

BOOK REVIEWS

Rapoport, David C., and Yonah Alexander (eds.). *The Morality of Terrorism. Religious and Secular Justifications*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982.

It is all too easy to condemn terrorism with emotional tirades against the immorality of tactics which cause death and injury to innocent bystanders. However, such condemnation, while understandable and somehow satisfying to the name-callers, is a poor substitute for sober analysis of the phenomenon of terrorism.

Terrorism, at least some of it, does have a philosophy, does have a rationale, and does have an ethical component. Occasionally terrorism may even have an ethical basis. Not to acknowledge these facts may appeal to governments or to those whose views are formed by attending primarily to sensationalist news reports, but it will do nothing to provide informed policy guidance which may reduce the incidence of terrorism or minimize its impact.

The burgeoning literature on terrorism has, thus far, paid scant attention to the moral aspects of such political violence. Similarly, terrorism's historical dimension has been largely overlooked. In *The Morality of Terrorism*, Rapoport and Alexander have brought together a series of essays which give prominence to these two aspects of the study of terrorism.

The volume is organized into three sections dealing, respectively, with religious terror, state terror, and rebel terror. Each section is preceded by an introductory essay authored by Rapoport. In the collection on religious terror, Rapoport, contributing an article in addition to the introduction, begins with an examination of the relationship between tactics and morality which inspired the Sicarii and the Zealots in their revolt against Rome in the first century A.D. His analysis emphasizes the powerful motivation generated by religious fervour, but reminds the reader that even driven individuals need not lose sight of, or control over, the purposiveness of terror. The fact that, in the revolt against Rome, terrorism was eventually counter-productive had a profound influence on subsequent Jewish thought and weighed heavily in the calculations of some twentieth century Jewish terrorists when deciding upon their targets. This influence is discussed briefly by Rapoport in a postscript in his essay, but it deserves a full treatment in any comprehensive coverage of the morality of terrorism.

The remaining contributions on religious terror sit together somewhat uneasily. Vytautas Kavolis deals with terrorism only obliquely, focusing rather on the importance of Satanic beliefs in the onset of millenarian movements. Moshe Amon examines the importance of myths and, specifically, attempts to show how the destruction of beliefs central to Western religions is related to modern terrorism. Both pieces are rather disappointing in their failure to move beyond a classical and

philosophical discourse. A rather more interesting piece by John Dugard on the origins and current status of the concept of "just war" provides some useful insights into the problems in international law occasioned when one party to the conflict is not a state. But, in spite of the origins of the concept in early Christian thought, the discussion seems out of place in a section on religious terror. Probably the most relevant, and certainly the most topical, piece in the section is John Pottenger's essay on liberation theology. The religious dimension and the influence of the priests cannot be ignored, particularly when considering revolutionary activity and terrorism in South and Central America. Pottenger provides a concise picture of the dilemmas facing the Church in reconciling traditional Christian ethics with the ineffectiveness of non-violent methods of overcoming social injustice.

The second section of the book concentrates on state terror, a topic which is becoming increasingly recognized as perhaps the most important in the study of terrorism. Recent events, such as the siege at the Libyan People's Bureau in London and the announcement of American plans to attack terrorists pre-emptively or to inflict punishment on states which sponsor terrorism, have alerted a wider audience to the dangerously destabilizing effects that state terrorism might have on international relations. Surely an urgent research priority must be to understand the moral calculations made by states who use terror as an instrument of foreign policy. Equally important, especially in terms of human rights, is an understanding of the moral implications of a state using terror to control its own people.

It is the latter subject which is addressed in this section. Chapters dealing with Revolutionary France, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union (the latter being an interesting but unauthenticated and anonymously authored "document" which purports to be a 1940s Soviet blueprint for "general terror") provide analyses of the classic cases of state terror. The section would have been greatly improved, however, by inclusion of material on contemporary terror regimes and the use of terror as an element in foreign policy.

The final section of the book examines rebel terror, that side of terrorism to which the lion's share of attention is usually devoted. Three chapters deal with the ethical systems of terrorists, their purposes and their effects. The highlight here is Zeev Ivianski's penetrating analysis of the moral quandaries which faced the Russian terrorists of the late nineteenth century. His argument that expediency necessarily overtakes the limits presumably set by terrorist ethics is particularly relevant when applied to some major contemporary terrorist organizations. In succeeding chapters Alfred Louch, arguing that terrorism is inherently immoral, points out some of the possible defences of terrorism, and Maurice Tugwell provides some nice historical examples of the use of guilt transference by terrorists which have clear implications for the design of responses to terrorism.

The final three chapters confront the issue of how democratic societies can fight terrorism without destroying individual rights in the process. Robert Gerstein and Paul Wilkinson ask what moral principles

should shape our legal rules for dealing with terrorism and whether the domestic or international system should have jurisdiction. The concluding essay, by George Quester, poses the question "Why be so appalled at terrorism?" and warns that societies must assess the costs of various modes of response to terrorism as well as the cost of terrorism itself. It is a timely and salient warning.

There can be little doubt that terrorism is as much a moral problem as a political or strategic one and yet little serious attention has been paid to the moral aspects of the phenomenon. For this reason the appearance of *The Morality of Terrorism* is most welcome, though it is by no means a definitive examination. Some contributions seem a little distant from consideration of the real moral issue, while a number of important areas are left untouched. Nonetheless, the essays provide an intelligent and stimulating introduction to a realm which should become a focus of much more analysis and discussion.

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Henze, Paul. *The Plot to Kill the Pope*. New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1983.

Sterling, Claire. *The Time of the Assassins*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983.

Both *The Plot to Kill the Pope* and *The Time of the Assassins* address the abortive attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II, perpetrated by Turkish national Mehmet Ali Agca in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981. Authors Paul Henze and Claire Sterling convincingly repudiate the notion that the assassination attempt was conceived and executed by a "loner" or that it was the fruit of a rightist conspiracy, as disseminated internationally by much of the mass media. More problematic to substantiate, in terms of satisfying the requirements for a conviction in court, is their joint conclusion that the principals behind the material event are the Bulgarian secret services under the direction of their masters in the Kremlin, who regard the Polish Pope as a threat to Soviet domination over Eastern Europe.

Although Henze and Sterling reach the same conclusion, each author pursues a different approach in the quest for a rationale behind this emblematic terrorist attack. It is precisely because of the difference in approach that the two books complement each other and should be read together.

Consistent with his background as student of history, diplomat, and staff member of the U.S. National Security Council, Paul Henze's scholarly approach is highly systematic. He collects all available facts from open sources and, by way of recapitulation, appends a detailed chronology beginning in 1958 — the year of the would-be assassin's birth