

# How We Came to Think About Terrorism:

## A Conceptual History

### Dr. Julian Bourg

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Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University

With roots in the French Revolution and nineteenth-century radicalism, the modern idea of terrorism appeared suddenly in the West during the interwar era (1918–1939), shaped by the forces of revolution, war, law, and empire. Although postwar concerns about atomic weapons and genocide added to this basic conceptualization, only in the 1970s did the fully developed paradigm of terrorism emerge around the world, with important consequences for Japan. A central lesson of this conceptual history is that the real choice the world faces is not between state and non-state violence, but rather between violence and non-violence.



Julian Bourg is Associate Professor of History at Boston College and a 2018–2019 Visiting Scholar at the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies at Harvard University. His first book, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (2007), won the 2008 Morris D. Forkosch book prize from the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and in 2017 was republished in a second revised edition with a new preface. He translated and introduced a book by the political theorist, Claude Lefort, entitled, *Complications: Communism and the Dilemmas of Democracy*, and edited the volume, *After the Deluge: New Perspectives on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France*.

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