TERRORISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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We've all become much too used to random and deadly terrorist attacks in this country in the past few years. At the beginning of 2018, an opinion poll found that some two-thirds of Britons expected a major terrorist attack to have taken place on British soil by the end of the year. That's more than in any other country where the same question was asked: more than France, Germany or the United States, more even than Turkey or Spain. This level of fear reflected not least the fact that four serious terrorist incidents took place in the UK during 2017. In June, a Muslim man was killed and eleven people were injured after a 47-year-old man drove a van into a group of worshippers in Finsbury Park, north London, on 19th June, shouting "I want to kill all Muslims". The perpetrator, Darren Osborne, was not previously known to the police, and was said to have turned against Muslims after reading about other terrorist attacks and then consulting far-right Islamophobic websites. Earlier the same month, a van and knife attack along London Bridge and nearby Borough Market left eight people dead and 48 injured. The three suspects were shot dead by armed police within minutes. They were all radical Islamists who had declared their allegiance to the so-called Islamic State in the Middle East. On 22 March, a car was driven into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, near the Houses of Parliament, killing five people and injuring 50. The single assailant jumped out of the car after it came to a stop and stabbed an unarmed police office before being shot dead by other officers on the scene. The perpetrator, 52-year-old Khalid Masood, a British citizen, had acted alone, and issued a message shortly before the attack in which he said he was taking action to avenge the deaths of Muslims killed by Western military forces in the Middle East.
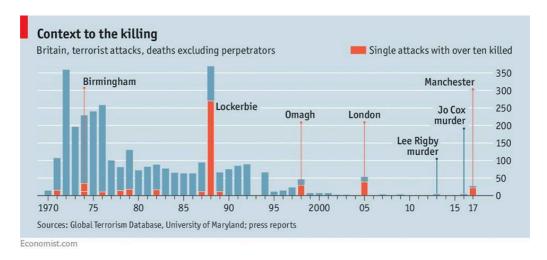
And then on 22 May, a male suicide bomber killed 23 and injured 139 at the end of a concert at the Manchester Arena by US singer Ariana Grande in May. Most of the victims were children or teenagers. The bomber was Salman Ramadan Abedi, a 22-year-old local man, originally from Libya, who had recently returned from his home country. After initial suspicions of a terrorist network, police later said they believed Abedi had largely acted alone but that others had been aware of his plans, including his brother in Libya. Most probably Abedi had made contact with ISIS on his trip to Libya, but had built his bomb on his own. Finally, on 15 September, a London tube train at Parsons Green station was targeted and witnesses reported a flash and bang. Thirty people were taken injured, mostly with burns, but there were no fatalities. An 18-year-old Iraqi refugee who had entered the UK illegally in 2015 was arrested and later sentenced to life imprisonment. He claimed to have undergone training with ISIS but his bomb was a crude home-made bucket bomb that failed to go off properly, and it remained uncertain whether he actually did have contacts with the organization. During police interviews he blamed Western forces for the death of his father in Iraq.

There have also been a number of potential terrorist attacks that have been foiled by the police and security services, some of them from white supremacists and neo-fascists, some from men who have declared their allegiance to the so-called Islamic State. It's striking that, looking at these incidents, and at terrorist attacks in the UK in the last few years, the perpetrators have mostly been loners, even if they have claimed allegiance to some larger organization. The London attacks that took place on 7 July 2005, when four Islamist terrorists detonated suicide bombs on two underground trains and a London bus, killing 52 people of 18 nationalities and injuring some 700 others, were unusual both in the extent of the damage and loss of life they caused, and in the degree

to which they were co-ordinated. Statements by the perpetrators said that they were avenging the killing of Muslims by British armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like most other perpetrators in recent years, they were not previously known to the security services, partly because they were not working on behalf of any wider terrorist organization.

But they did share a second general characteristic of recent terrorists who have committed outrages in the UK: they were British, as were the two Islamists of Nigerian descent who attacked and decapitated the British soldier Lee Rigby on 22 May 2013, though both men were, unusually perhaps, already known to the police. Similarly, on 16 June 2016, the Labour MP Jo Cox was fatally shot and stabbed on the street by Thomas Mair, a man associated with the far-right organization Britain First but had not previously been suspected of any intention to commit terrorist acts.

All of these attacks have created a climate in which, as the opinion poll I began with showed, British people expect more terrorist outrages to occur on British soil in the future. But if we take a longer-term perspective, terrorist attacks have actually been declining in this country over the past few decades.

Context to the killing
Britain, terrorist attacks, deaths excluding perpetrators — Single attacks with over ten killed

Sources: Global Terrorism Database, University of Maryland; press reports
Economist.com

If we look at this graph, based on statistics from the Global Terrorism Database, we can see that there were far more deaths from terrorism in this country from the early 1970s to the mid 1990s than there have been since. The destruction of a Pan Am transatlantic flight by an on-board bomb on 21 December 1988 killing 270 people, mostly American but also including eleven people hit by falling debris on the ground, was the largest terrorist incident in modern British history. It was unusual in being sponsored by a foreign government, the Gaddafi regime in Libya, which later took responsibility for the action, committed in retaliation for air attacks on Libya by American planes stationed on British soil. Otherwise the major force behind terrorist attacks in the UK in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s was the Provisional Irish Republican Army and associated dissident Irish nationalist groups, and the decline in the number of such attacks from the mid-1990s onwards reflects the impact of the Good Friday Irish Peace Agreement.

If we broaden our horizon and look at the recent history of terrorism in Western Europe as a whole, a similar picture emerges. Of course this is similar because the UK statistics are part of the series. Here however, the falling number of terrorist attacks by the Basque terrorist group ETA from the end of the 1980s onwards reinforces this pattern. And looking at the global statistics, neither Britain nor Western Europe comes close to the scale of terrorist activity evident in countries in the Middle East and Asia, if this snapshot view from 2013 is anything to go by.

So what exactly is terrorism? Essentially, it means the exercise of violence in order to intimidate or in other words terrorise people into doing something they would not otherwise want to do. The word terrorism was

actually invented during the French Revolution, like so many other modern political ideas. Surrounded by invading monarchist armies led by the Austrians, who threatened to execute all the revolutionaries if they won, and menaced by a whole range of internal enemies after they had guillotined King Louis XVI on 21 January 1793, the Jacobins instituted a reign of terror in Paris and the provinces in which three central principles of modern terrorism emerged: *vengeance*, for example against aristocrats for allegedly oppressing the people; *intimidation*, to force people to abandon their support of the monarchy and the church; and *purification*, to eliminate all the real or supposed enemies of the republic that could be found. Thousands of people were guillotined or shot by what Edmund Burke, the most trenchant critic of the Revolution, called, already in 1795, 'those hell hounds called terrorists', before the reign of terror came to an end with the overthrow of Maximilien Robespierre on 28 July 1794.

The word *terrorism* went straight into the dictionary published by the Académie Française in 1798, while other radical revolutionary regimes in later history followed the example of the Jacobins. Thus for example, the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917-18 called a 'red terror' against their opponents, exercised by the *Cheka* or Bolshevik political police, who executed between one and two hundred thousand alleged counter-revolutionaries between 1918 and 1921. As the newspaper *Izvestiya* announced on 3 September 1918, it was necessary to 'crush the hydra of counterrevolution with terror'.

Here you have a hostile cartoon showing the Bolsheviks sacrificing mother Russia on the altar of Marxist internationalism.

Terror was exercised on a far greater scale in the Soviet Union under Stalin, beginning in the early 1930s with the deliberate killing of 'kulaks' or independent farmers above all in Ukraine, but also in Kazakhstan, through the withholding of food supplies during a famine in which at least three million people died of starvation, in order to force them to agree to the collectivization of agriculture, which was in turn intended to feed the new industrial towns Stalin was constructing.

This propaganda poster from the time says "Destroy the kulaks as a class!"

From the mid-1930s onwards, hundreds of thousands of people were arrested, executed or imprisoned in labour camps in Stalin's great purges, which aimed at ensuring the absolute loyalty above all of members of the Bolshevik Party and associated institutions.

VISITEZ L'U.R.S.S. SES PYRAMIDES!...

Here's a French cartoon inviting readers to visit the pyramids of the USSR – made of the skulls of people killed by Stalin. The purges escaped central control and became an object in themselves, before they were finally brought to an end when even Stalin recognized the damage they were causing.

A comparable though in many ways different reign of terror was exercised by Hitler, first of all in Germany, with the arrest of some 200,000 Communists and Social Democrats during the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 and their imprisonment in concentration camps. During the war itself, the Nazis ruled the territories they conquered above all by terror, with the German army playing its part in massively disproportionate reprisals against villages thought to be harbouring resistance groups. The destruction of villages like Lidice in Bohemia or Oradour in France and the massacre of their inhabitants was repeated hundreds if not thousands of times in Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and other occupied territories in the East.

Since the end of World War II there have been many other examples of dictatorial states ruling through terror. The most striking perhaps is Cambodia, where under the Maoist Khmer Rouge at least 2 million people were killed between 1975 and 1979 as part of an attempt to deindustrialise and deurbanise the country and turn it into a socialist agrarian republic. Here too vengeance, against the urban elites, intimidation, and purification were central to the reign of terror.

Terror exercised by the state is mentioned too little in the standard accounts of terrorism. It has killed many more people than individual or autonomous group terror has done over time – one thinks for example of the regime of the colonels in Greece during the 1970s, or dictatorships around the same time in Chile and Argentina. And it has in some cases at least spilled over into mass murder and genocide in a way that what we normally and instinctively think of as terrorism usually has not.

The distinction between a violent and coercive state and a democratic state seems an obvious one. But there is a long tradition of individual terrorists or small groups regarding the state as exercising power by force even when it hasn't really been doing so. In nineteenth-century Europe for example, the anarchist movement thought of the state as the source of all of society's ills. Hence the widespread exercise of terror in the last decades of the century and the years leading up to the outbreak of World War I against leading statesmen, politicians and monarchs. The Russian Populists in particular believed that Russian peasant communes, in which the vast majority of the population lived, would function autonomously if left to themselves: the entire apparatus of the state was simply a means of oppression, and if the leading people in the state were assassinated, the whole edifice would crumble and disappear. The influence of anarchists such as Mikhail Bakunin spread to France, Spain and Italy and across the Atlantic and led to the creation of the typical cliché image of the anarchist terrorist of the period, bomb in one hand and knife in the other.

The list of prominent victims of anarchist assassinations in the decades leading up to the outbreak of the First World War included the President of France, the former Empress of Austria, the King of Italy, the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Spain, the Prime Minister of Russia, the Tsar of Russia, and two Russian Ministers of the Interior. As with other terrorist movements, an apparently rational aim – the destabilisation of the state – spilled over all too easily into acts of revenge and purification. In 1893 for example a French anarchist, Auguste Vaillant, threw a bomb into the Chamber of Deputies. In revenge for his execution, following his trial, another anarchist, Emile Henry, detonated a bomb at the Café Terminus in Paris, killing one customer and injuring twenty. When asked why he had attacked innocent people, Henry replied: 'There are no innocents'. 'I wanted', he said at his trial, 'to show the bourgeoisie that their pleasures would no longer be

complete, that their innocent triumphs would be disturbed, that their golden calf would tremble violently on its pedestal, until the final shock would cast it down in mud and blood.' Here we can see a terrorist motivated by a characteristic mixture of purification ('there are no innocents'), vengeance and, implicitly though rather in the background, intimidation, causing fear in the population and, once more, destabilising the state.

The anarchists also wanted to provoke the state into revealing its essentially authoritarian and undemocratic character by prompting it to undertake harsh measures of repression. And indeed it did, with the French Chamber of Deputies for example passing a set of repressive laws two days after Vaillant detonated his bomb that allowed the government to shut down the anarchist press. In Russia the Tsarist secret police clamped down on all forms of opposition, intensifying repression after the 1905 revolution. Anarchist terror produced the opposite effect to the one intended. The state did not collapse. Lenin was not amused. Individual terror was useless, he declared. Only mass terror would work. In Russia opposition to the rule of Tsar Nicholas II was aroused not by police suppression of violent revolutionary action, but by the Tsar's refusal to accept liberal institutions and democratic laws.

Extreme left-wing terrorism re-emerged in Europe in the late 1960s and 1970s with the Red Army Faction and associated groups in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy. Like the Russian Populists these groups targeted agents of the state or what they regarded as the capitalist economic system. If they launched wider attacks they tended to be against symbols of capitalism, as in their night-time arson of department stores. Their emergence was a consequence of disillusion at the failure of the student revolt of 1968 to revolutionise society. The ideology of the movement was based on an extreme and dogmatic form of Marxism, and its campaigns caused a good deal of public hysteria, above all in the so-called German Autumn of 1977. The parallel movement in Italy, the Red Brigades, are reckoned to have assassinated 75 people including the former Prime Minister Aldo Moro. Both drew their inspiration from revolutionary terrorists in Latin America, notably the so-called 'urban guerrillas' or Tupamaros, active in Uruguay in the 1960s and early 1970s, whose numerous acts of terrorism against what they regarded as a repressive state only prompted violent and extreme counter-measures by the police and the armed forces, and the creation of a dictatorship in 1973.

Revolutionary terrorist movements were uniformly unsuccessful. Society was not transformed. Nor have terrorist movements located on the extreme right wing of the political spectrum been successful either. A bomb set by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols on 19 April 1995 immediately outside a government building in Oklahoma City killed at least 168 people and injured more than 680 others. The perpetrators were members of the so-called militia movement, armed paramilitaries in settlements in remote parts of the American West who believed the government to be evil and advocated resistance to it. Another example of what one might call a post-anarchist ideology can be found in the campaign waged by the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, a former university professor who came to believe in a form of nature-based anarchism and retired to live as a recluse in the wilderness of Montana, where he was forced to witness the destruction of the surrounding area by developers. Between 1978 and 1995 he made a long series of increasingly sophisticated bombs and sent them to a variety of addressees, including engineering professors, fossil fuel company executives, and computer experts, as well as trying to blow up an airplane. Three people were killed and 23 injured before his identity was discovered and he was arrested. The Unabomber acted entirely on his own; movements like Earth First or the Earth Liberation Front prefer tactics like putting metal spikes into trees designated for felling, in order to damage chainsaws or burning down SUV dealerships. The related movement of the Animal Liberation Front attacks research facilities using live animals for experimentation and undertakes illegal acts of a similar kind. Like many such organizations, of course, these ones reject the label of terrorism, and in this case they have more justification than most: their method after all is not to create fear and panic in the population, or to exact revenge by killing for example oil company executives, and it's perhaps unfair to bracket them with the far more violent phenomenon of the Unabomber.

Eco-terrorism is ultimately very much a fringe phenomenon. A more important sponsor of terrorism than revolutionary movements of the far right or the far left has been nationalism. Its effects could be devastating: the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, by a Serbian nationalist in June 1914 sparked the fatal conflict of the First World War. The assassination was a carefully planned plot to strike a blow in favour of Serbian claims to Bosnia, occupied by the Austrians since 1908. One might say that in the end they succeeded in this aim, though at a quite exorbitant cost, since following the defeat of Austria in 1918 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was formed by international agreement; it included both Serbia and Bosnia, and was dominated by the former.

Nationalist terrorism in some parts of Europe had a very long pedigree. Nowhere was this more the case than in Ireland, where it began at the end of the 1850s with the Fenians, who in 1867 carried out the first known urban bombing action in an attempt to free colleagues from Clerkenwell prison in London, where they were on remand awaiting trial for preparing an armed uprising in Ireland: 12 people were killed and 120 injured. Part of the prison wall was destroyed but there were no escapes. The perpetrators were arrested and one of their number, Michael Barrett, was the last person to be publicly hanged in England before public executions were abolished in 1868. Further 'outrages' as they were called, mostly carried out in Ireland itself, proved a major headache for British governments and fuelled Gladstone's unsuccessful drive to grant Home Rule to the Irish in the 1880s and 1890s.

It was not until the Northern Irish civil rights movement at the end of the 1960s provoked an increasingly right-wing and repressive reaction from the Protestant rulers of Northern Ireland, which had remained part of the UK after Irish independence, that Irish nationalist terrorism revived. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the IRA ran a campaign of terrorist violence aimed at intimidating the Protestant population of Northern Ireland, which retaliated with violence of its own, and, on the British mainland, provoking the electorate into agreeing to the unification of Ireland in order to bring the violence to an end. Among many terrorist acts the bombing of Manchester's Arndale shopping centre on 15 June 1996 stands out: the explosion of a 1500 kilogram bomb, the largest bomb to go off in the British isles since World War II, injured more than 200 people but caused no fatalities. The IRA as was customary had sent a warning 90 minutes beforehand and 75,000 people had been evacuated from the area. £700 million worth of damage was caused, or more than £2,5 million in today's prices. The campaign, as I have mentioned, was eventually brought to an end by the Good Friday agreement establishing Catholic-Protestant power sharing in Northern Ireland.
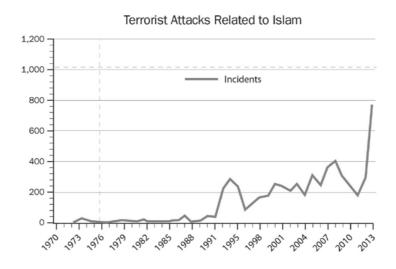
There were other nationalist terrorist movements in late 19th- and 20th-century Europe, notably the Basque separatist ETA, which bombed Madrid airport in 1979, and the Armenian revolutionary brotherhood (which seized the Turkish embassy in 1983). ETA killed 287 people between 1968 and 1980 and injured 400. Despite the example of Madrid airport, ETA tended to target leading government officials and policemen, including the military governor of Madrid in 1979.

Its campaign did not however slide over into the form of terrorism known in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s and early 2000s as 'ethnic cleansing', where rape, murder and imprisonment in concentration camps accompanied attempts by rival ethnic groups, especially Serbs, Croats and Kosovo Albanians, to expel other ethnic groups from territory they regarded as their own. These campaigns also had a long history, going back to the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, founded in 1893 to gain Macedonia for Bulgaria from the Ottomans, initially by guerrilla warfare. After World War I the IMRO became a more purely terrorist organization and targeted significant politicians in its efforts to end the partition of Macedonia: among its victims were the Bulgarian Prime Minister in 1923 and the King of Yugoslavia in 1934, after which it was effectively closed down by the Bulgarian Army. And in British-controlled Palestine after the end of World War II, extremist Zionist groups, notably the Irgun (defined even by the United States government as a terrorist organization) carried out ethnic cleansing actions against Arab villages and launched terrorist attacks on the British to get them to leave –

notably the bombing of the King David Hotel, where the British administration was housed, killing 91 and injuring 46. Zionist terrorism was paralleled by Palestinian terrorism, in organizations such as Black September, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas, and others, who engaged in spectacular actions including the hijacking of planes and cruise ships to bring attention to their cause as well as launching armed attacks on Israeli civilians. Overall, however, there is little doubt that Zionist terrorism played a significant role in the establishment of the state of Israel, one of the very few cases one can cite of a successful nationalist terrorist movement, though of course there were other, more important national and international forces at work as well.

Nationalist terrorism has given way in recent decades to the rise of terrorist movements rooted in religious belief. Of course, we have to note that some nationalist movements have also had a religious dimension: Catholicism for the IRA, for example, or Judaism for the Irgun, or Orthodox Christianity for the IMRO, or Catholicism for the Croats. But in each case the religious element was essentially secondary and national ideals and purposes were more important. Terrorism motivated primarily by religion has taken a variety of forms, notably in cults such as Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, which released the deadly nerve agent Sarin on the Tokyo subway system in 1995, or Gush Emunim in Israel, which in 1984 hatched plans, fortunately not carried out, to blow up the Dome of the Rock and the Blue Mosque on the Haram-ash-Sharif hill in Jerusalem to clear the ground for the restoration of the Temple, or, to take another example, the Branch Davidian sect that self-immolated in 1993 with the deaths of its leader David Koresh and 82 of his followers during a siege of their compound at Waco, Texas, by US security forces.

But it has functioned in recent years in particular as a weapon of Islamist extremism. Beginning in the early 1990s terrorist incidents related to Islam have grown rapidly in number, as this graph indicates.

And the parts of the world where the most terrorist attacks have occurred are those where Islamist radicalism is most active. Of course, the version of Islam which terrorists represent has little to do with mainstream Muslim religious practices and beliefs. Islamic fundamentalism is to the broad global religion of Islam as Christian evangelical fundamentalism is to the Catholic Church or the Church of England. Religious terrorism as practised by loosely organized groups like the Taliban, Hamas, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and Isis draws on the example of 'propaganda by the deed', to quote the classic concept of the nineteenth-century anarchist movement, and it combines in a radical form the classic terrorist aims of intimidation, vengeance and purification: intimidation of Christians, as is evident in numerous attacks on churches and congregations in the Middle East; vengeance for the Russian and American interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq; and purification of unbelievers, including Muslims who do not accept the Sunni fundamentalism of the terrorist groups, in a self-defined holy war.

But Islamist extremist terrorism differs from classical terrorist movements in the centrality of self-sacrifice and self-destruction to its tactics. Suicide bombings, rare before the rise of Islamist terrorism, reflect its allegiance not to some secular aim but to an imagined God. Purposes such as destroying the state of Israel, driving the Russians out of Chechnya or the Americans out of Afghanistan or Iraq may be present, but they are not paramount. Increasingly the driving force has been the desire to exterminate unbelievers who were seen as immoral and decadent, as in the attacks carried out on tourist centres in Egypt in the 1990s, or discos and clubs in a variety of countries from Indonesia to western Europe. Increasingly, in other words, it has been driven by pure hatred, by the belief declared by the French anarchist Emile Henry after his arrest for throwing a bomb into the Café Terminus in 1893: 'there are no innocents', and therefore indiscriminate killing is the order of the day. What we have here is not some rational or finite aim that can be discussed: it is a limitless, transcendental purpose in a war that will only end when the terrorists' aim of a society in every country in the world that is organized according to their concept of Islam has been achieved, an aim that is no more realisable than the anarchists' dream of a society where there is no state. That is why radical Islamist terrorism is so difficult to counter, its practitioners, unlike those, ultimately, as it proved, of the IRA, impossible to negotiate with. More problematical still is the fact that terrorist acts carried out in the service of a warped conception of Islam are all too frequently perpetrated by lone individuals difficult to identify in advance, rather than organized groups whose membership can be identified.

There are many possible ways of tackling the problem of terrorism, differing to some extent on the nature of the problem itself. One is military action. On 11 September 2001, 19 agents of Al-Qaeda hijacked four American airplanes, forcing two of them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, a third into the side of the Pentagon in Washington, and a fourth that was recaptured by the passengers but crashed into a field in Pennsylvania, causing more than 3,000 deaths and many more injuries. The terrorists were directed from a base in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and US President George W. Bush declared a 'war on terror', launching a NATO invasion that removed the Taliban from power. More controversially, Bush also led a successful invasion of Iraq in the belief that Saddam Hussein, a secular dictator, was involved in the bombings. Recently a coalition of powers has more or less effectively brought about the removal of Isis from Syria and Iraq.

Military action, the war on terror, only makes sense against terrorism that is sponsored by sovereign states or imitations of them like Isis. It is hugely costly and there is massive collateral damage in which innocent people get killed in large numbers. And it is only tangentially relevant to domestic terrorism, which may claim allegiance to an organization like Isis but is seldom actually directed or sponsored by it. Special anti-terrorist legislation has been the preferred reaction of politicians and governments to major acts of terrorism. But it is seldom effective, or to put it another way, it seldom adds effectively to the means states already have in place through the criminal law. It is sometimes counter-productive, as with the ban on Sinn Fein's voices being heard on the broadcast media for six years from 1988 – it actually gave more publicity to Sinn Fein, made it look like the victim of an undemocratic restriction on free speech, and was circumvented by the BBC by having actors say the words instead of Sinn Fein's representatives. Cover quasi-military operations by special army units run the risk that the units themselves start to operate beyond the law, as was sometimes the case in Northern Ireland.

The most effective way of combating domestic terrorism is through intelligence, through the careful and thorough monitoring and identification of potential threats, as the uncovering and prevention of a large number of likely attacks in this country over the past few years has shown. This can never be watertight, however; there will always, as I noted at the start of this lecture, be individuals whose conversion to the terrorist mentality is sudden and unnoticed. That's why education and social work are important, through groups such as Women Without Borders that focus on community based education, interfaith dialogue and similar strategies. The UK government has tried to pursue a similar policy through its Prevent programme, but experts are largely agreed that it has failed in its aims and indeed may have made things worse by imposing intrusive controls on schools

and universities that alienate Muslim students rather than winning them over. And the evidence of recent terrorist incidents in the UK strongly suggests that equal attention ought to be paid to the potential radicalization of young men for ultra-right and neo-fascist ideologies as well.

Terrorism almost always arouses in those who suffer from its attacks a determination to stand together in defiance of attempts to intimidate or destroy them, as examples that stretch from the cafés of Paris in the 1880s to the Manchester arena last year have repeatedly shown. It fails, in other words, in its aim to intimidate the public. Most citizens are prepared to allow some diminution of their freedoms in order to safeguard their security. But we need to be careful about how far that diminution goes. From the very early days of modern terrorism to the present, democratic societies, which have often borne the main brunt of terrorist fury, have been faced with the dilemma of how to increase security against attacks while still preserving basic civil freedoms. Here's a contemporary satirical poster from France in 1893 after the passing of repressive laws in the wake of an anarchist outrage, saying: 'For your own security, don't have any freedoms'.

Democracy, as we've all discovered in the past few years, is fragile and vulnerable, and it's vital that we don't allow it to be undermined by disproportionate reactions to the threat of terrorism.