



Pathways to evil

Genocide and Terrorism in the ancient world



Terrorism



Modern views of terrorism in the ancient world

- “While terrorism is not normally thought of as a phenomenon that was prevalent in the ancient world, there are at least some examples of it from early periods of history. ... The clearest indications of early uses of terrorism in ancient times came from the internal politics of Rome during some periods of the Republic, Jewish revolts in the Eastern Mediterranean first against the Seleucid Greeks and then against its incorporation into the Roman Empire, and battles between different factions in the Eastern Roman/Byzantine Empire. In these cases there is little doubt that organized groups were using violence directed toward target audiences beyond the immediate victims in order to achieve political objectives. In these cases the violence was frequently organized and widespread enough to meet the criteria for terrorism.” James M. Lutz and Brenda J. Lutz. *Terrorism : origins and evolution* 2005:19



What is terrorism?

- “Terrorism involves political objectives and goals. It relies on violence or the threat of violence. It is designed to generate fear in a target audience that extends beyond the immediate victims of the violence. The violence involves an organization and not isolated individuals. Terrorism involves a non-state actor or actors as the perpetrator of the violence, the victims, or both. Finally, terrorism is violence that is designed to create power in situations in which power has previously been lacking (i.e., the violence attempts to enhance the power base of the organization undertaking the action).” James M. Lutz and Brenda J. Lutz. Terrorism : origins and evolution 2005:7



No terrorism for the Greeks?



The question of STASIS in the Greek polis

- “Although there were gradations and transitions within democracy and between dēmokratía and oligarchía , it was from these divergent interests that often bitter Social Conflicts broke out esp. in the 5th and 4th cents., leading often to civil wars (στάσις/stásis), a phenomenon that became a characteristic feature of Greek history. **Generally, small, highly coherent groups of political activists opposed one another and won followers among the citizenry of the polis concerned by offering political participation or the assurance of privileges.** Economic interests could also play a part in this process. It added especially to the explosiveness of the political situation that Social Conflicts usually had a foreign policy component, as major powers exploited the highly competitive mentality and the resultant conflict structures in their own interests [4. 268-308]. Through the 5th cent. BC, then, the dualism between Athens and Sparta resolved itself into an orientation of democrats towards Athens and oligarchs towards Sparta.” Gehrke, Hans-Joachim (Freiburg), “Social conflicts”, in: *Brill’s New Pauly*



The stasis at Corcyra

- Meanwhile Corcyra gave the first example of most of the crimes alluded to; of the reprisals exacted by the governed who had never experienced equitable treatment or indeed aught but insolence from their rulers—when their hour came; of the iniquitous resolves of those who desired to get rid of their accustomed poverty, and ardently coveted their neighbours' goods; and lastly, of the savage and pitiless excesses into which men who had begun the struggle, not in a class but in a party spirit, were hurried by their ungovernable passions. In the confusion into which life was now thrown in the cities, human nature, always rebelling against the law and now its master, gladly showed itself ungoverned in passion, above respect for justice, and the enemy of all superiority; since revenge would not have been set above religion, and gain above justice, had it not been for the fatal power of envy. Indeed men too often take upon themselves in the prosecution of their revenge to set the example of doing away with those general laws to which all alike can look for salvation in adversity, instead of allowing them to subsist against the day of danger when their aid may be required. Thuc. 3.85



The 400 at Athens

- Yet the people and the Council of the Bean met still, but debated nothing, save what the conspirators thought fit; nay, all that spake were of that number, and had considered before what they were to say. [2] Nor would any of the rest speak against them, for fear, because they saw the combination was great; and if any man did, he was quickly made away by one convenient means or other, and no inquiry made after the deed-doers, nor justice prosecuted against any that was suspected. But the people were so quiet and so afraid that every man thought it gain to escape violence though he said never a word. [3] Their hearts failed them because they thought the conspirators more indeed than they were; and to learn their number, in respect of the greatness of the city and for that they knew not one another, they were unable. [4] For the same cause also was it impossible for any man that was angry at it to bemoan himself, whereby to be revenged on them that conspired; for he must have told his mind either to one he knew not or to one he knew and trusted not. [5] For the popular approached each other, every one with jealousy, as if they thought him of the plot. For indeed there were such amongst them as no man would have thought would ever have turned to the oligarchy; and those were they that caused in the many that diffidence, and by strengthening the jealousy of the popular one against another, conferred most to the security of the few. Thuc. 8.66



Reigns of Terror

Groups of non-homoioi in Sparta



The Helots

- A servile population that were not slaves but had a status between free men and slaves.
 - Helots were “between free men and *douloi* (chattel slaves)” Pollux 3.83
 - The Helots were a population of common ethnic origin, unlike chattel slaves.
 - Helots belonged to the community not the individual.
- *The Chians were the first Greeks after the Thessalians and the Spartans to make use of slaves but they did not acquire them in the same way as these. **For the Spartans and the Thessalians...recruited their slave populations from the Greeks who previously inhabited the country they now control**, Theopompos FGrH 115 F122*

Helots: Rights and Obligations

- *Their master was permitted neither to manumit them nor to sell them beyond the border.* Ephoros FGrH 70 F4
- This was a distinguishing characteristic between helots and slaves in the Greek world.
- Although it may not seem must it was a form of protection that chattel slaves did not have.
- They assign to the helots every shameful task leading to disgrace. ... Moreover if any exceeded the vigour proper to a slave's condition, they made death the penalty... Myron F2

Helots: Treatment

- In other ways too the Spartans treated the helots harshly and brutally... And accordingly, when the Thebans made their invasion into Laconia, and took a great number of the Helots, they could by no means persuade them to sing the verses of Terpander, Alcman, or Spondon, "For," said they, "the masters do not like it." So that it was truly observed by one, that in Sparta he who was free was most so, and he that was a slave there, the greatest slave in the world. Plutarch *Lykourgos* 28
- This was an effort to ridicule the helots and boost homoioi morale.
- At the same time ridicule is an effective technique of quelling resistance.
- Clearly part of the Spartan system of quelling helot resistance worked.

Helots: Rule of Terror

- ...their policy at all times having been governed by the necessity of taking precautions against them. ..The Helots were invited by a proclamation to pick out those of their number who claimed to have most distinguished themselves against the enemy... As many as two thousand were selected accordingly, who crowned themselves and went round the temples, rejoicing in their new freedom. The Spartans, however, soon afterwards did away with them, and no one ever knew how each of them perished. Thucydides 4.80
- The rule of terror is an effective means of quelling a large hostile population.
- However, it does have major drawbacks in that terror will not work against widespread revolt and enhances the possibility of revolt.

The Kinadon Affair

- And within five days after the sacrifice was ended a man reported to the ephors a conspiracy, and Cinadon as the head of the affair. ... the informer replied that Cinadon had taken him to the edge of the market-place and directed him to count how many Spartiatae there were in the market-place. “And I,” he said, “after counting king and ephors and senators and about forty others, asked ‘Why, Cinadon, did you bid me count these men?’ And he replied: ‘Believe,’ said he, **‘that these men are your enemies, and that all the others who are in the market-place, more than four thousand in number, are your allies.’**” ... the leaders, however, put it this way, that it was they who knew the secret of all the others--Helots, freedmen, lesser Spartiatae, and Perioeci; for whenever among these classes any mention was made of Spartiatae, no one was able to conceal the fact that he would **be glad to eat them raw**. Excerpts from Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.3.6

