

The Utility of Terrorism, Considered with Respect to the Usage Made of It

By Gianfranco Sanguinetti¹

It is quite sad to see, in our times, the advance of barbarity in social mores, as well as in the moral stupefaction of individuals, who spare themselves no baseness. In this new ethical universe, competition is no longer aroused by excellence and emulation, but by the systematic debasement and denigration of the others. Attacking the target through calumny and ingratitude has become commonplace. Both this calumnious attitude and this cynical ingratitude, which strikes out at those to whom one feels obligated, are no longer limited to other individuals, but are today extended to include things and even, finally, *the very words* that designate those things. And so I cannot claim that words are necessarily innocent, but I will give them, too, a fair trial before condemning them as guilty.

Let's take the case of the word "terrorism," which was invented by the French in 1793. If we consider the subject without prejudice, we must denounce the existence of undeniable paradoxes: terrorism is slandered every day by all of its beneficiaries, much more intensely than it is critiqued by those who are subjected to it, and it is slandered in an even-more virulent way by the very ones who order it, profit from it, direct it and impose it on victimized populations. Quite unjustly, we can say, because it is thanks to terrorism that these demiurges govern the world today, legislating, torturing, executing, enriching themselves and prospering by extorting the most unrestrained license in their command over the world – a license that they couldn't otherwise enjoy.

It is a sad thing to encounter ingratitude, but it is even sadder to see it at work when the ingrates continue to draw such great benefits from the slandered thing in such an insolent manner. If we consider things in a spirit that is fair and impartial, we must admit that the [current] weak French president and his destitute government would never have been able to impose upon France all the unconstitutional and extra-judicial measures that they has been able to pass thanks

¹ "De l'utilite du terrorisme, Considérée par rapport à l'usage qu'on en fait," dated 8 December 2015, and published that same day by Mediapart:

<https://blogs.mediapart.fr/lechatetlasouris/blog/081215/de-lutilite-du-terrorisme>. Translated by NOT BORED! on 28 December 2015. All footnotes by the translator except where noted.

to Operation *Charlie*² and 13 November.³ These were difficult measures to impose, but they were demanded by those Hollande must obey. Thanks to all that, perhaps the weakest and most unpopular government that France has ever known was able to unleash wars and “regime change” abroad with impunity, and to instaurate a state of emergency domestically, including the suspension of civil liberties, which is the secret dream of the majority of the world’s governments.

We are forced to conclude that the French President, as well as those to whom he must report, owe an infinitely large debt of gratitude to terrorism, which they cannot erase by unjustly slandering it as if it were the origin of all the world’s evils, whereas, quite the contrary, it is the source of all the supplementary and extraordinary powers that they are arrogating [and using] against society without any opposition. Thus it is disconcerting to see ingratitude have the audacity to transform itself into pure hypocrisy and hypocrisy empowered [*l’hypocrisie en pouvoir constitué*].

Now let us consider in an unbiased fashion the other advantages that terrorism procures for those who condemn it hypocritically. Faced with [the spectacle of] terrorism, there is no risk of revolt in the French *banlieus*, although the reasons for revolt are even more acute than before, despite the events that so preoccupied the political leaders 10 years ago.⁴ But there are other advantages.

Thanks to terrorism, the authorities can compel people to shut themselves into their homes; they can criminalize any situation, arbitrarily indict and condemn anyone, search homes and the Internet when and where they want; they can kill at will, torture, place under house-arrest, and censor strictly – all without any risk of provoking indignation, critiques or opposition.

Thanks to terrorism, the State and its political beneficiaries can, as if by magic, become “good” because – after sacrificing a small portion of the population – they can bravely, proudly and virtuously set themselves up as *the protectors* of the remaining people. Thus terrorism becomes the long-sought-after Philosopher’s Stone, something capable of sanctifying power, edifying politicians and whitewashing the Mafioso “protection” of their subjects, which is what all States hope to obtain.

With social peace obtained domestically thanks to terrorism, the economy (and thus profits) can start up again, and they can do wonderful things abroad, such as selling otherwise unsellable Rafale planes to terrorism’s big sponsors.⁵ In the

² A reference to the attacks carried out against *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015.

³ Cf. Sanguinetti’s statement on the attacks carried out in Paris on 13 November 2015: <http://www.notbored.org/Paris-13-11.pdf>.

⁴ The widespread rioting of November 2005.

⁵ On 3 May 2015, *Business Insider* carried a report titled “French Mideast policy helped Rafale jet sales: experts,” which that claimed that “anti-US suspicion in the Middle East” has permitted

aftermath of Operation Charlie, the CEO of Dassault proclaimed angelically and briskly, “The stars being rather well-aligned right now, we are going to try to push our advantage in order to try to get a fourth contract before the end of the year.”⁶ But the advantages of terrorism for the economy are multiple and they don’t stop there. Abroad, thanks to the terrorist armies that have been set up (Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, the Islamic State), the West has reaped huge profits in the pillaging of the Third World.

A philosopher produces ideas; a poet produces poems; a priest sermons; a professors treatises, etc. Terrorism produces attacks. If we look closer at the relations of this sector production to the whole of society, we will see much prejudice. Terrorism doesn’t simply produce attacks, but also counter-terrorist legislation, jurists to write new laws, journalists to indoctrinate public opinion, TV programs, films, specialized judges, police officers experienced in the repression of terrorism, professors who give university courses and publish their inevitable treatises, psychologists, novels about submission – and these books, films and so forth are launched upon the general market as commodities. As a result, terrorism produces an augmentation of the national wealth.

Terrorism also produces counter-terrorism, the criminal justice system, henchmen, prisons, judges, offices, jurors and an entire branch of industry and the security services. And all these different trades, which constitute so many categories of the social division of work, develop different capacities of the human spirit, create new needs and, as a correlative, new modes of satisfaction. Thus torture has led to the most fertile mechanical inventions, and many honest artisans are employed in the production of these instruments.

Sometimes terrorism produces moral effects; sometimes tragic ones. Thus it renders good service to the moral and aesthetic sentiments of the public and the political class, to which terrorism always furnishes the occasion to rage against something obviously more immoral than it is. Terrorism breaks up the monotony and the daily, banal security of bourgeois life. It prevents stagnation and provokes tension and anxious mobility, without which the goad of competition itself would be dulled. Terrorism stimulates the productive forces, makes financial capital move and electrifies the Stock Exchange.

At the same that it, practiced at the global level, eliminates surpluses from the labor market, thus decreasing competition among the workers, terrorism – when it produces lots of victims and damage – simultaneously prevents salaries from falling below the minimum. At the same time, the struggle against terrorism

the French defense company Dassault to “finally score several lucrative deals” with Egypt, India and Qatar.

⁶ Author’s note: cf. *Le Point*, 2 June 2015.

absorbs more people [into the economy], thus reducing unemployment. In any case, terrorism – the staging of civil war so as to avoid one – saves many lives by comparison.

Terrorism isn't merely useful; it is *necessary*, like evil. We know that what is called "evil" is the great principle that makes us social creatures; it is the basis, the life and the reference point of all occupations, without exception; it is in evil that we must seek the true origin of all the arts and sciences; and, if evil no longer existed, society would be condemned to decline, if not perish utterly.