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TERRORISM

A HISTORY

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Decolonization and Ethno-nationalist Terrorism from the Late 1960s to the Present

A host of ethno-nationalist struggles have spawned terrorist campaigns in the many decades since the Battle of Algiers. In fact, two such conflicts produced the groups that became virtually synonymous (before 9/11) with terrorism in the modern imagination: the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Irish Republican Army. These groups, in turn, inspired a new wave of ethno-nationalist terrorism in the last several decades.

Palestinians, the Palestinian cause, and intra-Arab rivalries

After the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, most Palestinians ended up in dirty and crowded refugee camps, particularly in a narrow piece of land along the Mediterranean known as the Gaza Strip (then held by Egypt) and between the new Israeli border and the Jordan River, the so-called West Bank (seized by the new Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan), as well as in southern Lebanon and south-western Syria. Refugees generally believed that the Arab states would soon attack Israel again and make possible their return to their homes, a belief encouraged by the loud and threatening proclamations of Arab states against the Jews. The Arab defeat had been so devastating, however, that months of exile turned into years. Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees became an increasing economic burden to their hosts, who also clamped down on disruptive expressions of Palestinian nationalism.

Most Arab states loudly supported the Palestinians, but the primary reason was hardly altruism or true moral outrage. Rather, this public support for the hard-luck Palestinians – and its corollary, blind anti-Israeli rage – was an effective means of distracting Arab populations from their own demands for political and economic reform. In fact, the Palestinian cause became so useful to Arab governments in maintaining their nakedly authoritarian states that Arab statesmen came to understand that they

were better served by Palestinian misery than Palestinian victory. This has only begun to change in recent years as some Arab states have either embraced mild democratization or sought rapprochement with Israel for economic or geopolitical reasons.

The first Palestinian patron was Gamal Abdel Nasser, who came to power in Egypt shortly after a 1952 military coup that overthrew a British puppet. Nasser was a secularist who wanted to make Egypt a modern, self-sufficient state. He was also an apostle of pan-Arab nationalism, an agenda that was well served by encouraging the first post-1948 Palestinian militants known as *fedayeen* – the term used eight centuries earlier by the Assassins. They had already begun a campaign of hit-and-run attacks across the border from Jordan and Egypt, killing or wounding hundreds of Israeli civilians, by the time Egypt began direct sponsorship around 1955.[1] These attacks helped to precipitate an Israeli invasion during the Suez Crisis of 1956, after which Israeli troops briefly occupied the Sinai Peninsula and destroyed Egypt's *fedayeen* training camps, effectively ending for some time Egyptian sponsorship of Palestinian terrorism.

In 1964, Arab states sponsored the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), an umbrella organization for the many groups representing the refugees. The driving forces behind the creation of the PLO were Egypt's Nasser, who hoped to use the group to restrain the sort of Palestinian militancy that had led to the Israeli invasion, and Jordan's King Hussein, who hoped to mollify Palestinians within his borders and solidify his claim on the West Bank seized by Jordan in 1948. The PLO remained a propaganda tool of the Arabs for several years, confining itself to unleashing harsh words but few bullets against Israel.

Fatah and Yasser Arafat

Things might have stayed like this for a while, but for the addition of three ingredients: a new Palestinian champion, a new reason for exploiting the Palestinian cause, and a new Arab humiliation. The champion was Yasser Arafat, a young Palestinian studying engineering in Cairo. In 1959, Arafat and a close colleague formed Fatah, the aim of which was the destruction of Israel, the liberation of Palestine, and the development of Palestinian leadership free of the Arab states' control. (The name "Fatah" is a reverse acronym of "Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filastini" – literally, "Palestinian National Liberation Movement." "Fatah" colloquially means "conquest" in Arabic and is also used to refer to the period of Arab expansion in the first centuries after the foundation of Islam.) Fatah shied away from articulating much of a political or social agenda; rather, all efforts – both real and rhetorical – were focused on the "armed struggle." According to this doctrine, Palestinian guerrillas would rally the masses and provoke a war between Israel and its neighbors which would

lead to victory by the Arab armies. But Fatah was hampered by a lack of recruits, weapons, and funds and existed in name only for its first few years.

The second ingredient was sponsorship from Syria, whose deeply unpopular leaders came to power in a coup in 1966, whereupon they quickly realized that sympathy for the Palestinians and hatred of Israel were perhaps the sole issues that they could use to rally their citizens. Arafat and Fatah reluctantly accepted Syrian arms and funds, which allowed them to step up *fedayeen* operations against Israel.

But among the Palestinians there was still little support and few recruits for such militancy – that is, until war once again erupted between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the summer of 1967. Israel's devastating victory in the so-called Six Day War changed everything. Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip; the West Bank, including all of Jerusalem; and the Golan Heights from, respectively, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. In so doing, the Israelis came to occupy once-foreign territory where about a million Palestinian refugees lived.[2] Upon the anger, frustration, and humiliation of 1948's *Nakba* was heaped the experience of daily encounters with a now direct Israeli occupation. Compounding the problem was the rapid appearance of Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, carried out officially and unofficially by those keen to make permanent the addition of the land to the state of Israel.

Arafat and terrorism

As a result, Yasser Arafat and his *fedayeen* became the virtual leaders of Palestinian Arabs, for he seemed to be the only leader willing to stand up to the Israelis. He was also increasingly the only option, since the Israelis methodically expelled or suppressed those indigenous Palestinian nationalist leaders who might have eventually emerged as more moderate negotiating partners. Armed resistance from within and beyond the Occupied Territories – however unworkable the basic premise of the "armed struggle" had been shown to be – thus became the foundation for the construction of Palestinian national identity, a development well illustrated in "Returning to Haifa," a short story by the prominent Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani. In the weeks following the Six Day War, Said and his wife visit Haifa, the city from which they were forced to flee during the *Nakba*. They find that their old house is now occupied by a Jewish woman who adopted the infant son from whom they were separated in the chaos of their flight. As they leave their former home, Said fervently prays that their other son, whom Said had recently forbidden from joining the *fedayeen*, has now done so in their absence. Kanafani suggests, like Frantz Fanon before him, that only violence can counter twenty years of passivity, humiliation, and victimhood.

Arafat studied the FLN's strategy in Algeria and became convinced that terrorism could still achieve for the Palestinians what it had for the Algerians. Fatah's first efforts at carrying out terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians in the wake of the Six Day War quickly petered out, however, when many of Fatah's inexperienced militants were arrested due to the vigilance of Israeli neighborhood watch groups. Arafat's response was to set up the group's primary bases across the border in Jordan. The Israel Defense Forces launched a raid against Fatah headquarters in the Karameh refugee camp in March 1968 but were forced to retreat by Fatah fighters supported by Jordanian artillery – a rare instance in which Arabs had turned back Israelis. Boosted by this psychological victory, Arafat was soon leading a mini-state within the refugee camps of Jordan – what Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir called "Fatahland" – and effectively commandeered the PLO early in 1969 (he remained chairman of the PLO until his death in 2004). The PLO's governing charter was amended to state that Arafat's Fatah *fedayeen* were to be the core of the armed struggle against Israel. The PLO's new charter reiterated that its primary goals were the destruction of the state of Israel and the creation of a Palestinian state encompassing all pre-1948 Palestinian territory.

PLO factions and international terrorism

The PLO, however, was a fractious coalition, with its constituent organizations divided on matters of personal leadership, ideology, rival Arab backing, and the acceptability of a two-state solution. The latter, first proposed by the UN in 1947, would mean that Palestinians would gain an independent homeland alongside a Jewish state whose existence would be regarded as legitimate. Fatah, the PLO's largest and most influential organization, occupied the center, maintaining a delicate but successful balance among competing ideological concerns and the region's various Arab backers. The PLO's second-largest group was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a doctrinaire Marxist group led by the Palestinian Christian George Habash and committed to a modern, secular, socialist state. There were many smaller groups as well, several of which were front organizations for other Arab countries. What bound the PLO together minimally during the late 1960s and made possible Arafat's claim to head a united Palestinian front was agreement on the current necessity of the armed struggle against Israel.

But PLO factionalism gave the lie to any notion of a united front. Other leaders resented Arafat's position atop the PLO and hoped that they could outflank him via more spectacular acts of violence. Many of the PLO's other factions – in 1969 there were fourteen in total – also wanted to wage the fight against Israel on a larger field, striking Israelis and

Israeli interests wherever they could be engaged.[3] After 1967, Palestinian terrorists began carrying out attacks outside the Middle East against targets that often had scant connection to Israel, Jews, or Zionism, giving birth to the phenomenon known as international terrorism. The new strategy made little military sense, but it allowed small groups to participate on a much expanded "battlefield"; moreover, it proved to be an incredibly effective means of publicizing the Palestinian cause, far more than anything pursued earlier by Arafat or Fatah. The chief proponent of this new approach was the Popular Front's Habash, whose favorite means was airliner hijackings. Habash defended his novel tactic in words that consciously echoed those of the FLN's terrorist mastermind, Ramdane Abane, bluntly asserting, "When we hijack a plane it has more effect than if we killed a hundred Israelis in battle. For decades world opinion has been neither for nor against the Palestinians. It simply ignored us. At least the world is talking about us now."[4]

The Popular Front's first try at "publicity terrorism" was against Israel's national airline, El Al, in July 1968, when a Rome-to-Tel Aviv flight was diverted to Algiers. No passengers were harmed, as per Habash's strict instructions, and all were eventually freed in exchange for Israel's release of sixteen captured guerrillas. But before long, the zeal of young hijackers began to overwhelm Habash's concern about the dangers of bad publicity. Popular Front terrorists stormed an El Al jet several months later on the ground in Athens, screaming, "We want to kill the Jews!" One person was killed and two others were injured. In response, Israel attacked Beirut International Airport, destroying thirteen jets belonging to Arab airlines. This act of counterterror merely attracted more attention to the Palestinian cause.[5]

It also provoked more hijackings. In August 1969, a Popular Front team including the beautiful and charismatic female terrorist Leila Khaled hijacked a TWA flight leaving Rome and diverted it to Damascus, where they evacuated the plane and blew it up on the tarmac. The attack drew extraordinary attention, even though there were no casualties. Palestinians also gained their first international celebrity in Khaled, who soon became the darling of revolutionaries everywhere. Leftists around the world decorated their walls with posters of a smiling Khaled in a head scarf, clutching an AK-47, an iconic image second only to that of Che Guevara.

But such "successes" also triggered more competition within the PLO; just as Habash's Popular Front used hijackings to outflank Arafat's Fatah, other factions sought to one-up the Popular Front. In the most stunning move, a Popular Front breakaway group used a barometric trigger in February 1970 to blow up Swissair Flight 330 from Zurich to Israel, killing all forty-seven passengers and crew on board.[6]

Habash's response was not to pursue a higher body count but to carry out actions on an even grander scale. On September 6, 1970 – henceforth

Figure 10.1 Leila Khaled, photographed shortly after hijacking an international flight, 1969 (© Bettmann/Getty Images)

known as "Skyjack Sunday" – Popular Front hijackers simultaneously seized four planes in Europe. When one attempt went haywire, leading to Khaled's capture, a fifth flight was hijacked as a bargaining chip. Three of the planes were flown to Dawson's Field, a remote strip in the Jordanian desert. Khaled was eventually released and the Popular Front blew up three of the planes – a $30 million blow.[7] The lack of governmental preparedness amplified the impact of these hijackings, lending credence to the terrorists' claims that states were at their mercy. Moreover, the hijackings

got the world's attention. As the *Economist* editorialized, "The great hijack worked. The hijackers have succeeded in making 'Palestinian' an international household word."[8]

Black September, from Jordan to Munich and beyond

But King Hussein of Jordan had grown tired of Fatahland's quasi-autonomy and the PLO's use of Dawson's Field to stage its theatrics. On top of this, the Popular Front had repeatedly tried to assassinate him. Angry and humiliated, the king finally launched the Jordanian Army against the PLO's camps in September 1970, killing at least 3,000 guerrillas and supporters.[9] The last organized vestiges of the PLO's presence in Jordan were soon gone; Arafat, Fatah, and much of the rest of the PLO fled to new camps in southern Lebanon.

According to some accounts, Arafat had been opposed to the use beyond Israel of what he and his closest associates called the "terror weapon." But humiliated by the destruction of the Fatah mini-state and overshadowed by Habash and the Popular Front's attention-grabbing exploits, he was now courting one indignity he could never suffer: irrelevance. He therefore desperately embraced the "terror weapon" to reclaim authority over Fatah and the PLO. The result was his sponsorship of Black September, a new terrorist organization that took its name from the month of Hussein's humiliating destruction of PLO operations in Jordan. Its first attack, appropriately enough, was the assassination of Jordan's prime minister. Other Fatah terrorist teams struck outside the Middle East against Israeli and third-party targets calculated to generate publicity. Not to be outdone, Habash and the Popular Front engineered a massacre of travelers at Israel's Lod Airport. In minutes, twenty-four people were dead and seventy-eight wounded, most of them Puerto Rican pilgrims. Arafat was reportedly horrified, aware of the possible backlash against the Palestinian cause, but he felt constrained to keep pace with the Popular Front.[10]

The result was Black September's most infamous attack, perhaps the most famous in the history of terrorism before 9/11. The goal was maximum visibility for the Palestinian cause; therefore, the attack took place against the largest backdrop imaginable, the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany. One of the organizers of the attack bluntly described its rationale: "Bombing attacks on El Al do not serve our cause. We have to kill their most important and most famous people. Since we cannot come close to their statesmen, we have to kill artists and sportsmen."[11] The Black September team took advantage of lax West German security to gain easy access to the Olympic Village in the early morning hours of September 5. They immediately killed two members of the Israeli Olympic team and took another nine hostage. When Olympics

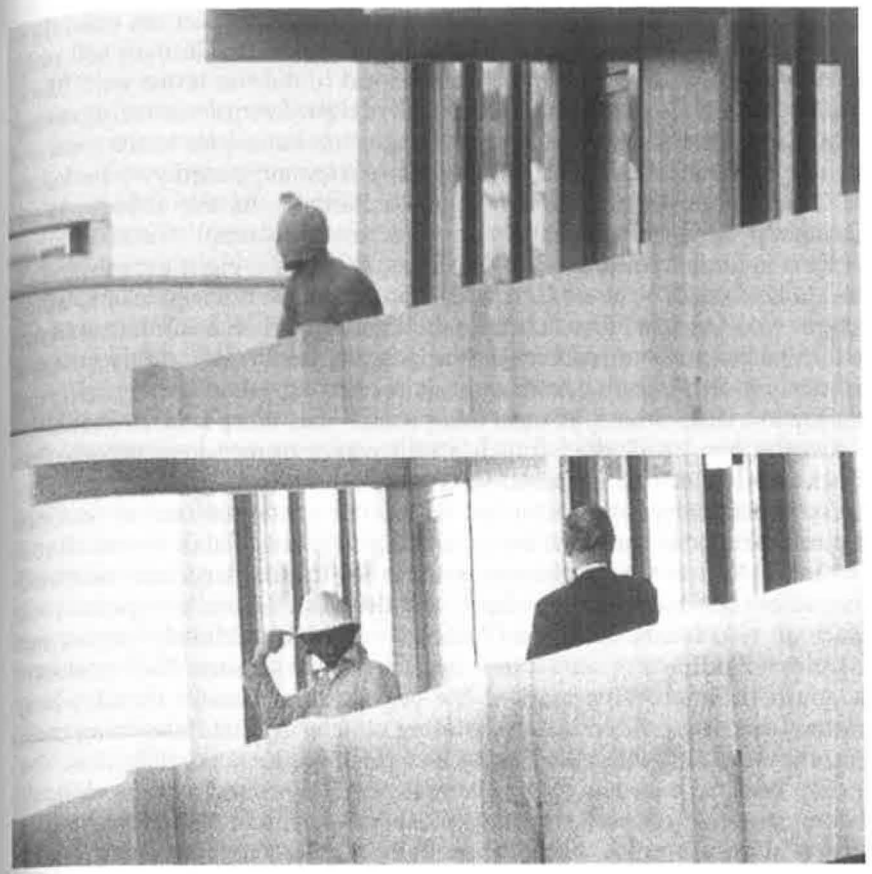

Figure 10.2 Black September terrorists at the Munich Olympics, September 1972. In the lower photo, an International Olympic Committee official negotiates with the terrorists' spokesman (© Bettmann/Getty Images)

officials suspended all competition for the day, Black September, Arafat, and the PLO achieved what would have been thought impossible before: an estimated international audience of 900 million viewers focused on the demands of the Palestinians. Television commentators, including Jim McKay of ABC Sports, narrated the drama throughout the day, while cameras beamed iconic images around the world of Black September terrorists wearing balaclavas, bearing AK-47s, and peering around doorways and over balconies.

Although international exposure was their real goal, the hostage-takers eventually presented demands: free passage and the release of 236 Palestinians held by the Israelis, as well as several members of ostensibly fraternal revolutionary organizations. The Israelis repeated their by now

categorical refusal to negotiate with terrorists. West German officials – horrified at the idea of a massacre of Jewish men on German soil only thirty years after the Holocaust – felt bound to discuss terms with Black September. The West Germans eventually feigned acquiescence, agreeing to transport the terrorists and the hostages via helicopter to the military airbase at Fürstenfeldbruck, whence they were supposedly to be taken to Cairo, where prisoners would be exchanged. At the airbase, West German police botched a hastily arranged rescue attempt. The final list of victims included all nine of the hostages, five of the eight terrorists, and one policeman. The West Germans captured three hostage-takers, all of whom were released less than two months later when a Lufthansa plane was hijacked. The members of Black September were widely praised as martyrs or heroes by Arab radicals for having taken the battle to the enemy in a distant land. Almost everywhere else, there was revulsion.

On the one hand, the Munich attack was a tremendous success, for Black September had attracted international attention to the Palestinian cause on a scale never achieved by earlier ethno-nationalist terrorist organizations. On the other hand, one high-ranking Fatah leader admitted that Munich was a disaster because the deadly outcome escalated the violent tit-for-tat between Israel and the PLO.[12] Israel's response took place on two fronts. The Israel Defense Forces immediately carried out a series of punishing air strikes and incursions against PLO positions in south Lebanon. This marked the beginning of Israel's decades-long pattern of using limited but devastating attacks against Palestinian communities and suspected PLO bases as retaliation for terrorist strikes. The results became increasingly predictable: the PLO found it more difficult to mount raids against Israel, but sizable Palestinian civilian casualties – there were several hundred in the fall of 1972 – further eroded Israeli legitimacy in the eyes of its neighbors and provided fodder to those who chose to characterize Israel as the true terrorist enterprise.

Israel also carried out a more targeted hunt for the Black September agents who planned the Munich operation, as well as PLO and Fatah officials involved in terrorism. Over the next seven years, Operation Wrath of God tracked down and assassinated over a dozen Palestinians, including Ali Hassan Salameh, purportedly Munich's master planner, and two of the Black September hostage-takers who had survived the shoot-out at Fürstenfeldbruck. Israeli hit squads used handguns, car bombs, land mines, and bombs planted in telephones. A separate operation, Spring of Youth, used a team of Israeli commandos to assassinate PLO officials in Lebanon. These Israeli operations created as many problems as they solved, however, particularly when an Israeli assassination squad killed a Moroccan waiter in Lillehammer, Norway, by mistake.[13]

Arafat: terrorist or statesman?

Arafat had come to recognize international terrorism's utility in gaining attention in a way that wars, humanitarian nightmares in refugee camps, and classic insurgency never had. He began to cash in on such attention in the years after Munich. In 1974, Arafat was invited to address the United Nations General Assembly. There he presented himself as a revolutionary and a seeker of justice, stating, "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."[14] The UN recognized Arafat and the PLO as the sole representatives of the Palestinian people. Arafat, the PLO, and the failure of the Arab states to militarily oppose Israel had essentially turned the Israeli–Arab conflict into an Israeli–Palestinian one; and probably no resolution of the former was now possible without first the resolution of the latter.

Arafat tried his hand at a statesman's approach to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict less than two years after the Munich massacre. He proposed a plan for a Palestinian "national authority" in the Occupied Territories, which was welcomed by many Palestinians as the first step toward normalization of daily life. But such a plan also implied that Arafat was willing to renounce a Palestinian right of return to the land lost to Israel in the 1948 war, as well as to recognize Israel's right to exist within its 1948 borders.

Rejectionism: Abu Nidal and Carlos the Jackal

At this point, the PLO's internal tensions emerged full blown. Arafat barely fought off a coup attempt by several Fatah leaders; and several hard-line groups, including the Popular Front and its splinter factions, defected from the PLO, pledging their opposition to any reconciliation with Israel. The so-called Rejectionist Front was backed by the leaders of Iraq, Syria, and Libya, who feared the impact of the resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian struggle on their ability to control their own populations. Syria continued to fund mutually hostile factions of the Popular Front throughout this period, a good indication of the cynicism of Arab leaders and the political utility of the Palestinian cause.

The most notable product of the PLO's rupture in 1974 was the emergence of two notorious – some would say psychopathic – terrorists who rose to prominence first as Palestinian nationalists and later as mercenaries. The first was Sabri Khalil al-Banna, who adopted the *nom de guerre* Abu Nidal ("father of the struggle"). As leader of the Rejectionist organization known as the Fatah Revolutionary Council, or simply the Abu Nidal group, his platform was absolute opposition to negotiations with Israel and any Palestinian who engaged in such. Between 1978 and 1984, Abu Nidal's group assassinated more than a dozen Arab diplomats

and PLO/Fatah representatives involved in establishing contact with Israeli and Mossad officials throughout Europe and the Middle East.[15] Fatah tried to kill Abu Nidal several times, but failed because he was sheltered by the government of Iraq. As an Iraqi agent, Abu Nidal worked to counter Syrian influence in the Palestinian movement, later becoming closely involved in the Lebanese Civil War. Syria later pried him away from Iraq with promises of safe havens and money. On behalf of Damascus, he carried out assassinations of Jordanian officials. Before long, Abu Nidal decamped for Libya, organizing terrorism as covert foreign policy for Muammar al-Gaddafi.

The other Palestinian-advocate-turned-terrorist-mercenary was the Venezuelan-born revolutionary Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, who became known by the media-bequeathed nickname Carlos the Jackal. In December 1975, Carlos led a Popular Front team in storming a summit of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries held in Vienna, taking about sixty hostages, all of whom were eventually released. The goal had been to intimidate those Arab powers that contemplated negotiating with Israel or supporting Arafat and the PLO in their efforts to do the same. In the late 1970s, Carlos formed the Organization of the Armed Arab Struggle, which in the 1980s carried out assassinations and terrorist attacks on behalf of Cuba, some of the Soviet Union's Eastern European satellites, and several Arab states, including Syria, Iraq, and Libya. It is impossible to create a definitive list of the terrorist attacks for which Carlos was responsible, since he repeatedly claimed credit for strikes that he almost certainly did not participate in, so devoted had he become to the international media attention granted to terrorists. "The more I'm talked about," Carlos declared to a colleague, "the more dangerous I appear. That's all the better for me."[16]

From the mid-1970s onward, Arafat became more and more a prisoner of terrorism, a tool that he had helped to unleash in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. He wanted to be viewed as a statesman and the father of his country, but had become addicted to terrorism as the primary source of funding, influence, legitimacy, and respect. He repeatedly turned to terrorism in order to assert control or leadership over the PLO, to outflank his rivals in the PLO and Arab states, and to restore morale after repeated disappointments, such as the Jordanian disaster. For instance, Arafat ordered a 1974 raid against the northern Israeli city of Nahariya primarily in order to preserve Fatah's bona fides in the wake of recent attacks by Rejectionist groups that killed and wounded dozens of adults and schoolchildren.[17] When it came to the use of terror against Israel, Arafat and Fatah believed that to be outpaced by their rivals was the most dangerous path of all.

The PLO in Lebanon and Israeli counterterrorism

The move to southern Lebanon in 1970 further hemmed in Arafat, who, not having learned his lesson in Jordan, proceeded to construct another Fatah mini-state. In Lebanon, this possibility was all the more tempting given the civil war that broke out in 1975, a conflict brought on in part by the destabilizing presence of PLO militias. The chaos of the Lebanese Civil War provided opportunities to Arafat but failed to materially advance the cause of Palestinian independence or alleviate the condition of the great numbers of Palestinian refugees. The virtual disintegration of central Lebanese authority produced a vacuum filled by a new generation of militias and terror organizations. It also provoked even more intervention and sponsorship of terrorism by foreign powers, particularly Syria, which harbored dreams of greater influence or even territorial expansion at the expense of Lebanon and Jordan. During this period, PLO factionalism seemed to increase daily. Even as he tried to carve out a new Fatahland, Arafat continued to carry out attacks against Israel, often using elaborate shell games to allow him to claim to his inner circle that he was still fighting against the Zionist enemy while establishing plausible deniability with Israel, its allies, and global audiences. One such attack took place in March 1978 when a shoot-out with Israeli troops near Haifa ended with a Fatah massacre of at least thirty-five civilians. This raid prompted the first of several Israeli incursions into southern Lebanon.[18]

Arafat's house of cards came tumbling down around him when Israel launched a full-fledged invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Ariel Sharon, the Israeli defense minister and principal architect of the plan, hoped to destroy the PLO and secure Israel's northern border against Palestinian insurgents and terrorists. The invasion set in motion a chain of events that deepened Lebanese factionalism and increased the role of Syria, thus ensuring more violence and chaos on Israel's northern border, particularly after Israel withdrew from central and eastern Lebanon in 1985. The Israeli invasion also failed to eliminate Arafat and the PLO. Early in the invasion, Israeli troops surrounded Arafat and his Fatah guerrillas in West Beirut, but house-to-house fighting and intense shelling killed thousands of civilians without destroying the *fedayeen*. When Arafat could hold out no longer, he prepared to flee. His international standing was so great that he was ushered out of Lebanon – first to Tripoli, north of the city, and then to Tunisia, his third place of exile – with a US Marine escort. Infuriated at Arafat's escape and still convinced of the possibility of inflicting severe damage on the PLO's "terrorist nests," Sharon ringed the Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila with Israeli troops and then allowed allied Christian militias to enter. The latter went on a rampage, killing at least 800 – possibly even a few thousand – Palestinian and Lebanese Muslim civilians as Israeli soldiers and tanks illuminated

the camps with flares and prevented anyone from fleeing.[19] The massacre stoked grassroots Palestinian hatred of the Jewish state and doubts about Arafat's ability to fundamentally advance Palestinian civilian interests. Israeli public sentiment also turned against the invasion, with Sharon soon forced out of office. The Lebanese Civil War and the Israeli invasion were counterproductive on another front, as well, triggering the costly US Marine intervention and the emergence of new militias and foreign-backed organizations, such as Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah, which were determined to punish the West and take the war to Israel. This was a critical moment in the development of Islamism and the targeting of Americans, a subject to which we will return in chapter 12.

The results of Israeli intervention in the Lebanese Civil War highlighted the difficulties inherent in Israel's efforts to deal with Arafat, the PLO, and terrorism. Several decades of Israeli military success ironically forced the Palestinians into believing that terrorism was the only way to continue their struggle against the Jewish state. This locked Israel into tit-for-tat violence with the most militant segments of the Palestinian cause, a process that sidelined moderates on both sides, creating a self-sustaining logic of confrontation. Each side justified its hard-edged policies in reference to their foe's radical violence, with both essentially coming to depend on the cycles of terror and killing. And without a doubt, Israel's myriad military and intelligence agencies became adept at counterterror (in both senses of the word), not only through their use of infiltrators, efficient intelligence gathering, and targeted assassination but also through the use of collective punishment. In the case of Lebanon, the Israeli decision to maintain a presence in the south succeeded as a defensive bulwark against Hezbollah and Palestinian militias but aided them in their efforts to raise money and recruit fighters in their struggles for national liberation. Not until 2000 did Israeli troops fully withdraw from southern Lebanon.

Complicating matters further, Israel has long maintained a double standard when identifying terrorism in its history. As noted in chapter 1, new conscripts were welcomed into Israeli armored units until quite recently with a dramatic night-time oath atop Masada that invoked the Sicarii as heroic freedom fighters, not the terrorists-cum-bandits they were.[20] And, as described in the previous chapter, two Zionist terrorists from the 1940s, Yitzhak Shamir and Menachem Begin, later became Israeli prime ministers. Furthermore, to this day, Israeli cities and towns are full of streets named after members and units of Irgun and LEHI. Stamps and medals have been issued honoring them, as well. If anything, Israeli memorialization of Irgun et al. stepped up after Begin became prime minister in 1977, thus ushering in a new era of respect and prominence for the old Zionist/Israeli right.

Arafat in Tunisia, Rejectionist terror, and Gaddafi of Libya

Arafat was even more locked into a mindset keyed to cycles of terror and counterterror. Once again chastened, and now with his forces more fragmented than ever, he responded in what had become his characteristic ways. On the one hand, Arafat the statesman explored a peace initiative introduced by US President Ronald Reagan that would have created a "self-governing" – but not independent – Palestinian entity in the West Bank, to be jointly administered with Jordan. On the other hand, Arafat the terrorist fought to regain the initiative against his Rejectionist rivals. In order to keep his statesman's hands clean, Arafat continued to operate behind a multitude of other organizations. The most prominent example in this period was the seajacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in October 1985 by a small PLO faction backed by Iraq but led by a member of Fatah. The seajacking went awry, and the terrorists abandoned the ship after killing the wheelchair-bound Jewish-American Leon Klinghoffer.[21] So great was the PLO's notoriety by this point that even terror operations with only one casualty served to reinforce the image of Arafat and his henchmen as the era's most bloodthirsty purveyors of terrorist violence. In this, one could say that the PLO had become a victim of its own success. Arafat, who always claimed to be the sole leader of the Palestinian diaspora, increasingly reaped the whirlwind, since Israel blamed him for every terrorist atrocity carried out by Palestinian Rejectionist groups. The latter were aware of this and carried out some terrorist attacks in order to discredit – even frame – Arafat and derail Israeli–Jordanian negotiations.

Those dictators in the region who maintained their hold on power in part by denouncing Israel and exploiting anger over the plight of the Palestinians also sponsored such terrorism. Enter Muammar al-Gaddafi, Libya's secular, pan-Arabist leader who came to power in a coup in 1969. Gaddafi eventually became the principal employer of the Abu Nidal group, which, presumably on orders from the Libyan leader (although the Syrians were also implicated), carried out simultaneous attacks on El Al ticket counters in Vienna and Rome in 1985, killing 19 civilians and wounding 120. Arafat immediately denounced the massacres, sensing there was little to be gained in such attacks anymore. After President Reagan denounced Gaddafi as the "mad dog of the Middle East" for his backing of international terrorism, the United States began a campaign to intimidate and limit Libya, in particular challenging the extent of Libya's reach into territorial waters in the Mediterranean. In response, Gaddafi used Abu Nidal to wage a covert campaign of revenge against US interests. In 1986, a bomb attack on a Berlin nightclub killed 2 US soldiers and a civilian and injured over 200 others. The US traced the attacks to Gaddafi as Abu Nidal's backer and retaliated later that year by bombing Gaddafi's headquarters in Tripoli, killing dozens of military officials, governmental

personnel, and civilians, including Gaddafi's adopted daughter. The feud escalated even further when Libyan officials planted a bomb on board Pan Am Flight 103 in December 1988. The plane exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270, including 11 on the ground.[22]

The first Intifada

Back in the Occupied Territories, Palestinians – feeling betrayed by the Israelis and the PLO alike – took matters into their own hands with what became known as the first Intifada ("shaking off") in December 1987. Civilians in Gaza and the West Bank mounted enormous demonstrations, engaged in passive resistance, staged strikes, and stoned Israeli checkpoints, settlers, troops, and tanks. The Israeli military, long used to dealing with terrorists and guerrillas, responded to rock-throwing teenagers with deadly force. By mid-1990, over 800 Palestinians had died in the violence, at least one quarter of them boys and girls under the age of sixteen.[23] International opinion had never been more on the side of the Palestinians.

Arafat was caught off guard by the uprising but within a year had managed to impose considerable control over the Intifada. In the meantime, a new organization was also exercising influence, particularly in the Gaza Strip. This was Hamas, an armed branch of Egypt's Sunni Muslim Brotherhood. Evidence has emerged that the Israeli authorities funneled intelligence and funds to Hamas in an effort to produce a counterweight to Arafat and the PLO, a move that later became one of the twentieth century's most notorious backfires.[24] Hamas and its development as part of the modern Islamist movement will be explored in chapter 12.

Arafat's hits and misses

Arafat, meanwhile, sensed that, with much international opinion on the side of the Palestinians, this was his moment to make a bold move. In late 1988, he and the PLO declared the creation of an independent Palestinian state, indirectly acknowledged the Israeli right to existence, and condemned the use of terrorism (including "state terrorism" – a comment presumably directed toward Israel). During a December 14, 1988, press conference, Arafat renounced his own use of terror as a political weapon, stating, "Enough is enough. Enough is enough. Enough is enough."[25] Meanwhile, he encouraged more protests, which he knew would result in Israeli crackdowns and the deaths of young Palestinians – deaths which were useful in mobilizing significant Israeli public opinion against the Shamir government, the Israeli military's stridency, and new settlements. But with the PLO poised to achieve a breakthrough victory, Arafat committed a potentially fatal error when he refused to condemn Saddam Hussein and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. As US troops poured into Saudi Arabia, Arafat called on all Arabs to resist the West. Never had he more lived up to the famous pronouncement attributed to the Israeli diplomat and historian Abba Eban that, under Arafat, "The Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity."

The complete breakdown of pan-Arab unity in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War seriously hurt Arafat and the PLO. Those Arab states most responsible for funding Arafat and the PLO's activities, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, slowed their money to a trickle. Inside the Occupied Territories, Hamas took advantage of the PLO's troubles to exert more and more influence over the Intifada. In southern Lebanon, Hezbollah became a regional force to be reckoned with and an uncompromising foe of Israel. It should be noted, however, that popular support in Palestine and Lebanon for Hamas and Hezbollah has probably owed more to their emphasis on social services and lack of corruption than to their use of terror and militancy, a fact that sheds much light on the PLO's four-decade crusade for legitimacy.

Arafat as statesman

Arafat seemed to have been outhustled and the PLO appeared outflanked on every front. Perhaps his declining control over the Palestinian movement triggered some new thinking on Arafat's part, or perhaps his renunciation of terrorism – always treated by the Israelis as simply a piece of theatre – was actually genuine. In any case, Arafat responded to his position of weakness in a dramatically different fashion than he had after the expulsion from Jordan or Lebanon. This time his emissaries carried out secret talks with the Israelis. Circumstances, particularly the success of the Intifada and the rise of Hamas and Hezbollah, had finally cast Arafat, Fatah, and the PLO in the role of Palestinian moderates, despite all the carnage they had inflicted. Israel and the PLO formally recognized each other in 1993 in the Oslo Accords and pledged to engage in direct talks geared toward the creation of an autonomous – but still not independent – Palestinian entity in Gaza and the West Bank. The next summer, Arafat's transition to full-fledged statesman was complete when he was elected president of the Palestinian Authority and made a triumphant return to newly established headquarters in Gaza City. His triumph was only partial, however, for now he had to contend with Hamas, which increasingly imagined itself as the legitimate voice of the Palestinian people. As negotiations between the PLO and Israel dragged on, caught up on a wide array of thorny issues, Hamas played the role of the new Rejectionist Front. With peace tantalizingly close, but most Palestinians still living in depressingly difficult circumstances, a second Intifada broke

out in September 2000, with Hamas (entrenched in Gaza) and Fatah (in the West Bank) vying for control of the movement. Arafat's death in 2004 from a stroke at the age of seventy-five fractured the Palestinian movement even further. Some of the PLO's secular factions have continued to use terror against Israel, but for quite some time the source of most terror attacks has been Hamas and Hezbollah.

After years of relative quiet, Hamas and its ally Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) carried out a massive raid into southern Israel in October 2023. The attack had the character of both a guerrilla operation, in that it targeted IDF troops and installations, and a terrorist strike, since it also targeted civilians, including concertgoers at a large outdoor rave and the residents of many kibbutzim bordering the Gaza Strip. Hamas and PIJ killed more than 1,200 Israelis in the attack, and took hundreds of civilians and soldiers hostage. There were also credible allegations of widespread sexual violence and particularly gruesome brutality. Hamas and PIJ probably mounted the attack for several reasons: to derail talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia about normalizing relations, to re-assert Hamas's importance as a significant local power, and to disabuse the Israelis of the notion that the Palestinian issue might simply go away. Israel quickly responded with air strikes and a full-blown invasion that leveled much of the Gaza Strip and caused thousands of civilian casualties. The initial attack and its staggering brutality, followed by Israel's invasion and the attendant humanitarian crisis in Gaza, thrust the Israeli–Palestinian struggle back onto the world stage and polarized international opinion. As of the writing of this edition, the outcome of the war was unknown, while much about Hamas and PIJ's initial attack remained murky. The bottom line was disturbingly clear, however: as of 2023, peace – whether in the form of a two-state, or now a three-state, solution – seems as remote as ever.

The Irish Republican Army

The story of the Irish Republican Army and its predecessors is central to the development of ethno-nationalist terrorism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it is the IRA of the last third of the twentieth century that has most fascinated and horrified observers. Indeed, the IRA is perhaps second only to the PLO as the pre-9/11 world's most iconic terrorist organization. Its emergence as such followed an odd route, as the IRA was reduced to near obscurity on more than one occasion after its success in defeating the British in the Black and Tan War. The group embraced socialism in the 1920s and began to champion class as well as national struggle. In the North, it sought to protect Catholics when sectarian violence erupted; in the South, it continued to oppose the Anglo-Irish Treaty that had divided the island and preserved nominal membership in

the British Dominion. Flirtation with the Nazis during the Second World War – as common enemies of Britain – nearly destroyed what status the IRA retained as the banner carriers for Irish republicanism. Its irrelevance was exacerbated by its commitment to abstentionism, the long-standing policy of refusing to occupy seats in Northern Ireland's devolved parliament, even when support for republicanism won it enough votes to do so. In a bid to reassert its importance, the IRA began a terrorism and guerrilla campaign in Northern Ireland in 1956 that eventually claimed the lives of six Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) policemen but alienated many republicans.[26] Short on public support in the North and South, the IRA suspended its terrorism campaign in 1962, but did not disband its paramilitary structure. The IRA was biding its time.

Northern Ireland ignites

Meanwhile, a Catholic civil rights movement in the North (informed by the American campaign led by the Revd. Martin Luther King, Jr.) peacefully agitated for better education, better housing, and more employment opportunities. While the Catholic population generally supported the new movement as more politically viable and less morally problematic than IRA violence, the romance of the armed struggle deeply resonated with the many Catholics who felt themselves abandoned and in need of protection. For their part, even moderate Protestants saw their position as highly precarious and suspected that civil rights activism was simply cover for Irish nationalism – a generally middle-class movement devoted to change via constitutional, peaceful methods – and even violent IRA republicanism. This fear encouraged the Protestant, unionist ruling elite of Northern Ireland to hold fast to its near monopoly on political power and force, particularly through the unionist-only police agency, the well-armed and well-trained RUC, and its reserve force, the so-called B-Specials, itself a highly sectarian and poorly trained civilian militia.

The situation was made worse by the behavior of loyalists, a term applied to extremists committed to the use of violence to maintain union with Britain. The most prominent – and infamous – loyalist organization was the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a terror organization that attacked Catholics in order to provoke violent responses, harden sectarian lines, and encourage observers to conflate the Catholic civil rights movement and militant republicanism. The UVF's hope was to precipitate the civil war between mainstream unionists and nationalists that it felt had been brewing for years. The group's notorious Malvern Street Murders in the summer of 1966 nearly provoked a general outbreak of violence, a development only averted by the authorities' swift prosecution of the UVF killers. But the situation continued to deteriorate. More loyalist paramilitaries formed, egged on by hardline Protestant politicians, especially

Ian Paisley. Meanwhile, IRA posters and republican rhetoric ominously spread throughout Catholic neighborhoods.

Things came to a head – and the UVF got its wish – in August 1969 when the RUC and the B-Specials beat, tear-gassed, and terrorized a peaceful civil rights march from Londonderry to Belfast and then watched as gangs of unionist Apprentice Boys rioted. A reporter who witnessed an RUC unit machine-gunning a Catholic neighborhood summed up the scene: "Anyone who was there that August night in Belfast . . . understood how the revival of the IRA became possible, and why the Royal Ulster Constabulary forfeited for ever the trust of Catholic Ireland."[27] With Belfast in flames, at least seven people dead, and hundreds wounded from gunshots, London sent in 6,000 British troops to restore order, a number which rose to 27,000 by 1972.[28]

Catholics and Protestants alike welcomed the British Army, but for different reasons. Catholics – even many republicans – hoped the British would serve as peacekeepers and honest brokers, while the Protestants saw in the British an ally. Unfortunately, the British soldiers sent from Germany to Northern Ireland had been trained to counter a Soviet invasion with maximum firepower; unsurprisingly, they treated demonstrators and agitators as an armed enemy and responded to the threat of shadowy agents operating in the midst of civilians with indiscriminate violence. British troops quickly went to work with the RUC and B-Specials quarantining Catholic neighborhoods, beating demonstrators, ferreting out still-hidden IRA activists, and alienating the public. In a self-fulfilling prophecy made possible by the UVF, hardline Protestants, and the British Army, the Catholic population – hungry for protection, leadership, and respect – turned to the IRA. For its part, the IRA was eager to channel all disgruntlement into republicanism and leapt at the opportunity to reclaim its position as the voice of Catholics.

The heightened legitimacy and support accorded the IRA triggered fresh demands for self-defense among Northern Ireland's Protestants, leading to the formation and operation of ever more loyalist paramilitary organizations. When the British Army, finally aware of the beast it helped to unleash, began to crack down on paramilitary activity, soldiers found themselves the target of terrorist violence from both sides, an unwitting participant in a tribal war. Developments in Northern Ireland echoed those of a decade earlier in Algeria, where the French Army was drawn into a war not of its choosing, increasingly tethered to the *colons*, who always suspected that Paris was about to make unacceptable concessions to the native population. The British made their own position more difficult by tolerating the legal presence of many loyalist paramilitaries, such as the Ulster Defence Association and the UVF, which carried out assassinations and terror attacks and repeatedly drew the British into the middle of gunfights through their provocative parades and demonstrations in Catholic neighborhoods. As with Algeria's *colon* vigilantism and the eventual outright treason of the OAS, most loyalist terrorism was simply meant to exact revenge.

The Provisional Irish Republican Army

In the wake of the return to open struggle in 1969, long-simmering tensions within the IRA came to the fore. Those in the IRA most committed to socialism were uncomfortable with a turn toward open militancy, instead preferring to develop a mass movement embracing the whole island. Dissenters concentrated in the North responded that the republican struggle, now particularly articulated as the defense of the Catholic population, should trump all else. They soon walked out, declaring themselves the Provisional IRA. For the so-called Provos, the armed struggle was paramount and any talk of pursuing political compromises was treasonous. The remaining republicans fashioned themselves the Official IRA. Although it briefly engaged in violence, this branch of the organization declared a ceasefire in 1972 and repudiated revolutionary violence. The field was left to the Provos – who soon co-opted the name IRA – and the inevitable splinter groups it generated. The Provos' endgame was barely more reasonable than the loyalists', since Provo demands for unification with the rest of the island were fanciful, for several reasons. First, the British all along held fast to the position that Northern Ireland's status could only be changed by a majority decision, and Protestant unionists were clearly in the majority. Second, unionists were hardly likely to be compelled to leave for England, since their identity was inextricably bound up with Northern Ireland as their historical homeland. And third, the Republic of Ireland was in no position to absorb Ulster, given that the latter's population had grown accustomed to the inordinately expensive British welfare state. Unfortunately, for decades, any sort of negotiated middle ground itself remained a hopeless fantasy, in light of both sides' entrenched attitudes concerning self-defense and survival.

For the first two years of the new armed struggle, Provo violence was directed solely against loyalists and Catholic Irish thought to be spies, informers, and mutineers. Provos killed the first British soldier in 1971, after the UK introduced the policy of internment without trial and stepped up operations to seize IRA weapons and suspects.[29] One such tactic was the use of curfews to clear the streets, followed up with house-to-house searches backed up by helicopters and armored vehicles. Between 1971 and 1976, the army made about 250,000 of these house searches.[30] As far as Catholics were concerned, the British Army had become an occupying force. London's decision in 1972 to disband Northern Ireland's parliament handed the IRA a major propaganda victory, since it could now claim that Ulster was a British colony in word and deed.

New levels of Provo violence were not long in coming, and in 1972 British officials began to describe the Troubles as "war with the IRA."[31] Such talk fed the growing Catholic perception of the IRA as a legitimate army, a sense that was heightened even more by the fact that the British tolerated the organization of IRA prisoners along military lines. Posters and graffiti that aped civil defense propaganda during the Second World War came to dominate public spaces throughout Catholic neighborhoods. All of this served to erode lingering Catholic restraints on the use of political violence and terror. The final step toward the abyss occurred on January 30, 1972, when British troops killed fourteen unarmed civilians during a violent crackdown on an unruly demonstration.[32] The event, quickly dubbed "Bloody Sunday," led to a surge of "volunteers," as they were known, into the IRA and the establishment of wide-scale passive support for IRA operations among the Catholic population. Throughout the Troubles, volunteers often revealed that they joined the IRA after they or a family member were victimized by the British or loyalist paramilitaries. In fact, an informal IRA survey of imprisoned members in the mid-1970s revealed that as many as 90 percent of them primarily joined the organization not from ideological motives, but rather out of a desire to strike back at those who had hurt or harassed them.[33]

IRA gun battles and sniping attacks on British troops soon lent the conflict the air of a guerrilla war. Parallel IRA attacks on civilians made clear that this was also a war of terror. On July 21, 1972 – what unionists came to call "Bloody Friday" – the IRA exploded twenty-two bombs in downtown Belfast, killing 7 civilians and 2 soldiers and wounding over 100. Ten days later, three more IRA car bombs killed 9 civilians near Derry. Most of these bombs were made out of a mix of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO), cheap and readily available ingredients capable of unleashing an amazing amount of devastation for their weight. For this reason, ANFO bombs became staples of the IRA's terror campaign, as well as countless others around the globe.[34]

IRA vs. UVF vs. Britain

The IRA directed most of its energy and bile toward its enemy's armed units during the mid-1970s. The majority of the IRA's victims were thus British soldiers, RUC policemen, and members of armed paramilitary loyalist groups, despite the occasional explosion of violence against civilians, as in July 1972. On the other hand, since loyalist paramilitaries were no more capable of ferreting out IRA gunmen from the larger population than was the British Army, the majority of the victims of loyalist violence were Catholic civilians. In the words of the UVF's leader, Gusty Spence, "If it wasn't possible to get at the IRA then some thought, 'We'll get those who are harboring them, succoring them, comforting them and supporting them.'"[35] Loyalists sometimes struck south of the border, as in 1974, when they set off two car bombs in Dublin and Monaghan that killed thirty-three civilians, an attack that helped to derail negotiations over a power-sharing agreement between the Republic of Ireland and the UK.[36] Because Protestants, unlike the Catholics, could enlist in an overt military or police force, those who fought the IRA through participation in a paramilitary organization tended to do so because their thuggish, often criminal records precluded them joining the military. Loyalist terror, as a result, tended to be more flamboyant, provocative, and brutal; it also more frequently involved torture, which was conducted in the so-called "romper rooms" of loyalist hangouts.

In 1974, the British began to move away from the sort of overt military behavior that routinely inflamed public opinion and increased Catholic support for the IRA. The UK redirected its efforts in two not entirely reconcilable ways. The first was to try to recast the Troubles as a criminal matter. More emphasis was placed on the courts as the proper vehicle for securing Northern Ireland. The British had some success in this regard, but the strategy also proved counterproductive in that the authorities yielded to the temptation of denouncing as "terrorism" a wide variety of behaviors – including propaganda, arms procurement, fundraising, and guerrilla operations – that many Catholics regarded as part of a legitimate struggle, armed or otherwise.

The second – and far more controversial – manner in which the British redirected the conflict involved the increased use of covert operations combining intelligence gathering, psychological warfare, and counterterror against both IRA militants and Catholic civilians. This activity was in itself nothing new. In the early 1970s a secretive British unit – variously called the Mobile Reconnaissance Force or the Military Reaction Force – carried out such operations, as alleged at the time and confirmed in more recent exposés and investigations.[37] But during the second half of the 1970s, this shadowy violence became by many accounts more systematic and more disturbing. The British used teams of commandos from the elite Special Air Service and agents from the RUC's Special Branch and the United Kingdom's MI5 to tail, capture, and/or kill IRA volunteers. Critics have alleged that security forces involved in such operations sometimes became involved in criminal enterprises, colluded extensively with loyalists, and used assassination and torture against IRA and civilian targets. Such was the case with the so-called Glenanne Gang. Its members included soldiers, police officers, and UVF thugs; its civilian victims numbered over 100.[38] Widespread suspicion about the work of government soldiers and agents gave rise to the widely held opinion that London was conducting a "dirty war" against Irish republicanism in Northern Ireland. What is clear is that the result of both efforts – increased use of the courts and covert operations – further eroded British legitimacy in Northern Ireland. As Karl Heinzen had observed more than

a century before, the use of ostensibly legal means as the cover for what was widely perceived as immoral and illegitimate purposes tended to debase the law rather than elevate the purposes. The British, nonetheless, managed to curtail the IRA's overt military behavior, and by the late 1970s shaved what had been a much larger organization down to perhaps 500 volunteers.[39]

The Provos' "long war"

British success bred its own problems, for a desperate IRA soon adopted more traditional terror tactics, such as assassinations of officials and more frequent attacks on civilians. It also forced the IRA to organize itself into small cells which were better insulated from infiltration, but also more prone to acts of unsanctioned violence. British insistence on applying the word "terrorist" to all IRA behavior thus once again proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The IRA had built up enough credibility with the Catholic population of Northern Ireland during the early phases of the Troubles that it was able to sustain operations – despite its far more overt turn toward terrorism – well into the 1990s. The IRA dubbed its new strategy "the long war," and it combined elements of both classic guerrilla warfare and terrorism. The *Green Book*, a manual distributed to all volunteers, stated in its 1977 edition that the IRA was waging a "war of attrition against enemy personnel which is aimed at causing as many casualties and deaths as possible so as to create a demand from their people at home for their withdrawal." The manual also called for a "bombing campaign aimed at making the enemy's financial interest . . . unprofitable" and "to make the Six Counties . . . ungovernable except by colonial military rule."[40]

The IRA had always been aware that British heavy-handedness provided the single greatest boost to its popularity and legitimacy. The organization thus took the battle to England on several occasions, hoping to coax the British Army into more self-defeating behavior. In the fall of 1974, the IRA set off bombs in five pubs across England, killing 28 civilians and wounding over 200. These bombings called forth much revulsion even in Northern Ireland, but the effects were mitigated and even reversed when the British imprisoned the wrong people (the so-called Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six) for over fifteen years. Nor was this the end of violence outside of Northern Ireland. In 1979, an IRA team pulled off perhaps its most spectacular attack, assassinating the 79-year-old Lord Louis Mountbatten – a war hero, the last viceroy of British India, and Queen Elizabeth's cousin – on his yacht off the northwest coast of the republic of Ireland. Three others died in the blast.[41] Gerry Adams, soon to be the head of Sinn Féin, the IRA's political arm, declared, "In my opinion, the IRA achieved its objective: people started paying attention to what was happening in Ireland."[42] Five years later, IRA brazenness reached new levels when operatives bombed the Grand Hotel in Brighton, England, during the Conservative Party's conference in 1984. Five people died, and Margaret Thatcher, Britain's prime minister, narrowly escaped injury.

The IRA's terrorism strategy was born of weakness, but it made Britain's task of dealing with Northern Ireland very difficult. While the IRA remained fixated on a number of long-term – but admittedly unreasonable – goals, British attention was distracted away from the creation of a master plan toward more immediate concerns over security. The result was a makeshift policy that exacerbated the situation, for it alienated all, satisfied none, secured little, and rectified nothing. Even when the British Army was adapted to the specifics of the conflict in Northern Ireland, it remained a force ill suited to the primary work at hand, namely police investigation and legitimacy building. All it took was an occasional lapse in British military discipline, and a new generation of martyrs was created to serve the cause of Irish republicanism and IRA militancy.

The IRA abroad

But martyrs and recruits were not enough to keep the IRA afloat during its long campaign; it relied on money and arms from abroad. The IRA's greatest source of funding was the sizable Irish-American community, whose support had tapered off during the organization's drift toward Marxism mid-century. With the start of the Troubles in 1969 and the emergence of the Provisional IRA, there was once again a cause and an attractive focus for Irish-American support. One group, the Irish Northern Aid Committee, raised money in bars and through dinners in the 1970s to the tune of nearly $3 million.[43] Such funds were ostensibly for prisoner relief and victims' care, but much of the money was used to purchase weapons. Some sympathetic Irish-Americans simply cut to the chase: one smuggler supposedly supplied the IRA with approximately 2,500 guns and 1 million rounds of ammunition in the 1970s.[44]

Outside of North America, the IRA portrayed itself as a rather different sort of organization, depending on the audience. In Europe, the IRA forged links with revolutionary Marxist groups, such as West Germany's Red Army Faction and Italy's Red Brigades (more on these organizations in the next chapter). In this instance, the IRA played up its revolutionary and socialist heritages and was rewarded with some weapons and training, but also with intelligence and organizational help. The IRA formed its closest and most productive relationships with other ethno-nationalist organizations that, like the Provos, saw themselves as fighting against a colonial occupier. The IRA and the Basque separatist group ETA (see below) traded weapons and equipment, and IRA volunteers trained at

PLO camps in the Middle East and North Africa in 1968 and throughout the late 1970s.

Gerry Adams and the Provos also studied classic texts and campaigns from the history of terrorism and guerrilla warfare. IRA leadership was strongly influenced by Fanon's works on anti-colonialism, and tales of the Greek Cypriots' struggle against the British. Of particular interest was Robert Taber's 1965 study of guerrilla movements, *The War of the Flea*, in which he recounted how the Irgun, EOKA, and other organizations studied the work and writings of the early IRA leader Michael Collins. For a group so rooted in history, it was ironic that the IRA had to rediscover its own past, although it becomes understandable when we remember that the IRA's version of its history had been extensively mythologized and Collins's contributions minimized, given his willingness to accept partition in 1921.

Alternatives to terrorism

Irish-American, Red Army Faction, and PLO aid did not produce victory for the IRA; rather, it simply kept the cause alive. The stalemate between the IRA and British authorities was perhaps best illustrated in 1980–1, when thirty-three IRA volunteers held in the notorious prison known as the Maze launched a hunger strike. Demanding that they be treated as political prisoners, the inmates foreswore all food and welcomed martyrdom, attracting unprecedented international attention to the IRA cause. The central figure in the drama was Bobby Sands, a 26-year-old arrested for a non-violent crime. Seizing on the public relations value of the hunger strike, the IRA forbade other volunteers serving sentences for violent crimes from engaging in the protest. On the verge of death, Sands was even elected to the United Kingdom's parliament (one other hunger striker was elected to Ireland's parliament). When he died, an estimated 100,000 people attended his funeral in Belfast. All told, ten hunger strikers died before the IRA called off the protest.[45] Unable to win on the battlefield or through terrorism, the IRA had reasserted its importance from within the walls of a prison.

A window of opportunity was opening. The first inklings of progress came in 1985, when the British and Irish governments – aided by moderate Northern Catholic leaders – concluded the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Agreement provided a framework for the two states to discuss policies for Northern Ireland and led to the first clear improvements in Catholic housing and employment in a generation. Just as importantly, Thatcher excluded unionists from the negotiations, an acknowledgment that Britain's patience with Ulster's *colons* was thinning.

Figure 10.3 Mural of Bobby Sands in Belfast, Northern Ireland (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobby_Sands#/media/File:Bobby_sands_mural_in_belfast320.jpg)

Negotiations and terrorism

The specter of compromise led hardcore republicans and loyalists to more violence. The latter grew alarmed at the prospect of a British sell-out, and the IRA had to demonstrate it was still in possession of its revolutionary bona fides. But Catholic tolerance for IRA violence was beginning to wane. The reasons for this were many. Catholics sensed that IRA provocations jeopardized the possibility of more negotiations and thus more improvements in the Catholic standard of living. With new options for addressing long-held grievances, the population no longer felt backed into a corner, dependent on IRA violence as the sole means of self-defense and self-respect. The Irish government's involvement in the North also implied that the IRA was no longer the sole defender of the nation, a conviction that had always encouraged the IRA's win-at-all-costs rhetoric. Perhaps most importantly, Catholics had grown tired of the funerals and fear. When the IRA killed civilians – such as a Remembrance Day bombing in Enniskillen in 1987 that killed eleven Protestants, a landmine attack in 1992 that killed eight, and a botched effort to target the leadership of a loyalist paramilitary group in 1993 that killed nine – Catholic revulsion throughout Northern Ireland was palpable.[46] Catholic hopes

unfortunately meant new fears for Ulster's loyalist paramilitaries, who repeatedly lashed out at the IRA. When volunteers could not be found, Catholic civilians would do. The Ulster Freedom Fighters and other groups killed dozens of civilians in the late 1980s and early 1990s, particularly after IRA attacks.

But changes were afoot, in Northern Ireland as well as within the leadership of the IRA. By the early 1990s, Adams and his deputy Martin McGuinness had grown tired of the endless tit-for-tat killing that always threatened to erupt into full-scale sectarian warfare; more importantly, they had come to understand that the armed struggle had failed to achieve its lofty goals. The hunger strikes and associated electoral successes of the early 1980s had demonstrated that Sinn Féin could become a real force in Northern Ireland's political scene, achieving through the ballot box at least some of what seemed further and further out of reach through violence. And now, IRA violence, particularly the Remembrance Day massacre in Enniskillen, threatened that electoral success, alienating Catholics, who were increasingly disgusted by the pointless killing. Adams was particularly sensitive to the public's mood and showed himself to be flexible, even reasonable. He was a charismatic leader and, as one of the most ardent advocates of the armed struggle, was immunized against charges of cowardice or betrayal. He had also come to realize that, for all the collusion between the British security forces and loyalist paramilitaries, the two parties were separate entities with distinct agendas. If Adams, the Provos, and Sinn Féin could negotiate with Britain, the loyalists could be sidelined and their violence stigmatized.

At last motivated by something more realistic than the fanciful dream of all-island nationalism and something more substantive than revenge and self-defense of Northern Irish Catholics, the IRA began to pursue a different kind of terror campaign in Britain in the early 1990s. The first hint of this came in February 1991 when it carried out a mortar strike on the prime minister's London residence that shocked the British people but, by design or serendipitous accident, caused no casualties. In any case, the attack prefigured a serious change in the IRA's approach, which was increasingly calculated to provoke outrage, attract international attention, and convince the government that the organization could not be defeated, all while causing a minimum of casualties and thus a minimum of damage to Britain's willingness to engage in talks. This was terrorism meant to push the enemy toward the negotiation table, rather than the more common sort meant to entrench differences and polarize the neutral middle. In the IRA's new British campaign, phoned-in warnings, off-hours bombings, and massive property damage became the norm. In April 1992, the IRA set off an enormous bomb in London's financial center known as the Baltic Exchange that killed three civilians and caused hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of damage – at first estimated as more financial damage, in fact, than had been inflicted so far in more than

twenty years of IRA violence. In April 1993, a car bomb in the London financial area of Bishopsgate went off after hours, killing only one person, a foolhardy photographer who had rushed to where the IRA had warned a bomb would explode. Once again, the IRA caused a spectacular amount of economic damage – some initial estimates, later scaled down, ran to £1 billion.[47]

The British authorities repeatedly denounced the attacks and pledged not to negotiate with their perpetrators, but the outrages helped to convince Britain that, while the IRA could not achieve a military victory, it could also not be eliminated. Northern Ireland's most reasonable negotiating partner was John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), who had been involved in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985; it was to him that Britain reached out for direct talks. Shortly thereafter, Hume took the critical step of contacting Adams and Sinn Féin for talks that essentially led to the formation of a united nationalist front in 1993. Also critical was the close involvement of Albert Reynolds, the prime minister of Ireland, whom Sinn Féin regarded as a sympathetic and honest broker. Reynolds, in turn, helped to gain the backing of US officials, and eventually newly elected President Bill Clinton. American visas, long withheld, were granted to Sinn Féin officials, including Gerry Adams and the notorious terrorist Joe Cahill, in January 1994. This granting of recognition to republicans went far in convincing them that negotiation and compromise would indeed be more fruitful than armed struggle. That August, the IRA announced a "complete cessation of military operations," which was shortly answered in kind by loyalist paramilitaries – an altogether different sort of call-and-response than Northern Ireland was used to.[48]

The final spasms of violence

Direct talks between Britain, Ireland, the SDLP, and the largest Protestant organization, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), proceeded slowly. A major impediment to progress were British and UUP demands that Sinn Féin be excluded until the IRA decommissioned its weapons. In 1996, the IRA renounced its ceasefire, in part to placate hardliners, and returned to violent activity, the centerpiece of which was the February bombing of Canary Wharf in London's Docklands. Essentially a continuation of the IRA's early 1990s terror campaign, the bomb caused relatively few human casualties (2 dead and more than 100 wounded), but caused enormous economic damage. A nearly simultaneous recommendation from former US Senator George Mitchell to include Sinn Féin in talks without an IRA commitment to decommissioning provided British Prime Minister John Major the cover to recommence talks with Sinn Féin present. In turn, the IRA declared a new ceasefire in 1997. The election of Tony Blair and

the transition to Labour Party rule in Britain, as well as the continued involvement of Mitchell, led to renewed progress in talks dominated by the SDLP and the UUP. On Good Friday, April 10, 1998, Britain and Ireland's leaders announced the formation of a new devolved government for Northern Ireland, complete with a complicated but balanced power-sharing agreement. Critical features of the agreement included reform of the RUC to include Catholics and the granting of full and equal civil rights for all citizens. Northern Ireland's voters supported the agreement in a plebiscite, and Sinn Féin reluctantly signed off on it, as well.

IRA extremists predictably formed splinter groups, such as the Continuity IRA and the Real IRA. In August, the latter set off a car bomb in the Ulster town of Omagh. The result was twenty-nine civilian dead, one of the largest single-day body counts of the Troubles. The dead included a pregnant woman, Spanish schoolchildren on holiday, and Catholics as well as Protestants.[49] The Omagh tragedy crystallized support for a renewed commitment to peaceful negotiations, as denunciations of the attack flowed in from every direction. In a striking turn, Gerry Adams condemned the bombing in his most strident language to date, and followed in 2000 with a commitment to put the IRA's vast arsenal of weapons "beyond use." Sinn Féin's acceptance of the peace process was duly rewarded in 2001 when it surpassed for the first time the SDLP as the largest recipient of the Catholic vote in Northern Ireland. Talks broke down several times, but in 2005 the IRA renounced the use of violence and terror and committed itself to "exclusively peaceful means" in securing its goals.[50] One year later, it announced that all of its weapons had been decommissioned, a claim disputed by some. From May 2007 to June 2008, the newly empowered Northern Ireland Assembly government was headed by Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party and Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin – the most unlikely government partners in recent history.

The retirement and death of Paisley (2008 and 2014), the death of McGuinness (2017), and the retirement of Adams (2018) have allowed for the emergence of a new generation of politicians not connected to the hardline positions and bloodshed of the 1970s and 1980s. This passing of the torch has helped to cement a nearly universal conviction that violent conflict is over and will not return. The devolved Northern Ireland Assembly has survived its members' mutual mistrust and generally been capable of finding workable solutions to thorny problems, such as the granting of equal status to the Irish language. The narrow Brexit vote in 2016 to leave the European Union threatened to re-impose a hard border between Northern Ireland (leaving the EU as part of the UK) and the Republic of Ireland (still an EU stalwart) and thus undermine a myriad of agreements central to the Good Friday Accords. Indeed, unionist protests over Brexit protocols forced the Assembly to suspend meeting for almost two years, but it appears (as of early 2024) that the body is about to return to work. Such is the commitment to preserve peace.

The total number of casualties associated with the Troubles is hard to pin down. It has been estimated (for the years 1969–2001) that the IRA's principal factions killed more than 1,800 people. Other republican groups killed at least 200 more. Loyalist paramilitaries killed at least 1,000, while British troops and the RUC killed more than 350 people, nearly 200 of whom were civilians.[51]

An important question remains: was the violent campaign waged by the IRA – which is really to say the Provisional IRA – successful? The Provos were not defeated by the British state, nor were they successful in reuniting the island as an independent republic. Provo violence played a not insubstantial role in forcing the British to the negotiating table in the 1980s and 1990s, thus leading to more Northern autonomy and protections for the Catholic population, but it is quite clear that in the end the IRA and its political affiliate Sinn Féin found far more success through non-violence, diplomacy, and compromise.[52] What is rarely admitted, however, is that such a path did not open until nearly all the militant and political parties involved, as well as the Catholic and Protestant populations of Northern Ireland, had tired of the violence. Just as importantly, the threat of renewed violence repeatedly served as a spur to complete negotiations. What is beyond doubt is that, even decades after the end of the killing, Northern Ireland's emotional wounds remain.

Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers

While Palestine and Northern Ireland have been the epicenters of the two largest ethno-nationalist terror campaigns since the late 1960s, there have been several other notable ones. One of the most vicious and bloody was the struggle of ethnic Tamils to gain a homeland on Sri Lanka, a large island about 20 miles from the south-eastern tip of India, during a civil war that lasted more than twenty-five years and made extensive use of terrorism. The island's population is about 74 percent Sinhalese (most of whom are Buddhist), 18 percent Tamil (most of whom are Hindu and concentrated in the north and east of the island), with the rest mostly Muslim. The struggle, however, was largely over ethnic, not religious identity. There were, in fact, both Hindu and Christian Tamils who participated in terror missions. The roots of ethnic conflict lay in the divide-and-conquer tactics of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonists in Ceylon (as it was known until 1972). Tensions became much greater after Sri Lanka achieved independence from Britain in 1948 – one year after India did – and the Sinhalese majority began to limit the use of the Tamil language and the influence of Tamil culture, even in the north of the island. The Sinhalese majority refused some Tamils citizenship, systematically

disenfranchised others, imposed strict quotas on Tamil university attendance and membership in the civil service, and forcibly repatriated some of the Tamil population to India.

Tamil rebels waged a sporadic campaign of terror and assassination against the Sinhalese-dominated government starting shortly after independence, but to little effect. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), better known as the Tamil Tigers, became the primary vehicle for Tamil militancy and terrorism in the mid-1970s, gradually eclipsing other nationalist groups through violence and intimidation. The man who eventually rose to lead the Tamil Tigers, Velupillai Prabhakaran, distinguished himself early by assassinating the moderate Tamil nationalist mayor of Jaffna, the largest city in the Tamil-majority region of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Tigers are significant in the history of terrorism for three reasons: (1) they illustrate well the typological fluidity that exists among terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and conventional struggles; (2) they introduced new tactics, particularly suicide bombers and piracy; and (3) despite years of success, they were decisively defeated by the Sri Lankan government in 2009.

The Tamil Tigers: terrorism, guerrilla war, and conventional struggle

The Tamil Tigers' goal over more than three decades of existence was independence; the hoped-for means was a popularly supported mass movement fielding a conventional army. The early Tigers and their antecedents were Marxists; all that remained by the late 1970s, however, was a certain millenarianism and Mao's proposed revolutionary trajectory. The Tigers always represented the extremist fringe of the Tamil nationalist movement and as such found it difficult to generate uncoerced support from the Tamil minority. They carried out terrorism against moderate Tamils and their own people to raise money and demand obedience, as well as against the Sinhalese-dominated government and population in pursuit of a homeland. The Tigers used assassination and attacks on military and police outposts, as well as shootings and bombings of civilian targets, such as shopping centers; passenger planes, commuter trains, and buses; mosques and temples (including the Buddhist temple at Kandy, the country's most revered site); and village and city streets. One single car bomb attack in a market in the capital of Colombo in April 1987 killed 113 people and injured over 200; another in January 1996 destroyed the city's financial center, killed 86 people, and injured another 1,400. The total number of casualties of such attacks stretches well into the thousands, with the total number of deaths in the conflict numbering at least 70,000.[53]

What made the Tamil Tigers particularly able to grow into a potent and deadly force was sizable financial support from the large Tamil

population of south-eastern India and relatively well-off Tamil expatriate communities in Western Europe, North America, and Australasia. For a time in the 1980s, the Tamil Tigers were even the beneficiaries of intelligence and material aid from elements of the Indian secret services opposed to the Sri Lankan government. The Tamil Tigers also relied from time to time on bank robberies and other small-scale criminal enterprises to raise funds. In its last decade, the Tamil Tigers expanded into far more lucrative ventures, such as legitimate business, money laundering, extortion, arms and drug smuggling, and forcible taxation of Tamils.

International support and the narrowness of the straits separating Sri Lanka from the mainland made it possible until nearly the end of the conflict for the Tamil Tigers to carry out operations even when successful Sinhalese counterinsurgency efforts and waning support from Sri Lankan Tamils would otherwise have extinguished the movement. Under those circumstances, the Tamil Tigers retreated into near total dependency on terror tactics to keep their struggle alive.

When support grew, the Tamil Tigers' insurgency expanded to include more extensive guerrilla operations against the Sri Lankan armed forces, making particular use of child soldiers and female-only units. In 1988 and 1994–5, the Tamil Tigers were able to support small, uniformed conventional forces in the field, essentially creating a Tamil mini-state. Even while on the defensive in 1996, the Tigers engaged in relatively large-scale military operations with several thousand fighters.

A constant factor was the presence of a virulent form of nationalism that entirely replaced the early interest in Marxism. One source of inspiration was early twentieth-century Hindu nationalism in India. Wherever possible, the Tamil Tigers established schools in base camps in Sri Lanka and abroad designed to indoctrinate young Tamils with a heady mix of nationalism, Hindu mysticism, asceticism, and self-sacrifice. When recruitment failed, the group would simply kidnap children.

Another aspect of the Tamil Tigers' insurgency was the repeated involvement of India in the conflict. From 1987 to 1990, Indian peacekeeping troops sought to enforce a ceasefire, primarily to keep the Tigers' struggle from spreading to the mainland. Direct fighting eventually broke out between the Tigers and Indian troops, and the Sri Lankan government, also tired of the foreign presence, provided the Tigers with weapons to use against the Indian military.[54] Moreover, despite India's efforts, the Tamil Tigers managed to take the fight to the mainland, assassinating Rajiv Gandhi, India's prime minister, in 1991.

The Tamil Tigers and suicide terrorism

The most notable feature of the Tamil Tigers' campaign was their introduction of new means suited to the particular circumstances of their

insurgency. The most striking was the use of so-called suicide bombers – individual terrorists who carry and detonate bombs alongside their target. The tactic is alarmingly successful in penetrating anti-terror defenses and either inflicting large numbers of casualties or destroying precise targets. Suicide bombers can react to circumstances as they develop and can get much closer to their targets, having dispensed with the need to escape. Hezbollah was the first group in recent memory to employ the tactic, beginning with the 1983 attacks on US and French forces in Lebanon, events that made a strong impression on the Tamil Tiger leader, Prabhakaran. The Tigers began using the tactic in 1987, rapidly becoming, until recently, the most prolific agents of suicidal terror missions. The Tigers carried out more suicide attacks from 1987 to 2001 than all other groups using the tactic combined – as many as 200.[55] (In recent decades, Palestinian, Iraqi, and jihadist groups have become the most frequent sponsors of suicide bombings.) The Tamil Tigers, like others before and since, dispatched suicide bombers because the group was desperate to regain the initiative and was rich in but one resource: young, fanatically devoted fighters. Summing up, Prabhakaran stated in a 1998 speech: "In terms of manpower, firepower, and resources, the enemy was strong and the balance of military power was in his favor. Yet we had an extraordinary weapon which was not in the arsenal of the enemy. The courage and commitment of our fighters was our most powerful weapon in the battle."[56] So great became the Tamil Tigers' dependence on the tactic that it created two branches of the organization devoted specifically to suicide bombing: the Black Tigers for men, and the Birds of Freedom for women. The Tigers used suicide missions against their moderate nationalist rivals as well as against the government. From 1991 to 1994, the Tigers engaged in a particularly destructive campaign of violence, eliminating through the use of suicide bombers most of the leadership of one of Sri Lanka's principal parties, the United National Party, including its presidential candidate and more than fifty others.[57] Suicide bombing missions by Tamil Tigers were also an effective tactic for mitigating Sri Lankan military gains. In 1994, waterborne Black Tigers destroyed the second-largest vessel in the Sri Lankan Navy. Four years later, Black Tiger teams assassinated a Sri Lankan general and carried out bloody attacks on army and police columns.

Who would choose such a fate for themselves? The Tamil Tigers received a steady stream of volunteers, in large part through the group's policy of seizing and rearing children in such a virulently nationalistic environment. Garlanded photos of young martyrs decorated the walls of Tamil Tiger training camps and Tamil-controlled cities and were regularly featured in Tamil newspapers. Monuments to Black Tiger martyrs dot Tamil cities. Another inducement is that bombers were granted the privilege of eating their last meal with the group's charismatic leader, Prabhakaran. On the other hand, parents of young martyrs were sometimes rewarded materially or were intimidated into relinquishing control over their children. Even for those Tamil Tigers whose missions were not meant to end in their own deaths, the allure of martyrdom and the comfort of death exerted a strong hold. Tamil Tiger guerrillas and terrorists alike were required to carry vials bearing cyanide to be used in the event of imminent capture. "We are married to our cyanide," one claimed. "It makes us clear-headed and purposeful."[58] More than 600 Tamil Tigers committed suicide in this way.[59]

The end of the Tamil Tigers

In 2005, the Tamil Tigers held about a quarter of the country, but changes were taking place that quickly led to a total victory for the Sri Lankan government in May 2009 when government forces seized the Tamil Tigers' last holdouts and killed Prabhakaran as he tried to flee.

Much credit has been given for this victory to President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was elected in 2005. Rajapaksa brought a new willingness to press for a complete military victory over the Tamil Tigers, and he militarized the conflict in important ways: first, by refusing to negotiate with the Tigers, and, second, by transferring nearly all armed operations from the police or paramilitaries to the regular army. But many Tamil and foreign critics argue that Rajapaksa's final victory was largely made possible by the army's brutality. Some have alleged that the army used chemical weapons against Tiger units. Others have accused the government of widespread war crimes, including the use of disappearances and rape to terrorize the civilian population.

While the Sri Lankan government might well have committed war crimes that contributed to the state's triumph, there were several other factors that helped to lead to the dramatic victory. First, the Tamil Tigers never had much uncoerced support from the population, in part because of their own reliance on brutality and what would certainly qualify as war crimes. When it became clear that the Tigers were losing militarily, few civilians rallied to their cause. By 2009, most Tamils simply wanted freedom from both sides' violence.

Second, the Sri Lankan government had grown much better at providing carrots and not just sticks. Even if Rajapaksa took a hard line on compromise with the Tamil Tigers, he and his government dramatically moderated their stance toward the broader Tamil public's linguistic, cultural, and political demands. For instance, Tamil was certified as an official language of Sri Lanka, and many ethnic Tamils had already started to serve in the Sri Lankan government.

Third, the clamp-down by the United States and its allies on the international financing of terrorism after 9/11 made it much harder for the Tamil Tigers to raise funds via business ventures or from the Tamil

diaspora. Moreover, the US began to provide the Sri Lankan government with signals intelligence.

And, fourth, the Sri Lankan military adopted tactics successfully used by the British and Malayan armed forces in the 1950s. In particular, it maximized the use of intelligence about the location and nature of the enemy, avoided large engagements, and used small units that could move quickly and precisely. In other words, the Sri Lankan Army adopted many of the Tamil Tigers' guerrilla tactics.

As in Northern Ireland, the conflict in Sri Lanka and the attendant use of terrorism can be declared over. But given the far greater loss of human life and the unresolved accusations of war crimes and even genocide, Sri Lanka remains a deeply traumatized and fractured country.

ETA: Basque Nation and Liberty

One of the longest-running unresolved ethno-nationalist struggles is that of Basque Nation and Liberty (ETA, from its Basque name), which has fought for national independence, often aided by terrorism, for decades. The Basques inhabit the Pyrenees in northern Spain, and although they have not had an independent state for over a millennium, Basque language, culture, and identity have remained distinct. In the 1950s, Spain's fascist dictator and ultra-nationalist Francisco Franco forcibly tried to suppress Basque separatism and assimilate Basques into Spain. Basque nationalists organized opposition to Franco but made little headway. The most radical formed ETA in order to wage an armed struggle against Spain for independence, consciously emulating other Third World nations' fights against colonial powers. In 1965, ETA leaders adopted the "action-repression-action spiral theory," a strategy for the use of terrorism that built on the experience of other revolutionary ethno-nationalist groups, particularly the FLN in Algeria. The "spiral theory" acknowledged that, although there was no broad revolutionary movement, it could be created or, rather, coaxed out of latency. The strategy was, by now, a familiar one, although never articulated as clearly: terrorist or "commando" units would stage attacks against the Spanish government, police, and military, who, unable to narrowly target the terrorists, would brutally crack down on the population believed to be sheltering them, thus alienating the population, inflaming Basque separatism, and building a broad revolutionary movement that could compel Spain to cut the Basques free. This plan closely paralleled the ideas simultaneously developed by Carlos Marighella in Brazil (see chapter 11 for more on Marighella and the Latin American groups he inspired).

In 1968, ETA – as well as a host of splinter groups that typically carried out attacks under the ETA name – began to launch terrorist strikes in accordance with the "spiral theory." ETA agents kidnapped

and assassinated government and police officials, as well as prominent Basques who opposed independence or the use of violence. ETA also robbed banks and extorted businesses (charging what it called a "revolutionary tax") to fund their activities, which, besides terrorism, included a substantial propaganda effort. Although most Basques would consider themselves nationalists and have backed independence or at least autonomy throughout this period, relatively few have supported ETA. Probably the high-water mark of ETA's popularity among Basques came in 1970, when sixteen ETA defendants used a trial in the city of Burgos to publicize their cause. Six defendants were condemned to death, but the sentences were reduced in the wake of massive demonstrations that portrayed the Burgos defendants as martyrs.[60] The strategy of the "spiral theory" seemed to be paying off. Support for ETA grew, much of it coming from Spanish opposition groups, such as the socialists and communists, who understood ETA as primarily anti-authoritarian rather than pro-Basque, a reputation enhanced by ETA's assassination in 1973 of Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco's prime minister and heir apparent.

Ironically, ETA's short-term success precipitated a long-term decline, in that Carrero Blanco's death hastened the collapse of fascism in the wake of Franco's death in 1975. The return of constitutional democracy dramatically undermined ETA's level of support and prospects for victory by removing the enemy that had defined ETA's existence and garnered it public backing from across Spain. Many Basques, in fact, questioned the need for a revolution given the possibilities for free expression and autonomy within a democratic state. But ETA's terrorist campaign continued and even intensified. Intoxicated by violence and desperate to reclaim attention and momentum, ETA terrorists began to target civilians in Basque lands and across Spain in the late 1970s, the period of the worst bloodletting in ETA's four-decades-long campaign. ETA and its sympathizers long maintained that it sought to minimize casualties in favor of highly symbolic targets, all while generally avoiding the killing of innocents. When ETA bombs did, in fact, kill civilians, spokesmen tried to shift blame to the authorities by accusing them of ignoring phoned-in warnings, as in the bombing of the Hipercor supermarket in Barcelona in 1987 that killed twenty-one civilians, including several small children.[61] Nonetheless, the bottom line has been clear: ETA has killed more than 800 people since the 1960s, and well over one-third of the victims have been civilians.[62]

ETA has been strongly rooted in the working-class identity of most of its members for most of its existence. Since the late 1960s, in fact, ETA and several of its splinter groups have been avowedly Marxist in their ideology and goals, a choice linked to ETA's close identification with Third World liberation movements. In the 1980s the Spanish government began to take advantage of this, hoping to peel away moderate middle-class

Basques by granting cultural and linguistic equality and virtual political autonomy to the region.

ETA effectiveness was also diminished by improved police work and increasing French willingness to extradite ETA terrorists and activists hiding in the French Pyrenees. Despite the fact that it was gaining ground against ETA in the mid-1980s, the Spanish government became so concerned about ETA terrorism that security officials conducted a "dirty war," in which secret government hit squads – known as Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups or GAL – used kidnapping, torture, and assassination against ETA members and whatever innocent civilians accidentally fell into their clutches. In the program's four-year existence, GAL teams killed at least twenty-seven people, including at least nine who have never been connected to ETA. Stories and rumors about GAL extra-legal brutality did not bring about the realization of ETA's "spiral theory" – that is, the creation of a Basque popular separatist movement that forced Spain to grant Basque independence – but they did give ETA new life, adding substance to its claim of fighting against an authoritarian state. When asked why ETA retained enough support to keep operating through the lean years of the 1980s, one former ETA official answered simply: "the GAL's dirty war" kept ETA popular.[63] In light of GAL violence, many Spaniards openly questioned how far Spain had traveled toward the creation of a liberal democratic state since the death of Franco. In the eyes of many Spaniards, Basques, and international observers, though, the stain of GAL's "dirty war" was partially lifted in the 1990s by government trials and convictions of many GAL counterterrorists, including the interior minister, the director of State Security, and numerous regional officials. With the end of the GAL program and, with it, the belief in the possibility of the complete eradication of ETA violence, terrorism returned, but only to what might be called manageable levels. ETA still engaged in terrorism, but at a much reduced level. Still more than a nuisance, it certainly no longer represented a threat to the state or the social order.

Meanwhile, ETA was becoming less and less viable. Even as already marginal support for its maximal demand of outright Basque independence shrank, popular revulsion against its methods grew. In 1996, ETA kidnapped and nearly starved to death over a brutal year-long confinement a Spanish prison official, an act that led to widespread denunciation. And then in 1997 ETA kidnapped and murdered a local conservative Basque politician, Miguel Ángel Blanco. More than 100,000 Basques marched to protest his murder, as did several million people in the rest of Spain.[64] ETA partisans found themselves on the defensive, routinely harassed within the communities that they thought were "theirs." The terror attacks of 9/11 further undermined ETA's justification of terrorism against a democratic government and a pluralistic society.

With the granting of virtual autonomy to the Basques, particularly the right of self-policing, ETA's goals were achieved in all but name. Few

Basque separatists, therefore, were willing to continue a military/terrorist campaign for independence, and ETA was reduced to a small core of radical members largely pushed into exile abroad. In 2010, it announced a ceasefire, and a "permanent" cessation of armed activity the following year. By the end of the 2010s, ETA decommissioned its weapons and dissolved its organization. ETA violence is presumed over, although the threat of bloodshed from splinter groups that require relatively few resources beyond utter fanaticism remains.

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11

The Era of Leftist and International Terrorism

Leftist-inspired, revolutionary terrorism receded into the background between the 1920s and 1950s, overshadowed first by state and then ethnonationalist terror. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, leftist terrorism roared back into prominence, eventually provoking fears of a new left-wing international terrorist conspiracy.

The return of revolutionary terrorism

The recrudescence of revolutionary terrorism can be traced to the confluence of a number of factors in the 1960s. The first was the anger and the sense of possibility created by the rapidly broadening anti-colonial movement, which had already led to independence for many countries in Africa and Asia. The First World's frequently brutal efforts to oppose these movements, such as in Algeria and Vietnam, fit the Marxists' definition of imperialism, particularly in the ideological hothouse environment spawned by the Cold War. Mao and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev contributed to this by peddling Marxism as a strategy for anti-colonial wars of independence, even in largely non-industrialized societies. In those countries where a foreign occupier could not be identified as the enemy, Marxists directed their hatred toward the entrenched ruling elite, frequently portraying their local government – whether it be a First World democracy or a Third World dictatorship – as a stooge of the era's greatest military and economic power, the United States.

A new generation of theorists sought to make Marxism relevant to such circumstances, and they found an eager audience, particularly in the massive student populations created by the baby boom, economic growth, and expansion of post-secondary education in the decades after the Second World War. New global disparities in wealth, often coupled with the conservatism of older generations, helped to push young adults toward such highly ideological readings of contemporary developments.

These conditions helped to shape what was to be a central feature of the new revolutionary terrorist tradition: groups of affluent, educated students hoping to make revolutions on behalf of what they imagined to be the poor (and ignorant) masses.

Latin American revolutionary movements

The most influential figure in the budding new global revolutionary tradition was the Argentinian Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Together with Fidel Castro, he led a years-long insurrection that finally ousted the American-backed Batista regime in Cuba on New Year's Day, 1959. Shortly thereafter, Guevara wrote *Guerrilla Warfare*, a practical guide to making revolutions that leaned heavily on his Cuban experience. The centerpiece of the book was Guevara's claim that in Latin America rural guerrillas could serve as the "focus" of revolutionary sentiment, generating an uprising in lieu of broad political mobilization or a class-conscious mass movement. This was severely at odds with classical Marxist thinking, but many revolutionaries in Latin America (and Africa for that matter) seized on the formula, despite the fact that Guevara's next effort at making a revolution ended in failure and his own death in Bolivia.

Whereas Guevara barely mentioned terrorism, describing it as an urban adjunct to a largely rural process, later revolutionaries began to promote terrorism as the primary means of coming to power, further deepening the schism with orthodox Marxism. The first manifestations of revolutionary terrorism in Latin America in the 1960s occurred in Venezuela, where the Armed Forces of National Liberation carried out attacks on foreign businesses and assassinated police officers, and in Guatemala, where the Rebel Armed Forces kidnapped and assassinated Guatemalan and foreign officials, including the US ambassador, who was killed in 1968. Little came of either campaign, both of which petered out quickly.

Uruguay and the Tupamaros

A far more destructive and influential revolutionary movement emerged in Uruguay, illustrative in how it both tried to follow the Guevaran model and departed from it. The country – nestled between Brazil and Argentina on the South Atlantic coast – boasted an overwhelmingly urban population, a booming economy, and a surprisingly stable democratic government. By the late 1950s, however, the export-driven economy began to stall. Conditions rapidly deteriorated both for the poor, who fell through the welfare state's safety net in ever greater numbers, and for well-educated young adults, who could not be absorbed into the economy in sufficient numbers. Without long-standing democratic traditions, the state instinctively began to lean on the army, police, courts, and government-controlled media to suppress dissent. Raúl Sendic, a young law student from the capital of Montevideo, tried to organize Uruguay's sugar-cane workers, but the movement was suppressed by the army in league with large landowners. Sendic resolved to challenge the state through violence. Moreover, he decided to base the movement in Montevideo – home to half the country's population – where his small number of supporters could more readily attract the attention of impoverished workers. In 1962 or 1963, he formed the National Liberation Movement, better known as the Tupamaros in honor of the Incan leader Tupac Amaru II who had led a rebellion against the Spanish in the late eighteenth century. The quasi-Marxist Tupamaros set as their major goals the destruction of capitalism and what they regarded as a sham democracy, the massive redistribution of wealth, and the creation of a decentralized socialist state.

During their first five years, the Tupamaros gathered arms, secured funding, and tried to set up the rudiments of what they dubbed "dual power." They imagined this as a parallel pseudo-government that would satisfy the real needs of the people and undermine faith in Uruguay's official government. Toward this end, the Tupamaros robbed banks and warehouses and hijacked food delivery trucks, distributing the proceeds to the poor like modern-day Robin Hoods. The group itself remained small, confined mostly to young, well-educated, middle-class urbanites.[1]

Marighella and the urban guerrilla

Sendic and the Tupamaros had amassed enough guns, money, and popular support by 1968 to embrace a new strategy, one espoused by Carlos Marighella, a Brazilian legislator turned communist revolutionary who was killed in a shoot-out with police in 1969. Marighella wrote many short works on revolutionary war, but his best-known work is the *Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla* (published just a few months before his death). Marighella's body of writing remains one of the most influential – perhaps the most influential – in the modern history of terrorism, owing to his success in synthesizing a wide array of sources into a coherent and disturbing statement about the tactics, strategy, and ultimate purposes of violence.

Marighella believed that popular support eluded revolutionaries because of the state's success in convincing the masses that they lived in a just and benevolent society. His strategy was to overwhelm the government on all fronts with chaotic violence so that the state would "be obliged to transform the political situation into a military one."[2] The resultant brutal police and army crackdowns would reveal, he believed, that the state was, indeed, an oppressive, fascist entity in service to

international capital. The scales would drop from the eyes of the masses, and they would inexorably flock to a guerrilla army led by the revolutionary vanguard in numbers sufficient to overthrow the state.

Perhaps the most important element of Marighella's strategy was to proclaim that, since the goal of revolutionary violence is to provoke the state, the specific target, form, and casualty count of the violence is irrelevant, as long as the result is chaos. Appropriate targets for revolutionary terrorism could be found everywhere: "banks, industries, armories, military barracks, prisons, public offices, radio and television stations, North American firms, gas storage tanks, oil refineries, ships, airplanes, ports, airports, hospitals, health centers, blood banks, stores, garages, embassies, residences of high-ranking members of the regime such as ministers and generals, police stations, official organizations, etc."[3] His list of tactics is equally exhaustive: assaults, bank robberies, strikes and work stoppages, desertions, expropriation of weapons, liberation of prisoners, executions, kidnappings, and sabotage. And in his hands all of them amount to terrorism, since the express purpose was provocation through symbolic violence.

Since Marighella's campaign of revolutionary violence required virtually no coordination, just maximum mayhem, he stated that the ideal means of organizing urban guerrilla warfare was in isolated cells or "firing groups" of four or five members.[4] The National Liberation Front of Algeria had pioneered such a structure, with each cell connected to only one other through just the cell's leader. Such a decentralized structure ensured that if one revolutionary were captured, he or she had a limited amount of information about the rest of the organization.

In a single stroke, Marighella brought together almost every strand of innovation by theorists and practitioners in a century's history of terrorism. What remained was an easily grasped dictate: sow chaos and wait for the government to fall. In all fairness, Marighella's description of his strategy was somewhat more complex than that, but in effect its sophistication was undermined by its seductive simplicity. So widespread has his approach become that most who have adopted it over the last half-century are probably unable to name its author.

The Tupamaros and terrorism

This was not so in the case of Sendic and the Tupamaros of Uruguay, who eagerly devoured Marighella's pamphlets. The Tupamaros remained convinced that a small Guevaran vanguard could create the necessary political crisis, but believed it would be exploited not by a Cuban-style military insurrection, but by a popular revolution sparked by government oppression, and not in the countryside but rather in the city. Terrorism was indeed the alpha and omega of the Tupamaros' military plans, which

they began to put into effect in 1968. Their bank and food store robberies became grander in scale and much more likely to involve the shooting deaths of policemen and even innocent bystanders. The Tupamaros' efforts to humiliate the government also led them to steal the accounting books of the Financiera Monty, a loan company involved in bribery and illegal currency trading. The Tupamaros gave the books to a state prosecutor, leading to several convictions and the resignation of several politicians.[5] Tupamaro "firing groups" assassinated police officials and bombed government buildings. What made the Tupamaros most notorious was their practice of kidnapping government officials, foreign dignitaries (including the Brazilian consul and the British ambassador), and businessmen. The victims – fourteen between 1968 and 1972 – were held in Tupamaro hideouts dubbed "people's prisons" until the government released prisoners or someone paid exorbitant ransoms.[6] In its early stages, Tupamaro urban terrorism achieved its desired effect.

The group's well-chosen symbolic attacks, publicity stunts, and welfare operations attracted significant public support. According to one poll, 59 percent of Uruguayans agreed that the Tupamaros were motivated by "a sense of social justice," a fact that helped to swell the group's ranks to its high-water mark of about 2–4,000 members.[7] And, indeed, as the situation began to grow more desperate, the state resorted to the sort of tactics Marighella and Sendic had hoped for. The government granted police the use of emergency powers, suspended civil liberties, ramped up censorship, arrested supporters and labor leaders, and subjected terror suspects to lengthy extra-legal detentions and torture.

By 1971, the Tupamaros had grown overconfident, convinced that the public was on the verge of passing completely into their camp. As a result, they dramatically overplayed their hand, opting to join a left-wing coalition running in presidential and parliamentary elections late that year. The public, however, had wearied of the Tupamaros' violent antics. Two events seem to have disproportionately tipped public opinion. The first was the kidnapping and murder in August 1970 of Dan Mitrione, who worked for the US Agency for International Development but was alleged to be an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The second was the killing of several Uruguayan policemen in 1971.[8] Counter to Marighella's predictions, the violence had disgusted Uruguayans and convinced them that they were themselves the targets of terror. Civilians welcomed the government's crackdown on the Tupamaros, even the decision to transfer all anti-terror operations to the army. In the elections of 1971, Uruguayans decisively voted against the leftists and in favor of a hardline right-wing ticket, which turned more and more to the use of emergency powers to combat Tupamaro terror. Aided by more public cooperation and its own use of infiltration, massive searches, indiscriminate arrests, and torture, the army gained the upper hand in its fight with the Tupamaros. During 1972, it killed about two dozen Tupamaros in

gun battles and captured 1,000 suspects; it also detained about 4,000 non-Tupamaros.[9] The rebel group was effectively crushed, but the damage had been done to Uruguay's constitutional order. The military had grown accustomed to its newfound powers and disgusted at democratic corruption and inefficiency. In 1973, President Juan María Bordaberry dissolved Congress and ruled as a military-backed dictator until the army ousted him in 1976, exercising direct control over the state until 1985. Throughout this twelve-year period, there were widespread human rights abuses by the military.

The Tupamaros had hoped to unmask the Uruguayan government for the fascist, repressive entity they believed it to have always been. Instead, Sendic and his supporters simply encouraged – enabled, even – the rise of a far-right movement within the army and security apparatus. The Tupamaros hoped that terror and violence would lead to popular support. Instead, terrorism eventually alienated the populace. By the time the Tupamaros realized their error, it was too late for them and for democracy in Uruguay. The most common errors of those who follow Carlos Marighella's *Mini-Manual* – and that, we might say, is most of today's terrorists, whether they consciously realize it or not – are that they overestimate the revolutionary potential of the masses and underestimate the repressive power of the state. Moreover, even under the most favorable circumstances, the strategy requires a finely calibrated quantity and quality of violence that inflames, but does not repel, the public. As has so often been the case – most notably in the Russian Empire, Cyprus, and, more recently, Palestine, Iraq, and Pakistan – terrorists are much more likely to destabilize a country than to achieve anything resembling their goals. Terrorism is thus a tactic easily adopted – particularly in desperate times by those who preach action – but difficult to convert into victory.

Similar storylines played out in much of Latin America. In Argentina, for instance, two groups – the People's Revolutionary Army and the Montoneros – carried out urban guerrilla warfare that claimed, according to the government, 700 victims. This helped to create a backlash that included military coups and the emergence of the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance, a state-supported right-wing death squad eventually responsible for the murder of 2,000 people. All told, the Triple-A and the state killed or "disappeared" perhaps as many as 22,000 people through the early 1980s – and possibly even more.[10] As in Uruguay, the Argentine military's 1976 takeover was justified by the need to combat terrorism, even though the Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army had already been suppressed. The military junta's leader, General Jorge Videla, demonstrated that the political uses of antiterrorism were far more important than definitional rigor when he described a terrorist as "not just someone with a gun or a bomb, but also someone who spreads ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization."[11]

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and narco-terrorism

Not all Latin American revolutionary groups have adopted the urban guerrilla strategy. In fact, the region's longest-tenured such group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), has remained somewhat truer to the Cuban pattern. Established in 1964 as the armed wing of the Colombian Communist Party, FARC has from the beginning drawn most of its support and recruits from the countryside. For decades, FARC remained mired in the second phase of Maoist or Guevarist revolution. It built a powerful uniformed guerrilla force of as many as 20,000 members that it used to carve out sizable "liberated zones" but was unable to seize the cities or force the government to its knees.[12]

Like the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, FARC readily slid along the typological range of violent behavior, engaging in terrorism, guerrilla fighting, and conventional warfare as its abilities and opportunities warranted. FARC's terrorist activities included assassinations, hijackings, and bombings and other attacks on military and civilian targets. Like the Tupamaros, FARC made liberal use of kidnapping. It seized politicians (including cabinet ministers, members of congress, and presidential candidates), security personnel, wealthy landowners, foreign and domestic businesspeople, and tourists. According to one count, FARC kidnapped almost 7,000 people from 1997 to 2007, while another leftist revolutionary group, the National Liberation Army, kidnapped over 5,000.[13] What probably began as a means of propaganda developed into an important financial prop, with FARC (and its rivals) raising millions of dollars through ransoms. Beginning in the 1980s, FARC became involved in drug trafficking, particularly by providing security for cocaine growers and transporters. FARC also raised funds through extortion, protection rackets, and levying "taxes" and other fees in their liberated zones. While the group claimed it remained a revolutionary organization, the truth is that it had edged closer to a criminal enterprise or, within the territories it controlled, a quasi-government. Many recruits joined because FARC was essentially the only employment opportunity in impoverished rural regions of Colombia.

As FARC's insurrection lurched toward its sixth decade, both sides finally began to recognize that military efforts could not lead to a favorable outcome. After several years of negotiations brokered by Chile, Cuba, Norway, and Venezuela, FARC and the Colombian government came to a comprehensive agreement that satisfied several rebel demands, such as land reform, rural investments, and amnesty for insurgents. In return, FARC agreed to disarm, abandon the drug trade, and transition to a law-abiding political party. As of 2022, the peace between FARC and the government has generally held, although splinter groups and other

revolutionary organizations have continued to shield narcotics traffickers and engage in violence, albeit at a much lower level.

The Shining Path

Without a doubt, Latin America's most violent and disruptive terrorist organization has been Peru's Sendero Luminoso – the Shining Path. The group was largely the creation of Abimael Guzmán (b. 1934), a one-time philosophy professor at a provincial university in the central Andes and a member of the Maoist faction of the Peruvian Communist Party. In 1970, the charismatic Guzmán established his own offshoot, the Shining Path, the goal of which was the establishment of an agrarian communist state essentially pre-colonial in character. Guzmán established a cult-like following among students and fellow professors and used his university's education program to send recruits into the surrounding highlands, where they established "people's schools" to indoctrinate peasants. Although Guzmán and his core of supporters were Westernized, middle-class intellectuals, the program of the Shining Path, particularly its emphasis on Incan mythology and anti-white rhetoric, was designed to appeal to Peru's impoverished and underserved indigenous population.

Guzmán took advantage of the state's relative absence in the Andean highlands and built a well-disciplined and highly centralized organization during the 1970s. After ten years of preparation, the Shining Path began its "People's War" in 1980 – ironically at nearly the very moment that Peru was returning to civilian rule after a twelve-year military junta. When the government responded with a series of emergency-power declarations, the Shining Path dispersed throughout the Andes and began a classic terrorist campaign. Although the state could rightly claim that it had achieved military victory against the Shining Path by the mid-1980s, the organization's leadership core remained intact. The Shining Path's cynical alliance with Peruvian drug lords also meant that the group was awash in money – reportedly up to $100 million a year.[14] These funds were used to bribe officials, purchase weapons, and fund social services for otherwise poorly served indigenous communities in Peru's highlands. The government's worsening human rights record – fed by the transfer of more and more power to military authorities answerable to no one – also drove many into the arms of the Shining Path. The net result was that Guzmán could attract recruits faster than the military could capture or kill them.

Shining Path violence took many forms, with the scale of its assassination campaign particularly awe-inspiring. The group targeted rival socialist, labor, and grass-roots organizations, but saved its greatest wrath for the political establishment. By 1988, the Shining Path had assassinated more than 250 public officials and then ramped up the pace, killing over

160 officials in 1989 alone.[15] The group also carried out an extensive bombing campaign, hitting approximately 3,700 targets from 1980 to 1988.[16] A favorite target was Peru's electricity infrastructure, so much so that power outages in the capital city of Lima were common. During these outages, the Shining Path would burn an enormous hammer and sickle in the hills above the city to remind Lima's residents of the fate that was in store for them. Shining Path bombings and other attacks also caused plenty of human casualties. All told, an estimated 30,000 people died between 1980 and 2000 as a result of the Shining Path's violence, according to the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Committee.[17]

Peruvian counterterrorism and counterinsurgency

In response, Peru's army and security organs engaged in a vicious campaign of "disappearances" and extra-judicial killings, frequently attacking villages that they suspected harbored the Shining Path. According to one army commander, "In order for the security forces to be successful, they will have to begin to kill Senderistas [members of the Shining Path] and non-Senderistas alike. They will kill 60 people and at best three will be Senderistas, but they will say that all 60 were Senderistas."[18] The broad population found itself caught between Shining Path terror and governmental counterterror, with approximately 20,000 Peruvian civilians killed by the state.[19]

In 1992, the authorities captured Guzmán in one of his safe houses in Lima, using surveillance and old-fashioned police methods. Along with the terrorist mastermind, the police were able to seize a computer and other records that laid bare the group's organization. By the fall of 1994, the state had 7,000 Senderistas in custody.[20] This was finally a pace that Shining Path recruitment could not match. Moreover, the group had been so focused on Gúzman's cult of personality that cutting off the head nearly killed the whole beast. Guzmán was eventually convicted of a number of crimes related to terrorism; he died in prison in 2021 at the age of eighty-six. In his absence, a few leaders have tried to carry on, occasionally resuming terrorist operations, but at a fraction of the scale achieved in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The United States, the New Left, and Weatherman

In the United States, student movements and social unrest led to violence, as well, but the radical groups had far less direct impact, while the popular and state-sponsored reactions – while still significant – were decidedly less violent and less anti-democratic. But questions remain: Why did radical organizations turn to violence at all in a democratic,

wealthy, and highly educated society? Moreover, why were the privileged children of middle- and upper-class families in the forefront of this violence? And why did the US government react as if the violence was far more of a threat than it actually was?

This was an era of transitions, and its cultural, social, and political ferment crystallized in what came to be known as the New Left. This movement distinguished itself from traditional leftism by concentrating not on labor and economics, but rather on issues of personal freedom and justice, such as civil rights and women's rights. Baby boomers were swelling colleges and universities to the bursting point (the US student population quadrupled from 1946 to 1970), and students were at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement, the sexual revolution, and the burgeoning countercultural world of drugs, music, and alternative lifestyles.[21] But campuses were electrified by one issue in particular: anger over a supposedly imperialistic war in Vietnam and the highly unpopular draft it necessitated.

The nexus of the New Left, student unrest, the counterculture, and opposition to the Vietnam War was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Formed in 1960, the organization's goal was nothing less than the transformation of American politics and culture, largely through control of the Democratic Party. At its height, the group had 100,000 members and was a force to be reckoned with. But by the end of the decade, tensions over the group's identity and mission were at a breaking point.

Marxist analysis had played an important role for those on the radical edge of the New Left from the beginning, for it made sense of the confluence of military, political, and economic behaviors they saw in the United States and abroad. By the late 1960s, SDS's most radical Marxists had turned for inspiration to Third World leaders such as Guevara and Marighella, as well as Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam. These radicals formed a faction within SDS known as Weatherman, a name lifted from Bob Dylan's song "Subterranean Homesick Blues." Weatherman believed that the path to revolution lay not in the development of a mass movement via America's factories and universities, but rather through a guerrilla alliance of white ultra-radicals, Black Power activists, and Third World rebels. In order to destroy what they perceived as a police state, Weatherman advocated "bringing the war in Vietnam home to Amerikkka," their derisive term for the United States, meant to suggest its underlying racist character. In June 1969, the group – composed of perhaps 5–600 members – hijacked SDS, expelling the more traditional socialists and progressives through procedural moves and posturing that would have impressed even Lenin.[22]

In hindsight, Weatherman's quick slide toward violence and notoriety is rather easily explained. As its radicals became more removed from the New Left mainstream and popular support, they turned toward ever more radical solutions. Weatherman's first attempt at violent agitation

was the so-called "Days of Rage" in October 1969, when street-fighting radicals set fire to cars, smashed store fronts, and baited the police in downtown Chicago. "You hate the pigs so much you want to kill them," one rioting student later said of the police. "We may lose militarily, but by smashing pigs we will win in the eyes of the workers."[23] The Days of Rage repulsed most Americans, who noted the absurdity of privileged middle-class students engaging in revolutionary violence against working-class police.

The Weather Underground

Shortly thereafter, Weatherman launched a campaign of terrorism, or, in their words, "strategic armed chaos." Their goal was to foment "mass public action" against capitalism and bourgeois democracy.[24] In this, they were consciously following Marighella and modeling themselves after the Tupamaros. In theory, the American rebels organized themselves into small, decentralized cells in imitation of the Uruguayan group. But this was entirely beside the point; with only about a dozen members committed to actually carrying out violence, Weatherman was numerically incapable of forming more than a few firing teams. Befitting their status as middle-class amateur militants, the group's terror campaign began disastrously. In March 1970, three members of the group died in a Greenwich Village townhouse when a bomb they were constructing went off. Later that year, operatives bombed New York City's police headquarters, the National Guard headquarters in Washington, DC, the Presidio army base in San Francisco, and a facility doing army research at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The sole fatality was a UW graduate student.[25]

At the end of 1970, the group changed its name to Weather Underground, its former appellation rejected as sexist. Over the next seven years, the Weather Underground set off a number of bombs, most notably in the Senate wing of the US Capitol and the Air Force wing of the Pentagon. Showing off their supposed connections to the international revolutionary movement, the Weather Underground staged attacks to celebrate the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and in response to the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende, and Gulf Oil's operations in Angola. With few exceptions, Weather Underground bombs caused no casualties but extensive property damage. Destroyed by feuding and defections, the group essentially shut down in 1977, although some members gravitated to other organizations. The era's last major armed action – carried out by former activists of the Weather Underground and two Black revolutionary groups – was the 1981 robbery of a Brink's armored car in which one guard and two police officers were killed.[26]

The Weather Underground utterly failed in its mission to radicalize the American public and precipitate a revolution. The group was nonetheless seen as a serious threat to national security by the US government. The FBI suspected that Weatherman was actually – not just rhetorically – in league with foreign communists, and mounted a major investigation of the group through the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO), a long-standing government campaign to surveil and disrupt dissident organizations both legal and illegal. The FBI began this effort even before Weatherman transformed into a terrorist outfit and began to carry out bombings. This led to a number of arrests, most of which eventually came to naught since most incriminating evidence had been gathered through illegal means. For this reason, some of the Weather Underground's most prominent members – such as the husband and wife team of Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn – never served jail time. In a 2001 interview, a defiant, unrepentant Ayers claimed, "We weren't terrorists. The reason we weren't terrorists is because we did not commit random acts of terror against people. Terrorism was what was being practiced in the countryside of Vietnam by the United States."[27]

The Symbionese Liberation Army

Another American urban guerrilla outfit, the Symbionese Liberation Army, proved that very small groups – the SLA never had more than about fifteen members – could attract disproportionately influential attention. The group's bizarre outlook was rooted in communalism (the group's name is derived from the word "symbiosis"), anti-capitalism, and devotion to the international revolutionary movement. Active from 1973 to 1975, the SLA is best known for its kidnapping of the newspaper heiress Patty Hearst, who later took part in a bank robbery meant to sow chaos and fund future operations. Hearst's mother later claimed that her daughter had been "brainwashed." Hearst was nonetheless found guilty, although she was released early and later pardoned fully. Most of the members of the SLA, including its cultish leader Donald DeFreeze, were killed when their hideout burned down during a shoot-out with police. The remaining members – fleshed out with a handful of new recruits – later planted bombs under Los Angeles police cars and committed another bank robbery in which a customer was killed.[28]

For the middle-class activists and students (usually former students, since revolutionary activities made it difficult to keep up with one's studies) who made up the Weather Underground, the Symbionese Liberation Army, and similar groups, the revolutionary lifestyle was probably more important than participation in revolutionary violence. Members embraced all the trappings of the age's counterculture, rejecting private property, living in communes, swapping sexual partners, and

engaging in heavy drug use. Their affluent, educated profiles made their criminal, sometimes even sadistic, behavior all the more inexplicable. For example, the Weather Underground's Bernardine Dohrn famously enthused over the Manson Family's grisly murders.[29]

Their ultra-radical stances and their disavowal of bread-and-butter issues associated with progressivism and socialism made it nearly impossible for them to appeal to anything but the tiniest sliver of the population. As their critics on the left repeatedly noted, however, their violence and outlandish behavior roused moderates and conservatives – what Richard Nixon called the "silent majority" – against the New Left and leftist causes in general. Dedicated to the destruction of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, the only thing that American urban guerrillas destroyed was the SDS. Instead of provoking a popular uprising, the Weather Underground and the SLA created widespread support for COINTELPRO's mild police repression and Nixon's presidential shenanigans.

These groups highlight one of the most noteworthy trends in terrorism since the 1960s: the dramatic increase in the amount of terrorism directed against liberal democratic states. This is true for both left-wing revolutionary groups (including the Tupamaros, to the extent that Uruguay had a democratic government) and ethno-nationalist groups (for instance, the IRA, ETA in post-Franco Spain, and Canada's separatist Québec Liberation Front). Two principal factors help to explain this development. First, in liberal democratic societies, constitutionally protected civil liberties – such as judicial due process and freedom of the press and assembly – afford terrorist groups greater cover under which to organize and launch plots. Conversely, authoritarian states and their relatively unrestrained security organs tend to fare better at unearthing and dispatching subversive groups. Second, liberal democratic societies and their freer and more developed media networks provide terrorist groups the means to publicize their grievances through trials, manifestos, and violence. In authoritarian states, government-run media can deprive opposition groups, including those that resort to terrorism, of most of their access to the public. Under such circumstances, subversive groups usually are geared toward less symbolic forms of violence, such as guerrilla warfare. One notable exception was a campaign of violence by anti-Castro terrorists against Cuba and friendly Caribbean countries, highlighted by the October 1976 mid-flight bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed seventy-three passengers and crew members.[30]

The left in Europe

The dilemmas that democratic societies face in dealing with left-wing revolutionary terror were on even greater display in Europe than in the

United States. Europe was home to dozens of such groups from the late 1960s through the 1980s, nearly all of which engaged in some combination of Guevaran rebellion and Marighella-style "urban guerrilla" warfare and modeled themselves after the Tupamaros. In France, Action Directe carried out dozens of attacks on government buildings, prominent businesses, and military-industrial infrastructure. In Britain, the so-called Angry Brigade planted bombs and robbed banks. Both hoped to create through their actions revolutionary crises that would disable bourgeois society and lead to popular uprisings. When the public responded negatively, if at all, Action Directe and the Angry Brigade descended into criminality, violence for the sake of violence, and eventual oblivion. The two most violent groups – West Germany's Red Army Faction and Italy's Red Brigades – were more successful on many counts. Although neither triggered the revolution they hoped for, both achieved a disquieting amount of public sympathy and brought their respective countries to the brink of political crises.

Europe experienced the same general circumstances that gave birth to leftist revolutionary movements in the United States. An additional factor was the significant opposition to what was perceived as their own governments' and business community's support of American imperialism. In West Germany and Italy, there was also particular anger at the older generation and its complicity in Nazism and fascism, world war, and genocide. Although liberal democracy had been firmly established in both countries, former Nazis and fascists were still prominent in government, business, and public life, a factor which helped to explain why neither country had satisfactorily come to grips with its recent, horrid past.

The Baader–Meinhof Gang / Red Army Faction

The founders of Germany's most notorious terror group of the 1970s shared several characteristics: a middle-class upbringing, an eagerness to reject conventional society in favor of counterculture beliefs, and a deep-seated hunger for radical social justice. The bad-boy and petty criminal Andreas Baader, his lover Gudrun Ensslin, and the radical journalist Ulrike Meinhof met through Frankfurt's and West Berlin's radical student circles and got their start in 1968's myriad street fights with police. During one stand-off with the police, Meinhof issued a statement that announced, "This fascist state means to kill us all! We must organize resistance. Violence is the only way to answer violence. This is the Auschwitz Generation, and there's no arguing with them!"[31]

The group began by setting off small bombs in department stores as protests against bourgeois decadence. But it soon graduated to dreams of an urban guerrilla campaign intended to tear the mask off what it saw as a hopelessly fascist West Germany. But these were pampered young

men and women with no direct experience of guns, bombs, and violence. To prepare themselves, Baader and his followers went to Jordan in the summer of 1970 in order to train in a PLO-operated camp. The state of unreality surrounding the group was well illustrated by one run-in they had with their hosts. When horrified members of the PLO protested that the German women were sunbathing in the nude, Baader lectured them: "The anti-imperialist struggle and sexual emancipation go hand in hand. Fucking and shooting are the same thing!"[32] Shortly after returning to Germany, Baader and his small band began to rob banks to raise funds for their war against the socio-economic Establishment, soon gaining fame as the Baader–Meinhof Gang. Baader's penchant for carrying out their revolutionary expropriations in high style made the group media darlings among West Germany's left-wing intellectuals and students. Their frequent use of stolen luxury vehicles as their getaway cars led to the popular joke that BMW stood for Baader–Meinhof Wagon.

Shoot-outs with the police produced deaths on both sides and allowed the Baader–Meinhof Gang to present themselves absurdly as the victims of a fascist state. While this was quite a stretch for most West Germans, a poll revealed that 20 percent of the population had "a certain sympathy" for the group.[33] The group, rechristened the Red Army Faction (RAF) in a nod to the Marxist Japanese Red Army, began to carry out bombings in the spring of 1972 targeting the United States' military presence in West Germany. Four US soldiers died and dozens were wounded.[34] Within months, Baader, Ensslin, Meinhof, and other ringleaders, including Jan-Carl Raspe, were arrested and soon held in a special facility constructed for them at Stammheim prison. It seemed the RAF was finished.

The German Autumn of 1977

In fact, the climax had not come yet. The RAF's imprisoned members began a hunger strike – from which one died – that garnered more public sympathy, as did the suspicious prison suicide of Meinhof. In the meantime, the RAF was almost completely reconstituted with new leaders and members who went into action during Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe's long-delayed trial for murder in 1977. RAF terrorists killed a federal prosecutor and the head of Dresdner Bank and staged a barely foiled rocket attack on a government building. The violence and drama crested in what became known as "the German Autumn" of 1977, when the RAF's second generation kidnapped Hanns-Martin Schleyer and demanded the release of Stammheim's RAF prisoners. Schleyer, a former Nazi and SS officer, was a member of the board of directors of Daimler-Benz and head of an influential industrialists' association. With the public panicking about RAF terror and the government refusing to negotiate with Schleyer's captors, sympathetic PLO hijackers seized a Lufthansa airliner and demanded the release

Figure 11.1 Funeral of Ulrike Meinhof, May 1976 (© Keystone/Getty Images)

of the RAF prisoners in return for the plane's passengers. Eventually, the hijackers murdered the pilot and took the plane to Mogadishu, Somalia, where it was stormed by the West German antiterrorist group GSG 9 (which had been formed in the wake of the Munich massacre). When it became clear that they were not going to be sprung from jail, Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe committed suicide in their prison cells, staging their deaths to appear as if they were murdered by their jailers. Many on the left believed it. With the death of the RAF's imprisoned leaders, Schleyer was killed and left in the trunk of a car in Alsace.[35]

The German Autumn of 1977 failed to produce a revolutionary upheaval or government collapse but did trigger considerable debate about the country's Nazi past. Artists, writers, and filmmakers had already begun to respond to the duel between the RAF and West Germany's security organs with a host of creative efforts that warned about the return of authoritarianism. In his 1974 novel *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, for instance, one of post-war Germany's most popular authors, Heinrich Böll, described how one woman's life is destroyed by the media and the police after a one-night stand with a man who later turns out to be a terrorist. The most compelling depiction of Germany's troubled 1970s was the multi-director semi-documentary *Germany in Autumn* (1978). The film portrays a deeply divided population, opening with older, conservative

West Germans attending the funeral of Schleyer and ending with younger West Germans mourning at the graves of Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe.

Within a year of Schleyer's murder, most of the RAF's second generation of terrorists were arrested. But the RAF restocked its ranks again. This was a pattern that would repeat itself into the 1990s, with the RAF destroyed and reconstituted several times. By this point, the group bore little similarity to its original version, except for its thirst for chaos and vengeance. Although it was never able to equal the group's earlier political impact, the RAF continued its campaign of politically motivated killing. Most notable was an attack and a bombing at a US air base in Frankfurt in 1985 that killed two soldiers and a civilian.[36] The Red Army Faction was also accused of the murders of the heads of Deutsche Bank, Siemens, and the engineering firm MTU. The RAF finally announced its disbandment in a 1998 communiqué, leaving behind a legacy of mayhem, brutality, and hopelessly misguided idealism.

Italy – left vs. right

Italian terrorism of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s was a more complicated and violent affair than elsewhere in Europe, involving tremendous bloodshed from hundreds of left- and right-wing groups. According to one calculation, there were over 14,500 politically motivated attacks from 1969 to 1994 producing over 1,800 casualties.[37] Unlike West Germany in the 1970s, where terrorists entertained fanciful dreams of creating a revolutionary crisis, Italy during this period was arguably close to one already. By the late 1960s, people across the political spectrum were growing increasingly disenchanted with Italian liberal democracy and its notorious penchant for corruption and unstable coalition governments. The Socialist and Communist Parties attracted considerable support, encouraging, in turn, the emergence of a plethora of neo-fascist groups. In scenes reminiscent of Italy and Germany in the 1920s, far-left and far-right gangs waged fierce street battles to establish their bona fides, attract support, and prepare for the final confrontation.

Neo-fascist street violence was augmented by methodically planned terrorist attacks carried out by groups such as New Order and National Avant-Garde. The worst of the atrocities took place on December 12, 1969, when neo-fascists set off a bomb in Milan's Piazza Fontana. Unlike some other attacks, which were primarily meant to intimidate and propagandize, this was also meant to kill. And kill it did: the bomb left seventeen dead and eighty-eight wounded. Those on the left grew convinced that the state – particularly its military and security organs – was in league with neo-fascists in carrying out what came to be called a "strategy of tension": a campaign of violence and terror that could be conveniently blamed on communists, socialists, and anarchists in order to discredit

the left, justify more repressive measures, and ultimately pave the way for a military coup. While the evidence for the existence of such a conspiratorial strategy is fragmentary, the government's behavior did lend it credence. In the case of the Piazza Fontana bombing, the state arrested two anarchists, one of whom was finally acquitted only in 1987.[38]

The Red Brigades

This sense of siege contributed to the decision by some on the far left in 1969 to form a Marxist–Leninist group, the Red Brigades, dedicated to the use of revolutionary violence. The social composition of the Red Brigades differed somewhat from contemporary leftist revolutionary groups in other countries in that it drew not only from Italy's radical student population, but also from the Communist-Party-affiliated working class. The Red Brigades' plans for using terror were also a bit different. While definitely influenced by Marighella and the Tupamaros, the Red Brigades imagined a much more protracted conflict in which they would gradually render the cities ungovernable, thus creating the ideal circumstances for the development of a politically conscious and armed proletariat aware of its world historical role. To carry this out, the Red Brigades were organized territorially, with each city's operatives functioning as a largely independent cell or "column" that could choose its own structure. Two central bodies coordinated actions but kept the columns compartmentalized and difficult to penetrate.[39]

Throughout the first half of the 1970s, the Red Brigades hardly registered on the authorities' radar, given the scale of neo-fascist violence and the manic, undisciplined terrorist attacks of a myriad of left-wing groups. Meanwhile, the Red Brigades organized and gathered arms, funds, and recruits. When they carried out operations, they were generally kidnappings in which the victim was held for a short while and then released unharmed. In 1978, however, the Red Brigades began the campaign of violence that was to make them the most notorious terrorist group on the continent. First came the February assassination of a judge, followed shortly after by the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro. Moro was a five-time Italian prime minister and the leader of the Christian Democratic Party. Recently, he had effected a reconciliation between the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party that was about to make him prime minister again, this time at the head of a center–left coalition. The Red Brigades targeted Moro not only as Italy's best-known politician, but also as a warning to the Communists, whom the Red Brigades now regarded as traitors to the true revolution. Through 1980, the Red Brigades carried out dozens of assassinations of policemen, federal and regional government and police officials, judges, and business executives. In 1981, a Red Brigade cell kidnapped US General James Dozier, who was serving with

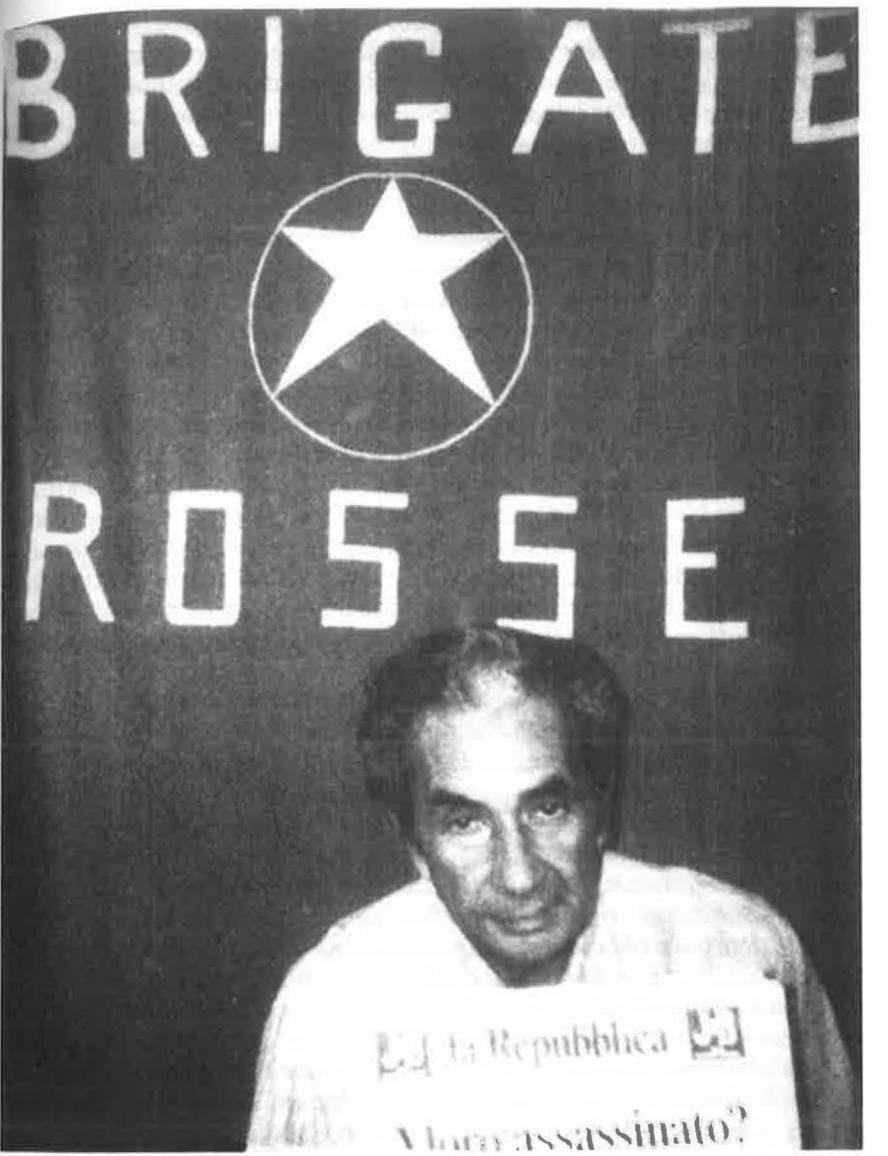

Figure 11.2 Aldo Moro in captivity, 1978 (© Getty Images)

NATO. After being held for a month, during which the Red Brigades tried to use him as ransom for the release of comrades in prison, a newly formed and specially trained antiterrorism unit sprang him from captivity.

All the while, other far-left and neo-fascist groups continued to carry out their own terrorist outrages, killing almost eighty people in the year

1978–9 alone.[40] Ominously, organizations on the far right began to adopt the left's strategy of decentralized, long-term armed struggle. The most notorious such group was the Armed Revolutionary Nuclei, which carried out attacks on leftist politicians, labor leaders, and magistrates and governmental officials involved in the hunt for neo-fascist terrorists. Much of the Nuclei's violence, however, was simply meant to disrupt daily life and undermine the normal functioning of state and society. Such was the only explanation possible for the era's worst terrorist attack, which the Nuclei carried out in August 1980. A bomb in the waiting room in Bologna's main train station killed 85 people and wounded over 200. The conviction of two members of the Nuclei was eight years in coming, plus another seven for appeals, a delay partially caused by sophisticated efforts by members of Italy's security apparatus to manufacture evidence that pointed to the involvement of foreign terrorists. Such malfeasance lent credence to the left's belief in a neo-fascist "strategy of tension."[41]

Red Brigade terror dramatically declined after 1981. Improved efforts by center and left politicians to address some working-class concerns as well as general fatigue with the terror campaign led to a drop in passive support for the Red Brigades. A Red Brigade tactical error played no small role as well: in 1979, terrorists killed a member of the Communist Party who had informed the police about Red Brigade operations, thus further cutting into popular working-class support.

In the case of the Red Brigades as well as the Red Army Faction, the Weather Underground, and the Tupamaros, revolutionary terrorism emerged in democratic states under peculiar and specific circumstances. In each of these cases, the broader society was experiencing tremendous upheavals that produced radical groups with maximalist programs of social and cultural transformation. When these groups recognized that they enjoyed too little popular support to achieve their goals peacefully through democratic processes, they turned to violence. But since these groups were born of broader, radical movements, they became convinced that the revolutionary crisis was only a few bomb blasts away. In none of these cases did terrorism create the hoped-for revolution. This is not to say, however, that terrorism had no effect. In Uruguay, it contributed to the rise of a right-wing dictatorship, while in West Germany it touched off extensive soul-searching about contemporary society's links to its Nazi past. In the United States, Italy, France, and Great Britain, left-wing terrorism helped to discredit broader and more moderate leftist movements.

The rise of international terrorism

Concurrent with the rise of leftist revolutionary terrorism was the advent and expansion of the phenomenon known as international terrorism. This referred to the behavior of those terrorist organizations that acted

well beyond the borders of their own countries when establishing bases and safe havens, raising money, and carrying out attacks. Sometimes this meant staging strikes against citizens of countries uninvolved with the terrorists' struggles. The most prominent practitioners of this sort of terrorist violence, as we saw in the previous chapter, were members of the PLO, particularly George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which was particularly fond of hijacking airliners to attract attention to the Palestinian cause. Later, Black September carried out the Munich Olympics massacre, using a stage far from Palestine to attack Israeli interests. Indeed, international terrorism seemed to dominate headlines around the world from the late 1960s well into the 1980s. In the Western world, there was a widespread sense that this had become an intrinsic part of terrorism. This was reflected in the rise of Hollywood films that depicted the arrival of terrorism on American shores. The first was 1977's *Black Sunday*, about a Palestinian plot to crash the Goodyear blimp into the Super Bowl as punishment for American support of Israel.

What made this brand of violence so frightening was the dawning sense that everyone everywhere had become a potential target. By the mid-1970s, organizations concerned with security began to count incidences of international terrorism. The criteria for counting such acts, however, have always been open to broad interpretation, thus producing wildly different results. For instance, where the CIA counted 2,698 international terrorist attacks for the period 1968 to 1977, the more cautious RAND Corporation reported barely 1,000 (the majority of which, it emphasized, produced no casualties).[42] Whatever the figures – all of them seemed large to governments and societies alike – there was the implication that international terrorism was monolithic and thus the expression of a worldwide conspiracy.

The security organs of the United States and the rest of the Western world unconsciously began to conflate the overlapping yet distinct phenomena of revolutionary and international terrorism. In practice, this meant a tendency to overlook what truly motivated the organizations that turned to terrorism. There were, of course, such revolutionary groups as the Tupamaros, the Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and the Red Brigades who were Marxists and thus internationalists by definition. These groups did indeed speak frequently of revolutionary alliances, but the truth was that they usually reflected general sympathies rather than hard-and-fast links in practice. Complicating matters was the fact that some of the most influential and active terrorist groups of the era – such as Habash's Popular Front – sometimes draped their fundamentally ethno-nationalist concerns in the language of socialism or Marxism. But, no matter how much Habash expressed his solidarity with the Red Army Faction, his only real goal was a Palestinian homeland. Many political leaders and security experts failed to recognize that participation in international terrorism often had no internationally driven ideological

component. This was particularly the case for the Provisional IRA, whose acts of violence were often categorized as international terrorism because of their North American fundraising and cross-border attacks from the Republic of Ireland. The Provos' links to revolutionary socialism, however, were minimal at best.

The United States: international terrorism as a communist conspiracy

For the United States, the increasing conflation of revolutionary and international terrorism had disastrous consequences because it distorted the way leaders understood and prioritized threats to America's national security. This is a story whose consequences continue to be felt to the present day. In short, key US officials came to two egregiously erroneous conclusions about terrorism: first, that it was an ideological stance, rather than a tactical and strategic decision; and, second, that terrorist groups of any substance could only carry out their activities if sponsored by states. The history of terrorism offers few clear lessons, but certainly one is that terrorism has appeared in many forms and served many purposes over the centuries. Nonetheless, influential Americans in the field of national security defied the historical evidence and committed the United States to policies based on the assumption that terrorism could only exist in certain guises. As a consequence, threats from other quarters, namely trans-national religious and ethno-nationalist groups, were discounted or overlooked.

Much of the explanation for these disastrous decisions lies in the fact that American thinking about national security in the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by the Cold War, as it had been since the late 1940s. Many commentators saw proof of the existence of an international terrorist conspiracy in the anti-imperialist rhetoric and limited connections between violent leftists in the 1970s. The journalist and mystery writer Ovid Demaris warned, for example, of these groups' "determination to replace the few democratic societies left in the world with totalitarian governments."[43] The most sensationalistic warnings were delivered by Claire Sterling, a conservative journalist and author. Her 1981 book *The Terror Network* contended that the Soviet Union, unwilling to risk everything on war, had turned to destabilizing the West through terrorism. Her study, however, was based on sketchy evidence, such as European newspaper accounts and government contacts; furthermore, her work lacked any appreciation of the political and historical contexts of the terrorist campaigns she purported to analyze.

To be sure, the USSR and its allies did, in fact, provide some terror groups with money, arms, and/or training, but the cartoonish understanding of a global conspiracy peddled by Sterling and others has

obscured a more nuanced story. The Soviets apparently had little interest in European urban guerrilla organizations such as the Red Army Faction, the Red Brigades, or Action Directe; nor did they establish contacts with Abu Nidal or Carlos the Jackal, which has often been alleged. The Soviet Union did send resources to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and its later splinter organizations off and on in the 1970s and 1980s. The Soviets' goal was not general mayhem or destabilization; rather, they tried to recruit the PFLP on occasion to gather intelligence, assassinate defectors, and influence the peace process in the Middle East. In the end, the Soviets seem to have abandoned these limited efforts as ineffectual or counterproductive. The Soviet Union's Eastern European satellites had more contact with terrorist organizations, although once again the goals were highly specific and uncoordinated across the Eastern Bloc. The Romanians, for instance, employed Carlos the Jackal's group to kill Romanian dissidents. The Poles used terror groups to facilitate arms sales to third parties for hard currency, while the East Germans recruited them to buy hi-tech Western weapons. Several countries supplied terrorists with aid in order to secure intelligence on Western states or against groups the communists feared as a domestic security threat. The East German Stasi briefly cooperated with the Red Army Faction – granting asylum to some members and providing weapons and training – but this aid lasted for no more than a few years in the 1980s. In short, Soviet and Eastern European sponsorship of terrorist organizations was limited, sporadic, and focused on practical goals.[44]

But many US leaders had come to understand international politics as a zero-sum contest between the United States and the Soviet Union, a framework that demanded that all political violence in the West be traced back to the USSR. By the early 1980s, some high-ranking national security officials had come to see terrorism in this same way. The most vocal was Alexander Haig, an army general, NATO commander, and Ronald Reagan's first secretary of state. Haig's belief in Soviet responsibility for all international terrorism was partially the result of personal animus: while stationed in Europe he was the target of an unsuccessful assassination attempt by the Red Army Faction in 1979. In private, Haig railed against the Soviet plan. The head of the State Department's intelligence division later remembered, "He believed that Moscow controlled the terrorist apparat. At first I thought he was kidding."[45] But in his first press conference as secretary of state in 1981, Haig stated that Moscow was "training, funding, and equipping terrorists" and that "international terrorism will take the place of human rights in our concern."[46] This was a dramatic change in direction and a staggering intellectual leap: the United States had conflated all threats against it into one, folding terrorism into the Cold War.

William Casey, head of the CIA, was another influential member of the Reagan White House who believed that the Soviets were behind nearly

all terrorist activity. His principal source of proof – besides his gut instinct that in a black-and-white world the Soviet Union was a natural backer of terrorism – was none other than the "research" of Claire Sterling. According to the CIA's chief Soviet analyst at the time, "Casey contemptuously told CIA analysts that he had learned more from Sterling than from all of them." What CIA analysts knew, however, was that "much of [Sterling's book] was based on CIA 'black propaganda,' anti-communist allegations planted in the European press."[47] In other words, the CIA's disinformation campaign had been so successful that the White House had come to believe the propaganda.

The CIA soon learned that it had something to gain by acquiescing in this fantasy, for the White House successfully worked to boost the CIA's funding and free it from some of the more onerous intelligence-gathering restrictions placed on it during the Watergate era. If the CIA ultimately rejected the fiction that the Soviet Union was terrorism's prime mover, it came to accept the underlying assumption that terrorism was primarily a device sponsored by states to advance covertly their foreign policy agendas. While this was certainly the case with some groups and sponsors in the Middle East – particularly when it came to Syria, Iraq, and the PLO's more obscure factions – such a statement hardly covered the activity of the era's bloodiest and most disruptive groups (the Provisional IRA, Fatah, the Shining Path, ETA, the Tamil Tigers, etc.). American policymakers grew ever more convinced, however, that state sponsorship was behind most terrorism in the 1980s, a conviction solidified by the American experience in Lebanon in 1982 and 1983 (see the next chapter for more information on this). Such a conviction was also both a cause and consequence of the United States' feud with Libya and its leader, Colonel Gaddafi. These assumptions about the fundamental character of terrorism blinded the CIA and the United States to the possibility of international terrorists of a rather different type, whose transnational concerns were religious and conservative, not secular and Marxist.

At the same time, US officials downplayed the rhetorical and functional similarities between terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism, on the one hand, and state terror, on the other. This was, of course, at a time when the United States directly supported a number of right-wing, anti-communist governments, particularly in Latin America, that used death squads, torture, "disappearances," and the systematic suppression of democracy and civil liberties in order to terrify and control their populations. US support was primarily financial, but it also involved the direct training of military personnel through the School of the Americas at Fort Benning in Georgia. In 1996, the Pentagon released seven of the school's training manuals from the 1980s, which provided explicit instruction on torture, kidnapping, assassination, and the suppression of civil liberties.[48] At the time, the US government denied allegations of such training and the application of such techniques in Latin American "dirty wars," and strongly endorsed the legitimacy of those governments. Jeane Kirkpatrick, one of President Reagan's most influential national security gurus, provided the justification for such support in the doctrine that was named after her. Totalitarian states, such as the Soviet Union and those sought by leftist revolutionaries, she said, were more destructive than authoritarian regimes. Thus, in an imperfect and bipolar world, the United States had little choice but to aid authoritarian states.

Terrorism and security

A rather different consequence of the obsession with international terrorism was the single-mindedness with which governments around the world concentrated on securing international and then, rather later, domestic air travel. Terrorists, however, are like water running downhill – both seek the path of least resistance, sweeping around obstacles to find less obstructed routes. This is why purely defensive antiterrorism – the hardening of sites, the deployment of more security, etc. – is incredibly expensive and minimally effective. When terrorists find it too difficult to attack one way, they will attack another. In the 1970s, authorities throughout the world came to assume that hijacking was the main danger that terrorists posed to airplanes; the main defensive measure was the massive deployment of metal detectors to screen for handheld weapons. Traveling by airplane soon became significantly safer, until the 1980s, when terrorists largely shifted to bombing rather than hijacking planes. The newer tactic was a blunter weapon, since it no longer gave terrorists the opportunity to speak directly to their various audiences and, in fact, threatened to overly horrify them. But it was effective at attracting attention. The authorities' assumptions were destroyed a second time when terrorists graduated from smuggling bombs aboard planes in luggage to bringing bombs aboard on their own bodies. Those in charge of security had never addressed the possibility that some terrorists would be willing to die in order to complete their missions. Meanwhile, much less was done to secure other forms of transportation, such as by rail and sea, or other high-profile targets, such as sporting and entertainment venues, energy infrastructure, large office buildings, and even government buildings.

This development also illustrates the critical relationship that exists between the terrorists' goals, targets, audiences, weapons, and usual scale of violence. Ideologically and politically motivated terrorists with domestic agendas and orientations are usually most interested in communicating values, mobilizing the uninvolved, and building sympathy; therefore, they are more likely to be sensitive to public opinion and thus far more likely to prize drama and visibility over casualties. On the other hand, ethno-nationalist terrorists seeking a complete rupture with an occupying country are more interested in destroying the possibility of compromise,

perhaps by provoking a brutal governmental reaction or civil war; thus, this sort of terrorist is more inclined to seek more casualties. Those terrorists, including those whose motive is primarily religious, who have no interest in winning over segments of the "enemy" population are most inclined to use great violence, although even then, until recently, such terrorists were often constrained by the fact that horrendous violence might alienate their own population by humanizing the enemy. In fact, we will turn to the subject of religious terrorism in the next chapter.

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