

The Ecology of Terrorism

A MAJOR CONCERN of men in the 1970s is the expanding element of destructiveness in our mid-20th century culture. It may well be more than a coincidence that the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened the Security Council to deal with the problem of air piracy during the same week in which a U.N. Conference in Stockholm discussed the current ecological menace.

Of course, this civilised concern is by no means new. "Terror in the compound," said Plotinus 17 centuries ago, "is the dread of dissolution . . ." Yet the combination of violence and modern technology transforms the nature of the contemporary phenomenon. More than that, the application of classical terminology to a radically different situation persists in obscuring new and pertinent analyses and impedes, in our view, the elaboration of appropriate preventive and control measures.

The investigation of terrorism is the study of power *in extremis*. There used to be a belief that some cultures are prone to terrorism and others immune, but this is now felt to be both false and pernicious. As one student of terrorist movements has observed, despite "historic familiarity and despite the importunate experience of the past three decades, which were punctuated by terroristic outbreaks and burdened by régimes of terror, this form of power remains at the edges of scientific inquiry . . ." ¹

¹ E. V. Walter, *Terror and Resistance, A Study of Political Violence* (1969), p.3. E. V. Walter, "Theories of Terrorism and Classical Tradition," paper delivered to the American Political Science Association (Sept. 6-10, 1966, New York City).

² E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (1959). See also: Max Nomad, *Aspects of Revolt* (1961).

³ The information in this and the following paragraphs is based on the *Proceedings of the Symposium on Federal Practice & Aviation*, at Southern Methodist University School of Law (Dallas, Texas), in *Journal of Air Law & Commerce* (Vol. 37, no. 2), Spring 1971, pp. 229-233.

The phenomenon of banditry has been studied, but has remained restricted to the analysis of bandit activity in societies of the past. A vast literature is developing on the activities of urban and jungle guerrillas, but it deals mostly with terrorism in relation to the various ideological trends with which it is believed to be associated. Eric Hobsbawm notes in his book on *Primitive Rebels* that these bandits of the past "could at best, like Moses, discern the promised land, but never reach it . . ." ² They were either too weak or too isolated to make a durable impact on the societies in which they operated; when, on occasion, they did succeed, by allying themselves with successful revolutionary movements, they soon found themselves overpowered by the new establishment.

Today there is growing concern within the international community over the increase of organised violence and murder. But there is still no proper response, no due proportion between the alarm of the international community exposed to the daily raids of modern outlaws, and its collective response to them. This disparity is not due to the absence of appropriate technical means to curb air piracy, or political terrorism, or other forms of modern banditry, but—among other factors—to a serious lack of understanding of the nature and implications of modern violence and of its wider, cumulative effects.

TAKE AIR PIRACY as an example. We can observe that the curves of hijacking have risen steeply since the first international agreement to cope with the unlawful seizure of aircraft. ³ Between 1948 and 1958 there were 21 successful cases of hijacking—an average of 2.1 per year. In the next five years the annual average rose to 3.3 per annum. This was, then, a "figure" deemed worthy of expert consideration, and it initiated the 1963 *Tokyo Convention on Offences and Certain Acts Committed on Board Aircraft*. Far from curbing air piracy, this conference seems

only to have infused new life and confidence into *de facto* and potential law-breakers. The Tokyo Proceedings carefully avoided laying any positive obligation to punish the offenders on the state to which the hijacker travelled. In the following five years the annual average for hijacking jumped to 7.2. Still no international legal action was invoked, with the result that in the subsequent two years (1969–70) the average jumped to 50.5 successful hijacking operations per year, involving 23 nations, regardless of geographical location, economic philosophy, or political persuasion. They covered a wide range of countries, e.g. the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., Algeria, Thailand, Switzerland, Philippines, Poland, Turkey, and Italy. Israel, which is the main target of Arab terrorism, was the victim in only one case throughout this period.

This situation led to the *Draft Convention on Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft* at the Diplomatic Conference at the Hague in December 1970—a draft which is yet to be ratified by the minimum number of governments required to make it an effective international instrument. It required the butchery of innocent bystanders at Lydda Airport in May 1972 by Japanese assassins affiliated with Arab terrorist organisations to provoke an almost complete world-wide strike of air-line pilots and then a mild resolution by the Security Council.

Why the absence of a stronger reaction? This is due to a number of causes. The jurist and Nobel Prize-winner, René Cassin, has pointed out that one of the difficulties in dealing with the situation was the inability of international society to deal with guerrilla-style activity, which is outside the framework of international law.⁴ In a war which departs systematically from the classic rules, all conceivable means are considered valid for the success of the cause, and the application of any traditional humanitarian principles becomes a dead letter. M. Cassin noted that it might have been possible to prevent the spreading of hijacking outside the American continent if the Security Council had not made “the mistake” of recognising the status of “belligerent” for members of the Palestine Resistance Movement (and by implication, other resistance movements), without simultaneously requiring them to abide by the conditions of the *International Convention of the Hague* of 1907 and of the Red Cross of

1949, both of which appeal to certain fundamental humanitarian principles in all armed conflicts.

Another cause militating against a stronger reaction to the new terrorism derives from the convenience of political indulgence. Many governments continue to see the problem of air piracy and international banditry as an aspect of ideological and political struggle in our time which can be localised to certain areas, and in some cases can even be exploited for political gain. In this respect the situation is, again, not radically new. Peter the Great maintained “diplomatic” contact with the pirates of Madagascar in the 18th century; and almost every European state had ambivalent relations with the Moslem pirates of the Barbary Coast of the Maghreb. That similar compromises should arise in our ideologically divided, permissive, and morally selective society is only to be expected.

A third cause is the fact that punishment of terrorism has so far been lenient, perhaps because of the revival of the ransom system, which offers governments an easy alternative to accepting responsibility. The *Lufthansa* deals with the Black September air pirates is a case in point.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, a fundamental difference between outlaws of the past and those of the present. The bandits of old operated with unequal destructive power against the establishment, in a “non-standardised” society. Modern outlaws operate with a destructive power often superior to that of the establishment in a “standardised” society, and on any targets of their own selection. They claim the full protection of the law which civilised society permits them to break and to manipulate to their own advantage. The only way in which the Federal legal authorities could secure the conviction of Chicago’s Al Capone was for the evasion of U.S. income tax. In most countries outlaws are immune from capital punishment regardless of their crime.

For pirate crews in the 18th century the risks of their hazardous trade were immense. When captured they were executed on the spot. They depended for bases and supplies on populations whose range of cooperation was inversely proportional to their level of technological development; they had to confine their activities to marginal sea routes or secondary land targets. Their armaments were light, and they had to compensate for this when facing the enemy with a courage which took a high toll. Last but not

⁴ Interview with Christian Hoche, *Le Figaro* (5 September 1971).

least, the choice of offensive and defensive technology which the pirates could muster was limited. Like their victims, they depended on wind-power for mobility at sea and on horse-power for speed on land; and both relied mainly on cold steel for defence and offence. The bandits had, at best, an ill-organised system of communication, finance, or propaganda. Bandits and pirates were artisans in an increasingly backward trade dependent on crude violence.

MODERN OUTLAWS operate effectively in a totally different environment, with or sometimes without

the help and connivance of powerful political groups or states. The circumstances surrounding the release of the three surviving Munich Olympic murderers implies at least a tacit agreement among the various parties involved. Obviously terrorists can hold their own, and they can in fact convert an old trade into a most successful corporate enterprise, highly rewarding according to its own standards and needs. The direct and the fringe benefits are also such as to make all ideology, *i.e.* the political rationale of modern banditry, quite secondary and often irrelevant to its own self-fulfilling violent goal.

A Modest Proposal

I HAVE NO STATISTICS to hand, but I think I am correct in saying that hijacking has in recent years become a greater threat to aviation than the air-crash. Every conceivable technical precaution is taken against the risk of crashing. No manufacturer would dare to market a plane which was vulnerable to lightning, turbulence or other natural hazards, and no aviation authority would permit such an aircraft to operate. But no one—neither manufacturers nor licensing authorities—seems to have grasped the need to build aircraft that are hijack-proof as well.

These days, gaining control of a plane is child's play for an armed and determined man, still more so for armed and determined groups of men. The flight deck is as readily accessible from the passenger cabin as one room of an apartment from another. The crew are unarmed, and even if they weren't it would be no use—a mid-air gun-battle could spell disaster.

Ever since the word got round, hijackings have become an every-day occurrence. And ever since it also emerged that governments can be brought to their knees by holding the crews and passengers of hijacked planes to ransom, they have also become a paying proposition. One needs no crystal ball to foresee that this novel form of extortion will persist for as long as it remains easy; likewise that the price which the extortioners set on their hostages' survival will steadily increase. Such is the nature of extortion.

ALL THE MEASURES so far taken against air piracy have proved ineffective. Stiff penalties fail to deter criminals whose chances of escape are high. Arming crew-members or carrying armed security-men on every flight (as the Israelis do) can endanger passengers as much as hijackers if it comes to the crunch. The irksome prodding and poking of passengers for concealed weapons—something which happens at German and a few other European airports for a few days or weeks after every hijack (and lapses when nothing happens for a while)—has never yet prevented air piracy, if only because such checks cannot be internationally imposed and hijackers are at liberty to board planes at certain

foreign airports where surveillance is less strict. So far, international cooperation against air piracy has foundered on lack of solidarity. Without such cooperation there would be little point, for example, in refusing to touch down at airports in Arab countries. The "Black September" activists could go aboard elsewhere; nor is there any assurance that their example will not be followed in other countries. Desperadoes are a universal phenomenon.

AS FAR AS I CAN SEE, there is no legal or political, military or police method of putting an end to air piracy. But mightn't there be a technical one? Is it really beyond us, with all our advanced technology, to construct hijack-proof aircraft if we seriously set our minds to it?

I am no aircraft manufacturer, but even a layman can see that hijackings would at least be rendered very much more difficult if the flight decks were permanently sealed off from the passenger area by a bullet-proof partition. And why not? One could always install a fridge and a WC in the inaccessible cockpit.

Admittedly, this would leave hijackers free to menace passengers or stewardesses and use them as an indirect threat to compel pilots, whom they could no longer get at, to alter course. But there might be a remedy for this too—a gas-duct operable from the pilot's seat which could, if need be, fill the passenger cabin with a fast-working but harmless anaesthetic. Passengers and highjackers would complete their journey asleep and could be properly sorted out at the other end. Not a pleasant prospect from the passenger's point of view, granted, but considerably less unpleasant than hours or days of mortal terror spent as hostages in criminal hands.

To render all passenger aircraft hijack-proof by these or similar means would naturally cost a mint of money—but so does the present state of affairs. Besides, the first air-line able to announce "Our planes are hijack-proof" would certainly recoup its expenditure.

Sebastian Haffner

BANDITRY AND TERRORISM have much in common. Banditry operates outside the law, with a profit motive, employing terror when necessary. Terrorism *per se* is a violent alternative to legitimate political, economic, and military power. This alternative is anti-establishment by definition, regardless of motivation or merit. The motives behind terrorism vary and are not always discernible; and the border-lines between banditry and terrorism are not clear-cut since motives tend to shift. Recall the classic examples. Pirates could achieve respectability and join the legitimate establishment by being commissioned as privateers. Some, like Sir Henry Morgan, alternated between privateering and buccaneering at their convenience. The Mafia started out as a national liberation movement and eventually organised international crime.

Modern terrorism, like the older violent alternatives to legitimate power, seems to require a minimal critical mass in order to be effective. By "minimal critical mass" we refer to some function of the multiple of the number of people involved and the means at their disposal. Modern technology has increased the magnitude of the means in the equation, making it possible for extremely small groups to achieve the minimal critical mass necessary for the perpetuation of operational terrorism. This creates, as we have earlier suggested, an ideological misconception regarding the nature and limits of political violence which modern terrorists exploit. Populistic revolutionaries from the Bolsheviks to the Castroists, and including the Carbonari of the old Italian *Risorgimento* as well as the "Weatherman" of the new American scene, all required the support of the many in order to achieve at least a minimal functional mass so that they could function: the means at their disposal were limited. Modern groups—*e.g.*, the Tupamaros of Uruguay, the Ustachsi of Croatia, the Dev Geng of Turkey, the Tudeh of Iran—claim to be National Revolutionists seeking the liberation of their countries through organised violence. Regardless of their social bases they achieve an operational minimal critical mass with limited membership—due to modern global technology. Other terrorist groups such as the "Red Army" of Japan, the Baader-Meinhof-Mahler group of West Germany, the Popular Front for Palestine Liberation and, more recently, Black September, all claim to

believe that "national liberation" can better be achieved through "world revolution", whatever this may mean. But they also owe their existence to modern technological complexities.

Let us look beyond their claims. Modern terrorists who style themselves "revolutionaries" may in fact be something quite different. D. Wechsler's description of the *Sociopath*⁵ may help one to understand some of the features involved. Sociopaths "generally have a grasp of social situations, but they are inclined to manipulate them to their own advantage in an anti-social way. . . ." Wechsler adds:

The Sociopath's test performance as a whole is characterized by a breeziness and self-assurance which contrast markedly with that of a neurotic. He is not bothered by contradictions, and, when not ornery, takes everything in his stride. His abstract thinking is generally below average, and this is frequently indicated by a low score on the Similarities Test. . . . One feature common to both male and female adolescent sociopaths is a relatively low score on the Information Test. This may reflect in part educational retardation or the tendency of many sociopaths to disregard those aspects of available knowledge (reality) which do not lead to the satisfaction of his immediate needs.

REGARDLESS OF THE QUESTION of mental norms, or of ideological or pecuniary motivation, the fact is that modern outlaws do achieve the minimal critical mass required for the realisation of their goal with a limited specialised membership. The standardisation of modern air communications makes the links of the system an easy target for air pirates. Technical complexity and sophistication increase the element of "sensitivity", and render some targets practically indefensible—particularly since the social, physiological, and legal defence-mechanisms have not developed commensurately, as the recent events in Munich have demonstrated. Under these circumstances what is surprising is not that air piracy exists, but that it has not become a more common feature of air communications today in view of its flamboyant successes and the increasing international dependence on air traffic.

Turning to the infra-structure of destructive capacity at the disposal of the modern outlaw, the massacre at Lydda Airport (carried out by three Japanese terrorists affiliated to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) is an example of what could happen elsewhere. They could have carried out a more serious operation by obtaining their weapons outside the airport, and then firing at any crowd of Israelis anywhere in the country (unless one assumes that

⁵ D. Wechsler, *The Measurement and Appraisal of Adult Intelligence* (1954), 4th ed. p. 176-177.

some kind of ritual murder was involved here). A determined group can, in point of fact, terrify a whole population, e.g., by poisoning wells, using biological weapons. These can easily be acquired today, just as guns or even medium-sized rockets may be bought. General Dayan was being realistic, not fanciful, when he defined the Japanese action as something very akin to a "natural catastrophe." In the case of air piracy, the "airport civilisation" in which terrorists operate favours their activities. It is one "global village", with interchangeable runways and waiting rooms. Not only do air transport, air terminals, and regulations governing air travel become more and more conventional, the external patterns of human behaviour, from pilots to passengers, are becoming increasingly special-

ised and standardised in relation to air transport, quite independent of other cultural values and styles. This has three consequences: (1) the detection of the bandits becomes increasingly difficult in the impersonal society of mass transport; (2) the outlaw's ability to disrupt air traffic—or any other modern standardised process—is increasing proportionally with the functional complexity of the process itself, and parallel to the destructive power at their disposal; and (3) the modern system of mass communication and mass production allows that permanent "marginal" fringe of the population which exists in every society to congregate for the purpose of committing anti-social acts with a facility which did not exist in the past. An operation can be planned in Germany by a

"They Are Among Us"

WE ARE GOING to have to live with the man in the hood for a long time: certainly until the present generation of terrorists, the Black September men and the Provos and the rest, has expended itself in death or defeat; and very likely longer than that, until the force that drives such men, the calculation that such methods can bring them what they want, has been disproved by repeated failure, and they have no more imitators.

This is the new international community of the possessed. It could take years, perhaps even the rest of the lifetime of people who are now barely middle-aged, before this phenomenon is destroyed, or destroys itself. Until then we shall have to live with the possibility of men with concealed faces, and concealed minds, breaking with machine-guns and bombs into the normal life of many people in many different countries. Each success in this sort of operation produces new attempts to imitate it. Of course, there is a genuine political grievance at the root—very far down at the root—of what the Black September movement is trying to do. There were genuine grievances in Ulster too, and Quebec and Uruguay. But the injustices that have undeniably occurred in these places are no different in kind, or in scale, from similar injustices that have existed in the past, and even in our time; far more Germans lost their homes in 1945, for instance, than Arabs in 1948 and 1967. The difference now is the length to which a small number of people are willing to go in order to insist that their own particular remedy for some of these problems should be accepted by everybody else.

THE WORLD ITSELF is no worse than usual; but the obsessed are prepared to do worse things to have their way about it. Modern weapons help them: the day will come when suicidal urban terrorists of a kind the world has not yet seen will have a nuclear device at their disposal. The very sophistication of the modern society that has mounted the recent

Olympics helps them. The immediacy of world communications, especially the television coverage on which all terrorists have come to rely, helps them immeasurably. That is what is new. And so long as they have reason to believe that the methods they use will bring the results they want, the terrorists will go on with their campaigns.

The urban guerrillas who have made themselves part of the world's politics in the past few years are all-or-nothing men: every time they launch an operation they are tossing a coin between a spectacular reversal of fortunes and a crushing defeat. That is the way you have to work when you want to change the world at a stroke. It is why other people cannot afford to let the terrorists come to believe that one more blow, one more shock to civilised nerves, will start to bring them what they want. The test for civilised society is to hang on.

THE THING has happened before, after all. In the last part of the nineteenth century another group of wandering terrorists thought it was in their power to destroy European society; the bombs they planted, and the assassinations they carried out, half-persuaded many people that they could. Then, too, the more far-sighted and scrupulous ones began to have doubts about the methods they were using. Bakunin wrote a cautionary letter to one of the wildest of them, Nechayev, the man who gave Dostoyevsky the idea for "Possessed." Of course passion was essential, he said. But allied to passion there must be reason; the men with grievances should not strike "arbitrarily, in a dream, as is often done by my friend, namely, you". It might almost be an epitaph for the Arabs who killed and died on that Tuesday in Munich. But that letter was written in 1870. It was another 30 years and more before that particular wave of violence spent itself.

Our guerrillas will be with us for a long time yet.

The Economist

Palestine Arab, executed in Israel by terrorists recruited in Japan, with weapons acquired in Italy but manufactured in Russia, supplied by an Algerian diplomat financed with Libyan money.⁶

WE THUS FACE a new problem: a concentration of related minorities of specialised anti-social populations, acting on selected targets of their choice. Because of the ability of modern outlaws to assemble freely (and not necessarily physically, but by electronic communication) they can attack the most vulnerable target, clandestinely and overwhelmingly, literally in a suitcase. Modern terrorism—ideology, and other political rationalisations, notwithstanding—is changing into an independent, self-sufficient, self-fulfilling business organisation. The appeal of so many vested interests, so much built-in power, such great economic and psychological rewards, is helping to create a situation which is no longer an ephemeral and marginal phenomenon of contemporary society. Unless conditions are drastically changed, one can only predict that the strategy and tactics of terrorism will become further entrenched. Such terrorism is *more* dangerous to affluent and ideologically neutral nation-states than to strife-torn societies (Uruguay, Palestine, etc.) which contend daily with various forms of terrorism and are physically and emotionally conditioned to confront these sacrificing situations.

Uncontrolled violence is becoming an international problem of social ecology which may be irreversible. As we have urged, the psychological roots of the problem should not be overlooked. Extreme characteristics are found in a fringe element amounting to probably less than 5% of the population. If one studies the distribution of intelligence, it is found that people with a representative IQ are to be found within two standard deviations of the mean, *i.e.* “geniuses” and “idiots” will appear in the marginal fringe. The same distribution probably holds for athletic potential or other characteristics, including asocial tendencies.

⁶ In a despatch from *The Times* correspondent in Washington (15 July 1972), the Central Intelligence Agency and other Western intelligence organisations were reported to have evidence that links had been established between Japanese, Turkish, Palestinian, Uruguayan, and other terrorist groups.

⁷ “The detectable expression of the interaction of genetically transmitted characteristics and environment.” (Webster’s Dictionary).

There is no evidence that the relative number of potential protestors against society has increased, although the growth of world population enhances the probability that more “minimal critical masses” will crystallise. Eccentric characters, marginal anti-social elements, conspiratorial adventurers, underground fantasists, and simple village idiots have always been constant features of organised society. Their personalities cover a wide range of oddity, from the psychopath to the idealist; and the potential proportion of murderers or saints is probably the same today as it was in the past. What has changed, as we have already noted, is their ability to create, organise and concentrate as a specialised destructive social *phenotype*,⁷ possessing a high degree of behavioural unpredictability with international (or intercontinental) impact on an otherwise standardised society.

TAKE ATHLETIC PROWESS as an example. Modern athletic achievements exceed those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, although the potential relative number of excellent athletes in the population has probably not changed. What has happened is that conditions are now more favourable for the expression of the athletic phenotype. The field prowess of members of national athletic squads does not represent the typical characteristics of the society from which a magnificent team is derived: these members represent the fringe elements of the population relative to certain qualities. When recruited and organised, they form a small specialised population which differs significantly from the rest of the population relative to athletic ability. Furthermore, in the case of a selected specialised population of footballers, a cast-iron set of regulations controls their specialised behaviour. A high standard of selectivity within the phenotype is maintained when footballers of one team are matched against footballers of another team within the same league, in order to keep their performance on a high level. If all the selected footballers were on one side and a representative sample of the population on the other, there would be no contest; one side would always win. This, in fact, is what may indeed happen with the specialised selected population of outlaws—in the absence of appropriate measures specifically elaborated to cope with the specialisation of violence.

FOOTBALL TEAMS, lunatic asylums, terrorist gangs,

or commando units are all specialised micro-populations in which certain characteristics are segregated for different purposes. Each fulfils a role in society, and each avails itself in modern times of a much wider field of recruits than in the past (*inter alia* because of the general increase of the world population).

If we may continue a moment further with the athletic analogy, a national football team is submitted to unsparring efforts in order to make footballers better performers. A team can count on talent scouts to discover potential footballers, on medical specialists to keep them at the peak of their physical performance, on psychologists to harmonise their physical and mental balance, on trainers for therapeutic skills, and on a variety of gadgets to control their performance and correct their faults. A football team enjoys and utilises publicity and public relations, both as a tool to attract potential footballers and as a means of rewarding them when successful. The activities range from the sale of tickets to fan-exploitation, and often a star cult emerges which can overshadow the original idea and primary interest of the game itself. Big business and, in certain lands, national interests control the operation of these teams. Specialised trading markets and even international stock exchanges are created according to precise and selective economic rules for the benefit of a complex infrastructure of vested interests.

THE MODERN TERRORIST PHENOTYPE is a new product of our culture, existing on its own logic, for its own purposes, regardless of ideological justification. The phenomenon is a menace to society because of its new destructive capacities and a concomitant unpredictability of behaviour which puts it beyond control.

Indeed, unpredictability is recognised as one of the major forces in modern international politics. The term "crazy state" has been proposed by one writer in order to define this particular quality.⁸ Unpredictability, in this context, has initiated the search for "patterns of randomness" by political sociologists and students of systems analysis.

Modern terrorists derive their high behavioural unpredictability largely from three factors: their multiple targets, their limited numbers, and

(above all) from the variety of their cultural roots. For example, it is extremely difficult to *predict* and *prevent* attacks such as the "kamikaze" one launched at Lydda airport, primarily because the rationale of the predators was totally alien to the environment assaulted. Kozo Okamoto stated to the military court in Jerusalem which tried and convicted him for the Lydda butchery that he and his companions acted in order to promote "the World Revolution". He added that both the executioners and their victims, "united in death", would be reincarnated as stars, and that their joint illumination would shed "eternal peace on earth." A political tragedy incorporating mystic symbolism with compulsive ideologised violence, executed according to an ancient Bushido code, in a modern airport which is, both geographically and culturally, remote from Japan is—to say the least—difficult to foresee. According to one Japanese journalist who attended the Okamoto trial, the defendant had wanted to project a neo-Samurai image of the most archaic type, waging a duel to the death against a hated enemy, the modern international bourgeois establishment.

VIOLENT IMPULSES based on very particular traditional values of indigenous cultures, if limited to their natural habitat, are in a state of equilibrium with their environment. In the event that these special violent cultural values are transferred to a different civilisation, a state of equilibrium is no longer possible, thus creating new and unprecedented threats. The uniqueness of strange concepts, exported from a different set of values, becomes a source of high and unpredictable danger. They create a social ecological situation which defies known control measures.

A PRIMARY CONCLUSION to be drawn from the analysis of modern terrorism concerns its obscure and misleading anti-social character. The lack of a distinct border-line between banditry, political terrorism, and violent radicalism blurs the essential fact that in modern society extremist alternatives to legitimate power are becoming self-fulfilling.

Specialised marginal anti-social populations, with little or no interest in or knowledge of the people or "the masses" they claim to represent, cannot be controlled without coordinated international action. They are no longer a political phenomenon linked with particular historical or

⁸ On the relevance of improbable behaviour in modern political society, see Y. Dror, *Crazy States: A Counter-conventional Strategic Issue* (1971).

economic situations; they are becoming a retrograde socio-ecological feature. This type of anti-social activity cannot be confined, and it is bound to proliferate. The structure of modern society, and the special talents and abilities of marginal asocial populations, favours the achievement of a minimal critical mass of sufficient power to disturb the international social equilibrium at will. The unpredictability of free-floating cultural values in alien environments contributes to accelerating the pace of this disequilibrium.

Less than ten years ago the movement for

ecological safety was almost non-existent. The changes in the physical ecology of the world are today enforcing international cooperation—for the alternative is, clearly, an international catastrophe.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE for governments and peoples to realise that the effects of modern terrorism are as contagious as small-pox, as poisonous as air pollution, and as dangerous to non-immunised societies as measles was to the American Indians?

Self-Portrait

on a rainy Sunday in the city of Berlin

Armed I am, equipped
 with the knives of reason
 Cool logic guides my bullets around corners
 Haughtiness and sophistry make my going smooth
 Implacable my doubts ever more cheekily
 Ever more nervously torture the stone of this well-fed city
 Safely too I swim even down her drains
 And my mockery rises higher than barred-in towers
 Venal I am for the cash of hard truth
 In the pillboxes of my scepticism I sit secure
 From the radiance of the great obscurantists and
 Yesterday's hate protects me from tomorrow's
 Tempest. Take note: I am armed, equipped.
 And yet I am vulnerable, often I have been
 Again and again I lie there, newly butchered
 Torn open under the savage sky of this region
 Meathooks they drive into my belly
 Whaler command ships float in my eyes
 On my tongue lies the hope of those who are hopeless
 In the end my wild dreams wearily ebb away
 On the slaughter block of your schools and offices
 Sausage machines greedily swallow what's left of me
 Hungry waits the land on the shore of your ocean of houses
 And the great city licks her lips
 For the well-earned Sunday roast called Biermann

Wolf Biermann

Translated by Michael Hamburger