

## ONE

### Terrorist Propaganda and Argument

**T**errorism is a form of deliberate, purposeful political activity. It combines power and argument.<sup>1</sup>

Terrorist arguments—the subject of this volume—may have some success without being sound, subtle, or intellectually rich. They may be low-level moralism. They may be high-wattage and heated, yet connect in only sputtering ways with thoughtful people. But as a thousand “normal” political campaigns have demonstrated in modern times, in favorable circumstances being brazen and argumentative can be enough to get noticed and make neutrals or moderates back away, or to draw the weak-minded in. Terrorists may be highly educated, rhetorically skilled, or both. What compels may not be the wealth of wisdom or the line of logic in terrorists’ arguments but the freshness in their approaches, the variety in their media, the relentlessness of their combinations of words and deeds pummeling their audience.

Few realize how great is the range of terrorist mediums. Our pages will explore and reveal this range.

Simple songs, chants, and shouted slogans have long done service as forms of political mobilization. The Islamic State in Syria and the Levant, referred to as ISIS, or simply IS, features male chants as musical accompaniment to innumerable propaganda releases. These forms of vocalization are free; they can be mastered instantly; they may evolve, or rebut, a prevailing view, or take fresh sudden turns during a terrorist campaign. Their short form has always been easy to daub on walls and now works well within the 140-character limit

of social media message. Mao Tse-tung wrote long and profound essays, but his currency in the non-Chinese world of the 1960s and 1970s relied on the short sayings and maxims in the “little red book,” a plastic-covered pocket-book of 300 thin pages.<sup>2</sup> A convert to Maoism who visited China and went on to suborn a third of Peru, Dr. Abimael Guzman, explained in 1988 that “as Chairman Mao said, ‘It isn’t enough to say it once, but a hundred times, it isn’t enough to say it to a few, but to many.’” In the Naxalite movement of India, or in the rural underground war of Nepal of the early noughts, or in the jungle hide-outs of the Filipino New People’s Army today, the slogan, the simple aphorism, the pejorative label reducible to a painted banner remain powerful mediums for advancing the revolution.

In the late 1980s, women jailed in Lima’s Canto Grande prison for participation in terrorism promulgated by the Sendero Luminoso gradually won semi-autonomy of their cell blocks and staged elaborate plays and song fests, complete with costumes and permanent wall murals. With sticks and flags, in formal uniform, they drilled in an enclosed courtyard below the super-sized visage of a smiling Abimael Guzman, “Comrade Gonzalo”; photos were published in their overseas English language propaganda.<sup>3</sup> This was supremely good for morale and a fulsome advertisement for Sendero slogans about turning gloomy jail cells into bright schools of revolution. Another example of urban guerrilla theater is the street theater of militant Kurds, winning attention and coins from passersby in the 1980s in Europe. More flamboyant was the violent, tragic response of several Iranians of the People’s Mujahideen e Khalq, who reacted swiftly to the French arrest of their leader, Maryam Rajavi, by immolating themselves on public streets in Paris in 2003.<sup>4</sup>

Oratory, elaborate and passionate oral argument, is economical, requiring but one person’s voice. Oration can be free, forceful, attractive—even seductive. Our schoolbooks teach of orators who rose to power with excess of confidence and hot words in beer halls, dockyards, or rented theaters. Some terrorist leaders are as loud—Muammar Qaddafi of Libya was an example. Proficient talkers at lower volume have included Osama bin Laden of the 1990s and 2000s and Jose Marie Sison of the New People’s Army of the Philippines during that same period and even today.

Other terrorist leaders are quiet and cagy, like mob bosses in the movies. They keep their voices low and this makes them all the more ominous. Examples are Abu Nidal of Black June, George Habash of the Communist and nationalist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK). Some of

modern terrorism's most forceful speeches may have been made in the conference hidden away in the Soummam River Valley of Algeria, where many leaders of Algeria's National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN) convened in mid-1956. It was there that Ramdane Abane persuaded other FLN leaders that their political efforts and low-intensity guerrilla war against French security forces needed to be boosted with urban terrorism. Abane liked to say, "One corpse in a [dinner] jacket is always worth more than twenty in uniform."<sup>5</sup> Thousands have since agreed. The Egyptian al-Qaeda chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has been a terrorist leader since the early 1980s. He may never raise his voice; his videos can seem dull; he is said to lack charisma. Yet his deeds have made him the most wanted man in the world. And his powers come from combining those deeds with his spoken and written words.

A flyer or printed leaflet can circulate with less risk to its author than a public speech poses. Printed material has advantages of brevity and accessibility for the reader. For the terrorist, producing a flyer is simple and cheap; the flyer is easily passed from one hand to hand. An underground leaflet can stir the imagination; it can be hidden readily in a pocket and can be made to disappear with the flush of a toilet or the flick of a match. Nineteenth-century Russians used manifestos on paper, as did the self-described "anarchist fighters" who bombed the home of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and many other American officials on one June night in 1919 in retaliation for the deportation of anarchists. The anarchists' potent little handbill bore the title "Plain Words" and included sentences such as "There will be bloodshed. . . . There will have to be murder."<sup>6</sup> Simultaneous bombings, at sites across America where investigators often found the same printed flyer, made for strategic signaling of the revolutionaries' ubiquity.

Many violent extremists since have recognized the political significance and psychological impact of a few simple paragraphs. In the Philippines, some of the mid-twentieth-century Huk guerrillas' propaganda experts had to slip and slide through the jungles and mountain trails of the Philippines carrying steel rollers and colored ink for mimeographing. Humidity and rain must have destroyed half their prints. In 1990, Hamas used leaflets during the Palestinian intifada. In 2011 a graduate student curious about these continuities in the propaganda use of a printed page could read an article in *Commentary* titled "The Return of Anarchism" and also pick up in rural New York photocopies of a century-old manifesto written by Errico Malatesta, an international anarchist who died in 1932.

The interview is a bridge between oral communication and print media. Such an interview can be granted by a spokesman of violence as surely as by

the traditional public political figure. Inevitably, mainstream media editors and reporters are drawn toward talking to terrorist leaders responsible for events. Their news profession makes them unlike the governors of states, who usually agree with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that terrorists should be denied “the oxygen of publicity.” And naturally the more self-confident terrorist leaders or publicists who aim to influence the mind, the imagination, or the heart of the public grant interviews to representatives of the mainstream media, and even initiate them. In 2002, Abu Abbas of the Palestinian Liberation Front faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) seized the chance to talk to John F. Burns of the *New York Times* in order to explain why the PLF would *not* have pushed a wheelchair-bound senior citizen overboard from the hijacked cruise ship *Achille Lauro*. Abbas must have been delighted to have his oversized photo in that eminent paper, where he looked thoughtful, smoldered like his cigarette, wretched his actions in the cause of Palestinian liberation, and denied a role in the murder by his gunmen aboard that ship. His arguments and ideas covered many paragraphs in the celebrated American daily. Readers learned that Abu Abbas is proud of his master’s degree in English literature.<sup>7</sup>

A more recent example of the use of the interview was that of Maryam Rajavi, leader of the People’s Mujahideen e Khalq (MEK, also sometimes PMOI), a well-armed force of Iranian dissidents with encampments in the then-supportive Iraq of Saddam Hussein. As the heir to her husband’s enterprise, Rajavi gave many interviews to mainstream media. Thus she guided PMOI into political channels and came to depend on political efforts and political fronts and led the group away from guerrilla attacks and terrorism. Such efforts over the years were chronicled in established media as well as in MEK organs such as the front “National Council of Resistance of Iran” and its website ([www.ncr-iran.org](http://www.ncr-iran.org)).

Where funds allow, terrorists have sometimes combined the features of the leaflet and the extended interview in a major-circulation newspaper by purchasing ad space for their propaganda. From 2005 to 2012, Rajavi’s MEK prepared and disseminated an astonishing array of well-designed and distinctive advertisements—usually full page, thus expensive—for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Washington Times*. They trumpeted the group’s success: “35,000 Iranians Rally in Brussels.” They sought legitimacy: “250 Parliamentarians, 50 Jurists Condemn . . . Conspiracies against Iranian Mojahedin in Iraq, Call for Removal of Terror Tag from PMOI.” This campaign took on special forcefulness in the United States when the organization chose to trumpet its many quiet conquests such as speech dates by a range of

political conservatives and former generals: “Panel Discussion about Policy on Iran” and “A Partial List of the Signatories.” And they begged for sympathy: “Iranian Regime Threatens to Kill Its Opponents; 140 Loudspeakers Used for Psychological Torture against Ashraf Residents.”<sup>8</sup> The ad campaign succeeded. By 2012 the European Union, the United States, and Canada had all dropped the PMOI from their lists of terror groups.

If space in a major newspaper buys legitimacy, permanency, and a place at the podium in future debates, then there may be reason to own and direct an entire newspaper, rather than competing for the attention of others’ newspapers. Vladimir Lenin conducted clandestine operations, wove intelligence nets, and crafted coup strategy, but he also helped the political newspaper *Iskra*, or “Spark” (Motto: “From a spark, a fire will flare up”). He saw advantages in running this newspaper, especially the way it recruited and mobilized the politically minded and produced ever-larger circles of agitation, creating ripples across the political pond. In a similar spirit, the Algerian National Liberation Front established *El Moudjahid*, a newspaper that was passed with interest from hand to hand in both urban and rural zones.

Soon after the insurgents’ victory in Algeria, the PLO started its own organ, *Fatah*, a sophisticated newspaper published in multiple languages. In America, the Weather Underground admired Lenin’s *Spark*; Mao soon followed suit (“A single spark can start a prairie fire”). The Weathermen offered their public a succession of short-lived periodicals, including *A Single Spark*, *Groundswell*, and *Breakthrough*, which appeared sporadically. A newsletter might be eight pages. Another publication ran to forty-two pages. None did as well as the group’s long charter, program, and book-length polemic, *Prairie Fire*—the group claimed that 40,000 copies were sold in the San Francisco Bay Area alone.<sup>9</sup> More important than the money that sales brought in was that the periodicals created opportunities to start street conversations and to recruit (another borrowing from Lenin).

For decades before and after the Weathermen’s quick flame-out, the militant Irish diaspora in the United States produced a succession of newspapers, several of which endured. Mailed to homes on subscription and sold on street corners and in shops, these papers socialized the diaspora, creating an unbounded if diffuse community, not dissimilar from how people nowadays describe the internet’s impact. A newspaper with a closely controlled editorial policy could firm up militants with vigorous arguments or, as circumstances required, lighten the appeals with cultural and sports features, literary material, a feature on female activists in the movement, or columns dabbling gently in Catholic religious affairs.

Magazines add to the printed page the sophistication and excitement of color art and photography. That alone is reason for an organization with pockets deep enough, or sponsors willing enough, to consider producing its own periodical. Owning one's own medium makes life considerably easier for the terrorists as the need to bargain over hot political content and beg for access to photo editors is eliminated. American anarchists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were usually poor, but they were determined, and some were in the printing profession, and so they managed to publish scores of militant newspapers. The production values tended to be low, and many of these papers folded after a few months. In the early 1960s, by contrast, some young West German militants—who would soon help birth the Baader-Meinhof gang—had funding from the East German Stasi (secret police) to produce *Konkret*, an appealing, large-format magazine that came out several times a month. Stasi money ran out, so the editors, including Ulrike Meinhof, kept their leftist politics intact while spicing up the format with sexy photographs and human-interest articles, a different business model that drew in myriad subscribers and buyers. Circulation leapt. Glossy pages and color photography can rarely misfire, if the money for them can be found. Even Black June, the Abu Nidal Organization of Palestinians (ANO), produced such organs of propaganda. It should not be thought incongruous that the terrorist who did more killing in the 1980s than any other also participated in editorial decisionmaking for the organization's magazines.<sup>10</sup> Hezbollah and Hamas enjoy rich patronage from Iran so that they can afford to put out glossy periodicals.

Al-Qaeda has also long been enraptured with the internet and quickly mastered the postage-free, wider-circulation technical apparatus of the World Wide Web. By 2004 it was producing electronic magazines, or e-magazines, with high production values. *Sawt al-Jihad* (The Voice of Jihad) was a pioneering bimonthly virtual magazine that openly called for blood, the killing of heretics, and the death of George W. Bush. This was followed up in August 2004 by *Al-Khansa*, an online magazine for women (al-Khansa was a seventh-century Arabic woman poet).<sup>11</sup> *Inspire*, which we discuss in detail in chapter 9, started in 2010, boasted the highest production standards: compelling, crisp photos, original designs, and occasional mixes of photography with softer art work. ISIS, a successor organization to al-Qaeda that has more money at its disposal, has yet to match al-Qaeda's media department for skilled, attractive e-magazine work.

The intimacy and power of radio attracted Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who used it to broadcast messages of hope and courage to the American people in a time of depression and war. European communications history offers

landmark radio transmissions by substate actors, such as the tragic words from the radio systems of failing guerrilla fighters as they begged help from the outside world. In August 1944 the Polish Home Army broadcast for help as the German army crushed the Warsaw Ghetto rebellion. On November 4, 1956, someone recorded the crackling but inspiring last words of a Hungarian station broadcaster as the Soviet Red Army overran his building.<sup>12</sup> The chance to speak directly to a massive audience, and to stake out grounds of legitimacy or frame an argument, perhaps made it inevitable that substate violent actors would also use radio to make their case over the ether. In the late 1950s, the Martinique-born psychiatrist and writer Frantz Fanon, who sympathized with Algerian freedom fighters, took the time to write scripts for the National Liberation Front of Algeria, which had transmitters in countries of the Maghreb. After the FLN's surprising victory, in 1962, hardly an insurgent group or terrorist organization did *not* use radio. The Islamic State broadcast in multiple languages from its bases in Syria and Iraq and advertised its broadcasts in its magazine, *Dabiq*. ISIS has also struggled to establish its radio footprint in Afghanistan, which it already claims as a *wilaya* (province) of its proclaimed caliphate. Local Afghan officials have fretted about the Islamic State radio show *The Voice of the Caliphate* stirring unrest in the country and reaching into the city of Jalalabad with its "promotional messages, interviews, and a cappella . . . songs."<sup>13</sup>

Radio as a medium used by substate or terrorist actors has often required funding by a state or a wealthy private patron. Chin Peng, the long-time leader of the Malayan Communist Party, ran "Voice of the Malayan Revolution" from November 1969 to July 1981 using a 20-kilowatt transmitter that reached much of Malaysia and Singapore. In his memoirs Peng writes that the People's Republic of China trained the crew and provided the equipment and the site of the studio.<sup>14</sup> Members of the Italian Red Brigades slipped into Communist Czechoslovakia and broadcast back in Italian from state studios happy to encourage leftist militancy inside a NATO neighbor. (There is irony in the death of the Red Brigades' rich patron, the book publishing heir Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who was killed in 1972 when a bomb he was affixing to an electrical transmission tower in Italy exploded.) In a study published in 1987, Lawrence Soley and John Nichols documented dozens of "guerrilla radio stations" around the world.<sup>15</sup> Such stations had special appeal in rural areas where many listeners were illiterate. The radio broadcasts advanced argument after argument; they preceded and followed terrorist acts, which they helped to explain; they gave a voice, and then fame, to underground leaders. A few years after the Soley-Nichols study, in 1991, the Lebanon-based militant group Hezbollah

added to its printed propaganda by starting Al-Nour (“the Light”) radio, initiating production in that medium even though the group was busy the same year with the more complicated project of launching a television station, Al-Manar (“the Beacon”; the subject of chapter 5).<sup>16</sup>

When there was a turnover in leadership of Tehrik-e-Taliban (Taliban Movement of Pakistan) in 2013, the younger man rising to power was Mullah Fazlullah, a cleric from the Swat Valley known as “Mullah Radio” for the reputation he had built in supplementing terrorism and guerrilla strategies by broadcasting over mobile short-wave technologies.<sup>17</sup> Given ISIS’s control of several million people, administrative powers over extensive territory, and its declared interest in minting its own currency, it was not surprising to read in communications news in 2015 of a radio station in Raqqa, the Syrian capital of the proclaimed caliphate. A Turkish teenager who joined ISIS tweeted photos of himself in the studio and suggested he serves as an ISIS broadcaster.<sup>18</sup> ISIS broadcasts radio programs in addition to its deployment of websites and social media.

Television was a medium barred to the Irish Republican Army. No matter how media savvy, IRA leaders at the height of their war were disallowed from appearing on British television screens. Nevertheless, several extremist groups have developed their own TV systems for communications outreach. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) exploited cable TV with its niche markets and lower cost. They rented a scheduled time frame, or the odd half-hour, and aired a self-made program. When one country closed them down, the PKK’s financiers just opened their treasury to purchase airtime for their Raj TV in another place. Cable companies in Denmark, Belgium, and Germany have been temporary hosts to local front organizations that put PKK ideology on television. The PKK’s founder and leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has reinvented himself through his media work as often as Yasser Arafat did in a long career. Kurds are not less creative than Palestinian media mavens. Hamas, representing Sunni Palestinians, runs Al-Aqsa television, the name signaling allegiance to the famed al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Shows beamed into Europe via satellite have been controversial. Meanwhile, MEK—Iranian exiles long sponsored by Saddam Hussein’s Iraq—found a home in France and the leaders often broadcast their messages, which is both efficient and far safer for terrorists than traveling about. Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the “holy man” of Hezbollah, has a valuable platform: his own television station, Al-Manar. It airs his speeches and interviews, in addition to reams of other material, on the strength of Iranian state funding. Lebanese law bars foreign money in the broadcasting



industry, yet foreign critics of Hezbollah are put on the defensive, denounced even by Lebanese officials as neo-colonialist vis-à-vis Hezbollah because of its native Lebanese membership. Now a state-within-a-state, Hezbollah often dominates the national parliament. Al-Manar TV helped achieve that.

Al-Manar is wealthy and stable and can fill a full day with television programming of its choice, but most terror groups simply lack the funds, or the skills, or the safe haven to do the same. They make do with videos. Early terror groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organization made them; several decades later, in 2000, the PLO's allies at Al-Manar TV commissioned fifty music videos to support the first Palestinian intifada (ca. 1987–93).<sup>19</sup> Now practically every insurgency and terror group makes them. Terrorists' videos can be any length—from minutes to performances of over an hour—and quality also varies greatly. Most important is the power that videos have as a platform: images with authenticity are selected and edited in ways wholly controlled by the terrorists. In 1992, at a height of the IRA bombing campaign, one Irish militant newspaper ran advertisements with prices and descriptions of videos from “The HomeFront Library” with titles such as *The Will to Resist*, *Against Her Majesty*, and *Behind the Mask*, made by the IRA and featuring IRA gunmen and senior officials.<sup>20</sup> Now, however, “martyrs” and “warriors” no longer need “artists” to make myths and messages; they can fashion the myths themselves by their own video releases.<sup>21</sup> Anita Pratap, a South Asian journalist, had the impression that the Tamil Tigers leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was a monumental figure from videos she had seen that were made by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). On finally meeting Prabhakaran, she was thunderstruck to find him somewhat shy with a childishly soft voice and a most ordinary face. She realized how effective the Tigers' propagandists were: in the videos Prabhakaran had remained silent.<sup>22</sup> A violent group such as Hamas that wants to project force may strut on video as it parades its green-and-white-clad troops brandishing Kalashnikovs or its children strapped with papier-mâché “suicide bombs.” Other advocates may speak in sugary or quiet ways, seeping into the subconscious, reassuring those who have been fretting over the blood that terrorists leave on the streets. Still other terrorist advocates are cocky and clever, laying traps with verbal frames and twisted logic.

Some groups have had the wherewithal to make full-length films. Before the days of videography, the militant American underground group known as the Weathermen arranged for the noted cinematographer Haskell Wexler (1922–2015), Emile de Antonio, and Mary Lampson to make a documentary that presented the group, their activities, and their ideology. Running

eighty-seven minutes, *Underground* seems dull now, but being masked (because they were wanted by the FBI), the subjects of the documentary might have been electrifying in 1976. Ulrike Meinhof was another militant who wrote a script, *Bambule*, about rebellious school girls and other German culture war matters of the 1960s, and she began (but could not complete) a film of the whole. Given that Hezbollah television programs often run long, and are varied enough to include lengthy series, and even comedy shows, there is doubtless demand for recirculating such films in the form of DVD and computer files.

Websites are another platform for terrorists' strategic messaging, one with many advantages: the cost is low; the websites do not just show and tell, they are interactive; websites can be updated on an ongoing basis, and the effects have immediacy, a quality people do not often feel when describing the impact of the printed word. Terrorists are often credited with possessing technical skills but little education; some have both and have weaponized them toward whipping up a race war in America. An early example was a message board system linking personal computers that was created by Tom Metzger, an American racial supremacist from California, in the very early 1980s. Don Black is a man of similar views who did something technically similar. Then around 1995 Black launched the website Stormfront.org, which became a right-wing militant phenomenon by 2008 with well over a hundred thousand users. Black maintains the site to this day from West Palm Beach, Florida. The Southern Poverty Law Center has tracked the publicity effect of the web in the case of Dylann Roof, a young man who shot twelve people at close range in an African American church in Charleston, South Carolina. Roof's racial manifesto and postings at Stormfront shot the site's number of hits skyward, and there was an accompanying steep climb in donations.<sup>23</sup> Maryam Rajavi and others in the group MEK also use the web to communicate their nationalist message, along with satellite TV, print media of all sorts, and other messaging. When their radio station Iran Zamin Radio had to announce that it was closing down in June 1998, one way the news came out was on the station's Farsi-language webpage, which advised listeners to tune in to the new Voice of Mujahed radio frequency. The Tamil Tigers had distinguished webpages, during their long fight from 1976 through 2009. The websites offered Tamil language lessons, artwork and cultural notes, history lessons, political screeds, war news, and links to donate to the LTTE cause. Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shia-based organization, has had numerous websites, including [www.moqawama.org](http://www.moqawama.org) (*muqawama* means "resistance"). Indeed, most terrorist groups today have multiple websites, and support from servers in safe places where hosts may be sympa-

thetic or wholly indifferent to their message. Some sites are hosted at American universities—probably unwittingly.

Screens glow and they keep growing in size, but ink and newsprint keep pushing back. France's *Le Monde* ran a full-page visual joke at the expense of the sociologist Herbert Marcuse, who had predicted that electronics would doom the printed page. The ad featured an image of the inventor of movable type, Johannes Gutenberg, glaring into the camera and making a forceful, vulgar gesture of defiance and contempt directed at Marcuse. Ad text lauded the survivability and power of print over five centuries. Today's terrorists grasp what Marcuse missed: new video technologies are wonderful, but they do not replace detailed arguments as set down in a printed tract, a learned journal, a pamphlet, a book. Those who are by nature readers may be better seduced by books, magazines, and pamphlets than by lighted screens. Monographs and handbooks by terrorists will probably never disappear. Contemporary legal cases against a terrorist may involve an alleged perpetrator who has been studying *The Anarchist Cookbook*, by William Powell, which first appeared in 1971 and is still selling.<sup>24</sup> An ever-valuable window into the culture and belief system of al-Qaeda remains their *Al Qaeda Training Manual: Military Studies in the Jihad against the Tyrants*, which first appeared in the late 1990s. The LTTE had not only their diplomat the Sri Lankan native Anton Balasingham as their representative in its London office, his Australian-born wife, Adele, became a leader of the women's wing of the LTTE and wrote a book about her experiences. Her book *Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers* combines politics, sociology, and military technique to celebrate the lives of women members of the LTTE. One may be certain that old-fashioned hard copies of this book were used in many political training sessions in remote places unserved by electricity, let alone Wi-Fi. But the text is also accessible on the Web, for the girls and women involved in most terrorism movements around the world.

Extremists read and distribute books, which is why some critics of Islamist violence feel that far more must be done to limit distribution of radical materials that are mainstreamed en masse by Middle Eastern private donors or government offices, as from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>25</sup> What is much less known is that terrorists also write books. One chronicler claims to have located and read 108 autobiographical volumes by different terrorists.<sup>26</sup> College students of intellectual ambition may read Peter Kropotkin's autobiography to try to understand anarchism. The first famous female hijacker's memoir, the autobiography of Leila Khaled, boosted her popularity and justified Palestinian militancy to many readers. Abu Iyad, an intelligence chief for the PLO, wrote

an autobiography, *My Home, My Land*.<sup>27</sup> But while the PLO has manifested other literary interests it may not yet have matched the self-interested output of Irish militants: Sean Mac Stiofain, Martin McGuinness (1950–2017), Gerry Adams, and Eamon McGuire are among those who have written full-length autobiographies. The bomb maker and regional commander Sean O’Callaghan defected from the IRA Provisionals and published his valuable autobiography, *The Informer*, in 1998. These are efforts to introduce, to humanize, to explain, to defend, and sometimes even to subtly threaten. The white power advocate and physics professor William Pierce seems to have intended to threaten when he wrote, under the pen name Andrew Macdonald, a paperback novel and revolutionary manifesto of sorts, *The Turner Diaries*. It has been a hit with the U.S. violent right. *The Turner Diaries* sets out a grim near-term future of racial revolution that is eventually won by whites led by what he calls “the Organization.” Among Pierce’s readers were Timothy McVeigh and a half dozen other violent Americans.<sup>28</sup> In Norway, the white power answer to Pierce was Anders Breivik, who labored for years creating “A European Declaration of Independence,” released on the internet in 2011 as he undertook two mass terrorism actions: a bombing of government offices and a shooting rampage against a socialist youth rally.<sup>29</sup> Diaries are dangerous for most terrorists to keep, but the eco-terrorist Theodore Kaczynski did so. Doubtless he hoped they would be read upon his capture—and they were, but by very few. More conventional was the Hezbollah publication in two volumes, *The Diaries of Truthful Pledge: The Steadfastness of a People and a Resistance*, about the 2006 war with Israel in which “The Party of God” took proud roles. The Syrian jihad strategist and advocate of terrorism, Abu Musab al-Suri, has published a number of books, including a polemical encyclopedia 1,600 pages long titled *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, which appeared in 2004. Ayman al-Zawahiri has written as many as five books, including an enlarged second edition of his fascinating defense of terrorism, *Knights under the Prophet’s Banner*. There can be no better examples of extended argument than these pages by veterans of decades of underground life and overt propagation of terrorism.

For the bookish—to whom pages often hold significance and serious argument—social media can be the opposite: often spurious, silly, shallow. Subjects as grand as the rise of a “caliphate” or the assassination of a world leader hardly bear discussion in quips, accompanying tourist snapshots, catchphrases, and snarky one-liners. Consider the social message and photo of mid-2015 from the Middle East war zones showing a young Frenchman with Kalashnikov standing in an ISIS store and holding up the Nutella chocolate he is buying. An up-

beat, innocuous quotation from the boy is added, sweetening the presentation of the young face. This may attract one or two more bewildered “brides” to emigrate from France, or appeal to a teen bogged down in self-doubt in Belgium, but its fatuousness may alienate other young adults. A security studies expert will add that such a posting was probably stage-managed by ISIS, whose gunmen normally collect foreign volunteers’ hand devices as they arrive in theater. When outside such censorship, social media offer innumerable advantages: speed of transmission, low cost for some types and accounts, interactive qualities no print medium can offer, and portability. Social media give terrorists their own platforms; Al-Jazeera is unlikely to run a militant’s latest recruitment video but she can run it herself. Attachments can be documents of serious length or depth, or as short as the latest fatwa, a pamphlet of interest, a news interview quip in a foreign tongue, or an emotion-charged still photo. All of this explains why notable terrorist groups today are using social media.<sup>30</sup> As a new study demonstrates,<sup>31</sup> ISIS has exploited multiple technical types, mastered both the general and the personal appeal, and destabilized its enemies by surprising reach and penetration, all the while responding adroitly to governments attempting to shut down ISIS in these arenas. At one time observers marveled on how Ayatollah Khomeini, exiled in France and a seemingly thirteenth-century charismatic leader, managed to send thousands of electrifying audiotapes of sermons past Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi’s censors into the heart of the ultramodern Iranian state of the mid-1970s. Today’s parallel is the social media reign of ISIS, whose volume of social media exceeds all levels imagined by earlier terror organizations, and whose destruction of art, astonishing amputations, and brutalization of homosexuals and young girls is not hidden but instead is advertised outwardly to the twenty-first-century world and recorded for all time on the internet pages of *Dabiq* magazine.

Modern terrorists are competing for attention in the ongoing battle of ideas. They recognize and perhaps envy their mainstream competition, which is loud, multifaceted, and often richly supported with money. Contemplating this unequal battle, Dr. Theodore Kaczynski, known as Unabomber, carefully explained his lethal actions in a typescript he batted out in his Montana cabin in 1994: one must kill so as to be listened to and heard above the rabble. Kaczynski’s messages to the public carefully and deceptively referred to himself in the plural. His pronoun choices were suggestions of a hidden organization, and thus popular support, which largely did not exist. Such individuals, small terror groups, and larger insurgencies that use terror, all seek to draw the public eye. Human beings are social animals, and the terrorist is too; the near-maniac Kaczynski proved as much by writing so much, including a manifesto of 35,000 words. It was not errors in

bomb making but his insistence that the manifesto be published by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* that led indirectly to his capture. The sort of observer who says or writes flippantly that “terrorism never succeeds” must ponder how it was that this hermit did obtain publication of his ideas in the *Washington Post*, in a dense eight-page supplement, and at no charge. That year, 1994, was one in which the internet and innumerable other media were available to substate actors to propagate their views. Yet the highly successful Unabomber chose to communicate with only the typewriter, stamped letters, and the small bomb. For a time this low-tech approach offered protective cloaking, for the same reasons that al-Qaeda messengers later abandoned satellite phones and returned to using personal couriers and smuggling old computer disks.

It is difficult to predict how tomorrow’s terrorists will advance their arguments. Target audiences, the length or depth of the message, the production values of a video, whether or not a group invests in radio, or the number of foreign languages in which an insurgency’s presses or websites churn out advertisements—all will continue to vary. The terrorist argument will never be predictable, nor predictably packaged. One rule may be that newer media are not replacing the older; the new supplements, rather than replaces. Terrorists like to freshen their images by offering new options and products. But the rural theater skit still works for Indian Maoists who have not forgotten the Great Helmsman of China. The cleverly disguised charity bucked up by sentimental appeals about suffering can do political and terrorist work, no matter that al-Qaeda, Lashkar e Tayyiba, and many other groups have been exposed for such abuse. A telephone may no longer be plugged into a wall, but it is still a perfect device to send or receive a mysterious bomb threat and set into unnecessary frantic motion an elaborate security architecture. The revolution comes to us with much that is new, but also much that we have been seeing since about 1968, when Palestinian hijackers began staging their astonishing international dramas.

If we can be certain of anything, it is that while the mediums of dissemination will change, the arguments of terrorists will continue to put themselves and their causes in the best possible light, whether through logic, emotional appeals, reference to history or culture, deception, or lies. Terrorism is about power but it is also about public affairs, and terrorists must attract audiences and make their arguments—or all their actions are meaningless or nihilistic. For these reasons, citizens, educators, and policymakers alike do well to understand terrorist arguments and the mediums in which they are transmitted and received.