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TERRORISM IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE: LESSONS OF HISTORY FOR TODAY'S WAR ON TERRORISM Part I: posing the questions for studying terrorism in Russia

ТЕРРОРИЗМ В РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ: УРОКИ ИСТОРИИ ДЛЯ СЕГОДНЯШНЕЙ ВОЙНЫ ПРОТИВ ТЕРРОРИЗМА Часть I: постановка вопросов к изучению терроризма в России

This article is the first in a proposed series of articles in English about different aspects of the causes, development, and consequences of political terrorism in the post-reform Russian Empire. The challenges of studying the history of terrorism in Russia are examined in this article. In many ways, Russia was the birthplace of mass political terrorism in the modern world. In the course of 50 years between 1866 and 1916, terrorists, mostly from leftist organizations, committed thousands of terrorist acts against members of the government and society and killed or wounded 17,000 people. The epoch of terrorism in Russia corresponds to the European «epoch of dynamite» before the First World War, when several individuals, mostly anarchists, killed several dozen people, mostly monarchs, presidents and other state figures. Through a comparative analysis of the history of terrorism in Russia and Europe, one can speak about a unique path of the development of terrorism in the Russian Empire. Despite the abundance of primary sources and academic literature on this topic, the fact remains that in the study of terrorism in Russia, many aspects of this prerevolutionary phenomenon even today are still controversial and painful. In both Russian and foreign historiography, from the beginning of terrorism to the present, there are both positive and negative stereotypes about the terrorists, their supporters and opponents along with significant elements of myth making, distortion of facts, and huge blank spots. The topic also has a huge contemporary relevance. Despite the assertion of today's mass media and politicians, terrorism and government wars against terrorism did not begin with the terrorist attacks committed on September 11, 2001 in the United States. Many tendencies in terrorism and government wars against terrorism first emerged in prerevolutionary Russia.

Данная статья является первой из предполагаемой серии авторских публикаций на английском языке о разных аспектах предпосылок, развития и последствий политического терроризма в пореформенной Российской империи. В этой статье приведены результаты анализа главных вызовов при изучении терроризма в России. Во многом Россия была местом рождения массового политического терроризма современного толка. На протяжении полувека (между 1866 и 1916 годами) террористы, главным образом, из левых организаций, совершали тысячи терактов против представителей правительства и общества и убили или ранили около 17 000 человек. Период терроризма в России соответствует европейской «эпохе динамита» перед Первой мировой войной, когда некоторые индивиды, главным образом анархисты, убили несколько десятков человек, преимущественно монархов, президентов и других видных государственных деятелей. При помощи компаративного анализа истории терроризма в России и Европе можно уверенно говорить об особом пути развития терроризма в Российской империи. Несмотря на изобилие первоисточников и научной литературы по данной теме, в изучении терроризма в России многие аспекты данного дореволюционного явления до сих пор являются спорными и болезненными. В отечественной и зарубежной историографии с момента возникновения терроризма и до наших дней продолжается острая полемика, существуют как позитивные, так и негативные стереотипы о террористах, об их сторонниках и противниках, наличествуют значительные элементы мифотворчества, искажение фактов и огромные «белые пятна». Значимость научной проблемы не вызывает сомнений. Наперекор утверждениям современных медиа и политиков, терроризм и правительственные войны с терроризмом начались не с терактов, совершенных в США 11 сентября 2001 года. Многие течения в терроризме и в правительственных войнах против терроризма возникли впервые в дореволюционной России.

Keywords: terrorism, terror, terrorism in Russia, terrorism in Russian Empire, political terrorism

Ключевые слова: терроризм, террор, терроризм в России, терроризм в Российской империи, полити-

in Russia, terrorists in Russia, political violence in Russia, state security policy of Russia, state crimes in Russia, political crimes in Russia

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The history of political terrorism in the last decades of the Russian Empire is the history of the origins of mass terrorism in the modern world. This article is the first of a proposed series in English about different aspects of the causes, development, and consequences of terrorism in Russia in a 50-year period between 1866 and 1916. Challenges to the study of terrorism are the focus of this article. Several long-term and short-term factors came together to create virtually ideal conditions for the emergence of terrorism in Russia as a mass phenomenon and virtually impossible conditions for the autocracy to crush terrorism and other oppositional activity. These factors are still relevant today for governments and societies involved in the war against terrorism that began after terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001.

The sheer massive scale of terrorism, the diversity of its practitioners, supporters, and opponents, and the longevity of terrorism in Russia merit extensive study. An epoch of terrorism begins on April 4, 1866 with the attempted assassination of Tsar Alexander II by Dmitriy Karakozov, a member of the radical group Organization, and ends on September 24, 1911 with the assassination of Premier Petr Stolypin by Dmitriy Bogrov, an anarchist and double agent for the Department of Police [1]. Terrorism occurred during the reigns of Russia's last three tsars – Alexander II (1855-1881), Alexander III (1881-1894), and Nicholas II (1894-1917). The assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881 by members of the populist revolutionary organization The People's Will [*Narodnaya Volya*] was the most spectacular terrorist act of the Russian era of terrorism. The last major political assassination in pre-revolutionary Russia was the killing of Grigorii Rasputin on December 17, 1916 by Prince Feliks Yusupov, Grand Duke Dmitrii Pavlovich, V. M. Purishkevich, a founder of the Union of the Russian People, and several others. The murder of Rasputin was an attempt by certain members of the Imperial family and far right politicians to save the dynasty from being overthrown in a revolution or palace coup and had no connection with organized terrorism.

Political terrorism in Russia passed through three distinct periods with huge elements of continuity in tactics and aims. This is yet another phenomenon that requires intensive study. Although there are many monographs and studies about different periods of terrorism, to the best of the author's knowledge, there is no comprehensive monograph about terrorism in Russia between 1866 and 1911 [2].

A preliminary stage from 1866 to 1869 included two terrorist acts committed by the Organization, founded by N. I. Ishutin, the cousin of Dmitrii Karakozov, who attempted to assassinate Tsar Alexander II, and the People's Vengeance [*Narodnaya Rasprava*], founded by S. G. Nechaev. Nechaev and several other members of the group murdered fellow group member I. I. Ivanov, suspected of treason. The story of the People's Vengeance served as the basis for Fyodor Dostoevskij's novel "Demons" [*Besy*]. Particularly horrifying to generations of radicals and historians was the publication at the trial of Nechaev's followers of the program document "The Catechism of the Revolutionary" [*Katekhizis revolyutsionera*], authored by Nechaev and possibly co-authored by anarchist Mikhail A. Bakunin. Not only did the catechism call for revolutionaries to be cold and calculating with each other, it also called for the division of society, including liberals and other socialists, into various categories whose members could either be killed, provoked into becoming more reactionary or morally compromised according to the needs of the revolution [3].

Two major waves of terrorism took place from 1878 to 1894 and from 1894 to 1916. The overwhelming majority of terrorist incidents occurred between January, 1878 and March, 1881 in the first wave and between October, 1905 and September, 1911 in the second wave.

The first wave of terrorism began on January 24, 1878 when revolutionary Vera Zasulich attempted to assassinate St. Petersburg Governor General F. F. Trepov (a jury acquitted her in March, 1878) and culminated in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II on March 1, 1881. The People's Will and groups acting in its name dominated terrorism from 1879-1894. Even though the Executive Committee of the organization had been wiped out by 1883, many radicals right up to 1894 identified themselves as members of the People's Will and made repeated attempts to restore the organization. The period was also characterized by liberal support of the terrorists as a means to force the government to grant concessions and by the formation of Russia's first major right-wing anti-revolutionary organization "The Sacred Brotherhood" ["*Svyashhennaya Druzhina*"]. Also significant was the government's evolution of its policies in using judicial and administrative measures in combating its political opponents. Specific historical conditions shaped this first period of terrorism and strongly influenced actions and goals of political parties across the political spectrum and government policies during the second wave of terrorism. Most importantly, this first wave of terrorism delayed Russia's constitutional development by 25 years [4].

The second wave of terrorism coincided with the reign of Tsar Nicholas II. The period was characterized by a time of organization of different movements in the late 1890s, a few spectacular assassinations in the early 1900s, and then thousands of terrorist acts committed by leftists from October, 1905 to September, 1911. Virtually all left-wing parties and movements, participated in terrorism. They included empire-wide parties, ethnic minority parties, anarchists of different tendencies, and unaffiliated leftists. Liberals generally supported left-wing terrorism as a means of forcing the government to grant concessions and condemned right-wing terrorism. Right-wing elements organized their own anti-revolutionary movements and carried out a few political assassinations. Although conservatives and rightists condemned leftist terrorism, many did not approve of violence from their own ranks. Left-wing terrorism was only part of a major wave of political, social, ethnic, religious, and criminal violence sweeping the Russian Empire during the 1905 revolution and following years. As in the first wave of terrorism, government policy in using judicial and administrative measures against its opponents underwent considerable changes. Most importantly, the second wave of terrorism seriously undermined Russia's constitutional development [5].

The two waves of terrorism in Russia occurred during a period of European history often called "la belle époque" – a period running from the 1870s to 1914 of alleged peace and stability. "La belle époque" was also called the "era of dynamite" by many historians and writers because of a number of highly publicized assassinations of heads of state by anarchist individuals. Russia's contribution to the "era of dynamite" broke all records in Europe. From 1850 to 1900, there were about 40 political assassinations in European countries – in a period considered a virtual epidemic of political terrorism. Between 1870 and 1900 in Russia, there were 38 left-wing terrorist incidents causing 100 deaths. Left-wing terrorism in Russia reached its climax from 1905-1911 with 16,800 people killed or wounded in some 23,000 recorded incidents while the total number of killed and wounded from 1870-1917 was 17,000 people [6].

The types, goals, timing, and organization of terrorism generated sharp controversies among leftists from the 1870s onward [7]. Terrorists practiced *political terrorism* directed against the government and its supporters and *economic terrorism* directed against the propertied classes. Each type of terrorism had its own goals, but the general aim of political terrorism was to force the collapse of the political system while economic terrorism aimed at destroying the socio-economic system [8]. While party and movement leaders engaged in debates and formulated numerous strictures about the types, goals, timing, and organization of terrorism, these strictures generally were ignored by rank-and-file terrorists during the second wave of terrorism.

Furthermore, terrorism merits study because it was one factor enabling unity among left-wing parties and movements in the 1905 Revolution and following years. Historians have gener-

ally concentrated on disputes between party leaders, particularly Vladimir Lenin and others in emigration, and tended to ignore how rank-and-file members resented factional strife. Terrorism helped create a united front among leftists [9]. It brought together leftists of different tendencies and nationalities and was a major factor in building working relationships with liberals.

The history of political terrorism in the Russian Empire is highly relevant for those exploring contemporary terrorism and government wars against terrorism. Many tendencies in contemporary terrorism and counter-terrorism have their origins in pre-revolutionary Russia. These tendencies included:

- The presence of an entire social stratum – in this case, the Russian socialist intelligentsia – as a mass base for left-wing terrorists and their supporters. Europe had its bohemian intellectuals, marginal elements, and conspirators but Russia had an entire social stratum existing exclusively for the destruction of the existing order.
- The process of radicalization of certain population groups who replenished the ranks of radicals. In Russia, these groups included young adults, especially students, teenagers, women, and members of ethnic and religious minorities.
- The criminalization of the political classes, especially liberals, due to their support of terrorism.
- The waging of information wars by terrorists and their supporters against the government to win over public opinion both in Russia and abroad. Revolutionaries and liberals maintained that they were freedom fighters against a despotic government and that terrorism was justifiable because the government used terror against its opponents.
- Using political trials in the 1870s and 1880s and the State Duma from 1906 onward by socialists and liberals to defend left-wing terrorism, discredit the government, and win support from the political classes.
- Using terrorism as a tactic to deliberately provoke the government into becoming more repressive and, thus, ignite a revolution. This was an attempt to make the saying “the worse it is, the better” come true.
- Employing terrorism as a pre-emptive strike against the possibility of Russia becoming a liberal, constitutional European state. Left-wing terrorists in both waves wanted to go directly from feudalism to socialism and bypass the capitalist stage of development even though party platforms often recognized a lengthy period of parliamentary democracy was necessary before a socialist revolution was possible.
- The development of far-right terrorism and mass far-right political movements as a response to left-wing terrorism and to socialist and liberal political establishments.
- The development of an ambivalent attitude by conservatives, far rightists, and other supporters of the government in the autocracy’s war against terrorism. Anti-socialist and anti-liberal elements often withheld their support for various reasons from the government in its anti-terrorism fight.
- The development of government policies on combating terrorism and other crimes against the state and its attempts to mobilize public opinion against the terrorist threat. In Russia, mobilizing public support often failed because the autocracy repeatedly maintained a mistrustful attitude toward any public initiative, even from the most loyalist elements.
- The massive breaking by significant numbers of the population of traditional religious, moral, and legal restraints against killing. This raises questions about the level of legal consciousness of the political classes and government.

The complexities and ramifications of terrorism deserve comprehensive study despite the overwhelming abundance of primary sources and academic literature on the subject. In both Russian and foreign historiography, from the beginning of terrorism in the 1870s to the present, there are both positive and negative stereotypes about the terrorists and their supporters and opponents along with significant elements of myth making, deliberate distortion of facts and interpretations to promote political agendas, and huge blank spots. Despite the efforts of many Russian and Western historians to study terrorism objectively, eschatological themes of a cosmic

battle between the forces of good and evil have dominated both academic and popular literature. The major eschatological myth in historical works since the 1870s has been the story of how a repressive government ran a police state and forced idealistic young men and women to become terrorists. Since 1991 in the former Soviet Union, certain academic and popular writers have reworked this eschatological myth to show how demonic revolutionaries, led by foreign and internal enemies, attacked a divinely sanctioned government dedicated to defending Christian values. This forms part of a larger exercise in rewriting history backward to show how the Russian Revolution of 1917 – often now described as a “Golgotha”, with Tsar Nicholas II as a Christ-like martyr, – happened. It is hardly surprising that conspiracy theories have repeatedly turned up in the literature on terrorism [10]. Several examples will suffice to demonstrate how much elements of myth-making, ideological distortion, and political agendas have shaped the historiography of terrorism.

The author of this series wrote his master’s thesis on the judicial reform of 1864 and political trials of populists and members of the People’s Will between 1866 and 1894 [11]. Defendants and their liberal lawyers invariably argued that government repressions against peaceful propagandists had forced young idealists to become terrorists. Prosecutors generally demonized the defendants as the incarnation of evil. Historians have usually praised the heroic speeches of the defendants and the lawyers, while condemning the prosecution for persecuting the revolutionaries. What gets ignored is the fact that prosecutors, defendants, and lawyers all brought political agendas to the trials and turned justice into a secondary issue. Furthermore, the courtroom behavior of all three parties undermined the judicial reform, a reform that could have done much for turning Russia into a state based upon the rule of law. As will be shown in this series, a low level of legal consciousness of many members of the government and political classes created virtually ideal conditions for the development of terrorism in Russia on a mass scale.

Soviet historians denounced non-Bolshevik parties and movements for practicing terrorism and maintained that the practice of terror was one factor resulting in the logically inevitable defeat of these parties in the 1917 revolutions and civil war. One quotation from Vladimir Lenin, directed against the Socialists-Revolutionaries, was invariably cited in works about non-Bolshevik socialist parties. As Lenin wrote in 1902: “Because the Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs), by including terrorism in their programme and advocating it in its present-day form as a means of political struggle, are thereby doing the most serious harm to the movement, destroying the indissoluble ties between socialist work and the mass of the revolutionary class. No verbal assurances and vows can disprove the unquestionable fact that present-day terrorism, as practiced and advocated by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, is not connected in any way with work among the masses, for the masses, or together with the masses; that the organization of terroristic acts by the Party distracts our very scanty organizational forces from their difficult and by no means completed task of organizing a revolutionary workers’ party; that in practice the terrorism of the Socialist-Revolutionaries is nothing else than single combat, a method that has been wholly condemned by the experience of history” [12]. Many Soviet historians took this quotation out of historical context and applied it to the People’s Will. Because the Socialists-Revolutionaries considered themselves heirs to the People’s Will, Soviet historians could write history backwards to show how the logically inevitable defeat of the Socialists-Revolutionaries in 1917 and the civil war began with the history of the People’s Will.

The history of political terrorism in Russia became part of ideological polemics in the last decade of the Cold War. American journalist Claire Sterling and Western political scientists in the early 1980s argued that the Soviet Union was directing international terrorism deliberately to destabilize the West. Rebuttals by Soviet publicists charged that left-wing terrorists in the West were repeating the same mistakes by Russian terrorists before 1917. Just as Soviet historians charged that Russian terrorists objectively served the forces of reaction, publicists asserted that Trotskyite, Maoist, anarchist, and other extreme left terrorist groups were made up of petty-bourgeois and lumpen-proletarian elements, supported by the Americans, and objectively serving the interests of American imperialism and neo-fascism [13].

Studying terrorism in the Russian Empire requires using both a long-term and a comparative approach to reduce elements of myth-making, stereotypes, and political agendas. Using a

long-term approach to study the half-century of terrorism allows investigators to track elements of continuity and change during the period when two major waves of terrorism occurred. A comparative analysis of terrorism in Russia and European countries allows us to determine elements of similarity and differences between Russia and Europe. The evidence shows that it is possible to speak of a uniquely Russian path in the development of terrorism. It is also important to use these approaches in analyzing the Russian government's policy toward political (state) crimes. The long-term approach helps track the evolution of the government's policy in using police and judicial means to combat political opposition along with failed attempts to mobilize popular support for its policies. The comparative approach is extremely useful in understanding Russia's internal security policy in the context of European governments' policies toward their political opponents. Furthermore, the comparative approach in studying government policies on political crimes helps demolish stereotypes of the Russian Imperial government as the most repressive in Europe and as the creator of a police state. The historical record shows that the autocracy faced fairly unique challenges to its authority compared to other European governments during the period called "the era of dynamite".

Two long-term themes that deserve intensive investigation to understand the origins, development, and consequences of terrorism on a massive scale in Russia are the relationship between the government and the political classes and the level of legal consciousness of both the government and the political classes.

A major challenge in studying terrorism in Russia and any country is finding a definition of terrorism. Another challenge is the understanding of terminology used by supporters and opponents of terrorism to describe organized violence practiced by governments and oppositional elements. The following examples illustrate the complexity of the terminology issue. Russian terrorists proclaimed that they practiced terror and described government repressions as "white terror" ["*belyj terror*"]. In France, the Jacobin government officially and openly practiced terror, while its opponents called the Jacobins terrorists. The term "white terror" was used from 1794 to 1815 to describe the murders of Jacobins, republicans, and Bonapartists by royalist gangs, often acting with the tacit support of local governments. Note how the term "terror" in the French and Russian settings suggested that the organized violence of Jacobins and Russian revolutionaries was a legitimate, even if regrettable, form of political struggle, while the term "white terror" has no redeeming nor justifiable features. Furthermore, terrorists in Russia used numerous euphemisms to describe their activities. They often used the term expropriations to denote armed robberies of banks and government institutions to obtain funds for the movement. By using the term expropriations, revolutionaries tried to convey the message that they were taking back what the government had allegedly stolen from the people and to ensure that potential supporters, especially liberals, did not regard revolutionaries as common criminals. Image presentation was important for many terrorists from different political movements because they needed to convince supporters both in Russia and especially abroad that they were freedom fighters against a tyrannical government. Bolsheviks loudly condemned Socialists-Revolutionaries and other rivals for practicing terrorism, but Vladimir Lenin and other Bolsheviks employed euphemisms to mask the fact that they too practiced terrorism. Terms such as partisan activities, combat detachments/ fighting squads, fighters, technical groups were euphemisms for terrorist activities, terrorist detachments or squads, terrorists, bomb-making and arms-smuggling groups [14]. Note that in this series, the term terrorism will be used to denote organized violence by opposition elements against government and society.

It is difficult to find a satisfactory working definition of terrorism and terror and to determine how these phenomena differ from other types of state and oppositional violence. Particularly significant in formulating definitions are the historical conditions that make terror – state violence – and terrorism – oppositional violence – possible. Governments throughout the world have used mass violence against their real or alleged opponents for centuries. Oppositionist individuals and groups in many countries have practiced politically-motivated killings against their real or imagined enemies for centuries. However, terror and terrorism are the creations of modern European history – specifically they emerged during the age of revolutions and other great changes in Europe from 1789 to 1914 and have continued until the present. Terror and

terrorism differ radically from how governments and opposition movements dealt with their enemies in the past.

A historical approach to the study of terrorism could clear up some of the difficulties facing scholars seeking to define terrorism. Instead, one often finds scholars, especially political scientists, expressing frustration over the subjectivities involved in defining terrorism. For example, Dutch scholar Oskar Verkaikk noted how terrorism is a particular kind of political violence and involves the discursive use and impact of the term terrorism. In other words, why do people choose to use the term terrorism to describe a particular political activity and what are the consequences of using an often subjective term. Both lines of study, according to Verkaikk, emphasize that terrorism is meant to terrify [15]. However, terrorists go beyond the aim of simply trying to terrify people. Terrorism in the Russian Empire was specifically aimed at creating conditions for the overthrow of the imperial government.

A similar sense of frustration over defining terrorists is made by American political scientist Krista E. Wiegand. She described terrorists as “nonstate actors who pursue random unconventional violence targeted at noncombatants to achieve political objectives”. Wiegand correctly noted that the labeling of who is a terrorist depends heavily on who is making the distinction. American President Ronald Reagan observed that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” [16]. However, labeling terrorists as nonstate actors pursuing random violence against noncombatants definitely does not apply to the situation in the Russian Empire where terrorists deliberately chose targets from the Imperial family, armed forces, and bureaucracy to speed up the collapse of the autocracy.

American political scientist Martha Crenshaw has done extensive work in taking a historical approach to the study of terrorism and examining the complexities of the causes of terrorism in different countries, including the Russian Empire [17]. Some of her observations are highly relevant to the Russian setting. Crenshaw noted that “terrorism is essentially the result of elite disaffection; it represents the strategy of a minority, who may act on behalf of a wider popular constituency who have not been consulted about, and do not necessarily approve of the terrorists’ aims and methods” [18]. In the Russian Empire, terrorism was a form of political struggle used by the political classes, especially the socialist intelligentsia, and terrorist campaigns generally operated separately from mass violent movements especially during the revolution of 1905-1907. Crenshaw noted that revolutionaries can turn to terrorism when they regard government policy as intolerably unjust and wrote that government repression of the populist movement in the 1870s triggered the formation of the People’s Will in 1879 [19]. Crenshaw’s explanation is correct, but one must note that thousands of terrorist incidents took place after the Manifesto of October 17, 1905 that granted a State Duma and political freedom and turned Russia into a semi-autocratic/semi-constitutional state. What triggered this wave of terrorism was that socialists and liberals regarded the October Manifesto as a sign of weakness by the government and that the Manifesto created ideal conditions for the final battle against the autocracy. Particularly relevant to the Russian context is Crenshaw’s observation that “it is clear that once a terrorist group embarks on a strategy of terrorism, whatever its purpose and whatever its successes or failures, psychological factors make it very difficult to halt. Terrorism as a process gathers its own momentum, independent of external events” [20]. As will be seen, the wave of terrorism that broke out after October, 1905 took on a life of its own despite efforts by party and movement leaders to suspend or cease terrorist activities. Once the terrorist genie had been let out of the bottle, it was almost impossible to force it to return to the bottle.

For this series, the author has developed his own definitions of terror and terrorism. Both phenomena are the creations of modern history beginning with the French Revolution and other great revolutions and changes in Europe. Governments practice terror – organized and systematic violence – against real or imagined opponents in their own countries or in other lands. Practice of terror requires an organized political police force to monitor and suppress opposition; legal definitions of political crimes; categorization of political opponents; a police-judicial infrastructure to arrest, try, and punish opponents; an ideology to justify use of violence, intense use of the media to mobilize mass support for terror; reliance upon different population groups to support terror. The targeted categories of “enemies of the state” or “enemies of the people” can

be based on a broad range of human characteristics: race, ethnic group, religion, political affiliation, social class and other characteristics. Methods of terror against categories of the population can range all the way up to genocide – an attempt to exterminate all members of a group. Terror differs sharply from traditional methods of government repression of opponents. It is seen not only as a necessity, but also as a desired good. Furthermore, terror elevates the struggle between a government and its opponents to the level of a cosmic struggle between the forces of absolute good and absolute evil. Eschatological motifs about a coming destruction of an old world and the birth of a new world feature prominently in many ideological movements, especially those advocating violence. Terror is possible only when governments have broken with traditional religious, moral, and legal prohibitions against killing particularly when the targets of terror belong to groups that have been categorized and demonized by governments as dangerous, evil, and unworthy of life. For the period in the history of European revolutions between 1789 and 1917, only French revolutionary governments practiced terror [21].

The Russian government did not practice terror against its opponents despite assertions by many pre-revolutionary, Soviet, post-Soviet, and Western historians that the Russian Empire was a police state that employed mass terror. The autocracy lacked both the resources and the political willpower to practice terror and it could not mobilize support from the population largely due to its inherent mistrust of any public initiative, even from the most loyalist elements. Although many of its policies were repressive, the Russian government did not and could not practice terror as French revolutionaries did in 1793-1794 and the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution of 1917. Of course, a low level of legal consciousness among many members of the government, including Tsar Nicholas II, shaped many decisions on policies toward political opponents. However, in fairness to the government, Russian revolutionaries often used terrorism to deliberately provoke the government into becoming more repressive so that repression would ignite a revolution. This tactic played into the hands of reactionaries in the government who were eager to find the slightest excuse to revoke reforms and adopt harsher measures of repression [22]. One can argue that Russian government policies toward political opponents were repressive enough to antagonize the intelligentsia and political classes but the imperial government was unable to suppress violent activities and mobilize mass support against terrorism. The autocracy was in a “neither here nor there” situation: it was not a police state and it was not a full-fledged democracy. Hence, the autocracy was doomed to fighting an unwinnable war against its political opponents.

Opposition groups practice terrorism – organized and systematic violence – against governments, societies, and individuals. Terrorism has its own infrastructure – the organization of specialized groups of terrorists (although individuals, today known as “lone wolves”, have practiced and still practice terrorism); organization of networks of supporters; formulation of the goals of terrorism; using mass media to gather support for terrorist activities; relying on certain population groups to provide the mass base of terrorists and supporters. The targeted categories of enemies can be based on the same broad range of human characteristics that are used by governments to target individuals and groupings. Terrorists, depending upon their ideological tendency, can limit their activities to violence against specific groups. In Russia before 1917, left-wing terrorists killed government officials and members of the propertied classes. Terrorism differs from mass movements of violence during a rebellion or revolution. Mass movements tend to be spontaneous and can easily be crushed by governments or wither away. Like practitioners of terror, terrorists regard terrorism as not only a necessary evil or a harsh choice for the moment, but rather as a desired good. It elevates the struggle between terrorists and their opponents to the level of a cosmic struggle and develops an ideological framework to justify terrorist activities. Most importantly, terrorism becomes possible only when significant numbers of people break with traditional religious, moral, and legal prohibitions against killing.

In Russia, the political classes, including the socialist intelligentsia and many liberals, constituted the mass base for practitioners of left-wing terrorism and their supporters. What allowed this massive breaking with traditional norms against killing was the intelligentsia’s concept of revolutionary morality – anything that helped the revolutionary cause was good while anything that hindered the cause was bad. Adding to the concept of revolutionary morality was

the intelligentsia's low or non-existent legal consciousness. Law was regarded by most socialists and many liberals as something relative and the intelligentsia tended to dismiss European legal norms as inappropriate or inapplicable in the Russian Empire. Socialists often dismissed European law as only benefitting exploiters, while many liberals found European law distasteful for appealing to people's self-interest rather than to a sense of virtue. Many Russian conservatives adhered to Slavophile arguments that European law was based on cold principles of rationalism and could not provide a sense of justice that Russian Orthodoxy enabled. One can argue that the low level of legal consciousness both among many members of the government and political classes created virtually ideal conditions for the development of mass terrorism on a scale unknown in European countries during this period. What emerged was a massive sense that everything was permissible in political matters. This mentality brought many members of the government and political classes close to embracing antinomianism – a concept that people are no longer bound by traditional bonds of morality and legality.

If we attempt to construct a common European historical narrative about terrorism, then the specific historical conditions in Russia beginning with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 must be taken into account to explain how terrorism in the Russian Empire took a virtually unique path compared to the rest of Europe. However, this does not mean that people in Russia were more bloodthirsty than people in other European countries and that this is one more example of "Russian backwardness". Europe before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 was convulsed by a culture of violence. As French cultural historian Jacques Barzun noted: "No one who has not waded through some sizeable part of the literature of the period 1870-1914 has any conception of the extent to which it is one long call for blood, nor at the variety of parties, classes, nations, and races whose blood was separately and contradictorily clamored for by the enlightened citizens of the ancient civilizations of Europe" [23]. What happened was that Russia had a large contingent of people who had broken earlier with traditional restraints against killing compared to the rest of Europe. Europeans on a mass scale abandoned restraints against killing when war broke out in 1914.

Let us examine the specific historical setting in the Russian Empire that made the origins, development, and consequences of terrorism possible on a mass scale. The historical setting for terrorism cannot be over-emphasized. Otherwise, attempts to formulate definitions of terrorism turn into a futile exercise in discussing abstractions. Terrorism in Russia emerged and developed in a specific historical period – the history of the post-reform Russian Empire between 1861 and 1917. The abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the other great reforms of the 1860s and 1870s launched the beginning of the great transition of Russia from the pre-industrial age to the industrial age. In Marxist terms, this is the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The post-reform period of the history of the Russian Empire was the local equivalent of the European-wide transition from the pre-industrial age to the industrial age. This great transition in Europe, including Russia, was a stormy period of economic crises, enormous political-social tensions, and mass disorientation of populations. The causes of social anxiety included the collapse of pre-industrial political and social relations and a crisis of values [24].

The years from 1861 to 1917 in Russia were marked by rapid changes – industrialization, urbanization, the formation of new social classes and groups, the expansion of education, the rise of ethnic consciousness among the empire's more than 100 ethnic groups. This period was also one of immense stresses and strains, marked by wars including the Russo-Turkish War, Russo-Japanese War and World War One and by decades of political unrest and the revolution of 1905-1907. Russia was becoming a European state long before 1917. The development of industries, cities, educational system, mass communication, the rise of new social strata, especially the professional classes, indicated that "Russian backwardness" in the economic sense was not really a cause of the revolution of 1917. In Russia, the abolition of serfdom broke apart the foundation of the pre-industrial order and launched the beginning of the disintegration of other traditional relationships and values. There were many sharp conflicts between different strata of the population along political, estate, class, ethnic, religious, regional, age, gender, and other lines. There were also intense conflicts within many strata and groups in society. Conflicts between the government and different social groups intensified along with conflicts between groupings

within the Imperial government. The post-reform period in Russia was, to use the expression of French historian Fernand Braudel, "*une longue duree*" – a long-term period of the slow accumulation of major changes.

Political terrorism in the Russian Empire formed an integral part of a continual debate running from 1861 to 1917 over Russia's future centered on the question "Where are you going Russia?". The major political question that preoccupied the government and political classes (i.e. the intelligentsia, the educated classes, and those participating in political parties and movements) was the political development of Russia in relation to Europe. Two major options emerged for those concerned about the country's political development.

1. Would Russia become another European state? All European states in this period were constitutional/semi-constitutional monarchies or republics. Thus, Russia could become another European liberal, bourgeois, constitutional, parliamentary state based upon the rule of law. Certainly, the judicial reform of 1864 was a major step in this direction.

2. Or would Russia remain distinct from other European states? Not only conservatives of different tendencies believed in Russia's special path, but also many socialists and liberals took this view.

It is tempting to suggest that the revolution of 1905-1907 resolved this question about the state and social development of the Russian Empire. The Manifesto of October 17, 1905, signed by Tsar Nicholas II, granted a State Duma and political freedoms. This act transformed the autocratic state order into a semi-autocratic/semi-constitutional state order and brought Russia nearer to European states. However, the October Manifesto did not launch the beginning of a transition by Russia into the realm of European statehood. The major barrier on the road to Russia's constitutional development was the disagreement of Nicholas II and many representatives of the government and political classes with the model of European liberal statehood and law, particularly in the areas of legal restraints upon government, society, and individuals. Until the end of his reign, Nicholas II believed that he had signed the October Manifesto under duress and that he was free to alter or revoke it. Socialists and liberals regarded the Manifesto as a sign of weakness by the government and believed that the granting of political freedom had created ideal conditions for the final assault upon the autocracy. Leftist parties and anarchists carried out thousands of terrorist acts after the promulgation of the Manifesto. Rightists regarded the October Manifesto as a betrayal of the autocracy and the work of subversive elements in the bureaucracy aided by internal enemies. They formed right-wing organizations to mobilize support for a *revolution from the right*, dedicated to restoring Russia's uniqueness. Representatives of the government and political classes had reached a virtually unique consensus in Russian history on the empire's political development [25]. This rejection of a European model of statehood was unprecedented in the history of European revolutions and strongly influenced the course of events in the Duma monarchy from 1906 to 1917 and in 1917, especially between the February and October revolutions [26]. Note that the views of members of the government and political classes constituted the views of a minority of the population. Peasants and members of other lower classes constituted the overwhelming majority of Russia's population. They had their own conceptions of government and law and were overwhelming monarchist. However, the monarchism of the lower classes, like elsewhere in Europe, was expressed in a longing for a Father Tsar who would punish the evil nobles and officials responsible for the suffering of the common people. This type of monarchism could not serve as a base of support for the autocracy. Two minorities – the establishment of the government and a counter-establishment of the political classes – determined the political development of Russia in the years before and after the 1905 Revolution.

What has been generally ignored by historians is that Russian terrorists, starting in the 1870s, made their own contribution to this rejection of European norms of statehood and law. A hidden aim of terrorists was using terrorism as a pre-emptive strike against the development of the Russian Empire in the direction of European liberal statehood. This tactic of a pre-emptive strike was, in its own way, a major contribution of the terrorists to the special path of the Russian Revolution. Two waves of terrorism ensured that in 1881 and 1905 Russia failed to turn in

the direction of liberal European norms of statehood and legality. As former Hungarian communist Tibor Szamuely noted about the People's Will: «“Narodnaya Volya” destroyed itself by achieving its supreme triumph. Its history is usually referred to as a glorious failure. What had it gained for the Russian people? Nothing. It had merely frittered away its members' lives in acts of individual terrorism that were inevitably doomed to failure. Such is the conventional view. It is wrong. In terms of its own purposes “Narodnaya Volya” was completely successful. It had sacrificed itself on the blood-stained altar of revolution, but in death it was triumphant. The revolution had won the race for time. The main aim had been accomplished: Russia's constitutional bourgeois development had been stopped. It was only resumed twenty-five years later, and by then it was too late» [27].

In conclusion, it is time to recognize that the history of political terrorism in the Russian Empire between 1866 and 1911 deserves deeper study to determine its place in the overall European context of the history of political violence and lessons for today's wars against terrorism. One major erroneous conclusion made by many historians is that terrorism failed in Russia because terrorists could neither overthrow the government nor ignite a revolution. The historical record shows that the left-wing terrorists accomplished some significant victories. These included:

- Winning the support of Russian liberals and other opposition forces in the Empire. This diminished the government's base of support.
- Convincing many European and North American liberals and socialists that political terrorism was a completely legitimate means of struggle against a repressive government.
- Winning the support of socialists who objected to terrorism as a means of struggle.
- Setting an example to non-Russian minority nationalists to use terrorism.
- Winning the sympathy and support of great writers. The exoneration of the terrorists by Leo Tolstoy in his letter “I Cannot Be Silent” is virtually unparalleled in the history of terrorism.
- Influencing the organization of right-wing terrorist organizations and mass movements that threatened the autocracy with a “revolution from the right” and further diminished the base of support for the government.
- Provoking the government into using more repressive policies to maintain and undermining the court reform that could have taken Russia in the direction of becoming a state based upon the rule of law.

Few other terrorist movements in history have achieved so many victories. Following articles will investigate the goals, organizations, and practices of terrorists in the two major waves of terrorism and the responses of liberals, conservatives, and the government.

To be continued

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БИБЛИОГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ ССЫЛКИ И ПРИМЕЧАНИЯ

1. Все даты даются согласно юлианскому календарю. В XIX веке различие между юлианским и григорианским календарем составляло 12 дней; в XX веке – 13 дней.
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