

Key events in the history of terrorism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Terrorism has had a long history which has spanned from ancient civilizations, continued and evolved with those civilizations well into present day global terrorism. Several events throughout history could be considered key events that have fueled the use of certain terror tactics throughout the ages. In this essay three key events stand out in the history of terrorism and help to shape the way global terrorism has grown and is studied today.

Ancient

One of the very first examples of a true terrorist group, the Sicarii or “dagger men,” could be seen using terror tactics in the first century. This group where the more fanatic breakaway group of the Zealots of Judea who were led by the descendants of Judas of Galilee. The causes of tension where due to the religious-ideological conflict between the belief of the Jews and the Roman Empire, which was viewed as the complete opposite way of life of the Jews. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, their goal was to end Roman rule over the Jewish and operated primarily in Jerusalem. It was believed that the Jewish people where not to be ruled by anyone but God and this led to the Jewish revolution against Rome.

According to Historians, the Sicarii literally utilized a cloak and dagger terror tactic by carrying around small daggers, or “sacae”, in their cloaks and assassinated their targets within large crowded areas, often in broad daylight, so as to disappear into the crowd after the target was killed. Due to the stealth of this tactic the Sicarii where able to assassinate a target often unnoticed and rarely face capture. This also an example of an earliest form of urbanized terrorism as most of the attacks happened within the cities

populated areas and the terror instilled by the Sicarii was magnified because of the way they relied on anonymity as a way to instill fear.

Targets included Roman government collaborators and Hebrew Roman sympathizers that were thought to help the oppression of the Jewish people. The Sicarii instilled fear and agitated tensions further until it provoked a great revolt for Jewish liberation. After the beginning of The Great Jewish Revolt, the Zealots and the Sicarii joined forces, to attack and take Jerusalem from Rome in 66 AD. The rebel factions were able to temporarily take control of the Temple in Jerusalem, executing anyone who tried to oppose their power. Due to the perceived extremist violence they were willing to inflict, the factions were eventually cornered and either killed or committed mass suicide

1000-1900 AD

The Great Gunpowder plot goes down as the most notorious terrorist conspiracy attempt in British history and has left a lasting impression throughout the decades. Much like the 9/11 attacks, the plot took a lot of time and patience to come to fruition. The attempt was the first of its kind using gunpowder technology to essentially wipe out King James I, parliament, lords, the gentry and all manner of his established English government at the time in one full swipe. During Queen Elizabeth's reign England was at war with Catholic Spain and so Catholics were persecuted and marginalized, priests could be tortured and executed for openly practicing and those who denied and did not practice the Protestant faith

faced severe financial and legal penalties. Even those harboring catholic priests could face punishment, torture or death.

By 1559 the Queen was aging, had no child, and refused to name a successor opening the chance for James IV of Scotland to push for his claim to the throne due to his mother Mary Queen of Scots. James IV began building support, some of which were of the Catholic minorities and leaders of Catholic faith who hoped that James would help bring reform and toleration for the Catholic populace. When Queen Elizabeth I finally died March 25 1603, English Catholics openly rejoiced and James's supporters expected him to deliver on his perceived promises of catholic toleration. The night before his coronation James refused to grant full toleration and only suspended the fines placed on Catholics who refused to attend protestant parish churches as long as they were still loyal to the king and state. The king failed to grant the English Catholics immediate religious toleration and set several assassination plots in motion by disenchanting Catholics.

On November 5th 1605, the night before a new session of Parliament was to open in Westminster, a man was found in the basement vaults of the house of Parliament with enough barrels of gunpowder hidden underneath firewood to blow it up 20 times over. The man they arrested was, Guy Fawkes, one of the original conspirators and a Catholic soldier who helped execute the failed assassination attempt on King James I. While Fawkes was the first to be found, the brain behind the plot was Robert Catesby, a proud Catholic in an aggressively Protestant England during Queen Elizabeth's time and several other coconspirators who plotted in secrecy to enact a coup and assassinate King James I and his members of Parliament during the opening addresses.

<https://assignbuster.com/key-events-in-the-history-of-terrorism/>

After which the plan was to make one of King James's children a puppet monarch in order to restore Catholic faith in England. The plot was foiled after one of the conspirators cracked and sent a letter warning King James of the plot against his life. Guy Fawkes was tortured and hung, and Catesby and his coconspirators fled but were later caught and faced the same fate. The Gunpowder plot is often compared to modern domestic religious terrorism of today.

Modern

Modern day terror consists of mass shootings, suicide bombings, cyber hacking, and several other techniques that are specific to the age of modern technology. The most recent tragedy of domestic terrorism took place at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh where a forty-six-year-old Robert Bower stormed the building with an assault rifle. One of the largest predominantly Jewish neighborhoods in the United States, Squirrel Hill was not perceived as a high crime or racially tense neighborhood. The tree of life congregation was founded more than 150 years ago and merged with two other congregations back in 2017.

A member of the Philadelphia based networking service-GAB, was known to be popular with far-right extremists, white nationalists and antisemitic views that Robert Bowers was a member of. In the months leading up to the attack Bowers had not shown any red flags that would have alerted FBI or police to suspect him of this type of attack although in the days leading up to the attack Bowers posted severely antisemitic comments on the site. According to neighbors Bowers was a normal 50-year-old man who kept to himself and

never made his views known or showed signs of this type of mentality towards immigrants or Jews.

Believed by authorities to have acted alone Robert Bowers opened fire with an AR-15 semi-automatic assault rifle and three hand guns killing 11 people and injuring 6 during a baby naming ceremony within the Synagogue. Just before the attack Bowers was heard shouting anti-Semitic slurs and opened fire. Multiple calls came in from those who had barricaded themselves inside and within minutes police were at the scene just as Bowers was on his way out. Among those injured were two police officers and two SWAT officers injured during a shootout with Bowers, but eventually surrendered and was taken into custody where he was treated for injuries he sustained during the shootout. According to authorities Bowers was shot several times (Tabachnick, 2018).

The lure of terror usually begins with the feeling of being helpless or betrayed by the very things or organizations which that person held close and believed in only to perceive that institution becoming corrupted and diluted by other outside influences. As world views and politics continue to change terrorism will most likely always be present in some form or another, however learning from its history may be the only way to eventually get to the root of the problem.

References

- Nicholls, M. (2007). Strategy and Motivation in the Gunpowder Plot. *The Historical Journal*, 50(4), 787-807. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20175128>

- Pittsburgh Community Reels Following Mass Shooting At Synagogue. (2018). Washington, D. C.: NPR. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2126993321/>
- Richard A. Horsley. (1979). The Sicarii: Ancient Jewish “ Terrorists”. The Journal of Religion, 59(4), 435-458. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1202887>
- Tabachnick, T. (2018, November 1). Eleven Dead, Six Injured in Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting on Shabbat. Jewish Exponent, pp. 1-40. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2137095066/>