

ABSTRACT

**TITLE: CAMUS AND SARTRE: THE UNSETTLED
CONFLICT ON VIOLENCE AND TERROR**

NADINE AHMED, M.A., 2010

**DIRECTED BY: DR. JOSEPH BRAMI, PhD HEAD OF
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN**

The broad purpose of this paper is to bring attention to the subject of terrorism. Two plays by are compared which both treat this matter somewhat differently. The two plays are "Les Mains Sales" by Jean Paul Sartre and "Les Justes" by Albert Camus. The two authors who are both descendents of the existentialist time period have quite differing views on the subject. Sartre was known for his belief in action while Camus was known to be more of a pacifist. Both of these issues are portrayed in the paper. This paper also goes one step further because it looks at the literary aspect of both plays yet also places them and their theories into today's context. Both of the plays look terrorism from the eyes of the terrorist. However the issues and theories presented here bring some insight into the terrorists mind and how that affects the world today.

CAMUS AND SARTRE: THE UNSETTLED CONFLICT ON VIOLENCE AND TERROR

By

Nadine Ahmed

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Advisory Committee:
Dr. Joseph Bami
Dr. Herve Thomas Campagne
Dr. Andrea Frisch

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Introduction

Since 9/11, the word terrorism has become an essential part of our everyday vocabulary. There has been a worldwide focus put on fighting a “war on terror” and the word is now used very loosely. Almost any organized group who uses violence as a means to achieve their ultimate goal is considered as a terrorist. There is however, even six and a half years after 9/11, still a debate on the actual definition of the word “terrorism”. If one were to ask six different people what they believe the definition of terrorism is, there is a good chance that they would receive six different answers. Even within the United States, different agencies have different definitions. In that State Department’s annual report on terrorism (and not war) it is defined it as:

“The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”¹

One must keep in mind that the State Department is a Cabinet-level agency that deals with foreign affairs. The Department of Defense, however, the agency that controls the United States military, defines terrorism as:

¹ State Department annual report
<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2000/2419.htm>

“Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”²

As one can see, the definition is relevant to the role that each agency plays in the government. The very important word that is seen in both definitions and is vital when studying terrorism is “violence”.

The concept of violence is very broad. Oxford Dictionary defines it as “behavior involving physical force intended to hurt damage, or kill”³. Of course the origins of violence are very difficult to trace since it has been around since the beginning of mankind. In order to study violence and terrorism we must know the difference between the two. Violence can be any murder or harmful act, while terrorism is premeditated and very often is driven by a political reason. The first time the word itself was used was in the French Reign of Terror in 1793-1794 by Maximilien Robespierre, when he said that terror was nothing other than prompt justice that was severe and inflexible.⁴ The type of terror that Robespierre was referring to is known today as “revolutionary terror”, which uses violence for political means. Since the 18th century numerous other forms of terrorism have been defined (e.i. bioterrorism, nuclear terrorism, ecoterrorism), which is why it is very

² Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 April 2001. [Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f(d)].

³ http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/violence?view=uk

⁴ Schama, S: "Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution." Vintage Books, 1989

important to define the form of terrorism in relation to how it will be discussed throughout the rest of this specific study.

People often think that major discussions on terrorism did not even begin until problems in the Middle East worsened. These days “terrorism” is often associated with the Middle East, and groups like Al Qaeda. What people do often forget to mention is that terrorism exists in almost every corner of the world and that it has existed in many different historical periods. In recent years, there have been numerous publications on terrorism by scholars and authors. We find books or articles on every aspect of terrorism, such as the terrorist’s motives, the organization of terrorist groups, and possible resolutions. One aspect of the modern day discussion on terrorism that is somewhat controversial is trying to understand why the terrorist’s commit violent acts by looking at things from their point of view. Often, when authors do this, they are looked at as being on the terrorist’s side. In the book, *From the Terrorist’s Point of View*, Fathali Moghaddam, makes it very clear that by looking at the terrorist’s point of view, we are not accepting what they do, but he believes it is the best way to find an effective means to end terrorism.⁵ He also brings up a very valid point, by saying that terrorism is often in the eye of the beholder. For example, he says that from their point of view they are soldiers fighting a war. And groups that we call terrorist groups (e.i. Hamas, the IRA, Tamil

⁵ Moghaddam, Fathali M. *From the Terrorists’ Point of View* : Connecticut : Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006 pg. 2-10.

Tigers), consider themselves to be social and political groups. Criticism of authors like Moghaddam is not something new and has also occurred in the past when political violence was as common as it is today.

Another time in history that writers wrote similar commentaries on terrorism was after World War II and during the beginning of the Cold War. One of the most popular literary and philosophic movements that existed during this point in history was existentialism. The movement became very popular in the 1940's and 1950's with writers such as Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Both of these authors were very politically "engaged" writers, meaning that they wrote a great deal on the political situations of the time, and the issue of terrorism and violence was something we saw very often in their work. Of course, in order to analyze any work that is politically "engaged" one must look at the historical and political context during which the work was written. It is also almost impossible to compare actual historical periods themselves, but broader philosophies on issues such as terrorism and violence that were relevant then are important when looking at the issues of today.

In the early 1940's, during World War II, there was an emergence of many radical political ideologies and governments. Aside from Nazism and Fascism, the biggest political ideology that divided people and nations was Communism. Intellectuals at the time either took the side of being pro-communist or anti-communist. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels influenced the original Communist

doctrine, and it is this philosophy that writers such as Sartre greatly admired. The type of Communism that took over the Eastern Bloc of Europe in the late 1940's and 1950's did not necessarily follow these same principles. A prominent figure whose name is often affiliated with the word "communism" is Josef Stalin. Scholars have created the term "Stalinism" for Stalin's communist reign, which was founded on Terror. He was responsible for the death of millions of people. Many leftists were very upset when Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939, because it involved collaborating with Germany, who's was politically very right-winged. Even though Hitler broke the Pact in 1941 during Operation Barbarossa, several people decided not to side with the Communist Party anymore because of how Stalin's reign was changing the face of Communism.

Leading up to the Communist era there were several revolutionary movements. The main state where the majority of these actions took place was in Russia; since it was there that Communism was first used as a form of political rule. In the early 1900's Socialist Revolutionary Groups in Russia were trying to get rid of the Tsar dynasty in order to bring in a classless society. This led to the 1917 Revolutions, which then brought in Lenin and soon after him Stalin. After World War II, there were other nations trying to fight against Stalin's tyrannical regime and avoid becoming a part of the Eastern Bloc. These nations were also socialist, but did not follow the idea of Stalinism. Also in the early 1950's there were tensions arising from colonial nations who were struggling for independence. Revolutionary groups

in these countries, like the Front de Liberation National (FLN) in Algeria, were also resorting to violence as a means to achieve their ultimate goal.

The position of intellectuals, during this time, was also very important. Because of the way that the society was then, intellectuals were forced to be either for or against communism. Since most existentialist writers were on the left side of the political spectrum they often either joined or had some sort of connection to the Communist Party. Sartre was a great admirer of Marx and believed there was a correlation between the existentialist idea of free will and the original Communist doctrine. Sartre was never a member of the Communist Party, and considered himself a “compagnon de route”. Even with his support of the Communist doctrine, he did not believe in Stalinism or any totalitarian regime and criticized it in his works. Albert Camus also joined the French Communist Party for an extremely short period of time, in his youth. When he wrote about revolt in *L’Homme Révolté* and made his opinion on the situation in Algeria public, Sartre and other leftist intellectuals did not agree with his position. This caused a very well known rift between the two writers. Like Sartre, Camus was also opposed to totalitarian regimes. His underground journal, *Combat*, wrote out against Nazi Germany. We can also see this opposition in *L’Homme Révolté*.

In the essay, Camus does an in-depth analysis of the issue of violence as a form of rebellion, and this is where Camus and Sartre are known to have different views. The biggest issue on which their views were very different was the use of terror by the FLN as a means to fight for independence. The FLN was well known for

its terrorist actions, for example several car bombs and café bombs, against innocent civilians. Sartre spoke to members of the FLN in the preface to Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre (Wretched of the Earth)*, where he told them that they had a right to freedom and they could use any means necessary to fight for it. Camus, on the other hand, listened to the FLN's point of view, but did not agree with their terrorist means to achieve independence. Both Camus and Sartre, were however against the use of torture by French soldiers against Algerian prisoners. In his a 1969 article in the journal *Motive*, Camus said that he was not a proponent for "non-violence", therefore he was not a pacifist.⁶ He knew that violence was inevitable, but that did not mean it needed to be legitimized or justified. Sartre, on the other hand, even though he did not believe in reigns of terror that took away people's freedom, did believe that one could use any means necessary to achieve ultimate freedom.

In *Sartre Today: A Centenary Celebration*, which is a collection of essays in the journal *Sartre Studies International*, Ronald Aronson says that the quarrel between Sartre and Camus is one of the most well known of the twentieth century.⁷ Coincidentally, both of the writers published a play, within one year of one another that dealt with the issues of violence and terror. Both of the plays dealt with the issue of communism and totalitarian regimes. The first play to come out was *Les Mains Sales*, by Sartre in 1948. Just one year later, Camus finished the play *Les*

⁶ February 1969 *Motive*

⁷ Sartre: A Centenary Celebration, *Sartre Studies International* volume 11 issues 1,2 pg. 302.

Justes. *The Rebel* was published three years later, in 1952, and it was then that the two writers had their infamous break because of their opposing views on political violence. The plays show their differing views on this subject. The fact that both authors wrote plays on this subject shows the importance of the issue of political violence at the time. By writing a play, the author is not just asking the public to read, but also to see and to closely feel what they are trying to say in the play.

Both plays pose similar questions regarding the morality behind political violence. In both plays, there are murders committed for the purpose of a Socialist Revolutionary Group and both authors question just how far one can go when acting in the name of a political party fighting for power and independence. In *Les Mains Sales*, Sartre writes from a very personal standpoint, because he discusses the issue of the validity of an intellectual bourgeois fighting for the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Camus's play is different in many ways, one of them being that it is based on an actual event that happened in 1905: the assassination of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich. Camus poses the moral questions behind murder with more compassion than Sartre, because he also brings up the question of the murdering children during political violence. He also closely questions whether or not an ideology is more important than a human life and if it is worth dying for. Both of the authors look at the situation from the revolutionary terrorist's point of view, but the way that they reject or accept the use of violence is quite different. The best way to examine these two plays and the questions they pose is by looking closely at the main characters from both plays. One of the biggest debates in our modern day

society is how to fight the “war on terror”. Even though Camus and Sartre do not provide this answer to this in their plays, by closely analyzing their characters readers can concretely see the issues of violence and terror from the terrorist’s perspective.

Part I
Les Mains Sales

The Play

When one hears the name Jean-Paul Sartre, one thinks of existentialism and how he was one of the greatest philosophers of our time. Names of his famous books also come to mind, such as: *The Age of reason, Existentialism is a Humanism, and Being and Nothingness*. From these texts and the amount of research on this important 20th century figure, one can see that Sartre was a very liberal thinker. He was also an interdisciplinary man who wrote novels, plays, essays, articles, and even what some consider being manifestos. His works touched the disciplines of literature, philosophy, and politics among others. Politically, Sartre was considered a leftist, and his existentialist writings had a very large impact politics during that time period. During the war in Algeria, for example, Sartre came out in public support of the independence and even supported the Front de Liberation National (FLN). He believed that they had the right to freedom and needed to use any means possible to achieve it. He also admired revolutionaries such as Che Guevara, who fought for socialism in Latin American countries.

Sartre wrote the preface to *Les Damnes de la Terre (Wretched of the Earth)*, by Franz Fanon, and in this preface he openly supports the use of violence by the colonized population of Algeria against the French. Sartre

defends their right to freedom, and uses existentialist theory as reasoning behind their actions, when he writes:

“Try to understand this at any rate: if violence began this very evening and if exploitation and oppression had never existed on the earth, perhaps the slogans of non-violence might end the quarrel. But, if the whole regime, even your non-violent ideas, are conditioned by a thousand-year-old oppression, your passivity serves only to place you in the ranks of the oppressors”.⁸

Sartre did not get a welcoming reception for this preface from the French people. In fact, he was criticized for being a proponent of violence and terror here he places the oppressed man’s position into a historical, political, and existential context. Sartre is considered one of the greatest “*écrivains engagés*” of our time. Therefore in order to read and understand any of Sartre’s work, it is very important that we place the play politically and historically.

Yes, Sartre was against colonialism, but there were in fact other forms of violence and terror that Sartre was publicly against; for example Stalin’s rule and his form of communism, also Nazism, or any other fascist totalitarian regime. Sartre, along with many other intellectuals of his time, was inspired by the ideology of Marxism. He was a “*compagnon de route*” the Communist Party in France. However he believed that Stalinism was just a corruption of the communist

⁸Fanon, Frantz. (1961) *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris : Cahiers libres/Editions la Découverte, 1987. pg. 25

doctrine and that it did not give individuals the right to freedom, which was one of the fundamental principles of existentialism. In *Les Temps Modernes*, a journal that he was one of the founders of, he wrote: "the politics of Stalinist Communism are incompatible with the honest exercise of the literary profession."⁹ He also argued that Stalinism had made Marxism sterile, because you cannot turn "dialectics into formulae for catechism." Stalin's violence or that of any other terror-based regime is very different both politically and historically from the violence of the FLN during the Algerian Independence movement.

In several of Sartre's philosophic works, one can see his views on violence from his existentialist standpoint. However Sartre also wrote plays based on the subject of violence and terror, one of the most famous ones being *Les Mains Sales*. The play was first performed on April 2, 1948 at the Theatre Antoine in Paris. Since the play deals with the controversial themes of terror and conflicts within the Communist doctrine, it received various receptions. Members of the right accepted the play as they saw it as anti-Communist, while members of the left wing criticized it for the same reason. Because of this controversy, the play was not restaged until 1976.

In order to understand the play and its themes, one must start with the title: *Les Mains Sales*, which translates into *Dirty Hands*. Just like in all of Sartre's work,

⁹ Bondy, Jean. "Jean Paul Sartre and Politics". *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 2. No. 2, Literature and Society. pg 25.

existentialism is the underlying philosophy. The first time that the phrase, “les mains sales”, comes up is in the fourth act, when one of the protagonists, Hoederer, who is the head of the communist party in his country, says that he himself has “les mains sales”. When describing himself as such, he is in fact talking about how he has gone to any extreme, even killing, to dirty his hand for political goals. So, yes, the title does have to do with murder, but not just any murders, it deals with those committed by revolutionary terrorist groups. Through the personalities and roles of the characters, Sartre also uses this metaphor to show the totalitarian spirit at the time and the means that its members would take in order to achieve their political goals. One of the biggest problems in this play, and one that critics often disagree on, is whether or not Sartre accepts the metaphor of “les mains sales” to be just.

There is no doubt that Sartre attacks the unscrupulousness of the Communist party, which is one reason the play was not accepted by members of the Communist Party. Some of the important themes in the play that translate over to the actual political situation are corruption, treason, and loyalty. What Sartre shows overall is that with the corruption within the Communist Party, people did not have the right to choose and had no liberties. Existentialist values are founded on individual liberties; therefore Sartre is clearly showing that his socialist Marxist view on Communism did not go along with the totalitarian form of communism that was seen during the Cold War.

The title of the play, however, goes deeper than just politics and the communist doctrine. Through each character and in each scene Sartre questions “les mains sales” in deeper sense than just a political one. The development of each character throughout the play represents not only the Communist party, but also what it means and how justified it is to have “les mains sales”. One wonders, when reading the play, if these revolutionaries who have these so-called dirty hands are terrorists in Sartre’s eye. At the same time Sartre also questions to what extreme one can go to reach their ultimate goal. In order to deeply analyze each character’s role, metamorphosis, and if they have “les mains sales”, one must place the play historically and politically.

The play takes place in Illyria, which was the name of an ancient kingdom before Christ. The region now encompasses Montenegro, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. However in the play, the country most likely represents Yugoslavia, which never formally became a part of the Eastern Bloc, but did claim to be a Communist State, as its official name was the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The country in the play is also, a small country that is an ally of Nazi Germany and is about to also become an ally of the Soviet Union. In 1939, the Nazis and Soviets signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which renounced warfare between the two countries and pledged neutrality if either country gets attacked by a third party. This pact angered many leftists and had a large impact on the play.

There are two main protagonists, Hugo and Hoederer. Hugo is a young intellectual who comes from a bourgeois family. He leaves his family to join the Communist party and is very anxious to take action. Hoederer is the Communist party leader in Illyria and has recently been partaking in negotiation talks with the Pentagon, led by a man named Karsky. His group consists of Liberals and Nationalists who are in opposition to the Regent of Illyria, and the Prince of the Regent is the other character involved in the negotiations. The play is actually a flashback of Hugo's mission in the party. At the beginning of the play, the audience learns that he has come back from prison to see a woman named Olga, who is a member of the Socialist Proletarian Party as well. At first she is hesitant to let him into her house, and is worried that he may have become a traitor while in prison. Louis, another leading figure in the Party who has authority over Olga, is not willing to let Hugo back into the party and wants to have him killed. Olga, though, wants to give Hugo a chance and therefore asks Louis to give her time to hear his side of the story. The second through seventh "tableaux" show the flashback that Hugo recounts to Olga.

We learn that a few years back, Louis sent Hugo to pose as Hoederer's secretary but eventually to kill him because of the negotiations he was trying to make with Karsky and the Prince. Hugo and his wife, Jessica, live with Hoederer and during their stay there, Hugo argues with Hoederer about his stance on the negotiations he is attempting to come to, but eventually comes to the conclusion that he will not actually kill him. Hoederer blatantly asks Hugo if he is there to kill

him, and is not angered by his response, he is actually willing to help Hugo. Jessica, also an intellectual woman, tries to seduce Hoederer. He refuses the temptation, and just as he is trying to push Jessica away from him, Hugo sees them together and shoots Hoederer. The big question at the end of the play is whether Hugo committed the murder because of jealousy or because of his opposition to Hoederer's politics. This question brings up the main discussion of what constitutes a person to having "les mains sales". When we return to the present day, in the last act of the play, Olga tells Hugo that while he was in prison, the political plans that Hoederer was attempting to create with the Regent and the Pentagon have actually come into play. Hugo is very angered by this, does not want to associate with the Party anymore, and walks away from Olga, where he knows there are men waiting to shoot him.

Once again, the biggest issue concerns whether or not the characters have "les mains sales" and through the experiences that the main characters, Hugo, Hoederer, and Olga undergo, Sartre shows what he means with his metaphor of "les mains sales". Even though the characters are fictional, they represent Sartre's view on revolutionaries who go to the extreme of killing to achieve their political goals. By looking very closely at the development of each character throughout the play, one can see what Sartre means by this metaphor and can try to come to a conclusion of where Sartre stands on the moral questions "les mains sales" poses. Through the analysis of each character we can see if they fit into Sartre's metaphor. The historical

and political context of the situation in the play, along with Sartre's criticism on Soviet communism are very important to the existentialist philosophy in the play, but the questions that Sartre poses can be used to look at the use of violence by any extreme revolutionary group. Hugo, Hoederer, and Olga are the main characters one can analyze in order to look at Sartre's metaphor, but the smaller roles of Louis, Karsky, and the Prince are also important when answering the questions posed in this play.

The Characters

Hugo

Several critics, who have analyzed this play have said that Hugo represents Sartre. Hugo is a very young intellectual who comes from a bourgeois family. His father is a powerful businessman that even Karsky, the head of the Pentagon, knows. It is obvious throughout the play that Hugo is looked down upon by the other Party members because they see him as not really knowing what it is to be like them. Right from the beginning of the play, Hugo is criticized for being a bourgeois and an intellectual. Sartre's attention to detail is very important in this play. An example of this is the character's full name: Hugo Barine. In Russian, the word barine is a term one uses when referring to someone of a higher social class. By using

“Barine” as Hugo’s last name, Sartre is almost mocking his character in order to exaggerate the conflict of an intellectual bourgeois who is a revolutionary at the same time.

In the first act of the play, Olga very reluctantly lets Hugo into the house. Just after he comes in, one of the first things he asks her is:

“**Hugo** (regarde autour de lui.): Quel désert! Tout est là, pourtant. Ma machine à écrire?

Olga: Vendue.¹⁰

At first it may not be extremely apparent, but the typewriter is an example of Sartre’s attention to detail. It is a very small thing in the play, but it signifies education and knowledge. It also shows the intellectual side of Hugo, a characteristic of his that is important throughout the play. It is also significant that Olga says the typewriter has been sold, because the opposition to Hugo as an intellectual. Another question that Hugo poses in the play is whether or not people of Hugo’s intellectual capacity are able to have “les mains sales” and can be completely “engage” politically. During this first tableau, Olga also convinces Louis to give her a chance to listen to Hugo’s story instead of killing him right away. Louis reaction to this shows how the members of the Socialist Proletarian party did not believe that intellectuals had what it took to be a revolutionary:

¹⁰ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Les Mains Sales*. Paris: Gallimard, 1948. p. 18

“Louis: Récupérable? C’était un petit anarchiste indiscipliné, un intellectuel qui ne pensait qu’à prendre des attitudes, un bourgeois qui travaillait quand ça lui chantait et qui laissait tomber le travail pour un oui, pour un non”.¹¹

Louis, who hired him to commit the murder in the first place, uses his being an intellectual and coming from a rich family as an excuse to not allow him back in the Party. Through Louis, one can see Sartre’s criticism of the Communist Party, because he does not accept Hugo based on his family’s class.

The second act begins the account of Hugo’s flashback. The detail just from the first stage directions that describe the setting reads: “Hugo tape a la machine”¹², showing again the symbolism of the typewriter. In this first scene of the second act, he is in the room with another Party member, Ivan, who has been given the job of setting off a bomb, and will more than likely die while doing it. While Hugo is typing, Ivan says:

Ivan: Tu ne pourrais pas t’arrêter de taper.

Hugo: Pourquoi?

Ivan: Ça m’énerve”.¹³

Hugo’s typing is another example of Sartre’s details that shows Hugo’s intellectualism. The fact that Ivan demands Hugo to stop typing and is completely bothered by it sets up the question that Sartre poses of whether or not an

¹¹ *Les Mains Sales*. p. 28

¹² *Les Mains Sales* p. 37

¹³ *Les Mains Sales*. p. 65

intellectual can be a revolutionary as well. Hugo's character stands on one end, arguing that he can in fact be a revolutionary, while the other party members (with the exception of Olga) stand on the other end of the argument. Hugo also tells Ivan that his Party name is Raskolnikoff and that the name is an allusion to Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The character in this book is a murderer and also a student, therefore Hugo is showing how he believes an intellectual can also be a revolutionary.

The play was written soon after World War II ended, at the brink of the Cold War and when Stalin's power was influencing almost all of Eastern Europe. The ideological differences between the characters show Sartre's criticism on Stalinism and the current political situation. For example, Ivan, who has a very small role in the play, represents how every member in the Party is expected to have the same views and there is limited individuality. Hugo has the responsibility of writing the Party's newspaper and in this scene there is an interaction between them that says:

Ivan: C'est toi qui fait le journal?

Hugo: Moi et des autres.

Ivan: Il m'a passé souvent par les pattes mais je ne le lis pas. C'est pas votre faute mais les nouvelles sont en retard de huit jours sur la BBC ou la Radio Soviétique".¹⁴

¹⁴ *Les Mains Sales* p. 40

Ivan, who is simply a faceless Party member, is showing here that he believes the newspapers are outdated. Ivan's neglecting then newspapers and journals also shows a struggle in the play of an intellectual being active in the Communist Party.

Hugo wants to prove that he is in fact capable of going to the extreme of being a revolutionary and that he can kill. He says to Olga: "Hugo: J'en ai assez d'écrire pendant que les copains se font tuer"¹⁵. He is even willing to give up writing in order to take action in the Party. The original ideology of communism came from intellectuals and Sartre shows here how the party has changed. At this point in Hugo's flashback he is brainwashed by the Party and is very willing to do whatever they say. He has very different views from his bourgeois father and being active in the Party is all he desires. This actually marks the point where we one can start to look at the development of Hugo in the play.

At the beginning of the play Hugo is a naïve youngster who is willing to blindly follow his leaders just to be involved with the Party. We see this first in the fourth scene of the second tableau, when Hugo asks Olga what Hoederer and Louis are discussing. Olga says all she knows is that Louis is against what Hoederer wants and Hugo replies with "Alors, s'il est contre, je suis contre aussi. Pas besoin de savoir de quoi il s'agit"¹⁶. So here we see how, Hugo is willing to follow his leader, but throughout the play and by the end this changes. He is a talkative character and can be a bother to the other party members, such as Ivan and Olga. Sartre uses a great

¹⁵ *Les Mains Sales* p. 46

¹⁶ *Les Mains Sales* p. 45

deal of sarcasm and mockery in the play and intense determination to kill is an example of this.

Hugo desperately wants to take action, and interestingly enough when Louis asks him to take on the assignment he says: “Louis: Il parait que tu veux *agir*?”¹⁷, and the word “agir”, which means to act, is italicized. Hugo’s idea of action at this point in the play is to set off a bomb, because he refers to other Party members who set bombs off near the Grand Duke at the end of the 19th century. Louis, ironically responds: “Louis: Tu en rêves parce que tu est comme eux: un intellectuel anarchiste. Tu as cinquante ans de retard: le terrorisme, c’est fini”¹⁸. This sentence is important for more than one reason, and does not only concern Hugo. This is actually the only time in the play where we see the word terrorism even though the whole metaphor of “les mains sales” deals directly with violence and terror. It also shows how Party members, like Louis, look down at Hugo for being an intellectual.

When Hugo is informed of Hoederer’s plans to work with the other groups he finds it to be idiotic, which is what Louis believes also. Sartre uses the relationship between Louis and Hugo as a perfect example of how members of the Socialist Proletarian Party of Illyria were completely at the service of the Party. Hugo is also an example of how people would join the Party and become brainwashed by them. When Hugo explains to Louis why he joined the party he says: “J’ai quitté ma famille

¹⁷ *Les Mains Sales* p. 48

¹⁸ *Les Mains Sales* p. 49

et ma classe, le jour ou j'ai compris que c'était l'oppression"¹⁹. Here, Sartre points out the original theory behind the party's motives, and Hugo represents this theory. Hugo's only knowledge of what this Party stands for is what he sees in Louis and Olga; he even tells them that for him the party is them, "pour moi le Parti, c'est vous"²⁰. Louis gives Hugo the assignment of assisting in Hoederer's death, Hugo is angry because he wants to do the actual killing, he says, "Une intellectuel n'accepte pas n'importe quelle besogne"²¹.

Once Hugo is with Hoederer, his character develops and changes. Hugo does not hide from Hoederer the fact that he comes from a bourgeois family and that he has a father who used to be the vice-president of a company, but he does however hide that he has a doctorate. His wife, Jessica, takes the whole situation with Hoederer as a joke. She tells her husband that he does a good job of playing the "role" of a revolutionary, and treats the situation as if it were a game. This only adds to the argument that Sartre brings up in the play about intellectuals being revolutionaries and being able to have "les mains sales". Even Hugo's own wife questions if he can actually be both an intellectual and a revolutionary. When she learns that the revolver in his suitcase is for killing Hoederer, she says: "Mais tu ne pourrais jamais, ma pauvre petite abeille, veux-tu que le tue a ta place?"²².

¹⁹ *Les Mains Sales* p. 54

²⁰ *Les Mains Sales* p. 53

²¹ *Les Mains Sales* p. 55

²² *Les Mains Sales* p. 73

Hoederer's guards, Georges and Slick, also represent the majority of the population of the party. These men resemble mafia style hit men. The name Slick is similar to mafia nicknames and is out of place in the play. The use of a name like this may be a satire that Sartre uses to show his attitude on what totalitarian parties have become. Minor characters, such as the guards, also represent that lack of freedom within the Party, and Hugo is always on the other side of those characters. For example, here the guards want to search through Hugo's belongings for no reason. He wants to keep the revolver hidden and therefore refuses to let them look through his things:

“Georges: Tu n’es pas du Parti.

Hugo: Si

Georges: Alors, qu’est-ce qu’on t’a appris là-bas? Tu ne sais pas ce que c’est qu’une consigne?...

Hugo: Je respecte les consignes mais je me respecte aussi moi-même et je n’obéis pas aux ordres idiots qui sont faits exprès pour me ridiculiser”²³.

Existentialism believes that while taking into account the limits put upon them, one can achieve liberty. *Les Mains Sales* is an existentialist play and Hugo can be seen as an existentialist character, especially here when his lines completely put down Stalinist communism that takes away individual liberty. When one of the guards tells Hugo that he only has the right to respect himself once because he is a secretary,

²³ *Les Mains Sales* p. 88

Hugo responds that the only reason he joined the party was so that every man would have the same right.

Throughout the flashback, Hugo is constantly defending himself to the Party, trying to justify his right to be in the Party. Sartre not only raises the question of the intellectual's right to have "les mains sales", but also whether or not there is independence within the Party. Hugo represents Sartre's existentialism, and argues for his right to be a part of whatever he believes in. Another example of this in the third act is when Slick accuses him of never actually having experienced hunger. Hugo responds that his parents use to feed him and would say "Une cuillerée pour le gardien qui est en chômage, une cuillerée pour la veille qui ramasse les épiluchures dans la poubelle, une cuillerée pour la famille du charpentier qui s'est cassée la jambe"²⁴. He left his house because he did not agree with his family and asks Slick what he can do to truly be a part of the Party. This shows the political engagement of the play, because Sartre is clearly showing his views on how the Party is no longer funded on what one believes in. During the post-World War period, several intellectuals, especially in France, took the side of the Communist Party. After the Party started changing its face with the growth of the Soviet Union under Stalin, intellectual's support of the Communist Party started to fade. Hugo shows to these other party members, such as the guards, how he had to fight and humiliate himself in order to just join something he believed in.

²⁴ *Les Mains Sales* p. 97

Even though Hugo's political ideas and beliefs do not change throughout the play, he does change as a person. Ironically enough, it is his relationship with Hoederer that really changes him. Hugo sees that Hoederer is not as awful as he was expecting. Through their relations with one another, one can see how Hugo opens up. He tells Hoederer that he needs discipline because of all the thoughts in his head, showing the depth of his intellectual brain. We also start to see a slight change near the end of the third tableau, because earlier in the flashback he was very eager to just be a faceless member of the Party who was taking on an assignment. Now, however, he is turning into the existentialist character that Sartre intends for him to be by defending his own right to be in the Party.

In the beginning of the fourth act, Jessica continues to believe that Hugo is incapable of pulling off his task and even brings him the revolver before his meeting with Hoederer. In this same conversation between Hugo and his wife, she asks him whether or not he has changed his mind on killing Hoederer. He answers that he has not done this, and this hesitancy shows that he is changing and unfolding as a character.

Shortly, after the conversation between Hugo and his wife the Prince and Karsky come to meet with Hoederer on their negotiation and Hugo is present during the meeting. Hugo's character does not play an extremely important role in the actual meeting since he is posing to be Hoederer's secretary. However, Karsky, the head of the liberal-nationalist Pentagon, knows Hugo's father. He blames Hugo for his father's death:

“Karsky: J’ai rencontré votre père la semaine dernière. Est-ce que ça vous intéresse encore d’avoir de ses nouvelles?

Hugo: Non.

Karsky: Il est fort probable que vous porterez la responsabilité de sa mort.

Hugo: Il est à peu près certain qu’il porte la responsabilité de ma vie. Nous sommes quittes”.²⁵

Here one can also see the strength of Hugo’s desire to be in the Party, since he is not at all moved by the news of his father’s death. During the meeting itself, Hugo does not speak very much. He listens while the three different party heads argue in order to come to some sort of solution for Illyria. Just as the agreement is about to be made, Hugo screams out: “Écoutez bien vous deux: il n’aura pas le Parti derrière lui (Hoederer) pour cette combine”²⁶ and then seconds later an explosion is heard. The fact that Hugo argues orally but does not kill Hoederer then is important, because it raises Sartre’s question on an intellectual being able to truly have *les mains sales*.

The explosion is important because it signifies treason and lying within the party. Hugo realizes that someone from the Party was responsible because the Party does not have faith in Hugo to finish the task. This is a turning point in the story and there is a change in Hugo. In the second act we hear Hugo tell Louis that for him the party is Louis and Olga and then after the explosion he is angry that they do not have confidence in him:

²⁵ *Les Mains Sales* p. 141

²⁶ *Les Mains Sales* p. 153

“Hugo: Il y a des gens qui te donne une mission de confiance, hein, et tu cases le cul pour l’accomplir et puis au moment où tu vas réussir, tu t’aperçois qu’ils se foutaient de toi et qu’ils ont fait faire la besogne pas d’autres”²⁷.

Hugo is drunk during this part of the play because he drank with Hoederer before the meeting. He is completely destroyed by the fact that his own Party would turn against him. His character as a young naïve intellectual who is willing to take any action in the name of the Party starts to change right after this explosion.

We learn in the fifth tableau, that it was in fact Olga who was responsible for the explosion. She enters Hugo and Jessica’s house while Hugo is asleep from his drunkenness, and tells Jessica she set off the bomb because the party does not like traitors. When Hugo wakes up he learns that he has twenty-four hours to finish his task. Hugo says that if they replace him he will leave the party and Olga replies, “Crois-tu qu’on peut quitter le Parti?”²⁸. At this point, Hugo is still saying he is going to kill Hoederer, but is clearly trying to convince himself that he has it in him to be an assassin. He even argues with his wife that he was about to take out the revolver when the explosion went off. Hugo’s self-questioning goes along with the larger question in the book of just how far one can act as a revolutionary. He even asks his wife what she would do in his place, showing how is not sure of himself, and she answers that she would tell Hoederer that the Party wants Hugo to kill him and then

²⁷ *Les Mains Sales* p. 158

²⁸ *Les Mains Sales* p. 174

not do it. She tells him that he is following Louis and Olga very blindly because if he had met Hoederer instead of them one year ago he would have followed Hoederer instead. Sartre's use of blind faith in the book shows his commentary on what the Communist Party does to its members.

It is also in the fifth act that Hugo confronts Hoederer with how he feels about the agreement Hoederer is about to make. The change in Hugo's attitude towards the party is seen with this conversation between the two protagonists. At the beginning of it, Hugo still has his guard up and tells Hoederer that he does not have the right to bring his personal "games" into the Party. Sartre is once again criticizing how the Communist party has changed by showing how politics have become a "game". Looking at this historically, one can take Stalin, for example, who used the Communist Party and twisted its ideologies to create a terror-based regime. Hugo blames Hoederer for being a traitor by wanting to share power with the other parts of the government. Throughout their conversation Hugo's feelings about Hoederer starts to change as Hoederer explains himself. Even though Hugo still has faith in his own beliefs, his desire to act and kill is not as apparent.

Sartre also shows that the main goal of the Party is to gain power, and Hoederer represents this goal. But Hugo continues to be the voice of socialism as he says: "Il n'y a qu'un seul but: c'est de faire triompher nos idées, toutes nos idées et rien qu'elles"²⁹. Hugo also looks down at Hoederer for lying to his own Party

²⁹ *Les Mains Sales* p. 196

members and argues about the ones who have died for the Party. Hugo immaturely believes that the Party never lies and this is why he is ready to do anything for the Party. The difference between Hugo and Hoederer on the means of how far one can go when involved in revolutionary dynamics is also a question that Sartre raises. Hugo believes that every means is not morally right and this questions the morality of lying in the nasty political game. It is in this part of the play that we see the expression “les mains sales” for the first time. Hoederer blames the intellectuals and bourgeois for doing nothing and being afraid to dirty their hands, unlike him who has had his hands drenched in blood. Even though Hugo says he is not afraid of blood, he does admit that he entered the Party because of its principles. When Hoederer leaves, Hugo tells his wife that he is still going to kill him, but the audience can sense his doubt.

It is the next morning, at the beginning of the sixth tableau, when Hugo goes in to kill Hoederer that the audience begins to think he is not capable of having “les mains sales”. Hoederer basically convinces Hugo that he is not capable of killing, and that he would have to think too much before doing it which would make it almost impossible for him or any intellectual. Hoederer also tells him that he has confidence in him and Hugo changes his mind about committing the act. At this point in Hugo’s flashback one feels that Sartre is trying to say that an intellectual cannot be a true revolutionary. But, it turns out that Hugo does shoot Hoederer, and not because of what he is doing with the Party but because he sees him with his wife.

When the play returns to the present and Hugo learns that the policies of Hoederer have in fact been adopted, he tells Olga:

“Je ne sais pas pourquoi j’ai tue Hoederer mais je sais pourquoi j’aurais du le tuer: parce qu’il faisait de la mauvaise politique, parce qu’il mentait a ses camarades, et parce qu’il risquait de pourrir le Parti. Si j’avais eu le courage de tirer quand j’étais seul avec lui dans le bureau, il serait mort a cause de cela et je pourrais penser a moi sans honte”.³⁰

After he says this he goes out where he knows there are men waiting to kill him and dies. One of the biggest problems in the book is why he killed Hoederer. One angle that we can look at this question is by seeing if he really has “les mains sales” and if he can be considered a revolutionary terrorist for what he has done. In this play, Sartre makes the development of the each character very clear. The development is not only in Hugo’s character, but also in the political position of the Party. However, as the politics and Party change, Hugo’s view on the politics does not and he stands firm in his original belief. After analyzing the other main characters, Hoederer and Olga, who do not have roles as large as Hugo’s but who are very important for Sartre’s interests; we can see which of the characters actually do fit into the metaphor of “les mains sales” and how far they go in using violence and terror as a means of achieving their goals.

³⁰ *Les Mains Sales* p. 247

Hoederer

Hoederer is the only character in the play to actually say that he has “les mains sales” and is not ashamed of it. Sartre created the two protagonists in the play to be complete opposites from one another. Hoederer does not develop through out the play like Hugo does. He represents the Party and through his character Sartre raises several moral issues, most importantly the use of violence and terror as a means to achieving revolution. Ironically, Hoederer does not commit the act of murder in the play, like Hugo does. Instead he confesses to already having “les mains sales”.

The first time we hear about Hoederer is in the second tableau when Louis sends Hugo on the mission to kill him. This early in the play, without really knowing about the hypocrisy that exists within the Party, one gets the impression that Hoederer is a very harsh, inhuman character. But it is once we get to know him as a character that has an almost likeable quality to him. From his very first interaction with Hugo, when he believes that there is no revolver in Hugo’s suitcase, the audience feels that he is not an evil killer like we expected him to be. Unlike the stereotype of the head of a country’s communist socialist party, which is someone who is compassionless, he has an understanding demeanor about him. He believes, as do other Party members, that an intellectual cannot be a revolutionary, but he gives Hugo more of a chance than others do. Also, unlike the other party members, Hoederer does not accuse Hugo of not having the right to be in the party. He does

explicitly tell him that as an intellectual he would make a bad assassin, but he does not tell him that he does not have the right. In a philosophical aspect we can look at both Hoederer and Hugo as existentialist characters, because they both believe in the right to individual freedom.

While Louis, Olga, the guards, and Ivan represent the Party and how its members have a limited right to individual freedoms, Hoederer represents the opposite side of this. The other members do not have the freedom of choice, so thus follow what the party demands. Hoederer, however, goes along more with Sartre's existentialist liberty. In the third tableau, Hoederer even defends Hugo's right choose:

“Slick: Je n'ai rien a lui (Hugo) pardonner.

Hoederer: Si: d'être entre au Parti sans y être pousser par la misère”.³¹

Slick does not want to “pardon” Hugo, because he is a bourgeois. But, even at this point when the only thing that Hoederer knows about Hugo is that he is a writer and a bourgeois, he still does not question his right to be in the Party.

Hugo is the idealist character in the play, and Hoederer is the pragmatist. In the second act, with a limited knowledge about Hoederer, one thinks he is a very corrupt man. But by the end of the play, it becomes clear that when Sartre criticizes how that party has become one force and how it makes all the decisions for its members, he is criticizing the other members and not Hoederer. Hoederer makes his

³¹ *Les Mains Sales* p. 98

first allusion to having “les mains sales” in the third tableau when he tells Hugo how he went straight from his childhood to being a man. It is also in this third tableau that we see Hoederer’s pragmatism during his meeting with the two other party leaders. For him, the emphasis is placed on getting the job done no matter what the situation is. In the play, the situation is that the Soviets are approaching and are very close to taking over the country of Illyria. Hoederer’s goal and reason he has the meeting is to avoid the approaching Soviet force.

The Prince and Karsky are ready to make a peace deal with Hoederer that would create a more unified nation in which there would be a Parliament and the Proletarian Party would have two seats. Hoederer is angered by this and wants half of the representation in the Parliament. His goal to obtain power does not change at all throughout the play. Hugo sees Hoederer’s negotiations with these men as treason against the Party, but Hoederer, the pragmatist, engaging himself in political dynamics. In Hugo’s character we still see the principles and ideologies, but in Hoederer we only see him using any means necessary to obtain power. We can see this, for example right before the bomb goes off and he is about to make his deal:

“Je fais toujours confiance aux gens c’est un principe. Je sais que vous devez consulter vos amis mais je sais aussi que les convaincrez. Si vous me donnez aujourd’hui votre acceptation de principe, je parlerai demain aux camarades du Parti”.³²

³² *Les Mains Sales* p. 152

The way that he negotiates with the men and tries to push them to get what he wants shows his diplomatic and pragmatic character. This also shows how Hoederer is willing to play the “game” of politics and tell the opposing groups what they want to hear, but at the same time still try to achieve political power for him.

There is no question as to whether or not Hoederer has *les mains sales* because he is the only character in the play that actually uses the expression. He admits that he has dirty hands and that one must have them if one wants to be a revolutionary and engage in politics. In the fifth tableau, Hoederer and Hugo have their long conversation in which Sartre shows the difference between two very different ideologies and approaches to politics. Hugo believes that power can only be obtained by using arms, and Hoederer responds:

“C’est le sang que tu regrettes? J’en suis fâché mais tu devrais savoir que nous ne pouvons pas nous imposer par la force. En cas de guerre civile, le Pentagone a les armes et les chefs militaires. Il servirait de cadre aux troupes contre-révolutionnaires.”³³

Even though Hoederer has killed in the past, he does not believe in taking over by terror and force. He firmly believes the best way to avoid a war with the Soviets is to join forces with the other two non-socialist groups. In order to do this, he must go against the socialist ideas his party is funded on and lie. Hugo finds that to be the worst part about the fact that Hoederer is making these negotiations, and Hoederer

³³ *Les Mains Sales* p. 193

accuses him of not being able to take risks, saying, “ Si tu ne veux pas courir de risques il ne faut pas faire de politique”³⁴. Hoederer, unlike Hugo, will go to any means possible, whether it is lying or compromising with enemy groups in order to obtain power. He even says that the Party itself is nothing but a means to get to the ultimate goal: power. The difference between Hoederer’s realist pragmatism and Hugo’s idealism is also shown when Hoederer tells him that lying has been going on in the Party for a long time and it is not the perfect uncorrupt Party that Hugo thinks it is. Hoederer accuses Hugo of being afraid to dirty his hands. He says to him:

“Comme tu tiens à ta pureté, mon petit gars! Comme tu as peur de te salir les mains. Eh bien reste pur! A qui cela servira-t-il et pourquoi viens-tu parmi nous? Vous autres les intellectuels, les anarchistes bourgeoises, vous en tirez prétexte pour ne rien faire. Moi j’ai les mains sales. Jusqu’aux coudes. Je les ai plongés dans la merde et dans le sang” .³⁵

This is perhaps the most important passage in the book, because it is here that Sartre shows the significance of his metaphor. He is undoubtedly talking about killing, since he brings up the image of being in blood up to his elbows. He also uses “merdre” to show how his hands have been dirtied. Hoederer also says that all the experiences he has been through only make him govern the way he does. Therefore, Hoederer is not afraid to use whatever means necessary in order to achieve his ultimate goal.

³⁴ *Les Mains Sales* p. 196

³⁵ *Les Mains Sales* p. 199

The last thing that Hoederer says in this passage is that an intellectual cannot be a real revolutionary, only perhaps an assassin. He accuses Hugo of basing his opinions on principles and not really on people. Here again, Sartre raises the question of whether or not an intellectual can be a real revolutionary. According to Hoederer, Hugo and other intellectuals like him think that they can achieve a revolution with their writings. Even though Hugo has said several times in the play that he is ready to kill and is going to finish off his duty, Hoederer knows Hugo does not have it in him. A good example to prove this is in the sixth tableau after Hoederer has learned from Jessica that Hugo is going to kill him. Hoederer even tells Hugo that he cannot ever be a real killer one is born a killer. The main reason that Hoederer gives to explain Hugo's inability to kill is that he would think too much before he committed the act. Hoederer claims that he himself has cold blood and a deep thinker like Hugo can never have cold blood like him. Through this whole conversation between Hoederer and Hugo, Sartre shows the difference between the two men and makes it seem impossible for Hugo to ever be like Hoederer.

At one point when Hugo is in the office, Hoederer turns his back on Hugo to get coffee giving him the perfect opportunity to commit his murder. After Hoederer finds out that Hugo is there to kill him, he still offers to help him. When Hugo argues with Hoederer that he was about to set off the revolver, Hoederer says: "Oui. Je te l'ai doit: c'est plus dur qu'on ne pense"³⁶. He again reminds Hugo how difficult it is

³⁶ *Les Mains Sales* p. 222

to actually have “les mains sales” and to kill. When Hugo worries that he will be considered a traitor to the Party, we see Hoederer’s view on using whatever means necessary in order to have a revolution. He tells Hugo “...la Revolution n’est pas une question de mérite, mais d’efficacité, et il n’y a pas de ciel”³⁷. He also tells Hugo that he would have pulled the trigger, because they are not from the same place, showing again the difference between a man with dirty hands and one who thinks he can engage in revolution.

One of the most ironic points in the play is when Hoederer dies and when Hugo catches him with Jessica. However, in the scene right before Hugo kills him, Jessica is propositioning herself to Hoederer and he is trying to refuse her. When Hugo catches them he does not give either of them a chance to explain themselves. The last thing that Hoederer says to his guards before dying is not to treat Hugo poorly for doing what he did because he did it because he was jealous. Hoederer also says that he slept with Jessica, which is not true. Therefore he is doing this in order to save Hugo from suffering the consequences. Sartre did not make Hoederer an evil character at all; he may actually be the only somewhat warm character in the entire play. Thus, Sartre shows how having les mains sales does not mean that one is evil, and through Hoederer’s character he shows that the reason such men have them is in order to achieve their goal of revolution and power.

³⁷ *Les Mains Sales* p. 223

It is also ironic that Hoederer's political plan to join forces with the Regent and the Pentagon ended up coming into play after his death. Louis and the rest of the Party go along with this deal when it eventually happens, showing the hypocrisy behind the Party. This is important because it proves what Hoederer's character stands for in the play: that in order to achieve the Party's political goals one must dirty their hands. There is no question as to whether or not Hoederer has *les mains sales*. However, Hoederer's character also raises the moral question of whether or not one can justify having *les mains sales* and killing. Hoederer does not ever say that killing is justified; he just says that whatever means are necessary to achieve power must be used.

Olga

So far we have seen the two protagonists in the play; one who has *les mains sales* and admits to it and one who desperately wants to have them. Olga's role is much smaller than both Hugo's and Hoederer's, but it is very important when looking at Sartre's metaphor of *les mains sales*. While the other two main characters represent two opposite extremes, Olga represents one of the most important institutions in the play: the Party itself. Yes, both Hoederer and Hugo were part of the Party, but neither of them fit the qualities of what the Party really was. And even though there is a handful of other characters who are Party members and who do

whatever the Party asks, Olga has aspects to her that are different. First off, she is the only female associated with the Party, because Jessica clearly states that she does not belong to the Party. Secondly, Olga wants to give Hugo a chance to come back into the party after he returns from jail, while the others are ready to kill him right away. There are points in the play where it seems like Olga does not always want to go in the direction of the Party, but the fact that she ends up following them shows Sartre's criticism of the treason within the Party. There is also a question raised as to whether or not Olga has *les mains sales*. Even though she has never acted or killed, she still goes along with the Party and is that one questions whether or not that qualifies her as having "*les mains sales*".

The first scene of the play starts with Olga listening to radio and from what she hears we learn the historical and political situation. The radio voice belongs to a Party representative and we learn that the Soviets have seized Kischnar, which is 40 miles away, and are coming close to Illyria. The voice also says: "*Illyriens, nous savons qu'on vous a contraints de prendre les armes contre l'URSS...*"³⁸, and it is right after this that Olga turns off the radio. When first reading the play one may not question why she turns off the radio, but after reading it one can see that Olga turns off the radio because she does in fact question the party herself. The Party was not originally going to fight against the Soviets, but now has changed its' position, showing that it is two-faced.

³⁸ *Les Mains Sales* p. 11

Hugo and Olga's relationship is also rather confusing in the play because it is not obvious as to whether or not they had any romantic affiliation with one another. Through out most of the play Olga is very cold towards Hugo, but she stills give him a chance to tell his side of the story for a chance to be back in the Party. Sartre portrays Olga as a cold-hearted revolutionary woman who is only concerned with acting in order to achieve revolution for the Party. In the first act Olga also says: "Hugo, je ferai ce que le Parti commande. Je te jure que je ferai ce qu'il me commandera"³⁹. This line along with the fact that she does not have a real personality of her own shows that Olga is a representation of the Party. The fact, however that she argues with Louis to let Hugo tell his story shows the inner psychology behind an individual who has no other choice than to do what the Party wants. But even when she explains to Louis why Hugo should explain himself, she says that it is for the interest of the Party. Everything is based around the Party and not the individual. Olga's character is a perfect example of how the Party is the opposite of what existentialist freedom stands for because it does not allow its members to have freedom.

Louis has more of an authority over Olga, but Olga still is a character that adds to Sartre's point of effectiveness within the Party. Her role in the second act is purely to organize things so that the killings that need to be made are made and that the bombs that need to be set off are set off. For example, she sends Ivan off before

³⁹ *Les Mains Sales* p. 20

he sets off the bomb. And right after she hears the explosion she says : “Ca brule, la bas. Ca brule. Tout un incendie. Il a reussi”⁴⁰. Her role is to make sure that every assignment gets carried out effectively and since her character represents the party, there is no real feeling of regret or remorse in her.

In her relationship with Hugo, however, there is a slight trace of Olga’s individualism. In the first act she convinces Louis to listen to Hugo’s side of the story in order to have him back in the party. And in the second tableau she convinces Louis to let Hugo go kill Hoederer and that she has faith he will carry out the assignment. The next time Olga comes up in the play is in the fifth tableau when the audience learns that she was the one who actually set off the bomb. Olga says that she set off the bomb because the Party was starting to believe that Hugo was a traitor. She admits to Jessica that she does not think Hugo is a traitor but she cannot make the others believe her. This shows how the Party has only one belief and that the beliefs of individuals cannot even be expressed. Olga came and threw the grenade behind the Party’s back, but she was still ready to kill both Hoederer and Hugo. She tells Hugo:

“J’ai eu confiance la première, quand il y avait cent raisons de te refuser et j’ai communiqué ma confiance aux autres. Mais nous ne sommes pas des boy-scouts et le Parti n’a pas été crée pour te fournir des occasions

⁴⁰ *Les Mains Sales* p. 56

d'héroïsme. Il y a un travail a faire et il faut qu'il soit fait; peu importe par qui"⁴¹.

This only proves that Olga is completely with the Party and will represent whatever they decide, even though she has defended and pushed for Hugo to take action, she would still choose the Party over anything else. She also tells him that one cannot leave the Party even if they wanted to. Therefore she may feel stuck or may want to leave, but her life and fate are in the hands of the Party.

At the end of the play, when the flashback is over, Hugo tells Olga that because of her he learned purity and ironically she tells him that her views changed with the Party. Olga's character itself does not develop really like Hugo's throughout the play. While Hugo's beliefs and principles stay the same even as he develops, Olga's change with the Party. It is here at the end of the play that it becomes clearer as to why Olga turned the radio off in the beginning. Even though Sartre does not explicitly say it, the audience and reader sense that Olga may not really agree with what the Party is doing. She even comes close to showing her personal side when she tells Hugo that she thought about him everyday. However at the end she does not side with Hugo and continues to be just a small part of the Party that does not allow its members to be free.

One would think that since Olga took action and is always ready to do whatever the Party asks, that she also has *les mains sales*. But, in the sixth tableau,

⁴¹ *Les Mains Sales* p. 171

Hoederer tells Hugo that whoever threw the grenade did it with their eyes closed and that she did this to not hear since she was scared of the sound. Therefore, was Olga scared to throw the bomb and does that mean that she is also like Hugo in the sense that she is scared to really dirty her hands? Unlike the other two characters, Olga does not represent an existentialist character because she does not take her fundamental right to choose and she is willing to do whatever the Party wants, even if it involves murder. At the end of the play she yells at Hugo to go out where there are men waiting to kill him. She knows that the rest of the Party wants to kill him and she accepts it.

Conclusion

Sartre's stance on violence in general was at times controversial and the public in the 1940's through the Cold War thought that just because he supported the Algerian independence movement, he was pro-violence. He did not however support the violence of totalitarian and fascist regimes, such as Stalin's. When Sartre was criticized for attacking Communism in the play, he strongly disagreed. He never once attacked the ideology of communism, and according to him existentialism was necessary for communism to even exist. What he was showing though was that Stalin's Communism was different and all it did was take away fundamental human freedoms. In his famous book, *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre clearly points

out that existence comes before essence, which means that one is born first and then they create their own essence, and that nothing can dictate a person's character because they are the ones that control it.⁴²

In this play, the main question is not about whether or not the Party that Sartre portrays is taking away individual freedom because it is very clear that it does that. The main question here is on a more moral level, about just how far a revolutionary can go to achieve their ultimate goal. The three main characters in the book show the different angles on how to approach the issue. The metaphor of having *les mains sales* is simply an image of what it means to be completely "engaged" in revolutionary dynamics. The first character to look at is Hugo, the intellectual aristocrat who is eager to take action and kill. It turns out that he does in fact kill, but for jealousy and not in the name of revolution. The question posed here is what constitutes having dirty hands and is it just any murder or does it have to be associated with revolution as well? According to Hoederer, when he describes what having "*les mains sales*" actually means, it does have to do with politics. The only way that one can truly be involved with politics is if they are ready to dirty their hands. At the end of the play, Hugo has changed and is no longer the naïve, talkative youngster he was in the beginning. He says that whatever the reason was that he killed Hoederer, he still deserved to die because of what his political goals were. The fact that Hugo says this and did actually kill him means that he does have *les mains*

⁴² Sartre, Jean Paul. *Existentialism and Humanism*. New York: Haskell House Publishing. 1977 pg. 7-14

sales and that he is not afraid to admit it. He is even willing to die at the end for what he did. He denied everyone that said an intellectual had no chance of having “les mains sales”, by killing Hoederer and going out to face his own death, and this shows the existentialist side to his character.

Since Hoederer is the only character that admits he has les mains sales, there is no real question there. He is the proof that in order to achieve what one wants politically they must take any means possible, whether it be lying or killing or anything of the sort. Olga’s character is more questionable since she does not actually kill anyone or admit to killing anyone. She does however set off a bomb thinking she was killing people and also does anything the Party asks for. Therefore from one standpoint, her being ready to kill at any moment could qualify her as being able to have “dirty hands” This means that even her deep involvement with the party shows that she too falls under Sartre’s metaphor. Her role is slightly different though because all of her actions represent what the Party wants and they are not individual beliefs. The problem now is how much involvement does one need to have in order to have les mains sales and where does Sartre draw the line in seeing which members do and which ones do not?

Violence is apparent in each character’s role. For Hugo the violence is killing Hoederer. For Hoederer it is everything he has done to have les mains sales and for Olga it is doing what the Party wants and throwing the grenade. The question now is since they are all guilty of using violence does that also mean that they are terrorists and does having les mains sales qualify one to be a terrorist? Just like Sartre’s views

are very dependant on what the political situation is, so is the definition of terrorism. In this play Sartre does not portray the characters as terrorists like we see them today. They are portrayed as revolutionaries. Terrorist is a relative term depending on who is defining it. Hugo is an assassin and every assassin is not necessarily a terrorist. Hoederer has dirtied his hands in order to try and obtain political power even though it has meant killing in the past, but every political figure that has done this has not been called a terrorist either. Olga represents a party that does not give individual freedom to its members, yet they are a party that uses violence as one of its main means in achieving its goals. They too do not consider themselves as terrorists, but instead as revolutionaries. All of the characters, however are violent and raise the moral question on just how far one can go in revolution and up to what point is it morally acceptable.

Part II
Les Justes

The Play

Like most writers of his time Albert Camus was thrown into an era of complete political unrest and changing ideologies. During his lifetime he witnessed everything from World War I, World War II, the start of the Algerian Independence War and the Cold War. He was greatly influenced by the unsteady political situations that surrounded him and this is seen not only in his essays and articles, but also in his novels and his plays. In a November 1946 Article of *Combat*, Camus called the twentieth century a “century of fear” because of all of its political instability.⁴³ Nonetheless, one thing that set Albert Camus apart from many Western writers was the fact that he was born in Algeria and was a pied-noir. Unlike writers that were born in France, by being a pied-noir Camus had the influence of two societies: France and Algeria. Therefore, as David Carroll mentions in *Albert Camus, the Algerian*, Camus had a different point of view than others. In *Chroniques Algériennes*, for example, Camus says that he understands why the FLN was fighting for independence but he cared more about his family and their safety.⁴⁴ Camus brought up many different subjects in his works, but

⁴³ Gramont de Alexandre. *Albert Camus Between Hell and Reason.: Essays from the Resistance Newsletter Combat*. pg. 117

⁴⁴ Camus, Albert. *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*. New York: Random House, 1960 pgs. 115-123

one that we see so frequently was that of violence and terrorism. His most famous novel, *The Stranger*, deals with the idea of violence through its famous character Mersault and according to a 2006 article in the *New Yorker*, world leaders, such as President Bush of the United States, have even recently quoted the novel when discussing the issue of terror in the Middle East.⁴⁵

Another thing that set Camus apart from his fellow writers was that he did not associate himself with particular one school of thought. He was known to have rejected the association literary critics made between him and Sartre, for example in *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, (November 15, 1945) he said “No, I am not an existentialist, Sartre and I are always surprised to see our names linked”.

⁴⁶The two writers often collided on several issues, violence being a very important one of them. The FLN was a perfect of example of the difference between the two writers on this issue; Sartre clearly supported their rebellious guerilla warfare while Camus clearly condemned it. Another issue that they had different views on was the role of the writer. While Sartre believed that the writer had to be politically engaged, Camus said “It is not the struggle that makes the artist of us, but art that obliges us to be combatants. By his very function the artist is the witness of freedom, and this a justification for which he sometimes

⁴⁵ Gopnik, Robert. “Read it and Weep” *New Yorker*, 2006
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/08/28/060828ta_talk_gopnik

⁴⁶ Camus, Albert, *Essais*. Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pleiade, 1965. Pg. 1424-1427.

must pay heavily”.⁴⁷ The process of literary “engagement” between the two is also dissimilar. There is no doubt that Camus is politically engaged in his writing, but he goes further back with the steps leading to engagement. This sort of self-analysis is related to the ideology of the absurd, of which there are three steps. The first deals with the feeling of the absurd when one senses that something is not right and does not understand what this feeling is. The second deals with the consciousness that the feeling is there, and this is when one questions what the meaning and purpose of everything is, but yet it still does not make sense. Then finally the third involves the actual “engagement” when one wonders what they can do now, how one can help, and finally engage themselves. This process shows Camus’s “engagement” with the situations that surrounded him and how he dealt with responding to them. Sartre’s “engagement” was different from this, because as he discusses in *Qu’est-ce que la littérature*, an author must “engage” himself when writing to the political situations that surround him.

One could spend years looking closely at the differences and similarities between Sartre and Camus on many different issues. They differed greatly on their views towards the Algerian Independence Movement. In *Les Chroniques Algériennes*, Camus supports the idea of federalist nation.⁴⁸ He was against the terrorist actions of the FLN, but he was also against the use of torture by the French towards their Algerian prisoners. For example, Camus did raise several

⁴⁷ Bree, Germaine. *Camus*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1959. p. 9

⁴⁸ *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*. pgs. 119-120

moral issues on killing itself. He was openly against the death penalty. In “*Reflexions sur la Guillotine*” he said that decapitation was “no less repulsive than the original crime, and this new murder”.⁴⁹ Even though Camus condemned the act of violence that were a revolt, such as those of the FLN, he still believed that one needed to listen to them in order to find a solution.

In *L’Homme Révolté*, Camus analyzes the mechanics of revolt. He defines it, at its base, as “an impulse that drives an individual to the defense of dignity common to all men.”⁵⁰ This involves liberty and freedom, but he goes on to discuss the perversion of revolt when it becomes absolute and a form of violent murderous terrorism. He also makes his disregard for the current Marxism, for example that of the Soviet Union, quite clear. He finds that such governments are states of terrorism. Camus wrote essays, novels, and plays that showed his engagement with the political situations and ideologies around him. One play that depicts the issues of violence and terror as well as Camus’s commentary on states of terrorism is *Les Justes*.

The play, known as *The Just Ones* in English, was written in 1949, one year after *Les Mains Sales*. The play therefore was written in between the end of World War II, the beginning of the Cold War and before the end of the France’s colonial era. Camus got his inspiration for this play from Boris Savinkov’s *Memoirs of a Terrorist*, where the latter discusses the workings of the

⁴⁹ *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*. pg. 178.

⁵⁰ Bree, Germaine. *Crisis and Commitment*. New York: Dell Publishing Co, 1972. p. 9

revolutionary combat organization of the Socialist Party in Russia from the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the things Savinkov describes in his book is the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch, who was killed by a bomb thrown by a member of the party, Ivan Kaliayev. Savinkov's character is represented in the play as the character Annenkov. Savinkov was the head of the Combat Organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, just like Annenkov is in the play. Camus kept the same name for Ivan Kaliayev, the Grand Duke's killer. He was educated at the Lemberg University and met fellow writer Savinkov. It was through Savinkov that he became involved with the Combat Organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and was persuaded to perform political assassinations even if it meant giving up his life.

In the analysis of *Les Mains Sales*, the historical and political context of the play was discussed and it is important to do the same with *Les Justes*. Of course here there are two contexts to pay attention to: that of Russia in 1905 and also of the political situations that Camus faced in 1949. In 1905, and soon after the Grand Duke's death, Russia witnessed its first big revolution of the 20th century. The revolution was a culmination of many anti-government sentiments after several decades of an autocratic Romanov dynasty rule. Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch was the uncle of the Tsar and General-Governor of Moscow and after the Combat Organization of the Socialist Party killed Alexandrovitch, the Tsar made some reforms. However, the reforms were not enough and this led to the Bolshevik revolution that would come about ten years later. Camus chose to write about this event forty-four years after it happened, and he wrote the play

only four years after the end of World War II, during Stalin's reign in the USSR, and when Europe was becoming even more divided by the creation of the Soviet Bloc.

Camus once said that he felt the least like an author writing this play than any of his others, because of how close he stayed to the original story. The play discusses the workings behind the operation mainly from the point of view of the revolutionaries. The play begins with plotting of a group of revolutionary terrorists, led by a man named Boris Annenkov. There is also a woman in the group, Dora Doulebov who is romantically affiliated with Kaliayev in the play. Also Stephan Federov, the only fictional character in the play, represents Camus's problems with the Communist Party. Ivan is given the assignment to throw a bomb at the Grand Duke's carriage when he is going to the theater. When the carriage passes by, Ivan sees that his niece and nephew are in the carriage with him and he does not throw the bomb. He tells his fellow group members that he did not feel right killing children. Federov is the one party member who is completely against this, while the others agree with Kaliayev and allow him to finish his job two days later.

In the fourth act, Ivan is already in prison and the Grand Duchess pays him a visit. She shows him the consequence of his action by how it has affected her and asks him to admit to being a murderer and accept Christianity and if he does then she will forgive him for the murder and give him his life back. He refuses this and he also refuses to reveal the names of the other group members that helped him to Skoutarov, a member of the secret police. In return,

Skoutarov says he will publish articles saying that Ivan betrayed his group members. Meanwhile the other group members fear that they have been betrayed, but then realize that he did not betray them when they hear that Kaliayev has been hung. Dora reacts harshly to his death by asking Annenkov if she can take action for the next killing organized by the Party.

Camus brings up several issues in this play. The most important ones are those concerning violence and terror. One may wonder why Camus chose to portray this specific event in a play almost fifty years after it happened. A very plausible answer may be that he was trying to show that the issue of revolutionary terrorism had not changed. An important question in this play and that Camus often brought up in his works, is whether or not an ideology is more important than a human life. Camus believes, in fact, that one's life is more important and shows this in "Les Justes". Germaine Bree writes about this play in the book *Camus* in which she says that Camus questions whether "a man can deliberately kill another in view of the future good of all humanity"⁵¹. Camus also questions the moral issue behind revolutionary political killings.

The title of the play is important and symbolic in itself because the "just ones" are all the characters who belong to the revolutionary group and who are involved in the killing. This shows the difficulty that critics often have when analyzing Camus because he is clearly against terror, however he refers to the terrorists in the play as "les justes". One reason that the play has this title, is that

⁵¹ *Camus*. p. 184

Camus believed that one needed to listen to the terrorists and that they did have the right to be heard. This can be associated with the existentialist belief that everyone has the right to his or her own belief. Through the characters in the play, Camus shows that if they are in fact the “just” ones then up until what point are their actions and beliefs are justified. There is also another way to look at the title by taking “les justes” as those who establish justice and in this case they feel that killing the Grand Duke is justified. Camus does not necessarily agree that killing for any ideology is justified. However the criticism he presents does question the morality behind their actions.

When the play was written theatre was one of the closest ways writers could relate to the people. Camus used theatre to portray the issues of violence and terror in order to make people listen to him. This play does not have very many characters, but the way that Camus develops each character is very important to understand the moral issues and questions on violence and terror that he presents. The main characters that one must look at are Kaliayev, Annenkov, Dora, and Stephan. Each one plays their own role in the unveiling of Camus’s view on whether an ideology is more important than a life, on what exactly justice is, and up until what point are actions by revolutionary terrorist groups justifiable.

Ivan Kaliayev, also known as Yanek

Ivan is the biggest character in the play, and he is the only one for whom Camus kept the original name. Ivan Kaliayev was a writer, just like in the play and his nickname was “the Poet”. Like Sartre, Camus does present the issue of an intellectual as a terrorist, but there is not the same question of whether or not it is possible because of Kaliayev and also the terrorist who inspired him to write the play, Boris Savinkov, was a writer himself. The first time that Kaliayev’s name is mentioned is in the very beginning of the first act when Annenkov is telling Stephan who is involved in the group:

“Annenkov: Kaliayev. Nous l’appelons aussi le Poete.

Stepan: Ce n’est pas un nom pour un terroriste.

Annenkov: Yanek pense le contraire. Il dit que la poésie est révolutionnaire”⁵²

Therefore, even before he comes into the play Kaliayev already has the image of a revolutionary poet. And, right from the beginning of the play, Camus shows that this is in fact possible.

At the beginning of the play, most of the characters appear to be very robotic and emotionless. The most important thing to them is being effective in order to achieve their goal of killing the Grand Duke. Even Kaliayev who we know is a writer is concerned with the carrying out the assignment of killing the Grand Duke. He knows the exact day and time that the Grand Duke will be at the

⁵² Camus, Albert. *Les Justes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1950. p. 19

theatre where the bomb is to be thrown. He also says: “J’ai passé deux mois à observer les colporteurs, plus d’un mois à m’exercer dans ma petite chambre”⁵³. The pragmatic side of Kaliayev is very evident in the first act, but one does still notice the difference between him and Stepan right away. For Stepan the revolution must be fought with hatred and vengeance, while for Kaliayev it is for happiness and also justice for everyone. The conflict between these two characters goes on until the end of the play, and in the very beginning Stepan tells Kaliayev that he does not have experience or the right kind of hand to throw the bomb. At this point, Kaliayev is still very firm with his belief that he is ready and completely capable of killing. He answers Stepan by telling him that his hand will not tremble and that he knows how to kill. Kaliayev even thinks that killing the Grand Duke is not enough, saying: “Le grand-duc, ce n’est rien. Il faut frapper plus haut!”⁵⁴. When discussing the assignment with Annenkov, Kaliayev refers to the Japanese form of terror, in which they committed suicide in order to complete their mission. Annenkov rejects this idea because he wants to achieve a new form of terrorism. This shows Camus’s rejection of suicide as a response to the absurd as we also see in essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

Stepan continues to reject Kaliayev’s ability to be a revolutionary because he thinks that Kaliayev entered the revolution because he was bored with himself. However, Kaliayev argues him by saying: “Tu ne me connais pas, frère.

⁵³ *Les Justes* p. 26

⁵⁴ *Les Justes* p. 31

J'aime la vie. Je suis entre dans la revolution parce-que j'aime la vie."⁵⁵ The fact that Kaliayev uses his love for life as his reason for joining the party shows is an example of how Camus shows the point of view of the terrorists to his audience and readers. When this play came out, Camus said that he stayed very close to the dialogues and information that is in Savnikov's memoir. Therefore, Camus is recreating the reality of what the terrorists actually said. Kaliayev also tells Stepan that he should be here to kill a man in the name of the people, for their justice, and not just to kill. Here, Camus is differentiating between the crime that these terrorists are about to commit and any random murder. Even though he may not agree with their actions, he is still showing the justification that the terrorists believe they have in order to political killings.

Kaliayev's development occurs very early on in the play. We start to see his true personality by his conversations with the other characters. For example, in the very beginning of the first act, he appears to be very pragmatic and worries about effectiveness. He also is very determined to take whatever means are necessary in order to complete his action, even if it means dying himself. That aspect of Kaliayev makes him seem emotionless, but later on in the first act one can see the more human side to him. First, there is an obvious chemistry between him and Dora. For example, he pays attention to her eyes by telling her they look sad and is concerned about it. Then there is also a moment at this point in the play where he voices his own feelings:

⁵⁵ *Les Justes* p. 33

“Kaliayev: Je suis triste. J’ai besoin d’être aimé de vous tous. J’ai tout quitté pour l’Organisation. Comment supporter que mes frères se détournent de moi? Quelquefois, j’ai l’impression qu’ils ne me comprennent pas. Est-ce ma faute? Je suis maladroit, je le sais”⁵⁶.

Earlier on in the play, Kaliayev’s emotions are not shown and here he says that he is sad, showing the emotions that can exist behind a terrorist. He wants Stepan and other like him to see that he wants a revolution for life. Kaliayev justifies the killing he is about to commit by showing that he is doing it in order to better life for the people. He says to Dora: “Nous acceptons d’être criminels pour que la terre se couvre enfin d’innocents.”⁵⁷.

Even though we see the unveiling of Kaliayev’s personality in the first act, he does not change in his stance on committing the killing and why it is justified. Here at the end of the first act, Camus poses one of the biggest questions in this play: whether an ideology is more important than a human life. And it is through Kaliayev that Camus stages this debate. Kaliayev believes that the ideology of fighting despotism is more important than anything else. Kaliayev says that for one whole year he has thought about nothing other than killing the Grand Duke:

“C’est pour ce moment que j’ai vécu jusqu’ici. Et je sais maintenant que je voudrais périr sur place, à cote du grand-duc. Perdre mon sang jusqu’à la dernière goutte, ou bien bruler d’un seul coup. Dans la flamme de

⁵⁶ *Les Justes* p. 35

⁵⁷ *Les Justes* p. 36

l'explosion, et ne rien laisser derrière moi. Comprends-tu pourquoi j'ai demande à lancer la bombe? Mourir pour l'idée, c'est la seule façon d'être à la hauteur de l'idée. C'est la justification"⁵⁸.

Kaliayev's intentions are made very clear here. The only reason he is willing to sacrifice his own blood is because he believes so strongly in the idea itself of justice for everyone. He is against despotism and he thinks that if he dies while fighting against it, then he will be as "high" as the idea itself. Kaliayev also lets Dora convince him that there is something else as fulfilling as dying during the bomb for the idea, and that is dying on the scaffold where the execution occurs.

However, he is still worried about being an "assassin". He tells Dora that his thoughts often torment him because he does not want to be labeled as an assassin, but then he calms down when he remembers what he is fighting for. This proves how terrorist is a term that is relative depending on who is defining it, because from this point of view he does not see himself as a terrorist. Dora questions whether he can actually commit the act of killing the Grand Duke from the front line, since he is the first one who is going to throw the bombs. Therefore, through Dora, Camus already begins to raise the moral question about the actual killing itself. Even when Dora reminds him that the Grand Duke is an actual man who may have very compassionate eyes, Kaliayev still says "Ce n'est pas lui que je tue. Je tue le despotisme"⁵⁹. This is one of the very last things

⁵⁸ *Les Justes* p. 38

⁵⁹ *Les Justes* p. 42

said in the first act and it shows Kaliayev's desire to fight despotism, which is one of the biggest issues that Camus presents in the play.

The second act is very short, but is also very important because it shows an important change in Kaliayev. The act starts out with the Dora and Annenkov waiting for the bomb to go off. But, the bomb does not go off and we find out that Kaliayev could not set off the bomb because he saw the niece and nephew of the Grand Duke sitting in the horse carriage with him. The stage directions are very important here because they give readers a better description of what Kaliayev actually looks like when he returns to the house: "Entre Kaliayev, le visage couvert en larmes"⁶⁰. Tears represent human emotions thus showing the emotional side to Kaliayev. Therefore, even before knowing exactly what happened we know that he was very alarmed and moved. The fact that Kaliayev could not kill the Grand Duke because he did not want to kill the children as well brings up another issue in the play. Camus is now posing the question of just how far one can actually go when fighting a revolution. A very personal part of Kaliayev is also seen when he says: "As-tu regardé des enfants? Ce regard grave qu'ils ont parfois. Je n'ai jamais pu soutenir ce regard"⁶¹. He also says that their eyes looked very sad and this is a similar concern that he had for Dora in the first act. This shows how he is not like a terrorist who can kill for no reason and with hate. It also shows he actually cares about the people.

⁶⁰ *Les Justes* p. 52

⁶¹ *Les Justes* p. 52

There is still however the same aspect that we saw in *Les Mains Sales* of a party or group that does not allow people to be independent. He tells the group that whatever is decided he will do. This is simply a political criticism by Camus on how in these revolutionary terrorist groups there is no true individuality in relation to the fundamental rights each person is born to have. Everyone is worried about fighting for the idea of getting rid of abolishing despotism and even if one does not believe it is moral they will go to whatever means necessary to fight for what the Party stands for. Kaliayev leaves it to the group to decide what is moral and then will follow whatever they decide. Even though he says this to the party, he still goes through a phase of self-questioning, which is just one step in the process of his development and change as a character. For him, killing the children is both a social and human injustice and it makes him a “murderer”, which is exactly what he does not want. It turns out that the rest of the group, except Stepan, agree that they would not have killed the children as well and Kaliayev is given another chance in two days. Camus is using Kaliayev to show the compassion that can exist behind these terrorists and tries to make their point of view clear even if he does not agree with them at all. The fact that most of the others in the group agree with Kaliayev that killing children shows how Camus presents the debate on whether or not the action is justified.

In the first act, we saw Kaliayev’s idea of terrorism was only to fight for the people and to get rid of despotism and in the second act this becomes even clearer. Camus’s ambiguity on certain issues makes it difficult to see whether or not he sides with Kaliaiev completely. However in Kaliayev’s character it is very

obvious that wants to fight despotism. For example while Stepan is arguing with the others about killing the children, Kaliayev says:

“ J’ai accepté de tuer pour renverser le despotisme. Mais derrière ce que tu dis, je vois s’annoncer un despotisme qui, s’il installe jamais, fera de moi un assassin alors que j’essaie d’être un justicier” .⁶²

He denounces Stepan’s idea of terrorism, which involves unjust killings done out of hatred. Kaliayev feels that if he follows this form of terrorism he will become an assassin, but if he kills the Grand Duke, who represents despotism, then he is only doing justice for everyone. The type of revolution that Kaliayev wants to fight is one of honor and he believes that killing children is the opposite of honor. If the revolution ever changes and goes against honor, he would no longer continue to fight it. Up until this point, Kaliayev really believes that killing the Grand Duke is justified, but with his hesitancy to kill the Grand Duke because of the children, we start to see a change in his desire to take action and kill.

It is in the third act that Kaliayev not only questions the killing of innocent children but also debates the effectiveness of killing in general. Voinov, another group member who was supposed to throw the second bomb after Kaliayev decides he is not born to kill and leaves the group. Right after this Kaliayev questions himself even more during another intimate conversation with Dora. He says to her:

⁶² *Les Justes* p. 63

“Je croyais que c’était facile de tuer, que l’idée suffisait et le courage. Mais je ne suis pas si grand et je sais maintenant qu’il n’y a pas de Bonheur dans la haine. Tout ce mal, tout ce mal, en moi et chez les autres. Le meurtre, la lâcheté, l’injustice...Oh il faut que je le tue...Mais j’irai jusqu’au bout! Plus loin que la haine!”.⁶³

He also says that the only emotion deeper than hate is love and that love means sacrificing everything for the people of Russia. He loves the people he is fighting for. He loves justice and the Organization because it fights for justice. But Dora questions him even further by asking him if he would still love her if she were not in the Organization. He does not give her a straight answer and tells her that he wishes he could tell her yes. Here the limit of Kaliayev’s humanity is shown, because as much tenderness and love as he does show and have, he still loves the idea of fighting for his people and abolishing terrorism more than he loves anything else. He says that by killing the Grand Duke he will finally bring peace to everyone. Kaliayev makes it seem as if he must talk himself into committing the act and this makes the audience feel as if Kaliayev does not really believe that he is capable of going through with the act.

The next time that we see Kaliayev after the Grand Duke has been killed is in the fourth act when he is already in jail. In the theory of the absurd as well as how Camus rejects suicide in *Mythe de Sisyphe*, therefore he does not believe that fighting for an ideology is more important than a life. By actually going through

⁶³ *Les Justes* p. 68

with the killing, Kaliayev stands on the other side Camus's viewpoint. When we see Kaliayev's condition in the prison, one realizes that there are actually two lives in question: The Grand Duke's and Kaliayev's, because he will be executed for what he did. Another question of social injustice lies in this part of the play as well, which deals with the death penalty. In his famous essay, *Reflections on the Guillotine*, Camus is clearly opposed to the death penalty and in this part of the play; there are several things that show this.

First, Camus uses irony in the beginning of the fourth act when Kaliayev has a conversation with a man named Foka, who is in prison for killing three people because he was thirsty. The ironic part of the whole situation is that this man is actually going to be Kaliayev's executioner. Also, he calls Kaliayev "barine". Foka is serving as an executioner because every execution that he carries out lessens his sentence by one year. In *Reflections on the Guillotine*, Camus says that the death penalty is unjust because it is equal to the crime. Therefore even though Foka is escaping the death penalty himself, he is still killing others in return, which is morally wrong according to Camus. Also ironic is that Kaliayev calls Foka brother even though he will be the man to kill him. With this irony Camus is criticizing both the difference in classes and the death penalty. When Kaliayev tells Foka about what he is in jail for, he tells Foka that he killed the Grand Duke for Foka and that Foka and him are brothers. Therefore, even after he is in jail he still believes that fighting for the ideology of abolishing despotism is most important. We can see this, for example, when Foka tells Kaliayev that the earth is made only for barines, he replies: "Non, elle est

faite pour toi. Il y a trop de misère et trop de crimes. Quand il y aura moins de misère, il y aura moins de crimes. Si la terre était libre, tu ne serais pas la”.⁶⁴

Kaliayev strongly believes that the only way justice can be achieved is if one fights for it, he even tells Foka that God cannot bring justice to the earth and only people can.

During his whole time in prison Kaliayev continues to believe that the ideology he is fighting for is worth dying for. He knows that he will be hung for what he has done, but truly believes that he must die for what he has done and has no regrets about it. Therefore, to Kaliayev his death sentence is justified. He is even given the opportunity to save his life on two different occasions while he is in prison, but he ends up dying for the cause. The first time he is given the opportunity is from a man named Skouratov, the director of the Police Department. Without even listening to Skouratov, Kaliayev refuses the grace that Skouratov is offering him. And when Skouratov calls him an assassin, he tells him not to use that word. His sensitivity shows again the humanity in Kaliayev that does not make him a cold-blooded killer. Kaliayev calls himself a “prisoner of war” showing how he believes that he is fighting a war against despotism. Camus’s question on whether or not the Grand Duke’s death is moral is portrayed here when Skourtaov tries to tell Kaliayev that regardless of the politics, there is still a man who has died. So besides testing Kaliayev’s loyalty to the idea of fighting despotism, Camus is also questioning just how far one can go

⁶⁴ *Les Justes* p. 101

in order to achieve “justice”. In *Camus*, Germain Bree says that for Skouratov, justice is a matter of appearances. Blood is “untidy” and affects the appearance, while ideas live in a separate world of their own and do not have an appearance.⁶⁵ For him, ideas are not real and not at all like an actual murder, and he says that this is why he became a policeman. In order for Kaliayev to be graced, he must admit that he is guilty for the murder of the Grand Duke and he must give information on his other party members to Skouratov. Even though Kaliayev knows he killed him, he does not want to admit to being an assassin and a murderer because he truly does not believe that he is one. Kaliayev’s loyalty to the “idea” is put to the ultimate test here, because he decides once again to give up his own life for it.

Skouratov’s character is not a very major one, but he is very important to the presentation of Camus’s main issues in the play. His opposition to Kaliayev only emphasizes Kaliayev’s stance on fighting for the ideology being more important than his own life. Skouratov also questions Kaliayev on the death of the children, one of the other moral questions in the play. Skouratov asks Kaliayev that if the idea could kill the Grand Duke, then why did it not drive him to kill the children or the Grand Duchess. Kaliayev cannot answer his question, which shows self-doubt. Even though Skouratov’s role in the play shows the social injustices and corruptions within the system, Skouratov also poses Camus’s biggest questions in the book to the main character, Kaliayev.

⁶⁵ *Camus* p. 189.

Kaliyev's loyalty to the "idea" is also questioned soon after Skouratov leaves and the Grand Duchess comes in to see him. She is another character who does not have a very major role in the play, but she is very important in the analysis of Kaliyev. The Grand Duchess shows the consequences of her husband's death to Kaliyev. Through her, Camus also shows a religious side to the whole situation. Even though Camus, himself, was an atheist, he did not hesitate to bring in a religious aspect to the question Kaliyev faces. The fact that Kaliyev rejects religion here shows the common attitude many existentialists had towards God. During his conversation with Skouratov, Kaliyev did not really change his view on what he did. But with the Grand Duchess even though he does not change his position on what he did, he questions himself much more. She is the only character in the book to make him aware of the moral aspect of the killing by separating the death of her husband from the politics behind it.

When she first approaches him, Kaliyev is still firm on his stance that he did not commit a crime but an act of justice:

"La Grande-Duchesse: J'ai pense que tu dois me ressembler. Tu ne dors pas, j'en suis sure. Et a qui parler du crime sinon au meurtrier.

Kaliyev: Quel crime? Je ne me souviens que d'un acte de justice".⁶⁶

The Grand Duchesse tries to tell Kaliyev that the Grand Duke spoke of justice as well and from her standpoint she sees that Kaliyev brought injustice. This is relevant to any situation involving revolutionary terror, when the view of justice

⁶⁶ *Les Justes* p. 117

changes from depending on the eye of the beholder. She shows Kaliayev the human side of her husband by telling him that her husband was sleeping while Kaliayev was maliciously planning his murder. She also shows him the personal consequences of his death, by saying that now she is suffering because she too has lost her husband. When the question about the death of the children comes up, Kaliayev says that the only reason he spared her is because she was with the children. The Grand Duchess then asks Kaliayev why the children are not guilty like their uncle and tells them that her niece actually has “a bad heart”, that she is scared of going near the poor and that at least her husband was kind to the peasants. Therefore, the question is not about what the Grand Duke represented and if his killing was justified or not. The question now turns to the injustice of the killing, the Grand Duchess even tells him: “Certainement tu es injuste aussi”.⁶⁷ By describing the niece’s personality, the Grand Duchess is looking at the moral side of a killing whether it be a man, woman, or child. However she does “tutoie” him, which shows the disparity between the classes in the society. This is also an example of Camus’s criticism of the injustice between higher and lower class people at the time.

The Grand Duchess also offers Kaliayev a chance to live, by telling him to ask for forgiveness from God, which would require him to admit he committed a murder. Kaliayev refuses this and asks her to let him die, so he will not be a murderer. He refuses God’s power to achieve ultimate justification. He does

⁶⁷ *Les Justes* p. 119

however admit that he feels compassion towards her and even says “C’est pourquoi je vous pardonne le mal que vous et les vôtres m’avez fait”⁶⁸, but he still asks her to let him go and die. Kaliayev has let the Grand Duchesse show him the morality behind his actions and has even seen it from her point of view, but when it comes to a choice between life or death for the idea he still chooses death. The way that Kaliayev and the Grand Duchess look at the other person’s side shows how Camus believes one must listen to the terrorists.

The last time we see Kaliayev is in the fourth act. It is through his fellow group members that the audience and readers learn of his death. For a moment in the fifth act, all the other group members, except Dora, question his loyalty because there were talks that he betrayed them in order to save his life. But, when they hear that he was executed they all revere him. Voinov, the party member who left comes back and says he wishes he had been in Kaliayev’s place, Stepan admits that he is envious of Kaliayev, and Dora asks to throw the next bomb in his honor. The mourning for him shows humanity in the other terrorists as well. It also shows that his death, even though it was for “justice”, still was the death of a man that affected others. This goes back to Camus’s opposition to the death penalty and how it is equivalent to the original crime committed.

⁶⁸ *Les Justes* p. 124

Annenkov

Boris Annenkov is one of the main characters in the play who does not develop like Kaliayev. Kaliayev does not necessarily change his view on whether or not fighting to abolish despotism is worth dying for, but he does develop as a person. Annenkov however represents the effectiveness and dogmatic aspect in revolutionary terrorism by organized groups. He shows how terrorism, according to such groups, involves political violence, and should be justified. Even more importantly, he plays Boris Savinkov's character. Savinkov was involved in many acts of political violence and until his death he believed that every action was justified. He is a perfect example of why the title of the play is in fact *Les Justes*, because regardless of what anyone else thinks, these socialist revolutionaries believe that their actions are justified.

From the beginning of the play Annenkov is portrayed with very little emotion or humanity. He is a very neutral character and he remains this way throughout the play. His neutrality is important in the moral questions Camus raises as well as the idea of fighting for an idea, because he shows the effectiveness in accomplishing each action. In the beginning of the first act, he gives orders to Stepan on what his role is in accomplishing the task at hand. He also asks each character if they have completed their role in order to make sure everything is in order. Also in the first act, we start to see a difference between Annenkov and Kaliayev in dying for the cause. Kaliayev tells the others that he is willing to die in order to achieve justice for the people, and when he says this

Annenkov replies with: “Non, cela n’est pas nécessaire. Il faudra essayer de fuir. L’organisation a besoin de te fuir”.⁶⁹ One would think, that since he is the head of the party he would have the same passion as Kaliayev, but he is more concerned with the actual workings and triumph of the party as a whole. This is seen again when he scolds Stepan and Kaliayev:

“Etes-vous donc fous? Vous vous souvenez de qui nous sommes? Des frères, confondus les uns aux autres, tournez vers l’exécution des tyrans, pour la libération du pays! Nous tuons ensemble, et rien ne peut nous séparer”.⁷⁰

Annenkov believes that in order to achieve the goal of killing the Grand Duke, the group must work together. He is the ultimate representation of a revolutionary terrorist leader.

Annenkov is even willing to take action if he must in order to carry out the task. For example, in the second act, he says that he is the chief, but worries about effectiveness of getting the job done and decides to take action:

“Je sais que je ne dois pas être avec eux (Yankek et Voinov). Quelquefois, pourtant, j’ai peur de consentir trop facilement à mon rôle. C’est commode, après tout, d’être force de ne pas lancer la bombe”.⁷¹

Annenkov has given up his life for the life of a terrorist. He tells Dora that he regrets the other kind of life with women and other things that bring pleasure.

⁶⁹ *Les Justes* p. 30

⁷⁰ *Les Justes* p. 34

⁷¹ *Les Justes* p. 48

He is very aware of his responsibility as a revolutionary terrorist. With Dora and Kaliayev, we still see the human emotion of love and passion, but with Annenkov the relationship is very dry. Surprisingly, though, he does not show anger, something that one would imagine every terrorist is full of. When Kaliayev comes back and says that he could not throw the bomb because of the children, Annenkov does not react like Stepan does with anger and resentment. Instead, his priority is to come to an agreement as a group with the other group members and continue on to make sure that the task gets fulfilled. He also is the only character who does not give his opinion on whether or not he would have thrown the bomb if the children were there. He agrees with the practical details, for example that Kaliayev is right that the Grand Duke was supposed to be alone and there was no plan for the children to be there. He also takes all responsibility for the party since he is the chief: "Je suis le responsable. Il fallait que tout fut prévu et que personne ne put hésiter sur ce qu'il y avait à faire"⁷². Therefore, the fact that Annenkov makes decisions for the party shows the lack of individuality within it. Without giving his opinion, he asks the others what they would have done. When the majority decides that they would have acted like Kaliayev, he then decides that the act will be carried out in three days. This shows how even though he is the head of a party that carries out acts of violence, he is not malicious, and he is a very effective neutral leader. The moral question of whether or not killing the children hardly involves Annenkov's character, and

⁷² *Les Justes* p. 57

shows how his decisions and actions involve what is best for the Party, for example he says: “L’Organisation décide que le meurtre de ces enfants est inutile. Il faut reprendre la filature. Nous devons être prêt à recommencer dans deux jours”⁷³. He still does not say that he believes the killing of children is unnecessary, he only speaks in terms of the Party.

One thinks that perhaps in the third act, Annenkov is compassionate towards Voinov when Voinov decides that he cannot be part of the Party anymore. However, Annenkov’s lack of anger does not necessarily mean compassion, he is more concerned with having someone who is not ready to act be a part of the task. He tells Voinov that every revolutionary terrorist has been like him at one point. This shows how Annenkov has overcome internal struggles that come along with violence and has lived the lifestyle of a revolutionary terrorist. The question of violence for Annenkov does not involve morality or immorality; it involves achieving the goals. In this dialogue with Voinov, Annenkov also answers the questions that everyone involved with the planning of the terrorist act has the same risks. Voinov tells him that he is not cut out for terror and he thinks he would be better off working with the propaganda committee and Annenkov answers: “Les risques sont les memes”⁷⁴. He does not clearly say whether or not he agrees with Voinov’s decision, but he tells him to do as he wishes and says he will take the responsibility of telling the other group

⁷³ *Les Justes* p. 67

⁷⁴ *Les Justes* p. 76

members. When he returns to the other members, he again uses Voinov's absence as something that will help the party by saying that he will be more useful in another section. He also takes the responsibility into his own hands to throw the second bomb himself: "A une heure de l'attentat, il m'a fallu decider seul. Je prendrai la place de Voinov"⁷⁵. Annenkov does not question whether or not what he is about to do is moral; the only worry he has is getting the job done.

Annekov is not seen again until the fifth act, which is set to be one week after the bomb has already been thrown. This means, that unlike Kaliayev, he did not get caught for throwing the second bomb. He also shows the least compassion for Kaliayev's death amongst the group members. When Dora is mourning and screaming, he replies that there was no other solution than death. And while she is presenting the moral question behind Kaliayev's death, he says: "La Russie vivra, nos petits-enfants vivront"⁷⁶. Therefore even though he told Kaliayev one did not need to commit suicide at the beginning of the play, he understands that at this point there is no other option. His responsibility now is to worry about how the Party will save Russia because of what Kaliayev did. He also that there is no difference between revolutionary fighters and people who die from political injustices, because they are all together dying in a struggle. He tries to show Dora that the status of Russia right now does not allow for anything else and that they must fight now.

⁷⁵ *Les Justes* p. 81

⁷⁶ *Les Justes* p.137

Kaliayev gives in at the end to letting Dora throw the bomb even though the Party does not allow women to be in the front line. This is the first time in the play that he goes against what the Party wants. Perhaps this is the one sign of compassion in Annenkov in the play, because he understands Dora's new desire to act. However, throughout the rest of the play Annenkov stays very neutral and worries only about his job as the chief of the Party. There are quite a few times throughout the play where Annenkov's moral beliefs were questioned, but he stayed true to fighting for the Party. Considering that the play was based on something Boris Savinkov (who is Annenkov in the play) wrote, it is obvious that Camus is showing us the point of view of the head of an actual revolutionary socialist terrorist group. The emphasis is not put on morality, but on what the group considers to be justice. Every means must be taken to achieve the goal for Annenkov, even if it means taking human lives.

Dora

It is not very often that one hears of revolutionary terrorist women. There is a difference between Olga, from *Les Mains Sales*, and Dora. They are both women of a revolutionary terrorist group, but Olga is colder hearted, because she does not feel remorse and continues her actions as the part demands. Dora has a very compassionate side to her that can be seen mainly through her relationship with Kaliayev. She does change through the play as well, she goes from not acting and being part of the planning to then asking to

take action at the end of the play. Her character also questions the morality behind killing for political revolutionary means as well as how far one can go when fighting for the idea. The development that Dora goes through in the play is also important for the debate on violence and terror.

At the beginning of the play, Dora is a bit like Annenkov in the sense that she is there to organize and carry out the plan. However with Annenkov we saw no emotions almost throughout the whole play and we know that Dora is not at all like Annenkov through the emotions that she shows in just the beginning of the first act. When Stepan comes in, one can see her hospitality and femininity when she asks him if he needs to rest and pays attention to how he feels. Even though she is a female revolutionary terrorist, she does not hesitate to show her feelings towards Kaliayev. One emotion that Kaliayev notices in Dora in the first act is the sadness in her eyes. This sadness is symbolic because Dora is the one character who does not seem to completely agree with what she is doing.

There are several times in the play when Dora questions whether or not it is actually justified to kill the Grand Duke. In the first act, in one of Kaliayev' and Dora's intimate conversations, he gives her some of the reasons as to why he hates despotism, and how he wants to fight a revolution for life and Dora responds: "Et pourtant nous allons donner la mort." There is however an internal argument that Dora struggles with because even though she questions the act of killing and bringing death, she also believes in the "idea". When Kaliayev says that dying for the idea is bigger than the idea itself she says "Moi

aussi je desire cette mort-la"⁷⁷. She also believes that an even greater happiness than dying for the idea while the bomb is set off is dying for it after with the guillotine. She says: "Mais aller vers l'attentat et puis vers l'échafaud, c'est donner deux fois sa vie"⁷⁸. It is interesting that of all characters to comment on the guillotine it would be Dora since she is the one that least expects to accept execution. And right after she says this, she goes back to questioning whether or not Kaliyev can actually go through with throwing the bomb. This is the first time in the play that the Grand Duke is seen as a human and not just a political figure that represents despotism. She asks him what he will do if he sees that the Grand Duke has compassionate eyes :

"Dora: Une seconde out u le regarderas! Oh! Yanek, il faut que tu saches, il faut que tu sois prévenu! Un homme est un homme. Le grand-duc a peut-être des yeux compatissants. Tu le verras se gratter l'oreille ou sourire joyusement. Qui sait, il portera peut-être une petite coupure de rasoir. Et s'il te regarde a ce moment-la..."⁷⁹.

Even though Kaliyev answers that he will kill him with joy, Dora tries to tell him that there is a big difference for the person who kills from the front line because they get to see him up close. Through Dora the moral question on the killing of an actual man is posed. Up until this moment, the Grand Duke was nothing more

⁷⁷ *Les Justes* p. 38

⁷⁸ *Les Justes* p. 40

⁷⁹ *Les Justes* p. 42

than a figure of despotism and here Dora brings up his humanity by talking about his eyes.

In the second act while Dora is waiting with Annenkov for the bomb to go off, Dora brings up another emotion that shows her ambiguous stance: fear. When Annenkov tells her that she seems surprisingly calm, she answers by saying she is afraid and for the three years that she has worked with him that is the main feeling she has had:

“ Dora: Eh bien, voila trois ans que j’ai peur, de cette peur qui vous quitte a peine avec le sommeil, et qu’on retrouve toute fraiche au matin. Alors il a fallu que je m’habitue. J’ai appris a être calme au moment ou j’ai le plus peur”.⁸⁰

The fact that fear is something she has been feeling since she has been part of the organization shows that she is not cut out for violence or to take action.

Annenkov told Voinov, that every terrorist goes through the stage of fear but then they overcome it. And even though Dora has been with the group for three years she has evidently not gotten over this stage of fear. Her fear is magnified when she thinks that Kaliayev has been arrested. This is very much the opposite of when she was telling Kaliayev her feelings on the guillotine, showing again her oscillation between one side and another.

Dora is also very supportive of Kaliayev when he returns from the first attempt to throw the bomb. She tells him that he is not the first one to back

⁸⁰ *Les Justes* p. 49

down on their first time. And she also agrees with Kaliayev that she would have backed down from throwing the bomb if she would have seen the children. Of all the characters in the play, Dora might be the most human and compassionate. She represents the moral and human side that might possibly lie within revolutionary terrorists. We can see this in her arguments with Stepan who is the opposite of her. When he says that children did deserve to die, Dora asks Stepan if he could kill children with their eyes open. She tells him:

“Ouvre les yeux et comprends que l’Organisation perdrait ses pouvoirs et son influence si elle tôlerait, un seul moment, que des enfants fussent broyés pas nos bombes”.⁸¹

She also says that if the revolution did accept things like this, then it would be completely inhumane. Dora right away jumps at occasions like this in the play to show the moral side of the situation. Just how she showed Kaliayev and the audience the human angle to the Grand Duke’s death, she does the same thing for the children. Stepan also brings up the fact that she is a woman and that she has a distorted sense of what it means to love the people. Dora replies with: “Mais j’ai une idée juste de ce qu’est la honte”⁸². Dishonor is clearly very important to Dora, and she is the character who is the most outspoken about one should feel shame if they kill children.

⁸¹ *Les Justes* p. 59

⁸² *Les Justes* p. 60

Also when Stepan tries to show the other side by saying that there is no point in saving the Grand Duke's niece and nephew because thousands of Russian children are dying of hunger, Dora says that killing them would not stop any poor Russian kid from dying and that there are limits one must stay in. This shows how Dora is not the type of terrorist that would go to any means and kill anyone in order to fulfill the task. In the book, *The Artist and Political Vision*, Benjamin Barber says that none of the characters really show Camus point of view, since he was anti-terrorism.⁸³ This can be justified by the fact that everything in the story is very similar to what actually happened, except Stepan. So when Dora argues with Stepan, it is an example of the moral questions that Camus means to raise in this play.

The relationship between Kaliayev and Dora was, however, not something that Camus added into the play. Their conversations however were created completely by Camus, since Boris Savinkov was the one who wrote the memoir that this play is modeled after. Their conversation that takes place just before Kaliayev throws that second bomb demonstrates how Dora is not sure of herself and the position that she is in with this terrorist group organization. She looks back on her life before she was part of the group with a sense of nostalgic regret. When Kaliayev tells her that he will go to the ultimate end with the killing and not kill for hate but for love of the people. Dora then says that those who

⁸³ Barber, Benjamin. *The Artist and Political Vision*. News Burnswick: Transition Books, 1982. p. 106

really love justice do not know love because there is too much blood involved.

She questions love and what she knows of it when she says:

“C’est l’amour absolu, la joie pure et solitaire, c’est celui qui me brule en effet. A certaines heures pourtant, je me demande si l’amour n’est pas autre chose, s’il peut cesser d’être un monologue, et s’il n’y a pas une réponse quelquefois”.⁸⁴

The question that Dora poses here is even larger than the killing of the Grand Duke. She ponders more on what is driving them to fight the revolution and what kind of love for the people is really behind the cause they are fighting for. They discuss tenderness, which is even more personal than love and Dora asks if he loves justice tenderly or if it is more with a flame and vengeance that comes with revolt. The feeling that Dora refers to here is one that Camus discusses in *L’Homme Révolté*, where he says that revolt comes from one’s individual desire for justice because of a rejection of the societal justice that they currently live in.

She also brings the question of tenderness to a personal level involving their relationship. Dora wants to know if he loves her with tenderness and if he loves her more than the Organization and justice. Kaliyev does not give her a straight answer here and she tells him that at least once he can discuss what is really in his heart outside of the political problems and injustice. Here again Camus uses Dora to show human kindness behind these terrorists that are called “les justes”. She is also the only one to call them “les justes”, she says that they do

⁸⁴ *Les Justes* p. 85

belong to this world because they are “the just ones”. With this as well as the nostalgia that she feels during this part of the play, the audience starts to see her character change from one who believed so strongly in what the Party stood for in the beginning to a character who is trying to find a way out of the world. She is using her beliefs as a reason to say that she does not belong to this world. The last thing that she says to her lover before he leaves to throw the bomb is “La Russie sera belle”, but she says this with tears streaming down her face. At this point in the play, Dora is starting to let her emotions, mainly the love she feels for Kaliayev, overcome anything else that she feels. She also makes it clear once Kaliayev has left, that she does not feel right about him throwing the bomb. We can see this when he asks Stepan to pronounce the words “la haine” and after he says them, she says that Kaliayev did not know how to pronounce them right. Camus ends the third act with the bomb going off and Dora saying: “C’est nous qui l’avons tue! C’est moi”⁸⁵, and here she is talking about the Grand Duke. Therefore, Camus closes the act, with the moral question once again on the actual killing of a man and if it is more important than the ideology.

In the fifth act, Dora character goes through the final stage of development that Camus has built up throughout the rest of the play. She is clearly very disturbed by Kaliayev’s death. The act starts out with her pacing up and down and Annenkov telling her to rest. She responds that she is freezing, and this is actually a representation of what her heart is really feeling. The

⁸⁵ *Les Justes* p. 94

character that had been very warm throughout the play will now let her blood turn cold. The fact that she is so distraught by Kaliayev's death also shows that question here is not about the death of only the Grand Duke but also Kaliayev. There is also the reference once again to Camus's point of view on the guillotine, by showing the human effects that it has the loved ones of the person who is being executioned. It shows that a man is human, regardless of his class or purpose and that any death of a man will have several consequences. Dora copes with his death by saying that this is the only way he will be free from the world. She tells the rest of the group members that they must desire that Kaliayev is sentenced to death because that is the only way that peace will be brought to him. Annenkov tells her that she is crazy, showing the difference between a terrorist who represents dogmatism and Dora, who represents the emotional side that exists within one.

Dora's internal struggle between life and death is intensified as the act goes on. She continues to feel very cold and says that she already feels as if she is dead herself. She brings up yet another question in the play, when she asks : "Et s'il mourait pour rien?"⁸⁶. She tells Annenkov that she does still believe in what the organization is fighting for but that she chose with a heart full of joy and now she has a heart full of sadness. She feels like a prisoner in her own life and through this we see the emotional consequences that come with killing from the side of the killer. When the news that Kaliayev has been hung is confirmed, there

⁸⁶ *Les Justes* p. 138

is change in Dora. Instead of crying and mourning, she decides to take action and asks Annevkov if she can throw the next bomb. The last thing that she says in the play is: "Yanek! Une nuit froide, et la meme corde! Tout sera plus facile maintenant!"⁸⁷.

One big question is what exactly Dora decides to throw the bomb for. Is it her desire to fight for justice or her love for Kaliayev that drove her? From her emotional development throughout the play, it is obvious that her decision to kill was because of his death. It seems as if this is the easy way to resolve the internal struggle that she has shown to the audience throughout the whole play. The fact that she chose death also shows the moral consequence behind killing and how the loss of a life can affect a person so much that it leads to the loss of another. Even though Dora dies, Camus still does show his anti-terrorist position because of the effect it has on others.

Stepan

Stepan is the only character in the play that Camus created himself and was not actually a historical figure. Stepan's personality and position on issues is the opposite of what Camus believes, but he created him in order to show the other side. Every time there is a moral question posed by another character, Stepan is always represents the extreme immoral side. He resembles a character that one might find in Sartre's play because of his lack of warmth. We must keep

⁸⁷ *Les Justes* p. 152

in mind that he is a creation by Camus in every part of this analysis. Stepan is another one of the characters who does not change or develop through out the play. He is pro-violence and believes in using every means necessary to achieve the ultimate goal. He is portrayed like this at the beginning of the play and will not change.

Stepan is introduced in the very beginning of the play and we learn that he has just come back from Switzerland, where he escaped to after being in jail in Russia. Camus uses Switzerland because even in 1905 it was already a neutral federal country and was often associated with the notion of freedom. The fact that he has come back from a free country to fight the revolution already shows his desire to revolt. Even when Dora asks him to rest, he says that he is never tired and the only thing he is concerned with is killing the Grand Duke. When Stepan does not agree that Kaliayev, a poet, can also be a terrorist, we see that Stepan's character is a more extreme revolutionary than Annenkov. He is not just concerned with effectiveness; he represents the extent to which revolt can occur within an individual that Camus discusses in *L'Homme Révolté*.

The tension between Kaliayev and Stepan is noticeable even before they actually meet each other. But when they are together it is greatly intensified. Stepan asks Annenkov if he can throw the bomb and this starts their discussion that will continue throughout the play. Stepan says that one needs to have a firm hand and experience in order to throw the bomb. He also rejects Kaliayev's right to be in the Party, by saying that he hates people who join it because they are bored. When Kaliayev says that he is fighting the revolution because he loves life,

Stepan answers with: "Je n'aime pas la vie, mais la justice qui est au-dessus de la vie"⁸⁸. Here, Camus is showing the difference between an individual, such as Kaliayev, who is fighting for the idea and the happiness that will come with it and an individual who is so concerned with justice that he can not even love life. Stepan's drive for justice comes out of hate and resentment, which is a different form of revolt than Kaliayev's.

The biggest thing that separates Stepan from the other characters is his position on the death of the Grand Duke's niece and nephew because he is the only one who says that he would have killed the children without a second thought. He says:

"Je n'ai pas assez de cœur pour ces niaiseries. Quand nous nous déciderons à oublier les enfants, ce jour-la, nous serons les maîtres du monde et la révolution triomphera"⁸⁹.

In *L'Homme Révolté*, Camus also said that whenever there is a revolt for "absolute" freedom or justice, meaning a revolt without limits, it would lead to terrorism founded on murder. This is exactly what Stepan represents, because for him there should be no limits and one should kill the children if that is the only way to kill the Grand Duke. Stepan also presents the other side of the argument by saying that since Kaliayev did not kill these two children thousands

⁸⁸ *Les Justes* p. 33

⁸⁹ *Les Justes* p. 59

of other children will die of hunger because of the Grand Duke's politics. Camus shows the difference in Stepan's idea of revolution by making it a limitless one:

“Stepan: “Si vous êtes surs que par nos sacrifices et nos victoires, nous arriverons à bâtir une Russie libérée du despotisme, une terre de liberté qui finira par recouvrir le monde entier...Vous ne croyez pas à la révolution”.⁹⁰

Stepan's position here is again exactly what Camus says in *L'Homme Révolté*. He talks of the limitless revolution of freedom that could take over the world. Camus says that in the third step of revolt, when one is fighting for the absolute justice, it can often lead to tyranny. Even though Stepan does not take it to that point, he does allude to it.

Stepan is also the only character in the play to call them all murderers. This goes against the title and also how Dora refers to them as “les justes”. A murderer is not someone who is justified, showing again Stepan's difference from the other group members.

Despite all of the tension between Stepan and Kaliayev, Stepan calls him “frère” when he says his final goodbye. Once Kaliayev has left to go fulfill his task, Stepan comments on how he does not like Kaliayev's enthusiasm and how he has a very weak soul, but he is sure that Kaliayev will throw the bomb and that is all that matters. But Camus still shows the difference between them when right after Stepan says that, Dora points out how he pronounces “la haine” better than

⁹⁰ *Les Justes* p. 63

Kaliyev did. Stepan goes on to say that he is not like the rest of them because they do things in the name of love and he does not love anything or anyone he only feels hate.

The most emotion that we see in Stepan is in the last act when he says that Kaliyev did not betray them. He even says that there was something between the two of them: "Je l'enviais"⁹¹. His jealousy of Kaliyev is not a warm emotion, but it does however show that he does not have the same feelings and passion for justice as Kaliyev has. One could also see that even if he did want to love life and justice as Kaliyev did, he may not be capable of it because of the experiences he has been through. He has been in prison and has suffered from the treatment of the current government towards him. Therefore, perhaps Camus is showing that he is not even capable of being like Kaliyev because he has been destroyed by what happens with revolt. Stepan's character is far from what Camus believes in, but he is necessary in the play in order to represent Camus's position on revolutionary revolt and terror. He represents the immoral answer to any question that Camus presents on violence and terror in the play.

Conclusion

Now, looking at the title, it has become much clearer than it was in the beginning. There were several questions at the beginning of the play as to why Camus, a man who was openly against terrorism, would call a group of terrorists

⁹¹ *Les Justes* p. 148

“les justes”. However, we can now see that it is not Camus who is calling them “les justes”, but it is the characters that give themselves that name. It is Dora who actually said that they were “les justes” in the play, and it is obvious that it is in reference to her and Kaliayev, because they are two who will end up dying for justice. Even later on in his career, when Camus was openly opposed to the FLN, he still looked at the terrorist’s point of view. For example, in *The Algerian Reports*, he even goes as far as to publish letters between him and his revolutionary friend, M. Kessous. However just because he is looking at their point of view does not make him pro-violence or pro-terror. On the other hand, in this play, by showing the true personality of each character, he is actually showing again how he believes that human life is more important than dying for an ideology and that there must be moral limits when committing acts of revolutionary terror.

Barber wrote in *The Artist and Political vision*, that none of the characters in the play really represent Camus’s point of view. But, they are still very essential in looking at the moral questions he raises in the play. Out of the main characters presented here, there are two that change and two do not. The same two that change, Kaliayev and Dora, are also the two die at the end. The irony is that it is these two characters who are more emotional and who die. The other two characters, Stepan and Annenkov, do not show human emotions and do not die. Annenkov is the neutral character in the play, and Stepan is on the other end of the emotional spectrum from Kaliayev and Dora. He is full of hate and is only

fighting the revolution out of hatred and vengeance. Each character also has a specific role that shows the issues Camus's raises in the play.

Kaliyev dies for the idea of fighting despotism and tyranny, something that Camus is against. Camus believes that a man's life is more important than an ideology. He shows the consequences that come along with a man's death, and this can be seen with what the Grand Duchess says to Kaliyev. Another place where it can be seen is in Dora's reaction to Kaliyev's death. Dora shows the human side of terrorists. She is the most emotional character and also presents most of the moral questions. Annenkov is the character who represents dogmatism and carrying out the task. He is very neutral and never takes a very strong side on any of the arguments. Stepan shows the opposite of Camus's beliefs and is always in opposition to any moral or humanist question posed in the play. With each and every one of these characters, we are able to clearly see the two big issues that are presented to the reader. The first one deals with whether or not an idea is more important than a man's life. Kaliyev represents the side that believes that the idea of fighting for justice is more important, but the way that Dora reacts to Kaliyev's death shows Camus's stance, which is that it is not more important. The second question is how far terrorists can go when committing acts of political violence. The majority of the characters believe that they cannot kill innocent children and that the limit must be drawn there. Camus does answer that it would be immoral, but one question that is left unanswered is if the killing of the Grand Duke is justified. The terrorists believe that it is

justified, as we can see from the title, but the Grand Duchess, a minor, but key character, shows us that justice and injustice lie in the eye of the beholder.

Conclusion

The relationship between Camus and Sartre has been both studied and criticized by various scholars. In 2004, Ronald Aronson wrote a book titled *Camus and Sartre: The Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel that Ended it*, which discusses the history of their infamous friendship. Aronson starts out the book by pointing out that many people do not really know the full story of their relationship or what ended it.⁹² Camus and Sartre are the most well known writers of the existentialist movement and discussions over their differences are often controversial. Camus and Sartre first met in 1943 during the German occupation of France. They continued to be both political and intellectual allies after World War II. They also both wrote plays, novels, essays, and articles. They even collaborated on a few journals, such as *Combat*. When tensions leading up to the height of the Cold War increased, there were obvious differences between the two writers. During the very bitter years that came after the war, there was political violence in various parts of the world. Since both of the writers were very politically engaged, they both wrote on the subject of political violence in many different aspects of their work.

Revolutionary terrorism was apparent in the beginning of the 20th century started out with the beginning traces of the Bolshevik revolution. Some

⁹² Aronson, Ronald. *Camus and Sartre: The Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel that Ended it*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2004. p. 2-10

of the biggest influences of these revolutions were the ideas of socialism and communism. Both Sartre was a “compagnons de route” of the communist party at one point and Camus was an “intellectuel de gauche”, but when their actual views on revolt and terror became more clear in their writings, their intellectual and political camaraderie came to an end. In 1952, Camus wrote *L'Homme Révolté*, in which he discussed the different stages of revolt. Even though he believed in a man's right to freedom and to revolt, he believed that when revolt became absolute, it would become tyrannical. In this aspect, many scholars, such as Germaine Bree, believe that Camus was talking about Stalin and the Soviet Union. However, Sartre disagreed with Camus's theories on this as well as his stance on the Algerian War for Independence. While Sartre supported the FLN and their freedom to use any means necessary to achieve complete freedom, Camus believed that when these means involved killing innocent people, their actions were not justified. Sartre believed that when violence could lead to a path of change it could be used, and Camus openly did not agree with him on the matter.

Les Mains Sales and *Les Justes* were written just a few years before *L'Homme Révolté* and the way that both authors treat the issues of violence in the plays shows their opposing views on the subject. Both deal with the issues of revolutionary terrorism and communism in their respective plays. Sartre focuses on the issue of a writer having the ability to be a terrorist and take action, and he also questions how much involvement in the act of terror gives

the terrorist “les mains sales”. Camus’s play, which is based on a true story, does not really question whether or not a writer can be a terrorist, since his main character is in fact known as “The Poet”. There is also a question of how far a terrorist must go in their actions; but is not like Sartre’s question that involves what qualifies one to have “les mains sales”. Camus discusses, instead, up until what point a terrorist’s actions are justified. Another issue that both authors bring up in their plays is murder. In *Les Mains Sales*, the question of murder for political means is brought up with the death both Hoederer and Hugo. The reasoning behind Hugo’s motive for killing Hoederer is unclear, and this shows Sartre’s commentary on political killings in the name of a revolutionary party. Hugo’s death at the end may leave the audience confused on Sartre’s position throughout the whole play, but regardless of its ambiguity, it does show that Sartre believes that intellectuals take action as terrorists as well. The moral issue in Camus’s play, is one that people can relate to because it involves the killing of children. The Grand Duke and Kaliayev both die in the play as well, and with their deaths Camus shows that he believes that a man’s life is much more important than fighting for the ideology.

Camus and Sartre do not show the issues of violence and terror in the exact same manner or to the same extent, and in some cases the questions that they both raise do not get completely answered. But, they do still show their respective opinions on the issues. Sartre, in his colder and more detached style of writing, uses his main characters to show that one must take any means

necessary in order to have “les mains sales”. And even though he does not take clearly take sides in the play on whether or not having “les mains sales” is justified, he does say that having them is the only way to really achieve the ultimate goals. Camus also uses his characters, to make his opinion on terrorism very clear. By the end of the play, and with the experiences the audience undergoes with the characters, it is apparent that Camus believes that a human life is more important than the fight for an ideology. He also shows the extent of the injustice with the issue of the murder of children. This is very different from what Sartre believes, and is a perfect example of why the two writers view’s on this very important matter clashed.

It is not often that one can take two plays written over half a century ago and use them in discussing modern day issues. Even though the political issues were completely different back then, and it is almost impossible to really compare historical events, there are still many principles and philosophies that one can take from these plays and use them in a modern day context. Camus and Sartre were not just writers, they were philosophers and their writings were not purely about literary form, but about the “engagement” behind their words. Both writers did know that it was necessary to listen to the point of view of the terrorists. This is something that many politicians often forget or are not even willing to do. Sartre for example believed that one had the right to freedom and needed to take any means necessary to fight for it. Terrorists today may not be fighting for the same reasons as terrorists fifty years ago, but the will for a

certain kind of freedom, whether it is political or religious, is still a driving force for many terrorist groups. In this aspect, if one looks at the situation with Sartre's philosophies in mind, they may better understand the reasons behind their actions. There is also the other point of view of Camus, who believes that even if it is unjust, we must still listen to the terrorist's point of view, which is something we do not see in modern day politics either. Both authors, even with their opposing views, were two of the greatest thinkers of their time, and if were to put these two plays into a modern day situation, they would probably be equivalent to modern day politically "engaged" films. The philosophies of these two men touched the minds and souls of many people fifty years ago and would surely have the same effect if read again in today's context.

It would be difficult to compare the details of one of today's situations with the situations in the two plays or the situations that Camus and Sartre lived in over fifty years ago. There are however, comparisons that can be made between certain political situations today and the issues that Sartre and Camus present in their plays. Even though the argument between Sartre and Camus on violence, and specifically violence used by the FLN, was very public, their views towards violence as a form of government rule were very much the same: they both were against it. Stalin was notoriously known for using terror as a means to achieve his political goals. This form of political terror is not as common now as it was back then, because the United Nations and democratic nations, such as the United States, are trying to prevent it from occurring. In Zimbabwe, however,

there have been many attacks on President Robert Mugabe's form of governing.⁹³ Since 1980 Robert Mugabe has been criticized by Western leaders for being a dictator and for his use of violence against the opposing Democratic Party within the country. Just this year, in the beginning of April, Mugabe lost the initial elections in his country for the first time in twenty-eight years. Soon after this there were raids against opposing party members and foreign journalists who were in Zimbabwe covering the event. He has also been accused of hiding election results in order to obtain his position as President.

One of the biggest moral issues that Camus presents in *Les Justes* is whether or not fighting for an ideology is more important than the life of one person. In the play, Kaliayev loses his life not only as a punishment for what he did but also because he believes it is a way for his people to eventually find justice. There are opposition groups to governments in almost every country in the world. Some of these groups take their opposition to an extreme and use violence as a means to achieve their ultimate goal for political power. A Colombian group, notoriously known for this, is the FARC. This group is relevant to what both Sartre and Camus show in their plays about how the term terrorist being in the eye of the beholder. The FARC sees itself as a Marxist-Leninist group, while the United States' Department of State has it on its list of foreign

⁹³ "Robert Mugabe: The man behind the fist". *The Economist*. March 29th 2007.

terrorist organizations.⁹⁴ Even though the group was organized in the 1960's as the military sector of the Colombian Communist Party, they have recently been involved in the very internationally public case of Ingrid Betancourt. Betancourt was a political, anti-corruption activist, a former Senator, and is a French citizen. She was kidnapped by the FARC in 2002 and has been held hostage since then despite attempts at negotiations by both the French and Colombian governments. The only way that the FARC will release her along with about 40 other high profile hostages is if President Alvaro Uribe's government releases FARC prisoners and sets up a demilitarized zone. One may wonder how this relates at all to *Les Justes*, since there is not one person in the situation that is similar to Kaliayev. However, holding someone hostage is taking away their freedom and essentially taking away their life. For six years, Ingrid Betancourt's life has essentially been nothing because she has been at the mercy of her captors. The relation here to what Camus presents in his play is whether the ideology behind what the FARC or any revolutionary terrorist group fights for is more important than the life of any hostage. Since this case has become so public, we can also see how the loss of a person's life can affect others. Betancourt's daughter and son have both been very public in fighting for their mother's life. In a 2005 article by the French journal, "L'Humanite", Melanie Delloye, publicly says that the reason that her mother has not been freed is because the Uribe has

⁹⁴ US Department of State Fact Sheet. October 11, 2005. Foreign Terrorist Organizations. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>

no desire to free the hostages. The fact that there has been no movement by the government or the FARC to release any humans shows that they are placing the ideology of what they are fighting for ahead of human lives. One can relate this to the debate that Camus presents in his play about the importance of fighting for the “ideology”.

Camus and Sartre’s disagreement on the issue of violence and terrorism became public after the Algerian Independence War was already underway and after the FLN had already been held responsible for some terrorist actions in the country. *Les Mains Sales* was written several years before the War began, but some of the underlying issues that it presents are show the traces for Sartre’s commentaries on the Algerian War. His metaphor of “dirty hands” in itself can be used when looking at many situations. One belief that is apparent in Sartre’s work is that in order to fight a revolution one must “dirty” their hands in order to achieve ultimate revolution. This means that they must go to any extreme necessary. It is not clear whether or not Sartre is for or against this, but it does however show that any means necessary must be used. There are not many cases of revolution in our present day anymore since imperialism began to die down. There are, though, some regions in the world that are still fighting their own “revolutions” to become independent nations. An example of this is Kashmir; an area located in the heart of the Himalayas and is currently divided between India and Pakistan. There has been turmoil in this region for quite a few decades, but the majority of the publicity it gets goes to the problems between

India and Pakistan, and does not really focus on the Independence of the region itself. There are groups of revolutionary groups that both Pakistan and India refer to as “terrorist groups”, but Kashmiri people refer to them as freedom fighters. They have been held responsible for many terrorist actions, one of the more recent ones being a bomb blast of the Indian Parliament house. These groups have not yet achieved independence, but they have “dirtied” their hands in the sense that Sartre discusses in his play in order to try to achieve it.

Lashkar-i-Tayyaba is an example of a modern day terrorist group that would fit into Sartre’s metaphor of “les mains sales”. While European nations, the United States, India, and Pakistan consider them as a terrorist group, they consider themselves as a revolutionary political group.⁹⁵ Their main objective is to obtain independence, even though they have been identified as an “Islamist” militant organization. This group took responsibility for the attacking the army barracks for the Red Fort in New Delhi in 2000, and have also been blamed for the bomb attacks in New Delhi in October of 2007 that killed sixty people.

In an article entitled *Sartre integrating Ethics and Politics: The case of Terrorism*, by Marguertie La Caze writes about where Sartre would stand on modern terrorism today. She discusses the issue in the context of Al Qaeda and religious terrorism.⁹⁶ One of the main points that she makes is how Sartre

⁹⁵ Foreign Terrorist Organization Fact Sheet.

⁹⁶ La Caze, Marguerite. “Sartre Integrating Ethics and Politics: The Case of Terrorism”. *Parreshia Journal*. Number 3, 2007

supported terror when it had a revolutionary goal, for example to obtain independence or to fight against a ruling nation or force that was taking one's independence. She also brings up a discussion by Ronald Aronson in *Sartre Studies International*, where he says that Sartre only experience terror up to a certain point and did not see the type of suicide bombing and extreme attacks by Al Qaeda that we see today. Aronson uses this to prove his opinion that Sartre would not have been accepting of such terror in our modern day because this terror does not have the same motives as the one that Sartre portrays in his works, such as *Les Mains Sales*. There is no doubt that Camus would also not have supported the terrorist attacks prevailing in our modern day societies, yet both authors show the side of the terrorists. This is something that is very controversial today, but is very relevant when studying the dynamics of this haunting phenomenon that has invaded the twenty first century.

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