrey Simon, "Technological and lone operator terrorism. Prospects for a fifth wave of global terrorism," in: Jean E. Rosenfeld (Ed.), *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy. The Four Waves theory and political violence*, Routledge, London-New York, 2011, 44-65.

47 Benoît Gagnon, "L'Écoterrorisme: Vers une cinquième vague terroriste nord-américaine?" *Security & Strategy*, N° 3, 2010, 15-25.

48 See Riikka Puttonen's recent development; Flavia Romiti, "The Linkage Between Organized Crime and Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (Preprint), 2020.

49 For a good, up-to-date summary: Vincent A. Auger, "Right-Wing Terror: A Fifth Global Wave?" *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2020, 87-97.

50 And this, despite its few deficiencies and the obstacle represented by the difficulty of accessing the supplements announced by the author on the site [www.yalebooks.com/lynn](http://www.yalebooks.com/lynn), which testifies to an editorial policy that is strange, to say the least.