CHAPTER 9

Martyrs and Demons

When Anders Breivik was on trial in 2012 for his horrendous assault on a youth camp sponsored by a political party pledged to multiculturalism in Norway, he was allowed at the end to give a statement. He did not deny that he was responsible for the act. Yet he did not admit that he was guilty of it. Instead, he said, this was "a preventive attack in defence of my ethnic group, and I cannot acknowledge guilt," adding that he acted "on behalf of my people, my religion and my country."[1] He went on to say that his struggle was not over, and that his "brothers in the Norwegian and European resistance movements are sitting there and watching this case while they are planning new attacks," predicting that "they may be responsible for as many as 40,000 deaths." Though Breivik sacrificed his own freedom to this cause, he was convinced that the glorious struggle was far from over.

Timothy McVeigh said as much when he was sentenced to death for bombing the Oklahoma City federal building. He quoted from Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, saying that "our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher."[2] Most interpreted McVeigh's use of this quotation as an assertion that the government was setting a bad example by sentencing him to death. In another sense, however, this is what McVeigh had been saying all along—that the government was the enemy. In his dramatic moment in the courtroom, Timothy McVeigh was vaunting his actions as part of an enormously important and historical struggle

and articulating what he felt this larger scenario was about: a conflict between liberty and slavery, a cosmic war in which both he and the government had critical, though opposing, roles to play.

The fact that Breivik and McVeigh were captured and convicted of their crimes might appear to indicate that their wars were over and they had lost. Yet by putting their actions into the larger frame of history, Breivik and McVeigh were stating that the war was far from over, and the resolution was still uncertain. Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, the political leader of Hamas, told me virtually the same thing about his movement's struggle against Israel. Although he admitted that things did not look promising now, he assured me that the fight would be waged for years, perhaps generations, to come. "Look at history," he said. "Palestine has been occupied before, for two hundred years, and then liberated. This time," he added, "we have been occupied for only fifty years. We have to wait."[3] Rantisi said that the apotheosis might not come in his lifetime, but perhaps in his children's lifetime. Eventually it would come.

As Dr. Rantisi implied, the point of every story is its ending. Insofar as the scenario of cosmic war is a story, it carries a momentum toward its completion and contains the seeds of hope for its outcome. I use the term *hope* rather than *fear,* for no one wants to believe in a story that cannot produce a happy ending. Those who accept that their life struggles are part of a great struggle, a cosmic war, know that they are part of a grand tale that will ultimately end triumphantly, though not necessarily easily or quickly. The epic character of the story implies that the happy ending may indeed be long delayed—perhaps until after one's lifetime or after the lifetimes of one's descendants. In the meantime, the story will involve sadness and travail. Christians recall that Jesus, for example, triumphed over death only after being subjected to the gruesome and humiliating spectacle of public execution.

Overcoming defeat and humiliation is the point of war. The story of warfare explains why one feels for a time beaten and disgraced—that is part of the warrior's experience. In cases of cosmic war, however, the final battle has not been fought. Only when it has can one expect triumph and pride. Until that time, the warrior struggles on, often armed only with hope. Our personal tales of woe gain meaning, then, when linked to these powerful stories. Sagas of oppression and liberation lift the spirits of individuals and make their suffering explicable and noble. In some cases suffering imparts the nobility of martyrdom. In such instances the images of cosmic war forge failure—even death—into victory.

SACRIFICIAL VICTIMS

In the Twitter feeds of young jihadi supporters of ISIS, one of them announced the death—the martyrdom as the tweet put it—of a young Australian volunteer. Known only by his nom de guerre, Abu al-Walid al-Australi, the young man had left his family and his job in Australia to join the ISIS forces fighting in Syria.[4] A slickly produced graphic poster portraying the dead man accompanied the tweet, conveying information about the martyr and the circumstances of his death. He was part of an ISIS unit that was trying to capture the Wadi al-Deif military base in northwest Syria when he was shot by a sniper. This tweeted announcement was one of dozens, perhaps hundreds posted on line in exactly the same way, usually with the same slick graphics framing, often portraying the martyred fighter in death, sometimes with the gruesome marks of battle on his face. The posters would be tweeted and retweeted, often with words of affection, affirmations that he would be residing in the highest ranks of heaven, and pleas to Allah to grant him blessings.

The slick online magazines produced by ISIS, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, regularly featured tributes to its volunteers who became suicide bombers—or rather *ishtishhadi,* "self-chosen martyrs," as the magazines put it. Featured in the June 2015 issue of *Dabiq* was the story of twenty-five-year-old twin brothers from Germany, both of whom volunteered for suicide attacks in Iraq. The picture of the handsome, smiling brothers holding a Qur'an with the black ISIS in the background was prominently displayed in the magazine.[5] German newspapers reporting this story revealed that the two were born in 1989 as Kevin and Mark K. (the last names were not revealed) in the northern Westphalia town of Castrop-Rauxel in district Schwerin.[6] They were raised in an ordinary middle-class household, according to their father, who was a police officer. During high school Kevin participated in an exchange program in Turkey, and when he returned he began attending a mosque. Following high school Kevin went to college to study mining and energy law at Ruhr University in Bochum. Mark volunteered for the German army and was sent on assignment to Afghanistan. It seems that Kevin was the first to formally convert to Islam, and then Mark joined him. Their main contact with radical jihadi extremists was initially online as they perused websites and joined in Twitter chats. In the summer of 2014 when Mark was on leave, the two quietly slipped out of the country to Turkey, and then to Syria, where they joined other ISIS recruits. They were given Arabic names. Kevin, as Abu Mus'ab al-Almani, was assigned a difficult

suicide mission in Iraq. An ISIS video pictured him beside two other volunteers, an Arab and a Tajiq, as Kevin explained in German why he was willing to give his life for this mission. The video then showed the truck that he is driving as it barreled across Iraq roads, carrying seven tons of explosives, to a checkpoint in front of the Fourth Regiment of the Iraqi army in Wilayat Shamal north of Baghdad. As the truck plowed through the checkpoint the explosives were ignited and an enormous fireball was shown, engulfing the entire headquarters of the Fourth Regiment. Soon after, his twin brother Mark gave his life in another suicide mission, this one involving a car bomb that exploded near the town of Baiji, also near Baghdad, killing dozens of Iraqi security forces. The *Dabiq* photos of them portrayed the young brothers in the fullness of life as a paragon of Muslim valor. Tributes to them repeatedly said that they were sure that "Allah would welcome them to paradise" as a result of their acts.

This notion of a heroic, transforming death is a common motif in communiqués of activists groups involved in terrorist acts around the world. Though the message was projected in cyberspace by the global jihadi community that supports ISIS, it is replicated by other movements in other formats. Hamas, for example, revered its suicide bombers on posters plastered on walls in Gaza and West Bank cities. In the Hezbollah neighborhoods of Beirut, portraits of martyred fighters involved in attacks on Israel and the United States were portrayed on banners hanging from street lamps. Martyrdom was also the image projected by the architecture of the shrine that for a time accompanied the grave of the Jewish attacker Dr. Baruch Goldstein, at the Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron. The shrine was shaped into an elegant plaza surrounded by plaques set inside boxes accompanied by votive candles that looked not unlike the stations of the cross in a Catholic sanctuary. It was clearly a shrine, a shrine for someone the young man guarding it described as both a martyr and a "hero in war."[7] A similar attitude attended the funeral celebrations for the young Muslim men who gave up their lives in acts of "self-martyrdom," as the Hamas leaders, like the ISIS supporters, wished to call their operatives' acts of suicide bombing. These celebrations were remarkable events recorded on the videotapes of the men giving their ardent last statements the night before their deaths. The tapes were then clandestinely circulated throughout Gaza and the West Bank as a sort of recruitment device for like-minded young men. These events were not really funerals, a fact symbolized by the drinking of sweetened rather than bitter coffee, the distribution of

sweets, and the singing of wedding songs. A cross between a marriage and a religious festival, these affairs were a modern example of an ancient religious ritual: the sanctification of martyrs.

Similar events have attended the memorials for martyrs in other religious movements. Activist Sikhs have proudly displayed pictures of the fallen leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who died as a result of the military operation ordered by India's prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. His image has been displayed as prominently as those of the founding gurus of the tradition, and he has been remembered on both his birthday and his martyrdom day. Followers revere Bhindranwale for what they regard as his exemplary model of commitment. As one of his young followers told me, "He went to his death for what he believed."[8] The brother of one of the Khalistani leaders killed in a government encounter told me virtually the same thing: Bhindranwale "didn't just say words, he backed them up with deeds."[9]

It was a sentiment echoed by Rev. Michael Bray with regard to Scott Roeder when he shot the Wichita, Kansas, abortion provider Dr. George Tiller in 2009. Earlier, Bray had expressed similar reverence for his friend Rev. Paul Hill, whom Bray regarded a martyr after he was condemned to death for his killing of abortion provider staff in Pensacola, Florida. As the date of Hill's execution drew near, Bray began to produce publications announcing Hill's impending martyrdom, not only to rally support that might keep that event from happening, but also to give it religious significance in the likelihood that it would. "We must plead with the powers that are," Bray wrote, to spare the life of a man "who was called by God to the sacrificial, public witness he made" and was sentenced to die only "for doing justice and showing mercy." Bray regarded Hill as a martyr, and he lashed out at the brutality of a government that would take such a noble person's life.[10]

Absent from Bray's sense of outrage was any respect for the lives of Dr. John Britton and his volunteer escort, James Barrett, which Hill terminated—or "aborted," as Bray put it—in a brutal act of double murder. In a curious twist of logic, Bray had made out Hill to be the victim rather than the murderer that the state and most of the American public regarded him to be. In this way Bray was like those who mourned the deaths of Dr. Baruch Goldstein, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the ISIS soldiers, and the Hamas suicide bombers—each of whom sent scores of innocent people to early graves. Billy Wright, the Northern Ireland activist who had been convicted for his role in the terrorist acts conducted by the Protestant Ulster Volunteer Force paramilitary group,

said that "there's no doubt" that within "every terrorist" there is the conviction that "he is the victim." According to Wright, this allows the terrorist to justify his action "morally within his own mind."[11]

A similar point was made by Dr. Rantisi when he stressed in my interview with him that Arab Muslims were the true victims in the confrontation rather than the savage perpetrators of suicide attacks the western media portrayed them to be. He recounted the injustices done against himself, his family, and other Arabs over the years to demonstrate that the experience of victimage had preceded these violent attacks. It was an argument similar to the one made by Osama bin Laden in his February 1998 fatwa against America, in which he claimed that his acts were defensive, since it was America who declared war on Muslims by its "crimes and sins" committed in the Middle East.[12] The incidents of terrorism undertaken by activists such as Rantisi, bin Laden, and their operatives were thus justified by their followers as defensive acts of noble fighters. If they succeeded in their mission unscathed, they were heroes; if they died in the process, they were martyrs.

The idea of martyrdom is an interesting one. It has a long history within various religious traditions, including early Christianity. Christ himself was a martyr, as was the founder of the Shi'i Muslim tradition, Husain. The word *martyr* comes from a Greek term for "witness," such as a witness to one's faith. In most cases martyrdom is regarded not only as a testimony to the degree of one's commitment, but also as a performance of a religious act, specifically an act of self-sacrifice.

This dimension of martyrdom links it to the activity that some scholars see as the most fundamental form of religiosity: sacrifice. It is a rite of destruction that is found, remarkably, in virtually every religious tradition in the world. The term suggests that the very process of destroying is spiritual since the word comes from the Latin, *sacrificium,* "to make holy." What makes sacrifice so riveting is not just that it involves killing, but also that it is, in an ironic way, ennobling. The destruction is performed within a religious context that transforms the killing into something positive. Thus, like all religious images of sacrifice, martyrdom provides symbols of a violence conquered—or at least put in its place—by the larger framework of order that religious language provides.

There is some evidence that ancient religious rites of sacrifice, like the destruction involved in modern-day terrorism, were performances involving the murder of living beings. The later domestication of sacrifice in evolved forms of religious practice, such as the Christian ritual of the Eucharist, masked the fact that in most early forms of sacrifice a real

animal—in some cases a human—offered its life on a sacred chopping block, an altar. In the Hebrew Bible, which is sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the book of Leviticus gives a detailed guide for preparing animals for sacrificial slaughter. The very architecture of ancient Israeli temples reflected the centrality of the sacrificial event. The Vedic Agnicayana ritual, some three thousand years old and probably the most ancient ritual still performed today, involved the construction of an elaborate altar for sacrificial ritual, which some claim was originally a human sacrifice.[13] This was certainly so at the other side of the world at the time of the ancient Aztec Empire, when conquered soldiers were treated royally in preparation for their role in the sacrificial rite. Then they were set upon with knives. Their still-beating hearts were ripped from their chests and offered to Huitzilopochtli and other gods, eventually to be eaten by the faithful, and their faces were skinned to make ritual masks.

Why are such gory acts of sacrifice central to religion? The attempt to find answers to that question has been a preoccupation of scholars for over a century. The insights of such pioneering thinkers as Émile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud have been revived at the end of the twentieth century by such scholars as Maurice Bloch, René Girard, Walter Burkert, and Eli Sagan, who have given social and psychological reasons for the virtual universality of violence in religious images and ideas.[14] Most of them have seen the symbols of violence as playing an ultimately nonviolent and socially useful role.

According to Freud, for instance, violent religious symbols and sacrificial rituals evoke, and thereby vent, violent impulses in general. Accepting Freud's main thesis, Girard amended it by suggesting that the motivation for violence is "mimetic desire"—the desire to imitate a rival—rather than the psychological instincts of sexuality and aggression. Like Freud, Girard claimed that ritualized violence performs a positive role for society. By allowing individuals to release their feelings of hostility toward members of their own communities, symbols of violence enable affinity groups to achieve greater social cohesion. "The function of ritual," claimed Girard, "is to 'purify' violence; that is, to 'trick' violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals." Those who participate in ritual are not consciously aware of the social and psychological significance of their acts, of course, for Girard claimed that "religion tries to account for its own operation metaphorically."[15]

Much of what Freud and Girard said about the function of symbolic violence in religion has been persuasive. Even if one questions, as I do,

Girard's idea that mimetic desire is the sole driving force behind symbols of religious violence, one can still agree that mimesis is a significant factor. One can also agree with the theme that Girard borrows from Freud, that the ritualized acting out of violent acts plays a role in displacing feelings of aggression, thereby allowing the world to be a more peaceful place in which to live. But the critical issue remains as to whether sacrifice should be regarded as the context for viewing all other forms of religious violence, as Girard and Freud have contended.

My own conclusion is that war is the context for sacrifice rather than the other way around. Of course, one can think of religious warfare as a blend of sacrifice and martyrdom: sacrificing members of the enemy's side and offering up martyrs on one's own. But behind the gruesome litany is something that encompasses both sacrifice and martyrdom and much more: cosmic war. As Durkheim pointed out, religious language contains ideas of an intimate and ultimate tension, one that he described as the distinction between the sacred and the profane. This fundamental dichotomy gives rise to images of a great encounter between cosmic forces—order versus chaos, good versus evil, truth versus falsehood—which worldly struggles mimic. It is the image of war that captures this antinomy, rather than sacrifice.

At a seminar on the comparative study of the subject of disorder and order, Girard was challenged by a colleague who questioned Girard's assumptions about the anthropological origins of the image of sacrifice. He suggested that perhaps Girard was wrong—that the primal hunt started first, and sacrifice was meant to imitate the hunt. "If I accepted your theory," Girard replied, "I could no longer connect my theory of desire with my theory of victimage." His comment was followed by laughter.[16] My guess, however, is that it was nervous laughter, since the intervention of the scholar Eric Gans pointed to what most of his colleagues at the seminar must have known to be true, that the social activity of organized conflict, whether against an animal in a hunt or against other people in battle, is a primal form of human activity. Warfare organizes people into a "we" and a "they," and it organizes social history into a storyline of persecution, conflict, and the hope of redemption, liberation, and conquest.[17] The enduring and seemingly ubiquitous image of cosmic war from ancient times to the present continues to give the rites of sacrifice their meaning.

I think the concept of sacrifice makes sense only within the context of cosmic war. The sacrificial victim represents the destruction endemic to battle. Like the enemy—and like violence itself—the victim is often

categorically out of place and is therefore a symbol of disorder. Animals used for sacrifice, for instance, are usually domesticated beasts: they live in the ambiguous middle ground between the animal kingdom and the human.

When sacrificial victims were human, they also frequently came from an uncertain category. In India, for example, in the case of the *sati* of widows, the victims were anomalies: married women bereft of living husbands.[18] Among the Huron and Seneca Indians a sacrifice was made of a warrior out of place: during a state of war between tribes, an enemy soldier was captured, brought into the community, made a member of a household where a son had been lost in battle, and became for a time that missing son. The brave was feted and adored and then, knowing what the outcome would be and yet displaying his courage, he was ritually tortured to death. The final acts included plucking out his eyes and crushing and mutilating his genitals while the young man, still alive, writhed in pain. But he courageously accepted his fate.[19]

Sometimes it was God him- or herself who was offered up, or a divinely inspired person such as Jesus or Husain, whose very existence was extraordinary. It was not just their sacrifice that made them divine; rather, their almost unhuman holiness was what made them candidates for slaughter. This is a motif in literature as well is in historical legend. Herman Melville's *Billy Budd,* for instance, played on this theme: though he stuttered, in every other way Billy was as morally pure as his antagonist, Claggart, was evil. His very goodness was an indication that he did not fit into society and eventually had to be destroyed. A group of scholars who compared the issues of sainthood and morality cross-culturally came to a similar conclusion about saints, but put it the other way around: social misfits make good candidates for sainthood. They must be perceived as sublimely wacky in order for their martyrdom and self-sacrifice to be seen as pure.[20]

The sacrifices made during acts of religious terrorism in recent years have been consistent with this theme. In a study of the young men chosen by the Hezbollah and Amal sects in Lebanon to be sacrificed as martyrs in the bombing of American and Israeli targets, Martin Kramer concluded that they met the traditional criteria of purity and anomaly required of sacrificial beings. They were no longer children but were not yet married, they were members of the community but were free from family responsibilities, and they were pious but not members of the clergy.[21] In the case of the youths who volunteered for participation in Hamas suicide missions, interviews with their families and tapes of their last testimonies

indicated that they were often regarded as somewhat shy but good kids. They were serious in their manners, perhaps slightly aloof from their crowd, and ultimately were accepted in society in a grand way when their suicidal acts were remembered joyously as events of martyrdom.

When Dr. Rantisi objected to my use of the term *suicide bombers* to describe his young colleagues in Hamas who chose to blow themselves up in acts of violence against Israel, he was objecting to the idea that their acts were done idiosyncratically or thoughtlessly, or performed simply because the person desired death. As I mentioned, he preferred to think of them as "self-chosen martyrs," soldiers in a great war who diligently and reverently gave up their lives for the sake of their community and their religion. The videotapes taken of the young men the night before their deaths indicated that they thought of themselves in just that way. They were trying not to avoid life but to fulfill it in what they considered to be an act of both personal and social redemption.

THE INVENTION OF ENEMIES

Every struggle has its heroes, but even more fundamentally, the struggle must have a foe. As James Aho observed in his study of Idaho and Montana militia movements, the concept of enemy is "socially assembled."[22] Our discussion of the scenarios of war has indicated that this is indeed true of virtually every instance of religious-related terrorism: enemies have to be invented if they do not already exist. If the point of scenarios of cosmic war is to give those who believe in them a sense of empowerment and hope, these feelings could not be generated without the role of an evil foe, a negative reference to which one can position oneself and over which one can hope to triumph. Put simply, one cannot have a war without an enemy.

This means that some enemies have to be manufactured. As Stanley Tambiah noted in his analysis of ethnic conflict, the "rites of violence" in religious riots in South Asia led inevitably to the "demonizing of victims and their expulsion or annihilation in the idiom of exorcism."[23] The demonization of an opponent is easy enough when people feel oppressed or have suffered injuries at the hands of a dominant, unforgiving, and savage power. But when this is not the case, the reasons for demonization are more tenuous and the attempts to make satanic beings out of relatively innocent foes more creative.

When research students working with me monitored the Twitter feeds of the jihadi supporters of ISIS, they found that Americans,

Europeans, and Israelis were seldom mentioned by their nationalities. They were called *kafir* or *kuffar,* singular and plural terms for "unbelievers," and usually meant in a pejorative way. Or they might be called "Crusaders" and "Zionists." But these were the nicest terms reserved for the non-Muslim enemies of the movement. "These dirty dogs think they are better than human," said one jihadi supporter on his Twitter feed, speaking of Israeli leaders who planned to revive the death penalty, but only for non-Jews.[24] Another described the three groups attacking ISIS in Fallujah in 2016 as "the axis of evil"—the Iraq army, Shi'a militia groups, and the American military.[25]

In Myanmar, I was told by the radical Buddhist monk Ashin Wirathu that he suspected Muslims in general to be allied with ISIS, so they were all regarded as suspected terrorists—"Islamic extremists," he called them—until proven innocent.[26] Moreover, like many political leaders in Myanmar he regarded the Rohingya Muslim community to be aliens, non-Burmese people who should be denied citizenship even though they had lived for generations in the northwest coastal region of the country. During the Gujarat massacre in India, Muslims were characterized as the mortal enemies of Hinduism, and hence as a group could be subjected to the most severe forms of attack, including dousing them with kerosene and setting them on fire. In all of these cases, the creation of a sense of enemy gave communities a sense of identity—it clarified who they were not—and it provided the moral license to violently attack those who were not their kind; indeed, they were considered less than human.

In the case of the Aum Shinrikyo movement in Japan the mélange of enemies was quite remarkable. Its numbers included the Japanese and American governments, Freemasons, and Jews. Master Asahara's inclusion of Freemasons seemed to stem from the writings of European mystics who he claimed were trying to create Armageddon because "they think the reign of Christ will not come unless the final war is fought."[27] Jews were included because of similar conspiratorial theories alleging them to have designs on global economic and political control.[28] Added to these foes in Asahara's diatribes was a vague, generic enemy, a sort of inchoate force of evil, represented by the Japanese police, the news media, and virtually anyone he thought might be opposed to him.

The enemies of Sikhism, as described by the activist leader of the Khalistan movement, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, were similarly varied. They included both politicians and shadowy figures with no names. What Bhindranwale disdained—indeed loathed—was what he

described as "the enemies of religion." These included heretics who have fallen from the disciplined Sikh fold and sought the easy comforts of modern life, and "that lady born in a house of Brahmans"—the phrase he used to describe Indira Gandhi. Bhindranwale's epithet for Indira Gandhi seems to have indicted both secular and Hindu politicians—the former because of party, the latter because of caste—and, in fact, he often regarded the two as twin evils. He was reflecting an attitude held by many Sikhs—that what passed for secular politics in India was in fact a form of Hindu cultural domination.

A similar political twist characterized the satanization of Catholics by the Irish Protestant leader Rev. Ian Paisley. In calling the pope a "black-coated bachelor," he was insulting the religion of the community that he and other Protestants feared could eventually overwhelm them by their numbers in Ulster and by their strength in the adjacent Republic of Ireland. But Paisley was also attempting to turn an ordinary opponent—a leader of a rival religious group—into a caricature and thus dehumanize both him and the Catholics for whom he is an honored figure. On other occasions he not only denied that Catholics were Christian but also implied that they were subhuman. In these ways Paisley was doing what is commonly done to enemies: deny them personhood.

In some cases, the enemy has been literally caricatured. Rev. Michael Bray was fond of publishing cartoons in his newsletter portraying abortion clinic doctors and political leaders in the Clinton administration as bulbous buffoons. He also distributed a joke book of the Polish-joke variety, but with the butt of the humor aimed at abortionists. It contained lines such as "How do you tell if an abortionist has class?" The answer: "All the words on his tatoo *[sic]* are spelled correctly." Inadvertently compounding the humor was the fact that the word *tattoo* was misspelled, presumably by mistake. In another issue of his newsletter, Bray explained that jokes that "mock evildoers" reinforced a "right posture" of "loathing, not a happy tolerance."[29]

Bray admitted that behind his humor was a serious attempt at depersonalization, a quality that is found in virtually every group's attitude toward its enemy—the more so if it is a grand enemy, a satanic foe in the scenario of cosmic war. Shortly after Benjamin Nathaniel Smith went on a shooting spree, killing or wounding eleven members of racial minorities before destroying himself, the leader of the World Church of the Creator, with which the killer was affiliated, mourned the "loss of one white man": Smith. The eleven other killed or wounded did not count, since they were "subhuman" or "mudpeople," as Matthew Hale,

the leader of the movement, called them, using the same pejorative epithets used by Christian Identity writers.[30]

Robert Matthews, the leader of an Aryan Nations splinter group, the Order, who was later killed in a government shootout, used the Christian Identity term *mudpeople* to describe blacks and Hispanics. He advocated that they, along with what he called the "so-called white race traitors" who supported them, be exterminated in what he characterized as "a racial and religious Armageddon."[31] The grandfather of Christian Identity activists, Richard Butler, once invited his followers to his compound in Hayden Lake, Idaho, for what he described as "a summer conference and nigger shoot." He said that any blacks who attended would be treated as "live targets," and any who "refused to run or can't for any reason will be fed to the dogs."[32]

The principal recipients of Christian Identity's wrath, however, are not blacks but Jews. According to the movement's ideology, they have subverted the Bible's teachings from the very beginning by claiming they were the real Jews of the Bible, the inheritors of God's kingdom, and not the children of Satan that Christian Identity claims them to be. Denver Parmeter explained that he was mandated by Christian Identity teachings to participate in a plot to kill Alan Berg, a Denver talk show host, because the radio personality was Jewish. Jews "had to be killed," he said, explaining that "Blacks diluted the white race" and are to be despised, but Jews are even worse because, according to Identity teachings, they are the "origins of evil."[33]

In light of these wretched characterizations of Jews, and considering how frequently Jews have been depersonalized as enemies over the centuries, it is troubling to see some Jewish activists adopting the same attitudes toward their own enemies, the Arabs. Nowhere was this depersonalizing stance more apparent than the reaction of some supporters of the radical Jewish settler movement at a wedding celebration soon after the firebomb attack on a Palestinian home in the town of Duma in the West Bank in June 2015. An amateur video uploaded on YouTube showed members of the crowd stabbing pictures of the murdered family and cheering.[34] At the funeral of Dr. Baruch Goldstein, who was killed in the melee created by his massacre of innocent Arab Muslims at prayer in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, a rabbi, comforted the assembled followers of Goldstein by explaining that Gentile blood was worth less than Jewish blood.[35] Followers of Kahane's Kach group, on the bus en route to Goldstein's funeral, passed around newspaper pictures showing the exposed head wounds of Arabs who

were killed in Goldstein's slaughter. "This proves that Arabs have brains!" said a teenager, pointing at the bloody gray matter. His friends laughed and passed around plastic cups filled with sweet Kiddush wine to toast the memory of Dr. Goldstein.[36]

These blanket characterizations of a people make the process of dehumanizing an enemy easier. It is difficult to belittle and kill a person whom one knows and for whom one has no personal antipathy. As most Jews are aware from centuries of experience at the receiving end of anti-Semitism, it is much easier to stereotype and categorize a whole people as collective enemies than to hate individuals. The Christian Identity activists still regard Jews this way, and as we have seen, some Jewish extremists collectively brand Arabs in such a manner. To many Muslim activists, America and Americans are collective enemies, with the particulars of how and why they threaten Muslim people and their culture left unspecified. And since September 11, some Americans regard all Muslims as enemies.

This phenomenon of the faceless collective enemy explains in large part why so many terrorist acts have targeted ordinary people—individuals whom most observers would regard as innocent victims. The series of ISIS-related attacks in 2015 and 2016 in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Istanbul, Baghdad, and Dacca were chilling for their assaults on everyday life. In the Paris attacks on November 13, 2015, the victims were mostly young people out for a night on the town, eating and drinking at cafés, and enjoying a rock concert in the Bataclan theater. At the Bataclan, the featured group that night was the American heavy metal band Eagles of Death Metal, from Palm Desert, California. An hour into the concert, three black-clad young men entered the hall, shouting "Allahu Akbar!" and started to fire indiscriminately into the crowd. It was one of several coordinated attacks that night, and by the time the killing was over, 130 innocent victims had fallen in the hail of bullets.

Similarly, those who planned the bombings of buses of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv regarded the schoolchildren in the vehicles who were on their way to class and the housewives on their way to the shopping mall as less than innocent: they were representatives of a collectivity—Israeli society—that was corporately the foe. An Israeli on the other side of the struggle confirmed that he regarded innocent Arabs as enemies as well, since there were no such things as civilians in "a cultural war."[37] Echoing this sentiment, a leader in the Hamas movement told me, "No one is innocent in the war between Arabs and Jews."[38] He indicated that he regarded all Israelis as soldiers or as potential soldiers, including women

and children. In a videotaped interview of Osama bin Laden several weeks after the 9/11 attacks, he is seen chortling over the success of the aerial assaults on the World Trade Center and Pentagon buildings, thankful to God for the success of the mission, but without a trace of remorse for the thousands of lives lost in the buildings' collapse.

Since it is relatively easy to kill someone who is unknown, the perpetrators of terrorist acts have sometimes been apologetic after the fact, as were the members of the "Real IRA" after their attack in the village of Omagh, Northern Ireland. More often, however, even when the extent of the victims' suffering has become known, the perpetrators have remained defensive about what they have done. Timothy McVeigh, for instance, in his words of sympathy to the families of the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing essentially repeated a scene from *The Turner Diaries*. In that novel, after the fictional bombers had destroyed a federal building, they picked their way through the rubble and helped one of the women who had been injured, whose "pretty face was smudged and scraped . . . and blood was spurting from a deep gash in her thigh." The bombers regretted that so many "thousands of innocent victims" had to die but remained convinced that there was "no way" that they could "destroy the System without hurting many thousands of innocent people—no way."[39]

Since these victims did not possess individual personality, they could represent a collective enemy such as the American "system," or they could be a stand-in for a more diffuse notion of evil, a sort of "enemy-in-general." In the sermons of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, for instance, he seemed deliberately vague about who the enemy really was. "To destroy religion," Bhindranwale informed his congregation, "mean tactics have been initiated," and they came from "all sides and in many forms."[40] But rather than explain what these forces were, who was behind them, and why they would want to destroy religion, Bhindranwale dwelled on what the response should be: a willingness to fight and defend the faith—if necessary, to the end. "Young men: with folded hands, I beseech you," Bhindranwale implored, reminding them that the ultimate decision between truth and evil was up to them.[41]

Moreover, there is a poetic appropriateness to the image of the enemy as a shadowy, almost subhuman figure—"mudpeople," in Christian Identity's way of thinking, "rats" and "vermin" in the Twitter comments of ISIS supporters. Since the point of a religious vision of cosmic war is to assert the triumph of order over disorder, it is understandable that the foes would be considered amorphous. They are, in fact, sym-

bols for amorphousness itself. Even when the symbols have been particular peoples and governments, such as Jews, Arabs, and America, the concepts have been so broad and generic as to be virtually metaphoric in character.

The idea of the enemy is sufficiently flexible that it can include more than one group. In fact, as political scientist Ehud Sprinzak has argued, the efforts to "delegitimize" an opponent by considering it to be an enemy has often been "split." The hatred inspired by what Sprinzak has called "the radicalization of a group of extremists" has been directed toward "two separate entities."[42] In such instances the enemy includes not only the primary target, but also a secondary target. It could be any person or entity that is seen as supporting or defending the primary target.

The primary enemy is the religious rival or local political authority that directly threatens the activist group and against which there is usually a commonsense basis for conflict and animosity. The secondary enemy is a less obvious threat: a moderate leader on one's own side, for example, or a governmental authority who is trying to be fair-minded. Both can infuriate an activist who has bifurcated the world into heroes and enemies in a cosmic war. Secondary enemies, such as government authorities, are seen as not only defending the primary enemy but also belittling the very notion of cosmic war. One of these secondary enemies' greatest failures, from a radical's point of view, is their inability to take seriously the notion of an absolute, sacred struggle. Instead they treat disputes as if they were rational differences over which reasonable people can come to some sort of accommodation or even agreement. This view is anathema to those who see the world at war.

ISIS volunteers have shown complete contempt for political leaders in Islamic countries, calling them "fake Muslims." Some of Irish leader Rev. Ian Paisley's harshest rhetoric was reserved for "apostates," as he called them—moderates from his own, Protestant side. Once, when a delegation of Protestants called on him and acknowledged their respect for his position but encouraged him to be more modest in the way he proclaimed it, Paisley threatened to kick them out the door. Later he explained who he thought they were: "emissaries from hell, that is who they were, sent by Beelzebub, commissioned by Satan to tell the man of God to compromise."[43] The militant Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale also lambasted the moderate, modern-minded men in his congregation. His wrath was aimed especially at those who, in opposition to Sikh custom, did not let their beards and hair grow long and those who "hankered after government administrative positions."[44] Some

Christian activists have despised white liberal defenders of civil rights almost more than minorities. "O. J. Simpson was a national hero," an Aryan Nations leader remarked, referring to Simpson's alleged murders of his white wife and her Jewish friend, since he "got a Jew and a race traitor at the same time."[45]

Government authorities make easy secondary targets. They protect the primary enemy and belittle the notion that ordinary mortal conflict can be elevated to the level of cosmic war. Moreover, as upholders of order within society, they are the natural enemies of those who feel that a certain amount of revolutionary disorder is necessary to transform the system. Rabbi Meir Kahane told me that he despised the secular government of Israel more than the Palestinian Arabs—whom he pitied, he said, rather than hated.[46] Mahmud Abouhalima said he loathed secular Muslims such as Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak, who, he claimed, are not really Muslims at all. He regarded Mubarak as a wolf in sheep's clothing, who wore the label of Islam but "watered down" Islamic law.[47] In Rev. Ian Paisley's case, he was able to despise the government of Great Britain even while demanding that it support his Unionist cause. It was the moderate, accommodating stance of London toward the Catholics that so incensed him and led him to describe Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as a "wicked, treacherous, lying woman."[48]

This hatred of government as a primary or secondary enemy in a cosmic war has made political leaders targets of assassination. President Barack Obama was the object of a series of violent plots, none of which succeeded, largely due to careful government surveillance. During the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States, the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, hinted that his rival, Hilary Clinton, might be assassinated by supporters of the second amendment of the constitution, the provision that protects gun rights. In other cases political leaders have indeed fallen victim to assassins' bullets. Irish nationalists in the Provisional IRA killed Britain's Lord Mountbatten. In Egypt, President Anwar Sadat was assassinated by Muslim extremists associated with the Al-Jihad movement. In India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was killed by her own Sikh bodyguards as a reprisal against her orders to the Indian army to invade the Sikhs' Golden Temple. The speaker of the Egyptian Assembly, Rifaat al-Mahgoub, was killed by members of the same radical Muslim group that killed Sadat. In Algeria, the civilian head of the military-supported Council of State was assassinated, allegedly by followers of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front. Israel Prime Minister

Yitzhak Rabin, flushed with the victory of a peace accord with the Palestinians, was struck down by a Jewish extremist who could not bear the idea of compromise with the Arabs. Earlier, Rabin had been the subject of derision by supporters of the perpetrator of the Hebron massacre, Dr. Baruch Goldstein. At his funeral they blamed the Israeli government for his demise and the mere mention of Rabin or other government officials was greeted with hissing and catcalls. On the bus that brought Kach supporters to the funeral, one woman told friends proudly that her son had propped up pictures of Rabin and other government leaders in the toilet and drawn concentric rings around their faces to provide targets while he urinated.[49]

AMERICA AS ENEMY

More than any other nation, America has been assigned the role of primary or secondary foe in the rhetoric of many activists around the world. As the September 11, 2001, attacks demonstrated the wrath has been directed not only toward governmental symbols but also economic ones—not only the Pentagon but also the World Trade Center. The wider circle of targets has included American businessmen, American culture, and the American "system"—a generic term that has included all responsible persons and every entity that has kept the country functioning as a political, economic, and social unit. The United States is not the largest recipient of terrorist actions, however; in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the largest incidents of terrorism were in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and in war-torn countries such as Syria.[50] Earlier, in the 1990s, the U.S. State Department's counterterrorism unit reported that a disproportionately large number of acts of terrorism worldwide had been waged against American citizens and facilities.[51] But although the number of attacks on American soil have not been as great as dozens of other countries in the world, it remained a potent symbol of opposition.

Osama bin Laden said that he regarded America as a worldwide enemy. One of the members of a movement associated with the Al-Qaeda network explained why. The reason, Mahmud Abouhalima told me, is not only because the United States supports secular governments such as Egypt's that he and his colleagues find directly oppressive, but also because of its history of terrorist acts. The U.S. bombing of Hiroshima, for instance, Abouhalima compared with the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building.[52] Abouhalima's spiritual leader, Sheikh

Omar Abdul Rahman, during a lengthy courtroom speech at the end of the trial convicting him of conspiring to bomb the World Trade Center in 1993, predicted that a "revengeful" God would "scratch" America from the face of the earth.[53] They echoed bin Laden's designation of America as "the biggest terrorist in the world."[54] The reason bin Laden gave for targeting America was its list of "crimes," which included "occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors and turning its bases in the peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples."[55] In response to what bin Laden regarded as a declaration of war on Muslims by America, he issued a fatwa calling on "every Muslim" as "an individual duty" to join him in a righteous war "to kill the Americans and their allies." He assured his followers that "this is in accordance with the words of Almighty God" and that "every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded" should "comply with God's order."[56]

Why is America the enemy? This question is hard for observers of international politics to answer, and harder still for ordinary Americans to fathom. In the terrible hours of 9/11 many watched with horror as their compatriots and symbols of their country were destroyed by people whom they did not know, from cultures they could scarcely identify on a global atlas, and for reasons that did not seem readily apparent. From the frames of reference of those who regard America as enemy, however, several motives appear.

One reason we have already mentioned: America is often a secondary enemy. In its role as trading partner and political ally, America has a vested interest in shoring up the stability of regimes around the world. This has often put the United States in the unhappy position of being a defender and promoter of secular governments regarded by their religious opponents as primary foes. In Iraq, the United States was behind the creation of a new democratically elected secular government in 2004 that put Shi'a in power and inadvertently marginalized Sunni Muslims. In Egypt, following the Arab Spring in 2011, both Muslim Brotherhood and military regimes blamed the United States for meddling in Egyptian politics. Earlier, a Muslim Egyptian sheikh had told his followers that "America is behind all these un-Islamic governments," arguing that the purpose of American political and economic support was "to keep them strong" and to try to "defeat the Islamic movements."[57] Following an unsuccessful military coup in Turkey in 2016, rumors were rife that the United States' Central Intelligence Agency

must have been behind the plot. In the case of Iran prior to the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini saw the shah and the American government linked as evil twins: America was tarred by its association with the shah, and the shah, in turn, was corrupted by being a "companion of satanic forces"—that is, of America.[58] When Khomeini prayed to his "noble God for protection from the evil of every wicked traitor" and asked Him to "destroy the enemies," the primary traitor he had in mind was the shah and the chief enemy America.[59] In the case of Iran, there is indeed evidence that the United States had participated in the overthrow of a previous government when it helped to enthrone the shah of Iran in place of a democratically elected regime led by Mohammad Mossadeq, who the U.S. officials at the time thought was leading Iran in the direction of the socialist bloc.

A second reason America is regarded as enemy is that both directly and indirectly it has produced and supported modern culture. In a world where villagers in remote corners of the world increasingly have access to MTV, Hollywood movies, and the internet, the images and values that have been projected globally have been American. The young supporters of ISIS used the modern technology of Twitter, YouTube, and the dark web to communicate their messages, but often their attacks were on the superficiality and materialism of European and American culture.

It was this cultural threat that brought an orthodox rabbi, Manachem Fruman, who lived in a Jewish settlement on the West Bank of Israel near Hebron, to regular meetings with Hamas-related mullahs in nearby villages. I visited Fruman in his humble quarters in a settlement near a Palestinian village where he told me that he and the mullahs from the neighboring Palestinian towns often met, and agreed about the degradation of modern urban values; they also concurred over which country was ultimately responsible. When the mullahs asserted that the United States was the "capital of the devil," Rabbi Fruman told me, he could agree.[60] In a similar vein, Mahmud Abouhalima told me he was bitter that Islam did not have influence over the global media the way that secular America did. America, he believed, was using its power of information to promote the immoral values of secular society.[61]

The third reason for the disdain of America is economic. The World Trade Center symbolized America's global economic reach, and even prior to 9/11 bin Laden had identified economic exploitation as one aspect of western domination over the Muslim countries of the Middle East that needed to be countered. The leaders of ISIS have also regarded