



# CALIFORNIA'S MANY AND VARIED ATTACKS

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In September 2015, I began a project at the Rose Institute of State and Local Government researching the history of terrorism in California. Little did I know that my research would soon come to include my hometown of San Bernardino. Fellow students Wes Edwards '18 and Bryn Miller '19 joined me in combing through newspaper archives looking for reports of terrorist acts in California.

The term domestic terrorism is defined in federal law as activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. (18 U.S. Code § 2331). We searched public databases for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Sacramento Bee*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, using a list of more than 50 search terms, to look for incidents occurring from 1910 through

2015. We found a variety of attacks, perpetrated by many different and changing groups and individuals through the decades.

The bombing of the Los Angeles Times building in 1910 was the one of the first and most prominent attacks of the 1900s. Members of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers detonated a suitcase filled with dynamite and intended to go off at 4:00 a.m. when no employees would be in the building. Instead, the bomb went off at 1:00 a.m., killing 21 people and injuring another 100. The Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies), a Socialist union that advocated direct action, were responsible for a number of other attacks against businesses in the following decade. They were also suspected of pipe bombing a Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco in 1916 that killed 10 people and injured another 40. The Cats Claw Club of California (CCC of C), a sub-group of the Wobblies, threatened and bombed a number of wealthy and prominent people from 1916-1918. Their targets included the Governor's mansion in Sacramento in 1917.

Members of the Klu Klux Klan were responsible for threats and attacks in various cities starting in 1922. There are reports of threats and assaults in Los Angeles, Bakersfield, and San Francisco in 1922, and continuing through the 1940s, and even into the 1980s. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* ran stories of a young woman in Los Angeles who was branded with a cross in 1926 and of cross burnings in Huntington Park in 1940 and even as late as 1983 in Kagel Canyon.

The 1960s saw the rise of various ethno-nationalist groups such as the Black Panther Party, Chicano Liberation Front, pro-Castro and anti-Castro groups, and the Jewish Defense League. The Chicano Liberation Front was one of the most active, claiming credit for 28 bombings of banks, schools, government buildings, and supermarkets in 1970-71. The group also claimed credit for the shooting of the police chief of Union City in 1974. Between 1973 and 1976, a group known as the Death Angels was responsible for a string of 12 murders in San Francisco (known as the Zebra Killings). The *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1975 that this group had a plan to run all whites out of San Francisco. The police investigation of those murders grew into a dragnet that took in many innocent young black men for questioning and was ultimately stopped by U.S. District Judge Alfonso Zirpoli. Four men were ultimately tried and convicted of the Zebra Killings.

Radical left-wing groups such as the Weather Underground, Symbionese Liberation Army, and New World Liberation Front were also active in the 1960s and 1970s. The Symbionese Liberation Army may best be known for the kidnapping of Patty Hearst in 1974, but six of their members also died in a shootout with police the same year. The New World Liberation Front was responsible for many attacks in the 1970s, mostly in the Bay Area. Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski, who briefly taught at the University of California Berkeley, sent a series of bombs to locations across the country, starting in 1978 and ending in 1995. Four of the 16 targets were in California. Bombs in 1982 and 1985 severely injured researchers at the University of California at Berkeley. Kaczynski's bombs also killed a store owner in Sacramento in 1985 and a timber industry lobbyist in 1995 in Sacramento.

Abortion clinics have been the target of violent attacks since the early 1980s. In 1984, a clinic in San Diego was firebombed, causing \$200,000 in damage. The same facility was again attacked in 1985. Since then, abortion facilities across the state have been targets, including clinics in San Diego (1987), Long Beach (1988), Redding (1990, 1992), Sacramento (1992), Fresno (1992), and Chico (1994). More recently, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Thousand Oaks was the target of an arson attack in 2015.

Environmental extremists engaged in acts of vandalism and arson starting in the 1980s. For example, a group called the Animal Liberation Front vandalized laboratories at Loma Linda University Medical Center in 1984 and at the University of California Davis in 1988 and 1997. The 1997 attack caused \$4.6 million of property damage to the campus. Another group called Farm Animal Revenge Militia was responsible for a series of arson attacks against meat wholesalers in 1993 and 1994 in San Diego. Animal Liberation Front also attacked poultry and meat processing facilities in 1999 and 2000. It continues to be active, with an attack on a San Diego fur shop in 2013. Earth Liberation Front is a third environmental extremist group whose activity began in 2000. Its targets have included the Delta & Pine Land Company in 2001, car dealerships in the San Gabriel Valley, Santa Cruz, and West Covina in 2003, and construction sites in San Diego in 2003, Sacramento in 2004, and Carmel Valley and Pasadena in 2006.

The last attack in our study (through 2015) is the shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, on December 2, 2015. There, two gunmen killed 14 people and injured another 22. Investigators have not linked the shooters to a terrorist organization, but think that they were 'self-radicalized' and motivated by religious fanaticism.

Terrorism does not have one story, one face, or one goal. Our archival research shows that many different people and entities in California have been targets in the last century. Many different groups and ideologies motivated those attacks. Radical extremism can originate from almost anywhere across the ethnic and political spectrum. ◆