

TERRORIST MENTALITY:  
A COMMON LINK THROUGHOUT HISTORY?

A Comparison of Narodnaya Volya, the French Reign of Terror,  
And the Muslim Brotherhood

By

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## ABSTRACT

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With the destruction of the twin towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, counter-terrorism moved to the forefront of national security priorities for the United States. Analyzing the strategies and tactics of a terrorist group is useful in order to effectively combat the terrorist group. This research takes a step further to provide an equally valuable tool for recognizing and countering terrorist groups, and that is to understand the terrorist mentality common to each terrorist group.

This analysis compares the terrorist mentality of the leaders of the French Reign of Terror, the Narodnaya Volya and the Muslim Brotherhood. This work will provide the historical background and development of each group. Also, the ideologies that formed through the writings and/or speeches of the radical leader(s) for each group will then be carefully analyzed. In addition, an examination of the beliefs that formed the terrorist mentality of each group will be compared and clarified. This thesis will show how terrorist groups are identifiable at the onset of their development and provide strategies for recognizing the characteristics of terrorism.

## DEDICATION

To my mother

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I set out in my graduate career with the purpose of studying a wide variety of subjects. When I needed to narrow my focus, I turned to the professor who inspired me the most, Dr. Thomas W. Heilke. His analytical mind and passion for political philosophy were too enticing to pass up.

This endeavor is altogether inspired by Dr. Heilke, and made achievable because of his encouragement and guidance. I am indebted to him for his patience, and I am honored to have studied with him.

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## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In response to the terrorist attacks on American soil on September 11, 2001, the United States began to shift its focus from national spending on conventional warfare capabilities to counter-insurgency capabilities. Policy-makers recognized a change in the type of warfare the United States government expects to confront in the coming years. They also recognized that lines between military and civilian have become blurred. Additionally, The National Intelligence Council in its publication of *Global Trends 2025* declared the growing importance of recognizing and combating terrorist groups.<sup>1</sup>

Significantly important today is the development of technology and its availability to smaller groups of combatants. State militaries are now more vulnerable to these smaller groups, which lack the high-tech and expensive military expertise of superior, modern-state militaries, but which nevertheless have the ability to inflict damage because of new technologies. Governments now need to continue improving their tactics in order to effectively combat this type of asymmetrical warfare. Our current conflicts are fundamentally a struggle for ideas and we need to shift our focus from much of what we know about previous wars.

The history of modern terrorism is testament to the changing tide of warfare from traditional armies to the use of terrorism. Since the mid-1700's, war was mostly nation against nation, but with the current development of technology and the effects

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<sup>1</sup> National Intelligence Council, "Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World," ed. Directorate of National Intelligence (Washington, DC2008), 68.

of globalization, nations who are superior militarily and in high-tech resources have become more vulnerable to small groups of insurgents. One of the most difficult aspects of this change is that it is difficult to define who the current enemies are of nation-states: are they terrorists, organized criminals, lone criminals, freedom fighters, or insurgents? This new questions tells us that there is a noteworthy change to the type and style of conflict now occurring and that national governments need the ability to identify their enemies in order to develop the best tactics for fighting them.

Strategies for recognizing the characteristics of terrorism are vitally important. Asking ourselves what the enemies are saying and recognizing the ideological and cultural factors behind their actions will give the United States a better foothold for effectively combating the current terrorist threat. This will also help us to create a method for combating future terrorist groups.

Recognizing the similarities between terrorist organizations is a beginning to identifying terrorist groups. I began this project by focusing on terrorist groups that are well known today and by studying their ideologies, aims, and strategies. I asked, “What are their beliefs, principles, and creeds? What motivates groups of people to commit heinous acts of violence outside of war? What kinds of methods do they choose to employ in order to accomplish their goals? And what links these terrorists groups throughout history?”

In my search to answer these questions, I studied numerous terrorist groups. Then, I narrowed the scope of this project to focus on three major terrorist movements; the French Reign of Terror, the Narodnaya Volya, and the Muslim



Brotherhood, and to identify what similarities they have despite their differences. These individual terrorist movements are distant from each other in geographic region, in religious affiliation, and in time; yet, they show significant similarities in their complexity, motivations, and strategies. Additionally, they have strongly influenced other terrorist groups and have impacted governments worldwide. The historical events that I examine helps us see how, even though the methods and tactics of terrorism have changed and developed through the centuries, there are significant links throughout history that connect various terrorist beliefs.

One layer of analysis will provide the historical background and development of each group. I will then analyze the ideologies that formed through the writings and/or speeches of the radical leader(s) for each group. Lastly and most importantly, I will examine the similarities and differences in the beliefs that formed the terrorist mentality of each group.

## DEFINING TERRORISM

According to the National Counterterrorism Center, as of October 14, 2008, the United States defines *terrorism* as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents.” *International terrorism* is “terrorism involving citizens or the territory of

more than one country,” and a *terrorist group* is “any group practicing, or which has significant subgroups which practice, international terrorism.”<sup>2</sup>

The definition and character of terrorism has changed over the centuries with changes in technology, the identity of those involved, the methods, and even the aims and purposes of the groups. However, what remains constant over time and among groups are certain mentalities and beliefs. A historian and expert on terrorism, Walter Laqueur, clarified this concept best.

Walter Laqueur’s work identifies the essence of terrorism and argues that terrorism is not a new phenomenon. It is neither a revolutionary ideology nor merely a technique. It is not unique to any specific political, religious, or geographic affiliation. However, terrorism does have certain qualities. Terrorism is anonymous in character, unpredictable, a violation of established norms, and specifically, it is an insurrectional strategy.<sup>3</sup> In one passage about defining terrorists, Laqueur wrote, “... They may belong to the left or to the right; they may be nationalists or, less frequently, internationalists, but in some essential respects their mental makeup is similar.”<sup>4</sup> This mental makeup overshadows the dividing lines between terrorist groups and reveals their similar philosophies.

Typically, when terrorism is described in the media or by the public, descriptions repeatedly arise of violent actions such as the bombings, hijackings, kidnappings, assassinations, or random shootings. Terrorists normally feel a lack of

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<sup>2</sup> The National Counterterrorism Center, "Counterterrorism Calendar 2009," (National Counterterrorism Center, 2009), 141.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-6.

power to bring about their desired changes in other ways. Some terrorists take care not to endanger themselves, while others are ready to die by suicide in order to carry out their attacks. Typically, the desired changes that terrorists hope to accomplish with these actions include political changes, societal changes and cultural changes.

As of today, there is still no internationally accepted definition of terrorism for member states of the United Nations. This lack of a definition for the term has been a hindrance to international dialogue and, consequently, countermeasures against terrorist activity. In 1992, Alex P. Schmid, a historian and later official to the UN, recommended to the Crime Branch of the United Nations to use the definition for “war crime” as a starting point for a terrorism definition. He stated, “If the core of war crimes - deliberate attacks on civilians, hostage taking and the killing of prisoners - is extended to peacetime, we could simply define acts of terrorism as ‘peacetime equivalents of war crimes.’”<sup>5</sup>

It is nearly impossible to point to a specific event that could be named the first act of terrorism, largely because the definition of terrorism has been ambiguous. Evolving tactics, technologies, and a continuing debate on the definition of terrorism make it difficult to pin-point the first terrorist act or to define a terrorist group.

In a search for the first terrorist groups, one early group aligns with the characterizations of terrorism provided by Walter Laqueur and Alex P. Schmid. The story of the Assassins is a good place to start at delineating the terrorist mentality

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<sup>5</sup> "United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime," [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/terrorism\\_definitions.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/terrorism_definitions.html).

explained in this paper. Looking at their dramatic beginnings and mentality provides a basis for identifying modern terrorist groups.

## THE ASSASSINS

In the eleventh to fifteenth centuries in Syria, there existed a mysterious splinter group from the Isma'ili sect of Shia Muslims, whose fanatic mentality and dramatic methods were legendary. The group is known in English as The Assassins. In reality, very little is known about The Assassins and there are polar opinions and accounts about the group. Even the group's name and the etymology of the word, "assassin," are heavily debated.

Political murder is not a new phenomenon, but the name of the act derived from the history of the Isma'ili Assassins.<sup>6</sup> The Assassins, however, were not just "political assassins". Bernard Lewis, historian and Middle East expert, remarked, "In one respect, the Assassins are without precedent – in the planned, systematic, and long-term use of terror as a political weapon."<sup>7</sup> Lewis claims they are the first terrorists of recorded history.

The Assassins were said to have formed after their faction, the Nizaariyyah, were driven from Egypt in 1090 over a quarrel about the leadership succession of the Fatimide dynasty in Cairo. They settled in present day Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Iran under the leadership of Sheikh Hasan-i Sabbah with their headquarters in Alamut.

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London,: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 125.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

Sunni Muslims, who were the dominate force in the Islamic world, heavily persecuted the Isma'ili sect. The sect in return sent dedicated individuals to kill the Sunni leaders, using methods that would not just kill the leaders, but that would leave a lasting and horrific impression.<sup>8</sup> The Assassins created this impression by choosing a very public moment for their target and using a small dagger. Unlike poison, such a method did not allow for the assassin's escape.

News of these assassinations spread to European courts through stories written and told by Crusaders returning from the Holy Land. One such chronicler, the crusader, Jean Joinville, recorded stories for the French court about attacks by the Sarrasins. Sarrasin, or Saracen, was a word used during the Crusades to describe a Muslim or a nomad from pre-Islamic Syria.<sup>9</sup> However, Joinville specifically refers to the Isma'ilis; scholars believe the accounts refer to the attacks of the Isma'ili Assassins.<sup>10</sup> Most notably, he recorded that King Louis IX of France felt threatened by them, and that he responded to these attacks with diplomatic missions and appeasements.<sup>11</sup>

In the European stories about the Assassins, the chief, Hasan-i Sabbah, was called the "Old Man of the Mountain." Old Man, or Elder, would be a common

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 21-37.

<sup>9</sup> "Oxford English Dictionary," in *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Farhad Daftary, *The Assassin Legends : Myths of the Isma'ilis* (London: Tauris, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Jean Joinville and Joseph Noel Wailly, *Histoire De Saint Louis* (Paris,: Chez M. v J. Renouart, 1868), 117-23, 218.

translation for the widely used Arabic term, “*Sheikh*”. However, Old Man of the Mountain specifically refers to this leader of the Syrian Isma’ili sect.<sup>12</sup>

In his story, “Of the Old Man of the Mountain, Of His Palace and Gardens,” Marco Polo describes the strategy of Hasan-i Sabbah in acquiring the kind of loyal and fanatical men necessary to carry out the suicidal missions. Sabbah had created within the mountainous region a palace with luxurious gardens that had streams of wine, milk, honey, and water. The palace and gardens were filled with beautiful women, gold, and every other kind of luxury imaginable.<sup>13</sup>

His men, however, were trained outside the palace in methods of disguise, martial arts, and many languages including Saracen, Latin, Roman and Greek. They were trained with intense discipline from a young age until they were grown. They were taught that one day their lives would be fulfilled in service of their master.

When the time came for an assassination, the selected disciple would be given a hallucinogenic. He would be brought to the palace, whereupon regaining consciousness; he would awaken in the sheikh’s garden paradise. He would be given a golden dagger and a mission with the promise that upon its completion and his ultimate death, the disciple would find himself rewarded with the enjoyments of this paradise. According to Marco Polo, “The object which the chief had in view in forming a garden of this fascinating kind, was this: that Mahomet [or Hasan-i Sabbah] having promised to those who should obey his will the enjoyments of Paradise, where

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<sup>12</sup> Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian 1298*, ed. Thomas Wright, trans. William Marsden (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 73.

every species of sensual gratification should be found, in the society of beautiful nymphs.”<sup>14</sup> The disciples were so mesmerized by the beauty and pleasures of Mahomet’s paradise that they dedicated their lives to serving and dying at the command of Mahomet, believing that in reward, they would return to this kind of Paradise in the after-life.

The Isma’ilis believed that they were a “corps d’élite in the war against the enemies of the Imam.”<sup>15</sup> They proved their loyalty and faith by sacrificing their lives in order to eliminate the oppressors and subsequently earned for themselves eternal rewards. For the victims of their murder and terror, the Assassins were dangerous and fanatical criminals against society and true religion.

The fall of the Assassins came from two forces in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century: the Mongols and the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Baybars. Baybars was a formidable enemy of the Mongols and Crusaders, but attacked Muslim populations as well in order to conquer additional territory. Therefore, the strategy of the Assassins in Syria was to join other Muslim forces against the Mongols, but to appease Baybars by paying him tribute. At first, it seemed to be an effective strategy, because Baybars did not attack them. However, immediately upon his arrival in the land of the Assassins in 1260, he gave their land in “fief to one of his generals.”<sup>16</sup> In 1266, he granted a truce to the Assassins.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 121.

Baybars' political motives were always to conquer, and he was known to betray promises of peace and to slaughter his enemies instead. Despite the truce, Baybars would not tolerate an independent, heretical group of assassins in the heartland of Syria for long. The Assassins, perhaps unaware of Baybars' reputation, mistakenly or perhaps with no alternative, chose a disastrous strategy for their own survival. The truce ended and they were consequently conquered and destroyed by Baybars.<sup>17</sup>

The Assassins had the idealistic motive of freedom from persecution: but, according to the legend, terrorism was not just a means to an end, it became what identified them. They made efforts to accomplish their assassinations in public so they could spread the terror of their acts. Their use of terrorist tactics made them deplorable in the eyes of their enemies and potential sympathizers.

The stories left to history about the Assassins portrayed a scheming thirst for violence and terror that scarred the minds of their enemies. Their beliefs and goals for their society included not just freedom from the persecuting surrounding leaders, but also creation of a perfect society, essentially a paradise or utopia where they could practice their extreme beliefs and avoid persecution from the surrounding Muslim rulers. This goal of a utopian society was lofty and unsustainable, and they chose destructive and horrific means to attempt such perfection.

Since the appearance of the Assassins, many groups using different methods have fought for independence, land, or ideologies. Like the Assassins, the Jacobins

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 122.



during The French Reign of Terror, the Narodnaya Volya, and the Muslim Brotherhood were all highly influential terrorist groups that had unrealistic ideals for perfect societies. They differed politically, religiously and geographically, but they all showed tyrannical motives with a focus on deposing the current rulers and claiming complete power themselves. The terrorist belief was consistent in that the goals for social or political change that each terrorist group declared were not as consequential to each group as was the importance of continuing the terror. They were defined by their terrorist deeds; the ultimate goal became continuing the terror regardless of social or political progress and change.

At the inception of these groups, the leaders had no clear, attainable vision for what their future society would be. They would call for the removal of the current political leadership, but they did not have a plan for future leadership. Instead, being terrorists became their identity and the force behind their actions. The only clear plan for the future was to continue employing terrorism.

## PART TWO

### THE REIGN OF TERROR OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “terrorism” was used in the English language for the first time in 1795 to describe the Jacobin Reign of Terror in France.<sup>18</sup> The word “terror” is defined with words like *panic* and *fright*. It is as “an emotion experienced in anticipation of some specific pain or danger... accompanied by a desire to flee or fight.”<sup>19</sup> “Terrorism” therefore describes an action taken for the purpose of drawing these emotions and reactions out of a group of people or their government. However, methods to induce terror have also been used by governments to frighten their subjects into control and submission.

It is debatable whether the Terror was a result of a military crisis in 1793 or whether the roots lie with the beginning of the French Revolution itself in 1789. The 1789 Revolution began with humanitarian passions to reform, but then developed into widespread injustices to individual safety and liberty. The central question about the French Revolution was why the Reign of Terror in 1793-4 occurred. Did the Revolution become so violent because of the counter-revolution, or was the violence during the Terror just a reaction disproportionate to the counter-revolutionary threat?<sup>20</sup>

For most historians, the basis of the Revolution was “sincere liberal beliefs in tolerance and judicial process until it was forced by the circumstances of violent

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<sup>18</sup> "Oxford English Dictionary."

<sup>19</sup> "The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language," Houghton Mifflin Company, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/terror>.

<sup>20</sup> Peter McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799* (Oxford [England] ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 148.

counter-revolution to compromise some of its founding principles.”<sup>21</sup> However, three historians, Francois Furet, Patrice Gueniffey, and Simon Schama, have argued that the “Terror’s” mindset was already in place when the Revolution began in May 1789. Gueniffey argued that “‘patriots’ began early in the Revolution to distinguish those with opposing viewpoints as strictly enemies of the new order.”<sup>22</sup> For Simon Schama, “violence was ‘the Revolution’s source of collective energy... the Terror was merely 1789 with a higher body count.’”<sup>23</sup>

King Louis XVI was executed for treason after a trial by the revolutionaries in protest against the monarchy in January 1793. The new government, however, immediately had foreign troops threatening its national sovereignty in three regions of France: the north-east, south-east and south-west. Additionally, the country was facing civil war and internal division. The National Convention needed to take action against the foreign invaders as well as the internal strife. It resolved to create an alliance between the rural and urban populations in order to mobilize the country for war.

The Jacobin government’s means for persuasion combined policies meant to address grievances along with tactics of intimidation and coercion. The Committee of Public Safety was the executive committee of the National Convention in power and ordered mass arrests of anyone thought to be a threat to the national security.

Internal enemies included deserters as well as citizens expressing disagreement with

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<sup>21</sup> Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred : Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France*, The Wilder House Series in Politics, History, and Culture (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 225.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

the revolutionary ideals or those who had been associated with the government under Louis XVI (*l'ancien régime*).

In March, 1793, the Paris Revolutionary Tribunal was established and the Law of Suspects was issued on September 17. The Law of Suspects was a means to detain the suspected unpatriotic citizens in order to discourage counter-revolutionary action. “The arrest of ‘suspects’ by surveillance committees was directed at those who, by word, action or status, were associated with the *ancien régime*.”<sup>24</sup> The suspects included a wide array of citizens from nobles and office holders to women left to represent family names, to clergy and shop-keepers.

On October 10, the Committee of Public Safety announced in a declaration on revolutionary government that “‘The provisional government of France is revolutionary until the peace’; all government bodies and the army were now placed under the control of the Committee, which had to report weekly to the Convention.”<sup>25</sup> That October began the series of executions by guillotine starting with the wife of Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and then followed by 21 expelled Girondin deputies.

The sweeping brutality of the Terror used the guillotine, propaganda, intimidation, coercion, firing squads, detentions, and surveillance to discourage political opposition. All such opposition at this time was considered treachery and punishable with the threat of execution. The revolutionaries above all else did not want to slow or hinder the momentum of change in France from monarchical rule to popular sovereignty rising out of the revolution of 1789.

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<sup>24</sup> McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799*, 120.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

## MAXIMILIAN ROBESPIERRE

The purpose of the terror differed among Convention members as well as among the Committee of Public Safety members. For some members it was intended to maximize the war effort, but for others it was used for more ideological purposes. One of the most influential members of the Committee of Public Safety was Maximilian Robespierre. He and his supporters held much higher aims for the Terror than gaining victory in the war.

Robespierre's vision was for society to become regenerated, self-denying, and virtuous; for him, this was the absolute basis for the Revolution. On February 5, 1794, he clarified to the Convention what he deemed the aim of the Revolution to be. He said,

*“We wish an order of things... where the country secures the welfare of each individual, and each individual proudly enjoys the prosperity and glory of his country.... We wish to substitute in our country... the empire of reason for the tyranny of custom... a people magnanimous, powerful and happy for a people lovable, frivolous and wretched—that is to say, all the virtues and miracles of the Republic for all the vices and puerilities of the monarchy.”*<sup>26</sup>

Robespierre believed men were born virtuous, but were then corrupted by society. His efforts to conform society to his standards of morality were unsuccessful and along with his associates, he pushed to continue the Terror further.

However, Robespierre and his supporters became more and more isolated, because for the majority of the Convention, the Terror was not for perfecting society

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<sup>26</sup> P. M. Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 257.

but for the realization of peace. For this majority, the political and economic controls of the Terror were “but temporary and regrettable impositions to that end; the regular extension of the powers of the Committee was a recognition of its achievements and the continuing war crisis, but not a measure of support for Jacobin ideology.”<sup>27</sup>

Eventually, even the Jacobin supporters of Robespierre felt that the Reign of Terror should come to an end. Nevertheless, when another influential member of the Committee, Georges Danton, stood up in the National Convention appealing for a stop to the Terror, he became its next victim.

In 1794, Robespierre called for yet another purge and the Committee had finally had enough. One man spoke out against him and others rose in agreement. Robespierre was consequently arrested. The following day marked the end of the Reign of Terror when Robespierre was executed by guillotine. Ultimately, the devastation during the Reign of Terror is estimated to have encompassed tens of thousands of French citizens throughout the country who were executed for being enemies of the revolution.

What distinguishes the terrorism that was waged during the Reign of Terror in France from freedom fighting is that violence was used not just as a weapon but also as a means of creating fear and paranoia in the masses. The Jacobins were originally revolutionaries with high ideals to liberate France from monarchical rule. They wanted to keep the power they had gained against external and internal enemies, but

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<sup>27</sup> McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799*, 145.

their terrorist tactics and unrealistic ideals for society overshadowed their goals for better government.

Almost one hundred years later, the Narodnaya Volya in Russia declared revolution and preached freedom from monarchical rule. Likewise, it began with a terrorist mentality at its foundation. It did not assert realistic ideals for society or a vision for peace.

### PART THREE

One of the most important terrorist groups in history is a 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian group, the Narodnaya Volya, also known as the People's Will. The Narodnaya Volya did not exercise terrorism from above like the Jacobins did during the French "Reign of Terror," but were one of modern history's first organized groups for the purpose of terrorism. Their ultimate goal was to assassinate Czar Alexander II. This aim was misleading, however, because the group actually had a thorough doctrine of terrorism laid out for Russia. It was a doctrine of violence and terror that would surpass any single violent act for revolution.

#### SERGEI NECHAEV

Mikhail Bakunin and Sergei Nechaev were two prominent and conspiratorial proponents of terrorism in Russia in the late 1800's. Bakunin authored "Revolution, Terrorism, Banditry" and Nechaev authored "Catechism of the Revolutionist (1869)." Both have heavily influenced terrorist thought worldwide to the present day. According to Margaret Scanlan, these two men "formulated the key principles of Russian Terrorism" ten years before the Narodnaya Volya group managed to assassinate Czar Alexander the II.<sup>28</sup>

Several of Sergey Nechaev's ideas were particularly influential in sustaining the terrorist mentality. He was zealous in developing the secret organizations and hard-core discipline for revolutionary terrorism. In his "Catechism of the

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<sup>28</sup> Margaret Scanlan, *Plotting Terror : Novelists and Terrorists in Contemporary Fiction* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 182.



Revolutionist,” Nechaev defined the ideal revolutionist as an “implacable enemy of this world” whose only desire is the immediate destruction of society.<sup>29</sup> “The true revolutionist,” according to Nechaev, “was a man who had broken completely with the existing order... [and like the Assassins was] ready to use even the most repugnant methods—including the dagger, the rope, and every manner of deception and perfidy—in the name of the ‘people’s vengeance.’”<sup>30</sup>

*“The guiding principle must be the measure of service the person’s death will necessarily render to the revolutionary cause. Therefore, in the first instance **all those must be annihilated who are especially harmful to the revolutionary organization, and whose sudden and violent deaths will also inspire the greatest fear in the government and, by depriving it of its cleverest and most energetic figures, will shatter its strength.**”<sup>31</sup>*

Nechaev’s brutal language demonstrated the indiscriminate nature of his plan and his single-minded goal of creating terror.

Nechaev’s mentor, Mikhail Bakunin, along with several Russian émigrés, managed to publish two radical revolutionary journals during their time in Geneva. The journals, the “Rabotnik Journal” and the “Narodnoe Delo”, meaning “The Worker Journal” and “The People’s Cause” respectively, were both short-lived, but in 1872, the group organized the Russian Brotherhood in Zurich and Bakunin gained many followers among clandestine groups in Moscow, Petersburg, Odessa, and Kiev.

Despite his influence, Bakunin never founded a revolutionary organization inside Russia itself during his own lifetime. He was famous more for having

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<sup>29</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Voices of Terror : Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists from around the World and Throughout the Ages* (New York, NY: Reed Press, 2004), 71.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (New York: Norton, 1978), 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> Laqueur, *Voices of Terror : Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists from around the World and Throughout the Ages*, 74.

mentored Sergey Gennadievich Nechaev than anything else. Nechaev was the “most dramatic disciple inside Russia,” but he was “less a genuine anarchist than an apostle of revolutionary dictatorship, far more concerned with the means of conspiracy and terror than with the lofty goal of a stateless society.”<sup>32</sup>

Nechaev’s influence was seen in numerous anarchist periodicals of the time. For example, one such journal, the *Khleb i Volia* (Bread & Liberty) printed the following during the summer of 1905; “only the enemies of the people can be enemies of terror!”<sup>33</sup> Another periodical compared Kerenskii and Lenin of Russia to the Robespierre and Danton of France.<sup>34</sup>

#### NARODNAYA VOLYA (THE PEOPLE’S WILL)

With inspiration from Sergei Nechaev and Mikhail Bakunin, the physical development of the Narodnaya Volya revolutionary group first began in Russia with a propagandist group of individuals who created a Populist Party called *Zemlya i Volya* or “Land and Freedom.” This group sought a social revolution and began its efforts by trying to educate peasants from the countryside. From the 1860’s, “Land and Freedom” members were mostly from among the privileged society in Russia and had received a high standard of education.<sup>35</sup>

In 1876, a circle of the “Land and Freedom” revolutionaries, specifically the Natanson group, wrote a policy for what they called “disorganization” and what is “in

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>33</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 60.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>35</sup> Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill : Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 11.

modern terms, violence and terrorism.”<sup>36</sup> The Natanson group was at this point a nameless society, but it had a specific agenda to create “disorganization” in Russia. According to its charter, the group’s first objective was “to weaken, to shatter, that is to disorganize the power of the state, without which, in our opinion, the success of even the broadest and best devised plan for revolution will not be guaranteed.”<sup>37</sup> The stated objective looked like a plan for revolution, but a closer look at their program revealed a broader plan for mass executions and terror.

The ‘disorganizers’, for instance, were tasked with an outlined program that asked of them specifically the following:

- “a) the institution of ties and organizations in the army, for the most part among officers;*
- b) the attraction to their support of persons serving in one or another government institution;*
- c) the systematic extermination of the most evil or prominent individuals in the government; [and]*
- d) on the day of reckoning [revolution], the mass extermination of the government and in general of individuals by whom is preserved or might be preserved one or another structure that we deplore.”<sup>38</sup>*

The charter first outlined their plan for infiltration of the army and the sabotage of officer unity. The group then extended its targets to all of the government with plans for mass exterminations. The terrorist mentality became more clear when, lastly, the charter indiscriminately declared its targets as general individuals that they might deplore.

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<sup>36</sup> Deborah Hardy, *Land and Freedom : The Origins of Russian Terrorism, 1876-1879*, Contributions to the Study of World History, No. 7 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 47.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

By 1879, some members of the group felt that the “organization” principles for revolution were ineffective and decided to make terrorism their main tactic. This splinter group was soon to become the People’s Will, also known as the Narodnaya Volya, which has piqued the interest of Western historians and has been called “the first modern terrorist organization in the world.”<sup>39</sup> According to Richard Pipes, “It was the first organization in history dedicated to systematic political terrorism.”<sup>40</sup>

The years when this group dominated became known to its members as the “heroic period,” dating from 1878-1881. “The leadership of the People’s Will confined their organization to centrally controlled terror, and did not allow its members to exercise terrorist initiative freely in the periphery.”<sup>41</sup> Eventually, the instigated violence gained momentum and permissible motives for violence shifted from self-defense to plans for political retaliation and ultimately to aims for the tsar’s assassination.

Narodnaya Volya (People’s Will) was a theory-oriented group of revolutionaries motivated by socialist dogma.<sup>42</sup> The group was formed specifically for the purpose of terrorism in Russia with its members active in planning and attempting assassinations of government officials and others who supported the imperial regime. It also made plans to bomb government buildings.

In the spring of 1880, A. I. Zheliabov, the key orchestrator of Czar Alexander II’s demise, formed a branch of the Narodnaya called the St. Petersburg Central

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<sup>39</sup> Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill : Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Pipes, *The Degaev Affair : Terror and Treason in Tsarist Russia* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2003), 10.

<sup>41</sup> Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill : Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Military Circle. The terrorist mentality of the Narodnaya Volya was further clarified in the beginning of the circle's charter. Here the charter demonstrated to what point the Narodnaya Volya had reached in its plans against the government. It had a treasonous agenda to sabotage the Russian military from within. The charter began:

- *“The Circle...fully shares the program of the party of the People's Will...*
- *Forming a branch of the existing revolutionary organization, the Circle, being specifically military, undertakes the following tasks:*
  - a.) to organize in the army a force for the active struggle against the government, and*
  - b.) to paralyze the rest of the army which, for whatever reason, is incapable of [waging] an active struggle.”<sup>43</sup>*

The Narodnaya Volya was successful in assassinating tsar Alexander II in March of 1881. The People's Will, or Narodnaya Volya, “regarded terrorist activities as the best means of forcing political reform and overthrowing the tsarist autocracy.”<sup>44</sup>

One of the main objectives of the group was to announce its existence and willingness to be ruthless in undermining the government, its military and supporters. Furthermore, the terrorists hoped to incite a government response that would be brutal enough to cause it to lose support from the population and turn popular support to the cause of the terrorists. This backfired on the group, because anti-terrorist sentiment was high among the population and the government was able to arrest many of the group's members and hang them.

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<sup>43</sup> Pipes, *The Degaev Affair : Terror and Treason in Tsarist Russia*, 11-12.

<sup>44</sup> “Narodnaya Volya.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2007. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. 17 July 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9054862>.

Narodnaya Volya fell apart within a year after the murder of Alexander II. Even though police reports apparently exaggerated the terrorist threat, the threat still managed to bring the government's attention to reform experimentation. The "heroic period" of terrorist activity was not strong enough to shake the tsarist regime's political foundation or even to disrupt normalcy within the empire, that is, apart from Alexander II's assassination.

Alexander II's assassination "was merely a prelude to the enormous escalation of terrorist activity in Russia in the first decade of the twentieth century."<sup>45</sup> At this time, terrorism spread to every layer of society and beyond Russia's borders. According to Ann Geifman, Russian terrorism influenced European terrorism in the context that the Russian terrorists did not confine their activities to inside the Russian borders, but like the historic Assassins, they instead expanded their program, calling for political assassinations abroad.<sup>46</sup>

Immediately after Alexander II was assassinated, there was a period of seeming peace. However, that was misleading, because calls for violence continued among the underground groups, although no notable terrorist act occurred at this time in Russia. In the years between March 1881 and mid-1893, there were reports from informers of another major terrorist act in motion. Plans were being developed for key political assassinations, specifically for the successor of Alexander II, his son Nicolas II. Even before Nicholas II had the opportunity to disclose his political

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<sup>45</sup> Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill : Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

intentions, the terrorists both at home and abroad had developed plans for eliminating him. Regicide was still the highest priority on the revolutionaries' agenda.

Some members proceeded to develop methods like bombs filled with nails and other explosive devices but wanted to wait for action until after Nicholas II divulged his political reforms. When the new Czar assured his public "that he had no intentions of promoting such changes, and would do everything in his power to continue the policies of Alexander II, regicide again became the primary objective for most advocates of terrorist tactics. The goal was impractical, however, and strictly theoretical, but remained for this generation of radicals a sacred and cherished dream."<sup>47</sup>

By the end of the century, there was an open surge in calls for "a new wave of political terror, 'at least as [powerful] as in the years 1879-1880 and even more so.'"<sup>48</sup> Without abandoning regicide as a consistent goal, the group came to consider lesser state officials to be appropriate targets for new acts of terrorism.<sup>49</sup>

Comparable to the mentality of leaders during the French Reign of Terror, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian revolutionaries desperately opposed monarchial rule. The French revolution aimed to give governing power to the people through elected officials of a National Assembly. In contrast, the Russian revolutionaries believed in a stateless society with absolutely no hierarchy of power, that is, anarchism.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Both the Jacobins of the French Reign of Terror and the Narodnaya Volya had visions of a perfect society and claimed that through terrorism they would achieve their goals. Like the French Reign of Terror, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian revolutionaries already had a well developed terrorist mentality at the onset of the revolution above and beyond their illusory ideals for society.

Their plan was the continuation of destruction and did not include a clear vision of a future society post-revolution. The Russian revolutionaries spoke of freedom from monarchial rule and government oppression, but they did not include a realistic plan or vision of a peaceful society after the conflict. Essentially, their mentality was just the opposite. It was a vision for an unending revolution or “nihilism”. Similarly, Robespierre, in his calls for continuous purges and destruction, did not have a realistic vision for a peaceful society, post-revolution.

They spoke of high ideals that in reality are abstract. They were inspirational ideals, but they lacked tangibility. To illustrate this point, a clear contrast to Robespierre or Nechaev is the example of an American revolutionary, Martin Luther King, in his “I Have a Dream” speech. Like Robespierre and Nechaev, King also spoke of freedom and overcoming injustices, however, he added tangible concepts to his vision of society. For example, he said he dreamt

*“...That one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.”*

*“...That one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black*



*girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.*"<sup>50</sup>

Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech clarified his vision of an integrated society with the image of children from both races holding hands and this gave tangibility to his vision of a peaceful society post-revolution.

This is the kind of mentality specifically missing from that of the revolutionaries, Robespierre and Nechaev. Their vision and mentality was one that lacked a true idea of society and had room only for more terror, hence, the terrorist mentality of continuous violence that persists to the present day amongst terrorist groups.

The mentality of continuous destruction or "terror" and a lack of a realistic vision for post-revolution peace has held constant through the ages in terrorism. But, the next question is: What makes terrorism different today than a thousand years ago or than two hundred years ago during the French Reign of Terror and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian revolution?

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<sup>50</sup> Martin Luther King, *In Search of Freedom* (New York, N.Y.: Polygram Special Markets,, 1995), sound recording.

## PART FOUR

The main terrorist threat for the United States today comes from Al-Qaeda, an off-shoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is necessary to understand to whom and to what today's terrorists refer when they justify their actions and extreme beliefs. I chose for this section to focus on the ideology of the groups and individuals who have most influenced the Muslim Brotherhood, because the Muslim Brotherhood in particular is ideologically one of the most influential organizations for Muslims worldwide today and it is considered a key influence on both Al-Qaeda's leadership and the members they recruit. Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, was able to build an entire terrorist organization teaching the ideas of Qutbism<sup>51</sup> and turning it into a plan for terrorist action. Al-Qaeda has varying effects in different countries, but it has a deep-rooted effect on the mentality of the terrorists that the United States has been facing since the attacks on the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001.

Furthermore, this extremism has roots as far back as the 14<sup>th</sup> century with influences such as Sheikh Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah and later with Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, then Abul Ala Maududi, and finally with the founders of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan Al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. These are considered the most significant historical influences on today's modern Islamic extremists; I will consider them in order.

The Muslim Brotherhood's strongest influence on current terrorism has been a combination of its spread globally, the development into splinter groups, and its

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<sup>51</sup> For further discussion on Qutbism, see pages 54-55.

concept of jihad. The respected military historian and author of Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror, Mary Habeck, affirmed that in order to identify today's terrorists, one needs to understand the meanings of jihad. The current trend among terrorists is to propagate the belief in global jihad rather than the traditional Islamic jihad. However, she also pointed out that it is important to note that although the global jihadists are the enemy of the United States, they make up less than approximately one percent of the 1.5 billion Muslims in the world today.<sup>52</sup>

Global jihadis believe they are the only true believers of Islam. They cling to the belief that hostile unbelievers control the world and that those unbelievers desire the destruction of Islam, or more specifically, the destruction of a core belief in Islam: "*la ilaha illa Allah*," that is, that there is no god, except Allah. The vices of the Western world threaten this unity of God; therefore, war against the West and its puppets is justified.

The concept of *tawhid*, traditionally a belief about the unity of God, and the concept of *jihad*, meaning struggle, are key beliefs in Islam. The distortion of these Islamic beliefs is currently a popular strategy for recruiting terrorists. For example, extremists distort the meaning of *tawhid* to mean more the promotion of virtue and the preventing of vice than its more traditional meaning. Likewise, the meaning of *jihad* is distorted to by global jihadists to include indiscriminate violence and it has especially become the rallying concept for terrorists. The writings of Sheikh Ibn

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<sup>52</sup> Mary R. Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy : Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 58-64.

Taymiyyah have been a significant influence in the evolution of the meaning of jihad for extremists.

## IBN TAYMIYYAH

Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah's full name was Taqi Ad-din Abdul Abbas Ahmad Ibn'abd Al-halim Ibn'Abd As-Salam Ibn Taymiyah Al-Harrani. An Islamic scholar of the fourteenth century, he continues to have an enormous impact on Islamic thought today. His writings and actions have been used to encourage and teach Muslims to lead holier lives, but also to promote terrorist doctrines among Muslims.

Ibn Taymiyyah was born in 1263 CE in the city of Haran, located in what is today Turkey, and he died in 1328 CE. He came from a family of prominent theologians. His father was well known for his scholarly achievements and his grandfather was a teacher of the Hanbali school of thought (one of the four schools of thought for Islamic jurisprudence). During these generations, the Mongol Empire was rapidly expanding, although mostly before Ibn Taymiyyah was born. However, the area where Ibn Taymiyyah lived found itself on the borders of the Mongol empire by 1274, and the people feared Mongol military attacks.

Ibn Taymiyyah continued in the tradition of his family and the ideas of the Hanbali school of thought. However, Ibn Taymiyyah was more outspoken than most representations of this school and he believed strongly in returning to the basics of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He believed that returning Muslim focus to a more literal

interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah was essential for the restoration of the Islamic community.

His literalism, puritanical views, and forthrightness clashed with the leading theologians and jurists of the time and he soon found himself imprisoned for his beliefs. He did not let that deter him. One day, while he was part of a delegation of ulamaa (scholars), he proclaimed his beliefs in front of the Khan of the Tartars, Qazaan, and his notoriety spread. When no other ulamaa would say a word, Ibn Taymiyyah said to Qazaan,

*“You claim that you are Muslim and you have with you Mu’adhdhins, Muftis, Imams, and Shaykh but you invaded us and reached our country for what? While your father and grandfather, Hulagu were non-believers, they did not attack and they kept their promise. But you promised and broke your promise.”<sup>53</sup>*

Ibn Taymiyyah became well known for his courage in front of the Qazaan, but in contrast to his search for peace before the Qazaan, it would be Ibn Taymiyyah’s teachings about jihad that would inspire future Islamic jihadists. He defended his beliefs of violent jihad with quotes from the Qur’an, such as the following:

Qur’an 2:216

*“Prescribed for you is fighting, though it be hateful to you. Yet it may happen that you will hate a thing which is better for you; and it may happen that you love a thing which is worse for you. Allah knows and you know not.”<sup>54</sup>*

Ibn Taymiyyah claimed that the Qur’an and the Sunnah mention countless times the obligatory and meritorious nature of participation in Jihad. In addition to

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.fatwa-online.com/biographies/8thcentury/ibntaymiyyah.htm>

<sup>54</sup> Laqueur, *Voices of Terror : Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists from around the World and Throughout the Ages*, 392.

his recitations of the above Qur'anic quote, Ibn Taymiyyah, described the kind of obligation a Muslim had to perform jihad. In his book, *Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihad*, he elevated the importance of violent jihad as a particular obligation that is above that of Islam's five pillars of the faith. He wrote that jihad, "... is the best voluntary [religious] act that men can perform. All scholars agree that it [jihad] is better than the hajj (greater pilgrimage) and the 'umrah (lesser pilgrimage), than voluntary salaah and voluntary fasting, as the Qur'an and Sunnah indicate."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, he explained the lawfulness of jihad and the importance of it to God. As an example, he quoted from the Quran: "Since lawful warfare is essentially jihad and since its aim is that the religion is Allah's entirely and Allah's word is uppermost [Qur'an 2:189 and 8:39 and 9:40]." With this elevation of the importance of jihad combined with his declaration that "... according to all Muslims, those who stand in the way of this aim must be fought," he isolated not only unbelievers but Muslims who disagreed with him as well. Ibn Taymiyyah was issuing a call for a purge in the faith, as well as a call to arms against both non-believers and Muslims that did not prescribe to his interpretation of Islam.

He equated Jihad with extremism and inspired suicide missions with the following definition of Jihad :

*"Jihad implies all kind of worship, both in its inner and outer forms. More than any other act it implies love and devotion for Allah, Who is exalted, trust in Him, the surrender of one's life and property to Him, patience, asceticism, remembrance of Allah and all kinds of other acts [of worship]. **And the individual or community that***

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

***participates in it finds itself between two blissful outcomes: either victory and triumph or martyrdom and Paradise.***”

It is traditionally believed among many Muslims that the meaning of jihad is not what is popularly represented in the media today, but that jihad represents the inner, spiritual struggle or fight that believers face to choose between right and wrong. On the other hand, when Ibn Taymiyyah spoke of “martyrdom and Paradise,” it was difficult to interpret his meaning to be anything less than the actual violent form of jihad. Ibn Taymiyyah clarified his meaning of jihad and its glorification when he spoke of the significance of a martyr’s death:

*“Other people [participate in it] out of a desire to make things easy for themselves when death meets them, **for the death of a martyr is easier than any other form of death. In fact, it is the best of all manners of dying.**”*<sup>56</sup>

One of Ibn Taymiyyah’s quotes from *Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihad*, revealed most clearly the extreme importance he gave to Jihad:

*“The most serious type of obligatory Jihad is the one against the unbelievers and against those who refuse to abide by certain prescriptions of the Shar’ia, like those who refuse to pay zakaat, the Kharijites and the like.”*<sup>57</sup>

Ibn Taymiyyah’s contribution to a terrorist mentality among Muslims is more a matter of how he influenced extremists in Islam to take up a particular interpretation of the Qur’an. His writings on violent jihad, the glorification of martyrdom, and making these two themes the focus of life for a Muslim, gave them a level of priority

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 393.

<sup>57</sup> Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, *The Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihad*. P33, in [www.islamistwatch.org/main.htm](http://www.islamistwatch.org/main.htm)

above that of any other religious or life obligation. These ideas became popular among terrorist recruits and religious leaders to justify terrorism, because Ibn Taymiyyah taught in the fourteenth century that political assassinations were not only justified but necessary.

Ibn Taymiyyah had significant influence for several modern extremist Muslim movements. One of the more modern revivals of Ibn Taymiyyah's teachings occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the Saudi Arabian founder of a Sunni sect of Islam, known as Wahhabism. Al-Wahhab sought to revive many of Ibn Taymiyyah's principles in his own teachings on Islam. Even though Ibn Taymiyyah was a Sufi Muslim and Wahhabism is strictly anti-Sufi, Al-Wahhab venerated and gave lectures on Ibn Taymiyyah, especially concerning the more extreme and puritanical aspects of his teachings. The Wahabis have been considered dangerous specifically because they were followers of Ibn Taymiyyah.<sup>58</sup>

## AL WAHHAB

The Wahabis of Saudi Arabia have been highly influential in their connections to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Wahabis are considered the most extreme Islamists of any puritanical sect, and Sunni groups that base many of their own beliefs on Wahabist doctrines include today's Afghani Taliban, Al-Qaeda and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Wahabis officially opposed jihadist resistance to Muslim rulers, because they claim "the decision to wage jihad lay with the ruler, not the individual

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<sup>58</sup> Robert Baer, *See No Evil : The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the Cia's War on Terrorism*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), 86-87.



believer,"<sup>59</sup> but they have been the largest contributors to puritanical Islamists and Muslim Brotherhood resistance groups in Palestine and Syria.

Al-Wahhab's principal contributing ideas for Islamic extremists were a restatement of Ibn Taymiyyah's ideas. They were three-fold. First, he called for a return to Islam's original teachings in the Quran and hadiths. Secondly, he declared the need to unite faith and action. Finally, he forbade all non-orthodox beliefs and practices.

Another key orchestrator for the influence and development of modern Sunni Islamic extremism followed Al-Wahhab. He was a theologian, journalist, and political philosopher in Pakistan during the early 1900's, Sheikh Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi.

#### A 'LA MAUDUDI

Maududi was born in 1903 and died in 1979. In 1941 Maududi formed the Islamic party in Pakistan called the Jamaat-e Islami. The party was Pakistan's first religious political party. Its officials have stated that it has a peaceful agenda to govern, but it is allegedly tied to al-Qaeda and has not advocated a peaceful approach in areas like Kashmir.

Jamaat-e Islami party was credited with developing "an ideology based on the modern revolutionary conception of Islam in the contemporary world."<sup>60</sup> Although

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<sup>59</sup> Noah Feldman, *After Jihad : America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy*, 1st ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 47.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/ji.htm>

the party never did well electorally in Pakistan, Maududi's charismatic and inspirational teachings influenced Islamic movements outside of Pakistan to idealize a future modern Islamic state under Shar'ia law and a return to the Quran.

Maududi believed socialism and capitalism were moral failures and would be replaced by Islam. He believed this would happen naturally as Muslims became educated in the Quran and based their societies on Shar'ia law. His legacies included an emphasis on Muslim education towards an Islamic state, and turning a nationalist political sentiment into a religious one.

Without describing at least the two major founders and philosophers behind the Muslim Brotherhood, it would be too difficult to understand from what mentalities and teachings the modern Islamic terrorists have come. Similarly to how a terrorist mentality was in place before the Narodnaya Volya became active and before the French Reign of Terror, Hasan Al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb were teaching terrorist thought before the founding of modern Islamic terrorist groups. It is important to take a closer look at their teachings.

#### HASAN AL-BANNA

Hasan Al-Banna was the founder as well as the imam (religious leader) for the Muslim Brotherhood until his assassination in 1949. He was son to the strict, fundamentalist Sheikh Ahmad, whose writings on Islamic law and customs helped shape his son's ideology.

Al-Banna believed Egypt was threatened by the work of Christian missionaries, the heavy military presence of the British Occupation, and Western affluence in comparison to Egyptian poverty. In about 1928 or 1929, when several workers came to him for guidance and mentoring, he formed the Muslim Brotherhood, an ultra-orthodox Islamic group, in Egypt. These workers came to Al-Banna because they were disgruntled with their situations and were disheartened with the condition of Islam.

Al-Banna wrote five tracts to lay out guidance for his followers and incite them to action for social and political changes in Egypt as well as in all of the Middle Eastern Muslim nations. The pan-Islamic motivation is to see “a return to the world-state of the Four Orthodox Caliphs and, this once accomplished, an aggressive march forward to conquer the rest of the earth for God and His Sacred Law.”<sup>61</sup>

In the five tracts, Al-Banna laid out the ideology and mission of the Muslim Brotherhood and provided a framework and plan for the Muslim Brotherhood program. In the first tract, “Between Yesterday and Today,” Al-Banna described how Islamic goals and ideology have evolved from the time when the Prophet Mohammed created his totality government in Medina to the time when the tract was written prior to WWII. Al-Banna then explained Islamic principles and ways of bringing about reforms for returning to his “ideal”.

Al-Banna then presented a historical narrative of this ideal when the Islamic state began and had the “Qur’an for its constitution & the prophet as its model and

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<sup>61</sup> Charles Wendell, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Bannaa (1906-1949) : A Selection from the Majmû’at Rasâa Il Al-Imâam Al-Shahâid Ôhasan Al-Bannâa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 3.

leader....”<sup>62</sup> He also idealized the time when the Ottoman Empire existed, because this period exemplified when Islam was expansive and its people were successfully united.

While expanding on Islamic principles, Al-Banna emphasized the perfection of Islam as a system for social organization and how it covers every aspect of life’s affairs. For Al-Banna and his followers, if Muslims would just submit themselves to the true meaning of their religion, they could free Islamic lands from foreign leadership and experience the freedom of living under the strict rules of behavior for social harmony and righteousness under Islam. Al-Banna emphasized that the aims of his group were not for worldly wealth or luxuries. He detested this characteristic that he saw in Westerners. Their aim should be rather for rewards offered in the afterlife.

The goals of the group were not anti-prosperity; Al-Banna and his followers were disturbed by the poverty of Egyptians and sought to make reforms so that their needs could be better met. The stated primary goals were to rid the “Islamic fatherland” from domination by foreigners and to establish in its place an Islamic state that would implement the rules and principles of Islam. According to Al-Banna, the non-existence of this form of Islamic state meant that all Muslims were sinning before God and would be held responsible for their negligence.

The sin of not creating an Islamic state under Shar’ia Law should be rectified by Muslims, according to Al-Banna, by first reviving the spirit of Islam among

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 13.

Muslims and then waging Jihad for control of the land and people, extending eventually to those that cover the earth. Even though Al-Banna's writings indicated a will for his goal that Islam reach the whole world, he began his focus on the Arab lands and specifically, the Nile Valley.

He expanded on his goals in the second tract, "Our Mission", which concerns "the mission of restoring the original 'Community of Believers' and the reopening of the campaign to bring the rest of the unbelieving world under the sway of God's Law and His True Religion."<sup>63</sup> Here one can see how heavily Al-Banna's father's instruction influenced him. There was a strong focus on the social mores and laws in Al-Banna's description of Islamic principles for the restoration of what the first Islamic community represented.

Al-Banna believed that the first Islamic government the Prophet Mohammed was able to establish with Islamic leadership was perfect. What has been lacking since then and especially at the time of his writing was, first, a purity of the Muslims themselves as well as their leaders; secondly, a focus on implementation of Islamic law; and, thirdly, a drive to conquer comparable to what Prophet Mohammed and his government had striven for and achieved.

In dealing with social rules, Al-Banna seemed to be expressly concerned with Western influence on what he regarded as too much freedom for women in social and work life and especially on looser sexual standards for everyone.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 5.

Al-Banna and his followers were explicitly intolerant of corrupt rulers who were also Muslim. According to Richard Mitchell, expert on the Muslim Brotherhood, for Hasan Al-Banna

*“...it was all too easy to pass from threatening words to acts; and increasing numbers of Muslim Brothers were exposed, as time went on, as terrorists and assassins who attacked the foreign economic exploiters and the hated masters of Egyptian political life almost impartially. For whatever he may have written in adverse criticism of European Fascism and imperialism, there can be little question that Hasan was deeply impressed by the organization of the Nazi, Fascist, and Communist parties, and by no means rejected the tactics they employed to gain and sustain their power.”<sup>65</sup>*

Al-Banna argued that Islamic militarism was superior to that of Fascism, Communism, and Nazism, because, he said, ultimately Islam prefers peace.<sup>66</sup> In contradiction, Al-Banna stressed a Muslim’s required duty to shed his blood for all the goals outlined throughout the five tracts. It all boiled down to conquering for the sake of Islam. He did not stop at mentioning a Muslim’s duty to serve, but glorified martyrdom and wrote extensively on the importance of violent Jihad.

The third tract, entitled, “To What Do We Summon Mankind?” highlighted the goals of life or to what men should aspire as he interpreted it from the Qur’an. He focused on the concept that Islam should be supreme in the world: “...the Noble Qur’an appoints the Muslims as guardians over humanity in its minority, and grants them the right of suzerainty and dominion over the world in order to carry out this sublime commission.”<sup>67</sup> In a further restatement, he added to the aim of dominating

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 71.

the world the aim of “guiding all of humanity to the sound precepts of Islam and to its teachings.”<sup>68</sup>

Then he focused on the need for Muslims to be self-sacrificing for this purpose and stated that bringing about the world-wide rule of Islam is the purpose of their life. It is interesting to see Hasan’s defenses came out in this tract when he addressed what he saw as an accusation of being “political”. Even though he already had made a case for how there were no divisions between Islam and government, he seemed upset by the political identification his critics must have mentioned about his group:

*“We summon you to Islam, the teachings of Islam, the laws of Islam and the guidance of Islam, and if this smacks of ‘politics’ in your eyes, then it is our ‘policy’! And if the one summoning you to these principles is a ‘politician,’ then we are the most respectable of men, God be praised, in ‘politics’! And if you wish to call this ‘politics,’ say what you like, for names will never harm us when what has been named is made clear and our goals stand revealed.”<sup>69</sup>*

Al-Banna recognized that many Muslims interpreted the Qur’an differently in a more passive or non-literal way as well as in ways that were able to accommodate Western ideas (especially secularist ones). He strongly rejected and condemned this attitude.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, Al-Banna liked to pick and choose what would be useful to adopt from Western culture, such as certain scientific achievements and study, while rejecting certain ideas in economics and science.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 83.

A core concept of the Muslim Brotherhood is that Jihad is the only way to achieve the goals of the Muslim Brotherhood, no matter how long it takes. The Muslim who refrains from taking action on behalf of the goal suffers a loss of his Jihad reward and will be deprived of personal benefits.

Al-Banna focused much of his writing on a contrast between Islam and the West. He rarely mentioned the nations east of Arabia and he also seemed particularly keen to argue for the superiority of Arabs over other Muslim peoples. He tried to not discriminate, but suggested that Muslim peoples far from the Arab world may not have fully received the message of Islam or been able to follow the laws and principles of Islam.

In his final two tracts, Al-Banna delved into the importance of violent Jihad, claiming that he “regards abstention and evasion of jihad as one of the major sins, and one of the seven mortal sins that guarantee annihilation.”<sup>71</sup> In addition to this extreme, he used descriptions like “backsliding” and “slackers” to describe the Muslims who did not fully participate in jihad. God will castigate them for their lack of enthusiasm and for their weakness and cowardice not just by punishing them in the afterlife but also by causing them disgrace in this world until they take up jihad.

Al-Banna defined the Muslim Brotherhood when he said to the brothers,

***“you are not a benevolent organization, nor a political party, nor a local association with strictly limited aims. Rather you are a new spirit making its way into the heart of this nation and revivifying it through the Qur’an; a new light dawning and scattering the darkness of materialism through the knowledge of God; a resounding voice***

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 133.



*rising and echoing the message of the Apostle (May God bless and save him!)”<sup>72</sup>*

Al-Banna immediately followed this declaration by telling the brothers that they were the ones called to finally not hide from their duty. He said they were being called to Islam and that government is part of Islam. They were “agents of revolution!, [and to] say: We are agents of the truth and of peace in which we believe and which we exalt. If you rise up against us and offer hindrance to our message, God has given us permission to defend ourselves, and you will be unjust rebels.”<sup>73</sup> These striking yet quite contradictory words, speaking of peace but violence at the same time, set the tone for the development of the Muslim Brotherhood and have been responsible for the incitement to violence and many of the deaths since the 1930’s when Hasan Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood.

Al-Banna’s quest for a kind of perfection in Muslim society could be seen as idealistic in some circles, but his consistent teachings in support of violence against such broad and vaguely defined groups of people supports the terrorist mentality more than it encourages realistic societal reform.

## MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

Today, the foundation for most Islamic terrorism can be linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. L. Carl Brown, historian and professor at Princeton University from 1966 to 1993, said the best label for the Muslim Brotherhood would be “an Islamist

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

totalitarian movement.”<sup>74</sup> As such a movement, the Brotherhood polishes its followers to be “true believers” in Islam. They separate in their minds those who are good from those who are not, as well as those who are saved versus those who are damned. They base this division on teachings from Hasan Al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb.<sup>75</sup>

Robert Baer gained extensive experience first hand in the Middle East and with the Muslim Brotherhood during his twenty-one year career as a case officer for the CIA. About the Muslim Brotherhood, Baer wrote, “[It] was an amorphous, dangerous, unpredictable movement that shook every government in the Middle East to its bones.”<sup>76</sup>

The Muslim Brothers were first active in Egypt where the Brotherhood was founded and then branched out to numerous countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the rest of the world. The group, known in Arabic as *al-ikhwān*, is feared because of its extreme religious views and its aim to take over politically and impose these views on all of society.

The Brotherhood began with a dedication to bring “the Kingdom of God to earth.”<sup>77</sup> The most notable incidents of its activity were in Egypt, where members tried to assassinate President Abdul Nasser and again in Syria where they twice tried

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<sup>74</sup> L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 148.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Baer, *See No Evil : The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the Cia's War on Terrorism*, 86.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

to kill President Hafiz Al-Asad. In 1982, President Asad destroyed the city of Hama in retaliation, the city having been seized by the Muslim Brothers.<sup>78</sup>

### *Beliefs of the Muslim Brotherhood*

A principle aim of the Brotherhood is pan-Islamist governing for all areas of Muslim life as laid out in the Qur'an and the Shar'ia, from individual and family life to community and state life. They seek to establish the Shar'ia as the complete source of legal reference. According to the Muslim Brotherhood's official website, for all of its branches internationally, the creed is:

*“Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. **Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.**”<sup>79</sup>*

“What has stayed vaguely constant in Brotherhood ideology,” writes Brown, “is Qutb's influence that the Shar'ia should be re-established when Islam is restored and the promotion of violent Jihad to rid the lands of “Jahili” influences and power which extend to all Muslim and non-Muslim lands.”<sup>80</sup> Under a strict environment of belief and with the momentum that the group gained, it was not a distant leap for them to use violence, or for that matter, any means necessary, to oppose the enemies of God. With such an orientation, “it was the prototype of many later Islamist movements.”<sup>81</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood was accused of advocating terrorist acts like suicide bombings in Israel and targeting civilians as part of the Hamas group of Muslim

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> "The Principles of the Muslim Brotherhood," [www.ikhwanweb.info](http://www.ikhwanweb.info)  
<http://www.muslimbrotherhood.co.uk/Home.asp?zPage=Systems&System=PressR&Press=Show&Lang=E&ID=4584>.

<sup>80</sup> Brown, *Religion and State : The Muslim Approach to Politics*, 148.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Brothers. The Muslim Brotherhood's official opposition to terrorism contrasts sharply with the writings of its founder and subsequent leaders who consistently urged violence.

### *Growth of the Muslim Brotherhood*

The Brotherhood spread internationally to other nations in the Arab world where it gained influential positions in many opposition political groups. Between the years 1936 and 1938, the Brotherhood membership grew from 800 to nearly 200,000. By the mid-1940's, the group reached nearly 500,000 members and it is believed its membership grew to about two million towards the end of the decade as its ideas spread to other Muslim nations and gained support there.<sup>82</sup> When the Muslim Brotherhood spread beyond its Egyptian borders in 1936, it set up programs first in Lebanon and then in Syria the following year. By 1946, the Brotherhood was established in Palestine, which became the world's theater for Islamic terrorism.<sup>83</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood became active in most Muslim countries in the form of political opposition and/or education, charity and social groups. Its influence now extends beyond the Middle East to Western nations like the U.S., Great Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands and eastward to East and South Asia via Arab diasporas and their networks. From there, political Islamism has grown exponentially

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<sup>82</sup> Robin Hallett, *Africa since 1875 : A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), 138.

<sup>83</sup> Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, trans. Colin Meade (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2007), 17-19.

largely in consequence of persecution from Middle Eastern governments as well as the political writings and martyrdom of Sayyid Qutb.

## SAYYID QUTB

The key idea behind Sayyid Qutb's work can be expressed with the phrase from his book, Milestones: "*It is essential for mankind to have new leadership!*"<sup>84</sup> Qutb discussed how the Western man is the modern source of leadership for the world, but Western culture lacks essential values and a certain lifestyle found only in a specific form of Islam. Furthermore, Western leadership of the world is on the decline "because it is deprived of those life-giving values which enabled it to be the leader of mankind."<sup>85</sup> That was why the form of Islam, which Qutb described, would carry mankind toward an ideal life that includes his version of freedom, equality, and harmony.

He made efforts to defend his statements with idealized historical examples and blanket statements in order to create indisputable arguments. But these arguments overshadowed the issues he was actually discussing. For instance, he noted how Russia under communism faced shortages of food, had surplus when under the Tsars and then presently had to import food from abroad and sell gold reserves for it. He argued that Russia failed because the system of collective farming was "against human nature."<sup>86</sup> He then referred to Russia's failings in order to contrast it with the

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<sup>84</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Rev. ed. (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Unity Pub. Co.), 7.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

success and virtues of the first Muslim generation in Mecca without fully developing a real argument.

Perhaps the principle reason for his comparison was to point out negative influences from non-Islamic nations. The kind of Islam that would be worthy of the new leadership of mankind was not found in any current Muslim leadership. Qutb's rationale for this claim was that he believed Muslim societies were heavily influenced by what he called jahiliyya - influences from non-Islamic cultures or even Islamic cultures that had not yet attained the level of purity and perfection in Islam that he envisioned.

The "Milestones", or as he also described them, the "signposts along the way", were the stages to reviving the original concept of what Islam was meant to be, nurturing it in a society, and then taking over that society. Conquering the world was the chief objective of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qutb believed he knew what God would be thinking and could speak on His behalf. He also believed his concept would bring freedom, equality, and harmony to mankind. The governing society with its strict rules would give non-believers freedom to choose Islam or choose being conquered. Giving people this one option would lead people to the right path and true freedom, according to Qutb:

***"It is necessary for the new leadership to preserve and develop the material fruits of the creative genius of Europe, and also to provide mankind with such high ideals and values as have so far remained undiscovered by mankind, and which will also acquaint humanity with a way of life which is harmonious with human nature, which is***

*positive and constructive, and which is practicable. Islam is the only System which possesses these values and this way of life.*<sup>87</sup>

In the first chapter of Milestones, Qutb examined the Prophet Mohammed's intentions for humanity. Specifically, he was concerned with how mankind had strayed after the first generation of Muslims. He blamed the downfall of Muslim cultures on the adoption of jurisprudence and principles from non-Muslim societies.<sup>88</sup> He believed the first group of Muslims took instruction directly from the Qur'an and translated it directly into action, unlike the modern Muslim community.

The generations that followed apparently lost this initiative and chose to take the instruction of the Quran and chiefly use it for academic purposes and for pleasure. This decision caused the succeeding generations to stray from Islam. Another cause of Muslim decline, according to Qutb, was that the succeeding generations did not cut themselves off from jahiliyyah, or "The state of ignorance of the guidance from God" like the first generation had.<sup>89</sup>

*Jahiliyyah* normally refers to the time in Arabia prior to Islam, but it also refers to a human condition. Islam came to Arabia after the fifth and sixth centuries when war had been waged between the Persians and the Romans for the previous four hundred years. The people of that previous time were thought to be arrogant, ignorant, barbaric, brutal and morally bankrupt.

Qutb would have liked to see Islam develop in society not just to take a central place in people's lives, but for all of society to be governed by it and to have

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 19.

the concept of one God and the focus of every individual be toward the worship of God so that nothing would become more important than God.

The Arabic phrase “*La ilaha illa Allah*” is central to Islam; it means “there is no god but God”. Qutb stressed this concept and believed it was not fully realized in modern Muslim societies. It was necessary for Islam to dominate and be a governing force in society for the truth of this concept to be realized.

Qutb stressed that “Islam cannot fulfill its role except by taking concrete form in a society, rather, in a nation; for man does not listen, especially in this age, to an abstract theory which is not seen materialized in a living society.”<sup>90</sup>

The milestones along the way to reaching this type of society would be based on “the Holy Qur’an – and from its basic teachings, and from the concept which it created in the minds of the first group of Muslims, those whom God raised to fulfill His will, those who once changed the course of human history in the direction ordained by God.”<sup>91</sup>

Qutb advocated the creation of a distinct Muslim society under Islamic rule. He wrote that Islam should be revived and restored to govern and specifically to enforce Islamic, or Shar’ia Law. Since Shar’ia law has not been the only source of law, “we can say that the Muslim community has been extinct for a few centuries.... The Muslim community with these characteristics vanished at the moment the laws of God became suspended on earth.”<sup>92</sup> The previous Caliphates in history did not

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 9.



measure up to Qutb's standards, nor did any of the current regimes under Muslim rule. Shar'ia law was fully in place for the first generation of Muslims according to Qutb, but since then there has not been a truly Islamic society. If Islam were once again to be restored to the extent that it was, as initially, the leader of humanity, then "the Muslim community [would be] to be restored to its original form."<sup>93</sup> However, he could not clarify an example of this true Islamic society. The kind of community that Qutb proposed to establish was extinct, and he could not provide a precise means for this creation of society or community under Islamic rule.

Qutb envisioned a sort of Islamic revival and he was concerned with the distance between this revival of Islamic values and the reality of gaining the kind of leadership that he spoke of. Qutb said it would take much patience and the focus should be on each step along the way. The most important of his ideas was the progress of faith in this whole process:

*"To attain the leadership of mankind, we must have something to offer besides material progress, and this other quality can only be a faith and a way of life which on the one hand conserves the benefits of modern science and technology, and on the other fulfills the basic human needs on the same level of excellence as technology has fulfilled them in the sphere of material comfort...."*<sup>94</sup>

Qutb believed that he was laying down in his writings certain "truths" that would change the course of human history. He also believed that his ideas came from God during his meditations on the Qur'an. He recognized the disconnectedness of his milestones, but believed that "it is the nature of signs along the road to be

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 10.

disconnected.”<sup>95</sup> The primary question presented in the Qur’an... in “the Meccan portion” was a question of faith with two main aspects, the Divine and the human, and the relationship between them. The main aspect of the Meccan period was the “imprint ‘There is no deity except God’ on hearts and minds, and teaches Muslims to adopt this method and no other –in spite of the fact that it appears difficult –and to persist in this method.”<sup>96</sup>

Like Maximilian Robespierre, Qutb’s focus was on intangible concepts that were both single-minded and unrealistic. For example, Qutb’s main points were first, that Islam is the way and only way for mankind to experience life-giving values like freedom and faith in the unity of God. Secondly, the Muslim community needs to develop a truly Islamic Society under Shar’ia Law. None yet exists. Thirdly, this society then needs to be continually “purified.” Again, this concentration on purity echoed the mind-frame and speech of Robespierre.

The significant difference between the plan for society change outlined by Qutb compared to the plans of Robespierre or Nechaev was that Qutb believed these changes needed to occur in stages rather than immediately. That is, his “milestones” or “sign-posts” along the way to societal change would include a kind of Islamic revival, then develop a vanguard of pure believers under Shar’ia law, expand the organization, continue violent jihad and then eventually conquer the world and continue conquering until all of society was “purified”.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 31.

In the fourth chapter, Qutb made the case for Jihad. He claimed it was concerned first and foremost with freedom. However, he was really saying that a tight group of radical Islamists needed to rid their world violently of everyone not agreeing to rule under Shar'ia. This was his call to jihad.

The call to rid the world violently of anyone disagreeing demonstrated the intolerant nature of the organization and its fundamentals to the extreme that no peaceful society could exist under these measures. The “stages” to societal change, or “milestones”, gave the illusion that Qutb believed in a peaceful evolution of society, but the truth behind his words were more reflective of the terrorist mentality whose focus is unending violence with an unattainable goal for a perfect society.

Qutb blended jihadist ideas with “apocalyptic traditions.”<sup>97</sup> The expectation was that in order to have the ultimate conquest realized, it would be necessary for a society to purify itself and become a conduit to the world’s end.<sup>98</sup> For the jihadists, it was a struggle between good and evil. A spokesperson for an off-shoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, once said, ““there are no such terms as compromise and surrender in the Islamic cultural lexicon.””<sup>99</sup>The goal was to completely extinguish the enemy without the enemy recognizing the force and to never appease the enemy.<sup>100</sup>

The ideology of Sayyid Qutb is sometimes referred to as *Qutbism* and it reflects his ideas of fighting for the establishment of the perfect Islamic community

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<sup>97</sup> Barry Cooper, *New Political Religions, or, an Analysis of Modern Terrorism*, Eric Voegelin Institute Series in Political Philosophy (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 116.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

free of outside, non-Islamic (particularly Western) influences. This society would return to the original godly knowledge of Islamic morality which, according to Qutb, had been extinct for hundreds of years.

Qutbism is the notion that the earth must be re-conquered for this ideology. The extreme Qutbist beliefs are like-minded to the other terrorist movements described in this thesis in what I have called the terrorist mentality. Its tenets are a quest for the perfect society and an undertaking of ruthless violence to frighten and intimidate society to the will of the group.

The main tenets of Qutbism include submission to the sacred Shar'ia law; making Shar'ia law not just for judicial purposes but for controlling every detail of life; getting rid of all non-Islamic influences; jihad for eliminating any opposition to these beliefs; and, jihad to destroy any possible jahili influences.

This philosophy of the Muslim Brotherhood is the most influential philosophy for Islamic terrorist groups worldwide. The four main tenets, or the four phases of the plan for world domination in the context of Qutbism are the following in this order:

1. "Awaken" Muslims to the extreme beliefs.
2. Establish the community of believers under a Caliphate.
3. Launch Jihad as a pillar of faith and employ flexibly during the other phases, but dominantly after the establishment of the Caliphate.
4. Institute the Islamic World Order.

Qutb was writing this plan from a position of powerlessness during one of the many times he was incarcerated. His ideas were as unrealistic and power-hungry as those of Robespierre, but because he wrote them down and articulated a system for achieving them, his followers were given a means for using his ideas to suit their needs in the quest for power. Furthermore, because many Muslims can relate to the desire for a return to Muslim dominance in the world through a Caliphate, Qutb's concepts are preached in order to draw support to the terrorists' cause. What they do not preach to the masses is the intolerant nature of these beliefs and the impossibility of reaching the standard that they set. When a group preaches violent jihad and endorses it as a pillar of the faith, the outcome is terrorism with no foreseeable end to the violence. Terrorism breeds more terrorism: without a tangible and realistic plan for a peaceful society, the revolution is predetermined for failure.

## PART FIVE

### CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

Motivations behind terrorist movements might at first be seen as the ideals and the perfection that a group declares it is fighting for or fighting to create. However, there is a consistently single-minded, impossible, and unrealistic standard they preach. For terrorist groups, the main object is terror. The level of intolerance is so extreme that no achievable standards exist for anyone outside the group. There are only the saved and the condemned. However, the extremeness of the leaders' concepts can be quickly redefined to redraw the borders between the saved and the condemned.

Each group began with anti-monarchial beliefs but quickly broadened its enemy targets to include more and more groups of people. The link between the Narodnaya Volya, the French Reign of Terror and Islamist extremists is the intangible and unrealistic ideals for purity of society and an intolerance for any beliefs other than their own. The societal changes desired by the terrorists were unattainable, because the terrorists had naive ideas of perfection.

Even if the definition of terrorism is still elusive, understanding the extreme mentalities of terrorists like the Narodnaya Volya, the Jacobins during the Reign of Terror and the Muslim Brotherhood helps to clarify the identity of terrorist movements.

The French Reign of Terror lasted from 1793 to 1794, and through the speeches of its most prominent figure, Maximilien Robespierre, we can understand the essence

of the terrorist mentality. Likewise, this mentality was mirrored through the writings of Sergey Nechaev, the most notorious author during the “heroic period” of the Narodnaya Volya, lasting from 1878 to 1881. Furthermore, the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in around 1929, and still active today, with its reverence for the teachings of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan Al-Banna, continue an intolerant and extreme philosophy that breeds terrorism.

With Robespierre as the force behind The Terror, Nechaev as the force behind the Narodnaya Volya, and Qutb as the intellectual force behind today’s Muslim Brotherhood, the groups’ messages have lacked a tangible vision of peaceful societies. They had a continually expanding definition of the enemy identity; their continuous calls for more terrorist acts in support of the quest for societal change exemplify the terrorist mentality. Terrorism expert Walter Lacqueur pointed out that “in some essential respects their [terrorists’] mental makeup is similar . . . . Its philosophy transcend[s] the traditional dividing lines between political doctrines. It is truly all-purpose and value-free.” The mental makeup of Robespierre, Nechaev and Qutb were similar. Each expressed their terrorist mentality in almost identical language.

In the speech of Robespierre to the National Convention on February 5, 1794, we can see his mentality of terror:

*“The splendor of the goal of the French Revolution is simultaneously the source of our strength and of our weakness: our strength, because it gives us an ascendancy of truth over falsehood, and of public rights over private interests; our weakness, because it rallies against us all vicious men, all those who in their hearts seek to despoil the people . . . . It is necessary to stifle the*

*domestic and foreign enemies of the Republic or perish with them. Now in these circumstances, the first maxim of our politics ought to be to lead the people by means of reason **and the enemies of the people by terror.***

*If the basis of popular government in time of peace is virtue, **the basis of popular government in time of revolution is both virtue and terror: virtue without which terror is murderous, terror without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing else than swift, severe, indomitable justice; it flows, then, from virtue.***<sup>101</sup>

When Robespierre gave this speech, he had a vision for perfection in society and, ultimately, he was consumed with power. He considered The Terror to be the nation's strength because it was his own strength. He viewed terrorism as not a means to an end, but as a continuing, virtuous, and effective method for securing and maintaining the reign of his government. He held the same mentality as Nechaev and Qutb but unlike the latter two, Robespierre was speaking from a platform of power. His goal was to employ terrorism on the citizenry in order to force them to succumb to his will for a perfect society.

Even so, Robespierre's enemies could have been anyone. Nechaev and Qutb did not speak or write from positions of power, but were part of the underground revolutionaries calling for revolt against the established government. The victims of terrorism for Nechaev and Qutb, like Robespierre, could have been anyone disagreeing with the goals or plans that they set forth in their mandates.

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<sup>101</sup> France. Convention nationale. Comité de salut public. Important state paper. A report made in the National Convention, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety. By Citizen Robespierre [sic]. A member of that Committee, on the political situation of the Republic. The 27th brumaire, the 2d year of the Republic. (17th Nov. O.S.) Printed by order of the National Convention. Translated from the French, for the information of the American Republic. Boston, MDCCXCIV. [1794]. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. University of Kansas Libraries. 18 Dec. 2009 [1794]. 38pp. *Social Sciences*



Nechaev and Qutb were similar in that they both expressed the terrorist mentality openly and both were jailed by their governments for those expressions. In each case, they gained more popularity through their imprisonments and consequent executions. They had become martyrs and inspired the generations that followed in their doctrine of terrorism.

The Narodnaya Volya and the Muslim Brotherhood were organized groups for the purpose of terrorism similar to the way Robespierre's regime was organized for terrorism. The Jacobins of The French Reign of Terror, the Narodnaya Volya, and the Muslim Brotherhood all believed they could achieve their goals through terrorism. Most importantly, terrorism was not just a tactic for any of them. It was a well developed mentality that was established before any of the revolutionary actions.

Most of today's individual Islamic terrorists have, at the most, read or heard only short excerpts from the Muslim Brotherhood's teachings. However, through these excerpts, the message can be distorted in order to most effectively recruit any given individual. They can also mold what little the individuals know about their faith in order to draw them into the fight.

It is helpful to understand the teachings of the leaders of a terrorist group to recognize a terrorist identity. However, in order to combat terrorism, it is most important to recognize that the terrorist group's definitive goals, aims and strategies are dominated by the momentum of terrorism itself. Because they possess the terrorist mentality, they will be continually unsatisfied with any intermediate attainment of their goals and they will continue to call for more and more violence.

The specific characterizations of terrorism may continue to change, but terrorist groups will always be identifiable by their terrorist mentality. So, terrorism can be straight forward, as is in the cases of Robespierre and Nechaev; or it can be indirect through re-phrasing of a concept like jihad, as in the case of Al-Banna and Qutb. The terrorist mentality is identified by the insatiable thirst for power combined with the relentless push for violence against an indiscriminate and easily re-definable group of people, regardless of the group's stated goals.

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