The History and Development of Terrorism

Chapter 6

Social Revolution and the Enlightenment

- 18th Century considered Age of Reason or the Period of Enlightenment
- Many people believed they were living in a time of historical change
- The deductive logic of the former age was gradually replaced by faith in empirical observations
- Prior to the Enlightenment, a large segment of the European population was tied to a class of nobles, while smaller groups of people were part of emerging trade and professional classes

Social Revolution and the Enlightenment (cont.)

- During the Enlightenment, many Europeans began to question the manner in which they were governed
  - Sought to increase the power of the lower classes
  - The forces of change during the Enlightenment brought a new way of thinking about citizenship
  - Enlightenment was an international intellectual movement
Social Revolution and the Enlightenment (cont.)
- Philosophers produced a common idea about government
  - Governments should exist to protect individual rights
  - Best form of government was democracy
  - Citizens had rights
  - Governments were created to protect those rights
  - Common people should control the government through social contract or constitution
- The Enlightenment brought an increased demand for democracy
  - Tension developed between the ruling class and the governed
  - Tension often spilled into violence

Social Revolution and the Enlightenment (cont.)
- The American Revolution
  - By 1775, American talk of democracy moved from the intellectual circles to the streets and eventually to the battlefield
  - The Second Continental Congress declared independence from Britain on 4 July 1776
  - The revolution did bring about a profound change, even though it was conservative
  - Democracy was no longer an idea inside debating circles of Enlightenment philosophers
  - Americans created a republic based on a representative democracy

Relationship Between Terrorism and Democracy
- Terrorist attacks occur more frequently in democracies than in any other form of government
  - Between 2000 and 2003:
    - 530 attacks
    - 390 occurred in countries practicing full or limited democracy
The French Revolution (1789-1799)

- French Revolution based on same enlightened principles as American Revolution
- French Revolution was different and had a more deadly tone
- Extremely bloody
- First revolution in the modern sense of the word
- American Revolution transferred power from British upper class to American upper class
- French Revolution was a transfer of power between classes
- American Revolution represented long-term evolutionary process toward democracy
- French Revolution represented a radical shift in power structures

The Reign of Terror

- Term terrorism appeared during the French Revolution
- Edmund Burke, British philosopher, used the word to describe the situation in revolutionary Paris.
- Referred to the violence as the “Reign of Terror”
- Used the word terrorism to describe actions of the new government

The Reign of Terror

- Members of the Committee of Public Safety were called terrorists by French nobles, their families and sympathizers
- As the government consolidated power, the would-be democracy gave way to Napoleon Bonaparte and military authoritarianism
Guerrillas and the Spanish Peninsula

- Meaning of terrorism underwent a subtle change during Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1807
  - Spanish partisans attacked French troops in unconventional manners
  - Spanish called it patriotism
  - French referred to Spanish partisans as terrorists
- Definition shifted away from gov't. repression and toward those who resisted gov't.
- Definitional transformation continued throughout 19th century.

1848 and the Radical Democrats

- The democrats of the early 1800s were not united
- In the wake of failure, disgruntled democrats began to speak of non-legislative avenues for change
- Radical democrats demanded immediate and drastic change
  - Democracy should be based on economic equality as well as freedom
  - Wanted to distribute wealth created by trade and manufacturing evenly

1848 and the Radical Democrats (cont.)

- Many socialists, including a group of socialists called communists, argued for centralized control of the economy
- Anarchists, sometimes allies and sometimes foes of the socialists, wanted to reduce or eliminate centralized government
- Capitalists opposed all forms of socialism and anarchy
1848 and the Radical Democrats (cont.)
- The radical democrats called for class revolution, which came in 1848
- The revolutions demonstrated common people were aware of economic tensions
- However, the revolutions were unable to change the system
- A small number of radical democrats went “underground”
  - Chose subversive violence as a means to challenge authority
- They became popularly known as “terrorists”
  - They hoped to achieve social revolution by terrorizing the capitalist class and its supporters

Strains of Radical Democrats
- Three strains of radical democrats came together after the failed revolutions of 1848:
  - Socialists
  - Communists
  - Anarchists

Strains of Radical Democrats - Socialists
- Democratize society and assume control of industrial production
  - Believed strong state would ensure profits from industry were distributed in an egalitarian manner
- Socialism: A broad set of economic theories of social organization advocating state or collective ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods, and the creation of an egalitarian society
- One of the chief spokespersons and intellectuals in the socialist camp was Karl Marx, the founder of communism
Strains of Radical Democrats
- **Communists**
  - A particular form of socialism
  - Advocated strong centralized government
  - Elimination of all classes save the working class
  - Complete state monopoly over all forms of industrial and agricultural production
  - **Communism:** A socioeconomic structure that promotes the establishment of an egalitarian, classless, stateless society based on the common ownership of the means of production

Strains of Radical Democrats
- **Anarchists**
  - Shared many ideas about the egalitarian nature of society with socialists, but they disagreed on the function of the state
  - Concerned with the distribution of wealth
  - **Anarchism:** Theories and attitudes which support the elimination of all compulsory government

Strains of Radical Democrats
- **Anarchists** (cont.)
  - Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865)
    - One of the advocates of modern anarchism
    - Called for the extension of democracy to all classes
    - To be accomplished through the elimination of all property and government
    - Believed that anarchy would develop peacefully as people learned about the structure of governments and the capitalist economy
Violent Anarchism

- Socialists and anarchists debated the efficacy and morality of violence
  - Most of the people who called for revolution spoke of mass action, not individual violence
  - In the 1880s, anarchists began assassinating heads of state
    - They started using Alfred Nobel’s new invention, dynamite
  - Richard Jensen: Initial calls for revolution in history cannot be associated with terrorism
  - 1880 press and politics collapsed all forms of socialism into generic term – anarchism

Violent Anarchism (cont.)

- Richard Jensen: Says several factors merged to create a culture of terrorism among some members of the anarchist movement
  - The first cause for transformation can be found in the growing number of people attracted to the movement
    - Internal debates over how to achieve change
    - Economic change also influenced the anarchist movement
      - New political structure effectively blocked peaceful change
      - Economic consolidation was accompanied by social stress
      - Nationalistic factors also influenced the growth and spread of violence after 1880

Violent Anarchism (cont.)

- Propaganda by the deed
  - Violent anarchists wanted to send the message that no industrialist was safe and that the capitalist order would crumble under the “philosophy of the bomb”
  - The final factor influencing the adoption of violent action was the invention of dynamite
    - Gave individuals or small groups a psychological edge
    - Rhetoric gave birth to propaganda of the deed, but dynamite fostered the philosophy of the bomb
Violent Anarchism (cont.)

- Anarchists championed political assassination
  - Police officials, politicians, royal leaders, and presidents were killed by anarchists from Russia to U.S.
  - Trend lasted well into the 20th century
- By 1880, various groups of left wing revolutionaries came to be known as anarchists in the popular mind

Rhetoric, Internal Debates, Action

- Peter Prokoptin (Russian prince 1842-1921)
  - Believed humanity existed between two competing entities:
    - Cooperation
      - Mutual aid and humanitarianism (tribes, villages, trade guilds)
    - Authoritarianism
      - Humans tended to arrange themselves into hierarchies and to give authority to their leaders
  - This competition led to tension
  - Advocated evolutionary change
  - He called for revolution, but abhorred violence

Rhetoric, Internal Debates, Action (cont.)

- Mikhail Bukunin (1814-1876)
  - Rejected Prokoptin’s non-violent anarchy
    - Called for “propaganda of the deed”
  - Revolutionaries could not use the state as an instrument of emancipation because it was inherently oppressive
    - The state must be destroyed
    - Its destruction will come when masses of people recognized they were being exploited by the state
  - Advocated bombing and assassinations as a way of awakening the masses to reality
Rhetoric, Internal Debates, Action (cont.)

- Karl Heinzen:
  - Advocated political murder
  - Murder that could be arbitrarily distributed through society

- Johann Most (1846-1906)
  - Published Heinzen's writings in a radical newspaper, Freiheit
  - Advocated terrorism in Freiheit and called for violent action, the best form of propaganda

- Heinzen and Most represent an important transition in the history of Western terrorism

Modern Terrorists and Their Historical Counterparts

- Walter Laqueur:
  - Modern terrorists are more ruthless than their historical counterparts
  - Terrorism of historical terrorists was mainly rhetorical
  - Anarchists were selective about their targets
  - Modern terrorism has been typified by indiscriminate violence and intentional targeting of civilian population
  - Modern terrorists strike at governments by killing citizens

Modern Terrorists and Their Historical Counterparts (cont.)

- Isabel Duyvesteyn:
  - Modern terrorism is directly related to past practices
  - Debate between old and new practices of terrorism involves a false dichotomy
  - No research has confirmed there is a new terrorism
  - Use of old and new labels does nothing to clarify contemporary problems
Anarchism and Nationalism

Nationalist trends accompany anarchist violence in the West
- Nationalists under foreign control adopted tactics of anarchists to fight foreign powers occupying their lands
- Nationalist groups throughout Europe turned to the philosophy of the bomb
- Nationalistic terrorists followed patterns set by violent anarchists

Nationalists believed they were fighting for their countries
- While anarchists were socially isolated, nationalists hoped for greater support
- Nationalists saw themselves as fighting patriotic wars
  - They only adopted tactics of anarchists
- Governments labeled them as terrorists
  - Irish Republican Army (IRA) grew from this period
- The moral justification for anarchist and nationalist terrorism is essentially the same

Terrorism in the modern sense came from violent anarchists in the late 1800s
- The most successful actions took place in Russia prior to the 1905 and 1917 revolutions
  - Anarchist groups assassinated several Russian officials including the tsar
- Anarchism also spread to the United States
  - In America it took the form of labor violence
  - American anarchists, usually immigrants from Europe, saw themselves linked to organized labor
A Contemporary Analogy
- 19th century anarchists created a panic and their activities were sensationalized by the press
  - People feared anarchism
  - Believed it was an international conspiracy to topple western governments
- Yet the anarchists failed
  - They tried to ally with labor movements
  - Labor leaders would not support random violence
  - Anarchism was strongest where industrialization was weakest

A Contemporary Analogy (cont.)
- Early 1900s witnessed several events that increased the public’s fear of anarchism
  - Assassination of President McKinley
  - Russian Revolution of 1917
  - Boston Police Strike of 1919
  - Red Scare of 1919
- Culminated in measures that resulted in the violation of civil liberties of several Americans
- Could the reactive measures of 9-11 be considered parallel to the over-reactive measures taken in the early 1900s?

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921
- Late 19th century Russia differed significantly from the other powers in Europe
  - Class distinctions between nobles and peasant were virtually the same as they had been prior to the French Revolution, and Russian peasants were beset by poverty
Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- Narodnaya Voyla (The Peoples' Will) represented violent socialist revolution
- After 1850, three groups felt they could reform and modernize the Russian state, but they disagreed about how to do it
  - One group, like Tsar Alexander, wanted to modernize Russia from the top down
  - Another group, the intellectuals, wanted Russia to become a liberal Western democracy
  - Violent anarchists believed that Russia's problems could be solved through revolution
    - The People's Will represented such a group

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- The People's will began a campaign of revolutionary terrorism in the 1870s
- The motivation behind People's Will evolved from Russian revolutionary thought, and the philosophy was embodied by Mikhail Bakunin and Sergey Nechaev
  - Both advocated violence, but neither participated
  - Russian anarchists were writing for a general population in the hope of sparking a democratic revolution

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- Nechaev laid down principles of revolution in "Catechism of the Revolutionary"
- Bakunin believed the Russian government was established on thievery
  - Argued in "Revolution, Terrorism, Banditry" that the only method of breaking state power was revolt
  - Revolutionary sympathy was high among the peasants, giving them a closer relationship with many urban workers
Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- The People's Will campaign
  - People's Will murdered the police chief of Moscow and went on a campaign of bombing and murder
  - In May 1881, they succeeded in striking their ultimate target—they killed Tsar Alexander II
  - Tsar Alexander III (ruled 1881-1894)
    - Ended all attempts at reform
    - People’s Will was eliminated
    - Revolutionaries went underground

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- Tsar Nicholas
  - Faced his first revolution in 1905, after his army lost a war to Japan
  - In addition to losing the war, Russia was consumed with economic problems and bureaucratic inefficiency
  - Russian revolutionaries needed another national disaster to create an atmosphere for victory
  - It came in 1914, when Russia entered WW I

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- Tsar Nicholas (cont.)
  - In February 1917, a general strike in St. Petersburg turned into a revolution
    - Unlike 1905, the Russian army joined the workers, and a new government was formed
    - 1917 saw the formation of a new Russian government
      - The February revolutionaries, called Mensheviks came to power
      - Workers Councils (Soviets) were established
      - The primary mistake of the Mensheviks, was that they kept Russia in an unpopular war
Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- Seeing unrest for the war in Russia, the Germans sought a way to use that unrest to remove Russia from the war.
- They found it when Vladimir Lenin offered to remove Russia from the war if they would help him gain control of the Bolsheviks (communist revolutionaries who opposed the Mensheviks).
- The Germans did, and in October 1917, Lenin orchestrated a second revolution, gained control of Russia, and removed it from the war.

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- The Russian revolution utilized terrorism in a new manner.
  - Created an impact on peoples' view of terrorism in the 20th century.
  - Lenin and one of his lieutenants, Leon Trotsky, believed terrorism should be used as an instrument for overthrowing middle-class, or bourgeois, governments.
  - Advocated terrorism as a means of controlling internal enemies and as a method for coping with internal strife.

Terrorism and Revolution in Russia: 1881-1921 (cont.)

- By threatening to export terror, Lenin and Trotsky effectively placed fear of communist revolution in the minds of many in the West.
- Lenin’s victory and subsequent writings have inspired terrorists from 1917 to the present.