

## Terror and Terrorism (I): The Path of History from Sicarii Zealots to Sons of Liberty

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**Abstract.** With the benefit of hindsight, the phenomenon of terrorism is as old as mankind and its history can be traced to all known human civilizations and economic societies depending on one's perspective of the origin of man and civilization or one's sense of economic history. It is instructive to note that the history of terrorism is a history of the various manifestations, and dimensions of the phenomenon including the various types of *terrorism* and the groups involved, over time, whether state or non-state actors. Even though a lot have been written about the history of terrorism, there seems to be a knowledge gap in the literature on the path of history of terrorism. To this end, this paper captures the essence of the roots and historical trajectory of terrorism with particular emphasis from Sicarii Zealots to Sons of Liberty. The method of gathering information for this paper is the secondary data gathering method through the use of existing literature and the internet. The objective of the paper is for us to have a knowledge-based historical understanding of the genealogy of terrorism across centuries. It is hoped that the robust knowledge of this history of terrorism would provide us with the intellectual foundation for understanding current levels and dimensions of terrorism and guide us in proffering the needed solutions to this phenomenon that is daily widening in scope and intensity and threatening man kind with annihilation.

**Keywords:** History; Terror; Terrorism; Terrorists

### 1. Introduction

Every activity of man including both the negative and positive is to some degrees trapped in time, which reflects the historical period such an activity first blossomed and flourished, the realities and problems of that period as well as its philosophical assumptions, its contemporary challenges and its

future trajectory. The subject matter of terrorism is no exception to this historical fact. As a concept that is deeply rooted in history, terrorism is deeply embedded in history and it is as old as mankind and human civilization (see Obakhedo and Unufe, 2019). The history of terrorism is a history of well-known and historically significant individuals, entities, and incidents associated, whether rightly or wrongly, with terrorism (Wikipedia, 2020). Though terrorism is as old as mankind, there is a debate as to when it came into currency.

While some view the origin from the perspective of religion, others view it from the prism of civilization and social revolution. From terrorism theorizing and existing literature, the most common roots of terrorism and causes include civilizations or culture clashes, globalization, religion, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. It is also argued that at a more personal or individual level, the reasons for terrorism include: frustration, deprivation, negative identity, narcissistic rage, and/or moral disengagement.

Scholars dispute whether the roots of terrorism date back to the 1st Century and the [Sicarii Zealots](#), to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and the [Al-Hashshashin](#), the 17<sup>th</sup> Century pre-Reign of Terror's [Gunpowder Plot](#), the Reign of Terror of the Jacobins in France, to the 19th Century and the [Fenian Brotherhood](#) and [Narodnaya Volya](#), or to other eras (Burgess, 2012; UK National Archives, 2009; Hoffman 1998:17). Arguably, history of modern terrorism began with the French revolution and has evolved ever since. It is important to note that in all past centuries including the extant 21<sup>st</sup> Century, acts of terror either from above (from the state) or from below (from individuals and groups) have reared their ugly heads. Specifically in the 20th Century, terrorism was mainly associated with a vast array of anarchist, socialist, fascist and nationalist groups, many of them engaged in [third](#)

[world'](#) anti-colonial struggles (United States Holocaust Museum, 2014; The Foundations of Modern Terrorism, 2013; Wikipedia, 2020). The hitherto known history of mankind is replete with crises of calamitous dimensions.

It is important to note that because of the volume of incidents of terror and terrorism in history, it is practically impossible for all of them to be discussed exhaustively in one paper of this nature. Therefore, this paper discusses the evolution of known cases of terrorism from the 1<sup>st</sup> Century's case of Sicarii Zealots to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century's Sons of Liberty. The later developments of terror and the trajectory of terrorism from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century till date are discussed in another paper by the authors. No doubt these papers will help us to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of terrorism, its dimensions, its impact on the human race and provide us with insights on how to proffer solutions to this hydra-headed monster which if care is not taken can wipe out the human race within a twinkle of an eye (see Obakhedo and Obakhedo, 2016). For the purpose of comprehensibility, the paper is robustly divided into five (5) sub-headings: Part I captures the introduction of the subject matter while part II discusses the conceptual issues in the discourse with Part III examining the origins of terror and terrorism in our world and why. Part IV x-ray's the evolution and history of terrorism while Part V is the concluding remarks.

## 2. Conceptual Discourse

### 2.1 Terrorism

Individuals, scholars, groups, nation-states and multi-lateral organizations have attempted to define the concept of terrorism with much of those definitions sparking-off controversies. As a result, the literature is overwhelmed with an avalanche of definitions of terrorism. A plethora of these definitions have been heavily criticized by others, either those accused of terrorism, scholars, international relations experts and practitioners etc. According to Caleb Carr (2002) terrorism is simply the contemporary name given to and the modern permutation of, warfare deliberately waged against civilian with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence can find objectionable. To Donald Harle (1989) terrorism is an intense paralyzing fear, or dread of it. Terrorism is a deliberate attempt to create terror through a symbolic act involving the use or threat of abnormal lethal force for the purpose of influencing a target group or individual.

In the contention of Louise Richardson (2001) terrorism is a politically-motivated violence directed against non-combatants or symbolic targets which is designed to communicate a message to broader audience. And to Robert Mackey (2009) "Terrorism is the deliberate killing of innocent people, at random, in order to spread fear through a whole population and force the hand of its political leaders" (Mackey, 2009). To Alex P. Schmid and A. Jongman (1988):

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims are violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are use to manipulate the main target (audience(s), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought (Schmid and Jongman, 1988:page unknown).

According to Jack Gibbs (1989) terrorism is illegal violence or threatened violence directed against human or nonhuman objects, provided that it:

(1) was undertaken or ordered with a view to altering or maintaining at least one putative norm in at least one particular territorial unit or population; (2) had secretive, furtive, and/or clandestine features that were expected by the participants to conceal their personal identity and/or their future location; (3) was not undertaken or ordered to further the permanent defense of some area; (4) was not conventional warfare and because of their concealed personal identity, concealment of their future location, their threats, and/or their spatial mobility, the participants perceived themselves as less vulnerable to conventional military action; and (5) was perceived by the participants as contributing to the normative goal previously described (supra) by inculcating fear of violence in persons (perhaps an indefinite category of them) other than the immediate target of the actual or threatened violence and/or by publicizing some cause (Gibbs, 1989:page unknown).

Terrorism has also been defined by the League of Nations Convention as all criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a

group of persons or the general public (League of Nations Convention, [1937](#)).

### 3. Roots of Terror and Terrorism

#### (a.) Origin of Terror and Terrorism

The word ‘terror’ was not coined until the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, but the phenomenon of terrorizing people through violence is as old as man himself (Giddens, 2008). In ancient civilizations, when one army invaded a city held by the enemy; it was not at all uncommon for them to raze the entire city to the ground and kill all of the men, women and children in the city (Giddens, 2008). The point of this was not just physically to destroy the enemy, but also to create terror in those living in other cities and demonstrate the power which that terror represented. So, the phenomenon of using violence with the idea of terrifying populations, especially civilian populations, is obviously older than the term (Giddens, 2008: 882). It was against this backdrop that Douglas Harper (2007) quoted a leader in the French Revolution, Maximilien Robespierre to have proclaimed in 1794 that: “Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country’s most urgent needs” (Harper, 2007).

Before the term was coined, terror and terrorism were characteristics of the Greeks and Roman Empires. For example, the terror cimbricus was a panic and state of emergency in Rome in response to the approach of warriors of the Cimbri tribe in 105 BC (Wikipedia, 2020). It is important to note that the term ‘terror’ was not invented by the French revolutionaries themselves, but by counter-revolutionaries: the people who despised the French Revolution and what it stood for and who believed that the blood-letting which went on was a form of terrorizing the population (Laqueuer, 2003; Kegley, Jr., 2007, emphasis added).

The origin of the term, “terrorism” is a subject to several theories (Wikipedia, 2020). One theory states that it comes from the French word *Terrorisme* which is based on the Latin verb “*Terrere*” which means “to cause to urinate” (see Juergensmeyer, 2001). On his part, Douglas Harper (2007) contends that terrorism is derived from both Latin and French; namely: *terrere* (Latin), “to frighten” and, “*terrorisme*” (French). It is line with this that another theory states that it comes from the French word *terrorisme* often associated with the *Regime la terreur*

meaning the “Reign of Terror” of the Revolutionary government of France of September 5, 1793 to July 28, 1794 (see OED, 2007; Harper, 2007). From both Latin and French, terrorism can be viewed as “to frighten” and “to cause to urinate” or to quake to the bone marrow as if life is about to taken out.

The English word “terrorism” that replaced “*terrere*”, “*terrere*” and “*terrorisme*” connotes the “systematic use of terror as a policy” (see OED, 2007; Harper, 2007). Although the Reign of Terror was imposed by a government, in modern times “terrorism” usually refers to the killing of innocent people (Mackey, 2009) by a private group in such a way as to create a media spectacle (Lott, 2001). This meaning can be traced back to Sergey Nechayev, who founded the Russian terrorist group “People’s Retribution” in 1869 who described himself as a “terrorist” (Crenshaw, 1990:77). The description of terrorism as “systematic use of terror as a policy” which was first recorded in English dictionaries in 1798 is at variance with the contemporary meaning and manifestations of the term (see OED, 2007; Harper, 2007). This difference in meaning explains the various forms of terrorism that had manifested themselves across the globe over the years (Wikipedia, 2020).

### 4. The Evolution of Terrorism

Terrorism has existed for thousands of years and its history is a history of the various types of terrorism and the groups involved over time (Wikipedia, 2020). Historically, the vast majority of terrorist acts in traditional societies were religion-inspired and these historical examples are a good reminder that religiously-inspired terrorism - a major contemporary concern - is certainly not new (Goldstein, 1996; see also Johnson and Lelsay, 1990; Piscatori, 1984; Esposito, 1992; Binder, 1988). According to Thomas M. Magstadt (2006) even though all terrorisms in history are not related to religion, there seems to be a link between terrorism and religious fundamentalism with Islamic extremism an obvious case in point (P.464). Both in the past and in recent time, religion-based ‘terrorists’ often claimed they were carrying out the will of God (see Magstadt, 2006: 464). However, many terrorists are not religious and few religious fundamentalists engage in acts of terrorism (Magstadt, 2006: 464). Still, terrorism appears to have its roots in religion – specifically, its origins can be traced to three obscure religious sects (the names of which have entered into our vernacular – Zealots, Assassins and Thugs (Rapoport, 1988; Weiberg and Davis, 1989, emphasis added).

#### 4.1 Ancient and Early Terrorism: From Sicarii Zealots, 'Order of Assassins' to 'Reign of Terror'

##### 4.1.1 The Sicarii Zealots of 1<sup>st</sup> Century

While historical examples of terrorist events can be traced in writing to Biblical times, the Romans were known to have both practiced and been the recipients of terrorist activities (Carr, 2002). According to Gordon Greavette (2004) the Roman Empire in the contention of Caleb Carr experienced guerrilla warfare and terrorist activities throughout its history as an empire to reckon with (emphasis added). However, the earliest recorded instances of terrorism in the ancient world and the West was carried out by Sicarii Zealot, a Jewish extremist group active in [Judaea Province](#) at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD against the Romans (Chaliand, 2007:68; see Goldstein, 1996:206; Johnson and Lelsay, 1990; Piscatori, 1984; Esposito, 1992; Binder, 1988, emphasis added). This extremist Jewish group also killed outsiders and helped provoke rebellion against 'pagan' Rome in 66-73 CE (Weiberg and Davis, 1989). But their effort failed and some 2,000 Zealots were crucified with those who survived turning into guerrilla warfare, and were finally crushed when their last mountain stronghold, Masada, was surrounded and 960 men, women, and children committed mass suicide (see Goldstein, 1996:206).

According to contemporary historian Josephus, after [Zealotry](#) rebellion in the 1st century AD, when some prominent collaborators with Roman rule were killed (Hoffman, 1988; Chaliand, 2007) [Judas of Galilee](#) formed a small and more extreme offshoot of the Zealots, the [Sicarii](#), "dagger men" in 6 AD (Chaliand, 2007:6). According to Josephus, the Sicarii would hide short daggers under their cloaks, mingle with crowds at large festivals, murder their victims, and then disappear into the panicked crowds with their most successful assassination being that of the [High Priest of Israel](#) Jonathan (Chaliand, 2007:68). This later radical [Sicarii](#) from 6 A.D. assassinated local government officials, Roman imperial officials and all pro-Roman and collaborationist Jews in an attempt to ignite uprisings and drive the Romans out of Palestine (Goldstein, 1996:206, Wikipedia, 2020; see Hoffman, 1988, emphasis added).

Their terror also was directed against Jewish "collaborators", including temple priests, Sadducees, Herodians, and other wealthy elites (Hoffman, 1988:167). However, based on their terror acts, the sect has been described as one of the earliest forerunners of modern [terrorism](#) that intended their actions to suggest a message to a wider target audience in this instance, the Roman imperial

officials and all pro-Roman and collaborationist Jews (Wikipedia, 2020; see Hoffman, 1998, emphasis added).

#### 4.2 Terror in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and Beyond: The Hashshashins or 'Order of Assassins' or 'The Assassins'

##### 4.2.1 The Assassins

Beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century after the Zealots was a Shi'ite Muslim (or [Shia Muslim](#)) Sect known as Hashshashins, a deadly and shadowy Islamic Fundamentalist and an offshoot of the Isma'ilis sect led by [Hassan-i Sabbah](#), which was itself a breakaway group from the Medieval Shi'ite Muslims that used the drug, Hashish, as a means of reaching a state of religious ecstasy that strengthened them to perform their sacred work, which was "the murder of both Christians and Muslims they considered enemies of their faith and their sect" (Carr, 2002:52-53; Rapoport, 1990:121; Rapoport, 1984:658; see Greavette, 2004). According to Gordon Greavette (2004) the Hashshashin cult later became known in the western world as the "Order of Assassins" (Greavette, 2004; Laqueur, 1999:11) and till date perpetrators of such acts of terrorist violence are known as 'assassins' (emphasis added). The Hashshashin militia was opposed to [Fatimid](#) rule and they seized Alamut and other fortress strongholds across Persia; but the Hashshashin forces were too small to challenge enemies militarily, so they assassinated city governors and military commanders in order to create alliances with militarily powerful neighbours (Willey, 2001:19; Daftary, 1995:42). For example, they killed Janah al-Dawla, ruler of [Homs](#), to please [Ridwan of Aleppo](#), and assassinated [Mawdud](#), [Seljuk](#) Emir of [Mosul](#), as a favour to the Regent of [Damascus](#) (Daftary, 1995:42). The [Hashshashin](#) also carried out assassinations as retribution (Hodgson, 2005:83).

Arguably, the Hashshashins, the Assassins or simply the Order of Assassins became the first truly non-state group to become known for the application of terror as it murdered outsiders in a campaign to "purify" Islam (see Carr, 2002; Weiberg and Davis, 1989:22, emphasis added). However, under some definitions of terrorism, such [assassinations](#) do not qualify as terrorism, since killing a political leader does not intimidate political enemies or inspire revolt (Burgess, 2012; Chaliand, 2007:68; Hoffman 1998:84, emphasis added). And towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and the Middle Ages and later during the Reformation, violent sects arose within Christianity as well (Weiberg and Davis, 1989:22, emphasis added).

#### 4.2.2 The Thugs

There was also the Thugs Sect, a Hindu Sect in India which was finally destroyed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Weiberg and Davis, 1989). The earliest authenticated mention of thugs as a band or fraternity, rather than ordinary thieves, appears in Ziyā-ud-Dīn Baranī's History of Fīrūz Shāh, dated around 1356 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017, emphasis added). Etymologically, the word "Thug" derives from the Hindi term *thag*, which itself comes from Sanskrit's *sthagati*, which means a "thief", a "swindler" or a "deceiver" or cunning, sly or fraudulent or "he conceals" (Encyclopedia, 1902; Wikipedia, 2020). The word "thug" was Anglicized (incorporated into English Language as an English word) during the time of British Imperial rule of India and still denotes a brutality to this day. Members of the thug cult were originally called Thuggee or Tuggee meaning "deceivers" (Wikipedia, 2020).

The thugs or thuggee or tuggee referred to an Indian network of secret fraternities which consisted both of Hindus and Muslims though their patron deity was the Hindu Goddess Kali who engaged in murdering and robbing travellers (Dash, 2005). Thuggee was a secret cult whose members, both Muslims and Hindus, and they operated as gangs of highway robbers, tricking and later strangling their victims (Katsan, 2006). Thuggee or tuggee or Thugs refers to, an organised gang of professional robbers and murderers (Wikipedia, 2020). Arguably, the Thugs trace their origin to seven Muslim tribes and Hindu, including the battle of Kalee or Kali (a Hindu goddess of destruction) against Raktabija (Luchesi and von Stuckrad, 2004), from historical evidence available, the Thugs considered themselves children of Mother Kali, created from her sweat (Luchesi and von Stuckrad, 2004). According to colonial sources, Thugs believed they had a positive role in saving human lives and that without the Thugs' sacred service, Kali might destroy all humankind (von Woerkens and Tihanyi, 2002). It was for this 'sacred service' that some writers classify the thugs as a religious cult or sect (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017).

Thugs travelled in groups across the Indian sub-continent for six hundred years (Los Angeles Times, 2003). They operated from as early as the thirteenth century until they were suppressed by the British in the nineteenth century (Wikipedia, 2020). The Thugs' modus operandi was to join a caravan as fellow travellers, delaying their attack until the other

travellers lost their initial wariness of the newcomers (Wikipedia, 2020). To take advantage of their victims, the Thugs would join travellers and gain their confidence; this would allow them to surprise and strangle the travellers with a handkerchief or noose (Wikipedia, 2020). They would then rob and kill them, and bury their victims ((Wikipedia, 2018; emphasis added). This led to the Thugs being called Phansigar (English: "using a noose"), a term more commonly used in southern India (Russell and Lai, 1995).

According to the Guinness Book of Records (McWhirter, 1979), the Thuggee cult was responsible for approximately two million deaths while British historian Mike Dash said that the thugs killed a total of 50,000 people over an estimated 150 years (Dash, 2005). Analysts say this was based on Mike Dash's assumption that they only started to exist 150 years before their eradication in the 1830s (see Dash, 2005). Political scientist David C. Rapoport estimated that 500,000 people were killed by the Thugs (Richardson, 2007). According to other estimates, they murdered one million people (Chowdry, no date). Yearly figures for the early nineteenth century are better documented, but even they are inaccurate estimates (McWhirter, 1979). For example, gang leader Behram has often been considered to be the world's most prolific serial killer with 931 killings between 1790 and 1830 attributed to him (McWhirter, 1979).

Reference to contemporary manuscript sources, however, shows that Behram actually gave inconsistent statements regarding the number of murders he had committed, and that while he did state that he had "been present at" more than 930 killings committed by his gang of 25-50 men, elsewhere he admitted that he had personally strangled around 125 people. Having turned King's Evidence and agreed to inform on his former companions, furthermore, Behram never stood trial for any of the killings attributed to him, the total of which must thus remain a matter of dispute (Paton, see also Dutta, 2005).

Though sporadic efforts were made toward the extinction of the gangs before the 1830s, but it was Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India (1833–35) and his chief captain, William Henry Sleeman that took vigorous steps that targeted the Thugs for total eradication (Britannica.com; Wikipedia, 2018). Captain William Sleeman, with the cooperation of the authorities in a number of princely states, succeeded so well in eliminating the evil that from 1831 to 1837 no fewer than 3,266 thugs had

been captured, of whom 412 were hanged, 483 gave evidence for the state, and the remainder were transported or imprisoned for life (Britannica.com; Wikipedia, 2018). The fraternity presumably thereafter became extinct (Britannica.com; Wikipedia, 2020). The Thugs Sect had existed for many, many centuries in India as highway ambushers who secretly killed thousands of other Hindus apparently out of some perverse sense of religious duty (see Weiberg and Davis, 1989).

#### 4.3 Terror in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century: The Case of the Gunpowder Plot

The next pre-Reign of Terror notable act in the evolution of terrorism in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century is the November 5, 1605 Gunpowder Plot. On November 5, 1605 a group of conspirators led by [Robert Catesby](#) which had in 1604 leased a coal cellar beneath the House of Lords by stockpiling gunpowder in what is now referred to as the Gunpowder Plot, attempted to destroy the [English Parliament](#) on the [State Opening](#), by detonating a large quantity of the [gunpowder](#) secretly placed beneath the [Palace of Westminster](#) in a grand design to kill [King James I](#) and the members of both Houses of [Parliament](#) along with leading noblemen and the conspirators planned to make one of the king's children a puppet monarch and in the resulting anarchy implement a coup that will restore the Catholic faith to England through a Catholic monarch (UK National Archives, 2009 cited by Wikipedia, 2020). The gunpowder was procured and placed by [Guy Fawkes](#) (Wikipedia, 2020). The plotters' aims were nothing short of a total revolution in the government of England, which would have killed the King as well as hundreds, if not thousands, of Londoners; and by that very fact, this incident would have been the most devastating act of terrorism in Britain's history, plunging the nation into a religious war (see Wikipedia, 2020, emphasis added).

Unfortunately for the conspirators, English spymasters uncovered the plot and caught Guy Fawkes with the gunpowder beneath Parliament and the other conspirators fled to Holbeach in Staffordshire (History Today, 2018). A shoot out on November 8 with authorities led to the deaths of Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy and the brothers Christopher and John Wright with the rest been captured while Guy Fawkes and seven others were tried and executed in January 1606 (History Today, 2018). As a memorial, this planned attack has become known as the Gunpowder Plot and is commemorated in Britain every November 5 with fireworks displays and large bonfires with effigies of

Guy Fawkes and [the Pope](#) are often burned (History Today, 2018). The groups engaged in several acts that could be considered terrorist acts and used the deeds for propaganda purposes and it is trite to note that comparisons are often drawn between Gunpowder Plot and modern religious terrorism, such as the attacks in the US by Islamic terrorists on [9/11](#) 2001 (see Varsity Tutors Online; Britten, 2005; Fraser, emphasis added).

#### 4.4 Terrorism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: From the Sons of Liberty to 'Reign of Terror'

The next major remarkable terror acts through the last few years of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century are the Sons of Liberty and the Reign of Terror. The [Sons of Liberty](#) were an underground group formed in [Boston](#) and [New York City](#) in the 1770s with a political agenda of independence of Britain's American colonies (Varsity Tutors Online, no date). This clandestine group was equally opposed to British Rule in these colonies and committed several attacks most famous among these was the [Boston Tea Party](#) (Wikipedia, 2020). As stated earlier, the modern day terror and terrorism can be traced to the events of the French Revolution in the last few years of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the political class struggles that were associated with it – the "Reign of Terror" of September 5, 1793 – July 28, 1794 or simply "The Terror", a period of about eleven months during the [French Revolution](#) when struggles between rival factions led to mutual radicalization which took on a violent character with mass executions by [guillotine](#) with the victims of the Reign of Terror totaled approximately 40,000 (see Wikipedia, 2020, emphasis added).

The [Jacobins](#), who ruled the revolutionary state, employed violence, including mass executions by guillotine, to compel obedience to the state and intimidate regime's enemies (Furstenberg, 2007). The Jacobins, most famously Robespierre, sometimes referred to themselves as "terrorists" (Furstenberg, 2007). Some modern scholars, however, do not consider the Reign of Terror a form of terrorism, in part because it was carried out by the French state (Hoffman, 1998:1; Chaliand, 2007:6). From among people who were condemned by the revolutionary tribunals, about 8 percent were aristocrats, 6 percent clergy, 14 percent middle class, and 70 percent were workers or peasants accused of hoarding, evading the draft, desertion, rebellion, and other purported crimes (Harvey, 2006). The struggles have been considered the first co-ordinated and concerted effort at internal, state terrorism as the leader of the Jacobin Club, Maximilien Robespierre and his revolutionaries on

the Parisian ‘Committee of Public Safety’ were the first to attempt “the elevation of primitive passion into a high-flown political philosophy, and to create an organization that tried to systematize murder and other lawlessness into a set of rules” (Parry, 1976: see Greavette, 2004).

It is in line with the above terrorist acts that scholars have argued that modern day revolutionary terror is usually traced to more secular roots, often to the French anarchists (Rapoport, 1988:146). However, the association of the term ‘terrorism’ only with state violence and intimidation lasted until the mid-19th century, when it began to be associated with non-governmental groups (Wikipedia, 2020). As a human activity, terrorist acts are stimulated by psychological motivation that is a distorted by-product of both individual and group thinking, interaction and motivation (Greavette, 2004). By committing terrorist acts, perpetrators of this type of violent warfare are, in their view, merely pursuing their extreme interests in the political arena in an unorthodox manner (Crenshaw, 1990). Empirical evidence available in the literature supports the argument that terrorist acts are often motivated by either religious or cultural considerations, which manifest itself in their need to pursue changes to the existing political societal structure through their heinous terrorist activities (see Greavette, 2004).

### 5. Concluding Remarks

So, from ancient times, as evident in the assassination of tyrants in ancient Greece and Rome, and by the Zealots of Palestine and the Hashshashin of Medieval Islam, terrorism has metamorphosed from conventional terrorism to catastrophic terror with the phenomenon posing annihilating threat to human existence. It is against this backdrop that it is argued that our world today appears to have given way to gangsterism as order in the international system has given way to Medieval and Dark Ages barbarism and savagery and terrorism has become the norm in reaction to the violence arrogance of comprador imperialism (Orobator, 2005).

The lesson that can be inferred from the historical trajectory of terrorism is that the offshoots of terrorism is traced to unresolved issues and the barrage of obstacles to achieving or realizing age-long individual or group(s) dreams and for us to be able to confront the phenomenon, we need to understand the historical underpinnings of such cases of conflict and resolve them dispassionately in the interest of global peace, otherwise, terrorism would be more sophisticated and more deadlier and if

adequate care is not taken, some terrorists may find and use weapons of mass destruction in attempts to wipe out the entire human race and by then, the terrorism of today would be the history of terrorism tomorrow.

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