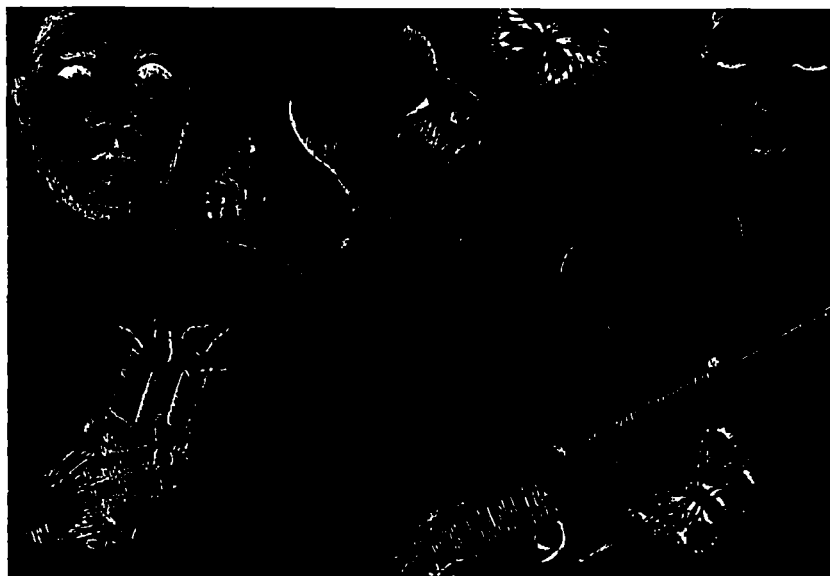


son....Nature's wonder, nature's majesty, nature's sublime power, nature's embodiment of Deity were contemplated by the small meditating figures in these landscape without much recognition either of nature's negative aspects or of the destructive potential of the 'culture' symbolized by the action of the axe, the locomotive, and the figure of man himself."

Almost all the pictures to which she refers bear an emblem, in its middle distance, of human culture—a ship, a building, or perhaps a rowboat. Many of the scenes are of storms, apocalyptic in their fury. But the figure in the foreground holds his pose. Far from seeming in a state of "mystical surrender" or "moral blindness" or lacking in the faculty of "recognition," he appears to be reading the scene with the greatest degree of alertness and repose. What he does with *his* landscape is the one thing Miss Novak has failed to do with *hers*. The book as a whole carries on in this way; and it represents, for us, a momentary loss of intellectual courage, which one hopes will soon be restored.



Victoria Arthur

sary only if, and only to the extent, it presents obstacles to achieving that essentially selfish end. And we cannot ignore the extralegal (and sometimes legal) terrorism employed by agencies of an established government to discourage or punish dissent and opposition when the normal structures or processes are deemed too unwieldy or inefficient.

Terrorism is a phenomenon known to all ages and probably to most societies. If we are tempted to see it as a scourge peculiar to our troubled time, this is due to the speed and scope of its spread and the sophistication of its means. Many of us are now convinced of a demonic network of conspiratorial forces of destruction—a conviction enhanced by the international mass media's instantaneous and highly dramatic coverage of each new terrorist outrage. As a result, what might once have been predominantly local in its impact is seen as a universal threat to order and security. Whether international conspiracy, political contagion, or simply a behavioral fashion, there is no denying the importance of terrorism or its costs.

The two books under review deal with the virulent outbreaks in Ireland and Italy—subject matter as contemporary as the morning paper. Although both books have serious shortcomings in approach and style, they reveal significant similarities and differences in the terrorism experienced in these two countries. By concentrating on the causes and characteristics of specific terrorist groups and movements, and by emphasizing the terrorists' perceptions

of the social orders they are determined to disrupt (and, if possible, destroy), these studies provide little support for the more popular theories of international conspiracy. Neither book ignores the predictable similarities in means and tactics—and even, to some extent, an occasional overlap of theory and ideology. But such similarities fade in importance before the intensity of what are seen as local needs and objectives demanding direct and urgent action.

This is certainly true of O'Ballance's *Terror in Ireland*. Superficial as its essentially descriptive approach renders it, O'Ballance does provide a helpful historical summary of "the Troubles" in Ireland, carefully tracing the sometimes weakened but never completely broken strands of this most determined of nationalistic causes. All the necessary distinctions are made between the romanticized heroes of the rebellious past and the brutality of their contemporary counterparts. But the distinctions are clearly secondary to the continuing of that "Heritage of Hate" the author chooses as a subtitle. His theme finds confirmation in the tragic toll of men now choosing to starve to death for the cause and in the escalating intensity of the reaction when yet another name is added to the seemingly endless roster of "martyrs" for Ireland.

Unfortunately the full depth of the Irish tragedy and the futility of mounting terrorist campaigns escapes this telling of the story. O'Ballance settles too easily for what soon becomes little more than an accountant's tabulation of incidents year by year. Beyond what appears to be a principled rejection of

**TERROR IN IRELAND:
THE HERITAGE OF HATE**
by Edgar O'Ballance

(Presidio Press [Novato, Calif.]; 286 pp.; \$14.95)

**NEVER AGAIN WITHOUT A RIFLE:
THE ORIGINS OF ITALIAN
TERRORISM**

by Alessandro Silj
(Karz Publishing [New York City]; 233 pp.; \$14.95)

Gordon C. Zahn

In *Terrorism* (Little Brown, 1979)—probably the classic study of the subject—Walter Laqueur prudently avoided offering a comprehensive definition of the term. If we are inclined to view it mainly as the concentrated use of violence to disrupt or overthrow an established political order, we must not overlook other forms, other uses, that are less "exalted" in purpose or rationale. There is the terrorism of a criminal gang, for example, which may be ascribed in part to the depressed or oppressed status of its members but whose objective is private gain; public authority is the acknowledged adver-

both the indiscriminate terrorism of the IRA and the injustices, past and present, suffered by the Catholics under Protestant domination in Northern Ireland, one is never quite certain where the narrator's personal sympathies lie. This reader would have welcomed a more thorough inquiry into the background and motivations of the individuals named in the frequent shifts of leadership and allegiances—or, failing that, more compelling evidence that these rivalries are based mainly on ego-serving ambition or personal pique. Then too, what seems to be disproportionate emphasis on the terrorism of the various IRA factions tends to obscure the part played by the terrorism of Protestant paramilitaries and the "official" terrorism of the Ulster constabulary and the British army. Shortcomings in perspective and balance aside, this is a creditable assessment of the central role played by organized terrorism as an expression of a "heritage of hate."

Part of the difficulty with Alessandro Silj's study of Italian terrorism is the unfortunate translation, with its awkward and stilted terminology and clumsy grammar. The jacket copy boasts that the book has gone through several printings in Italy, and perhaps its quality is more evident in Italian. Of course its popularity might reflect merely the sensational nature of the subject. But the principal flaw of *Never Again Without a Rifle* is its overemphasis on the background and ideologies of the various groups and their leaders—the reverse of the problem with the O'Ballance volume.

Silj's primary focus is on specific individuals and their careers, in the Red Brigades and similar terrorist groups and movements; and these biographical sketches provide many moving insights into the character and motivation of these particular leaders. The American reader will be struck by the parallels between them and the more radical segments of our own "New Left" of not too distant history—even to the sharing of ideological sources (Herbert Marcuse and Frantz Fanon among them). But where the IRA finds a unifying and tangible objective in its opposition to continued British rule, Italian terrorism seems marked by an undifferentiated commitment to revolution for its own sake.

To no one's surprise, then, the Italian "revolution" has become an exercise in

esoterica, the movement repeatedly fractionalized by ideological differences that give rise to endless meetings and conferences, streams of broadsides, manifestoes, and other publications characterized by a rhetorical style and content that soon degenerate into pretentious cant. And Silj does not resist the tide. Instead of turning to more objective factors—personalities, organizational structures, and the measurable consequences of terrorist activity in terms of gains and setbacks—he shifts his focus to equally esoteric interpretations of the conflicting modes and variations of ideology. No one would deny the importance of ideological and rhetorical underpinnings of terrorist action, but here again it is a question of emphasis and balance.

To his credit Silj does devote a third and final section to a "debate on political violence," but his treatment falls short of the exploration of general principles and alternatives one hopes to find. What is sadly lacking in both books is a more objective evaluation of the nature and efficacy of terrorism as *such* and a more detailed analysis of how it has changed in its modern manifestation. There are crucial questions relating to the moral dimension of terrorism that are not addressed by either author—for example, the essentially indiscriminate nature of contemporary terrorism. In an earlier time it was those who bore some of the guilt for injustices or oppression who were most often the object of terrorist assault. Today, it seems, the innocent bystander is the primary, though random, target of the bomb placed in the crowded marketplace. If true, the "new terrorism" mirrors changes and trends in large-scale military strategy and tactics and in advanced military technology, where it has become impossible to exercise discrimination in destruction.

There is reason to believe that terrorism will remain a fact of political life and will actually increase in scope and intensity. Whatever hope there may be of reversing this grim trend lies in learning to understand and come to terms with the individuals and movements engaged in terrorist activity and the social situations that have led them in their desperation to turn to terrorism. Even with these books' shortcomings, both can contribute to that understanding and, therefore, are deserving of serious attention.

COVERING ISLAM—HOW THE MEDIA AND THE EXPERTS DETERMINE HOW WE SEE THE REST OF THE WORLD

by Edward W. Said

(Pantheon Books, 192 pp.; \$10.95/\$3.95)

Marvin Zonis

Covering Islam completes the trilogy that noted literary critic Edward Said began in *Orientalism* and continued in *The Question of Palestine*. All three works confront similar challenges: What constitutes knowledge; how is that knowledge, or what passes for it at a given time, produced; and how is it used?

Said argues in *Orientalism* that those concerned with the Orient (he is particularly interested in the Muslim Middle East) have represented it as the antithesis of the Occident. That representation—of ideologized, ahistorical, degraded, and, finally, inferior societies and peoples—was created and sustained by Western travelers, scholars, and colonial statesmen and used to justify Western cultural and political domination of the region.

The Question of Palestine considers the result of that (mis)representation: the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.

In the present volume Said argues that such misshapen and perverse representations still hold sway. As evidence of the ways in which Islam is "covered" by the mass media and by scholars and governmental or other "experts," he examines the controversial "Death of a Princess" TV docudrama, the media treatment of the Iranian revolution—particularly the hostage crisis—and some contemporary American scholarship on the Middle East. He concludes that while such accounts succeed in "covering" many of the realities of the Islamic world, they also result in obfuscating what is a most complicated, diverse, and turbulent region. But more, that such obfuscation has had major political aims and consequences, "so that numerous manipulative aims can be realized, from the stirring up of a new cold war, to the instigation of racial antipathy, to mobilization for a possible invasion, to the continued denigration of Muslims and Arabs."

But there is another dimension to this relatively brief essay. Said is at