

A Brief History of Terrorism

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History of Terrorism

- The terrible thing about terrorism is that ultimately it destroys those who practice it.
- Slowly but surely, as they try to extinguish life in others, the light within them dies. —Terry Waite (British envoy kidnapped in Beirut)
- THOUGHTS?

History of Terrorism

- Many characterize modern terrorism by the # of incidents, amount of damage, and its international nature or by the influence of technology on terrorism.
- While the terrorism perpetrated by the Islamists extremists of today do have some unique features, a review of the history of terrorism shows some amazing similarities overtime and may help us better understand the phenomenon.
- Groups listed as holy terrorists were durable, destructive in their actions, and international in their reach.

Terrorism in the Ancient World

- Indian thuggees terrorism
- Jewish Sicarii
- Assassination of Julius Caesar
- Assassination of Tsar Alexander II
- Assassination of General Sisara by Jael
- While these cases are academically interesting, it isn't clear how these events relate to terrorism today

History of Terrorism

- Some of the earliest terrorist groups were the Thugs, who existed for nearly 600 years (quite a long-time for a terrorist group, by comparison the IRA & the PLO which are around 60 years old, are the oldest active groups today) in India.

History of Terrorism

The holy terrorist



A group of Indian thugs in about 1863

indian thuggees terrorism

- Thuggee or tuggee (Hindi: ठगगी :udrU;īggaḥṭ :tirksnaS; نڱ :ihdniS;agahts :adannaK;ਠੱਕ੍ਹ thakka) were the acts of Thugs, an organised gang of professional robbers and murderers .
- Thugs travelled in groups across the Indian sub-continent for six hundred years.
- To take advantage of their victims, the Thugs would join travelers and [gain their confidence](#); this would allow them to surprise and strangle the travelers with a handkerchief or noose. They would then rob and bury their victims.

indian thuggees terrorism

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZTgBNb_yPw

Jewish Sicariis

- *Sicarii* comes from the Latin word for dagger *sica*, and means assassins or murderers. The Sicarii, or "dagger men" carried out murders and assassinations with short daggers.
- **Founded In:**
- 1st Century CE (Common Era, the first year that Jesus Christ is assumed to have been born. Also called A.D., *anno domini*, meaning "in the year of our Lord.")
- The Sicarii were led by descendants of Judas of Galilee, who helped foster revolt against direct Roman rule in 6 CE, when they attempted to carry out a census of the Jews under the rule of Roman governor Quirinius in Syria, so that they could tax them. Judas famously proclaimed that the Jews should be ruled by God alone.

Jewish Sicariis

- The Zealots of Judea have aspects of a modern terrorism.
- Known to the Romans as sicarii, or dagger-men were “holy terrorist who carried on an underground campaign of assassination against the Greeks, Romans, and prominent Jews, who supported the Romans, in Judea.
- Their motive was an uncompromising belief that they could not remain faithful to the dictates of Judaism while living as Roman subjects.
- They were revolutionaries seeking to exploit messianic deliverance, a goal that is similar to the Trotskyites of the Soviet revolution.
- Their goal was to create a mass insurrection or political uprising to end Roman rule. They succeeded but were ultimately besieged and committed mass suicide at the fortification of Masada.

The Zealot revolt resulted in the second destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and the Jewish exile which influenced Jewish history for 2000 years

Jewish Sicariis

- **Objective:**
- To end Roman direct rule over the Jews.
- **Tactics:**
- The Sicariis most notable tactic was the use of short daggers to kill people. Although they were not terrorists in the modern sense, this method of murdering people in crowded places before slipping away did cause extreme anxiety among surrounding onlookers, and thus terrorize them.
- As political scientist and terrorist expert David C. Rapaport has pointed out, the Sicarii were distinct in primarily targeting other Jews considered to be either collaborators or inactive in the face of Roman rule.
- They attacked, in particular, Jewish notables and elites associated with the priesthood. This strategy distinguishes them from the Zealots, who aimed their violence against Romans.

Jewish Sicariis

- Sicarii terrorism began as Jewish resistance to Roman rule in the region, which began in 40 BCE. Fifty six years later, in 6 CE, Judea and two other districts were combined and put under the control of Roman rule in what would later be considered greater Syria.
- Jewish groups began violent resistance to Roman rule around 50 CE, when the Sicarii and other groups started using guerrilla or terrorist tactics. All out war between the Jews and the Romans broke out in 67, when Romans invaded. The war ended in 70 CE, when Roman forces devastated Jerusalem. Masada, [Herod's famous fortress](#) was conquered by siege in 74.

Jewish Sicariis

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8evRFOW3Wus>

In the late 11th century, the Hashshashin (a.k.a. the Assassins) arose

- The Assassins, a faction of Shia Islam called the Nizari Ismalis, lasted for about 200 years.
- They added public reaction or political terror, the trinity of assailant, victim, & god that characterized holy terrorism.
- They sought to recreate Islam as Mohammed practiced it. They used a cell structure and sought safe havens to plan attacks and purify the religion by eliminating prominent non-believers, a practice also used in early Islam.
- Their conquest of territory was international but also reflected tactics of counter-insurgency as they would take, hold, and develop areas often developing alliance through marriage.
- Their tactic was assassination of prominent Muslim leaders who they identified as straying from the faith.

In the late 11th century, the Hashshashin (a.k.a. the Assassins) arose

- They achieved their objective by deceiving their target as to their true faith (the practice of *taqiyya* which allows believers to deny their faith to create favorable circumstances to an attack).
- A modern analogy might be the 9/11 hijackers shaving their beards or drinking alcohol to fit in with society prior to their attacks).
- By practicing *taqiyya*, the assassin never developed a bond with their target in spite of years of close contact before killing them.
- This resulted in them being called “hashashin” or hashish eaters which is the genesis of the word assassin.
- There are reported stories of them using hashish but these are unconfirmed. However, it is known that the assailant either died in the attack or waited after his victim had been killed to be captured and killed – suicide mission, which was meant to develop sympathy among the population and inspire fearful awe in their enemies.

assassination of Julius Caesar

- The **assassination of Julius Caesar** was the result of a [conspiracy](#) by many [Roman senators](#).
- Led by [Gaius Cassius Longinus](#) and [Marcus Junius Brutus](#), they stabbed [Julius Caesar](#) to death in a location adjacent to the [Theatre of Pompey](#) on the [Ides of March](#) (March 15), 44 BC.
- Caesar was the [dictator](#) of the [Roman Republic](#) at the time, having recently been declared [dictator perpetuo](#) by the [Senate](#).
- This declaration made several senators fear that Caesar wanted to overthrow the Senate in favor of [tyranny](#).
- The conspirators were unable to restore the [Roman Republic](#). The ramifications of the assassination led to the [Liberators' civil war](#) and, ultimately, to the [Principate](#) period of the [Roman Empire](#).

assassination of Julius Caesar

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgPymD-NBQU>

History of Terrorism

Reign of Terror (French Revolution)



The French Revolution

- It is from the French Revolution that the word “terrorism” emerges but in this case refers to a conscious effort by the revolutionaries to use terror to cowl public dissent.
- Relevant to the history of modern terrorism, but a tremendously involved topic
- This form of state terrorism was used by many including the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and some Latin American dictatorships in 1960' – 80's.
- The short version is that France was an absolute monarchy with special privileges for the nobility and Catholic clergy.
- From 1789 until 1799, the French Revolution took place with the underlying goal of democracy

Reign of Terror

- Various groups battled for control of France during the Reign of Terror from 1793-94
- A radical group lead by Maximilien Robespierre enacted a policy whereby the state, supposedly to ensure justice and democracy, executed somewhere between 18,500 and 40,000 dissenters

Reign of Terror

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NAQtkUTUdg>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOuA-u6Me7o>

History of Terrorism

- In the mid- to late 18th century, terrorism was a major international issue as anarchist performed assassinations against prominent individuals including the Russian Czar Alexander II and the American President William McKinley in 1901.
- The Novodnaya Volya, a Russian anarchist group, was part of this period and is referred to as the first “modern” terrorist group. Rather than basing their actions on God like the Holy terrorists they promoted political change perpetrated by actions of man.
- Part of the goal was to draw people to the cause (recruitment) through provocative acts.
- The NV often used bombs which also resulted in the assailant dying which was meant to attract moral sympathy like the Assassin.

Result of the Revolution

- A key message in the history of terrorism is that diverse motivations including anarchy, leftist and rightist political ideologies, ethno-separatist aspirations, and religious motives, exist.
- The influence of the French Revolution spread throughout Europe making people think about their rights and democracy although it did not bring democracy.
- Do you agree with what is below?
- Planted the seeds of democracy throughout Europe?
- Or
- Served as a model for state sponsored terrorism carried out by Stalin and Hitler?
- Or started radical democracy AKA - Socialist

Democracy, Anarchism and Terrorism

- **Democracy** ([Greek](#): δημοκρατία, *Dēmokratía* literally "rule of the commoners"), in modern usage, is a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, such as a [parliament](#).^[1] Democracy is sometimes referred to as "rule of the majority".^[2] Democracy was originally conceived in [Classical Greece](#), where political representatives were chosen by a jury from amongst the male citizens: rich and poor.

Anarchism

- **Anarchism** is a [political philosophy](#) that advocates [self-governed](#) societies based on voluntary institutions. These are often described as [stateless societies](#), although several authors have defined them more specifically as institutions based on non-[hierarchical free associations](#). Anarchism holds the [state](#) to be undesirable, unnecessary, and harmful. While [anti-statism](#) is central, anarchism entails opposing [authority](#) or [hierarchical organisation](#) in the conduct of all human relations, including, but not limited to, the state system.

Our Operational Model of what terrorism is

- **VERY IMPORTANT!**
- Is an act of violence
- Has a political goal
- Is carried out against innocent people
- Is intended to frighten the larger audience

Democracy, Anarchism and Terrorism

- In 1848, radical groups supporting democracy began another smaller revolution in France
- They were called Spring of the Peoples – it spread to many European capitals
- Rebellion was quickly put down due to lack of organization and strategy
- They were crushed by monarchs and the upper class
- Disillusioned, these socialists or radical democrats turned to violence
- For the next 50 years they engaged in political violence, including bombings, assassinations and arson to bring about social change

Early Selective Terrorism

- At the end of the 1800's, European intellectuals began to support the idea of terrorism with ideological justifications
- Russia, however, emerged as the most fertile ground for terrorism
- Anarchists known as the People's Will assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881
- The Russian government quickly hunted all of them down and executed them, but they became a role model for others

Global Anarchist Terrorism Ensued

- The rise of selective terrorism – Kill leaders not innocent bystanders
- Would go as far as to abort mission if target was with wife and children
- Assassinations:
 - 1894-French President Sadi Carnot
 - 1897-Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Canovas
 - 1898-Austrian Empress Elisabeth
 - 1900-Italy's King Umberto
 - 1901-President McKinley

Moral Idealism

- Early terrorism was selective
- Political assassination was frequently used as a tool for eliminating members of governments
- There were moral limits that the terrorists were reluctant to cross
- Tended to not kill innocent people

State Terrorism

- Definition - The use of violence to gain and maintain power.
- Subsequently, state sponsored terrorism replaced anarchist terrorism, coming back to the French Revolution
- The classic examples of state sponsored terrorism are Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini, who murdered millions of their own people
- These people used their power to terrorize their own people

Post WWII Anti-Colonial Terrorism

- Colonial powers were in a state of decline
- Indigenous people fought stronger powers ruling over them with the use of terrorism
- Nationalist movements began to adopt the terror tactics of the anarchists
- If terror tactics could be used in pursuit of anarchy, oppressed people fighting for freedom from foreign occupation could also use terror
- This thinking merged the moral justification of that of nationalists with anarchists.

Nationalism

- **Nationalism** is a complex, multidimensional concept involving a shared communal identification with one's [nation](#).
- It is expressed as a [political ideology](#) oriented towards achieving and maintaining communal self-government, and sometimes [sovereignty](#), over a territory of historical significance to the group.
- Additionally, it is further oriented towards the development and maintenance of a common communal identity based on shared characteristics typically including culture, language, religion, political goals and/or a belief in a common ancestry. Individuals' membership within a nation, and their support of the associated nationalism, is illustrated by their connected [national identity](#).



Nationalist and Ethnic Terrorism

- Two types of terrorism then emerged post WWII
- Nationalist movements seeking independence from colonial occupation
- Ethnic groups attempting to separate themselves from a different majority

Left and Right Wing Terrorism

- As nationalist terrorism began to spread worldwide, terrorism began to change again
- Left and right wing groups emerged with various political agendas
- Left wing terrorism didn't survive the collapse of the Soviet Union; communism wasn't workable
- Right wing terrorism remains, but it has taken a back seat to new forms of terrorism

Left and Right Wing Terrorism

- **Left-wing terrorism** (sometimes called **Marxist–Leninist terrorism** or **revolutionary/left-wing terrorism**) is [terrorism](#) meant to overthrow conservative or [capitalist systems](#) and replace them with liberal or [socialist societies](#)
- **Right-wing terrorism** is [terrorism](#) motivated by a variety of ideologies and beliefs, including [anti-communism](#), [neo-fascism](#), [neo-Nazism](#), [racism](#), [xenophobia](#). This type of terrorism has been sporadic, with little or no international cooperation. Modern radical right-wing terrorism first appeared in western Europe in the 1980s and in eastern Europe following the [dissolution of the Soviet Union](#).

Definition of FASCISM

- **1***often capitalized* : a political philosophy, movement, or regime (such as that of the Fascisti) that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition
- **2**: a tendency toward or actual exercise of strong autocratic or dictatorial control early instances of army *fascism* and brutality —J. W. Aldridge

Definition of COMMUNISM

- **1a** : a system in which goods are owned in [common](#) and are available to all as needed
- **b** : a theory advocating elimination of private property
- **2capitalized**
- **a** : a doctrine based on revolutionary Marxian [socialism](#) and Marxism-Leninism that was the official ideology of the U.S.S.R.
- **b** : a totalitarian system of government in which a single [authoritarian](#) party controls state-owned means of production
- **c** : a final stage of society in Marxist theory in which the state has withered away and economic goods are distributed equitably
- **d** : [communist](#) systems collectively

Definition of SOCIALISM

- **1**: any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods
- **2a** : a system of society or group living in which there is no private property
- **b** : a system or condition of society in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the state
- **3**: a stage of society in Marxist theory transitional between [capitalism](#) and [communism](#) and distinguished by unequal distribution of goods and pay according to work done

Definition of CAPITALISM

- : an economic system characterized by [private](#) or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a [free market](#)

Religious Terrorism

- In the 1990's, religious terrorism emerged in the form of radical Islam
- Criminally inspired terrorism appeared in which criminals engage in terrorism for fun and profit or ally themselves with other terrorist groups for some mutual benefit, not because they believe in the cause
- At this point, it is noteworthy that terrorism came well before militant Islam