Enemies of Humanity

The Nineteenth-Century War on Terrorism

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ISAAC LAND

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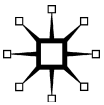

ENEMIES OF HUMANITY

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Contents

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Introduction

Isaac Land

In the final days of the Paris Commune, the "bloody week" beginning May 21, 1871, it appeared that the city was burning to the ground. As government troops recaptured Paris street by street from the Communard rebels, ashes rained on the nearby hilltops, mixed with bits of charred paper from the Ministry of Finance and the Louvre library. The classically minded poet Leconte de Lisle accused the Communards of following the example of Herostratos, a lunatic who burned down the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus—one of the wonders of the ancient world—simply to ensure his eternal fame. The French government, headquartered at Versailles, and the international press joined in a chorus of condemnation of the "reds" and their insult to art and civilization. Once the smoke cleared, inconvenient facts began to emerge: The fire damage was not very extensive (casting doubt on any theory of a long-premeditated arson plot), and the Ministry of Finance had been burned not by Communard kerosene bombs but by the incendiary shells shot by the government's own artillery. The rich vaults of the Bank of France remained unplundered after two months of Communard rule. None of this stopped French conservatives from cultivating the myth that the Paris Commune was a takeover by criminals and prostitutes who first looted the city and then torched it.[1]

The year 1871 caught terrorism at a fascinating moment of transition. The word *terrorism* still carried strong associations from the bloodier moments of the 1790s. The Communards were "terrorists" because they instituted a Committee for Public Safety (which looked like a conscious emulation of Robespierre), yet in the end the archetypal Communard "terrorist" was the *pétroleuse* arsonist, the cackling hag spreading fiery destruction in her wake. The misdeeds of the Communards (some high-profile hostages executed; some fires set in a last-ditch effort to stave off the army) pale in comparison to the retribution that followed. The Marquis de Gallifet,

commanding the victorious government troops, presided over what historians agree is the largest massacre on French soil up to that date (roughly 25,000 dead). All Communard defenders were shot, including those who surrendered. Even though Gallifet was nominally in the service of a republican regime, the purge extended to individuals who were not implicated in the Commune but had opposed Napoleon III. Paris remained under martial law for several years; victims of capricious arrest were routinely denied access to lawyers. Thousands of alleged Communards were shipped to remote rocky islands, where they languished in cages.[2]

Meanwhile, exaggerated tales of Communard atrocities proved useful to enemies of the Left, worldwide. Allan Pinkerton, the Chicago detective, had emerged from a Civil War stint as a military spymaster with a vision of himself as a general in the war on crime. *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives,* his account of the 1877 labor crisis, began with a denunciation of the "brute force and terrorism of the long strike," which, according to Pinkerton, was merely the tool deployed by the foes of civilization in their scheme to bring the horrors of the Paris Commune to America.[3] Pinkerton followed the lead of many American newspapers in misnaming the Communards as Communists. For the detective, "communism is scoundrelism" and the railroad strikers at Pittsburgh were somehow plotting with tramps, burglars, and river pirates to pillage the city.[4] Pinkerton's ultimate goal was plain: He meant to demonstrate that all labor unions were at heart criminal, communistic, terrorist conspiracies. His National Detective Agency would assemble proof of this at the request of any beleaguered employer, for a reasonable fee. Terrorism, then as now, was defined by its self-appointed adversaries.

Allan Pinkerton and the Marquis de Gallifet would be surprised to learn that in the twenty-first century, many authors describe the "war on terrorism" as a very recent development, something that has emerged within living memory. *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism,* effectively begins with the problem of aircraft hijacking and the pivotal role of the Nixon administration ("the first in U.S. history to consider international terrorism a national problem").[5] Another post-9/11 book, entitled *The First War on Terrorism,* makes the equivalent claim for the Reagan administration. Readers less susceptible to historical amnesia will have some sense of a deeper chronology, probably beginning with Alfred Nobel's invention of dynamite in 1866 and the *ère des attentats* (1878–1914), so named for the numerous assassinations and "outrages" in many different countries.[6] Implicit in all of these chronologies, however, is a belief that terrorism can be defined by its engines of

destruction, and that new technologies somehow create a rupture in history.[7] Whether the weapon is an "infernal device" with a timing mechanism, an airliner converted into a propaganda statement, or a suicide bomber behind the wheel of a speeding truck, the terrorist moment begins with a new technique. A tiny, fanatical group is suddenly empowered to cause uncertainty and harm on an (previously) unthinkable scale. Wars against terrorism predictably follow, a defensive undertaking in which governments scramble to improvise a response to this unprecedented threat.

The purpose of this book is to suggest that such an approach to the history of terrorism is irredeemably flawed. We begin with the origin and early usage of the word itself, which arose out of political innovations rather than additions to the arsenal of the dissatisfied. The theme of terrorism is so closely linked to the themes of law, power, and violence that a truly comprehensive account would probably resemble a history of *homo sapiens*. Our goal, however, is not to offer a definitive cross-cultural account of atrocity through the ages, but to inquire into the relatively modern and Europe-centered practice of *declaring a war on terrorism*. What were the origins and development of this phenomenon? Whose ideological interests did it serve? What legal and institutional innovations did it require? What rhetorical strategies did it adopt to win over the public? Did waging a war on terrorism reduce, or increase, the incidence of political violence? Histories of terrorism, premised on the idea that government's role is essentially reactive, often fail to consider these questions at all. The resulting narrative is episodic and inconclusive. Walter Laqueur, who has reflected on these matters for several decades now, concludes that "there has been no 'terrorism' per se, only different terrorisms."[8] If we inquire instead into the motives of those who conceived—and waged—a war on terrorism, a much more coherent, but profoundly disturbing, picture emerges.

The common thread in nineteenth-century wars on terrorism is counter-revolution. For this reason, *Enemies of Humanity* ranges much more widely than some readers might expect. Thus, self-emancipating slaves, workers on strike, and campaigners for woman's suffrage all counted as terrorists, *whether or not their tactics included intimidation and atrocity.* The aphorism "one person's freedom fighter is another's terrorist" implies that both terrorists and freedom fighters wage war, causing harm both deliberately and as a form of collateral damage. Yet, in the nineteenth century, some remarkably unwarlike groups and movements found themselves ranked among the so-called enemies of humanity. The prevailing historical focus on the *ère des attentats*

obscures this important phenomenon. A major objective of this book is to gather in one place topics that were often discussed together one hundred years ago, but which have been disaggregated by a historiography of terrorism that isolates the bomb-thrower from the union organizer, and the anarchist assassin from the nationalist agitator in Asia or Africa. Those who feared the terrorist also feared the crowd, whether it took the form of the so-called "dangerous classes" of the great cities, or the fecund "Yellow Peril" that allegedly threatened the global dominance of the white race. In many places, the war on terrorism boiled down to a campaign against anything resembling majority rule. This should not be altogether surprising. Edmund Burke—godfather of counter-revolutionary thought—had declared that democracy itself was a terrorist enterprise.

Making an open declaration that the war on terrorism was a defense of elite or minority privilege would have made little political sense, of course. As early as the 1790s, Burke's dismissal of the majority as the "swinish multitude" had backfired. In part for this reason, there were not many attempts to define terrorism in the nineteenth century. Naming the enemy in a precise and candid way would have alienated many people whose services would be required as foot soldiers, taxpayers, and police informants. It helped to use an array of ambiguous terms such as *pirate, thug,* and *enemy of humanity,* alongside *terrorist*. Arguably, victory over this vague foe was never the objective; the siege mentality that the war fostered served to mute any serious discussion of reform, while branding political dissidents as just another form of terrorist.

Meanwhile, civilization required a new breed of defenders; the military fought terrorism, to be sure, but soon it would be professionals such as journalists, detectives, and spies who played the most active part in naming the enemy and framing the problem, meanwhile missing no opportunities to celebrate their own glamorous role on the front lines of the war. Calling such activities "counter-terrorism," as if they necessarily followed—and responded to—terrorist acts, does not do them justice. The war on terrorism has sometimes preceded terrorism, while in other cases, it has been prosecuted in the continued absence of any serious terrorist threat. This is even leaving aside the phenomenon of agent provocateurs, who incite or initiate the violence that their employer is supposed to deter or suppress. One hundred years ago, Joseph Conrad published *The Secret Agent,* a novel about a spymaster who secretly commissions a terrorist act as a devious way to discredit his government's enemies and score political points. In the post-9/11 world, Conrad's

novel is often mentioned for its insight into the terrorist mind, but we would do better to remember that the novel's most intelligent, proactive, and creative villain is not an idealist revolutionary, but a spymaster who serves an unscrupulous government.

Then and Now: Naming the Enemies of Humanity

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, proponents of a war on terrorism argued that the world was now divided between those who had successfully transitioned to the new era ("September 12" people) and those who lingered in denial, clinging to the lost world of September 10, 2001. It would be interesting to know what self-described September 12 people would make of the extensive use of ancient rhetoric and legal categories in the twenty-first century campaign against al Qaeda. Pirates were the first *hostis humani generis* ("enemies of humanity"), a Roman legal category that has been used to justify government reprisals for millennia. In the year 1840, William Meacham Murrell proudly described his role as a common seaman aboard the *Columbia,* sent by the U.S. Navy to punish Malay pirates that preyed upon American shipping. In his memoir, Murrell related how the *Columbia* inflicted vengeance, not against a pirate vessel, but on an undefended settlement: "We met with no obstacle, whatever, to impede us in the work of destruction, which was carried on to its fullest extent; the town being burnt to the ground, leaving nought but a mass of ruins." Murrell explained that shelling a town was the same as targeting pirates, since Malays were born pirates and had been so historically, "from the earliest periods." After the town was leveled, American landing parties sifted through the wreckage for plunder. This behavior, of course, was not piracy but "retaliation" carried out on behalf of the community of "civilized nations."[9] Murrell was not engaged in mere name-calling. The normal rules of warfare do not apply when the defense of civilization is at stake. Atrocity becomes convention.[10]

Since it was logically impossible for any human to be an enemy of *all* humanity, nineteenth-century terrorists found themselves lumped in with animals and insects. In the 1890s, the foreign correspondent of the *New York Times* described a bombing scare in Paris as follows:

> When I was a boy we used to be taught that civilization had at last become a permanent state of man . . . We had felt comfortable over the impossibility of any more such savage invasions as those that submerged Greece

> and Rome. Now, lo and behold, it is discovered that we have been breeding our Alarics and Attilas in our own cellars![11]

Confronting the "Attilas in our own cellars" equated the enemy with a public health menace and implied that the war on terrorism was against an entire (subhuman) population. Co-existence with such an infestation was unthinkable. Several "kill and burn" campaigns described in the chapters that follow verged on genocide, and indeed could have resulted in genocide if the commanders had been able to carry out their agenda in full. This murderous impulse found justification in the "subhuman" character of the alleged terrorist population.

There are many obvious discontinuities between the *ère des attentats* and our present predicament, but remarkably, the counter-terrorist rhetoric of the twenty-first century pays tribute—in an unabashed and self-conscious way—to its nineteenth-century antecedents. Less than a month after the 9/11 attacks, the historian Paul Johnson published an op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal* with the unforgettable title "The Answer to Terrorism? Colonialism."[12] Illustrated with a nineteenth-century engraving showing Stephen Decatur at daggers drawn with some dark-skinned Barbary Pirates, Johnson predicted that "America and her allies may find themselves, temporarily at least, not just occupying with troops but administering obdurate terrorist states." Johnson's optimism about international support for this measure is amusing in retrospect, as is his praise of France (whose conquest of Algeria in 1830 was a "logical step" and whose protectorate in Tunisia "solved" the piracy problem there). Terrorism, as the expression of a whole culture or population, requires "responsible supervision" by civilized authorities until some much later date. As Johnson saw it, the lesson of 9/11 was not that the West must bring democracy to the Middle East at any cost, but that it was finally time to admit it had failed there, and Bush needed to think about our "long-term political obligations" in that part of the world. How long-term? Johnson noted Libya's "resumption of outlaw activities" under Colonel Gadhafi; the Italian colonial administration, it seems, had left that country too soon.

Johnson's editorial also contained a reference to "the old Roman law definition of pirates as 'enemies of the human race'." At a time when many commentators stressed the modernity (or postmodernity) of al Qaeda, this seemed quaint.[13] However, this Roman legal concept has had a major influence on the current war on terrorism.[14] It offered a precedent for Bush administration lawyers making the case that suspected

terrorists, such as the detainees at Guantanamo Bay, were not entitled to protection under the Geneva Conventions. John C. Yoo, a Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the months after 9/11, defended this reasoning as follows:

> Why is it so hard for people to understand that there is a category of behavior not covered by the legal system? What were pirates? They weren't fighting on behalf of any nation. What were slave traders? Historically, there were people so bad that they were not given protection of the laws. There were no specific provisions for their trial, or imprisonment. If you were an illegal combatant, you didn't deserve the protection of the laws of war.[15]

Yoo's appeal to history was ill advised. A privateer was a pirate with a license; similarly, the slave trade was eventually outlawed, but only after centuries in which governments regulated it, profited from it, and attempted to monopolize it.[16] Nonetheless, the Bush administration accepted Yoo's interpretation, resulting in the "extraordinary rendition" and torture of captives worldwide.

The "enemy of humanity" category has also informed the Bush administration's conduct towards U.S. citizens. Although dirty bomb suspect José Padilla was arrested at O'Hare Airport in Chicago—not on a foreign battlefield—he was designated an unlawful enemy combatant by Presidential order, held without trial, and denied access to lawyers. President Bush's unprecedented (and secret) authorization of domestic spying by the National Security Agency is another example of the presumption that U.S. citizens forsake their rights if they are under the least suspicion of consorting with terrorists. Under the aegis of the war on terrorism, state and municipal authorities—anxious to avoid a repeat of the Seattle protests of 1999, an outburst completely unrelated to the al Qaeda threat—have also enjoyed relaxed safeguards and expanded budgets for riot control, not to mention for surreptitious surveillance. The use of undercover officers as infiltrators and provocateurs in peaceful dissident groups is particularly alarming. The sweeping, nationwide counter-intelligence campaign waged by New York City's police department prior to the Republican convention in 2004 has garnered headlines, but it should be considered as a symptom of what is now a widespread problem, rather than a bizarre case of overzealous law enforcement.[17]

In the current atmosphere, any effort to build critical distance from the war on terrorism sounds to some like sympathy with the enemies of

humanity. Wire services such as Reuters have suffered ridicule and hostility for declining to use the word *terrorist* in their reportage, preferring "militant" or "insurgent." It is probably too late to consider doing away with the word *terrorist* altogether, but critics of Reuters would do well to consider the history of the word and the purposes for which it has been deployed over the last 200 years. It is a long history of insincerity, to put it politely. If today's global war on terrorism is said to encompass the threats posed by José Padilla, by unarmed demonstrators in New York City, and by the various nationalist and sectarian insurgencies in Iraq, then Reuters surely cannot win the prize for sophistry.

The promiscuous use of terms such as "terrorist" and "enemy of humanity" will ultimately diminish the sense of moral indignation that they are meant to arouse, not to mention sapping the credibility of those who use them indiscriminately. In the summer of 2005, the U.S. Army was caught cutting and pasting these terms into press releases from Iraq. CNN reported that virtually identical words were put in the mouth of a conveniently unidentified Iraqi bystander in reports on two different insurgent attacks. The news release from July 13, describing an attack in which several children had died, read as follows: "The terrorists are attacking the infrastructure, the children and all of Iraq," said one Iraqi man who preferred not to be identified. "They are enemies of humanity without religion or any sort of ethics. They have attacked my community today and I will now take the fight to the terrorists."

The July 24 press release recycled the same quotation for a different occasion, replacing the reference to children with one to the ISF (Iraqi Security Forces). A spokesman described the duplication as an "administrative error."[18] This incident reminds us that in the twenty-first century, as in the past, one of the chief benefits of waging a war on terrorism is the privilege of naming the terrorist. As in so many other situations, winning control of the language means winning the power to determine the agenda. On the sixth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Colin Powell made headlines for daring to suggest that terrorism was *not* the most important problem facing the world today.[19] Terrorists have proven adept at obtaining, and holding, the attention of the media; the self-appointed warriors against terrorism have, it seems, learned a lesson from their enemies. If we feel unable to discuss anything but terrorism, whose interests are being served? This is a question worth asking today, but it can also inform our appraisal of wars against terrorism in the past.

Fearing the Crowd: Revolution and Atrocity

Peter C. Messer's chapter, "Feel the Terror: Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France,*" shows how Edmund Burke—today considered a founder of modern conservative thought—helped introduce the word *terrorist* into the English language. Significantly, the frightening thing about these terrorists was not that they were a tiny, well-armed squad of malcontents. Quite the opposite. They possessed popular appeal and large numbers. Burke's *Reflections* summed up a pessimistic vision of what things would be like if the swinish multitude were in charge. The specter of a "system of terrorism"—a tyranny of, by, and for the previously disenfranchised—was Burke's way of discrediting the idea of majority rule.

Persuading people that they were not fit to govern themselves was no easy task. Common sense would seem to suggest otherwise, and Burke's political enemies, Joseph Priestley and Richard Price, made an appeal to reason as opposed to tradition. Messer shows how Burke fought to redefine the conversation around sympathy and feeling, removing the events in France from the sphere of reasoned debate. The scene that Burke wanted his readers to remember was the dainty Marie Antoinette at the mercy of the unruly Parisian mob, an image of the crowd at its worst that would be invoked to discredit many subsequent uprisings and revolutions. In a bitter ironic twist, it was Priestley, not Burke, who faced a riot in which his home was burned and he had to flee the country. Such violent feelings, presumably, were justified by outrage that any Englishman would show sympathy for the terrorists in France.

Laurent Dubois' chapter, "Unworthy of Liberty?: Slavery, Terror, and Revolution in Haiti," places the violence of the much-maligned Haitian Revolution in a broader context. This historic slave rebellion was invoked for generations as an example of indiscriminate massacre driven by racial hatred. However, Dubois reminds us of things that would have been all too evident to the insurgent former slaves: the public tortures and private humiliations that had been inherent in French rule, as well as the extraordinary brutality of the methods used by General Leclerc, Napoleon's brother-in-law, in his effort to roll back the island's independence in 1802. Leclerc contemplated a bloodletting so thorough that it would erase the memory of freedom, along with the freedom fighters themselves.

In contrast, Dubois shows that Louverture did not pursue a vengeful approach. During the upheavals of the 1790s, he offered his white captives amnesty if they made a public statement of repentance. He outlined

a program of co-existence with the imperial, slave-holding powers of the region, collaborating with white planters and even using his army of freedmen to force black workers back onto the plantations, where they would continue producing sugar and coffee for export. A self-conscious "Haitian" identity opposed to France emerged only in the aftermath of Leclerc's devastating counter-revolutionary onslaught, and Louverture's capture and death. A politically moderate approach had been possible, but treating the revolutionaries as terrorists resulted in a deepening of the culture of violence and revenge.

By the 1830s, the period covered in Bryan Rommel-Ruiz's chapter, "Vindictive Ferocity: Virginia's Response to the Nat Turner Rebellion," it was no longer so easy for conservatives to simply stonewall reforms of any kind. Whites contemplating challenges from their enslaved fellow Virginians had to do so in the awareness that Haiti remained a free black nation, northern states had already implemented emancipation, and the British plantations in the Caribbean were considering when, not whether, to follow suit. Proponents of emancipation argued for action now to head off future rebellions like Turner's. Rommel-Ruiz shows how Thomas Gray, in his narrative of Turner's life and deeds, sought to undermine this argument by insisting that Turner was a "gloomy fanatic" whose bizarre actions had no bearing on what a normal slave might do. Gray is not as famous as Edmund Burke, but his invocation of mental illness as a way to isolate terrorist acts from their political context was a classic maneuver.

In choosing to blame the influence of northern agitators for Turner's uprising, white Viriginians lost an opportunity to reappraise the future of slavery in their state. As Rommel-Ruiz argues, Virginia could very plausibly have cast its lot with the mid-Atlantic states, following Pennsylvania's lead rather than South Carolina's and changing the course of American history. Governor John Floyd saw the logic behind emancipation, but lost the battle in the state legislature, which accepted the alternate argument that the root cause of the revolt was not slavery, but "leniency."

The chapters by Messer, Dubois, and Rommel-Ruiz show how counter-revolutionaries improvised new political and military strategies to cope with the post-1789 world. It may seem intuitive to associate counter-revolution with a *repudiation* of novelty, but in their struggle against the people they called terrorists, conservatives embraced innovation. In the process, they blurred the line between politics and warfare, their own severity setting off "accelerating rhythms of frustration, fear, and extremism."[20] By undertaking reprisals rather than reforms or compromises,

these wars on terrorism did not save lives in the long run; rather, they sowed the dragon's teeth of future conflicts by insisting upon a false choice between savage inequalities or social collapse.

Keeping the Peace: A War without an Ending

Brian Jenkins, in his chapter "1867 All Over Again?: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State," considers the British response to Fenian violence. The Fenians, militant Irish nationalists, made headlines when they successfully brought the republican struggle to towns all across England, and to locations as far away as Canada and Australia. Poorly armed police forces that had previously only addressed routine problems of urban disorder now faced a sophisticated enemy capable of setting off explosives and attempting assassinations of prominent persons. Jenkins notes the ambitious efforts to "harden" both the police and the likely targets of Fenian assaults, but disagrees with recent commentators who have likened Britain's post-9/11 security regime to the government's reaction to the Fenian crisis. Indeed, he observes, in the 1860s, influential policymakers, including the home secretary, balked at the prospect of curtailing English liberties, railroading terrorist suspects, or instituting a permanent police bureau that specialized in domestic spying.

Many things that were unthinkable in England, however, were already in force across the Irish Sea. Armed constables, and political police, were part of British rule in Ireland. Those who addressed republican gatherings had to worry about note-takers who recorded incriminating remarks. Seditious newspapers also suffered from government harassment. While, as Jenkins emphasizes, "the rule of law was upheld" in Ireland, there was an unmistakable double standard, even in the Liberal era. Defenders of English liberties felt compelled to protect the rights of Fenian militants on English soil because a police state would endanger their own rights. English liberties overseas, however, were considered more in the nature of a gift than as a sacred birthright; there would be a recurring temptation to waive the rights of colonial subjects, or to suggest that terrorist acts proved an entire subject population was unfit for freedom.

In "The Making of Russian Revolutionary Terrorism," Claudia Verhoeven explores the legal and media frenzy surrounding Dmitry Karakozov's failed attempt to shoot Tsar Alexander II. This chapter shows that April 4, 1866, marked an important transition in Russian thought and practice. Karakozov emerged from a crowd in broad daylight to fire his gun. This was no palace coup; April 4 demonstrated that

public places were no longer safe for high officials. The prospect that every "nobody" on the street posed a threat was too much to bear; understandably, many Russians (including the tsar) chose to assume that the gunman was a Polish nationalist. Even when this theory proved false, speculation about Karakozov's name and its alleged Tatar origins sought to orientalize the assassin, once again placing him on the colonized fringes rather than the empire's Russian center.

Faced with the reality that a Russian had attempted to kill the tsar, a search began for heroic figures that could expunge this national disgrace. The first and most obvious was Osip Ivanovich Komisarov, who had jostled the gunman's arm, causing him to miss his target. A later—and to Verhoeven more significant—set of patriotic heroes were the government's interrogators, who filled the Peter-Paul Fortress with detainees, placed them under extreme duress, and produced thousands of documents unveiling the vast international conspiracy which had supposedly spawned Karakozov. It is possible to doubt whether organizations like the evocatively named *Hell* really existed. Suspects later recanted their confessions, or claimed that interrogators had twisted their words. The aftermath of April 4 foreshadowed many subsequent incidents in which the political police and the media worked in a kind of partnership; both had an interest in fashioning a sensational story that ultimately served to glorify their own role.

In my own chapter, "Men with the Faces of Brutes: Physiognomy, Urban Anxieties, and Police States," I examine the relationship between the growing fear of *collective* violence—whether from the so-called "dangerous classes" who were thought to infest the great cities of Europe and the United States, or from workers on strike, who instilled discipline in their ranks through a "system of terror"—and the fear of *individual* terrorists (anarchist assassins and bomb-throwers). The enraged loner with a pistol might seem to have little in common with an opportunist who committed crimes while sheltered in the anonymity of a rioting mob, but in the hands of clever publicists, tallies of arrests turned into horrific proof of an invisible army of thieves and murderers, arrayed against society and ready to march at any time. Crime writing became the mainstay of the new, mass-circulation newspapers. Policemen generally, and detectives in particular, were a natural partner for the journalist in search of a really salacious story. Together, they portrayed urban spaces as a front line in the war on terrorism, conflating the politically motivated actions of the anarchists with the atavistic effusions of lust, hatred, or greed that criminologists like Cesare Lombroso associated with the degenerate poor.

The key to comprehending this threat was believed to lie in plain sight on the criminal's face. The nineteenth century was the golden age of physiognomy, the art (or science) of discovering a person's virtues, vices, and other qualities from the shape of their nose, ears, forehead, and other readily visible features. As promulgated in the closing decades of the eighteenth century by the best-selling theorist J.C. Lavater, physiognomy encouraged ordinary urban dwellers to follow their God-given intuition; just as a good tree could be known by its abundant, healthy fruit, the outer appearance of a person made manifest their inner attributes. In a city of strangers, Lavater promised potentially life-saving insights from the study of faces. In the context of the war on terrorism, however, discussion of bomb-throwers like Ravachol quickly degenerated into a conversation about his ugly mug shot as disseminated by newspaper caricaturists. A fascination with the forensic refinement of Lavater's theory—a system of cross-referenced index cards known as *bertillonage* developed by the Paris police—also distracted the public from any serious consideration of the political context for Ravachol's deeds.

In their engagement with everyday city life, policing, criminality, and court procedure, the chapters by Jenkins, Verhoeven, and Land deviate from most histories of terrorism. Yet this thematic convergence would not have surprised many nineteenth-century readers. The war on terrorism grew, not so much by definition as by analogy, which lent it a strange cohesiveness across many lands and circumstances. Alan Pinkerton's appropriation of the Paris Commune was typical of this process. Terrorists were almost invariably identified by comparison to something—or someone—else at a distance in space or time. Both sides at the battle of the Alamo said they were fighting "pirates." Morant Bay was supposedly a replay of the Haitian Revolution. The British extirpated the Thuggee cult in India, but shortly afterward, "thugs" of a different sort turned up in the slums of London and New York. The Apache warrior, defeated on the Western plains, was twice reborn: first as a Philippine nationalist guerrilla, and then in the early twentieth century as a swaggering tough on the street corners of Paris and Brussels. The war on terrorism was truly global, and in the most eerie way, neverending. Malay pirates were likened to Mexican "desperadoes"; anarchist bombers, in turn, were dubbed "international pirates." These threads of analogies made it possible to delineate a world-wide threat, and advocate a worldwide struggle, without ever quite pinpointing what that threat had been in the first place. What final victory would anyone have expected against an enemy with such a talent for shape-shifting and resurrection?

Waging Total War: The Logic of Retribution

Matthew Candelaria's chapter, "Vast and Cool and Unsympathetic: From *The Descent of Man* to 'The Empire of the Ants'," shows how Victorian studies of the "incomprehensible success of the cockroach" encapsulated much broader anxieties about the future of humanity and the fate of European supremacy. Fashionable theories portrayed evolution as a war, with species vying for total dominance. The vigor of fecund vermin, in this view, mocked slow-breeding humanity's pretensions to superiority. The cockroach, in particular, was defined as an enemy that challenged the Victorian household from within.

The new science of entomology could offer no final solution to the roach hordes, which had roamed the earth before humanity arose and might well persist into a post-human future. H. G. Wells considered it likely that a confrontation with an evolutionary rival would take a genocidal form. The impossibility of dialogue frames the narrative in *The War of the Worlds,* but Candelaria also discusses a number of lesser-known works by Wells that reproduce this theme in clashes between humans and sentient invertebrates of earthly origins. He summarizes the prophecies of Wells in language that resonates with many other campaigns against "terror," past and present: "their inhuman nature will make them intractable to negotiation or treaty, leaving only one possible response from humanity, unremitting and even unreasoned violence." It is ironic that the cockroach, which prospered in the face of daily assaults, nonetheless inspired such ambitious fantasies of extermination.

In G. K. Peatling's chapter, "The Savage Wars of Peace: Wars against Terrorism in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and India," the specter of genocidal war appears again. The defenders of the British Empire justified their violence as a refined substitute for the chaotic alternatives, pogroms along racial or sectarian lines. The war on terrorism could easily take the form of an elemental struggle for survival and dominance, not unlike the doomsday scenarios envisioned by Wells. In the words of one Ulster loyalist, what was to prevent 40 million Britons from simply "squelching" 4 million ungrateful Irish Catholics? According to the bleak worldview of these pioneers of counter-insurgency, terrorist provocations could elicit nothing but repayment in kind. Blaming repressive government policies on the demands of an imaginary lynch mob just offstage was, in one sense, yet another manifestation of nineteenth-century fears that democracy would lead to atavism and social collapse. The loyal, but bloodthirsty, mob was the shadowy twin of the degenerate "dangerous classes."

Yet as Peatling observes, the self-appointed representatives of civilization themselves embraced irrational justifications for retaliation and excused pro-state vigilantism as "an eye for an eye," vilifying dissident or insurgent groups in the same breath. James Fitzjames Stephen, the jurist and philosopher, applied this logic to British rule in India, warning that "timidity" in the face of Indian demands would show a fatal lack of confidence in Western values. Perversely, Stephen was prepared to deny Western-educated Indians the right to serve as judges in cases that involved Europeans on trial, while excusing the bigotry of Anglo-Indians who supported the violence inherent in the existing colonial regime and threatened more if reforms were implemented. In both Ireland and India, administrators capitulated to the demands of militant pro-state interest groups, while proudly maintaining that compromising with terrorists was beneath the dignity of the British Empire.

The United States preferred to consider itself an anti-imperial power, though as John Coats demonstrates in his chapter, "Half Devil and Half Child: America's War with Terror in the Philippines, 1899–1902," most Americans presumed that their mission was to civilize the islands, or interpreted them as an extension of their western frontier, dismissing nationalist leader Emilio Aguinaldo as an "Apache." In consequence, the United States set out to deny the Philippines the right to self-government. Defeated in a conventional war by November 1899, Aguinaldo's army adopted a guerrilla strategy. Devious tactics ("playing the role of amigo with arms concealed") proved effective but also undermined the distinction between civilian and combatant, guerrilla and bandit. For a time, the U.S. Army continued to treat Filipino captives as prisoners of war.

The crucial turning point came when politicians such as William Howard Taft, a future president and later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, began referring to Filipino tactics as a "system of terrorism." Ostensibly, this referred to the insurgent practice of assassinating those who collaborated with the occupying power. But Taft's language signaled that the conflict had entered a far more ruthless phase. American interrogators tortured captives with the "water cure." General Order 100 was invoked to permit the torching of villages and summary executions of suspects. By 1902, this self-described "kill and burn" approach was drawing criticism at home and even from within the U.S. Army. These tactics, however, followed the exterminationist logic of G.O. 100, invoking as it did the figure of the pirate, the enemy of humanity who had supposedly placed himself beyond the protection of any law. This chapter suggests important continuities between military actions against

Native Americans (also carried out under G.O. 100) and the rules of engagement that governed conventional armies in a counter-insurgency struggle. Theodore Roosevelt had written that "war waged by savages . . . is inevitably bloody and cruel," but Coats shows that in the Philippines, as elsewhere, wars *against* terror easily transform into wars *with* terror.

Hugh Phillips's chapter, "The War against Terrorism in Late Imperial and Early Soviet Russia," describes what happened when a government deployed remarkably similar tactics—this time, not against a despised minority or an "alien" race overseas—but against what it considered its "own" population. At first, the tsarist state seemed to believe its own rhetoric, and sought merely to infiltrate an insurgency that it claimed was a fringe movement infected with foreign ideas. In a campaign against such a tiny conspiracy of idealists and misguided youths, superb intelligence collection, coupled with the judicious recruitment of double agents would be sufficient to foster paranoia among the regime's enemies and, eventually, bring about their destruction. In this war, whose aim was to penetrate terrorist "cells," the heroes were master interrogators like Georgii P. Sudeikin, who won the trust of radicals by convincing them that he, too, despised the reactionary excesses of the government. Sergei Zubatov sought to steal the insurgents' thunder by founding his own labor union movement, which was nicknamed "police socialism."

However, as the Revolution of 1905 demonstrated, discontent with the tsarist state was widespread and profound. The government barely averted collapse by temporarily conceding some rights to an elected legislature, the Duma. After the immediate crisis had passed, persecution of the regime's enemies took new and disturbing forms. Instead of police infiltrators, the weapon of choice now was a blunter instrument, sometimes the Cossacks, sometimes right-wing vigilantes (the Black Hundred), sometimes the army itself. In this period, state terrorism directed itself at entire populations, striking without discrimination at residential districts in the cities, at villages in the countryside, sanctioning the abuse of women and children, and spinning off into pogroms against Jews. As Phillips notes, the thousands executed and ten of thousands incarcerated in the years following 1905 pale by comparison to the crimes of later regimes. Yet the break with precedent had its own significance at the time, using a war on terrorism to justify a level of repression that made headlines around the world and was said to exceed the worst deeds of Ivan the Terrible.

The chapters by Candelaria, Peatling, Coats, and Phillips remind us how the murderous state-sponsored campaigns against civilians that unfolded in the twentieth century could claim a number of precedents in

the nineteenth-century war on terrorism. Presidential candidate John Edwards has mocked our current war on terrorism as a "bumper sticker," not a strategy, but for those intent on extermination, calling human beings "vermin" or "terrorists" has indeed served as a strategy in the past.[21] The origin of the word *terrorist* in the French Revolution suggests an affinity between small-t terror and large-T Terror; yet in their embrace of apocalyptic violence, it may be *the proponents of a war on terrorism,* not the terrorists themselves, who have most closely embraced the spirit of Robespierre's celebration of untrammeled state power: "A people does not judge as does a court of law. It does not hand down sentences, it hurls down thunderbolts; it does not condemn kings, it plunges them into the abyss; such justice is as compelling as the justice of the courts."[22]

Holding governments accountable for the people they kill in the course of their counter-terrorist campaigns is likely to draw charges of "moral equivalency," or of belittling the deaths caused by terrorists. However, it is nihilist governments, not nihilist individuals or small conspiracies, that may ultimately pose the gravest threat to life and liberty.

In the nineteenth century, governments built up standing armies of police and intelligence personnel—armies that have still not disbanded—using the threat of unruly mobs and anarchist bomb-makers to justify the expenditure, and the curtailment of liberty, that went with this security establishment. The media cooperated, creating the impression that civilization itself was under siege and extreme measures were necessary. A candid assessment of the full spectrum of threats to democracy in our own century would have to include the abuse of the powers that an increasingly anxious citizenry bestows on its military, intelligence services, and police forces.

Notes

1. Stewart Edwards, *The Paris Commune, 1871* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 249; Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 159–190.
2. Edwards, *Paris Commune,* 344–348.
3. Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives* (New York: G.W. Carleton, 1900), 18. This book was first published immediately after the railroad strike, in 1878.
4. Ibid., 85.
5. Timothy Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 33; David C. Wills, *The First War on*

Terrorism: Counter-Terrorism Policy during the Reagan Administration (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

6. A chronology followed in Walter Laqueur's works, such as *A History of Terrorism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2001); in Dominique Venner, *Histoire du Terrorisme* (Paris: Pygmalion, 2002); and in Matthew Carr, *The Infernal Machine: A History of Terrorism from the Assassination of Tsar Alexander II to Al-Qaeda* (New York: New Press, 2006).
7. For a recent example of this approach, see Mike Davis, *Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb* (New York: Verso, 2007).
8. Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 79; Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 232–233.
9. William Meacham Murrell, *Cruise of the Frigate Columbia* (Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey, 1840), 111–115. The *Columbia* was the first U.S. Navy vessel to circumnavigate the globe; for this reason, a reconstructed, full-scale version of Murrell's ship is an attraction at Disney World in Orlando, Florida.
10. Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes: One Man's Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide* (New York: New Press, 1996); Lindqvist, *A History of Bombing* (New York: New Press, 2001); Gerry Kearns, "Bare Life, Political Violence and the Territorial Structure of Britain and Ireland," in *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror and Political Violence,* ed. Derek Gregory and Allan Pred (New York: Routledge, 2006), 9–34.
11. "A Return to Barbarism," *New York Times,* May 1, 1892.
12. *Wall Street Journal,* October 9, 2001.
13. Contrast, for example, Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 2003); and John Gray, *Al Qaeda and What It Means to Be Modern* (New York: Free Press, 2003).
14. Alfred P. Rubin, *The Law of Piracy* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1988).
15. Jane Mayer, "Outsourcing Torture: The Secret History of America's 'Extraordinary Rendition' Program," *New Yorker,* February 7, 2005.
16. Debora L. Spar, *Ruling the Waves: Cycles of Discovery, Chaos, and Wealth from the Compass to the Internet* (New York: Harcourt, 2001).
17. Gwen Shaffer, "Force Multiplier," *New Republic,* August 2, 2004, 19–21; *New York Times,* "Police Infiltrate Protests, Videotapes Show," December 22, 2005; *New York Times,* "City's Police Spied Broadly before G.O.P. Convention," March 25, 2007. This police conduct bears comparison with that discussed in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Gerhard Hirschfeld, eds., *Social Protest, Violence, and Terror in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's, 1982).
18. CNN, "'Enemies of Humanity' Quote Raises Iraq PR Questions," July 24, 2005, http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/07/24/military.release/index.html.

19. Interview with Walter Isaacson for *GQ* magazine, September 11, 2007, http://men.style.com/gq/features/landing?id=content_5900.
20. Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 173.
21. For examples, see Tina Rosenberg, *Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America* (New York: William Morrow, 1991); Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1998); John Edwards, speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, May 23, 2007, quoted in Council on Foreign Relations, "The Candidates on the War on Terror." http://www.cfr.org/publication/13672/ (accessed September 8, 2007).
22. Ruth Scurr, *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 245.

PART I

Fearing the Crowd: Revolution and Atrocity

CHAPTER 1

Feel the Terror: Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Peter C. Messer

On July 14, 1789, the Parisian crowd stormed the prison-fortress of the Bastille, a moment that symbolized the collapse of France's *ancien régime* and the beginning of Europe's Age of Revolution. In the months and years that followed, defenders of the old European order watched in horror as revolutionaries abolished the political and religious foundations of the French *ancien régime* and embarked on a turbulent experiment in republican government. One such interested observer was Edmund Burke. A prominent member of the British House of Commons, Burke was an ardent defender of the ancient English constitution and its blend of monarchical, aristocratic, and republican forms of government supported by a powerful Church of England. In the 1760s and 1770s he had worked tirelessly to check what he saw as the tyrannous policies of George III and his ministers. In the 1780s and 1790s Burke became an equally vocal opponent of reformers whose efforts to democratize the House of Commons and allow religious dissenters into government he believed threatened to throw the nation into anarchy. At first content to observe the progress of the French Revolution from afar, Burke became alarmed when, in November of 1789, Richard Price, a prominent advocate of reform, delivered and subsequently published a sermon, *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country,* to the London Revolution Society. Price held up the French Revolution as a model of change that Britain could benefit from embracing. Burke interpreted this call for reform as an attack on his beloved English constitution and responded with

Reflections on the Revolution in France, a pamphlet that laid the foundations for one of Europe's first wars on terror.

Burke's *Reflections* offers a useful insight into an important but often overlooked aspect of any war on terror: its linguistic dimension. The word *terrorist* is conventionally understood to refer to groups that use unnecessary violence to circumvent the political process in pursuit of illegitimate goals.[1] Of course, all of the really important phrases in the previous sentence are incredibly subjective; that is to say, what constitutes a legitimate goal, or necessary violence, lies in the eyes of the beholder. Thus, the designation of a group as "terrorist" is a crucial moment in any struggle for social, political, or economic change because it defines the boundaries of acceptable debate and action. Since terrorist groups, by definition, pursue an illegitimate agenda through illegitimate means, any group labeled in this way can be dismissed out of hand. A close reading of Burke's *Reflections* illustrates how manipulating the language of terror and terrorism can place the ideas and actions of political opponents outside the boundaries of acceptable politics. In this case, Burke used the language of sympathy and feeling to portray the French revolutionaries and their British supporters as the enemies of humanity, whose ideas should be dismissed without further consideration. If successful, this strategy would have allowed him to silence his political opponents without having to engage directly with their potentially popular ideas for reforming the British state. Burke's *Reflections,* in other words, reminds us that wars on terror rest on controlling the language used to describe the ideas and actions of the supposed terrorists, and that the allegation of terrorism can circumvent the political process in pursuit of illegitimate goals as effectively as the real violence of terrorists.

To understand how Burke's *Reflections* used the allegation of terror to circumvent the political process, or at least deny Burke's opponents access to it, the pamphlet needs to be read against contemporary events in both Britain and France. Despite the stated topic of *Reflections,* Burke's principal concerns lay with developments in Britain rather than in France. Various groups within Britain—Dissenters, representatives of urban areas, and radical politicians—had been agitating for a comprehensive reform of Britain's political system for most of the second half of the eighteenth century. Reformers called for an expansion of suffrage, a more equitable apportionment of representatives to the House of Commons, and the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which effectively disenfranchised religious dissenters. Even the monarchy itself came under increased scrutiny, especially following the crisis provoked by George III's illness in 1788. Reformers sought to establish parliamen-

tary supremacy by giving Parliament the authority to bestow or revoke the Crown and determine succession to the throne. Agitation in support of these measures, inspired by the success of the American Revolution and the centennial celebrations of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, was steadily increasing in both frequency and vehemence when the French Revolution erupted in 1789.[2]

The French Revolution represented a particular threat to conservatives such as Burke because of the rhetoric that inspired it and the opportunity it provided to test theories of government espoused by reformers. Prior to the revolution in France, political dissent embraced the conservative language of the English constitution, affirming the principles of traditional government even as reformers sought to change them.[3] The French Revolution, however, encouraged English reformers to embrace the more radical language of natural rights, which called for the sweeping changes that alarmed Burke. Moreover, reformers directed this radical rhetoric toward the working classes and encouraged them to take direct action to ensure that their voices were heard and opinions respected by the representatives in Parliament.[4] Finally, the French Revolution represented a laboratory for experiments in religious toleration and republican government based on the principles of natural rights and the repudiation of traditional political, cultural, and social institutions. Burke, and other conservatives, feared that the principles and policies of the French Revolution would enter British politics and lead the nation down the path of anarchy and confusion.[5] Burke, consequently, launched an attack on the French Revolution that sought to discredit the revolutionaries' policies and principles by portraying them as enemies of humanity—inhuman brutes who abandoned reason and politics in favor of destruction and terror.[6]

Burke rested his rhetorical war on the French terror on the language of sympathy and feeling. Sympathetic discourse emerged in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries as a way of legitimating political authority that avoided the twin perils of monarchical tyranny and republican anarchy by appealing to sentiments and feelings. Political authority, these authors claimed, rested with those whose refined sensibilities enabled them to sympathize with the victims of political injustice and whose abilities to arouse the honest feelings of their fellow citizens would promote virtue and discourage vice. Distrustful of reason, which they believed could be twisted to suit the ends of corrupt demagogues, these authors argued that the surest path to truth lay in the refined sensibilities. Feelings—whether of revulsion or admiration—they argued, could not easily be corrupted because they reflected the verdict of nature

aroused by the sympathetic observer's perception of any proposition or action. The path to virtue, truth, and good government lay in observing the feelings demonstrated by proponents of a cause and the sympathies their actions aroused among the audience. Tyranny, vice, and corruption manifested themselves in callousness and indifference in the face of suffering and injustice. Virtue and truth appeared in the ability to sympathize with the sufferings of others or in the shared feelings of revulsion at unjust and unprincipled acts.[7]

Appeals to sympathy represented a particularly powerful tool for Burke in his struggle with the proponents of reform. The superiority of feeling or sympathy to reason lay in its supposedly innate qualities. All truly virtuous people shared the same reaction on observing a particular event, as their feelings responded to the guidance of nature. Failure to feel sympathy for the plight of fellow human beings or outrage at the actions of tyrants became a mark of corruption. This absolute stand on the origins and meaning of feelings and sympathies effectively excluded the subjects surrounding them from any debate or discussion. An author describing how he or she felt upon observing a scene necessarily ended further discussion on the subject: Either readers shared those feelings as a consequence of their virtue or humanity or they did not, evincing themselves as either corrupt or inhuman. Burke's decision to frame his pamphlet in the language of feeling and sympathy effectively removed the debate over the French Revolution from the realm of politics where reasonable people could disagree and reduced the issue to a binary confrontation between good and evil. This polarizing discourse allowed Burke to avoid discussing the merits of reform by associating it with the irredeemably evil French revolutionaries, discrediting and demonizing all who disagreed with him.[8]

Burke began his discussion of the Revolution in France by establishing for his readers the terms by which it must be understood. Sympathetic discourse required the individual evaluating any event or action to position himself as a dispassionate observer; that is, as a spokesman for general humane principles rather than as the advocate of a particular cause. To establish his credibility in this regard, Burke described himself as a defender of "manly, moral, regulated liberty," and as a pragmatist disinclined to "give praise or blame to any thing which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction." He promised to evaluate the French Revolution based only on how it combined "liberty . . . with government; with public force; with the discipline and obedience of

armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with morality and religion; with the solidity of property; with peace and order; with civil and social manners." This definition of dispassionate observation reveals an essential component of Burke's war on what he considered the French terrorists. Most British defenders of the Revolution, aware of its pragmatic shortcomings, had defended it in terms of the metaphysical abstractions—as a vindication of natural rights. Burke's vantage point as a dispassionate observer, however, would not take into consideration those principles upon which the revolutionaries justified their actions; it would only consider the immediate effects of those actions. In other words, he stacked the rhetorical deck in his favor by discrediting the perspective of his opponents and his targets and narrowing the "acceptable" subjects of conversation to those who supported his views.[9]

With the parameters of understanding established, Burke then set out to place the French Revolution in a realm that could only be judged by feeling. He contended that in order to understand the Revolution people would have to view "the use which is made of power" by "new persons of whose principles, tempers, and dispositions, they have little or no experience, and in situations where those who appear the most stirring in the scene may possibly not be the real movers."[10] Consequently, these observers required a way of knowing that could accommodate their ignorance of the motives and personalities of the revolutionaries and account for the possibility of unseen actors manipulating events. These potential obstacles in the search for truth, of course, had served as the justifications for viewing politics from the natural and undistorted perspective of feeling, in the first place. By invoking those same epistemological concerns at the beginning of his pamphlet, Burke made the case that Britons could best understand the French Revolution by consulting the sympathies that their observation of it aroused. Those actions that triggered feelings of outrage were undoubtedly perpetrated by nefarious individuals, while those whose sufferings produced a tear in the eye and a tug on the heart of the beholder were surely on the side of virtue and truth.

Burke made his case for sympathy and feeling as the only way to understand the Revolution more directly when he explained the significance of the event to his readers. He declared that "the French revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world." The unprecedented nature of the event implicitly required a way of knowing that could account for its magnitude, a task ideally suited to the language of sentimental ethics and the appeals to visceral emotions on

which it rested. Burke made this point by observing that in France "every thing seems out of nature in this strange chaos of levity and ferocity, and all sorts of the crimes jumbled together with all sorts of follies. In viewing this monstrous tragic-comic scene, the most opposite passions necessarily succeed, and sometimes mix with each other in the mind; alternate contempt and indignation; alternate laughter and tears; alternate scorn and horror."[11] The novelty and extremity of the French Revolution meant that observers could only assimilate it through the range of powerful emotions that it provoked. Careful thought and reasoned judgment had no place in this social and political maelstrom. The visceral emotions produced by observing the events overwhelmed all other senses and faculties, leaving observers to feel their way through ever-changing scenes of revolutionary France. This perspective, of course, reduced questions of context and motivation to an afterthought, especially given Britons' ignorance of the actors and the possibility of unseen conspirators. The French Revolution could only be understood by the contempt, indignation, laughter, tears, scorn, and horror that all rational people should feel on observing it. The Revolution, in Burke's pamphlet, would unfold as a Manichean struggle between absolutes of virtue and corruption detectable in the feelings of the observers and from which no truly humane person could dissent.

Burke's most powerful appeals to the sympathies of his readers appeared when discussing aspects of France's revolution that had clear parallels in the British reform movement. Key components of the reformers' agenda, for example, included universal manhood suffrage, reapportionment of the House of Commons to reflect the rapid growth of cities such as Manchester and Birmingham, and annual Parliamentary elections.[12] The French Revolution had initiated many reforms of this kind. A reformed Estates General, newly reapportioned and including representatives from a relatively broad spectrum of French society, began the Revolution by drafting a constitution that stripped the nobility and clergy of their privileges, opened up office holding to the commercial and professional classes and expanded the franchise to include approximately two-thirds of the country's adult men. The French Republic had become a test case for most of the British reformers' agenda, which conservatives such as Burke felt compelled to discredit in order to preserve the small franchise and aristocratic domination of Parliament that they saw as Britain's political foundation.[13]

Burke attempted to discredit France's more representative and more democratic National Assembly—the descendant of the Estates General—by arousing the anger of his audience over the injustices perpetrated by

that body. After an initial review of the political, economic, and religious reforms initiated by the Revolution, Burke sought an explanation for "the fresh ruins of France, which shock our feelings where ever we can turn our eyes." He declared that these misfortunes were not "the devastation of civil war" but the result of "rash and ignorant counsel in time of profound peace." These leaders, acting without fear of domestic unrest, had acted with a free hand "in authorizing treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burnings throughout their harassed land." Burke began by shifting the reader's attention away from the particular policies embraced by the Revolutionaries and on to their supposed effects on the people of the France and all sympathetic observers. Readers should consider the treasons, robberies, rapes, slaughters, and burnings that shocked humane feelings when assessing the effects of the policies pursued by the new French government. The ideals that motivated the National Assembly or the exigencies that shaped their actions all paled in comparison to the grim reality of the effect of the Revolution's reforms. This description denied the French Revolution any semblance of legitimacy and reduced its supporters to inhumane creatures who abandoned their sympathies and feelings in the name of an abstraction, while real people suffered.[14]

With the necessary illegitimacy of the Revolution validated by the feelings it produced among observers, Burke set out to explain how the French had come to reject the feelings and sympathies that defined humanity. The causes of this calamity, Burke stressed, lay in the "composition of the National Assembly." Burke cautioned that "No name, no power, no function, no artificial institution . . . can make the men of whom any system of authority is composed, any other than God, and nature and education, and their habits of life have made them." Consequently, while the people may choose representatives to act with "virtue and wisdom" the "choice confers neither the one nor the other on those upon whom they lay their ordaining hand." The Assembly, he noted, lacked "any [men] of practical experience in the state" and "the best were only men of theory." In general, it was composed of "practitioners of the law," not the "distinguished magistrates" or the "leading advocates" but "of the inferior unlearned, mechanical, merely instrumental members of the profession." These men, "having no previous fortune in character at stake . . . could not be expected to bear with moderation, or to conduct with discretion, a power which they themselves, more than any other, must be surprized to find in their hands." These were joined by "the faculty of medicine" and "the dealers in stocks and funds" and "men of other descriptions, from whom as little knowledge of

or attention to the interests of a great state was to be expected." On the whole, he found not "the slightest traces of what we call the natural landed interest of the country." The explanation for the alleged treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burnings that shocked the feelings of disinterested humanity lay in the democratization of French government and the rise to power of the commercial, professional, and intellectual classes. That British reformers would propose similar reforms implied that they were either indifferent to the suffering their policies would likely create or ignorant of the effects. In either case, the terror of the French Revolution became a powerful argument against reform in Britain.[15]

To complete the argument Burke turned his attention back to British government and the importance of preventing any change in its composition. The "British house of commons" was presently "filled with every thing illustrious in rank, in descent, in hereditary and in acquired opulence, in cultivated talents, in military, civil, naval, and politics distinction, that the country can afford." While he admitted that men such as those who dominated the National Assembly could rise to power in Britain, they would be constrained by "the immoveable barriers of laws, usages, positive rules of doctrine and practice, counterpoised by the house of lords, and every moment of its existence at the discretion of the crown." In this passage, Burke presented the qualities of British government about which the reformers complained—the aristocratic composition of the Commons, the unrepublican House of Lords and monarchy—as Britain's principal bulwarks against the disaster that had engulfed France. Altering the balance or makeup of these institutions would inevitably usher in the same men whose petty jealousies and ignorance of the science of government had produced the horrific scenes Burke described. The terror that readers should have felt on reading Burke's descriptions of events in France, consequently, became the ultimate justification for preserving the status quo in Britain. Moreover, the willingness to accept the possibility of such suffering as a price for political reform would reveal a person as an unfeeling brute, the very definition, according to the principles of sympathetic ethics, of a tyrant.[16]

In addition to calling for the reform of Parliament, reformers threatened the conservative view of English politics by calling for direct citizen participation in government. Reformers defended the right of the press to criticize governments, the right of the people to petition Parliament for redress of grievances, and to take to the streets in protest if these other means failed to achieve their desired end. In keeping with

this vision of a politically active populace, reformers established clubs, such as the London Revolutionary Society, to monitor Parliament, coordinate popular opposition, and publicize the triumphs of the French Revolution.[17] The French Revolution, once again, implemented many of these reforms. Prior to the meeting of the Estates General, local committee meetings, drawn from a cross-section of French society, drew up *cahiers de doléances,* or petitions of grievances, that ultimately determined the National Assembly's reform-minded agenda. In the elections that followed, the aggressive campaigning of self-styled Patriot committees ensured that a majority of deputies in the Assembly favored substantial changes to the French government. Most famously, of course, the Revolution was driven forward by Enlightenment ideas popularized in the French press and propagated through a burgeoning network of voluntary organizations—salons, groups such as the Freemasons, and the Jacobin Clubs. The success or failure of the French Revolution, therefore, offered a conclusive body of evidence on the possibilities or perils of greater citizen participation in government.[18]

Burke chose to use the Revolution to comment on the perils of allowing bodies of self-styled patriots and republicans a voice in governing the nation. He did so in the same style that he embraced in his comments on the democratization of French politics, appealing to the feelings of readers to preclude any reasoned discussion of the merits of the subject under consideration. He complained that members of the National Assembly, out of "fear of the bayonet, and the lamp-post, and the torch to their homes," adopted "all the crude and desperate measures suggested by clubs composed of a monstrous medley of all conditions, tongues, and nations." In the meetings of the Assembly, "every counsel, in proportion as it is daring, and violent, and perfidious, is taken for the mark of superior genius." Members "ridiculed" ideas of "humanity and compassion" and considered "tenderness to individuals" a type of "treason to the public." They say "perfect" liberty wherever "property is rendered insecure." In this cauldron of "assassinations, massacre, and confiscation, perpetrated or mediated," the revolutionaries formed their "plans for the good order of future society." In these passages, Burke carefully juxtaposed his sentimental ethics with the reason and abstract metaphysics of the revolutionaries and their reforming allies in Britain. The appeals of the latter to the principles of liberty and the future good order of society only masked their corrupt intentions. Their toleration of assassination, massacre, and confiscation, acts undoubtedly shocking to the humane sentiments of his readers, marked both the revolutionaries and their defenders as enemies of humanity whom Britain must defeat.[19]

In the 1780s, reformers spared the monarchy such overt criticism. George III's personal popularity made the monarchy one of the few widely supported institutions in British government. Reformers nonetheless warned of the dangers of tyranny and corruption inherent in the monarchy, and called for limitations on royal power.[20] Conservatives such as Burke, on the other hand, viewed the monarchy as the foundation of Britain's political system and the bulwark against the passion of the multitude and demagogic politicians.[21] Not surprisingly, these men cast a suspicious eye on France as the political reforms initiated by Louis XVI and his ministers rapidly spiraled out of control and into revolution. The French revealed how their attitude toward monarchy had changed in October 1789, when the people of Paris stormed the palace at Versailles and forcibly brought the king to Paris, where he could be more closely observed by the Assembly and his subjects. Their invasion of the royal compound and the resulting deaths of two bodyguards demonstrated not only that the people claimed the right to rule their monarchs, but also that they no longer held the persons of the king and queen in particularly high regard. While certainly more dramatic than anything advocated by Price, this action, at least for Burke, neatly summed up the consequences of diminishing either the power or the majesty of the monarch.[22]

In *Reflections,* Burke had to tread carefully when defending the monarchy, as England had long prided itself on the limits placed on royal authority by the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and long condemned as tyrannical the French kings' claim to absolute power and authority. When viewed from this perspective, the people's march on Versailles reflected nothing more than an effort to prevent a ruler committed to absolute monarchy from undoing the constitutional monarchy established by the National Assembly.[23] Burke dealt with this problem by using the language and logic of sentimental ethics to establish the institution of monarchy as the product of nature, while carefully avoiding defending the absolute authority claimed by French kings.[24]

The first step in this process was to transform the persons of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette into exemplars of the sentimental ethics that separated civilized humanity from the brute forces of nature, anarchy, and tyranny. Burke's description of the invasion of the royal compound at Versailles, consequently, set the events of October 6, 1789, against the human and domestic life of the royal family. He reported that "the king and queen of France, after a day of confusion, alarm, dismay and slaughter, lay down to indulge nature in a few hours of respite." The queen's

slumber, however, was cut short by a cry from the sentry guarding her door. He was "cut down" and the room was invaded by "a band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with his blood," and the queen had "just time to fly, almost naked . . . to seek refuge at the feet of a king and husband, not secure of his own life." The account neatly juxtaposed the refined sensibility of the monarchs, who observed with horror the supposed excesses of the Revolution and retreated into peace of their home, with the cruel excesses of the Parisian crowd and its leaders. The feelings of shock that the king and queen felt at the scenes unfolding outside their palace marked them as fully human, an image reinforced by Burke's description of a nearly naked wife fleeing to the protection of her husband. Readers who understood the power of sentiment and feeling, consequently, would easily recognize the humanity and the monarchs and the barbarous qualities of the invaders. What was at stake in the invasion of Versailles, in short, were not the merits of royal policies, or even the qualities of the king and queen, but rather the sympathetic principles that defined civilized life that they represented.[25]

With the sentimental nature of these events established, Burke began to weave them into a narrative that legitimated monarchy. He stressed that support for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette as king and queen of France was a natural extension of recognizing their sympathetic position as aggrieved victims of the mob. Thus, Burke recounted how the royal couple was "forced to abandon the sanctuary of the most splendid palace in the world, which they left swimming in blood," and "conducted into the capital of their kingdom." He described how, "as a man," Louis "felt for his wife and his children, and the faithful guards of his person" and how "as a prince, it became him to feel for the strange and frightful transformation of his civilized subjects, and to be grieved for them." The queen, he was pleased to report, "has borne the day . . . the imprisonment of her husband, and her own captivity, and exile of her friends, and the insulting adulation of addresses, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with serene patience, in a manner suited to her race and rank." Louis's and Marie Antoinette's reactions to their plight revealed not only that they possessed the sympathetic qualities of humanity that their attackers evidently lacked, but that they also could claim a heightened sensibility peculiar to their station. Louis felt as a prince for the suffering of others, even as he felt for his own personal losses. Marie Antoinette bore up under the humiliations heaped on her, in a manner that marked her as a person of particular fortitude and feeling. These reactions made it clear that there was something peculiar that set monarchs apart from the common people, and that it

was rooted in a superior sensibility that had come to reside in the minds of the king and queen.[26]

In contrast, Burke portrayed the assault on the monarchy as an assault on a modern and civilized world governed by feelings of sympathetic attachment. He explained that "such treatment of any human creatures must be shocking to any but those who are made for accomplishing Revolutions," revealing that, whatever their original intentions, the revolutionaries had lost touch with their most basic human qualities. The fact that they had directed their assault against the king and queen, Burke insisted, underscored how dangerous that departure had become. He informed readers that "the inborn feelings of my nature, and not being illuminated by a single ray of this new-sprung modern light . . . that the exalted rank of the persons suffering, and particularly the sex, the beauty, and the amiable qualities . . . with the tender age of royal infants . . . instead of being a subject of exultation, adds not a little to my sensibility on that melancholy occasion." Burke positioned himself as defending the monarchy not out of particular attachment to the power of kings, but for the way in which recognizing the superior station of the monarch revealed a greater sensitivity to the feelings of compassion and sympathy. In embracing change, or possessing the ability to make revolutions, the French had revealed themselves to be the enemies of humanity, and the same qualities, Burke implied, would surely spread to the British if they too turned their backs on the monarchy.[27]

Always sensitive to British fears of monarchical tyranny and professed love of liberty under a balanced constitution, Burke concluded by tying both to a culture of sympathy created by the institution of kingship. He observed, "I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever." No more would "we behold that generous loyalty of rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom." It was the spirit of chivalry and feeling that "had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all gradations of social life"; it had "mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force, or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners." In a series of deft associations, Burke painted the assault on monarchy not as

an attack on a particular form of government, but on the system of sentimental ethics upon which political freedom rested. The feelings of chivalry that should have provoked outrage at the events at Versailles were precisely those feelings that had produced freedom by taming the unruly impulses of monarchs and their dependents. It was only by recognizing the power and position of a king that a society could develop the powers of sympathy and manners that would encourage and support a system of free government. Freedom depended on feelings and sympathy, and these qualities depended on the monarchy.[28]

With British and human freedom tied to the feelings cultivated by monarchy, Burke once again emphasized that in attacking the king and queen of France, the Revolutionaries, and their British sympathizers, had revealed themselves to be the enemies of civilized society. The great error of these misguided men, he argued, lay in their rejection of the universal sympathies and feelings that constituted the bedrock of any society. The events at Versailles underscored how "all is to be changed" and the "pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shares of life and which . . . incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason." The demise of the politics of sentiment and the triumph of the empire of reason, he lamented, would undermine the most fundamental principles of society. In the new world created by the Revolution, "a king is but a man; a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order," and honor "paid to the sex in general as such . . . is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying is simplicity." This "barbarous philosophy" would leave laws "to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern, which each individual may find in them, form his own private speculations, or spare to them from his own private interests." Nothing would be left that "engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth," as the "sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable" of promoting the patriotic "love, veneration, admiration, or attachment," which were the natural consequences of monarchy. The politics of sentiment, encouraged by monarchy and necessary for freedom, also lay behind the relationships between men and women, the reverence for religion, and the respect of children for parents that made civilized life possible. Moreover, the persons of the king and queen were necessary for cultivating the affection for the commonwealth that brought the state into

existence. By framing the attack on Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI in the language of sympathy, Burke had created not only a defense of monarchy as a natural institution necessary for human freedom, but also one that made the institution the only defense against anarchy and chaos. Once again, the difference between the supporters of the French Revolution and people such as Burke had ceased to be a contest between rival political philosophies and became a clash between the friends and enemies of civilization.[29]

It is easy to lose track of the rhetorical dimensions of Burke's pamphlet in light of subsequent developments in the French Revolution. When viewed from the perspective of 1793, or the present, his vivid descriptions of murders, assassinations, and chaos seem prescient rather than as part of a calculated strategy to silence his political opposition. When viewed from the perspective of 1790, however, the rhetorical dimensions of the pamphlet become more obvious. Crowd violence had played an important role in the Revolution. The fall of the Bastille, peasant uprisings in the countryside, and the march on Versailles all contributed to the rounds of reform which, especially in the latter case, pushed the Revolution further than what its more moderate leaders envisioned. The crowd actions, however, were more defensive and less revolutionary than Burke insisted. The assault on Versailles, for example, occurred in response to mounting evidence that Louis intended to use the army to undo the constitutional monarchy established by the National Assembly. Similarly, peasant revolts in the countryside appear to have arisen primarily in response to seigneurial opposition to the new order.[30] Similarly, the radical committees that supposedly triggered much of the violence Burke described, while advocating significant reform, generally embraced moderate positions in 1790.[31] Even the Jacobin Clubs, so famous for their later radicalism, demanded nothing more than a progressive income tax and greater price controls, choosing instead to devote their energy to identifying corruption in government.[32] Burke's depictions of bloodthirsty revolutionaries running amok in the streets of Paris, in other words, reflected reality neither as understood by the leaders of the French Revolution, nor by British observers of it.

The gap between Burke's descriptions and the reality he purported to describe underscores the degree to which the rhetoric he employed reflected a conscious political strategy to confront his political opponents in Britain. Unwilling to risk the transfer of French theory and practice to Britain, he set about to discredit not only the particular policies but also the very idea of change and transformation. The supposedly

universal nature of feeling and sentiment provided an ideal way to send that message. By associating the process of political change in France with images of terror and fear, Burke could transform what was in reality an effort, albeit a drastic one, to reform the institutions of the *ancien régime* into an assault on civilization. The outrage such descriptions should provoke among readers would prove beyond a doubt the dangers of tampering with the established political order and make any further discussion of the subject pointless. Opposition to the revolution in France, consequently, would become a war on terror premised on the irrationality and inhumanity of the revolutionaries that effectively prevented any further discussion of the possibility of reform in Great Britain.[33]

In addition to the exaggerations of violence, Burke also carefully manipulated his descriptions of the English constitution and the abuses of France's *ancien régime,* in order to critique the Revolution and silence his domestic opponents. Also, to prove the superiority of his vision of the English constitution, Burke appealed to his readers' feelings, in this case those of affection rather than terror. He had the advantage of taking a stand that more or less reflected contemporary public opinion. In the late eighteenth century, the people of England did embrace their form of government as the explanation for the relative political stability their nation enjoyed and as the cause of the economic prosperity and the source of the influence in the world.[34] Burke played on the popularity of this view of the English government, to remove any thoughtful consideration of reform from the agenda of popular discussion, by embedding popular beliefs in feeling and emotion. The same system of sentimental ethics that transformed the French Revolution from a political movement into a war on civilization transformed the English constitution from a form of government to the embodiment of peace, order, and social harmony.

While Burke eagerly pointed out the pride the people took in their form of government, he did not explore too closely any rational basis of that sentiment, preferring to celebrate his countrymen's feelings about the constitution. He remained hostile to the abstract metaphysics of Enlightenment theory, insisting that the English were "not the converts of Rousseau," but rather than discuss pragmatic benefits they enjoyed under their constitution, he preferred to emphasize their feelings about it. Thus, Burke observed that "in England we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. . . . We fear God; we look up with awe to kings;

with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; with respect to nobility." His countrymen, Burke claimed, "are generally men of untaught feelings," and "instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree." In the context of sentimental ethics, Burke's arguments constituted a powerful defense of the status quo. The English constitution was beyond reproach because it reflected the natural sentiments of the people, which could not be shaped or manipulated by the reasoning of demagogues, atheists, or political theorists. The cause of reform, consequently, became an affront to the truth, as the people of England knew it to be through their feelings, if not their experiences.[35]

The best evidence of Burke's awareness of the powers of sympathetic discourse to discredit arguments, and his manipulation of it to achieve his ends, appears in his conscious attempts to deny this powerful rhetoric to his opponents. In a passage heavy with unintended irony, Burke observed that when the "frauds, imposters, violences, rapines, burnings, murders, confiscations, compulsory paper currencies, and every description of tyranny and cruelty," produced by the Revolution, shocked "the moral sentiments of all virtuous and sober minds," its defenders "immediately strain[ed] their throats in a declamation against the old monarchical government of France." Once the revolutionaries had "rendered that deposed power sufficiently black, they then proceed in argument, as if all those who disapprove of their new abuses must of course be partisans of the old."[36] Burke, of course, had repeatedly pursued exactly this strategy in exaggerating the excesses of the Revolution and the ideas of his opponents. Even in this passage, he framed his condemnation of his opponents' attacks on the defenders of the *ancien régime,* with appeals to the shocked feelings that the violence, tyranny, and cruelty of the Revolution produced in moral and sober minds. These attempts to disparage the rhetorical practices of his opponents, consequently, only underscore the centrality of emotion and feeling to his own cause, and the importance of denying to his opponents any right to appeal to these sentiments.[37]

Burke did not deny that abuses had existed under the *ancien régime*. Instead, he set out to shape the discussion in such a way as to remove those very real problems from consideration. He did so, in effect, by removing the French Revolution from history. When discussing the French Revolution's treatment of the clergy, for example, Burke argued that to justify their actions, the Revolutionaries had raked "into the histories of former ages (which they have ransacked with malignant and profligate industry) for every instance of oppressions and persecution"

undertaken by the clergy. He described this "fiction of ancestry in a corporate succession, as a ground for punishing men who have no relation to guilty acts, except in names and general description" as an "injustice" created by "the philosophy of this enlightened age."[38] As with much of Burke's pamphlet, these charges served an immediate political purpose. English Dissenters rested their case for reform less on present inconvenience than on the history of abuse they had experienced at the hands of the Church of England.[39] If the feelings brought forth by past injustices did not constitute legitimate grounds for present actions, however, then the French had no moral basis for justifying their revolution on the abuses of the past, and English Dissenters had no just claim to present religious reform. In making this argument, Burke also distinguished the appeals to emotion made by his opponents from his own attempts to inspire outrage among his own readers. His calls for a rejection of the French Revolution were legitimate because they rested on an immediate emotional response to perceived suffering, whereas those of his opponents rested on the manipulation of memories that had no bearing on the present.

The French Revolutionaries and their English allies erred not only in point of fairness in arousing emotions based on past abuses, but they also impeded the process of human improvement they pretended to champion. Burke explained that history was a chronicle of "the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal and all the train of disorderly appetites, which shake the public." These "vices," he asserted, were "the causes of all those storms. Religion, morals, laws, prerogatives, privileges, liberties, rights of men, are the pretexts." He cautioned that "wise men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names; to the causes of evil which are permanent, not to the occasional organs by which they act, and the transitory modes in which they appear." The efforts of the French Revolutionaries, and the desires of the English reformers, to change the institutions of the *ancien régime* threatened to substitute a meaningless change in the occasional organs and transitory modes of oppression, for a proper assault of vice. Emotions stirred up to further this agenda were necessarily suspect and either masked sinister designs or threatened to further the problems they were supposed to address. Burke's opponents were "attending only to the shell and husk of history," and in "waging war with intolerance, pride, and cruelty, whilst under colour of abhorring all ill principles of antiquated parties," they were "authorizing and feeding the same odious vices in different factions, and perhaps in worse."[40]

Neither Burke's rhetorical strategy nor his larger agenda was lost on his readers. The pamphlet, despite the notoriety of its author, was not particularly well received. In 1790 and 1791, 25 pamphlets appeared responding to Burke, and in the decade following the appearance of *Reflections,* 55 pamphlets attacking its contentions emerged. While the particulars of the criticisms varied, they consistently expressed concerns over Burke's hostile treatment of the French Revolution and his adulation of the English constitution. In the first case, authors, reflecting the reality on the ground, repeatedly pointed out that there was no evidence of the horrors described in the pamphlet, and insisted that the Revolution had unfolded along moderate reformist lines. Where authors did concede that excesses had occurred, they proved willing to accept them as the result of unfortunate consequences of a laudable effort to reform a system that had become hopelessly corrupt and inefficient. While Burke's critics shared his affection for the English constitution, they did not embrace his portrayal of it as an unchanging document handed from one generation to the next. Authors such as Catherine Macauley Graham and Thomas Christie insisted that the English owed their liberty and freedom to their willingness to improve their government and ensure that it promoted and protected the liberties of the people. While these authors may not have approved of all aspects of the French Revolution as a model for England, they did believe that its attempt to improve government according to the theories of natural rights constituted one of its more useful legacies. Taken as a whole, these pamphlets called for a discussion of current events in France and England founded on reason and experience and devoid of the passionate rhetoric that Burke had employed, which they believed obfuscated rather than clarified the situation in both countries.[41]

Though Burke's thoughts produced consternation and condemnation in his more reform-minded countrymen, they did, however, anticipate the conservative reaction to the revolution in France and the reform movement in England. The pivotal developments in this regard were the growing radicalism of the revolutionaries and the declaration of war between England and France. The outbreak of war proved particularly problematic for the English regime. The French Revolution, as Burke feared, had been relatively well received in England and despite its radicalism in 1792, the population was slow to warm to war. The government's response was to define the debate in exactly the terms anticipated by Burke. The French were the enemy not simply because of the power of their armies or the threat they posed to British interests, but because they were the enemy of religion and good order in society. The Revolutionaries

and their British supporters were portrayed as anarchists and atheists, who would destroy the constitutional principles upon which liberty rested. As Burke had done, these authors juxtaposed the beauty of English practice with the dangers of French tyranny. The constitution and church in England were superior to those in France because they were largely unchanging and drew their power from the deference with which they were treated by both the population and the rulers. The message was reinforced by cheap pamphlets published by the Loyalist Association and by sermons from the pulpit. Both genres echoed Burke's passive view of politics: emphasizing the perfection of inherited institutions, stressing the dangers of innovation of any kind, and portraying dissent as atheism.[42]

When these measures failed, the rhetoric of crisis and the warnings of the uniqueness of the French enemy became justifications for more direct oppression of reformers. Booksellers were prosecuted for selling Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* and other political tracts either criticizing the British government or calling for reform. Reformers associated with the Constitutional Society and Corresponding Society were arrested and tried according to the king's message in respect of Seditious Practices for calling a convention to consider the reformation of the British political system. William Pitt introduced measures into Parliament that made it treasonous to do anything that could be interpreted as stirring up the people in opposition to the king and that granted magistrates the power to curb assemblies of more than 50 people. Pitt and his government also sought to restrict the ability of the press to criticize government and to hamper the printing of oppositional tracts by taxing newspapers. The legal efforts of the government were reinforced by extralegal measures taken by the crowds. Inspired by fear of religious plots and foreign infiltrators, mobs repeatedly attacked Dissenting ministers and opponents of the government in the 1790s. Though the government tried to restrain such actions, it tended to be much more zealous in its prosecution of the members of crowds and demonstrations deemed seditious than of those involving supporters of the government. Much as Burke had intended (he remained in Parliament throughout the period), when the political pressure on the British government from reformers mounted, the solution lay in silencing them by portraying them as enemies of the state and of humanity.[43]

The publication of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* initiated one of Europe's earliest wars on terror, and illustrates the power of the idea of terror to shape or, more accurately, circumvent political debate. His descriptions of the horrors of the French Revolution and his defense of a

knee-jerk patriotism grounded in the unconditional acceptance of the status quo set the tone for a political discourse premised on the impossibility of dissent. Grounded in the supposedly universal realm of feeling, his rhetoric portrayed the French Revolution as an assault on the founding principles of civilization. His emphasis, in making this case, on actions taken by the new French government that paralleled reforms advocated by Burke's British political opponents, effectively portrayed this latter group in the same light as the Revolutionaries. Coupled with a vision of British patriotism founded on an unreflective and intuitive love of the ancient constitution, Burke's argument denied the French Revolutionaries and their British supporters the ability to act purposely and rationally in defense of legitimate political aims. The consequences of this way of thinking about both the French Revolution and the British political reform surfaced in the government's repeated attempts to silence dissent in the 1790s and in the violent actions of loyalist crowds against political and religious dissenters. It is easy to overlook this negative aspect of Burke's war on terror because so much of what he described, eventually, took place as the French Revolution descended into chaos. When he wrote in 1790, however, these events were yet to take place, and Burke claimed to describe existing conditions as much as predict future developments. Consequently, though Burke's *Reflections* accurately predicted the rise of terrorism out of political extremism, it also illustrates the power of the allegation of terror in silencing politically inconvenient dissent from political opponents.

Notes

1. Peter Stillman, "The Changing Meanings of Terrorism," *Perspectives on Evil and Human Wickedness* 1, no. 2:81–90, http://www.wickedness.net/ejv1n2/ejv1n2_stillman.pdf.
2. Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 1–98; Marilyn Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); John Dinwiddy, "Interpretations of Anti-Jacobinism," in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics,* ed. Mark Philp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 38–49.
3. Goodwin, *Friends,* 23, 99–135; Gunther Lottes, "Radicalism, Revolution and Political Culture: An Anglo-French Comparison," in *French Revolution,* ed. Philp, 78–98.
4. Goodwin, *Friends,* 40–42, 52–53, 112–116; Jenny Graham, *The Nation, the Law, and the King: Reform Politics in England, 1789–1799*. 2 vols. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 1:27–96.

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CHAPTER 2

"Unworthy of Liberty?" Slavery, Terror, and Revolution in Haiti

Laurent Dubois

The Haitian Revolution is still too often portrayed as a whirlwind of unending violence, a chaotic series of bloody massacres driven by racial hatred, with little larger political meaning. From the moment when tens of thousands of enslaved men and women on plantations in Saint-Domingue rose up in 1791, the response among elites throughout the Atlantic World was—predictably—one of shock and horror. For the many who were heavily invested in protecting and buttressing the system of slavery, the revolt was an enormous threat, and they largely responded by portraying it as little more than an unruly, chaotic, barbaric, and bloody affront to the hierarchies they considered essential and justifiable. Of course, there were also commentators who saw something very different, arguing that the enslaved, who were oppressed by a brutal system, had as much right to rise up against their oppressors as the revolutionaries who fought Britain in North America or those who attacked the aristocracy in France. Still, the powerfully negative images generated during the late eighteenth century about the revolution continue to circulate and shape contemporary perspectives to a surprising degree.

While the process that transformed the slave colony of Saint-Domingue into the independent, emancipated nation of Haiti was certainly a bloody one—perhaps as much as a third of the population died in the process, the majority of them of African descent—in order to understand it we need to situate, contextualize, and investigate the precise forms of violence used at different moments in the revolution.

Doing so allows us to see that periods of intense, widespread violence during the revolution were, in fact, periodic and interspersed with periods of relative calm. It allows us to see how certain leaders, most notably Toussaint Louverture, sought to both channel and contain violence in pursuit of broader political goals. It allows us, in short, to see the Haitian Revolution as a political process like the French Revolution or the other bloody transformations of the time and to move away from the images of excessive and incomprehensible violence with which it has often been saddled.

This chapter synthesizes material I presented in my narrative history of the Haitian Revolution, *Avengers of the New World,* in order to explain how insurgent and counterinsurgent violence and terror shaped the revolutionary process.[1] It begins with an examination of the foundational terror at its root: the daily violence of slavery itself, which the enslaved revolutionaries violently overturned. It then turns to an examination of how violence was used in the insurrection of the slaves, which began in Saint-Domingue in 1791, and in the course of the war that followed and that eventually led to the abolition of slavery in the colony and in the French empire more broadly. The chapter explores not only the role of violence and terror in the conflict itself, but also how certain leaders, most notably Toussaint Louverture, dealt with the ways in which representations of such violence were used to delegitimize the revolution itself. Responding to suggestions made by former planters from Saint-Domingue that the acts of violence committed by slave revolutionaries suggested they were "unworthy of liberty," Louverture astutely contended that the same argument would apply to the French, who had themselves committed many atrocities in the course of their revolution.

Emancipation, instituted in 1794, came under steady attack during the late 1790s, and eventually a large military force was dispatched by Napoleon Bonaparte to crush the power of Louverture and his army. This fateful decision by Bonaparte set in motion a new, and brutal, war that pitted French armies against people of African descent in Saint-Domingue dead set on defending their liberty. In this war, as in the early period of insurrection, retributive violence and atrocities took place repeatedly. The brutality of the war, and the genocidal aims pursued by the French, shaped the vengeful and violent discourse through which Jean-Jacques Dessalines announced the birth of the Haitian nation in 1804. In doing so, he presented his own victory, and the massacres of whites he ordered after independence, as revenge not only for the terror of slavery but for the broader terror of European colonialism in the Americas, evoking the specter of the decimated indigenous inhabitants

of the island through the choice of the indigenous name "Haiti" for the new nation. Out of a world of slavery that had been shaped by terror, Dessalines hoped, through violence, to create a world of liberty and redemption, a dream still left unfulfilled.

Haiti's case was unique in many ways, but its history was linked to that of slavery throughout the Americas. In many ways colonial Saint-Domingue was similar, for instance, to British Jamaica, and indeed the latter actually saw larger and more successful revolts during the eighteenth century. Communities of runaway slaves, called "maroons," forced the British to sign treaties guaranteeing their liberty in Jamaica in the 1730s—something that also took place, but on a much smaller scale, in Saint-Domingue—and a large revolt took place there in the 1750s. The revolutionary transformation that took place in Saint-Domingue in the 1790s, however, far surpassed any other case of slave resistance in overturning slavery, creating a new emancipatory order in its place, and ultimately creating a new nation that stood proudly, and absolutely, against slavery itself. In the process, the Haitian Revolution helped to propel the broader struggle against slavery in crucial ways, even as Haiti itself struggled under the dual burden of political isolation and internal strife during the nineteenth century. The Haitian Revolution became a symbol, often simplified in the process. For some, it was a symbol of the dangerous terror exercised by slaves against their masters. For others, it was, and remains, a symbol of the possibility of redemptive and liberatory violence.

In the eighteenth century, the thriving economy of the Atlantic world was based on slavery, and slavery was maintained through "an elaborate choreography of terror." This fact was widely recognized by both supporters and critics of slavery. As the British-born planter Bryan Edwards noted, "In countries where slavery is established, the leading principle on which the government is supported is fear: or a sense of that absolute coercive necessity which, leaving no choice of action, supersedes all questions of right." A decade later, the British abolitionist James Stephen, looking back on a decade of revolution in the French colonies of the Caribbean, wrote similarly that what had once "secured in great measure the tranquility" of these plantation societies was "the nameless and undefined idea of terror, connected in the mind of a negro slave, with the notion of resistance to a white man and a master."[2]

In the Caribbean, as elsewhere in the Atlantic world, this "idea of terror" was maintained through public spectacles of torture, sometimes carried out by officials in the plazas of colonial towns, but more often, on private plantations. In 1775, at a time when many plantation owners in French Saint-Domingue feared the use of poison against them by their

slaves, a doctor wrote that plantations everywhere were outfitted with stakes at which slaves suspected of conspiring against their masters were burned alive. "To intimidate the other negroes," he wrote, the masters forced "each of them to carry a bundle of wood for the stake, and to watch the execution." A few decades later, one plantation owner wrote to the managers of his property in the colony with the advice: "Slow punishments make a greater impression than quick or violent ones." Rather than 50 lashes "administered in five minutes," he recommended "twenty-five lashes of the whip administered in a quarter of an hour, interrupted at intervals to hear the cause which the unfortunates always plead in their defense, and resumed again, continuing in this fashion for two or three times," as being "far more likely to make an impression." Such tortures were not limited to the living. As Vincent Brown has argued, masters sought to sustain fear in the minds of their slaves not only through "physical force," but also by terrorizing "the spiritual imaginations of the enslaved" through "spectacular punishments committed upon the bodies of the dead."[3]

Torture and terror were not the only tools used to control the labor of slaves and dissuade them from resistance. Indeed, as many historians have shown, on a daily level plantation discipline was often maintained through less public and spectacular exercises of power, such as granting or withholding clothes, rum, permission to visit other plantations or towns on Sundays, or the right to plots of land. Plantation discipline was also enforced through the cooperation of certain slaves, most importantly drivers, who most directly supervised and disciplined other slaves and generally meted out punishments on behalf of masters. And for female slaves, it also included the constant threat, and regular experience, of sexual predation by masters and white managers, as well as by slave drivers. But, for all its intricacies and intimacies, the edifice of plantation slavery ultimately depended crucially on the power masters had over the bodies of their slaves. They could exercise this control, obviously, in the market, by selling away slaves as punishment or for economic reasons. But they could also exercise this control by inflicting pain, suffering, and death on their slaves in order to punish them and seek the submission of those who watched this exercise of power.[4]

The terror exercised in plantation societies was the extension of that practiced in the slave trade itself—from the raids and war that captured men, women, and children in the interior of Africa to the strategies of control used in the coastal forts in which they were held awaiting their shipment across the Atlantic through the brutal conditions and violence these captives experienced on the journey itself. The death rates were

enormous at all points of the process, as they were for new arrivals on plantations themselves. Up to half of new arrivals in the Caribbean colonies died within a few years, and infant mortality was almost as high. In most of the plantation zones of the Caribbean and South America, slave populations never grew on their own, but, rather, had to be constantly supplemented by new arrivals who replaced the dead.

The violence of slavery was confronted in many ways by the enslaved themselves, most powerfully through the revolution that brought freedom to Saint-Domingue in the 1790s. Throughout the eighteenth century, it was also a concern among colonial administrators and governors in the colonies; among kings, ministers, and parliamentarians in Europe; and among a variety of Atlantic intellectuals. There were some official attempts to control the violence exercised by masters against their slaves, but they rarely succeeded. Planters were extremely vociferous in their defense of what they considered their absolute right over the lives of their slaves. In the French colonies of the Caribbean, again over the course of the eighteenth century, there were ongoing debates and conflicts between planters who defended their right to "domestic sovereignty" and reformers who were hoping "to break the vicious circle of crimes [torture and mutilation] and 'counter-crimes' [*marronage*]" by "controlling what happened under the veneer of domestic sovereignty." Administrators attempted to control what happened on the plantations through laws meant to rein in the violence of planters both by punishing murders of slaves and by requiring the registration of slave populations in order to supervise the way they were treated. These laws were resisted intensely and never put into practice in the years before the Haitian Revolution. In the British Caribbean in the early nineteenth century, a similar cycle would once again take hold, with attempts at reform being resisted by planters.[5]

In both the French Caribbean and, later, the British Caribbean, the actions of slaves finally helped to break open the impasse of colonial administration. It was their use of violence and their threat of violence that forced an acceleration of the conflicts and an increasingly strong set of actions by metropolitan administrators. The enslaved used violence, and sometimes methods specifically aimed at terrorizing their masters, in pursuit of liberty.[6]

Not surprisingly, slave-owners and their allies and supporters represented the use of violence by slaves as abhorrent and barbaric, often circulating and sometimes simply inventing lurid descriptions of violence in an attempt to delegitimize and isolate slave insurgents. Descriptions of the violence of the enslaved thus took place in a particularly politicized

context. This was also true of the descriptions of the slave trade and of slavery by their critics, of course. The difference was that slave-owners and their allies had an easier time writing and publishing their views in the colonial context, whereas enslaved insurgents had a more difficult time representing their own actions. Luckily, the monopoly over information on the part of slave-owners was not complete, in part because once they lost their monopoly over violence and were forced to confront and negotiate with slave rebels, the latter got a chance to speak and voice their perspectives and demands. Rebel slaves also found allies of principle among abolitionists and allies of convenience among officers and representatives of enemy imperial governments. There is, consequently, an archive rich enough to present an account of antislavery action and thought by the enslaved.

When the slave insurrection began in the northern plain of Saint-Domingue in August of 1791, violence was successfully used to terrorize whites on the plantations, most of whom rapidly fled to the towns. Contemporaries who tried to describe the uprising often provided accounts of the violence that included descriptions of both extreme brutality and incidents of loyalty and pity on the part of the slaves who had suddenly gained power over their masters. Bryan Edwards, who traveled to Saint-Domingue soon after the uprising, and whose English-language writings on it profoundly shaped subsequent interpretations of the event, wrote a series of famous and often-quoted passages about the uprising. It had, he declared, produced "horrors of which imagination cannot adequately conceive nor pen describe" and a "picture of human misery" that "no other country, no former age, has exhibited." "Upwards of one hundred thousand savage people, habituated to the barbarities of Africa," he wrote, "avail themselves of the silence and obscurity of the night, and fall on the peaceful and unsuspicious planters, like so many famished tygers thirsting for human blood." Edwards also described the "unexpected and affecting" act of one slave who, though part of the conspiracy that preceded the uprising, also saved the life of his master and his family after it began. Indeed, there are a number of accounts written by planters themselves of enslaved people, including some who were active within the conspiracy that had launched the insurrection, protecting and saving the lives of their masters in the early days of the uprising.[7]

The counterinsurgent violence deployed by the French was, for the most part, quite indiscriminate. French troops made few distinctions among the slaves they encountered in the zones of insurrection. In several documented cases, these troops took over insurgent camps after most warriors had departed, finding only noncombatants, including

many children and elderly slaves. They nevertheless massacred those they captured. Many slaves who might otherwise have opted for the relative safety of their plantations thus fled to the insurgent camps for fear they would be victims of white reprisals. There was little room for neutrality in a landscape overtaken by violence and counterviolence. It was a situation that has become all too familiar in the course of twentieth-century wars of insurgency and counterinsurgency.

The insurgent leaders of Saint-Domingue, however, knew that ultimately they could not win a war against an empire without support from the empire itself. Within the first few months of the uprising, they began to make attempts to contain violence in order to open the way for negotiation. An important account by one white prisoner, named Gros, provides us with insight into the debates about the use of violence and terror that took place in the insurgent camps. Gros's account—which is corroborated by other sources from the period—how one insurgent leader, Jeannot, distinguished himself in terrorizing prisoners, often setting up spectacles in which the tortures once inflicted on slaves by masters—whipping, burning, mutilation—were now inflicted by enslaved insurgents on white prisoners, and sometimes directly by slaves against their captured masters. Other insurgent leaders, however, seem to have been displeased with Jeannot's tactics; his superior, Jean-François, had him arrested, tried, and shot and subsequently avoided physical violence against his prisoners. Indeed, some prisoners were recruited to become secretaries for the insurgent leaders and to help in negotiations with colonial and military authorities. Less powerful leaders also showed humanity toward white prisoners. Gros describes one insurgent who had once served as a domestic in Paris, and was therefore nicknamed "the Parisian," providing prisoners with food and mattresses. Gros also argues that the insurgents' attitudes toward white prisoners depended on individual experiences during slavery, explaining that those who had lived on sugar plantations were more "enraged" than those who had been on the smaller mountain coffee plantations.[8]

As they sought to rein in the mistreatment and torture of white prisoners, insurgent leaders like Jean-François also successfully consolidated their military gains, controlling territory and surviving and expanding as an army. Unable to crush the revolt, as many whites initially believed they would easily be able to, the colonial administration began negotiating with the insurgents. This process—in which some of the leaders of the uprising proposed that if a few hundred of the insurgents were granted liberty, they would lead a return of their followers to the plantations—generated debates and conflicts within the camps. The

leaders themselves admitted, however, that such plans were not acceptable to the "multitude" of Africans who comprised their forces, who were unwilling to go back to the plantations unless there were reforms in the practice of slavery including limits on the punishment they could suffer at the hands of masters and overseers. Many insurgents spoke out forcefully against both compromise and mercy.[9]

It was in this context that the man who would become the most famous leader of the revolutionary period, Toussaint Louverture, first emerged as a political force. Louverture had once been a slave, but he was freed over a decade before the revolution began and had briefly owned at least one slave when he had managed a small plantation. During the negotiations with the colonial administration, Louverture repeatedly intervened to protect white prisoners. As the prisoner Gros describes, when the insurgent leader Biassou ordered the prisoners shot, "Toussaint, of Breda, Biassou's aide, braved all dangers to try to save us" and "explained that we should not be sacrificed in this way, that we should be put in the stocks and judged by the Council of War." Louverture insisted that prisoners had to be tried through due process within the camps, not killed out of vengeance or rage. Biassou backed down in this case. But, when a group of prisoners including Gros were being brought to Le Cap, the capital, as part of a prisoner exchange, they encountered a group of insurgents "assembled and rushing towards us, with sabers in their hands, threatening to send only our heads to Le Cap, cursing the peace and their generals." Their escort, including Louverture, protected the prisoners and brought them to Le Cap safely.[10]

Before the revolution, colonial officials had long sought to curb the torture and terror meted out by planters, but planters had resisted successfully throughout, and slaves had seen little change in their condition. Like reformist colonial administrators, insurgent leaders such as Jean-François and Biassou also believed that torturing and terrorizing captives wascounterproductive. In contrast to colonial reformers, the insurgent leaders, at least to some extent, managed to marginalize or stop the torture of white prisoners, securing better conditions and, in several cases, freedom for those they held in their control. This success is quite remarkable, for the demand for vengeance against whites on the part of slaves must have been strong, along with the temptation to act against masters as they had acted against slaves.

The attempts at negotiation by French officials between planters and insurgents ultimately fell through, to a large extent because planters were unwilling to negotiate with rebels they saw as "brigands" and, still, pieces of property. As the war dragged on, the more radical demands the rank-

and-file insurgents put forth in late 1791 became the platform for the insurrection as a whole, radicalizing the leadership in the process. In 1792 Jean-François and other leaders proposed a plan for the outright abolition of slavery. The stalemate between the administration and the insurgents would likely have continued for years had it not been for the arrival of foreign war in early 1793, which opened the way for a dramatic set of transformations in Saint-Domingue. When Britain and Spain declared war on France, both of the former sought to conquer the valuable colony. The Spanish did so by recruiting insurgents as "auxiliaries," promising them freedom if they would fight against the French. Many, including Louverture and Jean-François, responded. The French administration—battling the Spanish "auxiliaries" and the British, who had recruited planter allies—similarly offered freedom to those who would serve the republic. When such measures proved insufficient, they took a much bolder step and abolished slavery outright in a desperate bid to save the colony for France. The strategy was a success: The forces France gained through emancipation stalled the advances of Britain and Spain, and ultimately forced their retreat from the colony. The emancipation decreed locally in Saint-Domingue in 1793 was ratified in Paris in 1794 and extended to the entire French empire.

The decision of the French republican administrators effectively appropriated and channeled the violence of the slave uprising into the war between France and its enemies. The colonial administration embraced the cause of liberty, transforming its greatest internal threat into the foundation for the defense of the colony. In place of stories of insurgent atrocities, the officials and parliamentary representatives who defended emancipation in Paris celebrated the heroism and idealism of their new, formerly enslaved, recruits. In the process they opened the way for the ascendancy of a new group of leaders, many of them ex-slaves, who would ultimately take control of the task of transforming Saint-Domingue into a post-emancipation society.

In the wake of emancipation, Toussaint Louverture transformed himself into the de facto military and political leader of the colony. Louverture was acutely aware of the broader geopolitical context in which the Saint-Domingue revolution was taking place. Maintaining emancipation, Louverture understood, would require keeping at bay the counterrevolution of planters eager to reverse emancipation and regain their power and property. The struggle to defend and define emancipation, furthermore, would take place in the Atlantic world dominated by empires and nations deeply invested in slavery. During the 1790s, Louverture skillfully navigated the currents of imperial warfare that were

shaping the Atlantic world of the time. He was also highly sensitive to the ways the portrayals of violence, and particularly the violence of the insurrection that had won freedom, could be used to delegitimize and undermine this victory.[11]

"If, because some blacks have committed cruelties, it can be deduced that all blacks are cruel," declared Louverture in an impassioned 1797 pamphlet, "then it would be right to accuse of barbarity the European French and all the nations of the world." He was writing in response to a speech by a former slave-owner from Saint-Domingue, Viénot de Vaublanc, who painted a picture of a colony steeped in chaos and overrun by lazy and violent former slaves. Vaublanc's speech focused on the "barbarities" committed during the 1791 insurrection as a way of delegitimizing the emancipation that it had brought about. In his response Louverture conceded that there had been "terrible crimes" committed by ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue. But, he insisted, the violence in the colony was no greater than that in metropolitan France. Indeed, he noted ironically, if the blacks of Saint-Domingue were as "ignorant" and "gross" as Vaublanc proclaimed, that fact should excuse them for their actions. The same was not true, he suggested, of the numerous Frenchmen who, despite "the advantages of education and civilization" had committed horrific crimes during the revolution. Pursuing his own attack on Vaublanc's attempt to delegitimize an entire political project by pointing to particular atrocities committed in its pursuit, he noted that if the treason and errors of some in Saint-Domingue justified a return to the old order there, then the same would be true in France. Would it not be justified to claim, on the basis of the violence of the French Revolution, that the French were "unworthy of liberty" and "made only for slavery," and that they should be once more put under the rule of kings? How, he further insisted, could Vaublanc—a one-time owner of slaves—gloss over "the outrages committed in cold blood by civilized men like himself" who had allowed "the lure of gold to suppress the cry of their conscience"? "Will the crimes of powerful men always be glorified?"[12]

In his revolutionary leadership, Louverture was acutely aware of the importance of countering European visions of the ex-slaves, who were the majority in the colony, and he understood that controlling tendencies toward violence and vengeance was crucial. Since his days in the insurgent camps, he had been extremely conscious of the potential ramifications of violence and had distinguished himself for the clemency he showed counterrevolutionary whites. Indeed Louverture's policy of avoiding vengeance against whites contrasted sharply with the actions of white administrators in the region during the same period. In Guadeloupe in

1794, for instance, several hundred counterrevolutionaries who had fought with the British were massacred by the metropolitan administrator Victor Hugues. When Louverture captured areas controlled by the British, meanwhile, he typically gathered in a local church whites who had supported the enemy and told them that, following Catholic teachings, he would forgive them if they repented for what they had done. His generosity toward planters who had fled the French colony for British or Spanish islands or the United States went against metropolitan policy and earned him harsh criticism from administrators in the colony. Some went so far as to portray him as a tool of the counterrevolution.[13]

His attempts to secure good relations with planters were also part of his broader economic policy. Louverture concluded that the colony must continue to produce colonial commodities—principally sugar and coffee—in order to be in a position to trade for provisions, as well as weapons and ammunition. He crafted good trade relations with Britain and the United States—going against French metropolitan policy as he did so—in order to secure what he felt was necessary for the colony. His policy also meant that plantation productivity had to be maintained, which in turn implied that the aspirations of many ex-slaves for land ownership and economic independence had to be contained. The twists and turns of his régime were the by-now-familiar set of compromises and ironies facing revolutions seeking independence in the midst of empire: In order to make sure Saint-Domingue never reverted to the slave colony it had been, he chose to maintain the central institution of the old system—the plantation—as a way of negotiating with a threatening set of powers, all of them invested in slavery. Ultimately, in a draconian decree he passed in 1800, and then in his 1801 Constitution, Louverture created an order in which he used his military to coerce former slaves into continuing to work on the plantations. Where the violence of slavery had been privatized, and controlled by individual masters, the violence of Louverture's régime was regimented and delivered by state representatives, and it was justified as a necessary part of a broader project of liberation.[14]

Despite the economic conservatism of Louverture's régime and its successes at rebuilding the plantation economy, the French government, particularly after the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, determined that it could not accept the existence of a powerful and autonomous class of leaders of African descent in the Caribbean. The reversal of the attitudes in the French government, which for several years after emancipation had generally supported the ending of slavery, was propelled in part by narratives that depicted the revolution and its leaders as barbaric and uncivilized. This process took place on both sides of the Atlantic as criticisms grew of

what were deemed the "excesses" of the revolutionary transformation and as nostalgia grew for the order that had been in place before. It was energized by a set of old racial discourses that had been infused with new meaning in the wake of the slave revolution of Saint-Domingue. For these reasons, it is easy to interpret the reversal as an inevitable development: a return to old ways of thinking after a brief interlude of revolutionary radicalism. But it is worth emphasizing how dramatically ill-conceived and unimaginative Bonaparte's turn against Louverture truly was. Louverture had certainly taken a bold step by crafting a kind of sovereignty for Saint-Domingue, producing a careful system of administration with himself at its center through his 1801 Constitution. And yet he had taken great pains, aided by his white planter collaborators, to profoundly limit the sovereignty so that it fit comfortably with the existing imperial economic structures. He offered France a highly conservative economic order that, within a few short years, produced a rapid rise in the production of coffee (and, to a lesser extent, sugar) out of a largely ravaged colony. It was a cost-effective order that drew its new elites and its armed forces from the population of Saint-Domingue, rather than requiring a continual infusion of troops from Europe that—as the British had learned in fighting Louverture and as Bonaparte would soon be forcefully reminded of—were extremely costly in terms of human life. Although this order depended on coercion, including violent punishment meted out by state representatives against plantation laborers, the new economic system could well have been as stable as—or even more stable than—the extremely violent and racially stratified plantation society out of which it emerged because it offered some routes for escape for ex-slaves through the armed forces. Finally, as Bonaparte and his foreign minister Talleyrand briefly acknowledged in their negotiations with the British in 1801, embracing Louverture and his army would have given the French empire a daunting local army that could be deployed against the valuable slave colonies of Britain and other slave-holding enemies.[15]

What did Louverture ask for in return? Although it was evidently too much for Bonaparte and his advisors, in retrospect—given the cataclysm that the French refusal set in motion—it is striking just how little he wanted. Louverture's order required an acceptance of shattered racial hierarchy, one in which the highest ranks of administration were open to people of African descent. But the order was already a fait accompli, and though it was resented by many planters, there were also plenty in Saint-Domingue who were comfortable enough to collaborate extensively within it. The possibility of granting leadership to a few was, as Louverture demonstrated, an effective mechanism for maintaining the

majority population in Saint-Domingue in relative subjugation. The French also had to accept, of course, a loss of direct administrative control over Saint-Domingue, something that certainly could have led to further demands for autonomy in other colonies. This prospect may have been what truly frightened Bonaparte and his advisors. But there would probably have been possibilities for negotiation with Louverture that could have lessened at least some aspects of local autonomy, as long as assurances were made of the preservation of liberty. Though it is impossible to know what would have happened had Bonaparte taken a different approach, it is difficult to imagine that the outcome could have been any worse for the French.

The French refusal of Louverture's advance essentially eliminated the possibility of compromise around the question of imperial governance. The possibility that a local leadership of African descent could play a role in crafting colonial governance from within was essentially closed off. This polarized the political situation and ultimately forced a new set of choices on the Caribbean leadership. The battle became one between emancipation and racial equality defended through a more radical sovereignty, on the one hand, and a return to much of the old colonial order, on the other. Although it is difficult to establish precisely when or why he did so, by the middle of 1802 Bonaparte had decided to re-establish slavery in the Caribbean colonies in the hopes of rebuilding them as thriving sugar plantation zones.

The period stretching from the arrival of Bonaparte's massive military mission to Saint-Domingue, led by his brother-in-law Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc, in 1802 to the independence of Haiti in 1804 was an extremely brutal one, during which the levels of violence and terror used by both sides reached frightening new levels. The war began when the French troops arrived and refused to wait for Louverture's permission to land at Le Cap. His commander, Henri Christophe, set the town on fire and began fighting the arriving French troops. Not all of Louverture's officers remained loyal, however; especially in the western and southern portions of the colony, many joined the French. Nevertheless, Louverture and his loyal generals—including Christophe and Jean-Jacques Dessalines—forced Leclerc into several months of hard campaigns that culminated in a battle at Crête-à-Pierrot, where the French won a very costly victory. Soon afterward Christophe defected to the French and Louverture and Dessalines followed suit. In June 1804, Leclerc set up a trap for Louverture, fearing that he was still animating resistance in the colony, and deported him and his family to France, where he died in prison.[16]

The first stage in the war was a clear victory for the French, but not a complete one. A major part of Leclerc's mission, as laid out by Bonaparte

in a series of instructions, was to co-opt or eliminate the black officers of the colony and disarm the black army. But the casualties Leclerc suffered from disease and battle during his first months in the colony made this impossible: As he confronted ongoing resistance from small bands of rebels after the surrender of Christophe, Dessalines and Louverture, he had to depend on the very army he was supposed to destroy. And—as both French officials in the metropole (including Bonaparte) and Louverture knew—the rainy months of late summer and fall, when outbreaks of disease were more common and more virulent, would be a particularly dangerous time for the French troops. There are some hints that the surrender of at least some rebels was part of a strategy—articulated in at least one case by Louverture at the beginning of the conflict—that involved doing whatever it took to keep the conflict going until the wet season in order to take advantage of disease outbreaks to demolish the French. Still, rather than hold back in the French-sponsored campaigns against the remaining rebels in the colony, Dessalines distinguished himself in his effectiveness and brutality and was repeatedly complimented by admiring French officers during this period.

By late 1802, however, defections from the French side began to accelerate. The remaining bands of rebels—led in the north by Sans-Souci and another Kongo-born officer, Macaya—attracted more and more soldiers. The French, seeking to stop the defections by threatening and increasingly massacring and terrorizing segments of the black troops in their service, instead accelerated the process. They executed black officers and their families and sometimes killed entire units they suspected of sympathy with the insurgents. Their tactics grew more and more brutal as the war went on. They gassed units of soldiers in the holds of ships and drowned hundreds by pushing them off ships with bags of flour tied around their necks. They also carried out spectacles of torture: Attack dogs were brought in from Cuba and their use demonstrated in a public event during which a black servant was killed by one of them. Both Leclerc and his successor Rochambeau clearly articulated genocidal policies, explaining that the existing population would have to be decimated in order for slavery to be re-established and the old order rebuilt. Rochambeau wrote in December of 1802 that it was necessary to "exterminate all the armed Blacks, the farm laborers and their chiefs and, to use a metaphor, cut the legs of everyone else: without this we will lose our colonies, and any hope of ever having any."[17]

Insurgents responded by executing white prisoners—sometimes on the hills above the towns the French still held—as vengeance for the killing that went on within them. At times, they massacred white civilians. In

some cases, powerful physical reminders were used to mobilize people against the return of slavery. One plantation worker, who had been flogged by a local policeman, apparently spread "dangerous rumors," saying "while touching his wounds" that the whites were planning to restore slavery. The marks on his skin would have been a clear reminder of the tortures suffered in the past and a powerful incentive to make sure the future looked different.[18]

French actions were ultimately extremely counterproductive, sending those who were still loyal to France into the opposition and sealing an alliance between a fragmented and diverse population through their open brutality. The black officers who remained in the service of the French, including Dessalines, ultimately followed the lead of many of their soldiers, and in October 1802 the tide clearly shifted against the French. The final stage of the war of independence began, and the lines of opposition became increasingly clear and intractable. When he defected, Dessalines commanded the French officers he had until recently been serving under to "return to Europe." Though the idea of ridding the colony of whites was evoked and discussed before, the idea of national independence truly coalesced as a clear and widespread political agenda in the wake of the French atrocities committed against loyal troops during late 1802.[19]

The brutality of this conflict, which stretched through most of 1803, shaped the language with which the founders of Haiti defined their new nation. The January 1804 declaration that created the nation harshly rejected the French as barbarians and demanded both their permanent expulsion and vengeance for their crimes. And Dessalines ordered a series of brutal massacres of white planters and their families in the wake of independence. At the same time, while he later declared that all Haitians would henceforth be defined as "black"—an act aimed primarily at undermining conflicts between those of purely African descent and those of mixed European and African ancestry in the colony—he also exempted and delivered naturalization papers to a number of French individuals, most notably widows, who were allowed to keep their property, as well as groups of Polish deserters from the French army and German colonists. In other words, while Dessalines's proclamations and actions broadly effected a rejection of all "whites" from Saint-Domingue, he specifically defined France as the "real enemy of the new nation." This allowed certain individuals of European descent—who had to pledge their rejection of France in order to gain naturalization as Haitians—to escape that construction, and the broader expulsion of the "white," in order to become Haitians, and therefore black.[20]

The choice of the name *Haïti,*—as well as other, fleeting references to the indigenous past of the Americas, notably the use of the terms like "Army of the Incas" and "Sons of the Sun" for what became known as the "indigenous army" under Dessalines's command—meanwhile represented a parallel gesture of inclusion that embraced not the living but the dead. The name was, according to some eighteenth-century sources, that which was used by the original Taino inhabitants of the island. The members of Dessalines's entourage, several of them well-educated *gens de couleur,* were likely familiar with the name through contemporary histories of colonization. Indeed, in 1788 one white resident had, in a pamphlet calling for broader autonomy for the colony, suggested the use of the term Aïti. But it was also true that the landscape of Saint-Domingue was littered with the remains of the vanished Taino culture, which were frequently uncovered as fields were worked in the plains and the mountains. By embracing a Taino heritage through the choice of the term *Haïti,* the founders of the nation were attempting to infuse its creation with the authority of a mythic past that was present as a haunting in the landscape of their new nation.[21]

There was nothing particularly unique about this gesture, which is at the center of many nationalisms, but in Haiti it took on a particularly fascinating inflection. The majority of the victors of the Haitian Revolution (though certainly not of the new nation's leadership) were not just of African descent, but African survivors of the middle passage, and men and women who had grown up across the Atlantic. Many others were first- or second-generation residents of the colony. As they expelled the French colonial state, which itself had only laid official claim to the colony for just over a century, the nation's new leaders mobilized the spirits of the indigenous dead to legitimize their claim to the land. This served to infuse their control of the territory with a genealogy, and in so doing presented the birth of Haiti not only as a rejection of slavery but more broadly as a rejection of the history of European colonialism in the Americas. Indeed, in justifying the post-independence killing of whites, Dessalines would write in April of 1804 that he had "avenged America."[22]

It was a necessary rejection, and an impossible one. The challenge for Haiti was to build a new order in a world still in the thrall of the old. The new nation's territory and its constituency were scarred by the history of slavery and the rigors of the plantation economy, as well as by the brutality of the war the created it. And the violence of empire and the terrors of slavery were still everywhere. The nineteenth century brought an uphill battle to fulfill the promises of a revolution in many ways out of its time. The new nation was met with a relentless hostility on the part

of the dominant states of the Atlantic world, notably the United States and, of course, France, where pro-slavery forces remained extremely powerful. The enslaved in the southern states of the United States, as well as those in the remaining French colonies in the Caribbean, would have to wait several decades before they gained the freedom Haitians had won for themselves in 1804. We should remember, and recount, the successes of 1804—the victory of dignity, the independence of communities throughout Haiti, the individual days of freedom stolen from slavery—even as we continue to watch and wage the ongoing struggle to escape the nightmare of a past that is still present.

Notes

1. Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
2. Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 10; Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (London: T. Miller, 1801), 3:36, quoted in Vincent Brown, "Spiritual Terror and Sacred Authority in Jamaican Slave Society," *Slavery and Abolition* 24, no. 1 (April 2003): 24–54, 24; James Stephen, *The Crisis of the Sugar Colonies; or, An Enquiry into the Objects and Probable Effects of the French Expedition to the West Indies* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 72.
3. Pierre Pluchon, *Vaudou, sorciers, empoissoneurs de Saint-Domingue à Haïti* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), 176; Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 37; Brown, "Spiritual Terror," 24.
4. A recent and well-detailed study of the workings of one plantation in Jamaica is Trevor Bernard, *Mastery, Tyranny and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
5. On these debates in the French case, see Malick Walid Ghachem, "Sovereignty and Slavery in the Age of Revolution: Haitian Variations on a Metropolitan Theme," (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2001), 136.
6. Dubois, *Avengers.*
7. Edwards, *History,* 3:67, 79.
8. See Gros, *Isle de Saint-Domingue: Précis Historique* (Paris: Imprimerie L. Potier de Lille, 1793). Selections from this text will be included in John Garrigus and Laurent Dubois, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789–1804: A History in Documents* (Boston, MA: Bedford, 2006). For an excellent analysis of Gros's text, see Jeremy Popkin, "Facing Racial Revolution: Captivity Narratives and Identity in the Saint-Domingue Insurrection,"

Eighteenth-Century Studies 36, no. 4 (2003): 511–533, 523. Biassou to Commissioners, 23 December 1791, Archives Nationales [henceforth AN], DXXV 1, folder 4, no. 20.

9. Jean-François and Biassou to Commissioners, 12 December 1791, AN DXXV 1, folder 4, no. 6; Gros, *Précis*.
10. Gros, *Précis*.
11. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Vintage, 1963), 125; Beaubrun Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: François Delancour, 1958), 3:32; Pamphile Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haiti,* ed. Pierre Pluchon (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 193; Victor Schoelcher, *Vie de Toussaint Louverture* (Paris: Karthala, 1982), 94–95; Michel Etienne Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste, et ses observations* (Paris: Dufart, 1809), 3:246.
12. Toussaint Louverture, "Letter to the Directory, 27 October 1797," in *Toussaint Louverture,* ed. George Tyson, Jr. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 36–43.
13. Ardouin, *Etudes,* 3:99; Laurent Dubois " 'The Price of Liberty': Victor Hugues and the Administration of Freedom in Guadeloupe," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd series 56, no. 2 (April 1999): 363–392.
14. See Claude Moïse, *Le projet nationale de Toussaint Louverture et la Constitution de 1801* (Port-au-Prince: Mémoire, 2001).
15. On the negotiations with the British, see the excellent study by Marcel Bonaparte Auguste and Claude Bonaparte Auguste, *La participation étrangère à l'expédition française de Saint-Domingue* (Québec: C. and M.B. Auguste, 1980).
16. The best history of the war of independence is Claude Bonaparte Auguste and Marcel Bonaparte Auguste, *L'Expedition Leclerc, 1801–1803* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1985). For a recent analysis of the use of violence by both sides in the conflict, see P. R. Girard, "Caribbean Genocide: Racial War in Haiti, 1802–4," *Patterns of Prejudice* 39, no. 2 (2005): 138–161.
17. On the course of the war, see Dubois, *Avengers,* chapters 12 and 13; on Rochambeau, see Girard, "Caribbean Genocide," 157.
18. Girard, "Caribbean Genocide," 153.
19. Auguste and Auguste, *L'expédition Leclerc,* 238–245.
20. See Ardouin, *Etudes,* 6:7, 15–17, 33–34. Girard, "Caribbean Genocide," presents a useful interpretation of the causes of and justifications for Dessalines's massacres of whites.
21. See David Geggus's excellent discussion of the naming of Haiti in *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), esp. 208, 215–217.
22. Ardouin, *Etudes,* 6:16–17.

CHAPTER 3

Vindictive Ferocity: Virginia's Response to the Nat Turner Rebellion

Bryan Rommel-Ruiz

They sat in the jail cell facing each other: the slave accused of murder and rebellion and the lawyer intent upon telling the slave's story. Before Nat Turner was to be tried for leading an insurrection in Southampton, Virginia, Thomas Gray, a local lawyer, interviewed Turner to see if he could understand what motivated Turner and his supporters to murder nearly 60 white men, women, and children. Various stories were circulating the state, but Gray took it upon himself to meet Turner in his jail cell to record Turner's description of the rebellion he led on August 21, 1831. As Gray noted in his introduction to Turner's "Confessions," "Public curiosity has been on the stretch to understand the origin and progress of this dreadful conspiracy . . ." It was Gray's intention to tell the truth and reveal the voice of the accused murderer. But Gray could not hide his disdain for Turner. As much as he tried to distance himself from Turner's story, he could not refrain from seeing Turner as a "monster" and "gloomy fanatic." As he said, "The calm, deliberate, composure with which he spoke of his late deeds and intentions, the expression of his fiend-like face when excited by enthusiasm, still bearing the stains of blood of helpless innocence about him . . . I looked on him and my blood curdled in my veins."[1]

Thomas Gray was searching for meaning in the Southampton tragedy, like his fellow Virginians to whom he directed this narrative, wanting to know why Turner and his fellow insurgents would kill "innocent" people. But in Gray's hands Nat Turner's "Confessions" is more

than a retelling of the rebellion. It reveals a more complex story of slavery, rebellion, and justice. On the one hand, it is a story that describes a religiously devout slave whose apocalyptic visions of a racial Armageddon inspired him and his supporters to attack Virginia's slave régime. On the other hand, the narrative illuminates Gray's authorial voice and his effort to subordinate Turner's insurgency to religious fanaticism. He judges Turner's intellect and behavior in the context of Turner's fervent asceticism and manipulates the text in order to depict Turner as a psychopathic zealot and murderer. Thus, the multiple voices that surface in the *Confessions* make this text difficult for the readers to know whose voice they truly hear, and therefore what actually happened that night in August 1831. While they can get a glimpse of Turner's perspective, in the end it is Gray's authorship that frames their understanding of Turner and the rebellion. Fundamentally, Gray's rendering of the rebellion empowered him to structure how his fellow Virginians would "know" what happened and how posterity would remember Nat Turner's rebellion. In Gray's telling of Nat Turner's "Confessions" then, knowledge truly becomes power: Gray's description of Turner would shape the way Virginians understood the Nat Turner Rebellion and how they would confront the future of slavery in their state.

Although Virginia experienced slave conspiracies in 1800 and 1802, none wrecked havoc on the psyche of white Virginians as Nat Turner's rebellion. This traumatic event would sear the historical memory of Virginians and affect the ways they would address the issue of slavery in the state in the following years. All told, 55 white men, women, and children were killed by Turner and his fellow insurgents, and the horror and brutality of the rebellion sent shockwaves throughout the white population of Virginia—and the nation as well. For Turner, this rebellion was more than a slave uprising: It was a spiritual war. Turner received a vision six years previous to the uprising in which he saw "white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle," the sun darkened, "the thunder rolled in the Heavens and blood flowed in streams . . ."[2] In his confessions, he said that "the great day of judgment was at hand" and the race war he would lead was part of the Lord's Second Coming. That the terror unleashed by Nat Turner and his supporters was believed to be sanctioned by God made this event all the more disturbing, unbelievable, and horrific in the mind of his confessor and narrator, Thomas Gray,[3] and undoubtedly the white audience who would read Nat Turner's "Confessions."

An event as traumatic as Nat Turner's rebellion is enveloped with multiple and complex meanings. For many African Americans and scholars

of African American history, Nat Turner's uprising represents a shining moment in the otherwise dark history of American slavery. It was an example of slaves challenging an oppressive and brutalizing régime in North America. And just as whites would try to shape the historical memory and legacy in the immediate years that followed the rebellion, blacks have come to regard this slave uprising as a moment of resistance, empowerment, and justice in their historical memory.[4] Slave revolts in mainland North America were few and far between, never reaching the potential of those in the Caribbean or South America.[5] After the American Revolution, they became even more rare. While Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vessey plotted slave revolts in Virginia and South Carolina respectively in the early nineteenth century, those revolts never came close to creating the political, social, and psychic disruptions that Nat Turner's rebellion produced.

This chapter does not focus on the historical causation of the Nat Turner Rebellion. Rather, it examines the ways white Virginians tried to make sense of this cataclysmic experience. Beginning with Thomas Gray's account of Nat Turner's revolt and looking at the debate over abolition in Virginia, this chapter examines how Virginians framed the discourse of the rebellion to downplay slavery as the motivating force for Turner and his followers. Much as other historians have examined traumatic historical events such as Metacom's/King Philip's War or the American Civil War, this chapter explores the vocabulary and language white Virginians used to render meaning to the psychic distress generated by the Nat Turner Rebellion.[6] Indeed, choosing what to call this slave revolt was an exercise of power to determine how it would be remembered. Was it a rebellion? A massacre? An uprising? Were the slaves just in slaying their oppressors? Was Nat Turner a religiously inspired leader of a slave revolt, or a murderous fanatic who led others to indiscriminately kill innocent men, women, and children? People in Virginia, the northern states, and even Nova Scotia weighed in their opinions on why Nat Turner and his followers committed the acts that they did. However, this search for meaning and the shaping of historical memory had profound political and social consequences. At issue would be the future of slavery in Virginia. If slavery lay at the foundation of Nat Turner's motivation to lead a slave revolt, would eliminating it prevent another revolt from happening? Virginia's Governor John Floyd believed so, as he led a gradual emancipation campaign following the execution of the insurgents. In making sense of the rebellion, Virginians were forced to examine the role of slavery in their society, and they wondered aloud whether it should be eliminated. While the rebellion

provoked the issue of abolition, white Virginians eventually chose not to emancipate slaves. Instead they sought to restrict the mobility of free blacks and control black preachers. In following this path, white Virginians not only intended to identify whom they believed were responsible for the Nat Turner Rebellion in their historical memory, but also intended to allow historical amnesia to minimize, if not erase, slavery as the catalyst for the rebellion.

Thomas Gray's account of Nat Turner's "Confessions" is the beginning point for understanding how Virginians struggled to comprehend the slave uprising. Gray insisted that he related Turner's account verbatim, but the multiple levels of authorship complicates interpreting the text. Is Turner being honest with Gray? Is Gray shaping the narrative to tell the story the way he wants to tell it? Despite his effort to corroborate Turner's story with other evidence, the reader is left suspicious of Gray's account. For, fundamentally, Gray is trying to discover the deeper meaning of Turner's motives and actions, and he shaped the narrative to describe the underlying issues that led to the rebellion. It is in this context that we must approach Gray's authorship. While Gray purports to tell the truth, he does not strive for objectivity. In his mind the Nat Turner Rebellion was "attended with such atrocious circumstances of cruelty and destruction, as could not fail to leave a deep impression, not only upon the minds of the community where this fearful tragedy was wrought, but throughout every portion of our country . . ."[7] Multiple stories of the rebellion abounded, but Gray viewed his narrative as the authoritative account of what happened.

Like most Virginians, Gray wanted to know what motivated Turner to lead an uprising that caused so much human carnage. Gray called Turner a "gloomy fanatic" who "was revolving in the recesses of his own dark, bewildered, and overwrought mind, schemes of indiscriminate massacre to the whites. Schemes too fearfully executed as far as his fiendish band proceeded in their desolating march." Furthermore, he saw a larger lesson to be learned from Turner's "confession." First, how Turner's mind "became bewildered and confounded" and then how it became "corrupted and led to the conception and perpetration of the most atrocious and heart-rendering [*sic*] deeds." But Gray believed that his narrative had a larger purpose. He said, "It is calculated also to demonstrate the policy[8] of our laws in restraint of this class of our population [slaves], and to induce all those entrusted with their execution, as well as our citizens generally, to see that they are strictly and rigidly enforced."[9] Gray obliquely admitted that slavery was responsible for Turner's insurrection, but rather than being motivated by slavery's

oppression, his narrative stressed the leniency with which Turner was treated and how that was responsible for the kind of slave Nat Turner turned out to be. But for Gray, the fundamental reason the insurrection occurred was Nat Turner's "mind," not his position as a slave. For Gray, Turner's mind was the "offspring of gloomy fanaticism, acting upon materials too well prepared for such impressions."[10] Turner was a smart, cunning, and devoutly Christian slave. Rather than seeing these as virtues, Gray viewed these attributes as if they were the wellspring of Turner's violent rampage.

Gray's narrative begins with Turner's childhood and the ways he was foreordained to be someone special. By stressing Turner's extraordinary capabilities, Gray suggests that normal slaves would not have perpetrated a slave rebellion. Turner related that as a child he could recollect events that occurred before he was born, and consequently his fellow slaves believed that he "surely would be a prophet." His parents thought he was destined for a great purpose because of "certain marks on my [Turner's] head and breast." His talents and intelligence, however, led his grandmother to believe that he was of no use as a slave—a view that was echoed by other slaves later in Turner's life. By documenting Turner's uniqueness, Gray underscores how Turner rose above his station in life to perform incredible feats. Gray lists examples such as Turner's ability to learn how to spell and read upon being exposed to a book and his knowledge of how to make gunpowder, as well as other "experiments" to support the belief that Turner was not normal—or from Gray's perspective, was abnormal. In Gray's mind, Turner's extraordinary actions and intelligence, coupled with his religious zealotry, would be the ingredients that would inflame Turner's rebellion.[11]

By focusing upon Turner's religious fanaticism, Gray believed he found the source of Turner's rage. Turner described himself as an ascetic (particularly citing his withdrawal from other slaves and abstention from alcohol) who studied the Bible intensely. Turner related to Gray how he communed with the Holy Spirit who had told him that his intelligence and wisdom were gifts from God. During this period of intense religious study he was instructed by the Holy Spirit to serve the plantation overseer, an event that led to his running away. But after he absconded for 30 days, Turner returned to the plantation. While he was gone, the Holy Spirit appeared to him and said that Turner was meant to serve God "in this world, and serve his earthly master." However, at this time Turner had a vision where he "saw white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened—the thunder rolled in the Heavens and blood flowed in streams—and I heard a voice saying, 'Such is your luck,

such you are called to see, and let it come rough or smooth, you must surely bare it.' "[12] Upon experiencing this vision, Turner's asceticism became even more intense. In his testimony, he said he withdrew from other slaves so he could serve the Holy Spirit more fully.

After this spiritual revelation in 1825, Turner began to have more visions and said he witnessed miracles, events that further fueled his asceticism. He believed he was an instrument of God's will, and "sought more than ever to obtain true holiness before the great day of judgment should appear." Indeed, his visions revealed to him that Armageddon was near and that it was his earthly duty to play a major role in producing it. Turner regarded his visions as signs that Christ's Second Coming was drawing near. As he said to Gray, "For as the blood of Christ had been shed on this earth, and had ascended to heaven for the salvation of sinners, and was now returning to earth again in the form of dew . . . it was plain to me that the Savior was about to lay down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and the great day of judgment was at hand."[13] In 1828, Turner had another vision revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. In this vision the Holy Spirit told him, "the Serpent was loosened, and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that I [Turner] should take it on and fight against the Serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first." It was in this particular vision that Turner identified the struggle between blacks and whites with the cosmic struggle between good and evil. Furthermore, it was incumbent upon him to lead this religious war. As other scholars have noted, these revelations illustrate that Turner saw himself as a leader fighting against the evil of slavery. Turner was neither fighting for his freedom, in particular, nor even for the freedom of those close to him. Rather he was engaged in a religious battle against the entire system of slavery and the evil it represented.[14]

However, Gray could not see this. It was these apocalyptic visions that Gray focuses on as Turner's motivation for the violence that he would lead. Nowhere does he describe Turner's discontent with slavery, nor for that matter the other slaves', whom Turner recruited to join him in the insurgency. Turner would wait six years from the time of these religious revelations before he would lead the rebellion. However, this period remains unexplored by Gray, who continues to focus on Turner's religious zealotry. Upon asking Turner whether he thought he was mistaken about his visions, Gray wrote, Turner claimed that he received apocalyptic visions about the rebellion. Turner believed that the solar eclipse in February 1831 was the sign to begin the insurgency "and slay my [his] enemies with their own weapons." He said, "on the signs appearing in

the heavens, the seal was removed from my lips, and I communicated [to the other slaves he recruited] the great work laid out for me to do . . . It was intended by us to have begun the work of death on the 4th July last . . .” The Fourth of July would have been an ideal time for Turner to lead the rebellion as slaves leading uprisings or running away traditionally used occasions when whites were distracted to commence their attacks or flee. In this case, Turner became ill, precluding him from beginning the insurgency. But upon witnessing another solar eclipse, he instigated the rebellion on August 22.

It is at this point in the narrative that Gray emphasizes that Turner was not an ill-treated slave, as if to underscore that slavery and the oppression it produced were not factors for Turner’s revolt. Since 1830 Turner had been living with Joseph Travis, and Gray points out that Turner did not see himself as oppressed by his master. In fact, Turner described Travis as a “kind master, and placed the greatest confidence in me; in fact, I had no cause to complain of his treatment of me.” Throughout the narrative slaves were never described as being maltreated. They were described either as being under the charismatic influence of Turner to participate in the rebellion or as faithful servants to their masters, hiding their masters during the rebellion and informing white authorities about those who participated in the revolt. For Gray, slaves were not historical agents. They were merely pawns in Turner’s rebellion or the extension of white benevolence.

On August 22, 1831, Nat Turner led six other slaves to nearby plantations and homes, attacking property and killing people as they made their way through Southampton, Virginia. They indiscriminately killed men, women, and children, and recruited slaves as they continued their insurgency. At one point, Turner counted up to 60 fellow rebels, although the hope was to recruit more. Turner/Gray’s “Confessions” reveal little about the intention of the rebellion in terms of whom Turner and his followers planned to kill. It appeared that the white population in general was the target of their violence. Before the rebellion was put down by the local militia, 55 white men, women, and children were killed. Gray did not identify how many black insurgents died or were wounded in the uprising nor did he describe how white Virginians exacted retribution by killing blacks whom they suspected were part of the rebellion. Virginian society was devastated, and since Turner escaped capture, it remained apprehensive of another rebellion. A slave uprising that erupted in nearby North Carolina soon after Nat Turner’s rebellion added to their concerns. However, Nat Turner was eventually caught six weeks later. He had hidden in a local cave, and was sniffed out by a dog.

Having nothing but a dagger to defend himself, Turner surrendered to the dog's master and was sent to prison where he awaited trial and his ultimate execution.

While Turner describes the rebellion, the violent tone of the narrative appears controlled by Gray in order to amplify the horror that occurred. Gray wanted to clearly describe the rebellion and murders in graphic detail in order to negatively portray the destruction Turner wrought. He wrote about Turner killing people in their sleep, and on one occasion returning to a house the insurgents had earlier attacked in order to kill a baby that was forgotten in the initial raid. That these horrors occurred was not disputed as other sources such as newspapers and court documents corroborated Gray's account. What is doubtful is the way Gray had Turner relate what happened. For example, Gray had Turner saying, "I returned to commence the work of death." And on another occasion, Gray recorded Turner saying, ". . . 'twas my object to carry terror and devastation wherever we went." More ominously, Turner was recorded as saying, "I sometimes got in sight to see the work of death completed, viewed the mangled bodies as they lay, in silent satisfaction, and immediately [went] in quest for other victims." Even in retreat, Turner said to Gray, "we found no more victims to gratify our thirst for blood"[15] For Gray, Turner is more than a religious fanatic. In his characterization, Turner becomes a monster, the embodiment of an indescribable evil who killed infants and delighted in the mutilation of white people.

However, Gray would have to characterize Turner this way to dismiss the possibility that Turner actually could have been executing a calculated military strategy to incite as much fear and chaos as possible in order to achieve his goals. Again, we have to recognize this tension in Gray's *Confessions*. Given that Turner's rebellion was an assault on slavery as a social and political institution, performing acts of mercy or taking hostages as a military maneuver in order to negotiate better terms for himself and his fellow rebels were probably dismissed by Turner because his rebellion was fundamentally fulfilling a religious mission. Recall that Turner had successfully fled enslavement once before, only to return to lead a rebellion he believed was part of God's apocalyptic plan. Anything short of achieving God's mission would have been considered a failure for Turner, further eliminating other traditional military strategies such as waging a war of rebellion in order to establish maroon communities in the swamplands of Virginia or North Carolina (which are within geographic proximity to the region of Virginia where Turner waged his uprising). Although Nat Turner eventually fled the rebellion, running away was only the final act once victory appeared hopeless.

Gray's *Confessions* was an effort to derive meaning from the violence Nat Turner and his fellow rebels inflicted on white Virginians. In having access to Turner in his jail cell, Gray believed he could get at the truth, which proved elusive to most Virginians, as newspapers had difficulty determining what actually occurred except from various accounts. Still, Gray maintained that much of what passed for news was rumor and saw it as his obligation to find out the truth of what happened. But Gray wanted more than this as well. He wanted to understand how Turner could kill in cold blood. As Gray concludes his narrative, he describes Turner's coolness and calm demeanor. Turner's apparent lack of feeling and distance disturbed Gray, who could only conclude from his perspective that Turner was a fanatic, albeit one who showed "uncommon intelligence." As he said, "The calm, deliberate composure with which he spoke of his late deeds and intentions, the expression of his fiend-like face when excited by enthusiasm, still bearing the stains of the blood of helpless innocence about him . . . I looked on him and my blood curdled in my veins."[16] Gray was certain of what happened. Turner and his fellow slaves had unleashed a "massacre," one that was "unparalleled and inhuman" in its "fiend-like barbarity." For Gray, it was clear that this was not a slave uprising seeking justice for an oppressed people. Turner's attack was an act of "monsters" and "shocking to humanity," and could only be understood in the context of fanaticism. Stripping Turner and his fellow rebels of their identity as slaves in a slave society, Gray could avoid describing the brutal world of human bondage and the violence that was part of its everyday life. Gray could escape the context of slavery because Nat Turner was an uncommon slave, and making him the focus of the uprising allowed Gray and his readers to avoid the motivation of Turner's followers, who were ordinary slaves.

As we will see, the disturbing issue of slavery's relationship to the Turner rebellion was questioned by Virginians and others such as William Lloyd Garrison, the ardent abolitionist who edited the antislavery newspaper, *The Liberator*. Gray could try to suppress slavery as the motivating cause for the Nat Turner Rebellion, but his fellow Virginians, including Governor John Floyd knew better. After the end of the rebellion and the execution of Nat Turner, Virginians began their most intensive discussion of slavery, emancipation, and colonization (the effort to send blacks to Africa) in its history. How they approached these issues would determine not only the future of slavery in Virginia, but how they would understand and process the Nat Turner Rebellion. Would they agree with Gray's conclusion? Or that of their governor, who knew well that the persistence of slavery in Virginia created conditions for another rebellion?

While journalists were concerned about gathering information about the rebellion to record events, they too searched for meaning to understand what motivated Turner to lead the slave uprising. Like Gray, a number of newspaper writers viewed Turner as a fanatic and his followers as "wretches" who were "mad—infatuated—deceived by some artful knaves, or stimulated by their own miscalculating passions."[17] According to one writer from the *Constitutional Whig,* the insurrection "was stimulated exclusively by fanatical revenge, and perhaps misled by some hallucinations of his [Nat's] imagined spirit of prophecy."[18] As the *Norfolk Herald* recorded, Turner "was instigated by the wildest superstition and fanaticism, and was not connected with any organized plan of conspiracy beyond the circle of the few ignorant wretches whom he seduced by his artifices to join him."[19] If slavery influenced the rebellion, it was not because it was a brutal and oppressive régime. Like Gray, writers commented upon the leniency and benign care on the part of slaveholders that produced the slave uprising. As a writer in the *Constitutional Whig* noted, "It is an aggravation of the crimes perpetrated that the crimes of slaves in this country are distinguished for lenity [*sic*] and humanity." Slavery in North America (as opposed to the Caribbean) was distinguished for its paternalistic treatment according to this writer; more severe treatment of slaves would have controlled their behavior.

White Virginians responded to the rebellion with as much rage and ferocity as Turner and his followers had. The *Constitutional Whig* noted that whites retaliated to the rebellion by decapitating some of the black prisoners who were caught by militiamen. The newspaper further wrote that "A spirit of vindictive ferocity has been excited" as a result of the uprising. The violence inflicted by Turner and the other rebels had gripped white Virginians, many of whom believed that Turner's rebellion was not only well coordinated but that it would also inspire other slaves in the state to revolt. More than the fear of another uprising, however, the unmitigated violence of Turner's insurgency paralyzed white Virginians. The *Constitutional Whig* wrote, "It will be long before the people of this country can get over the horrors of the late scenes, or feel safe in their homes."[20] Virginians were not only trying to understand what produced this violent revolt; they were also looking for solutions to avoid future rebellions to prevent such violence from happening again.

As some writers focused on Turner's fanaticism, others examined the nature of slavery and the slave-master relationship itself as the motivating force behind the Nat Turner Rebellion. A journalist for the *Constitutional Whig* wrote, "We therefore incline to the belief that [Nat Turner] acted upon no higher principle that [sic] the impulse of revenge against the

whites, as the enslavers of himself and his race." Observers like William Lloyd Garrison argued that slave revolts such as the one led by Turner were inescapable, as they were the manifestation of the brutality of the system of slavery itself. As Garrison said, "What we so long predicted . . . has commenced in fulfillment." Indeed, Garrison viewed Turner's revolt as the first of others to happen as long as slavery continued. He wrote, "The first drops of blood, which are but the prelude to a deluge from the gathering clouds, have fallen. The first flash of the lightning." Garrison noted that innocent people would die as long as slavery was practiced. He said, "We have warned our countrymen of the danger of persisting in their unrighteous conduct."[21] For Garrison, immediate emancipation was the only solution to avoid the violence of another slave revolt.

Although a critic of Garrison and other Yankee influences, Governor John Floyd fundamentally agreed with Garrison about the correlation between slavery and the Nat Turner Rebellion. Floyd also believed that Christianity (particularly its teachings regarding spiritual equality) and the presence of emancipated blacks in the state contributed to social instability between black and white Virginians. But his immediate concern was trying to eliminate the major problem that he believed instigated the slave revolt: the existence of slavery in Virginia. The Governor's diary reveals how he was so distraught by the rebellion that he believed it was his life's mission to eradicate slavery in the state. He initially led a gradual emancipation movement shortly after Nat Turner's execution, hoping that the state legislature would pass a law abolishing slavery and then send the emancipated blacks to Africa. Ultimately, he removed himself from the public debates, although he continued to support emancipation.

Floyd's concerns about slavery emerged while the rebellion was being put down and the militia remained vigilant of black mobility fearing another revolt. He considered Turner's uprising the "massacre of Southampton" and described the "inhuman butcheries" inflicted upon the victims of the rebellion.[22] For Floyd, the inherent violence of the system that people like William Garrison saw was not the potential for slave revolts, but the potential for slaves to be incited by outside influences. Floyd believed that Turner's insurrection was instigated by Northerners, particularly "peddlers, traders, preachers, and abolitionists." He recorded in his diary of having read Garrison's *Liberator* and believing the paper had the "expressed intention of inciting slaves and free negroes in this and the other states to rebellion and to murder the men, women, and children of those states."[23] Floyd was so paranoid about another rebellion that he viewed every black preacher with suspicion. In his letter to Governor

James Hamilton Jr. of South Carolina he related how black preachers gathered slaves in assemblies and preached "that all men were born free and equal—that they cannot serve two masters—that the white people rebelled against England to obtain freedom, so have the blacks the right to do." Floyd was convinced that every black preacher was involved in the conspiracy and that they were going to establish a new government composed of the revolted slaves. Floyd believed that only the abolition of slavery would eliminate the social and political volatility it produced.

In his diary, Floyd described the process of the debate on emancipation in Virginia's legislature. He grew disheartened as the momentum turned against his own position. He recorded how the abolition debate was emotionally charged and how this point in time following the Turner Rebellion would favor emancipation. But the voices supporting slavery proved more powerful. Even threats to divide the state emerged. Ultimately, the legislature voted down the abolition bill. The reasons the legislature maintained slavery were best summarized by Thomas Roderick Dew's essay "Abolition of Negro Slavery," published as a series of newspaper articles following the debate over emancipation in the 1830s. In this essay, Dew argued that ending slavery would be impractical (with the freed slaves either remaining in the state or being sent to Africa) and persuaded his readers that eliminating it would bring about Virginia's economic and social collapse. Although Dew stressed the concern of "amalgamation" or integration (which other pro-slavery advocates feared, particularly in the context of miscegenation), his essay was mostly an academic, although readable, argument connecting Virginia's vitality to slavery. Significantly, Dew wanted his readers to think beyond the Nat Turner Rebellion and consider the effects of abolition on Virginian society. By making this rhetorical move, Dew was effectively negating the root cause of the revolt: the violence inherent to the system of slavery. By focusing upon why Virginia needed to continue with slavery but without forgetting the revolt, Dew was simultaneously encouraging his readers to remember the violence of the uprising but to overlook the reasons Turner and his followers attacked white Virginians in the first place. Understanding the horror that white Virginians felt, Dew nonetheless did not want them to let the "excitement" of the rebellion influence their decision. He discouraged his readers from listening to abolitionists whom he believed were inconsiderate of property rights and who were promoting a plan that would be expensive to the state. (Abolitionists offered to compensate masters for their loss of property, albeit at a lesser value.)[24]

Dew's widely published essay fundamentally defined the pro-slavery position that would resound time and again throughout the South and

the nation over the next thirty years.[25] But the essay did more than contribute to the pro-slavery arguments that would prove victorious in Virginia. It enabled Virginians to stress the Nat Turner Rebellion as an aberration in the history of slavery and shift the focus of the uprising from the brutality of slavery to other reasons such as Turner's religious disposition and "fanaticism." Furthermore, they believed they could avoid a similar insurrection by restricting the mobility of black preachers and freed blacks rather than by eliminating the institution itself. While the horrors of the revolt remained in the memory of Virginians, the motivating factors that led to it receded in their minds after the emancipation debates. Their memories were now colored by Turner's charismatic personality, which was seen as abnormal and unique. While Thomas Gray contributed to this representation of the revolt, Dew made sure to marginalize the Turner rebellion in his larger description of the link between slavery and Virginia's socioeconomic development. He convincingly argued that slavery was instrumental to Virginia's economic vitality and that it maintained harmonious social relations. In Dew's mind, the slave revolt was tragic, but eliminating slavery would be even more tragic because it would complete what Turner wanted: to destroy Virginian society.

Dew's essay did more than tie Virginia's destiny to slavery; it arguably disconnected a mid-Atlantic state from other states in the region—such as Pennsylvania and New York (states that had a legacy of slavery and passed gradual emancipation laws following the American Revolution), and especially the other Chesapeake and tobacco-based state, Maryland—with which it had shared a close colonial history. Perhaps with an eye toward the emancipation debates in the British Empire[26] and the racial trauma of the slave revolts that established a black nation-state in Haiti, Dew and his fellow Virginians viewed their society and history in the larger context of the southern United States and the Caribbean. According to the 1820 census, slaves constituted nearly 40 percent of Virginia's population, a significant number that reflected the degree to which the future of slavery in the state hung in a balance. That this enumeration occurred in the midst of the controversy over admitting Missouri as a slave state also reveals how the nation as well as Virginia could no longer ignore slavery and its embedded relationship in national politics.

However, instead of becoming a leader in a gradual manumission movement, Virginia chose to maintain slavery, defending it in an environment of a growing national antislavery movement that connected slavery with the larger reform and religious impulse enveloping the country. Virginia's abolition debate was arguably a referendum on the future of slavery in the

nation. After the American Revolution, Virginia was at the leading edge of the revolutionary antislavery movement. It led the young nation in private manumissions after the state assembly authorized such legislation, the first of its kind in the Chesapeake and southern states. Leading planters and intellectuals such as George Mason, Fernando Fairfax, and St. George Tucker called for the end of slavery in the state and advocated colonization schemes that would remove freed blacks to Africa, much as leaders such as Thomas Jefferson Randolph would advocate following the Nat Turner Rebellion. The historian Gary Nash has argued that the publication of Tucker's colonization plan in northern cities such as Philadelphia illustrates the ways Virginia stood at the forefront of addressing issues regarding American race relations and the direction of slavery in the new republic.[27] Following the Nat Turner Rebellion Virginia was again poised to lead the debate on slavery. And again it chose to maintain slavery, although this time viewed from a perspective that envisioned the state preserving a Jeffersonian vision of agrarian independence (as opposed to the social decay and dependencies of the industrial North). This was a vision that believed Virginia's economic, social, and political independence depended on black slavery. In this respect, Virginia was holding on to a precarious socio-economic foundation its colonial ancestors established in the seventeenth century, one which the historian Edmund Morgan has argued enabled revolutionary planters like Thomas Jefferson to dream of independence.[28] Thomas Roderick Dew and his fellow Virginians saw the future of slavery and their state's economy within this Jeffersonian tradition.

But in retaining chattel slavery, Virginia became more closely connected to those states such as South Carolina and was now part of a wider orbit of southern states that would eventually secede in order to protect slavery. That Maryland, a neighboring colony in the Chesapeake and one with a similar history of social, economic, and race relations as Virginia, did not secede from the United States is further testament to the ways Virginia had moved closer to the more southern states. Like South Carolina, Virginia found itself on the defensive in maintaining slavery and how it was integral to its social and economic life. In this respect, the Nat Turner Rebellion turned the tide of Virginia's history. After a moment of intense debate over emancipation, Virginians now saw their society inextricably linked to slavery.

By negating the role of slavery in the Nat Turner Rebellion and shaping a historical memory that focused on Turner's fanaticism, Virginians could maintain their focus on the violence of the revolt while assuring themselves that they had understood the motivating issues that led to the uprising. However, people like Governor Floyd knew otherwise and rec-

ognized that the continued presence of slavery would keep Virginia in a state of social instability, with the potential for another revolt always remaining as long as slavery existed. His fellow Virginians disagreed, believing they had solved the problems associated with the rebellion by restricting the mobility of freed blacks and black preachers. In deflecting the emphasis of Nat Turner Rebellion from slavery, a historical amnesia set in among white Virginians that not only protected slavery but also strengthened the state's commitment to the institution because they believed in slavery as a social and economic necessity. In the end, Dew and his fellow Virginians were proved wrong: Slavery did not lead to the state's vitality and independence; rather it put Virginia down the road to secession, a decision that eventually produced the social and economic devastation that Dew and others thought they could avoid.

Notes

1. Thomas Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner,* in *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents,* ed. Kenneth S. Greenberg (Boston, MA: Bedford, 1996), 54. All subsequent citations of the *Confessions* in this chapter will be from Greenberg's excellent documentary collection. There are numerous copies of the "Confessions" available on the Internet. The copy of Nat Turner's "Confessions" provided by the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill is perhaps the most authoritative. It can be accessed at, http://docsouth.unc.edu/turner/turner.html.
2. Ibid., 46.
3. For the ways Gray is seen as author and manipulator of Nat Turner's "Confessions," see Kenneth S. Greenberg, "The Confessions of Nat Turner: Text and Context," in *Confessions,* ed. Greenberg, 8–10.
4. For the importance of Nat Turner in black history, see Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981). For a discussion on the legacy of Nat Turner, see Kenneth S. Greenberg, "Introduction," in Co*nfessions,* ed. Greenberg, 1–35. For a much more controversial reading of Nat Turner's rebellion, see William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (New York: Random House, 1967). For a critical response to Styron's book, see John Henrik Clarke, ed., *William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1968). For a recent exploration, see Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed., *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
5. For a comparative history of slave revolts in the western hemisphere, see Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

6. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
7. Gray, *Confessions,* 40.
8. We can read Gray's use of the word "policy" here to refer to not only the laws concerning the government of slaves, but also how he believes in the correctness of these laws.
9. Gray, *Confessions,* 41.
10. Ibid., 42.
11. Ibid., 44–45.
12. Ibid., 46.
13. Ibid., 47.
14. Harding, *River;* Herbert Aptheker, *Nat Turner's Rebellion* (New York: Humanities Press, 1966); Stephen Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion* (New York: New American Library, 1975).
15. Gray, *Confessions,* 49–52.
16. Ibid., 54.
17. *Richmond Compiler,* August 24, 1831.
18. *Constitutional Whig,* August 29, 1831.
19. *Norfolk Herald,* November 4, 1831.
20. *Constitutional Whig,* August 29, 1831.
21. William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator,* September 3, 1831.
22. John Floyd, *The Diary of John Floyd,* ed. Charles H. Ambler (Richmond, VA: Richmond Press, 1918), September 3, 1831, 106.
23. Ibid., September 27, 1831.
24. Thomas Dew, "Abolition of Negro Slavery," in *Confessions,* ed. Greenberg, 112.
25. Ibid. For Dew's influence on pro-slavery thought and intellectuals, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "A Southern Stewardship: The Intellectual and Proslavery Argument," *American Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Spring, 1979): 63–80.
26. For a detailed examination of the Anglo-American antislavery movement, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolutions, 1770–1823* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975); for the relationship of British West Indian emancipation and capitalism, see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966).
27. Gary Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1990), 3–60.
28. Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: Norton, 1975), 300–320.

PART II

Keeping the Peace: A War without an Ending

CHAPTER 4

1867 All Over Again? Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State

Brian Jenkins

In a trenchant criticism of the contemporary British government's response to the threat of Islamic terrorism—its attempt to extend to 90 days the period during which terrorist suspects might be held without charge—the Director of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the London School of Economics, Conor Gearty, author of a highly regarded brief study entitled *Terror,* recently declared that "It's 1867 all over again." He was alluding to a proposal, advanced at the height of Irish revolutionary nationalist violence in Victorian Britain, to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. Although Gearty refers to its "repeal," even the suspension of this protection against arbitrary detention would have been a sensational step. The creed of the Englishman, the *Times* as Britain's most influential newspaper had boasted, was the conviction that it was "natural and easy for a man to be free" so long as he was provided with a "King, and Upper and Lower Chamber, the right of refusing the supplies, the Habeas Corpus Act, and trial by jury." The power of her less than truly representative Parliament, the rule of law, adherence to due process, and an ever-lengthening list of freedoms were the foundation stone of the British liberal state. In the opinion of Friedrich Engels, no admirer of her social structure, England was the least unfree country in the world.[1]

Mid-Victorian Britons treasured their freedoms—assembly, petition, and the free expression of opinion whether in Parliament, at public meetings, or by the press. Liberty of the press, William Blackstone

had written a century earlier in his seminal *Commentaries on the Laws of England,* was "essential to the nature of a free state." However, the man who published what was "improper, mischievous or illegal" must be prepared to face the consequences of his folly. If the crime of seditious libel was one means by which governments restrained the press, they also imposed a stamp duty that priced newspapers out of the reach of the vast majority of the population. It was the removal of the stamp duty in the mid-nineteenth century, along with technological developments, that saw newspapers proliferate in number and their readership expand exponentially as literacy levels increased rapidly. "Liberty of thought and speech," the *Times* asserted, "is the very air which an Englishman breathes from his birth."[2]

Somewhat surprisingly, the newspaper was of the opinion that policemen were the "only organ through which a thoroughly enlightened and paternal Government communicates with the nation at large." But a great many Britons—who flattered themselves that unlike Europeans they were not tracked by spies and informers, and had no need to fear that their words were being "noted down for crimination"—regarded the advances in policing with considerable suspicion. Englishmen, in particular, had difficulty reconciling the new policemen with the "perfect freedom of action and exemption from interference which are the great privileges and blessings of society in this country." Nevertheless, the London police model, as constructed in 1829, was soon being adopted throughout the land. Policemen were instantly recognizable and unarmed. Here were assurances they would not operate covertly and that physical force would be resorted to only "sparingly and with discretion." The multitude of provincial forces, and the absence of a centralized command, ensured there was no concentration of police power in the hands of the executive. Equally, there was a willful retarding and understaffing of detective departments prompted by the knowledge that a political police needed to be "essentially a *detective* police." As for the rule of law, which the policemen embodied, it was expressed in freedom from indefinite detention without trial, from torture, by the presumption of innocence, by the doctrine of reasonable doubt, by a presiding judge sufficiently independent not to be immediately submissive to political pressures, by a jury of peers, and by the requirement of jury unanimity for conviction. These protections, however, did not balance the scales of justice. The poor were not guaranteed representation by counsel even in capital cases, and there was no genuine court of appeal to which victims of miscarriages of justice might turn.[3]

Britain's fragmented police forces were evidently ill equipped to detect and confront a violent national conspiracy, yet this is what they faced in the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood. A body of "Young Ireland" nationalists had attempted a rebellion in the year of European revolutions, 1848. Among the insurgents who fled Ireland, following its seemingly effortless suppression, were James Stephens and John O'Mahony. The former claimed patriotism as a family inheritance, being connected on his mother's side to the United Irishmen whose rebellion in 1798 had precipitated the union of Great Britain and Ireland. Stephens's experience as an aide to the leader of the Young Ireland insurgency, Smith O'Brien, had left him scornful of an overly scrupulous adherence to "strictly honourable tactics," and taught him the folly of challenging the State without resolute leadership, thorough planning, and careful preparation. He found refuge in Paris, at that time the intellectual center of revolutionary nationalism, where he furthered his education in the fundamentals of conspiracy—secrecy, hierarchical discipline rooted in absolute obedience to superiors, the enrolment of conspirators in a brotherhood thereby symbolically embracing them in a fraternity with its implied commitment to the equality of men, the acceptance of violence as the instrument of freedom, and the role of the press as a weapon of mass mobilization. Returning quietly to Ireland in 1855, Stephens met, two years later, with emissaries of the Irish American diaspora. They came bearing promises of men and money in support of rebellion. He set two conditions for an understanding: first, a regular and assured supply of funds; second, his absolute control of the organization. Then, on March 17, 1858, he and a small group of men, among them Thomas Clarke Luby, swore an oath of secrecy and obedience to superiors, and formed the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood for the purpose of overthrowing "English rule" and creating an independent Irish Republic. The Brotherhood's structure was cellular, composed of units or "circles," of which the largest was to hold 800 members. Within this circumference sat a series of ever smaller "circles," each supposedly hermetically sealed. In reality, members of one circle often knew those forming others. Consequently, the Brotherhood was never as secure as it was designed to be.[4]

Stephens was scornful of the United States, which he visited in the autumn of 1858. Nor did he admire the great majority of Irish American nationalists to whom he was introduced. An exception was John O'Mahony, a former companion in Paris, a fellow critic of Irish American "tinsel patriots," and an unstinting admirer of Stephens. O'Mahony's

reward was the appointment as chief of the organization's American wing. A cultural as well as a political nationalist, he named it the Fenian Brotherhood in honor of the legendary *Fianna,* who had defended ancient Ireland from invasion. Stephens accepted the different name, which was soon applied to members of the conspiracy on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, not as an assertion of the Irish Americans' independence but as an affirmation of the entire movement's fundamental convictions—Ireland's natural right to independence and the necessity of violent revolution. But Stephens's autocratic behavior and bitter reproaches quickly alienated O'Mahony, constantly castigated as he was by the self-described "provisional dictator" for failing to maintain the promised flow of assured and generous Irish American funding. The descent of the United States into economic depression and then the Civil War dashed any lingering hopes of cash and men flooding across the Atlantic. Costly as the conflict proved to be in young Irish American lives, it ultimately worked to the Brotherhood's long-term advantage. The war, one volunteer observed, was a school of instruction for those Irishmen who hoped one day to strike a blow for their homeland's freedom. Their recruitment by the Brotherhood was facilitated by a Union War Department that permitted the likes of Stephens and Luby to move freely through the ranks swearing men into the revolutionary nationalist organization. Moreover, the Civil War both legitimized violence as a solution to political problems and reinforced its utility as an instrument of national identity.[5]

Stephens, meanwhile, was energetically recruiting in Ireland. Charisma, "dogged patience," and immense self-confidence endowed him with a "wondrous gift of winning over young men," tens of thousands of whom reportedly took the Fenian oath. He drew into the Brotherhood local associations of nationalists, such as the Phoenix National and Literary Society of Skibereen; he successfully raided the branches of the Catholic Young Men's Society founded in 1849 by Father Richard O'Brien, later Dean of Limerick; and he converted the reburial in Ireland of the remains of a former Young Ireland rebel, Terrence Bellew McManus—who had died in poverty and obscurity in San Francisco—into a Fenian publicity extravaganza. Archbishop John Hughes of New York gave the cause a helping hand by parading his Irish nationalism during a visit to his homeland, while 1863 saw the launch of the *Irish People*. Stephens expected the weekly to generate income and popular support for revolutionary nationalism. It certainly cultivated among the Irish that sense of injustice, deprivation, discrimination, and frustration, which by exciting a spirit of vengeance promised to harden support for the resort to physical force. At

the same time, it excoriated constitutional agitation as "debasing and delusive," ridiculing its advocates as backers of piecemeal reforms, and carried this message into the Irish communities of Britain whose commitment to Fenianism impressed investigators sent by the American Brotherhood in 1865. In England, Irish intelligence concluded, there was scarcely a town with a sizable Irish population in which Fenians were not to be found. Nevertheless, the *Irish People* was not only a propaganda asset but also a fiscal and security liability. It lost money and inevitably drew the attention of the authorities to a *secret* body committed to the forcible overthrow of British rule.[6]

The Fenians imported and smuggled arms into Ireland; they drilled in their use, often under the direction of veterans of the American war; they infiltrated the militia and endeavored to subvert the high proportion of Catholic Irishmen among the regulars stationed in Ireland; the American branch launched raids into British North America, while Irish Americans in England hatched a plot to seize the lightly guarded military arsenal at Chester Castle and make off with the arms; an insurgency was attempted in Ireland that, although a failure, impressed the authorities with the Brotherhood's organization and reach; and one Fenian chief was spirited out of a Dublin prison, while his successor was freed from police custody by armed rescuers operating in broad daylight in Manchester, England's principal industrial city. This last incident, during which a policeman was killed, and the Fenian Chief's published threats of reprisals should any of his rescuers go to the scaffold for the death of the law officer, deepened the fear that the Irish struggle had been transferred to Britain and was going to be waged in an unconventional manner. Indeed, one nationalist firebrand, John Mitchel, who had served as the Brotherhood's financial agent in Paris, claimed for the Irish the right to strike England anywhere and by any means. A few months later, Fenians blew down much of a narrow London street during an attempt to free another leader from a prison. This tragedy, which brought death and destruction to the innocents of an impoverished area of London; the formation of an Assassination "circle" and the stalking by one of its alleged members of the Irish Chief Secretary; the reported conspiracies against the lives of the monarch and senior ministers; the murder of the most prominent Irish Canadian politician by an alleged Fenian and the attempted assassination in Australia of the Duke of Edinburgh by a self-proclaimed Fenian avenger; the murders in Ireland of policemen and suspected informers; the reported mailing of "explosive" letters to prominent individuals, all happily intercepted by the post office; and the attempted sabotage of the gasworks in Warrington, Cheshire, which lent credence to

reports of plots to ignite gasometers in a massive campaign of arson, convinced the British government of a sinister shift in Fenian tactics from insurgency to terrorism.[7]

Were the Fenians terrorists? Several analysts have acquitted them of "deliberate acts of murder and terrorism," dismissing the Clerkenwell bombing as a jail break which in going horribly wrong gave a "false impression" of the Brotherhood as a terrorist gang. The Fenians, apologists argue, "eschewed terror tactics and preferred the old-fashioned approach of open insurrection." Indisputably, the Fenians were initially committed to insurgency, defined as a "struggle between a non-ruling group and ruling authorities" characterized by violence "to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics." But rebels are disposed to demonstrate the weakness and vulnerability of an existing régime, and they seek to attract popular support, through "insurgent terrorism." As early as 1866, the Irish viceroy had described as a calculated system of terror the Fenian intimidation of persons who might have provided the state with intelligence. But the answer to the question continues to depend on the definition of *terrorism,* a noun of such elasticity that well in excess of 100 academic and official definitions were on offer by 1983. The difficulty of finding a universally acceptable definition is understandable. The distinctive historical experiences and "present interests" of different peoples are always likely to produce different meanings and connotations. There is also an absence of "homogeneous activity," for actors, actions, and motives vary greatly. Thus official definitions tend to be too broad. Terrorism, to paraphrase the current British law, is the use or threat of serious violence against persons or property "in order to intimidate or coerce either government or people for the purpose of furthering a political cause." Thus the Prevention of Terrorism Act effectively condemns as terrorists virtually all insurgents. A number of academics, on the other hand, have narrowed the definition. Thus for Conor Gearty, violence is "unequivocally terrorist" when it is politically motivated and carried out by substate groups; when its victims are chosen at random; and when the purpose behind the violence is to communicate a message to a wider audience. However, insofar as the "unique and distinguishing characteristics" of terrorism are "the specific intent to terrorize, intimidate and coerce," to cause "fear and coercion through fear," then the Irish agrarian secret societies that waged savage struggles over access to and use of land were properly described by contemporaries as agrarian terrorists even though their "coercive intimidation" of "innocents" may often have been essentially nonpolitical.[8]

Ireland was fertile soil for the growth of terrorism. It had an abundance of misery and discontent, a tradition of violence which went beyond specific acts to include "an ambivalence towards violence, and acceptance of the mystique of violence, and a belief that violence can lead to great political change," while a quintet of nationalist missionaries, in which priests and press were the dominant voices, dwelt upon the humiliation, disrespect, and contempt suffered by the Irish at the hands of the English. They fostered a "collective sense of unjust persecution," oppression, and insult, which aroused a desire for revenge, and they denounced the existing state structure and society as alien, illegitimate, and even tyrannical. Positions on the continuum between constitutionalism and violence depended then as now frequently "on particular views of the legitimacy of the state." Nor was *terror* a word leading Fenians shunned. Thomas Clarke Luby later offered a public defense of the Clerkenwell tragedy. Speaking to an American audience, he declared: "It was unfortunate that innocent people suffered, but this was the fortune of war—war was no child's game. All those things struck terror into England."[9]

For a liberal state of the nineteenth century, which lacked a written constitution, as for modern democracies, the countering of terrorism posed peculiar problems. The ethics of counter-terrorism have been described as "an even more tangled and difficult subject than the ethics of terrorism," for only "those measures of proven effectiveness" consistent with a liberal state's "basic values" ought to be adopted. British governments of the late 1860s and early 1870s implemented measures that were reasonably comprehensive without ever being formulated as a coherent policy. Generally, they met the test of liberal acceptability. The belief that Fenianism was American-inspired, American-funded, and American-led might legitimately have prompted Britain to seek an understanding with the United States on its discouragement. That option was removed by the embitterment of the Anglo-American relationship as a result of Britain's neutrality during the Civil War. Another possibility was for the British government to restrict the entry into Ireland of Americans suspected of being agents of revolutionary nationalism. Unfortunately, many Irish Americans possessed a form of dual nationality. Those of them born in the United Kingdom retained, under British law, their original nationality, notwithstanding naturalization as American citizens. It would have been embarrassing at a time when Britain upheld the doctrine of indefeasible allegiance to deny them admission to their homeland. A second obstacle was the nature of the liberal state. When a harassed Irish Executive proposed to warn off Irish American suspects

with the threat of indefinite detention without trial, or, failing that, to demand passports of American visitors, Conservative ministers rejected such "indiscriminate proceedings." An unobjectionable interdiction was that of weapons. Extensive naval patrolling of the Irish coast discouraged smuggling, while investigations were conducted of the staffs of Customs Houses at ports where suspect arms were being imported. Weapons were licensed in Ireland, and measures of doubtful legality adopted in Dublin, to discourage citizens from carrying them, but a proposal to establish an arms' registry in Britain, given the legality of their possession, was rejected by a Cabinet which feared it would be impossible to secure parliamentary consent without revealing the government's sources of information. Here was ministerial acknowledgment of the vital importance of intelligence in the struggle to contain terrorism.[10]

The police were expected to be the principal terrorist hunters, but the abject failure of the Manchester and Metropolitan forces to make good use of the detailed intelligence on Fenian rescue plans forwarded from Dublin saw pressure exerted for the creation in Britain of the kind of national constabulary that already existed in Ireland. This the politicians resisted for fear of being accused of putting Britain on the slippery slope to a gendarmerie. However, some 35 forces were temporarily issued with handguns at the height of the Fenian crisis; the Metropolitan police received training in the use of the cutlass; more than 1,000 men were added to its establishment; detective departments and plain clothes branches were strengthened in both the capital and the provinces; tens of thousands of special constables were sworn into temporary service; and a special "little department" was set up to gather, organize, coordinate, and collate intelligence on Fenian groups. This department obtained warrants to intercept the mail of 24 suspects; discreetly investigated the correspondents of known Fenians; and instructed the mayors of 46 cities and towns where the Fenians were believed to be active to forward to the Home Office the names, addresses, and meeting places of suspects. The Home Office circulated descriptions—and, where available, photographs—of senior Fenians, and police chiefs were ordered to mount surveillance operations. Before long, ministers were marveling at the quantity and quality of the information being provided by this improvised special branch. Had it not been closed down in the Spring of 1868, as Fenian fears subsided and concerns rose that exposure of the little department's existence would bring accusations of domestic spying, it "could have been the start of a proper domestic intelligence-gathering bureau in Britain." It did serve as a precursor of the Special Irish Branch established more

than fifteen years later in response to another wave of Irish republican terrorism in Britain.[11]

Infiltration of subversive groups is another of the legitimate counter-terrorist measures open to a liberal state. Thomas Beach, known in the United States as Henri Le Caron, volunteered his services as an agent within the command structure of the American organization, while the Dublin police had a female agent who was the source of the detailed and timely intelligence on the Manchester and Clerkenwell incidents. She was so invaluable a source that to protect her identity several of the men plainly implicated in the devastating explosion were permitted to escape conviction. John Corydon, the informer who enabled the British to frustrate the planned raid on Chester Castle, and the handful of fellow Fenians who turned Queen's Evidence following their capture, were the "supergrasses" of the Fenian trials. The court proceedings were also exercises in state propaganda. The cases made in court against the Brotherhood's senior figures were designed not simply to secure their convictions but also to alienate them from much Irish middle-class opinion. The Fenians were depicted as social as well as political extremists, enemies both of private property and the Catholic Church. They exhibited, declared a member of the English hierarchy, "the avaricious cupidity of Communists." Cardinal Cullen, the dominant member of the Irish hierarchy, was one Irishman profoundly impressed with the evidence.[12]

Neither Irish Executive nor Home Office overlooked the need to strengthen the most obvious targets of insurgent terrorists. As in the modern era, Irish police barracks were converted into small fortresses. In London, government departments were provided with equipment to douse the fires that might be started by Fenian arsonists. Elaborate precautions were taken to ensure that the sewers were not used by bombers as subterranean access routes to palaces and public buildings. To reassure the loyal that they would be protected, the government demonstrated a commitment to the sure, swift, and occasionally severe punishment of terrorists, but as the British discovered in their response to Fenianism, executions are fraught with danger. The three men hanged for the killing of a policeman during the Manchester rescue served as additional examples of the "tyranny of the dead." They were elevated by the Irish to the rank of martyrs. When placed in an Irish political context, the "Victorian way of death . . . became a resounding public and nationalist spectacle" that facilitated the shifting from Catholic Irish to the Protestant English the entire responsibility for Ireland's ills.[13]

Official confidence that treatment as common criminals would deny imprisoned Fenians the romantic glamour of martyrdom proved sadly

misplaced. Harrowing tales of prison conditions were soon in circulation, and the prisoners protested their treatment as felons. Although granted a number of small privileges that distinguished them from other convicts, they demanded some more formal recognition of their special status as political prisoners. The most persistent and aggressive of the protesting prisoners was O'Donovan Rossa, who rode his notoriety to a sensational victory in an Irish by-election in 1869. As a convicted felon he could not, of course, take his seat. Eventually, the press campaign in Ireland alleging cruel mistreatment of the prisoners, the questions in Parliament, and the well-organized popular campaign for amnesty, compelled the government to establish an inquiry and to promise to publish both its findings and the prisoners' complaints. The confirmation of several of the latter, such as the holding of Rossa for 35 days with his hands restrained behind his back, and his frequent sentence to extended periods in the dark and grotesquely uncomfortable punishment cells, were sufficiently embarrassing to speed up the liberation of most of the prisoners.[14]

The redress of legitimate grievances in order to deny subversives a sympathetic or friendly general population is perhaps the most highly recommended modern liberal response to insurgency and terrorism. It was something the Liberal governments of the mid-nineteenth century had been quick to recognize. Speaking in 1866, a Liberal Chief Secretary declared that it was not enough to suppress Fenianism. The government had also to "dry up the sources of discontent" by removing "every excuse, every shadow of excuse, that the most distempered and disordered imagination can conceive." But it was not until Gladstone formed his first administration, and proclaimed his mission to pacify Ireland, that the policy of seeking to delegitimize Fenianism was pursued resolutely. Yet "soft" measures take time to work and will never appease the most ideologically committed enemies of the existing state. This was Gladstone's painful discovery following passage of the bills disestablishing the Church of Ireland and modestly reforming land tenure.[15]

How well, then, did the Victorian state cope with what it perceived to be Fenian terrorism? By and large it did remarkably well, at least in Britain. The liberal state took a giant step forward in the midst of the Fenian crisis with a dramatic expansion of the electorate, the revision of constituency boundaries, and the sheltering of voters from coercion and intimidation by mandating the casting of ballots away from prying eyes. The freedoms of assembly, speech, and petition continued to be respected in the face of provocative public meetings organized by Fenian sympathizers. There was no descent into a police state. The firearms

temporarily distributed to a number of police forces were never to be used in normal duties; there was no passage of draconian legislation following the Clerkenwell bombing, as there was to be after the IRA bombing of two Birmingham pubs a century later; and there was no great extension of police powers. The Home Secretary declined to take action in 1867 against the Fenian chief, Thomas Kelly, for want of sufficient evidence to bring him to trial. In short, the rule of law was upheld and due process respected. The Fenians were criminalized. In Britain, they were charged with serious criminal offences, not political subversion, and were professionally defended in regular courts. However, the trial of those accused of the murder of the Manchester policeman was tainted by a refusal either to delay it or change the venue, which increased the danger of a rush to judgment. The police manipulated the rudimentary identity parades of suspects, and appear to have embellished the evidence they themselves gave in order to enhance the prospects of conviction. A number of eyewitnesses gave inaccurate, if not false, testimony. As a result, an innocent man was convicted and subsequently pardoned. This brought accusations of a general miscarriage of justice, but as the law then stood, the other four accused were guilty of constructive murder. Only one of the accused in the Clerkenwell case, Michael Barrett, was convicted, and before he was executed the Chief Justice conducted an impressive, thorough, and detailed reconsideration of the case. Barrett's claimed alibi was investigated, despite the very strong suspicion that it had been concocted by his friends, and he was given an extraordinary opportunity to provide an explanation of additional, damning evidence. Judged by the standards of the time, his trial was fair.[16]

The liberties taken with the liberal state were inevitably much greater in Ireland, where the challenges to its authority and security were not only more direct, but were also the product of the widely held British beliefs that the Irish belonged to a "different race"; possessed a "different type of character"; were in a "different [and lower] stage of civilization, politically, socially, and intellectually"; and therefore needed a "different régime." In brief, the Irish were unworthy, as yet, of those institutions and freedoms that in the opinion of Britons mankind in general considered best for all men. In Ireland, there was a far higher proportion of policemen to population than elsewhere in the United Kingdom; the national constabulary was armed, and there existed in Dublin a police division that concentrated on political dissidents. Political meetings were closely monitored, and shorthand writers were often in attendance to note down the speakers' words for possible "crimination." John Francis Maguire, the Liberal nationalist Member of Parliament for Cork,

and publisher of the *Cork Examiner,* complained in the Commons that spies and informers were having a chilling effect on public debate. However, the brutal suppression of a meeting in Phoenix Park by the police, at a time when several members of the Royal Family were staying at the Viceregal Lodge, sparked such an outcry in Britain that the Gladstone government was obliged to promise that in future law and practice would "conform in all things to the principle of equality" as between England, Scotland, and Ireland. However, Ireland did witness the successful prosecution of two nationalist newspaper editors, Richard Pigott of the *Irishman* and A. M. Sullivan of the *Nation*. They were convicted of seditious libel, and served short terms of the most gentlemanly imprisonment. The Peace Preservation Bill of 1870, which armed the viceroy with "enormous" power to suppress seditious newspapers, was applauded by Cardinal Cullen. But its effective use was severely limited by inclusion in the bill of a liberal safeguard. The government was liable for damages should a jury find that it had acted "without sufficient justification," and this was a far from improbable result in Ireland. Thus a full-scale assault on freedom of the press did not materialize. Despite the urging of a choleric Chief Secretary, Robert Peel, the Irish Executive had declined to shut down a provocative and incendiary press, and tolerated for more than two years the publication of the subversive *Irish People,* whose office served as the centre of the Fenian conspiracy while it brazenly urged "patriots" to prepare for revolution.[17]

The Executive was equally reluctant to curtail freedom of speech, tolerating the inflammatory lectures of Father Patrick Lavelle on the Catholic right of rebellion, during which he declared the government so corrupt that "revolution was justified and that the Church could not refuse to sanction it." It was similarly hesitant to interfere with the right of assembly—whether mock funerals for the "Manchester Martyrs," mass demonstrations seeking amnesty for the Fenian prisoners, or the popular receptions given to them on release. "No free government [could] object to public meetings for any legitimate object, short of running the risk of a breach of the peace," the viceroy declared. Nor was Isaac Butt's Home Rule agitation seriously disrupted despite the involvement of known Fenians and the certainty in Britain that its success would signal her decline as a great power. Ireland did suffer the unenviable distinction of repeated suspensions of *habeas corpus*. Although the Tories were proud of the restraint with which they utilized the extraordinary powers of detention without trial, these powers were a source of acute embarrassment for Liberals. Was arbitrary imprisonment becoming "a part of the ordinary system of government"? This question led to Gladstone's

resistance to a further suspension even in the face of agrarian terrorism. He eventually gave way to the pressure for local suspensions, but the mid-nineteenth-century invasions of civil liberties pale in comparison with the emergency and "temporary" legislation of the twentieth century. Its constant re-enactment and extension have led to permanence and the development of a "symbiotic relationship" between the "ordinary criminal law and the emergency legislation."[18]

Suspensions of *habeas corpus* notwithstanding, suspicions that witnesses in Fenian trials faced intimidation, thus increasing the likelihood of "perverse" acquittals, did not see the jettisoning of "long-established judicial procedure." There was no suspension of jury trials, no relaxation of rules governing the admissibility of involuntary confessions, and no requirement that an accused prove his innocence, as there was to be a century later. The prison night watchman suspected of complicity in the escape of James Stephens from jail, and among whose belongings Fenian materials were found, was acquitted when the trial judge instructed the jury that it would be "dangerous to the liberties of the subject" to convict a man for the "simple fact that a treasonable document was found in his possession." Thomas Clarke Luby, following his conviction in 1865, admitted that his had been a fair trial, while A. M. Sullivan declared that his trial for seditious assembly had been conducted with "singular impartiality and judicial dignity." He had, of course, been freed as a result of the jury's inability to agree on a verdict. The rule of law was upheld, and not only in civilian trials. A courageous and principled Judge Advocate General, Thomas Headlam, prevented the commander of the Irish garrison, Sir Hugh Rose—who had earned a reputation during the Indian Mutiny as something of a glutton for capital punishment—from indulging his appetite for the swift and exemplary punishment of soldiers who violated their oath of allegiance to the sovereign by joining the Brotherhood. One or two executions would in Rose's opinion do wonders for discipline. Headlam ensured that courts martial applied the basic standards of British justice and thus were not conducted in a manner crudely or blatantly unfair to the accused. There were no detentions without trial, no special military commissions, and no executions of disloyal soldiers.[19]

If the Fenians failed to achieve their objective, they did claim to have prevented the Irish from meekly accepting British rule. Fenianism had taught him, Isaac Butt declared, "the depth, the breadth, the sincerity of that love of Fatherland" that chronic misgovernment had first "tortured into disaffection" and then "exaggerated into revolt." The Fenians had compelled English statesmen to recognize, Richard Pigott wrote, that

"they must govern Ireland—if they govern it at all—in accordance with the peoples [*sic*] wishes." But in addition to concentrating British minds as rarely before on the Irish problem, the Fenians bequeathed to the next generation of militant nationalists a frightening tactical legacy. Speaking in 1867, Britain's preeminent parliamentary Radical, John Bright, had asserted that nothing had been done for Ireland except under the influence of terror. "It was 'the right of any people, sufficiently numerous for national independence,' Abraham Lincoln had earlier asserted, 'to throw off, to revolutionize, their existing form of government, and to establish such other in its stead as they may choose.'" The Fenians evidently believed that the cause of national liberation justified or excused terrorist violence, but this issue remains a subject of debate. Does the right of national liberation outweigh "the right to life of (non-threatening) noncombatants"?[20]

Notes

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CHAPTER 5

The Making of Russian Revolutionary Terrorism

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When it was first published in 1882, Stepniak's *Underground Russia* was recommended to Europeans interested in finding out more about a political phenomenon that had recently emerged in the east: revolutionary terrorism, or, as Europeans sometimes mistakenly referred to it, "nihilism."[1] The preface informed readers that prior to the publication of *Underground Russia,* there was nothing of value on the subject to be found anywhere: In Europe, sensationalism and a lack of sources combined to produce mere "absurdities," while in Russia authors twisted their views for fear of being exiled or imprisoned; moreover, most sources had been written by nihilism's "furious enemies, by those who conscientiously consider it a horrible crime, or a monstrous madness."[2] Hence the merit of *Underground Russia:* Stepniak was an insider, a veritable, real-life expert on nihilism. He had struggled alongside the Balkan Slavs against the Turks (1876), participated in the anarchist rebellion in Benevento (1877), then joined the Russian revolutionary organization *Land and Freedom* (*Zemlia i Volia*), and finally, in 1878, stabbed to death the head of the tsarist secret police on the streets of Saint Petersburg. So experience Stepniak certainly had—though it must be said that he was no stranger to myth making, as shows his dramatic description of the birth of terrorism in the late 1870s:

> Upon the horizon there appeared a gloomy form, illuminated by a light as of hell, who, with lofty bearing, and a look breathing forth hatred and defiance, made his way through the terrified crowd to enter with a firm step upon the scene of history. It was the Terrorist.[3]

Decisively, that was *not* how it happened: It is not the case that in the late 1870s the terrorist suddenly showed up, as if out of nowhere, on the historical horizon. As a matter of fact, terrorism had already been in the making for over a decade in Russia. To show the influence of this prehistory on the meaning of *terrorism* and *the terrorist* in the late 1870s, this chapter addresses Russia's earliest reactions to this new form of political violence.

Terminology

By all accounts, the Russian Empire is the birthplace of revolutionary terrorism. To show the making of this modern political phenomenon, a short, standard chronology will suffice. April 4, 1866, Dmitry Karakozov fired the first shot at the tsar and missed; 1867 Anton Berezovsky repeated the attempt and failed as well; and 1869 was the year of the infamous Nechaev case, whose intra-party murder was fictionalized in Dostoevsky's 1872 novel *Demons (Besy)*.[4] "Nechaevism" effectively turned revolutionary youth away from violence for a decade, until in 1878 Vera Zasulich shot the governor-general of Saint Petersburg to avenge the mistreatment of a political prisoner. With this shooting, she opened "the season of terror," and then, a year and several assassinations later, there formed *The People's Will,* the world's first systematic terrorist organization, which, after six separate attempts, finally succeeded in assassinating Alexander II on March 1, 1881. Some two decades later, Lenin would be able to refer to the violence of *The People's Will* as "the old terror" (*staryi terror*), but here, circa 1880, it is still new, and in fact being named for the first time in Russia.[5]

Thus, for example, in the year 1880, Nikolai Morozov, one member of *The People's Will,* published a pamphlet titled "The Terrorist Struggle" (*Terroristicheskaia bor'ba*), in which the new form of struggle received its first thorough theoretical treatment. That same year, Russian newspapers reported that those who stood accused during the so-called "Trial of the Sixteen" were members of a self-proclaimed "terrorist party" (*terroristicheskaia partiia*) and identified themselves as "terrorists" (*terroristy*).[6] Prior to this, that is, during the 15 years identified in the above-mentioned chronology, terror-terminology did appear in the press, but either to refer to the top-down violence of the Russian state—and therefore as an echo of "*la terreur*" of the French Revolution—or, sometimes, in the sense of cultural warfare; for example, the culture issuing forth from Peter the Great's reforms was identified as "Petersburg terrorism" (*peterburgskii terrorizm*) or Nikolai Chernyshevsky was said to have

"terrorized" (v. *terrorizirovat'*) the Russian public with his infamously influential novel, *What Is to Be Done?* (*Chto delat'?,* 1863).[7]

But if it was circa 1880 that terror-terminology gained new meanings, so to say, from the bottom up, the contours and coordinates of the discursive field signified by the term "terrorist" had long been drawn and defined top-down. That is, ideas about who (those revolutionaries newly defined as) "terrorists" were and how they operated had been forming for years, especially among the administrative echelons of Russian society. This can be easily demonstrated by looking at the language that was used to convict Tsar Alexander II's six tsaricides in 1881.

First of all, the transcripts of the 1881 trial make abundantly clear that terror's new meaning originated with the revolutionaries themselves, that they themselves decided on and then took up a new form of struggle that they referred to as "terrorist." Throughout the indictment, to wit, terror-terminology is rendered with scare quotes, as is, in fact, much of revolutionary language. Thus, the text refers to "the so-called 'terrorist fraction'," "the so-called 'party'," and even "the so-called 'conspiratorial' apartment."[8] Even when directly citing the defendants, the indictment estranges their speech by means of diacritical marks. Thus, the text states that Sofia Perovskaya had self-identified as "a member of the party *The People's Will* and an 'agent of the Executive Committee'," and that she had stated that the party would wage its struggle "by means of 'terrorist facts'."[9] All this is doubtlessly a distancing technique, but no less an indication that the prosecution is using an unfamiliar language here. In short, the authorities had not yet learned to "speak terrorist"—and they certainly had not yet learned to make use of this new language for political ends. At this time in Russia, it was not yet the case that an act of political violence could be effectively rendered illegitimate simply by naming it "terrorism," or that naming someone a "terrorist" instantly placed that person beyond the pale of the political.

Although the new meaning of "terrorist" (adj. *terroristicheskyi* and n. *terrorist*) was becoming part of common parlance, the new meaning of "terrorism" (*terrorizm*) had not yet entered the lexicon. This is why the trial's prosecutor states that the form of the defendants' struggle is "not simple terror, but terror raised to the level of political theory"; why, in describing Morozov's pamphlet, *The Terrorist Struggle,* he speaks of a "terrorist theory" (not "a theory of terrorism"); and why, finally, although he explicitly states that the "Russian terrorists" have given the world "a new word,"[10] he never names that word.[11] In sum, at the height of the season of terror, "terrorism" was not yet available as shorthand for the political reality introduced by the revolutionaries.

To give accurate expression to the horror of what would soon come to be known as "terrorism," therefore, the prosecution resorted to conventional political language, for example, conspiracy (*zagovor*) or sedition (*kramola*), and common politico-cultural referents like tsaricides (*tsareubiitsa*), a criminal secret society (*prestupnoe tainoe soobshchestvo*), a gang of political murderers (*shaika politicheskikh ubiits*'), and so on.[12] In characterizing the terrorists, moreover, the prosecution not only used expressions like "unusually typical conspirator," implying an unambiguous referent, but also narrated the entire *People's Will* in terms established by earlier cases, such as the Karakozov, Nechaev, and Zasulich cases.[13] The whole of the prosecutor's speech, in fact, is filled with discursive tics and cultural assumptions that had coagulated over a 15-year period, that is, since 1866, when Karakozov fired the first shot at Alexander II.

So the point is, if we rewind to the Karakozov case—which is a case that, for reasons that are not especially relevant here, has always been marginalized in the historiography of terrorism—we will not only witness the earliest reactions of the Russian state to a new form of political violence that would come to be known as terrorism, but also uncover the roots of the discourse that will define this phenomenon.

What Karakozov Did

Unlike the political violence of *The People's Will,* the meaning of Karakozov's shot was highly ambiguous to contemporaries. There was nothing in this case about which one could say that it was "unusually typical." In fact, the only thing contemporaries could agree on was that April 4 was an absolutely "unheard-of" event in the annals of Russian history. Hence, it always remained known as simply a date, "April 4" (*4ogo aprelia*), which, in terms of political significance, would not be overshadowed until "March 1" (*1ogo marta*), that is, March 1, 1881, the date of Alexander II's assassination.

Of course there had been victims of tsaricide before: Boris Godunov (1605), Tsarevich Aleksei (1718), Peter III (1762), and Paul I (1801), to name but a few. But there was something qualitatively different, something modern, about April 4. Earlier tsaricides had been the result of palace coups; consisted exclusively of members of the upper echelons of society; and their assassinations had taken place in private spheres that were entirely inaccessible to the Russian public. Karakozov, contrarily, was a civilian trying to kill the tsar right as the tsar strolled onto the boulevard in broad daylight.

The major problematic introduced by this fact can be easily ascertained from what was at that time a standard rendition of the event:

> On April 4, 1866, around 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when the emperor, upon finishing his walk in the Summer Garden, exited onto the banks of the river Neva, an unknown man, standing in the crowd of people that had gathered by the gate, approached his carriage and shot at the holy person of His Imperial Highness.[14]

What Karakozov did was to complicate the Russian experience of tsaricide by introducing two new elements of danger: anonymity and the crowd. With him, the duplicity and potentially violent reserves of the unknown nobodies that increasingly populated the empire's urban centers first emerged in plain view. And what April 4 revealed, therefore, was not only that any public display of representativeness would henceforth be dangerous to the sovereign, but also, and more importantly, the existence of a new, irregular enemy that forced a complete reconceptualization of the empire's political space-time continuum.

Who Karakozov Was (Said to Be)

After experiencing a slashing of the temporal order, a rushing onto the streets of the capital, and then shock in the face of the incomprehensible, Russia's first reaction, which was a veritable automatism among all estates of the Empire, was to direct the blame onto an "other." "Are you Polish?" the emperor was reported everywhere to have asked his would-be assassin.[15] This quick question signified what was at that time the "natural" enemy for Russia: The Kingdom of Poland (along with what is now Lithuania) had been the site of separatist rebellions just a few years back (1863–64) and, as one Soviet scholar rightly remarked about the post-April 4 "polophobia," imperial authorities had since the 1825 Decembrist revolt become unused to Russian revolutionaries, but very used to Polish rebels.[16]

Although Karakozov's attempt on Alexander II would eventually be canonized as the "prologue" to revolutionary terrorism, that is, it initially appeared as an episode immanent to the long history of Russo-Polish conflict on the borderlands of Empire. Indeed, it was right around this time that the Polish-Catholic strand of the revolutionary movement began to be detached from the increasingly prominent Russian-socialist track; the latter matured as the former was stamped out by, among other

things, the Empire's policy of Russification—and then receded in relevance. The results of this development are especially evidenced by the fact that Polish nationalist Anton Berezovsky, who attempted to assassinate Alexander II in Paris one year after Karakozov, was so completely erased from the revolutionary tradition that his name did not even appear in Soviet encyclopedias.

Now the fact is that in 1866 everyone in Russia thought that the culprit was Polish, but there were two individuals who ran a veritable campaign to promote this conviction, and they happened to be two of the most influential individuals of the post–April 4 period. The first was Mikhail N. Murav'ev, a lifelong reactionary (in)famous for the brutal suppression of the 1863–64 Polish rebellions that shook the Empire's western borderlands under his tenure as governor (1863–65). In fact, so brutal had been this suppression that it had outraged public opinion in Europe as well as in Russia, as a consequence of which Alexander II had maneuvered Murav'ev into early retirement. But now, in the face of what was thought to be a renewed Polish threat, Murav'ev—who was widely known as "the hangman of Vilna"—was trotted out again and appointed as head of the Investigative Commission (*Sledstvennaia Komissiia*) into April 4. Instantly, he projected a Polish conspiratorial connection onto the case: No sooner had he met Karakozov and sized up his "manners" than he scowled at him, "You are a Pole!"[17] So fanatical was he in his anti-Polish paranoia, indeed, that he saw Poles where there were none. On April 13, Minister of Interior Petr A. Valuev—himself no friend of the Polish cause—noted in his diary that Murav'ev had tried to forcibly drive the idea of the Polish threat deeper into public consciousness, and that Alexander II twice had to intervene personally in these plans. Preparing the first official announcement about April 4 for publication in the Ministry of Interior's official newspaper, *The Northern Post* (*Severnaia Pochta*), Murav'ev insisted on mentioning the western borderlands, "even though thus far there has not been a single non-Russian name among those drawn into the case."[18]

Even without *The Northern Post,* however, Murav'ev could count on support from the press, and this was because of the position of the second of the two above-mentioned influential individuals: Mikhail N. Katkov—erstwhile friend of the legendary anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, then a constitutionalist, and finally the period's most prominent conservative ideologist—was the editor of *The Moscow News (Moskovskie Vedomosti*). As vehemently anti-Catholic as was Murav'ev, Katkov's conservative turn had coincided with the Polish rebellions: While Murav'ev directed the war effort abroad, Katkov had used *The Moscow News* to

conduct propaganda on the home front. And now he was at it again, to prove that the Poles were behind April 4: "His name is Olshevskii; he is a Pole," Katkov decided to declare on April 8.[19] And a few days later: "his facial features and especially his knowledge of Polish permit us to rejoice that he is not Russian."[20]

The assassin, however, was not in the least Polish: He was, as he had reportedly told the tsar, "pure Russian."[21] He was born into an impoverished aristocratic family from Saratov (situated in the Volga region to the south of Moscow), had attended the law faculties of Kazan and Moscow universities, and his name was not Olshevskii, but Karakozov. "Karakozov, brothers, from Saratov," *The Petersburg Leaflet* (*Peterburgskii Listok*) reported having heard it said on the streets in response to the news about his name:

> "So he's Russian," Senia said sadly.
> All stood with their heads hanging down.
> "Russian! What a misfortune! Though his name is sort of strange. Doesn't sound Russian. Maybe it's German, or Tatar, or Jewish. You don't hear Russian names like that. And all kinds of peoples live in the Saratov region. Maybe he's not Russian?"[22]

Each time a bit of evidence of Karakozov's identity was printed in the press, it exploded the assumptions of cultural traditions, and then public discourse either rearranged the criminal's face to resemble yet another familiar threat or wriggled its way out of old interpretive categories. Upon disclosure of the tsaricide's ethnicity, for example, "Russian" was instantly sliced up to designate distinct juridical and cultural categories:

> Every true Russian understands that you cannot be Russian in the real meaning of the term and raise a sacrilegious hand against the monarch. [Origin], i.e. birth from a Russian father and Russian mother, only gives the criminal a juridical right to Russian nationality; but that juridical right does not yet connect someone with the nationality of living bonds, with those bonds that place him and his acts in solidarity with the nation. [. . .] Even if such an individual is a Russian by birth ten thousand times over, we still will not acknowledge him as a Russian.[23]

Newspapers also reprinted official notification from Saratov's aristocracy that, in truth, the Karakozovs had never quite been officially registered as members of the nobility.[24] And the press outmaneuvered the destiny of his name by rooting its descent in Tatar origins: " 'kara' means 'black,'

'kiuz' means 'eye,' 'koze' means 'mutton'."[25] Whoever this new enemy was, in sum, he was certainly "other."

What Was (Allegedly) Done to Karakozov

These defensive reflexes coincided with a very effective diversion: It was said that the tsar had been saved because a young hat-making apprentice of Russian peasant stock, Osip Ivanovich Komisarov, had shoved Karakozov's arm at the very moment of the shooting. The mechanism is clear: The enemy has been placed on the outside of the political community, and now the community reseals itself around a "real" Russian hero. So far, nothing unusual, except, perhaps, for the fact that this peasant, courtesy of new print media and modern technologies, became an instant celebrity and, in fact, Russia's first-ever plebeian media star.

The market was instantly flooded with leaflets, booklets, and brochures about the unprecedented event—and especially about Komisarov's decisive role in it: *April Fourth and Its Patriotic Meaning for Rus; The Attempted Assassination on the Life of His Imperial Highness Emperor Alexander II*; "*Thanks to the Almighty for the Tsar's Salvation*," and so on.[26] And the most popular of these—some went through multiple print runs inside of two weeks—showcased Komisarov's portrait, which quickly became the must-have item of the post–April 4 period. Indeed, thousands upon thousands of *fotograficheskie kartochki* bearing Komisarov's image were distributed throughout the Empire at a breakneck pace (unleashing a veritable price war in the process); etchings taken from his photograph graced the pages of illustrated monthlies like *Illustrated Newspaper* (*Illiustrirovannaia Gazeta*) and *The Fashion Shop* (*Modnyi Magazin*); and, meanwhile, his name and/or face was used to sell everything from music to theater tickets, to jewelry, to beer, to candies, chocolates, cigarettes, and so on and so forth.

The saturation of Russian culture with Komisarov's image should remind us that "the media" have been there since terrorism's very inception and are indeed at all times an essential, defining facet of terrorism. Terrorism, telegraphs, and trains (now we might say, terrorism and telecommunications)—these cannot be separated.

What Was Done for the Autocracy

The Russian autocracy, clearly enough, could rely on an energetic press and a robust market for the distribution of official ideology. Not to create the impression, however, that the substitution strategies that placed

Karakozov on the outside of the political community and Komisarov at its center were manufactured by the state and its capitalist cronies. The Russian people very enthusiastically embraced the peasant "savior," eagerly crowded public spaces to pay their respect to the "saved" tsar, applauded endlessly during patriotic theater performances, and spontaneously booed Polish actors off stage. It would probably be more accurate to say, therefore, that the Russian state took very good advantage of "opportunities" like Komisarov. Another example of this was the April 17 festivities that fêted concurrently the tsar's birthday, his 25th wedding anniversary, and, importantly, the inauguration of the newly reformed judiciary. The illuminated capital celebrated this triple occasion with much bravado. Podiums were erected for concerts; houses decorated with placards, banners, and transparencies; and theaters offered free performances, including Mikhail Glinka's patriotic opera *Zhizn' za Tsaria* (*A Life for the Tsar*), which was attended by the man who had but recently given his "life for the tsar," Komisarov (and was henceforth graced with the sobriquet, "the new Susanin," after the opera's protagonist).[27] The April 17 celebrations were not expressly staged in order to counter the effect of April 4, but they were obviously a very convenient occasion for the autocracy to publicly reassert its power just two weeks after Karakozov had aimed his gun at its head.

What the Autocracy Did

Not satisfied to simply reassert itself, however, the autocracy—or at least the conservative elements in what was once Alexander II's reform-minded administration—did go on to reap some very real political benefits from the Karakozov attempt. Speaking long-term, April 4 stopped dead in its tracks and then began to reverse the progressive program of the Great Reforms era. The era of Great Reforms, in fact, is alternatively known in the literature as "the sixties," but conventionally dated from 1855–66, that is, from the death of Nicholas I to the first attempt on the life of Alexander II.

The first thing that happened was a serious shake-up in government: Liberals were out, conservatives in. Then the most prominent of the latter were gathered in a Special Council—to which some of its members referred, apparently without irony, as the *Comité du salut public,* that is, the Committee of Public Safety—and set to work to rethink official policy. The direction of this new policy was made public on May 13, when Alexander II signed into law a rescript outlining his "commitment to the protection of the Russian people."[28] The rescript endorsed traditional

morality, family values, and religiously inspired education; loyalty to the government; respect for private property; and unity among estates.[29] In other words, ideologically, it stood in diametrical opposition to the decade's undeniably progressive *Zeitgeist*. To put this theory into practice, Alexander II then charged the Special Council with implementing administrative measures to curb the growth of "harmful elements" in society and halt the influence of "evil" on the young generation.[30]

What the Special Council Did

A virtual who's who of reactionaries, the Special Council swooped down on the avant-garde of progressive journalism, forever closing down the radical journals *The Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*) and *The Russian Word* (*Russkoe Slovo*); tightened surveillance of the book market; determined to revisit the recently promulgated press laws; outlawed whatever student gathering the administration deemed a threat to public security or morality; and even prohibited public display of politically provocative fashion (gender-bending hairstyles, folksy costumes, dark glasses, and so forth). Obviously, following a faulty Polish scare, the Russian State had identified the new enemy with intellectual trends like socialism and materialism, or whatever at that time fell under the general heading, "nihilism." By mid-summer, the administrative somersault had effectively increased the power of governors in the provinces, and in the capital there was underway a broad reorganization of the police that included the formation of a special task force to protect the tsar's body.[31]

What the Investigative Commission Did

Meanwhile, an Investigative Commission had gone to work under the auspices of Murav'ev. True to his reputation, "the hangman" ordered so many arrests after April 4 that, according to one contemporary author, "except for members of [the Investigative] Commission itself and affiliates of *Moscow News*," no one felt safe.[32] Another writer, who was himself arrested after April 4, noted that the whole world of journalism to the left of the conservative Katkov was subjected to searches and censorship. "Every day," he wrote, "news arrived that this or that literary man had been taken during the night. Little by little, half of the literary men I knew had been taken."[33] Between April and September 1866, indeed, the Investigative Commission censored, searched, questioned, arrested, and harassed thousands in all of Russia's major cities and provinces. One gets a good sense of the devastating cultural repercussions of this political

reaction from the fact that, first among intellectuals and then in the historiography, the period after April 4 became known as "the white terror" (*belyi terror*).[34]

To crack what it was convinced was a conspiracy, the Investigative Commission worked round the clock. "The number of arrests increased daily," Murav'ev protégé Lieutenant-Colonel Petr A. Cherevin wrote retrospectively. "We were at the Third Section without pause from 10 am to 3 or 4 am."[35] During the day, Murav'ev et al. recorded testimonies; at night, they compared notes, drew up new questions, listed suspects to be summoned, and so on; and arrests were made in the early morning hours between 4 and 7 am. By April 20, the Peter-Paul Fortress was stuffed to full capacity with post-April 4 arrestees.[36]

Until the Investigative Commission finally published its findings in the official paper of the Ministry of Interior on August 3, the case was wrapped in absolute secrecy. One of Katkov's informers and sometime *Moscow News* correspondent, a lieutenant colonel of the General Staff in Vilna named Sergei A. Raikovskii, reported from Petersburg that, "even in Murav'ev's family nobody knows anything. Colonel Losev of the Vilna Gendarmerie, who is conducting the investigation here, even hides his address, not only from us sinners, but even from his wife, who addresses her letters to him directly to the Third Section."[37]

This secrecy, in combination with Murav'ev's reputation, cast immediate suspicion on the conduct of the Commission. Torture may have been illegal since 1801, but it was everywhere presumed—not only by Karakozov's friends (who hid poison in their hair, boots, and coat buttons so as to be able to commit suicide in case torture proved too unbearable), but also by the public at large.[38] On July 25, the tsarist secret police filed a report that there were widespread rumors in Petersburg that members of the Investigative Commission had tortured suspects, refused them food and drink, and so on.[39]

And this was, in fact, precisely what happened. An April 5 Investigative Commission log entry, for example, noted that the as-yet-unidentified criminal's "obvious lies and refusal to confess force the Commission to the most active and energetic means."[40] Cherevin's retrospective notes partly clarify the meaning of this phrase: Deprived of food, drink, and sleep, Karakozov was for days kept standing up straight (away from all walls against which he might have leaned and rested) and questioned incessantly.[41] Interrogations continued for 12–15 hours at a time, and at night Karakozov was given no real rest: "imagining that the criminal would talk if he were heavy with sleep," Cherevin wrote, members of the Commission woke him three times per hour.[42] On April 7, Karakozov

asked to be allowed to sleep: "Though he really is exhausted," the log entry notes, "it is necessary to further exhaust (*potomit'*, also torture, oppress) him to see if he won't decide to confess today."[43]

Both official memoranda and Cherevin's notes, moreover, make explicit the Commission's liberal use of religious admonition to force confession. Admonition was par for the course under the old judicial system, but the new system was adversarial, not inquisitorial, and should not have relied on the practice. Nevertheless, starting the very day of Karakozov's arrest and continuing each day thereafter, because his testimonies were "obviously false," the Commission enlisted the services of Vasilii P. Polisadov, archpriest of the Peter-Paul Fortress.[44] Interestingly enough, Polisadov—a man who had held various appointments abroad and counted among his acquaintances a whole host of Right Hegelian professors—would have preferred, as he informed the Commission, to discuss with Karakozov "science, literature, art, [and] the social condition of society."[45] The Commission, though, preferred it the old-fashioned way, and so, for hours at a time, suspects were sermonized, shamed, and promised the kingdom of heaven should they confess. In Karakozov's case, the technique was not especially successful: "a priest admonished him for several hours, but he continues to be as stubborn as before," notes a log entry on April 6, while Polisadov himself noted more than two weeks later that Karakozov had "of course [. . .] not yet repudiated" the ideas that led to his crime.[46] In other cases, however, the technique met with more success: "Only after a few days of admonition by a priest did Fedoseev admit his intention [to kill his father]."[47]

During the trial, finally, a number of defendants spoke of unspecified sufferings endured at the hands of the Commission, as a result of which, some claimed, they had made false confessions. Lapkin, for example, testified as follows:

> They threatened me . . . they said I'd be sent into exile for five years; they said they'd send me to Mikhail Nikolaevich Murav'ev, and among us there were rumors that Mikhail Nikolaevich had subjected Karakozov to torture . . . After that threat I decided to finish myself off and wanted to bleed to death, but I had one remaining hope, that they had promised me that in case I would plead guilty that they would seek to obtain mercy from the emperor . . . I chose the latter, and that is why I took upon myself such a horrible charge of which I was not at all guilty.[48]

Retrospectively, at least one of them, Ivan Khudiakov, in his *Autobiographical Essay* (posthumously republished as *Notes of a Karakozovist*), claimed to have

been severely beaten.[49] Therefore, notwithstanding what he called the "constant obstinacy" of those under the Commission's scrutiny, on June 9, 1866, Murav'ev was able to present the tsar with a full report on the case.

Murav'ev's report contained neither criminal counts nor a catalogued presentation of evidence; it was in no way a legal indictment. Nevertheless, it must properly be considered a crucial blueprint for perceptions of the Karakozov case. Not only did it enjoy imperial endorsement (Alexander II ordered the Special Council charged with implementing the imperial decree of May 13, 1866, to give it careful consideration) and thus shape knowledge of the case among the upper administrative echelons, but also, in accordance with Murav'ev's recommendation, in early August, a clipped version of his report was published in *Severnaia Pochta* and then reprinted by all major Russian newspapers.[50] In sum, Murav'ev's report—a reactionary's synopsis of a highly complex and contradictory paper trail—was the reading through which the Russian public encountered the Karakozov case and, indeed, the reading that had the dominant shaping power as far as the image of the case was concerned.

How Officialdom Represented April 4, 1866

Just how thick was the veil of secrecy surrounding the Karakozov case is shown by the fact that the Russian government permitted the release of just two official documents to the Russian public. These were, first, the results of the criminal investigation—that is, the newspaper version of Murav'ev's report—and, second, the verdicts of the Supreme Criminal Court (which was a closed court, in immediate violation of the celebrated judicial reforms of 1864 and their inauguration, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, on April 17, 1866). Given that the entire case contains some 6,000 separate documents, one can imagine the filtering process that went into construction of the official truth.

The truth according to officialdom—that is, according to the officially endorsed Investigative Commission—may be summarized as follows. Under the influence of imprisoned radical Chernyshevsky's novel, *What Is to Be Done?,* there formed in Moscow a student group called *Organization* (*Organizatsiia*), whose goal it was to spread socialism, destroy morality and religion, and overthrow the government through revolution. At *Organization*'s core sat a secret sui/tsaricidal cell called *Hell* (*Ad*). *Hell,* in turn, had ties with nihilists in Saint Petersburg; with the Polish underground in Moscow and, through its representative organ *The People's Custody (Narodova Opeka*), with Polish separatist prisoners

in Siberia; and with the hitherto unheard-of *European Revolutionary Committee,* an international secret society with its headquarters smack in the middle of what was at that time one of Europe's radical havens, Geneva. This Swiss city, not so coincidentally, sheltered the most eminent of Russian revolutionary exiles, Alexander Herzen, Nikolai Ogarev, and Mikhail Bakunin. Supposedly, a pyramid network of interdependent societies, functioning on a need-to-know basis, fanned out from this command center. Finally, adopting as their motto, "the end justifies the means," members of *Hell* took an oath to murder whomever obstructed their path and designated one amongst themselves as the tsaricide, who, upon execution of the crime, had to immediately commit suicide by poisoning himself, leaving behind only an explanatory proclamation. When Karakozov was detained, arresting officers discovered on his body, aside from the smoking gun with which he had shot at the tsar, three different types of drugs and a proclamation, "To My Worker Friends" (*Druz'iam rabochim*), that explained his motive. Pistol, poisons, and a proclamation: Karakozov had obviously acted out *Hell*'s program.[51]

Contra Commission, and Conclusion

This official story, however, is nonetheless highly contested. The Karakozov case was actually never solved at all—neither at the time, nor since—and its truth sways somewhere between, on the one hand, the version just related and, on the other, the possibility that neither *Organization* nor *Hell* ever existed, and that Karakozov was a monomaniacal suicide who played a little too seriously at conspiracy and decided to assassinate the tsar only to outrun the insignificance of what he was convinced, in his hypochondria, was his pending death.

Indeed, during the investigation and trial, every single one of the defendants vehemently contested the Investigative Commission's story. Most swore that *Hell* had been but a confused rumor that took especial flight during drinking spells: "*Hell* did not exist," said Karakozov's cousin, Nikolai Ishutin, during the trial. "It was no more, no less than some stupid speeches made under the influence of wine."[52] Others went further, insisting that the Investigative Commission had fabricated the reality of *Hell*:

> [President of the Court] *Gagarin* [to defendant Nikolai Stranden]: Did you belong to the secret society *Hell*?
> *Stranden:* No.

Gagarin: It seems to me you acknowledged as much. You admitted that you belonged to the society *Hell,* which had as its goal tsaricide, and you put yourself on the list of members of *Hell.*

Stranden: I'm saying that we rejected tsaricide, and those lists have no meaning because they were presented to us by the Commission . . . They told us that we were drawing up a list to facilitate checking people at the Commission . . . I thought that I was drawing up a list of members of *Organization* and the society of mutual aid.[53]

True or not, no such testimonies were at the time made available to the Russian public; neither the records of the investigation, nor the trial transcripts were declassified until after the revolution of 1917. All the public had were the newspaper version of Murav'ev's report and the verdicts of the Supreme Criminal Court.

In terms of public perceptions of the case, it was probably most significant that, in the end, the Supreme Criminal Court refused to state whether *Hell* had actually existed or not. To nevertheless secure sentencing, the Court performed legal acrobatics too complex to reproduce in the space of this chapter. Suffice to say that through a combination of codes and creative interpretation, the Court found all but one of the principal defendants guilty on counts of conspiracy, and then handed down two death sentences, a set of life terms, and a slew of lesser sentences of exile and imprisonment. And then, half a year after all was said and done, the law was rewritten in such a way that it would henceforth be capable of sweeping up in its nets *whatever* gathering of two or more as a secret society and potential conspiracy.

But—with the question of *Hell*'s existence effectively circumvented by the law—the idea of a secret suicidal tsaricide squad as defined by the Investigative Commission remained rooted in public consciousness, lingered in language, and then took on a life of its own in revolutionary praxis. And so, for example, Nechaev's conspiratorial network—again, fictionalized in Dostoevsky's *Demons*—structurally mimics *Hell,* that is to say, not as *Hell* was, if it was at all, but as described in the media. And—to return to the beginning—during the 1881 trial of the six members of *The People's Will* who stood accused of the assassination of Alexander II, the prosecution characterized the "terrorists" and their "terrorist party" in absolute accordance with what had by then become the traditional—or typical—narrative, that is, as a centralized, systematized, and hierarchical band of sui/tsaricides. There was perhaps but one significant difference between 1866 and 1881: Whereas after April 4, the authorities had magnified the idea of conspiracy, after March 1, they

tried to minimize it—obviously in inverted proportion to the actual size of the respective threats.

Notes

1. Ideas discussed in this chapter are developed in Claudia Verhoeven, *The Odd Man Karakozov: Towards a Novel History of Revolutionary Terrorism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008). "Nihilism" was popularized through Ivan Turgenev's 1862 novel, *Fathers and Sons* (*Otsy i Deti*), but the term had seen earlier usage, for a survey of which, see M. P. Alekseev, "K istorii slova 'nigilizm'," *Sbornik otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti AN SSSR* 101, no. 3 (March 1928). When the term "settled," it signified the *Weltanschauung* of the new men and women of the 1860s, who, having abandoned the Romantic literature and German idealism of their parents' generation, turned toward the natural sciences, English utilitarianism, and French socialism, and adopted a whole new *modus vivendi*. Critics, however, staged nihilism as pure negation, as a philosophy that believes in nothing, and seeks to destroy everything.
2. S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii, *Underground Russia; Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life,* with a preface by Peter Lavrov (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1973), vi-vii. Originally published as *La Russia Sotterranea* in 1882 in Milan.
3. Ibid., 28–29; S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinskii, *Grozovaia Tucha Rossii* (Moscow: Novyi Kliuch, 2001), 42. The Russian reprint does not capitalize "terrorist" as does the English.
4. A protégé of Mikhail Bakunin, Sergei Nechaev ordered the murder of Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov, one of the members of his own revolutionary organization, *Narodnaia Rasprava* (*The People's Vengeance*).
5. V. I. Lenin, "Partizanskaia voina," *Polnoe Sobranie sochinenii,* 5th ed. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1958–65), 14:3. Originally published in *Proletary* no. 5, September 30, 1906.
6. See, for example, *Moskovskie Vedomosti* [henceforth *MV*], nrs. 298–307, October 27–November 5, 1880.
7. Alexander Herzen, "Zhurnalisty i Terroristy," *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1954–65), 16; Alexander Herzen, "Our 'Opponents'," *My Past and Thoughts,* trans. Constance Garnett (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 289; *MV,*no. 78, April 14, 1866.
8. *Delo 1-go marta 1881 g. Protsess Rysakova, Mikhailova, Gelfman, Kibalchicha, Perovskoi i Zheliabova.* Pravitel'stvennyi otchet' (Odessa, 1906), 16, 42, 43
9. Ibid., 33–35.
10. "A new word" in the sense of "a new idea" or, more generally, "something new"; it is a common Russian idiom, namely "skazat' novoe slovo v nauke, v iskusstve, etc" ("to say something new in science, art, etc.").

11. *Delo 1-go marta 1881 g.*, 181–182.
12. Ibid., 133, 138, 143, 186.
13. Ibid., 171.
14. *Pokushenie Karakozova. Stenograficheskii otchet po delu D. Karakozova, I. Khudiakova, N. Ishutina i dr.,* ed. M. M. Klevenskii i K. G. Kotel'nikov. Seriia *Politicheskie protsessy 60–80 gg.* ed. V. V. Maksakov i V. I. Nevskii (Moscow: Tsentrarkhiva RSFSR, 1928), 1:6.
15. See for example *MV,* no. 73, April 7, 1866.
16. B. Bukhshtab, "*Posle vystrela Karakozova*," *Katorga i ssylka,* no. 5 (1931), 69.
17. Sergei A. Raikovskii to Mikhail N. Katkov April 12, 1866. Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka [Russian State Library, henceforth RGB], Fond rukopisei (Collection of Manuscripts), f. 120, no. 24, 98.
18. *Dnevnik P. A. Valuev ministra vnytrennykh del.* Tom II: 1865–1876 gg. (Moscow: Izd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1961), 119.
19. *MV,* no. 73, April 8, 1866.
20. Ibid., no. 76, April 12, 1866.
21. A. A. Shilov, *D. V. Karakozov i Pokushenie 4 aprelia 1866 goda* (Petrograd: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1919), 11.
22. *PL,* no. 56, April 17, 1866.
23. *Golos* (*The Voice*), no. 102, April 14, 1866.
24. *Severnaia Pochta* (henceforth *SP*), no. 109, May 25, 1866.
25. *Illiustrirovannaia Gazeta* (henceforth *IG*), no. 15, April 21,1866.
26. *PL,* nos. 58, 60, April 21, 24, 1866; *MV,* no. 79, April 15, 1866.
27. *IG,* no. 17, April 5, 1866.
28. Vysochaishii reskript. May 13, 1866. no. 43298, *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov.* Sobranie II. Tom XLI. Otdelenie pervoe. 1866. Ot No. 42861–43602 (Saint Petersburg, 1868), 547–549.
29. *SP,* no. 102, May 14, 1866.
30. Marginalia in Alexander II's hand on Murav'ev's June 9, 1866, report. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [State Archive of the Russian Federation, henceforth GARF], f. 272, op. 1, d. 5, l. 2.
31. See Jonathan W. Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege: Security Police and Opposition in Russia, 1866–1905.* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), 17–20.
32. Cited in A. Volodin, "Raskol'nikov i Karakozov. K tvorchestkoi istorii D. Pisareva '*Bor'ba za zhizn*'," *Novyi Mir,* no. 11 (1969), 215.
33. Cited in Ibid., 216.
34. "The white terror" was a denomination taken from an article penned by N. A. Vorms and anonymously published in Herzen's *The Bell* (*Kolokol*): "Belyi Terror." *Kolokol,* nos. 231–232 (January 1, 1867).
35. P. A. Cherevin, *Zapiski P. A. Cherevina* (*Novye materialy po delu Karakozova*) (Kostroma: Izdanie "Kostromskogo Nauchnogo Obshchestva po izucheniiu mestnogo kraia," 1918), 11.
36. Report from Peter-Paul Fortress Governor-General Sorokin to Alexander II from April 20, 1866. GARF f. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1, ll. 20–21.

37. Letter Raikovskii to Katkov from April 22, 1866. RGB, Fond Rukopisei, f. 120, no. 22, 42.
38. Trial testimony Zagibalov and Stranden, *Pokushenie Karakozova,* 1:119, 150.
39. "Agenturnaia zapiska." July 25, 1866. GARF, SA f. 109, op. 1, d. 281, l. 1.
40. GARF f. 95, op. 1, d. 439, ll. 1–2ob.
41. *Zapiski P. A. Cherevina,* 5–6.
42. Ibid., 5.
43. GARF f. 95, op. 1, d. 163, T. I, ll. 24–25ob.
44. Investigative Commission Entries for April 5, 1866. GARF f. 95, op. 1, d. 163 T. I, ll. 2.
45. Archpriest Vasilii Petrovich Polisadov's April 23 report to Governor-General Sorokin. GARF f. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1, l. 26.
46. Investigative Commission Entries for April 6, 1866. GARF f. 95, op. 1, d. 163 T. I, l. 16; archpriest Vasilii Petrovich Polisadov's April 23 report to Governor-General Sorokin. GARF f. 109, op. 1, d. 100 ch. 1, l. 26
47. *Zapiski Cherevina,* 39.
48. Trial testimony Lapkin. *Pokushenie Karakozova,* 2:48.
49. Ivan Khudiakov, *Zapiski Karakozovtsa* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1930), 129. Written in 1867 and originally published as *Opyt' avtobiografii* (Geneva, 1883).
50. See Alexander II's marginalia on Murav'ev's June 9, 1866, report. GARF f. 95, op. 1, d. 439, l. 27. Murav'ev's recommendation appears in a June 9, 1866, note to Alexander II. GARF SA (Sekretnyi Arkhiv) f. 109, op. 1, d. 283, l. 2.
51. For Murav'ev's June 9, 1866 Report to Alexander II, see GARF f. 95, op. 1, d. 439; for the clipped version, see *Severnaia Pochta,* August 3, 1866.
52. Trial testimony Ishutin. *Pokushenie Karakozova,* 2:28–29.
53. Trial testimony Stranden. Ibid., 118–120.

CHAPTER 6

Men with the Faces of Brutes: Physiognomy, Urban Anxieties, and Police States

Isaac Land

In 1891, at the height of the *ère des attentats* (1878–1914)—a constellation of assassinations and bombings identified by many today as the beginning of modern terrorism—Cesare Lombroso published an analysis comparing the faces of ordinary criminals with those of "political" criminals, including in the latter category a motley assortment ranging from John Wilkes Booth to Italian nationalist insurrectionaries and the men accused of Chicago's Haymarket bombing. Lombroso drew attention to the numerous similarities between the photographs of these self-described idealists and those of common thieves and murderers. For example, 29 percent of the ordinary criminals had massive jaws, while a full 60 percent displayed "facial asymmetry"; the corresponding numbers for political criminals were 19 and 36 percent respectively. The tightest correlation was on "anomalies of the ears," which appeared in 75 percent of ordinary criminals, and 64 percent in the political category. Lombroso did not claim that there was no difference between the two classes of malefactor; indeed, he argued against imposing the death penalty for political crime, hoping that these criminals could be rehabilitated. Yet he maintained that the close study of a face would tell us in advance whether that person's ideas or proposals could lead to beneficial change, or whether they would result in nothing but mutinous outbursts or the pursuit of political dead ends. Snub noses or jug ears, then, were no matter for amusement or indifference. Lombroso even warned that the faces

of anarchist bomb-throwers and their ilk displayed an innate cruelty that had discovered an outlet [*essor*] in politics.[1]

Lombroso could draw on a rich and influential tradition for his criminological speculations. The practice of discerning virtue, vice, and other qualities from a person's outward appearance is called physiognomy. This art—or science—was an inheritance from the ancient world, but in the nineteenth century it gained an unprecedented prominence and credibility, to the point that the word *physiognomy* became synonymous with the face (or *phiz*) that it purported to interpret. The faces of terrorists were studied not simply to supply proof of their identity (for instance, to obtain a conviction in court), but also as an explanation *in themselves* for the atrocities committed. Lombroso was not unique in associating the terrorist's face with that of a murderer or a rioter. It is not always fully acknowledged that the *ère des attentats* coincided with a period of unusually acute anxiety about collective violence and urban meltdown. The barbarians were at the gates—or to use another clichéd phrase popular at the time, every great city sat atop a smoldering volcano that might, without warning, erupt in "ashes and blood."[2] One of the easiest ways to discredit socialists and *dynamitards* was to assign them the atavistic snarl of the street tough.

For example, in the aftermath of the Paris Commune, Hippolyte Taine proposed that French revolutions—past and present—were an evolutionary regression. The sharp canine teeth concealed in the human mouth were evidence of "carnivorous and ferocious instincts" that we awaken at our peril. When public order collapses, "we see all of a sudden spring forth the barbarian, and still worse, the primitive animal, the grinning, sanguinary, wanton baboon, who chuckles while he slays, and gambols over the ruin he has accomplished."[3] In a similar spirit, the union-busting detective Allan Pinkerton used the specter of the Paris Commune to help rally opposition to the nascent labor movement in the United States. Pinkerton's book *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives* (1877) presented the great railroad strike of that year as a pitched battle between the forces of authority and the forces of chaos. Pinkerton described the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the mercy of a rogue's gallery of river pirates, professional thieves, and tramps from the countryside who descended on the city, intent on "arson, pillage, and plunder." In a long, lyrical passage, Pinkerton detailed the "men with faces of brutes, women with faces of demons" who despoiled the city.[4] No wonder that by century's end, American millionaires would request

tombs constructed of reinforced materials that could withstand an assault by rioters, and some mansions were built with an early version of the 911 emergency hotline, to be activated by a special button marked simply "MOB."[5]

Conventional chronologies of terrorism have directed our focus to the final decades of the nineteenth century. As a consequence, the vogue for applying (and misapplying) the theories of Charles Darwin and Louis Pasteur to the diagnosis and cure of the terrorist malaise is a familiar story.[6] This chapter will complicate that picture by addressing continuities with earlier periods and older systems of thought. To the names of Darwin and Pasteur, I add that of the Swiss clergyman J. C. Lavater, who promulgated a simple version of physiognomy in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. He concentrated on a very few traits, such as the slant of the forehead and the shape of the nose. This proved immensely popular because in a city of strangers, it promised insight at a glance. A pedestrian or a merchant would instantly know who to trust, and who to shun. For artists, novelists, and journalists, it reduced the city's complexity to a thrilling chiaroscuro composition, the contrasts of light and darkness corresponding to the heavenly or hellish faces on the street. Lavater's emphasis on foreheads, of course, also spawned the pseudo-science of phrenology and a spate of speculation about the brains of criminals. I do not consider the results of dissections or the interpretation of "bumps" under the hair in this chapter, concentrating instead on the special role played by the face itself, which was not hidden from the gaze of the general public.

Lavater's faith in the proposition that ugly faces betrayed ugly minds, while beautiful faces displayed virtue, shaped the mission of the new urban police forces and their most celebrated figure, the detective. Even the sophisticated anthropometric codifications created by Alphonse Bertillon and, later, Lombroso adhered to Lavater's aesthetic imperative and even retained many of his specific prejudices (against heavy jaws, for example). I conclude the chapter with the case of Ravachol, a classic example of what happened when an examination of the face took priority over an examination of the facts. When respected voices from law enforcement characterized anarchist bomb-throwing as a sublimated variant of street crime, and newspaper sketch artists deployed all the resources of physiognomy to display that truth, political violence became senseless violence, precisely because the media coverage had removed the deed from its political context.

Ugly as Sin: Urban Description and the Dangerous Classes

As the Latin proverb *fronti nulla fides* suggested, conventional wisdom had long maintained that the features of the human face were *not* any sort of reliable window into the soul. During the Enlightenment, experts on the face had emphasized the role of musculature in forming expressions. Muscles, of course, could be trained. At a moment of surprise, control might slip, but most of the time it was possible to dissemble, "putting on" any face that the situation required. A child began with an unmarked, malleable face, but a lifetime of grimaces, squints, or leers could eventually make for a legible physiognomy. Such a face, however, was not an inheritance from the ancestors, but the result of an individual's choices and acquired habits. Moreover, some people could avoid even this degree of rigidity. The actor David Garrick was rumored to have such plastic features that he had successfully posed for someone else's portrait. The average person lacked such talents, but the pressures of polite society could enforce a surprising degree of conformity. In the 1780s, Louis-Sébastien Mercier in his *Tableau de Paris* declared that a physiognomist would have a hard time in his city, because there, everyone had the same face.[7] These anecdotes seem exaggerated, but they illustrate the eighteenth-century fascination with mutability.[8]

There were some limits to this faith in the plasticity of the human form. Eighteenth-century art theorists obsessed over the rare, perfect face, precisely because such consummate beauty could not be imitated on demand, in real life or on the canvas. Every male in Paris may have looked "like" the next, for instance, but they had not all assumed the appearance of the Apollo Belvedere. J. J. Winckelmann's influential writings on Greek statuary left many readers despondent, convinced that the men and women of the ancient world had simply been better proportioned and more handsome than anyone in modern times.[9]

Not every aesthetic theory proposed such unattainable ideals, however. In Britain, the followers of the picturesque sought after the irregular, the rough, and the unconventional. The picturesque movement began as a rejection of the manicured symmetry favored by eighteenth-century landscape designers, but the work of John Thomas Smith illustrates how it could reshape representations of urban dwellers as well. Smith's first book, *Remarks on Rural Scenery* (1797), was a fairly orthodox performance, showcasing his etchings of lopsided old cottages half-buried in vines. However, he prefigured much of his later work in statements like the following: "so much is irregularity of parts a constituent of beauty, that it may very nearly be said that *equality is deformity*."[10] Smith made

this observation about cottages, but in his *Ancient Topography of London* (1815), he applied this aesthetic to urban life, sketching construction sites and burnt-out ruins, and making a final record of the sagging, buckling remnants of the city that Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton had once known. He populated the streets below with peg-legged mendicants and ragged street vendors. Thus, the *Ancient Topography* was an aesthetic exercise, meticulously including "irregularity of parts" throughout each picturesque scene; the missing limbs of the weathered or wizened beggars correspond to the missing walls of the ruined buildings. Yet Smith's composition also invites us to consider his beggars as "antiquities" themselves, whose survival was no less remarkable—and worthy of admiration—than the venerable architecture that formed his book's ostensible subject.

There was, undoubtedly, more than a little condescension in singling out dwarfs, cripples, Jews, and black men for their picturesque appearance (as Tim Hitchcock has observed, Smith does not include young women with their children in tow, who would have accounted for most of London's mendicant population).[11] Yet the people who enter the pages of the *Ancient Topography* have names, histories, and even the privilege of eccentricities. A few are frauds, faking infirmity or spinning tales to squeeze a few more coins from the public, but most are characterized as hardworking and inventive, whether they make their living by "crying" goods from one end of town to the other, as entertainers, or simply by begging from passersby. Smith's unabashed love for street life in all its forms is evident throughout.

It is worth taking notice of the fact that the poor, even the ragged and ugly poor, did not inevitably, or invariably, elicit the fear and disgust that some later writers portrayed as a natural response. In Smith's work, the inhabitants of the street are not a social problem, and they are certainly not a threat. Their faces and bodies are an ornament to the city; their presence is no more a parasitic intrusion than Smith's beloved gothic architecture, which lent an interesting and picturesque character to London. Smith found an articulate supporter in Charles Lamb's 1822 essay, "A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis." Lamb condemned the rise of "modern fastidiousness" which sought to purge the city of harmless beggars who "deserved a statue rather than a whipping-post." Yet Lamb's starting point—the disappearance of quaint street characters—accentuates the essentially backward-looking, elegiac approach to urban life that he shared with Smith. Autumn was the most picturesque of seasons because it exhibited the varied tints of decay; similarly, if his beloved beggars had not been vanishing, Lamb might have found little to say about them.[12]

The Zürich clergyman and philosopher J. C. Lavater, in his *Physiognomische fragmente* (1775–78) offered a radically different, and far more influential, interpretation of human ugliness. According to the *Fragmente,* we already know how to interpret physiognomy because nature is full of this kind of information. The darkness of a storm cloud betokens rain, a tree shows a healthy aspect promising that it will bear fruit, and a pleasant face is meant to tell us something also, because "beauty and ugliness have a strict connection with the moral constitution of the Man."[13] Lavater denied that he was teaching an "occult" art such as palm-reading; indeed, he argued that the truths of physiognomy, far from hidden, were manifest to everyone: "The child, the clown, the connoisseur will all agree respecting the same faces, that the one is beautiful, and the other ugly."[14] Children were right to flee from deformed or hideous persons; God meant them to fear the invisible moral evil contained within these visible exteriors. In Lavater's view, since everything in nature is of divine origin, to deny that messages are written on the human face—the most visible part of God's most important creation—was nothing short of blasphemy.

In contrast to earlier theories that had emphasized the more malleable aspects of the face, Lavater emphasized the hard, bony forehead and the nose. In order to avoid the distraction of musculature, he favored the study of skulls and silhouette profiles.[15] He believed that the pictures in his lavishly illustrated and expensive book really required little commentary (although this did not stop him from supplying hundreds of pages of text); Lavater's teaching method relied upon awakening a new respect for our inborn responses of attraction and revulsion. He urged would-be physiognomists to "always give yourself up to first impressions," even after applying rigorous geometrical techniques to the face under study.[16] Lavater's followers whose own faces did not resemble a Greek statue's profile could console themselves that God occasionally threw in a few "eccentrics" like Socrates, who reportedly resembled a leering satyr. Lavater compared these outliers to scattered typographical errors in a compendious volume; the book as a whole was, nonetheless, legible.[17] The flaws in the *Fragmente*—its vacillation between system-building and poetic intuition, its callous readiness to condemn whole groups of people on the flimsiest evidence, its obsession with noses—were all spotted, and ridiculed, during Lavater's lifetime. The fact remains that he found many sympathetic readers.

Indeed, this Swiss-German writer became one of the most famous men in Europe even before he had finished publishing his ambitious multi-volume opus. By 1810, there had been 15 editions of the *Fragmente*

in French and 20 in English.[18] Significantly, it also appeared in cheap abridgements, including some aimed at children. It is not surprising that many painters and caricaturists embraced Lavater's ideas; he made their job easier.[19] Novelists, similarly, needed to "sketch" their characters in an economical and vivid manner.[20] Yet Lavater's appeal was both wider and deeper than this. For religious readers, the Protestant clergyman implied that he was on the verge of solving the age-old problem of discerning who was elect and who was reprobate:

> I am unable to describe the satisfaction which I frequently feel, I might have said almost every day, when in the midst of a crowd of unknown persons, I discover some who bear on their forehead, if I may use the expression, the seal of the Divine approbation, and of a more exalted destiny![21]

What proved especially timely about the *Fragmente,* however, was not its insight into what awaited people in the afterlife, but its guidance on how readers might cope with the "crowd of unknown persons" in the growing cities of Europe. There are repeated references to the problems of the marketplace, such as discerning counterfeits and deciding whether to extend credit to a stranger. Facial expressions might lie, but a penchant for deceit, like other traits, could be spotted in the bony structure of the face.[22]

Lavater did not speak very directly to European imperialism. He had less to say about doctrines of racial difference than almost any of his nineteenth-century successors. Hailing from the landlocked Swiss town of Zürich, Lavater's invocations of "the negro" in the *Fragmente* (typically, as the opposite of the Greek ideal) seem predictably bereft of any reference to real people or real societies. Likewise, later authors would emphasize the simian aspects of the brutish face, but Lavater's physiognomic bestiary included dogs, frogs, birds, and various farm animals in addition to apes. Where Lavater's preoccupations did resonate most closely with those of his contemporaries was his craving for certainty amidst Europe's internal migrations, social dislocations, and political upheavals. For elites, uneasy about upstart commoners and demands for democracy, physiognomy offered a profound reassurance:

> Study the superiority that certain physiognomies have over others. The common Father of the human race has, no doubt, created all men of one and the same blood; but *equality of condition* is not the less, on that account, a chimera. . . . You will be able to determine, according to geometrical rules, the relations which are to be found between the forehead of

> a man formed for commanding, and the forehead of one formed for obeying; between the nose of a monarch and the nose of a slave.[23]

The face of revolution, if it came, would predictably be an ugly one. The sage of Zürich did not single-handedly transform the genre of urban description, but he shifted its emphasis away from the tricks of clever rogues (which might, after all, find a parallel in the dishonest conduct of bigger thieves, such as lawyers, merchants, and stockbrokers) and toward a fixation on the wretched, disfigured faces that Lavater believed separated the bestial residuum from the upright city dwellers. One newspaper would actually refer to the "unhuman class." More common nineteenth-century terms for what had once been the picturesque poor were "dangerous classes," "vicious classes," "proletariat,"or "*les misérables.*" In his later and darker work, *Vagabondiana* (1817), even John Thomas Smith referred to Lavater; on the same page, he comments that the face of one London beggar was a "mixture of the idiot, the goat, and the bull-dog."[24] George Cruikshank's famous illustrations for *Oliver Twist* (1837) also demonstrate the central role of physiognomic doctrine in the new view of the poor. Cruikshank drew Oliver as if anyone could have easily spotted the orphan's exalted parentage in his high forehead, flaxen hair, and angelic visage. In contrast, Fagin, Sykes, and company resemble leering goblins, their distorted physiognomies limning various types of villainy.[25]

Likewise, the shadowy ape-like face of the sinister "Schoolmaster" in Eugène Sue's runaway best seller *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842) pointed the way to a whole genre of urban gothic novels that probed the dark corners of the metropolis, but promised to make the city intelligible through an almost zoological taxonomy of urban vices. Living in Paris or London was now an exercise in the art of reading faces. Even the authors and artists who penned parodies of physiognomy indulged in it themselves. Ironically, satirists with a sympathy for reformist or even radical politics (Cruikshank, Dickens, Sue, J. G. Grandville, Henry Monnier) produced the most devastating caricatures of the criminal and the ne'er-do-well as animals that happened to walk on two legs.[26] They seem to have believed that the path forward, politically, was to differentiate the worthy and hardworking segments of society from the underclass—or, as Sue called them, the scum (*écume*). Thus, even those who would have repudiated Lavater's terrifying dichotomy between born monarchs and born slaves helped to popularize his Manichean approach to human nature. This, in turn, amplified the perception that cities were divided into districts of "sunlight" and districts of "shadow."

In theory, the shadowy dangerous classes could be held in check, or possibly rolled back, by a modern police force. The reality was less glamorous. "Policing" had been part of urban life in Europe for some time; it meant imposing order on a disorderly urban environment, rounding up vagrants, stamping out sources of bad smells, removing obstructions from the streets, and keeping a watchful eye on the weights and measures used in commerce. Even for nineteenth-century policemen, crime fighting remained only a part of a larger portfolio that might include chasing errant livestock, setting up street lighting, and maintaining soup kitchens for the poor.[27] In the event of an actual confrontation with the dangerous classes, moreover, the policeman's loyalty was not certain. He had often been recruited from the same repellent social strata that he was meant to discipline and chastise. A German cartoon from 1849 summed up middle-class ambivalence about the police. An officer barges into a church and breaks up a wedding, calling it an unlawful assembly. His idiocy, in physiognomic terms, is expressed by his extreme ugliness; if a minotaur had interrupted this ceremony, it would hardly have looked more out of place. The illustrator drew everyone in the church with conventional and dignified human features, except for the monstrous, intrusive creature who is "policing" the wrong part of town.[28]

Despite these misgivings, policing proliferated; so did crime statistics. In an ironic twist, increases in arrests and the new mania for record keeping only made the crime rate look worse. By the 1840s, the French police had "discovered" the repeat offender, leading to an anxious debate about hardened criminals. "There exist in Paris about 30,000 persons who have no other means of existence than theft," wrote Sue in *Les Mystères de Paris,* citing H. A. Frégier as his expert source.[29] The imprecise nature of terms like "dangerous classes" made it easy to conjure up phantom hordes of almost any size from the statistical tables. In London, Reverend Henry Solly asked, "What would a force of 8,000 or 9,000 police be against the 150,000 roughs and ruffians whom, on some sufficiently exciting occasion, the metropolis might see arrayed against law and order?"[30] The specter of the dangerous classes, then, owed much to the existence of a modern, number-crunching police force, but the short-term result was a panic over crime rather than a glorification of the police as upholders of public order.

Policemen who actually made arrests and retrieved stolen goods were, if anything, considered *less* reputable than those who achieved nothing. The notorious case of Jonathan Wild continued to taint the image of all professional "thief-catchers." Wild had flourished as a famous crime fighter in eighteenth-century London until it became clear that he was merely

selling back property stolen by his own associates. Even honest lawmen had, historically, operated on an entrepreneurial basis, earning rewards for locating stolen property, but often leaving a crime unsolved if there was no money in it. The new police departments promised a different attitude. Yet Eugène-François Vidocq (1775–1857), the most successful and internationally well-known policeman of the nineteenth century, had himself been a criminal for many years. Exceptionally strong, agile, and expert at disguise, no prison could hold him. Recruited by the Paris police, Vidocq obtained phenomenal results and invented the modern detective bureau. A one-man database on the professional criminals of Paris, Vidocq could match the technique of a crime with its likely perpetrator. His astounding memory for details enabled him to exploit tiny clues, such as a muddy boot print or even a horse's nosebag. As an undercover agent—his greatest talent—Vidocq impersonated a whole gallery of characters. He was supervising twenty-eight agents and held the title of *chef de la Sûreté* by the time he resigned to write his *Mémoires* in 1827.[31]

The example of Vidocq suggested that the dangerous classes could throw up their own nemesis. However, his effortless alternation between cop and robber personas fed public anxieties about the activities and motives of plainclothes police. The Paris police inaugurated a high-profile project to put *uniformed* officers on the street in 1829, when Vidocq's tales of police deception were the talk of the town. Meanwhile, Vidocq's unexplained wealth implied to some observers that the city's foremost detective had never abandoned his life of crime; he had simply locked up his competitors.[32] For anyone who worried about the corrosive effects of modernity and urban life, the strange career of Vidocq must have seemed more like a symptom of the problem than its cure. In particular, Vidocq's simple but shocking formula of staffing his detective bureau entirely with ex-convicts fed into the worst suspicions about the integrity of the police force. The best-selling crime fiction of the 1830s and 1840s, such as Dickens' early novel *Oliver Twist* and Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris,* devoted remarkably little time or attention to the police, instead exalting the gentleman amateur crime fighter.

In *Oliver Twist,* it is a concerned citizen—Mr. Brownlow—who tracks down the arch villain Monks. He hires assistants to help him apprehend Monks, and offers cash rewards to expedite the capture of Fagin and Sikes. Similarly, Eugène Sue's master crime fighter is an aristocrat, not a policeman. Rodolphe leads a double life, using his repertoire of disguises (and dialects) to pass from high society ballrooms to thieves' kitchens. Rodolphe scorns his nemesis, the Schoolmaster, when the arch-criminal

appeals to the law: "You dare to invoke the law, you who have always lived in open, armed revolt against society?"[33] Fearing that the Schoolmaster would only flourish in prison, Sue's vigilante hero devises a unique punishment, removing his captive's eyes and then setting him free to contemplate his sins in perpetual darkness. This further disfigurement of the already hideous criminal must have reassured those who hoped that legible physiognomies would demystify the dangers of Paris. Yet Rodolphe's own facility for false identities—like the undercover exploits of the criminal-turned-policeman Vidocq—suggested on the contrary that in the modern city, nothing was as it seemed.

The Birth of the Mug Shot: Speaking Portraits and Ugly Terrorists

The police needed a makeover. Tsar Nicholas I pointed the way forward when the first head of the newly founded Third Section came to inquire about its mission. The Russian Tsar reportedly took a clean white handkerchief from an attendant and replied, "Take this, and wipe away the tears of my people."[34] The story may be apocryphal, but it is not implausible; Nicholas, a great admirer of the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott, would have been pleased to clothe his innovations in antique, chivalric garb. The Third Section was primarily concerned with censorship and suppressing political dissent, but it included a contingent of gendarmes (mounted policemen in elegant uniforms). It was as close as Nicholas could come to sending a knight to solve the problems of the nineteenth century.[35]

The smart uniforms were not a trivial matter; they sent the message that the police were now firmly on the side of law and order. Some of the new police departments recruited exclusively from the army. In Budapest, they slept in barracks and awoke to a bugle. The traditional Anglo-American fear of standing armies made that style of policing distasteful, but even so uniformed "bobbies" and "cops" with numbered badges came to patrol the streets of London and the growing cities of the American republic. London's constabulary did not adopt a military rank system, as the police departments in the United States did, but even Scotland Yard drew criticism for paying more attention to "drill and the 'goose step' " than to solving crimes. Police chiefs demanded elaborate command and control systems to help them marshal their forces when urban disorder broke out. By the end of the nineteenth century, any great metropolis would have been incomplete without its own network of signal boxes, station houses, and telegraph wires all coordinated from

a central police headquarters. Armories in the United States, established to support the National Guard in the event of an urban insurrection, were ostentatiously modeled on medieval castles, complete with crenellated battlements.[36]

Equipped with all the trappings of chivalry, the police required only a dragon to slay. The journalistic hype about the "dangerous classes" suggested that finding the dragon would not pose any problem; were not the remaining enclaves of civilization in the nineteenth-century city under perpetual siege? The *Edinburgh Review,* in a notably timorous display of confidence, observed that because of modern policing, the public could take it for granted that "they sleep and awake in safety in the midst of hordes of starving plunderers."[37] The *Times* of London reported that garotters (or muggers) "and their species have displayed themselves in the true colours of their class as the profound enemies of the human race"[38] The people actually charged with the task of urban policing, however, quickly learned that the enemy was not so easily named or confronted.

Contrary to physiognomic doctrine, people with average, forgettable faces could—and did—commit crimes. The city of Boston, Massachusetts resorted to rounding up suspicious persons in a weekly "show-up of rogues"; the public could observe their faces and try to mark their clothing with pieces of chalk. Such a remedy was bound to fall short given the mobility inherent in any nineteenth-century society. It was not difficult for "confidence men" (and women) to commit fraud or theft, then catch a train and start over in another town. Perversely, the people who looked *most* trustworthy according to Lavater's rubrics would flourish as criminals in this environment.

Tracking, and publicizing, a criminal's past misdeeds had become critical. Index card systems could help the police with the growing problem of information retrieval, although this French innovation did not spread quickly. Just what should be recorded on the cards remained a puzzle. Criminals liked to change their names. One physician suggested that malefactors could be catalogued based on their distinctive odors. Of course, there was no standard system to describe smells; even hair, eyes, and other traits proved too changeable or subjective. The study of fingerprints remained in its infancy. Publishing daguerreotypes of faces made the "rogue's gallery" easier to disseminate, but without a way to abstract or encode the information that the pictures contained, cross-referencing was practically impossible. So was proof of identity that would hold up in a court of law.[39]

Alphonse Bertillon's innovative technique of anthropometry reduced each human being that passed through police custody to a series of

numbers (length of right forearm, and so on). Bertillon's fascination with the contours and convolutions of the human ear ensured that mug shots, to this day, include a profile as well as a frontal view. In order to implement his complex system of classification (soon known as *Bertillonage*), he had to develop a descriptive vocabulary far more discriminating and precise than Lavater's, complement it with an apparatus of measurement, and then invent abbreviations that would enable clerks to write it all down. The result was the *portrait parlé* (spoken portrait), which could be transmitted by telegraph if necessary. Beginning in 1883, the Paris police stored this anthropometric data in a filing system that made it possible to go straight to the cards of individuals possessing a distinctive feature or combination of features. The *portrait parlé* was also a *speaking* face, though not exactly in the sense that Lavater had envisioned. It did not pretend to disclose the state of the soul; it did, however, allow a suspect to be known, and incriminated, by his or her own features. Bertillonage was admired, and imitated, worldwide in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.[40]

In the 1770s, the father of physiognomy had predicted that his teachings would one day be "the terror of Vice" and openly suggested that the people who scorned his ideas could only be those who had something to hide.[41] A century later, Lavater's vision had become institutionalized in the big-city police departments on every continent. The faces of the inquisitors themselves, of course, were now above scrutiny. Instead of the bumbling, hideous man-beast caricatured in *Kladderadatsch,* the police detective was the up-to-date, nineteenth-century hero whose surveillance of the recidivist "dangerous classes" kept the law-abiding public safe. Lavater had imagined the physiognomic expert as a sort of genius or virtuoso born with an instinctive insight. The mystique of the infallible detective relied, instead, on scientific pretensions. His trained eye was objective, like a magnifying glass or the lens of a camera; thus, the detective's word could be taken as unimpeachable.[42]

Those who cast doubt on the impartiality or competence of the police must be malefactors of some kind themselves. Crime fighting was a noble activity, above politics. As one apologist put it, "no one now thinks of pointing to the police as the infringers of the liberty of the peaceful and honest, for the more the liberty of the turbulent and dishonest is restricted the better; the freedom of the malefactor being the bondage of the just."[43] This prestige made the detective—even on the payroll of a private corporation rather than a city government—one of the most plausible spokesmen for the war against "terrorist" organizations such as the nascent labor union movement. For example, when railroad magnate

Franklin B. Gowen set out to break the Workingmen's Benevolent Association by conflating it with the atrocities of the "Molly Maguires," journalists who might have publicized the plight of the Pennsylvania mine workers (and their law-abiding labor union) instead acted as eager deputies for Allan Pinkerton's team of investigators and provocateurs.[44]

The now-familiar melodrama of recidivist villain and intrepid police investigator was played out once again in the media coverage of François-Claudius Ravachol, an anarchist whose Parisian bombing campaign was put to a stop by his arrest on March 30, 1892. The public learned of Ravachol's apprehension in the manner to which it had grown accustomed; the newspaper reports blurred the lines between journalists and policemen, between detectives and scientists, and between crime fighting and entertainment. In particular, everyone wanted to get a piece of the physiognomic action. *Le Figaro* boasted about the *très exact* drawing of Ravachol on their front page and quoted a witness who volunteered that the scoundrel's nose resembled a bulldog's.[45] The last word, of course, belonged to the experts at the *service anthropométrique.* The newspaper *Le Temps* described Ravachol's entry to police headquarters, allowing the suspense to build as the officials alternately congratulate each other and express uncertainty, up to the moment when M. Bertillon stepped forward to deliver his verdict with a dramatic flourish: "Doubt no further; my conviction is absolute." This was the man Bertillon had measured before, two years earlier, when he had been arrested for passing false currency. After having the suspect stripped naked before the assembled policemen, Bertillon then demonstrated his encyclopedic knowledge of Ravachol's body, from the scar on his left hand to the position of the moles on his chest.[46] Bertillon's files also stripped the *dynamitard*'s history bare; he was François Königstein, whose record of villainy included theft, murder, and grave robbery. The criminal anthropologists of the day rushed to describe Ravachol as a new incarnation of Nero or Caligula, a wild beast that committed murder out of a delight in bloodshed, who had stumbled on explosives which enabled him to kill on a grander scale.[47] The triumph of Bertillon's filing system, meanwhile, was billed as a victory of modern science over atavistic, random violence.

This lunatic or latter-day Caligula was something of a folk hero to the French left; a song in his honor was set to the tune of the *Carmagnole* ("Vive le son de l'explosion!"). There was a reason for this, although newspaper accounts of Ravachol's arrest did not take the time to explain it. During the May Day rallies of 1891, jittery soldiers had attacked workers in the factory town of Fourmies, killing nine and wounding at least eighty. On the same day, the police opened fire on demonstrators in

the Paris suburb of Clichy. In a travesty of justice, the courts responded to both incidents by punishing the surviving workers. When Ravachol targeted the apartment building of the presiding judge in the Clichy case, and then dynamited the home of the attorney general who had relentlessly prosecuted the workers, his actions carried unmistakable political meaning. This rational and purposeful dimension of Ravachol's behavior is largely forgotten, especially in histories of terrorism. Arguably, it is histories of terrorism that would benefit the *most* from incorporating this information and considering its implications.[48]

Instead, most histories of terrorism—notably Walter Laqueur's influential work—are still written in the spirit of the Rome conference. In November 1898, a group of 54 delegates convened for a month in the Italian capital to discuss the nature of the anarchist threat. They adopted a definition proposed by the Russian delegate, declaring that an anarchist act was one "having as its aim the destruction through violent means of all social organization."[49] Where Tolstoy or Gandhi's anarchism fit into this is hard to say. "Anarchism has no relation to politics," the protocol went on, "and cannot under any circumstance be regarded as a political doctrine."[50] The Russian wording served a very specific political purpose. Russia's own bomb-throwers were not, in fact, of the anarchist persuasion; by lumping all militants together under the "anarchist" label, however, the tsarist régime hoped to win sympathy from Western governments that *did* have an anarchist problem. The Rome protocol implied that bomb-throwing directed against tsarist oppression meant exactly the same thing as bomb-throwing in a Western democracy; in each and every case, it must be the work of the criminally insane, people who relished mayhem for its own sake. The Rome conference did not result in the complete intelligence-sharing and police cooperation that the Russians envisaged, but the language of the protocol did help guarantee that the international community would close ranks against the anarchist enemies of humanity. In Theodore Roosevelt's first address to Congress, the President of the United States stated that anarchism was "no more an expression of 'social discontent' than picking pockets or wife-beating," neatly evoking the dangerous classes and Roosevelt's earlier career as a chief of police.[51] In 1908, the *Washington Post* proposed the death penalty for *being* an anarchist, since "an anarchist is, in fact, a murderer, even before he has done the deed."[52]

Presiding over these developments were the newspaper caricatures of Ravachol's glaring, bestial face. Anthropometry had elevated police work above politics, but it also reduced Ravachol/Königstein and his confederates to something beneath politics, a collection of physiognomic traits

and distasteful body parts (the clinical description of his moles, or *grains de beauté,* conveying anything but beauty). Bertillon's *portrait parlé* served to silence the anarchist. Lavater would have felt vindicated. In the end, the terrorist had been both accused of and convicted by his own ugliness.

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PART III

Waging Total War: The Logic of Retribution

CHAPTER 7

Vast and Cool and Unsympathetic: From *The Descent of Man* to "The Empire of the Ants"

Matthew Candelaria

At the end of the nineteenth century, Britain was at the height of its ascendancy, the unchallenged naval power, but they were unable to rest complacent in their power. Like Professor Mosely of the *H.M.S Challenger,* they had trouble sleeping. Mosely wrote in his log:

> One huge winged cockroach baffled me in its attempts to get rid of him for a long time. I could not discover his retreat. At night he came out and rested on my book-shelf at the foot of my bed, swaying his antennae to and fro, and watching me closely. If I reached out my hand from bed to get a stick, or raised my book to throw it at him, he dropped at once on the deck and was forthwith out of harm's way. He bothered me much, because, when my light was out, he had a familiar habit of coming to sip the moisture from my face and lips, which was decidedly unpleasant, and awoke me often from a doze. I believe it is with this object that he watched me before I went to sleep.[1]

Like a giant at the edge of sleep, Britain knew that tiny eyes watched it with insidious intent. By the 1870s, the Prussian unification of Germany and the industrialization of the United States posed challenges that would eventually overtake British power, but initially these failed to capture the British imagination. They did not have the same capacity as more foreign or novel threats to inspire visceral fear or deep despair.

When Britons looked beyond the borders of the West, they saw there real reasons to fear: colonial revolts, the modernization of Japan, and the vast foreign horde of China. Furthermore, the rise of evolutionary theory added a whole new dimension to the possible threats to British power. Nature, heretofore subject to humankind by divine law, had been loosed to challenge the dominance of humanity.

To understand how Britons imagined this new threat, let us first consider how they imagined the foreign, but human, threats. These threats were governed to some extent by a flawed application of evolutionary theory. Popular understanding of evolution has always been dogged by the misconception that, for example, monkeys evolved from lemurs, apes from monkeys, and humans from apes all in their current forms. This misconception casts lemurs as more primitive organisms than monkeys, who are more primitive than apes, who are more primitive than humans, whereas all animals extant today have been subject to the same length of evolutionary pressures and are fairly equally adapted to their ecological environments. The primitivist misconception was applied by racial theorists in the nineteenth century to argue that Europeans, often claimed to have descended from "Aryan" stock, were the most highly evolved humans, while Asiatics, Native Americans, and Africans were less evolved. This evolutionary sense of the foreign threat gave a shape to fears about Africa and Asia that mirrors the shape of fears about evolutionary enemies of humankind.

In 1893, the historian Charles H. Pearson published one of the most influential texts describing the nature and shape of the foreign threat to Britain, *National Life and Character.*[2] Pearson explains that "No one, of course, assumes that the Aryan race—to use a convenient term—can stamp out or starve out all their rivals on the face of the earth. It is self-evident that the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindoos, if we may apply this general term to the various natives of India, and the African negro are too numerous and sturdy to be extirpated," and they must be dealt with in another fashion.[3] Pearson holds with the then-current system of domination, saying that in the colonies Europeans are to be "the planter, the mine-owner, the manufacturer, the merchant, and the leading employee under all these . . . while the negro is to be the field-hand, the common miner, and the factory operative."[4] Unfortunately, even if the European dominates in the colonies, his dominion cannot last, for, as Pearson shows through extensive examples and calculations, everywhere the "lower races" are found, their numbers increase in excess of Europeans. Ultimately, "the conquered people absorbs the conqueror."[5] Adding

European technology and culture to their reproductive power would allow them to overwhelm and destroy the West.

Of chief concern to Pearson and to others was China, which represented the most organized of the "lower races." The growth of their population made their expansion inevitable: "it is scarcely doubtful that [China] will not only people up to the farthest boundary of her recognized territory, but gradually acquire new dominions."[6] Pearson gives a long list of China's possible dominions from Uzbekistan to Alaska, Borneo to South America. However, after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904, most people in the United States came to imagine that the chief threat came from a militarized and modernized, but not entirely Westernized, Japan.[7] Because this threat from the "lower races" was most often geographically centered in Asia, it was often called "the yellow peril," a term of uncertain origin, but common usage in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The threat imagined by Britons from the "lower races" is magnified by the even greater reproductive capacity of nonhuman enemies. This chapter explores some of the scientific sources and imaginative effects of the acute evolutionary terror felt by many in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Urbanism and the Roach Hordes

During the nineteenth century, as European powers were consolidating their overseas dominions, industrialization led to the consolidation of domestic populations into urban areas. In the nineteenth century, the city as a locus of human power implied the exclusion and control of animal power. In the medieval and early modern periods animals were accepted in the urban environment. The presence of meat markets and slaughterhouses in cities came to be seen as a serious liability, as the animals brought into cities for them disrupted the otherwise smooth and orderly codes of the city. For example, businesses around the Smithfield Market in London were disrupted whenever animals were driven to market. Human spaces were implicitly civilized spaces, where people conducted human business, such as commerce and socializing, not spaces where animal business, such as excretion and fornication, were conducted. The sight, sound, and smell of the animals became increasingly offensive to urbanites, and meat markets and slaughterhouses were removed from central urban locations. The source of offence is core disgust. For example, J. T. Norris told a committee considering the fate of

the Smithfield Market that he had witnessed, "bullocks . . . jumping on the backs of the cows in the public streets, in the presence of passengers of both sexes. I think it is an offence to decency," and Norris and the committee linked these acts by the animals with human immorality found in the area of Smithfield Market. In response to complaints such as this, the Smithfield Market was closed and another opened farther from the city center.[8]

Coeval with the rise of the urban environment is the rise of urban conceptions of home. The urban home is one further step removed from nature.[9] It is a site of purity—moral, spiritual, and physical—and to be kept free of contamination. Instructions for cleanliness are very explicit: Physical dirtiness leads to sickness, and is indicative of moral and spiritual pollution. The presence of insects in the home threatened the purity of that home, and therefore should be eliminated. Nor is insect presence decried simply for reasons of cleanliness. During the nineteenth century, pets and pet-keeping flourished, so that an animal presence became almost a necessary feature of the Victorian home.[10] Why is it then that during the nineteenth century humans tended to want to exclude animals from their urban lives? Is it because pet animals were cleaner or healthier than excluded animals? Pet animals included birds of all types, which can transmit numerous diseases, as well as squirrels and rabbits that had been captured in the wild and therefore presented no inconsiderable risk of infectious disease. What, then, is the distinguishing marker between desirable animals, pets, and undesirable animals, beasts and vermin?

Some animals are desirable because their presence reaffirms human dominance.[11] The city as a locus of human power would not be complete without the proximate presence of dominated nature provided by gardens and pets.[12] This dominion is expressed in many ways. First is through the power of selection. We choose the animals we wish to have present, and therefore they are ours. Second, this dominion is expressed through the control of animals' breeding habits. By isolating the animals (and, later, sterilizing them), we prevent them from engaging in the types of animal business that we believe to be offensive.[13] Finally, the animals are aestheticized, whether through breeding, grooming, or as a consequence of choice.[14] The animals become, like bibelots, an expression of personal taste and acquisitive ability. Thus, by manifesting their own choice of habitats, by breeding in uncontrolled numbers, and even by being unattractive, vermin resist the dominance of humanity, a resistance that would be perceived as a threat after the advent of evolutionary theory.

The doctrine of evolution wrought changes on all branches of biology, not the least of which was entomology. Entomology arose not as a science, but as a hobby, with the "Aurelians," or butterfly collectors. The early study of insects was absorbed by the quest for ever-rarer and more beautiful specimens, but evolution changed the object of search in all biology from rarities to "common ancestors" and "missing links." Entomologists in the late Victorian period settled on the cockroach as the most ancient and undifferentiated insect, possibly an ancestral form. However, in the process of bringing cockroaches to the fore, they constructed these pests as mortal enemies of humanity, a label they maintain to this day.

Before evolution made its mark, a number of factors made cockroaches almost invisible in the field. The most important is the belief that natural history and science, having nature as their province must be conducted outside the city. Thus, natural historians and scientists are known for their excursive tendencies.[15] Their goal is to get out of the cities, get away from humanity, and get into "nature." For much of the nineteenth century, few thought that nature existed in the city itself. Therefore, most urban insect species were neglected or ignored; a survey of the five volumes of the *Entomology Magazine* (1832–38) revealed not a single article about the cockroach or related urban pests.

The first entomologists to take significant note of the cockroach are William Kirby and William Spence in their *Introduction to Entomology* (1857). While most of their time in discussing damage is devoted to crops or storehouses, before leaving the subject of injurious insects, they write (in a singular voice), "There are three kinds of insects better known, to whose ravages, as most prominent and celebrated, I shall last call your attention. The insects I mean are the cock-roach (*Blatta [Periplaneta] orientalis*), the house-cricket (*Gryllus domesticus*), and the various species of white ants (*Termes*)."[16] The authors give no citation about the "most prominent and celebrated" ravages of the cockroach, but take it for granted that the reader knows of these creatures. The implication is that not only are people familiar with the insects and the damage they cause, but that they are talking about them. Kirby and Spence go on to describe the abundance of cockroaches in London, "In the London houses, especially on the ground-floor, they are most abundant, and consume every thing they can find, flour, bread, meat, clothes, and even shoes."[17] E. F. Stavely, in his 1871 survey, goes even further, saying, "the destruction which [cockroaches] occasion is very great, for even that which escapes being devoured by them they spoil by means of a fluid ejected from the mouth, and which corrodes, discolours, and

imparts an offensive smell to whatever has been subjected to its action", thereby adding metal to the list of their depredations.[18] However, Kirby and Spence caution us that, "we may think ourselves well off that others of the larger species of the genus have not been introduced in the same way—as, for instance, *Blatta gigantica* . . . not content with devouring meat, clothes, and books, even attacks persons in their sleep, and the extremities of the dead and dying."[19] Although cockroaches' diets are versatile and include corpses, this description of *Blatta gigantica* is probably an exaggeration. This exaggeration suggests the readiness with which people were willing to accept that cockroaches were capable of truly horrific deeds. It also suggests the relative carelessness with which stories about the cockroach were passed along in lieu of solid research.

The story's original source is probably Professor Moseley's account quoted at the beginning of this chapter. A cockroach waiting until we fall asleep to drink the sweat off our faces is not the same thing as an "attack." Trapped as it was on an ocean-going vessel, the cockroach probably found that the primary resource it lacked was fresh water, of which human sweat, containing as it does primarily digestible salts, is an excellent source. The cockroach in this situation has successfully inverted the power relationship between humanity and nature, thereby giving a basis for human fears about roaches' ability to overcome them.

Kirby and Spence distinguished their approach from the earlier, poetic, entomologists in their discussion of the relative demerits of the cockroach and house-cricket:

> The house-cricket may perhaps be deemed a still more annoying insect than the common cock-roach, adding an incessant noise to its ravages; since, although for a time, it may not be unpleasant to hear "the cricket chirrup in the hearth," so constant a din every evening must very much interrupt comfort and conversation.[20]

With this antipoetic understanding of the cricket, they become the only authors I have encountered who rate the cricket a more noxious insect than the cockroach.[21] Although Kirby and Spence have made a truly significant conceptual break in moving toward practical entomology, they were still directed primarily toward rural species of insects—providing but cursory notice toward urban pest species—and their approach, though systematic, did not incorporate evolutionary ideas. However, in 1886 appeared the seminal text in urban entomology, *The Cockroach* by L. C. Miall and Alfred Denny. An introduction to the study of insects, it makes its focus a single insect, one chosen specifically because it easily

"came to hand."[22] *The Cockroach* is intended to cause a change in entomology: "It is our belief and hope that naturalists will some day recoil from their extravagant love of words and names, and turn to structure, development, life-history, and other aspects of the animal world which have points of contact with the life of man."[23] This maneuver is a response to three different, but connected, stimuli. First, it is an attempt to move the science of entomology from the realm of "pure" science, which still retains some elements of aesthetic naturalism in that it can be engaged solely in the observation of the natural world, into the realm of strictly applied science. Thus, the primary reason for studying insects, according to Miall and Denny, is to turn the knowledge to practical benefits for "man."

Second, that the cockroach is chosen indicates that the insect's population has probably increased significantly since the middle of the nineteenth century. The authors obviously assume that the vast majority of their readers will be able to procure cockroaches in order to conduct their own experiments whenever the book is found to be "deficient rather than excessive in detail."[24] Later Miall and Denny conclude ultimately that, "In numerical frequency they probably exceed all domestic animals of larger size, while in geographic range the five [pest] species . . . are together comparable to the dog or pig, which have been multiplied and transported by man for his own purposes."[25] The recognition of the cockroach's ubiquity comes with the dawning realization that there may exist species of animals that will remain persistent and eternal "domestic parasites."[26] This realization is couched in a mixture of superlatives and martial metaphors. In speaking of the diet of the cockroach, they say simply, "As to the food of cockroaches, we can hardly except any animal or vegetable substance from the long list of their depredations," and as to preventing their spread, "Cold is the only check."[27]

Acknowledgment of the durability of these insects is linked with the third driving stimulus in Miall and Denny's study, a greater appreciation for the geologic record and evolutionary role of the insect. Miall and Denny comment that of all insects, Orthoptera are "undeniably the least specialized," and of these, "none are more simple in structure or reach farther back in the geological record than the cockroaches."[28] The authors also include an article by S. H. Scudder dedicated to "The Cockroach of the Past." Scudder identifies the usefulness of the cockroach in the study of evolution, "in no group whatever can the changes wrought by time be so carefully and completely studied as here."[29] Paradoxically, the success of these "simple" insects is attributed by Miall and Denny to "characteristics too subtle for our detection or comprehension." These superlative

descriptions are matched by the authors' use of martial language for the animal's dissemination. Other species are said to "retreat" before them in "petty wars" that may last for centuries.[30]

The incomprehensible success of the cockroach leads Miall and Denny to a consideration of domestic animals, which they divide into those that have been "forcibly reduced to servitude," and those that are "in various degrees parasitic upon men."[31] In the former category, the authors place agricultural animals, exemplified by oxen, sheep, goats, and pigs, while the latter category contains not only rats, jackdaws, magpies, houseflies, and cockroaches, but also cats and dogs. These animals have all "attached themselves to man in various degrees of intimacy."[32] Apparently, Miall and Denny view cats and dogs as willing partners in the pet relationship, rather than as subject creatures as is now commonly believed. However, the division between servant animals and "parasites" is clearly a question of human power and control. If humans have reduced them to servitude, then the animals are neither objectionable nor worthy of further mention, but if they move in of their own volition, then they are parasites preying on "a wealthy and careless host."[33] For his part, Scudder augments the terrifying nature of cockroaches by utilizing their dominance in the geologic record:

> The cockroaches of to-day are no longer, as once, a dominant group; they are but a fragment of the world's Insect-hosts; yet even now the species are numbered by hundreds. If this be a waning type, what must its numbers have been in the far-off time, when the warm moisture which they still love was the prevailing climatic feature of the world; and how few of that vast horde have been preserved to us! The housekeeper will thank God and take courage.[34]

By talking of the "Insect-hosts" and the "vast horde" of cockroaches, Scudder has transformed the insects into barbarians threatening to overwhelm humanity at any moment. The housekeeper must "take courage," for in our homes humans and roaches are locked in mortal combat for dominance.

Although Miall and Denny attempt to be descriptive in this book, their language is emotionally loaded and contains an implicit call to action that defines the salient "points of contact" between this insect species and humanity as antagonistic ones. The martial metaphors invite us to view the cockroach as an enemy of humanity, and the descriptions of cockroaches' age and distribution, following hard upon the descrip-

tion of humanity as "wealthy and careless," challenge us to take care against these parasites. These undertones of antagonism between these two species are continued and augmented by later books on pest species, which very clearly follow Miall and Denny's seminal book.

Edward Butler frames the goal of his book, *Our Household Insects* (1893), in innocent and scientific terms and treats most insects with ambivalent curiosity, but he singles out the cockroach as almost the chosen enemy of humankind. In his preface, Butler claims, "My aim has been to give a plain and easy account of such insect pests as may be met with in ordinary dwelling-houses, and thus to show that every one has ready to hand . . . abundant material for the practical study of that most fascinating branch of natural history, entomology."[35] We have already seen how Butler favors the poetic qualities of the house-cricket. Although he describes more noxious insect pests with considerably stronger language, it is for the cockroach that Butler reserves the special role of humanity's insect adversary, as an analysis of his descriptions of other pests in comparison with cockroaches will indicate.

Butler treats the housefly with no antagonistic language. He concludes his chapter on the fly with a series of speculative questions wondering why the fly seeks harborage in human homes, postulating that, "the house fly has sought the protection and additional resources of man's society to aid it in its struggles with less prolific insects."[36] Butler makes flies and humans almost allies against a common foe. He more straightforwardly describes the infestation by lice, saying that all mammals, "from elephant to mouse" harbor these parasites.[37] In treating the flea, Butler calls their attacks "humiliating," but primarily speaks of the fleas themselves as "really extremely curious" and "zoological oddities."[38] This was prior to the discovery that fleas are the disease vector by which plague is transmitted to humans, and therefore later texts use more forceful language in describing them.

The only insect besides the house cricket directly compared to the cockroach is the bedbug, which is compared owing to their identical methods of introduction to Britain, and is called "a much less desirable importation."[39] However, despite the fact that these creatures feed on the human body while we sleep and that they are acknowledged to be worse pests, they still do not achieve the same adversarial status as cockroaches. Consider, for example, the resistance of these insects to treatment methods. First, the bed-bug: "The ordinary insect-powders are of very little avail when [the bugs] retreat to their narrow hiding-places."[40] Compare this with a similar passage describing the cockroach:

> Spite of "beetle-traps" and "vermin-powders," it maintains its ground; neither rats, cats, nor hedgehogs (all numbered among its foes, and the last an especially greedy devourer of it) are able materially to lessen its numbers. By reason of some subtle superiority, perhaps impossible for our gross senses to perceive, it continues to be victorious over all its enemies, and in the face of all opposition and efforts to exterminate it, still flourishes and continually spreads.[41]

The influence of Miall and Denny is clear in the language about the cockroach's "subtle superiority." We may also recognize those authors' martial language, considerably strengthened and turned into an explicit battle between seemingly all creation and the cockroach. Humanity is drawn into the conflict through the portion of its society perceived to be most under threat, "Nowhere a welcome guest, it yet quietly pushes on its conquests, and even the determined hostility of the tidy housewife does not avail to check its progress."[42] The cockroach, as the enemy of the housewife, becomes a threat to the home, the cornerstone of Victorian civilization. More than just a pest, it has become a threat to civilization itself.

Butler's book serves as the model for all surveys of urban pest species for many decades. For example, Glenn Harrick's 1916 text, *Insects Injurious to the Household and Annoying to Man,* follows Butler in attitude and structure. The only significant changes are the addition of techniques for killing cockroaches (gasses and different powders, lead-poisoned wafers, geckoes, even turpentine) and the use of slightly more scientific language.[43] This imitation serves to codify the genre, and subsequent texts compile more killing methods and more scientific language, but maintain the attitude that cockroaches are the singular natural enemy of humankind.

Deadly Nature in the Evolutionary Imagination

It is a commonplace that the theory of evolution displaced humanity from the center of creation in much the same way as had Copernican cosmology. But the nature of the displacement is in fact very different, for while Copernicus demotes the Earth from the cosmological center of the universe, the transformation that evolution wreaks is of a personal nature. It is not our planet, but ourselves that have been transformed. And evolution carries with it an implicit threat. If all life on Earth is constantly being reforged by ongoing selection pressures, then it is possible that there could arise another species powerful enough to not merely resist humanity, as does the cockroach, but to challenge humanity for

dominance. Charles Darwin, in *The Descent of Man* (1871), opens the door on this threat:

> every one who admits the principle of evolution must see that the mental powers of the higher animals, which are the same in kind with those of man, though so very different in degree, are capable of advancement. Thus the interval between the mental powers of one of the higher apes and of a fish, or between those of an ant and scale-insect, is immense; yet their development does not offer any special difficulty.[44]

Darwin allows the possibility that an ape, a fish, or even an ant is capable of becoming as intelligent and, possibly, as powerful as humans. This oblique statement he later refines with respect to the aesthetic sense of various birds and mammals, demonstrated by the preference of female birds and mammals for males whose beauty equally appeals to us: "we can thus see how it has come to pass that certain mental faculties, in various and widely distinct groups of animals, have been developed in nearly the same manner and to nearly the same degree."[45] If birds can develop the same aesthetic sense as humanity, then why not tool-use? Why not language? Why not empire? Finally, Darwin closes *The Descent of Man* by further leveling the evolutionary playing field by bringing humanity down a notch:

> We must . . . acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man with all his noble qualities, with sympathy which feels for the most debased, with benevolence which extends not only to other men but to the humblest living creature, with his god-like intellect which has penetrated into the movements and constitution of the solar system—with all these exalted powers—Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin.[46]

Darwin never goes beyond these hints, never discusses the possibility that human preeminence on the Earth could be challenged by an evolutionary contender.

T. H. Huxley walks a similar line in *Man's Place in Nature*. In the 1863 lecture "Man's Relation to the Lower Animals," Huxley combines the question of humanity's origin with that of human power relative to nature:

> The question of questions for mankind . . . is the ascertainment of the place which Man occupies in nature and of his relations to the universe of things. Whence our race has come; what are the limits of our power over

> nature, and of nature's power over us; to what goal we are tending; are the problems which present themselves anew and with undiminished interest to every man born in the world.[47]

Here these two questions seem to be component parts of Huxley's goal in *Man's Place in Nature,* a treatise whose title promises not simply a natural history, but a location of humanity's part in the grand scheme of the universe. This placement of humanity seems only fitting, since evolution is replacing creationism, and a vital part of the creation story in *Genesis* is a cosmological binding of where we came from, who we are, and what is our purpose in the universe.

However, Huxley focuses only on the first question to describe ossuary evidence of human evolution. Huxley, like Darwin, gives only vaguely troubling hints as to humanity's future. When discussing the inherence in humanity of what Darwin calls "the indelible stamp of his lowly origin," Huxley says, "It is as if nature herself had foreseen the arrogance of man and with Roman severity had provided that his intellect by its very triumphs should call into prominence the slaves, admonishing the conqueror that he is but dust."[48] Here Huxley is invoking the order of creation inherent in *Genesis,* with humanity as the conqueror and nature its slave, to ultimately undermine the Biblical message. Humankind, without the indwelling breath of God, is but dust, mortal dust.

Huxley asserts the inevitability of the evolutionary rise of intelligence, writing of "Nature's great progression, from the formless to the formed—the inorganic to the organic—from blind force to conscious intellect and will."[49] This progression places humanity at the high prominence at evolution's end, but Huxley does not guarantee this place for us alone. If "even the highest faculties of feeling and of intellect begin to germinate in lower forms of life," and if all animals are equally being acted upon evenly by the process of evolution, then it follows that it is possible for other animals to make the leap "from blind force to conscious intellect and will." Huxley does not address this possibility directly, probably in part because he is attempting to minimize the reaction against evolution, coupling fear with the already extant revulsion that he addresses.[50]

The issue of evolutionary enemies of humanity stands up several times in popular discourse on evolution. As Huxley points out in "Mr. Darwin's Critics," popular reviewers of Darwin try to draw an evolutionary cordon sanitaire around humanity.[51] Evolution, though sufficient to explain the other animals of the earth, could not explain the origin of humanity, and therefore could not give rise to another animal capable of challenging humanity. Further, popularizers like Dr. Alexander Winchell, though

accepting evolution, present humankind as the final product of the process. Winchell directly addresses the question, "Will there be an animal superior to man?"[52] Like Huxley, Winchell accepts that "The world seems to have been designed with the view of stimulating to activity the powers of a thinking being," but unlike Huxley, Winchell asserts that "science affords us some intimations which tend to assure us in the possession of the dignity which we now enjoy as the archonts of terrestrial existence."[53] Winchell follows up this assertion with evidence that Nature's beauty directly correlates with humanity's ability to appreciate beauty, that the spines of all animals have striven to the verticality which is achieved only in the human frame, and that humanity's ability to understand and appreciate the Deity are all indicators of humanity's "consummation of organic exaltation."[54]

But the most strident popularizer of the possibility that evolution will give rise to animals capable of challenging human dominance is H. G. Wells, who promotes the exact opposite of Winchell's assertions. In his essay "On Zoological Regression," he asserts, "there is no guarantee in scientific knowledge of man's permanence or permanent ascendancy."[55] He posits that "Nature is, in unsuspected obscurity, equipping some now-humble creature with wider possibilities of appetite, endurance, or destruction, to rise in the fulness of time and sweep *homo* away into the darkness."[56] Wells believes this to be more than just speculation, but, rather, scientific likelihood, for larger, more successful—and slower-breeding—organisms are likely to become extinct and be supplanted by previously small, insignificant creatures better able to adapt due to their "prompt fecundity."[57] In this basic principle of evolution, Wells finds the basis for his critique of conservatism, "A group of large animals . . . is a group that has, as it were, staked its existence upon the permanence of the current conditions; has become powerful, massive, and slow-breeding; and so has purchased the lordship of the present at the price of the remote future."[58] Humanity epitomizes the vulnerable masters of the present. Wells says, "No doubt man is lord of the whole earth of to-day, but the lordship of the future is another matter," and identifies among our possible successors "the herring, the frog, the Aphis, or the rabbit."[59] No matter who the enemy, however, Wells assures us that they will be inhuman "beyond the most bizarre imaginings of nightmare."[60] And their inhuman nature makes them intractable to negotiation or treaty, leaving only one possible response from humanity: unremitting, even unreasoned, violence.

The most famous of Wells's inhuman enemies are the Martians from *The War of the Worlds.* Because detailed commentary exists elsewhere

(see, for example, Bergonzi or the editions edited by James Gunn or Leon Stover), I will only focus briefly on this novel. From the novel's very first paragraph, the Martians are described as a wholly alien intelligence, having "minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic."[61] In the initial attempt to communicate, a small deputation with a white flag is completely eradicated by the heat ray and war breaks out. Although Wells's narrator compares the aliens to European settlers in Tasmania, the disparity between the Martians and humanity is a far greater divide than that between any two nations. To clarify the relationship, Wells allows us to view the Martians not feeding on human blood, but nourishing themselves through transfusion.[62] Wells hypothesizes that as species' brains evolve, their intestines atrophy, which seems to be correct, at least in human evolution.[63] This evolutionary difference creates an unbridgeable chasm between humanity and the Martians, "The digestive processes and their reaction upon the nervous system sap our strength and color our minds. Men go happy or miserable as they have healthy or unhealthy livers, or sound gastric glands. But the Martians were lifted above all these organic fluctuations of mood and emotion."[64] Because the Martians are beyond all emotion, they are beyond sympathy and therefore beyond a negotiated peace.

There is a temptation to imagine that the Martians represent a state to which Wells suggests humanity might rise, but Wells stresses that, although there are analogies between human and Martian evolution, there is not necessarily any unified path of development that all species must follow.[65] Wells makes it seem as though humanity and the Martians are in a common evolutionary channel, "We men, with our bicycles and road-skates, our Lilienthal soaring-machines, our guns and sticks and so forth, are just in the beginning of the evolution that the Martians have worked out," but ultimately Wells makes us see the Martians and their evolution as truly alien to us. Wells mentions "that what is the dominant feature of almost all human devices in mechanism is absent—the *wheel* is absent." Moreover, "in [Martian] apparatus singularly little use is made of the fixed pivot."[66] These differences are not mere technical observations, nor stylistic turns in the creation of the alien; they are an attempt to reaffirm the vast possibilities inherent in evolution. Evolution has the power to create different bodies and wholly different minds, minds not only incomprehensible to us but also comprehending their universe in an alien fashion and crafting foreign technology. This alienness is the cause of their destruction, as their foreign bodies succumb to

terrestrial bacteria. Because the Martians cannot be reasoned or bargained with, their destruction is all that will satisfy readers.

The equal ineffability of the enemy in "The Empire of the Ants" (1905) is epitomized by the repeated question, "What can one do?"[67] This story represents first an exploration of the possibility that evolution could produce "new competitors for the sovereignty of the globe."[68] Holroyd, the observer who recounts his experiences to the story's narrator, notes,

> In a few thousand years men had emerged from barbarism to a stage of civilization that made them feel lords of the future and masters of the earth! But what was to prevent the ants evolving also? . . . they had a language, they had an intelligence! Why should things stop at that any more than men had stopped at the barbaric stage?[69]

Holroyd posits the action of evolution, and Wells makes sure to develop the behavior of his imperial ants from the already observed behavior of army and leaf-cutter ants. Of army ants, the Captain observes that it is "absurd" to fight them, for "Dey come, dey go." Humans flee before the ant armies, but when the ant armies pass, "Then you come back again;—the house is clean, like new!"[70] The action of evolution has created ants that simply "don't go," unlike extant army ants. Also, Holroyd learns of leaf-cutter ants from the captain of the boat on which he rides up the Amazon, "He told of the little workers that swarm and fight, and the big workers that command and rule. . . . He told how they cut leaves and made fungus beds, and how their nests in Caracas are sometimes a hundred yards across."[71] Although the action of the leaf-cutter "commanders" is a false analogy, it provides a plausible shelf on which to build the unit action of the imperial ants. Wells effectively conveys the ants' inhuman sentience. When a man boards a canoe infested with ants, Holroyd, "saw the scattered ants about the invader's feet, and doing what he had never seen ants doing before. They had nothing of the blind movements of the common ant; they were looking at him—as a rallying crowd of men might look at some gigantic monster that had dispersed it," and later, "They did not move in columns across the exposed places, but in open, spaced-out lines, oddly suggestive of the rushes of modern infantry advancing under fire."[72] Though Holroyd can make inferences and comparisons about the ants' actions, he is not able to understand some of their behaviors—such as why they carried, "oddly-shaped burthens for which he could imagine no use"—and no attempt at

communication is made, or even considered.[73] The ants respond to human presence with force, using poison to kill, then picking our flesh ragged and our bones clean.

"The Empire of the Ants" is an exploration of the limits of human power. The ants are a synecdoche of the nature that humanity believes it has dominated. The image of nature "hedged, ditched, and drained into the perfection of submission" is juxtaposed against the Amazon where humanity has "but a precarious hold." The jungle is repeatedly described as "inhuman:" "the weather had no human aspect," the land has an "inhuman immensity," and "the skies were empty of men."[74] Nor is this inhumanity passive, but the result of an active war against humankind:

> One travelled for miles amidst the still, silent struggle of giant trees, of strangulating creepers, of assertive flowers, everywhere the alligator, the turtle, and endless varieties of birds and insects seemed at home, dwelt irreplaceably—but Man, Man at most held a footing upon resentful clearings, fought weeds, fought beasts and insects for the barest foothold, fell a prey to snake and beast, insect and fever, and was presently carried away.[75]

In the jungle, humanity fights and fights, and finds itself overcome. In the end, what can one do? At the story's end, the gunboat has steamed up the river to find a deserted town. In a gesture reminiscent of *Heart of Darkness,* the captain fires his main gun at two buildings occupied by ants, destroying them, but inflicting no visible casualties. More significant is the destruction of the canoe on which the boat's first lieutenant was killed. Uncertain of any productive course of action the captain "vindictively" decides, "I will burn dem alive!" This vengeful act infects the entire crew, "Everyone aboard was pleased by [the] idea, everyone helped with zest," and as they burn, the ship's stoker laughs, "*Saüba* [ants] go pop, pop . . . Wahaw!"[76] The spirit of revenge makes the humans take pleasure in the mere death of their enemy.

Unlike *The War of the Worlds* and "The Empire of the Ants," "The Sea Raiders" presents an ambiguous tale of humanity contending with nature, and can stand as a representative of a number of Wells's other stories about natural oddities—stories like "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid," "Aepyornis Island," and "The Valley of the Spiders," where the battle of the species is not portrayed as a fight to the finish, but only as a series of running skirmishes, falling sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other. Reading Wells's fiction as a body impresses one that the world is a dangerous place and that humanity is best served by regarding it with a constant state of suspicious watchfulness. Failure to treat the

world with its due respect almost costs the life of the protagonist of "The Sea Raiders," Mr. Fison. When Mr. Fison first sees a group of *Haploteuthis ferox,* one of the octopoid raiders from the title, feeding on a human corpse, "he was horrified, of course, and intensely excited and indignant at such revolting creatures preying upon human flesh," rather than feeling any fear.[77] Mr. Fison, as an Englishman, has "all the assurance which the absolute security of this country against all forms of animal life gives its inhabitants," and he definitely considers them animals, beyond communication. Though their large eyes gives "the creatures a grotesque suggestion of a face," he does not consider them as intelligent, communicable beings. Instead, "He shouted to them, with the idea of driving them off, and, finding they did not budge, cast about him, picked up a big rounded lump of rock, and flung it at one."[78] Mr. Fison's rock turns out to be the first salvo in a brief skirmish that continues until the shoal of *Haploteuthis* is driven off by patrols of Preventive Service boats containing men "armed with harpoons and cutlasses."[79] Humanity defends itself and its shores with violence, never attempting communication with its obviously intelligent adversaries. Wells's evolutionary enemies challenge humanity's status as "archonts of terrestrial existence," and they continue to gain new currency in our current war on terror.

In his 2005 remake of *The War of the Worlds,* Steven Spielberg attempts to link Wells's Martians with al Qaeda terrorists, and succeeds in a very uneven fashion. The sudden and fiery destruction of New York buildings and roads successfully evokes the utterly surprising nature of the attacks of 9/11, and the dusty make-up applied to Tom Cruise after his narrow escape from the Martians' first attack is reminiscent of images of New Yorkers who were there on that day. The impotence of the seemingly impressive U.S. military echoes the feeling of many Americans that spending hundreds of billions of dollars a year on military hardware cannot hope to keep them safe, and the image of soldiers stalking a staggering tripod through Boston reminds us of urban military operations in Baghdad or Fallujah. The celebration of the soldiers for having hit an already dying tripod makes a powerful ironic comment on the effectiveness of these operations.

For its part, the cockroach is, as always, a more elusive presence in this most recent war on terror. Every now and again it appears, as in a student editorial calling the Iraqi insurgents "cockroach terrorists."[80] He never explores the metaphor, but is eager to lay down the most horrific language available not only for the insurgents, but for those who evidence any support of them. Sometimes it shows up in terms of using a "cockroach solution" to the war on terror, namely a "multi-level multi-disciplinary

approach."[81] In another version, the United States is said to be "[Using] a Cockroach to Catch a Cockroach" when it allies itself with Pakistan in the War on Terror.[82] In still another version, a cockroach is represented as a more effective U.S. president than George W. Bush.[83] The incoherence of these references is illustrative. Of utmost importance is not so much what the cockroach is, but what it represents: the most hateful thing imaginable, the thing whose extermination is justified, exactly in the same sense it was used by Rwandan Hutus to describe the Tutsis they attempted to eliminate. But none of those who use the term seem aware that the major part of the cockroach's repulsiveness is its durability. Cockroaches remain a crepuscular force at the edge of the luminous day of humanity's dominion of the earth, a creature whose cold eyes remind us that they watched the dawn and dusk of the dinosaurs and that our afternoon may prove all too brief regardless of its brightness.

Notes

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2. Richard Austin Thompson, *The Yellow Peril* (New York: Arno, 1978), 18.
3. Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 33.
4. Ibid., 33–34.
5. Ibid., 73.
6. Ibid., 50.
7. Thompson, *Yellow Peril,* 29.
8. Chris Philo, "Animals, Geography, and the City: Notes on Inclusions and Exclusions" in *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands,* ed. Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emel (New York: Verso, 1998), 60–64.
9. W. H. Robinson, *Urban Entomology* (New York: Chapman and Hall, 1996), 6.
10. Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 84.
11. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 5; Ritvo, *Animal Estate,* 82.
12. Tuan, *Dominance,* 18–19.
13. Ibid., 88, 99, 109.
14. Ibid., 98–99, 104; Ritvo, *Animal Estate,* 83.
15. David E. Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), 76–78.
16. William Kirby and William Spence, *An Introduction to Entomology* (London: Longman, 1857), 139.
17. Ibid.

18. E. F. Stavely, *British Insects* (London: L. Reeve, 1871), 114–115.
19. Kirby and Spence, *Introduction,* 140.
20. Ibid.
21. Edward Butler would later note the disparity between the "poet" and the "naturalist," but seemingly sided with the poet on this matter. He attributed an air of "mysteriousness" to the cricket, and compiled numerous quotations expounding on the beauty of its song.
22. L. C. Miall and Alfred Denny, *The Structure and Life-History of the Cockroach* (London: Lovell Reeve, 1886), i.
23. Ibid., i-ii.
24. Ibid., i.
25. Ibid., 21–22.
26. Ibid., 21.
27. Ibid., 20–21.
28. Ibid., 22.
29. Ibid., 206.
30. Ibid., 20.
31. Ibid., 21.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 219.
35. Butler, *Household Insects,* 5.
36. Ibid., 218.
37. Ibid., 326.
38. Ibid., 248.
39. Ibid., 273.
40. Ibid., 298.
41. Ibid., 145.
42. Ibid.
43. Glenn W. Herrick, *Insects Injurious to the Household and Annoying to Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).
44. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New York: D. Appleton, 1897), 609.
45. Ibid., 617.
46. Ibid., 619.
47. Thomas H. Huxley, *Man's Place in Nature and Other Anthropological Essays* (New York: D. Appleton, 1892), 77–78.
48. Ibid., 146.
49. Ibid., 151.
50. Ibid., 152–156.
51. Ibid., 252–253.
52. Alexander Winchell, *Sketches of Creation* (New York: Harper, 1874), 373.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., 378.

55. *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction,* ed. Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 168.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 130.
58. Ibid., 130–131.
59. Ibid., 131.
60. Ibid., 177.
61. H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (n.p.: Aerie, 1987), 3.
62. Ibid., 5, 139.
63. C. R. Badcock, *Evolutionary Psychology: A Critical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 34.
64. Wells, *War,* 139.
65. Bernard Bergonzi, *The Early H. G. Wells: A Study of the Scientific Romances* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 134.
66. Wells, *War,* 143, emphasis in original.
67. H. G. Wells, *The Favorite Short Stories of H. G. Wells* (New York: Doubleday, 1937), 94.
68. Ibid., 104.
69. Ibid., 94.
70. Ibid., 88.
71. Ibid., 92.
72. Ibid., 98–99.
73. Ibid., 99.
74. Ibid., 89, 90, 93.
75. Ibid., 93.
76. Ibid., 100–101.
77. Ibid., 413.
78. Ibid., 412.
79. Ibid., 419.
80. J. Matt Barber, "Note to Media: They're not Insurgents, They're Terrorist Cockroaches," *The Conservative Voice,* www.conservativevoice.com, December 30, 2004.
81. www.grubbykid.com, "The Cockroach Solution," September 9, 2004.
82. B. Raman, "Use a Cockroach to Catch a Cockroach," *South Asia Analysis Group,* Paper 316. (September 17, 2001). http://www.saag.org/papers4/paper316.html.
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CHAPTER 8

The Savage Wars of Peace: Wars against Terrorism in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and India

G. K. Peatling

Proponents of the current war, as of past wars, against terrorism depict their struggle as a defense of the core values of civilization against an amoral barbarism in which it is impossible to be neutral.[1] Terrorists, as stereotyped by counterinsurgent theorists, are "dedicated to violence and destruction" for its own sake; under terrorist brutalization, "headstrong youths can become so hooked on the life of terrorist murder that they perform their tasks in a kind of sacrificial ecstasy."[2] The limitations of the approaches of critics of wars against terrorism are perhaps more surprising. Specifically, such critics implicitly share with counterinsurgent writers a characterization of state violence as being less chaotic than that of resistance movements. The violence of the modern state may be more powerful, but in contrast, in the Foucauldian sense, it is "ordered."[3] States, especially first world states, claim their violence is legitimate and possess an ability to disguise their violence by applying it in ways that are of a lower intensity, such as military deployments, surveillance techniques, and legal or illegal detention.[4] Where wars against terrorism are criticized in such analyses, it is to suggest that states of the first world, especially the United States, have helped to generate the conditions for the emergence of terrorism owing to the ruthless pursuit of their own interests. Wars against terrorism are commonly attacked for being repressive and on account of the weight of materiel deployed in such operations; they are also criticized as a disguised form or consequence of colonialism.[5]

Though the terminology employed varies, counterinsurgent and so-called critical theorists implicitly agree on this characterization of terrorism and of the "battle against terrorism,"[6] that the more chaotic violence associated with terrorism is the weapon of the weak and of groups opposed to and outside of the "order" provided by the state.[7] As this chapter will suggest, however, moments even in arguments used to defend wars against terrorism suggest a very different characterization of such conflicts. Specifically, such moments disclose roots of pro-state or counterinsurgent violence that—far from emanating from cold, rational, and cynical calculations of a military or statist nature—are atavistic, emotional, and irrational. Such violent pro-state tendencies may emanate from a variety of sources, including racism and sectarianism; elemental longings for vengeance for perceived or actual wrong; xenophobic reactions to immigration; and/or pseudo-realist readings of national interests.

Such tendencies are often supposed to represent elemental urges in the population of a state, and a leading justification often offered for the more palatable disciplinary violence of the state is the need to divert uncontrolled and chaotic pro-state violence that might otherwise emanate from a community that the state represents. In fact, the claim that repression carried out by authorities is thus representative is often an imposture; but for immediate purposes, this distance between rhetoric and practice is less significant than the two problems evident even if such discourses are taken on their own terms. First, although seemingly counterintuitive from some perspectives, in so far as state repression is thus depicted as necessary in order to control the chaotic consequences of pro-state vigilante action, violence or terrorism, the latter drives the former. Second, these aspects of pro-state or counterinsurgent discourses to a large extent avow that wars against terrorism are ultimately grounded in a view of human relations that—while ostensibly protecting civilization and freedom, and acting on the closely cognate principles of Western rationality—actually privileges and glorifies the role of domination, irrationality, and violence. Pro-state ideologies are thus stricken with the same philosophical depravities that their supporters—in moments of self-righteous moral indignation—find in systems of thought that endorse terrorism.

These aspects of wars against terrorism will be assessed in this chapter with reference to the discursive strategies adopted by the British ruling classes toward nationalist insurgency in nineteenth-century Ireland and India—although the prevalence of such aspects of "war against terrorism" is also demonstrated in some more recent manifestations, including

later conflicts affecting Ireland and India. One reason for analyzing such fields of research is that theories of the relationship between the modern state, Western rationality, idealism, and violence have been usefully developed there. In accordance with the fact that relevant writings identify the proximity of idealism and violence embodied in the modern state, this chapter entails recognition of the difficulty in making moral and political judgments about "wars on terrorism"; but the chapter does offer a recommendation for clearer thinking, especially among counterinsurgent theorists and supporters of anti-immigration or antiterrorist legislation. This chapter further suggests the contingent possibility that because a war against terrorism may have roots in violence even more atavistic and irrational than that of the terrorism it targets, it may be more chaotic, barbaric, and disastrous than the dangers it is intended to avert.

Violence and the Modern State

Early in 1885, an Englishwoman, Lucille Dudley, made an attempt on the life of the New York-based Irish-American leader Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Rossa, deemed "The Prince of dynamiters," was widely accused of inspiring Irish republican terrorist "outrages" in contemporary Britain. Victorian notions of propriety and respectability did not restrain the British, American, and Ulster unionist press from heaping an astonishing level of approbation on this attempted murder. "Had the bullet reached the goal which it was intended to reach," the *Londonderry Standard* opined, "Miss Dudley would have been hailed by thousands as a heroine, and humanity would have felt a sense of relief."[8]

Counterinsurgent analysis is prone to pay insufficient attention to the role that such pro-state violence, or violence even only partially intended to defend the existing order, plays in generating and perpetuating terrorism-related conflict. Counterinsurgent writers on the recent Northern Ireland conflict have thus tended to give loyalist paramilitaries little attention,[9] a deficiency which critics have noticed.[10] Even writers who have overtly addressed pro-state terrorism in Northern Ireland have tended to emphasize dimensions that are reactive to republican terrorism,[11] an approach that does not entirely fairly represent the role of loyalism in the onset and course of the conflict. But in a more subtle sense, analysts, and not only counterinsurgent analysts, tend to overlook not only pro-state terrorism, but violence that is endemic to the condition of states in the first world. Observers, for instance, are remiss in problematizing groups such as the Weather Underground in the 1960s, whereas the racist

violence of white vigilante groups is not seen as terrorism. But analysts exhibit a more fundamental blind spot in overlooking the way in which official and nonofficial violence and intimidation of nonwhite groups since the Civil War determined power relationships between different social groups in the long term, especially in the southern states of the United States. Even a first-world state without insurgent movements—or where these have been repressed—where the rule of law apparently prevails, should not necessarily thus be treated as a just, "healed," or conflict-free zone.[12]

However, some critics have gone further than identifying as sources of conflict the paramilitary pro-state violence and low-intensity forms of violence and intimidation that are more endemic to nation-states and the systems of order they support. In particular, it is suggested that such violence combines in subtle ways with the most idealistic aspects of the philosophical underpinning of the modern Western nation-state. To attempt to reform the state by using the idealism of Western rationality to critique the most brutal and irrational forms of domination, which the modern state periodically employs, is thus to overlook how closely related is the violence to the idealism. This observation, while troubling, is pertinent to the practice of modern wars against terrorism and has been particularly usefully developed by writers on British imperialism in the nineteenth century, especially in India, where connections between violence, the growth of the state, and Western rationalism are particularly evident.

Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that the apparently universal nature of the truths of Enlightenment rationalism is linked to the growth of the nation-state in its distinctively modern form, and of ideas of the state's legitimacy, including its supposedly legitimate monopoly of violence. This is a process not only in which third-world nationalisms have been willing actors, but also one that is an integral part of the history of European imperialism. The point, Chakrabarty feels, "is not that Enlightenment rationalism is always unreasonable in itself, but it is rather a matter of documenting how—through what historical process—its 'reason,' which was not always self-evident to everyone, has been made to look 'obvious' far beyond the ground where it originated." That historical process is a deeply ambivalent one; "repression and violence . . . are as instrumental in the victory of the modern as is the persuasive power of its rhetorical strategies." Indeed, coercion is "originary" or "foundational" in the rise of the modern state.[13] Enlightenment rationalism should not be discarded because of its connections to a past or present practice of violence; in any case, a history which transcends such

values would be difficult to compose owing to the institutional connections between the site from which professional history is now predominantly written (the Western university) and the modern state which embodies so many rationalist values. But it is desirable to aim to write a history that self-consciously "makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices, the part it plays in collusion with the narratives of citizenships in assimilating to the projects of the modern state all other possibilities of human solidarity." History should depict the modern state as inevitably contested, a contest between the collectivities defined by "the rituals of citizenship"—and its allied coercive forces—and other forms of human connections and solidarity.[14]

Chakrabarty thus outlines the close relations that exist between violence and idealism within the modern nation-state and the difficulties in critically interpreting these. The linked values of Enlightenment rationalism cannot be eschewed altogether without depriving marginal social groups of sources of protection and empowerment. Violence may be used for idealistic purposes, including the defense of characteristics commonly thought part of "civilization" (which include aspects of the modern state); but violence is also foundational and "pandemic" to the modern state,[15] and statist violence may also dominate the idealism, a conjuncture evident in moments in discourses supportive of wars against terrorism.

Terror, Revolution, and Community

From an etymological and a historical point of view there are close connections between terrorism and revolutionary movements, and there are also practical affinities. States and scholarly analysts are interested in assessing the extent of popular support for both such movements. To governments interested in suppressing such movements, there may be some benefits in linking terrorism to stereotypical representations of particular communities and ethnic groups, though such a process is fraught with dangers.[16] The opposite approach of depicting terrorist or revolutionary movements as a minority of fanatics without organic relation to the surrounding community would appear to be more fruitful from a pro-state perspective; by emphasizing the distance between activists and the hardest experiences of injustice and impoverishment, counterinsurgent analysts can dismiss the argument that such activists represent any legitimate grievance.[17] This is a strategy etched deeply into the history of counterrevolutionary thought—stretching back most notably to Edmund Burke's reactions to the French revolution (in which form it is

characteristically admired by modern counterinsurgent writers)[18]—through reactions to the liberal and nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, and to modern critics dismissing the self-perceptions of Marxist or guerilla groups as a vanguard of the people.[19] In its crudest form, this reading suggests that no unrest or revolutionary potential would exist but for a very small number of agitators, or even one single leader.[20] Equivalent readings were highly influential in British reactions to indigenous protest during the period of imperial rule in India, and were memorably expressed in Lord Curzon's dismissal of the Indian National Congress—eventually the key engine of the movement for independence—as a "microscopic minority."[21] A more recent manifestation of similar assumptions is evident in the policy and practice of the current U.S. administration toward Iraq. That insurgents in Iraq do not represent the people—in the official interpretation—is indicated by the fact that "democratic" institutions have been set up in the postwar period, the working of which insurgents are trying to disrupt.

A war on terrorism in any given context is thus closely linked to such assumptions precisely because they make it a viable policy; if insurgents lack popular support, it is assumed that they can be suppressed with (at most) acceptable costs. There are both practical and theoretical flaws in this aspect of counterinsurgent analysis. In practice, there are at least some particular cases in which revolutionaries or terrorists have considerable support within a surrounding community, at least to the extent that repression of such movements proves difficult, and arguably more destructive than the movements themselves (examples include the British-backed repression of the 1798 insurrection in Ireland, and the repression of the Paris Commune in 1871). As we shall note, further pro-state discourses exist for dealing with the strength of networks of support for terrorism and for defending the practice of war against terrorism in this context. From a theoretical point of view, it is very rare that those who rebel are the most impoverished, so it is not realistic to test revolutionary movements according to whether revolutionaries have personally experienced the greatest injustice.

What is more immediately significant in counterinsurgent or counterrevolutionary analysis—and specifically in the analysis posited by supporters of wars against terrorism—is the suggestion that underlying repression exists a represented majority, whose will must prevail against a microscopic minority (the terrorists and their supporters) through numbers, and ultimately through force. In this sense, there is a fundamental similarity between the advocates of war against terrorism and apologists for particular terrorist movements; each argues that their violence fairly

represents a community's protest against an intolerable state of affairs. Moreover, close attention to discourses underlying war against terrorism reveals striking claims made about the nature of this communal protest, as well as its translation into state action.

There is a noted disjuncture between two aspects of the rhetoric accompanying the current war against terrorism; an effort to demarcate terrorism as a barbaric phenomenon that must be eliminated, and the fact that this war undoubtedly, at least partially, is—and is occasionally justified as[22]—a war of revenge for an attack upon the United States or the West. Logically, an element of revenge has to exist; terrorism was as evil on September 10, 2001 as it was on September 12, yet U.S. policy was not previously so focused on a war against terrorism. It is not clear on whose behalf it is intended to exact revenge, since some of those personally bereaved on September 11 did not favor a violent or warlike response.[23] Possibly more problematic is the combining of a defense of the values of civilization with an alleged urge for revenge, little more sophisticated in principle than lynch law, though backed by the most technologically advanced and lavishly funded military combination in history. There is a further implication, as with all supposedly primal urges for righteous revenge, that this urge could not be denied expression—it *had* to have an outlet—an implication that poses the question as to what would have happened had that urge not been harnessed and gratified in the military action of the United States and its allies.

Investigation of a variety of historical contexts, especially nineteenth-century Ireland and India, reveals this to be a common and significant feature of wars against terrorism.

India

Victorian British legal historian and judge James Fitzjames Stephen is best known to posterity as a critic of John Stuart Mill, particularly in his *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873).[24] In this book he argued that the right to liberty could not act as the basis of a political or social order. Stephen went considerably further than just suggesting that authority and repression were necessary for pessimistic or negative reasons, and advanced a sophisticated argument about the moral and rational purpose of authority and of state coercion; the willingness to control the barbaric or the disruptive forces within a state and, at times, beyond its borders, was a positive building block of civilization.[25]

Stephen also articulated an unusually cogent cognate justification for British rule in India. Stephen served the Raj for two and a half years

as Legal Member to the Viceroy's Council, years toward which he felt immense pride,[26] and he personally suggested that his time in India materially influenced the ideas he advanced in *Liberty*.[27] Admirers also later suggested that Indian experience "not unnaturally" accentuated his tendency to take a more ennobling view of the coercive actions of the state,[28] and more critical later writers also drew connections between the two.[29] Stephen indeed argued that India demonstrated an instance of the legitimacy not only of conquest, but also of the continued holding of territory as a conquest. In developing the natural resources of India, maintaining order, dispensing justice and honest administration, and restraining its peoples by suppressing barbaric customs such as widow-burning and female infanticide, the British in India were using force to serve the development of higher civilization.[30] Before the British conquest, Indian society "for centuries has been the theatre of disorder and war," and only the firm hand of British rule preserved order.[31]

Stephen further advanced a theory that ingeniously asserted the existence of a combination of indigenous acceptance of the superiority of British civilization—an indigenous inability to actualize, unaided, the rule of law that was its bedrock—and the characteristic counterrevolutionary argument that insurgent resistance to the existing political order lacked the support of the community. Indian opinion, he argued, recognized the value of British reforms, but owing to moral cowardice, was particularly prone to be intimidated or terrorized by small numbers of bandits, seditious influences, or elders defending barbaric customs, and thus needed the British to impose ordered civilization from above. Stephen insisted that "many, and indeed most, of the natives recognized . . . enormities" such as female infanticide "in what we should regard as their true colours, and that they had been permitted only through supineness and indifference."[32] Stephen similarly lauded the work of legal codification in British India for providing a means to resist criminal gangs, which the "submissive" indigenous population otherwise lacked.[33] The governance of India by Europeans, and the repressive action of the British state, thus upheld civilized values in India against a barbaric foe who would read misplaced respect for cultural difference and "native ideas" as appeasement and weakness: "to shrink from enforcing [Western ideas], would, in my opinion, be, and be felt to be, an act of mere timidity, and would have no other effect than that of teaching the natives that we did not dare to do what on our own principles we could not deny to be just."[34] A clear affinity exists between such arguments and post-9/11 defenses of the war against terrorism.[35]

At times however, in private, Stephen's motives for defending particular structures of British rule appear in a different light. In 1876, Stephen suggested that his friend, the then Viceroy Lord Lytton, promote the prospect of expanded indigenous employment in the institutions of the imperial state.[36] Within a few weeks, however, having taken soundings from Anglo-Indian (i.e., European) opinion, Stephen was more hesitant:

> the Europeans are few enough to have their conduct influenced by slight passing causes, & you must recollect that the European, who (cant apart) really is the superior of the natives, & is in this country only by virtue of that superiority, will pass to the debit of the natives with whom he is brought into contact anything that he regards as a humiliation inflicted on himself. Any attempt to alter the real relation between the two will produce the most bitter resentment in the Europeans, & where the natives give them a chance, which sooner or later they will, why then, as I heard a civilian observe not long ago, "the baboos will get a good deal hurt."[37]

A substantial element of Stephen's motivation for resisting an expansion of the official role of Indians was thus a fear of a vengeful and racist backlash, particularly against "baboos" (educated Europeanized Indians), by white European leaders of imperial society. Significantly, a few years later, Stephen was a leading mouthpiece of Anglo-Indian protest at the Ilbert Bill, a proposal of the British-backed Government of India to expand the role of indigenous judges in the administration of justice (which would have seen them ruling in cases with Europeans on trial).[38] That this opposition forced the government to emasculate the measure suggests that fear of an Anglo-Indian backlash was not a peripheral influence on the course of events.[39] Moreover, educated Indians' frustration with their want of such official opportunities would play a key role in the emerging confrontation between Indian nationalism and the British Raj; this would be the key grievance in the formation of the Indian National Congress,[40] the mainstay of Indian nationalist protest for over two generations of confrontation and attempted British suppression until independence was achieved in 1947.

Concerns similar to those Stephen advanced thus continued to impact British policy in the administration of India. Ostensibly, Stephen advanced a lucid defense of a coercive state's war on terrorist sedition as a necessary precondition of the universally recognized values of civilization. In fact, however, Stephen's and others' fears of their inability to control a violence as atavistic as any form of sedition—albeit the violence of

defenders of the Raj—helped to define battle lines for two generations of conflict in India between the British imperial state and insurgent nationalist opponents.

Ireland

The nineteenth-century, and more recent, history of pro-state discourses and terrorism-related conflicts in Ireland reveals many commonalities with this structure of influences. The tendency, discussed above, for the republican Provisional IRA to be framed as the only or main terrorist threat to peace in the recent history of Northern Ireland has had a powerful political effect from 9/11, when concerted efforts were made by unionist and British right-wing opinion to use the new odium acquired by formations labeled "terrorist" against the Provisional IRA.[41] In fact, figures released in 2004 by the Police Service of Northern Ireland revealed that a clear majority of incidents of paramilitary-related violence since 1998 had involved loyalists, not republicans. Even before 9/11, however, the notion of a war against terrorism in Northern Ireland was largely considered to have reductively antirepublican intonations.[42]

Nationalist and republican protest, occasionally described at the time as terrorism, was also from pro-state perspectives the major problem in Ireland, as in the Indian case, in the late nineteenth century, when the whole of the island of Ireland was incorporated within the United Kingdom. Such protest included Fenian and other Irish-American groups' attacks in Britain and Ireland, crime and intimidation of landlords and officials in rural Ireland, and, later, the attacks of the early IRA on military, police, and other targets in Ireland during the Irish war of independence (1919–21), around the time of southern Ireland becoming independent and the partition of the island. As in India, there was an established British and unionist stereotype which presupposed that terrorism arose in Ireland not because of grievances and community support, but because moral cowardice led Irish people to capitulate to terrorist leadership. British policy, in the words of one historian, was influenced by "the common British view of the Irish as a quaint, childlike race, often incompetent, and easily terrorized or led . . . into violent behaviour."[43] Similar stereotypes were still evident in recent British newspaper coverage of the Northern Ireland conflict.[44]

Reminders of the existence of pro-state loyalist paramilitary groups and of the recent extent of loyalist violence themselves serve as an antidote to such representations. Again, however, the extent to which confrontation between British rulers and indigenous nationalism encom-

passing terrorism and repression was fundamentally conditioned by the perceived threat of pro-state violence—and not just from Ulster—is arguably more revealing. Opposition in Protestant Ulster to Irish nationalist independence was already in evidence in the late nineteenth century. It was suggested in some quarters that not only would Protestant Ulster forcibly resist any effort by a British government to grant independence to Ireland, but also that, if a military confrontation ensued, the supposedly more disciplined Protestant community would prevail at the expense of the Catholic Irish.[45] The threat of violent resistance to home rule from Protestant Ulster moved to the center stage of the Irish question in the early twentieth century, when (backed by British supporters) it first frustrated the implementation of the British government's third Home Rule bill of 1912,[46] and then complicated further efforts at British-Irish settlement in the period which produced the Anglo-Irish war of 1919–21. It was influentially long argued that, in view of likely forceful Protestant resistance to home rule, denying autonomy to nationalist Ireland was the best way to preserve peace in the country.[47] The nature of Protestant Ulster's aversion to home rule was depicted by some British ruling-class admirers as an accurate divination of the fact that Irish Catholics were an inferior people, and an independent Ireland dominated by Catholic numbers would represent an inferior civilization.[48] Yet at other times, even supporters suggested that if Ulster unionist opposition to home rule was irrational and grounded in sectarian suspicion of Catholics, on that very ground it was impossible to reason with the unionists: "The right of Ulster to resist Home Rule," one supporter asserted, "is the right of every man to protect his hearth . . . elemental, as old as humanity itself."[49]

From 1920, sectarian violence erupted in the new state of Northern Ireland, still part of the United Kingdom but partitioned from the rest of Ireland that was about to become independent. In spite of the fact that Catholics were usually the victims of this violence, in the words of a historian of this conflict, the authorities focused their attention more on the "war against terrorism," the suppression of the relatively small amount of nationalist and republican insurgency.[50] Unionist leader Sir James Craig told British ministers in September 1920 that the "Loyalist rank and file have determined to take action" at perceived dangers posed by republicans in their midst, a threat of vengeful pro-state violence that authorities harnessed by absorbing Protestant vigilante elements within the state's new police force. This step, in historian Michael Hopkinson's view, "defined the long-term character of loyalist government of the six counties," thus giving rise to key nationalist grievances in the new

state.[51] Some scholars suggest that an exaggerated fear of a loyalist violent backlash in the 1960s also inhibited the British government from pressuring the unionist government of Northern Ireland to enact political reforms. It could thus be argued that the threat of pro-state violence was a critical precondition of government policies which helped to accentuate nationalist and republican protest in Northern Ireland, a protest which from 1969 onward increasingly took on the form of terrorism.[52] In the early 1970s, British and unionist authorities focused on the suppression of republican violence, even regarding loyalist vigilante groups as allies in that project rather than a danger that could or should be controlled;[53] this policy inflamed violence in Northern Ireland, leading to the disastrous Bloody Sunday shootings of 1972.[54] Authorities' perception of their inability to control pro-state violence and intimidation continued to inhibit efforts at resolving the conflict thereafter, most notably paralyzing the first attempt at power-sharing in 1974.[55] In recent times, academic counterinsurgent commentators have tended to adopt high estimates of the ability of Ulster Protestants to resist forcefully any attempted imposition by the British state of undesired policies in Northern Ireland; in this sense, such commentators' disproportionate condemnation of republican insurgency may in part be seen not as a principled opposition to terrorism, but as an acceptance of the unionist case, which, in part, comprises a capitulation, on the grounds of political expediency, to pro-state intimidation and violence.[56]

One thus does not need to accept republican arguments for a united Ireland to observe that the determination of segments of Ulster Protestant opinion to resist incorporation in an independent Ireland usually favored by the majority in the island—a determination which at times took on paramilitary and violent forms—has been one of the contingencies which has contributed to political conflict in Ireland. From the late nineteenth century, the British decision not to grant home rule as favored by Irish nationalists, and to maintain an at times coercive rule in parts of Ireland, was in part justified on the ground that it controlled the latent and potentially more destructive violence that would ensue with Ulster's resistance to home rule. This source of pro-state violence was sometimes depicted even by proponents as involving a sectarian bullying of a minority or a weaker party, and was more widely depicted as atavistic and beyond control, whether by reason or executive authority.

But this was not the only source of otherwise allegedly uncontrollable violence from which proponents of the Union suggested it protected the Irish people; indeed, in late nineteenth-century political debate, more powerful arguments among British and unionist observers suggested that

such other violent tendencies emanated from Britain itself. It was suggested that in the event of independence in Ireland, a military or geopolitical conflict with Britain might ensue in which Irish nationalist leaders and the Irish people would face the unfettered action of the more powerful British state. In 1885, just before the first home rule crisis, the *Londonderry Standard* expressed this concern in a warning to Irish nationalists featuring a memorable metaphor:

> Parliament cannot vote the dissolution of the country, and, were it to do so, the country itself would very soon come to blows. And if it came to blows—with four million Irish on the one side, and forty million, supported with all the resources of the Empire, on the other—everyone knows what the result must be. Yet it is to such a crisis that the Nationalists are doing their very best to drive this unfortunate nation on. An infuriated frog rushes forth into the open to do battle with an elephant. To use Carlyle's figure, the elephant lifts his foot and "squelches it."[57]

This argument also featured in the jurist Albert Dicey's influential book *England's Case against Home Rule*.[58] Ostensibly, Dicey posited arguments as to why Irish home rule was contrary to British interests, but in fact his analysis was more wide ranging. Dicey's aim was the "complete moral union" of Britain and Ireland, and he argued that "Irish discontent" was "curable" and best met through reforms administered through the wealth of the British state, justice dispensed in British-backed courts, and, where necessary, coercion by the British executive.[59] Dicey's opposition to home rule, and that of many leading British political figures at the time, was framed by a set of self-consciously realist assumptions about international relations,[60] according to which sovereign nation-states, with their separate and rival interests, were highly prone to act in a self-interested way and thus fall into collision.[61] In any resulting confrontation between an independent Ireland and Britain, the smaller state would come off worst. In the anarchic international-relations system, such a scenario could not be avoided, so it was better for the Irish people to remain part of the United Kingdom. In retrospect, this argument could be criticized on the empirical grounds that an independent Ireland would not prove as vulnerable as suggested.[62] But this analysis also seems logically faulty due to the selective nature of its "realism"; actors in international affairs were assumed to be impelled uncontrollably to act in a Hobbesian state of war, yet the same British rulers who would cripple an independent Ireland militarily or economically were expected to do "justice" to Irish demands if Ireland remained part of the same state.[63] In any

case, the same British ruling class that found this argument persuasive in the late nineteenth century would have controlled British policy in the hypothetical event of Irish independence, thus effectively avowing their inability to inhibit the crushing effects toward the Irish people of militarism emanating from the British state. Coercion of Irish nationalism, a war against the terrorism practiced by Irish republicans and agrarian activists,[64] was deemed a necessary and superior alternative.

Discourses Regarding Terrorism and Immigration

Wars against terrorism in both Ireland and India in the nineteenth century and beyond, like the current war against terrorism, also had domestic repercussions. There is a long history in both Britain and the United States of links being drawn (often spuriously) between immigrants and social problems. In recent times the British and U.S. popular media have linked terrorist attacks in both countries to communities of immigrants, and expressed frustration at authorities for not doing more to limit immigration or to detain or deport Islamic radicals.[65] Proponents of more restrictive immigration policies claim that they faithfully represent popular animosity to immigration, and that by articulating so-called "legitimate concerns" about immigration, they are channeling sentiments which otherwise might find expression in racist political parties or nativist violence.[66] While such rhetoric, which often emanates from socially privileged positions, blames the immigrants themselves for creating racial tensions, immigrants are in fact the victims of restrictions and of the forces of global capitalism ultimately behind the movement of peoples.[67] Assertions as to the potency of nativist backlash against immigrants do however comprise political pressure for more repressive executive action toward immigrants. In the first half of the twentieth century, Jewish immigrants to Britain were negatively stereotyped with associations to crime, Bolshevism, and terrorist action against British forces during the British occupation of Palestine. Subsequent limitations on immigration, partly inspired by perceived popular hostility to immigrants, cut off an avenue of escape for Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe, thus playing a role in exposing more Jews to Hitler's death camps.[68] In the cases of nineteenth-century Ireland and India, discourses justifying repressive responses to immigration had less tragic consequences, but also reflected fear of atavistic forms of pro-state violence.

In nineteenth-century Britain, Irish immigrants had been blamed by commentators and occasionally the authorities for spreading poverty by competing for low-paid jobs, for allegedly disproportionate involvement

in ordinary crime, and for bringing and spreading contagious diseases.[69] In the 1860s and 1880s, Irish nationalists and republicans were responsible for a number of attacks in Britain on public buildings, targets including, in episodes with a modern resonance, London underground stations. Thanks in part to the ostentatious loyalty of most Irish people in contemporary Britain,[70] the intimidation and harassment of Irish people in Britain evident during late twentieth-century republican terror campaigns[71] was largely absent one hundred years earlier, and the moderate response of the British government and of British opinion has been praised by some historians.[72] As the willingness to make excuses for Dudley's attack on Rossa demonstrates, however, responses were informed by the conviction that the cause of disturbance in British-Irish relations lay in a minority of Irish-American professional agitators,[73] not any communal grievance in Ireland, and that U.S. authorities possessed the means of ending terrorist activity in Britain but had been remiss in rounding up such agitators. There, thus, was an assumption that Dudley was expressing a righteous and elemental urge to revenge against those who had wronged her country, an urge that was expressed illegally because it was not channeled by adequate state action.

By the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, nationalist Indian students visiting Britain were increasingly blamed for disorder. British nationalists and Jingoes responded with violence and intimidation to students' celebrative commemoration of the 1857 Indian mutiny (which students saw as a patriotic revolt) on its fiftieth anniversary in 1907. Typically, these incidents were represented by mainstream opinion as the fault of the Indians owing to their association with nationalist antistate protest in India, which took on forms sometimes seen as "terrorist"; even though in Britain the Indian students were the victims of violence, British opinion deemed them blameworthy. The establishment newspaper the *Times* spoke of an "Indian student problem," and restrictions on the admission of Indian students were introduced by authorities.[74] The Jingo pro-state violence directed at the students was thus officially seen as a justifiable outburst of atavistic frustration at Indian nationalism, which outburst should not be directly suppressed (in contrast to the attempted suppression of antistate activism in Britain and in India itself); instead, the frustrations underpinning it were ultimately gratified by the authorities.

Conclusion

Contrary to its depiction as a defense of civilized values against a barbaric foe, even discourses justifying the current war against terrorism suggest that it has roots in urges to violence no less atavistic, elemental, and chaotic than terrorism as commonly negatively depicted, albeit urges which happen to be pro-state. The examples discussed here, taken largely from late nineteenth-century India and Ireland, demonstrate that the current war against terrorism is by no means unique in this. Idealism and violence are always in close proximity in the order created by the modern nation-state, so that the rhetoric accompanying a war against terrorism merely denotes violent forces exerting moments of particular control. According to accompanying discourses, a war against terrorism is necessary because such atavistic urges to violence among a community cannot be suppressed, but have to be appeased and channeled. Often these pro-state tendencies to violence are vengeful, so that those who legitimize or excuse them adopt particularly holistic assumptions toward first-world nations and ethnic communities—one that occludes, in Chakrabarty's terms, "other possibilities of human solidarity"—presupposing that members of such communities possess some right to vengeance in response to perceived or actual wrong committed against other members; this demand for vengeance, it is suggested, must be gratified by the state. It seems clear that in at least some of the instances that have been discussed in this chapter, the desire for "revenge" within the population onto which it has been projected has been exaggerated and manipulated for political or ulterior motives. This is in one sense reassuring, since the satiation of an irresistible lust for communal vengeance, such as the rhetoric of a war against terrorism supposes, would not comprise a defense of civilization, but an abnegation of a civilizing process[75] which has largely involved the transcending of the rule of vengeance. The fact that such rhetoric is inaccurate comprises, however, no defense of war against terrorism, suggesting that in some respects it is based on a view of human interaction that is not only incorrect, but also deeply uncivilized, privileging the role of violence, power, and irrationality.

To make these points is not to offer specific policy recommendations in relation to any current or future terrorism-related conflict, nor to lionize antistate violence just because it is outside of the state, nor to blur, as occurs in postmodern methodologies, the difference between terrorist and victim;[76] in fact, counterinsurgent commentators, where unwilling to consider the significance of pro-state violence and intimidation, are guilty of lacking a clear awareness of the distinction between terrorism

(in its pro-state forms) and its victims, and frequently indeed blame the latter. The argument advanced in this chapter does illustrate however that at least in some scenarios it must be a contingent judgment whether pro-state violence and coercion really represent civilization, or even a civilization superior to the forces that may underpin certain forms of insurgent or terrorist protest. It is certainly acting in the interests of civilization neither to deny the relevance of such inquiries, nor to try to close down debate about terrorism and its opponents by invoking simplistic moral categories.

Notes

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CHAPTER 9

Half Devil and Half Child: America's War with Terror in the Philippines, 1899–1902

John Coats

After waging war for almost three years against an elusive enemy, many American commanders in the Philippine islands were frustrated. The United States had entered the archipelago after its brief, triumphant war against Spain in 1898. However, in addition to gaining a colony, the United States also inherited Spain's war against a Filipino army determined to win independence. Unwilling to surrender its prize, the United States won a brief conventional war against its outmatched opponent and declared victory, only to find that the war had entered a nonconventional phase in which Filipino nationalists established a shadow government and fought a tenacious guerrilla campaign against the U.S. Army. To break the resistance, the Americans employed a strategy that combined military pressure with benevolent policies. By 1901, the resistance had been confined to a pair of provinces, but in those provinces the war took an ugly turn. Filipino insurgents increasingly employed terrorist tactics to force cooperation from a war-weary populace and to combat the occupying forces. Impatient American officers, chafing under limiting rules of engagement, chose to use terror to eliminate stubborn pockets of resistance. In both cases, isolated atrocities and uses of terror in the early months of the war would be used to justify more systematic terrorist activities in the final weeks of the conflict.

Guiding American conduct during the war was General Order 100 (1863): "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States

in the Field." The orders, which other Western nations used as a model for their own regulations, called occupying troops to a high standard of conduct when dealing with pacified populations. In the Philippines, this aspect of the occupation was characterized by the official policy of benevolent assimilation. However, the orders also criminalized insurgents, thereby allowing the army to utilize repressive measures against guerrilla forces and those who abetted them. In the Philippines the army was loathe to enforce the punitive measures of G.O. 100, but by 1901 their inability to crush the last bastions of resistance led them to strip the guerrilla fighters of their protection as lawful combatants. The army could deport insurgents, destroy the property of sympathizers, and summarily execute offenders.[1] The provisions, restraints, and powers contained in the G.O. 100 provide a framework in which to consider how an army bound by standing orders could utilize terror while fighting to preserve colonial order.

While the army struggled to pacify the islands, the American people sought to make sense of the Philippine War. Most had embraced the war with Spain and the acquisition of the Philippine islands, but they needed a means to understand both a distant war and an alien people who so bitterly resisted American rule. As other chapters in this book have suggested, wars on terror can be used to define adversaries, contain popular unrest, and protect existing institutions from radical change. The United States war in the Philippines also adds to our understanding of these issues by considering how late nineteenth-century Americans framed a distant war on terror: They struggled with reports of atrocities, found familiar definitions of the nonwhite other to understand their enemy, and drew upon their memory of past conflicts.[2] As both sides, hardened by months of low-intensity guerrilla war, embraced the use of terror, the Philippine War became a matter of national conscience.

Benevolent Assimilation

America's involvement in the Philippines came about as a result of the Spanish-American War—a conflict that also might be considered a war on terror. In 1895, Cuban rebels renewed their armed struggle to gain independence from Spain. Faced with a large Spanish military presence on the island, the Cubans adopted guerrilla tactics. They avoided pitched battles, attacked economic targets, drew support from the populace, and occasionally employed terror. For their part, the Spanish chose for the second time in three decades to commit men and resources in an effort to hold one of their few remaining colonial possessions. Spain's General Valeriano

Weyler applied harsh methods to bring the rebels to heel. His campaign against the insurgents ranged from travel restrictions and the application of military law to acts of terror such as summary executions, the destruction of crops, and the burning of homes. Weyler was best known for his adoption of *reconcentrado,* the removal and resettlement of dispersed rural populations to overcrowded, unsanitary collection sites (concentration camps) where some 100,000 to 400,000 Cubans would perish.[3]

The American people closely followed events in Cuba through the nation's popular and sensationalist press, whose editors found the conflict in Cuba irresistible. The fighting provided their publications with lurid headlines that sold papers, and the American people read daily accounts of the fighting. While the press recounted (and embroidered) the human price of Spanish policies, the administrations of Grover Cleveland and William McKinley took a measured approach to the problem. Both pressured the Spanish government to settle the conflict by granting Cuba and Puerto Rico autonomy, but even when Spain made just such an offer, the Cuban leadership pressed for full independence. The U.S. position shifted in February 1898 when the publication of an inflammatory Spanish diplomatic note and the destruction of the U.S. battleship *Maine* (which the press widely attributed to Spanish treachery) brought the United States to the verge of war with Spain. Under U.S. pressure, Spain agreed to a cease-fire and promised reforms, but refused to consider Cuban independence. On April 11, McKinley asked Congress for the authority to use military force to end the Cuban conflict and within two weeks Spain and the United States were at war.

The war against Spain was widely supported by an American people inspired by complex motives. McKinley's April 11 message to Congress focused mainly on humanitarian concerns and economic interests—and he was largely on the mark. Businessmen and agrarian interests hoped that the war would protect commerce and enlarge American markets. Other Americans focused on the plight of the Cuban people; Republican senator George F. Hoar echoed the sentiments of many when he argued that "we cannot look idly on while hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings . . . die of hunger close to our doors. If there is ever to be a war it should be to prevent such things as that."[4] Imperialists saw an opportunity to step boldly onto the world stage and add to the United States small colonial holdings. They looked beyond Cuba (which was officially removed from the imperial menu by the Teller Amendment) to other Spanish colonies.

In what Secretary of State John Hay called "a splendid little war," American forces not only defeated the Spanish in Cuba but systematically

stripped Spain of its colonies. An American fleet under the command of Admiral George Dewey attacked and decisively defeated Spanish naval forces in the Philippines on May 1, 1898. On the islands, the Americans found the Spanish army engaged with Filipino insurgents who were fighting for independence. The Spanish garrison refused to surrender to the Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo, but did turn Manila over to American troops in mid-August. The American army settled into the capital's Spanish fortifications while the Filipino army remained in its trenches. Within a few short months a war that had begun, ostensibly, as a crusade to liberate Cuba from a colonial power that terrorized its people, had ended. As the ink dried on the Treaty of Paris, Spain had lost, and America gained, an overseas empire.

There was little question as to what to do with Cuba (which became an American protectorate), Puerto Rico, or Guam (both of which became colonies), but the annexation of the Philippines faced immediate, fierce, and prolonged opposition from a powerful, well-organized cadre of anti-imperialists in the United States. The opposition offered arguments against annexing the Philippines that ranged from the highest ideals of American democracy to the most basic racist stereotypes of the day: Colonies would undermine the principles of self-government, cheap Asian labor would hurt American workers, expensive standing armies would be needed to garrison the islands, Asian peoples would pollute American society, and an empire would lead to the foreign entanglements decried by generations of isolationists. The imperialists replied that they acted in the best interest of the United States and the Philippines. Annexation would improve commerce, move the United States fully onto the world stage, protect the Filipinos from less-altruistic imperial powers, and provide an opportunity for the Filipinos to grow under the tutelage of the United States. More significantly, the imperialists had momentum on their side; the Philippines were already in American hands. It was difficult to argue when President McKinley asked, "who will withdraw from the people over whom it [the American flag] floats its protecting folds?"[5] After a heated debate, the treaty passed on February 6, 1899, by a 57–27 vote—only two more than the needed two-thirds majority. But if the imperialists believed the vote had put an end to the Filipino question, events proved otherwise.

While the Senate debated, Aguinaldo prepared for independence. He had been led to believe, or had assumed, that his cooperation with the United States would guarantee his leadership of an independent republic after the war. However, as it became clear that the Americans did not view them as equal partners, Filipino leaders organized a government,

wrote a constitution and declared an independent Philippine Republic in late January. Two days after the vote in the Senate, hostilities broke out in Manila between American and Filipino troops, plunging the United States into its first overseas war against a colonial people determined to win their independence.

The war in the Philippines unfolded in three distinct stages, each more terrible than its predecessor. Beginning in February 1899, Filipino and American forces fought a conventional war that featured large formations of uniformed troops fighting set piece battles for geographic objectives. During the first months of the war, the Americans firmly believed that benevolent rule would win over the Filipinos. In November of that same year, the Filipino forces dispersed and adopted guerrilla tactics, forcing the Americans to undertake a counter-insurgency campaign. During this phase of the war, the guerrilla forces enjoyed widespread support by the population and targeted an American military that shifted to a pacification role. By April 1901, the Americans had captured Aguinaldo and largely succeeded in suppressing the insurgency. However, in the provinces, where insurgency persisted, both Filipino and American forces resorted to the systematic use of terror to achieve their goals. By the summer of 1902, the Americans succeeded in breaking the last organized resistance to American rule, but they did so at an enormous cost in terms of lives, property, and their integrity.

However, in 1899 the price of their new colony was not evident to many Americans, least of all to those interested in creating an American Empire. The McKinley administration and its supporters entered the Philippines confident that their new charges would soon realize the benefits of American rule. In 1898, many Americans challenged traditional isolationist sentiments and shared a belief that their superior, even exceptional, nation shared a responsibility with other "civilized" western nations to impart their culture to the nonwhite peoples of the world. As Rudyard Kipling so famously wrote, the west would have to: "Take up the White Man's burden—Send forth the best ye breed—Go, bind your sons to exile to serve your captives' need; to wait, in heavy harness, on fluttered folk and wild—Your new-caught sullen peoples, half devil and half child." Optimistic soldiers, officials, and correspondents believed that the "better" Filipinos would welcome American protection and aid as they struggled to bring their uneducated kin into the civilized world. The Americans would win hearts and minds by staffing schools, reforming the legal system, engaging in public works projects, opening trade and modeling democratic ideals. As William Howard Taft would later put it, "We think we can help these people; we think we can elevate

them to an appreciation of popular government."[6] President McKinley formally made this progressive approach the centerpiece of American policy in the Philippines when he called for a policy of benevolent assimilation through just and fair rule. To McKinley, the United States had a high calling, to create in the Filipinos "a people redeemed from savage indolence and habits, devoted to the arts of peace, in touch with commerce and trade of all nations, enjoying the blessing of freedom, of civil and religious liberty, of education, and of homes, whose children . . . shall for ages hence bless the American republic because it emancipated and redeemed their fatherland, and set them in the pathway of the world's best civilization."[7]

While fully expecting to win over the Filipino people (or at least the ones that really mattered), the McKinley administration faced differing conceptions of the nation's new charges. Many Americans, the vast majority of who knew little of the Philippines, drew from a variety of traditions and models to understand a distant people. To define the Filipinos, they looked to the Jim Crow South, Native American conflicts, traditional Asian stereotypes, and paternalistic notions of race relations. For the most part, the Filipinos were assigned a combination of the worst Sambo and Oriental stereotypes. As historian Michael Hunt puts it, the Filipino was considered "ignorant and servile like the black, impractical and infantile like the Latino, savage like the Indian, and impassive like the Oriental."[8] From the anti-imperialist who entertained the possibility of a carefully-managed Republic of the Philippines to the most ardent racist, Americans crafted a view of the Filipino that protected the concept of American exceptionalism—that tenacious idea that American social, economic, and political systems are morally superior to other systems. Whether the Filipinos were victims in need of rescuing or an inferior, untrustworthy, and savage race in need of the discipline of western colonialism, only the rarest of Americans could conceive of them as equals.

The American perspective of the war was considerably influenced by its experience in subjugating Native American nations. Little Big Horn (1876), the Apache chief Geronimo's final capture (1886) and Wounded Knee (1890) still resonated with the American public, and Native American stereotypes (mostly negative) were employed by both politicians and the press in framing the war in the Philippines. Newspapermen regularly referred to Filipinos as natives who were led by local chiefs; the *Chicago Daily Tribune* regularly referred to Aguinaldo as an "Apache insurgent leader" who could not rule the islands' disparate tribes.[9] In response to calls to grant the Filipinos independence, Theodore

Roosevelt condescendingly suggested that "To give independence now would be precisely like giving independence to the wildest tribe of Apaches."[10] Later in the war, frustrated soldiers described the conflict as "worse than fighting Indians" and suggested "remedial measures that proved successful with the Apaches."[11] In the Philippines, as on the frontier, natives found off the reservation would witness firsthand General Order 100's coercive measures; the army could destroy property, summarily execute prisoners, and otherwise criminalize those who resisted American policy. However, should they submit, Americans readily adopted a paternalistic attitude that attempted to "elevate" the natives by bringing them into the dominant white society. For the imperialist, the insurgents clearly fit a perception of a savage other created over decades of frontier warfare.

Other Americans looked to Asian and African American stereotypes to frame their view of nonwhite peoples.[12] Both supporters and opponents of the Philippine War traded barbs concerning the treatment of blacks in the south. On one side of the argument, southern anti-imperialists like South Carolina Senator Benjamin R. Tillman wondered why the United States would want to add to its racial problems by embracing "the mongrel population" of the Philippines. He argued that the white southerners knew better than others the burden of dealing with an inferior race; by living with African Americans, they already labored under the white-man's burden.[13] This racism was not limited to southern firebrands, but was echoed by Indiana Senator Albert J. Beveridge. An ardent and unabashed imperialist, he managed to encompass virtually every negative characterization of the oriental Filipino in a January 1900 speech in which he characterized them as "a barbarous race, modified by three centuries of contact with a decadent race. The Filipino is the South Sea Malay, put through a process of 500 years of superstition in religion, dishonesty in dealing, disorder in habits of industry and cruelty, caprice and corruption in government." Such "clever" and "indolent" people, he argued, often "mistake kindness for weakness" and "must be dealt with as children."[14] Anti-imperialists also used race to warn against the long-term impact of empire; Senator Carl Schurz of New York raised the specter of an immigrant invasion of "Malays and unspeakable Asiatics by the tens of million!"[15]

In the Philippines, the attitudes of Americans toward the Filipinos varied widely. At one end of the spectrum, most American soldiers viewed the Filipinos with derision. They quickly took to calling the Filipinos "niggers" and "gugus." They often acted with cavalier indifference to the islanders' personal and property rights. For the most part, they interacted

with the Filipinos in one of three ways: in combat; in their police role; or in forays into the barrios to acquire alcohol, laundry, cheap labor, prostitutes, or other goods and services.[16] Racism, violence, and exploitation intermingled to create an exploitative and often explosive relationship between soldier and native. At the same time, American officers attempted to carry out benevolent assimilation and to cultivate relationships with local elites. McKinley charged the army with establishing a military government in the Philippines that would be "as kind and beneficent a government as possible."[17] In Manila, the army began applying the standards of progressive America to the city; they cleaned Manila's streets, inspected slaughterhouses, reopened schools, and policed the streets.[18] However, while they worked to demonstrate the benefits of American rule, they remained in fighting positions ringing the city, for Aguinaldo's army had not dispersed.

"Worse than Fighting Indians": The Guerrilla War

On February 4, 1899, an American sentry fired at a group of Filipino soldiers who failed to respond to his challenge. The incident escalated into widespread fighting, and the first phase of the war in the Philippines had begun. Throughout 1899, the Filipino and American forces fought a series of set piece battles. The Filipinos suffered loss after loss to the better-trained and -equipped Americans; however, they remained in uniform, in the field, and in defense of specific objectives. During this period, both sides generally adhered to rules that are said to govern wars between conventional armies. The American army, in particular, attempted to separate civilians from combatants, took prisoners, limited the destruction of private property, and focused their attention on driving the enemy from the field. Atrocities occur in all wars, and the first months of fighting witnessed murder, rape, burning, and pillage, but these acts were not the systematic use of terror that would appear in the final months of the war—rather, they were the terrible results of the rage, violence, and the calloused consciences that accompany war. By the end of the year, Aguinaldo's forces had been badly beaten and a new, more terrible phase of the war had begun.

In November 1899, Auginaldo and his lieutenants decided to abandon the field and adopt a guerrilla strategy. In one sense, the choice reflected failure (the Americans could not be defeated in a conventional war), but the new strategy also called to mind past successes against the Spanish. Victory might not be achieved quickly, but the goal of independence was still in reach. As explained by General Francisco Macabulos, the goal was

"not to vanquish [the American forces], a difficult matter to accomplish considering their superiority in numbers and arms, but to inflict on them constant losses, to the end of discouraging them and convincing them of our rights."[19] To this end, the army split into autonomous commands, and local Katipunan committees were formed to collect a war tax, recruit insurgents, and ensure the cooperation of their charges. As the Filipinos shifted their strategy, the American army adjusted to a new role in the islands. The army reorganized, shifting from a divisional organization best suited to fighting a conventional war to a territorial occupation pattern that divided the troops into 639 smaller garrisons by the end of 1900.[20] The Office of the Military Governor would administer the islands, taking on a police function, preparing pacified areas for the transition to civilian government, building roads, establishing schools, and generally abiding by the benevolent assimilation policy outlined by President McKinley. At the same time, the army continued to hunt the Filipino army; an overly confident General Theodore Schwan predicted that, "although the predatory bands into which . . . the insurgent forces have degenerated are giving occasional trouble, these I trust and believe, will be extirpated in short order."[21]

By late spring 1900, the army had made significant ground in implementing the benevolent side of its orders, but had achieved little success in suppressing the guerrillas. One must be careful to avoid giving the war a depth and breadth that it lacked, for in the better part of the archipelago the troops would see little action; in 34 of the 77 provinces, there would be no fighting reported between American and Filipino troops.[22] However, in other provinces, the war was often a hard fought conflict that wore down civilians, soldiers, and guerrillas alike. American companies operating against the guerrillas endured sickness, countless searches for arms caches, unforgiving terrain, and patrols that might be interrupted at any minute by a guerrilla attack. Especially frustrating was the enemy's ability to, when pressed, blend in with the civilian population. According to one officer, "Several times when a small force stops in a village to rest the people all greet you with kindly expressions, while the same ones slip away, go out into the bushes, get their guns, and waylay you further down the road. You rout them & scatter them; they hide their guns and take to their houses & claim to be amigos."[23]

To the American observer, the line between criminal and insurgent was sometimes difficult to distinguish; local bands of *ladrones* (bandits) took advantage of the wartime conditions to boldly raid villages before returning to their remote hideouts. For the most part, the American press, politicians, and other political observers labeled the Filipino fighters

as insurgents and guerrillas. However, some of the more vocal supporters of the war deliberately blurred the line between combatant and common criminal. As the war moved into its guerrilla phase, one correspondent reported that American troops sought to protect "friendly natives" from the depravations of insurgents who led a "war of brigandage" and "follow[ed] the lives of outlaws."[24] The Republicans also tended to mix the language of insurgency with banditry. In his vigorous campaigning for the McKinley-Roosevelt ticket in the summer of 1900, Roosevelt repeatedly described the Filipino resistance as "banditti" engaged in "brigandage."[25]

General Arthur MacArthur, who took over as military governor and commanding general in May 1900, had a different view of the problem. He faced a difficult situation: Casualties were rising, the guerrillas seemed to enjoy the support of the population, it was difficult to secure adequate numbers of soldiers, and his troops increasingly chafed under the restrictive policies of benevolent assimilation. A complex, controversial leader, MacArthur had a sound understanding of the challenges faced by his command. His predecessor, General Otis, had repeatedly predicted a quick victory over Filipino "troops in small bands [who were] scattered through these provinces, acting as banditti, or dispersed, playing the role of amigo with arms concealed."[26] MacArthur understood that "the bands of insurgent guerrillas are not soldiers in the true sense of the word, but it is a mistake to classify them as ladrones or armed robbers"[27]

This distinction between soldier, guerrilla, and bandit would be the deciding issue in the prosecution of the war. MacArthur's "true" Filipino soldiers wore uniforms and were part of a clearly identifiable army; as such they enjoyed protection when captured (the Americans typically disarmed Filipino soldiers and released them). The guerrillas, who fought both in and out of uniform, presented a different problem, but one that was dealt with in General Order 100 (1863). General Order 100 was written during the Civil War at the behest of Union General Henry Halleck by Francis Lieber, a professor who was interested in codifying the laws and customs of war. Halleck was particularly interested in a finding that would place Confederate guerrillas outside the protection of the law—he was given much more. Lieber wrote a code that allowed for coercive measures against guerrilla forces, but the code had a far broader reach and included sections on martial law, the exchange of prisoners, and the conduct of the army in occupied territories. General Order 100 carefully regulated the conduct of American soldiers toward pacified civilian populations in occupied territories, and the army applied

those provisions throughout the war. The orders also provided for repressive measures against guerrilla forces and those who abetted insurgents, but during the first two years of the war, the army worked within policies designed to win the support of the population; they afforded captured guerrillas prisoner-of-war status and limited reprisals (especially the destruction of property) to Filipinos caught materially aiding the insurgents.[28]

The restrictions, an elusive enemy, and a steady stream of stories recounting Filipino atrocities helped fuel the call among some commanders to increase the pressure on the insurgents. Brian Linn, in his excellent military history of the war, recounts:

> Virtually every soldier knew a victim personally or had heard of some horror visited on his comrades. . . . During the 26th Infantry's one-year tour on Panay, for example, one officer was assassinated by men wearing U.S. Army uniforms, another was lured into an ambush by guerrillas under a flag of truce, a soldier's corpse was disinterred and mutilated, . . . and three captive soldiers were tortured and killed.

The Filipino guerrillas also used terror against their own people. In U.S. Senate hearings William Howard Taft would repeatedly claim that "it would have been utterly impossible to continue the guerrilla warfare . . . without the system of terrorism and assassination and murder which prevails." On the other hand, General MacArthur reported that "Intimidation has undoubtedly accomplished much to this end [ensuring civilian support], but fear as the only motive is hardly sufficient to account for the united and apparently spontaneous action of several millions of people." Indeed, in the war's opening months, the Filipino people had widely supported Aguinaldo and his army (both in the field and as guerrillas). However, the cost of supporting the insurgents grew as the months passed, their enthusiasm waned, and increasing numbers started supporting the Americans—some for personal gain and some as the best means to bring peace.[29]

Increasingly, the guerrillas resorted to terror to ensure that the population did not betray the revolutionary cause. The most common targets of terrorist action were the officials of American-friendly municipal governments. Collaborationist mayors, or *presidentes,* were intimidated and punished with penalties ranging from fines to destruction of property to execution. When an individual was out of reach, the guerrillas might kidnap family members or advertise a reward for assassinations and other acts of terror. Summary beatings and house burnings were common, and

one district commander called for all American sympathizers to be executed traitors.[30] In 1900 alone, in four districts in the central Luzon department, the guerrillas killed 204 Filipinos for cooperating with the American army and assaulted another 167.[31] Glenn May, in his study of the war in the province of Batangas, argues that for the insurgent's shadow government, dispensing justice against traitors was difficult, and "as severe as the guerrillas' sentences—corporal punishment and death—may have seemed, they were really the only kinds of sanctions available to them."[32] However other historians have found that guerrilla justice often reflected "individual sadism or of a policy of deliberate terrorism more than of the implementation of justice."[33] The use of terror achieved limited results: It did coerce Filipinos outside American zones of control to support the insurgents and also discouraged cooperation with occupying forces. But the use of terror proved a two-edged sword, for in targeting their own people, the guerrillas undermined their own position and, in many cases, advanced the American policy of benevolent assimilation.

Local American commanders and their troops grew frustrated with the continued emphasis on benevolent assimilation—some chafed under the restrictions while others began to circumvent them. Isolated groups of American soldiers, mostly led by junior officers, committed atrocities that included physical abuse, the execution of prisoners, and torture. The most famous of such atrocities, and certainly the method that drew the most attention from the press, was the infamous "water cure." In this torture, the accused would be made to lie on his back and then forced to consume gallons of water, which would then be forced out of the victim by pressing on his stomach. How did American troops justify such torture? Many of the officers had arrived in the islands full of confidence in their ability to win over the Filipinos, but their experience in the islands soon colored their perceptions of the native people and hardened their hearts. Stuart Creighton Miller, in his highly critical history of the war, ably illustrates how soldiers moved from paternalistic sympathy for the Filipinos to a desire to achieve pacification through the use of force. One such soldier, Captain Matthew Batson, at first expressed his disgust over the destruction of a peaceful village, but within six months was proudly writing home that the course of his native Macabebe scouts "is easily traced by the smoke from burning homes."[34] Executions, torture, and the torch—while neither officially sanctioned nor pervasive—were used by local commanders who believed that benevolent assimilation could not pacify a stubborn, uncivilized foe. Many soldiers easily justified their abuses by recalling the atrocities committed by the Filipinos, thus creating a vicious circle of retaliation.

Aguinaldo and his followers had banked heavily on their guerrilla strategy having worn down popular support for the war among the American people by the time polls opened in the 1900 presidential election. They assumed that William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic nominee, would withdraw American troops if he won. General Tomas Mascarado had rallied the people, "[as] McKinley falls by the way side, the people abandon him and incline to the political party of Bryan whose fundamental teaching is the recognition of our independence."[35] Their belief was well founded, for the official platform of the Democratic party argued for an independent Philippines under the protection of the United States. The Republicans cried foul, arguing that Bryan only encouraged the insurrectionists—a case validated by an increase in insurgent activity that inflicted casualties on the Americans at a rate approaching the climax of the conventional phase of the war.[36]

Rather than ending the imperialist experiment in the Philippines, the election of 1900 hastened the defeat of the insurgents. McKinley decisively defeated Bryan and the better-informed Filipino clearly understood that the Republicans would not grant the Philippines independence—the war would go on. This political reality, combined with the American army's ongoing and increasingly aggressive operations against the guerrillas, convinced many Filipinos that they should throw in their lot with the Americans.

The Dirty War

The Philippine War was entering its final phase and a combination of pressures combined to create a dirty war that colors the entire history of the conflict. The Filipino insurgents' persistence, tactics, and use of terror caused local American commanders to increasingly sanction terror to achieve their goals. Many American officers believed that strict implementation of G.O. 100 could quickly end the war. In the districts where the insurgency persisted, they argued, the policy of benevolent pacification had clearly failed. Even where the civilian population desired to end their support of the rebels and find peace, their fear of the guerrillas ensured their cooperation with the insurgents. As attractive as peace might have been, it was not worth taking the risk of the burnings, beatings, or assassinations meted out by the guerrillas. Given this situation, some Americans believed that the only way to pacify the troubled districts was to selectively and systematically use terror to make the population more fearful of the United States Army than of the insurgents. To deal with the insurgent's use of terror, Brigadier General

Jacob Smith argued that "a few killings under G.O. 100 will aid very much in making the enemy stop these assassinations [of officials working with the Americans]."[37] Another officer continued to count the insurgents as criminals: "We must take firm hold of this bandit and *ladrone* question: he bullet and prison labor, under the lash, are the only instrumentalities . . . to work our beneficent purposes of reform."[38] Many officers agreed that the rifle, gallows, and torch needed to replace efforts to win hearts and minds.

General Order 100 provided a legal framework that endorsed punitive measures against guerrilla forces and their sympathizers. Its provisions, many of which directly applied to situations in the Philippines, viewed guerrilla warfare (or the support thereof) as a criminal act. The provisions made it clear that those fighting in civilian clothes could "expect no quarter" and that "men, or squads of men, who commit hostilities, whether by fighting, or inroads for destruction or plunder, or by raids of any kind . . . with intermitting returns to their homes and avocations, or with the occasional assumption of the semblance of peaceful pursuits, divesting themselves of the character or appearance of soldiers—such men . . . are not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war, but shall be treated summarily as highway robbers or pirates." The order also denied the protection of prisoner-of-war status to those accused of "destroying bridges, roads or canals, or of robbing or destroying the mail, or of cutting the telegraph wires" and deemed a "war traitor" anyone who "gives information of any kind to the enemy, or holds intercourse with him." It made special reference to assassination, the favored terrorist tactic of the Filipino insurgents: "Civilized nations look with horror upon offers of rewards for the assassination of enemies as relapses into barbarism." If allowed to enforce the punitive measures of G.O. 100, the army could deport insurgents, destroy the property of sympathizers, and summarily execute offenders.[39]

General MacArthur, under increasing pressure to end the war, began a new campaign against the guerrillas in November 1900. In unsecured areas, he abandoned benevolent pacification and issued a series of new orders that freed his officers to exercise the punitive measures found in G.O. 100. MacArthur called for his commanders "to interrupt, and if possible, completely destroy" the system "by which supplies and information are sent to them [insurgents] from the towns." In applying G.O. 100, commanders were told that "the more drastic the application the better."[40] He also received permission to deport insurgent leaders to Guam.[41] He followed those sanctions in January 1901 with orders allowing confiscation of property of insurgent sympathizers and the burning

of barrios that harbored or supported the guerrillas. This decision to make the Filipinos collectively as well as individually responsible for attacks on American troops, acts of terror, and collaboration with the guerrillas was a significant escalation of the conflict. If a patrol took fire from a barrio, the barrio burned. If individuals in a community harbored insurgents or supplied them, the entire community suffered the consequences. Colonel Samuel Sumner summed up the attitudes of many officers when he wrote, "I am aware that this is a severe and stringent measure and will entail hardships and suffering on the inhabitants, but it seems the only practical means at hand to bring . . . a speedy end to the present unsettled and dangerous condition of affairs."[42]

By January 1901, MacArthur was reporting that the new campaign had scored a series of major successes against the guerrillas.[43] The number of garrisoned towns increased from 400 to 502, arrests of insurgents and their supporters surged, executions increased, and the deportation of insurgent leaders began.[44] The new offensive and its accompanying reprisals had begun to succeed not only in inflicting casualties on the insurgents, but also in cutting them off from their civilian base of support. In the backcountry, increasingly harassed and isolated guerrilla bands abandoned the struggle and either surrendered or quietly returned to their homes. Then, as if to highlight the Filipino's plight, General Mariano Trias, Aguinaldo's second-in-command, surrendered to U.S. forces and swore loyalty to the United States. Eight days later, the Americans captured Emilio Aguinaldo, who subsequently swore loyalty to the United States and made a public declaration that called for his troops to surrender and accept American sovereignty.

By the fall of 1901, the Filipino insurgents had been defeated in all but a few districts, most notably Batangas and Samar. In Batangas, a province in southern Luzon, insurgent forces under the leadership of General Miguel Malvar had been largely successful in resisting both benevolent and military efforts to pacify the district. Both sides increasingly employed terror to win their goals: the insurgents in attempting to discourage defections to the Americans, and the Americans in employing the repressive measures of G.O. 100. On the island of Samar, conditions had deteriorated into a state of virtual anarchy, with guerrillas, bandits, soldiers, and a militant religious sect fighting across the jungle-covered mountains and in the coastal villages. The stubborn refusal of those insurgents to end their struggle was punctuated on September 28, 1901. In what would be called the Balangiga Massacre, guerrilla forces, in a surprise attack, killed and mutilated more than forty-eight American soldiers. The editors of the imperialist *Outlook* fell back on familiar

stereotypes and called the loss a "deplorable and horrible incident . . . such a one as might have occurred in our former wars with the Indians of the Far West."[45]

In the Batangas district, Brigadier General Franklin J. Bell did not abandon benevolence, but relied far more on repression and fear to pacify the region. Recognizing the need to separate the guerrillas from their civilian supporters he demanded that the Filipinos either openly support his efforts or be labeled as insurgent sympathizers and subject to fines, destruction of property, or imprisonment. Where open support of the American cause was lacking, he ordered his troops to burn buildings, level crops, and carry away food supplies and livestock. Bell also began a policy of concentration that closely resembled the widely condemned policies employed by General Valeriano "the Butcher" Weyler in Cuba.[46] As in Cuba, the concentration of people in the zones resulted in widespread loss of life—the new population centers had inadequate sanitary facilities, lacked sufficient food supplies, and the population suffered from malaria—and the death rates were well above twice the normal rate.[47] Bell reported, "I can't say how long it will take us to beat Malvar into surrendering, and if [there is] no surrender, [I] can't say how long it will take us to make a wilderness of that country, but one or the other will eventually take place."[48] Bell's policies succeeded in forcing General Malvar and most of his supporters to surrender in April 1902. Effective resistance in Batangas had ended—only on the island of Samar did the rebels continue the fight.

General Adna Chaffee, who had succeeded MacArthur in July, gave General Jacob H. Smith the task of pacifying the people of Samar. Smith's campaign on Samar tainted the entire American legacy in the war and caused a widespread outcry in the United States. In an escalation in the war with terror, Smith systematically used terror to pacify the island. He urged his men to turn the island into a "howling wilderness" by burning housing, killing livestock, and executing those who dared resist. "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn. The more you kill and burn, the better you please me," he ordered. "I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms in actual hostilities against the United States."[49] Some of his troops, motivated by a desire to avenge the losses and atrocities at Balangiga, eagerly set about the task of terrorizing the populace. They started by completely destroying the town of Balangiga, then expanded their efforts. In the worst cases, officers like Major Edwin Glenn kidnapped and tortured civilians (including three priests) and conspired to murder others. More common was the work of Major Littleton Waller, who in less than two weeks killed 39 people and

burned 255 buildings. Others employed G.O. 100 with more restraint, but employ it they did. Smith's counterterror strategy gave the Filipinos little incentive to cooperate, for it treated all the natives alike, and in January 1902, General Chaffee traveled to Samar and ordered Smith to restore discipline and modify his comprehensive use of terror to accommodate those Filipinos who cooperated with the Americans.[50]

In the United States, reaction to the army's heavy-handed tactics ranged from shocked silence in the imperialist press to cries of vindication from the war's critics. The ongoing publication of stories recounting atrocities by American soldiers was now confirmed by eyewitness accounts in court as officers were tried for their roles in the atrocities. *The Nation* argued that the United States could not "offer an excuse for ourselves which we did not tolerate for an instant in the case of Spanish atrocities."[51] Opponents of the war ridiculed the imperialist press, which had argued that stern measures were called for against a savage enemy who fought outside the bounds of civilized warfare. However, after a period of silence, the imperialists gathered themselves and countered that anti-imperialists treated "isolated offenses as if they were common, habitual acts."[52] They even returned to the argument that troop misconduct, while regrettable, could be explained by Filipino atrocities. Besides, the measures had crushed the rebellion and turned the natives into "good Indians."[53] The tactics of the dirty war weakened the case for a benevolent American empire, but the imperialists did not retreat from their long-established positions.

Wars on Terror

On July 4, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt formally declared the war in the Philippines over. As with most nonconventional wars, the end was not nearly as clear to the people in the Philippines as in Washington. However, Roosevelt was correct in claiming victory. The repressive measures of the dirty war had succeeded in breaking the last insurgent strongholds and bringing a measure of peace to the archipelago. In contrast, the history of the Philippine War has remained contested territory as generations of scholars have shaped public perceptions of the war as justified, a cautionary tale, or as another tragic chapter in the history of American imperialism.

Considering the Philippine War as a war on terrorism adds another perspective to our understanding of a distant conflict, but also informs how we engage the ideas, problems, and horrors of terrorism in our lifetime. Victory in conventional war, whether in the Philippines or in the

war in Iraq, can be an illusion that moves from victory speech to a dirty war with frightening speed. We are also reminded that we access familiar stereotypes as we seek to define and understand terrorists and other nonconventional enemies. One possibility is to criminalize our opponents in order to cast their efforts as illegitimate; another is to draw upon racial stereotypes. We may grimace at the crude caricatures from the turn of the last century: the inscrutable Malay, the headhunter, or the barefoot black man; but contemporary media also draw on stereotypes, such as young Arab "Islamic fundamentalists," to depict enemies of humanity. Stereotyping opponents as some form of other—whether that be the Filipino in 1900, the Japanese in 1941, or Muslims in 2001—remains a deeply seated and troubling aspect of the human condition. These stereotypes also aid Americans who tenaciously cling to the idea of American exceptionalism. During the Philippine War, anti-imperialists believed that American actions were diverging from their historic mission to serve as a city on the hill: an example that others should follow out of common sense, not by the force of American arms. The imperialists differed from their opponents in that they believed that a colonial empire would speed the expansion of American ideals by training lesser peoples to appreciate American rule of law, engage in a capitalist economy, and eventually participate in self-government. Today, notions of American exceptionalism are not as uniform, but they persist nonetheless. As a nation, their self-confidence (some would say arrogance) has been challenged on many fronts, but Americans believe that other nations and cultures should imitate their example.

Most recently, a challenge to American exceptionalism has been posed by terrorists who reject American leadership and values. Choosing to kill and maim in order to sow fear, they harden their hearts to the fate of their victims and to those who live in fear. At the same time, the atrocities committed by terrorists can have a deadening effect on those charged with combating terrorism. In the Philippines, both sides effectively employed terror to achieve their goals. The Filipinos employed it against their own people and against American troops. The Americans entered the war with a predisposition to view the Filipinos as an inferior people, then had their consciences seared by the brutality of war. By the end of the war, American troops were systematically employing terror in a manner that would have been unthinkable at the start of the conflict. Atrocity met and matched atrocity, making the Philippine War a war with terror, as much as it was a war on terror. As the current war on terror unfolds, Americans must take care that in combating terrorism

they do not sacrifice their national conscience by allowing themselves to act as terrorists.

Notes

1. Adjutant General's Office, "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field," General Orders No. 100 (1863), http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lieber.htm#sec9.
2. As Brian Linn clearly explains in his preface to *The Philippine War, 1899–1902* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000), the terminology of this war easily gives offense. He chose the neutral "Philippine War" over the Filipino-American War or Philippine Insurrection and chose to use the terms "resistance," "*insurrectos,*" "insurgents," "guerrillas," and "revolutionaries" to refer to Filipinos who sought independence through armed conflict with the United States. This chapter will follow his example.
3. David Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 8–9.
4. Hoar quoted in H. Wayne Morgan, *America's Road to Empire* (New York: John Wiley, 1965), 63.
5. McKinley quoted in Lewis L. Gould, *The Spanish American War and President McKinley* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982), 111.
6. U.S. Senate, *Affairs in the Philippines: Hearing before the Committee on the Philippines* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 347.
7. McKinley quoted in Gould, *President McKinley,* 119. This approach has evolved over time to include the 1960s' modernization theory and nation-building efforts in several developing nations, including the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and, most recently, Iraq and Afghanistan. The Philippine Centennial Celebration, Documents of the Philippine-American War, "Address by President William McKinley, December 21, 1898," http://www.msc.edu.ph/centennial/benevolent.html.
8. Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 81.
9. *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 28, 1899; September 15, 1899.
10. *New York Times,* July 18, 1900; For Roosevelt's logic, which was widely imitated in the imperialist press, see the *Chicago Daily Tribune,* September 18, 1900.
11. For examples of the chiefs and tribes language, see *New York Times,* October 26, 1900, February 8, 1899, and January 11, 1902; *New York Times,* December 13, 1899; General Samuel Young quoted in Linn, *Philippine War,* 211.
12. African Americans were caught between conflicting interests. As American citizens, they felt obligated to do their duty and serve in Cuba and Philippines; at the same time, they empathized with colored peoples being

subjugated by white society in a situation much like their own. For more on African American viewpoints, see William Gatewood, Jr., *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

13. *New York Times,* February 8, 1899.
14. Ibid., January 10, 1900.
15. Schurz quoted in Stuart Creighton Miller, "*Benevolent Assimilation*": *The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899–1903* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 124.
16. Glenn May, *Battle for Batangas: A Philippine Province at War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 155.
17. Corbin to Otis, December 4, 1898, *Correspondence Relating to the War with Spain, April 15, 1898–June 30, 1902* (Washington, 1902), 2: 850.
18. For a concise description of the Army's efforts in Manila, see John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898–1902* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1973), 54–70.
19. Quoted in Linn, *Philippine War,* 187.
20. General Orders, No. 38, *Correspondence,* 2: 1154–1155; Linn, *Philippine War,* 199.
21. Schwan quoted in May, *Battle for Batangas,* 133.
22. Linn, *Philippine War,* 185.
23. Captain John L. Jordan quoted in May, *Battle for Batangas,* 142–143.
24. *New York Times,* December 15, 1899.
25. See for example, his speech found in Ibid., June 18, 1900; Ibid., July 3, 1900.
26. Otis to Adjutant General, November 24, 1899, *Correspondence,* 2, 1107.
27. U.S. Senate, *Affairs in the Philippines,* 139.
28. Adjutant General's Office, General Orders No. 100.
29. Linn, *Philippine War,* 221–222; U.S. Senate, *Affairs in the Philippines,* 135–136.
30. Linn, *Philippine War,* 194.
31. Ibid., 268.
32. May, *Batangas,* 180.
33. Linn, *Philippine War,* 195.
34. Miller, "*Benevolent Assimilation,*" 182–184.
35. Quoted in Linn, *Philippine War,* 187.
36. Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags,* 171; Linn, *Philippine War,* 209.
37. Smith quoted in Linn, *Philippine War,* 212.
38. Colonel William Birkhimer quoted in Ibid., 293.
39. Adjutant General's Office, General Orders No. 100.
40. Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags,* 205–206.
41. MacArthur to Corbin, December 25, 1900, Corbin to MacArthur, December 26, 1900, *Correspondence,* 2:1237–1238.
42. May, *Battle for Batangas,* 229.
43. MacArthur to Corbin, January 4, 1901, *Correspondence,* 2:1241.

44. Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags,* 209; Corbin to MacArthur, December 26, 1900, *Correspondence,* 2
45. *The Outlook,* October 12, 1901, 341.
46. Bell was not the first to use concentration zones, Major Frederick Smith had ordered all Filipinos in Marinduque to live in five towns or be considered insurgents. MacArthur defended the policy as an effective policy in the face of "obstinate resistance." MacArthur to Corbin, March 22, 1901, *Correspondence,* 2:1261.
47. May argues that Batangas would have experienced a "mortality crisis" caused by malnutrition and malaria regardless of the concentration policy; Bell's zones only exacerbated the crisis. May, *Battle for Batangas,* 262–267.
48. Bell quoted in May*, Battle for Batangas,* 254.
49. *New York Times,* July 17, 1902.
50. Brian Linn, "The Struggle for Samar," in *Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War and Its Aftermath,* ed. James C. Bradford (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 158–176; Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags,* 253–256.
51. *The Nation,* 74 (May 8, 1902): 357.
52. *New York Times,* February 6, 1902; see also the *Chicago Daily Tribune,* May 18, 1902.
53. *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 30, 1902.

CHAPTER 10

The War against Terrorism in Late Imperial and Early Soviet Russia

Hugh Phillips

About 200 miles northwest of Moscow lies the city and province of Tver, one of Russia's most ancient cities and by 1900 an area of textile factories and a "notoriously liberal" aristocracy.[1] The liberals grouped themselves around the provincial zemstvo, an organ of local self-government created in 1864 by Emperor Alexander II as part of his package of "Great Reforms," the most important of which abolished serfdom in 1861. The zemstvos were very important in promoting literacy, better health care, and agricultural improvement, but they received no funds from the central government and were always subject to be overruled by St. Petersburg or even the local governor who was appointed by the emperor. At best the zemstvos were a first step toward the creation of a new political order in Russia.

However, in 1894, the leading liberals of Russia learned that whatever hopes they may have attached to the new tsar, Nicholas II, as a reformer, were misplaced. In that year, Russia's leading liberals presented the famous "Tver Letter" to the emperor, requesting the establishment of a representative assembly with real, not simply consultative, powers, an idea Nicholas likened to "senseless dreams."[2] From the beginning, it seemed that Nicholas was trying to push moderate reformers into the arms of the revolutionaries, of which Russia had plenty.

In Tver's textile industry, which really took off in the 1890s, the mostly female workforce was among the most "brutally treated" and poorly paid in all Russia. Predictably, a revolutionary movement took root in Tver. Equally predictable, it became one of the most violent in all

Russia. But the first major violence in Tver came from the Right, with the support of the local governor and businessmen.

Beginning in 1902, agrarian unrest began to flare up in Russia and quickly spread to the cities. By late 1904, about half of European Russia was officially in a state of rebellion. In Tver, many reformers and revolutionaries looked to the zemstvo for leadership; recognizing this, in October 1905, a mob of right-wing extremists, publicly encouraged by Governor Sleptsov, attacked the zemstvo's headquarters in Tver, killing and wounding dozens and razing the structure. Yet the workers continued to limit their actions, for the most part, to speeches and demonstrations; the authorities responded with Cossack sabers and cavalry charges. By December, the now-enraged workers had taken control of the factory districts and prepared to fight, as troops arrived from Moscow. When the news arrived that the Moscow uprising had been crushed, Tver's workers capitulated. In retaliation the factories were locked down till the following Easter, an act that drove the workers to the brink of starvation.

These desperate people now turned to terrorism. In early 1906, a bomb literally blew the governor to bits. A young factory worker, away from her native village only for a few years and completely apolitical before coming to the city, had, by late 1905, become a supporter of terrorism. After the blast that killed Sleptsov, she saw pieces of the governor's body on a rooftop and was "gladdened" by the sight.[3]

Tver's experience was duplicated in much of Russia from 1881 until the collapse of the Imperial government in 1917. The general pattern, with some significant exceptions, was of a government and its allies that seemed determined to drive moderates and reformers into the arms of terrorists. Even one of Russia's last capable leaders, Peter Stolypin, used execution by hanging so liberally that the noose became known by the grisly epithet: "Stolypin's necktie." One of his predecessors, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, said that Russia's only hope was to remain true to autocracy and the Orthodox Church: *Any* change could spell Russia's doom. He even ruminated once on how to devise ways to keep people from "inventing things." And we have seen how only a fool could have sought real reform from the last tsar.

A leading expert on terrorism has noted that "systematic terrorism" first arose in the second half of the nineteenth century and that among its "distinct categories," the People's Will in Russia was the "most important by far . . ."[4] Dating terrorism as neatly as Laqueur does is risky, but he has a point. The People's Will assassinated Emperor Alexander II in 1881 but the relentless repression by Alexander III, for the most part, put the terrorists out of business for a time. They returned with a

vengeance in the early twentieth century. Anna Geifman, the foremost expert on Russian terrorism in the late Empire, noted that "nowhere between the turn of the century and the outbreak of World War I were terrorist practices so widespread as in Tsarist Russia."[5] Another authority wrote that after 1900, Russia witnessed terrorism "on a scale that the world experienced neither before nor since . . ."[6] In terms of number of casualties, the victims of terrorist acts in Russia in 1906–07 far exceeded the almost 3,000 killed in the attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.[7]

This chapter examines the history of the tsarist state's struggle with an extraordinarily violent terrorist movement that it never really defeated, a fact that alone warrants a close look at the government's policies. It concludes with a brief note on terror in the Soviet régime. This chapter is a work of synthesis based on over 30 years of teaching and studying Russia's past, including over three years in residence there since 1974. And I have drawn liberally on my notes for a course on "Terrorism in the Modern World" which I have taught since 2002.

As discussed in chapter 5, terrorism came to Russia with Alexander Karakozov's unsuccessful attempt on the life of Emperor Alexander II in April 1866. In 1878, an aristocrat, Vera Zasulich, attempted to assassinate the military governor of St. Petersburg, Fedor Trepov, who had ordered the flogging of a political prisoner, something at least nominally illegal. Her trial, widely-publicized, ended in acquittal, clear evidence that many Russians did not see terrorist assassination as particularly troublesome, an attitude that would long bedevil the state's counter-terrorism forces.[8] After the Zasulich fiasco, "political" cases, including terrorism, were heard before the military courts that both refused the accused access to counsel and were closed to the public.[9]

In 1881, the People's Will, the "first organization in history dedicated to systematic political terrorism,"[10] realized its fondest dream: the assassination of Alexander II. A suicide bomber felled the tsar, after a comrade's bomb destroyed the wrong carriage in the Imperial procession. His body virtually destroyed from the waist down, Alexander had time only to whisper: "To the Winter Palace to die." No spontaneous revolution occurred as some members of the violent opposition had hoped. Instead a wave of revulsion swept Russia, and the determined and reactionary Alexander III ascended the throne. His policies toward any opposition were much sterner than his father's, and a certain calm settled over the empire.[11]

Early in the reign of Alexander III, a semiofficial organization, the Sacred Guard, appeared. Its purpose was to defend the emperor and his family, as well as fight the dissemination of revolutionary ideas; its

membership included some of Russia's wealthiest men and it was their intention to use terrorism against terrorism. But its actions were confined to the establishment of a bizarre journal in the West that was designed to "subvert liberal and radical groups by publishing pseudorevolutionary and pseudoliberal newspapers." However, Alexander III's ministers shared their emperor's fear of *any* independent publications and at the government's orders the Sacred Guard passed into history.[12]

More important, in 1881 the secret police system was reorganized. Previously the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Chancellery handled surveillance and counterterrorism but in that year, the bulk of such police power was given to the Okhranka (often spelled Okhrana), which is derived from the Russian word for "preservation." This new body was within the Ministry of the Interior, and besides traditional spying on the populace, the Okhranka began the systematic process of "data quantification." In both areas, the effectiveness of the police improved with the widespread use of telephones and telegraph. The Okhranka fought, in effect, a "secret war, using special powers outside the law" to destroy revolutionaries and just about anyone who publicly questioned Russia's autocracy. It employed thousands, many of whom posed as revolutionaries, to infiltrate the movement. A wide range of activities—for example, reading the works of Charles Darwin—required the Okhranka's permission.[13]

The organization's most outstanding field agent was E. P. Mednikov. He was a former police inspector, and a colleague described him as "simple, semi-literate man" but possessed of a "native intelligence, sharpness, cunning, a capacity for work, and persistence." His successes in the field resulted in his assignment to lead a school for detectives in Moscow, where the cardinal rule was "The Okhranka wants the truth." The new detectives underwent thorough training in discreet surveillance and arrest techniques, and were not allowed to drink hard liquor nor display any "excessive tenderness to family or weakness for women."[14]

Mednikov remained with the police until the early twentieth century when his health, particularly his mental health, began to deteriorate. In the meantime, he watched in horror as his high standards deteriorated as the tsar's largely incompetent ministers looked the other way over the incompetence of Okhranka officers. They even allowed the number of agents to decline even as the revolutionary movement itself grew stronger.[15] Mednikov was not the last man whose talents were tossed aside by the government.

Though the state's repression destroyed the People's Will, some remained who wished to keep alive the organization's aims. A group of students, including the brother of the future Soviet leader Vladimir

Lenin, plotted to kill Alexander III on March 1, 1887, the sixth anniversary of his father's assassination. However, increased police surveillance of the posts and the terrorists' ineptitude combined to doom that effort. One of the conspirators actually wrote a letter to a friend in the provinces describing his conversion to terrorism. The police intercepted the letter[16] and put its author under tight surveillance that enabled the police to identify his associates, and when the terrorists moved to carry out the killing, all were arrested before a shot had been fired or a bomb detonated. Of the fifteen seized, five were hanged, including Lenin's brother. The effect was fairly sensational: One revolutionary wrote that the "terrorist struggle died away for many years."[17]

Yet the government knew nothing of the pessimism that enveloped the revolutionary movement. Indeed, state officials at the highest levels consistently overestimated the power and pervasiveness of the advocates of violent change. But at the same time, a shadowy figure, Georgii P. Sudeikin, emerged to lead the struggle against terrorism. His influence in fighting enemies of the state would affect much of tsarist Russia's police policies as well as those of the Soviet government.[18]

Sudeikin was born in 1850, the son of a destitute aristocrat in Smolensk. Following a stint in the army, he requested and received approval in 1874 to leave the military and join the Corps of Gendarmes, the organization charged with the "maintenance of order." An ambitious young man, Sudeikin was fascinated by the adventure of hunting down terrorists and revolutionaries. He was also singularly capable of at least appearing to admire some of his opponents: During one interrogation, he praised Zasulich for trying to kill such "scum" as the reactionary Trepov. Speaking of other terrorists, his praise remained fulsome: Two of the most famous of the People's Will, Zheliabov and Perovskaia, were, respectively, a "great man" and a "saint." During another interrogation, Sudeikin attempted to prove his progressive attitude by producing a copy of Karl Marx's *Capital*. Sudeikin would also insist in interrogations that the existing régime intended to introduce reforms that would benefit ordinary Russians but that the campaign of terrorism against the government made real change impossible. As Richard Pipes has noted, such words were important in Sudeikin's "remarkable ability to secure his victims' cooperation."[19]

Moreover, Sudeikin proved quite adept at eluding detection by the revolutionaries; for example, he carried multiple passports under various names, frequently changed his residences, and met with his agents at odd hours in such places as cottages on the outskirts of town. Operating from Kiev he had, by 1879, personally led a successful attack on the

headquarters of a terrorist group and, in general, had dealt a terrific blow to the entire revolutionary movement in south Russia. Shortly after the assassination of Alexander II, a frightened government reassigned him to maintain order in St. Petersburg.

Previously, the authorities believed that harsh penalties, such as death by hanging and long terms of hard labor, would crush the revolutionaries. Sudeikin sought more positive measures. For example, he established a special department in the capital's police structure to exert an "active influence" on the revolutionaries. "Special active collaborators" were to penetrate terrorist cells in order to destroy morale by instigating dissent and spreading rumors, especially by planting suspicions that the terrorist leaders themselves were actually informants and agents provocateurs for the police. Only after a period of surveillance that established precisely who were members of each cell, would the police move in to make their arrests.

Sudeikin then divided the "detainees" (to use contemporary terminology) into two main groups: "the corrupt and the naïve." For the former, Sudeikin spent rubles copiously hoping to get them to turncoat; with the latter he appealed to their idealism. Another key to the success of this program was patience: Sudeikin understood that the process could be lengthy but asserted that after a few months the revolutionaries would come round.[20] In summer 1882, Sudeikin, working within the new Okhranka, scored a spectacular coup: After careful preparations, he secured the arrest of some 120 militants in St. Petersburg, a move that amounted to the decapitation of the "entire revolutionary cadre in the capital city."[21]

Vera Figner, a veteran of the revolutionary movement and *de facto* head of the shattered remnants of the People's Will, then decided on a change in tactics. Henceforth, the radicals would be organized in small, independent cells of ten to twenty members who would be linked directly to the Central Committee without any contacts among the various groups. Terrorism remained the order of the day, and the new target number one was no less than Sudeikin, now a lieutenant colonel. Figner ordered one Sergei Degaev to journey to St. Petersburg to link up with revolutionaries in the military, but Degaev reported back that the entire region had been thoroughly purged of extremists. Figner, ever determined, then assigned Degaev to similar work in Odessa, Russia's main port on the Black Sea. He duly arrived there in November; the following month, the police placed his residence under surveillance. Soon afterward, his apartment was searched and yielded a cornucopia of revolutionary materials including a "fully-equipped printing press . . ." Degaev

was imprisoned. He soon decided to contact Sudeikin with an eye toward working with the government. Romantic, revolutionary heroism was not one of Degaev's personality traits.

Meanwhile, Sudeikin fought a running battle with the regular police. The latter's main goal was to arrest revolutionaries as soon as possible, an approach that often wrecked Sudeikin's tactic of leaving subversives at large until he had completed his careful surveillance operations. The colonel eventually won the argument and became in effect the chief of counterterrorism for the most restive areas of the Empire. The promotion was unannounced and, upon Sudeikin's death, the post of "inspector of the secret police for the conduct of political investigations" was abolished. Sudeikin had reached the height of his political career at the tender age of 33.[22]

Yet Sudeikin remained angry about what he called the "disparity between the insignificance of his position in the [official] hierarchy and his real significance as the protector" of the emperor. He believed that if only he could meet one on one with the tsar he could convince Alexander of his vital role in combating terrorism but it was not to be. Moreover, high-ranking aristocratic officials, rather than welcoming him into their society, shunned Sudeikin as an upstart who might well usurp their influence. Sudeikin's poor background and lack of refined manners caused many to see him as something of a maverick; certainly he was not a "team player."[23] If ever a state needed unity in a fight against terrorism, it was in late imperial Russia, but many officials close to Alexander III fought to prevent such harmony.

Probably in late 1883, the colonel and Degaev entered into a truly bizarre alliance. With Sudeikin's financial support and protection, Degaev would both turn in members of the People's Will *and* direct terrorist operations against the régime, the alleged purpose being to frighten the government into making real reforms.[24]

But in these complicated and still obscure episodes one thing is clear: Degaev decided he had erred in trusting Sudeikin. He apparently blurted out the whole or, at least part, of the story to another revolutionary who told Degaev that the only way to save himself from the murderous wrath of Russia's terrorists was to kill Sudeikin.[25]

The plot misfired several times but on December 16, 1883, Degaev and two associates, using a pistol and heavy crowbars, killed Sudeikin in a small apartment rented especially for the murder. Degaev managed to escape to Europe where he remained for almost two years before making his way to the United States. The murder had a sensational impact on the government where officials immediately assumed this assassination,

the first one in over a year, was a harbinger of a renewed terrorist onslaught. The widely despised minister of the interior, Dmitrii Tolstoy, was so agitated that he suffered a nervous collapse and had to leave St. Petersburg for six months. Yet as the story of Degaev's treachery emerged, it proved a serious blow to what was left of the violent revolutionaries: Its ranks were now filled with mutual distrust and a decline of party discipline.[26] Indeed after the murder of Sudeikin, the Imperial régime did not face any serious conspiratorial threats for almost two decades.[27]

But in those years, Russia underwent changes that would again shake the régime to its foundations. A crash program of industrialization helped create a small but desperate proletariat, as well as an even smaller middle class. Both, however, had serious problems with the status quo. For the workers, trade unions and indeed any type of worker organizations were virtually banned. Moreover, Russia remained an autocracy, which excluded any meaningful role for the new middle class. Finally, the peasantry suffered extraordinary land hunger and endured yet another famine in 1891. By about 1900, only the church and elements of the aristocracy could be considered supportive of the old régime. And over all, the last emperor, Nicholas II, was a man who faced a situation he was wholly unprepared to handle or even understand.

In this context, terrorism revived and would play a major role in the events of 1902–06, when full-blown revolution erupted in the empire. But this time, terrorism would assume, in part, a new face.

In 1896, a wave of strikes swept across Russia, forcing the authorities to reinvigorate the attention they gave the country's new militants. In this context, Sergei Zubatov rose quickly through the ranks of the security forces. Yet serious problems remained. In general, Russia's law enforcement structure, like the rest of the government, was a jumble of complicated and overlapping, even contradictory, layers. Moreover, many officials disdained undercover work, or in the case of impoverished nobles, any steady work at all.[28] Zubatov, for a time a police informer, made sweeping changes in the police corps: In particular, he standardized and professionalized procedures for conducting surveillance and the handling of informants, two vital aspects of any counterterrorism effort.[29]

The year 1898 proved an especially good one for Russia's new police. A group of mostly student radicals, although not all advocates of terrorism, formed a miniscule Social-Democratic Party, some members of which would seize power in two decades, an event unforeseeable in 1898. Zubatov, described by one historian as "ruthlessly able," pene-

trated the organization from its inception and by the end of the year, about 500 of the "most active Social Democrats from all over Russia," languished in prisons.[30]

Zubatov's methods were fairly simple. As a young man, he had seriously flirted with the revolutionary movement and therefore was able to discuss revolutionary theory and tactics with his detainees as cogently as any socialist leader. He could also shock his prisoners with intimate details of the organization, membership, and goals of the various revolutionary groups.[31] During interrogations, Zubatov would also urge upon his prisoners his belief that the emperor alone could solve Russia's many problems because of his alleged ability to stand above class divisions and therefore see all sides of complex political and economic conditions—an absurdity when the task fell to Nicholas II. Zubatov, who would often conclude his interviews with the exhortation that the "sovereign needs our help!" Such a theory of the monarch as "above politics" was, of course, hardly new, but Zubatov was singularly effective. Much like Sudeikin, at the startlingly young age of 32, Zubatov became Chief of the Moscow Okhranka.[32]

By 1900 and with a wide reputation for success and with the support of the tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei, Zubatov embarked on a potentially dangerous but generally effective course to deal with revolutionary groups from which terrorists usually sprang. Zubatov and associates would lure workers into state-controlled "unions" where they could be systematically weaned away from revolution. Initially, Zubatov and several repentant Social-Democrats, by this time the main Marxist party in Russia, focused on the establishment of mutual aid societies, something very important to Russia's poorly paid workers. Soon thousands of workers had joined various organs of this "police socialism." On February 19, 1901, the anniversary of the 1861 emancipation of Russia's serfs, Zubatov organized a march of about 50,000 workers within the walls of Moscow's Kremlin. For years a day of protest in Russia (the emancipation changed precious little in the life of the former serfs), the workers in the Kremlin sang hymns and prayed for the health of the tsar and his family. As a specialist, Bruce Lincoln, noted: "It was, perhaps, Zubatov's finest hour."[33]

Yet opposition to Zubatov's methods sprang from some unlikely sources. Predictably, radicals and revolutionaries found Zubatov's efforts a loathsome way of deceiving the workers and hastened to publicize the links between the "unions" and the police. More interesting, the captains of industry feared that Zubatov's organizations would inevitably drift back to revolution or worse. They appealed to the powerful minister of

finance, Sergei Witte, who harbored similar fears but could do nothing as long as other officials and members of the imperial family supported Zubatov.[34]

Russia's most effective counterterrorism official, however, proved quite sensitive to his opponents and believed he could mollify them with a sharp infusion of religion into his "union." This policy only alienated the workers and they drifted away from Zubatov and what was increasingly and derisively called "police socialism." By early 1904, membership in Zubatov's Machine Workers' Association had fallen to less than forty dues-paying members. By this time, however, Zubatov's standing was already in serious doubt.

In 1902, one of Zubatov's chief supporters, minister of interior, D. S. Sipiagin, was assassinated and Viacheslav von Pleve took his place. For reasons not entirely clear, Pleve had taken a strong dislike for the independent-minded Zubatov. In August 1903, a furious Pleve summoned his crack counterterrorism chief and berated him for allegedly passing state secrets to Jewish revolutionaries, concluding brusquely that Zubatov had 24 hours to clean out his desk and leave St. Petersburg. Again, Bruce Lincoln succinctly summed up the situation: "it was an amazingly cruel end to a brilliant career . . ."[35] Russia itself would suffer from Zubatov's fall: Jonathan Daly notes that the "political security system declined and sedition and political opposition increased after Zubatov's dismissal." In a final irony, a terrorist bomb killed Pleve less than a year after he fired Zubatov.[36] Events would show that apparently the Russian government learned precious little from the entire episode.

Zubatov himself entered a troubled and bitter retirement, refusing several offers to rejoin the police and becoming increasingly fretful about the revolution being inevitable. When he learned that Nicholas II had abdicated in early 1917, he calmly left his family at the dinner table, went to his study and shot himself.[37]

Beginning in 1902, rural Russia, a land of extraordinary misery, hopelessness, and land hunger, began a slow burn that would erupt into a series of events known as the Revolution of 1905. Nicholas and his advisers believed the unrest arose from outside agitators despite a special government commission attributing the violence to horrid local conditions. Moreover the urban, industrial economy began to contract at about the same time with soaring unemployment and an ever-widening strike movement. A Russian historian has observed that in 1905, terrorism took on three forms: "nationalist terrorism" in which the various non-Russian peoples attempted to achieve independence; "agrarian terrorism" in which peasants destroyed the homes and property

of the rural aristocracy; and "political terrorism" that strove for the wholesale destruction of the social order.[38] In fact, there was a fourth variation: terrorism from the Right, in support of the régime. Russia was on the brink.

Historians usually start most accounts of 1905 with the story of Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg, when soldiers, who had received a double ration of vodka, fired upon a massive and peaceful demonstration, killing about 200 workers and wounding, perhaps, as many as 800. Another casualty of that day was the ancient notion of the tsar as *Papasha,* the "little father" who would right all wrongs if only he were made aware of them. Instead, Nicholas II now became "Bloody Nicholas," an epithet he did very little to repudiate.

In any case, the terrorists of the radical and violent Socialist-Revolutionary Party, (commonly called the SRs) sprang quickly into action, detonating a powerful bomb under the carriage of Grand Duke Sergei, uncle of Nicholas II. The blast was so strong that some of Sergei's fingers were found on a nearby roof. The police persuaded the Imperial family to stay away from the funeral: It was impossible to guarantee their safety.

The strike movement and peasant unrest and violence continued apace throughout 1905. By the end of the year the situation was "little short of catastrophic" as the revolution spread and the government, including the police, were "all but disintegrating." By October, Russia was in the grip of a general strike: Even the ballet companies refused to perform. Looking back, a high-level security officer remarked that the revolutionaries "almost crushed us" in 1905.[39]

Toward the end of 1905, the police faced a new situation. While terrorism from the "left" was commonplace, now right-wing political violence arose, funded by some of Russia's wealthiest businessmen. This new situation placed the police in the delicate position of suppressing a movement that actually promoted the status quo.[40] In the end, the police usually turned a blind eye to terrorism from the Right. For example, much like the events at this same time in Tver, in the southern port of Odessa, Russian "patriots" engaged in several days of horrifying violence against the Jews, with thousands killed or injured. Odessa's Jews and radical students organized self-defense brigades, supported by numerous workers' groups, which helped limit the pogrom's destruction but were eventually overwhelmed by the pogromists. There is every reason to believe that the police and higher local officials aided and abetted the terrorizing of the city's Jews. Clearly the state did nothing to stop the violence.[41]

The most important nonstate player in the story of terrorism in support of the government was the Black Hundred. Actually, the Black Hundred was more an umbrella organization or a catch phrase for various Right extremist movements that flourished in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They were virulently nationalistic, detesting capitalism, liberalism and especially, Judaism. Like later fascist movements, it was easier to describe the Black Hundred more by what they opposed rather than what they favored. The movement peaked in 1907–08, when its membership reached approximately 400,000.[42]

While hordes were arrested, only ten people were executed in all of 1905.[43] But it is not known for certain how many died "unofficially" at the hands of the authorities or, at the least, with their connivance. Only after the military had broken the back of the revolutionaries did the government take off the gloves in dealing with terrorists and other extremists. The situation was indeed grave: In 1905 and 1906, terrorists killed almost 4,400 Russian officials, from policemen walking the streets to Grand Duke Sergei.[44] A police official observed that by early 1906, the techniques for bomb making had become so widely known that "practically any child could produce [a bomb] and blow up his nanny."[45]

It was under such desperate, perhaps hopeless, circumstances that Peter Stolypin rose to direct the government's war on terrorism. Stolypin had made a name for himself as governor of Saratov province in 1904–06. To deal with peasant unrest as well as a prison uprising, the governor used persuasion so effectively that he could eschew corporal punishment. Especially gratifying was his 1904 trip to St. Petersburg where Nicholas granted his gifted provincial administrator a personal audience.[46]

At a May 1906 meeting of the Council of Ministers, Stolypin asserted that Russia was in a state of siege: "Sedition, unrest and criminal attacks" had spread the length and breath of the empire. A leading specialist has noted that from April 27 to July 9, terrorists had killed 177 people and had attempted to kill 140 others. On the latter date, Stolypin declared St. Petersburg in a state of "extraordinary security," and soon ordered provincial officials to take "rapid, firm and undeviating" measures to reestablish order. Yet he emphasized that he would not tolerate authorities breaking the law while attempting to restore calm.[47]

But the terrorists kept coming. The liberal weekly, *Pravo* (*The Law*), reported in August 1906 that during the preceding June, violent attacks on government officials averaged 19.4 per week and most of the victims died.[48] On August 12, three SR terrorists almost killed their most hated opponent: Stolypin himself.

The twelfth was a Saturday and Stolypin, many government officials, citizen petitioners, and the prime minister's family were all at Stolypin's summer home on Aptekarskii Island where many high officials and prominent citizens spent their summers. An alert guard noticed the nervousness of one of the "petitioners" and when he and others attempted to search the petitioners, they detonated their bombs, killing themselves and 27 others. Stolypin was unharmed but his son and a daughter were seriously injured; the latter almost lost her legs in the blast and would not walk again for nearly a year.

But this savage attack seems only to have heightened Stolypin's standing not only in Russia but also abroad. Letters of sympathy and support poured into the prime minister's mailbox. Indeed, the minister of finance, V. N. Kokovtsov, observed that after the attack, Stolypin "gained in stature and was unanimously acclaimed *master* of the situation."[49] It seems clear that early in the history of modern terrorism the victim of an attack could quickly emerge from such tragic events appearing stronger in the eyes of the public. It is hard to explain why many people tend to see an intended victim of terrorism who survives as stronger than before, especially when the target survives more or less as the result of luck. In any case, this terrorist act led to one of the "most sustained, brutal and also most controversial campaigns of government repression" in Russian history.[50]

At the initiative of Stolypin, widely regarded as Imperial Russia's last capable politician, the government established a system of "field courts martial," each headed by officers appointed by the local military commander. In the eight months of this system's existence, it summarily ordered the execution of 1,102 extremists, the majority of whom were involved in terrorism.[51]

By Soviet standards, the numbers executed were small but to pre–World War I Europe, the killings created profound anger both within Russia and in Europe. "Virtually all leaders of society and most of the press vehemently denounced" these extra-legal procedures. As *The Times* of London reported in 1908, Stolypin's policy drew complaints from all sides: "To the reactionary it is revolutionary, to the revolutionist it is too reactionary."[52] The British ambassador told London that the "reception accorded [the field courts] is the reverse of favourable" and the public reaction in Britain was deeply against the violation of due process.[53] The great writer, Leo Tolstoy, wrote an anguished essay "I Cannot Keep Silent!" in which he argued that government violence was far worse than civilian terrorism because the former was done in cold blood.[54] When one realizes that in the 80 years prior to 1906, the Russian state

had executed on average nine people annually, the enormously negative impact of the deaths by the courts martial becomes obvious. Little wonder that a major expert on this era asserted that the system of special field courts "only made matters worse. It served as a bad example, encouraged contempt for the law, and impeded the emergence of a genuine sense of citizenship."[55] Stolypin's justification was that "Where bombs are used as an argument, ruthless retribution is certainly a natural response."[56] Natural, perhaps, but also futile or hopeless as long-term strategy.

But the field courts were hardly the entire story. Even in late 1905, the state made free use of indiscriminate bombing of workers' districts in Moscow, killing at least 1,000 civilians, many burned alive in their factories or apartment buildings. After the rebels in Moscow surrendered, mass arrests and summary executions continued with no one apparently keeping exact statistics. In an especially appalling move, the state rounded up the children of workers, and herded them into barracks where they were systematically beaten to "teach them a lesson."[57] One can only wonder what that lesson was supposed to be; and what it actually was.

State terrorism only intensified. From 1906 to 1909, more than 5,000 "politicals" were executed and about 38,000 jailed or tossed into the penal labor system, precursor of the notorious GULAG. In the Baltic provinces, always suspect in their devotion to "God and Tsar," soldiers and the Black Hundred ran amuck: From December 1906 until late May 1907, they killed about 1,200 people while destroying innumerable buildings and flogging untold thousands. Nicholas personally congratulated the military commander for "acting splendidly."[58]

In rural Russia, the state also went on the offensive: Areas of peasant unrest saw whole villages destroyed and thousands arrested. When the jails were stuffed to bursting, the Minister of the Interior, P. N. Durnovo, ordered his troops to "shoot the rioters and in cases of resistance to burn their homes." The dreaded Cossacks, liberally supplied with vodka, conducted what can only be called a terrorist campaign. The residents of entire villages were often forced to bare their heads and prostate themselves before the Cossacks who would then proceed to rape the girls and women before their men and boys. Anyone who protested was hanged from the nearest tree without any pretence of a trial. All told, a historian estimated that from October 1905 to April 1906, the government killed about 15,000 and deported or exiled another 45,000.[59] It is unlikely that even the sadistic and energetic Ivan the Terrible killed as many of his subjects as did Nicholas II during the Stolypin years. Indeed it was common for radicals of the time to refer to the police as "Stolypin's *oprichniki,*" the Russian name of Ivan's murderous political police.[60]

Stolypin also succeeded in infiltrating the various terrorist organizations. This was most spectacularly revealed in 1908, when the SRs conceded publicly that one of its top "commanders," Envoi Azef, was also a police agent.[61] Commonly called the "Azef affair," this bizarre situation lasted about 15 years during which time Azef helped found and was a leader of the SRs whose "fighting battalions" held some of Russia's most determined and often mentally unbalanced terrorists. Meanwhile, Azef was on the payroll of the police. On one occasion, the St. Petersburg Chief of Police refused to allow Nicholas II to travel from his suburban residence into the city until Azef assured him that no SR terrorists were lying in wait.[62] But Azef's chief duty was to "penetrate into the party center" and its terrorist organs. This he did so successfully that only after repeated accusations that he was a double agent did the SR leadership finally admit the truth.[63]

The Azef affair so demoralized the SRs, and the entire revolutionary movement, that some members came to question the entire party leadership and its advocacy of terrorism. Many lost interest in "the revolution" and the number of terrorist acts, especially assassinations, declined sharply after Azef's exposure. In short, the "Azef affair marked the end of large-scale revolutionary terrorism in Russia."[64]

In addition to fighting opponents of the régime, Stolypin made an attempt at land reform, which he considered his primary task once the revolutionary tide subsided. In most of European Russia, the peasants held their land communally, an arrangement rooted deeply in Russia's history. Stolypin's admittedly difficult goal was to introduce individual peasant land ownership, a process that would take generations. Revolutionaries hated Stolypin for obvious reasons, but the aristocracy also distrusted him, as many of them believed Stolypin eventually intended to redistribute their lands to the peasants. With so many enemies it is hardly surprising that Stolypin fell to assassination in 1911 by a double agent. By this time, Stolypin was so unpopular that he seems almost to have sought death: The night he was shot, neither had he bodyguards nor was he wearing his special bullet-proof vest. It remains true, however, that the number of terrorist acts declined dramatically after 1906.

In October 1905, Nicholas grudgingly granted a manifesto that established a national assembly, or Duma, to be elected by a complicated franchise, but most adult males got the right to vote. In 1907, after the first two Dumas actually tried to influence and shape state policy, Nicholas simply rewrote the electoral law to disenfranchise all but the very richest men of the empire. Once again, the régime showed its utter contempt for the rule of law. The few years of calm ended in 1912 with

the shooting deaths of about 250 striking workers in the Lena Goldfields Massacre. A revived strike movement quickly spread throughout Russia, and grew until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. By then, the Russian government was so gravely weakened by terrorism and its own incompetence that when the war came "the régime had all but ceased to function—paralyzed from within and besieged from without."[65] In the last years of peace, Nicholas frequently considered or even attempted to turn back the clock and transform the already weak state Duma into a purely consultative body.[66] Such a move would have provoked broad-based resistance and, perhaps, even outright revolution. Sometimes, it seemed that Nicholas was more determined to destroy his régime than preserve it.

Clearly, the Russian government had been seriously weakened by terrorism. With thousands of low-level officials and police dead at the hands of terrorists, it is a wonder the government could function at all. Indeed, as Geifman notes, "to a large extent, the revolutionaries succeeded in breaking the spine of Russian bureaucracy." Moreover it is obvious that late imperial Russia was a "generally unhealthy state" wholly lacking any genuine Western style "liberal tradition."[67] Such an anachronistic and unstable régime, which moreover lacked a viable industrial and technological base, was bound to find itself hard pressed to survive in the midst of total war.

And World War I hit the empire with a special ruthlessness. The state disintegrated in February 1917 from the war's blows and the concomitant general domestic unrest. In October, the Bolsheviks came to power; now "numerous practitioners of terror found themselves employing their skills in political murder and coercion . . ." Many found a home in the dreaded Cheka, the political police and forerunner of the KGB. "Iron" Felix Dzerzhinsky, the head of the Cheka, had reportedly been treated for a disease called "circular psychosis" and his chief associates had been involved in "extremist practices."[68] Indeed, Dzerzhinsky himself was literally a physical link between the tsarist police and the new Cheka. By 1917, he had spent most of his adult life in prison or penal exile, including three years in the notorious Orel prison, renowned for its routine brutality. Dzerzhinsky emerged from his years in jail, reputedly covered with scars. In power, he "was to copy many of these torture methods during the Red Terror."[69] But support for the Bolsheviks' free use of force affected much of Russian society; a new name arose for infant girls: "Terrora."[70]

With the Bolsheviks, renamed the Communists, in power, the tables were turned: The use of terror immediately became state policy, helping

to plunge the country into a bloody Civil War. A specialist on this unhappy era has written that the leader of the Soviet state, Vladimir Lenin, "had always been an advocate of using mass terror against the enemies of his revolution." However, even *before* the Civil War commenced and in which both sides freely used terror, Lenin exclaimed to a member of the new government: "You surely don't think we're going to come out of this as victors if we don't use the most severe revolutionary terror?"[71] Regarding Lenin's right-hand man, Lev Trotsky, the Russian historian Dmitrii Volkogonv, wrote, "for Trotsky, revolution was synonymous with violence, which . . . he called terror."[72] Trotsky himself remarked that "We must put an end once and for all of the papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life."[73] The battle cry of a leading anti-Bolshevik general, Lavr Kornilov, was "Take no prisoners! The greater the terror, the greater the victory!"[74]

Eventually Josef Stalin pushed aside Trotsky and seized full power in the late 1920s and "terror attracted him like a bee to a perfumed flower."[75] Stalin's utterly ruthless policies culminated in The Great Terror of 1936–38, the most devastating use of arbitrary state violence until the rise of Mao Zedong in China. A witness to much of these horrors, the late American diplomat and historian, George Kennan, summed up the situation quite well: The USSR was the "revolutionary heir to the security-obsessed czarist Russia."[76]

Notes

1. Richard Charques, *The Twilight of Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 87.
2. Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1997), 165.
3. Hugh Phillips, "Riots, Strikes and Soviets: The Revolution of 1905 in Tver," *Revolutionary Russia* 17 (2004): 49–65.
4. Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2001), 11.
5. Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 251.
6. Peter Deriabin, *Watchdogs of Terror: Russian Bodyguards from the Tsars to the Commissars,* 2nd ed. (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), 139.
7. Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark Steinberg, *A History of Russia,* 7th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 387.
8. Richard Pipes, *The Degaev Affair: Terror and Treason in Tsarist Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 18–19.

9. Michael Florinsky, *Russia: A History and Interpretation,* 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1953–55), 2:1080–1081; David Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform, 1801–1881* (New York: Longman, 1991), 334–335.
10. Pipes, *Degaev,* 10.
11. W. Bruce Lincoln, *In War's Dark Shadow: The Russians before the Great War* (New York: Dial Press, 1983), 169–171.
12. Ibid., 192–194.
13. Charles Ruud and Sergei Stepanov, *Fontanka 16: The Tsar's Secret Police* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), 59–60; Figes, *People's Tragedy,* 124; Fontanka 16 was the St. Petersburg address of the Okhranka.
14. Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16,* 61.
15. Jonathan W. Daly, *Autocracy under Siege: Security Police and Opposition in Russia, 1866–1905* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), 142–143.
16. Perlustration was a chief focus of the police.
17. Lincoln, *War's Dark Shadow,* 170–172. Lenin's brother advocated not only terrorism but also "systematic terrorism."
18. This account of Sudeikin's career draws most heavily on Pipes, *Degaev,* esp. chapters 3–5.
19. Pipes, *Degaev,* 36, 55.
20. Ibid., 39–40.
21. Ibid., 59.
22. Ibid., 68–70.
23. Ibid., 70–72. In the George W. Bush administration, a truly unforgivable sin is to be seen as not a "team player."
24. Ibid., 74.
25. Ibid., 83. Degaev eventually earned a doctorate in mathematics and later became a professor at the University of South Dakota. He died peacefully in bed in 1921.
26. Ibid., 104–113.
27. Jonathan W. Daly, "The Security Police and Politics in Late Imperial Russia," in *Russia under the Last Tsar: Opposition and Subversion, 1894–1917,* ed. Anna Geifman (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 219.
28. Jonathan W. Daly, *The Watchful State: Security Police and Opposition in Russia, 1906–1917* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 5–9.
29. Jonathan Daly, "Security Police," 220–221.
30. Lincoln, *War's Dark Shadow,* 183–185.
31. Daly, *Watchful State,* 9.
32. Lincoln, *War's Dark Shadow,* 206–207.
33. Ibid., 208–209.
34. Ibid., 209.
35. Ibid., 208–209.
36. Daly, *Watchful State,* 13–14.
37. Lincoln, *War's Dark Shadow,* 211.
38. I. V. Popov, *The Struggle with Terrorism in the Russian Empire, 1905–1914* (Krasnodar: Printing House of the Kuban, 2004), 99. [in Russian]

39. Dominic Lieven, *Russia's Rulers under the Old Regime* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 214–215.
40. Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16,* 101.
41. Robert Weinberg, *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa: Blood on the Steps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 166–176.
42. A. V. Posadskii, "The Black Hundred in the Saratov Countryside, 1905–1916," *Fatherland History* 2 (2004): 134–142. In Russian. See also Walter Laqueur, *The Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993).
43. Daly, *Autocracy under Siege,* 157.
44. Riasanovsky and Steinberg, *History of Russia,* 387.
45. Daly, *Watchful State,* 16.
46. Abraham Ascher, *P. A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 41–43, 46, 144; Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill,* 226–227. Jonathan Daly suggests the number of dead from these special courts might have been as high as 1,369; Daly, *Watchful State,* 21.
47. Daly, *Watchful State,* 16.
48. Ibid., 33–34.
49. Ascher, *Stolypin,* 138–140. Italics added.
50. Ibid., 138. Given Russia's history of government repression, this is a remarkable and accurate statement.
51. Ibid., 144.
52. *The Times,* August 3, 1908.
53. Ascher, *Stolypin,* 143.
54. Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 171.
55. Ascher, *Stolypin,* 146–147.
56. Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill,* 223.
57. Figes, *People's Tragedy,* 200–201.
58. Ibid., 201.
59. Ibid., 202.
60. Ascher, *Stolypin,* 148.
61. Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill,* 234.
62. Boris Vasilievich Ananich and Rafail Sholomovich Ganelin, "Nicholas II," in *The Emperors and Empresses of Russia: Rediscovering the Romanovs,* ed. Donald J. Raleigh, comp. A. A. Iskenderov (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 385.
63. Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill,* 233.
64. Ibid., 236; Daly, *Watchful State,* 94–96.
65. Andrew Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 350.
66. Ibid., 350. Nicholas grudgingly created the Duma in the wake of the 1905 revolution. When the Duma called for radical reforms, Nicholas drastically reduced the electorate in 1907, creating a usually pliant entity.
67. Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill,* 249–252.

68. Ibid., 253–254.
69. Figes, *People's Tragedy,* 124.
70. Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 183.
71. Dmitrii Volkogonov, *Trotsky: The Eternal Revolutionary,* ed. and trans. Harold Sukhman (New York: Free Press, 1996), 113.
72. Ibid., 215.
73. Figes, *People's Tragedy,* 641.
74. I. S. Rat'kovskii and M. V. Khodiakov, *A History of Soviet Russia* (St. Petersburg: Lan, 1999), 44. In Russian.
75. Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 158.
76. Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 35.

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Index