

## Tony Shaw, 'Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* and Terrorism on Film'

French paratroopers torturing prisoners with a blowtorch and electrodes. An Arab boy, barely in his teens, calmly gunning down a policeman in broad daylight. Ennio Morricone's heart-rending funereal score playing over an aerial shot of the carnage wrought by a *pieds noir* bomb in the Casbah. The charismatic Colonel Mathieu lecturing journalists about propaganda and censorship. A freeze-frame of two FLN youngsters who have just crashed an ambulance into a bus queue. A close-up of a French boy licking his last ever ice-cream as the café's clock ticks down to explosion time. The faces and sounds of Arab women ululating as even tanks fail to hold back the cause of Algerian independence.

Scholars of terrorism will immediately identify these as moments from *The Battle of Algiers*, Gillo Pontecorvo's classic cinematic account of the Algerian National Liberation Front's struggle against French colonial occupation in the mid-1950s. When it was released in 1966, Pontecorvo's black-and-white docudrama was simultaneously vilified and hailed for picturing terrorists as freedom fighters and for doing something that no other film had yet dared: depict and defend political violence against governments and civilians. Over the past fifty years, *The Battle of Algiers* has been extolled as a model for revolutionary action by paramilitary groups around the world, including the Irish Republican Army and Palestine Liberation Organisation. Conversely, the film has also been appropriated as a counter-insurgency training manual, and was famously screened at the US Defence Department in August 2003 to help fight the increasingly bloody 'war on terror' in Iraq. These actions testify to Pontecorvo's skill in vividly recreating the Algerian War in cinéma-vérité style, to the durability of *The Battle of Algiers'* affecting images, and to the film's exploration of both the reasons for and costs of terrorism. All of this helps to explain why *The Battle of Algiers* is so frequently cited as the greatest film ever made about terrorism and, indeed, as one of the most influential political movies in history.<sup>1</sup>

This essay critically examines *The Battle of Algiers'* status as *the go-to* film about terrorism. Focusing less on the movie's well-known political legacy, it instead investigates *The Battle of Algiers'* impact on and place in the international cinema of terrorism. The essay pinpoints connections between *The Battle of Algiers* and other terrorist films made before and after the mid-1960s, and sets *The Battle of Algiers'* treatment of political violence within the wider history of the relationship between cinema and terrorism. The essay explains what made *The Battle of Algiers* such a distinctive and important film in the 1960s, and how filmmakers have learned from and misused it in the decades since. The essay concludes with

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<sup>1</sup> There is a significant literature on *The Battle of Algiers*, including Joan Mellen, *Filmguide to The Battle of Algiers* (London: Indiana University Press, 1973); PierNico Solinas, *Gillo Pontecorvo's The Battle of Algiers* (New York: Scribner's, 1973); Irene Bignardi, 'The Making of *The Battle of Algiers*', *Cineaste*, Vol. 25, No. 2, March 2000, 14-22; Gary Crowds, 'Terrorism and Torture in *The Battle of Algiers*': An Interview with Saadi Yacef', *Cineaste*, 29, 3, Summer 2004, 30-37; Carlo Celli, *Gillo Pontecorvo* (Oxford: Scarecrow, 2005); Paul Haspel, 'Algeria Revisited: Opposing Commanders as Warring Doubles in *The Battle of Algiers*', *Journal of Film and Video*, 58, 3, Fall 2006, 33-42; special issue on *The Battle of Algiers*, *Interventions*, 9, 3, 2007; Jim Dingeman, "'You Cannot Continually Inflict": An Interview with Saadi Yacef', *Framework*, 49, 2, Fall 2008, 48-64; Thomas Riegler, 'Gillo Pontecorvo's Dictatorship of the Truth' – A Legacy', *Studies in European Cinema*, 6, 1, 2009, 47-62.

brief thoughts on what *The Battle of Algiers'* classic status tells us about the nature and limitations of cinematic terrorism.

### Antecedents

*The Battle of Algiers* was by no means the first film to focus on the subject of political violence. Nor was it, perhaps surprisingly for some readers, the first film to defend terrorism. Cinema was born in the 1890s, in the throes of what many scholars call the First Age of Terror. The archives of cinema's silent era show that before the First World War American, British and Danish filmmakers took particular pleasure in condemning the 'anarchist terror' that governments and the popular press feared was spreading like a contagion across the United States and Europe. During the same period, however, some American films dramatized the bravery of Russian nihilists violently challenging Tsarist oppression. Clearly, even at this formative stage of cinematic terrorism, one man's terrorist could easily be another man's freedom fighter depending on the national viewfinder.<sup>2</sup> After the 1917 Russian Revolution, a spate of American films, including D. W. Griffith's French Revolutionary epic *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), equated terrorism with Bolshevism. For their part, early Soviet filmmakers like Lev Kuleshov associated terrorism with capitalist saboteurs and counter-revolutionaries. Other Soviet directors, such as Sergei Eisenstein in films like *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), celebrated the role of the masses in defying Tsarism and in fighting imperialism generally. Gillo Pontecorvo, an Italian Marxist, shared the same outlook years later – hence *The Battle of Algiers'* accent not on individual heroes but on the Algerians' collective fight for independence.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1930s, as many cinemagoers began to enjoy sound as well as vision, screen terrorism continued to reflect and project the prevailing political and diplomatic concerns of the era. A majority of films in Europe tied terrorism to the spy mania that preceded the outbreak of the Second World War. *Sabotage* (1936), Alfred Hitchcock's thriller set in thirties London, is the most important example of this sub-genre. Indeed, thanks to its detailed picture of a terrorist group's modus operandi, the ways in which the film changed Joseph Conrad's Edwardian novel *The Secret Agent* to place a greater emphasis on the visually spectacular actions of terrorists rather than their motives, and, above all, the film's genuinely shocking bus-bombing sequence, *Sabotage* can be classified as the prototypical terrorist feature film.<sup>4</sup> The similarities between Hitchcock's emphasis on the humanity of those on the

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Porton, *Film and the Anarchist Imagination* (London: Verso, 1999), 16-18; Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of Innocence: Sex, Violence, Prejudice, Crime - Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 301-424; Isak Thorsen, "'We Had to Be Careful': The Self-Imposed Regulations, Alterations and Censorship Strategies of Nordisk Films Kompagni 1911-1928', *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, 19, 2010, 112-126; Simon Baker, 'The Anarchist's Doom', BFI screenonline <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1114528/index.html> .

<sup>3</sup> William M. Drew, 'D.W. Griffith's *Orphans of the Storm*: A Re-evaluation', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 18, 2, April 1990, 76-86; Nikolai Izvolov and Natascha Drubek-Meyer, 'Annotations for the Hyperkino Edition of Lev Kuleshov's *Engineer Prite's Project* (1918), Academia Series, Ruscico, 2010', *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, 4, 1, 2010, 65-93; Mellen, *Filmguide*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Paula Marantz Cohen, 'The Ideological Transformation of Conrad's *The Secret Agent* into Hitchcock's *Sabotage*', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 22, 3, July 1994, 199-120; Mark A. Wollaeger, 'Killing Stevie: Modernity, Modernism, and Mastery in Conrad and Hitchcock',

bus who are about to die and Pontecorvo's turning the camera on the faces of people who are about to be killed by FLN bombs placed in a cafe and discotheque in *The Battle of Algiers* has not gone unnoticed by film historians.<sup>5</sup>

In the first two decades after the Second World War, most filmmakers, like Pontecorvo, tended to look at terrorism through the prism of 'resistance'. This often related to the experience of military occupation during the war itself or to the convoluted process of decolonisation that shook the world after 1945. Many post-war Asian films glorified violent resistance to the Japanese empire, including Chinese cinema's first epic, *The Spring River Flows East* (Cai Chusheng/Zheng Junli, 1947).<sup>6</sup> A very different film was Andrzej Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), which explored the ambiguities of politically-motivated murder in Soviet-occupied Poland.<sup>7</sup> John Huston's *We Were Strangers* (1949) engaged explicitly with the revolutionary dynamics of US-dominated 1930s Cuba and was the first Hollywood film to suggest that the killing of civilians was justifiable in violent campaigns against dictatorships.<sup>8</sup> Another Hollywood production, Otto Preminger's *Exodus* (1960), celebrated the violent founding of Israel and quickly established itself as one of the most influential popular accounts of the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>9</sup>

### **A landmark and its immediate descendants**

As important as it is to acknowledge its forebears, *The Battle of Algiers* undoubtedly broke new ground when it appeared six years after *Exodus*. Pontecorvo's two-hour film deserves its special place in the history of cinematic terrorism for a multitude of reasons. First, *The Battle of Algiers* showed what realism and authenticity could be achieved when working outside of a studio system, using prodigious research, non-professional actors, and on-location, newsreel style shooting. The film has the rough-and-ready feel of a combat documentary or an up-to-the-minute television news programme. Related to this, *The Battle of Algiers* incorporated unflinching, highly believable images of violence, including the murder and torture of combatants and non-combatants. Hitchcock's famous bus-bombing sequence in *Sabotage*, for instance, had stopped abruptly at the point of explosion. In contrast, Pontecorvo captures the agony inflicted on an FLN prisoner by a paratrooper's blowtorch by showing it in close-up. Later, he shows us the terrible aftermath of bombings targeted at civilians by dwelling on the victims' bloodied bodies. Here, as in other parts of *The Battle of Algiers*, Pontecorvo eschewed agit-prop, good-versus-evil stereotyping in favour of an even-handed look at events from the French and Algerian perspectives. This sort of balance was

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*Modern Language Quarterly*, 58, 3, September 1997, 323-350; Merritt Abrash, 'Hitchcock's Terrorists: Sources and Significance', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 39, 3, 2011, 165-173.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Prince, *Firestorm: American Film in the Age of Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 24.

<sup>6</sup> Zhiwei Xiao and Yingjin Zhang, *Encyclopedia of Chinese Film* (London: Routledge, 1998), 106, 248.

<sup>7</sup> Janina Falkowska, *Andrzej Wajda: History, Politics, and Nostalgia in Polish Cinema* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), 53-64; Paul Coates, *The Red and the White: The Cinema of People's Poland* (London: Wallflower, 2005), 1-47.

<sup>8</sup> Tony Shaw, 'Hollywood's Changing Takes on Terrorism: Re-viewing John Huston's *We Were Strangers* (1949)', *Journal of Contemporary History*, forthcoming.

<sup>9</sup> Rachel Weissbrod, 'Exodus as a Zionist Melodrama', *Israel Studies*, 4, 1, 1999, 129-152; Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 161-162.

highly unusual in a film about terrorism and lean *The Battle of Algiers* greater power and authority.

On a political-cum-military level, no film before *The Battle of Algiers* had given viewers such a detailed, inside view of the tactics inherent in asymmetric warfare. We get to see the FLN using strikes, killings and appeals to the United Nations as weapons, while the French military smashes the FLN's cell structure on the one hand and gives away bread and chocolates to the Casbah's inhabitants on the other. On top of this, crucially, no film before *The Battle of Algiers* had demonstrated that terrorism was as much the preserve of the state, of democratic governments even, as that of non-state groups. Moreover, Pontecorvo shows us that state-sponsored terrorism is more deadly than that carried out by groups because it often goes on behind closed doors and can call on greater resources. A scene in which a captured FLN leader compares his organisation's use of small basket-bombs with the French military's napalm-bombing of Arab villages brings this point out most clearly. This scene, in which the FLN leader is speaking to French journalists, also alerts us to another important and novel aspect of *The Battle of Algiers*. No film before it had focused so explicitly on the media's propensity to follow official guidance on terrorist activities, nor demonstrated how both those and counter-terrorist activities often pandered to the media's and the public's voyeuristic impulses.

Dialogue is a vital, often overlooked component of *The Battle of Algiers*. Through it, the film encouraged viewers explicitly to question what terrorism is, who might conduct it and by what means, and who got to define the term. *The Battle of Algiers* also gave unprecedented space to exploring terrorists' motives. FLN operatives speak of their oppression at the hands of the colonial-minded French and of there being no alternative to terrorism given the power of the French state. Going further, in a wholly unparalleled way, *The Battle of Algiers* demonstrated the efficacy of terrorism in fostering political consciousness and change. Though the French military wins the battle of Algiers, the FLN ultimately wins the war. The FLN's campaign of violence is the key to the Algerians' long-term struggle and to their independence, which comes a few years later. *The Battle of Algiers* therefore tells us that terrorism is not only justified on occasions, it is absolutely necessary.

*The Battle of Algiers* was very much a product of the 1960s, a decade when wars of liberation were providing the impetus for a revolutionary political cinema in countries like Algeria and when even many mainstream film industries, like Hollywood, were shifting leftwards. This helps to explain the international accolades *The Battle of Algiers* received, including three Academy Award nominations in the United States. Inspired by Pontecorvo's triumph, leftist filmmakers in Europe, Africa and Latin America refashioned *The Battle of Algiers'* anti-colonial and anti-establishment messages for their own ends. Several of them had worked on *The Battle of Algiers* and used its success to open important doors, institutionally and artistically.<sup>10</sup>

It is possible to identify several direct descendants of *The Battle of Algiers*. The most obvious is *Z* (1969), a film made in Algeria by the Greek-born, French-based director Constantin Costa-Gavras. In this and many of his films in the years ahead, Costa-Gavras would borrow freely from Pontecorvo's quasi-documentary technique, siphoning it into the more accessible, commercial mould of conspiracy thrillers tinged with dissident themes. Few directors would make as many films about terrorism as Costa-Gavras and fewer still would

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<sup>10</sup> James Chapman, *Cinemas of the World* (London: Reaktion, 2003), 313-321; Hillier, Jim, *New Hollywood* (New York: Continuum, 1994).

challenge conventional wisdom about who conducts it, how and why.<sup>11</sup> *Z* was loosely based on the 1963 assassination of Greek left-wing activist Gregoris Lambrakis and starred Yves Montand as a prominent politician and doctor whose public murder amid a violent demonstration is covered up by government officials. *Z* was an indictment of Greek fascism and pointed to the terrors visited upon Greece following the military coup of April 1967. *Z* was banned in Greece, mirroring *The Battle of Algiers'* fate in France.<sup>12</sup>

Inspired by working as an assistant on *The Battle of Algiers*, in 1972 the French/West Indian director Sarah Maldoror made the award-winning *Sambizanga*. This was the first feature film to be made in Africa by a woman and the first major film to proffer a feminist perspective on revolutionary terrorism. *Sambizanga* revolved around the ongoing Angolan war of independence, and took its name from a working-class district of Luanda where a notorious Portuguese prison was located and in which the film's hero is confined and eventually tortured to death. The film looked at the background to an assault on the prison in February 1961, which was the Angolans' first coordinated act of armed uprising against the Portuguese, from the point of the view of the hero's wife. *Sambizanga* was shot in the neighbouring People's Republic of Congo under the auspices of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the party that would eventually take power in Luanda in 1975. The film sought to galvanise the Angolan liberation struggle and, like *The Battle of Algiers*, to promote the revolutionary anti-colonial movement generally.<sup>13</sup>

In 1973, Constantin Costa-Gavras collaborated with *The Battle of Algiers'* co-scriptwriter, Italian Franco Solinas, on *State of Siege*. Reconstructing actual events, *State of Siege* centred on the kidnapping and execution of an American, Dan Mitrione, by the radical leftist Tupamaro guerrillas in Uruguay in 1970. Mitrione was working for the Agency for International Development, an American organisation that offered economic and technical support to states in the developing world but also secretly ran Cold War counter-revolutionary operations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Using Mitrione's real-life, week-long interrogation as a backdrop, *State of Siege* on the one hand explored the brutal and tragic consequences of the struggle between Uruguay's right-wing authoritarian government and the Tupamaros, who were responsible for some of the most daring terrorist acts seen in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, the film accused the US government of conducting proxy terrorist campaigns against its ideological enemies in Latin America and violating human rights while claiming to be the leader of the free world. During *State of Siege's* production in Chile, politicians, intellectuals and actors fought bitterly with each other and with Costa-Gavras over the accuracy of the film's portrayal of Latin American terrorism. On its release, *State of Siege* was widely acclaimed as technically outstanding but accused of almost everything politically, from encouraging the assassination of American diplomats to emasculating the Tupamaros. In the longer term, *State of Siege* helped set the stage for a number of movies that critiqued state terrorism and US informal imperialism in and beyond the 1970s.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tony Shaw, *Cinematic Terror: A Global History of Terrorism on Film* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 102-122.

<sup>12</sup> John J. Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras: The Political Fiction Film* (Philadelphia, PA: Associated University Presses, 1984), Ch. 4; 'Z', *Image et Son*, 228, 1 May 1969, 21-29.

<sup>13</sup> Samba Diop, 'Sambizanga', in Blandine Stefanson and Sheila Petty (eds.), *Directory of World Cinema: Africa* (Bristol: Intellect, 2014), 236-238.

<sup>14</sup> Shaw, *Cinematic Terror*, 102-119.

Less well known than *State of Siege* but another early 1970s French-language film of note that borrowed from *The Battle of Algiers* is *Orders*. A 1974 Canadian docudrama directed by Michel Brault, *Orders* looked back at the clash between the Canadian authorities and the radical separatist organisation, the Front de Libération du Québec, during the so-called October Crisis of 1970, when the Canadian government had imposed a War Measures Act in response to the FLQ's kidnapping of Quebec's Labour Minister, Pierre LaPorte. *Orders* gave voice, as Brault put it, 'to those who suffered the horror' of the War Measures Act, including arbitrary arrests and beatings by the police and military that had occupied Montreal. Like *The Battle of Algiers*, *Orders* leant heavily on interviews with those who had been incarcerated by the authorities and was made in cinéma-vérité style.<sup>15</sup> Thematically and ideologically, *Orders* resembled *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum*, a 1975 West German drama directed by Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta. Centred on a maid infatuated with what turns out to be a member of the Red Army Faction, the film accused the mass media of cynically exploiting public hysteria over terrorism and the police of abusing their counter-terrorist powers. *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* was the first major box-office success of the New German Cinema movement and implied that the resurgence of a reactionary law-and-order mentality in the face of home-grown terrorists was a greater threat to West Germany's fledgling democracy than the terrorists themselves.<sup>16</sup>

### **Thieves, allies and challengers**

Thanks in part to *The Battle of Algiers*, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw filmmakers question the boundaries between conventional politics and terrorism like never before, and suggest that systematic, state-sanctioned violence was more malevolent than the sporadic terrorism carried out by revolutionary groups. As the 1970s gave way to the 1980s, however, the space for these views diminished. In the main, cinematic terrorism, particular in the West, instead fixated, like the news media and terrorism discourse generally,<sup>17</sup> on the threat posed by an 'international terrorism' largely emanating from the Middle East. Out went drama-documentaries, in came action-adventures that provided high-tempo, escapist entertainment centred on a simple narrative of good versus evil. Action took precedence over analysis, meaning that little space was given to considering terrorists' motives or to whether terrorism was a legitimate tool of policy or strategy of combat. Instead, terrorists were presented as either radicalist murderers or criminal extortionists.

Despite this, filmmakers still looked to *The Battle of Algiers* for inspiration or guidance. The result is that Pontecorvo's style and techniques were often put to very different uses from a political point of view. A prime example of this is the genre-defining 1977 American thriller *Black Sunday*, directed by John Frankenheimer. *Black Sunday* was the first Hollywood disaster spectacle that was explicitly about terrorism and the first feature film to show Palestinian

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<sup>15</sup> George Melnyk, *One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 133-135.

<sup>16</sup> Lester D. Friedman, 'Cinematic Techniques in "Lost Honour of Katharina Blum"', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 7, 3, July 1979, 244-252.

<sup>17</sup> Susan L. Carruthers, *The Media at War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 157-172; Brigitte L. Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented 'Terrorism'* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

terrorists on American soil. Its narrative focused on a Black September plot to punish the United States for supporting Israel by killing thousands of Americans at the annual Super Bowl event via an airship armed with steel rifle darts. During *Black Sunday's* pre-production, Frankenheimer and producer Robert Evans were captivated by *The Battle of Algiers*, thinking, on first viewing, that it was a collection of slices of real-life newsreel footage. Even after discovering the truth, and ditching Pontecorvo's shaky hand-held technique, Frankenheimer still ran *The Battle of Algiers* eight times for his crew to teach them the value of aesthetic realism and to help to give *Black Sunday* that essential '6 o'clock news feeling'. *Black Sunday* was a highly effective combination of fantasy and actuality, and a blockbuster that acquired added resonance in the wake of al-Qaeda's airborne attacks of 11 September 2001.<sup>18</sup>

Another example of directors misappropriating *The Battle of Algiers* is John Milius' late Cold War hit *Red Dawn* (1984). Made during a period when many Hollywood movies depicted terrorists and communists as evil bedfellows, *Red Dawn* centred on the bravery of a group of high-school students resisting a combined Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan invasion of the United States. Unlike *Black Sunday*, there is no evidence that the makers of *Red Dawn* used *The Battle of Algiers* for research purposes, but there are a number of indications that Milius, who had an encyclopaedic knowledge of film, plagiarised Pontecorvo. For instance, when the Russian paratroopers enter the Colorado town of Calumet early on in *Red Dawn* they look remarkably similar to their French counterparts in *The Battle of Algiers*. Later on in the film, the Russian occupation leader explains his tactics designed to crush the young American guerrillas using almost exactly the same vocabulary that Colonel Mathieu employs to justify his methods against the FLN. Reviewing *Red Dawn* in 1984, one American journalist called it 'the most convincing story about popular resistance to imperial oppression since the inimitable *Battle of Algiers*'. *Red Dawn* went on to become a cult classic for the Survivalist Right in the United States and an 'inspiration' for Timothy McVeigh's deadly Oklahoma City bombing of April 1995. In Iraq in late 2003, the US Defence Department used 'Red Dawn' as the codename for its operation to capture the deposed leader Saddam Hussein.<sup>19</sup>

Working against the grain, Constantin Costa-Gavras continued to make films in the 1980s that questioned prevailing wisdom about terrorism and which in many ways sought to update *The Battle of Algiers*. The most controversial and successful of these was *Missing* (1982), which probed the US government's role in the death of President Salvador Allende in the 1973 coup in Chile and the establishment of a right-wing dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet. The US-financed, Academy Award-winning thriller was closely based on the real-life disappearance of American expatriate writer Charles Horman after the coup and his father's discovery that Washington had been systematically involved in death-squad

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<sup>18</sup> Jason Grant McKahan, 'Hollywood Counter-terrorism; Violence, Protest and the Middle East in U. S. Action Feature Films', unpublished PhD thesis, Florida State University, 2009, 128; Robert Cettl, Robert, *Terrorism in American Cinema* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 45-47.

<sup>19</sup> Gross, Larry, 'A Blast From The Past That Continues To Resonate', *Film Comment*, 40, 1, Jan/Feb 2004, 22-23; J. Hoberman, *The Red Atlantis: Communist Culture in the Absence of Communism* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998), 298; 'Ambassador Bremer Briefing from Baghdad', 14 December 2003 <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/12/mil-031214-dod01.htm>

terrorism aimed at eliminating left-wing opposition.<sup>20</sup> *Missing* offered a trenchant critique of the United States' whole Cold War machine and anticipated campaigners like Noam Chomsky who argued in the later 1980s that Washington had exported a 'culture of terrorism' to regions such as Latin America and the Middle East. The film forced US Secretary of State Alexander Haig to issue an official denial of US complicity in the Chilean coup, and Costa-Gavras successfully fought a libel suit filed by the US ambassador to Chile during the coup.<sup>21</sup> *Missing's* message about US support for death-squad terrorism continued to reverberate through the 1980s in American films like *Salvador* (1987), made by another devotee of *The Battle of Algiers*, Oliver Stone.<sup>22</sup>

One year after *Missing* had appeared, in 1983, Costa-Gavras turned his attention from Latin America to the Middle East. *Hanna K* was a US-Franco-Israeli melodrama written by Costa-Gavras and Franco Solinas that revolved around an American-Israeli lawyer defending a Palestinian accused of terrorism after trying to regain possession of his family home. The Palestinian's former village has all but disappeared but his ancestral home exists as a tourist attraction in a settlement built and lived in by Russian Jews. *Hanna K* was the first film to come out of the United States that reflected the Palestinian perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian issue and which dramatized what Costa-Gavras took to be Israel's (and the West's) paranoia about Arabs. *Hanna K* failed commercially but was described as 'a statement of great and lasting significance' by the well-known advocate for Palestinian rights, Edward Said. In a documentary made a decade later, Said appropriated *The Battle of Algiers* for the Palestinian cause. Claiming that Pontecorvo had long considered making a film about the Palestinian conflict, Said argued that such a project would have been 'the logical contemporary extension of the political situation represented in *The Battle of Algiers*'.<sup>23</sup>

The centenary of cinema in the mid-1990s saw the appearance of an unprecedented number of films about terrorism, movies that cut across genres, styles and national boundaries. Many of these films continued to tell their viewers that terrorists were effectively part of an international criminal network bent on death and destruction. Hollywood reigned supreme in this field, courtesy of international blockbusters like the *Die Hard* series.<sup>24</sup> A second set of films registered the confluence of terrorism and religious fundamentalism during the 1990s, what many commentators called the 'new terrorism'. This trend took a variety of forms, but included a number of seminal Southeast Asian movies, like Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* (1995), that spoke of the threat posed by sectarian violence and politico-

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<sup>20</sup> Michalczyk, *Costa-Gavras*, 215-235; Gary Crowdus, 'The Missing Dossier: An Interview with Costa-Gavras', *Cineaste*, 12, 1, 1982, 30-38.

<sup>21</sup> Noam Chomsky, *The Culture of Terrorism* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1988); Robert Brent Toplin, *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 104-124.

<sup>22</sup> William J. Palmer, *The Films of the Eighties: A Social History* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 133-141; interview with Oliver Stone, 'Five Directors', *The Battle of Algiers* DVD, Disc Two: 'Pontecorvo and The Film' (Criterion Collection 249, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Cheryl Rubenberg, *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 340-342; Richard Porton and Ella Shohat, 'The Trouble with Hanna', *Film Quarterly*, 38, 2, Winter 1984-1985, 50-55; Edward Said (narrator), *Gillo Pontecorvo: The Dictatorship of Truth* (1992), *The Battle of Algiers* DVD, Disc One: 'The Battle of Algiers' (Criterion Collection 249, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Shaw, *Cinematic Terror*, 185-202.

religious terrorism carried out by communal groups. These films conveyed a very different message to earlier Third World films like *The Battle of Algiers* - indeed, to an extent they can be seen as a counterpoint to them. Whereas *The Battle of Algiers* extolled the power of collective, communal political violence, films like *Bombay* utterly condemned it.<sup>25</sup>

As films like *Bombay* focused on 'new terrorism', a third and final category of nineties movies revisited instances of 'old terrorism', often in order to explore the possibilities of bringing an end to present-day political violence. The history of terrorism in Northern Ireland was subjected to particularly intense cinematic scrutiny during the 1990s, when the province was undergoing a difficult 'peace process', and it is interesting to note how *The Battle of Algiers*, now thirty years old, had some influence on this. Irish filmmaker Jim Sheridan, who, with co-writer and former IRA activist Terry George, was at the forefront of this cycle about the Northern Ireland Troubles, professed that Pontecorvo's film had helped shape his whole approach to bringing stories to the screen and his 1993 film *In the Name of the Father* in particular. *In the Name of the Father* fictionalised the famous case of Gerry Conlon, an Irishman wrongfully imprisoned for an IRA pub bombing in England in the 1970s. The film painted a dark, angry picture of human rights violations by a government desperate to deny it was at war, but its main message was that peaceful not violent campaigns for justice were ultimately morally and politically superior. Like *The Battle of Algiers*, *In the Name of the Father* was showered with accolades and awards, and went on to make more money than any other film about the Northern Ireland conflict.<sup>26</sup>

A bleaker message emerged from a lesser known Irish-British film about Protestant paramilitaries in 1970s Belfast, *Nothing Personal* (1995). Its director, Thaddeus O'Sullivan, believed that *The Battle of Algiers* had no match as a study of terrorism but differed with Pontecorvo on the legitimacy of political violence. O'Sullivan rearranged what he saw as the 'incredibly moving piece of music' from *The Battle of Algiers*' bombing scenes for the dramatic opening of *Nothing Personal*, which showed the raw and tragic effects of an IRA no-warning bomb left in a pub. O'Sullivan's aim was to demonstrate the 'sickening' consequences of those activists on both sides of the Loyalist-Republican divide who claimed the right to kill people for their cause. In contrast with those in *The Battle of Algiers*, the terrorists in *Nothing Personal* are trigger-happy fanatics and bigots caught in a vortex of tribal warfare and escalating bloodshed. While Pontecorvo's film's showed terrorism fostering political consciousness and change, O'Sullivan's showed it furthering a cult of sectarian gangsterism.<sup>27</sup>

Ireland's biggest filmmaker of this era, Neil Jordan, also grappled with *The Battle of Algiers* when making his historical epic *Michael Collins* (1996), but from a different perspective. *Michael Collins* dramatized the IRA's battle to free Ireland from British control

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<sup>25</sup> Lalitha Gopalan, *Bombay* (London: BFI, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Sheridan, in conversation at the Irish Film Institute, Dublin, March 2017 <http://ifi.ie/film/the-battle-of-algiersla-battaglia-di-algeri-evening-course-reading-pictures/>; Brian McIlroy, *Shooting to Kill: Filmmaking and the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland* (Richmond, BC: Steveston Press, 2001), 76-82. In 2002, Sheridan co-produced another, documentary-style film about the Northern Ireland Troubles that was widely compared with *The Battle of Algiers*, *Bloody Sunday*. Martin McLoone, 'Bloody Sunday', *Cineaste*, 27, 4, Fall 2002, 42-43; William Arnold, 'Documentary Style "Bloody Sunday" Looks at the 1972 Massacre Through Irish Eyes', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 24 October 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Thaddeus O'Sullivan, 'Images of Liberation', *Sight & Sound*, 7, 3, 1997, 69; Brian Neve, 'Cinema, the Ceasefire and "The Troubles"', *Irish Studies Review*, 5, 20, 1997, 2-8.

following the 1916 Easter Rising and its founder's eventual assassination by his former comrades in 1922. Jordan re-watched *The Battle of Algiers* on several occasions while scripting *Michael Collins* and indeed was encouraged by the film's British producer to construct a Colonel Matheiu-type character through which the audience could more fully understand the British side of things in early twentieth-century Ireland. Jordan refused to do this, but more importantly also felt that Pontecorvo had effectively told a 'lie' in making a film that showed, as the Irishman put it, 'the unstoppable movement of a people towards concepts like "freedom" and "nationhood"'. Jordan wanted *Michael Collins* to be 'truer' than *The Battle of Algiers* by taking into account how bloody independence struggles, while justifiable, often led to even more violent civil wars, as had been the case in Ireland and more recently in Algeria itself.<sup>28</sup> *Michael Collins* sought to do this by capturing the coexistence in Michael Collins' character of warm, caring attributes with the capacity to be utterly ruthless in the pursuit of political goals and by Collins' murder by those who felt he had sold out to the British by signing an agreement that divided Ireland in two. Despite Jordan's attempts to distinguish his film from Pontecorvo's, a number of commentators likened the two, especially *Michael Collins*' defence of anti-colonial violence. 'I understand how the French must have felt in the Sixties on seeing Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*,' one liberal British journalist wrote.<sup>29</sup> For Ireland, *Michael Collins* was every bit a landmark that *The Battle of Algiers* had been for Algeria. In its sympathetic portrayal of a terrorist-turned-peacemaker, *Michael Collins* shed light on a filmmaker's efforts to eliminate political violence in his country by actively engaging in an ongoing peace process.<sup>30</sup>

### **New life in a new age**

Al-Qaeda's globally-televised terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC on 11 September 2001 opened up yet another era in the history of cinematic terrorism. This was not just because those attacks looked, as many people claimed at the time, 'just like a movie' and consequently further blurred the boundaries between fictional and real images of terrorism in the media.<sup>31</sup> Nor was it merely because filmmakers now had to dream up ever more fantastical plots to outdo what the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen provocatively called al-Qaeda's audacious 'work of art'.<sup>32</sup> It was also because every real and filmic act of terrorism for the foreseeable future would inevitably be viewed through the prism of what became known as 9/11. 'New terrorism', that emerging phenomenon in the

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<sup>28</sup> Neil Jordan, *Michael Collins: Film Diary and Screenplay* (London: Vintage, 1996), 4, 16, 30-31; Memo from Susan Richards and Neil to David Puttnam, 'Re Evergreen – Neil Jordan', 5 November 1984, Michael Collins Catalogue, Item 12845, Paper Collection, The Irish Film Archive, Dublin.

<sup>29</sup> Philip French, *Observer*, in Gary Crowds, 'The Screenwriting of Irish History: Neil Jordan's *Michael Collins*', *Cineaste*, 22, 4, 1997, 14-19.

<sup>30</sup> Seamus McSwiney, 'Trying to Take the Gun out of Irish Politics', *Cineaste*, 22, 4, March 1997, 20-24.

<sup>31</sup> B. Ruby Rich, 'After the Fall: Cinema Studies Post-9/11', *Cinema Journal*, 43, 2, 2004, 109-115.

<sup>32</sup> Terry Castle, 'Stockhausen, Karlheinz: The Unsettling Question of the Sublime', *New York Magazine*, 27 August 2011, <http://nymag.com/news/9-11/10th-anniversary/karlheinz-stockhausen/>

1990s, had now unequivocally 'arrived', and a new, Global War on Terror, declared by US President George W. Bush only days later, had come with it.

In the wake of 9/11, few film industries avoided getting embroiled in one way or another in the battle of images that formed such a crucial part of the Global War on Terror. Over the past decade and a half, it is possible to identify three main ways in which cinema has engaged in that battle. *The Battle of Algiers* can be linked to each of these ways, either directly or indirectly, thus extending the film's remarkable longevity. Indeed, taken together with the renewed interest shown in the film in political, military and academic circles, it might be argued that *The Battle of Algiers'* influence is greater now than it has been at any point since the 1960s.

The first and perhaps most obvious way in which cinema has participated in the Global War on Terror is by producing images that politically underpin it. These have largely taken the form of action-adventures or combat movies that, learning the 'lessons' from 9/11, have emphasized the unprecedented nature and scale of the threat posed to the international community by Islamist extremists. Just as the newly-formed Algerian government had sponsored *The Battle of Algiers* for propaganda purposes, many governments have lent their support to these sort of films. Many of these films, like *The Battle of Algiers*, have also been used to restore national confidence dented either by terrorist attacks or by other issues. Many films have also, following the trail blazed by *The Battle of Algiers* but utilising the latest in cinema technology, presented cinema-goers with highly realistic images of asymmetric warfare.<sup>33</sup>

Importantly, this category includes films that either predated 9/11 or that have projected the fear of terrorist attack more generally. A number of these films can be linked to *The Battle of Algiers*. Shots of the US Army marching through the streets of Brooklyn in the 1998 American action thriller about an Islamist attack on New York, *The Siege*, once again readily recall Pontecorvo's imagery of French paratroopers parading through Algiers. When making the 2002 Hollywood thriller about Colombian terrorism in the United States, *Collateral Damage*, director Andrew Davis used *The Battle of Algiers* as his main point of visual reference, particularly when it came to dramatizing the horrendous effects of urban bombing.<sup>34</sup> Some filmmakers on the political left used *The Battle of Algiers* to pass comment on 9/11 directly, often in order to dampen xenophobia or warmongering. For example, the American artist-turned-filmmaker Julian Schnabel presented a screening of *The Battle of Algiers* in Manhattan in 2002. 'I wanted everyone to see that grief is something that has no nationality,' Schnabel said, 'that this kind of sadness of losing a child, losing a family member, is something that is universal'.<sup>35</sup> Another long-time admirer of *The Battle of Algiers*, the British director Ken Loach, contributed to *11' 9" 01 September 11* (2002), a compilation of nine short films made by directors across the world in response to the September 2001 attacks. Loach's short centered on 'the other 9/11', the Chilean coup of 11 September 1973, and placed the United States in the role of a terrorist stamping out socialism.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Shaw, *Cinematic Terror*, 244-64.

<sup>34</sup> Prince, *Firestorm*, 56, 45.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Schnabel, 'Five Directors', *The Battle of Algiers* DVD, Disc Two: 'Pontecorvo and The Film' (Criterion Collection 249, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Tom Lamont, 'Ken Loach: The Film That Changed My Life', *Guardian*, 16 May 2010; Patricia Keeton, 'Re-evaluating the "Old" Cold War: A Dialectical Reading of Two 9/11 Narratives', *Cinema Journal*, 43, 4, Summer 2004, 114-121.

The second main way in which filmmakers have reacted to the Global War on Terror is to burrow beneath its surface, to question some of its key precepts and to explain acts of political violence by getting closer than ever to those who are committing them. This last dimension has been driven principally by the desire to 'get inside the mind' of one of quintessential figures of the new Age of Terror, the suicide bomber. Though *The Battle of Algiers* established some sort of benchmark in looking at terrorism from the terrorist's point of view, it would be wrong to suggest that this new generation of filmmakers is following Pontecorvo's lead. Once again, however, there are some connections.

Production records show that one of the most significant films about suicide terrorism to date, Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now* (2005), a drama set in the Palestinian territories, was profoundly influenced by *The Battle of Algiers*. *Paradise Now* rationally delineates the process of becoming a terrorist and portrays suicide bombers as desperate victims of Israeli occupation.<sup>37</sup> The makers of *Syriana* (2005), the Americans Stephen Gaghan and Steven Soderbergh, both cited *The Battle of Algiers* (and Costa-Gavras' *Z*) as influences. *Syriana* is a complex geopolitical thriller that connects terrorism to US arms trafficking in the Middle East. Soderbergh regarded *The Battle of Algiers* as the 'Rosetta Stone' of filmmaking and in 2008 made another movie that subverted mainstream views about political violence, a two-part biopic of the Argentine Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara titled *Che*.<sup>38</sup> In 2012, the renowned Indian director/producer Mira Nair made *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, citing *The Battle of Algiers* as her inspiration for a film that would seek to 'tell the tale of a global conflict from the other side'. Based on Mohsin Hamid's international best-selling novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* centres on a Pakistani Princeton graduate branded an enemy in the United States after 9/11.<sup>39</sup> Alongside these films, commentators, critics and scholars have linked *The Battle of Algiers* with many others politically and stylistically, including Anurag Kashyap's heavily-censored *Black Friday* (2004), about the notorious Bombay bombings of 12 March 1993. Other commentators in 2004 saw fit to compare the torture scenes in *The Battle of Algiers* with the recently-publicised photographs of American soldiers abusing Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib prison.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Paradise Now* production material, Augustus Film Archive, Amsterdam; Hania Nashef, 'Demythologizing the Palestinian in Hany Abu-Assad's *Omar* and *Paradise Now*', *Transnational Cinemas*, 7, 1, 2016, 82-95.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Soderbergh, 'Five Directors', *The Battle of Algiers* DVD, Disc Two: 'Pontecorvo and The Film' (Criterion Collection 249, 2004); Stephen Farber, 'A Half Dozen Ways To Watch The Same Movie', *New York Times*, 13 November 2005; Omar P. L. Moore, 'Steven Soderberg, Interpreting Che Guevara Via Romantic Lenses', *The Popcorn Reel*, 25 January 2009 <http://www.popcornreel.com/htm/soderche.htm>

<sup>39</sup> James Lamont, 'A Radical Hard Sell: Mira Nair's "The Reluctant Fundamentalist"', *Financial Times*, 19 April 2013; Interview with Nair, 'Five Directors', *The Battle of Algiers* DVD, Disc Two: 'Pontecorvo and The Film' (Criterion Collection 249, 2004).

<sup>40</sup> Kirk Honeycott, 'Black Friday', *Hollywood Reporter*, 5 May 2005; Guatam Chintamani, "'The Battle of Algiers" and How the Moving Image Distorts the Perception of Reality', *Swarajya*, 16 September 2016 <https://swarajyamag.com/culture/the-battle-of-algiers-and-how-the-moving-image-distorts-the-perception-of-reality>; Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez, 'The Battle of Algiers: 1966 Film Depicting Algerian War of Independence Against French Occupation Parallels Brutal U.S. Occupation of Iraq', *Democracy Now!*, 9 November 2005 [http://www.democracynow.org/2005/11/9/the\\_battle\\_of\\_algiers\\_1966\\_film](http://www.democracynow.org/2005/11/9/the_battle_of_algiers_1966_film) .

The third and final way in which filmmakers have reacted to the Global War on Terror is obliquely, through allegory. Since 9/11, Hollywood movies especially have abounded with aliens, super-villains, comic-book figures and monsters, many of which can be and have been linked to the Age of Terror. Using increasingly sophisticated special effects, many of these symbolic terrorists bring death and destruction on an unprecedented scale and suggest that contemporary terrorism is uniquely menacing. Such films are in many respects the antithesis of *The Battle of Algiers* and treat terrorism either as a plot device or civilisation's 'other'.<sup>41</sup>

However, a smaller number of science-fiction or fantasy films have challenged this Manichean interpretation of terrorism, including some associated with *The Battle of Algiers*. Director James McTeigue cited *The Battle of Algiers* as vital when preparing the British-American film *V for Vendetta* (2005). McTeigue's dystopian thriller is set in London in the 2020s and centres on a mysterious anarchist freedom fighter who uses elaborate terrorist acts to incite revolution against a neo-fascist regime. The Guy Fawkes mask used in *V for Vendetta* soon became a well-known symbol for anti-establishment protest groups across the world, including the Occupy movement.<sup>42</sup> Director Christopher Nolan recommended *The Battle of Algiers* to his crew during the filming of his third Batman movie, *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012), stating that no film had better 'captured the chaos and fear of an uprising'. The uprising in *The Dark Knight Rises* centres on a 'terrorist', Bane, with whom many viewers can sympathize, his aim being to free the downtrodden and oppressed of Gotham who have been marginalised and forgotten. *The Dark Knight Rises* significantly blurs the dichotomy between good and evil, terrorist and freedom fighter, just as Heath Ledger's The Joker had in *The Dark Knight* (2008). Bane forms his rebel army in Gotham's underground sewers, drawing parallels with the FLN's clever use of the maze-like corridors of the Casbah in Pontecorvo's film.<sup>43</sup> Lastly, in 2016, *The Battle of Algiers* even entered the *Star Wars* universe via Gareth Edwards' *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, a space opera that details the Rebel Alliance's attempts to steal the Empire's Death Star plans. Edwards borrowed heavily from *The Battle of Algiers* politically and stylistically in order to bring a darker tone to the *Star Wars* franchise. Rather than showing the Rebels as squeaky-clean heroes, *Rogue One* shows their extremist, violent side, including killing civilians. Numerous commentators read *Rogue One* as a movie that wanted audiences

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<sup>41</sup> Pollard, Tom, *Hollywood's 9/11: Superheroes, Supervillains, and Super Disasters* (London: Paradigm, 2011); Kevin J. Wetmore, *Post-9/11 Horror in American Cinema* (London: Continuum, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Warner Bros. production material for *V for Vendetta* [http://web.archive.org/web/20060315180047/http://vforvendetta.warnerbros.com/cmp/prod\\_notes\\_ch\\_02.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20060315180047/http://vforvendetta.warnerbros.com/cmp/prod_notes_ch_02.html); Jonathan Jones, 'Occupy's V for Vendetta Protest Mask is a Symbol of Festive Citizenship', *Guardian*, 4 November 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Jonathan Lewis, 'Good Guys and Bad Guys: The Battle of Algiers and The Dark Knight Rises', *OpenDemocracy*, 20 December 2012 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/jonathan-lewis/good-guys-and-bad-guys-battle-of-algiers-and-dark-knight-rises>; Oliver Lyttleton, 'Christopher Nolan Talks The Politics and Influences of "The Dark Knight Rises"', 24 July 2012 <http://www.indiewire.com/2012/07/christopher-nolan-talks-the-politics-influences-of-the-dark-knight-rises-more-from-the-films-press-tour-108072/>.

to see the blurry line between freedom fighter and terrorist. Several commentators urged the uninitiated to watch *The Battle of Algiers* to see that line grow even fuzzier.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* is the stand-out classic film about terrorism. It has achieved that status for several reasons. The film's visual and aural qualities have stood the test of time. The film has been cited as both a recruiting agent by paramilitaries and as an anti-terrorist training manual by governments. The film has been appropriated and misappropriated by filmmakers throughout its fifty-year life. And, the arbiters of excellence, the critics and scholars, have revered the film, in part because it accords with many of their views and concerns.

But *The Battle of Algiers* is also a classic of cinematic terrorism because it is an outlier. Despite this essay having demonstrated its influence on other filmmakers, we should not lose sight of the fact that most movies about terrorism have borne little or no resemblance to *The Battle of Algiers*. Over the past century, and especially since the 1980s, most films about terrorism have focused on action at the expense of analysis, the 'wow' not the why. They have reduced complex issues to human interest narratives, and have emphasised the threat of terrorism via enthralling images of destruction. In short, cinema for the most part has depoliticised terrorism, and filmmakers have presented perspectives of terrorism that are aligned with the interests of the prevailing state, social and economic orders in which they are institutionally and ideologically located. Most films, in other words, have presented terrorists as non-state actors that threaten the political and social equilibrium via unwarranted, extremist and criminal behaviour.<sup>45</sup>

It should not surprise us that cinema has treated terrorism this way. The film industry is, after all, just that, an *industry* centred on maximising profit often via appeals to the lowest common denominator and beholden to the same economic and political forces as any other mass medium. Yet appreciating this fact does not make cinema's narrow, politically limited take on terrorism any less important. After all, films have the power to spell out what literature, say, can only suggest. Films can *show* people visually and aurally what terrorism is and is not and thereby have the potential to give real meaning to an activity-cum-

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<sup>44</sup> Andrew Ross, 'Rogue One: A New Frontier in Long Battle over the Star Wars Brand', *Independent*, 13 December 2016 <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/rogue-one-star-wars-brand-darth-vadar-felicity-jones-george-lucas-a7472571.html>; Matthew Gault, "'Rogue One' Shows Us The Dark Side of The Rebellion', *War is Boring*, 17 December 2016 <https://warisboring.com/rogue-one-shows-us-the-dark-side-of-the-rebellion-d6aebf38bf6e#.the.filmk275ouvg6>.

<sup>45</sup> Over the decades, generally speaking television has followed a similar trajectory in its treatment of terrorism. However, more recently there is evidence of greater creativity on the small screen. American shows like *24* (2001-2014) said next to nothing about why people might resort to terrorism, but other television series have taken a different, more complex approach more along the lines of *The Battle of Algiers*. These include *Homeland* (USA, 2011-), *The Honourable Woman* (UK, 2014) and *Fauda* (Israel, 2016). See Stacy Takacs, *Terrorism TV: Popular Entertainment in Post-9/11 America* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2012); Brian Lowry, 'The Honorable Woman', *Variety*, 29 July 2014, 92. Debra Kamin, 'Thrill Ride', *Variety*, 29 September 2015, 68.

phenomenon that most people experience solely on an imaginary level. *The Battle of Algiers* has excelled at this, but most films have not. History indicates they are not likely to do so in the future either.