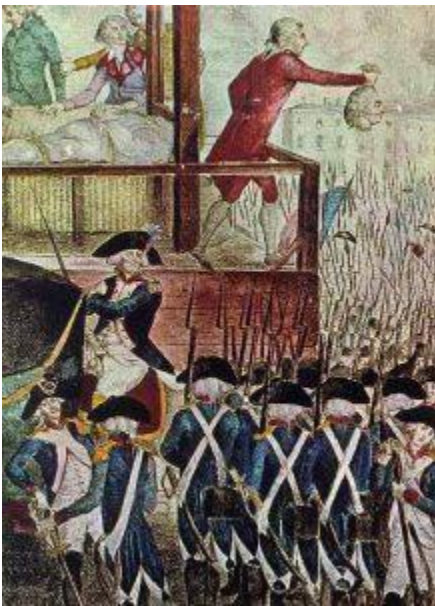


ORIGINS OF THE TERM TERRORISM



The root of the word terrorism is taken from a Latin term that means “to frighten”. It became part of the phrase *terror cimbricus*, which was used by ancient Romans in 105BC to describe the panic that ensued as they prepared for an attack by a fierce warrior tribe. Many years later that fact was taken into account during the bloody reign of Maximilien Robespierre during the French Revolution.

Terror is a feeling of intense and overwhelming fear, and that is exactly what Robespierre brought to the people of France.

Following the execution of Louis XVI, Robespierre was made the de facto leader of the French government. He was a member of the Jacobins political party, and used his new found power to attack his political enemies, the Girondins. Thousands of people were executed at Robespierre’s request, and it became one of

the bloodiest times in French history. Most of the victims were beheaded using the guillotine, which was often referred to by the title “The National Razor”. Any opposition to the power of the Jacobins was immediately squashed, and people lived in fear of retribution.

This period of time was referred to as the Reign of Terror, largely in homage to *terror cimbricus*. After nearly a year, the Terror came to an end and Robespierre was overthrown and executed. When it was over, people started to use the word terrorist to describe a person who abuses power through the threat of force. A journalist in the United Kingdom wrote about the Reign of Terror in The Times newspaper, and created the word terrorism as a way to describe the actions of Robespierre. The word became so popular it was officially added to the Oxford English Dictionary three years later.

Today the term terrorism has basically the same meaning, although it has become better defined over the years. Whatever the definition becomes, it will still be used to describe intentional acts of violence that are designed to harm or kill citizens in order to intimidate others.