

Terrorism – its past and present

Text 1:

Terrorist attacks in European history

Many people have the impression that the number of terror attacks has increased drastically in the past few years, claiming more and more victims. After several terror attacks recently took place in London, people were horrified and some believed that there had never been such terror acts in Britain.

Of course, this is not true – we need only look back at the time when the IRA (Irish Republican Army, founded in 1968) an 'innumerable' organization of Northern Ireland, started its war against the British government. Aiming to achieve independence from the UK and the reunification with the Irish Republic by violent means, the IRA is responsible for more than 3,500 deaths over the course of three decades.

When, in the aftermath of the Paris attacks in 2016 and 2017, French people thought and said that such abominable acts of terror had never been experienced in France, they were reminded by others who reminded them of the 1950s and 60s, when the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale), Algerian extremists, fought by all means to reach independence from France.

One could go on looking at scenes of violence and find many horrendous periods in European, American, African and Asian times of history when terror was used to frighten the respective population.

Focusing on Europe and its 'modern' political history, there was one particular period called the 'Reign of Terror' (la Terreur) – the French Revolution (1792–1794).

During this period, almost 17,000 people were officially beheaded, while 10,000 died either in prison, during the Civil War or without trial. The invention of the guillotine rendered speedy executions possible.

h) In the past, most terror attacks were religiously motivated.

2. Read the article "London attacks: IRA violence no different to this, says Docklands bomb victim". Fill in the information from the text about the four main topics in the memo sheet below.

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Information about Jonathan Ganesh | |
| 2 | The Docklands bombing | |
| 3 | The London Bridge Attack | |
| | J. Ganesh's opinion on terrorism | |

Worksheet: 9/11 – Terror attack on the USA

Working with the cartoon

- I. Describe the cartoon 'Attack on America' by Jim Bertone.

Tip: Some helpful information is given in the two info boxes below.

INFO The 9/11 terror attack

On the 11th of September 2001 hijackers captured four passenger planes, which had started on the east coast of the USA. Two of them deliberately hit the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York. The third plane came down on the Pentagon in Virginia and the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania and did not reach its terrorist aim – very likely the White House – because the passengers and crew managed to subdue the terrorists.

As all that happened on the same day, it was a enormous shock to the US and the world. About 3,000 people, including many innocent victims, lost their lives. The damage and destruction – especially in New York – were tremendous.

This was the most deadly attack on Americans, even greater than in Pearl Harbor in 1941, when the American battleship was attacked. And it was a most symbolic one as the Twin Towers symbolized the power and economic influence of the USA. The same is true for the Pentagon, the headquarter of the US defense. It has been found that the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden were responsible for the attack.

INFO Describing a cartoon

Your description should include

- the title/caption of the cartoon
- the name of the artist
- the year of publication (if known)
- a description of people, objects, setting (foreground, centre, background)
- a description of important visual elements (colours)
- depicted issues/events (social, historical, political)

- Look at the illustration of the Statue of Liberty on the right. Point out the differences to the one in the cartoon.
- Explain the symbols and message of the cartoon 'Attack on America'.



INFO The Statue of Liberty

In 1886 France gave this statue to the USA as a present. Its full name is "Liberty Enlightening the World". Lady Liberty holds a torch and a tablet with the inscription of the Declaration of Independence from July 4, 1776. The statue's crown has seven spikes representing the seven seas and continents of the world. It has an iron infrastructure and the exterior is made of copper, which has turned green because of oxidation.

The statue was erected on a tiny island, called Liberty Island, at the entrance to the harbor of New York and was used – only for a few years – as a lighthouse.

Beyond the cartoon

- The following poem by Emma Lazarus is graven on a tablet within the pedestal on which the statue stands. Explain the function of the statue according to this passage.

*Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning¹, and her name
Mother of Exiles². From her beacon-hand
Grows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame³.*

From Emma Lazarus: "The New Colossus", ll. 3-8

Annotations

- The "imprisoned lightning" refers to the electric light in the torch
- Exile: a person who has to leave his or her country
- The "air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame" refers to New York Harbor between NY and Brooklyn

Worksheet: Recent challenges: Vehicle attacks and problems of security

Working with the text

1. Read the article, look at the statements below and determine whether they reflect the text above or not. Prove your findings with a short quote from the line concerned. An example is given at the beginning.

- a) In 2017 seven acts of vehicle attacks were registered worldwide. true false

Proof: *"Europe has endured seven acts of vehicle terrorism in the past year..." (l. 1)*

- b) The police cannot properly deal with terror attacks.

- c) Some people will demand more surveillance.

- d) Exaggerated publicity of terror acts promotes imitation.

- e) The media is good at keeping the balance between "reporting facts" and "evoking fear".

- f) Violence doesn't got anything in common with group hatred.

- g) Effective crime prevention has to start at the very core.

Worksheet: Can terrorism be prevented?

Vocabulary

- I. Read the text "*Was Terror befeuert – und wie man ihn stoppen kann*". Fill in the table below. First find a simple German equivalent or paraphrase for the given words, then translate that word or phrase into English. An example is given at the beginning.

Tip: You can use a German dictionary – e.g. the *Lexikon* – to look up the meaning of the words.

| Word or phrase | German | English |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Terrorerfahrung (l. 13–14) | <i>Erfahrung mit Terror</i> | experience with terror |
| Sicherheitsbehörde (l. 18) | | |
| Restriktion (l. 30) | | |
| Anschlagsszenario (l. 30) | | |
| drakonische Maßnahme (l. 38) | | |
| flächendeckend (l. 45) | | |
| Algorithmus (l. 47) | | |
| Gefährdungsbewertung (l. 49) | | |
| Unrechtsstaat (l. 58) | | |
| Rechtspopulismus (l. 64) | | |
| präventive Maßnahme (l. 76) | | |
| Strafverfolger (l. 79) | | |

The terrorist as 'lone wolf'?

The Myth¹ of the 'lone wolf' terrorist

In recent years, references to such attacks have become inescapable. But this lazy² term obscures³ the real nature of the threat against us.

At around 8 pm on Sunday 29 January, a young man walked into a mosque in the Sainte-Foy neighbourhood of Quebec City and opened fire on worshippers⁴ with a 9mm handgun. The imam had just finished leading the congregation⁵ in prayer when the intruder⁶ started shooting at them. He killed six and injured 19 more. The dead included an IT specialist employed by the city council, a grocer, and a science professor.

The suspect, Alexandre Bissonnette, a 27-year-old student, has been charged⁷ with six counts of murder, though not terrorism. Within hours of the attack, Ralph Goodale, the Canadian minister for public safety, described the killer as "a lone wolf". His statement was rapidly picked up by the world's media.

Goodale's statement came as no surprise. In early 2017, well into the second decade of the most intense wave of international terrorism since the 1970s, the lone wolf has, for many observers, come to represent the most urgent security threat faced by the west. The term, which describes an individual actor who strikes alone and is not affiliated with any larger group, is now widely used by politicians, journalists, security officials and the general public. It is used for Islamic militant attackers and, as the shooting in Quebec shows, for killers with other ideological motivations. Within hours of the news breaking of an attack on pedestrians and a policeman in central London last week, it was used to describe the 52-year-old British convert⁹ responsible. Yet few beyond the exterior world of terrorism analysis appear to give this almost ubiquitous¹⁰ term much thought.

Terrorism has changed dramatically in recent years. Attacks by groups with defined chains of command have become rarer, as the prevalence¹¹ of terrorist networks, autonomous cells, and, in rare cases, individuals, has grown. This evolution has prompted¹² a search for a new vocabulary, as it should. The label