

## BOOK REVIEWS

Wright, Joanne. *Terrorist Propaganda: The Red Army Faction and the Provisional IRA, 1968-86*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990.

This important work could just as well be entitled: *Terrorism as Propaganda*, or even: *Terrorism is Propaganda*. Its theme concerns the survival of terrorist groups — using Germany's Red Army Faction (RAF) and Northern Ireland's Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) as case studies. Their survival, the author contends, depends directly upon their use of propaganda aimed at three distinct audiences. It also depends upon how the target governments respond to the terrorists' propaganda of word and deed.

The author speaks with the authority of one who grew up in Northern Ireland, studied under Paul Wilkinson at the University of Aberdeen, and who enriches her scholarship with primary sources. Dr. Joanne Wright is currently a Lecturer in International Relations and Strategic Studies at the University of Queensland, Australia.

In an obligatory (and reasonable) attempt to define terrorism, Wright interestingly prefers Van den Haag's definition over Wilkinson's because it includes the intended results of terrorist violence — "to hurt, destroy or control another or to damage, destroy or control an object (e.g., territory or property)." Wilkinson includes cause and context, and that distracts, Wright states, from a focus on the terrorists' attempts to influence a set of audiences. In Part I Wright sets the stage for analyzing the efforts of the RAF and PIRA to influence audiences by reviewing their historical backgrounds and ideologies.

Part II contains the main body of the work. Terrorist propaganda, Wright argues, uses "facts and arguments" to support an ideology. First, to an uncommitted audience, terrorists seek to publicize their cause, create a climate of fear and (most importantly) demonstrate that the state is "disadvantaging" major sections of society. The author explains why the RAF achieved so little success with this uncommitted audience by noting the dismal record of the communist eastern regime and the general prosperity and liberties of its western counterpart. The PIRA, claiming to speak for a large segment of displaced and discriminated Catholics, has enjoyed greater success at home, in Britain, and abroad.

Reducing the legitimacy of the target regime in the minds of an uncommitted audience is designed to swell the ranks of the sympathetic audience. Terrorist propaganda to the sympathetic audience focuses on two areas: the congruence of the ideology with the interests and perceptions of this audience; and the reasons why non-violent means are impossible. Both arguments and the deeds behind them are designed to extend the terrorist's base of active support. The RAF's narrow base of 1960s-era communalities and students and the operative democratic means of redress of grievances for

Summer 1992

the then West Germans again limited their success with this audience. And while the Provos' ideological case has had a wider appeal, the disdain of violence felt by many Catholics has weakened their propaganda. PIRA propaganda of word and deed since the 1970s, nevertheless, has created a core of terrorist activists of an estimated 100 to 200 individuals.

Finally, propaganda directed at this active audience, the terrorists themselves, is designed to bond each individual to the cause. The propaganda themes emphasize a "war situation" that, although of long duration, will result in inevitable victory. Wrights' analysis of internal propaganda directed at potential prisoners and martyrs makes clear the importance of this type of propaganda for group cohesion. The isolation of the RAF helped it build cohesion, but its failure to build a sympathetic audience, the Maoist sea the terrorist fish swims in, kept the number of activists limited. A larger "sea" and greater resources account for the greater core of PIRA activists.

In addition to a theory on the role of audiences in terrorists' successes, Wright adds to the literature on how the treatment of prisoners, the behavior of security forces, and the changing of legislation contribute to the tactical successes of terrorists.

Some attention is given to the role of the media as an actor in terrorist propaganda, especially towards the uncommitted audience. But given that the literature on this subject is vast and that the propaganda message to particular audiences is what is studied here, not focusing on the media's role makes good sense.

This well-organized, well-written, and insightful monograph should be widely read.

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Hyland, Francis P. *Armenian Terrorism: The Past, the Present, the Prospects*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991.

This analysis of Armenian terrorism against Turkey covers much familiar ground, yet introduces very little that is new. This is not surprising since the subject of Hyland's study petered out in the mid-1980s, when the present reviewer published his "*Pursuing the Just Cause of Their People: A Study of Contemporary Terrorism* (1986). Accordingly, it might have been more useful for Hyland to have analyzed the staggering events which have occurred in Soviet Armenia since 1988. In this latter situation, for better or worse, a genuine national movement has arisen, rather than a series of cowardly murders and inept bombings.