

in radar, nuclear science, computing, and cryptography that were freely shared with the Americans. Unless matters scientific are to be excluded from any catalog of cultural achievement, Wilson thus confounds his own argument.

What Wilson is trying to say is entirely sensible: Britain freely chose to sacrifice its empire in order to defeat the attempts of the Kaiser, Hitler, and Stalin to achieve dominance over Europe. In one of his excellent subessays, he explores the origins of the song that accompanied the music Edward Elgar wrote for the funeral of King Edward VII in 1910. “Land of hope and glory, mother of the free,” it begins, and Wilson

acknowledges that most British people, and those of not a few other nationalities, would recognize the validity in those words—not an evocation of heroics in the Nelson mold, perhaps, but a determination to fight for what is seen as right and never to surrender. That double determination is the common bond that joins Nelson at Trafalgar, Lloyd George in 1918, Churchill in 1940, and possibly even Margaret Thatcher holding on to the Falklands in 1982, all in defense of their sceptered isle. ■

■ Martin Walker is the editor of United Press International. His most recent books are *America Reborn: A Twentieth-Century Narrative in Twenty-Six Lives* (2000) and the novel *The Caves of Périgord* (2002).

## Unmasking the Terrorists

Reviewed by Terry McDermott

THE EARLIEST ATTEMPTS TO discern the root causes of 9/11 began errantly, with what seemed a simple question: Why do they hate us? The us-them taxonomy was further reinforced by widespread talk of a clash of civilizations, as if such a clash were not only well under way but unstoppable. They're *evil*, the president told us repeatedly. They hate modernity, freedom, democracy, even skyscrapers.

With this as the operative explanation, little wonder that the dominant 9/11 narrative, which emerged almost before the dust settled in lower Manhattan and persists today, depicts the attackers as crazed fanatics. A great deal has been written about the 19 hijackers based on minuscule information, and one consequence has been the proliferation of rumor and its solidification into fact. You'll find conclusions strung on the thinnest of threads, almost all supporting the “fanatics who hate us” angle.

In late September 2001, when *The Los Angeles*

### THE MAKING OF A TERRORIST:

Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes.

Edited by James J. F. Forest. Praeger. 3 vols., 1,214 pp. \$300

*Times* assigned me to examine the roots of the attacks, this angle shaped my initial reporting. We knew by then that Mohamed Atta, the presumed lead pilot, had grown up in an ordinary household in Cairo, attended university, and gone to Germany for graduate school. I set out to learn what had transformed this mild-mannered architect into the crazed killer of 9/11, and, by extension, *who* had effected that transformation, who had recruited and turned him.

It took three years to find the answer. In the end, I was forced to admit that Atta and his cohorts were not recruits but volunteers. They delivered themselves. And they did so for a variety of reasons: broad historical trends, including the long, slow decline of the Arab world; specific political objections, including American support of Israel; devout if wholly misguided religious belief; psychological alienation; and self-aggrandizement. The very ordinariness of the motivations implies that these were not exceptional men. Rather, they were so common that there are likely to be a great many more just like them. I argued in my writing that unless we understand what drives these people,

we'll have no hope of stopping them.

Many Americans don't want to hear this message. They insist that the acts of 9/11 themselves prove the madness and malevolence of the terrorists. But consider: Over the centuries, according to terrorism researcher Clark McCauley, terrorists and other guerilla practitioners of political violence have killed approximately half a million people. By contrast, what might be called state terrorism—state-sponsored attacks against a country's own citizens, such as the Nazi campaign against German Jews, the Soviet gulags, Mao's massacres during the Cultural Revolution, and Pol Pot's blood-soaked march backward in history toward Year Zero—killed 130 million people in the 20th century alone. We have no apparent problem finding rational motives when states murder their own people, yet when faced with the much smaller number of terrorist murders, we seem unable and often unwilling even to contemplate rational motives.

The burgeoning library on terrorism can be divided by author into three broad types: works by journalists, by government insiders, and by academics or other experts. The contributions by journalists tend to be emotionally overwrought and episodic, with some notable exceptions, including Simon Reeve's *The New Jackals: Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism* (1999) and Peter Bergen's *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (2001)—both, probably not coincidentally, predating 9/11—as well as Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (2005).

The books produced within the counterterrorism establishment, such as Robert Baer's *Sleeping With the Devil: How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude* (2004) and Richard Clarke's *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (2004), are often, though not always (see Clarke), less florid in their prose and more informed in their facts, and almost inevitably one-sided.

One would hope for more rigorous work from academics. Post-9/11, however, much of what has come from the academy has seemed beside the point. The scholarly work is too removed, and the work from think tanks often veers into polemics. Both sorts tend to be jargon-dense and not particularly fact-rich. There are exceptions, of course, including two books that focus more narrowly on terrorist socioeconomics and psychology, Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) and Robert Pape's *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (2005).

The library of worthwhile works on terrorism is about to grow exponentially with the publication of a massive three-volume compendium, *The Making of a Terrorist*, edited by James J. F. Forest, director of terrorism studies at the U.S. Military Academy. Despite the ambiguity of the title (it isn't about the making of a particular terrorist, but the making of any terrorist) and the wanton disregard for pulpwood forests, this is a welcome, largely clear-eyed collection.

The three volumes examine, respectively, recruitment, training, and root causes. Each volume contains useful and original work by journalists, government officials, and academics. But the third book, dealing with root causes, is by far the most valuable.

Especially arresting are contributions by the aforementioned Clark McCauley, a professor of psychology at Bryn Mawr College, from whose "Terrorism and the State: The Logic of Killing Civilians" I drew the data on state-sponsored killing, and by Paul Pillar, yet another Central Intelligence Agency veteran—who knew so many CIA men had literary ambitions?—whose "Superpower Foreign Policies: A Source for Global Resentment" presents a lucid, important examination not just of terrorism's causes but of what (if anything) can be done to address them.

If you envision terrorism as rooted in broad, his-

These were not exceptional men. Rather, they were so common that there are likely to be a great many more just like them.

torical causes, it's no simple thing to devise a policy response that's likely to succeed. Posing the crucial question, Pillar asks "how much the resentment against the United States that can undergird terrorism is a product of what it *is* and how much is a response to what it *does*?" The former is the dominant cause, he contends, with American victories in "past clashes between two civilizations" as one element. "Simply being the big guy—on a block, or on the globe—probably also contributes to resentment mixed with envy or with suspicion of how the big guy will use his strength among some of the less powerful. In addition, some of what may be resented is intrinsic to the very concept of a superpower—the ability to project power and influence all over the world. In the case of the United States, much of that influence consists of a propagation of culture that is a result not so much of U.S. foreign policy but rather of globalization and U.S. economic strength. MTV and Big Macs have spread throughout the world—including the Muslim world, to the chagrin of the Islamists—not because of decisions made in Washington but because America is large, rich, and creative, and as such has a disproportionate influence on what flows over the world's airwaves and trade routes."

This isn't to say that there are no policy choices to be made, by the United States or other nations. In "Political Repression and Violent Rebellion in the Muslim World," Mohammed Hafez, of the University of Missouri–Kansas City, concludes that marginalizing internal dissent, as Middle Eastern governments do, almost invariably radicalizes it. Egypt, the source of much of radical Islam's intellectual justification, offers a prime example.

Incentives to commit acts of terrorism can also be provided by religions that espouse apocalyptic visions, according to Syracuse University political scientist Michael Barkun, in "Terrorism and Domsday." As the new millennium approached, for example, the FBI warned that religious extremists might resort to violence "in an attempt to facilitate the onset of Armageddon." But, as Barkun notes, apocalyptic beliefs prove to be woefully poor predictors of terrorism: Such beliefs may be held by "indi-

viduals and groups known to have contemplated large-scale terrorist attacks," but they're also held by vast numbers of nonterrorists.

**T**he complexity of causes and influences documented throughout *The Making of a Terrorist* contrasts starkly with the simplistic motives that many American politicians ascribe to Al Qaeda. The misapprehension of the terrorist mindset has important consequences, for it forms the foundation of America's counterterrorist strategy. At its core, Islamist terror relies on a worldview that construes almost every action of the United States as part of the assumed American assault on Islam. Policies that fail to credit this worldview, consequently, may prove counterproductive to the ultimate goal of diminishing the number of terrorists.

The Iraq war is an excellent example. I spent much of the 18 months between 9/11 and the Iraq invasion in the Middle East. Everywhere I went during the first six months, I encountered tremendous sympathy and what seemed to be genuine affection for America. Over the subsequent 12 months, I began to hear ever more frequent complaints about U.S. goals in the Middle East and the possibility of an invasion of Iraq. I always replied that no matter what the Bush administration might want, there would be no invasion, simply because it would be so obviously counterproductive—it would drain the reservoir of international goodwill and multiply the number of terrorists. Up until the day of the invasion, I thought the tough talk was a ruse intended to bring Saddam Hussein to the negotiating table. I was prepared to admit the brilliance of the gambit. I wasn't prepared to credit the stupidity of the actual plan.

Some powerful people in the Bush administration seem to understand the problem, if only in hindsight. Consider this, from a 2003 memo by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld: "Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are

recruiting, training and deploying against us? Does the U.S. need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The U.S. is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists.”

Implied but not asked in Rumsfeld's memo are fundamental questions about combating terrorists: Who are they? Does it matter who they are, or is it

enough to know what they do? What drives them? We don't seem any closer to the answers than we were on September 10, 2001, but at least now, with the help of work such as that represented in *The Making of a Terrorist*, we're beginning to ask the questions. ■

■ Terry McDermott, a writer for *The Los Angeles Times*, is the author of *Perfect Soldiers—The Hijackers: Who They Were, Why They Did It* (2005).

## IN BRIEF

### HISTORY

## The Gospel of You Can Do It

BRUCE BARTON WAS AMONG THE last major figures of the 20th century without a full-scale biography. Richard M. Fried, a history professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has finally closed this gap. Why'd it take so long?

After all, Barton (1886–1967) was well known in his own time for three reasons that still resonate. First, he was a major force in advertising, not just in writing copy but in organizing one of the first multinational ad agencies. The agency became known as BBD&O and is still going strong as part of the worldwide holding company Omnicom.

Next, he was among the first popularizers of the idea of Jesus as one of us, out in the marketplace growing His Father's business. Barton wrote a best-selling book called *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), which is still being read for its depiction of the Rotarian Jesus of the modern megachurch, the church of Let's Grow and Prosper.

And, finally, Barton was a politician who sold himself and his worldview with the consummate skill of—you guessed it—an adman. From 1937 to 1941 he was a congressman from Manhattan, and

he was almost elected to the U.S. Senate in 1940. His innovations in selling a political vision through clever use of media, especially images, are still emulated by today's spinmeisters.

If he did all that, why have we been so slow to pay him the heed he deserves? Part of the answer, as Fried makes clear, is that we have been slow to see that consumer goods, religion, and politics have something in common: In the modern world, they all have to be sold. Selling is what Barton knew.

After World War I, a market situation developed that hadn't been seen before. The West developed surpluses. There were surpluses of mass-produced items such as soap and cigarettes. There were surpluses of religion—yes, religion—as the multiple denominations of post-Reformation Christianity continued splintering into competing brands with scant differences. And, in a sense, there were even surpluses of political ideas, such as socialism, communism, and good ol' apple-pie democracy.

Sorting out these surpluses, generating distinctions where often little difference existed, exploiting consumer choice—these were the roles of the modern salesman. How did Barton do it? By telling stories with a promise of betterment.

Bruce Barton learned the power of the gospel of You Can Do It early in his career. Fried relates the famous tale of how, after college, Barton was working as sales manager of P. F. Collier and Son, publisher of books and magazines. As an issue of the magazine *Collier's* was about to go to press in

### THE MAN EVERYBODY KNEW:

Bruce Barton and the Making of Modern America.

By Richard M. Fried.  
Ivan R. Dee.  
286 pp. \$27.50