



# Herod: Reflections on Political Violence

*Conor Cruise O'Brien*

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In *Herod: Reflections on Political Violence* (first published in 1978) Conor Cruise O'Brien collects a number of essays alongside three short plays that dramatise political arguments through the infamous figure of the Roman king of Judaea for whom the collection is named.

'A great book. In it, O'Brien not only denounces IRA terrorism, as you would expect from a mainstream politician, but - in a sense quite different from the rationalisations offered by ideological apologists for political violence - seeks to understand it. I mean, *really* understand it - not extenuate it by equivocation and non sequitur. And his thinking leads him to attack the republican mythology at the heart of the Irish state. Few writers have analysed terrorism so acutely or been as effective in undermining its ideological justifications.' Oliver Kamm, from his preface to this edition

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