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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Analysis of the New Left wave basing on the concept of the Four Waves of Terrorism by David Rapoport and selected political events

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ABSTRACT

The predominant aim of this publication is to perform a comprehensive analysis of the Third Wave of terrorism, the definition of which was proposed by an American professor, David Charles Rapoport. The author of this paper has decided to refer back to his considerations in his earlier work and to define yet another wave of terrorism basing on chosen political events, which took place during the so-called New Left wave. Within the scope of this article, more recent events that are strictly connected with safety and methods utilized during terrorist attacks are touched upon.

Keywords: Terrorism, The Four Waves of Terrorism, David Charles Rapoport, Far Right, Communism, Far Left, Red Army Faction, Ulrike Meinhof, Years of Lead, Aldo Moro, Red brigades, National Vanguard, Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari, ISIS

1. INTRODUCTION

The major goal of this paper is to dwell upon the concept of the Third Wave of terrorism, which was proposed in the early 2000s by an American professor, David Charles Rapoport together with his colleagues. The scientist in question proposed the existence of four waves and the analysis of initial two of them has been performed and published in the *World Scientific News* journal (Jach-Chrzaszcz, 2017). To continue the considerations on the topic, the author is going to present the importance of certain events, which were in the majority of cases dictated by politics. In the case of the third wave (which is also referred to as the New Left one), which started shortly after the commencement of the Second World War, international policies were still very dangerous and posed a threat for civilians, which will be discussed within the scope of this work. Similarly to the earlier paper, the aim of this dissertation is not to describe all terrorist organizations that are strictly connected with the New Left wave, together with events and most recognizable individuals, who were opposed to the applicable law regulations and decided to create well organized groups and thanks to their actions gained public support. The aim of the author is to present ideologies such groups believed in and ways they utilized such beliefs. Furthermore, the goal is to show why governments were unable to stop the widely spreading phenomenon in question.

2. THIRD WAVE OF TERRORISM – NEW LEFT

The end of the second wave of terrorism, which flourished between 1950s and the beginning of 1960s, marked a significant change in political approaches and ideologies. Far right movements, which were dominated by the concept that the French and the English are colonial overlords, were replaced by those characterized by more revolutionary and anarchistic views. The name of the third wave is the result of the exceptionally popular left-oriented political concepts formulated by major terrorist organizations that were active in the discussed period. One cannot forget that it was also the time when the Cold War between two superpowers, namely – the USA and the USSR (Gaddis, 1991). The rivalry was visible on many patters. When it comes to the discussed topic, one has to point out to the exceptional engagement of the intelligence of the USA, determined to break the integrity of international trade unions to limit the influence of the Communists. Within the borders of Italy, the CIA was active right after the end of the Second World War, where its tasks included supporting (especially in financial terms) Christian Democrats, who were able, thanks to the engagement of the USA, to overshadow the local communist party in the organized parliamentary election (Miller, 1983). The superpower in question was also involved in supporting the formation of military groups which were determined to oppose pro-communist movements. Aside from financially supporting neo-fascists, the CIA also collaborated with the Greek intelligence, which trained such units. What is more, at the beginning of the 90s, the Gladio issue was brought to life, as it was stated that it was a secret body that had been created at the beginning of the 50s as a result of cooperation between the USA and the SIFAR Italian intelligence (Ganser, 2006). When the risk of taking over the country by the Italian Communist Party was real in the 70s, Gladio was responsible for planning and executing terrorist attack pretending that they were executed by the followers of the left. In military terminology, such actions are referred to as *false flag operations* (Bale, 1996).

All of the described events took place especially in Italy, which will be discussed in detail in the further part of the paper. Below, one can find the origins of the New Left terrorism in Germany. After the lecture, it will become apparent that the reasons of its emergence were similar as in the case of Italy which collaborated with the USA.

2. 1. New Left terrorism in Germany

An organization that was highly active within the borders of Germany (at first in West Germany, later on in the unified Germany) was the so-called Red Army Faction. It started its factual operation in the 1970s, and its members were especially students, who were against the political ideology of such parties as CDU/CSU or SPD. Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin are considered to be the official originators of the RAF (Conzen, 2008). They met during one of anti-government demonstrations. They were also active participants of the German Extra-Parliamentary Opposition (APO). Even before 1970, Baader, together with other students, set fire to a mall in Frankfurt to protest against the military intervention of the United States in Vietnam. A reporter responsible for presenting the tragedy was Ulrike Meinhof, who later on decided to become a member of the newly created terrorist organization. Baader was arrested several times for his actions. Meinhof was responsible for managing a military action that was aimed at helping him escape the prison, which was organized on 14th March 1970 and is considered to be the moment where the RAF truly came to be (Stetten, 2009).

In the same year, the participants of the organizations started undergoing their training in Syria, which was hosted by the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Red Army Faction gathered funds for its further operation by robbing numerous banks. Robberies were commonplace between 1970 and 1972. 1972 is of exceptional importance, for the PLO responsible for training the members of RAF, started cooperating with the al-Fatah Movement and gave rise to the „Black September” Organization, responsible for attacking the group of 11 Israeli Olympians during Summer Olympic Games in Munich (Toohey, 2008). In May 1972, there was a significant increase in the activeness of the RAF.

On 11th May, they managed to perform a bomb attack on the Headquarters of the 5th Corps of the United States Army. On 19th May, a bomb planted by the RAF in the Axel Springer Company’s seat in Hamburg exploded, and on 24th May, the Headquarters of the United States Army in Heidelberg was attacked by means of using trap cars (Rosenfeld, 2014). All of the events were the result of the dissatisfaction of the RAF with the pro-USA policies that were strictly connected with the war in Vietnam (Gutmann, 2008). The leaders of the RAF were captured and imprisoned in July 1972 and the operation of the organization was suspended up until 1975. The members of the RAF who escaped punishment were determined to free their leaders.

From 1975 to 1982, they performed numerous terrorist acts, such as kidnapping. It has to be stated that the goal of the second generation of the RAF was not to change the course of the national politics, but rather to free their co-members (Scribner, 2007). The third generation of the RAF included small extremist groups which were focused on murdering influential individuals, especially bank and company owners or diplomats (Moghadam, 2008). On 20th April 1998, the RAF officially announced that the attacks would not be continued and that the operation of the organization would be discontinued (Blumenau, 2014).

2. 2. New Left terrorism in Italy

The Years of Lead is the name of a period, during which the occurrence of terrorist attacks increased and which started in Italy at the end of the 60s and continued to the early 80s (Aroldi, Ponte, 2008). It was the period of rivalry between far left and far right ideologies. The latter were supported by intelligences of capitalist countries, which wanted to eliminate communist movements within the borders of Italy. They were mainly managed by authorities from the USA and Greece. On the other extreme, there were groups supported by the USSR and Libya. Both sides provided a substantial military, financial, and logistic-oriented support to the newly founded groups, the aim of which was to start terror-related activities. In the discussed period, such parties as the New Order, October 22 Group, Partisan Action Group, National Vanguard, National Front, Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari, Black Order, and Frontline emerged. When it comes to those strictly New Left ones, the most popular far left organization in Italy was the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse), the symbol of which was a pentagonal star and a machine pistol.

The official beginning of the operation of the organization in question was 1970 and its leaders were: Renato Curcio, Margherita “Mara” Cagol, Paolo Besuscio, and Giorgio Semeria. Initially, the operation of the Red Brigades was mainly focused on spreading propaganda by means of printing and distributing pamphlets. Later on, the organization performed a series of brutal attacks on the cars of factory owners and offices of far right political groups. With time, the Red Brigades became more radicalized and their started attacking policemen, soldiers, and wardens. Said actions became even more violent in 1974. On 18th April, they kidnapped a right wing judge, Mario Sossi (Jamieson, 2004). The event in question was a starting point for a series of abductions and terrorist attacks against judges and politicians, which made the Red Brigades to start being treated as a factual terrorist organization. In the same year, the organization spread to Rome, Venice, and Genoa, securing a constant increase of the number of new members. In order to maintain properly operating structures, funds were needed.

They were gathered by robbing banks, kidnapping businessmen and politicians for ransom, as well as by dealing with arms and drugs. Between 1977 and 1979, when the Red Brigades was the strongest, the major enemy of its leaders was the Christian Democracy, a party that was created from the members of a secret anti-fascist movement. The most important event in the history of the group was the abduction of the former prime minister of Italy, Aldo Moro on 16th March 1978 (Sundquist, 2010). The crime was committed by the so-called second wave of the Red Brigades, under the supervision of Mario Moretti. They claimed that they would free the former prime minister if 13 members of the Red Brigades were freed from prisons. The government decided not to negotiate with terrorists, which led to murdering Aldo Moro. It showed the lack of power of the state, which was unable to ensure a proper safety to the civilians, as well as the inefficiency of the intelligence, which was unable to track down terrorists.

The event discussed is of exceptional importance, since 54 days passed from the abduction to the death of the kidnapped individual (Drake, 2006). A year later, the Red Brigades murdered Guido Rossa, a member of the local trade union and due to the fact lost the approval of their major followers – the workers (Drake, 2004). At the beginning of the 80s, Italian law enforcement bodies were much more effective and started capturing and punishing the members of the Red Brigades for their Actions. The organization started to be the enemy of the United States as well.

On 17th December 1981, the terrorists of the Red Brigades kidnapped James Dozier from Verona. He was Deputy Chief of Staff of NATO forces in Europe. The administration of Ronald Reagan learned from the case of Aldo Moro and decided to take over Dozier by sending an elite unit called Delta Force, which, while supported by Italian antiterrorists (NOCS) performed its task flawlessly (Dobkin, 1992). An increasing number of arrests of the members of the Red Brigades caused the organization to cease operation in 1981 and become divided into smaller factions.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis carried out above clearly shows that the period of time between the 60s and the 70s was dominated by the increasing importance of the left wing ideology, which was not welcomed by the United States, trying to fight with all forms of communist reign. The engagement of the USA was especially visible in the case of Italy, where the clash of two ideologies resulted in the boom of terrorism and calling the period in question the Years of Lead.

When it comes to terrorism in Germany, one can see hostility towards the United States of America caused by the military intervention of the latter in Vietnam. It was the time which was exceptionally important from the point of view of military and terrorist actions, especially in the context of quickly developing mass media. As the issues of the Vietnamese were reported by means of various channels, anarchists demanded military forces of the USA to be removed from the country in question. The access to mass media is of utmost importance and will play a key role especially in the case of the fourth wave of terrorism, which is called the religious one. One of the main goals of each and every terrorist is to spread terror and fear, as well to become known worldwide. The name of the organization and its goals are presented on the day of the attack.

The said state of affairs was typically taken advantage of by the discussed organizations, who tried to disrupt the operation of American companies and news agencies cooperating with the country. In both scenarios, the failure of the unit to operate was caused by kidnapping well-known and widely appreciated leaders, for whom it was difficult to find a replacement.

At the beginning of the 70s, the intelligence and law enforcement bodies were not properly prepared to fight terrorism and crime, but they quickly developed to face new, problematic challenges. One should also focus on the Arab part of the discussed issue, for it can be identified in the case of the Red Army Faction which collaborated with the Palestine Liberation Organization and trained Syrian troops.

It is intriguing, for currently ISIS uses mass media and exploits propaganda to recruit new cadets. They are typically trained in Syria. Even though the intelligence of the country is working remarkably better than it was in the past, it is still unable to track down both places and individuals training new Syrian terrorists. The said fact is going to be touched upon in the last part of the dissertation touching upon the religious wave as understood within the framework of The Four Waves of Terrorism by David Rapoport.

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