**The Cambridge History of Terrorism.**

*Richard English (editor), Cambridge University Press, 2021, 718 pages, Hardback. £120.00 ISBN: 9781108556248*

’The Cambridge History of Terrorism’ is a weighty 26 Chapter book where historians explore the problem of terrorism through the lens of history. The book includes chapters on terrorism in ancient times but also covers more contemporary groups such as ISIS. Written by a team of leading international scholars such as Richard English, Martyn Frampton, Bernard Blumenau, Ekaterina Stepanova and Cecilia Méndez this book provides an in-depth analysis of the various forms of terrorism, its causes, and its effects on society to explore what we can learn from taking a historical perspective. The book is divided into five parts: Introduction (Part I); Frameworks and Definitions (Part II); Historical cases of terrorism (Part III); Thematic Essays (Part IV); and Conclusion (Part V). The two introductory chapters by English (Chapter 1) and Frampton (Chapter 2) clearly set out the purpose of the book. English in particular outlines the role that historians can and should play in exploring and understanding terrorism in the contemporary world. While English defines terrorism, he also English argues that how terrorism is viewed is always down to prevailing powers and the wider cultural and societal context. English acknowledges that terrorism is a very western concept and that other cultures and regions have been ignored. Disappointingly, this acknowledgement does not feed into the selection of chapters that follow which remain very Western-centric. There is only one chapter on Africa and there is nothing on Asia beyond Pakistan.

Part II explores and outlines the role historians can and should play in terrorism and critical terrorism studies. The chapter provides those new to terrorism studies and history with some insightful concepts and ideas such as regionalisation, periodisation and how history fits with the other disciplines within Terrorism Studies such as Politics. The chapters outline the historical context and roots of terrorism from its emergence in the 19th century to its modern-day manifestations. In Chapter 6 Blumenau builds a strong case for the inclusion of history and historians into Terrorism Studies.

Chapters in Part III provide historical case studies from Palestine, the Basque country, Africa, Pakistan, Russia, Ireland, the Netherlands, the USA, Columbia, Peru, and Iraq. Examples are very Western-centric with two chapters on Northern Ireland and two on Russia. To be fair, the second chapter (19) by McConaghy, on Northern Ireland highlights transnational elements of terrorism but its focus is mostly on the IRA and feels rather repetitive. McGarry (Chapter 7) struggles to even use the term terrorism in the context of Northern Ireland, it is only mentioned five times over 29 pages. In her chapters on Russia, Stepanova on the other hand (chapters 11 and 12) labels almost any violence against the state as acts of terrorism. Whilst the chapter (14) on the Netherlands by De Graaf is interesting its inclusion is odd as terrorism there does not appear to be a huge problem historically or now compared to other countries that could/should have been included. Together these case studies provide in-depth explorations of the history of terrorism, terrorist groups, their ideologies, and their tactics, as well as the responses of governments and societies to terrorism. It also looks at the impact of terrorism on the political, economic, and social life of the region.

Part IV investigates the relationship between terrorism and the state, focusing on how states have utilised terrorism as a tool of coercion and control, as well as how terrorists have used the state as a target for their assaults. Chapter 22 on history and religion is interesting but is something that is explored much more extensively in English’s other work. These chapters also examine how states have responded to terrorism, particularly the deployment of counter-terrorism measures. These chapters conclude that terrorism is a complex phenomenon that requires a nuanced approach before one can effectively to understanding and respond to it. This part of the book provides a comprehensive overview of the history of terrorism, from its earliest roots to the present day. These chapters also outline various driving forces behind terrorism, such as religion, gender, and state violence.

The book's main ideas are that history is a useful tool for understanding terrorism and offering potential solutions (p.451), while the past guides our actions in the present, there is also the acknowledgement that terrorism cannot be eliminated. The entirety of the book highlights how historic precedent can act as an analytical instrument to explain the causes of terrorism. The book further highlights that terrorism cannot be separated from the past, though it may look different throughout time and context, as the past gives a better understanding of what today looks like.

Overall, it is a rich book, well-researched and provides a thorough overview of the history of terrorism taking a comprehensive historical inventory of terrorist attacks. For those new to the study of terrorism, this is a fantastic resource, though it may feel rather repetitive for those who have worked within the field for some time.