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ABSTRACT

Terrorism and Gender

Women are, in conventional wisdom, usually defined as peacemakers and placed outside the activism of terrorism. Men are seen as the primary agents of such violence. Yet history shows that when the goal of violence is perceived as a just cause, or as a service to the nation, such violence may become a family affair. This was true during European resistance to Nazi occupation, to Algerian efforts against French colonialism, and today of Palestinian violence against Israel. Specific aggression against smaller defined injustices has also included women. They may participate as individuals (the Bader-Meinhof Gang and the Red Guard in Europe since WWII) or as part of family groups (Algeria). This presentation will look at the context in which women and children as well as men have felt impelled to commit violence, and attempt to examine motives for action.