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# Revloutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962

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exhaustive research in a truly scholarly effort.

The problems of recruiting, promises of attractive duty and prospects for retention that plague today's Navy have their analogies in the period Harrod discusses. He analyzes these processes and offers insights into their importance. In an appendix of 13 tables, he delineates an interesting demographic picture of the enlisted force of the period. He also touches on the Navy's assessment of race relations and how racial policies were perceived and implemented in the fleet.

In its broadest sweep, Harrod's work has implications for naval leadership. Any man, officer or enlisted, who has served in the fleet can recall "white-hats" whom he admired, trusted and respected. He can also recall others who were less inspiring. Harrod speaks of both sorts.

A reading of *Manning the New Navy* will supply the officer and senior petty officer with a vantage point from which to view past personnel problems and from which to draw current inspiration for practical leadership.

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Hutchinson, Martha C. *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1978. 178pp.

Among the more mundane results of the political terrorism problem has been the large number of popular and scholarly books published to meet the public's interest, as well as to fulfill certain imperatives of a free economic system. Anyone familiar with the literature dealing with terrorism could successfully predict the contents of a stereotypical book-length treatment of the problem. Included would be obligatory chapters treating the IRA, the

PLO, the Cypriot EOKA, the Tupamaros, and the concluding chapter would cite evidence indicating terrorist cooperation across national boundaries and across organizational lines. Naturally, the closing page or so would consist of a bit of prognostication on the prospect of nuclear terror. Several of the general works are quite competent, refreshingly provocative and informative—perhaps to the extent that they deviate from the stereotype—sadly many are not. Among the best might be cited J. Bowyer Bell's *A Time of Terror*, Anthony Burton's *Urban Terrorism*, Edward Hyams' *Terrorists and Terrorism*, and Paul Wilkinson's uniquely analytic *Political Terrorism*.

What is lacking at this point are systematic, in-depth treatments of specific terrorist campaigns. For it is only through the exhaustive (and unfortunately, exhausting) study of the many ways in which terrorism has manifested itself that the (dis)utilities and (dis)incentives for political terrorism can be comprehended. The surfeit of terrorism books does not include a great number of such extensive treatments. Not that it is hard to understand why, given the paucity of evidence, the clandestine nature of the terrorism enterprise, and the shortcomings of the researchers (e.g., linguistic). There are however a few notable works in the vanguard of this approach. Noteworthy works include Jillian Becker's study of the Baader-Meinhof Gang, *Hitler's Children*; Bell's study of Jewish terrorism in mandatory Palestine, *Terror Out of Zion*; and finally John Cooley's impressive and valuable study of the fedayeen (Palestinian terrorists), *Green March, Black September*.

Thus, it is with great anticipation that Martha C. Hutchinson's new book, *Revolutionary Terrorism* is received—a study of the use of terrorism by the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) during the Algerian war. It is odd that the FLN terror campaign, matched in its

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scope and effect probably only by the Irgun in the Holy Land, has not been subjected to more thorough treatment to date. Even in the general works, the space accorded the Algerian revolution is disproportionately small when compared to other terrorist campaigns. Two of the better recent books only cite the FLN on five out of nearly 700 pages; only Anthony Burton provides more than cursory treatment (about 10 pages). Thus, *Revolutionary Terrorism*, to the extent that it succeeds, is an especially welcomed addition to the literature.

Perhaps it is best to be explicit about what *Revolutionary Terrorism* is not. It is not a comprehensive chronicle or history of the events of the Algerian revolution. In fact, the reader unacquainted with those events would be well advised to first read Alistair Horne's superb history, *A Savage War of Peace, Algeria 1954-1962*, before starting *Revolutionary Terrorism*.

Hutchinson proceeds from a definition of revolutionary terrorism as a systematic and purposeful method for seizing political power through individual acts of extraordinary and symbolic violence, directed against victims or objects in such a way as to be psychologically effective, in order to change political behavior and attitudes. She ascribes the prevalence of revolutionary terrorism to its small costs as compared to its much larger benefits for the perpetrator (terrorism at its essence being an effective weapon of the weak).

Paradoxically, terrorism, which often appears irrational or unpredictable—an image that may contribute to its political effectiveness—is basically a rational revolutionary strategy, in the sense of being a reasonable political choice. Terrorism is a policy that entails foreseeable costs and benefits. The terrorism of the FLN was the result of deliberate decisions by the revolutionary

elite, not, in most cases, a pathological or irrational outburst. (p. 36)

(Perhaps 100,000 Muslim Algerians and 5,000 Frenchmen died at FLN hands. Whether this represents a "reasonable political choice" is at least problematic; it is certainly ghastly within any humanist philosophical framework.)

The fundamental aims of the FLN were to obtain the absolute independence of Algeria from France and for the FLN to be the sole representative of Algerian nationalism. In pursuit of these aims, the FLN sought to: (1) gain support of the "native" population; (2) isolate and weaken the French in Algeria; (3) influence the population of France; and (4) gain international support and assistance. In furtherance of these aims, terrorism was consciously chosen as an instrument of the Algerian revolution.

Hutchinson imposes a typology on FLN use of terror. While the typology is useful, the categories are not mutually exclusive, and one suspects that it might be the orderliness of the presentation, rather than the analytical neatness of the terrorists, that attenuates the chaos (and passion) of the revolution. In any event, there is something to be gained in contemplating the functions of FLN terrorism, even if the data is less than orderly; accordingly, a verbal sketch of parts of Hutchinson's typology follows: No doubt the most important function of terrorism in Algeria was creating an obedient and compliant population. "Anyone who was not actively pro-FLN risked being labeled a traitor . . ." Concomitant with the creation of a compliant populace was the use of endorsement terrorism largely directed against the colons, and intended to influence Algerian Arab attitudes toward the FLN. Endorsement terrorism included acts of vengeance, as well as acts carefully calculated to provoke repression by the French against the Muslim populace. For example, the terror-murders of

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71 Europeans, 31 French soldiers, and 21 Algerians in August 1955 led swiftly to an estimated 12,000 dead at French hands. There were two supreme ironies in the Algerian war. One was the degree to which the French acted as if they sought the alienation of the Arab people of Algeria, and the second was that in an anticolonial revolution against France, the preponderance of victims were not French, but Arab objects of both French and FLN violence.

A third function of terrorism was the destruction of the French regime through the truncation of intelligence links, the promotion of noncooperation, the discouragement of colon contacts with the Muslims, and the creation of an atmosphere of pervasive insecurity. In general, this facet of the FLN campaign did not succeed in affecting the resolve of the French colonialists (indeed it had an opposite effect), but it did isolate the two communities from each other, and it did render both more susceptible to extremist leadership. Hutchinson appears to be mistaken in her assessments of the damage done to the French intelligence system, which managed to sustain itself through a brutal policy of torture and intimidation that was especially effective in the Battle of Algiers.

Yet a fourth functional variant was organizational terrorism, intended to settle internal disputes, eliminate competitors, enforce discipline, and recruit members. Hutchinson holds that this use of terrorism "was probably less significant for the FLN, however, than any other form." In view of Alistair Horne's citation of French claims that 12,000 members of the FLN were killed in internal purges, as well as 4,300 Algerians killed in factional disputes in France, it is hard to understand the author's diminishment of this facet of FLN terrorism. Perhaps the only explanation for Hutchinson's interpretation is the fact that she might consider such terrorism as of the compliance

rather than the organizational variety, thus illustrating the ambiguity of her typology.

Hutchinson concludes her treatment with discussions of the French response to terrorism, and the FLN's attempts to internationalize the conflict. We know that the French combination of "unresponsiveness with impotence" led to political gains for an adversary that had been defeated militarily. In France, the pattern of FLN terrorism seemed constantly to remind the French public of their presence in Algeria and its costs, both in gold and flesh. In the end, of course, DeGaulle sacrificed the province to save the state. "It was not so much that the FLN 'won' but that the French 'lost' the war."

*Revolutionary Terrorism* is a step in the right direction—that is, toward the intensive study of specific groups and campaigns. The prose is not elegant; there is a bit too much equivocation; a lexicon might have been nice; and the lack of adequate development of several chapters is distressing (e.g., especially the chapter treating internationalization of the war). However, that being said, the reader interested in terrorism (or revolution or Middle Eastern studies) will find Professor Hutchinson's book a worthwhile afternoon's reading, which is more than can be said for many books in the terrorism family.

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Jones, David R., ed. *The Military-Naval Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union*, Volume I. Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1978. 247pp.

This is the first of a projected 50 volumes plus indexes and supplements. Entries run from a few lines to 15 or more pages and the longer signed entries have extensive bibliographic notes. Subject coverage, at least in this volume, appears comprehensive: there are