CHAPTER-2

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM

History is replete with stories of famous revolutionaries who helped to shape the society with their intrepid thoughts and fiery spirit... —Revolutionaries.

2.1 In the previous chapter we discussed the nature and definition of terrorism. It is important to know its history, when it first emerged and how it evolved over time. Thus in this chapter we would discuss about the history and evolution of terrorism.

Let us first observe the different instances of terrorism in the chronological order, which would take us right back to the era, even before the reign of terror.

Before the Reign of Terror

Scholars dispute whether the roots of terrorism can be traced base to the first century and the Sicarii Zealots, to the 11th century and the Al-Hashshashin, to the 19th century and Narodnaya Volya, or to other eras.1 Other Pre-Reign of Terror historical events which are sometimes associated with terrorism are the gunpowder plot, an attempt to destroy the English parliament in 1605, and the Boston tea party which was an attack on British property by the sons of liberty in 1773, three years prior to the American Revolution.

In the first century C.E., the Jewish Zealots in Judaea Province rebelled, killing prominent collaborators of Roman rule.2 In 6 C.E., according to contemporary historian Josephus, Juel as of Galilee formed a small and more extreme offshoot of the Zealots, the Sicarii (“dagger men”). Their efforts were directed against Jewish “collaborators”, including temple priests, Sadducees, Heradians and other wealthy elites. According to Josephus, the Sicarii would hide short dagger under their cloaks, mingle with the crowd at large festivals, murder the victims, and then disappear into the panicked crowds. Their most successful association was the high priest Jonathan.3
In the late 11th century C.E., the Hashshashin (a.k.a. the Assassins) arose, as an offshoot of the Ismaili sect of Shia Muslims. Led by Hassani-i-Sabbah and opposed to Fatimid rule, the Hashshashin militia seized Alamut and other fortress strongholds across Persia. Hashshashin forces were too small to challenge enemies militarily, so they assassinated city governors and military commanders in order to create alliances with military powerful neighbours. For e.g. they killed Janah al-Dawla, the ruler of Horus, to please Ridwan of Cleppo, and assassinated Mawdud, Seljuk Emir of Mosul, as a favour to the regent of Damascus. The Hashashashin also carried out assassinations as a form of retribution. Under some definitions of terrorism such assassinations do not qualify as terrorism, since killing a political leader does not intimidate political enemies nor does it inspire revolt.

The Reign of Terror (1793-1794)

The Reign of Terror (September 5, 1793 – July 28, 1794) or simply The Terror (French: La Terreur) was a period of eleven months during the French Revolution when the ruling Jacobins employed violence, including mass executions by guillotine, in order to intimidate the regimes enemies and compel obedience to the state. The number killed totalled approximately to 40,000, and among the guillotined were King Louis XVI his queen and Marie Antoinette. Robespierre was guillotined by other members of France’s ruling National connection, thus putting an end to the reign of terror.

The Jacobins, especially Robespierre, their leader, sometimes referred to themselves as “terrorists” and the word ‘terrorism’ originated at that time. Some modern scholars, however do not consider the Reign of Terror as a form of terrorism, partly because it was carried out by the French State.

Role of Robespierre

After the fall of monarchy, France faced more riots, largely popular insurrections, and accusations of treacherous acts by those previously considered patriots. A stable government was needed to quell the chaos. On 11th March, 1793, a Revolutionary Tribunal was established in Paris. On 6th April, the nine-member committee of Public Safety replaced the larger committee of General Defense.
27th July 1793, the convention elected Robespierre to the committee, although he had not sought the position. The Committee of General security began to manage the country’s internal police.

Though nominally all members of the committee were equal, Robespierre has often been regarded as the dominant force and, as such the defacto dictator of the country. He is also seen as the driving force behind the Reign of Terror — Louis Sebastein Eerier called him a “Sanguinocrat” — although after 1794, other participants may have exaggerated his role to down play their own contribution.

As an orator, he praised revolutionary government and argued that the terror was necessary, laudable and inevitable. It was Robespierre’s belief that the Republic and virtue were necessarily inseparable. He reasoned that the Republic could only be saved by the virtue of its citizens, and that terror was virtuous because it attempts to maintain the Revolution and the Republic. For e.g. in his *Report on the Principles of Political Morality*, given on 5th February 1794, Robespierre stated:

If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace, the spring of that government during a revolution is virtue combined with terror: virtue, without terror is destruction; terror, without virtue is impotent. Terror is only justice prompt, severe and inflexible; it is then an emanation of virtue; it is less a distinct principle than a natural consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing wants of the country. The government in the revolution is only despotism of liberty against tyranny.

Robespierre’s popularity and appeal to the community came out mostly in the way that he spoke. His speeches were exceptional, and he had the power to change the views of almost any audience (This is one of the reasons why he became such a strong force in the terror). His speaking techniques included talk of virtue and morals, and also quite often he had a few rhetorical questions in his speeches in order to identify with the audience. He would also gesticulate and use ideas and personal experiences in life to hold the listeners’ attention. And his final method was to state that he was always prepared to die in order to save the revolution (ironically, his death would be an end to the revolution) — or rather the reign of terror.
19th Century Terrorism

Terrorism was associated with the Reign of Terror in France until the mid-19th century, when the term began to be associated with non-governmental groups. Anarchism, often in league with rising nationalism, was the most prominent ideology linked with terrorism. Attacks by various anarchist groups led to the assassination of a Russian Tsar and a U.S President.

The 19th century saw the development of powerful, stable, and affordable explosives, and the gap closed between the five power of the state and dissidents. Dynamite, in particular, inspired American and French anarchists and was central to their strategic thinking, as stated by Geral Chaliand and Armand Blin in their book ‘The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to Qaeda’.

In the mid 19th century Russia, many grew impatient with the slow pace of Tsarist reforms, and anarchists such as Mikhail Bakunin maintained that Progress was impossible without violence. Founded in 1878 and inspired by Bakunin and others, Narodnaya Volya used dynamite-packed bombs to kill Russian state officials, in an effort to incite state retribution and mobilize the populace against the government. Inspired by Narodnaya Volya, several nationalist groups in the ailing Ottoman Empire began using violence against public figures in 1890s. These included it Huchakian Revolution Party, the American Revolutionary Federation and the Internal Macedowan Revolutionary organization.

The United States

In the 1805s, John Brown (1800-1859) was an abolitionist who advocated and practised armed opposition to slavery. Brown’s several attacks was between 1856 and 1859, the most famous being in 1859 against the armoury at Harpers Ferry. Local forces soon recaptured the fact and Brown was tried and executed for treason. A biographer of Brown called Eric Foner writes in his book, Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction, that Brown’s purpose was “to change the nation into a new political pattern by creating terror.”

After the Civil War, on December 24, 1865, six confederate veterans created the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The KKK used violence, lynching murder and acts of intimidation such as cross burning to oppress, in particular African
Americans, and created a sensation with the dramatic nature of its foray'. The group’s politics are generally perceived as white supremacy, anti-Semitism, racism, anti-Catholicism, and nativism. A KKK founder boasted that it was a nationwide organization of 550,000 men and that it could muster 40,000 Klansmen within five day’s notice, but as a secret or “invisible” group with no membership rosters, it was difficult to judge the Klan’s actual size. The KKK has at times been politically powerful and, at various times, controlled the governments of Tennessee, Indiana, Oklahoma and Oregon, in addition to several legislatures in the south.

**Europe**

In 1867 the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a revolutionary Irish nationalist group, carried out attacks in England. Writer Richard English has referred to such attacks as the first acts of ‘republican terrorism’ which became a recurrent feature of British and Irish history. The group is considered as a precursor to the Irish Republican Army. Europeans invented “Propaganda of the deed” a concept that advocates physical violence or other provocative public acts against political enemies in order to inspire mass rebellion or revolution.

An early proponent was the Italian revolutionary Carlo Pisacane (1818-1857), who wrote in his “Political Testament” (1857) that “ideas spring from deeds and not the other way round”. Anarchist Mikhail Bakunin stated that “we must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda.” The phrase itself was popularized by the French anarchist Paul Brousse (1844-1912) who in 1877 cited as examples the 1871 Paris Commune and a worker’s demonstration in Berne, provocatively using the socialist red flag. By the 1880s the slogan had begun to be used to refer to bombings, regicides and tyranicides. Reflecting new understanding of the term, Italian anarchist Errico Malatessa in 1895 described “propaganda by the deed” (although he opposed the use of) as violent communal insurrections meant to ignite an imminent revolution.

Individual Europeans also engaged in politically motivated violence. For e.g. in 1893, Augusta Vaillant, a French Anarchist, threw a bomb in the French Chamber of Deputies.
The Ottoman Empire

Several nationalist groups used violence against an Ottoman Empire in apparent decline. One was American Revolutionary Federation, a revolutionary movement founded in Tiflis in 1890 by Christopher Mikaelian. Many members had been part of Narodnaya Volya or the Hunchakian Revolutionary Party. The group published newsletters, smuggled arms and hijacked buildings as it sought to bring in European intervention that would force the Ottoman Empire to surrender control of its Armenian territories. On 24th August, 1896, seventeen year old Babken Suni led 26 members in capturing the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Constantinople.

Early 20th Century

Europe:

Political assassinations continued into the 20th century, its first victim Umberto I of Italy, killed in July 1900. Political violence became especially widespread in Imperial Russia, and several ministers were killed in the opening years of the century. The highest ranking was Prime Minister Pyoir Stolypin, killed in 1911 by a leftist radical.

Again Michael Collins and others found the Irish Republican Army (IRA) which from 1916 to 1923 carried numerous attacks against symbols of British Power. IRA tactics were an inspiration to other groups, including the Palestine Mandate’s Zionists, as well as to British special operation during World War II.

Middle East: Lehi (Lebameni Herut Yisrael, a.k.a. “Freedom Fighters for Israel”, a.k.a Stern Gang) was a revisionist Zionist group that splintered off from Irgun in 1940. Abraham Stern formed Lehi from disaffected Irgun members after Irgun agreed to a truce with Britain in 1940. Lehi assassinated prominent politicians as a strategy.
World War II

The resistance movement in Europe:

Some of the tactics of the guerrilla, partisan and resistance movements organized and supplied by the allies during World War II according to historian M.R.D. Foot, can be considered terrorist.\textsuperscript{11}

Aerial bombardment and civilians:

Some scholars consider the deliberate bombardment of civilian population a form of state terror, and during the military conflicts leading up to World War II and the war itself; bombing of enemy civilian populations in order to terrorize and break morale was first employed.

Early in 1930s and with greatest intensity between 1938 and 1943, the Japanese used incendiary bombs against Chinese cities such as Shanghai, Wuhan and Chonging.

Mid 20\textsuperscript{th} Century

Some of the famous instances during this Era were:

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt founded in 1928, by Hassanal Barra, who created terrorism especially in the Middle East; their main tactics was ‘assassination’ and they finally assassinated the former P.M. Mahmud Fahmi-al-Nuqrashi in 1948 – which can be considered as their famous attack. ‘Fatah of Palestine’ was founded in 1953 by Yassar Arafat. This was behind the famous Munich Olympic massacre of 1972, being influenced by Algerian rebels – which was another memorable group during this period.

Again the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) founded in 1964, is known for its famous Coastal Road Massacre.

The popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) founded in 1967 was responsible for Black September Skyjacking in 1970, being influenced by Che Guevara.

It was during the mid 20\textsuperscript{th} century, along with other notorious groups, that the Red Army Faction emerged in Germany (1968), founded by Andreas Baader
and Ulrike Meinhof whose, one of the famous attacks was German Autumn killings in 1977 which was largely influenced by Che Guevara, Mao and Vie cong.

**Late 20th Century**

The late 20th century also witnessed a number of terrorist attacks. The important terrorist groups and their attacks of this era are:

**Japanese Red Army of 1971** under Fusako Shigenobu, a name behind Lord Airport Massacre which was another notorious terrorist group.

The **Tamil Tigers** of Srilanka (1976) responsible for many other attacks like the **Columbus terminal bombing**, is another desperate group which exists even today.

The Hezbollah of Lebanon, founded in 1982 and headed by Hassan Nasrallah, was known for its famous attacks of the U.S. Embassy in April 1983 and the Beirut barracks bombings of 1983. These attacks were greatly influenced by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The events of terrorism in the mid and late 20th century mainly took place due to a clash between the powerful and the weak or, in other words due to a constant exploitation by the government of the under privileged sect.

**Terrorism in 21st century:** The Terrorist activities found in the 21st century mainly occur due to religious causes. Major events after September 11, 2001 attacks include the Moscow Theatre siege, the 2003 Istanbul bombings, the Madrid train bombings, the Berlin school hostage crisis, the 2005 London bombings, the October 2005 New Delhi bombings and finally the 2008 Mumbai Hotel seize – all carried out in the name of Jihad, which admits of only one religion, namely, Islam.

This gives us more or less a clear picture of terrorism right from and before the reign of terror till today, where the event is found in many places throughout the world due to varied causes.

Amongst its varied causes the terrorism which was found in ancient times was mainly to stop a tyrannical rule in the country. To many of history's great thinkers, violent resistant to a despotic ruler was not a crime: it was a civic duty.
Moreover those who killed them were heroes. For example, Brutus who killed Caesar was justified by the cliché that there can be no such thing as fellowship with tyrants. History thus shows that those who have acquired power had struggled to sustain it but those who inherited it had often misused and finally lost it. As a matter of fact despotic leaders who were killed in history had taken advantage of their royal lineage; hence later the notion of 'Republic' was introduced for betterment in the system.

2.2 The Evolution of Modern Terrorism: New faces of Terror

The form of terrorism is continuously changing and this marks the dynamic characteristic of terrorism. But at the surface it remains “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear...” Terrorism has evolved into the principle of irregular warfare strategy of the 21st century. It is adapting to the changes in the world socio-political environment. Some of these changes have helped them to procure and operate funding and developing new capabilities. Other changes are gradually making them the enemies of the world, and not of any nation, race or religion.

It is important to notice that societies and governments in the past were significantly different than they are today. The lack of a Central government made it impossible to use terror as a method of affecting a political authority. Absence of central authority also meant that the warfare was open to many and not only to one. Instead of National armies, a variety of private parties participated in the warfare. Their involvement in warfare was considered to be perfectly legitimate. This feature is different from the modern situation, as here the nations go to war, though private participation is actually illegal.

Today most of the instances of terrorism have their underlying cause in one particular factor, namely, unequal trade between the developing and developed nations. It is often said that the capitalist nations dominate the weaker ones as a result of which the rebel takes place; but what kind of domination is it? The major part of such domination by the developed nations is economic. The system by free trade among developed or industrial nations on the one hand and developing, agro-based, nations on the other is not a very beneficial idea for the latter. Due to this free trade the profit is actually achieved by the
former and not by the latter as most of their income go into meeting the cost of transportation and commerce. Moreover the goods which the poor countries export are items of their small scale industries, handicraft items or items of fine art – which are actually bought by the developed countries at a reasonably cheap price which leads them towards a handsome amount of profit, exploiting the poor nations who then become poorer.

This reminds us of Karl Marx’s theory of Surplus value, where we find one sect to gain more and more profit by exploiting the other.

Foreign trade thus adversely affected the economy of underdeveloped countries. Due to this uneven competition these underdeveloped countries fail to foster manufacturing industries which could have changed the face of their economy. As a result of anchoring upon it, they even lost whatever artistic skills they had.

Moreover the West utilizes, cheap labour of the developing nations, make them work for long hours by not providing them with their appropriate wage. The extra income is thus pocketed by them by virtue of which they become rich. This in the language of economics is known as ‘Surplus Value’, the theory of which is mentioned in details in Karl Mark’s book ‘Theories of Surplus Value’.

The West also extracts all resources of the poor nations until it is left with nothing in which case these nations have to finally buy their own resources from the developed nations who have utilized it all, with a high price. This occurred in Iraq – whose oil was extracted by U.S. – which is the main cause of dispute between the two nations. Such an account of the West dominating the rest has been spelled out in Niall Ferguson’s book ‘The West and the Rest’.

Terrorism is gradually changing its form. Previously it used to direct violent killing of innocents but now of late it is not so. Bio-terrorism (where people are indirectly killed or diseased by the spreading of harmful, toxic biological elements in the environment), pyrrrorterrorism – whereby the region at dispute is made treeless and barren which would indirectly harm the survival of mankind, cyber terrorism where the terrorists, who are extremely technologically strong, hack the identity and password of innocents and carry out anti-social
activities in their names – are some of the new faces of the same old phenomenon of terrorism.

Again it is seen that the introduction of the computer has created yet another new type of terrorism known as informational terrorism, which presents a threat, equal to or greater than physical terrorism. E-mail bombs and attacks on internet servers are the lowest forms of informational terrorism in terms of destruction. Higher forms of informational warfare include using the internet as a catalyst to produce physical terrorism on a higher scale. Informational warfare can be summarized as that which targets the information and information systems that compromise and support civilian and military infrastructure of an adversary. Information warfare runs deeper attacks on tanks and troops: an information warfare campaign can target and disrupt the information and networks that support crucial, day to day workings of civilian, commercial, and military systems, e.g., air traffic control, power grids, stock markets, international financial transactions, logistics controls etc. In short informational terrorism can affect millions of people, thousands of miles away, without leaving a trail for detection.

Another form of contemporary terrorism is economic terrorism, a dangerous modern technique which, not only include theft and robbery, but also methods which might finally lead to famine and drought ending in mass deaths. In economic warfare a nation, in order to screw up the other, can cut off all its commercial ties with another. For e.g. many developing or underdeveloped nations produce commodities in excess which they export to the developed nations and earn their living, wealth and revenue thereby. Now, knowing this very well the developed nations may feel a threat from those nations. Then, in order to affect them badly, the developed nations may stop buying products from them, – as a result of which the developing nations incur a huge amount of economic loss.

Again capital terrorism is a very upcoming threat in today's era of globalization. In this kind of terrorism the purchase of products of a particular nation, which was quite high at one time, goes down surprisingly; as the same commodity (sometimes even with a better quality) is produced by another nation and sold at a much lower price.
Terrorism today has also crept within our thought process. Today when a person goes to a non-secular country, he always anticipates a feeling of threat from within himself from the established religion of that particular nation. In his book ‘On Liberty’ (pp.21-22), J. Still writes that, when we are thinking then at least at this domain we are absolutely free. But today we are in a situation where one’s free thought leads to its immediate subjugation by another thought of threat from the opponents.

If this becomes the nature of terrorism where, not only human beings, but the entire nature (trees, animals and birds) face a continuous threat to their existence, then terrorism cannot be uprooted from this world, until and unless human race – the seat of all destruction, perishes completely. But this perhaps is a self-stultifying statement, as the complete decline of human race is a threat to our minds itself. But if this Armageddon is for a greater cause, i.e., creation of a newly formed, non-violent, peaceful world – then there is no such threat faced by us.

Thus from such an overview of history and evolution of terrorism, we find that the world has frequently witnessed vandalism, followed by bloodshed and ruthless deaths. It seems that violence constitutes the instinct and nature of mankind (although in some cases it proves to be appropriate if not in all). Whenever and wherever we look at, such cases inevitably occur in this world, as history tells us, - abruptly reducing the population of that region.

Such a discussion of old and new faces of terror provide us a groundbreaking analysis of how terrorism has been perceived throughout history. What becomes distinctly clear is that only through deeper understanding can we fully grasp the dangers of the phenomenon whose repercussions are far from over.
References


3. Ibid., P.68.


